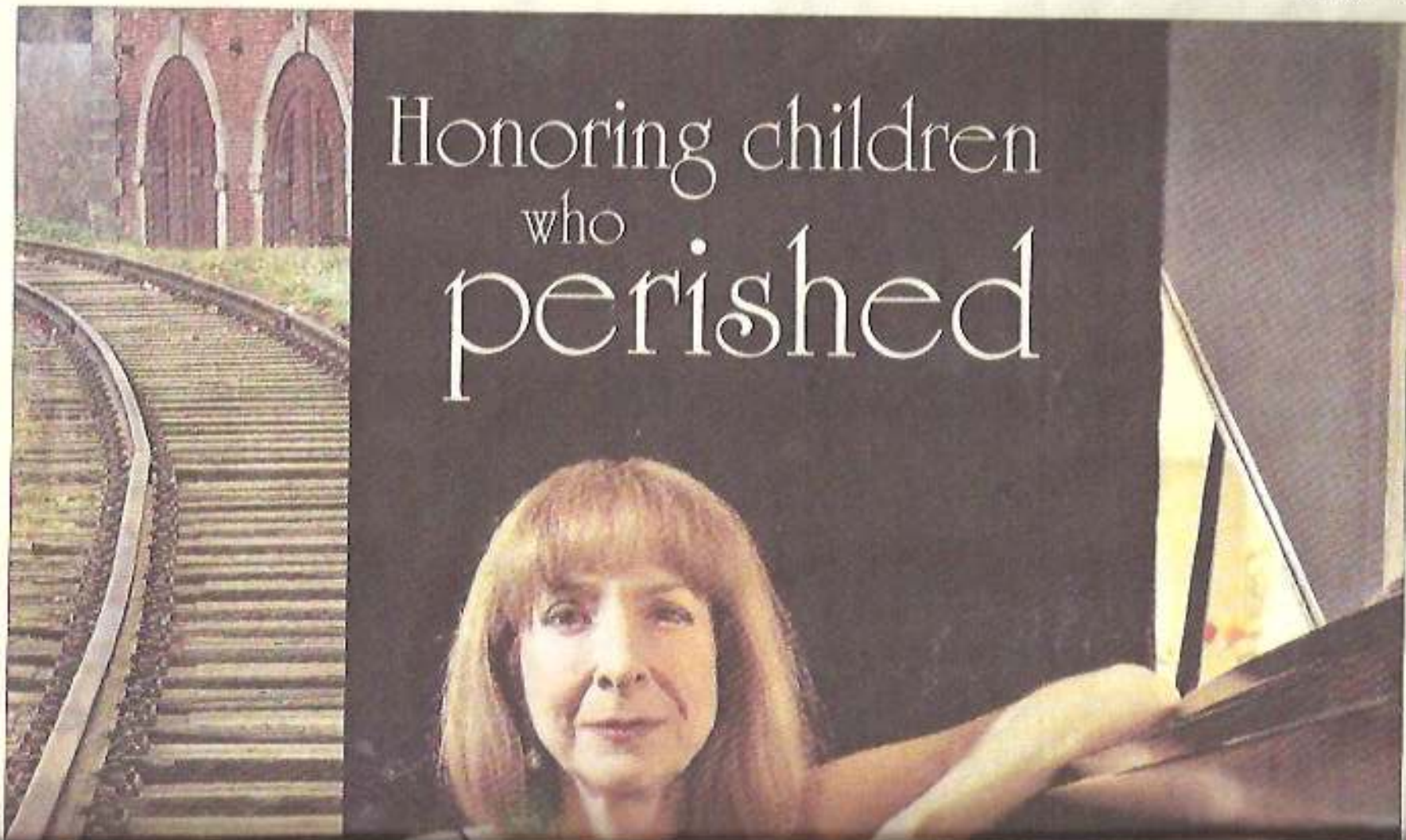


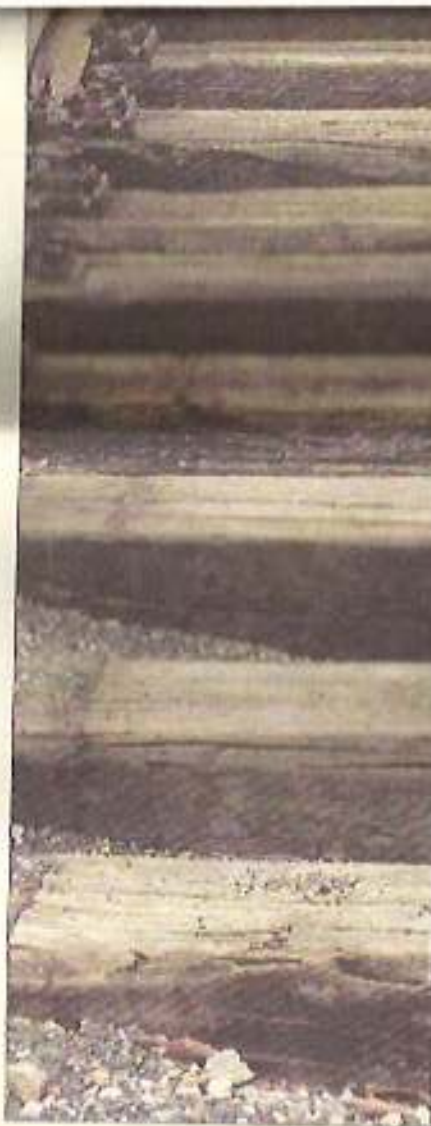
# *The Rhode Islander*

Journal | [providencejournal.com](http://providencejournal.com)

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Sunday, March 18, 2012





KRT

