

Brichto Israeli Arts & Culture Concert
Sponsored by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies

Music in Theresienstadt

Concert by

Gabriel Cassagnes (piano) and Adam Leites (oboe)



Week 3
Thursday, 30 October
6 pm

Maison Française d'Oxford
2-10 Norham Road
Oxford OX2 6SE

The concert focuses on Jewish composers from Theresienstadt. This camp had a remarkable artistic significance during the war.

Please find the link for the free Eventbrite tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/oxford-centre-for-hebrew-and-jewish-studies-82417491053>

Music in Theresienstadt

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6 pm Welcome: Professor Stéphane Van Damme (Director of Maison Française) & Professor Judith Olszowy-Schlanger (President of OCHJS)

Introduction: Professor Zoë Waxman (OCHJS/ AMES)

6:15: Concert

- Ilse Weber (1903-1944): Ich wandere durch Theresienstadt/I wander through Theresidenstadt
- Viktor Ullmann (1898-1944): Piano Sonata No. 7
- Ilse Weber (1903-1944): Und der Regen rinnt/ And the Rain Falls
- Pavel Haas (1899-1944): Suite for Oboe and Piano, Op. 17
- Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953): Piano Sonata No. 6 in A major, Op. 82, 4th movement, Vivace
- Ilse Weber (1903-1944): Wiegala

7:15 pm: Closing remarks and Q&A session

Refreshments and a chance to meet the performers after the concert.

The program focuses on Jewish composers from Theresienstadt. This camp has remarkable artistic significance during the war period. It was “home” to major composers, and an orchestra was created there.

The three pieces of Ilse Weber belong to a collection of poems and songs. She wrote both in the Theresienstadt ghetto, where she served as a nurse. With their simplicity and tenderness, these melodies offered the camp’s children a moment of carefree fun in the midst of daily suffering. The pieces are scattered across the program to give a breath within the mainly grim character of the performance.

Viktor Ullmann’s last sonata was composed in Theresienstadt. This piece combines lyricism, irony and tragedy in an elaborate writing style, with influences from Scriabin and above all Prokofiev, notably in its dance rhythms and growing tension.

Pavel Haas composed his Suite one year before being deported. It has become a major piece of the oboe/piano repertoire. The Suite has a poignant character, alternately fiery and languid. As for the piano writing, it is particularly dense and refined.

Though not connected with the camps, Sergei Prokofiev seemed relevant to this programme. With its tense and tormented mood, the last movement of his Piano Sonata No. 6 conveys the chaos and anguish of a world at war.

Adam Leites (Oboe) graduated from the Mozarteum University of Salzburg in 2022. During his studies, he had the opportunity to play as principal oboe at two concerts directed by Maxim Vengerov. He played chamber music as well with Veronika Hagen and Cordelia Höfer. Since he finished his studies, Adam teaches at the Conservatoire de Niort and more recently at the

Conservatoire de Fontenay.

Adam reached the final round of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Academy in March 2022. He was invited a few months later to play with this orchestra and Klaus Mäkelä for a summer tour (Berlin Philharmonie among other venues). Adam played again in February 2024 with the RCO, directed by Riccardo Chailly.

Adam played as principal oboe at Orchestre d'Avignon (June 2024) and performs regularly with the Orchestre de Normandie (wind quintet as well). Adam played also a few times with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

Adam was invited several times to play in New York. He performed in April 2018, February 2020, May 2022, April 2024 at the French Consulate. He played at the Symphonie Space on Broadway in May 2019, and at Central Park Summerstage in July 2022 (Bastille Day). Adam also gives private concerts in the South of France and in New York.

Gabriel Cassagnes (piano) is a young French pianist admitted in 2020 to the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris in Denis Pascal's class. He was also admitted in 2024 to study composition with Yves Henry. He obtained his DNSPM in June 2023 and is currently pursuing his second-year Master's degree.

On December 5, 2020, he was invited by Philippe Cassard to play on France Musique's "Génération France Musique Le Live" program, hosted by Clément Rochefort at the Théâtre de l'alliance française in Paris.

Born in 2001 in Arizona, USA, to a Spanish mother and French father, his parents returned to France the following year to settle in the Toulouse region, where he began taking private piano lessons at the age of six. At the age of fifteen, he decided to enroll at the CRR de Toulouse, where he was admitted to Gérard Rial's class, and from which he graduated a few years later with top honors. Throughout his years of initiation, his passion for the piano grew, and it was at the age of sixteen that he affirmed his desire to pursue this path professionally, which led him to sit the entrance exam for the CNSMDP, where he was admitted at the age of nineteen.

At various piano academies and festivals, he took part in master classes with renowned pianists and pedagogues Denis Pascal, Philippe Cassard, Jean-François Heisser, Jean-Frédéric Neuburger, François-Frédéric Guy, Dmitri Alexeev, Stanislav Pocheikin, Rena Shereshevskaya and Oxana Yablonskaya.

A regular participant in piano competitions, he won first prize in 2017 at the Clés d'Or competition in the "Superior" category, and in 2018 at the Steinway Prodiges Art competition in the "Excellence" category, as well as at the Flame Competition in Paris.

He is regularly invited to play at various concerts and festivals, including the following occasions: Les Théophanies in Rieux-Minervois: two concerts in 2022 and 2023; la pochette musicale on September 10, 2023; Lunel-Viel on August 22, 2022 for the Festival "Un piano sous les arbres"; Conques on October 2, 2022: concert at the Abbaye de Conques; Honfleur in summer 2021 for the Festival de La Forge; Paris on September 12, 2021 at the Musée Guimet for the "Les pianissimes" festival; the Eglise Saint-Ephrem: more than twenty concerts between 2022 and 2025 and the Eglise Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre: five concerts between 2021 and 2024. He also plays in private concerts, notably for the Concertino website, where he has been listed since 2018 and for which he has already given a dozen concerts.

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