

The American Prize in Composition—Social Justice related, 2022 (professional division)  
Edwin Fissinger Choral Composition Prize, North Dakota State University Challey School of Music, 2021

# OUT OF THE ASHES OF HOLOCAUST

*Music by*

JOSHUA FISHBEIN

*Solo Soprano, Solo Alto, SATB Chorus, Violin, Violoncello, and Piano*

*Words by*

MARINA FISHBEIN *and* JOSHUA FISHBEIN

*Adapted from*

the 1984 U.S. Congressional Record,  
including testimony by Barbara Mikulski quoting Robert F. Kennedy  
and a 1984 Baltimore Sun article by Gerri Kobren  
quoting Kathryn Michalos and Emily Velleli

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the Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County, Maryland.  
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This publication is dedicated to the memory of the composer's great-aunt Rachel Velleli Glaser (1948–2022),  
who devoted her life to Jewish education and the preservation of her family's Holocaust survival story.

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Thomas Colohan, Artistic Director.

Instrumental Parts for Violin and Violoncello are available separately: 9194A.

## COMPOSER'S NOTES

Beginning in September 1943, my seven-year-old grandmother (a Jew living in Nazi occupied Greece) was hidden with eight other family members in an isolated Greek mountain village by the Michalos family. This non-Jewish family had never met a Jew before; and yet they risked their lives and their home to save the lives of my family, among the mere 10% of Greek Jews that survived the Holocaust. Remaining friends, the families immigrated to the United States separately from one another, coincidentally both settling in Baltimore.

Their story of survival was the subject of a 1984 Baltimore Sun article "Greek Family in Baltimore Owes Its Lives to Another" by Gerri Kobren, including interviews with my great-grandmother Emily Velleli and Kathryn Michalos, the woman who saved her. Then-representative Barbara Mikulski added this story to the 1984 U.S. Congressional Record, including words of her own and quoting part of Robert F. Kennedy's Day of Affirmation address. My wife and I adapted words from these sources for this music composition aimed at memorializing my family's story while honoring the family that saved them.

—Joshua Fishbein

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## TEXTS

### I. Introduction

We bow our heads in shame  
to remember the deepest wound,  
the deepest ever inflicted on the soul of man.

All our attempts  
to document its horror,  
to record its brutality,  
to measure its devastating impact  
are in vain.

Yet, we must remember.

Out of the ashes of Holocaust,  
the dream of a better world did emerge.

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief  
that human history is shaped.

Each time we  
stand up for an ideal,  
or act to improve the lot of others,  
or strike out against injustice,

we send forth a tiny ripple of hope.

And crossing each other  
from a million different centers of energy and daring,  
those ripples build a current  
which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

That is the ultimate triumph of justice.

## II. Our Friends from Greece

Solo Alto = Kathryn Michalos (KM)

Solo Soprano = Emily Velelli (EV)

Altos and Tenors = Michalos family (A & T)

Sopranos and Basses = Velelli family (S & B)

KM: These are our friends from Greece.

EV: These are the ones who saved us from the Nazis.

KM: We wanted to help everyone.

EV: You knew the terrible risks.

KM: We could not help everyone.

EV: But, you answered our cry for help.

KM & EV: We speak of the past  
in present tense verbs.  
Our children were so young then,  
but now, they speak for us.

Sopranos: We were the first Jews you had ever met.

Basses: You gave us a place to hide.

Altos: You gave away your belongings.

A & T: You left everything behind.

S & B: But you saved our lives,  
while risking your own.  
For five months you hid us.  
And for that,  
your house was burned.

A & T: For five months we hid you.  
And for that,  
our house was burned.

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## III. Homeless Again

Chorus: A stone here,  
a corner there,  
the house was  
no more.

EV: You come to our hiding place  
to all live together.

KM: We come to your hiding place.  
We all live together.

EV: We all live together.

Chorus: We all live together  
like one big family.  
We talk together,  
eat together,  
sit around the fire  
together.  
This is a nice...