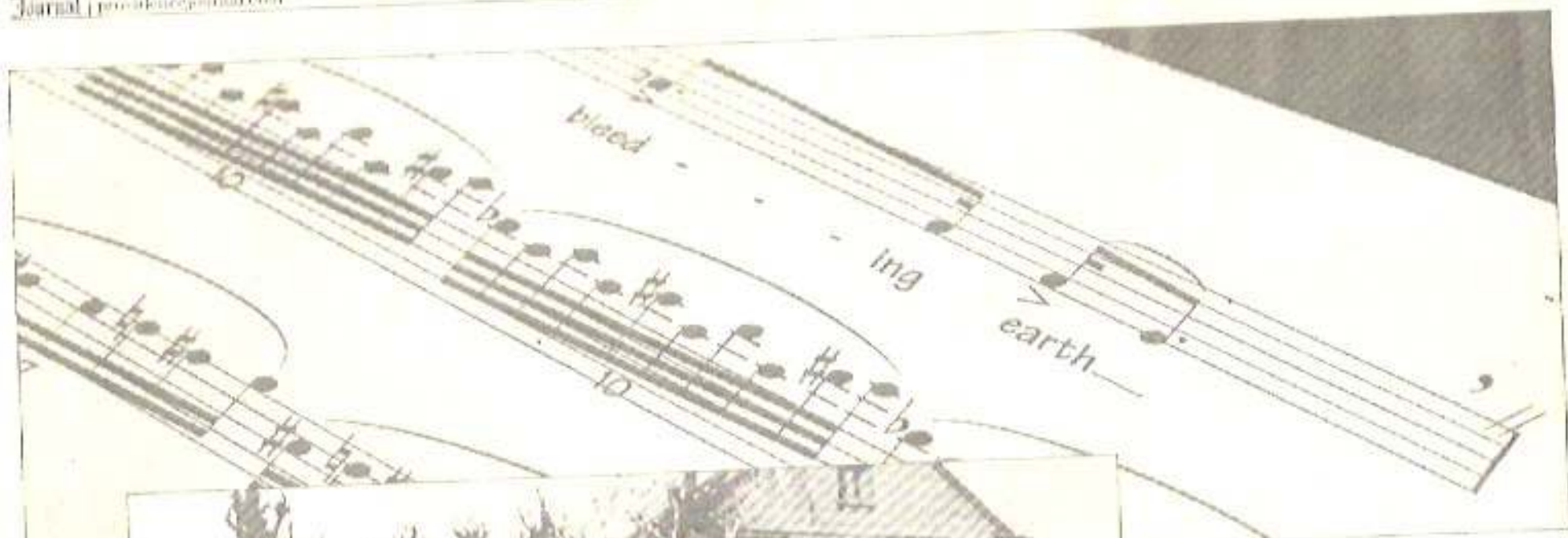
**Train tracks are preserved** as part of a memorial at Terezin, in the Czech Republic, to the Jews imprisoned there during World War II. Stillman wrote a series of songs, "Phoenix from the Ashes," to honor the children held there.

