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HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR YEHUDA NIR'S WRITTEN ACCOUNT OF HIS HARROWING EXPERIENCE WITH LIFE AND DEATH FORMS BASIS FOR NEW OPERA

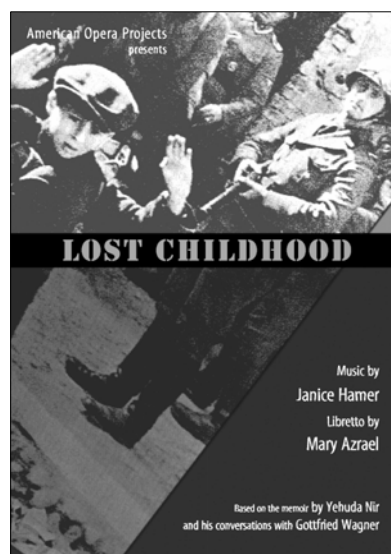
LOST CHILDHOOD

CLOSE FRIENDSHIP WITH GREAT-GRANDSON OF RICHARD WAGNER DEVELOPS ALONGSIDE OPERA

A friendship between an American Jewish composer and a German music historian/stage director, a great-grandson of Richard Wagner, was unlikely. Even more improbably, their acquaintance led to an artistic creation: ***Lost Childhood*** – an opera about the Holocaust and the continuing dialogue between Germans and Holocaust survivors.

Commissioned by the New York-based **American Opera Projects (AOP)** in 2000, composer **Janice Hamer** and librettist **Mary Azrael** have written an opera based on Holocaust survivor **Dr. Yehuda Nir's** memoir *The Lost Childhood* and on meetings between Dr. Nir and **Dr. Gottfried Wagner**, great-grandson of the noted opera composer whose family members would become close confidants of Adolf Hitler.

On July 29, 2007, American Opera Projects (AOP) will partner with the International Vocal Arts Institute (IVAI) to present a **world-premiere workshop** of *Lost Childhood* in Tel Aviv, Israel at the Tel Aviv Yafo Music Center's Janice Levin Auditorium. AOP Artistic Director, Steven Osgood will conduct members of the International Vocal Arts Institute with stage direction by Ned Canty.



“An Opera of the Second Generation: Lost Childhood, a Musical Bridge for Germans and Jews of Today,” a **symposium** with Dr. Nir, Dr. Wagner and the opera’s creators, will be held on July 25, also in the Janice Levin Auditorium. The symposium will explore the meaning of being a German or a Jew born after the Holocaust, and how the “second generation’s” creation of a Holocaust opera relates to conflicts and issues of today.

The opera’s creators, Hamer and Azrael, were touched by Nir’s memoir of a Polish-Jewish boy and his family disguising themselves as Polish Catholics in order to avoid capture. However, they searched for a way to carry this story of a “lost childhood” into modern times, and turned to a series of public dialogues between Nir and Gottfried Wagner (a human rights and Holocaust spokesperson).

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Wagner became a friend, committed to the development of the opera, as an advisor and historian of the post-Shoah sensibility in Germany, promoting the work in his lectures on four continents. Designing two fictional characters loosely inspired by the two real men, Hamer and Azrael examined the projections and stereotypes through which a Holocaust survivor and a German born after the war might view each other, and how they might learn to communicate beyond those constraints.

Lost Childhood, commissioned and developed by American Opera Projects, has been presented during its development at *New York City Opera VOX: Showcasing American Composers* series, the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. The July 2007 production in Tel Aviv marks the first international performance of the work.

July 25, 2007 – 5:30PM: “An Opera of the Second Generation: *Lost Childhood*, a Musical Bridge for Germans and Jews of Today” – Symposium featuring Dr. Yehuda Nir, Dr. Gottfried Wagner, & composer Janice Hamer

Janice Levin Auditorium, Tel Aviv Yafo Music Center
10 Sheerit Yisrael, Yafo, Tel Aviv

July 29, 2007 – 8PM: *Lost Childhood* – world premiere workshop

Music by Janice Hamer, libretto by Mary Azrael
Based on the memoir by Yehuda Nir and his conversations with Gottfried Wagner
Commissioned and developed by American Opera Projects
in collaboration with IVAI, Tel Aviv, Joan Dornemann and Paul Nadler, Co-Artistic Directors
Music Direction by Steven Osgood, Stage Direction by Ned Canty
with members of the International Vocal Arts Institute
Janice Levin Auditorium, Tel Aviv Yafo Music Center
10 Sheerit Yisrael, Yafo, Tel Aviv

For tickets: HADRAN Ticket office - 90 Ibn Gvirol, Tel Aviv. Phone: 03-5215200, email:
<http://www.hadran.co.il/>

For Press material and to learn more about this program and all other AOP projects, please visit AOP's website at www.operaprojects.org.

Founded in 1988, **American Opera Projects (AOP)** has gained international recognition as an arts organization devoted to creating, developing, and presenting new American opera and experimental music theatre. AOP is led by Charles Jarden, Executive Director, and Steven Osgood, Artistic Director.

Founded by Metropolitan Opera Assistant Conductor Joan Dornemann and Metropolitan Opera Conductor Paul Nadler in 1986, the **International Vocal Arts Institute** is a non-profit organization dedicated to finding and training the most talented young opera singers around the world. IVAI's diverse activities have included worldwide intensive training programs in Israel, the United States, Mexico, France, Puerto-Rico, Canada, Japan and China.

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