Josh Aronson and Jonathan Rose | Orchestra of Exiles

- Good afternoon, good evening, everybody, wherever you are around the world. I know that there are 3,000 participants registered for this extraordinary documentary today. We are extremely privileged to be able to show you the "Orchestra of Exiles," which is a documentary which explores the four-year odyssey of Bronislaw Huberman, the great violinist, whose story touches many of the major themes of the 20th century. Huberman's extraordinary efforts to create this orchestra, conducted by Arturo Toscanini, saved hundreds of Jewish families from the approaching Holocaust, and his achievements changed the landscape of cultural history. We are very, very fortunate to have Josh Aronson, the producer of the documentary, and Jonathan Rose, his great friend, with us today, who will be in conversation after the documentary. So please stay with us. Before we show the film, I'd just like to hand over to Josh and introduce him to you. Josh, would you just say hello to everyone, and then I will do the introduction afterwards of both you and Jonathan.

- [Josh] Sure.

- Thank you.

- Thank you, Wendy.

- And welcome. Welcome, Josh, and a great, great, thank you. I just want to just add now that I can see you that to everybody that I just, my great friend, my wonderful great friend, Dorothy Tannenbaum, suggested that I call Josh up and ask him if we could show the documentary, and I did that, and within two minutes he said, "With absolute pleasure." So thank you, Josh. Thank you very, very much. Now over to you.

- Well, thank you very much, Wendy. And this Lockdown University that you've created is just an extraordinary resource for people around the world. And thank you, and I'm glad to know about it. You know, I made this film a few years ago, Orchestra of Exiles, and what's extraordinary to me about the film is how the world has changed in terms of politics, in terms of immigration, in terms of repression, in terms of all the things that have been emerging in recent years. And that this film seems to move with it and becomes relevant in so many ways. Because to me, the film touches on themes that are just universal themes of human beings and of culture, and of politics. And it's what attracted me to the story in the first place.

I'll tell you more about it later, and I really look forward to talking with Jonathan again, who is my friend who last interviewed me for this film. We wrote a book based on the film also called "Orchestra of Exiles," and Jonathan and I spoke together about it at the New York Public Library. So he was the logical person to do this again. And you'll meet him and we'll have some Q&A after, and he'll field those Q&As on the chat room. So feel free to do that and stay with us, and enjoy the film. It was a three-year experience for me to make. I grew, I learned, and it was a powerful thing for me to do, and I'll share it with you. So thank you for coming, and enjoy the

film.

- Gosh, that was absolutely extraordinary. Thank you very, very much. So, before I turn the floor over to Josh Aronson and to Jonathan Rose, I'd like to tell you a little bit about both of them. Producer, director, writer, Josh Aronson began his career as a still photographer for Time Life, and soon after began making films. He directed hundreds of commercials, music videos, television pilots, and for the past 20 years, he has specialised in documentaries. Among his many productions, Aronson directed the Oscar-nominated "Sound and Fury," followed by "The Opposite Sex" and "Beautiful Daughters" for Showtime for PBS. He made "Playing for Real" about building careers in the cutthroat world of classical music, and "Talent Has Hunger" about master cello teacher, Paul Katz, and his students. Last year, Aronson completed "To Be of Service," running now on Netflix about veterans with PTSD who get a service dog as a remarkably effective mode of treatment. Josh is the founder of Harmony Project Hudson, an afterschool music education programme in Hudson, New York, with his wife violinist, Maria Bachmannn, who founded Telluride Musicfest, a chamber music festival in Colorado, which is in its 15th year. More on Aronson can be found on his website, aronsonfilms.com.

Jonathan F.P. Rose's business, public policy, teaching, writing, and not-for-profit work focuses on creating more environmentally, socially, and economically just and resilient cities. In 1989, Rose founded Jonathan Rose Companies, LLC, a multidisciplinary real estate development, planning, project management, and investment firm to address the challenges of the 21st century. He frequently lectures at graduate schools of business environment and architecture, unaffordable housing, community development, smart growth, and the environment. Mr. Rose's book on how to create resilient cities, "The Well-Tempered City: What Modern Science, Ancient Civilizations, and Human Nature Teach Us About the Future of Urban Life" was published by Harper Wave in 2016. Jonathan Rose has tested before US Senate and House Committee on housing, infrastructure, and environmental issues, and served and as advisor to the White House Office for Urban Affairs. A very warm welcome to both of you. Thank you so much for giving us your time. We are so looking forward to your presentation this morning. I'm now going to hand over to both of you. Thank you, Josh, and thank you, Jonathan. Pleasure to have you with us.

