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Holocaust Remembrance Concert

Glenn Block Director/Conductor
Illinois State University

James Major Director

John Spiro Narrator

Cynthia Oeck Soprano

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**Music Department
Illinois State University**

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE CONCERT

ISU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Glenn Block, Music Director and Conductor

ISU MEN'S CHORUS
James Major, Director

Rabbi John Spiro, Narrator
Cynthia Oeck, Soprano

**Braden Auditorium
Sunday Afternoon
April 21, 1996
3:00 p.m.**

Program

from the television mini-series *"The Holocaust"* (1970)

Morton Gould
(1913-1996)

Suite from "The Holocaust"
Main Theme
Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass)
Berta and Joseph's Song
Babi Yar
Elegy
Liberation

Performed in memory of the composer, who died February 21, 1996 in Florida

A Survivor from Warsaw (1947)

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874-1951)

Rabbi John Spiro, *Narrator*
ISU Men's Chorus

Intermission

A Survivor from Warsaw (1947)

Arnold Schoenberg
(1874-1951)

Rabbi John Spiro, *Narrator*
ISU Men's Chorus

Symphony No. 3 Op. 36 (1976)

Henryk Gorecki
(born 1933)

"Symphony of Sorrowful Songs"
Lento
Lento e Largo
Lento

Cynthia Oeck, *Soprano*

Program Notes

Suite from "The Holocaust" - Morton Gould

Morton Gould, the contemporary composer of lighter music, died on February 21, 1996. Gould composed the music for the television mini-series "The Holocaust." The film follows a Jewish family's struggles starting with pre-World War II hostilities and ends with their emancipation after the War. As the War breaks out, the family scatters throughout Europe; after the War, only two members have survived. Gould extracted some of the movie music to form a concert suite of five movements, and later appended another movement, the Elegy, which gives his own musical commentary on the war.

The first movement presents the heartwrenching theme of the entire "Holocaust" movie. The second movement, Kristallnacht - Night of Broken Glass, portrays the evening when Nazi supporters tore through the streets of Germany smashing windows and vandalizing Jewish homes and businesses. The sharp-edged sounds of the trumpets and other brass instruments vividly depict the violence of the night. The third section depicts the love and tranquility of the Old World through the eyes of Berta and Joseph. In the fourth movement, the music describes the massacre by the Germans of the Jews in the Russian town of Babi-Yar. As the Jews meet their death, the thick and dirge-like texture of the funeral march expresses the weariness and hopelessness of the prisoners. After the Elegy, Gould's uplifting melody of Liberation brings the suite to a close.

"A Survivor from Warsaw" - Arnold Schoenberg

Arnold Schoenberg's "A Survivor from Warsaw" is for narrator, large orchestra and male chorus. The narrator takes on the persona of several characters, including a survivor of the Warsaw Ghetto and a Nazi officer. Schoenberg had heard a personal account of life in the Warsaw Ghetto directly from a survivor. Schoenberg composed the composition in the twelve-tone technique, a compositional style based on the idea that all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale are prearranged into a specific order with no one pitch or pitches being more important. The composer then reorganizes the order of the pitches through a series of systematic permutations to form other row transpositions for use in the same composition.

"A Survivor from Warsaw" is divided into two unequal sections. In the first section, with orchestral accompaniment, the chosen rows stack vertically to form a very thick, contrapuntal texture. In the shorter second section, with male chorus, these notes take on a more linear and melodic function. At the close of his narrative, the Survivor tells how the Sergeant in charge of one of the death-squads orders his nameless captives to number off, and how they start first slowly, then faster and faster "like a stampede of horses" until finally and in resolute unison, they and Schoenberg's male chorus sing the Jewish prayer, "Shema, Yisroel."

Narrator's Text:

I cannot remember ev'rything. I must have been unconscious most of the time...! I remember only the grandiose moment when they all started to sing, as if prearranged, the old prayer they had neglected for so many years - the forgotten creed!

But I have no recollection how I got underground to live in the sewers of Warsaw for so long a time...

The day began as usual. Reveille when it was still dark. "Get out!" Whether you slept or whether worries kept you awake the whole night. You had been separated from your children, from your wife, from your parents. You don't know what happened to them... How could you sleep?

Trumpets again. "Get out! The sergeant will be furious!" They came out; some very slow, the old ones, the sick men, some with nervous agility. They fear the sergeant. They hurry as much as they can. In vain! Much too much noise, much too much commotion! And not fast enough!

The Feldwebel shouts: "*Achtung! Stilljestanden! Na wird's mal, oder soll ich mit dem Gewehrkolben nachhelfen? Na jut: wenn Ihr's durchaus haben wollt!*" (Attention! Stand still! How about it or should I help you along with my rifle butt? OK, fine, if that's what you really want!)

The sergeant and his subordinates hit everyone: young or old, strong or sick, guilty or innocent... It was painful to hear them groaning and moaning.

I heard it though I had been hit very hard, so hard that I could not help falling down. We all on the ground who could not stand up were then beaten over the head... I must have been unconscious. The next thing I heard was the soldier saying, "They are all dead!" Whereupon the sergeant ordered to do away with us. It had become very still - fear and pain. Then I heard the sergeant shouting: "Abzaehlen!" (Count off!)

They started slowly, and irregularly: one, two, three, four; "*Achtung!*" The sergeant shouted again: "*Rascher! Nochmals von vorn anfangen! In einer Minute will ich wissen wieviele ich zur Gaskammer abliefern! Abzaehlen!*" (Faster! Once again from the beginning! In one minute I want to know how many I am going to send off to the gas chamber! Count off!)

