



MONA GOLABEK **THE CHILDREN OF WILLESDEN LANE**

TUESDAY
MAY 8 2018
11 AM
WEDNESDAY
MAY 9 2018
9:30 AM & 11 AM


2017 > 2018
FIELD TRIP SERIES
BROADEN THE HORIZONS
OF YOUR CLASSROOM.
EXPERIENCE THE VIBRANT
WORLD OF THE ARTS
AT THE McCALLUM!



LEARNING LINKS

THE CHILDREN OF WILLESDEN LANE,
THE ABRIDGED THEATRICAL SHOW FROM THE ACCLAIMED
THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE,
DIRECTED BY HERSHEY FELDER



McCALLUM THEATRE EDUCATION
PRESENTS

MONA GOLABEK **THE
CHILDREN OF
WILLESDEN
LANE**

TUESDAY WEDNESDAY
MAY 8 2018 MAY 9 2018
11 AM 9:30 AM & 11 AM

"Each piece of
music tells a story."

> LISA JURA GOLABEK

Connecting to Curriculum and Students' Lives!

HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY > World War II, Austria, England

ARTS > Theater, music, classical composers, the piano

IDEAS > Injustice, inhumanity, survival, generations

EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF LITERACY

What is a "text"? We invite you to consider the performances on McCallum's Field Trip Series as non-print texts available for study and investigation by your students. Anyone who has shown a filmed version of a play in their classroom, used a website as companion to a textbook, or asked students to do online research already knows that "texts" don't begin and end with textbooks, novels, and reading packets. They extend to videos, websites, games, plays, concerts, dances, radio programs, and a number of other non-print texts that students and teachers engage with on a regular basis.

We know that when we expand our definition of texts to the variety of media that we use in our everyday lives, we broaden the materials and concepts we have at our disposal in the classroom, increase student engagement, and enrich learning experiences.

Please consider how utilizing your McCallum performance as a text might align to standards established for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language.

How do we help students to use these texts as a way of shaping ideas and understanding the world?

Please use this material to help you on this journey.

NON-PRINT TEXT > any medium/text that creates meaning through sound or images or both, such as symbols, words, songs, speeches, pictures, and illustrations not in traditional print form including those seen on computers, films, and in the environment.

THE WORK OF ART

A NON-PRINT TEXT FOR STUDY

WHAT'S IT MADE OF? HOW CAN THIS WORK SERVE AS A COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS-MANDATED "TEXT" FOR STUDENT STUDY IN THE CLASSROOM?



Sporting a red wig, the woman takes her place at the piano and begins to tell her story; or rather, her mother's story. Her fingers, ever nimble, flutter one second and strike the next, extracting from her instrument the whole range of sounds the telling of such a story demands. For this is the story of a youngster torn from her family in Vienna and sped by train – the Kindertransport (German for children transport) – to the safer shores of Britain in 1938. Her name is Lisa Jura. She couldn't have known as she made her way to safety that her parents would die in a Nazi concentration camp. But she surely experienced the pain of separation from them as well as the separation from her two siblings. Of the couple's three children, it was she who received the single ticket the family had at its disposal, perhaps because as a prodigy of the piano she seemed poised for a future which must not be cut short.

Now, daughter Mona, her student and survivor, shares the story of that prodigy – the carrying forward, generation by generation, of the sacred flame of artistry – with us.

Adapting her own book of the same title, she interweaves speaking in the voice of her mother with playing the pieces which her mother taught her on the piano. She begins fittingly at the beginning – in Vienna as the fate of Jewish families gradually worsens, moves through the Kindertransport, and on through the Blitzkrieg in London.