- Thank you, Wendy, and pleasure to be here. And thank you, Jonathan, for joining us.

- So actually, I have a bunch of questions for you, but I see all these questions in the question and answer that other people have asked. So, Josh, I'm going to ask you very few questions, and then I want to jump into these other ones just because your audience is so eager to hear some other things, okay?

- Great. I love the mystery.

- Okay. So first of all, how did the idea of this film come to you?

- Well, that's very interesting. I mean, every documentary filmmaker who's made a couple of films, has everyone they know come to them with ideas for films. And usually those ideas are about family members. They're about something that is not so interesting to the filmmaker. But every now and then, someone shows up. And in this case, someone named Dorit Straus came to me. She was a close friend, a pianist, as I am, and said I should make a documentary film about her father. So I immediately was polite and went the other direction. And then she began telling me about her father, who was saved by Bronislaw Huberman, who I'd never heard of, never heard of him. And in 1936, took him and so on, and you heard the story in the film. And I was very polite and didn't follow up. It didn't really interest me. But being Israeli, she was relentless. And she just kept coming at me, and she told me more and more about it.

And then I learned from her about Bronislaw Huberman, went online to research who Bronislaw Huberman was and who her father, David Grunschlag was. And what I found that she just didn't pitch the story right. The story was not about her father, although her father's in the film. The story is about Bronislaw Huberman, as you saw in the film. And what attracted me to it, people always ask me, "What was it that grabbed you?" What attracted me to make the first historical film I ever made was here was a man who was one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. He saved almost a thousand Jews, and he started the culture of Israel, and no one knew who he was. A book had never been written about him. A film had never been made about him. And I thought a man like that shouldn't be forgotten. So I dove in and I made the film. That's how it happened.

- That's fantastic. Because it's not only a film about him, and the creation of culture in Israel, well, the transference of culture to Israel, but it's really a film about the human condition, about leadership, about human evil, so many, many, many things. So making that must have had an impact on you. How did it impact you to immerse yourself in the holocaust, in the music, in so many disparate elements?

- Well, it had a real impact on me because one of the reasons I was so attracted to do it is the fact that in my, I was in my 50s when I made this film, in my early 60s when I made this film, and in looking at the subject, I recalled sort of... I remember when the Show of Foundation, which was Steven Spielberg's foundation, that was dedicated to interviewing every survivor in the world, what an ambitious project. Every to archive, a testimonial of every survivor in the world was Steven Spielberg's mission after Schindler's List. And I thought, "Well, I'm a documentary filmmaker, I'd be good at that, I'd be good at interviewing people like that." So I got the application from them to become an interviewer. And in the application were three or four blank pages, painfully blank pages that said, "Write all the books about the Holocaust and the movies about the Holocaust that you have read or seen." And I remembered a couple, and I was stuck. And I put it down and I didn't submit. And I was quietly ashamed of that.

And I realised in making this film, I would have to do all that reading and I would have to look at all those films. And I did. And it's one of the reasons it drew me to this, was to do that. And it changed me as a person. It changed me as a Jew. It really strengthened resolve to sort of, you

know, become a more whole, more powerful person in the world to affect change. So it was very powerful for me. Thanks for asking.

- That's amazing. And now you've actually formed your own mini orchestra in Hudson, New York.

- I have. I have. My wife and I, I started... Not my wife, but she helped in many ways. I've started a music education programme for children who don't have music education as a possibility in Hudson, New York. And we now serve almost 150 kids, and we're in our sixth year, and we're surviving very well during COVID times. We're completely virtual, and it's after school music. It's completely subscription. I've sort of stepped up to the plate to raise all the money to do it, and hit up all my friends to help, and including you, and thank you. And it's been just a joy in my life to bring music, which is one of the most powerful things we have in our lives to these kids. It's very changing. And that is itself a deep and an interesting conversation that we should maybe talk about later about how powerful music was in this film and why Toscanini stepped up to the plate because he recognised, as Huberman did, that it was music at this level performed by an orchestra of exiled Jews that could stand up against Nazism without guns. And that was a message that Huberman always talked about.

Q&A and Comments:

Q: I'm going to ask, I'm going to weave in some of the questions from our audience. So one of them is, was there any non-Jewish Palestinian involvement in the formation of the orchestra? And it looked like in the construction at least some of those were non-Jewish Palestinians.

A: In the construction. Yes. That's a very good question. As far as I know, there were no Palestinians in the orchestra. The orchestra was made up of, well, Palestinians at that time, they were all Palestinians in that they lived in Palestine, of course, but they were 99% Jewish.

