



Violins of Hope Brings Powerful Stories to Arizona

Grammy-award winning violinist Gil Shaham will perform with the Arizona Musicfest Festival Orchestra, Feb. 23 at Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts. (www.azmusicfest.org)

Violins of Hope tells the remarkable stories of violins played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust. Today, these instruments serve not only as powerful reminders of an unimaginable experience but also reinforce key lessons of tolerance, inclusion and diversity that are pertinent now as well as for future generations. Violins of Hope will be in Arizona Feb. 3 – March 26.

Israeli violinmaker **Amnon Weinstein** has devoted the last 20 years to locating and restoring the violins of the Holocaust as a tribute to those who were lost, including 400 of his own relatives. He calls these the Violins of Hope. Weinstein has restored more than 60 violins as a way to reclaim his lost heritage, give a voice to the victims, and reinforce positive messages of hope and harmony.

The Violins of Hope have been played in concert halls and exhibited in museums throughout the world. They have been featured in books, print, film and television. They have been used in lectures and educational programs and their stories and messages have impacted hundreds of thousands of individuals.

Violins of Hope will transcend religious and other barriers to facilitate a community-wide dialogue about music, art, social justice and free expression and the importance of cooperation and collaboration to achieve common goals.

“In every major U.S. city, except Phoenix,

there is a Holocaust museum where people of all religions can go for education and knowledge,” said **Julee Landau Shahon**, co-chair of Violins of Hope. “In schools, the Holocaust is studied from a historical perspective but not in an in-depth, comprehensive way. Providing education on the Holocaust and relating lessons of the past to present day is key to creating a future where tolerance, hope and peace are valued.”

According to **Marty Haberer**, CEO of the **Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix**, presenter of the Violins of Hope, in every city where Violins of Hope programming has taken place, it has been a huge success — for the community as well as the participating organizations.

“Given all that is happening in our world today, this program could not have come at a better time,” he says. “According to the Anti-Defamation League, anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S. rose 57 percent compared to 2016. This is the largest single-year increase on record and the second highest number reported since the ADL started tracking such data in 1979.”

Violins of Hope is a broad-reaching and collaborative effort with programs throughout the Phoenix Metropolitan area and Flagstaff, Tucson and Sedona. Many events are free or low-cost to encourage participation. For event information, visit www.violinsofhopephoenix.com.

GET MORE!: For a full rundown of Violins of Hope events, visit news.CITYSunTimes.com.