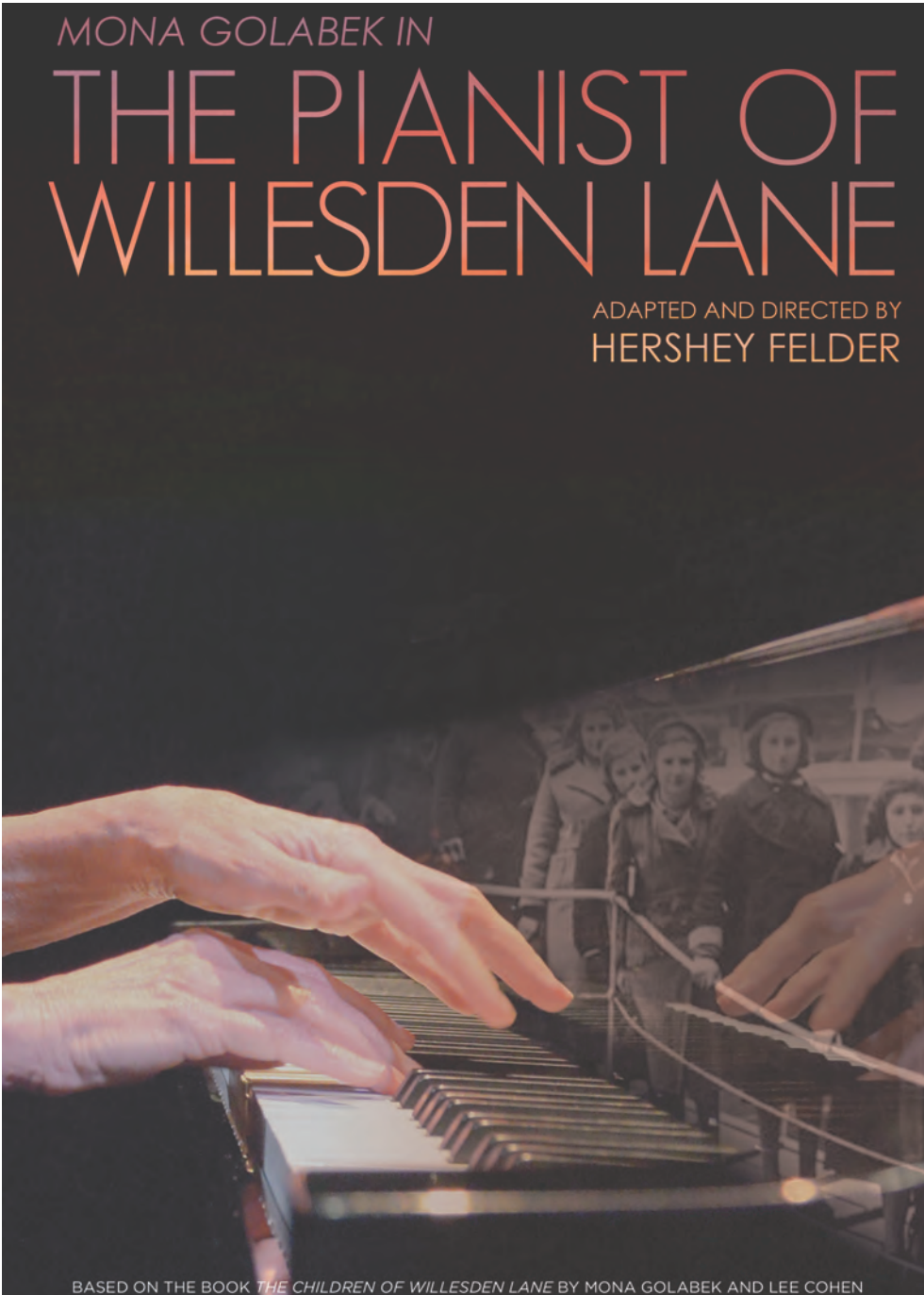


STUDY GUIDE



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Study Guide Objectives

This study guide serves as a classroom tool for teachers and students, and links to the following Common Core Standards and Connecticut State Arts Standards:

English Language Arts: Reading: Literature, Reading: Informational Text & History/Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2 - Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3 - Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3 - Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- 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.RI.11-12.3 - Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.5 - Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.5 - Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- 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.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.7 - Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they “see” and “hear” when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7 - Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.9 - Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Theatre

5: *Researching and Interpreting.* Students will research, evaluate and apply cultural and historical information to make artistic choices.

6: *Connections.* Students will make connections between theatre, other disciplines and daily life.

7: *Analysis, Criticism and Meaning.* Students will analyze critique and construct meanings from works of theatre.



About the Creators

By Aurelia Clunie

Mona Golabek: Performing a Legacy

Mona Golabek is a Grammy-nominated concert pianist and a third generation piano player in her family. Raised in Los Angeles by immigrant parents, Golabek is also a radio host and recording artist, and has performed internationally. In 2002, she published *The Children of Willesden Lane* with co-author Lee Cohen to share her mother's story. The book, almost ten years in the making, was inspired when Golabek was performing the Grieg piano concerto at the Seattle Symphony and realized her mother had played that very concerto for her debut (Caro). She had heard her mother's story ever since she was seven years old. "It was like a fairy tale in a strange way" (Teaching The Children of Willesden Lane: Meeting Mona Golabek).



Mona Golabek

Lisa Jura was fourteen years old and living with her family in Vienna, Austria. She dreamed of becoming a concert pianist and worked very hard to achieve her dream. Yet, when Hitler's army occupied Austria, the Jura family was no longer safe and her parents had to make the difficult decision of choosing which daughter would receive their one ticket on the Kindertransport—a rescue mission that sent Jewish children to safety in England. Lisa was chosen for her gift, and on the train platform, her mother, Malka, said to her, "Hold onto your music...it will be your best friend." Lisa did and continued working toward her dream during the war in England.

Mona Golabek carries on her mother's legacy as a pianist herself (her late sister, Renee Golabek-Kaye, was a concert pianist, as well), and as a storyteller. Upon writing *The Children of Willesden Lane*, Golabek founded the Hold On To Your Music Foundation which is dedicated to sharing Lisa Jura's story of perseverance in the face of adversity. The foundation distributes books and educational materials to schools and communities. Golabek travels and shares Jura's story through performance in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*.

Hershey Felder and Solo Performance

In 2012, Golabek premiered *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, the play based on her book. The play was adapted from the book and directed by Hershey Felder. Felder has created a unique model for sharing true stories through acting and music. His plays include *Beethoven as I Knew Him*, *George Gershwin Alone*, and *Hershey Felder as Irving Berlin*.

