The Emperor of Atlantis

Its score survived the Nazis.
Its creators did not.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day Concert
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY CONCERT

7pm | Monday, January 26, 2009
Norman Rothstein Theatre
950 West 41st Avenue

IF THIS IS A MAN
Music & Words of Primo Levi

Alessandro Raveggi
Soloist

Daniela Rosaria Romano
Accompanist

Reception will follow at the VHEC

ADMISSION FREE | Seats for this performance will go very quickly
RESERVE YOUR TICKETS | From JANUARY 12, 2009 by contacting,
Istituto Italiano | 604.688.0809 ext. 23 or iicvancouver@esteri.it

Presented under The High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Italy and the auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Vancouver, Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Vancouver in partnership with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, the Norman Rothstein Theatre and "Associazione Shalom."

ZACHOR | Remember
VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE
Editor: Frieda Miller
Design: Kazuko Kusumoto
Cover: Viktor Ullmann, circa 1924
Printed with the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia
THE EMPEROR OF ATLANTIS

Chamber Opera

By Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944) & Petr Kien (1919-1944)

A British Columbia Premiere

His Honour, The Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia will attend the opening

2pm | Sunday, February 1, 2009 - Opening
8pm | February 4, 7, 9 & 11, 2009

Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver
Tickets $40

ONLINE | ticketstonight.ca
IN PERSON
Sikora’s Classical Records | 432 West Hastings Street
Tom Lee Music | 929 Granville Street
Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre | 950 West 41st Avenue

Or at the door beginning one hour before curtain

Presented by 

[Logos]
THE EMPEROR OF ATLANTIS

The Greatest Music Drama You’ve Never Heard Of

DR. CHARLES BARBER | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, CITY OPERA OF VANCOUVER

A unique partnership is about to launch a unique production. It will be a British Columbia premiere. And it is coming in February.

‘The Emperor of Atlantis’ is a unique example of survivor art. Written in 1943-1944 at Theresienstadt, it is a chamber opera that continues to speak to our own time. It speaks to the Holocaust, and to genocides that abound in the present. Race hate did not end with the Nazis.

‘The Emperor of Atlantis’ was composed by inmates Viktor Ullmann and Petr Kien. It concerns a confrontation between Death and The Emperor. In this opera, Death goes on strike. Fed up with the Emperor’s bloody ways, he declares that he will no longer do the Emperor’s bidding. People are killed, but do not die.

In the penultimate scene, the Emperor summons Death once more. He demands that Death return to work. Death agrees, but on one condition...

This chamber opera is powerful, succinct, and deeply memorable. Its music is accessible, tonal, quite beautiful, and deeply touching. You will hear allusions to Bach, Mahler, Berg and touches of Kurt Weill in 1930s cabaret in Berlin. You will hear references to Josef Suk’s remarkable ‘Ysrael’ symphony. And you will also hear Ullmann’s own voice.

Declares Dr. Jaap Hamburger, this opera is “unquestionably Ullmann’s masterpiece.” So too is Kien’s libretto. Soon, you will know why. It is the best work they ever did, and was conceived and composed under the most appalling conditions imaginable. If they had not been killed by the Nazis, everyone today would know their names.

Theresienstadt was a kind of Potemkin Village. It was operated in Czechoslovakia by the Nazis in order to trick an all-too willing world into thinking that all the concentration camps were like this one: all had theatres, orchestras, lectures and seminars, journals and books. All were populated by happy Jews, kept apart for their own protection.
This monstrous lie concealed a monstrous fact: Theresienstadt was a transit station, en route to the death camps, for the vast majority of its inmates. The world saw what it wanted to see. The inmates knew better. They might not have worn the numbers. They knew the destination.

Even so, like civilized people everywhere, they sought refuge in art. One of the many miracles of Theresienstadt is that ‘Atlantis’ survived, although its creators did not.

The children’s opera ‘Brundibár’ was composed in 1938, and performed several times at Theresienstadt. It is by far the better-known work, and was produced jointly by UBC Faculty of Music and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre last year. It is a wonderful piece, and those who saw it at the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts were deeply moved.

‘Atlantis’ is a profound work, for adults. Although barely an hour long, in its energy and passion we find what we need to know about the human capacity for love, survival and – ultimately – forgiveness.

OUR PRODUCTION began months ago when City Opera of Vancouver, a professional chamber opera company, first met with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. We discussed the possibility of a co-production, and of creating a new audience to tell an amazing story. Both partners immediately grasped the potential, and developed an understanding.

‘Atlantis’ will reach out as never before. In the 90 days before opening, we will be going to temples and synagogues, to churches and mosques, to schools and colleges, to service clubs and community groups, and will tell the story. Our target is 90 talks in 90 days. The first took place on November 3, 2008 as part of the Heart of the City Festival, at the Carnegie Centre.

In this way, we build a new audience. In this way, we reach a new constituency of conscience. In this way, we widen the core message of the VHEC through the engine of opera.

The chamber opera, ‘Atlantis’ is being produced to professional standards and so funding is being sought from both foundations and individual sponsors. All gifts towards making this production a reality are of course greatly appreciated. On 12 November, we held a special patron’s event at the home of the acclaimed pianist Rena Sharon.

WE HAVE ASSEMBLED A STAR CAST. It includes Stephen Aberle, Samuel Chung, Robyn Driedger-Klassen, Andrew Greenwood, Will George, Megan Morrison, and John Minagro.

We held three days of auditions in the summer, and the great Judith Forst joined us at callbacks. Private coaching began last November, and ensemble rehearsals begin in January 2009. Four pianists have been assigned, and the music will be led by Dr. Charles Barber, who holds masters and doctoral degrees in conducting from Stanford University.

The orchestra will be led by the extraordinary Mark Fewer, former concertmaster of the Vancouver Symphony and now teaching at McGill. The company will be directed by Peter Jorgensen, assisted by producers Tom Durrie and Janet Lea, lighting designer Adrian Muir, and costume and set designer Marti Wright.