Her fingertips alternately caress and storm the keyboard. The sounds of Beethoven, Debussy, and Chopin express one moment all the horrors of the time and the next the delicacy of daily joys. As Ms. Golabek tells us, however, it is Edvard Grieg's piano concerto which plays the central role. It had held a special place in the affections of Lisa. She meant to make her professional debut with this work. How many times over the subsequent years had she tried to convey to her daughter the ways in which the Norwegian composer's melodic passages expressed all the different facets of her life experience? Daughter Mona demonstrates. The first movement of Grieg's masterpiece – all fire, bombast, and passion – connects to those now distant, turbulent days in Vienna; the uncertainty, the confusion, the growing dread and the mounting violence. She turns next to the second movement. Here too is drama and peril. This, mother has assured daughter, tells in musical terms what those foreboding days and terror-filled nights in London were, for her. In this movement, too, are passages of tenderness and calm. In these, the pianist finds reference to her mother – "saucy, vivacious, but with a profound piece of her heart missing." She moves then to the concerto's conclusion, its third movement. Here, if there is passion, there is also resolution. Ms. Golabek's playing is by turns probing and brilliant. She launches into the cadenza. (A cadenza is a solo flourish – often extended and demanding special virtuosity – which comes very near the end of a piece.) Her voice soars over the swirling scales as she informs us "My mother told me that when the bombs started in England, she'd go down to the basement of the hostel and pound out the cadenza of the Grieg, determined to drown out the bombs."

She pauses, as if struck fresh by the familiar, beloved strains. "Stunning music, isn't it?"

Similarly she finds the power of Rachmaninoff chords illustrative of D-day. In the intricate, repetitive patterns of a Bach partita she uncovers a correlative to her mother's sewing machine as it spit out uniform after uniform in an army factory.

Rounding off this moving presentation are archival photos and newsreel footage. These get projected onto screens within glowing frames which hover over the stage, as if they were so many portraits of cruelty, resistance, and triumph in an otherwise darkened gallery.

Ms. Golabek isn't an actor and doesn't pretend to be one. Instead, her style is simple and sincere. She tells her mother's story with integrity – and gets us rivetingly to imagine Lisa Jura's life in London. Mona adopts the voices of various men, women, and refugee children her mother encountered. She causes us to feel the anxiety of trying to make – and losing – contact with family members back in Austria. Above all she provokes in us some sense of the passion she and her mother both developed for the piano, the triumph of career highs, the satisfaction of expressing all there is to be expressed through those flurries of notes.



THE ARTISTS

WHO HAS *PRODUCED*
THIS TEXT FOR STUDY?

A native of Los Angeles, Mona Golabek was taught piano primarily by her mother, concert artist Lisa Jura. This takes on the feeling of a family tradition when we realize that Lisa Jura was taught piano by her mother in Austria. In speaking of her musical training, Mona Golabek says, "I studied with several outstanding pianists; Leon Fleisher, Reginald Stewart, and Joanna Graudan, but my mother was my true teacher and inspiration."

That exemplary training led to early successes as winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions in 1976, a New York City recital debut at Hunter College, and an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Her concert appearances have included performances with major orchestras and conductors around the world. The Hollywood Bowl, Kennedy Center for the Arts in Washington D.C., and Royal Festival Hall in London are just three of the starry locations at which she has given solo recitals. The subject of a PBS documentary, *More Than the Music*, she can also count a Grammy nomination to her credit.

In 1992, she and her sister Renee, a pianist as well, put together a recording of *The Carnival of the Animals* by French composer Saint-Saens, featuring some of poet Ogden Nash's animal verses. Actors such as Audrey Hepburn, James Earl Jones, William Shatner, and Betty White spoke the texts. Proceeds went to charities that promote animal welfare. The two sisters have also made a recording of Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite* with actress Meryl Streep as narrator.

Ms. Golabek hosts her own classical music radio program *The Romantic Hours*, a mashup of love letters, romantic poetry and classical music.