Pianist Judith  
Lynn Stillman  
composes a  
musical memorial  
based on words  
of Holocaust  
victims

Page G5

Who follow the rules about carrying out...  
It can be tough for relatives to know the...  
...of about half of the 76 planes.

...of about half of the 76 planes.  
...of about half of the 76 planes.  
...of about half of the 76 planes.



**A photographer credited as Vasicok** took this photo of Terezin that is of the Jewish Museum in Prague. It was taken illegally since the Nazis forbade photographs of the concentration camp where Czech Jews were imprisoned before being sent to Auschwitz or other death camps.



# RIC pianist creates tribute in song to young artists of Nazi camp

By CHANNING GRAY  
JOURNAL ARTS WRITER

It was in the summer of 1942 when 12-year-old Sidney Taussig and his family were rounded up by Nazi storm troopers, herded onto a cattle train, 50 to a car, and taken about 40 miles from their home in Prague to the Terezin concentration camp.

There, Taussig was involved in the production of a secret magazine that published poems, stories and artwork by teenage boys who put their lives at risk to document their daily struggle to survive. And to ensure that the world would learn of their fate, he buried some 800 pages of the manuscript. After the camp was liberated, he was able to recover the pages.

Now, almost 70 years later, Rhode Island College pianist Judith Lynn Stillman has set some of the poems from the buried magazine to music. The songs will receive their premiere Wednesday at two free concerts remembering the brave children of Terezin.

Stillman came across the poems about six months ago, when she was on tour in Canada and visited the home of two Holocaust survivors.

"Instantly, I felt compelled to do something," said Stillman, an artist in residence and music professor at RIC.

She copied some of the poems by hand, and on her drive back to Rhode Island found her head swirling with melodies and words. Overwhelmed, she stopped in a small town in rural Vermont, where she found a music store that had one package of music paper left on the shelves. Sitting in the parking lot,



**"I still think about friends who perished, some of whom I spent three years with. And we all lost our youth. ... But as children we could take a lot of things."**

Sidney Taussig, who at age 12 was taken to Terezin

composed seven songs titled "Phoenix from the Ashes."

They will be performed at 1 and 7:30 p.m. at RIC's Nazarian Center, with Phillips and Stillman joining forces for a program of music by Jewish composers who were held in Nazi camps.

Taussig, who is now 82 and living in West Palm Beach, Fla., will be on hand for the event, which also includes the showing of a recent documentary featuring several Terezin survivors.

In a recent phone interview, Taussig, a retired electrical engineer, recounted the remarkable story of how he became one of the rare and fortunate survivors of Terezin, located in what is now the Czech Republic.

The camp was housed in a former military fortress and designed by the Nazis to show the world that Jewish prisoners were well treated. Plays and concerts took place there, and many artists were among the prisoners. When the Red Cross conducted an inspection of the camp, the Nazis planted roses and passed out candy to the children, candy they promptly retrieved once the inspectors left.

was on a first-name basis with his Nazi captors, was able to convince those in charge that his son was his much-needed assistant. Taussig, whose job was taking prisoners in a horse-drawn cart to the crematorium, remembers his father smearing his face and hands with soot to make it look like he was working in the shop.