- But they may have been involved maybe, I don't know, in the office or, you know... I guess the question, you know, it's a very interesting question because at that time, the Palestinians were feeling like their homeland was being encroached upon, and that's why we saw the riots in the film. And so the question is, so it was a pretty divided country already. Did any of them go, "Well, these guys may be the enemy, but they're pretty cool enemy, and I want to be part of it too"?

- You know, it's a really good question. We should separate, in this case, we shouldn't call them Palestinians because they were all Palestinians. They were all living in Palestine, right? It was the Arabs and the Jews. And the question is, were Arabs engaged with this process as well? And certainly among the workers, the workers concerts that Huberman insisted on at one-fifth the price, and the people constructing the hall who wanted tickets instead of being paid overtime, there were certainly Palestinians there. And Huberman... There were Arabs there, and Huberman was very conscious of it, I would say. And it's interesting because it brings up what we can talk about later that who Huberman had become to get to that place. Because 15 years

before Huberman, or it would've been 10 years before, 1929, seven years before, Huberman came to Palestine for the first time and had a very different experience of Palestine, of Zionism, of Arab-Jew issues. And he grew tremendously in the process of making this, as I did.

- Hmm. So there's a... Well, actually, I want to talk about that before I go to some of the questions. You know, people who are abused... I don't want to say that he was abused, but he definitely had a rough childhood, and what I love the fact is that he realised himself that after his father died, that he had not grown to be a full person as he goes off to the Sorbonne to kind of expand himself. But often become self-defended, and therefore more limited in their scope. And the pathway of expansion is one of compassion. And it's so interesting that he really chose compassion and an action. There's a quote by the architect, Christopher Alexander, making wholeness heals the maker. And in many ways, by him taking this action of putting his values in action, it was part of his own healing process.

- Yeah. Oh, beautiful, John. Yeah. He was a heroic character, there's no doubt. And he was heroic by his actions and by the person that he became. I mean, he transformed himself by, well, he was obviously an extraordinarily intelligent man, and a genius performer. He was one of the great violinists of the century. And he was abused. I think, I say he was abused. I mean, you backed off of that, but I think he was abused by his father. Not physically abused, but in the way that Leopold Mozart abused his son and turned Mozart into a sort of a dancing monkey. The same was done with him. And as you hear in the film, for 10 years, his only companion was his father. So that's from 10 to 20. He had no friends. He was denied access to mostly his mother and his two brothers back in Poland. And he was just a money machine for his father. And that was it. And he went from that, and his father died. And although he did go to the Sorbonne and he did open up, and he learned about politics, he learned about sociology, he studied sociology and politics, he was still a very troubled man.

He was very self-absorbed. He was very difficult. His wife, Elza Galafrés, wrote a book after their marriage about her several husbands. But in describing him, she described it's one of the only sort of first-person close descriptions we have of Huberman, it was a nightmare being with him. He was completely narcissistic, he was completely self-absorbed, and he was kind of nasty. He thought little about other people. All he cared about was making money and building his career. He had no agent, he has no manager. He did everything himself. And she finally left him, leaving him alone, and he went back to the world. When he started this project in 1934, I think was really the impetus when he went to Palestine the second time, and he saw the need for an orchestra.

And by then, Einstein, who was his close friend, had started talking to him about the need for Israel, a need for a state of Israel. And although he had not been a Zionist before 33, before Hitler, by 34, Einstein had really had a real impact on him, and he became a Zionist. And he began to open up, he began to become undefended, as you described it, and his heart began to show. And more and more over those years, he turned himself around into a person of complete altruism. It was a remarkable piece of self-discovery. And in the same way that his heroism

comes from his actions in what he did, in saving a thousand Jews, creating the later, soon-to-be Israel Philharmonic, which was the culture of Israel, and still is the flagship culture of Israel, he did the same to himself. He turned himself into a compassionate human being and changed himself and changed the world.

Q: Hmm. This is a little side question somebody asked. So what did happen to Huberman's first wife and child?

A: They divorced, and that was the time when he was very self-absorbed. He was not a father. He was on the road all the time. As Joshua Bell said in my interview with him, I don't think it's in the film, he was at the time, frankly, what Josh Bell is today, which is to say the highest paid, one of the highest paid, most in demand musicians in the world. So he could have been paid anything and worked as much as he wanted, making as much as he demanded. Quite remarkable. So he had a little boy, and his wife went off and married someone else. She actually married Dohnányi, the conductor. And Dohnányi adopted the little boy, which says a lot that a living father would allow his son to be adopted by someone else. And he was a terrible father. He may have spent money now and then, but he basically spent no time with his son. And when the Israel Philharmonic did a 100th anniversary celebration of Huberman's life, which would've been '86, 1986, he was born in 1886, they invited his son, and his son refused to come. He said, "He wasn't a father to me." So the wife went off, married someone else, and the son moved to Canada and became, I think an architect or an engineer. I can't remember. He's dead now.

