



Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust

RESOURCE HANDBOOK / THIRD
EDITION

A project of

Remember the Women Institute

in cooperation with the National Jewish Theater Foundation and All About Jewish Theatre

Remember the Women Institute, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1997 and based in New York City, conducts and encourages research and cultural activities that contribute to including women in history. Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel is the founder and executive director. Special emphasis is on women in the context of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Through research and related activities, including this project, the stories of women—from the point of view of women—are made available to be integrated into history and collective memory. This handbook is intended to provide readers with resources for using theatre to memorialize the experiences of women during the Holocaust.

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By Rochelle G. Saidel and Karen Shulman

*This resource handbook is dedicated to the women whose
Holocaust-related stories are known and unknown, told
and untold—to those who perished and those who survived.*

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Remember the Women Institute
11 Riverside Drive
Suite 3RE
New York, NY 10023

rememberwomen.org

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Introduction to the Third Edition

By Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel

Founder and Director, Remember the Women Institute

This is the 2017 third edition of Remember the Women Institute's **Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook**, created as a service to educators and others who want to know more about dramatizations by women, as well as those that include women's Holocaust experiences. The material here is also intended to be incorporated into two larger projects: the [Holocaust Theater Catalog](#) of the National Jewish Theater Foundation, and a virtual [Holocaust Theatre Online Collection](#) (currently only in Hebrew) for All About Jewish Theatre. We are pleased to be part of both of these larger projects, the former based in the United States and the latter, in Israel. We launched the first edition of this resource handbook in April 2015, at a Yom HaShoah commemoration co-sponsored by [Remember the Women Institute](#), [American Jewish Historical Society](#), and All About Jewish Theatre, and held at the [Center for Jewish History](#), New York. The event coincided with the Remembrance Readings Day of [National Jewish Theater Foundation](#), which encourages using theatre to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

The 2015 program included three short dramatic presentations by professional actors and musicians: *Gretel Bergmann*, written and directed by Cynthia L. Cooper, performed by [Stacey Linnartz](#); excerpts from *In the Underworld*, originally written in French by Germaine Tillon, 1944, in Ravensbrück, directed by Meghan Brodie, performed by actors Stacey Linnartz and Lynn N. Silver, and singer Lily Davis; and "Wild Wind Blows" from *Silence Not, A Love Story* by Cynthia L. Cooper, performed by Stacey Linnartz. Musical direction and accompaniment were by Jonathan Marro. The event closed with a panel discussion on women, theatre, and the Holocaust with Rachel Lithgow, Executive Director, American Jewish Historical Society; Dr. Meghan Brodie, then Assistant Professor of Theatre, University of Southern Maine, Director, *In the Underworld*; Cynthia L. Cooper, playwright of *Gretel Bergmann* and *Silence Not, A Love Story*; Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel, founder and Executive Director, Remember the Women Institute; and Dr. Sonja M. Hedgepeth, Professor, Holocaust Studies, Women's Studies, Language and Literature, Middle Tennessee State University.

The second edition of the resource handbook was also released in conjunction with Remembrance Readings Day, on May 2, 2016, with a program of readings at the

Center for Jewish History in New York, in cooperation with the American Jewish Historical Society. Like the 2015 event, the program was a reflection of the goals of this resource handbook: providing information on and encouraging the production of plays and dramatic presentations about the Holocaust that are written by women and/or about the experiences of women during the Holocaust. The 2016 event included a play written by a survivor of Ravensbrück and Auschwitz, an original contemporary short play, and a personal history set to music. Excerpts of Charlotte Delbo's classic play, *Who Will Carry the Word?* were performed by Angela Bey, Mya Flood, Indira Joell, and Allison Rohr—Dr. Meghan Brodie's students in the Ursinus College Department of Theater and Dance, directed by Dr. Brodie. *The Spoken and the Unspoken*, the premiere of a short play written by Cynthia L. Cooper especially for this occasion, focused on researching and uncovering stories of sexual violence. The play, based on the work of Remember the Women Institute and the resistance we have faced in bringing this subject into the open, featured two professional actors, Stacey Linnartz and Jessica Litwak. Cantor Shira Ginsburg performed excerpts from her acclaimed Bubby's Kitchen, a musical reminiscence of growing up with grandparents who were heroes of the Resistance in Belarus. Following the performances, there was a panel discussion with Dr. Saidel, Dr. Brodie, playwright Cooper, Cantor Ginsburg, and Arnold Mittelman, President of National Jewish Theater Foundation.

This third 2017 edition is again being launched at a program at the Center for Jewish History, on April 26, in cooperation with the American Jewish Historical Society. The readings focus on women and resistance and include: *We Will Not Be Silent*, an excerpt from a play about Sophie Scholl, a leader of the White Rose resistance group, written by David Meyers, directed by Aliza Shane, and performed by Cait Johnston and Nick Giedris; *At the Train Station in Munich* by Cynthia L. Cooper, directed by Ludovica Villar-Hauser and performed by Sarah Baskin and Abby Royle; *In Her Words: Stories of Survival and Resistance* by Virginia D'Albert-Lake, Geneviève de Gaulle Anthonioz, Gemma La Guardia Gluck, and Isabella Leitner, adapted and directed by Dr. Meghan Brodie and performed by her Ursinus College students, Mya Flood, Indira Joell, Maddie Kuklantz, and Allison Rohr; and *Terezin Cabaret: Ilse Weber's Letters and Songs*, performed by Jenny Lee Mitchell and accompanied by Maria Dessena, Untitled Theater Company #61 and Mad Jenny Theatre.

Theatre has the power to make history more alive for viewers, whether it is strictly factual or evokes the spirit of what actually transpired. This third edition of the resource handbook with annotated bibliographies about **Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust**, with plays by and about women that were written and presented from the time of the Holocaust until today, helps us to better understand the experiences that women suffered as women. This will always be a work in progress and is by no means complete. We have added new plays to this third edition (indicated in color), and we will continue to add other plays and books as we become aware of them through scholarly

research, reader suggestions, and announcements in the media. We welcome suggested additions, which can be sent to info@rememberwomen.org. While we are focusing here on plays that were written in English or have English translations, we have included some plays in other languages, especially Hebrew. We look forward to receiving suggestions for additional entries in English and other languages, so that we can add them in the future. It is remarkable that seventy-two years after the end of the Holocaust, new plays continue to emerge.

Section 1 is an annotated bibliography that has three parts. Section 1, Part 1 of the bibliography lists plays about women and the Holocaust; Section 1, Part 2 lists plays about the Holocaust by women; and Section 1, Part 3 lists books about women, theatre, and the Holocaust. Following these three bibliographies, Section 2 of this resource handbook offers five personal essays, three of them new, describing the creation and staging of theatrical works about women and the Holocaust. In alphabetical order, they are by Dr. Meghan Brodie, Cynthia L. Cooper, Dr. Patrick Henry, Susan B. Katz, and Dr. Alice Shalvi. In Section 2.1, Dr. Meghan Brodie, Assistant Professor of Theater, Ursinus College, describes her experience working with her students at University of Southern Maine on *In the Underworld*, a play about Ravensbrück translated from Germaine Tillion's *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers*. (For more information about the original play, see the paragraph below about Germaine Tillion in this introduction, as well as entries about Tillion in the bibliographies.) In Section 2.2, Cynthia L. Cooper details how she became engaged with the story of Gisa Peiper, a young Jewish member of the resistance in Hamburg, and how she carried out research on site in Hamburg and elsewhere to create her play, *Silence Not, A Love Story*. In Section 2.3, Dr. Patrick Henry tells us about the play he wrote based on Charlotte Delbo's *Auschwitz and After*. (See references to Delbo in the paragraph below, and to Delbo in Section 1.) In Section 2.4, Susan B. Katz describes writing her play about the women who took part in the October 1944 prisoners' uprising in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In Section 2.5, Dr. Alice Shalvi, an Israel Prize awardee for Lifetime Achievement, writes about the initiation and implementation of *Refidim Junction*, a musical theatre piece that originated with the discovery of letters written by her mother in 1930s Germany.

Section 3 offers teachers a new outline frame, created by Karen Shulman, Educational Consultant for Remember the Women Institute, for a study plan that uses theatre to teach about women in the Holocaust. As with reader recommendations for additions to the bibliographies, we welcome for consideration reader suggestions for adding other essays and lesson plans about women, theatre, and the Holocaust.

Theatre at Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp

When considering the subject of women, theatre, and the Holocaust, a suitable place to begin is [Ravensbrück](#), the major women's concentration camp. While much information is available about the creation and performance of theatre and music in Theresienstadt

(Terezin), little is known about plays that were actually written and presented to small groups by female prisoners during their incarceration in Ravensbrück. This women's camp, located about fifty miles north of Berlin, was in operation from 1939 until 1945 and held political prisoners, Jews, Gypsies, so-called *asocials* (often prostitutes and lesbians), and other women from Germany, Austria, and virtually all of Nazi-occupied Europe. There were even several women from the United States imprisoned there.

There are two plays known to have been secretly written and performed by the female prisoners. The earlier play, entitled *Schum Schum*, was written by Austrian Jewish political prisoner Käthe Leichter with Herta Breuer, an Austrian Jewish Communist political prisoner. While it was not preserved in written form, it was actually performed in secret for a small group at the camp in 1942, and a survivor later described it in detail. The other play, *Le Verfügar aux Enfers: Une opérette à Ravensbrück* (roughly translated, the lowest-class worker goes to Hell) by French political prisoner Germaine Tillion, survived intact, was published as a book in French, and had a full-scale production in Paris in 2007. Most likely, Tillion read the play to her barrack mates in 1944 after they came back from work in the evening. Written under almost impossible circumstances and with the threat of severe punishment, the Leichter and Tillion plays were intended to lift the spirits and morale of their comrades in Ravensbrück.

Käthe Leichter and *Schum Schum*

Käthe Leichter was born in Vienna on August 18, 1895. At a time when it was unusual for a woman to receive an advanced degree, she was granted a PhD *magna cum laude* in Social Sciences from the University of Heidelberg. She was deeply involved in the Austrian student socialist movement, where she met her husband and fellow Social Democrat, Otto Leichter. As a member of this banned party, she was arrested by the Nazis in May 1938. After a trial in the summer of 1939, she was sent to Ravensbrück in January 1940. Rosa Jochmann, a non-Jewish Social Democratic resistance leader and friend who arrived at the camp a short time later, survived and reported about the play *Schum Schum*. The play, which had a clear anti-Nazi message, was about two Jewish prisoners who escaped to a deserted island and were shipwrecked. In addition to offering fantasy and a few moments of mental escape, it provided the women with opportunities for creative costume making.

"Too bad that this play had to be destroyed, because it contained so many songs that made fun of the SS, and so much social criticism," Jochmann recalled. She described the play: "Too bad that this play couldn't be filmed. The most amazing jewelry was created out of toothpaste tubes, a bridal dress from scarves, even a top hat and tails for the groom, all out of paper. The bride, a Jewish girl from Holland, was a very young and beautiful girl, and the groom was an Austrian Jewess...And the savages: the girls brought straw from the bindery, and we made little short skirts out of it. Our aluminum plates were polished all shiny, and hung from chains around their necks. It is impossible

to describe it all. That day the SS didn't come, but later we were betrayed, and everyone was sent to the hole [punishment cell block] for six weeks....Käthe and her friend had planned ahead, though, and the play we had staged had been destroyed. At the same time, there was a second version of the play, which praised the SS and humiliated the Jews. That was the version Käthe had put into her closet. That was what saved us all, because if they had found the real play, we would all have gone to our final destination." Rosa added that all of the participants were sent to the gas chambers with the first transport. In mid-March of 1942, Käthe Leichter and the others were gassed at the Bernburg euthanasia facility. (Steiner, *Käthe Leichter: Leben und Werk*, quoted in Saidel, *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*, pp. 61–62).

Germaine Tillion and *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers*

Unlike Leichter's play, **Germaine Tillion's** play/operetta *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers* was preserved. French political prisoners rescued by the Swedish Red Cross in the spring of 1945 took the manuscript of the play with them. Sixty years later, in 2005, it was published in French in an edition that reproduces page-by-page Tillion's handwritten script on the right-hand pages, with the lines in print on the left-hand pages. In addition, the book has a pocket that contains a bound reproduction of Tillion's small original notebook. As paper and writing instruments were difficult to obtain in Ravensbrück and the penalty for having them was severe, any surviving written materials from inmates (including recipe books and drawings) are rare and small in scale.

Like Leichter, Tillion arrived at Ravensbrück as an educated and accomplished woman. Born in Allègre, France on May 30, 1907, she studied anthropology at the University of Paris and elsewhere, and in the 1930s she carried out research missions in Algeria. A member and leader of the Museum of Man resistance group, she was arrested by the Gestapo on August 3, 1942, and incarcerated in Ravensbrück concentration camp in 1943, along with her mother. Her book about the camp, *Ravensbrück*, was translated from French into English and published in the United States in 1975, the first book in English to document life at Ravensbrück. In French the book had three versions, with Tillion augmenting information from one edition to the next. She died in France in 2008, a year after her play was performed in Paris in honor of her 100th birthday.

Tillion's play/operetta, like Leichter's play, was an act of resistance in the camp. The script is elaborate, with a narrator and directions for music. In an ironic and acerbic way, the play mocks the Nazis and portrays the terrible conditions that the women had to endure. There are references to classic literature and music, as well as to lice, inedible food, disease, and hardship. Using her background as an ethnographer, Tillion not only wanted to entertain her comrades but also to leave for posterity a description of the camp. In 2014, Tillion's play that debuted in French in 2007 was translated into English and presented as *In the Underworld*. The English-language translation by Annie and Karl Bortnick was commissioned by the University of Southern Maine Department of

Theatre. Directed by Dr. Meghan Brodie, then a professor in the university's theatre department, the play was presented at the university in April 2014.

Charlotte Delbo and *Who Will Carry the Word?*

Another non-Jewish French political prisoner, Charlotte Delbo, is quite famous for her writing and theatre work. Her play, *Who Will Carry the Word?* is about a women's concentration camp that could well be Ravensbrück, but is said to be Birkenau. As she was in both camps and did not write the play until after her liberation, it may be a composite based on her memories of both camps. Born near Paris in 1913, Delbo joined the French Young Communist Women's League in 1932. Her husband Georges Dudach, whom she married two years later, was active in the resistance. Delbo had been in Buenos Aires working with actor and theatrical producer Louis Jouvet when the Nazis occupied France in 1940. Instead of staying safely abroad, she, like Germaine Tillion, returned to Paris to be part of the resistance. On March 2, 1942, police followed a careless courier to their apartment and arrested both Charlotte and her husband. Dudach was imprisoned and then shot by the Nazis in May 1942. Delbo was held in transit camps near Paris for the rest of the year. Then, on January 23, 1943, she and 229 other French women imprisoned for their resistance activities were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. She was later sent to the Raisko satellite camp, then to Ravensbrück, and was there until liberated by the Swedish Red Cross in April 1945. After recuperating, Delbo returned to France and created this play as part of her writings about her experience as a concentration camp prisoner. A translation of *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles* (*Who Will Carry the Word?*) was completed by Dr. Cynthia Haft and appears in *The Theatre of the Holocaust* edited by Robert Skloot, published in 1982 by University of Wisconsin Press. In Section 2 of this handbook, see Dr. Patrick Henry's personal essay about writing a play based on Charlotte Delbo's *Auschwitz and After*.

Recovered Letters as Material for Theatrical Performances

Plays written during or soon after the Nazi era are an obvious source for contemporary dramatic presentations, as well as documentation. However, not only theatre of the era but also other written material from the time of the Holocaust can lend itself to dramatization. Two examples of mothers' letters that inspired theatrical presentations are *Letters to Sala* by Arlene Hutton and *Refidim Junction* by Magret Wolf. Presented off-Broadway in October 2015, Hutton's play is based on Dr. Ann Kirschner's *Sala's Gift: My Mother's Holocaust Story*. Kirschner received from her mother Sala a box of saved letters in 1991, when her mother was anticipating bypass surgery and afraid she would not survive. Approximately 300 letters, which were donated to the New York Public Library, were sent to Sala Garncarz while she was a prisoner in Nazi work camps. Born in Upper Silesia, Sala survived seven Nazi work camps and managed to hide and save her precious letters. After liberation she met and then married Sidney Kirschner, a corporal in the U.S. Army.

Refidim Junction is a play-operetta based on the letters that Dr. Alice Shalvi's mother in Germany wrote to her father in England in the 1930s, while waiting for an exit visa so she could join him. Librettist and composer Wolf combined lines from these letters with those from letters by another woman desperate to leave Nazi Europe, poet Marianne Rein. Written in German, the play has been performed in Germany and Israel (with Hebrew supertitles). It has also been translated into English. Dr. Shalvi, who initiated the creation of the play, provides details in an essay, below, in Section 2.5.

Anne Frank as a Subject for Plays about the Holocaust

While plays about Ravensbrück are not especially well known, plays based on Anne Frank's diary are perhaps the reference point when people think about women, theatre, and the Holocaust. This is true even though her diary deals with an adolescent's experience in hiding with her family, rather than more horrendous aspects of the Holocaust. In Parts 1 and 2 of the bibliographies in Section 1 below, there are a total of sixteen plays (most of them in English) that are related to Anne Frank's diary. In addition, [Anne Frank Center USA](#) in New York City has a "Conversations With Anne" talk-back series with several themes for students from age nine and up. After a solo one-act performance by an actress playing Anne, students have the opportunity to ask the actress questions. Undoubtedly, there are even more plays about Anne Frank in languages other than English.

The play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett was first presented on Broadway in 1955, and it still creates controversy, while continuing to be performed and written about. Much of the debate is about another version by Meyer Levin, who thought that he owned the rights to the play. A new play by Rinne Groff, *Compulsion*, deals with the controversy and Meyer Levin's obsession with the play. Other plays related to Anne Frank's Diary are: *Anne Frank and Me* by Cherie Bennet and Jeff Gottesfeld; an adaptation of the Goodrich and Hackett play by Wendy Kesselman; *Dreams of Anne Frank* by Bernard Kops; *And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank* by James Still; *The Idealist* by Jennifer Strome (an adaptation of the Levin play); *The Secret Annex* by Alix Sobler; *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank* by Grigori Frid; *Goodbye Memories* by Anita Yellen Simons; *Anne Frank and the Dead Bride* by Yossi Izraeli (Hebrew); and two related musical plays by Enid Futterman and Michael Cohen, *Yours, Anne* (1985) and *I Am Anne Frank* (2006). *Anne*, a provocative play written in Dutch by Jessica Durlacher and Leon de Winter, opened in Amsterdam in May 2014.

While considering the controversial versions of the play and the divergent uses of Anne Frank's diary for plays in English, it is important to realize that versions of the play have also been presented in other languages in various countries, sometimes with purposes that differ from the original Goodrich-Hackett production. For example, I saw *The Diary of Anne Frank* performed in the German Democratic Republic in 1980, and the play had a distinct anti-Fascist message that followed the Communist party line of the GDR at

that time. Anne Frank's story is a powerful symbol, with [Japan](#) just one of the countries throughout the world that uses it today for its own political reasons. Anne's story has also been adapted by the New York City Police Department, with a one-act play entitled *Anne and Emmett* being used as a tool to teach tolerance to its recruits. The play, written by Janet Cohen, is built around an imaginary conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African-American boy murdered by racists in Mississippi in 1955.

Theatre at Theresienstadt and in Exile

Just as Anne Frank's diary is the touchstone as a play about the female experience of the Holocaust, Terezin, or Theresienstadt, is the location we think of when we consider theatre and cultural activities in general during the Holocaust. An [article](#) by Margalit Shlain provides details. For information about one play written in Terezin, *The Last Cyclist*, see the entry on Naomi Patz in Part 1.2 that follows. Perhaps most famous is [Brundibar](#), a children's opera by Hans Krása that was performed as part of the Nazis' effort to impress visitors from the International Red Cross. Vlasta Štěpánová, known as Vava, is listed in the books section, Part 1.3 of the following bibliographies. She was an actress interned in Terezin and offers an unusual first-person perspective on theatre at this concentration camp. After her deportation to Terezin, she continued to perform and began to direct and write plays. Her book, *Acting in Terezín*, is based on a notebook that she kept in the camp (translated to English from Czech by her cousin, [Helen Epstein](#)). Jenny Lee Mitchell's Mad Jenny Theatre and Edward Einhorn's Untitled Theater Company #61 focus on presentations of cabaret from Terezin.

One of the earliest preserved plays was written in Sweden in 1943 by Nobel Laureate [Nelly Sachs](#). The German-Jewish poet and playwright fled Nazi Germany for Sweden in May 1940. Her poetic drama *Eli* was broadcast in West Germany as a radio play in 1958 and then premiered on stage in Dortmund in 1961. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966. Her play was published in English in *O the Chimneys: Selected Poems, including the verse play, ELI* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967). A play entitled *Smoke*, written by Mark Stein, tells Sachs's story.

Remember the Women Institute

For twenty years, [Remember the Women Institute](#), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation based in New York City, has conducted and encouraged research and cultural activities that contribute to including women in history. Special emphasis is on women in the context of the Holocaust and its aftermath. Through research and related activities, including this resource handbook, the stories of women—from the point of view of women—are made available to be integrated into history and collective memory. The Institute's newest project is an international group art exhibition on sexual violence during the Holocaust and other genocides, opening in New York City in spring 2018. The work of the Institute influences academic research and publications, as well as

theatre, fine arts, film, and popular culture. While this handbook is also geared to middle school and high school teachers, such academic fields as History, Humanities, Holocaust Studies, Theatre Studies, Political Science, Sociology, Women's Studies, Gender Studies, and Cultural Studies can benefit from this project, as well as the Institute's other contributions. Remember the Women Institute has published [books](#) and continues to organize panels on women and the Holocaust that have included: the groundbreaking workshop, "Beyond Anne Frank: Teaching about Women and the Holocaust," at a Conference on Teaching the Holocaust, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem (2006); various panels at the Scholars' Conference on the Holocaust; the first session dealing with women and the Holocaust (2005) and with sexual violence during the Holocaust (2009) at the World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem; and the first session dealing with sexual violence during the Holocaust, the Association for Jewish Studies (2010).

[Holocaust Theater Catalog](#) is a component of the National Jewish Theater Foundation/Holocaust Theater International Initiative, founded and directed by Arnold Mittelman. Its goal is to fill an existing void in Holocaust awareness by providing a critically needed entryway to the intersection of theater arts, education, and Holocaust scholarship. The selected theater works from 1933 to the present are included regardless of production history, publishing status, language, or judgment as to artistic merit. Over 650 plays are represented by title, author, synopsis and other relevant entries including, whenever possible, information that will direct the user to resources that provide access to the complete theatrical work. Through the unique power of theater and the use of technology, this international initiative strives to bring together diverse communities to engage on issues pertaining to the Holocaust at a critical time when our first and immediate connection to these atrocities, the living survivor, is quickly disappearing.

The Holocaust Theatre Online Collection

This *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust* Resource Handbook is one unit in The Holocaust Theatre Online Collection. Part of [All About Jewish Theatre](#), the Online Collection was launched in January 2012 at Wannsee House, Berlin, to commemorate 70 years since the Wannsee Conference. The final site will have fifteen categories. According to founder and director Moti Sandak, the message of this project is that the human spirit and creativity cannot be destroyed. The immediacy of theatre affects us emotionally, subliminally, and intellectually, in a direct way that few other art forms can duplicate. Despite unspeakably difficult circumstances, Jewish actors, singers, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, and other artists performed in the Nazi ghettos and concentration camps. Their remarkable creative output was a triumph of the human spirit over barbarism. After the Holocaust, other script writers, artists, and directors have created theatrical pieces about aspects of that black period of history.

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Section 1. Annotated Bibliographies

Compiled by Dr. Rochelle G. Saidel and Karen Shulman

This annotated alphabetically listed bibliography is divided into three parts: 1.1 Plays about Women during the Holocaust; 1.2 Plays about the Holocaust Written by Women; and 1.3 Books about Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust. Links are provided when available, so that readers can learn more about each entry.

1.1. Plays about Women during the Holocaust

Almagor, Gila. *The Summer of Aviya, Habima, 1996*

This mostly autobiographical one-woman play starring famed Israeli actress [Gila Almagor](#) follows Aviya, the ten-year old protagonist, as she comes home from a boarding school in the summer of 1951 to be with her mother in Petach Tikva. Aviya's mother Henia is a Holocaust survivor and partisan heroine who is dealing with severe mental illness caused by her experiences during the war. Based on Almagor's 1985 book, which was made into a [film](#) in 1988, the play is a production of [Habima](#), the Israeli national theatre company. Originally in Hebrew, the play highlights the difficult situation that many survivors went through after coming to Israel, along with the scars that stay with survivors and also affect their children. In 2003, Almagor starred in an [English version](#) of the play at Symphony Space in New York.

Arnfield, Jane and Mike Alfreds. *The Tin Ring*

This is the story of Zdenka Fantlová, a Czechoslovakian Holocaust survivor. When World War II broke out, she was seventeen years old. Arno, her first love, gave her a ring that she kept with her as a symbol of truth and hope while she was in Terezin and then Bergen-Belsen. Presented in [September 2012](#), The Lowry, Manchester, U.K. Based on *The Tin Ring* by Zdenka Fantlová, published in English by [McNidder & Grace](#).

Arnon, Shlomit and Yifat Zandani-Tsafrir. *Heart's Command, 2008 (Hebrew)*

This play about Haviva Reick was inspired by the 2004 original Hebrew version of the book *Haviva*, by Tehila Ofer and Zeev Ofer, now available in [English](#). The play tells the story of Haviva Reick, her life, her 1939 aliya to Israel, and her return to her native Slovakia to rescue Jewish people and downed Allied airmen. She is represented in the play as she is remembered in the mind of her former lover, now a solitary old man. Yael, a high school student, has been assigned to keep this man company in a retirement home. When he asks her where she lives, Yael says "Haviva Reick Street." This leads

the man to describe how people tried to persuade Haviva not to go on the dangerous mission for the British military in Mandate pre-Israel Palestine in 1944. Haviva's tenacity, as described by the man, encourages the young student to struggle against her own problems. The National Youth Theatre often performs the play in Israel, directed by the playwrights and in collaboration with the Orto-Da Theatre, for audiences of 11-year-old to 17-year-old students and educational teams.

Barnovski, Einat. *Why Didn't You Come before the War?* (Hebrew)

Elizabeth, or Lizzie, is a single child living in Tel Aviv in the 1960s with her survivor mother Helena. Lizzie's life is difficult, filled with the silence of her indifferent mother. The mother only opens up to her four friends: troubled Ita, well-groomed Zosia, religious Gita, and glamorous Fanny. They all reveal their pain and horror only to each other at their weekly meetings, as Lizzie eavesdrops. Beer-Sheva Theater, Israel, 2011, based on Lizzie Doron's 1998 novel, *Why Didn't You Come before the War?*

Bekerman-Greenberg, Rivka. *Eavesdropping on Dreams*, 2012

Playwright Dr. Rivka [Bekerman-Greenberg](#) is a psychotherapist who practices in New York City, where this play takes place. The play, which premiered at the [Barefoot Theater Company](#), follows the lives of three generations of women: Shaina, a medical student; mother Renee, born in a refugee camp after World War II; and Grandmother Rosa, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz. While the play takes place in the present, all three women struggle with questions of the past. When Shaina goes to Poland to find answers, she brings back memories and a harrowing family secret that unlocks their mysterious past. Premiered at the Barefoot Theater Company, New York, 2012.

Bennett, Cherie and Jeff Gottesfeld. *Anne Frank and Me*, 1997

The play [Anne Frank and Me](#) starts out in the present, with Nicole, the main protagonist, discussing her reading assignment of *The Diary of Anne Frank* with her friend. Nicole is not convinced that the Holocaust really happened. In a flash, Nicole is transported to Nazi-occupied Paris as a Jewish girl. She is forced to go into hiding and struggles for survival. At one point, she even meets Anne Frank and learns important lessons. For more information, see this [interview](#) with the playwrights. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Ben-Shalom, Miri. *I Want the World to See that I Can Cry*, 2003

This [play](#) is based on the journals of Ester Holtzberg Herschberg, which describe the horrors of living under the Nazis in the Krakow ghetto. Written by Herschberg's [niece](#), the play, in which we see a 70-year-old version of Ester along with her younger self, tells the story of six years of survival and her personal journey. From Home to Homeland, Inc.

Berg, Mary. *The Diary of Mary Berg*, 1986

Mary Berg was a United States citizen who ended up in the Warsaw Ghetto. Her diary was published soon after World War II, edited by S. L. Shneiderman, and translated into English. It was also serialized in newspapers, providing one of the first extended descriptions of the Nazi horror. A play based on the diary and directed by Jan Krzyzanowski opened in New York in 1986, to mark the 43d anniversary of the ghetto uprising. For details about Mary Berg's history, the diary and the play, see this [article](#).

