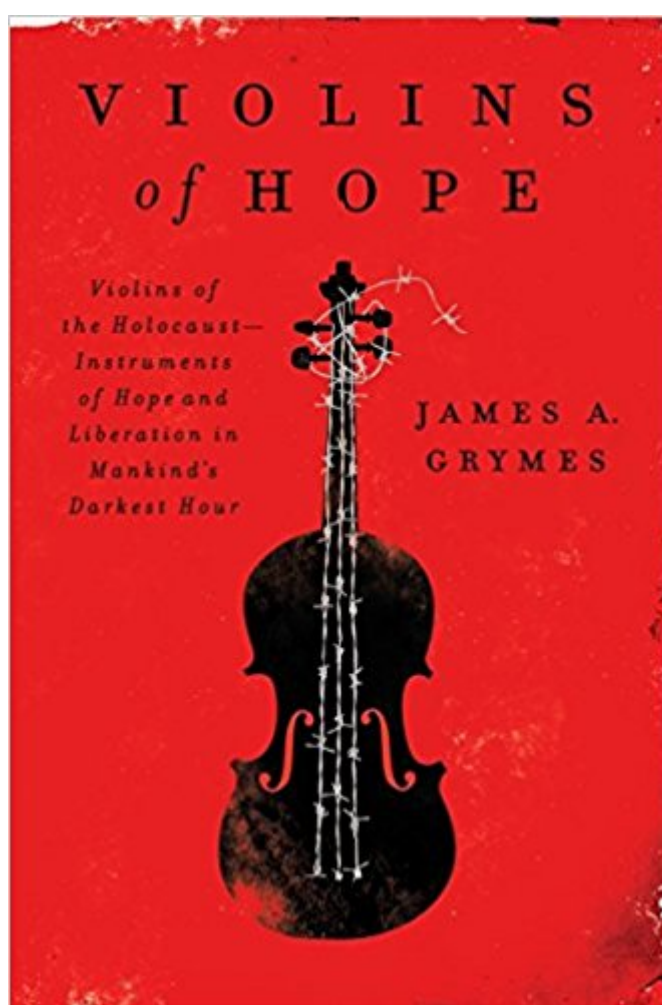


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Violins Of Hope: Violins Of The Holocaust--Instruments Of Hope And Liberation In Mankind's Darkest Hour



Synopsis

Winner of the 2014 National Jewish Book Award (Holocaust) A stirring testament to the strength of the human spirit and the power of music, *Violins of Hope* tells the remarkable stories of violins played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust, and the Israeli violin maker dedicated to bringing these inspirational instruments back to life. The violin has formed an important aspect of Jewish culture for centuries, both as a popular instrument with classical Jewish musicians and as a central factor of social life, as in the Klezmer tradition. But during the Holocaust, the violin assumed extraordinary roles within the Jewish community. For some musicians, the instrument was a liberator; for others, it was a savior that spared their lives. For many, the violin provided comfort in mankind's darkest hour, and, in at least one case, helped avenge murdered family members. Above all, the violins of the Holocaust represented strength and optimism for the future. Today, these instruments serve as powerful reminders of an unimaginable experience--they are memorials to those who perished and testaments to those who survived. In this spirit, renowned Israeli violinmaker Amnon Weinstein has devoted the past twenty years to restoring the violins of the Holocaust as a tribute to those who were lost, including four hundred of his own relatives. Behind each of these violins is a uniquely fascinating and inspiring story. Juxtaposing these narratives against one man's harrowing struggle to reconcile his own family's history and the history of his people, this insightful, moving, and achingly human book presents a new way of understanding the Holocaust.