Q: Huh. So interesting. And another question people ask is, so why did Huberman move to Israel himself?

A: Well, first of all, well, Huberman died in '46, and he was there in 1938, which was the second time that Toscanini conducted. So '36, the orchestra started. And after the orchestra started, he went back on the road. And he was a touring musician. He was in Australia, he was... And of course, travelling then wasn't like travelling now. It was a huge deal to travel to Australia on tour. It was a huge deal to travel. And he was travelling all the time. And when World War II started in 1945, he was in America. No, he was in Switzerland, at his home in Switzerland. And he was advised to get out of Europe, and he made his way to America. And he spent the war years on West End Avenue living in the building where Rachmaninoff lived. And he was there and toured America and played Carnegie Hall many times. After the war... He was caught in Switzerland in 1940, '39, '40, and after the war in '45, he moved back to his home in Switzerland. And he was tired and he'd had a lot of battering in his life. And he stayed in Switzerland at his estate there. He really had no interest in moving to Israel. He never did. And he died in, I think '46, '47. Never went back to Israel. But Ida Ibbeken, his companion, lover, secretary, did move, even though she was a Catholic, moved and spent the rest of her life organising his papers and working on his legacy. And she lived in Tel Aviv the rest of her life.

Q: And why do you think, there's another question, that his story was so unknown, that it disappeared so quickly?

A: Yeah, that's a good question. You know, firstly, you say why do we know other musicians from the first part of the 20th century, and we don't remember him?

- Like Heifetz, you know, like he's so famous. Why do we know about Heifetz and we don't know about him?

- Well, Heifetz actually fits with the taste of today very well. And which the taste of today is precision, utter precision. Because the music schools all over the world are churning out people. 80% of them seem to be Asian these days. Yeah, and the people are so precise, are so perfect that they can play note perfectly. And you put them on CDs, which is digital, and you compare a CD of Hilary Hahn today, someone who can play with such precision, or Joshua Bell today, who plays with utter clarity. If you compare that to Huberman, if you're not very sophisticated, open-hearted, you know what you're listening to, you'll hear mistakes. You'll hear, is he in tune? You'll hear a lot of things that aren't quite right, which actually is the way that we remember a lot of Arthur Rubinstein's playing, who made mistakes all the time. Well, that kind of playing from the first part of the 20th century was, we say that's playing that had fingerprints. It was unique, it was nobody but Huberman and nobody but Rubinstein could have sounded that way. And that kind of artistry was celebrated then, but less so now because it wasn't perfect. So that's one reason perhaps that he's not remembered as an artist.

Why he's not remembered for his accomplishments. I don't know. I mean, I talked to people at the Israel Philharmonic for years about this. They certainly have celebrated Huberman in every performance, every programme, at the top of the programme, at the IPO, wherever they play, it says the orchestra was founded by Bronislaw Huberman. The street that the Israel Philharmonic is on, Bronfman Hall, it's called in Tel Aviv, the streets that go on, two sides of it are Toscanini Street and Huberman Street. But if you ask any cab driver in Tel Aviv, or 90% of the people, maybe 95% of the people in Tel Aviv, had they ever heard of Bronislaw Huberman, they'll say, "Well, there's a street, Huberman Street," but they never heard of Huberman. They don't know who he is. Which goes to speak about, you know, what's happening to classical music in the world in certain areas also.

Q: Just a very quick question. Somebody asks, who's playing violin during the credits?

A: That is Joshua Bell playing the Franck Violin Sonata with Jeremy Denk. And I filmed them actually playing the concert in Vienna. We went there to film them to play the concert in Vienna. And we ended up not using the picture. We just used that. 'Cause we had Josh playing the Brahms Violin Concerto at the end, and that was his sort of last thing. But it was Josh and Brian playing the Franck about as well as it could be played. There's another version of the Franck that's also played just magnificently in the film. And that's being played by my wife, if I can say, Maria Bachmannn, who's a fantastic violinist. So there's a lot of Franck there. And it's interesting also, the Franck connection, because when Huberman's violin was stolen in Carnegie Hall in 1936, he was on stage playing the Franck Violin Sonata with another violin.