Bridel, David, Jonathan Rest, and Penny Kreitzer. *The Actors Rehearse the Story of Charlotte Salomon*

This one-woman play charts the relationship between actress Penny Kreitzer (co-author of the play), the artist Charlotte Salomon, and Charlotte's stepmother Paula Salomon-Lindberg, a renowned contralto and co-founder of The Kulturbund, the Nazi-sanctioned Jewish Theatre in Berlin. Originally produced (in English) by Shakespeare & Company's Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre in a bomb shelter in Jerusalem, Israel, 2009.

Caisley, Robert. *Letters to an Alien*, 1996

The play [Letters to an Alien](#) by [Robert Caisley](#) starts out in the present. Teenage Hannah wants to fit in at school but hates her name and the way she looks. She is also uncomfortable being Jewish. Her parents try to help by sending Hannah to her grandfather's, where she can learn about her Jewish heritage. When Hannah sits with her grandfather and asks him about the tattoo on his arm, he does not want to talk about it. While she is still at her grandfather's, aliens arrive there. They take Hannah back to 1943 Poland so she can better understand her heritage and her grandfather's past. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Cambers, Elizabeth, Sabrina Coons, Jessica Shelton, and Megan Stewart. *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Story*, 1999

Four students in Kansas came across [Irena Sendler's](#) name, as they were doing research for a National History Day project. They found her name on a list that said that she had saved 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942-43. Neither the students nor their teacher had heard of Sendler, and they spent the next several months looking through primary and secondary sources to find out her story. They learned that Irena, a Polish non-Jewish social worker, had managed to save children from the ghetto by helping them get past the Nazi guards. She then helped to get them adopted by Polish families. Irena kept lists of the real names of the children in jars buried in a garden, so she would be able to one day tell these children of their real identities. Irena's story of heroism inspired the four students from Kansas to write this [play](#) about her actions.

Cave, Candida. *Lotte's Journey*, 2007

This play *Lotte's Journey* is based on the true story of [Charlotte Salomon](#), a German-Jewish artist who was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943, pregnant and 26 years old. The production uses flashbacks to show Charlotte's journey as an artist, while she sits in a cattle train with her husband and other Jews on their way to their deaths. Premiered at the New End Theater, 2007.

Chaiken, Stacie. *What She Left*

Over the course of this twenty-minute play with two performers, we learn that the woman speaking to the audience is the granddaughter of one of the few Jewish women fighters in the Polish Resistance. She describes the great heights and depths that her grandmother experienced to keep herself and her people safe in the forest. The title refers to the burden of the grandmother's legacy, which the speaker holds and will pass on to her own daughter, from generation to generation. [What She Left](#) is the result of a commission the playwright received in 2009 to write a piece based on materials in the USC Holocaust and Genocide-Related Collection. See Chaiken's [website](#) for more information.

Chaiken, Stacie. *The Dig*

The Dig is a one-woman play about generational violence and its consequences. It specifically alludes to the effect of the Holocaust on individuals and their progeny, and Israel. An American archaeologist is summoned to a dig in Jaffa, the ancient Arab-Hebrew city at the southern tip of Tel Aviv. The Israelis have found something that might change everything. A genetic archaeologist with expertise in ancient DNA can tell them what has been discovered. The archaeologist's mother, a child survivor of the Holocaust, has just died. And there's a lizard in her bathtub. See Chaiken's [website](#) for more information.

Charkow, Brenley. *On the Other Side of the World*

Shanghai, China was a port of salvation for thousands of Holocaust refugees. Told through the eyes of a fiercely resilient young woman and inspired by the memoirs of many, *On the Other Side of the World* tells the dramatic true story of a young girl, her family, and a community that sought shelter and survival in a country and culture unlike their own. Produced in 2013, Next Stage Theatre Festival, Toronto. Inspired by Ursula Bacon's biographical novel *Shanghai Ghetto*. See Charkow's [website](#) for more information.

Chilton, Nola. *Five (Hebrew)*

Five female inmates in a concentration camp, each with a different background, tell about their experiences and everyday life at the camp: how they lost their identity, their clothing and personal items, even their hair. They talk about death, those who are lost, and the horror that surrounds them. To cope, they make each other laugh and pretend

there is food, while also fantasizing about revenge on their Nazi captors. The Neve Zedek Theatre Centre, Israel, 1983/1986.

Cixous, Hélène. *Oy!*

Oy!, the story of two German Jewish sisters, Selma and Jenny, takes place in 1995. In their late eighties, they are among the last witnesses to the Third Reich. They return home to Paris after traveling to the German city of their youth. Once they are back home, the sisters try to understand the swirl of emotions and memories that surfaced. Working together, they begin to unravel the complexities of a society's internalized racism and anti-Semitism that so darkly colored their past. U.S. premiere, The Actors Gang, Los Angeles, 2012. Original Language, French.

Cohen, Janet Langhart. *Anne and Emmett*, 2015

This one-act play was used as a tool for the New York City Police Department to teach tolerance to its recruits. It is built around an imaginary conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African-American boy murdered by racists in Mississippi in 1955. The play was performed in October 2015 for more than 1,000 recruits at the Police Academy in Queens, New York.

Cooper, Cynthia. *Gretel Bergmann*

This one-woman 10-minute play by Cynthia L. Cooper tells the true story of Gretel Bergmann, a Jewish athlete. Gretel encounters anti-Semitism in sports in early 1930s Germany, and has left to pursue her high-jump career in England; however, she is pressured to return for the 1936 Nazi Olympics. When she qualifies for the German team—the only religiously committed Jewish athlete to be included—the USA agrees to participate. But once the American teams set sail, Gretel is summarily cut from the team, and is left to sort out sports, morality, and honor. This monologue, which stands on its own and has been widely performed, is one of six stories told in *How She Played the Game*, a 75-minute performance piece.

Cooper, Cynthia. *Silence Not, A Love Story*, Gihon River Press, 2009

Silence Not, A Love Story, inspired by the true stories of Gisa Peiper and Paul Konopka, takes place during the economic crisis in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. A young Jewish woman involved in the labor movement meets a rebellious artisan. While trying to fight the rise of Nazism, their love for humanity and each other strengthens.

NEW

Cooper, Cynthia. *At the Train Station in Munich*, 2013

In this stylized short drama, a young Jewish woman in the resistance waits in disguise at the Munich station in 1938 for a train to safety in Paris. Meanwhile, German soldiers

all around celebrate the Nazi takeover of Austria in the Anschluss. To conquer her fears, the woman carries on a "conversation" in her mind with her younger self (played by a second actress), excavating memories, stories and poems, and bolstering her courage until the train arrives. Performed at The Anne Frank Center USA. Adapted from *Silence Not, A Love Story*, by [Cynthia Cooper](#).

Cooper, Cynthia. *The Spoken and the Unspoken*, 2016

This short play for two actors was written especially for the May 2, 2016, program of dramatic readings to launch the second edition of the *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*. The subject is Remember the Women Institute's research to uncover the stories of sexual violence during the Holocaust, and some of the difficulties involved. It was performed again at the Actors' Temple, New York, in November 2016.

Dalbavie, Marc-André. *Charlotte Salomon (opera)*, 2014

This opera, with libretto by Barbara Honigmann, is based on Salomon's semi-fictional diary, [Leben? Oder Theatre?](#) (Life? Or Theatre?), created during her French exile from 1940 to 1942. She was sent to Auschwitz and was murdered there, 26 and pregnant. Her diary included more than 700 pages of watercolor images, text, and musical references. She described it as a *Singenspiel*, or a play in song. Her art has been shown in museums throughout the world. The opera premiered in Salzburg, Austria, during the summer of 2014. See a [review](#), as well as entries on other plays about Salomon by authors Candida Cave and Nora Glickman in this bibliography.

NEW

Davidsmeyer, Jo. *Angel: A Nightmare in Two Acts*, 1995

[Angel](#) is a drama based on the trial and execution of real-life Nazi war criminal Irma Grese, a brutal concentration camp guard prosecuted at the Belsen trials and executed at the age of 21 for her crimes against humanity. A strikingly beautiful woman, she was dubbed by the international press as "The Blonde Angel of Auschwitz." During the play, Irma's prosecutor falls under her fatal charms. He is drawn, along with the audience, into a private nightmare where the tables are turned and he becomes the accused. Olga Lengyel, a real survivor of Auschwitz, teaches the prosecutor a lesson about dignity and survival. Josef Mengele is also a character. An early version of this award-winning play is in the collection [Reader's Theatre](#), edited by Marvin Kaye.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Who Will Carry the Word?* (Original in French, *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?*), 1966

[Charlotte Delbo](#), a French political prisoner and survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück, paints a picture of what it was like to be a woman in a concentration camp. Despair and death surround the characters in the play. However, Claire, the main protagonist, encourages the other women not to lose hope, as someone must

live on to tell their story. An English translation by Dr. Cynthia Haft is in *The Theatre of the Holocaust, Vol. 1*, edited by Robert Skloot, 1982, University of Wisconsin Press. This play has been performed in English in several venues in the United States, including a 2008 performance by the [Red Fern Theatre Company](#) in New York. Excerpts from the play, performed by Dr. Meghan Brodie's students from Ursinus College, were included in the May 2, 2016, program to launch the second edition of the *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Crawling from the Wreckage*. Written in French as *Et toi, comment as-tu fait?*

Related to her *Who Will Carry the Word?*, this play uses documentary-style female camp survivor testimony based on Delbo's own experience. There is an unpublished English translation by Brian Singleton.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Kalavrita des mille Antigone (Kalavrita with One Thousand Antigones)* (French)

This work is a dramatic prose poem chronicling the attempts of women to bury 1,300 dead men who were executed by German soldiers in response to an attack by Greek partisans. It recounts the event to a visitor to a monument to that 1943 event. Published in *La mémoire et les jours* by Charlotte Delbo, Paris, [Berg International](#), 1979. There is an unpublished English translation by Karen Alexander.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Les Hommes (The Men)* (French)

Based on Delbo's experience, the play depicts French women imprisoned prior to deportation in 1942–43. They have been separated from their men, some of whom have been taken to be executed. To take their minds off of their horrific circumstances, the women decide to use their talents to stage a comedy by Alfred de Musset. Published in the journal [Théodore Balmoral](#) No. 68, Spring/Summer 2012.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Scene in Memory* (French)

Also translated as *A Scene Played in Memory*, the text of *Une scène jouée dans la mémoire* is based on the final few moments between Delbo and her soon-to-be executed husband, both of whom were arrested for resisting the Nazis by publishing anti-German materials. Delbo interrupted a tour of South America to return to France in 1941 and join the Underground, and she and her husband were arrested in 1942.

Deutsch, Lucy. *The Miracle*

This play is based on the true story of Lucy Deutsch, alone in Auschwitz at age fourteen among 600 adult women. She learns early to be determined and keep her integrity against all odds. Later, as an orphan, she is imprisoned in Russia and uses her belief

in herself to accomplish the impossible. Deutsch wrote 25 songs included in this musical play, based on her autobiography, *No Time To Weep*. See the review [here](#).

NEW

Donfeld, Noelle. *The Spark*, Hannah Senesh, 2009

Along with composer Sandy Shanin, [Donfeld](#) has written this [musical](#) about Hannah Szenes (Senesh), a play that emphasizes her heroism as a parachutist from British Mandate Palestine to Hungary. The play was a semi-finalist of the Eugene O'Neill Musical Theatre Conference in 2009. It was selected for the Monday Night Reading Series of Theatre Building Chicago, as well as for the Pacific Palisades CA Playwrights Festival in 2010.

Durlacher, Jessica and Leon de Winter. *Anne*, 2014

This play, written in Dutch, opened in Amsterdam in May 2014. It presents a complex picture of a teenage girl who is at times impetuous, spoiled, or lonely. Anne Frank is portrayed as resenting her mother, mocking adults, and discovering her emerging sexuality. This multimedia stage production is said to be part of the efforts by [Anne Frank Fonds](#), the Swiss charitable foundation created in 1963 by her father, Otto, to reshape her image for today. For a review of the play and the controversy surrounding it, see an article in [The New York Times](#).

NEW

Einhorn, Edward. *Cabaret in Captivity*

Produced by Untitled Theater Company #61 in association with the York Theatre Company, this is a [presentation](#) of sketches and cabaret songs written in Theresienstadt (Terezín), taken from [Lisa Peschel](#)'s anthology [Performing Captivity, Performing Escape](#), as well as other sources. It was performed in May 2016 at the York Theatre at St. Michael's Church, New York, part of National Jewish Theater Foundation's Holocaust Remembrance Readings for Yom HaShoah. Jenny Lee Mitchell, a member of the cast, also presented excerpts for the 2017 launch of this resource handbook in April 2017. Her focus was on the work and words of [Ilse Weber](#), a charismatic Jewish poet from Czechoslovakia who was deported with her husband and younger son to Theresienstadt.

Eisenberg, Jesse. *The Revisionist*, 2014

Actor Jesse Eisenberg wrote this play and starred in it with Vanessa Redgrave at the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York. He based [The Revisionist](#) on the lives of two of his female survivor relatives. In the play, an American-Jewish writer suffering from writer's block goes to visit his 75-year-old cousin Maria, who is living in the small Polish town of Szczecin. The play was performed in [Hebrew](#) in Tel Aviv in July 2014.

Eliraz, Israel. *Wings* (Hebrew)

Based on Hannah Senesh's (Szenes) diary, letters, and poems, this play focuses on her youth and her wish to find love, as well as her mission as a British Mandate paratrooper and her ultimate murder by the Nazis in Budapest. Much of the story is portrayed through dance. Production, Haifa Theater, Israel, 1979.

Felder, Hershey (adapted by). *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, 2013

The play [*The Pianist of Willesden Lane*](#) is based on [Mona Golabek's](#) family story, as told in her [book](#) by the same name, written with Lee Cohen. Golabek, an accomplished pianist, plays the role of her mother, Lisa Jura, who was a young Jewish pianist in 1938 Vienna, dreaming about her debut at the *Musikverein* concert hall. However, with the new ordinances issued under the Nazi regime, everything changed for Lisa and she was sent to London on a *Kindertransport* at age fourteen. Enduring the Blitzkrieg, she continued to pursue her dream. After a sold-out run at [Berkeley Repertory Theatre](#) in fall 2013, the play ran off-Broadway in New York in summer 2014.

Fishman, Alexis and James Millar. *Der Gelbe Stern (The Yellow Star)*, 2011

Alexis Fishman, a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, wrote and stars as Erika in this play about a Jewish cabaret singer forced from the stage by the Nazis. The play premiered in Australia in 2011 and in [New York](#) in summer 2014. Drawing on her interest in Weimar culture and Berlin at the time, Alexis plays Erika, a darling of Berlin nightclubs. The half sung-half spoken show the audience watches is her finale, before being prohibited from performing by the Nazis. For more information, see Fishman's [website](#).

Fletcher, Rebecca Joy. *Cities of Light*.

This one-woman pre-Holocaust play with music takes audiences back to the cabarets of 1920s Berlin, Yiddish Warsaw, Paris, and Tel Aviv. Katarina Waldorf is a brave and talented cabaret performer who flees Berlin toward places where Judaism and creativity can still thrive. The play features archival songs performed mostly in English, with some original Hebrew, Yiddish, French, and German. Read more about [Fletcher](#), a cantor and educator as well as an actor and playwright, and a [review](#) of the play.

Franchi, Eva. *La Ragazza di Dachau* (Italian)

The translation of the title is "the girl of Dachau," but is a double entendre for the "whore of Dachau." The play presents a trial in which the court hears of the victimization of the female camp prisoner. La Compagnia del Centro Sperimentale del Teatro di Torrelunga di Brescia, 1968; La Compagnia "I Rabbdomanti," Milan, 1969.

Frid, Grigory. *Das Tagebuch der Anne Frank*, 1968

This version of *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a mono-opera in 21 scenes for soprano and chamber orchestra, composed in 1968 and first performed in 1972. The text is taken from original sections of the diary and describes episodes in Anne Frank's life. The piece was first performed with piano accompaniment at the All-Union House of Composers in Moscow in May 1972, and was performed in Jerusalem at Congregation Moreshet Yisrael in April 2014.

Frockt, Deborah Lynn. *The Book of Ruth*, 2001

In this [play](#), Hannah and her granddaughter Ruth are in a Nazi internment camp where they have only each other. As they try to save themselves from starvation and avoid being transported East, they fight to preserve themselves, their culture, and their humanity. Hannah tells Ruth recipes, while Ruth draws pictures, both of which help them support each other and be emotionally transported to a better place. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Futterman, Enid and Michael Cohen. *I Am Anne Frank*, 2006

This musical drama is an updated version of Futterman and Cohen's earlier musical, *Yours, Anne* (1985). Writer Enid Futterman and composer Michael Cohen combine spoken excerpts from Anne's diary with songs that reveal the power of her inner life. More information is offered [here](#).

Garti, Liore. *Haneke and Fiet* (Hebrew)

This play is based on a book by Ran Cohen Harounoff, Haneke's son. Haneke was a hidden child in the home of Wigle and Sophie Primowess in the Netherlands during the Holocaust. Haneke became a lifelong friend of their daughter Fiet, and this is the story of their friendship. The play was performed at the Mediateque Theatre for Children and Youth in Holon, Israel, in March-April 2015.

Gaudencio, Livia. *There Is No Sun in Ravensbrück*, 2015 (Portuguese)

Livia Gaudencio created the story of three Ravensbrück prisoners who exchange reports and personal experiences in the camp's barracks. Each of these fictional characters represent a composite: a Jewish French prostitute, a Russian lesbian Red Army sniper, and a German nurse "race defiler" who collaborated with Jews. Through their narratives, the audience learns about countless women's lives, and about daily concentration camp life. The script focuses on aspects of female imprisonment that include gender abuse and solidarity. A [reading](#) was performed in São Paulo, Brazil, in spring 2015.

Ginsburg, Shira. *Bubby's Kitchen*

Bubby's Kitchen is a one-act one-woman musical written by and performed by [Cantor Shira Ginsburg](#). The play explores the themes of the legacy of Jewish women's voices, Jewish identity, self-realization, and the personal synthesis of Jewish history, against the backdrop of the Holocaust and modern-day America. Inspired by the heroic actions of resistance her grandparents took against the Nazis as partisans in the forests of Belarus, [Bubby's Kitchen](#) is the story of one young woman's struggle to live up to her grandparents' incredible legacy. Yudis and Motke Ginsburg were among the 30,000 Jews who came out of the forests at the end of World War II. They made their way to America and started a farm in Troy, NY, where Cantor Ginsburg grew up. She weaves together a story of loss, survival, food, and family with vibrancy and wit. The play was performed in April 2016 at the [Manhattan JCC](#), with original music by Cantor Jonathan Comisar, and excerpts were performed as part of the May 2, 2016, program to launch the second edition of this *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*.

Giron, Arthur. *Edith Stein*, 1991

This play by [Arthur Giron](#), first performed in 1993, is the true story of [Edith Stein](#). A Jewish intellectual who converted to Roman Catholicism and became a nun, she was murdered in 1942 while a prisoner in Auschwitz. Samuel French Inc.

Glickman, Nora. *Two Charlottes*, 2002

Two Charlottes by [Nora Glickman](#) is based on the lives of the well-known German-Jewish artist [Charlotte Salomon](#) (1917–1943) and of French non-Jewish writer [Charlotte Delbo](#) (1913–1985). It was performed at the International University Theatre Festival, May 2003, in Jerusalem, Israel, and continues to be performed in several countries throughout Europe, North America, and South America. The play tells the story of an imaginary meeting between Charlotte Salomon, who was murdered during the Holocaust, and Charlotte Delbo, a non-Jewish member of the French resistance who was a well-known writer. (See Introduction and Delbo bibliography entries.) Both were prisoners at Auschwitz, but they never met. The pregnant Salomon was murdered on arrival, while Delbo was transferred to Ravensbrück and survived. The play celebrates the lives of both women through their unique creations in visual and written art.

Goldberg, Lea. *The Lady of the Castle*, 1954

The Lady of the Castle, a play by the famous and prolific Israeli writer [Lea Goldberg](#), takes place several years after World War II, when Zand and Dora, two Israelis, stumble upon a castle somewhere in Europe. Because of a storm outside, Zand and Dora have taken shelter in the castle. They discover the watchman, who is also the castle's owner, has been hiding a Jewish girl named Lena from the Nazis. The watchman, who has fallen in love with Lena and wants her to stay with him, has not told her the war is over.

Zand and Dora try to save Lena and take her back to Israel. The play was translated into English by T. Carmi, Tel Aviv, in 1970, as *Lady of the Castle: A Dramatic Episode in Three Acts*.

NEW

Goldberg, Linda S. *Unwrapped Gifts*, 2017

This play, based on the life and works of artist Charlotte Salomon, was presented as a reading at the Workshop Theater's Jewel Box, New York, in January 2017. Exiled from Berlin to the French countryside in an attempt to flee the Holocaust, she searches for love and sanity in the face of devastating personal loss and the chaos of war. Although she finds salvation in painting her life, she ultimately is sent, pregnant, to her death in Auschwitz. *Unwrapped Gifts* tells the story of the woman and the artist haunted by death, unattainable love, and a world at the abyss.

Gomon, Harriet. *Cooking with the Mouth*, 2015

In this approximately 35-minute show, the narrator, Jill, is an American Jewish journalist temporarily in Berlin to cover a technology festival. Having learned about the Holocaust at a too-early age, she has a phobia about the subject. However, she accidentally meets a survivor of Ravensbrück and learns how discussing recipes enabled women to retain a sense of identity and transcend their brutal circumstances. Jill evolves in her ability to deal with the Holocaust, bringing a particular dream of the survivor to fruition.

Goodrich, Frances and Albert Hackett. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1956

This theatrical production, based on Anne Frank's well-known diary, originally played on Broadway for nearly two years and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play in 1956. It originally starred Susan Strasberg as Anne, and was revived in 1997 with Natalie Portman making her Broadway debut as Anne. This version of the play about a young Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis in an attic in Amsterdam during World War II caused controversy that still abounds in some circles. Meyer Levin had assumed in 1952 that he would be the one to bring a different version of Anne Frank's diary to the stage. See the entries below on Rinne Groff's *Compulsion* and Meyer Levin's *Diary of Anne Frank* for more information and links. Published by Random House.

Gordon, Dan. *Irena's Vow*, 2009

Irena's Vow is based on the story of Irene Gut Opdyke's life during World War II. The play starts out when Irena (later Irene) is nineteen years old and promoted to becoming a housekeeper in the home of a Nazi officer. She learns there that a Jewish ghetto will be liquidated, and she feels compelled to try to make a difference. Irena manages to save twelve Jewish workers by hiding them for two years in various places, including the basement of the German commandant's house, until the end of the war. When the

commandant discovers what she is doing, he requires sexual favors in exchange for keeping her secret. Published by Playscripts, Inc.

Graf, Wendy. *Leipzig*

This play explores the journey of a three-member Catholic family, whose matriarch has become ill with Alzheimer's disease. She begins praying in Hebrew, unwittingly revealing her long held secret that she is a Jewish child refugee of the Holocaust. Produced by West Coast Jewish Theatre and The Group at the Marilyn Monroe Theater of the Lee Strasberg Institute, opened October 20, 2006.

Green, Phoebe. *Blessed is the Match*

This is one of the plays about the heroic life of Hannah Senesh (Szenes), the Hungarian born 23-year-old who immigrated to Palestine in 1939. She was later recruited by the British to be parachuted into Europe in 1944 to try to rescue downed Allied airmen and help the Hungarian Jewish community. One of three women in the British Mandate parachutist effort, she was ultimately captured, tortured, and executed by the Nazis.

Groff, Rinne. *Compulsion*, 2010

This play by [Rinne Groff](#) begins in 1951, when Sid Silver, a man deeply moved by Anne Frank's diary, wants to bring the story to the American masses. Silver pushes to promote the diary's publication, as well as adapting the diary into a play. *Compulsion* looks into Silver's investigation into the diary, and explores the obsession he has with retaining its memory. The play is inspired by the true story of author Meyer Levin and his pursuit to bring his version of Anne Frank's story to a wider audience. [Mandy Patinkin](#) played the role of Silver/Levin, starring among a cast of marionettes. Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Grumberg, Jean-Claude. *The Workroom-L'atelier*, 1984

[The Workroom](#) is a portrait of two men and six women laborers in Paris right after World War II. They are brought together in a cramped workroom, stitching fabrics together, while really telling the story of eight survivors trying to sew their own lives back together after the war. It was presented at University of Washington in 2014. Samuel French Inc.

Grusková, Anna. *Rabínka (The Woman Rabbi)*

This [play](#) was written and performed in Slovakian, but it has been translated into English. It tells the story of Gisi Fleishmann of Bratislava, a heroine of the Holocaust and one of the few female communal leaders. The play was later made into a film. Produced by Slovak National Theatre.

Halperin, Michael. *Mela*, 2004

In this one woman play, Mela finds love and courage while rescuing Jewish brothers from the Warsaw Ghetto, and commits to encouraging the rescued to remember their Jewish heritage, despite her own Catholicism. The play was inspired by the true story of Amelia “Mela” Roslan. She was mother to her own children and to the children given into her care, holding the family together while fending off incursions from Polish collaborators, police, and the Gestapo. Michael Halperin first told the story in a screenplay that became the basis for the best-selling children’s book *Jacob’s Rescue*, written by Halperin and Malka Drucker and published by Doubleday. Halperin felt that Mela’s heroic story had to be told. Production: Reading, Jerusalem, August 2004, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of Yad Vashem.

Hartley, Sean. *Number the Stars*, 1998

This musical, adapted from the Lois Lowry’s novel with the same name, tells the story of a young Danish girl’s pursuit to rescue her Jewish friend, as the Nazis take over Denmark. There is also a non-musical version by Douglas Larche. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Hayhurst, Mark. *Taken at Midnight*, 2014

The play is based on the true story of attorney Hans Litten, arrested by the Nazis as an enemy of the Reich in 1933, and how his mother fought a doomed battle to save him. Pamela Wilton played the mother in London in 2014, and Gila Almagor had the lead role of the mother in the Habima Theater production in Israel in July 2015.

NEW

Henry, Patrick. *Auschwitz and After*, 2016

This play is based on Charlotte Delbo’s trilogy of the same title and set in the third volume, “The Measure of Our Days.” Twenty years after liberation, a group of former French political prisoners, all women, hold a reunion in Paris where they discuss their shattered post-concentration camp lives. A Chorus speaks to the audience on several occasions and flashbacks to Auschwitz, drawn from the first two volumes of the trilogy, demonstrate the tender care the women offer one another during moments of great suffering. Other flashbacks show how these starving and sick concentration camp inmates read poetry and performed theatre as sustaining acts of defiant resistance to the massive Nazi system of dehumanization. The play had its first performance reading, directed by Nancy Simon, on January 20, 2016, in the Gesa Power House Theatre in Walla Walla, WA. Anyone interested in reading the play (in its English or French rehearsal script) for a possible performance reading or production should feel free to contact the author at henrypg@whitman.edu.

Hibbert, Cate and Voices of the Holocaust. *Under the Apple Tree*

Polish nurse and social worker Irena Sendler rescued more than 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. At great personal risk, she smuggled children out of the ghetto, providing them with false identity papers and keeping their identities safe in the hope of reuniting them with their families when the war ended. Their names were kept in glass jars and buried under the apple tree of a house in Warsaw. Produced January 2014, Chrysalis Theatre, Milton Keynes, UK.

Hrbek, Daniel. *The Good and the True* (English, 2013)

Czech director Daniel Hrbek has twinned the stories of Czech athlete [Milos Dobry](#) and Czech actress [Hana Pravda](#) who apparently never met but could have crossed paths at Auschwitz. Ms. Pravda died in 2008, and Mr. Dobry died in 2012. The 70-minute drama, based on their testimonies, opened in London in 2013 and then at the DR2 Theater in Manhattan in August 2014. The play begins with information about their birth and upbringing, but almost immediately shifts to their experience in concentration camps. In Terezin (Theresienstadt), soccer and theatrical presentations accompanied the abuse, fear, and suffering. Once the scene changes to Auschwitz, the play becomes much grimmer. Originally in Czech, this play about human endurance and survival against all odds weaves the testimonies of the two protagonists. The play is an adaptation of the award-winning *Shoah*, which was directed by Daniel Hrbek for Prague's Svandovo Theatre. Actress Isobel Pravda, granddaughter of survivor Hana Pravda, plays her grandmother on stage. See a review [here](#), and for more information see the play's [website](#).