This will be a fully staged production, and created by some of the most talented people in Greater Vancouver. We know you will be proud to see it, and to help make it possible.

Additionally, a pre-curtain program and musical ‘prologue’ will introduce each performance. Guest speakers will set the context, outline the conditions, and describe the importance of ‘Atlantis’. These introductory events will go a long way to explaining the vitality – and necessity – of re-creating ‘The Emperor of Atlantis’, a chamber opera thought lost so long ago.
BUT WHY BOTHER WITH ANY OF THIS? Here’s why. I was raised Scots Presbyterian, and had no special knowledge of Judaism nor of the Holocaust until I was about 12 years old. One day, in European History class, we saw films of the liberation of Auschwitz and Dachau. We saw the bodies, the emaciation, the sheer murderousness. No one in my class knew anything about this.

All of us, I believe, took a vow that this could never again be allowed to happen. And then we were shown ‘The Diary of Anne Frank’, and even the boys broke down, weeping. And so the vow was renewed.

Today, as adults, we must find new ways to remember this chapter of history. We must find ways that are bold and vivid. We must find these stories in art that clarifies and drives and elevates. We have found it in ‘The Emperor of Atlantis’.

With your help, we will find its support, and its audience, and move its message across our community. His Honour, The Honourable Steven L. Point, Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia will attend the opening.

Won’t you join us?
PAVEL KLING (1928-2005) was supposed to be neither a boy nor a musician. Alfred Kling, a former student of Anton Dvořák, and his wife, Rudolfina, already had a son, Alois, and he was the designated musician. In 1928, the Klings expected their second child to be a girl. Disappointed, Rudolfina frequently dressed Pavel in pink: “I also had long hair,” he recalled in a 1998 Shoah Visual History Foundation interview, “not because I was a prodigy, but because I was supposed to be a girl.” The outcome seems inevitable: Pavel Kling did become a world-renowned violinist who hated pink — he once tore up music printed on pink pages — and kept his hair cut short. But the journey nearly ended before it really began: in the 1940s, the Nazis marked him for death; talent, wit, and luck saved him. For an 18-month period, April 1943 – October 1944, Pavel Kling was part of the “school for life,” as he called it, of Ghetto Theresienstadt.

In April 1943, 15-year old Pavel was already an accomplished musician. At age 4, he had persuaded brother Alois to exchange his violin for Pavel’s gramophone. Alfred, recognizing his son’s determination, devoted himself to Pavel’s development, albeit sometimes to Pavel’s dismay. As one of several anecdotes, Pavel recalled one early incident: Alfred, a practicing dentist, insisted that Pavel practice immediately outside his office. One day, a departing patient gave Pavel a silver dollar — “listening to you was so painful,” she said, “it distracted me from the pain in my mouth!” Practice paid off, however, and in 1935, Kurt Adler, conductor of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, invited 7-year old Pavel to debut under his direction. Music consumed Pavel’s days — “being a child prodigy,” he recalled, “meant you had few friends and little interest in school.” His fondest memories were of his father’s sacrifices, particularly “[Alfred’s] effort to expose him to great artists and his confidence to have him play for the masters, such as Bronislaw Huberman.”

But life abruptly changed with the German occupation of Czechoslovakia. Alfred Kling was Jewish, Rudolfina, Christian; by Nazi law, Pavel and Alois were Jews. Jews could not perform or own musical instruments — “when they took away my violin,” Pavel said, “it really sunk in.” [As it turned out, his father’s stockpile of violins allowed Pavel to give up an inferior violin while Czech friends kept the best violin safe throughout the war.] By the early 1940s, the Prague Academy of Music had expelled Pavel and the Kling family had been forced into a ghetto-like housing...
arrangement. Then, on 9 April 1943, Pavel and Alois were transported to Theresienstadt Ghetto. (Alfred Kling died of natural causes “and sorrow” soon thereafter; Rudolfina lived in Brno throughout the war.)

AT THERESIENSTADT, Pavel entered a surreal world. On one hand, the ghetto was a key site in the Nazis’ “Final Solution” and the elimination of German, Austrian and German-speaking Czech Jews. Its function was to serve as a transit centre for able-bodied Jews en route to eastern work camps, and to collect those over 65, and disabled or highly decorated Jewish WWI veterans in one spot where they would die of starvation, disease, etc. And, finally Theresienstadt was to house prominent Jews, “especially artists, musicians, and other cultural figures, whose disappearance in a killing centre might provoke domestic and foreign inquiry.” All were, of course, to die, and the Nazis proceeded with ruthless efficiency: from late 1941 until 1945, they transported a total of 140,000 Jews to Theresienstadt; of these, 88,000 went to almost certain death in the killing centres or eastern labour camps; by 1945, 35,000 Theresienstadt prisoners, primarily the elderly, had died horrible deaths in the ghetto, of overcrowding, filth, starvation, exposure and disease.

On the other hand, because it was inside German-speaking territories, Theresienstadt was unlike the other ghettos. Its design and functioning — a “Potemkin village,” promoted as a typical Jewish settlement and indeed a ‘retirement spa’ for elderly Jews — reflected Hitler’s sensitivity to German public opinion. Thus, against a bleak backdrop of relentless death and deportations, a remarkable cultural life flourished in Theresienstadt. The SS not only tolerated culture, they encouraged it; a separate division of the Ghetto Council of Elders, the “Office of Recreation” (Freizeitgestaltung), administered cultural activities. Thousands of German-speaking professional
artists and intellectuals contributed; in what scholars have called “a university on the abyss,” more than 2,300 lectures — more than one for each day of the ghetto’s existence — were delivered in scattered miserable attics and cellars, however cold or hot the weather. Lecturers included Dr. Leo Baeck, psychologist Viktor Frankl, historian Miroslav Karny, artists Bedrich Fritta, Leo Haas, Felix Bloch, Max Placek, and Petr Kien, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and architect Norbert Troller. Tens of thousands of prisoners, young and old, attended, hungry and exhausted after their day’s work.

