



LOCAL STUDENTS ADDRESS HATE AND INTOLERANCE WITH NEW FILM

'Terezin: Children of the Holocaust' Film to Premiere Virtually

NEWBURYPORT, MA, January 25, 2021 – For 50 years *Terezin: Children of the Holocaust* has been performed live, as a stage play, for schools and audiences locally and around the world. The first-ever filmed production of the play is set to premiere virtually on Saturday, February 6th at a time when its message has never been so necessary or relevant.

Terezin follows a day and night in the lives of six children held at Camp Theresienstadt in the Czech Republic. The camp, also known as Terezin, imprisoned thousands of European Jews, including over 15,000 children, less than 150 of whom survived. While the play takes place during the Holocaust, it teaches audiences about the consequences of hate and discrimination in our everyday lives, the need for greater social responsibility, and the power of every individual voice in standing up to hate.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, live productions of the stage play *Terezin* had to be paused indefinitely as theaters closed or faced restrictions and schools reverted to hybrid and remote formats. With the backdrop of headlines about the pandemic, global protests for racial and social justice, and the rise of discriminatory acts and hate speech, a group of local students decided the message of *Terezin* could not go silent at such a critical time.

Terezin playwright Anna Smulowitz, was at first skeptical that the cast could safely rehearse and film the show with the pandemic in full force, however, Northeastern University freshman and *Terezin* cast alum Andrew Valianti convinced Smulowitz they could make it happen by adhering to extremely rigid Covid precautions including quarantining, Covid testing and isolating as a cast in a “social bubble” to rehearse and film the production.

Smulowitz gave her blessing for the project to move forward and Kathryn Lowell, a recent graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy (AMDA), joined Valianti as co-director, in addition to performing in the film. Both believed the themes of oppression and speaking out against racism and hatred were especially important in the current political climate.

“The message of the show goes beyond bringing this dark part of history to life for students across the globe,” said Valianti. “It underscores a fundamental truth - how we treat each other, as human beings, matters. That’s why we knew we couldn’t wait for the pandemic to be over to bring this play to young people and audiences across the country.”

Smulowitz was inspired to write *Terezin* back in 1970 after reading a real letter from 12-year old Chaim Landau, who was interned at the Terezin concentration camp, in which he wrote, ‘If you should find this letter, please tell someone. We want to go home. We want our lives back. Please remember us.’ The play has continued uninterrupted for the last 50 years, in Chaim’s memory and all those lost in the Holocaust.

“We felt it was so important to release the film at this moment in response to the level of hate, intolerance and violence currently happening right here in America,” shared Smulowitz. “We must learn from the lessons of the past about where this level of hate can lead. *Terezin* also offers an inspirational message about the power of hope and love, so needed in these times.”



The goal is to work with schools to incorporate the film and its message into their curriculum about the Holocaust, lessons about intolerance, or in response to acts of hate, bullying, or discrimination. The film will also be available for community groups and other audiences locally and around the world to expand the reach of *Terezin*.

“In the short term, when we can’t really travel places this will be our way to spread our message, but going forward it also serves as a way to reach communities and reach minds and hearts that we might not have been able to reach otherwise,” said Lowell.

The film features an introduction from playwright Anna Smulowitz, a filmed presentation of the play and a “talk back” with the cast, with a total running time of 1 hour and 43 minutes.

Cast Members Include (alphabetically):

Olivia Colden, Newbury, Age 17 (Actor – Role of Celia Langer)
Ava Laroche, Boxford, Age 17 (Actor – Role of Corinna Senders)
Katie Lowell, Georgetown, Age 21 (Co-Director, Role of Miriam Fisher)
Jessie Rosenthal, Newburyport, Age 16 (Actor – Role of Rachel Langer)
Andrew Valianti, Newbury, Age 18 (Producer, Co-Director, Actor – Role of Aaron Shapiro)
Ava Valianti, Newbury, Age 11 (Actor – Role of Leah Poutreau)

The virtual film premiere of *Terezin: Children of the Holocaust*, is scheduled for **Saturday, February 6th** with two screening times – **2:00PM EST** and **7:00PM EST**. For more information and to purchase tickets please click here: <https://terezin.eventcube.io/> or go to the *Terezin* website at [Events — Terezin: Children of the Holocaust](#).

Terezin: Children of the Holocaust is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to fighting racism, antisemitism, discrimination, intolerance and bullying through education and the arts.

For more information about *Terezin: Children of the Holocaust* please visit the website at <http://www.terezin.org> or for more information about the Terezin Film Project please contact:

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