Hutton, Arlene. *Letters to Sala*

As she is about to have heart surgery, Sala suddenly presents her daughter, Ann Kirschner, with a priceless collection of more than 300 letters and photographs, revealing a secret she has hidden from her family for nearly 50 years. She had risked her life to preserve this collection during five brutal years as a prisoner in seven different Nazi forced-labor camps. Produced by Annie Russell Theatre, Rollins College, Florida, February 2011. Directed by Eric Nightengale and performed [off-Broadway](#) in New York in October 2015. Based on the book [Sala's Gift](#) by Ann Kirschner. Publisher: Dramatists Play Service.

Israely, Razia and Chaim Marin. *The Dentist*

This one-woman monologue is about Rosi, a lonely 50-year-old physician coming to terms with her childhood as the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. She tells the story of her father at his graveside. He was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Auschwitz, where he was forced into the *Sonderkommando*. His experiences at the camp alienated him from his family, but before he dies, Rosi is able to forgive him. Produced 2006, Women's Festival Holon Theatre, Israel; 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Source

Material: Dr. Gideon Greif's book, *We Wept Without Tears: Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz*. English and Hebrew versions.

Izraeli, Yossi. *Anne Frank and the Dead Bride* (Hebrew)

In this adaptation of Anne Frank's diary, a tour guide oversees the lives of the residents in their hiding place. Anne expresses her thoughts and feelings, including her complex relationship with her mother and her feelings toward Peter. Those in hiding listen hopefully to news of the war on the radio. Finally, Anne's mother gives her a wedding dress, and she wears it to dance with the tour guide. Khan Theater, Israel, 1985.

Jelinek, Elfriede. *Rechnitz [Der Würgeengel]* (German)

This is a response by Austrian Nobel Laureate [Elfriede Jelinek](#) to the discovery of the orgiastic massacre of 180 Jews during a party thrown by Countess Thyssen Batthyany-Thyssen at Rechnitz Castle in Austria in March 1945. The play is a modern "text for speaking," written for performer/messengers who mix the story with language play and haunting stage imagery. In October 2010, the play caused protests in Dusseldorf. Based on the book *The Thyssen Art Macabre*, published by Rowohlt Theater Verlag.

Jones, Bill T. *Analogy/Dora: Tramontane*, 2015

Analogy/Dora: Tramontane, a dance production with dialogue, is based on an oral history Jones conducted with 95-year old Dora Amelan, his mother-in-law. She was a French Jewish nurse and social worker during the Holocaust. Amelan's harrowing and inspirational experience is broken into some 30 episodes that are the basis for choreography and songs. These episodes chronicle her early life in Belgium, her mother's death as the Germans were marching into Belgium, and her experiences working at an underground Jewish organization in Vichy France's internment camps, Gurs and Rivesaltes. Performed at [Montclair State University](#), New Jersey, in June 2015.

Kadmi, Shay. *Mania* (Hebrew)

Mania is an 80-year-old survivor of Auschwitz, who was subjected to Dr. Mengele's experiments. In this one-woman play, she is a widow and mother of two who suffers from schizophrenia. She wants to die, but first she wants to tell her story—what it was like there, what she went through, and what the Nazis made her do. Produced by Hasifriah Theater, Israel, 2003.

Karo, Inge Heilman. *The Library*

In this short drama for young audiences, a librarian in the United States looks back at her childhood during the Third Reich, when, as a Jew, she was forced to give up her library privileges.

Katz, Susan B., *Courage Untold*, 1986, revised 1991

This three-act docudrama chronicles the October 1944 prisoners' uprising in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Protagonist Roza Robota and her female compatriots are captured and show courage while facing torture and death. The first act details the preparations for the revolt, including the smuggling of gunpowder by women working in the camp's munitions factory to the *Sonderkommando* that oversees the gassing and cremation of prisoners. The revolt is successful in destroying Crematorium IV. However, in the second act, one of the conspirators betrays her colleagues. The play is based on interviews with survivors, including Hanka Wajcblum Heilman. Typescript is in the archives of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Kesselman, Wendy. (Adapted from Goodrich and Hackett). *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1997

This new adaptation of the classic production of Anne Frank's story is enhanced with recently discovered writings from the diary, along with survivor testimony, to create a new version of the story. The play was reviewed when it was performed at the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theater, Drew University, in Madison, New Jersey in November 2015. Dramatists Play.

Kesselman, Wendy. *I Love You, I Love You Not*

Teenager Daisy learns to accept and honor her Jewish heritage while visiting her grandmother. Daisy is unhappy with herself and her family life. Her grandmother gives her emotional stability by providing her with grandmotherly advice and support, as well as recounting her experiences in Auschwitz, where she lost her two sisters. Produced Louisville, KY, 1982.

Kops, Bernard. *Dreams of Anne Frank*, 1993

This musical drama tells the famous story of Anne Frank, and her time hiding with her family in an annex in Amsterdam during World War II. Samuel French Ltd.

Kraus, Joanna H. *Angel in the Night*, 1995

This play is designed to inspire the audience to realize that even one person can make a difference. The drama is based on the true story of a Polish Catholic teenager named Marysia Pawlina Szul, who saved the lives of four Jewish people during World War II. The story follows Marysia's struggle to save the fugitive family, even as it became more dangerous. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Kraus, Joanna H. *Remember My Name*, 1989

Inspired by the historical account of Le Chambon sur-Lignon, this story portrays a young Jewish girl's survival in wartime France, along with those who tried to help her. The play was performed by J-Town Playhouse company for Yom HaShoah in

Jerusalem in 2015 as part AACI's (Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel) program. Samuel French Inc.

Kreisler, Georg. *Lola Blau*

This is a cabaret-style musical about actress Lola Blau. She makes great progress in her theatrical career in 1938 Austria, only to have to flee the Nazis. She becomes famous on Broadway and then returns to Austria and confronts those who stayed. March 2009, The Club at La Mama, New York. Written in German and translated into English.

Kron, Lisa. *2.5 Minute Ride*

The play is based on author Lisa Kron's relationship with her father, Walter, a German-Jewish Holocaust survivor who escaped Germany by Kindertransport in 1937 at age fifteen. The play recounts anecdotes of Kron family life, including her father's insistence on an annual family outing to an amusement park in Ohio. A trip that Lisa takes to Auschwitz with her ailing father helps her better understand Walter's personal history. Switching from the amusement park to the concentration camp, the play portrays the author's idea that "humor and horror are flip sides of the same coin." The play received an OBIE Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations, Los Angeles Drama-Logue and GLAAD Media Awards, and was named the best autobiographical show of 1999 by New York Press. La Jolla Playhouse, 1996; Public Theater, New York, 1999; toured extensively to theaters including the American Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, the London Barbican and Theater Company Rinkogun in Japan.

Larche, Douglas. *Number the Stars*, 1996

This play, adapted from Lois Lowry's novel with the same name, tells the story of a young Danish girl's pursuit to rescue her Jewish friend, as the Nazis take over Denmark. There is also a musical version by Sean Hartley. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Lauro, Shirley. *All Through the Night*, 2010

All Through the Night, inspired by interviews with non-Jewish German women, is set during and after the Third Reich. The story examines the Nazis' impact on these young women's lives, through adulthood, under the regime. Hard choices are made, and they chose to survive or succumb. They are all changed forever by their experience. The New York premiere was presented in 2009 by Red Fern Theatre. Samuel French, Inc.

Lebow, Barbara. *A Shayna Maidel*, 1998

This play by Barbara Lebow begins in 1946, when Rose Weiss, a young woman in her twenties, is living in a Manhattan apartment. Rose came to America with her father from Poland when she was four years old. Rose's mother and sisters were supposed to come to America but were stuck in Europe when the war broke out. Rose, who is now

“Americanized” and lives with her father, is confronted with the arrival of Luisa, the only one of her sisters who survived the war. Luisa and Rose are very different, and both must learn to adjust to each other. Luisa brings memories of the times before the war. When Rose receives a letter that her mother wrote before the war, a new sense of family is created, with a conviction for a better future from the troubled past. Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

Leichter, Käthe with Herta Breuer. *Schum Schum* 1942

This play was written by two Jewish political prisoners, Social Democrat [Käthe Leichter](#) and Communist Herta Breuer, and performed in Ravensbrück women’s concentration camp. The play was lost but was described by Rosa Jochmann, an Austrian Social Democrat political prisoner who survived. See the Introduction above for more details.

Levin, Meyer. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, aired on CBS, 1952

This is the first known theater adaptation of Anne Frank’s diary. It was originally aired on CBS radio, twice in 1952. The story was then re-adapted by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, amid controversy, and became the well-known play that we know today. Much has been written about Levin and his obsession with Anne Frank.

Liebrecht, Savyon. *Mushkat* (Hebrew)

Lydia and Paula are rich Jewish sisters living in Hungary. During the war, they hide in the basement of their estate, together with Lydia’s son, Albert, and a Christian maid named Sonia. Life is extremely difficult in hiding, and they are cold, hungry, and afraid—unfamiliar feelings for these wealthy characters. Truth comes to light, with connections and relationships, including those between Sonia’s family and the rich Jews, and a love story blooms between the young. Staged by Habima, Israel, 1998. Publisher: Or Am.

Leitner, Isabella. *Fragments of Isabella*

A dramatic presentation of [Isabella Leitner’s](#) autobiography. Leitner, a Hungarian Jew, survived Auschwitz (where her mother and younger sister were killed on arrival in May 1944), a labor camp, and a death march to Bergen-Belsen (where another sister died). After liberation by the Russians, she and two surviving sisters arrived in the United States on the day World War II ended. Produced by Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 1989.

Litwak, Jessica. *Promised Land*

This play by [Jessica Litwak](#) is about the relationship between two women brought together in the forest, as they try to escape from the Nazis. Sonia, a young girl who is an atheist, takes Rivka, the rabbi’s wife, from the Ghetto to hide in the forest. Commissioned by The National Federation of Jewish Culture.

Loher, Dea. *Olga's Room*, 1992

Translated from German by David Tushingham, this [play](#) is based on the true story of [Olga Benario Prestes](#). A revolutionary communist German Jew, she went to Brazil with Brazilian communist leader Prestes. Pregnant with his baby, she was deported from Brazil to Nazi Germany in 1936 and ultimately murdered in Ravensbrück in 1942.

Louw, Gail. *Blonde Poison*, 2013

This [play](#) is based on the true story of [Stella Goldschlag](#), who was given the nickname Blonde Poison by the Gestapo, because she betrayed up to 3,000 fellow Jews in Berlin during World War II. Oberon Books.

Mann, Emily. *Annulla, an Autobiography*, 1985

The [play](#) focuses on the exchange between Annulla, a Holocaust survivor, and Emily, a character based on the author, who comes to record Annulla's oral history of her experiences in the Holocaust. Theatre Communications Group.

McCasland, Steven Carl. *Der Kanarienvogel (The Canary)*, 2015

Soprano Anna Kirkland starred as legendary soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, long believed to have been a Nazi sympathizer. The play with music explores her affair with Reich Minister Joseph Goebbels and her connections with the inner sanctums of The Third Reich. Performed off-Broadway in May 2015, Beautiful Soup Theater. See more information and visuals [here](#).

Mednick, Murray. *Mrs. Feuerstein*, 2001

This [play](#) takes place in the 1960s when Mrs. Feuerstein, a creative writing teacher, tries to confront her painful past by writing a play about her unusual relationship with a German couple. The play views Mrs. Feuerstein as she becomes obsessed with the idea of revenge, and is on the verge of a psychotic breakdown. Premiered at 2100 Square Feet Theatre, Los Angeles.

Megged, Aharon. *Hannah Senesh*

This play by famous Israeli writer [Aharon Megged](#) is about the last days of [Hannah Senesh](#), after she was captured and jailed in Budapest, before she was executed at the age of 23, in November 1944. Hannah Senesh (Szenes) is a well-known heroine during World War II, one of three women among the Palmach members in British Mandate pre-Israel who volunteered to parachute into Europe in an to attempt to save fellow Jews from the Nazis. Habima Theatre, Israel, 1958; Jewish Board of Education Inc., (revised) 1986. For a political analysis of how the play was part of Israeli's collective memory, see [Perfect Heroes](#) by Judy Baumel-Schwartz (2010. University of Wisconsin Press), pp. 141–45.

NEW**Meyers, David. *We Will Not Be Silent*, 2015**

The play portrays the true story of Sophie Scholl, a German college student who was a leader of the White Rose, a student group in Munich that carried out a major act of civil disobedience during World War II. This is an examination of the role ordinary Germans played in the rise of Hitler, and also the moral strength and clarity that led a group of German university students to risk their lives for a righteous but hopeless cause. The play has had several [readings](#), with excerpts performed as part of the April 26, 2017 event to launch this edition of the resource handbook.

Miller, Arthur. *Playing for Time*, 1985

This play by leading American playwright [Arthur Miller](#) is set in a concentration camp and based on [Fania Fenelon's](#) experiences in a camp's orchestra. The play (also a [film](#)) describes the inhuman treatment of inmates in the camp, along with the difficulty that the orchestra endured, as they had to perform for hours as prisoners were being led to their deaths. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Miller, Clint. *Our Diamond*

Five women imprisoned in Auschwitz escape their fears and revive their spirits by pretending to act out a play in front of an imaginary audience. With the help of a smuggled diamond, they achieve a powerful and stunning emotional victory over their Nazi captors and prove to their imaginary audience that they can triumph over deep tragedy. For more information, see this [website](#). Premiered on March 12, 2007, Abingdon, VA.

Mitchell, Shelley. *Talking with Angels*, 2001

This play is about the true story of Gitta Mallasz's heroic attempt to save her three Jewish friends, along with more than 100 women and children, from deportation during World War II. Gitta protected the women and children by sheltering them in a "war factory" that she managed.

Mittelpunkt, Hillel. *Anda*, 2008 (Hebrew)

The play's background is the 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. The lead female character, Anda Friend, was born in Budapest, deported to Auschwitz, and survived medical experiments on women in the infamous Block 10. She described in her diary the terrible experiments she and other Jewish women suffered. She is supposed to be a witness at the trial but is not chosen for political reasons. Anda belongs to the opposition revisionist party, her father was anti-Zionist, and she participated in meetings against the reparations agreement between Israel and Germany. The plot revolves around discussions between attorneys, with a touch of personal and romantic relationships. Directed by Mittelpunkt and performed September 2008 at the Bet Lessin Theatre, Tel Aviv, the play won three prestigious Israeli Theatre Awards

Nadler, Mark. *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*

In *I'm a Stranger Here Myself*: *Musik from the Weimar and Beyond*, Mark Nadler combines cabaret with a thoughtful exposé of Nazi totalitarianism. As becomes clear at the end of this performance that begins with the music (especially Kurt Weill) and culture linked to the Weimar Republic, this one-man show is about his mother's experience during the Holocaust. What had seemed to be an often comic cabaret review turns out to be a moving personal Holocaust story.

Nowak, Alma. *Auschwitz Oratorio*

This Polish play depicts the horrors of the Auschwitz maternity barrack by using a female chorus speaking in verse, with a prisoner who serves as a midwife. The midwife recounts the details of infants drowned, bodies fed to rats, infants with Aryan features being taken for adoption, and newborns starved to death when their malnourished mothers cannot breast-feed them. Unpublished English translation by A.M Furdyna.

Obolensky, Kira. *Hiding in the Open*, 2011

Hiding in the Open is a theatrical adaptation of Sabina Zimering's memoir with the same name. The play is the true story of two Jewish sisters who obtain false Catholic identities in Poland during World War II. The sisters work in a Nazi hotel and live in constant fear that their true identities will be discovered. Published by Playscripts, Inc.

Olmert, Aliza. *Piano Fantasy* (Hebrew)

Sixty-year-old Anna returns to the village in which she grew up in Poland. The village has financial problems that it hopes to solve through Jewish tourism. The villagers fight over accommodating Anna. Anna is there to find her piano, the one she was playing with her mother when the Nazis came and took her. She wants her grandson to have the piano. She stays with an old couple and soon begins to suspect their house was her own childhood house. Helena, her hostess, fears Anna will take not only the piano but also the house itself. The farmer confronts his wife after she kicks Anna out, and finds out the truth: Helena's parents worked for the Jews, and her mother told the Germans about Anna's family. When Helena's father saw the Jewish family on the train, he took the house. Anna shows them papers that prove the house is hers, but says she'll only take the piano. Helena refuses, being influenced by the village's hatred of Jews. Anna tells her there is gold under the floor, and Helena and her husband tear down the house. Production: Cameri Theater, Israel, 1994.

Ozick, Cynthia. *The Shawl* (also called *Blue Light*)

The New Yorker published Cynthia Ozick's short story, *The Shawl*, in 1980, and in 1983 the same magazine published her sequel called *Rosa*, a novella. Both stories were incorporated and published as a book in 1995. Meanwhile, Ozick decided in 1990 to dramatize *The Shawl* and *Rosa* for the stage. In 1992, the play, which portrays the harrowing memories of a female Holocaust survivor, had two staged readings in New

York at Playwrights Horizons. This was followed by a production, directed by Sidney Lumet, at Sag Harbor's Bay Street Theatre. After revisions, in 1996 *The Shawl* was produced off-Broadway, at Playhouse 91 of the American Jewish Repertory Theatre. This version of the play received a short review in [*The New York Times*](#). In 1995, actress Claire Bloom presented a dramatic reading of *The Shawl* on *Jewish Short Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond*, a National Public Radio series.

Pascal, Julia. *Theresa*, 1990

The play, the first of [Julia Pascal's](#) Holocaust trilogy, is based on secret research about the occupation of the Channel Islands by the Nazis, as well as the true story of Theresia Steiner. She was one of three Jewish women deported from Guernsey and gassed in Auschwitz. *Theresa* reveals the collaboration of the government, police, and ordinary islanders with the Nazis between 1940 and 1944. The play is a fictionalized retelling of Theresia's story, incorporating theatre, music, and dance. March 1990, Gulbenkian Studio Theatre, Newcastle, UK; November 5, 1995, New End Theatre, Hampstead, UK, as part of *The Holocaust Trilogy* by Julia Pascal. Published by Oberon books.

Pascal, Julia. *A Dead Woman on Holiday*

A Dead Woman on Holiday, the second of Pascal's trilogy, takes place during the Nuremberg Trials after World War II. Sophie Goldenberg, a French Jew, is working as a translator during the hearings when she and a Catholic American soldier meet and fall in love. However, she has an English husband, and he, an American wife and child. In addition to the war crimes theme, the play addresses issues such as adultery, guilt and survival. Published by Oberon books.

Pascal, Julia. *The Dybbuk*, 1992

This is the third play in Pascal's Holocaust trilogy. Using the concept of S. Ansky's 1914 Yiddish play about a dislocated soul that inhabits a living person, English playwright and director Pascal has framed it in the context of the Holocaust. The soul is that of a person who has died too early, and the play opens with a monologue by Judith, a contemporary British Jew describing a trip to Germany. Unable to shake her thoughts of the generations lost to the Nazis, Judith is haunted by the faces she sees in dreams, her own dybbuks. The scene changes to a wartime ghetto, and Judith becomes one of five Jews living in too-close quarters on little more than fear and memories. *The Dybbuk* premiered in London at the New End Theatre in July 1992, then the Lillian Baylis Theatre. Since 1992 it has played in Munich at the Festival of Jewish Theatre, at Maubeuge's International Theatre Festival, in Poland (British Council tour), Sweden, Belgium and a major British regional tour. *The Dybbuk* is published by Oberon Books in "The Holocaust Trilogy," three plays by Pascal. *The Dybbuk* had its US premiere at [Theater for the New City](#) in New York City in August 2010. See a review of the [play](#) when it ran off-Broadway in New York City.

Pelham, Aviva. *Santa's Story*

This one-woman show is the true story of Santa Pelham, who escaped war-torn Europe by agreeing to marry a man from Rhodesia whom she had never met and to whom she had only written a few times through a friend's introduction. Santa's daughter, opera singer Aviva Pelham, brings to life the story of Santa's journey from Germany to Spain, France, and finally Africa. Produced by The Fugard Studio Theatre, Cape Town, South Africa, 2012.

Perry, Ruth. *The Great Hope*

In the Austrian capital, following the [Anschluss](#), a young non-Jewish female with distant Jewish relatives decides that she will wear the yellow Star of David that her Jewish friends are required to wear by Nazi law. Publisher: Dramatic Publishing Company.

Piatka, Naava. *Better Don't Talk!* 1998

This musical memoir is written about the playwright's mother, Chayela Rosenthal, a star of the Yiddish stage in the Vilna Ghetto Theatre during World War II.

Pilcer, Sonia. *The Holocaust Kid*, 2007

Adapted from Sonia Pilcer's book of the same name, *The Holocaust Kid* is a collection of linked autobiographical stories that portrays the life of a "2G"—second generation, the child of a Holocaust survivor. It captures what it means to be born in the shadows of death, and to live and love without forgetting. (Pilcer coined the term 2G in her book, *7 Days*.) Pilcer was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany to Polish Jewish Holocaust survivors. Her father was in Auschwitz and her mother, in a forced labor camp. Produced by Shakespeare & Company, Lenox, MA; Ensemble Studio Theater, New York, NY.

Pohl, Lucie. *Hi Hitler*, 2014

This one-woman [play](#) performed by Pohl is a comedy that ran in New York and then at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Pohl, who is Berthold Brecht's great niece, chronicles her experiences immigrating to the United States as a child from Germany, as well as her life-long obsession with Hitler.

Posmysz, Zofia. *The Passenger in Cabin 45*, 1959

This was originally a radio play in Polish, written by and based on the experiences of [Zofia Posmysz](#), a Polish Catholic survivor of Auschwitz and a satellite of Ravensbrück. She turned the play into a novel in Poland in 1962, and it then had television and film versions. The story then became an opera entitled *The Passenger*, now in English translation, by composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg and librettist Alexander Medvedev. The staged premiere was in Austria in 2010. See this [article](#) for more information on

the opera, which was performed by the Houston Grand Opera in July 2014 in New York City as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. The principal character is a Nazi guard, whom a former concentration camp prisoner believes she sees while traveling on a ship to Brazil.

Prorok, Leszek. *Freja: The Cold Goddess of Love*, 1977 (Polish)

Dr. Hassbach, a German physician, interviews Agnes Sielska, a survivor of Nazi atrocities. The doctor's intention is to protect Germany from unsubstantiated war crimes claims. Agnes recounts her experiences at the Ravensbrück concentration camp and then at the Freja villa, where women with Aryan features were used to breed perfect Aryan children. The horrified doctor wants to offer an apology for Germany. However, Agnes argues that she hopes her recounting of her experiences will prevent future atrocities. Unpublished English translation by Marcus Wheeler.

Rashke, Richard. *Dear Esther*, 1997

Dear Esther is a play that tells the story of how Esther Turner Raab, along with 300 other Jews, escaped from Sobibor, a Nazi death camp in Poland, in 1943. Esther's story is recounted in Richard Rashke's book, *Escape From Sobibor*. After the book and a subsequent movie came out, Raab received many invitations to speak in public schools, as well as letters from people who heard her story. Those letters expressing love, concern, and also outrage at Esther's sojourn, inspired *Dear Esther*. KK Books, Washington DC.

Raspanti, Celeste. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, 1980

By the end of World War II, only about a hundred Jewish children were liberated from the Terezín Ghetto, after more than 15,000 children either passed through or died there. This story centers on Raja, one of the survivors, and her family and friends during her time in Terezín. Butterflies are a symbol of defiance and beauty in the world. Her story comes to show hope within the anguish. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Raspanti, Celeste. *No Fading Star*, 1979

This play, based on historical evidence, takes place in a monastery in 1943 Germany, where an active underground dedicated to hiding and transporting Jewish children operates. The story focuses on the arrival of two children named David and Miriam. David insists on going back to the ghetto to perform his bar mitzvah. Mother Franziska, putting herself in danger from another nun that is a Nazi sympathizer, plans a bar mitzvah for David and gets the children to safety. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Raspanti, Celeste. *The Terezín Promise*, 2004

This subsequent play centers on Raja, the same character from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, Raspanti's earlier play about Terezín. After the liberation of the camp, the

Nazis begin to retreat, while trying to destroy evidence of their crimes. Raja tries to keep her promise to her teacher, to not leave the camp without the drawings and poems created within it. Raja convinces some other survivors to look for the buried bundles and hidden suitcases with the art. When faced with an opportunity for vengeance, Raja teaches one of her companions the importance of leaving revenge and anger in the past. In the end they find the art that they were looking for and walk toward their new freedom. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Ravel, Aviva. *Vengeance*, 1988

This **play** dramatizes the confrontation of Anna, a 40 year-old Holocaust survivor, and Stephania, a former Polish opera singer who gave Anna's family away to the Nazis.

Rissetto, Diana. *Warmth*

Well-meaning Gemma has a happy life as a Catholic kindergarten schoolteacher, but her heart of gold sometimes gets her into trouble. For example, she finds herself volunteering with a foundation that helps and makes scarves for rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. Wanting to do more, she arranges for Magdelone, an 88-year-old Polish woman, to stay with her for two weeks. As Gemma grows close to Magdelone and her long-lost Jewish-American grandson, Victor, she becomes obsessed with the atrocities of the past and struggles with an odd form of Christian guilt, intent on healing all the world's problems. New Jersey Playwright Contest, staged reading as a finalist, Grange Playhouse, Howell, NJ community run.

Ritchie, Rebecca and Violet Fabian. *The Phoenix Cantata*

This is the true story of Violet Fabian, a Holocaust survivor, who after the war had to choose between two men, as she moved on from being liberated from Bergen-Belsen. She had a choice of marrying either a Catholic medical student who was helping to fight typhus in the liberated camps, or a fellow survivor from her native town who wanted to resume their life from before. Commissioned by the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo.

Rittner, Hannah. *Love and Exile*, 2014

Love and Exile, a play with music, tells the story of Poldi, a Holocaust survivor and recent immigrant to Chicago. Poldi lives between two worlds: the living and the dead. As she grows more attached to the ghost of her daughter Ella (dead during the Holocaust), the needs of her young son Max intensify. She suffers the demands of too many loves—Ella, Max, an adoring tailor named Yoseph, and the forbidden love for the married and pious Rabbi Shlomo. This story chronicles her journey between the strains of life and the escape from death's ghosts. The piece uses poetic language, song, and impressionist images to showcase the power of spiritual fractures and how they influence Poldi's relationship to time itself. The play was workshopped in 2014 with the NYU Musical Theater Department, and The Bechdel Group.

Ruffini, Gene. *The Choice*, 1980

This play is about a female Nazi hunter who finds a former officer who now lives his life in hiding as a Catholic priest, helping to save street kids in New York City. Knowing that this man has ordered the deaths of more than 2,000 Jews during World War II, the Nazi hunter demands that he be returned to Poland to stand trial. The priest agrees, but asks to first explain himself to her and the children he works with. Center for Studies on the Holocaust, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

Sack, Leeny. *The Survivor and the Translator*, 1999

This solo theater piece discusses what it is like not having gone through the Holocaust herself, but being a daughter of a survivor. (In *The Theater of the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Skloot, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.)

Sadeh, Yitzhak (Landberg). *Hannah's Road* (Hebrew)

This play retells the story of the heroism of Hannah Senesh (Szenes), who immigrated to pre-Israel Palestine from Hungary, and then was parachuted into Nazi Europe by the British to help rescue downed Allied airmen and try to save Hungarian Jews. Before she could carry out her plans, she was captured and executed by the Nazis.

Samuels, Diane. *Kindertransport*. 1993

This story focuses on the life and choices of Eva Schlesinger/Evelyn Miller, a nine-year-old girl separated from her German-Jewish parents and brought to Manchester on the Kindertransport. The play goes through Eva's transformation from trying to deny her roots, up until Eva's own daughter discovers some letters that give clues to Eva's past. While this play is fiction, it is based on many true accounts of children who were on the Kindertransport. The character's daughter, Faith, goes beyond her mother's rejection of her past and tries to restore the family's connection with the Holocaust. The play was first performed in London at the Cockpit Theatre in 1993, and then in various locales. Most recently it was presented in Jerusalem in spring 2014 by J-Town Playhouse Theater Project. An [educational packet](#) is available as a PDF. The play was published as a book by Nick Hern Books, London, 2010.

Sandager, Susie. *Time with Corrie ten Boom*

Susie Sandager created and performs in a one-woman show about Dutch Christian rescuer [Corrie ten Boom](#). Along with her sister, ten Boom was a prisoner in Ravensbrück women's concentration camp. Corrie survived and wrote *The Hiding Place* about her experience. This one-woman show (which varies according to the audience) brings to life the ten Boom family's rescue of Jews during the Holocaust. Sandager and her husband founded Yad B'Yad to develop and nurture relationships between Christians and Jews, and the play is an activity of their organization. She performed her play for an educators' conference at Yad Vashem in July 2014. See more information [here](#).