Felder grew up in an observant Jewish family in Montreal, Quebec, in Canada. His grandfather gave him a piano as a Passover gift, after he was known as a child for banging on the piano at the senior home where his family would visit his grandmother. He went on to study piano at Canada's McGill University and the Julliard School in New York. While living in Hollywood, he worked as a translator for Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation, which collects the stories and memories of Holocaust survivors. Later, he would develop his technique of creating one-man shows about musicians and would go on to share this format with others, including Mona Golabek, who sought him out to develop a new way to share her mother's story.



Hershey Felder



Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*.
Courtesy of mellopix.com and Berkeley Rep.

Solo performance is a unique style of acting in which one actor portrays multiple characters. In *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, Golabek portrays her mother, as well as her mother's teachers, friends, parents, and more. This requires a great deal of concentration. The performance is infused with classical music played by Golabek to highlight moments in the story.

Felder is relentless when it comes to developing and performing a piece. Of him, Golabek says, "Hershey has an incredibly generous spirit, but he also is utterly, painstakingly demanding....He is adamant in his attention to detail, and insists that every element of the production be at the highest artistic level. Having him as your director is no picnic..." (Weiss). "But," she says, "he is the first

to say that anything worthwhile is achieved at a tremendous cost." Of applying his grueling process to her story, Golabek says, "...the way he was able to help me blend the music and narrative of my mother's story was magic" (Weiss).

One may ask how Golabek can play her mother on stage night after night, as Marc Caro asked in a 2013 interview. "I always have images that go through to me of the (death) camps, the things that we've all been raised on, and those images really affect me as I'm playing those powerful (chords)," says Golabek, "...but I'm trying very hard to just deliver cleanly, purely, what my mother must have dreamed in that moment when she walked out onstage. I try to imagine what was in her heart, and I try to tell it very clearly and without putting a lot of weight on it..." (Caro). Says Felder, "A person can't live through death and destruction every night. It doesn't work" (Caro). Instead, Golabek tells a singular story of a fourteen-year-old girl with hopes and dreams and the determination to follow them regardless of her circumstances. Felder and Golabek have crafted a unique performance that allows the audience to focus on Lisa Jura's story and the integral part classical music plays in its progression.

Questions:

- Mona Golabek and Hershey Felder infuse their one person shows by playing live music on stage. If a performer were to tell your story, what art form besides acting should they use to express you?
- There are many artists who use solo performance to tell stories that feature multiple characters or real life people. Watch clips of Daniel Beaty, James Lescene, and Anna Deavere Smith performing their original works. Why do you think some actors choose to tell true stories though this medium?
- In 1955, Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett adapted *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank into a play entitled *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The play told Anne Frank's story and is meant to be performed by multiple actors. Choose a section of the play and compare it to the corresponding section of the book. Why do you think Goodrich and Hackett felt the need to adapt the book for the stage? Try adapting the same section for solo performance. How does it change? What specific challenges arise in telling the same story through solo performance? What are the benefits of telling stories through solo performance?



Learn more about Mona Golabek's book, *The Children of Willesden Lane* and the Hold On To Your Music Foundation by visiting <http://holdontoyourmusic.org/index.html>

The Children of Willesden Lane by Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen was published in 2002. Courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

The Pianist of Willesden Lane - Character List

Mona Golabek - A concert pianist

Lisa Jura - Her mother, a piano student. Born in 1924 in Vienna

Malka Jura, "Mama" - Lisa's mother

Abraham Jura, "Papa" - Lisa's father

Rosie - Lisa's older sister

Sonja - Lisa's younger sister

German soldiers - occupying Vienna

Professor Isselis - Lisa's piano teacher at age 14

Sid Danziger - Abraham's cousin in London to whom they send Lisa on the Kindertransport

Captain and Mrs. Richmond - the owners at Peacock Manor

Gladys - head servant at Peacock Manor

Monty - chauffeur at Peacock Manor

Betsy - cook at Peacock Manor

Carrie - handmaiden at Peacock Manor

Mr. Piedmont - butler at Peacock Manor

Mr. Hardesty - director of the Bloomsbury house

Mrs. Cohen - head of Willesden Lane

The children of Willesden Lane

Mr. Dimble - the foreman at Platz and Sons garment factory

Mrs. Canfield - the Quaker neighbor who harbors Lisa after Willesden Lane was bombed

Myra Hess - famous British pianist

Aaron - a child from Willesden Lane who takes a liking to Lisa

Professor Mabel Floyd - Lisa's master teacher at the London Royal Academy of Music

Captain - the French captain who comes back for Lisa

Lisa's Austria

Until age 14, Lisa Jura grew up in Vienna, Austria. Known worldwide for classical music, Vienna in 1938 was a center of Jewish economic life, culture, and education.

- In 1938, 192,000 Jewish people lived in Austria.
- 9% of Vienna's population was Jewish
- On March 12, 1938, Germany annexed the Republic of Austria in what is known as the Anschluss.
- Between 1938 and 1940, 117,000 Jews emigrated from Austria.
- After October 1941, emigration shifted to forced deportation by the Nazis to ghettos in Poland and Eastern Europe where many were killed.
- By November 1942, the Jewish population in Austria had fallen to 7,000 – many of whom were married to non-Jews or were in hiding.



Europe before World War II. Courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

Austria Today

- Austria became independent again in 1955 and joined the European Union in 1995.
- Austria's population today is over 8 million people with over 1.7 million people living in Vienna.
- Today's Austria has a Jewish population of 9,000 people.
- Austria is a landlocked European country located in the Alps mountain range where skiing and snowboarding are popular sports.
- Famous Austrians include classical composers Joseph Haydn, Franz Schubert, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, as well as actor and former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and psychologist Sigmund Freud.



Austrian flag 1934-1938.



Current Austrian flag

Audience Etiquette and Classical Music

By Ashley Baker

What is classical music?

In *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, writer, pianist and performer Mona Golabek gives her audience a musical journey through Vienna through the use of classical music. Classical music refers to any Western music produced between 1750 - 1820 and may include opera, chamber music, choral music, and symphonies. Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, Handel, and Vivaldi are popular composers whose work you may hear on TV, films and commercials today.

At a classical concert, you will see a **conductor** using visible hand gestures to communicate with the performers, an **orchestra**, or group of performers playing various instruments, and possibly **soloists**. Unlike other live performances, a traditional classical concert will be absent of any special effects. Classical music invites the listener to have a different experience, relying on sound, emotion, and your imagination to set the stage.

When should I applaud?

Like theatrical plays, classical concerts have similar rules. An audience is expected to listen and be respectful during the performance. Talking loudly during a concert can be disruptive to not only the musicians, but also to those around you. It's important to silence all cell phones and tablets, as the light and sound from devices can be distracting as the musicians read their sheet music. Talking, texting, photography and video are not allowed. Classical concerts are an invitation to stop and listen. They are designed to entice a listener with subtleties and variations in rhythm, melody and repetition.

