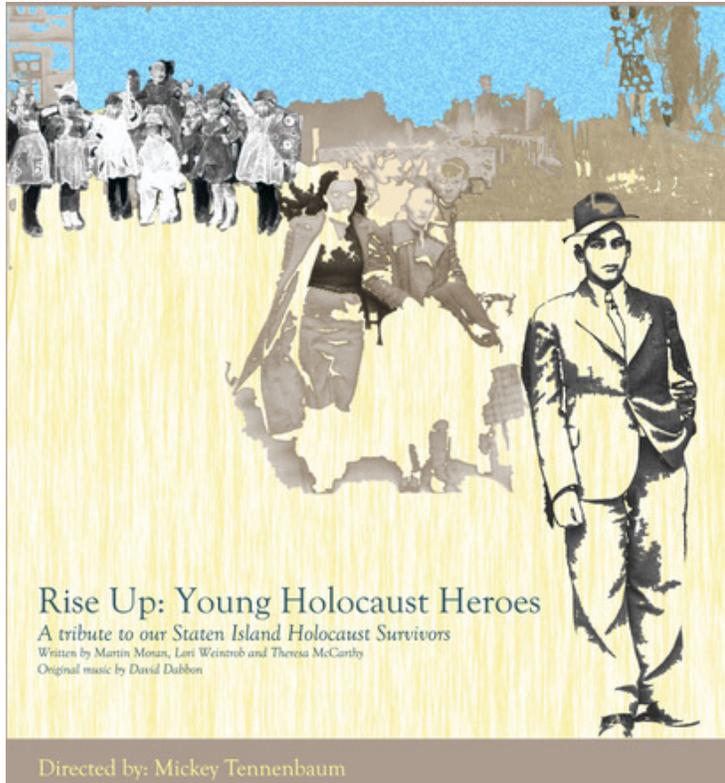




Wagner College
Holocaust Center
INSPIRE COURAGE



Presents



St. George Theatre, Staten Island

April 17, 2019, 10-11am

STUDY GUIDE

An Educator's Guide to Framing the Play
with eyewitness monologues

Introduction

RISE UP: YOUNG HOLOCAUST HEROES is an original play that seeks to address the question: “How do we resist hate?”

The play follows Tali, a college student, who shares with her friends and neighbors a curiosity about how young people their age survived the hardships of World War II and the Holocaust. They are joined by six survivors—from Germany, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia-whom she engages with to raise the memories “of long ago.” At first, they recall happier times, courtships, family meals and good relations with neighbors of all faiths. Then, these youth lose their rights to attend the cinema or schools and witness hate and rising anti-Semitism.

What lessons can we learn from their experience of persecution to help us today?

Through Tali’s eyes, we experience the true testaments of survivors who provide us with a timely message of courage, unity and resistance. There were many kinds of resistance in the Holocaust, from refusing to offer the Nazi salute to smuggling food to fighting the German soldiers with weapons. All kinds of resistance require courage, empathy for others who are different and ethical decision making. We hope that students will see themselves in Tali, and that they will be inspired to uncover stories of the Holocaust from the shadows, and share their discoveries with their peers.

Commissioned by the Holocaust Center at Wagner College, the play was created and performed first in 2018 with the support of the Leonard B. Kahn Foundation. *Rise Up* was written by Theresa McCarthy, Martin Moran and Lori Weintrob, with original music by David Dabbon, under the original title *In the Light of One Another*. The performance at the St. George Theater is directed by Michael Tennenbaum. Over 1,000 Staten Island students are scheduled to attend, making it the largest Holocaust commemoration in our borough’s history.

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Teachers, Students, Parents: For any questions, or for more information, please contact: Holocaust Center director Lori Weintrob, lori.weintrob@wagner.edu, 718-390-3309.

Before the Play

Before attending the play, consider asking your students the following questions:

1. *Who is a “survivor”?*
2. *What is the first thing you think of when you think of the Holocaust?*
3. *What images come to mind regarding prejudice, anti-Semitism, racism or hate?*
4. *Do you think you could teach your peers about the Holocaust?*

Encourage discussion, but be sure to moderate it closely. These questions don't have definitive answers, and that's alright. It's valuable for your students to do a self-inventory on their relationship with the Holocaust before attending the show.

Please consider using the following texts, graphics, and timeline to spark discussion among your students.

Theatre Exercise One:

Divide your students into groups of 3-5, and provide each group with a set of markers and a piece of paper. Assign one of the following words to your students, and have them work with their group to write 5 words that they associate with their assigned word:

- FAMILY
- HOLIDAY
- CELEBRATE
- LOSS
- LEGACY

Once the groups have created their lists, challenge them to create a 2-5 minute scene that uses those five words. Have the groups perform for each other, and follow it up with a discussion on why they created the skits they did, and what all of the skits had in common. If you prefer, you could use words such as: Empathy, Courage, Choices.