Satie, Stephanie. *Silent Witnesses*, 2013

Silent Witnesses is a one-woman play performed by the author. Based on interviews and conversations with child survivors of the Holocaust, the play is about a group of women who meet with their therapist to discuss their common experiences of being child survivors. A March 31, 2016, performance was co-sponsored by Remember the Women Institute and Child Development Research at The 13th Street Theater, New York City. Audience members were mesmerized by Satie's outstanding performance, based on her interviews and conversations with child survivors of the Holocaust. She portrays four such survivors, including survivor and psychotherapist Dana Schwartz of Los Angeles. Using accents and body language, Satie convinces the audience she is four different women, all telling their moving and harrowing stories of survival as children. The 85-minute play is directed by Anita Khanzadian.

NEW

Schaffer, Melissa. *Windows*, 2012

This play with music, based on the real story of a Holocaust survivor, won a local competition in New Jersey. The playwright also performed, portraying the survivor's mother. Along with her husband, the mother pushed her daughter out of the window of a cattle car transporting Jews to the Majdanek death camp.

Semel, Nava and Ella Milch-Sheriff. *And the Rat Laughed*, 2005

Based on Nava Semel's book of the same name, published three years earlier in Hebrew, the opera *And the Rat Laughed* was first performed as a co-production of the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv in April 2005. (The book has since been published in English.) Some of the Hebrew performances had English super titles. The opera spans from the present to the Holocaust to the future in a creative and innovative way, telling the story of a hidden child in Poland who was sexually abused. The highlight of the opera is a Mass scene, in which the girl's savior, Father Stanislaw, rebels against his Lord who had abandoned His children. In an attempt to restore the girl's hope and her faith, the priest discovers he has lost his own.

Semel, Nava. *Lost Relatives*, Israel Television, IBA-Channel 1, April 2013

This television drama, in Hebrew, is set in Israel in 1949. The young state is facing the enormous task of absorbing more than one million new immigrants in a very short time, most of them Holocaust survivors who had lost everything. The drama takes place during the Jewish High Holidays and features a 60-year-old woman and her son, both of whom survived the Transnistria ghetto. The son's wife becomes pregnant, shattering his dream of becoming a professional Jazz musician in Israel. The family's fate is entwined with that of their neighbors, two Auschwitz survivors from the Island of Rhodes. Together they gather around the radio to listen to the daily broadcast of a relative-seeking program called *Lost Relatives*. The woman is desperately seeking her husband, who immigrated thirty years ago to America and vanished without a trace. On

the eve of Yom Kippur, the husband sends a dramatic message on the radio, and the son is convinced by his mother to pick up his estranged father, now a lonely blind man.

Shaham, Nathan. *New Account*, 1954 (Hebrew)

A woman and a teenage girl are the main female characters in this 1953 play by a prominent Israeli writer and playwright, winner of the [Israel Prize](#) in 2012. The play deals with Holocaust survivors' adaptation in Israel. Helena is the wife and Lisa is the daughter of Dr. Arthur Auerbach, engineer and director at a Dead Sea mineral resource company. Lisa survived the Holocaust hidden in a monastery, while her father was in Auschwitz. She lives with her father in Sodom but her mother refuses to live far away from the city and accuses her husband, suspected of being a *Kapo*, of wanting to hide in a deserted place. However, Helena also seems to be hiding her wartime past. Each of these Holocaust survivors is burdened by a difficult history. The play was performed at the Cameri Theatre, Tel Aviv, in 1954. The manuscript is in Shaham's archive, Kipp Research Center of Hebrew Culture and Literature, Tel Aviv University, and the text was published by Or-Am in 1989.

Shaham, Nathan. *No Packages*, 1964 (Hebrew)

This play, which was never performed, was inspired by a real controversy that took place in Slovakia between parachutist Haviva Reick (who arrived in 1944 from pre-state Israel and fell in the line of duty) and a group of young Jewish members of the local resistance. The group, as well as Haviva, belonged to the Zionist movement Hashomer Hatzair. Shaham knew Haviva Reick in the Palmach underground elite force in British Mandatory Palestine. Yudka, the play's main character, represents Haviva Reick. The group members are preparing to retreat in the mountains and to fight. The background was deciding whether to take just young people or also to try to rescue older members of the community, Haviva/Yudka's belief. *No Packages* was planned to be performed at the 25th jubilee of Kibbutz HaOgen whose members were born in Slovakia. The manuscript is in Shaham's archive at the Kipp Research Center of Hebrew Culture and Literature in Tel Aviv University.

NEW

Shames, Germaine. *You, Fascinating You* (in development, 2017)

This musical is based on a 2012 [book](#) of the same name by [Shames](#), with lyrics by her and music by Frederico Ferrandina. It tells the story of Jewish ballerina [Margit Wolf](#), whose career in dance was cut short by the Holocaust.

Shamir, Moshe. *He Walked Through the Fields*, 1948 (Hebrew)

Although the title refers to a man, the play is equally about Mika, a young female Holocaust survivor. The play has great historic value because it was the first one performed in the newly established State of Israel, at the Cameri Theatre in 1948, in the midst of the War of Independence. It is based on [Shamir's](#) book of the same name,

published a year earlier, which has been included in the curriculum for matriculation exams in Israel. The absorption of Holocaust survivors is one of the main themes of the play. Echoing real-life situations at the time, problems arise when a Sabra (native Israeli) falls in love with a newly arrived female Holocaust survivor. After its first performance, it became a successful movie (1967), won many prizes, and made comebacks at Cameri (1956), Haifa Municipal Theatre (1966), Beer Sheba Theatre (1997), Beit Zvi School of acting and theater arts (2008) and Ruth Kanner Theatre (2013). Shamir, a kibbutz member and fighter of the Palmach (the elite underground force in mandatory Palestine), was awarded the Israel Prize in 1988 and died in 2004.

Shean, Nava. *Requiem in Terezin* (Hebrew)

This is an optimistic piece about the power of music, art, and non-violent resistance. A female narrator recounts how young conductor Rafael Schächter decides to perform Verdi's *Requiem* in the Terezin concentration camp. The narrator, a survivor of the camp, also tells of her own experiences, how she met the conductor, and the fight against inhuman conditions. First performed in Haifa Theater, Israel, 1981.

Sher, Emil. *Hana's Suitcase on Stage*, 2006

This [play](#) tells of the true story of a Japanese Holocaust educator's search around the world to find information about the owner of a suitcase that was found at Auschwitz. She manages to track down the owner's long-lost brother, and find out the history of both the love and tragedy that occurred. Based on a book by Karen Levine, Second Story Press.

Sherman, Martin. *Rose*, 1999

This one-woman [show](#) is a monologue about an 80-year-old Holocaust survivor named Rose. Rose tells stories of her life: growing up in a small Russian village, then living in Warsaw, then sailing to Palestine on *The Exodus*, and finally coming to America. We first meet Rose at the age of 80 in 1999, as she is sitting shiva for a murdered girl, and then her story develops. The play featured Sally Wingert when it was presented by [Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company](#), 2014, in homes around the Twin Cities. A Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Sholiton, Faye. *The Interview*

In preparation for her eyewitness testimony for a video archive project, a Holocaust survivor meets her interviewer, the child of other survivors. Revisiting old memories, a mother and a daughter find new ways to forgive and be forgiven. Production by Dayton Playhouse, 1997. See more information [here](#).

Simons, Anita Yellen. *Goodbye Memories*

Based on biographies of the Frank family and Simons's personal contact with Anne Frank's three surviving friends, *Goodbye Memories* is a universal story of

parents, children, friends, sexual awakenings, and the special spirit of a talkative, attention-loving girl named Anne Frank. *Goodbye Memories* begins on the morning of Anne's 13th birthday in June 1942, when she receives her famous diary. The play ends on the morning of July 6, 1942, when the Franks leave their Amsterdam home to go into hiding.

Sobler, Alix. *The Secret Annex*, 2014

In this play, Sobler imagines that Anne Frank survived the Holocaust, and at age 25, she is starting a new chapter of her life in New York City. Eager to publish a memoir of her time in hiding, Anne is sure it will launch her career as a writer. But when the only interested publisher demands drastic rewrites, Anne questions the meaning of her new life. Why did she survive, if no one wants to hear her story? Study guide available [here](#). Premiered, Winnipeg, Canada, 2014.

Sobol, Joshua. *The Ghetto Tryptic: Ghettos*, 1983; *Adam*, 1989; and *Underground*, 1991

Chaya, a former singer, ghetto food smuggler, and member of the Jewish underground resistance, is one of the main female characters in *Ghetto*. The plot is about a theatre that existed in the Vilna ghetto with the approval of Kittel, the local SS commander. In *Adam*, three young women—Nadia, Nusyia, and Mira—are prominent characters who are active in the Jewish underground in the Vilna ghetto. The plot deals with the leadership's decision in July 1943 to hand over the underground commander Adam (in reality the communist Yitzik Witenberg) to the German Military Government as demanded by an ultimatum. The three plays in *The Ghetto Tryptich* have been performed in Israel and abroad. First performed at Haifa Municipal Theatre in 1984, *Ghetto* has since been on stage for at least in 70 productions, in 24 countries and in Israel, again at Haifa Theatre in 1998, and at Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv in 2014. *Adam* was performed at Habima National Theatre (1989), and later in Germany (1989, 1993) and in Washington DC (1992). *Underground*, was performed at Yale Repertory Theatre, New Haven (1991), at Nationaltheater Mannheim, Germany and the Jewish Theater Chicago (1993). [Sobol](#) and his plays have won prestigious awards. Published in Hebrew by Or-Am.

Sobol, Joshua. *Love in Dark Times*, 2005

The plot of this play was inspired by the playwright's meeting and talks in Wiesbaden, Germany, with a women survivor of the Holocaust and her husband. The play's leading character is Anda, a young Jewish woman from Cologne who survived thanks to a relationship with a young Wehrmacht officer who fell in love with her. They lived in a secret apartment rented by the German in Cologne, until the day he was sent to the Russian front. Before leaving, the officer provided her with false documents permitting her to escape Germany and live in Switzerland. *Love in Dark Times* was performed in

Drachengasse Vienna, Austria (2005), Stadttheater Aachen, Germany (2006) and Rotebühltheater Stuttgart, Germany (2007).

Speace, Oscar. *Janka*, 2015

In this one-woman play, the dramatist's mother, Janka Festinger, describes the horrors of Auschwitz. The play was inspired by a 60-page handwritten letter that Speace and his brother discovered after their mother's death in 1994. Performed in April 2015, June Havoc Theatre, New York.

NEW

Spektor, Mira J. *Lady of the Castle—A Chamber Opera*, 1982

Based on the play by Israeli writer Lea Goldberg, this [play](#) was presented at Theater for the New City in New York in late 2016. Music and lyrics are by [Spektor](#). This chamber opera for four voices and three instruments is about one of the hidden children, a young girl found in 1946 in the basement of a crumbling castle in Europe.

St. Germain, Mark. *Dr. Ruth, All the Way*

This play tells the story of Dr. Ruth Westheimer's journey that preceded her career as a pioneering radio and television sex therapist. She fled the Nazis on a Kindertransport, lost both her parents in the Holocaust, went to Israel and joined the Haganah as a sniper, and struggled to succeed as a single mother newly arrived in America. This comedy/drama was produced by [Barrington Stage Company](#), Pittsfield, Massachusetts, June 2012.

Stein, Mark. *Smoke*

This play is about [Nelly Sachs](#), the winner of the 1966 Nobel Prize for Literature for her poems, mostly about the Holocaust. The play starts out on the day Nelly receives the award, and she has flashbacks to Germany in 1940, and her amazing escape from the Nazis. Produced by New Playwrights Theatre, Washington D.C.

Stein, Susan. *Etty*, 2009

Using only the words of [Etty Hillesum](#) from her surviving diary and letters, Stein created and performs in a one-woman show about a young Dutch Jew who shares her innermost thoughts about life, love, and ethical dilemmas. Etty works in Amsterdam's Jewish Council, a position that had the potential to delay her own deportation from Westerbork concentration camp. However, she was ultimately unable to save herself and her family from being shipped to Auschwitz. Stein has performed many times and in many venues, including prisons. She presented her play for an educators' conference at Yad Vashem in July 2014. She often uses the play as a springboard for discussion with her audiences. See more information [here](#). Premiered at 59E59 Theaters, New York, 2009.

Still, James. *And Then They Came for Me: Remembering the World of Anne Frank*, 1999

This multimedia [play](#) by award-winning playwright [James Still](#) uses videotaped interviews, along with live actors, to tell the stories of Ed Silverberg, who was Anne Frank's first boyfriend, and Eva Schloss, a young woman the same age as Anne, whose family (neighbors of the Frank family) went into hiding the same day as the Franks. The play is a mixture of oral history, remembrance, direct address, and acting. Eva Schloss, who later became Anne Frank's stepsister, made a rare appearance when the play was presented at Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, in November 2016. [Dramatic Publishing](#).

Stillman, Heidi, *The Book Thief*

Adapted from Markus Zusak's [book](#), the story is narrated by a death figure who is haunted by humans. Alongside the audience, the narrator tries to understand why people behave in terrible or generous ways. Liesel Meminger comes to live with adoptive parents in Nazi Germany. Over the course of World War II, she blossoms from a quiet girl with nightmares into a poised young woman who commits several acts of book thievery as she learns to read, keep important secrets, and give the Hitler salute, whether she wants to or not. The play was presented as part of an initiative to stop youth violence and intolerance, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL, 2012.

Strome, Jennifer. *The Idealist*, 2010

Directed by Lee Sankowich, for one night only on February 23, 2011, Jennifer Strome presented a new production of Levin's 35-minute radio play about Anne Frank at the Times Center in New York, with Tony Roberts and Alison Pill featured in the cast.

Strubbe, William. *The Wardrobe*, 2013

This [play](#) is about Elena, a fugitive Jew from the Warsaw Ghetto, and her relationship with Magda, a religious Catholic who agrees to hide her from the Nazis. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

NEW

Stryk, Linda. *The Glamour House*, 2016

Recently published by [Dramatists Play Service](#), the play draws on the story of a survivor who is a friend of the [playwright](#). In 1947, in the glamorous world of Trudi Stein's dress shop on Manhattan's Upper East Side, everything is cloaked in silence—until the arrival of an enigmatic new salesgirl. The very presence of Esther Bayer, a young immigrant from Germany, fills the joyless establishment with energy, laughter, and life. What ensues is a mysterious, obsessive relationship that culminates in revelation.

NEW**Sugimoto, Daniel. *Letters to Eve*, 2016**

This epic World War II **musical** is a classic story of love, friendship, family, and honor. It follows a Japanese-American family and their plight through forced incarceration, a black jazz musician captured during Germany's occupation of France, and the powerful spirit of music and literature. Among the untold stories of World War II, the play includes sexual violence during the Holocaust, based on the book ***Sexual Violence against Jewish Women during the Holocaust***, edited by Sonja M. Hedgepeth and Rochelle G. Saidel. The play premiered in Santa Monica, CA, in November 2016.

Swados, Elizabeth. *The Secret Window*

Broadway playwright **Elizabeth Swados** wrote this theatrical musical adaptation of the Holocaust memoirs of Nelly Toll, who survived the Nazi occupation of Lvov by spending thirteen months in hiding with a Christian family. The story is told through a series of tableaux accompanied by song and a limited number of musical instruments. The work, co-commissioned for the Annenberg Center's Festival Theatre for New Plays and its Children's Theatre Festival, 1997, was created with Het Waterhuis (Rotterdam, Netherlands).

Taikeff, Stanley. *Brigitte Berger*

The setting is the Melody House Music store in Brooklyn, NY, December, 1961. Frieda Miller is a bookkeeper who works on the upper floor near the instrument repair room. When a customer, Annaliese Rothstein, brings in her son's clarinet for repair, she instantly recognizes Frieda by her perfume as the Nazi guard who took her for her own sexual pleasure in the camp where she and her sister were deported during the war. Overcome, Rothstein runs out, sickened. When she returns in Act Two to pick up the clarinet, she confronts Frieda with the past, but Frieda flatly denies all accusations. The commotion alerts the store's owner, who demands to know the truth. Only then does Frieda confess her true identity as Brigitte Berger. The stunning revelation that she was posing as a Jew in Brooklyn after the war causes Pearlman to fire her, and she walks out of the store impassive and uncaring. There was a staged reading, New Dramatists production in 1981 and a production at No Smoking Playhouse, New York, 1983.

Tillion, Germaine. *Le Verfügbare aux Enfers: Une opérette à Ravensbrück*, 1944

The play/opera ***Le Verfügbare aux Enfers*** was written by **Germaine Tillion**, who in 1943, was sent to the German concentration camp of Ravensbrück, along with her mother, for participating in the resistance. While in the camp, Germaine wrote this opera as an ironic comedy, describing the terrible conditions that the "Verfügbare" (lowest class of prisoners) had to endure. This opera (in French) was written to entertain her fellow prisoners, while also acting as an ethnographic analysis of the concentration camp. The original script survived intact and was taken out of the camp when the Swedish Red Cross rescued the French political prisoners toward the end of

World War II. The play was published (in French) by Éditions de La Martinière, Paris, 2005, and performed in Paris in 2007 in honor of Tillion's 100th birthday. In 2014, Tillion's play was translated into English by Annie and Karl Bortnick to be presented as *In the Underworld*. The translation was commissioned by the University of Southern Maine's Department of Theatre. Directed by Meghan Brodie, then a professor in the university's theatre department, the play was presented at the university in April 2014. (See an essay about the play by Dr. Brodie in Section 2, below.)

NEW

Timor, Lahav. *Benghazi-Bergen-Belsen*, 2016

Silvana Haggiag is a brilliant and beautiful young woman in her early 20s, dismissive of the patriarchal norms of her Jewish community in Benghazi, Libya. Her family is violently uprooted and taken to Bergen-Belsen in Germany. A staged reading sponsored by American Jewish Historical Society and American Sephardi Federation celebrated the publication of the English translation of *Benghazi-Bergen-Belsen* by Yossi Sucary, the first novel about the Holocaust and Libyan Jews. The novel was adapted by Lahav Timor, who wrote the play. The production premiered at *La Mama Theater* in New York City in March 2017, No Visa Production, directed by Michal Gamily. The play not only focuses on the almost unknown story of the Jews of Libya during the Holocaust, but also tells the poignant story of two women who are in love with each other.

Tova, Theresa. *Still the Night*, Scirocco Drama, 1998

This story takes place during World War II, as two young women wander through Poland, pretending not to be Jewish. This drama, which is punctuated with song, is intended to show the strength of survival against all odds.

Votipka, Brendon. *Face Forward: Growing Up in Nazi Germany*, 2011

This play is about three young people's transition into adulthood, while living under the Nazi regime. There is Marian, a young woman whose father wants to hide a Jewish family, but she just wants to fit in. There is Rebecca, a student who is discriminated against in the classroom because of her Jewish heritage. And there is Ernst, who joins the Hitler Youth, where he struggles with his new life. Playscripts, Inc.

Watts, Irene Kristein. *Goodbye Marianne*, 1995

The play opens in Germany on November 15, 1938, the day that German state schools no longer allowed Jewish students to attend. Protagonist Marianne's world is crumbling, with her father in hiding from the Gestapo and her mother over-protecting her. Marianne meets a boy with whom she seems to have a lot in common, but she learns he is a member of the Hitler Youth. The play is documentary fiction, based on the personal experiences of the author as a child in Nazi Germany, along with other Holocaust survivors' accounts. Scirocco Drama.

NEW

Westfall, Susan. *A Stitch in Time*, 2017

This original short one-act [play](#), written by Susan Westfall and directed by Michael Yawney, is based on the true story of Paul and Hedy Strnad. The couple tragically perished in the Holocaust, but their memories come alive in this production, based on the letters, sketches, and dresses meticulously created from Hedy's designs. The play was written as part of a traveling exhibit of the [Jewish Museum of Milwaukee](#), *Stitching History from the Holocaust*. The exhibit includes dresses made from the design sketches of Hedwig Strnad, a Jewish woman living in Prague with her husband and seeking asylum in the United States in 1939. They sent sketches of Hedwig's clothing designs to a cousin, hoping to get a visa. Years later, the sketches were discovered by family members, and, thanks to the efforts of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Hedy's drawings were brought to life. The play *A Stitch in Time*, as well as the dresses created for the exhibit, were in the [Jewish Museum of Miami](#), co-sponsored by Florida International University, in early 2017.

Wolf, Magret. *Refidim Junction*, 2012

This operetta by librettist-composer Magret Wolf is based on letters that Perl Margulies wrote from Germany to her husband Benno in England in 1933-34, as well as letters that poet Marianne Rein wrote from Germany to author Jacob Picard in the United States in 1938-41. Both an actor and a singer play the parts of each of the women, one reading from the letters and one singing. There is also a chorus, as well as video projections. The production was originally commissioned by the Mainfranken Theater in Wurzburg, Germany and presented there in November 2012. It was also presented in Berlin in January 2015 and in [Jerusalem](#), with Hebrew subtitles, in June 2015, produced by Theatre Company Jerusalem. For more information, see an essay in Section 2.2 by Dr. Alice Shalvi, daughter of Perl and Benno Margulies and initiator of the production.

Wooten, John J. *Hannah*

A documentary theatre piece, crafted around the historical events in the life of Hannah Senesh (Szenes), who had made aliyah from Hungary to pre-Israel British Mandate Palestine. During World War II, she volunteered for a mission as a paratrooper with the British armed forces, returning to Budapest to try to evacuate downed Allied forces and rescue members of the Jewish community. She was caught, imprisoned, and murdered before she could carry out her mission. Produced by Zella Fry Theater at Kean University, NJ, 2011. Source Material: *Hannah Senesh: The Mission Home*. An earlier version of the play was presented at the Forum Theater in Metuchen, NJ, in 1998.

NEW**Yaged, Kim. *Vessels*, 2003**

This play by **Yaged** is about the experiences of lesbians in Germany during the Holocaust. It was commissioned for the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust's 2003 presentation of "**The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933–1945**" exhibition from the United States Memorial Museum.

Yaoz-Kest, Itamar. *Night Fences* (Hebrew)

Two Holocaust survivors, Eva and Daniel, return to Eva's village in Germany after the war to find out what happened to her family. As they sit in a dusty shed in the woods sifting through old objects, Eva begins to see visions of camp inmates marching around her. She joins the dead in re-creating camp horrors and becomes consumed by fear. Daniel, who cannot see the images, is afraid for her, and she cries in Daniel's arms. Production by Tzavta Theater, Israel.

Yellen, Sherman. *Budapest*

In New York City, 1962, Arnie and Robb, would-be screenwriters in their twenties, attend the funeral of a once famous Austrian-Jewish actor, in the hope of meeting celebrities who might help jumpstart their careers. They meet Minna, the dead man's beautiful 40-year-old sister, a survivor of both the Nazis and the Soviet gulag, who invites them into her life. She has a remarkable story of survival—as a Jew in a German camp, liberated by the Soviets who then imprisoned her as an Austrian baroness by marriage. An actress wishes to play Minna in a film, a story that could help the careers of both the actress and the screenwriters. Minna is reluctant to capitalize on her Holocaust story, because it is the one thing she values. Her love affair with one of the young men leads her to change her mind, with remarkable consequences. *Budapest* is a dark comedy and a story of love and betrayal, which recreates the fragile world of theatre émigrés in New York in the decades following World War II.

Yoeli, Naomi. *My Ex-Stepmother-in-Law*, 2015 (Hebrew)

As author and performer, **Naomi Yoeli** plays herself as a novice standup comic, and also uses another voice to portray her former stepmother-in-law, sculptor Agi Yoeli. Agi was born in Central Europe and survived a ghetto and Auschwitz, afterward coming to Israel. When she portrays Agi, Naomi Yoeli does not talk about the Holocaust but about before and after, almost sneaking in information about such topics as death marches. This is a mix of theater and reality, standup comedy and stage play, fiction and truth. There is also interaction with the audience. The play premiered in Tel Aviv, a production of Hazira Performance Arts Arena, in August 2015.

Zeckendorf-Kutzinski, Lisa. *New Year's Eve in the Oederan Slave Labor Camps*

A darkly comic sketch about hairstyle, fashion, and figure in the concentration camp. Original language, German, with English language translation in *Performing Captivity*,

Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto, ed. Lisa Peschel, Seagull Books, 2014.

Zinner, Hedda. *Ravensbrücker Ballade* (German)

An East German socialist realist drama that chronicles the suffering of women imprisoned in the Ravensbrück concentration camp, which was established in 1938 and became the largest women's concentration camp in the Third Reich. Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992.

1.2. Plays about the Holocaust Written by Women

Note: There is some duplication of plays about women during the Holocaust, listed above, as some plays about women were also written by women.

Almagor, Gila. *The Summer of Aviya, Habima*, 1996

This mostly autobiographical one-woman play starring famed Israeli actress Gila Almagor follows Aviya, the ten-year old protagonist, as she comes home from a boarding school for the summer in 1951 to be with her mother in Petach Tikva. Aviya's mother Henia is a Holocaust survivor and partisan heroine who is dealing with severe mental illness caused by her experiences during the war. Based on Almagor's 1985 book, which was made into a film in 1988, the play is a production of Habima, the Israeli national theatre company. Originally in Hebrew, the play highlights the difficult situation that many survivors went through after coming to Israel, along with the scars that stay with survivors and also affect their children. In 2003, Almagor starred in an English version of the play at Symphony Space in New York.

Arnfield, Jane and Mike Alfreds. *The Tin Ring*

This is the story of Zdenka Fantlová, a Czechoslovakian Holocaust survivor. When World War II broke out, she was seventeen years old. Arno, her first love, gave her a ring that she kept with her as a symbol of truth and hope while she was in Terezin and then Bergen-Belsen. Presented in September 2012, The Lowry, Manchester, U.K. Based on *The Tin Ring* by Zdenka Fantlová, published in English by McNidder & Grace.

Arnon, Shlomit and Yifat Zandani-Tsafrir. *Heart's Command*, 2008 (Hebrew)

This play about Haviva Reick was inspired by the 2004 original Hebrew version of the book *Haviva*, by Tehila Ofer and Zeev Ofer, now available in English. The play tells the story of Haviva Reick, her life, her 1939 aliya to Israel, and her return to her native Slovakia to rescue Jewish people and downed Allied airmen. She is represented in the

play as she is remembered in the mind of her former lover, now a solitary old man. Yael, a high school student, has been assigned to keep this man company in a retirement home. When he asks her where she lives, Yael says “Haviva Reick Street.” This leads the man to describe how people tried to persuade Haviva not to go on the dangerous mission for the British military in Mandate pre-Israel Palestine in 1944. Haviva’s tenacity, as described by the man, encourages the young student to struggle against her own problems. The National Youth Theatre often performs the play in Israel, directed by the playwrights and in collaboration with the Orto-Da Theatre, for audiences of audiences of 11-year-old to 17-year-old students and educational teams.

Atlan, Liliane. *Mister Fugue, or Earth Sick. (Monsieur Fugue, ou le mal de terre)*

This play by [Liliane Atlan](#) follows Mister Fugue, a German soldier, who is found to be befriending Jewish children during World War II. As a punishment, he is sent to a death camp along with the children. On the way to the camp, he and the children tell stories and play games. The children speak about the future, one they know they will never experience. Mr. Fugue’s character is loosely based on Janusz Korczak, a Jewish physician who accompanied orphaned children to Treblinka. Comédie de Sainte Étienne, Paris, France, 1967. Published in *Plays of the Holocaust*, edited by Elinor Fuchs, Theatre Communications Group, NY, 1987.

Atlan, Liliane. *Un Opéra pour Terezin (French)*

This commemoration of the murder of the Jewish musicians confined to Terezín in Czechoslovakia is structured like a Passover seder. The opera was intended to last all night long and to be staged in sites across the world. There are 40 scenes depicting the fate of the musicians who were imprisoned in this camp. In 1989, France Culture broadcast an outdoor all-night performance on the street in Montpellier where Atlan had lived as a child.