Minutes before the concert begins, musicians will make their way to the stage, take their seats, and tune their instruments. When the lights dim, the concertmaster or principal violinist will enter the stage and give the other musicians a note for final ensemble tuning. Once the conductor lifts the baton the concert begins. Some symphonies have several sections or movements with short bursts of silence between the music. Wait to applaud until the song has reached its completion. Your program will note how many pieces are in each work. Applause is generally heard at the beginning of the concert to welcome the musicians and at the end of the music. Applause at the end of the music is a formal way to let the musicians know how much you enjoyed the performance.

In *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, Mona Golabek tells the story of her mother, classical pianist Lisa Jura. Lisa's dream was to play the Grieg piano concerto in the finest music halls of Vienna. In this performance, director Hershey Felder weaves classical music and theatrical storytelling into one piece. As an audience member, you'll get to experience elements from both the worlds of live music and theatre. Unlike a classical performance though, the pianist of this piece will intersperse moments of piano playing with directly addressing the audience through storytelling.

What are the benefits of classical music?

Researchers have studied the effects of classical music on the brain. Classical music has been shown to:

- Reduce pain and anxiety before medical procedures
- Lower blood pressure
- Heighten and arouse emotions
- Fight insomnia
- Reduce crime
- Help brain development in children

Students who study music have also shown increased IQ. A University of Toronto study showed that six-year-olds who were given weekly music lessons over the school year tested, on average, 3 points higher than those who didn't.

Research also indicates that the brain of a musician works differently than that of a non-musician. "When you're playing an instrument, you have to be using more of your brain," says Dr. Eric Rasmussen of John Hopkins University.

No matter the benefits, musical concerts offer all of us the chance to relate to something bigger than ourselves. Coupled with the theatrical storytelling of Lisa Jura's journey, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* offers the best of both worlds. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy the performance.

Listen to excerpts from the music Mona Golabek plays in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* here: <http://holdontoyourmusic.org/educationmusic.html>

Guidelines for Attending the Theatre

Attending live theatre is a unique experience with many valuable educational and social benefits. To ensure that all audience members are able to enjoy the performance, please take a few minutes to discuss the following audience etiquette topics with your class before you come to Hartford Stage.

How is attending the theatre similar to and different from going to the movies? How is it similar to and different from going to a music concert? What behaviors are and are not appropriate when seeing a play? Why? Remember that because the performance is live, the audience can affect what kind of performance the actress gives. No two audiences are exactly the same and no two performances are exactly the same—this is part of what makes theatre so special! Students' behavior should reflect the level of performance they wish to see.

Theatre should be an enjoyable experience for the audience. Audience members are more than welcome to applaud when appropriate and laugh at the funny moments. Talking and calling out during the performance, however, are not allowed. Why might this be? Be sure to consider that not only would the people seated nearby be able to hear a conversation, but the actress on stage could hear them, too. Theatres are constructed to carry sound efficiently!

Any noise or light can be a distraction, so please remember to make sure cell phones are turned off (or better yet, left at home or at school!). Texting, photography, and video recording are prohibited. Food and gum should not be taken into the theatre.

Students should sit with their group as seated by the Front of House staff and should not leave their seats once the performance has begun.

Compare the audience etiquette practices for a classical music concert to audience etiquette practices for a play. What experience do you think you will have while watching *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*?

Themes for Discussion

The Value of Music

By Ayla Davidson

To Lisa Jura, her piano studies are more than just an extra-curricular activity, and to her parents, her passion for music is more than just a phase. The Jura family has an appreciation for music and art that was not uncommon in Europe in the 1930s. The arts were culturally recognized and celebrated as an esteemed profession that took skill and dedication and was a vital part of society. Ultimately, Lisa Jura's appreciation and passion for music fuels her survival through World War II.

Lisa's story begins in Vienna in 1938, "a city of dreams... a city of the greatest music for hundreds of years... a city of wonder" (p. 1). She takes weekly piano lessons for which she dresses to look "divine" since this is her most important hour of the week (p. 1-2). Her real dream is to debut at the Vienna Musikverein, one of the finest music halls in the world, playing the Piano Concerto in A Minor, by Edvard Grieg.

Lisa was an apprentice of music. She studied under Professor Isselis to learn everything she could. She followed in the footsteps of the great musicians of the past, developing her skill as though it was her duty to the world. Wolfgang Mozart studied under his father, Leopold Mozart, who was "determined to develop his two children's talents to the maximum" because he saw it as "his duty to them and to the world" (*History Today*). Lisa spent many hours a week practicing and dreamed about her debut.

When Mr. Jura, Lisa's father, wins a ticket on the Kindertransport, they choose Lisa to give "an opportunity for [her] to have a new teacher – an English teacher – in London" (p. 3). Lisa escapes the war in Vienna, saved solely by her piano skills and her parents' devotion to her dream. As she leaves her mother begs her:

Lisa, you must make me a promise. Never stop playing and hold on to your music – and I will be with you every step of the way. With every note, with every beat, with every phrase. I will be with you always..." (p. 9).

Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*.
Photo by mellopix.com



Lisa Jura. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.



TIME LINE

Compiled by Yanique Green and Aurelia Clunie

July 29, 1921 – Adolf Hitler becomes leader of National Socialist Party (Nazi).

1924 – Lisa Jura is born.

Jan 30, 1933 – Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.

March 12, 1933 – First concentration camp opens.

March 23, 1933 – Hitler gains dictator power over Germany.

July 14, 1933 – Nazi Party is declared the only party in Germany.

August 19, 1934 – Hitler becomes Fuhrer of Germany.

March 16, 1935 – Hitler violates treaty of Versailles.

1935 – Nuremberg Laws revoke rights and citizenship from Jews.

March 12, 1938 – Germany annexes Austria in what is called the Anschluss.

1938 – Lisa Jura attends her piano lesson, but is told she cannot ever return to the studio.

November 9/10, 1938 – Kristallnacht – Night of Broken Glass.

December 2, 1938 – First Kindertransport train arrives in Harwich, England.

1938 – Lisa Jura leaves her family and arrives in England on the Kindertransport train.

January 30, 1939 – Hitler makes a speech about his plans to annihilate the Jews.

September 1, 1939 –

Germany invades Poland.

September 3, 1939 – British

Prime Minister Neville

Chamberlain declares

war with Germany; King

George VI makes a

speech addressing British

involvement in World War II.

1940 – Nazis deport German

Jews to Poland and force

Jews to live in ghettos;

the final Kindertransport

train departs from the

Netherlands.

September 1940 – The

Blitz—German air force

bombing of England—

begins.

1941 – The first Nazi death

camps open. The systematic

extermination of Jews

begins.

December 7, 1941 – Japan

bombs Pearl Harbor in

Hawaii and the United

States enters WWII.

January 15, 1942 – Lisa Jura

auditions for the London

Royal Academy of Music.

June 1942 – Lisa Jura is

accepted to the London

Royal Academy of Music.