Theatre Exercise Two:

Directors, designers, and actors are often challenged with portraying fantastical moments on stage. From staging scenes with “ghosts” to time travel, *RISING UP: YOUNG HOLOCAUST HEROS* features many moments that require a lot of imagination to achieve. Start a discussion with your students on how they would stage the following moments:

- Tali (a student researching the Holocaust) encounters haunted memories of survivors
- The characters in the play take the audience from time period to time period, sometimes in the same scene!

- Actors are required to play multiple characters back to back
- MEET THE SURVIVORS: OUR NEIGHBORS**

What is Kristallnacht?

Both Margot Capell and Egon Salmon, Jewish children in Germany, were age 13 and 9 when Hitler came to power in 1933. Their friends slowly stopped speaking to them and, with the passage of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, they could no longer go to many schools, movie theaters or parks.



READ THIS PART ALOUD:

Oh it wasn't taken seriously. That was the whole problem...as I think back. The sad fact that nobody took it serious. "So what, some marching around in uniform, want to show off. It'll pass." That's it. It'll pass. That was the attitude that prevailed right along. It's hard to understand, but that's the way it was.

--Margot (Wolf) Capell, 1937, age 17 in photo

DISCUSS:

WHY WERE VERY FEW GERMANS WILLING TO HELP THEIR JEWISH NEIGHBORS?

WHAT NAZI IDEAS MIGHT HAVE APPEALED TO SOME GERMANS?

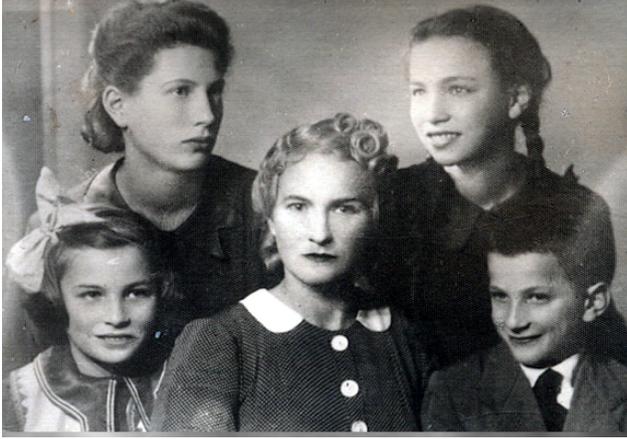
Margot and Egon were eyewitnesses to Kristallnacht, known as the "Night of Broken Glass." On November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis and Hitler Youth broke store windows, burned over 250 places of worship and killed 91 Jews. Egon's father was one of 20,000 Jewish men arrested by the SS and sent to Dachau, a Nazi concentration camp. After his father was released, Egon's family were not accepted to come to the United States at first, which had put up many barriers to Jewish refugees of Nazism.



Egon Salmon: 1938, Germany, age 14: Soon after Jews lost their citizenship status, Egon's passport was marked as "Jewish" by the Nazi government. He was initially turned back from the U.S. and Cuba but later used this passport to come to Staten Island in 1940.

Did Anyone Fight Back Against the Nazis?

Ruchama Rachel (Rothstein) Roth (upper left, at age 13 in 1940) moved with her family into the largest Ghetto in



Europe, in Warsaw, Poland. She studied Chemistry, but later was forced to work for the Nazis. She was able to help in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 19, 1943, when almost 1,000 young people--including many women--heroically fought off German soldiers for 21 days. Defeated, they were sent to Majdanek and then Auschwitz, both Nazi death camps.

READ THESE LINES ALOUD.

As you read, try to act out this part. Tap your shirt and boots to show where things were hidden.

And we were ready to resist. And once I went on the street, I met a friend. A friend that I went together with him to the theatre and to chemistry courses. And I asked him where have y--(Oh I am so happy you are still alive) I ask him where have you been? He was on the Aryan side. He was blond. He was blue eyed. But he says is very difficult to hide there...They used to chase the "Jew, Jew, Jew". Then the Gestapo came after you and they took you to Gestapo. And he came back and he is in the resistance. He is working on the place outside the ghetto in the airport O-Kin-Che Polish airport, for the German. And he is smuggling arms. So I told him, listen, so I told him I want to help also. He said no you are a girl, you don't know, they will catch you they will kill you. But finally I convince him and he promise he is going to take me. And I-I-I went out from the house very early in the morning, everybody was sleeping and I came to the gate and he took me in. and I said I don't want to know who will give me, what is the name of the resistance, who in case they will capture me. If I don't know, I will not say. They put me in the toilet to clean the toilets.... and then Paul came in and gave me a little package. It was a a gun, a little gun. And I put the gun in my...I had high shoes, boots. And then somebody gave me two packages and told me to put this in my coat on my body, on here, under the dress in the coat. And then when the work was finish. The German check me and he founded butter and bread and he smack me, but he didn't found this (the gun)...



