PIANO SONATAS RESCUED FROM THERESIENSTADT TO BE PERFORMED FOR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Pianist Jeanne Golan reintroduces works by composer Viktor Ullmann
Thursday, April 19 at 7 pm at Spertus (CHICAGO)

A number of prominent musicians had their lives cut short during the Holocaust. Among them was Viktor Ullmann, a popular and influential Czech composer of Jewish heritage whose work has rarely been performed since his death at Auschwitz in 1944.

On April 19, Spertus, Chicago’s center for Jewish learning and culture, brings pianist Jeanne Golan to Chicago to mark Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, with Viktor Ullmann’s music. She will be performing select pieces and discussing his life and work.

Golan has spent a sabbatical year recording and performing Ullmann's piano sonatas. Her effort to reintroduce his work is testimony to his talent and provides a beautiful way to honor his life. The commemorative program at Spertus, Music and Memory, takes place Thursday, April 19 at 7 pm. Tickets are $18 for the general public, $10 for Spertus members, and $8 for students. They can be purchased online at spertus.edu or by phone at 312.322.1773.

This program is made possible with support from the Bernard and Rochelle Zell Center for Holocaust Studies at Spertus.

Viktor Ullmann was born in 1898 in the town of Teschen in what then was part of the Austro–Hungarian Empire and now is the Czech Republic. Educated in Vienna, Ullmann was a student of Arnold Schoenberg and Alexander Zemlinsky. From 1920 to 1927, he worked with Zemlinsky at the New German Theatre in Prague. He went on to make important contributions to both Czech and German cultural life as a composer, conductor, pianist, and music critic.

Ullmann’s parents were Jews who converted to Catholicism before he was born. Nonetheless, in September 1942 he was deported to Theresienstadt, a transit camp with a population comprised mainly of Jewish scholars, professionals, musicians, and artists. To deceive Red Cross inspectors into believing that Jews were treated humanely by the Nazis, Theresienstadt had trappings of culture and freedom. Within this charade, Ullmann was assigned to work as a performer and composer. He composed more than 20 pieces of music during his two years of captivity, including three piano sonatas, a string quartet, dozens of songs, and an opera.

In actuality, Theresienstadt was a temporary stop on route to the death camps. Of the 140,000 Jews interned there, 33,000 died of starvation or disease and 87,000 were transported to other camps and then killed. Among them was Ullmann, who was transported to Auschwitz in October 1944 and perished in the gas chambers.

(MORE)
The music of Viktor Ullmann and the work Jeanne Golan is doing to revive it came to the attention of Spertus as a consequence of the efforts of Maestro James Conlon, Music Director of the Ravinia Festival. Through his OREL Foundation, Conlon works to recover and reintroduce music suppressed by the Third Reich.

Jeanne Golan has performed extensively throughout the United States and Europe. As a soloist, she has appeared with the American Symphony Orchestra under Leon Botstein, the Greenwich Symphony Orchestra, and the Hunter Symphony. As a chamber musician, she has performed with the Lark and Cavani Quartets. She earned her Master’s and Doctorate of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music and her Bachelor of Arts from Yale University. She is a professor of music at SUNY/Nassau, where she has received the Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award and the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Artistry and Scholarship on multiple occasions.

Golan’s CD, *The Complete Piano Sonatas of Viktor Ullmann*, will be released later this year. The Spertus Shop will be taking orders for the CD the night of the program.

Spertus is located at 610 S. Michigan Avenue. Discount parking is available for $10 with Spertus validation at the Essex Inn, two blocks south of Spertus.

ABOUT SPERTUS

Spertus is a center for Jewish learning and culture that invites people of all backgrounds to explore the multifaceted Jewish experience. Spertus inspires learning, serves diverse communities, and fosters understanding for Jews and people of all faiths.

Founded in 1924 as Chicago’s College of Jewish Studies, Spertus today offers an innovative, non-denominational array of specialized and public programming, grounded in Jewish thought, inspired by Jewish values, and resolutely relevant to people’s lives.

Spertus offers accredited graduate-level degree programs in areas that are critical to the Jewish and wider communities—including Jewish studies, leadership training, and nonprofit management. Recognizing that learning is sparked by many points of entry, programming at Spertus also includes cultural and continuing education offerings, such as lectures, seminars, exhibitions, concerts, and films. Partnerships and collaborative relationships in the Jewish, academic, philanthropic, and cultural arenas further allow Spertus to serve as a portal for diverse learning opportunities.

For more information, please visit [spertus.edu](http://spertus.edu).

Spertus is a partner in serving our community, supported by the JUF/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

# # #