April 30, 1945 – Adolf Hitler

commits suicide.

September 2, 1945 – World

War II and the Holocaust

end.

December 19, 1997 – Lisa

Jura dies.

And this is just what Lisa does. At Peacock manor Lisa sneaks downstairs to play the piano whenever she is lonely. When she arrives at Willesden Lane, the first thing she does is rush to the piano and play. On the night of the first bombings she takes refuge in the basement, hiding under the piano. She never told her mother the truth about her lessons, that she “didn’t have a teacher, that [she] was teaching [herself]” (p. 17). “She would have been heartbroken,” Lisa shares (p. 17).

However, Lisa’s mother would have been filled with joy, pride, and love had she been at Wigmore Hall on the night Lisa made her debut with the Grieg Piano Concerto in A minor. She had pursued her passions and against displacement, loss of family, and even war, Lisa Jura had achieved her dream.

Questions:

- What role does music play in your life?
- If you could be an apprentice and study any profession, what would it be? Do you think your parents would support your choice? Why or why not?
- Do you have a passion to which you are devoted? Does practicing give you hope and purpose, or even something to do when you feel discouraged?

Searching for Home

By Krista DeVellis

“The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned” – Maya Angelou

In The Pianist of Willesden Lane, we see Lisa’s search for home. The foundation for what she needs in a home is set by her first home, in Vienna. This is the home she grew up in for 14 years with her parents and her sisters. Her identity is intertwined with her faith and her music. She was raised on her mother’s music, and her family’s religion, both of which are warmly present in this home. “I loved how Mama would light the Shabbos candles and prepare a beautiful meal,” she says, “and Papa would say the prayer over wine and challah, and my older sister Rosie, and my younger sister



Abraham, Malka, Rosie, and Lisa Jura. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

Sonja and I, we would sing and sing...” (p. 6) Unfortunately, Lisa is separated from this home to allow her safety and a chance to pursue her dream. Her family knows she can no longer get her classical piano training as a Jewish girl in Vienna, so they support her the only way they can: by sending her away.

When Lisa is torn from Vienna she believes she will be living with family, her father’s cousin in London. Her father tells her not to worry, “you will be with family right away” (p. 8). When she arrives, however, she discovers he is unable to take her and she must go to work as a seamstress in Peacock Manor. It is at this time that she decides for herself what she can accept and what she cannot. Initially she is struck by how beautiful the manor is. “It was like a castle in my dreams,” she describes, “a veritable Schonbrunn Palace, with gardens, grand staircases, and magnificent paintings” (p. 11). But while the estate is beautiful, she is not allowed to play the piano and there is no mention of her practicing her faith. She knows her family sent her to follow her heart and pursue her training as a pianist. The people here are kind to take her in, but they restrict her from furthering her dream. She came to England not simply to survive, but to flourish, so she decides that she cannot stay at Peacock Manor.



Left to Right: The children of Willesden Lane. The living room of the hostel at 243 Willesden Lane, 1943. Martin and Gunther play ping pong at the hostel. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

Lisa is next placed in a crowded hostel on Willesden Lane. This building has a piano and many other young Jewish refugees. She is allowed to play the piano here, and has her first Shabbos dinner since leaving her family. It is at this dinner that she really connects with the other kids. A young man, Paul, shares what his parents wrote him in a letter. “The Germans forced them to leave our apartment and they went to Munich to stay with people we know,” he says. “They don’t know what is going to happen next. But they hope I am all right...and that they will see me soon” (p. 15). Lisa realizes this night how much she can connect with the other inhabitants of Willesden Lane. “It was becoming clear to me... I wasn’t alone” (p. 16), she says in response to Paul’s letter. Even though this place does not have the grandeur of Peacock Manor, it is filled with people with similar values. Everyone here supports Lisa’s music and they all help her to excel in different ways. Many of her friends create a practice regimen for Lisa, taking turns quizzing her on scales and chords, drilling her to play songs again and again, and helping her to keep time. Aaron, another young man from the hostel, surprises her with tickets to see a great concert pianist, Myra Hess. At the end of the concert, Aaron says tearfully, “Lisa, someday that will be you” (p. 20). Lisa is so thankful to have friends who believe in her, and who take such actions to sustain her dream.

When Lisa leaves Vienna, she misses her family immensely. She thinks of them often, and of the sacrifices they made that allow her to grow. She is cut off from those who love and support her, so she must find a new family in England. The people in Peacock Manor do not allow her to be herself, so she leaves on her own. At Willesden Lane, however, Lisa finds a real home again where people respect who she is and encourage her to achieve her dream.

Questions:

- Describe a place that is “home” for you. What makes this place important? Include as many details as you can – what does the place look like, smell like, sound like?
- As the saying goes, “Home is where the heart is.” What makes a home besides the place? What songs, people, or experiences make you feel at home?
- Create a collage of images that represent your idea of home.

Determination and a Dream: Lisa’s Perseverance

By Aurelia Clunie

Lisa Jura’s dream as a young girl is to become a concert pianist and debut at the Musikveren, a famous concert hall in Vienna, Austria. At age 14, Lisa makes her weekly music lesson a top priority. “This is my piano lesson and I have to look **divine**,” she explains as she readies herself for the bus trip across Vienna to her piano teacher’s studio (p. 2). Although Lisa encounters many roadblocks and challenges to achieving her dream, she never gives up. Her faith in her dream allows her to persevere and overcome obstacles throughout the war that could have stopped her.

These obstacles begin one Friday afternoon in 1938 when she arrives for her lesson. She encounters a German soldier who stands guard outside her professor’s building. While frustrated by changes brought by the German occupation—streets, including one named for the famous Jewish composer Gustav Mahler have been changed to German names—she does not let the soldier’s presence deter her. “I made my way up the staircase, less concerned about the German soldier, than I was about how I would play for my demanding teacher,” (p. 3). However, when she arrives, Professor Isselis informs her that he is no longer allowed to teach Jewish students. They must end her lessons that day and she must leave. Lisa is heartbroken. She fears that without a great teacher, she will not become the great pianist she dreams of being. Her mother continues to teach her, and encourages her to continue taking her studies seriously and following her dream. When the Juras must choose one daughter to escape Vienna on the Kindertransport, Lisa is chosen for her gift. Lisa’s parents instill a faith that her talent and hard work will take her far and are worth this incredible sacrifice. This is a heavy weight to bear for Lisa. “I was terrified—I started to cry. Then Mama said that it was an opportunity to have a new teacher – an English piano teacher—in London—where there are no ordinances...” (p. 8). Lisa takes up her mother’s faith that she can continue studying in England and develops a new dream – to bring her family back together.

When she arrives, Lisa must protect her dreams in spite of her refugee status, being placed in a new living situation where she knows no one, and the demands of working in wartime England.