Barnovski, Einat. *Why Didn’t You Come before the War? (Hebrew)*

Elizabeth, or Lizzie, is a single child living in Tel Aviv in the 1960s with her survivor mother Helena. Lizzie’s life is difficult, filled with the silence of her indifferent mother. The mother only opens up to her four friends: troubled Ita, well-groomed Zosia, religious Gita, and glamorous Fanny. They all reveal their pain and horror only to each other at their weekly meetings, as Lizzie eavesdrops. Beer-Sheva Theater, Israel, 2011, based on Lizzie Doron’s 1998 novel, *Why Didn’t You Come before the War?*

Bekerman-Greenberg, Rivka. *Eavesdropping on Dreams, 2012*

Playwright Dr. Rivka [Bekerman-Greenberg](#) is a psychotherapist who practices in New York City, where this play takes place. The play, which premiered at the [Barefoot Theater Company](#), follows the lives of three generations of women: Shaina, a medical student; mother Renee, born in a refugee camp after World War II; and Grandmother Rosa, a survivor of the Lodz ghetto and Auschwitz. While the play takes

place in the present, all three women struggle with questions of the past. When Shaina goes to Poland to find answers, she brings back memories and a harrowing family secret that unlocks their mysterious past. Premiered at the Barefoot Theater Company, New York, 2012.

Bennett, Cherie and Jeff Gottesfeld. *Anne Frank and Me*, 1997

Anne Frank and Me begins in the present, with Nicole, the main protagonist, discussing her reading assignment of *The Diary of Anne Frank* with her friend. Nicole is not convinced that the Holocaust really happened. In a flash, Nicole is transported to Nazi-occupied Paris as a Jewish girl. She is forced to go into hiding and struggles for survival. At one point she even meets Anne Frank and learns important lessons. For more information, see this [interview](#) with the playwrights. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Ben-Shalom, Miri. *I Want the World to See that I Can Cry*, 2003

This [play](#) is based on the journals of Ester Holtzberg Herschberg, which describe the horrors of living under the Nazis in the Krakow ghetto. Written by Herschberg's [niece](#), the play, in which we see a 70-year-old version of Ester along with her younger self, tells the story of six years of survival and her personal journey. From Home to Homeland, Inc.

Berg, Mary. *The Diary of Mary Berg*, 1986

Mary Berg was a United States citizen who ended up in the Warsaw Ghetto. Her diary was published soon after World War II, edited by S. L. Shneiderman, and translated into English. It was also serialized in newspapers, providing one of the first extended descriptions of the Nazi horror. A play based on the diary and directed by Jan Krzyzanowski opened in New York in 1986, to mark the 43d anniversary of the ghetto uprising. For details about Mary Berg's history, the diary and the play, see this [article](#).

Bridel, David, Jonathan Rest, and Penny Kreitzer. *The Actors Rehearse the Story of Charlotte Salomon*

This one-woman play charts the relationship between actress Penny Kreitzer (co-author of the play), the artist Charlotte Salomon, and Charlotte's stepmother Paula Salomon-Lindberg, a renowned contralto and co-founder of The Kulturbund, the Nazi-sanctioned Jewish Theatre in Berlin. Originally produced (in English) by Shakespeare & Company's Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre in a bomb shelter in Jerusalem, Israel, 2009.

Cambers, Elizabeth, Sabrina Coons, Jessica Shelton, and Megan Stewart. *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Story*, 1999

Four students in Kansas came across [Irena Sendler's](#) name, as they were doing research for a National History Day project. They found her name on a list that said that she had saved 2,500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942-43. Neither the students

nor their teacher had heard of Sendler, and they spent the next several months looking through primary and secondary sources to find out her story. They learned that Irena, a Polish non-Jewish social worker, had managed to save children from the ghetto by helping them get past the Nazi guards. She then helped to get them adopted by Polish families. Irena kept lists of the real names of the children in jars buried in a garden, so she would be able to one day tell these children of their real identities. Irena's story of heroism inspired the four students from Kansas to write this [play](#) about her actions.

Carlebach, Esther. *Lech Lecha=Go Forth, Me-afelah le'or Gadol, and Brothers*

These three plays are for intermediate school students, Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. The first chronicles the changing circumstance of two young Jewish girls, with one leaving Europe for Palestine and the other remaining in Nazi Germany. The second play, a sequel, continues to chronicle the lives of the two German-Jewish girls, whose lives and destinies were impacted by choices made while living under the Third Reich. *Brothers* is about family dislocation and reunion as a result of the Holocaust. Following the Nazi takeover of Poland, a Jewish family is only able to send one of their children to safety in Palestine. The drama focuses on the child's hardships alone in this new land and his eventual reunion with his surviving younger brother.

Cave, Candida. *Lotte's Journey*, 2007

Lotte's Journey is based on the true story of [Charlotte Salomon](#), a German-Jewish artist, who was murdered in Auschwitz in 1943, 26 years old and pregnant. The production uses flashbacks to show Charlotte's journey as an artist, while she sits in a cattle train with her husband and other Jews on their way to their deaths. Premiered at the New End Theater.

Chaiken, Stacie. *What She Left*

[What She Left](#) is the result of a commission the playwright received in 2009 to write a piece based on materials in the USC Holocaust and Genocide-Related Collection. This one-woman play tells of the heroism of a female partisan, and how she passes on her legacy to the next generation.

Charkow, Brenley. *On the Other Side of the World*

Shanghai, China was a port of salvation for thousands of Holocaust refugees. Told through the eyes of a fiercely resilient young woman and inspired by the memoirs of many, *On the Other Side of the World* tells the dramatic true story of a young girl, her family, and a community that sought shelter and survival in a country and culture unlike their own. Produced in 2013, Next Stage Theatre Festival, Toronto, Ontario. See Charkow's [website](#) for more information. Inspired by Ursula Bacon's biographical novel, *Shanghai Ghetto*.

Chilton, Nola. *Five* (Hebrew)

Five female inmates in a concentration camp, each with a different background, tell about their experiences and everyday life at the camp—how they lost their identity, their clothing, and personal items, even their hair. They discuss death, those who are lost, and the horror that surrounds them. To cope, they make each other laugh and pretend there is food, while also fantasizing about revenge on their Nazi captors. The Neve Zedek Theatre Centre, Israel, 1983/1986.

Cixous, Hélène. *Oy!*

Oy!, the story of two German-Jewish sisters, Selma and Jenny, takes place in 1995. In their late eighties, they are among the last witnesses to the Third Reich. They return home to Paris after traveling to the German city of their youth. Once they are back home, the sisters try to understand the swirl of emotions and memories that surfaced. Working together, they begin to unravel the complexities of a society's internalized racism and anti-Semitism that so darkly colored their past. U.S. premiere, The Actors Gang, Los Angeles, 2012. Original language, French.

Cohen, Janet Langhart. *Anne and Emmett*, 2015

This one-act play was used as a tool for the New York City Police Department to teach tolerance to its recruits. It is built around an imaginary conversation between Anne Frank and Emmett Till, the fourteen-year-old African-American boy murdered by racists in Mississippi in 1955. The play was performed in October 2015 for more than 1,000 recruits at the Police Academy in Queens, New York.

Cooper, Cynthia. *Gretel Bergmann*

This one-woman 10-minute play by Cynthia L. Cooper tells the true story of Gretel Bergmann, a Jewish athlete who encountered anti-Semitism in sports in Germany in the early 1930s, left to pursue her high-jump career in England, but was pressured to return for the 1936 Nazi Olympics. When she qualifies for the German team—the only religiously committed Jewish athlete to be included—the USA agrees to participate. But once the American teams set sail, Gretel is summarily cut from the team, and is left to sort out sports, morality and honor. This monologue, which stands on its own and has been widely performed, is one of six stories told in *How She Played the Game*, a 75-minute performance piece.

Cooper, Cynthia. *Silence Not, A Love Story*, 2009

Silence Not, A Love Story, inspired by the true stories of Gisa Peiper and Paul Konopka, takes place during the economic crisis in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. A young Jewish woman, who is involved in the labor movement, meets a rebellious artisan. While trying to fight the rise of Nazism, their love for humanity and each other strengthens. Gihon River Press.

NEW**Cooper, Cynthia. *At the Train Station in Munich*, 2013**

In this stylized short drama, a young Jewish woman in the resistance waits in disguise at the Munich station in 1938 for a train to safety in Paris. Meanwhile, German soldiers all around celebrate the Nazi takeover of Austria in the Anschluss. To conquer her fears, the woman carries on a "conversation" in her mind with her younger self (played by a second actress), excavating memories, stories and poems, and bolstering her courage until the train arrives. Performed at The Anne Frank Center USA. Adapted from *Silence Not, A Love Story*, by [Cynthia Cooper](#).

Cooper, Cynthia. *The Spoken and the Unspoken*, 2016

This short play for two actors was written especially for the May 2, 2016, program of dramatic readings to launch the second edition of the *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*. The subject is Remember the Women Institute's research to uncover the stories of sexual violence during the Holocaust, and some of the difficulties involved. It was performed again at the Actors' Temple, New York, in November 2016.

NEW**Davidismeyer, Jo. *Angel: A Nightmare in Two Acts*, 1995**

[Angel](#) is a drama based on the trial and execution of real-life Nazi war criminal Irma Grese, a brutal concentration camp guard prosecuted at the Belsen trials and executed at the age of 21 for her crimes against humanity. A strikingly beautiful woman, she was dubbed by the international press as "The Blonde Angel of Auschwitz." During the play, Irma's prosecutor falls under her fatal charms. He is drawn, along with the audience, into a private nightmare where the tables are turned and he becomes the accused. Olga Lengyel, a real survivor of Auschwitz, teaches the prosecutor a lesson about dignity and survival. Josef Mengele is also a character. An early version of this award-winning play is in the collection [Reader's Theatre](#), edited by Marvin Kaye.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Who Will Carry the Word? (Original French, Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles?)*, 1966

[Charlotte Delbo](#), a French political prisoner and a survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Ravensbrück, paints a picture of what it was like to be a woman in a concentration camp. Despair and death surround the characters in the play. However, Claire, the main protagonist, pushes the other women not to lose hope, as someone must live on to tell their story. This play has been performed in English in several venues in the United States, including a performance by the [Red Fern Theatre Company](#) in New York in 2008. An English translation by Dr. Cynthia Haft is in *The Theatre of the Holocaust, Vol. 1*, edited by Robert Skloot, 1982, University of Wisconsin Press. Excerpts from the play, performed by Dr. Meghan Brodie's students from Ursinus College, were included

in the May 2, 2016, program to launch the second edition of the *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Crawling from the Wreckage*. Written in French as *Et toi, comment as-tu fait?*

Related to her *Who Will Carry the Word?*, this play uses documentary-style female camp survivor testimony based on Delbo's own experience. There is an unpublished English translation by Brian Singleton.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Kalavrita des mille Antigone (Kalavrita with One Thousand Antigones)*. Written in French

This work is a dramatic prose-poem chronicling the attempts of women to bury 1300 dead men who were executed by German soldiers in response to an attack by Greek partisans. It recounts the event to a visitor to a monument to that 1943 event. Published in *La mémoire et les jours* by Charlotte Delbo, Paris, Berg International, 1979. There is an unpublished English translation by Karen Alexander.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Les Hommes (The Men)* Written in French

Based on Delbo's experience, the play depicts French women imprisoned prior to deportation in 1942-43. They have been separated from their men, some of whom have been taken to be executed. To take their minds off of their horrific circumstances, the women decide to use their talents to stage a comedy by Alfred de Musset. Published in the journal *Théodore Balmoral* No. 68, Spring/Summer 2012.

Delbo, Charlotte. *Scene in Memory (French)*

Also translated as *A Scene Played in Memory*, the text of *Une scène jouée dans la mémoire* is based on the final few moments between Delbo and her soon-to-be-executed husband, both of whom were arrested for resisting the Nazis and publishing anti-German materials. Delbo interrupted a tour of South America to return to France in 1941 and join the Underground, and she and her husband were arrested in 1942.

de Sousa, Alice. *Aristides—the Outcast Hero*, 2009

This play is based on the true story of *Aristides de Sousa Mendes*, a Portuguese hero who saved many people trying to flee the Nazis, most of them Jewish, during World War II. De Sousa Mendes was a diplomat working in the Portuguese Consulate in Bordeaux in 1940, when he assisted some 30,000 refugees to safe passage from occupied France to neutral Portugal. Premiered at the Greenwich Playhouse, London, 2009.

Dettelbach, Cynthia. *For the Love of a Leica*

A Russian colonel's obsession with a Leica in Brest, Poland in 1940 drives him to send the camera's Jewish owner to a labor camp and deport his family to Siberia. Ironically,

he becomes the family's savior when all 30,000 Brest Jews are slaughtered by the Nazis. A story of one family's resilience and their redemptive reunion with their Russian colonel. Ensemble Theater, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Based on *The Leica and other Stories* by Harry Rosenberg.

Deutsch, Lucy. *The Miracle*

This play is based on the true story of Lucy Deutsch, alone in Auschwitz at age fourteen among 600 adult women. She learns early to be determined and keep her integrity against all odds. Later, as an orphan, she is imprisoned in Russia and uses her belief in herself to accomplish the impossible. Deutsch wrote 25 songs that are included in this musical play, based on her autobiography, *No Time To Weep*.

NEW

Donfeld, Noelle. *The Spark*, Hannah Senesh, 2009

Along with composer Sandy Shanin, [Donfeld](#) has written this [musical](#) about Hannah Szenes (Senesh), a play that emphasizes her heroism as a parachutist from British Mandate Palestine to Hungary. The play was a semi-finalist of the Eugene O'Neill Musical Theatre Conference in 2009. It was selected for the Monday Night Reading Series of Theatre Building Chicago, as well as for the Pacific Palisades CA Playwrights Festival in 2010.

Durlacher, Jessica and Leon de Winter. *Anne*, 2014

This play written in Dutch opened in Amsterdam in May 2014, presenting a complex picture of a teenage girl who is at times impetuous, spoiled, or lonely. Anne Frank is portrayed as resenting her mother, mocking adults, and discovering her emerging sexuality. This multimedia stage production is said to be part of the efforts by [Anne Frank Fonds](#), the Swiss charitable foundation created in 1963 by her father, Otto, to reshape her image for today. For a review of the play and the controversy surrounding it, see an article in [The New York Times](#).

Elias, Jane. *Do This One Thing For Me*

This one-woman play, performed by the playwright, is based on her Greek-Jewish father's testimony to the USC Shoah Foundation, as well as written recollections that he asked his daughter to transcribe. Performed at TBG Arts Center, New York, in April 2015.

Feldman, Susan. *Band in Berlin*

A musical documentary about Germany's Comedian Harmonists, the popular vocal sextet squelched by the Nazis. Helen Hayes Theater, New York, 1999.

Filloux, Catherine. *Lemkin's House*, 2006

Raphael Lemkin, the man who is credited for inventing the word genocide, as well as pushing the U.S. government to declare it an international crime, is at the center of this play. Lemkin died in 1959. Two of the world's bloodiest genocides, Bosnia and Rwanda, happened after the law he advocated was finally signed in the U.S. in 1988. This [play](#) by [Catherine Filloux](#) explores the idea of Lemkin being haunted by thinking he did not do enough to stop further genocides. Playscripts Inc.

Fink, Ida. *The Table*

In [Ida Fink's](#) drama, a prosecutor is preparing four witnesses to testify about killings by the Gestapo. None of the witnesses can agree about specific details regarding the murders, except that many were killed on a specific day. Because the prosecutor cannot present witnesses who can identify specific members of the Gestapo nor agree on all of the details, he cannot, according to the letter of the law, win a conviction. Black Hole Theatre, University of Manitoba, Canada, 2008. Original Language, Polish, published by Salem Press, 2008.

Fishman, Alexis and James Millar. *Der Gelbe Stern (The Yellow Star)*, 2011

Alexis Fishman, a granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, wrote and stars as Erika in this play about a Jewish cabaret singer forced from the stage by the Nazis. The play premiered in Australia in 2011 and in [New York](#) in summer 2014. Drawing on her interest in Weimar culture and Berlin at the time, Alexis plays Erika, a darling of Berlin nightclubs. The half sung-half spoken show the audience watches is her finale, before being prohibited from performing by the Nazis. For more information, see Fishman's [website](#).

Fletcher, Rebecca Joy. *Cities of Light*.

This one-woman pre-Holocaust play with music takes audiences back to the cabarets of 1920s Berlin, Yiddish Warsaw, Paris, and Tel Aviv. Katarina Waldorf is a brave and talented cabaret performer who flees Berlin towards places where Judaism and creativity can still thrive. The play features archival songs performed mostly in English, with some original Hebrew, Yiddish, French, and German. Read more about [Fletcher](#), a cantor and educator as well as an actor and playwright, and a [review](#) of the play.

Franchi, Eva. *La Ragazza di Dachau (Italian)*

The translation of the title is "the girl of Dachau," but it is a double entendre for the "whore of Dachau." The play presents a trial in which the court hears of the victimization of the female camp prisoner. La Compagnia del Centro Sperimentale del Teatro di Torrelunga di Brescia, 1968; La Compagnia "I Rabbdomanti," Milan, 1969.

Frockt, Deborah Lynn. *The Book of Ruth*, 2001

In this [play](#), Hannah and her granddaughter Ruth are in a Nazi internment camp where they have only each other. As they try to save themselves from starvation and avoid being transported East, they fight to preserve themselves, their culture, and their humanity. Hannah tells Ruth recipes, while Ruth draws pictures, both of which help them support each other and be emotionally transported to a better place. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Futterman, Enid and Michael Cohen. *I Am Anne Frank*, 2006

This musical drama is an updated version of Futterman and Cohen's earlier musical, *Yours, Anne* (1985). Writer Enid Futterman and composer Michael Cohen combine spoken excerpts from Anne's diary with songs that reveal the power of her inner life. See more information [here](#).

Gaudencio, Livia. *There Is No Sun in Ravensbrück*, 2015 (Portuguese)

Livia Gaudencio created the story of three Ravensbrück prisoners who exchange reports and personal experiences in the camp's barracks. Each of these fictional characters represent a composite: a Jewish French prostitute, a Russian lesbian Red Army sniper, and a German nurse "race defiler" who collaborated with Jews. Through their narratives, the audience learns about countless women's lives, and about daily concentration camp life. The script focuses on aspects of female imprisonment that include gender abuse and solidarity. A [reading](#) was performed in São Paulo, Brazil, in spring 2015.

Ginsburg, Shira. *Bubby's Kitchen*

Bubby's Kitchen is a one act one-woman musical written by and performed by [Cantor Shira Ginsburg](#). The play explores the themes of the legacy of Jewish women's voices, Jewish identity, self-realization, and the personal synthesis of Jewish history, against the backdrop of the Holocaust and modern day America. Inspired by the heroic actions of resistance her grandparents took against the Nazis as partisans in the forests of Belarus, [Bubby's Kitchen](#) is the story of one young woman's struggle to live up to her grandparents' incredible legacy. Yudis and Motke Ginsburg were among the 30,000 Jews who came out of the forests at the end of World War II. They made their way to America and started a farm in Troy, NY, where Cantor Ginsburg grew up. She weaves together a story of loss, survival, food, and family with vibrancy and wit. The play was performed in April 2016 at the [Manhattan JCC](#), with original music by Cantor Jonathan Comisar, and excerpts were performed as part of the May 2, 2016, program to launch the second edition of this *Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust Resource Handbook*.

Glickman, Nora, *Two Charlottes*, 2002

Two Charlottes by [Nora Glickman](#) is based on the lives of the well-known German-Jewish artist [Charlotte Salomon](#) (1917–1943) and of French non-Jewish writer [Charlotte Delbo](#) (1913–1985). The play tells the story of an imaginary meeting between Charlotte Salomon, who was murdered during the Holocaust, and Charlotte Delbo, a non-Jewish member of the French resistance who was a well-known writer. (See Introduction and Delbo bibliography entries.) Both were prisoners at Auschwitz, but they never met. The pregnant Salomon was murdered on arrival, while Delbo was transferred to Ravensbrück and survived. The play celebrates the lives of both women through their unique creations in visual and written art. It was performed at the International University Theatre Festival, May 2003, in Jerusalem and continues to be performed in several countries throughout Europe, North America, and South America.

Goldberg, Lea. *The Lady of the Castle*, 1954

The Lady of the Castle, by famous and prolific Israeli writer [Lea Goldberg](#), takes place several years after World War II, when Zand and Dora, two Israelis, stumble upon a castle somewhere in Europe. Because of a storm outside, Zand and Dora have to take shelter in the castle. They learn that the watchman, who is also the castle's owner, has been hiding a Jewish girl named Lena from the Nazis. The watchman, who has fallen in love with Lena and wants her to stay with him, has not told her that the war is over. Zand and Dora try to save Lena and take her back to Israel. The play was translated into English by T. Carmi, Tel Aviv, in 1970 as *Lady of the Castle: A Dramatic Episode in Three Acts*.

NEW**Goldberg, Linda S. *Unwrapped Gifts*, 2017**

This play, based on the life and works of artist Charlotte Salomon, was presented as a reading at the Workshop Theater's Jewel Box, New York, in January 2017. Exiled from Berlin to the French countryside in an attempt to flee the Holocaust, she searches for love and sanity in the face of devastating personal loss and the chaos of war. Although she finds salvation in painting her life, she ultimately is sent, pregnant, to her death in Auschwitz. *Unwrapped Gifts* tells the story of the woman and the artist haunted by death, unattainable love, and a world at the abyss.

Goldstein, Dana Leslie. *Next Year in Jerusalem*, 2009

Abraham Mendel fled Europe at the start of World War II, fought in Israel's War of Independence, and now, in his seventies, lives in Brooklyn. The play is about his relationship with his adult daughters. Things come to a head at the family's Passover dinner, leading to great changes for the future. See details [here](#).

Gomon, Harriet. *Cooking with the Mouth*, 2015

In this approximately 35-minute show, the narrator, Jill, is an American Jewish journalist temporarily in Berlin to cover a technology festival. Having learned about the Holocaust at a too-early age, she has a phobia about the subject. However, after she accidentally meets a survivor of Ravensbrück and learns how discussing recipes enabled women to retain a sense of identity and transcend their brutal circumstances. Jill evolves in her ability to deal with the Holocaust, bringing particular a dream of the survivor to fruition.

Goodrich, Frances and Albert Hackett. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1956

This theatrical production based on the well-known diary of Anne Frank originally played on Broadway for nearly two years and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Tony Award for Best Play in 1956. It originally starred Susan Strasberg as Anne, and was revived in 1997 with Natalie Portman making her Broadway debut as Anne. This version of the play about a young Jewish girl hiding from the Nazis in an attic in Amsterdam during World War II caused controversy that still abounds in some circles. Meyer Levin had assumed in 1952 that he would be the one to bring a different version of Anne Frank's diary to the stage. See the entries below on Rinne Groff's *Compulsion* and Meyer Levin's *Diary of Anne Frank* for more information and links. Published by Random House.

Graf, Wendy. *Leipzig*

This play explores the journey of a three-member Catholic family, whose matriarch has become ill with Alzheimer's disease. She begins praying in Hebrew, unwittingly revealing her long held secret that she is a Jewish child refugee of the Holocaust. Produced by West Coast Jewish Theatre and The Group at the Marilyn Monroe Theater of the Lee Strasberg Institute, opened October 20, 2006.

Green, Phoebe. *Blessed is the Match*

This is one of the plays about the heroic life of Hannah Senesh (Szenes), the Hungarian born 23-year-old who immigrated to Palestine in 1939. She was later recruited by the British to be parachuted into Europe in 1944 to try to rescue downed Allied airmen and help the Hungarian Jewish community. One of three women in the British Mandate parachutist effort, she was ultimately captured, tortured, and executed by the Nazis.

Groag, Lillian. *The White Rose*, 1998

This play, based on historical events, chronicles the story of eight students from the University of Munich, who protested against the Nazi regime at the height of World War II. The students, who called themselves the White Rose, demonstrate the importance and courage of making a choice not to be a bystander. Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Groff, Rinne. *Compulsion*, 2010

This play by [Rinne Groff](#) begins in 1951, when Sid Silver, a man deeply moved by Anne Frank's diary, wants to bring the story to the American masses. Silver pushes to promote the diary's publication, as well as adapting the diary into a play. *Compulsion* looks into Silver's investigation into the diary, and explores the obsession he has with retaining its memory. The play is inspired by the true story of author Meyer Levin and his pursuit to bring his version of Anne Frank's story to a wider audience. [Mandy Patinkin](#) played the role of Silver/Levin, starring among a cast of marionettes. Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Grusková, Anna. *Rabínka (The Woman Rabbi)*

This [play](#) was written and performed in Slovakian, but it has been translated into English. It tells the story of Gisi Fleishmann of Bratislava, a heroine of the Holocaust and one of the few female communal leaders. The play was later made into a film. Slovak National Theatre.

Hamer, Janice (composer) and Mary Azrael (librettist). *Lost Childhood*

A three-act, full-length opera based on Dr. Yehuda Nir's memoir of his childhood hiding from the Nazis in Poland during World War II, and on conversations with musicologist Gottfried Wagner. When Nir's father was arrested in 1941, Yehuda was eleven years old, and in order to survive, he, his mother, and his teenage sister moved from place to place disguised as Polish Catholics. Commissioned and developed by [American Opera Projects](#). On November 9, 2013, The National Philharmonic presented the first complete concert performance of the opera at the Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda, MD.

Hibbert, Cate and *Voices of the Holocaust. I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

This play takes a retrospective look at the stages toward genocide through the eyes of the children of Theresienstadt: humiliation on the streets of German cities, synagogue burnings, Einsatzgruppen, and resistance. Jewish festivals and cultural values are embedded in the children's story, which ends with their arrival in Auschwitz in 1944. Produced January 2013, Stantonbury Campus, Milton Keynes, UK. Source material, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942–1944* by Hana Volavkova.

Hibbert, Cate and *Voices of the Holocaust. Under the Apple Tree*

Polish nurse and social worker Irena Sendler rescued more than 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto. At great personal risk, she smuggled children out of the ghetto, providing them with false identity papers and keeping their identities safe in the hope of reuniting them with their families when the war ended. Their names were kept in glass jars and buried under the apple tree of a house in Warsaw. Produced January 2014, Chrysalis Theatre, Milton Keynes, UK.

Hoffman, Eva. *The Ceremony*

The play takes place during one day, at a 2001 commemorative ceremony for a horrific massacre perpetrated in 1941 in the small town of Jedwabne, by the town's Polish inhabitants on their Jewish neighbors. For background and excerpts, please see Eva Hoffman, "The Ceremony (Excerpts from a Play)," in Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylinski, eds., *Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations After the Holocaust*, University of Nebraska Press, 2007, pp. 150–173.

Hutton, Arlene. *Letters to Sala*

As she is about to have heart surgery, Sala suddenly presents her daughter, Ann Kirschner, with a priceless collection of more than 300 letters and photographs, revealing a secret she has hidden from her family for nearly 50 years. She had risked her life to preserve this collection during five brutal years as a prisoner in seven different Nazi forced-labor camps. Produced by Annie Russell Theatre, Rollins College, Florida, February 2011. Directed by Eric Nightengale and performed off-Broadway in New York in October 2015. Based on the book *Sala's Gift* by Ann Kirschner. Publisher: Dramatists Play Service.

Israely, Razia and Chaim Marin. *The Dentist*

This one-woman monologue is about Rosi, a lonely 50-year-old physician coming to terms with her childhood as the daughter of a Holocaust survivor. She tells the story of her father at his graveside. He was arrested by the Gestapo and taken to Auschwitz where he was forced into the *Sonderkommando*. His experiences at the camp alienated him from his family, but before he dies, Rosi is able to forgive him. Produced 2006, Women's Festival Holon Theatre, Israel; 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Source Material: Dr. Gideon Greif's book, *We Wept Without Tears: Testimonies of the Jewish Sonderkommando from Auschwitz*. English and Hebrew versions.

Jelinek, Elfriede. *Rechnitz [Der Würgeengel]* (German)

This is a response by Austrian Nobel Laureate Elfriede Jelinek to the discovery of the orgiastic massacre of 180 Jews during a party thrown by Countess Margit Thyssen von Batthyany at Rechnitz Castle in Austria in March 1945. The play is a modern "text for speaking" written for performer/messengers who mix the story with language play and haunting stage imagery. In October 2010, the play caused protests in Dusseldorf. Based on the book *The Thyssen Art Macabre*, published by Rowohlt Theater Verlag.

Josephs, Alice and Dean Kaner. *The Night of Broken Glass*

The play is based on the events of *Kristallnacht* on November 9–10, 1938, in Nazi Germany and Austria, when hundreds of synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses were systematically destroyed and up to 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps. *The Night of Broken Glass* is based on some of the events that led up to the trial of

Herschel Grynzspan, called Herschel Green in the play. Produced by The Met Theatre, Los Angeles.

Kafrissen, Rokhel. *A Brokhe*, 2014

A brokhe (a blessing) is a bi-lingual Yiddish-English play, which was presented as a reading at [KlezKanada](#) in August 2014. Set in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Brownsville, in the early 1950s, the play takes place when thousands of Eastern European Jews arrived in the United States after the horrors of the Holocaust. Members of the Brayndls family find themselves haunted by the wartime past and threatened by American forces they don't quite understand. With guns, ghosts, and gangsters, *a brokhe* explores the role of violence in contemporary Jewish history and the Jewish response to trauma. See excerpts at the [BBC](#) website and [YouTube](#).