Q: Ah-hah. Wow. By the way, a bunch of questions about that. So one was how and where was the lost violin found?

A: Ah, well, the lost violin, everyone asked that question, and probably if I was to make the film again, I would have a little more information at the end. The reason I didn't have more information about it is because the story is so juicy and so delicious that I wanted all the emotion of the end of the film to be featured. I didn't want to-

- Right. Yeah.

- And do more about it. But in fact, what happened was that the man who stole it had just snuck in and just got lucky. And he got in backstage and he was able to find his way to the greenroom, which is where the artists get dressed. And Huberman left his double violin case there, and Ida didn't close the door and lock the door when she was standing in the wings. So the door was open. So this man just walked in, saw the case, opened it, grabbed the violin, stuck it in his coat, and walked out of Carnegie Hall. And he had the violin for years. He was a gig kind of, you know, amateur/professional studio musician. And he put a shoe polish on it so no one would recognise it or see what it was. Never took it to have it serviced 'cause any dealer would know it was a Stradivarius, and he played it for 50 years. And on his deathbed, he told his wife that she should bring that violin back and to look under the velvet in his case to find out about the violin. And he had all the articles about the stolen violin. So she brought it back to the world, and ultimately Josh Bell bought it.

- Ah. Amazing.

- There's much more to the story. It's a fascinating story. And films have been made about that story. And if you were interested in learning about it, on Josh Bell's website, which is just joshuabell.com, I think, he goes in, there's a whole, you know, thing you can read about the violin, the lost violin.

Q: How many current, you may not know this, but how many current musicians in the IPHO are descendants of the original musicians?

A: There was just one at the time, which... Well, that's not quite true. If you consider the descendants being taught by previous musicians, there's the french horn lady, there's the bass player whose grandfather came, but I think he was the only one that's actually descended. I've forgotten, I just lost his name, who was the bass player. He's retired now. But Cerovich in Poland, as you recall, was Huberman's guide to get the Bernsteins to come from Budapest. And they're all the Bernstein brothers. And Cerovich was his guide and his friend who was also in the orchestra. Cerovich's son and grandson were members of the orchestra, and that's it. The IPO now is... I don't know what the percentage is. Zubin Mehta told me it was high. The number of Russian immigrants who were musicians is very high in the orchestra. And it's a very different

sounding orchestra today than it was then. It was great then, it was very strong on strings, but very emotional and very rich in sort of Central European feeling and Berlin Philharmonic feeling. And, you know, the orchestras of Central Europe in the '30s, you know, built by, you know, William Steinberg in Hamburg and by Fürtwangler, who's mentioned in the film, just like with Toscanini, one of the great, great conductors of the century. It was a different sound. And today, it's a shinier, brassier sound of perfection. And so it's a different orchestra.

Q: So one of the questions, which actually I've wondered when I saw the film, quite well into the movie, you know, we hear Huberman is flipped out. He's very anxious because he doesn't have enough musicians.

- Right.

A: So is this because he was just so discerning and... Because there are tonnes of Jewish musicians who I'm sure wanted to get out of Europe, and I'm sure they're very good.

- Well, you've heard the expression, as we all have, in our reading and our history of it will blow over. As Leon Botstein says in the film, if you were singer, the head of the Kulturbund, who was a doctor and had this middle class and upper middle class life and intellectual life, and he thought he could control the SS. And if you were a person who had a life and a legacy and generations of people had lived in Vienna, and your family had lived in Berlin as a Jew, but as a business person or as an artist, but you lived there, that was your home. And we've always had antisemitism of one level or another. So there was always the pendulum. So looking at history, in hindsight is so dangerous.

- So you're saying he made invitations, but they wouldn't come.

- Exactly. They felt that they didn't want to go to Palestine, the desert. Who would want go to the desert? They were sophisticated, they went to theatre, they had all their friends. You go to... what kind of life is there with camels in the-

- Yeah, I get it. Yeah, I get it.

- They wouldn't go, until 1936, when it had gotten worse and worse and worse and they were all fired and they couldn't get work, and they were desperate, and then it was easier.

Q: Got it. Is there a recording of the first concert?

A: Yeah, no, I looked all over the world for that recording. And the people in charge of music recording at the IPO, the Israel Phil said, "Oh, we'll find it for you, don't worry." They couldn't find it.