KM: a very nice family.

EV: a very nice family.

KM: We all worry about food.

EV: They help as much as they can.

KM: They bake bread and dip it in the wine.

EV: That is our meal  
most of the time.

Chorus: The Nazis return,  
we leave again together.  
We return again together,  
but the village is destroyed.  
Now, we are homeless.

A stone here,  
a corner there,  
we are homeless,  
homeless again.

#### IV. Never the Same

KM: I lived in a cattle shed near my vineyards,  
tended my vines by day,  
searched for my husband by night,  
scattered my children,  
hoping the wind would carry them to safety.

And then, the war was over.

My husband, a prisoner,  
was sick without shoes.

KM: My husband survived.

EV: We came back home,  
sick too, without shoes.

EV: My husband outlived two brothers  
who were taken and killed.

KM & EV: We tried to start a new life,  
but Greece was never the same.  
We were never the same.

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#### V. A Tiny Ripple of Hope

Chorus: We found each other again in America,  
giving all the help we could.

A & T: These are our friends from Greece...

S: who saved us from the Nazis.

B: They answered our cry for help.

We speak of the past  
and live in present tense verbs.  
Dreaming of a better world,  
we send forth a tiny ripple of hope.

Words by Marina Fishbein and Joshua Fishbein, based upon:  
Representative Mikulski, speaking on May 10, 1984, 98th Cong., 2nd session,  
*Congressional Record* 130, pt. 9:11927-11928. (Public Domain.)  
Kennedy, Robert F. "Day of Affirmation Address." Speech, Capetown, South Africa,  
June 6, 1966. John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum. (Public Domain.)  
Kobren, Gerri. "Greek Family in Baltimore Owes Its Lives to Another."  
*Baltimore Sun*, April 29, 1984. (Used by permission.)



5

*mf cantabile*

S shame to re - mem - ber the deep - est wound, to re - mem - ber the

*mf cantabile*

A in shame to re - mem - ber the deep - est wound, to re - mem - ber the

*p* *mf cantabile*

T shame, in shame, the deep - est wound,

*p* *mf*

B shame, deep - est wound,

Vln. *p*

Vlc. *p* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf*

(8<sup>va</sup>) loco

10

S  
deep - est wound, the deep - est ev - er in - flict - ed on the soul of

A  
deep - est wound, the deep - est ev - er in - flict - ed on the

T  
the deep - est wound, in - flict - ed on the soul of

B  
deep - est wound, in - flict - ed on

Vln. *mf*

Vlc. *mp* *mf*

Pno.

8vb

Adagio lamentoso (♩ = 56)

14

S  
man, the deep - est in - flict - ed on the soul of man.

A  
soul of man, in - flict - ed on the soul of man.

T  
man, in - flict - ed on the soul of man.

B  
man, in - flict - ed on man.

Vln.  
*p* *f*

Vlc.  
*p* *f*

Pno.  
*pp* *f*  
*rit.* *loco*  
(8<sup>vb</sup>)



*poco rit.*

19

S  
A

T  
B

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

*mf*

All our at-

*p*

*poco rit.*

22 *a tempo*

S  
A

T  
B

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

*mf*

to rec - ord\_ its bru -

tempts to doc - u - ment its hor - ror,

*p*

*mf*

*a tempo*

*mp*

*Leg.*

24

S  
A

tal - i - ty, to meas - ure its dev - as - tat - ing im - pact, —

T  
B

to meas - ure its dev - as - tat - ing im - pact, —

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

*mf* *più f* *mp* *mf* *dim.*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

26

S  
A

all our at - tempts are in vain, *mf*

T  
B

all our at -

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

*mf* *mp* *p* *mf*

Reo. Reo. Reo. Reo.