Karo, Inge Heilman. *The Library*

In this short drama for young audiences, a librarian in the United States looks back at her childhood during the Third Reich, when, as a Jew, she was forced to give up her library privileges.

Katz, Susan B., *Courage Untold*, 1986, revised 1991

This three-act docudrama chronicles the October 1944 prisoners' uprising in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Protagonist [Roza Robota](#) and her female compatriots are captured and show courage while facing torture and death. The first act details the preparations for the revolt, including the smuggling of gunpowder by women working in the camp's munitions factory to the *Sonderkommando* that oversees the gassing and cremation of prisoners. The revolt is successful in destroying Crematorium IV. However, in the second act, one of the conspirators betrays her colleagues. The play is based on interviews with survivors, including Hanka Wajcblum Heilman. Typescript can be found in the archives of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Kentof, Alina. *Dr. Yanush Korczak*

This play tells the story of Dr. Yanush Korczak, advocate of children and director of the Warsaw Orphanage. The doctor sacrifices his chance at freedom to accompany his orphans to the concentration camp Treblinka, where he meets his death along with the children. Based on *A Field of Buttercups* by Joseph Hyams.

Kesselman, Wendy. (Adapted from Goodrich and Hackett). *The Diary of Anne Frank*, 1997

This new [adaptation](#) of the classic production of Anne Frank's story is enhanced with recently discovered writings from the diary, along with survivor testimony, to create a new version of the story. The play was [reviewed](#) when it was performed

at the F.M. Kirby Shakespeare Theater, Drew University, in Madison, New Jersey in November 2015. Dramatists Play.

Kesselman, Wendy. *I Love You, I Love You Not*

Teenager Daisy learns to accept and honor her Jewish heritage while visiting her grandmother. Daisy is unhappy with herself and her family life. Her grandmother gives her emotional stability by providing her with grandmotherly advice and support, as well as recounting her experiences in Auschwitz, where she lost her two sisters. Produced Louisville, KY, 1982.

Kessler, Renata. *The Wartime Diary of Edmund Kessler*

This play is based on the diary of the playwright's father, which was published as *The Wartime Diary of Edmund Kessler* (Academic Studies Press, 2010). This is an eyewitness account of his experiences in the Lvov Ghetto, the Janowska concentration camp, and in hiding in an underground bunker.

Klein, Gerda Weissmann. *Untitled, performed in Bolkenhain Concentration Camp*

Gerda Weissmann Klein, while a prisoner in Bolkenhain during the Holocaust, received permission to write and stage a light-humored play. It expressed the hope for a better life for future generations, who would find the inmates' present circumstances unbelievable. The play was performed on a Sunday and was so well received that it was presented on subsequent Sundays, so that more prisoners could attend. Mrs. Klein wrote in her autobiography, *All But My Life*, that she believed her play was "the greatest thing" she ever did in her life.

Krall, Hannah. *To Steal a March on God*

This play is based on the author's 1976 interviews with Marek Edelman, the last living survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, as well as on his 1945 memoir. The drama is structured in five sections; the opening and closing are set at a ceremony celebrating the anniversary of the famous ghetto revolt. The three other sections are based on the interviews with the survivor, now a doctor, and use flashbacks to recount the actions of the 24-year-old resistance fighter. Production, Warsaw, May 1980. Original Language, Polish, with an English translation by Jadwiga Kosicka.

Kraus, Joanna H. *Angel in the Night*, 1995

This **play** is designed to inspire the audience to realize that even one person can make a difference. The drama is based on the true story of a Polish Catholic teenager named Marysia Pawlina Szul, who saved the lives of four Jewish people during World War II. The story follows Marysia's struggle to save the fugitive family, even as it became more dangerous. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Kraus, Joanna H. *Remember My Name*, 1989

This story, which is inspired by the historical account of [Le Chambon sur-Lignon](#), tells of a young Jewish girl's survival in wartime France, along with those who tried to help her. The play was performed by J-Town Playhouse company for Yom HaShoah in Jerusalem in 2015 as part AACI's (Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel) program. Samuel French Inc.

Kron, Lisa. *2.5 Minute Ride*

The [play](#) is based on author Lisa Kron's relationship with her father, Walter, a German-Jewish Holocaust survivor who escaped Germany by Kindertransport in 1937 at age fifteen. The play recounts anecdotes of Kron family life, including her father's insistence on an annual family trip to an amusement park in Ohio. A trip that Lisa takes to Auschwitz with her ailing father helps her better understand Walter's personal history. Switching from the amusement park to the concentration camp, the play portrays the author's idea that "humor and horror are flip sides of the same coin." The play received an OBIE Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations, Los Angeles Drama-Logue and GLAAD Media Awards, and was named the best autobiographical show of 1999 by New York Press. La Jolla Playhouse, 1996; Public Theater, New York, 1999; toured extensively to theaters including the American Repertory Theatre, Hartford Stage, the London Barbican and Theater Company Rinkogun in Japan.

Lauro, Shirley. *All Through the Night*, 2010

[All Through the Night](#), which was inspired by interviews with German non-Jewish women, is set during and after the Third Reich. The story examines the Nazis' impact on these young women's lives, through adulthood, under the regime. Hard choices were made, and they chose to survive or succumb. They are all changed forever by their experience. The New York premiere was presented in 2009 by [Red Fern Theatre](#). Samuel French, Inc.

Lebow, Barbara. *A Shayna Maidel*, 1998

This [play](#) by [Barbara Lebow](#) begins in 1946, when Rose Weiss, a young woman in her twenties, is living in a Manhattan apartment. Rose came to America with her father from Poland when she was four years old. Rose's mother and sisters were supposed to join them but were stuck in Europe when the war broke out. Rose, who is now "Americanized" and lives with her father, is confronted with the arrival of Luisa the only one of her sisters who survived the war. Luisa and Rose are very different, and both have to learn to adjust to each other. Luisa brings memories of the times before the war. When Rose receives a letter that her mother wrote before the war, a new sense of family is created, with a conviction for a better future from the troubled past. Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

Leichter, Käthe with Herta Breuer. *Schum Schum*, 1942

This play was written by two Jewish political prisoners, Social Democrat [Käthe Leichter](#) and Communist Herta Breuer, and performed in Ravensbrück women's concentration camp. The play was lost, but was described by Rosa Jochmann, an Austrian Social Democrat political prisoner who survived. See the Introduction above for more details.

Lev, Gabriella and Ayellet Stoller, *Shulem*

Gabriella Lev, a child of Holocaust survivors, is the founder and director of [Theatre Company Jerusalem](#) (based in Jerusalem), which presents original plays in Hebrew and English that often have a feminist or Holocaust-related theme. *Shulem* juxtaposes the traditional Seder night with personal truncated memories from the Shoah in a unique and powerful dramatization.

Liebrecht, Savyon. *Mushkat* (Hebrew)

Lydia and Paula are rich Jewish sisters, living in Hungary. During the war they hide in the basement of their estate, together with Lydia's son, Albert, and a Christian maid named Sonia. Life is extremely difficult in hiding, and they are cold, hungry and afraid—unfamiliar feelings for these wealthy characters. Truth comes to light, with connections and relationships, including those between Sonia's family and the rich Jews, and a love story blooms between the young. Staged by Habima, Israel, 1998. Publisher: Or Am.

Leitner, Isabella. *Fragments of Isabella*

A dramatic presentation of [Isabella Leitner's](#) autobiography. Leitner, a Hungarian Jew, survived Auschwitz (where her mother and younger sister were killed on arrival in May 1944), a labor camp, and a death march to Bergen-Belsen (where another sister died). After liberation by the Russians, she and two surviving sisters arrived in the United States on the day World War II ended. Produced by Abbey Theatre, Dublin, 1989.

Litwak, Jessica. *Promised Land*

This play by [Jessica Litwak](#) is about the relationship between two women brought together in the forest, as they try to escape from the Nazis. Sonia, a young girl who is an atheist, takes Rivka, the rabbi's wife, from the ghetto to hide in the forest. Commissioned by The National Federation of Jewish Culture.

Loher, Dea. *Olga's Room*, 1992

Translated from German by David Tushingham, this [play](#) is based on the true story of [Olga Benario Prestes](#). A revolutionary communist German Jew, she went to Brazil with Brazilian communist leader Prestes. Pregnant with his baby, she was deported from Brazil to Nazi Germany in 1936 and ultimately murdered in Ravensbrück in 1942.

Louw, Gail. *Blonde Poison*, 2013

This [play](#) is based on the true story of [Stella Goldschlag](#), who was given the nickname Blonde Poison by the Gestapo, because she betrayed up to 3,000 fellow Jews in Berlin during World War II. Oberon Books.

Mann, Emily. *Annulla, an Autobiography*, 1985

The [play](#) focuses on the exchange between Annulla, a Holocaust survivor, and Emily, a character based on the author, who comes to record Annulla's oral history of her experiences in the Holocaust. Theatre Communications Group.

Mansfield, Cathy Lesser. *The Sparks Fly Upward* (opera), 2008

This opera by composer/librettist Mansfield was first fully staged in 2008. It follows the stories of three families in Berlin during the Holocaust. In June 2014, to promote interest in a live performance in Washington, DC, a video of the in a production was screened in Alexandria, VA. See a sample [here](#).

Milligan, Alexis and Michael McPhee. *937: The Voyage of the Doomed*

This half-hour [play](#) from Two Planks and a Passion Theatre Company had an eight-show run in 2013 at the Atlantic Fringe Festival, Halifax, Canada. Along with two Dalhousie theatre students, the play's creators animated coats and used shadows to tell one family's story aboard the doomed passenger liner [St. Louis](#). The ship's 937 passengers, 900 of whom were Jewish, sailed from Germany for Havana in 1939 to flee Nazi persecution. The play is largely a story about a father trying to lead his family to safety, but also trying to protect his son from knowing something is wrong. There is no dialogue. Milligan is a former puppeteer with Mermaid Theatre and CBC's *Mighty Jungle*.

Mitchell, Shelley. *Talking with Angels*, 2001

This play is about the true story of Gitta Mallasz's heroic attempt to save her three Jewish friends, along with more than 100 women and children, from deportation during World War II. Gitta protected the women and children by sheltering them in a "war factory" that she managed.

Moscovitch, Hanna. *The Children's Republic*

Among the Polish-Jewish children that Dr. Janusz Korczak is protecting in a Warsaw orphanage are a violin prodigy, a troublemaker, a young girl abandoned by her mother, and a malnourished boy. Even as the known ending looms, we are engaged in the everyday details of keeping the children alive. Production: Tarragon Theatre Mainspace, Toronto, November 2011. Moscovitch also wrote [East of Berlin](#).

Nanus, Susan. *The Survivor*

A group of daring Jewish teenagers smuggle food, other necessities, and then arms to the suffering Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto. Morosco Theatre, New York, 1981. The play is based on survivor Jack Eisner's 1980 autobiography, *The Survivor*.

Needleman, Felicia and Laurence Holzman. *Wallenberg: A New Musical Drama*

A musical that describes the amazing life story of a man who single-handedly saved the lives of thousands of Budapest Jews during the Holocaust. Music by Benjamin Rosenbluth. Produced in White Plains, NY Performing Arts Center in October 2010.

Nowak, Alma. *Auschwitz Oratorio*

This Polish play depicts the horrors of the Auschwitz maternity barrack by using a female chorus speaking in verse, with a prisoner who serves as a midwife. The midwife recounts the details of infants drowned, bodies fed to rats, infants with Aryan features being taken for adoption, and newborns starved to death when their malnourished mothers cannot breast-feed them. Unpublished English translation by A.M Furdyna.

Obolensky, Kira. *Hiding in the Open*, 2011

Hiding in the Open is a theatrical adaptation of Sabina Zimering's memoir, with the same name. The play is the true story of two Jewish sisters who obtain false Catholic identities in Poland during World War II. The sisters work in a Nazi hotel and live in constant fear that their true identities will be discovered. Playscripts, Inc.

Olmert, Aliza. *Piano Fantasy* (Hebrew)

Sixty-year-old Anna returns to the village in which she grew up in Poland. The village has financial problems that it hopes to solve through Jewish tourism. The villagers fight over accommodating Anna. Anna is there to find her piano, the one she was playing with her mother when the Nazis came and took her. She wants her grandson to have the piano. She stays with an old couple and soon begins to suspect their house was her own childhood house. Helena, her hostess, fears Anna will not only take the piano but the house itself. The farmer confronts his wife after she kicks Anna out, and finds out the truth: Helena's parents worked for the Jews, and her mother told the Germans about Anna's family. When Helena's father saw the Jewish family on the train, he took the house. Anna shows them papers that prove the house is hers, but says she'll only take the piano. Helena refuses, being influenced by the village's hatred of Jews. Anna tells her there is gold under the floor, and Helena and her husband tear down the house. Production: Cameri Theater, Israel, 1994.

Ozick, Cynthia. *The Shawl* (also called *Blue Light*)

The New Yorker published Cynthia Ozick's short story *The Shawl* in 1980, and in 1983 the same magazine published her sequel called *Rosa*, a novella. Both stories

were incorporated and published as a book in 1995. Meanwhile, Ozick decided in 1990 to dramatize *The Shawl* and *Rosa* for the stage. In 1992, the play, which portrays the harrowing memories of a female Holocaust survivor, had two staged readings in New York at Playwrights Horizons. This was followed by a production, directed by Sidney Lumet, at Sag Harbor's Bay Street Theatre. After revisions, in 1996 *The Shawl* was produced off-Broadway, at Playhouse 91 of the American Jewish Repertory Theatre. This version of the play received a short review in [*The New York Times*](#). In 1995, actress Claire Bloom presented a dramatic reading of *The Shawl* on *Jewish Short Stories from Eastern Europe and Beyond*, a National Public Radio series.

Page, Alex. *The Canceled Sky*

Based on an earlier radio play, this is a dramatization of the dreams and fears of Jewish female prisoners from Czechoslovakia, who are being transported to a Nazi concentration camp. In *From Valley Playwrights Theatre*, v2, Playwrights Press, 1989.

Pascal, Julia. *Theresa*, 1990

The play, the first of [*Julia Pascal's*](#) Holocaust trilogy, is based on secret research about the occupation of the Channel Islands by the Nazis, as well as the true story of Theresia Steiner. She was one of three Jewish women deported from Guernsey and gassed in Auschwitz. *Theresa* reveals the collaboration of the government, police, and ordinary islanders with the Nazis between 1940 and 1944. The play is a fictionalized retelling of Theresia's story, incorporating theatre, music, and dance. March 1990, Gulbenkian Studio Theatre, Newcastle, UK; November 5, 1995, New End Theatre, Hampstead, UK, as part of *The Holocaust Trilogy* by Julia Pascal. Published by Oberon books.

Pascal, Julia. *A Dead Woman on Holiday*

A Dead Woman on Holiday, the second of Pascal's trilogy, takes place during the Nuremberg Trials after World War II. Sophie Goldenberg, a French Jew, is working as a translator during the hearings when she and a Catholic American soldier meet and fall in love. However, she has an English husband, and he, an American wife and child. In addition to the war crimes theme, the play addresses issues such as adultery, guilt, and survival. Published by Oberon books.

Pascal, Julia. *The Dybbuk*, 1992

This is the third play in Pascal's Holocaust trilogy. Using the concept of S. Ansky's 1914 Yiddish play about a dislocated soul that inhabits a living person, English playwright and director Pascal has framed it in the context of the Holocaust. The soul is that of a person who has died too early, and the play opens with a monologue by Judith, a contemporary British Jew describing a trip to Germany. Unable to shake her thoughts of the generations lost to the Nazis, Judith is haunted by the faces she sees in dreams, her own dybbuks. The scene changes to a wartime ghetto, and Judith becomes one of five Jews living in too-close quarters on little more than fear

and memories. *The Dybbuk* premiered in London at the New End Theatre in July 1992, then the Lillian Baylis Theatre. Since 1992 it has played in Munich at the Festival of Jewish Theatre, at Maubeuge's International Theatre Festival, in Poland (British Council tour), Sweden, Belgium and a major British regional tour. *The Dybbuk* is published by Oberon Books in "The Holocaust Trilogy," three plays by Pascal. *The Dybbuk* had its US premiere at [Theater for the New City](#) in New York City in August 2010. See a review of the [play](#) when it ran off-Broadway in New York City.

Patz, Naomi, *The Last Cyclist*

This [play](#) by Naomi Patz is a re-imagination of a cabaret performed in Terezin and written there by Karel Švenk in 1944, as adapted in 1961 by Jana Šedová, the only known survivor of the original cast. It depicts the dress rehearsal in Terezín of a bitterly funny absurdist allegory mocking Nazism. Cyclists (Jews) are the victims of lunatics (Nazis) who escape their asylum to persecute bike riders. Many ridiculous misadventures later, the hero defeats the lunatics by accidentally sending them to the moon on the rocket ship they had built to be rid of him, the last remaining cyclist. The play was performed at West End Theater, New York in 2013. To see a review, please see [The New York Times](#).

Pelham, Aviva. *Santa's Story*

This one-woman show is the true story of Santa Pelham, who escaped war-torn Europe by agreeing to marry a man from Rhodesia whom she had never met and to whom she had only written a few times through a friend's introduction. Santa's daughter, opera singer Aviva Pelham, brings to life the story of Santa's journey from Germany to Spain, France, and finally Africa. Produced by The Fugard Studio Theatre, Cape Town, South Africa, 2012.

Perry, Ruth. *The Great Hope*

In the Austrian capital, following the [Anschluss](#), a young non-Jewish female with distant Jewish relatives decides she will wear the yellow Star of David that her Jewish friends are required to wear by Nazi law. Publisher: Dramatic Publishing Co.

Piatka, Naava. *Better Don't Talk! 1998*

This musical memoir is written about the playwright's mother, Chayela Rosenthal, a star of the Yiddish stage in the Vilna Ghetto Theatre during World War II.

Pilcer, Sonia. *The Holocaust Kid*

Adapted from Sonia Pilcer's book of the same name, [The Holocaust Kid](#) is a collection of linked autobiographical stories that portrays the life of a "2G"—second generation, a term for the child of a Holocaust survivor. It captures what it means to be born in the shadows of death, and to live and love without forgetting. (Pilcer coined the term 2G in

her book, *7 Days*.) Pilcer was born in a displaced persons camp in Germany to Polish-Jewish Holocaust survivors. Her father was in Auschwitz and her mother, in a forced labor camp. Produced by Shakespeare & Company, Lenox, MA; Ensemble Studio Theater, New York, NY.

Pohl, Lucie. *Hi Hitler*, 2014

This one-woman play performed by Pohl is a comedy that ran in New York and then at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Pohl, who is Berthold Brecht's great niece, chronicles her experiences immigrating to the United States as a child from Germany, as well as her life-long obsession with Hitler.

Posmysz, Zofia. *The Passenger in Cabin 45* (1959)

This was originally a radio play in Polish, written by and based on the experiences of **Zofia** Posmysz, a Polish Catholic survivor of Auschwitz and a satellite of Ravensbrück. She turned the play into a novel in Poland in 1962, and it then had television and film versions. The story became an opera entitled *The Passenger*, now in English translation, by composer Mieczyslaw Weinberg and librettist Alexander Medvedev. The staged premiere was in Austria in 2010. See this [article](#) for more information on the opera, which was performed by the Houston Grand Opera in July 2014 in New York City as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. The principal character is a Nazi guard, whom a former concentration camp prisoner believes she sees while traveling on a ship to Brazil.

NEW

Prager, June. *Distant Survivors*, 2016

The play is a poetic drama by June Prager about an American of German descent haunted by the Holocaust. Adapted from the poetry of William Heyen, the inspiration for the play came from several volumes of his Holocaust poetry: *Erika*, *Falling from Heaven*, and *Shoah Train*. Produced by the Mirage Theater Company and [Blue Moon Plays](#) in New York, the play confronts the hatred of "the other" and creates a world where memories of Holocaust victims and persecutors reawaken and are revealed to a man seeking to understand a time when evil destroyed the lives of millions.

Raspanti, Celeste. *No Fading Star*, 1979

This [play](#), based on historical evidence, takes place in a monastery in 1943 Germany, where an active underground dedicated to hiding and transporting Jewish children operates. The story focuses on the arrival of two children named David and Miriam. David insists on returning to the ghetto to perform his bar mitzvah. Mother Franziska, putting herself in danger from another nun who is a Nazi sympathizer, plans a bar mitzvah for David and gets the children to safety. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Raspanti, Celeste. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, 1980

By the end of World War II, only about a hundred Jewish children were liberated from the Terezín Ghetto, after more than 15,000 children either passed through or died there. This **story** centers on Raja, one of the survivors, and her family and friends during her time in Terezín. Butterflies are a symbol of defiance and beauty in the world. Her story comes to show hope within the anguish. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Raspanti, Celeste. *The Terezín Promise*, 2004

This subsequent **play** centers on Raja, the same character from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, Raspanti's earlier play about Terezín. After the liberation of the camp, the Nazis begin to retreat, while trying to destroy evidence of their crimes. Raja tries to keep her promise to her teacher, to not leave the camp without the drawings and poems created within it. Raja convinces some other survivors to look for the buried bundles and hidden suitcases with the art. When faced with an opportunity for vengeance, Raja teaches one of her companions the importance of leaving revenge and anger in the past. In the end, they find the art that they were looking for and walk toward their new freedom. Dramatic Publishing Co.

Ravel, Aviva. *Vengeance*, 1988

This **play** surrounds the confrontation of Anna, a 40 year-old Holocaust survivor, and Stephania, a former Polish opera singer who gave Anna's family away to the Nazis.

Rissetto, Diana. *Warmth*

Well-meaning Gemma has a happy life as a Catholic kindergarten schoolteacher, but her heart of gold sometimes gets her into trouble. For example, she finds herself volunteering with a foundation that helps and makes scarves for rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust. Wanting to do more, she arranges for Magdelone, an 88-year-old Polish woman, to stay with her for two weeks. As Gemma grows close to Magdelone and her long-lost Jewish-American grandson, Victor, she becomes obsessed with the atrocities of the past and struggles with an odd form of Christian guilt, intent on healing all the world's problems. New Jersey Playwright Contest, staged reading as a finalist, Grange Playhouse, Howell, NJ community run.

Ritchie, Rebecca and Violet Fabian. *The Phoenix Cantata*

This is the true story of Violet Fabian, a Holocaust survivor, who after the war had to choose between two men, as she moved on from being liberated from Bergen-Belsen. She had a choice of marrying either a Catholic medical student who was helping to fight typhus in the liberated camps or a fellow survivor from her native town who wanted to resume their life from before. Commissioned by the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, Inc.

Rittner, Hannah. *Love and Exile*, 2014

Love and Exile, a play with music, tells the story of Poldi, a Holocaust survivor and recent immigrant to Chicago. Poldi lives between two worlds: the living and the dead. As she grows more attached to the ghost of her daughter Ella (dead during the Holocaust), the needs of her young son Max intensify. She suffers the demands of too many loves—Ella, Max, an adoring tailor named Yoseph, and the forbidden love for the married and pious Rabbi Shlomo. This story chronicles her journey between the strains of life and the escape from death's ghosts. The piece uses poetic language, song, and impressionist images to showcase the power of spiritual fractures and how they influence Poldi's relationship to time itself. The play was workshopped in 2014 with the NYU Musical Theater Department, and The Bechdel Group.

Sachs, Nelly (1891–1970). *Eli*, a verse play, 1943

German-Jewish poet and playwright [Nelly Sachs](#) fled Nazi Germany for Sweden in May 1940. Her poetic drama *Eli* was broadcast in West Germany as a radio play in 1958 and then premiered on stage in Dortmund in 1961. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966. As she wrote the verse drama *Eli, Ein Mysterienspiel vom Leiden Israels* (*Eli: A Mystery Play of the Sufferings of Israel*) in 1943, this is the first known preserved Holocaust drama ever written. *Eli* has also been staged in Sweden, Great Britain, and the United States, where it premiered in 1981 at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. See more information [here](#).

Sack, Leeny. *The Survivor and the Translator*

This solo theater piece discusses what it is like not having gone through the Holocaust herself, but being a daughter of a survivor. (In *The Theater of the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Skloot, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.)

Samuels, Diane. *Kindertransport*. 1993

This story focuses on the life and choices of Eva Schlesinger/Evelyn Miller, a nine-year-old girl separated from her German Jewish parents and brought to Manchester on the Kindertransport. The play goes through Eva's transformation from trying to deny her roots, up until Eva's own daughter discovers some letters that give clues to Eva's past. While this play is fiction, it is based upon many true accounts of children who were on the Kindertransport. The character's daughter, Faith, goes beyond her mother's rejection of her past and tries to restore the family's connection with the Holocaust. The play was first performed in London at the Cockpit Theatre in 1993, and then in various locales. Most recently it was presented in Jerusalem in spring 2014 by J-Town Playhouse Theater Project. An [educational packet](#) is available as a PDF. The play was published as a book by Nick Hern Books, London, 2010.

Sandager, Susie. *Time with Corrie ten Boom*

Susie Sandager created and performs in a one-woman show about Dutch Christian rescuer [Corrie ten Boom](#). Along with her sister, ten Boom was a prisoner in Ravensbrück women's concentration camp. Corrie survived and wrote *The Hiding Place* about her experience. This one-woman show (which varies according to the audience) brings to life the ten Boom family's rescue of Jews during the Holocaust. Sandager and her husband founded Yad B'Yad to develop and nurture relationships between Christians and Jews, and the play is an activity of their organization. She performed her play for an educators' conference at Yad Vashem in July 2014. For more information, see [here](#).

Satie, Stephanie. *Silent Witnesses*, 2013

[Silent Witnesses](#) is a one-woman play performed by the author. Based on interviews and conversations with child survivors of the Holocaust, the [play](#) is about a group of women who meet with their therapist to discuss their common experiences of being child survivors. A March 31, 2016, performance was co-sponsored by Remember the Women Institute and Child Development Research at The 13th Street Theater, New York City. Audience members were mesmerized by Satie's outstanding performance, based on her interviews and conversations with child survivors of the Holocaust. She portrays four such survivors, including survivor and psychotherapist Dana Schwartz of Los Angeles. Using accents and body language, Satie convinces the audience she is four different women, all telling their moving and harrowing stories of survival as children. The 85-minute play is directed by Anita Khanzadian.

NEW

Schaffer, Melissa. *Windows*, 2012

This play with music, based on the real story of a Holocaust survivor, won a local [competition](#) in New Jersey. The playwright also performed, portraying the survivor's mother. Along with her husband, the mother pushed her daughter out of the window of a cattle car transporting Jews to the Majdanek death camp.

Semel, Nava and Ella Milch-Sheriff. *And the Rat Laughed*, 2005

Based on [Nava Semel's](#) book of the same name, published three years earlier in Hebrew, the opera [And the Rat Laughed](#) was first performed as a co-production of the Israel Chamber Orchestra and the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv in April 2005. (The [book](#) has since been published in English.) Some of the Hebrew performances had English super titles. The opera spans from the present to the Holocaust to the future in a creative and innovative way, telling the story of a hidden child in Poland who was sexually abused. The highlight of the opera is a Mass scene, in which the girl's savior, Father Stanislaw, rebels against his Lord who had abandoned His children. In an attempt to restore the girl's hope and her faith, the priest discovers he has lost his own.

Semel, Nava. *Lost Relatives*, Israel Television, IBA-Channel 1, April 2013

This television drama, in Hebrew, is set in Israel in 1949. The young state is facing the enormous task of absorbing more than one million new immigrants in a very short time, most of them Holocaust survivors who had lost everything. The drama takes place during the Jewish High Holidays and features a 60-year-old woman and her son, both of whom survived the Transnistria ghetto. The son's wife becomes pregnant, shattering his dream of becoming a professional Jazz musician in Israel. The family's fate is entwined with that of their neighbors, two Auschwitz survivors from the Island of Rhodes. Together they gather around the radio to listen to the daily broadcast of a relative-seeking program called *Lost Relatives*. The woman is desperately seeking her husband, who immigrated thirty years ago to America and vanished without a trace. On the eve of Yom Kippur, the husband sends a dramatic message on the radio, and the son is convinced by his mother to pick up his estranged father, now a lonely blind man.

NEW

Shames, Germaine. *You, Fascinating You* (in development, 2017)

This musical is based on a 2012 [book](#) of the same name by [Shames](#), with lyrics by her and music by Frederico Ferrandina. It tells the story of Jewish ballerina [Margit Wolf](#), whose career in dance was cut short by the Holocaust.