- [Jonathan] Huh. Even though it was on the radio all over the world through RCA, no one could

find it, don't know if it was recorded. And the recording of the Brahms 2nd that we use in the film, in a way it was lucky that we didn't find it because it would've sounded so degraded. And it's a very, very long scene, and I think it would've been distracting. So the recording we used was from a 1955 recording of the Brahms 2nd with Toscanini conducting the NBC Orchestra. So it was close, but it wasn't the same.

Q: Got it. What was the programme of the first concert?

- You're testing me. All right.

- I'm not testing you, Melvin is.

- Well, it's actually was listed in the film. I would direct you to-

- I saw that. Yeah, yeah, yeah, by the way, I saw that.

A: Yeah, Brahms 2nd, Mendelssohn, a piece of Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn was there because-

- Oh, it was the Unfinished, and it was the Unfinished Symphony. I saw that.

- Schubert Unfinished symphony, thank you. All right. The Mendelssohn was there, by the way, because when Hitler banned all Jewish composers, like Mendelssohn, Toscanini immediately added Mendelssohn to the programme.

- Right. So, you know what? There are many more questions. Some of them are more... By the way, Josh, there's some wonderful things, many compliments in the questions, which I should probably leave for you to answer. But I feel like you've really done a beautiful job of telling the story, both in the film itself and in this conversation. So my sense is now would probably be a good time to bring this to a close, but you might want to look at the questions and answers just because of the nice things that people are saying about you and the film too in those.

- Well, I can read those another time. Thank you. But I don't know. I don't want to take everybody's time while I read the...

Q: How many current musicians in the IPO are descendants?

A: We got that one.

Q: What title on Netflix, please?

A: Oh, the title of the film on Netflix is called "To Be of Service." Thank you for asking. That's my latest production.

One technical correction, mayor of Tel Aviv time of the first concert was Rokach. Dizengoff had died three months earlier. You are absolutely right, Alan L. And every time the film runs, I just, it's sort of a little stab in the heart. It's a mistake that says that Dizengoff was at the concert. He had died before the concert. But Dizengoff, the mayor of Tel Aviv, was hugely influential and supportive of Huberman's efforts in getting the hall, in building the hall, in finding money for him. And there was some writing somewhere about who was at the first concert, and it was just, it just slipped through. But you're right. So thank you for catching that.

Q: Zubin Mehta was invited to become the... I think Zubin Mehta, the question is when did Zubin take over the orchestra?

A: I think it was 19, I want to say '67, but I'm not quite sure. You certainly could Google that and find out. He came first as... Of course Zubin is not Jewish. You know, everybody knows, he's Indian. But he came as a visiting conductor and he had been conducting all over the world. He was this fantastically acknowledged young wunderkind, conducting Vienna, conducting Los Angeles, conducting New York Philharmonic in his 20s, I think, late 20s. And then he started coming to Tel Aviv and fell madly in love with the orchestra, with the heart of Israel, with people of Israel. And they fell in love with him. And they invited him to be the first, it's quite interesting, the first music director. There had never been a music director of the Israel Philharmonic. They always had guest conductors until then. So it was interesting.

Q: How many talented people perished in the Holocaust?

A: So many millions and millions. Let's see.

Q: Why were actors used in the making of the movie when so much of the message were carried by the musicians and their descendants?

A: Well, that's interesting. The question is, why are there actors in the film? It was a choice, it was a stylistic choice. Had I wanted to not do recreation, and every time you see Huberman or Ida Ibbeken or the musicians in the beginning and the end of the film, those of course are actors. And frankly, I just wanted to not have to rely on archival footage and interviews for the entire movie. It's a style of filmmaking. I could have done it. It would've been a more of a PBS kind of production. Many people make films that way. I really just wanted to, you know, make it more accessible by using actors. And it was just a choice. Nothing, no reason other than that.

- By the way, I think it was a really good choice.

- Oh, thank you.

- It makes the film more dramatic. It humanises it in another way.

Q: Yeah. Thanks. Here's an interesting question. Barbara Miller asks, how was it possible that

Huberman was able to travel as extensively as he did despite the Nazis' control in the situation in Europe?

A: It's a good question. It reminds me of the story of Toscanini. When Toscanini conducted the opening of the Bologna Orchestra in 1934, 1935. And Mussolini insisted that he play the fascist anthem, the anthem of his right wing Italy, and he refused. He said, "I'm only going to play the Italian national anthem." And he says, "If you do, you'll be in trouble." So he came to Bologna. It was the first night and the front row was filled with Mussolini's, you know, henchman. And he got up and he instantly played the Italian national anthem and went right into the opera. And all of Mussolini's guys got up and left. And so the next night, he got out of his hotel, left his hotel to come to the concert hall, and he was grabbed by a bunch of henchmen and he was beaten up, enough so that he had to go to the hospital. And he dragged himself out of the hospital to get to the hall to perform again that night. And once again, played the Italian national anthem instead of staying in the hospital and didn't play the fascist anthem. So they pulled his passport and they threatened him.