What were conditions in Bergen-Belsen?

Gabi Held

READ THIS PART ALOUD:

And we were at the camp and one day they told us everybody get out. Oh but before I forget, every morning we had to get up at 4 or five in the morning and stand in front of the barracks because the German soldiers came there at 9 o'clock and counted the people. Every single morning. We got up early in the morning and we were waiting until they came to count the people then we went back to the barracks. So many people died and it was so natural to see them just collapse and they put them in a wheelbarrow and put it outside the gate. I was standing always beside the gate when transport came and I told them “maybe you have some food” to throw us some, whatever they could give me. --Gabi Held, who later became a boxer in Hungary after the war.



Hannah Steiner with her boyfriend Abraham in Budapest, Hungary. They were separated during the war when Hannah was in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen with her mother. Hannah Steiner and her mother have a remarkable story because they were not separated at all throughout the war. Tragically, her mother died after liberation from Bergen-Belsen—where conditions were overcrowded in 1945. As Hannah says with great sadness, “she died with a raw potato in her mouth....This image never leaves my head.”

Anne Frank and her sister Margot also died of typhus at Bergen-Belsen in March 1945.

After the war, Hannah and Abraham found each other once again. They have a beautiful love story, and share the type of love that could have been taken from a film. They were reunited in Israel seven years after the war ended. After marrying in Israel, they moved to Staten Island.

THEATRE EXERCISE THREE:

OPTION A:

Provide the following THREE monologues to your students, and give them the option to choose one of them to study and then perform for the class. When studying the monologues, ask the students to do the following:

- Highlight the “beats” or everytime the character goes from talking about one thing to another
- Underline the words that are most important to communicate to the audience
- Write down questions that you might have about the character that are not addressed in the monologue

OPTION B:

Have the student research ONE survivor, and challenge them to introduce them to their classmates. They may write the introduction as a newspaper article with a meaningful headline.

MONOLOGUES:

HANNAH: [In Budapest, Hungary, in 1941] “In Hungary they didn’t let the girl go out with the boy alone, especially when she was 16... barely 16. You didn’t... just with a chaperone. So we then talked one day and with my mother, we went dancing. There they danced, you know - - the parents, all the parents, sat on the side, parents or chaperone, you know... on the side. So he went to my mother and asked it’s very hot, if he can go somewhere to have a cold drink. So my mother said ok we going. So we went to, like a Luna Park you know, like a - you know where the rides are. And we sat down by a table and we drank - I don’t know what – cold. And a boy came with a - they used to go around with flowers you know - with a little - flower - violet... you know and he came to the table and my husband [Abraham] bought a bouquet of violets but Violet is my name, because violet - my name is a flower - you know violet so he bought me a violet... and he took us home and he asked if he could come to see me.”

Romi Cohn, age 12 in 1940, began to witness an escalation in hate discussed in the monologue below. Romi was smuggled across the border to Hungary, but later returned to join the resistance. In 1944, he got false papers under the name Jan Kovic and used them to escape to take up weapons in the Slovakian resistance movement.

ROMI [In Slovakia]: The Nazis encouraged all kinds of low-lives, hooligans. They knew the Jews had no civil



rights, but they continued to attack them, to rob them. I remember I came home once from the synagogue in the evening, walking with my father and we were very vigilant to make sure we don't encounter these low-lives. We were making our way around the corner and then we were facing maybe a dozen so-called "Hitler Yuden" or Hitler Youth. So they saw my father and started to jump at him. They started to beat him up, he was laying on the ground bleeding. I kept screaming "Police, help! Police, help!" These people just make believe they don't see it, and the other ones were just cheering them on. "Kill the Jew! Kill the Jew!" they yelled. He was almost unconscious... conscious, then they left. This kind of experience happened almost every day.

EGON [a German-Jewish refugee at age 15 in 1939, he was finally allowed to enter the U.S. and was drafted to serve in the U.S. army 91st infantry in 1943]: "I received my draft notice before I graduated New Dorp High school on Staten Island. I asked for a deferment so I could graduate...My service was in the army. I was shipped to South Carolina and trained for combat, firing a rifle, crawling on the ground. Before I was sent overseas, I was made *on a preferred basis* a citizen of the United States and off I went to North Africa and then to Naples. We were in wine country. The Germans were at the top of the mountains and we were at the bottom shooting at each other. We were in the front lines shooting at the Germans. I was in the infantry, ahead of everyone else. Later, as the army of occupation, we were taking prisoners and I spoke to them in German. I spoke the language of the enemy. I'm laughing now, but I wasn't laughing then.... "

During and After the Play

Allow your students when attending the play to fully engage by having them turn off their phones, and tune into the world of the survivors. This might be an overwhelming experience for some students, so be sure to keep in tune with the class and how they are responding. Ask them to consider asking a question of the student actors or survivors when the play is complete.