**Music at Theresienstadt** was particularly rich in quality and quantity. By 1943, activities forbidden outside the ghetto — owning a musical instrument and performing — were allowed inside. The Freizeitgestaltung encouraged musicians to practice, study and compose. Choirs, cabaret groups, classical and popular orchestras played the symphonic and chamber works of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Janácek or Suk, and operas like Carmen, Tosca, or The Bartered Bride. Hans Krása’s children’s opera, Brundibár, was performed 55 times. Viktor Ullmann composed at least 20 musical works; many consider his opera, “The Emperor of Atlantis,” written in collaboration with Peter Kien, “one of the most significant creations in the spiritual legacy of the Holocaust era.” Like Pavel, Viktor Ullmann considered Theresienstadt a school, “one that teaches structure. Previously, where one was unable to experience that weight of cruelty due to ‘comfort’, (this magic of civilization), one was allowed simply to disregard it; it was easy to create the beautiful form. Here, where artistic substance has to try and endure its daily structure, where every bit of divine inspiration stands counter to its surroundings, it is here that one finds the master class.”

Only 15 years old, Pavel — “the little one,” as conductor Karel Ančerl called him — participated fully. After initially sharing a violin, a ¾-size viola was strung as a violin for him. He studied harmony with composer Pavel Haas, counterpoint with pianist Bernhard Kaff, and violin with Fröhlich. He played in innumerable chamber music concerts, in performances of Mozart’s “Bastien and Bastienne,” as well as in the 13-instrument ensemble rehearsing Ullmann’s “The Emperor of Atlantis.” He lived in the children’s barracks under the supervision of two conductors, three composers, and a poet. A roommate remembers Pavel’s effect:

“Music had not played a part during my early Berlin days . . . . There was no music until I moved to [barracks] L418 in the ghetto and then it really hit me. Pavel was a complete artist, he would let nothing get in the way of his playing. . . . He would entrance us with Paganini, tell me about the fundamentals of music from what a cadenza is, to recapitulation, a fugue or double stopping. At last I heard the inspiring violin music, or the first violin parts of music by Brahms, Saint-Saëns, Schubert, Mozart, Fauré, J.S.Bach, Teleman, etc. and that made life more bearable or rather it made one forget the worst aspects of one’s surroundings, it was an escape.”

The most intense period of the German deception about Theresienstadt occurred while Pavel was there. In late 1943, ghetto ‘beautification’ began: fake shops, cafés and even a chocolate shop, freshly painted buildings, and flowers suddenly appeared; frequent deportations of the sick and elderly reduced overcrowding. On June 23rd, Red Cross representatives visited: the inmates played jazz favourites, Verdi’s Requiem and Brundibár. Expecting to see conditions similar to the Polish ghettos, the Red Cross fell for the hoax and filed a bland report. Capitalizing on this success, the Germans produced a propaganda film, The Führer Gives a Village to the Jews. Karl Ančerl (Toronto Symphony Orchestra conductor, 1968–73) conducted the orchestra and Pavel played violin. To some survivors, the summer of 1944 was “the best time we had. Nobody thought of new transports.”

But the good times skidded to an abrupt halt in September 1944. The filming complete, the SS deported the
cultural elites of Theresienstadt, including Pavel, to Auschwitz-Birkenau; of the “Emperor” musical ensemble, only Pavel Kling and Thomas Mandl survived the Holocaust.

Pavel — and his brother, who had been with him since April 1943 — survived two selections, by insisting that he was a mechanic! Forced on a death march in early 1945, Pavel and Alois escaped and made their way back to Brno. After the war, Pavel completed his Prague Academy of Music diploma and then escaped from Communist Czechoslovakia. He spent time in Japan and Europe before settling in Louisville, Kentucky in 1957. In 1977 he joined the University of Victoria School of Music and remained there until the late 1990s. It was here that Charles Barber, City Opera Artistic Director met him: “Pavel Kling,” he believes, “was one of the most astonishing artists I have ever met.” In later life, Pavel actively participated in Holocaust education. He worked to honour his colleagues and mentors as well as explain the significance of the performances and compositions of the Theresienstadt musicians. “Absurd as it seems,” he said, “the cultural life was of such high quality that for me it was a school for life. You realized suddenly that you are part of a group that, for whatever reason, is thrust together. It is not your own persona that counts; rather, you are part of something larger and, if you do not do your part, you damage someone else’s chance.” Pavel Kling died in 2005.
Since the inauguration of the VHEC’s Shafran Teachers’ Conference in 1999, hundreds of educators have participated in this important forum for study and exchange. Participants come to the conference from across British Columbia, and often from Alberta and Washington State, to learn from internationally renowned scholars and educators, and to share teaching strategies with each other.

The conference made possible through the Dave and Lil Shafran Endowment Fund of the VHEC was inaugurated in 1999. The 2009 event, which will take place at the VHEC on February 20th, will address issues crucial to classroom teachers addressing the Holocaust in an increasingly crowded curriculum. The program also reflects the need for linkages, both practical and theoretical, between the history of the Holocaust, the sources that inform our understanding of this event, and ongoing human rights abuses across the globe.

English Language Arts and Social Studies teachers alike turn to literature in their teaching of the Holocaust. Both contemporaneous accounts and post-event testimonies -- including diaries, letters, poems and memoirs -- provide fertile entry points into exploring the varied and changing responses of individuals to the catastrophe of the Holocaust.

In his morning keynote presentation, Dr. Alan Rosen will guide conference participants in thinking about what special contributions literature makes to our understanding of this past. A 2008-2009 research fellow of the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah and regular lecturer at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies, Dr. Rosen’s publications include an edited volume of essays, Approaches to Teaching Elie Wiesel’s Night. In an afternoon workshop at the conference, Dr. Rosen will explore how Wiesel has written about the loss of his father over the span of forty years. The session will examine what these different strategies of literary response teach us about coping with such loss.