Well, so imagine this is Toscanini, greatest conductor in the world. The second that happened, the media all over the world was wild. And Mussolini within minutes rescinded that, gave him back his passport. That's what would've happened had Huberman been touched anywhere in Europe, because he was... And this is before the war. Once the war started, all bets would've been off and they would've taken him. But before the war, it was still a country. They had ambassadors, they had relations with other countries around the world. Let's not forget that even though the SS was behaving in the way they were within Germany and then Austria after the Anschluss, they still related to the world, and the world had people there. So they couldn't take celebrities like that. They couldn't take such famous people and do with them as they would. So he had freedom. He could have gone anywhere and he could have performed in Germany, which is where most of his income came, but he didn't. And so that's the reason. Good question.

Wendy, I see you coming back. Does that mean we're out of time? I should stop answering questions?

- [Wendy] No, Josh, if you've got the time. How much longer do you have?

- Oh, I'm having fun.

- So, hey, Josh, unfortunately I have to go.

- Okay, so let's close.

- [Wendy] So-

- You can stay on, Josh, and answer the questions of the audience versus my questions, but I

unfortunately have to go.

- Jonathan. Jonathan. So why don't I say to Jonathan, Jonathan, thank you very, very much for joining us. It was a great pleasure having you on Lockdown today. And Josh, if you'd like to continue, if you are enjoying yourself, and if you'd like to continue for another five or 10 minutes answering questions, it'll be a great pleasure for us.

- The questions just keep piling in, so I think it'd be great, Josh.

- [Josh] I'll be happy to. Sure.

- Are you happy to do that?

- And maybe, Wendy, you have some questions, but, Jonathan, thank you very much.

- You're welcome. I'll talk to you later, bye. Great to see you all.

- Thank you, Jonathan. And I look forward to meeting you when I'm back in New York.

- [Jonathan] Me too. me too.

- Thank you so much. Thanks. Bye-bye. So Josh, why don't we go on for another 10 minutes? 'Cause I don't want to take up too much of your time, because I see there are a lot of very interesting questions, and then I'll wrap up.

- Okay. Do you have any questions, or should I just go through and read them?

- Go through the questions. Yeah.

- Okay. All right. I saw a film about the return of the Huberman violin. Was it on YouTube? That documentary about the return of the violin was made in Tel Aviv and was on Israeli television. And I think it's been shown around the world. I don't remember what it was called, but you could certainly Google and find it.

Oh, Tali Gottlieb was on. She says, the man whose name I forgot who was in fact descended from Cerovich, whose name was Gabby Vole. Hi, Tali, how are you? And he was lovely with us. He's now retired from the orchestra.

Q: Was this orchestra one of the first to include women?

A: Good question. I don't know. I really don't know. I certainly don't think the Berlin Philharmonic or the big orchestras of Europe in 1936 had women.

Dorit Straus is on. Oh, she's saying Dorit Straus, who I mentioned before, is on. She's mentioning Gabby Vole as well.

Q: Manach Rothstein asks, where is he... Where is Huberman buried?

A: He was buried in Switzerland on his estate.

Q: What happened to Toscanini during World War II?

A: Good question. I know that when he left Italy after Mussolini gave him back his passport, he vowed he would not return to Italy or Europe until after the war, until the fascists and until Mussolini and Hitler were gone. And so he probably stayed in America is my guess, but I don't know. Let's see.

Q: Did all the orchestra musicians who immigrated to Palestine stay there after the war, or did some leave for other countries?

A: That's a good question. I suspect, I think they said that between 1936 and 1938, the two times that Toscanini played, conducted the orchestra, there were 75 or 80% of the original players still there. So some left, other people came into the orchestra, but I don't have those statistics.

Let's see. I'm sorry, I'm just scanning these questions. Thank you for these wonderful questions and this tremendous support.

You know, Eleanor says, "The music felt so authentic, did not realise the first concert was not available." And no, it certainly wasn't available. You know, the one piece of original archival music that's in the film that's very touching to me, and Itzhak Perlman told me the same when he came to a screening with Zubin in New York, he told me afterwards that he cried when Hatikvah came on in the 1948 recording of Hatikvah. That's an original recording from that moment when Ben-Gurion said, "Now the Palestine Symphony will play the national anthem of Israel, Hatikvah, for the first time as the Israel Philharmonic." And Ben-Gurion, who had been so resistant of bringing musicians, fancy musicians, as he called them, from Central Europe to Palestine, he's a politician, in 1948, he took full credit, and he's personally changed the name from the Palestine Symphony to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. But he could be forgiven. He was building Israel.