She thinks quickly on her feet when asked if she has skills. She knows her best skill is playing piano, but when a Kindertransport representative at Bloomsbury House does not see it as a “real skill,” she lists sewing as a skill (p. 10). This ensures her placement at Peacock Manor, an estate in the English countryside where she joins the staff of servants as a seamstress. She works hard and is liked by Captain Richmond, the owner of Peacock Manor. Lisa develops the nerve to ask the captain if her family can come to the safety of Peacock Manor too, but he expects to house soldiers at the estate and refuses to take Lisa’s family. Gladys, the head servant, forbids Lisa to play the piano in the parlor. Lisa cannot bear the thought of a piano that is, according to Gladys, “meant to be looked at and absolutely not to be touched!” (p. 12). She knows her gift will wither without practice, and that she must continue



Lisa Jura playing piano. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

pursuing her dreams to make her parents' heart-wrenching choice worthwhile. When Lisa chooses to leave the security of Peacock Manor, she must bike 30 miles to the train station, and travel by train to Bloomsbury House, "headquarters" of the Kindertransport in London, to seek a better arrangement.

In London, Lisa sleeps on a bench overnight before making her way to Bloomsbury House. She walks right into the director's office without an appointment and presents her case.

"My name is Lisa Jura, and I am from Vienna...I want to bring my family here to London, I want to live among my own, Sir, I play the piano, and I am going to make something of my life...and I need you to help me" (p. 13). Lisa's tenacity takes the director, Mr. Hardesty, by surprise. He does not immediately grant all of her wishes, but he solves the problem quickly by taking Lisa to 243 Willesden Lane. Lisa feels a glimmer of hope, "And that's when I thought, 'maybe everything is going to be all right'" (p. 14).

On her first day at 243 Willesden Lane, Lisa makes a strong impression. The instant she sees the piano, she stakes her claim. She sits to play and demonstrates her formidable talent in front of Mr. Hardesty, Mrs. Cohen, and everyone in the boarding house. "Mr. Hardesty stood frozen...Mrs. Cohen sat down in a chair... in disbelief. And then, one by one, the children came out their rooms... listening" (p.14). Lisa transforms 243 Willesden Lane in a moment.

Despite Lisa's clear talent, she must get a job. Her friend Gina helps her find a job sewing military uniforms in a garment factory. Even sewing becomes an opportunity to practice. She imagines her work is music and stitches "tapestries" in her imagination (p. 16). She works long days at the factory, but never loses sight of her dreams.

The night the first bombs of the Blitz drop on London, Lisa does not flee to the bomb shelter with the other children. Instead she takes refuge in the basement with the piano. She plays to drown out the bombs. She continues this ritual night after night. "After long nights of bombings, Londoners, with extraordinary fortitude and unmatched spirit, went back to work" (p. 17). Lisa is among the strong, determined Londoners and goes to work, too. She writes home, unsure of her parents' safety, unsure of her own safety, but keeps the promise she made to her mother to hold onto her music. It takes almost a year for Mrs. Cohen to rebuild the hostel, but she does and brings all the youth who had made the hostel home back from their temporary living arrangements.

Lisa's dreams of becoming a pianist and reuniting with her family drive her to overcome hardships. She knows when to push forward and when to ask others for help. When Lisa discovers she can audition for a scholarship to the London Royal Academy of Music, everyone from Willesden Lane helps her prepare. Her friends drill her on scales, musical pieces, and keeping rhythm, her co-workers at the factory make her a navy blue dress to wear at the audition, and her friend Gunter takes a day off of work to take her to her audition. Lisa has shared her faith in her dreams with anyone who will listen, and, in turn, her family, friends, and caregivers support those dreams as Lisa prepares for the most promising opportunity of her career.



Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*.
Photo courtesy of mellopix.com and Berkeley Rep.

Questions:

- Where do you turn to for comfort when you are afraid or frustrated? Is it an activity, a thing, a person, a place?
- Research your own family history. Can you find someone who persevered through a difficult time or circumstance? If you were going to tell their story, what artistic medium would you use?
- What is your dream for your future? Write a letter to yourself from the future encouraging yourself to keep going and overcome obstacles.

For Further Exploration

Kindertransport: The Children Transport

By Yanique Green

On December 2, 1938, approximately 200 Jewish orphans were brought to Harwich, England, due to a rescue operation called the Kindertransport. Following the *Kristallnacht*, the Night of the Broken Glass, when outraged Nazi soldiers killed and tortured nearly one hundred Jews and destroyed thousands of Jewish businesses and homes, organizations from England and Germany sought immediate immigration for children living in Germany and Austria. The Kindertransport brought children from Austria, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany to Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden and England. Many of them went on to live fulfilling and remarkable lives.



German Jewish children on the Kindertransport. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

The depth of violence afflicted upon the Jews living in Germany worried the neighboring countries as they sensed that it was only the beginning and even more danger was about to be unleashed on Jews. Organizations such as the British Jewish Refugee Committee, the Movement for Care for Children from Germany, the Reich Representation of Jews in Germany and private citizens of England gathered their resources in an effort to save as many children as they could. The organizations focused only on children under the age of seventeen, most of whose parents were already dead or sent away to concentration camps. Although immigration laws were strict, participating countries looked past regulations and opened up their gates to the children.

British officials kept the idea in mind that the children entering their gates would eventually be reunited with their parents after the crisis in Germany ended. In the meantime, they did their best to ensure that every child coming from Germany would have some kind of shelter, declaring that a price of 50 pounds be paid for each child by the organizations and the citizens who were able to help the children. Around ten thousand children were saved, thanks to the Kindertransport, and over seven thousand of them were Jews.

One survivor in particular is Ruth Hect. Ms. Hect was seven years old when she boarded a Kindertransport train, arriving in Belgium, and later being transported to Switzerland due to an unfortunate accident that she says saved her life. After missing her first train, her mother insisted that she was going to get her daughter to safety, putting Ruth on the railroad with a sign stating her name and destination. Ruth was then brought to Belgium where she lived in an orphanage, scared and missing her family, and aware that the world she knew would never be the same. The now eighty-three year old recalls a time her face was injured and she was transported to Switzerland. At the same time, Nazis sent the inhabitants of the orphanage she was living in to Auschwitz. As for the family that took her in, Ruth remains in touch with them. Looking back on her life, Ruth says she has lived a normal life; looking back on the souls that were lost, she says, "It is very unfortunate for the so many that were lost, but we always need to remember them."

Among those that need to be remembered are the heroes that saved many Holocaust victims. Many contributed to helping save not only children, but also adults. When the Nazis were on a war path, determined to annihilate all who they considered "impure" living in Germany, few were brave enough to stand up for the victims. Oskar Schindler, a man who originally planned to make a profit off of World War II, risked his life to help save 1,200 Jews from dying in the gas chambers. Schindler used his skills to bribe and trick the Nazi soldiers who wanted to kill Jews that worked with him. Schindler used the same profit that he made at the beginning of the war to buy more time to save the lives of Jews who were under his domain.

Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat, issued protective passports to thousands of Jews, identifying them as Swedish citizens. He then rented houses to shelter about 10,000 Jewish refugees living in Sweden. Wallenberg's actions prevented those Jews from entering concentrations camps. Like Schindler, he used his wits and money to keep the Nazis off his tracks, and saved over 100,000 lives.

Irene Sendler, a Polish Catholic social worker and a member of the Consul for Aid to Jews, produced false documents for Jews in an effort to save their lives, smuggling 2,500 children out of the Warsaw ghettos and placing them with Polish families, convents, and orphanages that were willing to help. Sendler was eventually arrested, tortured and sentenced to death; however, her group came to her aid. Following her rescue, Sendler continued smuggling children.

These people, and many others, helped children like Lisa Jura survive the most horrific time of their lives. They dared to go against what Hitler wanted and instead risk their lives saving many children.

“Every child saved with my help is the justification of my existence on this Earth and not a title to my glory.” – Irene Sendler



Kindertransport youths with Mrs. Cohen. Photo courtesy of Hold On To Your Music Foundation.

Meet a Kindertransport Survivor: Ruth Hect

From an interview between Natalie Pertz and Ruth Hect

Who is Ruth Hect?

Ruth Hect is a survivor of the Kindertransport with a true and unusual story. While most Kindertransport trains went to England, Ruth's train went to Belgium. When Ruth's mother took her to the train station, they discovered that Ruth had missed her Kindertransport train. Ruth's mother assured her she would be safe and said goodbye to a seven-year-old Ruth. In order to escape Germans invading Vienna, she was left at the station with a big sign including her name and destination. In reflecting about this time in her life, Ruth says "that's what you did to survive." In Belgium, Ruth lived with a German-Jewish family for two and a half years. Ruth describes the transition to living with strangers and says, "Growing up in Austria was very different; my new family was very intellectual and strict." Despite this, Ruth says, "a young child adjusts quickly and easily when treated nice. I got used to the lifestyle very fast." Ruth moved to the United States in 1952 and has lived in America ever since. Currently at the age of eighty-three, Ruth resides in Plainview, NY, and describes her years in the United States as "the most good and normal years of her life." Years later, Ruth recalls those tragic years and says that for many Viennese Jews it was "very unfortunate for so many that were lost, but we always need to remember them."

- **Conduct an interview with someone in your family or community that lived through an important event in history. Ask questions that get them to share as much detail as they can.**
- **Working in a group, use these interviews to write monologues.**

Kristallnacht and the Blitz

By Erin Frederick

In *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, Lisa's family undergoes a terrifying ordeal one evening as her father goes missing. As the family waits for him to come home, the city of Vienna, Austria falls into chaos around them. It was November 9, 1938 – a date that would come to be known as Kristallnacht.

Kristallnacht was the name given to the horrifying events that took place that night, and for several nights thereafter, in cities throughout Germany and parts of Austria, including where Lisa and her family lived in Vienna. The word is German for “Crystal Night,” or “Night of the Broken Glass,” and was named for the sounds of breaking glass that could be heard throughout cities and towns that night. This event was a major turning point in Nazi anti-Jewish policy that would eventually culminate in the Holocaust – the state-sponsored genocide, or mass murder, of 6 million Jewish people.



A synagogue burned on November 9, 1938 – Kristallnacht.

The events of November 9, 1938, were in retaliation for an incident that had taken place two days prior. On November 7, 1938, a 17-year-old Jewish student named Hershel Grynszpan shot and killed Ernst vom Rath, the Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum). Grynszpan, enraged over his parents' deportation to Poland from Germany, hoped that his dramatic action would bring attention to the plight of the Jews in Europe. When French police arrested Grynszpan, he said: “Being a Jew is not a crime. I am not a dog. I have a right to live and the Jewish people have a right to exist on earth. Wherever I have been I have been chased like an animal” (The American Experience).

The assassination of vom Rath spurred the Nazi party to take action against all Jews in Germany, and this movement spread to Austria, as well. Gangs of Nazi storm troopers destroyed nearly 7,000 Jewish businesses, set fire to more than 260 synagogues, killed 91 Jewish people and deported close to 30,000 Jewish men to concentration camps (The American Experience). The Nazis did not wear their uniforms; Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels wanted the public to believe that the events were a reflection of the “justified and understandable outrage of the German people” (Wiegrefe). At a Jewish orphanage in Esslingen, Germany, a mob drove the children out into the streets, while in the southwestern town of Kehl, the Jews were forced to march in rows of two down the streets, shouting “We are traitors to Germany” (Wiegrefe).

Kristallnacht survivor Susan Warsinger was nine years old in 1938, and she relayed her memories of that night in a podcast for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

“...My brother and I were sleeping in our bedroom and all of a sudden some bricks and rocks were being thrown through our bedroom window. And my brother, who has always been braver, looked outside and he saw that it was the people from our town that were throwing the bricks and the rocks through the window...We lived on the first floor and the rabbi of the town lived on the second floor. And I saw the rabbi standing on his veranda and there were two Nazi officers standing next to him holding him by the arm, and a third one held him by the beard and had a scissor in his hand. And he cut off his beard.

So we rushed across the hall to our parents' bedroom, and then my parents told us not to worry. They seemed to try to protect us all the time and not tell us what was going on. But gradually, you know, even young children find out on their own." (Warsinger)

In the play, 14-year-old Lisa is witness to some of the horrific events of that night. "I stood by the window waiting for my Father... and then I saw him...", she says. "The soldiers are beating him. They are forcing him down on his knees and making him scrub the filthy pavement as they laugh and yell: 'Judenschwein...! Jewish Pig!'" (p.6).

In the days following Kristallnacht, the Nazi party grew even bolder in their campaign to humiliate, incarcerate, and eventually eradicate the Jewish population. Goebbels spoke proudly of the destruction of the synagogues, stating, "They stood in the way long enough. We can use the space made free more usefully than as Jewish fortresses" (The American Experience). The Jewish community was issued a fine of one-billion marks, or 400 million U.S. dollars (Marcuse), for the death of vom Rath, and it was also determined that they would be held liable for all damages caused during the destruction of their own property during Kristallnacht.



A Jewish shop window broken on Kristallnacht, 1938. Photo: German Federal Archives.

Sadly, even the horrific events of Kristallnacht failed to make many world leaders take note of the Nazis' radical persecution of their victims. Not a single country broke off diplomatic relations with Germany at this time, though the United States did withdraw their ambassador (Wiegrefe). It wasn't until some time later, after the Nazi party had grown dramatically in strength, that the world began to fight back.