Just as literature provides us with points for connecting and empathizing with individuals, the Holocaust offers insights into patterns of collective behaviour. In an effort to guide student
response to genocide, teachers increasingly discuss the Holocaust with their students alongside events in Rwanda and Darfur. In at least two BC school districts, there are year-long grade 12 courses that situate the study of the Holocaust alongside the consideration of other 20th and 21st century genocides.

The Shafran Conference’s second keynote speaker, Dr. Adam Jones from the University of British Columbia Okanagan, will offer a critical framework for making such comparisons. According to Dr. Jones, author of *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (2006), the Holocaust set the agenda for the comparative field in many crucial respects. At the same time, the growing field of genocide studies is shedding important light on the Holocaust, particularly with regard to the relationship between genocide and imperialism.

In his afternoon workshop, Adam Jones will consider how to interest students in the study and moral challenge of genocide without overwhelming them. This workshop asks: What can students contribute to genocide studies and genocide activism, and what are viable teaching strategies for fuelling their interests? What are the emotional and intellectual consequences for the instructor of teaching comparative genocide?

Jonathan Friedrichs and Shannon Moore, teachers at Killarney Secondary School and alumni of Yad Vashem’s Summer Seminar, will lead a third afternoon workshop. Previewing the teaching moment created by the VHEC’s upcoming exhibit, *Canada & the 1936 Berlin Olympics* (Fall 2009 - Spring 2010), this workshop will explore Canada’s response to the 1936 Games, the context of anti-Semitism in Canada in the 1930s, as well as topics such as the Nazis’ use of propaganda, the intersection between the sports, politics, and identity, and the role of media in the Olympic Games.

As always, the VHEC hopes that teachers will leave the Shafran Conference with new perspectives on teaching the Holocaust and new strategies for exploring the ongoing resonance of this history in today’s classroom.

Additional information and registration forms can be found at: http://vhec.org/development.html.
In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly designated January 27th as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Since the establishment of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has formed an annual partnership with the Consul General of Italy, under the authority of the President of the Republic of Italy, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura Vancouver and the Norman Rothstein Theatre to present performances of Jewish music and culture, by Italian citizens. This event offers the Jewish community a unique opportunity to come together with members of another cultural and national community group to commemorate the Holocaust and reflect upon the destructive effects of racism and genocide on all people.

This year we are proud to present a performance of *If This Is A Man: Music & Words of Primo Levi*. Primo Michele Levi (July 31, 1919 – April 11, 1987) was a Jewish-Italian chemist, Holocaust survivor and author of memoirs, short stories, poems, essays and novels. Levi was born into a liberal Jewish family. He studied chemistry at the University of Turin and graduated first in his class in 1941, the year after Italy entered World War II as an ally of Germany. During the war Levi wrote for the resistance magazine *Giustizia e Libertà*. Levi was captured in December 1943. “I was twenty-four,” Levi wrote in *If This Is a Man*, “with little wisdom, no experience and a decided tendency ... to live in an unrealistic world of my own, a world inhabited by civilized Cartesian phantoms, by sincere male and bloodless female friendships.” He was first interned in a transit camp in Fòssoli, Italy and then, two months later, deported to the slave labour camp of Moniwitz-Auschwitz. From the railroad convoy of 650 people, fifteen men and nine women survived. Levi worked at one of three I.G. Farben laboratories that made synthetic rubber for the Nazi war machine and was as a result spared the gas chambers. As a chemist he knew he could safely eat cotton wool and drink paraffin. A non-Jewish guest worker secretly gave him extra helpings of soup.
Levi taught Italian to other inmates by quoting Dante from memory. From the Ulysses episode of Inferno he chose a passage, which dealt with the crucial question “What is a man?”

*If This is a Man* tells of Primo Levi’s experiences as a victim of the Holocaust, from his arrest by the Fascists in 1943 to the liberation of Auschwitz by the Russians. *The Truce* is the story of his eight-month journey back to Italy after he was liberated.

Primo Levi’s memoir *If This Is a Man* relates the dehumanizing experience of Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz during World War II. Although the Germans took away the prisoners’ names and suppressed their self-expression, they could not take away the prisoners’ sense of identity and self-worth. He explores the ways in which Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz were dehumanised yet managed to retain some sense of self - of who they were. They retain their identity despite the intention of the Germans to totally dehumanise them before sending them to their death.

**ALESSANDRO RAVEGGI, SOLOIST**

Alessandro Raveggi, actor and dramatist, has received numerous prizes including the “Premio Riccione per il Teatro” and the “Dante Cappelletti Award.” He was also the artistic director of the “Zoom Festival” and the director of two Florentine theater companies. For many years he has been deeply involved in theatrical research.

**DANIELA ROSARIA ROMANO, ACCORDION ACCOMPANIST**

Daniela Rosaria Romano was born in 1979 in Galatina, Italy, where she started her accordion musical studies very early with Maestro Gianni D’Aprile. In 2001 she moved to Florence where she studied for a degree in Literature and Philosophy at the Florence University and continued her musical studies of classical accordion. In 2007 she founded the “Cuarteto Cambalache” inspired by her meeting with the Argentinian Maestro, Miguel Angel Barcos. Since 2006 she also collaborates with Associazione Shalom of Florence, and contributes to its musical presentations, inspired by Jewish history and culture.

Presented under The High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Italy and the auspices of the Consulate General of Italy in Vancouver, Istituto Italiano di Cultura in Vancouver in partnership with the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, the Norman Rothstein Theatre and “Associazione Shalom.”
REFLECTIONS ON YAD VASHEM’S INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR EDUCATORS

The VHEC administers a program to send two British Columbian educators each year to participate in the International Summer Seminar at Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies in Jerusalem, Israel. The Program is supported by Anita, Elaine & Zav Shafran and Yosef Wosk.

