

Cellists' Corner
Brief Career Details of Important
Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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FEATURE on GEORGE HORVATH

Well, usually I am happy collecting information from various sources, putting it together in a readable form and sharing it with you all; but the story below is so incredible I wish to leave it unaltered, as told by daughter Janet Horvath:

“My father George Horvath was born February 26, 1922. A member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra for 38 years, George was a prominent cellist in the music community in Toronto. He studied at the Franz Liszt Academy (his teachers included Zoltán Kodály and Leo Weiner) and was recruited by the Budapest Symphony when he was in his early 20s. The Nazis invaded and occupied Budapest March 19, 1944 and shortly thereafter George was deported for slave labor in the copper mines of Yugoslavia along with thousands of other Hungarian Jewish men. Upon liberation he trudged barefoot to Hungary starving and emaciated covered in lice. He and my mother were reunited and made their way to Germany where they could attempt to procure paperwork to immigrate.

While in Munich George was able to join an orchestra of 17 Jewish survivors. The St. Ottilien Orchestra was bussed twice weekly by the Joint Distribution Committee and the United Nations Relief and rehabilitation Administration to give morale-boosting concerts in Bavaria for survivors languishing in the displaced persons camps. My dad played 200 concerts in 100 different DP camps from 1946-48. Two of the concerts in 1948 were led by the legendary maestro Leonard Bernstein (also in his 20s at the time!). Janet unearthed a program, photos with Bernstein and documents and while he and my mother waited for their paperwork he also took cello lessons from Anton Walter in Munich and played recitals for Munich radio (all of which she relates in her new book to be published in summer "The Cello Still Sings - A Generational Story of the Holocaust and of the Transformative Power of Music.").

George and Katherine eventually were able to procure the proper documents to make their way to Canada late 1948. They had to do odd jobs and menial labor until my father could join the union and audition for the Toronto Symphony. Over his career he played with the CBC orchestra in several filmed concerts, played numerous recitals, taught cello students, and performed in chamber music (trios and quartets). George and Katherine were married 64 years and were survivors of the Holocaust.

Both of them believed in the moral power of music and art, and their importance to the community and all of humanity. David, I'll try to send a photo or two knowing you often don't have the space. Here goes!
Thanks so much for remembering him on his birthday!
All best to you.
Stay well.”

Well worth noting down the following:

**The Cello Still Sings: A Generational Story of the Holocaust and
of the Transformative Power of Music**

by **Janet Horvath**

The Cello Still Sings: A Generational Story of the Holocaust and of the Transformative Power of Music, an absorbing creative non-fiction story, centers around George Horvath, the author's father, who from 1946-1948 played hundreds of morale-building concerts in Displaced Persons camps throughout Bavaria for Holocaust survivors like himself. Leonard Bernstein, the legendary young maestro, was at the helm of the seventeen-member Jewish orchestra for two of these concerts, bringing solace to thousands of refugees. George and Janet, both professional cellists had always loved to talk shop, yet this story is disclosed the last year of George's life. The concerts with Leonard Bernstein in Germany, become the catalyst enabling Janet to discover the truth about her history. She finds the original signed program, photographs with Bernstein, and a documentary, clues that lead her to discoveries about her parent's experiences and her upbringing darkened by the Holocaust's shadow. Seventy years later, in the very place her father performed with Leonard Bernstein, Janet is the cello soloist for a reconciliatory program in Landsberg, Germany. Please see video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsNxZ8JnH_I&feature=youtu.be

The Cello Still Sings: A Generational Story of the Holocaust and of the Transformative Power of Music, PageMill Press



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