Shane, Aliza. *Mein Uncle*, 2014

Described as “an absurdist fairy tale about the seeds of inhumanity,” this pre-Holocaust play set in 1931 is based on Adolf Hitler's relationship with his niece, [Geli Raubal](#). The play ran for ten days off-off-Broadway in New York in May–June 2014 at the Robert Moss Theater, a production of 3 Voices Theatre.

Shean, Nava. *Requiem in Terezin* (Hebrew)

This is an optimistic piece about the power of music, art, and non-violent resistance. A female narrator recounts how young conductor Rafael Schächter decides to perform Verdi's *Requiem* in the Terezin concentration camp. The narrator, a survivor of the camp, also describes her own experiences, how she met the conductor, and the fight against inhuman conditions. First performed in Haifa Theater, Israel, 1981.

Sholiton, Faye. *The Interview*

In preparation for her eyewitness testimony for a video archive project, a Holocaust survivor meets her interviewer, the child of other survivors. Revisiting old memories, a mother and a daughter find new ways to forgive and be forgiven. Production by Dayton Playhouse, 1997. See more information [here](#).

Simons, Anita Yellen. *Goodbye Memories*

Based on biographies of the Frank family and Simons's personal contact with Anne Frank's three surviving friends, *Goodbye Memories* is a universal story of parents, children, friends, sexual awakenings, and the special spirit of a talkative, attention-loving girl named Anne Frank. *Goodbye Memories* begins on the morning of Anne's 13th birthday in June 1942, when she receives her famous diary. The play ends on the morning of July 6, 1942, when the Franks leave their Amsterdam home to go into hiding.

Sobler, Alix. *The Secret Annex*, 2014

In this play, Sobler imagines that Anne Frank survived the Holocaust, and at age 25, she is starting a new chapter of her life in New York City. Eager to publish a memoir of her time in hiding, Anne is sure it will launch her career as a writer. But when the only interested publisher demands drastic rewrites, Anne questions the meaning of her new life. Why did she survive, if no one wants to hear her story? Study guide available [here](#). Premiered, Winnipeg, Canada, 2014.

NEW

Spektor, Mira J. *Lady of the Castle—A Chamber Opera*, 1982

Based on the play by Israeli writer Lea Goldberg, this [play](#) was presented at Theater for the New City in New York in late 2016. Music and lyrics are by [Spektor](#). This chamber opera for four voices and three instruments is about one of the hidden children, a young girl found in 1946 in the basement of a crumbling castle in Europe.

Stein, Susan. *Etty*, 2009

Using only the words of [Etty Hillesum](#) from her surviving diary and letters, Stein created and performs in a one-woman show about a young Dutch Jew who shares her innermost thoughts about life, love, and ethical dilemmas. Etty works in Amsterdam's Jewish Council, a position that had the potential to delay her own deportation from Westerbork concentration camp. However, she was ultimately unable to save herself and her family from being shipped to Auschwitz. Stein has performed many times and in many venues, including prisons. She presented her play for an educators' conference at Yad Vashem in July 2014. She often uses the play as a springboard for discussion with her audiences. See more information [here](#). Premiered at 59E59 Theaters, New York, 2009.

Stillman, Heidi, *The Book Thief*

Adapted from Markus Zusak's [book](#), the story is narrated by a death figure who is haunted by humans. Alongside the audience, the narrator tries to understand why people behave in terrible or generous ways. Liesel Meminger comes to live with adoptive parents in Nazi Germany. Over the course of World War II, she blossoms from a quiet girl with nightmares into a poised young woman who commits several acts of

book thievery as she learns to read, keep important secrets, and give the Hitler salute, whether she wants to or not. The play was presented as part of an initiative to stop youth violence and intolerance, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Chicago, IL, 2012.

Strassberg-Dayán, Sara. *Embers* [*El Rescoldo*]

Written in Israel in the author's native language, *El Rescoldo* (the dying embers) dramatizes fictional events in the Warsaw Ghetto, site of the most well-known Jewish uprising during the Holocaust. Original Language, Spanish, with English and Hebrew translations. Publisher, Reshafim, Tel Aviv, 1995.

Stringer, Virginia Burton. *Children of the Holocaust and Can You Hear Them Crying?* (a sequel)

Both plays deal with children who were victims of the Holocaust. The first play wonders what happened to the more than 200 children whose diaries were found afterward. The sequel is a one-act tribute to the thousands of children that did not survive the Terezin (Theresienstadt) concentration camp. The narrative features translations of actual stories and poems written by the lost children. *Can You Hear Them Crying?* was originally produced by the Color Performance Theatre at Carrollwood Playhouse, Tampa, Florida, November 1994.

Strome, Jennifer. *The Idealist*, 2010

Directed by Lee Sankowich, for one night only on February 23, 2011, [Jennifer Strome](#) presented a new production of Levin's 35-minute radio play about Anne Frank at the Times Center in New York, with Tony Roberts and Alison Pill featured in the cast.

NEW

Stryk, Linda. *The Glamour House*, 2016

Recently published by [Dramatists Play Service](#), the play draws on the story of a survivor who is a friend of the [playwright](#). In 1947, in the glamorous world of Trudi Stein's dress shop on Manhattan's Upper East Side, everything is cloaked in silence—until the arrival of an enigmatic new salesgirl. The very presence of Esther Bayer, a young immigrant from Germany, fills the joyless establishment with energy, laughter, and life. What ensues is a mysterious, obsessive relationship that culminates in revelation.

Swados, Elizabeth. *The Secret Window*

Broadway playwright [Elizabeth Swados](#) wrote this theatrical musical adaptation of the Holocaust memoirs of Nelly Toll, who survived the Nazi occupation of Lvov by spending thirteen months in hiding with a Christian family. The story is told through a series of tableaux accompanied by song and a limited number of musical instruments. The work, co-commissioned for the Annenberg Center's Festival Theatre for New Plays and its

Children's Theatre Festival, 1997, was created with Het Waterhuis (Rotterdam, Netherlands).

Szumigalski, Anne. *Z: A Meditation on Oppression, Desire and Freedom*

This play, which blends together drama, poetry, and dance, was inspired by the author's time working with survivors at the end of World War II, as a translator for the British Red Cross. The theme of the play looks into the relationship between captive and captor, along with horrific sacrifices people must make for their own survival. Signature Editions, 2001.

NEW

Taylor, Kathrine Kressmann, *Address Unknown*, 1938

Address Unknown was originally written as a short story, as letters between a Jewish art dealer living in San Francisco and his business partner, who had returned to Germany in 1932. The work exposed the American public to the dangers of Nazism. *Address Unknown* was performed as a stage play in France in 2001, in Israel beginning in 2002, in New York in 2004 and 2014, and in other cities in the United States. It has also been performed in Argentina, England, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Scotland, South Africa and Turkey. An adaptation for BBC Radio 4 was broadcast in June 2008. The most recent performance was in February-March 2017, sponsored by Next Generations in Florida.

Tillion, Germaine. *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers: Une opérette à Ravensbrück*, 1944

The play/operetta *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers* was written by Germaine Tillion, who in 1943, was sent to the German concentration camp of Ravensbrück, along with her mother, for participating in the resistance. While in the camp, Germaine wrote this operetta as an ironic comedy, describing the terrible conditions that the "Verfügbar" (lowest class of prisoners) had to endure. This operetta (in French) was written to entertain her fellow prisoners, while also acting as an ethnographic analysis of the concentration camp. The original script survived intact and was taken out of the camp when the Swedish Red Cross rescued the French political prisoners toward the end of World War II. The play was published (in French) by Éditions de La Martinière, Paris, 2005, and performed in Paris in 2007 in honor of Tillion's 100th birthday. In 2014, Tillion's play was translated into English by Annie and Karl Bortnick to be presented as *In the Underworld*. The translation was commissioned by the University of Southern Maine's Department of Theatre. Directed by Meghan Brodie, then a professor in the university's theatre department, the play was presented at the university in April 2014. (See an essay about the play by Dr. Brodie in Section 2, below.)

Tova, Theresa. *Still the Night*, 1998

This [story](#) takes place during World War II, as two young women wander through Poland, pretending not to be Jewish. This drama, which is punctuated with song, is intended to show the strength of survival against all odds. Scirocco Drama.

Valdez, Valerie. *Sanctuary*

In Munich, 1941, Emil, a young Catholic German architect, struggles with his conscience as he helps design the new crematorium at Dachau. He pleads his case for Vatican intervention to powerful Archbishop Mueller. While sympathetic, the archbishop knows he must protect the Church from any hint of resistance against the Third Reich. Instead, he offers Emil safe passage to America. However, before Emil can leave, he is noticed by Gestapo Major Vogel. Desperate to escape, Emil and his pregnant Jewish lover/Resistance member Leah seek refuge within the Catholic Church. The ultimate battle between good and evil rests with the archbishop, who is hiding his own secret, and who must decide on sanctuary or death.

Watts, Irene Kristein. *Goodbye Marianne*, 1995

The play opens in Germany on 15 November 1938, the day that German state schools no longer allowed Jewish students to attend. Protagonist Marianne's world is crumbling, with her father in hiding from the Gestapo and her mother overprotecting her. Marianne meets a boy with whom she seems to have a lot in common, but she learns he is a member of the Hitler Youth. The play is documentary fiction, based on the personal experiences of the author as a child in Nazi Germany, along with other Holocaust survivors' accounts. Scirocco Drama.

NEW

Westfall, Susan. *A Stitch in Time*, 2017

This original short one-act [play](#), written by Susan Westfall and directed by Michael Yawney, is based on the true story of Paul and Hedy Strnad. The couple tragically perished in the Holocaust, but their memories come alive in this production, based on the letters, sketches, and dresses meticulously created from Hedy's designs. The play was written as part of a traveling exhibit of the [Jewish Museum of Milwaukee](#), *Stitching History from the Holocaust*. The exhibit includes dresses made from the design sketches of Hedwig Strnad, a Jewish woman living in Prague with her husband and seeking asylum in the United States in 1939. They sent sketches of Hedwig's clothing designs to a cousin, hoping to get a visa. Years later, the sketches were discovered by family members, and, thanks to the efforts of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Hedy's drawings were brought to life. The play *A Stitch in Time*, as well as the dresses created for the exhibit, were in the [Jewish Museum of Miami](#), co-sponsored by Florida International University, in early 2017.

Wolf, Magret. *Refidim Junction*, 2012

This operetta by librettist-composer Magret Wolf is based on letters that Perl Margulies wrote from Germany to her husband Benno in England in 1933-34, as well as letters that poet Marianne Rein wrote from Germany to author Jacob Picard in the United States in 1938-41. Both an actor and a singer play the parts of each of the women, one reading from the letters and one singing. There is also a chorus, as well as video projections. The production was originally commissioned by the Mainfranken Theater in Würzburg, Germany and presented there in November 2012. It was also presented in Berlin in January 2015 and in [Jerusalem](#), with Hebrew subtitles, in June 2015, produced by Theatre Company Jerusalem. For more information, see an essay in Section 2 by Dr. Alice Shalvi, daughter of Perl and Benno Margulies and initiator of the production.

NEW

Yaged, Kim. *Vessels*, 2003

This play by [Yaged](#) is about the experiences of lesbians in Germany during the Holocaust. It was commissioned for the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust's 2003 presentation of "[The Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933–1945](#)" exhibition from the United States Memorial Museum.

Yoeli, Naomi. *My Ex-Stepmother-in-Law*, 2015 (Hebrew)

As author and performer, [Naomi Yoeli](#) plays herself as a novice standup comic, and also uses another voice to portray her former stepmother-in-law, sculptor Agi Yoeli. Agi was born in Central Europe and survived a ghetto and Auschwitz, afterward coming to Israel. When she portrays Agi, Naomi Yoeli does not talk about the Holocaust but about before and after, almost sneaking in information about such topics as death marches. This is a mix of theater and reality, standup comedy and stage play, fiction and truth. There is also interaction with the audience. The play premiered in Tel Aviv, a production of Hazira Performance Arts Arena, in August 2015.

Zeckendorf-Kutzinski, Lisa. *New Year's Eve in the Oederan Slave Labor Camps*

A darkly comic sketch about hairstyle, fashion, and figure in the concentration camp. Original language, German, with English language translation in *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto*, ed. Lisa Peschel, Seagull Books 2014.

Ziegler, Irene. *The Little Lion*, 2016

Based on the book by Nancy Wright Beasley, this play takes place in and around the Kovno Ghetto in Lithuania during World War II. The story chronicles the struggle of a Jewish family to survive the Holocaust and the heroism of Laibale Gillman, a teenaged boy, known as the little lion, who never stopped fighting for freedom. [Premiered](#) at Swift Creek Mill Theater, Virginia, in January 2016.

Zinner, Hedda. *Ravensbrücker Ballade* (German)

An East German socialist realist drama that chronicles the suffering of women imprisoned in the Ravensbrück concentration camp, which was established in 1938 and became the largest women's concentration camp in the Third Reich. Aufbau Tashchenbuch Verlag, 1992.

1.3 Books about Women, Theatre, and the Holocaust

NEW

Delbo, Charlotte. *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles? Et autres écrits inédits* (Paris: Fayard, 2013) contains these three Delbo plays in French: "Qui rapportera ces paroles?" (pp. 9–66), "Et toi, comment as-tu fait?" (pp. 245–313), "Les Hommes" (pp. 529–576).

Fuchs, Elinor, ed. *Plays of the Holocaust*, Theatre Communications Group, NY, 1987.

Galens, Judy and Sarah Hermsen, eds. *Experiencing the Holocaust: Short stories. Poems. Plays. Films. Music*. Volumes 1 and 2, UXL, Gale Group, 2003.

Giron, Arthur. *Edith Stein: A Dramaturgical Sourcebook*. Carnegie Mellon University Press, 1994.

Graver, Lawrence. *An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary*, University of California Press, 1995.

Heinmann, Marlene. *Gender and Destiny: Women Writers and the Holocaust*. Praeger, 1986.

Kremer, S. Lillian. *Women's Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination*. University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

Levin, Meyer. *The Obsession*, 1974.

Melnick Ralph. *The Stolen Legacy of Anne Frank: Meyer Levin, Lillian Hellman and the Staging of the Diary*, Yale University Press, 1997.

Peschel, Lisa. *Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín /Theresienstadt Ghetto*, Seagull Books, 2014.

Plunka, Gene A. *Holocaust Drama: The Theater of Atrocity*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Plunka, Gene A. *Staging Holocaust Resistance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

NEW

Reissa, Eleanor. *The Last Survivor and Other Modern Jewish Plays*. Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

Rovit, Rebecca and Goldfarb, Alvin. *Theatrical Performance During the Holocaust*. PAJ Publications, 2006.

Rubin, Janet. *Teaching About the Holocaust Through Drama*. New Plays, Inc., 2000.

Saidel, Rochelle. *The Jewish Women of Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2004, pp. 48-50, 61-62.

Schönová, Vlasta, *Acting in Terezín*. Translated from Czech by Helen Epstein, Plunkett Lake Press, 2011.

Schumacher, Claude and David Bradby, eds. *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in Drama and Performance*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Skloot, Robert, ed. *The Theater of the Holocaust: Volume 1*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.

Skloot, Robert, ed. *The Theater of the Holocaust: Volume 2*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1999.

Steinhorn, Harriet and Lowy, Edith. *Shadows of the Holocaust: Plays, Readings, and Program Resources*. Written for young audiences, the work is a collection of short dramas that chronicle the experiences of children in the Jewish ghettos and Nazi concentration camps. Kar-Ben Publishing. 1983.

Tillion, Germaine. *Le Verfügbar aux Enfers: Une opérette à Ravensbrück* (in French, with background information about the play), Éditions de La Martinière, Paris, 2005.

Watts, Irene N. *A Terrible Truth: Anthology of Holocaust Drama*. Playwrights Canada Press. 2004.

Section 2. Personal Essays about Creating and Staging Plays

(in alphabetical order by author, including three new essays)

2.1 Directing Performances of Germaine Tillion's *In The Underworld*

A Personal Essay by Meghan Brodie, PhD
Assistant Professor of Theatre, Ursinus College

On April 23, 1945, the Ravensbrück concentration camp released 7,000 prisoners into the care of the Swedish Red Cross. Among these prisoners was Germaine Tillion. She smuggled out a roll of film documenting experiments performed on women in the camp, and her friend smuggled out a play Tillion had written. Tillion wrote the play, an operetta, in secret in a tiny notebook she kept hidden. She risked her life to create this piece of art, because she could have been killed if the notebook had been discovered. Only five days after the release of prisoners to the Swedish Red Cross, the S.S. ordered the evacuation of about 15,000 women on a forced death march before the camp was liberated by Soviet troops on April 30. It is a miracle that Tillion and her play survived.

It was an honor to share with audiences Tillion's account of both the horror and hope that characterized life in Ravensbrück. In April 2014, I directed the English-language world premiere of Tillion's *Le Verfügar aux Enfers: Une opérette à Ravensbrück* in a translation by Annie and Karl Bortnick entitled *In the Underworld: A darkly comic operetta*. I staged the production at the University of Southern Maine in collaboration with artists in the United States and Europe.

In the Underworld is a searing critique of conditions in Ravensbrück, but it is also a story of hope and demonstrates how the women of Ravensbrück used humor as a tool for survival. The musical choices made by Tillion are quite sophisticated. Tillion rewrote the lyrics to many songs--folk songs, pieces from operas, etc.-- using the same themes. For instance, Orpheus's song about losing his Eurydice in Gluck's opera becomes the song of a woman in Ravensbrück who is singing about losing her sick pass and what that will mean for her future. Tillion's references to both art and history richly texture her account of life in the camp for the group of women in her barrack, composed largely of French political prisoners.

The cast and I spent a lot of time on research. We had an especially long “table work” period during which our dramaturg shared lots of historical background with the cast. Many of the cast members began their own research and shared memoirs with each other and created reading lists. We read together, watched a documentary on Ravensbrück, shared facts and questions on our private Facebook page. Our education about the Holocaust, and specifically the women of Ravensbrück, was extensive, and, for many of us, is ongoing even after the close of the production. We want to share these women’s stories and ensure they are not forgotten.

Each actor based her character on the life of a real woman in Ravensbrück or another camp. Their commitment to learning about the women was amazing. I asked the actors to shave or cut their hair (the women portraying characters new to the camp shaved their heads and those in roles of the women who had been in the camp for some time cut their hair) as a way of authentically portraying and paying tribute to the women and the lives they lived in the camps. I discussed my request with all of the actors before casting them so they could let me know whether or not they would be comfortable shaving or cutting their hair. This is not easy for any actor, especially a young female actor concerned with maintaining a “marketable” appearance for auditions, but every actor consented. The actors experienced the solidarity and love shared by the women of Ravensbrück and this was an incredible gift for all of us. Over the course of my months with the actors, I watched a group of young women—some of whom were strangers to each other—become a tightly-knit ensemble of artists who sincerely cared about each other and felt a sense of community created by their shared research, experiences, and commitment to honoring the lives of the women they were portraying.

Everyone working on this project has been transformed by the experience. We carry with us the experiences of the women of Ravensbrück and are dedicated to ensuring that these experiences are not lost to future generations. Working on *In the Underworld* has allowed us to experience some of the solidarity, love, hope, and humor shared by the women of Ravensbrück. I have never encountered a more committed group of artists. Cast and production team members have unfailingly challenged themselves, supported each other, and sought to educate themselves and others about Holocaust.

I hope this production of *In the Underworld* introduced audiences to the stories of the women of Ravensbrück so we all can carry these stories forward and share them with others. I also hope the production serves as a reminder that we have a responsibility to each other and to those who were murdered during the Holocaust to remember that genocide did and does happen, to fight tyranny, and to stand up for ourselves and each other.

Production photos

Credits

In the Underworld: A darkly comic operetta

by Germaine Tillion

translated by Annie & Karl Bortnick

musical arrangement & composition: Christophe Maudot

directed by Meghan Brodie

Musical Direction: Jonathan Marro

Choreography: Maria Tzianabos

Set: Shannon Zura

Lights: Shannon Zura

Costumes: Joan Larkins Mather

Sound: Shannon Zura

Props: Sarah Kennedy

Dramaturgy: Kirk Boettcher

Photography: Shannon Zura

Cast

Marmotte: Callie Cox

Lulu of Belleville: Helena Crothers-Villers

Titine: Mary Kate Ganza

Dede of Paris: Rhiannon Vonder Haar

Lulu of Colmar/Annette: Virginia Hudak

The Naturaliste/Marie-Anik: Madelyn James

Lise/Bebe: Clare McKelway

Nenette: Caroline O'Connor

Marguerite: Hannah Perry

Rosine: Elinor Strandskov

Havas: Sable Strout

NEW

2.2 The Woman Who Said “No”: Writing a Play about Anti-Nazi Resisters

A Personal Essay by **Cynthia L. Cooper**
Playwright, journalist and author in New York

My first surprise in visiting Hamburg, Germany to do research for a play about resisters to the Nazis had nothing to do with the Holocaust. The prominence of water in the city – the port and lakes and the Alster and Elbe Rivers—tapped my love of swimming and boat travel. Soon, though, the second surprise and the third, added more chilling dimensions.

My play, *Silence Not, A Love Story*, is based on the real-life story of a woman labor activist in Hamburg, who in the early 1930s before Hitler ascended to power, recognized the dangers of the Nazis and turned to anti-Nazi resistance.

As a playwright, research is a key part of my work, even as the play is also infused with personal responses. A play involves many elements – a place, a time, characters, narrative, action, dialogue, intrigue, conflict, resolution, emotional content and, quite possibly, illumination. Although it's possible to break away from any of these elements, knowing everything possible about the world of the play is important to moving forward with writing, revising, working with actors and theatrical partners and reaching audiences.

I travelled to Hamburg because I wanted to walk in the shoes of my character, Gisa Peiper, a 19-year-old Jewish woman from Berlin who moved there in 1929. She joined a small group of labor organizers in a political group, the ISK (translated loosely as the International Socialist Combat League, a bit of a misnomer for a group of dedicated pacifists).

I had a list of things I wanted to see in Hamburg: a tunnel under the Elbe River where the ISK activists handed out literature, the Reeperbahn red light district where I imagined the ISK had a storefront office, the site of labor rallies, and the still-standing prison where my character was locked up for a period.

I also had questions rolling around in my mind. This idea for the play had been inspired by one paragraph in a memoir about a resister's experience of sitting among Nazi soldiers at a railway station while in disguise. But what, I wondered, had led Gisa and her fellow activist Paul Konopka (they later married), to anti-Nazi resistance while others

in Germany were still oblivious or in denial? How can people in *our* time see into an unknowable future and decide, despite threats or fears, to speak out?

The years before the Nazis took power are nearly impossible to view without the knowledge of what came later. I can remember seeing survivors with numbers tattooed on their forearms. Images of the Holocaust are seared into our collective consciousness, along with the words, “Never Again.” But how would we know if “Never” were on the doorstep? To see things as my characters had meant rolling back time. How did they overcome paralysis? Channel fear?

By 2007, when I arrived in Hamburg from New York City, I had already done as much research as I could. I interviewed people who had known Gisa—friends, former colleagues in Minnesota, where she had become a professor. I had listened to Shoah tapes, interviewed survivors, studied exhibits at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, which, for a short time featured a handkerchief embroidered by Gisa in prison. I had searched through files of German-Jewish history at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York, and researched literature, art, poetry, music and history of the Weimar Republic.

I was especially drawn to a book, *Defying Hitler*, a contemporaneously written account of the years 1918–1933 by a self-exiled writer from Berlin, and published in 2002 after his death. There is no defying in the book.

Before Hamburg, I had visited Berlin. I spent hours in the Käthe Kollwitz Museum because Gisa was particularly fond of the artist. I visited the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, which induced a dizzying sense of disorientation with stone slabs placed on undulating paths.

At the obscure German Resistance Memorial Center, I walked through room after room honoring ordinary Germans who had undertaken acts of resistance, big and small—from smuggling food to delivering spy messages. The ISK was among the earliest documented: “the strongest resistance was from the labor movement,” said one placard. Labor activists experienced, even in the 1920s, the brutality of the Brown shirts who disrupted their rallies and beat up organizers. One photo at the center showed young people at a typewriter, just as I imagined my characters -- they had begun publishing details of Nazi activities and distributing them by hand. “Information you need,” became a theme throughout my play. Although, most people ignored their calls, this kind of speaking the truth appealed to me.

Once in Hamburg, I walked through the dank darkness of the Elbe Tunnel, an underground passage for dockworkers. I visited the Museum of Labor and the Museum of Art and “alighted” on a boat that traversed the river.

I intended to pop into the Hamburg Museum, expecting it to be the type of a facility where a city self-promotes, but, perhaps because it was unanticipated, I found something that stopped me short – my second surprise. The museum had a display about the 1920s in Hamburg. Glass cases were filled with artifacts. In one, lay police memorabilia and I saw a ledger listing the Jews in Hamburg. On 52 pages, the ledger contained the names of Jews, their addresses, their jobs, all typed out and numbered—and this was from the 1920s. That the Jewish population was being tracked and surveilled even at that early date told me about the way the culture placed Jews as “the other” and casually deployed anti-Semitism as if it were part of the regular course of business.

The shudder of that moment never left me – the knowledge that unseen forces were arraying against Jewish citizens, and my character had been astute in understanding those forces and had, at the same time, been targeted in covert ways.

After Hitler came to power in 1933, Gisa and Paul suffered many difficulties. They were questioned, harassed, their apartments raided. Paul had to flee to France by bicycle. Gisa, worried about her leaving her mother, stayed, was detained and sent to the Fuhlsbüttel Prison. The old stone prison is still standing, and my third surprise, upon visiting it, came from a plaque onsite: “Many political opponents of the Nazi regime were led through this gate into imprisonment between the end of March 1933 and the end of the war in 1945. The prisoners were interned without judicial proceedings. Many of them were mistreated, tortured, and some were driven to suicide or murder.” Reading it filled me with horror.

Gisa was released from prison after many months -- most likely to be followed in order to capture other resisters. Instead, she convinced her mother to relocate to pre-Israel Palestine, and then took on a new identity in the underground in Austria, until it, too, became unsafe.

When I sat down to write *Silence Not, A Love Story*, I began with that moment of waiting in disguise on a train layover amid Nazi guards. I include a recurring scene in the Fuhlsbüttel prison, in which guards put a knife on a table and urge my character to “save them the trouble,” while she refuses to accede. Water has a constant presence — so do poetry, art and song. But the police ledger, so powerful in my memory, never made it into the play. Instead, the strains of growing anti-Semitism snake through scenes that test the courage of my characters. Following the play’s premiere in

Jerusalem in 2010, I also wrote a short one-act, *At the Train Station in Munich*, hyper-focused on moral conviction overcoming fear.

Gisa later wrote: “There was resistance against the Nazis inside Germany consisting of a variety of people who had a conscience and courage. These people included Jews (who are unjustly accused of never having resisted), women (who are practically omitted in the history of resistance), and non-Jewish Germans, as well as many of the old labor movements (who are hardly mentioned). They fought the Nazis out of moral convictions and out of abhorrence of racial superiority.”

Once the story of Gisa had gripped my imagination, I couldn’t let it go. And that is, perhaps, the real beginning of a play: a story that, to the writer, has to be told. I heard a story of the love of people for each other and the mutual love of justice. To me, it shows a way to respond to injustice in every time period: I hope that audiences see that, too.

NEW

2.3 Writing a Play Based on Charlotte Delbo’s *Auschwitz and After*

A Personal Essay by Patrick Henry, PhD
Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature,
Whitman College

My desire to write a two-act play entitled *Auschwitz and After* emanates from my continued interest in Charlotte Delbo’s stunningly original trilogy of the same title and my sense of its inherent theatrical possibilities. The three parts were published separately in French, and are available together in English translation as *Auschwitz and After* (Yale University Press, 1995).

Delbo’s artistic approach differs from the analytical report we get in Primo Levi’s works and the extended linear narrative found in the writings of Elie Wiesel. Her goal was not to “recount” what happened in Auschwitz, chronologically or otherwise, but to make her readers “see” it. She therefore offers striking visual imagery, penetrating snapshots, and anguished portraits that enable readers to sense the horrors of the events she depicts. We happen upon “frozen corpses,” “walking automatons,” “silent howls,” “rats devouring corpses,” “the walking dead carrying the dead,” and then, suddenly, amidst the stench of diarrhea and burning flesh, appears a “tulip,” or a “blue sky.” Delbo insists that we

imagine the unimaginable and listen to the unspeakable while she attempts to represent the unrepresentable.