The following are reflections from the 2008 program participants:

NINA KRIEGER | VHEC EDUCATION DIRECTOR

Thanks to this remarkable program, I was able to join two BC teachers on the intensive three-week course, Teaching the Shoah & Anti-Semitism. There, I gained new knowledge, practical strategies and professional contacts that have already benefited my work at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Our class of 30 included educators from Canada, the United States and the Czech Republic. Participants ranged from a sixth-grade teacher at a predominantly Muslim school in Montreal to a medical ethicist and expert in Nazi physicians from Boston University. The group also included museum professionals from institutions such as the Holocaust Museum Houston, the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Centre in Florida and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

In addition to learning a great deal from each other, we had the privilege of studying with some of the foremost Holocaust scholars and educators in the world. The first week focused on the history of anti-Semitism and the diversity of pre-war Jewish life in Europe (the latter point being essential for understanding the varied responses of Jews to the catastrophe of the Shoah); week two dealt with the “Final Solution” and included several outstanding pedagogical sessions; week three explored post-Holocaust issues such as denial, the ongoing efforts to identify and prosecute Nazi war criminals, and contemporary anti-Semitism. Although I deal with the Holocaust daily in my position at the VHEC, the opportunity to interact with scholars such as historians David Bankier and Rafi Vago, theologian Rabbi Pesach Schindler and people such as David Horowitz, editor-in-chief of The Jerusalem Post, was extra-ordinary.
It was also very important for me to see Yad Vashem’s New Holocaust History Museum and explore the campus’ other resources. During lunch breaks I spent time at the Learning Centre (a multimedia centre that engages with key moral, theological and representational questions emerging from the Holocaust), the Visual Centre (where one can view virtually every Holocaust film -- testimony, documentary, newsreel, art film etc -- ever made) and the Holocaust Art Museum. The seminar leaders also facilitated several important one-on-one meetings with Yad Vashem staff members. I met with the Pedagogical Director of the International School, the head of initiatives for Jewish educators, and the Director/Curator of the New Museum.

It was the opportunity to study the Shoah in Israel that was perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the program. The course included day-trips throughout the vibrant country to destinations such as the Dead Sea, Masada, Tiberius, Nazareth, the Galilee, Tel Aviv and the Ghetto Fighters’ Kibbutz. One of the highlights was a study day at the Ghetto Fighters’ House, the first Holocaust museum in the world and the site of fascinating, innovative museum practices.

As a representative from the institution that administers scholarships for BC educators, my participation has enabled me to formulate ways of engaging other scholarship recipients in ongoing Holocaust education initiatives.

Graeme Stacey (Summer Seminar 2006) runs a yearlong senior-level course on the Holocaust and other genocides in Kelowna, while Kit Krieger (2006) has been applying insights gained during the course to a number of VHEC High School Symposia across the province. Karen Miller (2008) organizes an annual Holocaust Symposium for the Nanaimo school district. Shannon Miller (2008) is co-presenting a workshop at our 2009 Shafran Teachers Conference with program alumnus and VHEC Teachers’ Advisory Committee member Jonathan Friedrichs (2007). The Centre is committed to supporting these participants as they model best practices in Holocaust education in their schools, districts and beyond.
I came back from the program energized, inspired and teeming with ideas. I know the other participants did as well. The VHEC looks forward to maintaining our relationships with Yad Vashem and the outstanding teachers who benefit from the scholarship program.

**SHANNON MOORE | KILLARNEY SECONDARY SCHOOL, VANCOUVER**

Throughout the seminar, I was energized by the people, by the geography, and by the riveting discussions. Within our classroom the philosophy of life and survival was ever-present, and we had the honour of partaking in captivating lectures on a multitude of topics.

There were moments when I was literally buzzing in my chair, as I was excited by the possibilities for teaching that were presented. Each day, I would diligently take notes, and as the days went on I began to scribble discussion notes and pedagogical possibilities within the margins of my notebook. These notes became the catalysts for the impassioned patio discussions that became commonplace each night on our hotel patio. These discussions were symbolic of the quality of the people that I had the privilege to be surrounded by, of the diligence, innovation, and engagement with the content, and of the multitude of questions and concerns that emerge when one is teaching the Shoah. I am excited by the possibility of continuing these discussions, this time with my own students.

I traveled to Israel with questions about Jewish acts of resistance. Before this seminar, my perspective was a narrow one. The lectures and Yad Vashem’s excellent curriculum materials have provided historical context for Jewish responses to the Shoah, and a new frame for my own teaching.

Beyond our experiences in the classroom were those in which we experienced our teachings through the landscape of Israel. It is this element of geography, and of cultural immersion, that amplifies the overwhelming impact of this seminar. Standing in Jerusalem, one understands there is far more to the story of the Shoah than that told within the confines of a concentration camp. It is a story that I am determined to continue to tell.

**BY KAREN MILLER | NANAIMO DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL**

To be recognized for doing something that I am truly passionate about was a very great honour. The experience of traveling to Israel and participating in the seminars has definitely increased the depth of my knowledge and provided more insight into my teaching practice; I will be better equipped to continue this journey to which I am so committed.

I have three classes of grade 10’s this year who will benefit from my newfound knowledge and enthusiasm. As teachers we can provide guidance and direction, but ultimately it is up to the youth in our society to take the initiative and stand up against racial and religious intolerance because young adults, individually and collectively, can make a difference. We, as teachers, need to be the guides on this journey.

In addition, to the curricular studies we were also given the opportunity to travel and learn about the country of Israel. I met so many interesting people and visited so many fascinating historic places. This just added another dimension and level of understanding to my vision of a larger world perspective. This chance to learn more than what is in the textbooks was truly amazing. It was truly a privilege to participate in this program.

*For more information about the scholarship program, which covers tuition, airfare and accommodations for the program, please contact info@vhec.org or 604.264.0499.*
“I just wanted to tell you that the interview with Holocaust survivor Robbie Waisman, from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre changed my life,” wrote a residential school survivor from the Dene Nation. I was that survivor and the experience of speaking to members of the Dene Nation on September 8, 2008, changed my life as well. During that visit, I came to see my own experiences reflected in their tragedy.