The Blitz

Thanks to the bravery and sacrifice of her family, Lisa was able to escape the looming Nazi threat in Vienna, only to find herself in London during a period known as the Blitz. Nearly two years after the events of Kristallnacht, the Blitz began in September of 1940, in the midst of World War II.

The United Kingdom had been the target of German bombs prior to this time, but the focus had largely been Royal Air Force, or RAF, bases and communications networks (BBC). However, the Nazi party shifted their focus away from defeating the RAF and instead looked to attack the British capital city, in an attempt to destroy British morale.

The bombing began on the afternoon of September 7, 1940. Almost 1,000 German aircraft crossed the English Channel. This was the largest collection of aircraft ever seen at that time (BBC). The RAF scrambled to intercept the German planes, which led to a huge dogfight over London and the River Thames. The country was put on the highest alert, expecting



Firemen work on a bomb damaged street in London, 1941. Photo: National Archives and Records Administration.

a German invasion. Much of East and Southeast London was devastated; 430 civilians were killed and 1,600 more were seriously injured (The History Channel). Unfortunately, that was only the beginning.

The word “blitz,” which is German for “lightning,” was an appropriate name for the period. For the next 76 days, night after night (with the exception of one evening of foul weather), the sky was lit with the explosions of bombs dropping on the city and its residents. Nearly 30,000 bombs were dropped on the city during that time, and nearly 6,000 people were killed and twice as many were injured in the first month alone (The History Channel). Many residents packed their most important belongings and waited out the long nights in London Underground Stations, sometimes even sleeping on the train rails themselves. Others, like Lisa, opted to brave the danger from the perceived refuge of their own homes.

Pamela Netherstreet was ten years old during the Blitz. She recalls the night her home was hit by a German bomb:

“The siren went about 9:00 pm and very soon the whole area was completely ringed with flares. It was a most amazing sight. Mum and I took shelter in the cupboard under the stairs.... We didn’t hear a thing when the bomb hit. All we felt was the sensation of a lift [or elevator] rushing down, but of course we had been lifted up first. Eventually everything settled down and there, right in front of us, was a perfectly shaped tunnel. Unfortunately, my leg was pinned down by a beam, so I could not move.” (Netherstreet)



A home in East London is damaged by a German dropped bomb during the Blitz, 1940. Photo: Imperial War Museums.

Pamela and her family were rescued by the London Home Guard that night. They survived the bombing, but their home was destroyed.

Eventually, the German planes were redeployed to take part in the invasion of Russia, and the bombings ceased. In the end, approximately one third of the city had been destroyed by the bombings. This included such landmark buildings as the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and the House of Commons (The History Channel). However, the German forces did not succeed in their original mission to crush the British spirit. “It was Hitler’s belief that the war from the air would terrorize London into defeat,” said author Jon E. Lewis in his book *London:*

The Autobiography. “He was wrong. The city’s inhabitants, on the contrary, took a perverse and particular pleasure from being the front line of war. ‘We can take it’ became the catchphrase of the Blitz” (The History Channel). The famous “KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON” signs, now found so commonly in home design shops, were created and posted about the city during this time. While the city of London dealt with unimaginable hardship and suffering during the Blitz, they did just that: they kept calm, and they carried on. And the city of London rose back up from the ashes of the Blitz.



An air raid shelter in the London Underground during the Blitz, 1940s. Photo: National Archives and Records Administration.

Questions:

- Imagine that you received a ticket on the Kindertransport. Write a thank you letter to the person who gave you the ticket. Describe your new life in England. What challenges do you face? What fears do you have? What hopes do you have? Do you contribute to the war effort? What responsibilities do you have?
- The “KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON” image was originally designed in 1939 as one of three propaganda posters to boost morale during the war. The English government released two other posters that read “YOUR COURAGE, YOUR CHEERFULNESS, YOUR RESOLUTION WILL BRING US VICTORY” and “FREEDOM IS IN PERIL, DEFEND IT WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT,” but reserved “KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON” and never released it. View the video of the story behind this campaign and the discovery of the lost poster here: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/in-the-media/churchill-in-the-news/1405-keep-calm-and-carry-on-the-real-story>
- Imagine it is your job to create a poster to boost English spirits during World War II. What would your message be? Develop a design for your poster. Pay close attention to the requirements in the video. The poster must have a clearly recognizable, but difficult to counterfeit typeface and design, and have a short, encouraging message.



A reproduction of a 1939 British World War II poster which was rediscovered in a bookstore in 2000. Photo: United Kingdom government.

Life in Vienna: Music, Mozart, and Why One Young Pianist Will Return to this Musical City

By Natalie Pertz

Education Apprentice Natalie Pertz interviewed her sister, Elenora Pertz, about her time studying abroad in Vienna, Austria.

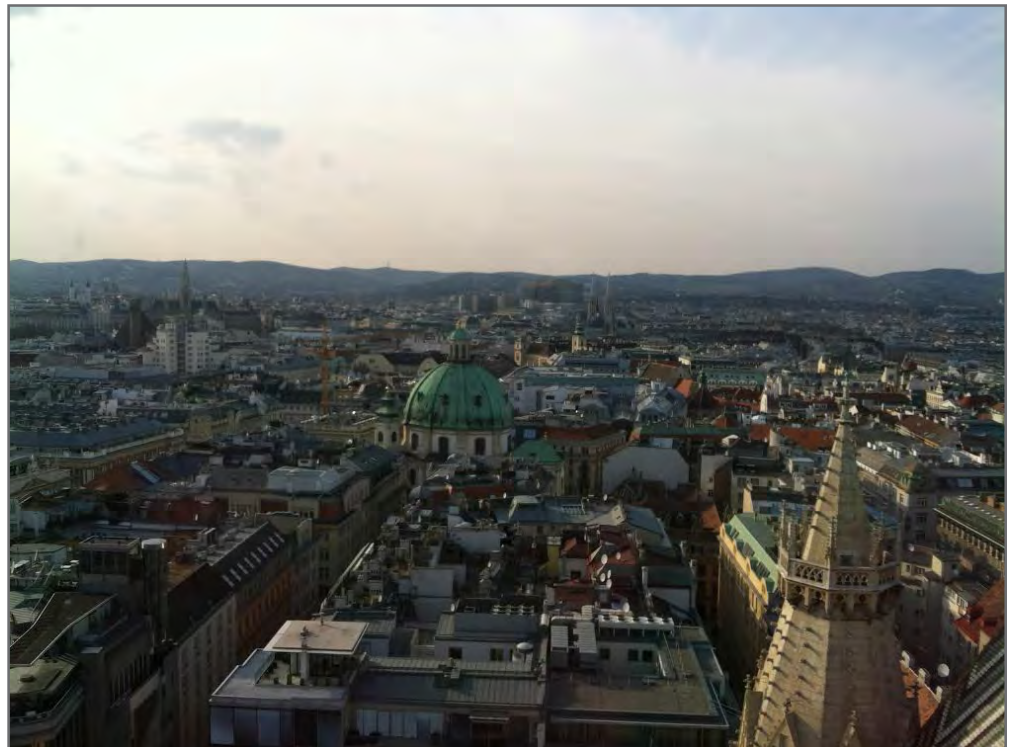


Nora Pertz in Vienna, 2014. Photo courtesy of Nora Pertz.

