



Echo Eternal

13th January 2025 – Buckingham Palace
In the Presence of His Majesty The King



CORE
EDUCATION
TRUST

Inspired by survivor testimonies of the Holocaust



Echo Eternal is a commemorative arts project which uses Holocaust survivor testimony to inspire creative responses (“echoes”) from children and young people across the United Kingdom.

Every year, around Holocaust Memorial Day in January, children and young people from different backgrounds come together to create a single joint echo in the spirit of building empathy between different communities in tribute to the memory of survivors and to their families.

Echo Eternal was conceived by journalist Natasha Kaplinsky OBE with staff and students from CORE Education Trust schools in Birmingham. It is jointly funded by the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) and delivered in partnership with the National Youth Music Theatre (NYMT) whose Young Company members provide creative mentorship.

The performance at Buckingham Palace shared with His Majesty the King is in tribute to two survivors: Zigi Shipper, the first survivor to inspire an echo at the inception of the project from students of Jewellery Quarter Academy in Birmingham in 2018; and Zdenka Fantlova whose testimony is used every year to ensure that all the participating children and young people are reminded about the eternal nature of their promise to be the “safe hands” guardians of testimony. Each participant receives a replica of the tin ring which features in Zdenka’s testimony and remains a poignant symbol of her legacy. Zdenka died in 2022 aged 100 and Zigi died in 2023 aged 93. They both made huge personal contributions to Echo Eternal and to Holocaust education in general.

Wiegala by Ilse Weber (1903-1944)

Ilse Weber was an author, singer and songwriter born in former Czechoslovakia. Following the annexation of her town to the Third Reich in 1939, Weber and her family were deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto and concentration camp; she remained there until 1944 working in the children's infirmary, composing poetry and songs to keep the younger prisoners entertained. Wiegala is a lullaby.

At the beginning of 1944, when the population of the children's infirmary were to be sent East, Weber voluntarily joined the children to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where she and her son Tomáš were both murdered. Her husband Wilhelm survived the war and managed to hide his wife's poems and songs, and retrieved them in late 1945. Ilse Weber reminds us of the tragic loss of young talent, the contributions of female Jewish artists more broadly, and the importance of creativity as a form of spiritual resistance in the face of human suffering and depravity.



We Are The Light

Music by Daniel Galbreath.

Lyrics by students from Jewellery Quarter Academy, James Brindley School and Nansen Primary School.

With lyrics taken directly from echoes by three separate school projects: a secondary school; a special school and a primary school, this song has become an anthem for the Echo Eternal project. It has been performed at various Holocaust education events every year since the project began and ultimately allows for young people to express themselves as a single voice of defiance against prejudice and hatred. The song begins with the mournful sentiments of loss, grief and despair, but inspired by testimony, the composition builds to offer an emphatic declaration of what many of the survivors wished for: a better future.



Weep No More

Music by David Childs.

Lyrics adapted from “Faery Songs” by John Keats.

This song was incorporated into Echo Eternal in response to specific testimony from Zdenka who spoke movingly about her rescue from the British Army from Bergen Belsen in April 1945. Zdenka would often fight back the tears as she recalled the face of one of her rescuers “full of human feeling”. Inspired by this compassion, Zdenka dedicated her life to sharing positive messages to future generations. She like Zigi, who implored young people “not to hate”, was committed to promoting humanity as a direct response to the “dehumanization” she personally experienced and spoke about so harrowingly.

Zigi and Zdenka lived their lives not defined solely as survivors, but rather as messengers of purpose, gifting their testimony to future generations to inspire a more peaceful world.





Zigi Shipper

Zigi was born on 18th January 1930, in Łódź, Poland and attended a Jewish school. In 1940 Zigi and his grandparents were forced to move into the Łódź Ghetto.

In 1942, all children, including Zigi, were rounded up and put on lorries to be deported from the ghetto. Zigi managed to jump off the lorry and escaped back into the ghetto where he remained, working in the metal factory, until the ghetto's liquidation in 1944. When the ghetto was liquidated, all of the people from the metal factory were put onto cattle trucks and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. On arrival, they were sent to the so-called Sauna building, where they were stripped, shaved and showered. Everyone else from the ghetto had to go through a selection, where a Nazi officer decided who was fit enough to work and those who should be killed immediately. Within an hour of the selection, those from Zigi's transport who were not classed as fit for work had been murdered.

A few weeks after arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Zigi was sent to Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig. Once there, Zigi volunteered to work at a railway yard, where he was able to get more food. With the Soviets advancing, Zigi and the rest of his group were sent on a Death March, arriving in the German naval town of Neustadt. There was a British air attack, and during the chaos that followed Zigi realised that all of the Nazis had left. They were surrounded by British troops and liberated on 3rd May 1945.

Zigi finally arrived in the UK in 1947, where he married and had a family.



Zdenka Fantlova

Zdenka Fantlova was born in Czechoslovakia in 1922.

In January 1942, Zdenka and her family were deported from their home and sent to the Terezin Ghetto, where Zdenka was reunited with her boyfriend, Arno. In June 1942, knowing he was to be deported the following day, Arno made a ring out of tin which he gave to Zdenka as a symbol of their engagement. On the inside of the ring he had engraved Arno 13.6.1942.

On 17th October 1944 Zdenka, her sister Lydia and their stepmother were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. When they arrived, Zdenka hid her ring from Arno under her tongue and was able to escape detection and keep it with her.

After a short time at Auschwitz, Zdenka and Lydia was sent to Upper Silesia where she was forced to dig trenches. From there she was sent on a Death March to Gross-Rosen in Germany, and then to Mauthausen, in Austria finally Bergen-Belsen where she was liberated on 15th April 1945.

Soon after Zdenka and Lydia arrived at Bergen-Belsen there was a typhus epidemic, during which Lydia died, aged just 17. On 15th April 1945, Zdenka was liberated by the British Army. After liberation she learnt that most of her family including Arno had been murdered during the Holocaust.

Zdenka wrote a memoir, *The Tin Ring*, which told her incredible story and memorialised forever the gift she was given by her first love Arno. For many years she visited schools and other organisations, educating students about her experience in the Holocaust.

Echo Eternal



Performers:

Abigail Eduardo
Bill Stanley
Charlie Carter
Christina Fopa
Dylan Jones
Frankie Donahoe
Gracie Reynolds
Laurie Jones
Maisie Jackson
Matilda Shapland
Neveah Bennett Robinson
Poppy Houghton
Rejauni Cleghorne
Sam Carter
Shay Taroni
Sophie Rabango
Zahra Bew
Zoey Meade

Violinist:

Karolina Przasnyska

Musical Director:

Kelvin Towse

For CORE Education Trust:

Jo Tyler, CEO and Co-Founder
of Echo Eternal

For NYMT:

Chris Cumings,
Artistic Director

Presented to His Majesty the King:

Adrian Packer CBE,

Group Chief Executive of CORE Education Trust,
Chief Executive of NYMT and Co-Founder of Echo Eternal

Natasha Kaplinsky OBE,

Chair and Co-Founder of Echo Eternal

Yaashvi Warik,

Student CORE Arena Academy



Echo Eternal
CORE Education Trust
23 Langley Walk, Ladywood, Birmingham
B15 2EF

echoeternal.uk

✕ @EchoEternal112 ▶ @echoeternal1253

With thanks to:



CORE
EDUCATION
TRUST