A rolling stone that gathers no moss, Ms. Golabek has also established the Hold On To Your Music Foundation. Through it, she looks to expand awareness of the ethical implications of world events such as the Holocaust, and the power of music and the arts to embolden the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Lisa Jura Golabek, as you will have gathered, was a Viennese child prodigy who, as a result of the Kindertransport, ended up in England and later in Los Angeles, where she raised a family. The Kindertransport was a rescue movement that transplanted children, threatened by the Nazis, to England in the years from 1938 to 1940. Her teenage years were passed in relative quiet at the Willesden Lane Orphanage in London. Work included a stint as a maid, and then in a factory making army uniforms. At night, she played the orphanage piano, giving pleasure and inspiration to the thirty some children living there.

An audition with the Royal Academy of Music in London earned her a scholarship to study with Mabel Floyd. In time, she found herself playing piano for soldiers at the Howard Hotel. When the war ended, she moved to Paris, where she performed the Grieg piano concerto and met her husband, French Resistance fighter Michel Golabek.

Immigrating to the United States with her new husband, she took up teaching piano. Her prize pupils were her daughters. Daughter Mona says her fellow students were in awe of her mother's "compassion, unique inner fire and uncanny intuition." Lisa Golabek gave benefit concerts throughout her life, raising money for Israel, cancer research, and AIDS hospices right up until her death in 1997 at the age of 73.

Director Hershey Felder adapted Ms. Mona Golabek's book for the theater, and subsequently helped to shape the presentation and intensify its effectiveness. Felder is himself a performer with solo shows about composers under his belt. His George Gershwin *Alone* debuted at Berkeley Repertory Theatre not so long ago. A Canadian born in 1968, he is in addition to playwright and director, a pianist, actor, composer, and producer. Over the course of his career, he has given 4,000 performances.

The arc he has created for the play takes its cue from the concerto form – a series of three contrasting yet thematically complimentary movements. He has also, in assessing the gifts and training that Ms. Golabek brings to the project, wisely gone for authenticity. "Trying to make her into an actress would be a mistake," said Mr. Felder. "The intention was to make her honest. Something like this works because it's a true story, and it's her true story."

The Children of Willesden Lane, is an abridged theatrical version of the acclaimed *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, directed by Hershey Felder. The original play, *The Pianist of Willesden Lane*, opened in Los Angeles at the Geffen Playhouse in 2012, and has been performed subsequently in Chicago, Boston, Berkeley, and New York. The book, on which the play is based, came about when in 1983 Mona Golabek, performing Grieg's piano concerto, found herself thinking, "This was the piece of music that told the story of [my mother's] life." So she set about interviewing her mother's friends, and with the information and insights she gathered, and with the help of co-author Lee Cohen, began to reconstruct her mother's life.

"I woke up one morning, and I thought, 'I'm making my debut in the piece that my mother always told me about, in the piano lessons!' This was the piece of music that told the story of her life."

> MONA GOLABEK

CONTEXTS

WHAT *INFORMATION* SURROUNDS THIS TEXT FOR STUDY & COULD HELP MAKE STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT WITH IT MORE POWERFUL?

KINDERTRANSPORT

Between the years 1938 and 1940, thousands of refugee children from Jewish families were allowed to leave Nazi Germany and take up temporary residence in Great Britain through the Kindertransport. The plan was to return these children to their families when the war was over. In hindsight, we know of course what happened to those families. However, the saving of these youngsters stands as one of the high points in humanitarian effort then or since. It was the very savagery of the pogrom staged by the Nazis, known as Kristallnacht, which caused British immigration to ease restrictions, opening the way for the Kindertransport. Children under the age of 17 were allowed temporary travel visas and transportation out of Germany (and Austria and Czechoslovakia) and into Great Britain, so long as someone – private citizens or organizations – could guarantee each child's care, education, and eventual return home. Parents could not accompany the children. The occasional infant was tended to by transport children. High on the priority list were children whose parents were in concentration camps, as well as orphans. Something like half of the children were set up with foster families. Others were settled in hostels, farms, and schools. After the war, many of these refugees applied for and received British citizenship. Many immigrated to Israel, the U.S., Canada, and Australia. The overwhelming majority, of course, never saw their families again.

