

Media Contact:  
Sarah Merrell  
Fletcher Marketing PR  
865-249-8371  
[smerrrell@fletchermarketingpr.com](mailto:smerrrell@fletchermarketingpr.com)



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### 'Violins of Hope' Brings Instruments Played During the Holocaust to Knoxville

*Historic Program Includes Symphony Performances, Exhibition and Educational Programming*

**KNOXVILLE, Tenn., October 23, 2018** – As ashes of the Holocaust fell to the ground, hope rose from the strings of violins.

Music often plays a powerful role in communicating history. This is evident with "Violins of Hope: Strings of the Holocaust," a collection of over 50 restored violins that were played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust. These extraordinary instruments that have survived concentration camps, ghettos and pogroms are making the trip from Israel to Knoxville in January 2019 to tell remarkable stories of injustice, suffering, resilience and survival.

The Violins of Hope will sing again in two performances at the Historic Tennessee Theatre located at 604 South Gay Street with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra as commentary by Hallerin Hilton Hill and dramatic readings bring the stories of the violins alive. These life changing performances are set to be held on January 23 and 24, 2019.



Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School is honored to be spearheading the project in partnership with valuable community organizations like the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra.

"The Knoxville Symphony is proud to be a partner in bringing Violins of Hope to Knoxville," said

Jennifer Harrell, Director of Education and community partnerships for the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. "There is a saying, 'for the heights and depths no words can reach, God gave us music, the soul's own speech.' The stories of human suffering and ultimately hope will be expressed through each of these incredible instruments."

In addition, the "Violins of Hope, Strings of the Holocaust" exhibition will be on display at the University of Tennessee Downtown Gallery located at 106 South Gay Street from January 4 - 27, 2019. The exhibition is being designed by world-renowned architect and exhibition designer, Lou Gauci and will be part of the "January First Friday" art district event on January 4, 2019. The "Violins of Hope" exhibition invites visitors to view, learn and contemplate this singular collection of instruments which survived the Holocaust.

This collection of violins was assembled and restored by Israeli master violin maker and restorer, Amnon Weinstein. Nearly 50 years ago, Amnon heard an impactful story from a Holocaust survivor who brought him a violin for restoration. This man survived the Holocaust because his job was to play

the violin while Nazi soldiers marched others to their deaths. When Amnon opened the violin's case, he saw ashes. He thought of his own relatives who had perished and was overwhelmed. Amnon put out a call for violins from the Holocaust that he would restore in hopes that the instruments would sound again. Violins of Hope was born.



An organizer of Knoxville's "Violins of Hope" and Head of the Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School, Miriam Esther Wilhelm, considers the program a monumental experience for the Greater Knoxville and East Tennessee community.

"Violins of Hope is an extraordinarily meaningful program that inspires and educates people of all ages and walks of life," said Wilhelm. "The Stanford Eisenberg Knoxville Jewish Day School is thrilled to have the opportunity to share these violins with the community as they tell the story of a tragic time in history and what we can learn from it in a unique and impactful way."

Throughout the month of January 2019, Avshi Weinstein, a Violins of Hope co-founder and educator, will tour East Tennessee middle and high schools as well as churches, synagogues, Sunday schools, businesses, recreation and senior centers with musicians and the Violins of Hope reaching tens of thousands of students and adults.

"I think the most important part of this project is education, especially for schools and the younger generation," said Amnon Weinstein. "When you are speaking through music, through these violins that have been in the camps and ghettos, it's easier for the younger generation to open their ears and hopefully understand better. The message for all is simple. Never again, never again."

Sponsorships for "Violins of Hope: Strings of the Holocaust" are currently available at a variety of levels starting at \$5,000 to sponsor a violin. Tickets for the event will be available within the next few weeks at [violinsofhopeknox.com](http://violinsofhopeknox.com). For more information on sponsorships, please contact Rabbi Yossi at 865-300-8012 or Jenny Wood at 865-242-0202.

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