The comportment of the women in Delbo's concentration-camp universe is in stark contrast to that of the men in the accounts of Levi and Wiesel. Levi insists repeatedly that survival in Auschwitz was based on "the law of the *Lager* [camp]": "Eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbor." There, Levi informs us more fully, "the privileged oppress the unprivileged," and that other ferocious law operates unabatedly "...to [him] that has, will be given; from [him] that has not, will be taken away." (*Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1958, pp. 160, 44, 88.) Although the demand for solidarity, "for a human word, advice, even just a listening ear was permanent and universal," he writes elsewhere, it was "rarely satisfied. There was no time, space, privacy, patience, strength" (*The Drowned and the Saved*, Vintage Books, 1989, pp. 78-79). In Wiesel's *Night*, we encounter men beating each other to death for a few crumbs and the barrack's chief tells Elie: "Don't forget that you are in a concentration camp. In this place, it is every man for himself...you cannot think of others. Not even your father. In this place, there is no such thing as father, brother, friend. Each of us lives and dies alone (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972, p. 110).

Amazingly, the women in *Auschwitz and After* constitute an active, protective, food-sharing community where individuals live in dialogue and communion with one another. From the first poem in "None of Us Will Return," where the women worry about whether the water in the "shower" will be warm enough for the children, to the end of "Useless Knowledge," we encounter women guiding, feeding, protecting, and caring for one another physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The intractable camp laws of anonymity, conformity, and self-absorption found in Wiesel and Levi have given way to human words and listening ears. The roll call reference, "We were leaning on one another so as not to fall" (Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, p. 35) serves also as a metaphor that applies more generally to their life together in this Nazi inferno. Here self-transcendence was required for self-preservation; one could not survive alone. While these differences are stark and real, it should be pointed out, not only that Levi and Wiesel were Jewish and Delbo was not, but that Delbo repeatedly insists that the Jewish prisoners had it the worst and that men, for various reasons, had it worse than women.

As a woman of the theatre, Delbo also wrote plays about her experiences in Auschwitz and after liberation. Three of her plays in particular touch immediately upon those experiences. *Qui rapportera ces paroles?* takes place in a death camp and repeatedly portrays the solidarity among the women as it insists that, despite their suffering, they must renounce suicide and do everything possible to survive so as to bear witness to their experiences. In this sense, the play ends ironically, but with authorial approbation, when Gina attempts to commit suicide by touching the electrified wire rather than become a member of the White Kerchief *Kommando* that burns children to death.

She is shot to death before she can reach the barbed wire. (Delbo, “*Qui rapportera ces paroles?*” in *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles et autres écrits inédits*, Fayard, 2013, pp. 9–66), translated and published as *Who Will Carry The Word?* in *The Theatre of the Holocaust*, ed. Robert Skloot (University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, pp. 267–325).

Et toi, comment as-tu fait? (*And You, How Did You Make Out?*) deals not with the question: “How did you survive Auschwitz?” but “How did you make out when you got back from Auschwitz?” (in *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles et autres écrits inédits*, pp. 245–313).

This play is therefore the theatrical form of “The Measure of Our Days,” which constitutes the third part of *Auschwitz and After*. Yet, except for eleven of its 66 pages, it is devoid of any dialogue between the characters. The play consists of a series of monologues in which various women and one man relate their post-war experiences in France to Françoise, who represents Delbo.

Finally, *Les Hommes*, or *The Men*, (also in *Qui Rapportera Ces Paroles et autres écrits inédits*, pp. 529–576) takes place in a prison where the women were held before going to Drancy and then Auschwitz. Here men and women were incarcerated separately with a courtyard between them. Once a day, during their time outside, they have the possibility of spotting one another through the fence that separates them. The women want Françoise, who once again represents Charlotte, to write a play for them. But Françoise claims that she cannot do so because their present reality weighs too heavily on her and to write about it would be too difficult for all of them. Therefore the play we are reading is the play that Charlotte could not write at the time that its action was unfolding. The women decide to put on Musset’s *Un Caprice* (*Caprice*) but on the day of the performance, the Resistance killed 29 German soldiers and the Germans had begun the reprisals by shooting some of the men prisoners. As a result, the women decide to mime *Un Caprice* but utter not a word of it. The words of Musset’s play are replaced by three monologues of women whose loved ones, a brother and two husbands, have been shot, two on that day and one earlier at another prison.

Basing my play on *Auschwitz and After* enabled me to enlarge the canvas, broaden the vision, and portray in one play many of the key themes that Delbo covered in isolation in her three plays: aspects of the Auschwitz experience, theatre in captivity, and the post-liberation lives of the women. I have set the play in the third volume of *Auschwitz and After*, “The Measure of Our Days,” which takes place after the women have returned to France. Twenty years after their liberation, they have a reunion in Paris. In my play, ten of these women discuss their lives since Auschwitz. They all stress the extreme difficulty or quasi-impossibility of “coming home” again. Their lives are replete with horrific memories, sickness, obsession, divorce, illusions, loneliness, and heartbreak.

I have created a Chorus that speaks to the audience on several occasions, reminding them of the reality of Auschwitz (as depicted in the first two parts of the trilogy: “None of Us Will Return” and “Useless Knowledge”) and the difficulty of the transition that the women are attempting to make. A Narrator situates the action, identifies the characters, and adds her voice occasionally to those of the other women. By utilizing lines primarily from the first two volumes of *Auschwitz and After*, I have pieced together dialogues between the characters throughout the play. In addition, I have staged a series of flashbacks to depict some of the horrors of Auschwitz as Delbo describes them (roll call and insatiable thirst, for example), as well as the tender care the women offer one another at these moments of great suffering. Other “flashbacks” include two scenes from Molière’s *The Misanthrope* and *The Imaginary Invalid*, even though they do not appear in the trilogy. Delbo tells us, however, that the women performed *The Imaginary Invalid* in Auschwitz and read parts of *The Misanthrope* in Ravensbrück. Watching the Chorus perform these scenes allows the audience to capture the role that poetry and theatre played in the camps, and how they functioned additionally as forms of artistic resistance to the dehumanization process inflicted on the inmates. Rehearsals for *The Imaginary Invalid* were held in Auschwitz “in a dark, freezing hut ... [when supper consisted of] 200 grams of dry bread and seven grams of margarine” (*Auschwitz and After*, p. 169). The audience itself participates in the play. The Chorus and other actors address the spectators directly because they represent the people who were not deported. The returning women want them to realize what they, and particularly those who did not return, suffered in Auschwitz. “I want them to understand,” says Mado, “even if they cannot feel what I feel.”

It is important, as we listen to Mado say: “I want them to understand,” to stress why the theatre is the ideal setting for this encounter. Here powerful stories are related live in the same room with close face-to-face proximity between characters and audience. Theatrical immediacy, as opposed to the book/reader or film/viewer situation, encourages empathy and makes it possible for characters and audience to bond together. A play about the Holocaust, then, not only serves to keep memory alive, but, as Elinor Fuchs points out, “In the very act of representing the annihilation of the human community, the theatre itself offers a certain fragile potentiality for re-creation” (*Plays of the Holocaust: An International Anthology*, Theatre Communications Group, 1987, p. xxvi.) On this point, see also *Holocaust Drama. The Theater of Atrocity* by Gene A. Plunka (Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp.16-19); and Robert Skloot’s “Raphael Lemkin and the Future of the Violent Past,” in *Teaching About the Holocaust and Genocide. Essays by Ida E. King Distinguished Visiting Scholars to Honor the Memory of Dr. Vera King Farris*, edited by Carol Rittner (Stockton University, 2016, pp. 55–59).

On January 20, 2016, *Auschwitz and After* had its first performance reading in the Gesa Power House Theatre in Walla Walla, WA. The fifteen Walla Walla women listed here brought this play to life. I could not be more grateful to all of them.

Directed by: Nancy Simon
Music composed by: Kristin Vining
Lighting designed by: Cynthia De Ville
Musicians: Kristin Vining, Keyboard; Amy Dodds, Violin

CAST

Narrator: Angelica Dimock
Charlotte: Julie Jones
Gilberte: Patty Leeper
Ida: Dyani Turner
Mado: Shauna Lilly Bogley
Marie-Louise: Sarah Hurlburt
Poupette: Jackie Wood
Gaby & Chorus: Chanel Finnie
Louise & Chorus: Lisa Anne Rasmussen
Marceline & Chorus: Danielle McMahon
Françoise & Chorus: Jen Pope

Patrick Henry is Cushing Eells Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Literature at Whitman College. Anyone interested in reading *Auschwitz and After* (in its English or French rehearsal script) for a possible performance reading or production of the play should feel free to contact him at henrypg@whitman.edu.

NEW

2.4 Bringing *Courage Untold* to the Stage

A Personal Essay by Susan B. Katz
Dayspring Counseling Services, Exton, PA

Bringing *Courage Untold* to the stage was a five-year journey that began in 1984, when I was 29 years old. My husband Richard and I were visiting friends, who had on their coffee table a book that caught my eye: *The Auschwitz Album* (discovered by survivor Lili Meier, text by Peter Hellman, Random House, 1981). It was filled with photographs of innocent people who never knew that the gas chambers awaited them.

One paragraph, picturing an Auschwitz crematorium, seemed to leap off the page. It read: "In this facility, on October 7, 1944, the *Sonderkommando* itself revolted. The members killed several SS men and blew up the crematorium with dynamite smuggled

to them by Birkenau women who worked in an ammunition factory. A large SS force put down the revolt and caught those prisoners who had escaped. Nearly all who were involved were shot. The women who had procured the explosives, led by twenty-four-year-old Roza Robota, were tortured before they were executed.”

My heart stopped. Growing up in Oak Park, Michigan in the 1960s, a Jewish middle-class neighborhood filled with Eastern European Holocaust survivors, I was aware of the concentration camps. My three best friends had parents who were Auschwitz survivors. I remember seeing their parents’ tattooed arms and asking about them. Along with their stories, I learned that this was a “gift” given to them upon their arrival at Auschwitz.

When I was ten years old and sleeping over at the home of one of these friends, I remember I suddenly woke up hearing cries and screams coming from her parents’ bedroom. My friend said, “Don’t worry, Susie, that’s just my mother having another nightmare about Auschwitz. It’s nothing to be scared about. Just go back to sleep.” Even though I didn’t fully understand, I felt so sad for my friend’s mother. As the years passed, I learned more and more about the human suffering in Auschwitz.

As an American Jewish child growing up, I could not help but wonder why someone didn’t help my people. Why did my friends’ parents suffer the way they did? Why didn’t the Allied forces destroy the crematoriums at Auschwitz? How could the world not have known about it? How could more than a million lives have been so easily extinguished at Auschwitz? How could my people die without a fight? Then, in 1984, I read a paragraph in *The Auschwitz Album* that spoke about my people fighting back.

It was the first time I learned of resistance activities inside a concentration camp. In the survivors’ stories I had heard growing up, I had never heard of Roza Robota from Ciechanow, Poland. I was fascinated by her. I wanted to know more about Roza and her fellow conspirators: Hanka Wajcblum, Estusia Wajcblum, Ala Gertner, and Regina Safirsztajn, along with an estimated twenty other women. I wanted to know how they found the courage to smuggle gunpowder to the *Sonderkommando*.

This one paragraph took me on a journey of discovery. Living in Chicago, Illinois, I began to research Holocaust literature regarding Roza Robota. After almost a year, I still found no information on Roza and her co-conspirators’ activities. I had, however, access to one of the largest survivor populations in the United States, in Skokie, Illinois. I learned that a friend’s mother-in-law, Erna Gans was a survivor, as well as president and a co-founder of the Illinois Holocaust Memorial Foundation. I contacted Erna Gans, who introduced me to other Auschwitz survivors. I interviewed dozens of those who lived in Skokie. I was disappointed to find no one who personally knew Roza or any of

her comrades. However, some survivors knew of their murder, after they were caught and publically hanged at Auschwitz.

Auschwitz survivor Joseph Neuman told me about Erich Kulka, a well-known Holocaust historian and survivor. While he did not know details regarding the women's role, he had written about the men involved in the uprising who had survived and immigrated to Israel. In the spring of 1985, I traveled to Israel and immediately met with Eric Kulka. Soon afterward, I received several phone calls from survivors who wanted to share information about Roza Robota and the other women.

After finding an English-Hebrew translator to help me, I set up interviews with these survivors. Two interviews stand out: The first was with Noah Zabladowicz, who actually knew Roza Robota in Auschwitz. I learned Noah was an electrician and could move about relatively freely in the camp to work. He had access to Roza in the clothing supply department, where she worked. I learned that he had persuaded Roza to become involved in the Jewish underground, and to approach women who worked in the munitions factory to smuggle gunpowder to help the *Sonderkommando*. By the end of our interview, Noah was in tears. He emphasized that he was alive only because of Roza's courage, because under harsh SS interrogation, she did not reveal any names. Seeing him flooded with emotions as he shared his involvement with Roza stirred me intensely. As I sat and watched Noah cry, I said to myself that I wanted to honor this man and the others involved in a story little known to the world.

I continued to set up interviews with survivors throughout Israel, and at the second pivotal interview, five women told me what they knew about the story. One of them told me that Estusia Wajcblum, one of the four hanged women, had a sister named Hanka Heilman. Hanka had also participated in the gunpowder smuggling. I asked if Hanka lived in Israel, and was told that she lived in Ottawa, Canada. I had finally found the first name of a woman who had survived the uprising!

After six weeks of researching material at Yad Vashem and interviewing survivors, I was anxious and excited to return to the United States. I wrote to Hanka Heilman, asking if I could interview her regarding the story. I told her I wanted to develop it into a play, as I had been involved with theatre arts for my entire life (including a minor in creative expression from Oakland University in Michigan). She agreed to meet in Ottawa, and in the summer of 1985, I was privileged to spend a week with her and her husband Joshua.

When I met Hanka she was in her early sixties, and I later found out she was only a young teenager when she arrived in Auschwitz. She had a vivacious personality, eyes that sparkled, and a laugh that was contagious. I liked her immediately. Hanka

explained that she had not shared her story with many people. With her permission, I taped our conversations and took extensive notes. She explained she had never met Roza Robota, because she did not live in her barracks, nor did she work in the same location. The system they had set up was to make sure no one knew too many other names in the underground. Therefore, if one person was caught and tortured, he or she could not provide other names.

She told me that she and her sister Estusia lived together in the same barrack and worked in the munitions factory, which provided war material and ammunition for the Nazi war effort. Her sister Estusia worked in the gunpowder room and she worked in a section known as control, where she had to check pieces of material to make sure they fit certain specifications. Hanka, Estusia, and other Jewish inmates working in the gunpowder room all agreed to help with the sabotage, devising a plan to smuggle out small quantities of gunpowder, which were passed on to Roza.

At the end of our week together, Hanka asked me a question: "Why is a young, Jewish, American woman so interested in Auschwitz? Did you have family members who died there?" I answered, "No." She pressed me again: "Are you certain?" I answered, "I am certain." Up until the time I had met Hanka, she had chosen to be fairly private about her Auschwitz experience. However, before she died, she wrote *Never Far Away*, her memoir that included her involvement with the underground.

Based on the material I had primarily received from Hanka Heilman, Noah Zabladowicz and Herta Fuchs, I was ready to start writing the first draft of *Courage Untold*. I was employed full-time at my social work position, so it took me three years to do the necessary research, reading, and finding survivors, and then, another two years of writing and rewriting.

Production History: the first reading was at the Playwright's Center, Chicago, September, 1989; the staged reading was at the Jewish Community Center, Skokie, November, 1989; the first full-staged production was at Avenue Theatre in conjunction with Kinetic Theatre in Chicago, with a six week run, following a January 13, 1990, opening; the second full-staged production was at Avenue Theatre in 1991, with another six week run, opening on April 4, 1991.

The Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois was a sponsor of the full-staged productions and helped to provide survivors who would speak to the audience after the production and answer questions. The foundation also supported and promoted student groups coming to the play. The play received good reviews and the *Chicago Jewish Star* chose *Courage Untold* as one of the top five productions in Jewish theater in 1991, stating, "Excellent, well-written drama and fine acting about a Jewish women's revolt in

Auschwitz.” I was also encouraged to receive an endorsement by Eli Wiesel, who wrote a supportive letter to encourage theatres to stage the play.

Professor Gene A. Plunka, from the University of Memphis, found my manuscript at the United States Holocaust Museum, when he was doing research for his book, *Staging Holocaust Resistance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). He dedicated a chapter to *Courage Untold*, stating: “The tale of the women of Auschwitz who managed to revolt in the most horrible conditions imaginable where humans were reduced to skeletons barely able to function is perhaps the most amazing event of the Holocaust.”

Post Script: When I met Hanka Heilman in 1985 and she asked if I had family members murdered in Auschwitz, I did not know my own personal connections. My father, who came from the small town of Mukacheve, Hungary (now in Ukraine), never told his three children about his family members who had perished in the Camps. In 2001, a year after my father’s death, my father’s first cousin sent me the Katz genealogy book, on which he worked for twelve years. I then sadly discovered the numerous relatives who had been sent to the Auschwitz gas chambers.

In fall 2016, my husband and I had the privilege to say *Kaddish* for our family members at the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial. As we were walking out of Auschwitz, we saw a group of approximately forty young Israelis. They were joyously singing Hebrew songs draped in their national flag, proudly wearing the Star of David on their backs. Watching them, tears ran down my face. Here I stood on the grounds of Auschwitz, knowing and writing about its dark history, where tragic death and human cruelties had flourished. Now, seeing this young group of Israelis gripped my soul. Their spirit for living, on the grounds that produced death, uplifted me. It made me intensely appreciate my life--every life. It made me appreciate my Jewish history. Their soaring spirits smiled down on Auschwitz, and at that moment, I knew and felt my people’s future looked bright.

2.5 Bringing *Refidim Junction* to the Stage

A Personal Essay by Dr. Alice Shalvi
Israel Prize Laureate

Refidim Junction is an opera, or a Scenic-Documentary *Aktion* by German-Israeli librettist composer Magret Wolf.

When my only brother, William Margaliot (Margulies), five years my senior, immigrated to Israel in 1990, he brought with him from London a vast quantity of family souvenirs—

photographs and documents of all kinds that had accumulated over a period of more than sixty years. Finally retired from professional life, he began gradually sifting through this material, coming upon much that was previously unknown to him. In 2007 he lighted upon a cardboard folder, on the cover of which our father had inscribed in German the words “Letters from my beloved wife, Perl.” Arranged in chronological order, it contained over one hundred letters written between August 1932 and May 1934, the period that elapsed between his fleeing to London from Essen, Germany and the much longed-for granting of entry visas enabling my mother, her mother, my brother, and myself to join him.

Confronted with this collection of letters, many of them written in close lines on flimsy paper in order to minimize postage, we decided to preserve the contents by having them computerized. A search for a computer-literate bi-lingual assistant who could also help us decipher words with which we were unfamiliar led us to Magret Wolf, a German-born recent immigrant to Israel. Weekly sessions, each of three to four hours, continued over several months, in the course of which both my brother and I not only learned many facts of which we had hitherto been ignorant, but also obtained unprecedented understanding of the agonizing emotion and suffering our mother had endured during the ten months of separation.

My mother’s letters deal primarily with her efforts to obtain an exit permit from Germany and an entry visa to England. They describe the Nazi bureaucracy from a very intimate point of view. Her style of writing is spontaneous; the letters sound as if she were speaking directly to her husband, as if he were sitting opposite her. Though we lack his replies to her letters, the exchanges were so rapid as to enable one to deduce their context from her responses to them. It is a kind of one-sided dialogue.

Left alone to wind up the business they had together operated, our mother was unsuccessful in eliciting payments from customers and hence also in paying suppliers. As an “Ostjüdin” of Polish origin and hence in danger of deportation, my mother anxiously reported to my father on police visits and ongoing surveillance. In hope of escaping these, she moved to Mannheim to live with a sister-in-law who had recently been widowed. The expectation was that she would soon receive both the requisite exit permits and entry visas. In fact, this process continued for a further eight months, during which she suffered not only material deprivation but also much mental anguish. The uncertainty of her fate, the continued threat of deportation, the dilemma of finding an alternative place of refuge, concern for her children’s welfare, her relatives’ resentment of her continued presence in their midst and their own fear lest they, too, fall victim to Nazi persecution—all these contributed to her agony. She feared she might never be reunited with her husband.

Desperate, she wrote almost daily to appeal for his help, occasionally accusing him of not doing enough to rescue her and their loved ones. Only very rarely do some glimpses of relief occur in the letters. Hearing the “Merry Widow” waltz coming from a neighboring window, she recalls the time when, in her teens, she sat on a balcony with a friend who taught her the words. Looking in the mirror, she is surprised to find that she still looks quite attractive. Alone in the house, she is able to write to Benno in peace and quiet.

At last, in May, after ten months of separation, she receives the longed-for visas.

However, her worries are not yet at an end. In the final letter she not only graphically conveys her own ecstatic response to the letter bearing the good news, but also reports that it had led my normally reserved, undemonstrative brother to fling himself sobbing into her arms. Yet there are still concerns regarding possible mishaps en route. She begs him, if at all possible, to meet us in Calais and most certainly no further away than Dover, our port of arrival in England.

Reading the letters brought my brother and myself closer together than we had ever been. When Magret left at the end of one particularly painful session, we embraced and broke into tears, overwhelmed by empathetic weeping. (It was the only time, other than when he returned from hospital after attending my mother on her deathbed, that I saw him cry.) We were mourning not only her suffering, but our own unawareness of it and hence our having failed to comfort her in her months of distress.

As the process of deciphering and dictation dragged on, I at one point asked Magret whether she wasn’t finding the work boringly repetitive.

“Not at all,” she replied. “I’m learning about an aspect of the Holocaust of which I was never aware, about which we never learned. We all know about the Final Solution, the millions who perished, but we know nothing of the everyday persecution, the exclusion, the expulsion. It’s an eye-opener for me.”

In the course of our collaboration, I had by chance learned that Magret was in fact a talented composer whose works had been commissioned and broadcast or performed on stage in Germany and other European countries. I borrowed some recordings and was deeply impressed by her unique musical idiom—both classical and innovative, wholly contemporary, but also melodious and harmonious. We became good friends.

In 2009, Magret asked for permission to use the letters as the basis of an opera that had been commissioned by the Würzburg Municipal Theater. As she herself wrote:

“The wealth of information, the connection between history, the personal story and the individual experience which are revealed in the letters made me think that the story had to be told. However, I felt something was still missing...an additional point of view, the continuation of the story...”

The resulting work, *Refidim Junction*, combines my mother's letters with those of Marianne Rein, a native of Würzburg who differed from her in age, background, and occupation, thus deriving a comprehensive universality from the individual stories.

What further enriches the work and deepens its impact is the material that Magret Wolf added to the two women's texts: a powerful, painful poem written by Rywka Kwiatowski in the Lodz Ghetto, two poems by Marianne herself, and a list of names of the Jews of Würzburg deported to Riga in 1941, which includes her name and that of her mother.

Concurrently with the spoken and sung texts, a running list of subtitles, giving the date and title of each new law or regulation imposed on Jews, forcibly brings home not only how early in Nazi rule the discrimination first began, but also how it steadily intensified until almost every day brought a new form of persecution.

The opera was first performed in Würzburg on November 10, 2012, in the course of the weekend marking the anniversary of the 1933 *Pogromnacht* (previously euphemistically referred to as *Kristallnacht*). The fact that it coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of my mother's death further heightened the emotional impact the occasion had on me. At the close of the premiere, after a long moment of total silence, the audience burst into prolonged applause. I learned later that several of them had attended one or even more of the subsequent four performances.

I had earlier become acquainted with the four principal members of the cast, the conductor, Ulrich Pakusch, and the director, Kai Christian Moritz. A charismatic, innovative and insightful actor, Kai was making his debut as a director. Himself both a devout Catholic and an ardent pro-Semite who had paid several visits to Israel, he brought his five collaborators to tour the country in the summer prior to the performance, in order to immerse them in Jewish and Israeli history. Each of the protagonists was portrayed by two women, a singer and an actor. All four entered totally into the roles they were performing, interpreting the texts with impressive understanding and empathy. The stories I told and photographs I showed them, in the course of two long meetings at my home, created an intimate bond between myself and Britte Sheerer, who sang the role of Perl. We have remained in ongoing contact.

Additional performances of *Refidim Junction* took place in Berlin on January 23, 2015 (International Holocaust Memorial Day), with the same cast but with the Berliner

Symphoniker in place of the students of the Würzburg Academy of Music. Again, the chronological context heightened the emotional impact on the audience. Letters I received from two of them, both non-Jews, testified to the unforgettable power of the work.

In June 2015, when *Refidim Junction* was performed in the course of the Jerusalem International Festival of the Arts, the Israeli audience was a very different one, well versed in Holocaust history. Nevertheless, here, too, the response was similar to that of Magret Wolf herself: “I never knew...”

I derive much satisfaction and consolation from the fact that my beloved mother’s suffering has found appropriate expression in a work of artistic integrity and excellence. It is a kind of vindication, a belated—and still in many ways inadequate—tribute not to her alone, but to those who lived through the pain of persecution and survived.

NEW

Section 3. Examining Women in the Holocaust through Theatre

A Study Guide by Karen Shulman
Educational Consultant, Remember the Women Institute

The following is an outline frame for a study unit that uses theatre to teach about women in the Holocaust. It is intended for teachers, who can use it with the play of their choice. The desired outcome and learning plan will differ according to the play chosen to use.

STAGE 1: DESIRED OUTCOME

Established Goals

- To explore the role of women in the Holocaust, while looking into their unique experiences through the art of theatre
- To understand gender in the Holocaust narrative
- To learn about the Holocaust
- To have students recognize the power of theatre's ability to teach history

Understandings

Students will understand:

- The events and timeline of the Holocaust
- That the Holocaust was a composite of individual actions and choices
- That women experienced unique threats and challenges
- How to look at important historical events through a gendered lens
- Lessons about human behavior and moral issues

Most lessons about the Holocaust explore the idea of "Never Again," along with discussions of early warning signs of genocide. This is also an opportunity to bring up issues of women in war, as well as current human rights abuses.

Essential Questions

- Why is it important to learn about women in the Holocaust?
- What unique experiences did women go through?
- Why do some people believe it is not appropriate to talk about women in the Holocaust?
- How can a personal story illustrate important events?
- How can we learn history through theatre?

Recognized Standards (potential list but not exhaustive)

National Core Arts Standards¹

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

Common Core State Standards²

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

¹ <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

² <http://www.corestandards.org>

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

STAGE 2: LEARNING PLAN

Activities

Any discussion about the Holocaust is a difficult one. Some students may know very little about the Holocaust, while others may be more familiar with its narrative. It is important to give a historical context to the Holocaust, before delving into a play. This should be done with timelines and details that would be suited for the age group of the students. By using plays, the students can understand the Holocaust through the characters. The teacher can facilitate a discussion to have the students move from the characters' personal experiences to the collective experiences of the Holocaust.

As an introduction, teachers could ask their students:

- In the past, what have you learned from seeing a play?
- What role does the theatre play in understanding history?
- What do you know about the Holocaust?
- What do you know about women's experiences in the Holocaust?
- Why is it important to explore women's experience in the Holocaust?
- Why is it important to learn about the Holocaust and subsequent genocides?

At that point, it will be up to the teacher to choose to read the entire play, or just excerpts.

Throughout the play, students will be introduced to elements of World War II and the Holocaust, and teachers can stop to explore them thematically. For example, a play might take place during or right after *Kristallnacht*, or in a concentration camp. It is important to have students understand the context in which the play took place, and through that, the students will gain a better understanding of historical events.

When learning about the Holocaust, personal stories are often looked at through a lens of individuals' roles as victims, perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, or rescuers. As the class analyzes the play, it is important to identify the main character's role. Ultimately, the lesson should focus on analyzing the play while trying to understand the role of women and their unique experiences.

Different themes will arise depending on the play that a teacher uses. The following are suggestions of themes that could be incorporated when looking into the experiences of women during the Holocaust:

- Women before the war
- Gender roles
- Choices women had or did not have
- Challenges women faced
- Family
- Shaved heads and other degrading physical aspects
- Motherhood
- Pregnancy
- Forced abortions
- Women in war
- Rape and sexual violence during the Holocaust
- Ravensbrück women's concentration camp
- Women in hiding
- Women rescuers
- Women partisans
- Women who collaborated with the Nazis
- Women guards in concentration camps
- Current examples of violence against women
- Rape as a weapon of war
- Sexual violence in genocides
- Survivors

We welcome your suggestions for additions to our Resource Handbook. We would also like to hear how you use this handbook in your classroom. If you would like to add information about a play about women and the Holocaust, about a play about the Holocaust written by a woman, or a sample lesson plan, please send details to info@rememberwomen.org.

For more information on Theatre and the Holocaust, please see the catalog on the website of [National Jewish Theater Foundation](#) and [All About Jewish Theatre](#).