THE PIANO

Even in prehistoric times, people produced sounds using strings. Artifacts like gourds and bows sported taut strings which could be plucked and bowed. It was probably inevitable then that someone would attach a keyboard to a set of strings. The dulcimer, which made its first appearance in the 1300s, was the earliest such exponent, involving a box, wire strings, and a couple of hammers. The clavichord and the virginal followed. The harpsichord came next. However, musicians who could elicit varying degrees of volume from other instruments were dissatisfied with the single, unvarying dynamic level possible on the otherwise popular harpsichord. It was left then to a Paduan, Bartolomeo di Francesco Cristofori (1655-1731), to invent the first pianoforte, later shortened to piano. Piano means soft; forte means loud. You can see the earliest version of his instrument still in existence today in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

EDVARD GRIEG

The history of Norway is intimately linked with both Sweden and Denmark. For many years, Denmark dominated its larger neighbor, Copenhagen serving as its cultural center. At age 15 Grieg entered the music conservatory at Leipzig, Germany. Four years later, he was an accomplished musician. Early pieces gained him favorable attention. But as he went along he was increasingly dissatisfied with the heavily Germanic influence present in his work. Led by the example of colleagues, he began moving toward a more specifically Norwegian style of composition, based in large part on native folk tunes. In this he was emulating the Russians who strove to develop a distinctly Russian music, and Dvorak whose musical themes were often adapted from Czech folk tunes.

In 1868, he finished what is perhaps his most revered piece, the A minor piano concerto. He was just 24 years old. It has three movements – or sections. It shares in common with Robert Schumann's piano concerto a similarity of feel. They are both in the key of A minor. And neither composer ever wrote a second. We know that Grieg heard the Schumann played by Schumann's wife Clara in Leipzig in 1858. We also know that Grieg revised his concerto no fewer than seven times. He was a tireless worker and could be quite critical of his compositions. The A minor concerto was, by the way, the very first concerto to be recorded in the early days of sound recording. Owing to the crude technology of the time, however, the full length work was cut down to a mere six minutes.

TO GET READY FOR THE PERFORMANCE, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > THE KINDERTRANSPORT
 - > EVENTS OF WORLD WAR II
-

HERE'S A 60-MINUTE LESSON IN COLLABORATION & PROBLEM-SOLVING YOU COULD TEACH TO HELP PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THIS WORK:

LINE OF INQUIRY – LOI is an essential question that generates a lesson:

How do the creators of *The Children of Willesden Lane* explore the life and lessons of pianist Lisa Jura through her relationships – to music and her daughter?

DISCUSS

Start a discussion in class by asking: Who are the members of our families who teach us things? What things do they teach us? How do these lessons take place? Why do these family members undertake to teach us things like that? Have students describe the mood or moods they sense in this piece.

Offer students a little context about the performance they are going to see. The woman who wrote and performs in it was taught piano by her mother. Her mother taught her other things along the way, like courage, the value of hard work and dedication, a deep love of music. She also taught her, by sharing with her the events of her early life, about inhumanity toward others, resilience, and triumph.

A HOMEWORK PROJECT: THE FAMILY MEMBER WHO HAS TAUGHT ME SOMETHING

Students determine which family member they want to focus on. They think carefully about the thing(s) this family member has taught them – and the ways in which they have done that. They interview that family member about their own experiences growing up and ask which member of their family was most instrumental in teaching (mentoring) them in some way. If that family member is not available for interviewing, the student interviews one or more family members about him/her. Having collected this information, the student composes a true story called *The Family Member Who Has Taught Me Something*.

These are shared aloud on a subsequent class day. This will be a great opportunity to have listeners do a “close read” of these texts. Ask questions of the listeners after each reading that requires them to return in their minds to the text they’ve just heard in order to provide answers. A liberal sprinkling of open-ended questions – always connecting back to the heard text – can take the dialogue into higher level thinking.