## II. Our Friends from Greece

Marina and Joshua Fishbein  
 adapted from a 1984 Baltimore Sun article by Gerri Kobren  
 quoting Kathryn Michalos and Emily Velelli

**Freely, with nostalgia** (♩ = ca. 42)

*mf espr.* *rit.*

Sop. Solo  
 These are the ones who saved us from the

Alto Solo  
*mp semplice*  
 These are our friends from Greece.

Vln.  
*p pizz.* *f* *pizz.*

Vlc.  
*f* *arco* *p*

**Freely, with nostalgia** (♩ = ca. 42) *rit.*

Pno.  
*f* *arco*

**Faster, driving forward** (♩ = 92)

Sop. Solo  
 Na - zis.

Vln.  
*arco* *mf*

Vlc.  
*mf pesante*

**Faster, driving forward** (♩ = 92)

Pno.  
*mf poco marc.* *con Ped.*

9

Sop. Solo *mf* You knew the ter - ri - ble

Alto Solo *mf* We want - ed to help — eve - ry - one. —

Vln. *mp* *port.* *mf*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

13

Sop. Solo *p* risks. *p* But, you

Alto Solo *p* We could not help — eve - ry - one. —

Vln. *mp*

Vlc. *port.*

Pno. *mp*

16

Sop. Solo *mp dolce*  
 an - swered our cry — for help. We speak of the

Alto Solo *mp dolce*  
 We speak of the

Vln. *mf* *p*

Vlc. *mf* *p legato*

Pno. *mf* *p legato*

19

Sop. Solo *mf*  
 past in pres - ent tense verbs. Our

Alto Solo *mf*  
 past in pres - ent tense verbs. Our

Vln. *mp*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

(*Rec.*) *Rec.*

22 *f* *poco rit.*

Sop. Solo  
child - ren — were so young then, — but now, they speak — for

Alto Solo  
child - ren — were so young, so young, but now, they speak — for

Vln. *mf* *f*

Vlc. *mf* *f*

Pno. *mf* *f* *poco rit.* *mf dim.*

26 *a tempo* *mf*

Sop. Solo  
us.

Alto Solo  
us.

Vln. *mf poco marc.*

Vlc. *mf pesante*

Pno. *a tempo* *poco marc.* *con*

29 *tutti Sop. mf*

S We were the first Jews you had ev - er met. *mf*

B You *mf*

Vln. *mp* *port.*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *mp*

32 *tutti Alto mf*

A You gave a - way your be -

B gave us a place to hide.

Vln. *mp* *port.*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *dim.* *mp*

### III. Homeless Again

Marina and Joshua Fishbein  
 adapted from a 1984 Baltimore Sun article by Gerri Kobren  
 quoting Kathryn Michalos and Emily Velleli

**Slow, bleak** (♩ = 52)

Sop. Solo

Alto Solo

S

A

T

B

Vln.

Vlc.

**Slow, bleak** (♩ = 52)

Pno.

*for rehearsal only*

*p* < *simile*

A stone here, a cor-ner there, a stone here,

*p* < *simile*

A stone here, a cor-ner there, a stone here, a

The musical score is for a piece titled 'III. Homeless Again'. It is in 4/4 time and the key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo and mood are 'Slow, bleak' with a quarter note equal to 52 beats per minute. The score includes parts for Soprano Solo, Alto Solo, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Violin, Viola, and Piano. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) have lyrics: 'A stone here, a cor-ner there, a stone here, a'. The piano part is marked 'for rehearsal only' and features a steady accompaniment. Dynamics include piano (*p*) and simile. The score is marked with a large 'Copyrighted Material' watermark.



4

S

A *mp legato*

T

B

Pno.

The house was no more, no

a cor-ner there, a stone here, a cor-ner there,

cor-ner there, a stone here, a cor-ner there, a

*poco cresc.*

7

S *mp legato*

A

T *poco cresc.*

B *mp*

Pno.

The house was no more, no more. The house, the

more. The house, the

a stone here, a cor-ner there, the house, the

stone here, a cor-ner there, a stone here, the

10 *poco rit.* *a tempo* Sop. Solo *mf espr.*

Sop. Solo *mf* *p* You

S A house was no more, no more.

