

# Holocaust Music Forum 2002

-- Let's think about the Holocaust through Music --

On November 9th, "Holocaust Music Forum 2002" was held by HEC and Small Hands at Kannabe Culture Hall near HEC. Having spent nearly a year for preparation, Small Hands played a very important role in both preparation and management.



Small Hands singing together with Ms. Toba Ben-Zvi in the Forum

For this forum, Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi, a survivor from Auschwitz, was invited to come to Japan to introduce her own experiences in to Japanese children. A hundred and fifty people, including many children, gathered at the forum to hear and think about the Holocaust. Since Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi is a well-known singer in Israel, the program included many songs related to the Holocaust and peace.

Prior to the event, the Small Hands investigated the facts

of the Holocaust in connection with Ms. Ben-Zvi's personal experiences. They presented on the stage what they learned about Lodz Ghetto, Auschwitz, and Death March, by describing the history and facts about themes they chose and by showing pictures with high-tech equipments.

Ms. Ben-Zvi told the children what her life was like in the ghetto and in Auschwitz and also explained how she managed to survive the time. Her story was filled with miracles, and her strong will to live, which she sustained through the time of her survival, gave strong impact on the Japanese children.

During the second part of the forum, there was a time for the audience to ask Ms. Ben-Zvi questions. A member of the Small Hands asked her what made her most happy. Her answer was that telling her own experiences to children fills her with joy.

The program was concluded with songs orchestrated by all the participants, and strong wish towards peace and mutual understanding rose within each child and adult.



Children attending the Forum

## *From the testimony of Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi*

I was in Lodz Ghetto for five years. I had my parents and a little brother, but my mother died in the ghetto in 1942. I had to work at the ghetto from the age of eight. The only food we were given were a cup of soup and a small bread.

In July 1944, the ghetto was liquidated, and everyday hundreds of people were sent to Auschwitz by cattle cars.

When I arrived at Auschwitz, I was separated from my father and my brother. I have never seen them since then. Soon after arriving at Auschwitz, there was a call for 50 girls to work at another place, and instinctively applied to join the work thinking that I may be able to live by joining the group. I was taken to a town called Guben in Germany, and worked at a factory which was making parts for airplanes.

I worked at Guben till January 1945, and when the Russian army came close, we were forced to walk 15 to 20 kilometers a day in the cold weather. It was the Death March. One morning, I hid in the straws instead of lining up in the cue. I tried to ask help from the Polish workers, but finally I was imprisoned at a police station. Since then, I was taken to camps of Potzdam, Hannover, Celle, and at last I was liberated at Bergen Belzen by the British Army.

My life was full of miracles, and the strong will to live and hope kept me living. I lost most of my family during the Holocaust, and I began my new life by coming to Israel.



Ms. Tova Ben-Zvi

## *Small Hands Grafting the Rose of Anne Frank*

On January 25th, 2003, the Small Hands grafted the Rose of Anne Frank to present to organizations, which promote peace studies through the Rose. Small Hands have been grafting roses since 1999, and this time university students from Tokyo and teachers from Kyushu (Southern part of Japan) joined the work. In one day, one hundred and forty stocks of field roses were prepared, and the cuttings of the Souvenir d'Anne Frank were grafted by the participants under the guidance of members of the Rose Association of Fukuyama.

Of the participants, ten members from Small Hands were from age 8 to 15. Some of them had already grafted the roses several times and have been raising them for presentation.

Eight students and Reverend Kanai of Meiji Gakuin University flew all the way from Tokyo, with the desire of spreading the Rose of Anne Frank to schools affiliated to the university.

Four teachers from Grace Nursery School in Oita also joined to graft the roses for themselves to show them to their children.

It was great pleasure for HEC and the Small Hands to have so many companies to spread the peace message by grafting the roses.



Rose grafting in HEC

## *Small Hands preparing for Study Trip to US*

Fifteen members of the Small Hands are now preparing for a study trip to USA. In November 2000, HEC and the Small Hands welcomed a delegation from San Diego, through the Millennium Peace Project, which included a student representative and Dr. John Stoessinger, a Sugihara survivor. The Millennium Peace Project and the Small Hands signed the "Millennium Peace Declaration of Interdependence" and started to exchange activities.



Fifteen members of the Small Hands preparing for the trip to US.

As part of the exchange, a plan of the Small Hands visiting San Diego for a study trip surfaced from both sides.

The Small Hands members who wanted to take part in the trip submitted applications to HEC with a report about their own activities along with an essay on their wishes and ideas towards their visit to the USA. They also underwent interviews with the HEC staffs.



Practicing the dance of "Sakura"

The Small Hands delegation members, who range in age from 12 to 18, started preparations for the trip in October last year and have gathered almost every week. They are now preparing for songs in Yiddish, Hebrew, Japanese and English, and to perform a Japanese dance, "Sakura (Cherry Blossoms). They are also making efforts for presentations in English on the Holocaust Education Center in Fukuyama, their own activities as the Small Hands, and Chiune Sugihara, the late Japanese diplomat, who saved 6,000 Jewish lives by issuing Japanese transit visas by his own decision.

The children are looking forward to meeting young people in the USA and exchange ideas about the Holocaust and peace.

### NEWSLETTER

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