His father also intervened on the behalf of his mother and sister and saved them from the gas chambers.

In the meantime, he helped with the underground magazine known as "Vedem," or "In the Lead," writing a story about the crematorium and helping type pages on an old Smith Corona typewriter that was left behind after the Nazis took over the walled fortress. When the typewriter ribbon ran out, he helped write the magazine by hand.

He recalled a 14-year-old friend who wrote some 140 poems for "Vedem."

At some point, he had the foresight to bury about 800 pages of poems and drawings so that they would be preserved for the world to see. His father put them in an empty oil can and buried it behind the blacksmith shop where



As a teenager, Helga Weissova Moskova drew this as her birthday wish. She wanted to leave Terezin and return home to Prague.

nearby river to erase all traces of the horrors conducted by the Nazis.

When the Russians liberated the camp in May 1945, Taussig unearthed the pages and took them to Prague. But for years the then-Communist government had no interest in seeing them published. It wasn't until about seven years ago that some of the poems and drawings were published in a book, "We Are Children Just the Same."

Three years after the liberation of Terezin, an uncle in New York was able to arrange for Taussig to come to the United States to study engineering. He ended up serving in the Air Force in the Korean War, then settled on Long Island, where he and his wife raised three children.

"If I look back now, I can't express how lucky I was," said Taussig, who estimated that out of the 14,000 children sent to Terezin, only 30 or 40 survived.

"I still think about friends who perished, some of whom I spent three

years with. And we all lost our youth. I

Stillman showed her efforts to Metropolitan Opera soprano Loti Phillips, a RIC graduate, and Phillips encouraged her to write more. In all, she

being shipped to the gas chambers at Auschwitz. Even Tausig was put on a transport to the notorious death camp, but his father, the camp blacksmith who

magazine, they buried the ashes of his grandmother and aunt, who were incinerated in the crematorium. Most of the prisoners' ashes were dumped in a

was working since I was 12 and didn't see my father and mother much. But as children we could take a lot of things." Among the poems Stillman picked, one talks about how a little boy will be no more when spring blossoms come. Another talks about snow concealing horrors that will be revealed when it melts.

"I wanted to honor those who perished," said Stillman, "to create a testament to the human spirit's ability to triumph over adversity."

The concert also includes music by Viktor Ullmann, the Czech composer who was sent to Terezin and later perished in the gas chambers at Auschwitz, and excerpts from John Williams' score to "Schindler's List." Also, slides will be shown of drawings by Rosemarie Koczynski, who survived two concentration camps as a young child.

"The Boys of Terezin" a documentary featuring several Terezin survivors, including Tausig, is the work of John Sharf, a seven-time recipient of the Edward R. Murrow prize for journalism and winner of 40 Emmys. It will be shown after the evening concert.

## Helping educators teach about Holocaust

Rhode Island College is one of six U.S. institutions of higher education selected by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to host the Better First Step Workshop. The event, March 22-23, is designed to prepare pre-service secondary teachers to integrate the Holocaust into their lesson plans effectively.

On Thursday, March 22, Peter Black, senior historian at the museum, will deliver keynote remarks titled, "The Nazis Among Us: The Prosecution of Perpetrators Living in the USA." The event takes place in the Student Union Ballroom from 4-6 p.m. The multi-faceted conference on teaching the Holocaust will continue Friday, March 23 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Alger Hall 50.

For information on these events, call (401) 456-9883 or visit ric.edu/pla.



This picture of Jews arriving at Terezin to be imprisoned was drawn by Helga Weissova Hoskova. Poem, stories and artwork were included in "Vedem."

Copyright © 2001  
(401) 277-7432