T B house was no more, no more.

Vln. *mp cantabile* 3

Vlc. *mp cantabile* 3 *pp*

Pno. *poco rit.* *a tempo* Play *p* *pp*

13 *Poco più mosso* (♩ = 60)

Sop. Solo come to our hid - ing place to all live to - geth - er. *mf*

Alto Solo We

Vln. *pp*

Vlc. *mp*

Pno. *Poco più mosso* (♩ = 60) *mp* *p* *8va*

15

Sop. Solo

We all live to- geth - er.

Alto Solo

*espr.*

come to your hid - ing place. — We all live to- geth - er.

S

We

A

We

T

We

B

We

Vln.

*mf*

Vlc.

*p* *mf*

Pno.

*loco* *mp* *p* *8va*

17

Sop. Solo

Alto Solo

S  
all live to - geth - er like one big fam - i - ly, *più f*

A  
all live to - geth - er like one big fam - i - ly, *più f*

T  
all live to - geth - er like one big fam - i - ly, *più f*

B  
all live like one big fam - i - ly, *più f*

Vln. *più f*

Vlc. *più f*

Pno. *loco* *mf cresc.* *più f*

## IV. Never the Same

Marina and Joshua Fishbein  
 adapted from a 1984 Baltimore Sun article by Gerri Kobren  
 quoting Kathryn Michalos and Emily Velelli

**L'istesso tempo, dreary** (♩ = 52)

Alto Solo *mp soulfully* 3  
 I lived in a cat-tle shed

Vln. *con sord.* *port.*  
*mp*

**L'istesso tempo, dreary** (♩ = 52)

Pno. *p* *simile*  
*una corda* *una corda* *una corda* *una corda* *una corda simile*

Alto Solo 4 3 3  
 near my vine-yards, \_ tend-ed my vines by day, searched for my hus-band by

Vln. *mp*

Pno. *una corda* *una corda* *una corda*



16 *a tempo*

Sop. Solo

Alto Solo *p* *mp* 3

o - ver. My hus - band, a pris - on - er, — was

Vln. *port.*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *a tempo* *pp* *simile*

*Leg. tre corde* *Leg.* *Leg.* *Leg.* *Leg. simile*

19 *mp* 3

Sop. Solo We came back home, — sick — too, — with - out shoes. —

Alto Solo sick — with - out shoes. — *mf* My

Vln. *senza sord.* *p* *mp*

Vlc. *p* *mp* 3

Pno. *cresc.* *Leg.* *Leg.* *Leg.*

## V. A Tiny Ripple of Hope

Marina and Joshua Fishbein  
 adapted from a Baltimore Sun article by Gerri Kobren  
 and U.S. congressional testimony by Barbara Mikulski  
 quoting Robert F. Kennedy

**Adagio, lamentoso** (♩ = 52)

Vln. *pp* *f*

Vlc. *pp* *f*

Pno. *f*

*8<sup>vb</sup>*  
*tre corde*

5

Vln. *poco rit.* *p*

Vlc. *p*

Pno. *poco rit.*

*(8<sup>vb</sup>)*  
*loco*



Poco meno mosso, ethereal (♩ = 48)

9

Vln. *sul tasto*

Vlc. *pp sul tasto*

Pno. *p*

*Leg. Leg. Leg. Leg. Leg.*

13

Vln. *p* *ord.* *poco accel.*

Vlc. *p* *mf* *mf cant.* *ord.*

Pno. *cresc.* *mf* *poco accel.*

*Leg. Leg. Leg. Leg. Leg.*

17

Vln. *rit.* *mp*

Vlc. *f cant.* *rit.* *p*

Pno. *cresc.* *dim.*

*Leg. Leg. Leg.*

*a tempo*

tutti Sop. *p* with wonder

S

tutti Alto *p* with wonder

A

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

24

S

A

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.