

Violins of Hope

Richmond

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VIRGINIA
HOLOCAUST
MUSEUM

VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF
HISTORY & CULTURE

BHMVA
Black History Museum
& Cultural Center of Virginia

**RICHMOND
SYMPHONY**
VALENTINA PELEGGI, MUSIC DIRECTOR



Violins of Hope Exhibit Brings Voices of Redemption to RVA

- *Three museums to showcase violins played during the Holocaust*
- *Exhibit serves as catalyst for conversation about tolerance & social justice*
- *12-week run in RVA marks exhibit's first visit to Mid-Atlantic region*

Richmond, Va. [June 8, 2021] – Violins of Hope, a touring exhibit that tells the remarkable stories of violins played by Jewish musicians during one of history's darkest times – the Holocaust – will be in Richmond at three museums for 12 weeks from Aug. 4-Oct. 24, 2021.

This marks the first time that the exhibit has been to the Mid-Atlantic region. Other U.S. cities to host Violins of Hope have included Birmingham, Charlotte, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Nashville and Phoenix.

The [Virginia Holocaust Museum](#), the [Virginia Museum of History & Culture](#) and the [Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia](#) will each showcase several violins from the exhibit as a loaned display. Many other violins will be used for concerts and educational events throughout the community. The 60-plus violins coming to Richmond were recovered and restored by Amnon Weinstein, an Israeli violin shop owner and master craftsman who lost 400 family members in the Holocaust.

“My father was determined to reclaim his lost heritage,” said his son, Avshalom “Avshi” Weinstein. “He started locating violins that were played by Jews in the camps and ghettos, painstakingly piecing them back together so they could be brought to life again on the concert stage and serve as a symbol of hope. Although most of the musicians who originally played the instruments were silenced by the Holocaust, their voices and spirits live on through the violins that my father has lovingly restored.”

Special concerts by the [Richmond Symphony](#) on Thurs., Sept. 9 at Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Fri., Sept. 10 at St. Mary's Catholic Church and Sun., Sept. 12 at the Dominion Energy Center's

Carpenter Theatre will be featured events during the exhibit's run in Richmond. Members of the Richmond Symphony will be playing some of the Violins of Hope during the concert. Information about tickets will be posted soon on violinsofhoperva.com.

Samuel Asher, Executive Director of the Virginia Holocaust Museum, began negotiations to bring Violins of Hope to Richmond after first connecting with Avshi Weinstein in 2017. "I saw the Violins of Hope concert in Nashville and I just knew that we had to have it here," he said.

A primary goal of Violins of Hope is to initiate deeper, more meaningful conversations about tolerance and social justice, along with educating people about the horrors of the Holocaust.

Asher noted that many organizations have reported an alarming uptick in anti-Semitism. A study conducted by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany revealed that 66 percent of Millennials could not identify what Auschwitz is.

"If people understand more about the causes and consequences of the Holocaust, they will be less likely to join hate groups or support anti-Semitism in our society," said Asher. "Through chamber concerts, educational programs and other activities that are planned during the 12 weeks of the exhibit, Violins of Hope Richmond will serve as a powerful instrument for learning about a time of great despair and the redemption that resulted from giving new life to these violins."

In addition to hosting the exhibit's first appearance in the Mid-Atlantic region, Violins of Hope Richmond represents the first time that three museums have partnered with the local symphony to host the exhibit and the first time that a Black history museum has been a partner for the exhibit. No other location in the U.S. has held the exhibit for 12 weeks, giving Richmond yet another reason to claim bragging rights.

Andrew Talkov, Senior Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Virginia Museum of History & Culture, added, "Each violin has its own unique and inspiring story that is told in a deeply personal and emotional way. We are honored to be part of a project that transcends religion and sparks a meaningful dialogue that reminds us that, despite our differences, we all share a common desire to live with dignity and be treated fairly and with respect."

The Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia is planning to highlight the role of jazz music in Virginia using Violins of Hope instruments. "Music has had a powerful influence on individuals as well as national movements," said Dr. Monroe Harris, Board President of the Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia. "It provides a connection that can have a profound impact on understanding ourselves and others. We look at the Violins of Hope as another opportunity to bring our communities together to learn, listen and share an experience."

For information about Violins of Hope Richmond and all of the related events, concerts and educational programs, including a downloadable Teacher's Guide, visit violinsofhoperva.com.

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About the Virginia Holocaust Museum

The Virginia Holocaust Museum plays a unique role in preserving and documenting the Holocaust in our community, and across the Commonwealth. Through our permanent exhibits, temporary exhibits, educational programming, and outreach, the Museum employs the history of the Holocaust and other genocides to educate and inspire future generations to fight racism, bigotry, and prejudice. Located at 2000 E. Cary Street in Richmond's historic Shockoe Bottom, the Virginia Holocaust Museum is free and open to the public. Hours are Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Saturday/Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Free off-street parking is directly across from the Museum on Cary Street. For more information, visit vaholocaust.org or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

About the Virginia Museum of History & Culture

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is owned and operated by the Virginia Historical Society — a private, non-profit organization established in 1831. The historical society is the oldest cultural organization in Virginia, and one of the oldest and most distinguished history organizations in the nation. For use in its state history museum and its renowned research library, the historical society cares for a collection of nearly nine million items representing the ever-evolving story of Virginia.

The Virginia Museum of History & Culture is located at 428 N Arthur Ashe Boulevard in Richmond's Museum District. Hours are Monday – Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the galleries and museum shop, Monday – Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for the research library. For more information call 804.340.1800, visit VirginiaHistory.org, or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

About the Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia

The Black History Museum & Cultural Center of Virginia celebrates the rich culture of African American people in Virginia and shares their stories to provide a more complete and inclusive history of their contributions to the American story. The Museum is located at 122 W. Leigh Street in Richmond's historic Jackson Ward. Hours are Thursday-Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, visit blackhistorymuseum.org or connect on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

About the Richmond Symphony

Celebrating its 64th season in 2021-22, the Richmond Symphony is the largest performing arts organization in Central Virginia. The organization includes an orchestra of more than 70 professional musicians, the 150-voice Richmond Symphony Chorus and more than 260 students in the Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestra programs. Each season, more than 200,000 members of the community enjoy live concerts and radio broadcasts. The Symphony also provides educational outreach programs to over 55,000 students and teachers each year. The Symphony was named one of 21 American orchestras first selected as a leader in orchestra

innovation by the League of American Orchestras through its Futures Fund initiative. The Richmond Symphony is partially funded by the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Visit www.richmondsymphony.com for more information.

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