The treatment of Indian residential schools is a sad and shameful chapter in Canadian history. For more than a century, Indian residential schools separated over 150,000 aboriginal children from their families and communities with the intent of assimilating them and of killing “the Indian within the child”, which was perceived as savage and inferior. I heard horrific first hand stories from residential school survivors about the physical, mental, and sexual abuse that defy our understanding. Tragically, some of these children died while attending these schools and others never returned home.

In 2002, retired chief David Ahenakew made his now infamous anti-Semitic comments that shocked many across the country, including some First Nations leaders who expressed shame and distanced themselves from the Ahenakew remarks. In a gesture of good will and rapprochement, Canadian Jewish Congress invited some First Nations leaders to Israel. One of the participants, Terri Brown was so moved by what she saw that she decided to ask me to speak to her community located in Fort Providence, some 300 km north of Yellowknife, NWT.

After my presentation, I was totally amazed and rewarded by the fact that some of the residential school survivors who had never spoken about their own experiences felt comfortable enough to do so. They came from different tribes and spoke 6 different dialects, but with the
help of translators, we were all able to understand what we was being said. I witnessed firsthand the tears, the heartfelt sighs and the quiet, personal reflections of the painful memories shared so openly and with so much heartbreak.

As part of my visit I also had the privilege of participating in a fire ceremony where one by one people stepped forward to offer dried pieces of fish, tobacco, meat or bread, placing the foodstuffs in front of the fire. Hymns were chanted. Drums rhythmically accompanied the gathering in the middle of a field surrounded by lakes. Chief Bill Erasmus took me under his guidance explaining the meaning of it all. I was totally overcome with the spirit of the hour and found that I too was able to communicate with loved ones that I had lost in the Holocaust. It was amazing and very touching. I was totally enveloped in this unbelievable atmosphere. My emotions, usually under control, gave way.

My host Terri Brown then took me to a nearby memorial, inscribed with some 600 names commemorating victims of all ages who are buried in unmarked graves. Parents of children who are buried in this way received death notices that read: Be advised that your child died like an angel.

Prior to my visit, many in that community had never met a Jew before and had never heard about the Holocaust. After my visit, I received many cards and letters, including one of which read: I read “Night” by Elie Wiesel. It touched me deeply. You and others who endured the horrors are examples of human resilience.”

My experiences during the Holocaust gave me a unique connection to this very special group of people in this remote part of the country. It was an extremely rewarding and meaningful experience to have participated in this way and I now count many from the Dene community among my friends.
Many secondary school teachers struggle with the daunting task of how to effectively teach the Holocaust to their students. There are those that feel one cannot adequately teach about the Holocaust without describing the cruel details of what the victims of Nazism endured. Others feel most comfortable giving a general overview of the Holocaust so as to avoid presenting graphic depictions of Nazi atrocities to students who may not be prepared for them. Teachers who are struggling with how to approach Holocaust education will find a useful springboard in *Echoes of the Holocaust*. *Echoes of the Holocaust* provides a wide-ranging study of discrimination in its many forms and then links it to the persecution that took place under the Nazi regime. It is a collection of readings compiled by Dr. Carole Ann Reed, former director of the Holocaust Centre of Toronto, and Harold Lass, past chair of the Toronto Holocaust Education Committee. The collection examines issues of anti-Semitism that took place during the Holocaust, but it gives equal weight to more recent issues of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, and physical and mental disability. The authors explain, ‘The overall purpose of this collection of readings and discussions is to engage secondary school students and the general reader in the critical process of analyzing contemporary human rights issues in relation to the ultimate violation of human rights, the Holocaust.’

Although it uses the Holocaust in Europe as the backdrop, *Echoes of the Holocaust* actually has a distinctly Canadian focus. Roughly half of the contributors are Canadian, including notable authors such as Pierre Burton, Alice Munro, and singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen. Many of the Canadian authors are extremely critical of Canada’s past and much of the book focuses on dispelling the myth that Canada’s history has been a largely harmonious one. There are three Japanese Canadian authors who write about the sudden frenzy of anti-Japanese legislation shortly after the Pearl Harbor attacks. Joy Kogawa, for example, has a poem about the transportation and ghettoization of Japanese Canadians in BC during World War II. A number of First Nations authors describe their marginalization at the hands of white Canadian legislators. Harvey McCue, an Ojibway author from Ontario, writes about aboriginals being rounded up.
and sent by train to residential schools where they were separated from family members and were torn away from their native languages and traditions. Author Adrienne Shadd, in her chapter ‘Institutionalized Racism and Canadian History: Notes of a Black Canadian,’ gives a particularly frank and biting critique. She writes, ‘racism is, and always has been, one of the bedrock institutions of Canadian society, embedded in the very fabric of our thinking, our personality.’ This book certainly does not tip-toe around Canada’s flawed past.

Yet in contrast to these critical points of view, there are several passages that offer a far more moderate message. Roberta Bondar, the first Canadian woman to travel in space, writes a passage about the obstacles women must overcome within male-dominated institutions. There is also a short anecdote entitled ‘Bodycheck’ written by a grade 9 girl from Scarborough about her experience being the only girl among forty boys in an ice hockey training camp. Certainly a passage about gender and hockey is not what one normally expects when reading a book about the Holocaust. One might ask if it is valid to include such passages and whether it doesn’t in fact run the risk of minimizing the horrors of the Holocaust. The struggles of a female hockey player cannot really be considered true echoes of the Holocaust. Such passages do however, show the book’s intended audience and perhaps offer the teacher a way to ease into a very complex and entangled subject.

*Echoes of the Holocaust* does not describe the barbarity of the Holocaust in great detail. Although each section is carefully linked to the Holocaust, there is little mention of what occurred in cattle cars or gas chambers. At the same time, however, it does not shy away from the sinister effects of anti-Semitism and of discrimination against all minority groups. This book provides Canadian teachers with a much-needed source of anti-discrimination readings to draw from, and more importantly, they are readings that are accessible to students. In essence, *Echoes of the Holocaust* is an educational tool about acceptance.