AFTER COMING TO THE THEATER, STUDENTS COULD RESEARCH THESE:

- > CLASSICAL COMPOSERS FEATURED IN THE WORK OF ART
- > STUDENT'S OWN FAMILY HISTORY

HERE'S A 45/60-MINUTE LESSON YOU COULD TEACH AFTER STUDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED THE WORK:

Lead students in recalling details of the performance. After some describing, you will want to ask open-ended questions that get at the essential ideas. Spend some questioning time focusing on the archival photographs and newsreel footage which appears in gilt frames.

ANOTHER HOMEWORK PROJECT: FILLING THE FRAMES

Have students gather old photographs of the family member they have written about. Add to these images others that illustrate in some way the ideas explored in that piece of writing. (An example: Mona Golabek might have included a picture of composer Grieg, a treble clef, a piano keyboard, a child's cap from the 40s, a train, and so on.) Students, using the originals or photocopies, assemble these onto a poster-sized piece of card stock. Each image is enclosed in a frame of some kind. Mona Golabek selected gold frames – what are some other choices?

These are arranged gallery-style in a subsequent class for group viewing. Once again, your questions to observers about these images, their arrangement, framing, and so on will open up all kinds of noticing and thinking.

"I was not interested in bringing this to Jewish kids. I wanted to bring this to kids from all walks of life — immigrants, children of color."

> MONA GOLABEK



WHAT'S YOUR READ OF THIS NON-PRINT TEXT?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS - AND HOW COULD THEY BE ADAPTED AS GUIDING QUESTIONS TO SPARK STUDENT DISCUSSION?

- > What happens in this play?
- > Who performed?
- > How would you describe the performer's voice? Her vocal delivery?
- > What kinds of moves did she make? What sorts of things did she express through movement?
- > What did you notice about the balance of spoken word to music?
- > How would you characterize the music overall?
- > Which composers were represented?
- > How were specific pieces used to illustrate events and other things in the story?
- > How would you characterize the language itself?
- > How did the presentation flow? What were transitions between parts like? What tempos?
- > Which moments had the greatest impact on you? Why was this?
- > Which of the lesser characters presented by Ms. Golabek stands out as most memorable to you? Why?
- > How would you describe Lisa Jura?
- > What are some of the life lessons here? What was the mother teaching her daughter besides how to play the piano?
- > What personal connections did you make to this piece – to the women whose combined story it was?
- > What new things did you learn?
- > What might you do differently in the future as the result of your experience of this piece?
- > In what ways has your experience of *The Children of Willesden Lane* confirmed the choices you already make in your life?

INTERNET

THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE, BEHIND THE BERKELEY REP SCENES WITH MONA GOLABEK

www.youtube.com/watch?v=snt_giq3yL4

A brief glimpse of the pianist at work and tiny sampling of spoken portion of the original play.

MONA GOLABEK TALKS WITH MARTHA STEWART

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNZYKsDnXI

Concert pianist Mona Golabek talks with Martha Stewart about music and her background.

MONA GOLABEK IN THE PIANIST OF WILLESDEN LANE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=csqhUwfr1HU

Sneak peak of Mona Golabek in the world premiere *The Pianist of Willesden Lane* at the Geffen Playhouse.

MONA GOLABEK AND HER MOTHER LISA JURA, PART 1

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2smTtTkKwE

This is a portion of the broadcast *The Romantic Hours* when she talked about her mother's experience of being taken from Vienna to England on the Kindertransport

BOOKS

THE CHILDREN OF WILLESDEN LANE: BEYOND THE KINDERTRANSPORT: A MEMOIR OF MUSIC, LOVE, AND SURVIVAL

By: Mona Golabek and Lee Cohen

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing, 2003

ISBN 978-0446690270

RESCUING THE CHILDREN: THE STORY OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT

By: Deborah Hodge

Reading level: 10 and up

Publisher: Tundra Books, 2012

ISBN-10: 1770492569

The book includes real-life accounts of the children and is illustrated with archival photographs, paintings of pre-war Nazi Germany by artist, Hans Jackson, and original art by the Kinder commemorating their rescue.

