



## ***TEREZIN: CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST – The Film***

For 50 years *Terezin: Children of the Holocaust* has been performed live, as a stage play, for schools and audiences locally and around the world. The first-ever filmed production of the play premiered virtually on Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at a time when its message has never been so necessary or relevant.

*Terezin* follows a day and night in the lives of six children held at Camp Theresienstadt in the Czech Republic. The camp, also known as Terezin, imprisoned thousands of European Jews, including over 15,000 children, less than 150 of whom survived. While the play takes place during the Holocaust, it teaches audiences about the consequences of hate and discrimination in our everyday lives, the need for greater social responsibility, the power of every individual voice in standing up to hate, and the inherent childhood capacity for hope.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, live productions of the stage play *Terezin* had to be paused indefinitely as theaters closed and schools transitioned to hybrid and remote formats. With the backdrop of headlines about the pandemic, global protests for racial and social justice, and the rise of discriminatory acts and hate speech, a group of young people decided the message of *Terezin* could not go silent at such a critical time.

*Terezin* playwright Anna Smulowitz, was at first skeptical that the cast could safely rehearse and film the show with the pandemic in full force, however, Northeastern University freshman and *Terezin* cast alum Andrew Valianti convinced her they could make it happen by adhering to rigid Covid precautions including quarantining, Covid testing and isolating as a cast in a “social bubble” to rehearse and professionally film the production. Anna and the cast believed the themes of oppression and speaking out against racism and hatred were especially important in the current political climate.

Smulowitz was inspired to write *Terezin* back in 1970 after reading a real letter from 12-year old Chaim Landau, who was interned at the Terezin concentration camp, in which he wrote, ‘If you should find this letter, please tell someone. We want to go home. We want our lives back. Please remember us.’ The play has continued uninterrupted for the last 50 years, in Chaim’s memory and all those lost in the Holocaust.

Winner of the 1984 Children’s Television Award, *Terezin* has toured schools, colleges, churches, synagogues, and theaters as a stage play throughout the United States and internationally, and has been translated into several languages. The play has been performed off-Broadway, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, in Cuba, in Panama, in Germany, including in Berlin and Frankfurt, as well as at the Terezin concentration camp in the Czech Republic and at Auschwitz in Poland.

The film allows the message of *Terezin* to reach a greater number of communities, hearts, and minds because of the digital format allowing for virtual screenings. The goal is to work with schools to incorporate the film and its message into their curriculum about the Holocaust, lessons about intolerance, or in response to acts of hate, bullying, or discrimination. The film will also be available for community groups, churches, synagogues, and other audiences locally and around the world.

The film features an introduction from playwright Anna Smulowitz, a filmed presentation of the play and a “talk back” with the cast, with a total running time of 1 hour and 43 minutes.

*Terezin: Children of the Holocaust* is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to fighting racism, antisemitism, discrimination, intolerance and bullying through education and the arts.

For more information about *Terezin: Children of the Holocaust* please visit the website at <http://www.terezin.org> or email [TerezinManager@gmail.com](mailto:TerezinManager@gmail.com) for more information .