They began again, first slowly: one-, two-, three-, four, became faster and faster, so fast that it finally sounded like a stampede of wild horses, and all of a sudden, in the middle of it, they began singing the *Schema Yisroel*.

Schema Yisroel

Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul
(and with all your might.)

And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

You shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them
(when you are sitting at home and) when you go on a journey.

"Symphony No. 3" - Henryk Gorecki

At dawn on the first day of September, 1939, an old German battle ship opened fire on the Polish positions outside the free city of Gdansk. Thus began the war that led to the horrors witnessed in the Camps across Europe and in Asia. On the 50th anniversary of 1939, Heads of State, the international media and citizens of the world gathered into the opera house in Warsaw, which had been devastated towards the end of the war, while at the same time a less noticed, but equally important, concert took place in the old German town of Brunswick, in the 13th century church of St. Magnus. The orchestra concert in St. Magnus began with a Kyrie for chorus and orchestra by Mendelssohn, and in witness to the crimes of the war, continued with Schoenberg's "A Survivor from Warsaw," and ended with Gorecki's *Symphony No. 3*.

The leap from Mendelssohn to Schoenberg symbolized the history and the setting in which the Gorecki "Symphony No. 3" was performed. It was a concert without interruption or applause, without spoken introductions, explanations or prayers. The only written words were those of Bertold Brecht's poem "To those who come after", and the only spoken ones were those in Schoenberg's "Survivor." "A Survivor from Warsaw" ends with a dark, loud dissonance. In the St. Magnus Church, the last echoes of the final chord of "Survivor" had barely faded when the orchestra's double basses began, *de profundis*, the long and slow melody from which Gorecki builds a great arch of hope, born out of sorrow.

The first movement is dominated by a setting of the 15th century Polish prayer known as the Holy Cross Lament. Flanking the entrance of the voice are two halves of a canon for strings alone, beginning and ending with the basses. The second and third movements continue the slow, static mood of the first movement, and both combine to form a length equal to that of the first movement.

The text of the second movement comes from a prayer inscribed on Wall 3 of Cell No. 3 in the basement of the "Palace," the Gestapo's headquarters in Zakopane, beneath which is the signature of Helena Wanda Blasziusiaskowna, and the words "18 years old, imprisoned since 26 September, 1944." The third movement text uses the opening line of the Polish Ave Maria, the prayer to the Holy Mother.

Symphony of Sorrowful Songs

I.

My son, my chosen and beloved,
Share your wounds with your mother;
And because, dear son, I have always carried you in my heart
And always served you faithfully,
Speak to your mother, to make her happy,
Although you are already leaving me, my cherished hope.

Lamentation of the Holy Cross Monastery from the "Lysogora Songs" collection.

II.

No, Mother, do not weep.
Most chaste Queen of Heaven
Support me always.
"Zdrowas Maria."

III.

Where has he gone
My dearest son?
Perhaps during the uprising
The cruel enemy killed him.
Ah, you evil people
In the name of God, the most Holy,
Tell me, why did you kill
My son?

Never again
Will I have his support
Even if I cry out.
Were my bitter tears
To create another River Oder
They would not restore to life
My son.

He lies in his grave
And I know not where
Though I keep asking people
Everywhere.

Perhaps the poor child
Lies in a rough ditch
And instead he could have been
Lying in his warm bed.

Oh, sing for him
God's little song-birds
Since his mother
Cannot find him.

And you, God's little flowers.
May you blossom all around
So that my son
May sleep happily.

Folk song in the dialect of the Opale region.

Notes by Maryann Flock.

About the Featured Artists:

Rabbi John Spiro, narrator, is spiritual leader at Moses Montefiore Congregation and teaches part-time at Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State Universities.

Cynthia Oeck, a native of Seattle, Washington, has performed with various professional and semi-professional opera companies including the Civic Opera Theater of Kansas City and Opera Players of Washington. Her roles include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte*, the Countess in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Genievre in the West Coast premiere of Handel's *Ariodante*, Hanna in *The Merry Widow* and most recently Violetta in *La Traviata*.

Ms. Oeck has performed in Washington, Missouri and Illinois on the concert stage. Appearances include Stravinsky's *Pulchinelletta*, Poulenc's *Gloria*, Mozart's *Coronation Mass*, Faure's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, and most recently Mozart's *Requiem* April 5, 1996, in Decatur, Illinois. Upcoming engagements include a recital of sacred music and a performance of Poulenc's *Gloria* in Corvallis, Oregon in December 1996.

Ms. Oeck has a master of music degree in Vocal Performance from the University of Washington in Seattle. She currently teaches voice at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois.

About the Music Director:

Dr. Glenn Block is the Director of Orchestras and Opera at Illinois State University, where he is also Coordinator of the Ensembles Division. An active guest conductor, he is one of the most active All-State orchestra conductors, having conducted in over 32 states and Canada. He is also the Music Director of the Youth Symphony of Kansas City, one of the country's largest and most extensive youth symphony programs. The youth symphony was invited to be one of only eight youth orchestras world-wide to participate in the 1996 International Festival of Youth Orchestras in Banff, Alberta, Canada earlier this month. Last week, the Youth Symphony of Kansas City also performed at the opening concerts of the national conference of the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), which was held this year in Kansas City. He has served on the Board of Directors of the Conductors Guild, and was elected to the Board of Directors of the Youth Orchestra Division of the American Symphony Orchestra League. In January of 1996 he was in residence with the Barranquilla Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, South America, conducting the orchestra and teaching conducting master classes.



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Amy Gilreath, <i>trumpet</i>	William Koehler, <i>bass</i>
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Orchestra Committee

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ISU SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Glenn Block, *Music Director and Conductor*

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