### Upcoming Events

**For Those Who Missed It!**

**The Life Journey of Child Holocaust Survivors: Memories & Reflections**

**Dr. Robert Krell**

Professor Emeritus, Department of Psychiatry, UBC; Founding President, VHEC

7:30pm | Monday, January 12, 2009

Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue

Donations Welcome
GET WELL

Saul Cohn, Best wishes for a speedy and full recovery. VHEC Staff & Board, Gloria Waisman & Gerri London and Survivor Drop-In

Jean Adler, For a speedy and successful recovery. Lisa Kafka

Kenneth Golden, Good wishes for a speedy and complete recovery. Vera & Bernard Rosen

Arnold Columbia, Wishing you a speedy recovery. Gloria & Robbie Waisman, Birgit Westergaard & Norman Gladstone

Arthur Hollander, Our best wishes for a speedy recovery. the Second Generation Group

Rose Jordan, Best wishes for a speedy recovery and good health. Adella & Bill Moscovitz

Janos Mate, Get well soon. Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro, VHEC Board & Staff

Jack Perel, Best wishes for a speedy recovery. Sally Zimmerman Vera & Bernard Rozen, VHEC Board & Staff

Bella Silverman, Wishing you a full and speedy recovery. Bernice Neuwirth & Rosalie Dymant, Esther, Lisa & Mary Knopp, Sally Zimmerman

Bella & Harold Silverman, Wishing you a speedy recovery. Sarah Nider, Henia & Jack Perel & Family, Aron, Sam & Al Szajman

MAZEL TOV

Rosa Baerwald, Happy 91st Birthday. From, Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg

Harvey Berenbaum, Happy 85th Birthday. David Feldman, Jocy Lowy, David & Grace Ehrlich

Lillian Boraks Nemetz, Happy Birthday. Gloria Ross, Deborah Messenberg

Alex Buckman, Happy Birthday, Des, Phillipa, Aaron & Eli Friedland


Dr. Alan Feldman, On your 80th. Gloria & Robbie Waisman

Irving Kates, In honour of your special birthday. Anita Shafran & Family

Richard Kramer, Happy 65th. Beth & Leon Bogner

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Krell & family, May you always go from strength to strength! Rowena & Josh Kleinman

Marilyn Krygier, In honour of your special birthday! Selma Furman & ’Snow’

Shoshana Lewis, Happy Birthday! Marni & Jeremiah Katz

Mrs. S. Lowy, Many more happy and healthy birthdays. Jocy Lowy

Rabbi Daniel Mikkelberg, On your new position as Temple Sholom’s Assistant Rabbi. VHEC Board of Directors & Staff

Colin Plotkin, On your 60th Birthday. Eddie & Debbie Rozenberg

Yvonne & George Rosenberg , On the engagement of Elana to Oren. Hymie & Rome Fox & family

Sharon Meen & Sandy Costaible, Celebrating important milestones. Dave & Lynn Graham

Gail & Brian Sidersky, Happy 40th Anniversary & Happy 60th Birthday Gail. Debbie, Eddie, Mira, Naomi & Alya Rozenberg

Art Szajman, Happy Special Birthday. Jocy Lowy & the boys

Issac Thau, On your special birthday. Neri & Aron Tischler

Linda & Joel Wener, On 36 years of wedded bliss. Beth & Leon Bogner

Judy Zaitzow, On your 80th Birthday. Lana & Mendy Landa, Rachel Wosk

Cantor Michael Zosman, On your new position as cantor of Congregation Beth Israel. The VHEC Board of Directors & Staff

SYMPATHY


In honour of Charles and Dora Davis. Rob & Marilyn Krell

Esther Alexander, In memory of your mother Pesa Fogel. Linda and Jack Bogdonov

Bessy Altman, In memory of my late husband Sam.

Wayne Boboroff, In memory of Kris. Allan & Nadine Landa

Beth Bogner, In memory of your Mother, Bessy Ackman. Jack & Betty Mendelsohn, Linda & Joel Wener, Ron & Judy Remick, Karyn & Joe Gold, Rome & Hymie Fox, VHEC Staff & Board, Harold & Marta Groberman & Family, Sam Hanson & Marilyn Mess, Brian & Sheryl Ross

Josef Brandt & Family, On the loss of your wife & mother Rosa. The Szajman Family, VHEC Board & Staff

Candyce Burns & Family, In memory of your Mother. Gary & Tamar Lowy

Ari Shiff & Carla van Messel, Sympathy, On the loss of your Brother. Jody & Harvey Dales

Bernice Carmeli, In memory of your Grandmother. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

Cindy E Charkow, Condolences on the passing of your Father. Rob & Marilyn Krell

Mariette Doduck & family, In memory of your Mother in-law, Rachel. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat, Beth & Leon Bogner, VHEC Board & Staff, Jody & Harvey Dales, Rome & Hymie Fox, Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Beverley Essers, In remembrance of Earl. Birgit Westergaard & Yosef & Norman Gladstone

Mrs Greta Dash & Family, Condolences in memory of your Husband. Jack, Evie, Albert, Janie & Steven Amar & families

Steve & Connie Field & Family, In memory of Steve’s Father. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg

TRIBUTE CARDS
August 16 – November 30, 2008
Ben Folk, On the loss of your Sister, Hannah. Pauline Babin, Odie Kaplan

Izak Folk, On the loss of your sister. Odie Kaplan

Izak & Ben Folk & Family, On the loss of your Sister and Sister-in-law. Ida Kaplan & Family

Toni-Lynn Frederick & Family, On the loss of your sister-in-law and brother. VHEC Board & Staff

Syd Freedman, In memory of your wife, Marjorie. Leslie Spiro

David Freedman & Family, In memory of your Mother and Grandmother. Hymie & Rome Fox

Cathy Golden, In memory of your Grandmother. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

David Goldman, On the loss of your loved Mother. Evelyn Kahn

Murray Goldman & Families, In memory of your Wife, Mother & Grandmother. Jocy, Richard, Gary & Tammy Lowy

