



Trude Levi

"We were walked to Auschwitz. Suddenly, I thought I'm hallucinating because I heard Eine Kleine Nachtmusik from Mozart."

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, Dec. 7, 1995, in London, UK (VHA Code: 7093).

Trude Levi was born Gertrude Mosonyi in 1924. She was a German speaking Jewish woman who lived in Hungary before World War II. She worked as a kindergarten teacher. Hungary was an ally of Nazi Germany. Although suffering persecution, for a long time, Jews were still relatively safe there. This changed in 1944, when the German army invaded Hungary. At this time, Trude was arrested by the Nazis for being Jewish. She was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp together with her mother. Trude's mother was so weak that she was killed immediately. The Nazis decided that Trude was strong enough to work, so she was not killed, but sent to a different concentration camp in Germany. There she had to endure extreme conditions and was almost shot. She survived.

After the Holocaust, Trude emigrated to London. She worked at the Wiener Library, one of the world's leading research institutes about the Holocaust. After retiring, she became a frequent speaker at schools in the United Kingdom and Germany, telling students about her experiences during the Holocaust. She died in 2012.

If you want to learn more about Trude Levi, you can read her books:

- *A Cat Called Adolf*
- *Did You Ever Meet Hitler, Miss? A Holocaust Survivor Talks to Young People*

Or you can watch a talk she gave to students in 2003: www.holocaust.org.uk/pages/category/trude

Discuss with your group and write answers to each question. Then decide who will present the group's results to the whole class:

- What is the survivor's background?
- What is the survivor's opinion about hearing music in Auschwitz?
- What does the survivor's reaction tell you about the role music can play in extremely difficult times?



Renée Danziger

“They had such nerve. We were greeted by a band.”

Source: Interview by the Holocaust Museum Houston. No date.

Renée Danziger was born Renée Rosenberg in 1927 in Sighet, Transylvania, which today is in Romania. She led a carefree childhood until the 1940s. Then, her father lost his business and migrated the United States. Soon after, the Nazis occupied her country. In early 1944, Renée, her family and the other Jews of her town were marched to the train station and deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Upon arrival, Renée's mother and two youngest sisters were immediately sent to the gas chambers and her brother was killed as well. Renée felt that music kept her alive in the camps as she and other prisoners hummed songs to maintain hope. Renée was later transported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp where she was liberated by the Allies in May 1945.

Renée was brought to New York by her father in 1946 and later moved to Houston, Texas. She became a supporter of the arts – especially orchestras. She died in 2013.

If you want to learn more about Renée Danziger you can read a children's book written by her daughter and niece:

- *Music of the Butterfly: A Story of Hope*

Or you can watch a video interview with her: <https://hnh.org/survivors/renee-danziger/>

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**Herman Haller**

“There was a band playing. The finest musicians in the world. These were all prisoners from all over occupied Europe.”

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive on July 21, 1995, in New York (VHA Code: 4189).

Herman Haller was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1924. His life changed in 1933, when the Nazis came to power. Almost immediately, people started boycotting his parents’ shop, just because the family was Jewish. In the early 1930s, his parents divorced. Herman’s father emigrated to Palestine, and Herman stayed behind in Berlin with his mother. In 1938, Herman’s mother sent him to Belgium to keep him safe from Nazi persecution of Jews. He initially lived with an uncle and later lived with a foster family. When the German Army invaded Belgium in 1940, Herman had to leave the foster family. The 16-year-old did not have papers, so he was always afraid of being arrested. In 1942, with the danger increasing, Herman fled to France. There his luck ran out, and he was arrested by the Nazis and then deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

At Auschwitz, Herman was forced to work constructing a factory. After three years, he was forced to take part in a so-called death march. Together with more than 50,000 other prisoners, he was marched on foot from Auschwitz in Poland towards Western Europe. In April 1945, he was liberated by American soldiers.

In 1947, Herman Haller moved to New Jersey. In later years, he became a frequent speaker at schools, telling students about the Holocaust. As of 2025, he was still living.

If you want to learn more about Herman Haller, you can read an interactive story about him here: www.storiesofnamesnotnumbers.org/survivors-data/herman-haller

Or you can watch a video interview with him: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ss2pCuQYLAW

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Pearl Pufeles

“There was an orchestra playing. So, we thought that cannot be that bad if they have concerts here.”

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive on July 19, 1995, in Joliet, Illinois, (VHA Code: 4103).