Encourage reflection and discussion with your students by using the following questions and activities as a guideline:

Free-Response Questions:

1. At the beginning of the show, the main character Tali sings her question song in which she states: “I want to know.” What does she want to know and why is it important? In what ways can you relate yourself to Tali and find similarities?
2. Reflect upon ONE survivor monologue from the show: Would you be able to act the way he/she acted in the face of danger? Why?
3. In the play, a group of students get together to discuss the Holocaust and act upon what they learned. Do you believe there is strength in numbers versus acting by yourself?
4. At the end of the show, Tali asks the audience for ways to resist hate and spread love. What would your answer be to the question: “How do we resist hate?” What are important issues today regarding hate that need to be confronted?

What is the Holocaust?

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. He declared passed discriminatory laws against anyone he felt had “weakened” the nation, including political enemies (communists), Jews and the mentally ill. With other leaders such as Heinrich Himmler and Joseph Goebbels, the Nazis promoted their idea of nationalism, invaded Poland and many other countries and set up forced labor camps. They began to sterilize, then kill, thousands of mentally and physically disabled persons. They segregated Jews and required them to move into ghettos, with inadequate food rations. In the fall of 1941, after the invasion of Russia, special killing units known as Einsatzgruppen began to murder Jewish men, women and children.

The Nazis and their collaborators killed 6 million European Jews as part of the "Final Solution," the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe during World War II. Six death camps, including Auschwitz, were in Poland where 3 million of the 9 million Jews of Europe once lived. Only 10% survived. Roma (“gypsies”) were also targeted for genocide. In addition, Nazis persecuted and killed thousands of Communists and homosexuals. Afro-Germans were sterilized so they could not have children and many were killed. Almost 2 million non-Jewish Poles were also killed. Consider this timeline to better understand how Nazi racism and anti-Semitism escalated gradually in three key phases.

1915: Armenian Genocide

1922, October: Benito Mussolini’s National Fascist Party “March on Rome”

1923, November 9: Beer Hall Putsch-Nazi Party Attempt to Overthrow the Weimar Republic. While in jail, Hitler writes Mein Kampf.

1929, June 12: Anne Frank born in Frankfurt, Germany.

1933, January: Adolf Hitler appointed chancellor

1933-1939 Nazi Segregation Policies

1933: Jews banned from civil service (exemption for WWI veterans)

1935, June: Revision of Paragraph 175 facilitates persecution of homosexuals

1935, September: Nuremberg Race Laws (Margot Capell)

1936: Olympic Games with Jesse Owens

1938, March: German annexation of Austria

1938, July: Evian Conference -32 countries refuse to accept Jewish refugees

1938, September 29: Munich Agreement

1938: Kristallnacht “Night of Broken Glass”

1939, May 13: Voyage of the St. Louis (Egon Salmon)

1939-1941: War, Ghettos, T-4 Program and Killing Fields

1939, September 1: Germany invades Poland

1939 Oct.: Hitler orders “Euthenasia” (T-4) killings of mentally ill and disabled persons.

1940, November: Warsaw Ghetto sealed

1941, June 22: Germany Invades Soviet Union

1941, August 24: Bishop von Galen protests T-4 killings

1941, September 1: “Jewish Badge” required in Germany and Poland

1941, September: Babi Yar (Einsatzgruppen murder 34,000 Jews outside Kiev)

1941, December 7: Japan bombs Pearl Harbor

1942-1945: Death Camps and Final Solution

1942, January 20: Wannsee Conference with Reinhard Heydrich

1942, March 1: Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp Established

1942, July: Gassing Operations begin at Treblinka

1943, April 19-May: Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

1944, March: Germany troops occupy Hungary; by summer, 400,000 Hungarian Jews deported (Hannah Steiner)

1944, June 6: D-Day Invasion led by American, Canadian and British forces

1945, April 29-30: American forces liberate Dachau

1945, August 6: U.S. drops bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

1945-Present: Genocide and Human Rights

1951: United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide

1994, April 6-July: Rwandan Genocide: 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus murdered in 100 days

2016: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry denounces genocide by Islamic State (IS) of Yezidi Christian and Shia Muslim groups in Iraq and Syria

This study guide was prepared by Daniel Smith, Ruth Kupperberg, Bethany Friedman and Joelle Parness, under the supervision of Prof. Lori Weintrob. Part of this work was done as internships at the Holocaust Center, supported by the Chai Society of Wagner College (Dr. Victor and Kim Avis, co-chairs).



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**Our mission is to awaken
future generations
to the ramifications
of prejudice,
anti-Semitism and racism
as well as the dynamism of
Jewish culture.**