

DINA ŠUKLAR WIESIKE (SERBIA/SLOVENIA)

Academy of Arts (Novi Sad)

Dina Šuklar Wiesike holds degrees in Piano Performance from Syracuse University, NY, USA (M.Mus) and Novi Sad University Academy of Arts, Serbia (B.A.), where she studied under the tutelage of Wei-Yi Yang and Dorian Lejāk, respectively. During her studies she was recognized with the most prestigious awards of both universities, was awarded numerous competitive scholarships and won top prizes at all piano competitions in the country. As a regular participant of international master classes, she has also worked under Peter Frankel, John O'Conor, Emanuel Krasowsky, Arie Vardi, Arbo Valdma, etc, and was engaged as a Teaching Assistant at master classes led by Dorian Lejāk. Her resume includes performances in Serbia, Macedonia, Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, England, Israel and the USA. In addition to piano playing and performing, Dina remains passionately dedicated to piano teaching. Together with her former piano teacher, Milena Apić, she authored a music book for young beginners Music Starter, described as "one of the most beautiful achievements of Serbian piano pedagogy" (Rita Kinka, Academy of Arts in Novi Sad, Serbia). Her students have won over 70 prizes at national and international piano competitions. She is currently employed at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad as a collaborative pianist.

Loni's Story

On October 12, 1944, the Reich was disintegrating under attacks from the east, west, and air, and she was sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland, where she was gassed two days later. This tragic story is all too familiar to many European Jews under German occupation—a story that might have remained untold if it weren't for "the sweet little boy" Peter, who, after the death of his mother, discovers 22 old letters sent from Holland.

Leoni (Loni) Frenkl was born in 1878 in Berlin. At 26, she married Dr. Ludwig Rabl from Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic), and they divided their lives between these two cities. Their first daughter, Ruth, was born in Berlin in 1906; their second daughter, Anamarie, was born in Karlsbad in 1908. Ludwig Rabl passed away in Berlin in 1925, and thirteen years later, under the threat of Nazi persecution, Loni moved to Amsterdam. Shortly thereafter, she opened a café called "Paris" in Amsterdam, which became a popular gathering place for German Jews. Anamarie also managed to leave Germany, emigrating to England, where she settled in London with her husband, Hans Lobenberg. In May 1939, Loni visited her daughter and son-in-law and was thrilled to learn that she was expecting her first grandchild. On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland; On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany, making travel to England impossible. Nine days after the declaration of war, Loni's grandson Peter was born. The next day, on September 13, 1939, Loni wrote her first letter to her grandson in shaky English.

Presenters



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After the German invasion and occupation of France, Belgium, and the Netherlands (May-June 1940), Loni lived in constant fear of violence. In June 1940, Dutch Nazi patrols roamed the streets of Amsterdam, demolishing the café "Paris." The following year, the café suffered two similar attacks. Loni Rabl did not mention these events in her letters to her daughter and grandson, but she wrote that she read their letters over and over, thinking of little Peter all day and night. In late August 1943, Loni was arrested and taken to the transit camp Westerbork near the German border. On February 23, 1944, she sent her last letter to a contact person in Amsterdam, who was to forward it to her family. Her daughter and grandson received this letter only in September 1945. On February 25, 1944, Loni was deported from Westerbork to the Theresienstadt ghetto in occupied Czechoslovakia. On October 12, 1944, Leoni Frenkl was transferred to Auschwitz, where she was killed two days later.

Letter List:

1. September 13, 1939 - Letter to Peter 1a. Lullaby
2. September 28, 1939 - Letter to Peter
3. November 16, 1939 - Letter to Peter
4. December 3, 1939 - Letter to Peter
5. December 18, 1939 - Letter to Peter 5a. Interlude
6. February 11, 1940 - Letter to Peter
7. May 5, 1940 - Letter to Anamarie 7a. May 10, 1940 - Interlude
8. September 26, 1940 - Letter to the family
9. 1940 - Undated letter to the family
10. Undated, probably around November 9, 1940 - Letter to Anamarie
11. Undated, probably later in November 1940 - Letter to the family 11a. Interlude
12. February 11, 1941 - Letter to Peter
13. Unknown date, probably late September/early October 1941 - Letter to Anamarie
14. October 1, 1941 - Letter to Mr. Bahman (in Switzerland)
15. January 6, 1942 - Postcard addressed to Hans Bahman 15a. Interlude
16. December 30, 1943 - Sent from the transit camp Westerbork to Joseph Blum
17. February 23, 1944 - Sent from the transit camp Westerbork to Joseph Blum