Meet Elenora “Nora” Grace. Nora is in her final semester of undergraduate studies at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. A double major in Piano Performance and International Studies, music – specifically the piano – has been a part of Nora’s life since the age of six. It wasn’t long before Nora adopted the discipline required of a successful musician with weekly lessons alongside a piano instructor, daily hours of individual practice, and performing in recitals whenever there was an opportunity to do so. After beginning at Vanderbilt, it was no surprise that her heart led her to study abroad in Vienna, Austria.

When it comes to pursuing a career in music, Nora believes that Vienna is the perfect city for any musician. She remarks, “In America, music is something we study. In Vienna, music is alive- it’s everywhere.” ...and when she says everywhere, she means everywhere! As you walk down the streets of Vienna, you will find music in more than just the arenas and concert halls. You will find music inside street cafes being discussed and performed as you walk by. Nora was surprised that the churches are a huge venue for concerts, too. “Almost every night, churches host musical performances.”

If you are in need of inspiration for your music, Vienna has plenty of it! What do Ludwig van Beethoven, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, and Joseph Haydn have in common? As some of the world’s great classical composers, they all lived and worked in Vienna for a time. “You can even go to the home where Beethoven lived,” Nora exclaims excitedly. Not only is music everywhere you turn, everyone is able to enjoy it. While an evening at The Metropolitan Opera in New York City could cost over a hundred dollars, a ticket to The Vienna State Opera (aka Wiener Staatsoper) costs 12 euros (that’s about \$14!). To make sure every citizen is in the loop, the city prints a special pamphlet each month. This pamphlet is full of every single daily concert and cultural event for that month. If you were to travel to Vienna any day of the year, for opera alone there are three opera



The Viennese skyline, 2014. Photo courtesy of Nora Pertz.



Golden Hall in the Musikverein in Vienna, Austria. Photo: Clemens Pfeiffer, A-1190 Wien (2004)

houses (Vienna State Opera, Volksoper, and Musikverein) that “offer live opera almost every night.” One of Nora’s fondest memories is of an evening where she attended two concerts in the same night! By making sure that music is affordable, present, and promoted, Nora believes that music is “accessible and appreciated by all classes of people.”

While living in Vienna as a student and intern, Nora’s typical day would begin with a subway ride to the opera house for work at 10 a.m. As music intern at the opera house, Nora would start her day working for a casting director (10 a.m.-1 p.m.) and then the head of music studies (2 p.m.-5 p.m.). Nora’s responsibilities included getting scores ready, making schedules for singers and collaborative pianists, making repertoire lists for the singers, and researching casting, among other things. After work, Nora fondly recounts that the best way to end the day would always be a cup of coffee and some gelato.

In Vienna, particularly as a classical musician, it is not uncommon for you to be able to make a living in your art form. Nora attributes this to the fact that there is “more performance opportunity-period.” For example, if you are a choral director, the amount of church work alone that occurs daily in Catholic churches would be enough to support yourself. Also, because of the number of opera and symphony companies, it is common for composers and orchestral musicians to find temporary but consistent work coming in and out as guest artists in these companies.

As she envisions a musical future in Vienna, Nora is hopeful because “You can make a living teaching and accompanying music alone.” After Nora’s seven months working and studying abroad in Vienna, she cannot wait to return. In February of this year, Nora will return to Vienna to audition for a Master’s degree in an accompanying program. Whether or not Nora is accepted into this program, she intends to move to Vienna permanently upon graduation in May. When she does return, Nora looks forward to the red covered walls of the opera houses, the sound of the orchestra as they tune before a performance, and “getting off the Uban (Viennese subway) and seeing the opera toilet (a public restroom that you pay to go into and plays opera music the whole time).”

Questions

- Vienna is still known for its rich culture of classical music. Research the Vienna State Opera, the Volksoper, and the Musikverein to see what concerts and events are coming up. Research museums and other tourist sites in Vienna. What concert or operas would you go to? What museums would you visit? Are there other sites such as palaces, parks, and restaurants to try? Create a three day itinerary for a trip to Vienna.
- Have you ever been enchanted by a city? What inspired you about that city? How do you imagine your life there? If you moved to that city, what would your occupation be? How would you build a new life in that city?

Suggested Activities

Writing – Music Response Journal

Lisa practices the Moonlight Sonata in her lesson with Professor Isselis. When she can no longer study with Professor Isselis, her mother offers to teach her. Who do you share music with? Who influences your taste and appreciation for music? What piece of music that someone else has shared with you is an important part of your life now? Who shared it with you? How does it make you feel when you listen to it?

Listen to the first movement of the Grieg piano concerto and Mozart’s “Moonlight Sonata.” Have you ever heard them before? If so, who introduced these pieces to you? If not, what is your first impression? Write a journal entry responding to each piece of music. How does each piece make you feel? What images or thoughts come to mind when you listen to them?

Listen to excerpts from the music Mona Golabek plays in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* here: <http://holdontoyourmusic.org/educationmusic.html>

Writing – Your Most Important Day

Lisa Jura prepares her entire life for her piano debut. To her, this is the most important day of her life. Describe your “most important day.” How do you prepare for it?

Design Activity

The Pianist of Willesden Lane is a one-woman show that follows Lisa Jura to many locations. Often, one-person shows have simple sets called *unit sets* that allow the performer to move fluidly from place to place. The audience uses their imaginations to follow the performer. The current production uses levels and projections to fill in gaps about locations and characters.

Lisa travels from her home in Vienna, Austria, to Peacock Manor, to 243 Willesden Lane. Other locations in the play include the Westbahnhof train station in Vienna, the Liverpool train station in London, the Kindertransport train itself, the factory where she works, Bloomsbury House, the streets of London, the concert hall where Myra Hess performs, the London Royal Academy, and the Howard Hotel where she plays piano. If you were a set designer, how would you create a set that allows Mona Golabek to tell this story? How would you invoke these locations? Design a unit set for *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*. Remember to leave room for a piano!

Improvisation: The Artists’ Debate

Imagine you and a friend are famous artists in Vienna in the 1930s. You can decide what skill you have – a visual artist, a vocalist, a pianist. You are sitting at a coffee shop “passionately defending your latest creation.” Decide what your latest creation is and improvise this conversation between you two.



Mona Golabek in *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*.
Photo courtesy of mellopix.com and Berkeley Rep.

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With Contributions by

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