Pearl Pufeles was born Pearl Herskovič in 1921 in Chynadiyovo, in Czechoslovakia. She had a twin sister named Helen and six older siblings. Her father worked as a tailor. In March 1944, Pearl and Helen were arrested by the Nazis, because they were Jewish, and deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In Auschwitz, the sisters were forced to handle the corpses of people the Nazis had murdered. They were also subjected to medical experiments by the infamous Nazi doctor, Josef Mengele, who was especially interested in twins. In January 1945, Pearl and Helen were forced on a so-called death march. Together with more than 50,000 other prisoners, they were marched on foot from Auschwitz in Poland towards Western Europe. Three months later, both sisters were liberated by American soldiers in Austria.

In the 1950s, Pearl emigrated to Chicago with her new husband. She became known for her skills in cake decorating and baking. She died in 2010. Helen also emigrated to the US. She lived in Indiana, and frequently talked to students about the Holocaust. She died in 2013.

If you want to learn more about Pearl Pufeles you can read this short text about her and her twin sister: https://candleholocaustmuseum.org/file_download/inline/7ce4ac2c-4459-428f-8cd1-cae1770fd5d2

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Yvette Lennon

“I say, ‘There’s an orchestra here.’ I say, ‘Who needs music here?’ I say, ‘I mean, they are crazy.’”

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive on February 12, 1995, in Plain Views (VHA Code: 979).

Yvette Lennon was born Yvette Assael in Thessaloniki in Greece in 1926. She came from a very musical family, and played accordion and piano. In 1941, the Germans occupied Greece and in 1943, they forced Yvette and her family to move to a ghetto along with other Jews. Soon after, they were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

At Auschwitz, Yvette’s parents were immediately sent to a gas chamber where they were killed. Yvette and her older siblings, Lili and Michael, survived, because they all became prisoner members of the Auschwitz orchestras. When the women’s orchestra no longer needed an accordion player, Yvette pretended to be able to play bass in order to keep her lifesaving spot. In October 1944, the orchestra was disbanded by the Nazis and Yvette was deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany. In April 1945, she was liberated there by British soldiers.

In 1946, Yvette met her husband performing in a bar for Allied soldiers. They got married and moved to London and eventually to the United States. Yvette Lennon died in 2008.

If you want to learn more about Yvette Lennon, you can read this obituary about her:
www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/yvette-assael-lennon-survived-holocaust-in-3204554.php

Or you can listen to this audio interview: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn558863>

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Barbara Fischman Traub

“There is music. That threw me. I mean, what’s going on here? It’s really enough to make you lose your sanity.”

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive on March 27, 1995, in New York (VHA Code: 4361).

Barbara Fischman Traub was born Golda Fischman in 1925 in Sighet, Transylvania, which today is in Romania. She was the youngest of four children. When the Germans invaded Romania in 1944, they forced Barbara and her family to move to a ghetto simply for being Jewish. In May 1944, the Nazis deported Barbara to the Auschwitz concentration camp.

In Auschwitz, Barbara was forced to perform difficult labor. Then in December 1944, she was sent to the Weisswasser concentration camp located in Czechoslovakia where she was forced to work in a factory. The camp was liberated by the Soviet army in 1945.

Barbara lost her parents and a brother in the Holocaust. She emigrated to the United States and studied patent law. She became very involved in Holocaust education and wrote a novel based on her experiences in Auschwitz.

If you want to learn more about Barbara Fischman Traub, you can read her novel:

- *The Matrushka Doll*

Or you can watch these short interview segments with her:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVjW1Kmfr0c>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tQ0hI-PWF8>

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Gloria Lyon

“I sometimes think of this as being very strange to have fine music play in a death factory.”

Source: Interview with the USC Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive on February 9, 1997, in San Francisco, California (VHA Code: 25639).

Gloria Lyon was born Zora Holländer in 1930 in what was then Czechoslovakia. She grew up in a sheltered Jewish home, until the region was annexed by Hungary in 1938. Hungary was an ally of Nazi Germany. Although suffering persecution, for a long time, Jews were still relatively safe there. This changed in 1944, when the German army invaded Hungary.

In May 1944, when Gloria was 14 years old, she was deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. This was the beginning of a long ordeal. She survived no less than seven different concentration camps, being shipped from camp to camp by the Nazis. Eventually, she was rescued by the Swedish Red Cross. The Swedish Red Cross was able to evacuate more than 15,000 concentration camp inmates to Sweden towards the end of World War II. In safety, Gloria learned that her family had also survived.

Gloria emigrated to the United States and in 1949 married a German-Jewish refugee in San Francisco. She suffered from life-long back because of the torture she had experienced in the different camps. Nevertheless, she became a fervent advocate of Holocaust remembrance and frequently spoke with students about her experiences during World War Two. She died in 2020.

If you want to learn more about Gloria Lyon, you can watch the long version of the interview the clip was taken from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCWuluFAkmY>

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