David Goldman & Family, On the loss of your mother. David, Tamar, Teah & Noah Bakonyi

Greg, Moe & Kirsten Strand, In memory of Elsie. Jocy, Richard, Stephen, Bun, Gary & Tammy Lowy

Irene Klein, Condolences on the loss of Joe. Mark Rozenberg, VHEC Board & Staff

Philip Levinson & Family, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother, Gwen. Frieda Miller, Rachel Wosk & Family, Susie & Mark Kierszenblat, Jody & Harvey Dales, Norman Gladstone & Birgit Westergaard, Rob & Marilyn Krell, VHEC Board & Staff, Ben & Rita Akselrod,

Sherry Levinson, On the loss of your Mother-in-law. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

Sharon Marcus, Condolences on the passing of your Father. Mark Rozenberg

Marilyn & Marty Margolese & Family, In memory of Marty’s Mother, Molly. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Earl Parker, In memory of Rose Parker. From the Schwartzman Family; Selma Furman, Shirley Stein & Ralph Schwartzman

David Goldman, Penny Sprackman & families, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother. Anita Shafran & family

Norman Richman & Family, In memory of your Wife & Mother. Gary & Tamar Lowy & Artzie Basin

Sam Rosen, With sympathy. Alice Kalensky

Michael Rosenfeld & family, In memory of your mother, Pauline Rosenfeld. Hymie & Rome Fox

Greg Rosenfeld & family, In memory of your Grandmother & Great Grandmother. Pauline Rosenfeld. Hymie & Rome Fox

Stephen Schneiderman, In memory of your Mother. Beth & Leon Bogner

Melissa Shafron, On the loss of your Mother. Leslie Spiro

Michael Shafron, On the loss of your Mother. Leslie Spiro


Scott Shay & Family, On the loss of your Mother and Grandmother, Helene Shay. Mark, Jacob, Talya & Nirit, Rozenberg

Ari Shiff, On the loss of your Brother, Susie & Mark Kierszenblat, VHEC Board & Staff

Scott Sklar & Family, On the passing of your mother. Gary, Tammy & Jocy Lowy

Penny & Mel Sprackman, On the loss of your Mother. Evelyn Kahn, Beth & Leon Bogner

Sarah & Bill Stevens & Family, On the loss of your mother, mother-in-law and grandmother. Odie & Ida Kaplan

Sally Tobe & Family, On the loss of Allen. Grace and David Ehrlich

David Tucker & Family, In memory of your grandfather, Joe. Aiden Fox & Family

Carla van Messel, On the loss of your Brother-in-law, Susie & Mark Kierszenblat


Sheryl Young, In memory of your Grandmother. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

**THANK YOU**

Rita Akselrod & Family, Shana Tova. Phillipa & Des Friedland & Family

Lillian Boraks Nemetz, In your honour. Congregation Beth Israel

Alex Buckman & Family, Shana Tova. Phillipa & Des Friedland & Family

Marion Cassirer, Thank you for speaking. White Rock Baptist Church

Iris Cohen, Thank-you. VHEC Board & Staff

John Conway, Thank-you. The VHEC Board & Staff

Graham & Judith Forst, Thank-you. Rob & Marilyn Krell

Rabbi Hillel Goelman, In your honour. Congregation Beth Israel

Kathy Hutchinson, In your honour. Congregation Beth Israel

Reverend Michael Ingham, In your honour. Congregation Beth Israel

Reverend Ric Matthews, In your honour. Congregation Beth Israel

Peter Parker, Thank you for speaking at our school. Coquitlam Alternative Basic Education

Mel Schneider, In appreciation. Wilensky Family

Stephen Toope, Thank-you. Graham Forst

Robin Vrba, Thank-you. VHEC Board & Staff

Robbie Waisman & Family, Shana Tova. Phillipa & Des Friedland & Family

**THANK YOU TO OUR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS:**

**DOCENTS:**

Beth Bogner, Michelle Brewer, Marcus Brandt, Pam Cyr, Jody Dales, Fay Davis, Reva Dexter, Myriam Dinim, Debby Freiman, Aaron Friedland, Phillipa Friedland, Patricia Friedman, Catherine Gagne, Larry Garfinkel, Fran Grunberg, Kayla Joffe, Catherine Kolm, Joel Kolm, Shoshana Lewis, Lucien Lieberman, Ivan Linde, Alexis Martis, Cathy Paperny, Cynthia Ramsay, Martin Rose, Wendi Vaisler, Rina Vizer, Linda Wener, Heather Wolfe

**SPECIAL PROJECTS & MAILING:**

Marcus Brandt, Lilias Ann Cameron, Talya Cohen, Rebecca Dales, Irene Dodeck, Michele Dore, Mark Drutz, Toni-Lynn Frederick, Aaron Friedland, Phillipa Friedland, Debby Freiman, Cathy Golden, Lisa Kafka, Ethel Kofsky, Catherine Kohm, Joel Kohm, Kit Knieger, Shirley Kushner, Gerri London, Stephanie Mrakovich, Sharon Meen, Tom Morton, Paul Richards, Corbin Saleken, Hideki Sawa, Bryn Shaffer, Stan Taviss, Gloria Waisman, Selah Williams

**OUR APOLOGIES FOR ANY OMISSIONS OR ERRORS**

**TO VOLUNTEER CALL ROME FOX 604.264.0499**
SAVE THE DATE

7:30pm | Monday, January 12, 2009
THE LIFE JOURNEY OF CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS: MEMORIES & REFLECTIONS | DR. ROBERT KRELL
Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue
Donations Welcome

7pm | Monday, January 26, 2009
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY CONCERT
Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue
Reserve your tickets from January 12, 2009 by contacting 604.688.0809 ext. 23

2pm | Sunday, February 1, 2009 - Opening
8pm | February 4, 7, 9 & 11 2009
THE EMPEROR OF ATLANTIS
Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue
Tickets available at the VHEC