Q: What was the name of the book that was mentioned?

A: The book that I wrote with another writer is called the same as the film. It's called "Orchestra of Exiles." It's in print if you'd like to check it out. It's interesting trying to take this film and doing a book version of it. Because of course, we researched this movie for a year, and there's an archive in Tel Aviv called the Huberman Library, or Huberman Archive in the Felicja Blumental

Centre in Tel Aviv. And in there is a small room in the centre, which is a performance hall of a well-known person from bygone era, Felicja Blumental, who was a pianist, I think. There is a small room that's the library. And in that room, we found all of the letters, all of the articles, everything that Ida Ibbeken had created that was left to the library on her death. And we went in and it was not particularly well-organized, only because it wasn't well-funded.

The staff, I think there were one or two people, they just, they were beloved of... They loved this material so much and were so sorry that they couldn't have the staff and the funding to have it better organised. So the result was for us, we had to hire people who spoke various languages, interns, because the letters Huberman spoke Polish, he spoke French, he spoke English, and he spoke German. So he wrote to different people in different languages. So every word that you hear the character of Huberman say in the film came from either an article about him and there was a quote from him, or from a letter that he had written. Every word of every character in the different accents came from a letter, either to or from Huberman. So that work, going through that library was quite a process, and that's why it took a year. So anyway, let's go on.

My cousin, Norbert Brainin, bought the violin in 1986. Yes, he did. He sold it to Josh Bell in 2000. I said that the violin made its way to Josh Bell after it was brought back to the world, but Norbert Brainin did indeed buy it first. He was the principal violinist of the, I think the Amadeus Quartet.

Thank you Robert Brainin, yes, for clarifying. There's a lot of information that has gone by the wayside. But I think that that, you know, is plenty.

And, you know, if any of you have questions, you can find me. There's a website, orchestraofexiles.com, and you could find me. And feel free to be in touch. And thank you all for coming. It's just a great honour to have... You know, I'm seeing 3,000 people registered for this, and this is certainly the largest audience I've ever had, and it's just been a pleasure.

- Well, Josh, I have to say, that was really such a special discussion. It's extraordinary privilege for us to bring this incredible story to our community. And since I started Lockdown University almost a year ago, I wanted to offer those around the world a community, despite the isolation and the lockdown. Tonight was a true manifestation of this. 3,000 people across four continents coming together to hear from two dear friends about such an important story, and is really such a strange coincidence that there were 3,000 people who attended the first performance of the Philharmonic Orchestra. So I thought that was actually extraordinary myself.

The challenges and truly tortuous decisions faced by Bronislaw Huberman as he fought to save musicians from the Nazis and from the ashes create the most beautiful legacy of the Israeli Philharmonic. And that was really magically brought to life by you, Josh. Really, it's an extraordinary documentary. I really, really want to thank you very, very much for today, for, you know, giving us the opportunity to show this amazing documentary. And thank you for just becoming part of our community. And I too look forward to getting together when we are back in

New York.

- I do too. Thank you very much.

- Thank you very, very much. And I would just want to say to all our participants, thank you very much for joining us today. And on the 11th of April, one of our participants is actually, is organising a first year anniversary for Lockdown University. So I hope that you will all pop that in your diary, and hope to see you, if not before then, on the 11th. Josh, thanks a million.

- Thank you.

- For sending out your details, you know, for all those people, for your friends who weren't able to attend today, this documentary can be found... Is it on Amazon Prime?

- Yes, it's on Amazon Prime, but not in every country. So be in touch with me if you can't find it, and we'll see if we can figure out a way to get you something. But Amazon Prime and wherever we've made a deal there, I guess.

- Okay, thank you. And where will they find you, Josh?

- Oh, well, if you go to the orchestraofexiles.com, on the website, you'll find a way to contact, you'll find my email address. Or you can go to the present film, tobeofservice.com, the one on Netflix. And there's contact information there, and you can learn about the latest film there.

- Okay, fantastic. So thank you. So for all of us here in LA and on the West Coast, enjoy the rest of the day. For you in New York as well, have a good afternoon. And for Israel and South Africa and the rest of the world, good night. Thanks, Josh. Bye-bye, everyone.

- [Josh] Bye-bye.