

Jewish Federation hosts 'Violins of Hope'

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In 1933, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, immediately founding his first concentration camp in Dachau.

In 1935, he issued the Nuremberg Laws, excluding Jewish people from public life across Germany.

By 1945, more than six million Jewish people were murdered across Europe during the Holocaust.

"We believe that in keeping the memory and lessons of the Holocaust alive, we prevent silence and indifference in future generations," says Marty Haberer, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix.

In an effort to give a voice to those lost during those darkest of days in our history, the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix



Amnon Weinstein examines violins in his workshop. *(Special to the Progress)*

and other community partners are bringing "Violins of Hope" to the Valley.

It tells the 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 lessons of tolerance, inclusion and diversity," said the federation, which partnered with more than 50 Arizona nonprofits, schools and businesses on the project.

The violins were first discovered by Israeli violinmaker Amnon Weinstein, who as a young violinmaker more than 50 years ago was asked to restore one.

The customer told Weinstein – who himself lost hundreds of relatives during the Holocaust – that the violin was played by

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a musician at Auschwitz as he marched to the gas chamber. The musician was spared by the Nazis and forced to play at the camp

But in 1996, by then a master violin-maker, Weinstein sought to restore every single one he could find as a way to reclaim his lost heritage.

The Violins of Hope have been played in concert halls and exhibited in museums worldwide.

Throughout February and March, Phoenix and Scottsdale will host more than two dozen Violins of Hope Phoenix events.

Free, ticketed and even school events being held through March 26, including:

Through March 26, the Arizona Jewish Historical Society will feature a free photography exhibit by renowned artist and photographer Daniel Levin called Amnon Weinstein, The Man behind the Music.

From Feb. 26 to March 24, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts will feature a Violins of Hope exhibition. Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday, noon-5. Docent-led tours (free).

On March 19, Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts will host a Violins of Hope Tribute Concert featuring the Red Rocks Music String Orchestra honoring Holocaust survivors and those who perished, with special guest Avshi Weinstein and emcee Lin Sue Cooney, at 7:30 p.m. (ticketed event).

On March 23 and 24, the Arizona Science Center Planetarium will host Chinese-American violin superstar Xiang (Sean) Gao as he gives an exclusive preview of a multimedia production based on stories of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees during the Holocaust.

Information: violinsofhopephoenix.com