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Customer Reviews

"Violins of Hope by James Grymes makes a unique contribution to Holocaust scholarship. This captivating work vividly illustrates Jewish courage and resistance through tracing the journeys of seven violins and the triumphs and struggles of the musicians who played them between 1939 and 1945." (Jewish Book World)"Musicologist Grymes traces the histories of seven violins and their Jewish owners in Nazi Germany. The stories are heartbreaking. One of the violins survived Auschwitz and another accompanied its owner during six years of living on the run. More than a mere history of an instrument, the book shows how music can entertain, soothe and even save lives, proving that even in mankind's darkest hour: 'Wherever there were violins, there was hope.'" (New York Post)"This is a book of intense poignancy ... written by a man who is both a fine writer and also a respected musicologist. We are fortunate that he wrote as he did, and left us a testament of hope in the midst of Hell." (The American Israelite) "Grymes traces the beautiful and haunting history of violins played by Jews in the Holocaust. The accounts are unembellished, with plain, yarn-spinning language. They breathe new life into history." (Publishers Weekly) "Violins of Hope is a work of research and scholarship that forms one of the most moving chronicles in the history of Western music. James A. Grymes has earned our plaudits and praise, and deserves our everlasting gratitude." (John Williams, Oscar-winning composer of the score for Schindler's List) "The cruelties of the Third Reich have been well-documented in countless Holocaust studies. This report contemplates the crimes of the Nazis from a special point of view. A special Holocaust study of the unique link that violins, klezmer or classical, have continuously had with the Jewish spirit." (Kirkus Reviews) "When you think of music history, you probably think of something dry, cold, and unemotional. Music historian James A. Grymes will change your mind with his book, which focuses on violins during the time of the Holocaust, and how they inspired comfort, hope, and perseverance." (Westchester Magazine)

A stirring testament to the strength of the human spirit and the power of music, Violins of Hope tells the remarkable stories of violins played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust and of the Israeli violinmaker dedicated to bringing these inspirational instruments back to life. The violin has formed an important aspect of Jewish culture for centuries, both as a popular instrument with Jewish classical musicians and as a central part of social life, as in the Klezmer tradition. But during the Holocaust, the violin assumed extraordinary roles within the Jewish community. For some musicians, the instrument was a liberator; for others, it was a savior that spared their lives. For

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Great book. It gives you a different perspective on music in the holocaust. I never knew that music was played constantly in the concentration camps. The German soldiers actually obtained instruments and music for the musicians in the camps. The musicians were given more privileges of food and showers for themselves and their families. Music was even played while victims were being murdered and tortured. The musicians felt bad that they had to play music for such awful circumstance, but they had to play for their own lives.

I have read many books that deal with the Holocaust but I was unaware that there were "instruments of hope and liberation in mankind's darkest hour." For me, this book was fascinating and I loved every word of it because it taught me that the strength to endure the unendurable can come from music. This book is rich in everything that makes a book a treasure...love, history, bravery, and so much more. I urge you to read this exceptional book and to also visit the authors site at the following link <http://www.jamesagrymes.com> I recommend this brilliant novel to anyone who wants to learn more about the history of the Holocaust. Thank you Mr. Grymes.

I have read *Violins of Hope* a few times now. The first time I was very disappointed by the book. However, after my second reading I changed my opinion. What I had been expecting from the book was more of a story about the violins being restored, more of the technical aspect I would say. The story is really much more about the original owner of the instrument and how it got to the point of being restored. To me, the musical part seemed rather overshadowed by the Holocaust part. I did end up very much liking *Violins of Hope*, the author did a very commendable job. As others have said, there must have been an awful lot of research done in writing this book.

Humans survive in inhumane situations often imbuing some thing reminiscent of, or hopeful of better times as a symbol of faith in the future and resistance to the present. Such is this story about violins.

Another story of the survival of the humans spirit against all odds. It would be very wise to heed this historical account and profit from the same.

This was a very interesting side of the holocaust that I had never heard of before. The stories very horrible but the part that music played in saving some lives was magical.

What a story. Ignore the repetitions of heroic Jews playing their way to even a small victory. The amazing part of the story is the redemption provided by a violin maker in Jerusalem. Bravo.

The Violins of Hope tells very personal and historical information about the musicians, their families, and their music. I had no previous knowledge of the role music had in the lives of the Jews during the Holocaust. Following the violins is a fascinating way to tell the story.

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