LILY RENEE, ESCAPE ARTIST: FROM HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR TO COMIC BOOK PIONEER

By: Trina Robbins

Reading level: 11 and up

Publisher: Graphic Universe, 2011

ISBN-10: 0761381147

TEN THOUSAND CHILDREN: TRUE STORIES TOLD BY CHILDREN WHO ESCAPED THE HOLOCAUST ON THE KINDERTRANSPORT

By: Anne Fox, Eva Abraham-Podietz

Reading level: 10 and up

Publisher: Behrman House, 1998

ISBN-10: 0874416485

Tells the true stories of children who escaped Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport; a rescue mission led by concerned British to save Jewish children from the Holocaust.

BOOKS

KINDERTRANSPORT

By: Olga Levy Drucker

Reading level: 8 - 12 years

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co., 1995

ISBN-10: 0805042512

The powerful autobiographical account of a young girl's struggle as a Jewish refugee in England from 1939-1945.

MY FAMILY FOR THE WAR

By: Anne C. Voorhoeve

Reading level: 12 and up

Publisher: Dial, 2012

ISBN-10: 0803733607

At the start of World War II, ten-year-old Franziska Mangold is torn from her family when she boards the Kindertransport in Berlin, the train that secretly took nearly 10,000 children out of Nazi territory to safety in England. Taken in by strangers who soon become more like family than her real parents, Frances (as she is now known) courageously pieces together a new life.

THE PIANO

By: William Miller, Susan Keeter

Reading level: 6 - 9 years

Publisher: Lee & Low Books, 2000

ISBN-10: 1584302429

One day, Tia wanders into the white section of town. Soon she is transfixed by a wonderful melody that drifts towards her from one of the houses. Without thinking, Tia accepts a maid's job from Miss Hartwell, the woman who lives there, just so she can hear more of the music. The Piano is an uplifting story of caring, friendship, and the connections that can develop between people, no matter how different their ages and backgrounds.

HER PIANO SANG: A STORY ABOUT CLARA SCHUMANN

By: Barbara Allman

Reading level: 8 and up

Publisher: Lerner Publishing Group, 2002

ISBN-10: 1575051516

Tells the story of the German pianist and composer who made her professional debut at age nine and who devoted her life to music and to her husband.

CDS

PIANO CONCERTOS: GRIEG & SCHUMANN

Pianist: Leon Fleischer (one of Lisa Jura's teachers!)

Label: Sony, 2005

ASIN: B000BDGWFI

CDS

RACHMANINOFF: PIANO CONCERTO NO. 3

Pianist: Mona Golabek
Label: Romantic Hours, 2001
ASIN: B000VLH8DU

THE CHILDREN OF WILLESDEN LANE: MUSIC AND WORDS

Artist: Mona Golabek
Label: Romantic Hours, 2003
ASIN: B000VLH8E4

CARNIVAL OF THE ANIMALS

Artists: Mona Golabek and Renee Golabek-Kaye
Label: Romantic Hours, 2002
ASIN: B000VLHCJU

THE ROMANTIC HOURS/MONA GOLABEK

Label: RCA, 1998
ASIN: B000003FSG
Various artists playing varied composers with readings interspersed.

DVDS

INTO THE ARMS OF STRANGERS — STORIES OF THE KINDERTRANSPORT (2000)

Narration: Judi Dench
Rated: PG (Parental Guidance Suggested)
Studio: Warner Home Video
Released: 2001
ASIN: B00005MEPJ

SAVING THE CHILDREN

Studio: CBS Broadcasting Inc.
Released: 2014
ASIN: B00K28NLII

“Something like this
works because
it’s a true story,
and it’s her true story.”

> HERSHEY FELDER, DIRECTOR

LEARNING LINKS HAVE BEEN CREATED BY:

MARK ALMY
RESEARCH AND TEXT UNLESS
OTHERWISE NOTED

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