

PERSEVERANCE



Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2022-2023 Season Suspense, Hope, and Wonder

Bringing Literature to Life!

Dear Educator or Parent,

We are pleased to bring you *Perseverance*, based on the recorded remembrances of Melvin Goldman penned by his daughter Lee Goldman Kikel, and adapted for the stage by L.E. McCullough. This deeply inspiring piece of theatre, directed by Art DeConcilliis, is a true story based on the experiences of Mr. Goldman after surviving the Lodz Ghetto and Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II and when he immigrated to Pittsburgh in 1950. *Perseverance* is brought to life through the enGAGE (Genocide Awareness Global Education) partnership between Prime Stage Theatre and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities, and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with both the literature and with the streamed theatre performance. We encourage you to use the theatrical exercises and creative thinking activities to enrich understanding of the plot themes. We hope that the Theatre Etiquette section helps encourage deeper personal connections between the performers and audience in a live theatre setting when you attend a live theatrical event.

If you have any questions about the information in this Resource Guide, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions!



Ponny Conomos Jahn, Education Coordinator
Prime Stage Theatre
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WE OFFER OUR SINCERE THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS, CORPORATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO SUPPORT OUR MISSION OF THE ENGAGE PROGRAM

Through the power of Theatre and Partnerships, Prime Stage Theatre, and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh will engage the world in education, understanding, and actions against the atrocities of genocide.

Allegheny Regional Assist District (RAD)

Jack Buncher Foundation

The Fine Foundation

The Kosciuszko Foundation, Headquarters in New York City

The Kosciuszko Foundation, Pittsburgh Chapter

National Endowments for the Arts

The Philip Chosky Charitable and Educational Foundation



OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Literacy in ACTion Program (LACT)
Student Matinees/Field Trips
Act 48 Workshops
Educational Resource Guides
Global Classroom Program
High School Drama Awards
Technical Theatre Internships
Students Together Organizing Prevention (STOP) Program



OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS

Allegheny Regional Assist District (RAD) American Eagle Outfitters
Jack Buncher Foundation Laurel Foundation
The Fine Foundation
Henry C. Frick Education Fund of the Buhl Foundation
Elsie H. Hillman Foundation
The Grable Foundation
PA Council on the Arts

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Wayne Brinda, Ed.D., Producing Artistic Director

ALL PRIME STAGE PRODUCTIONS AND RESOURCE GUIDES ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING:



English/Language Arts Standards

Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
4. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre National Standards

NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.

NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.

NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *Perseverance*

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking

CC.1.3.9-10.A: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.C: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CC.1.3.9-10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.E: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

CC.1.3.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.3.9-10.H: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently. CC.1.5.9-10.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CC.1.5.9-10.G: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

CC.1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information, or opinions.

CC.1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

CC.1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students while introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.





BEFORE YOU GO TO SEE THEATRE - PREP

An Important Message About Theatre Etiquette

It goes without saying that when most students today hear the word “theatre” they think, “oh, MOVIE theater.” And with that thought comes all of those things that we do at movie theater: eat popcorn, drink noisily from soda cups, put feet on the seat, text message—and the list goes on from there.

But live theater is just that: it’s LIVE with LIVE HUMANS who react and respond to the audience. Because of this, live theatre requires a higher level of respect between the audience and performer in order for the experience to be a positive one. As an audience member, you are a very important component of all productions.



House Rules

Please review the following “House Rules” with your students prior to attending. These could be used when preparing your students to view the performance.

- 1) Please stay with your group and wait for an usher to help you find your seat.**
- 2) Please turn all cell phones completely off before the performance. If you are texting during the performance, you will be asked to leave. (FYI, the theater will be dark, and light from your phone shines up on your face when you text. Everybody, including the actors on stage, can see you!)**
- 3) No photography or videotaping.**
- 4) Please stay in your seat until the intermission or the end of the play.**
- 5) No eating, drinking, or chewing gum during the performance.**
- 6) We encourage active listening and appropriate responses such as laughing or clapping. Please do not talk during the performance!**
- 7) Be polite and attentive. Show your appreciation by clapping. (FYI – the actors really love to see how much you enjoyed the show!)**

THINKING LIKE A CRITIC



Critics play an important role in theatre because they share their opinions about a production which they are often the first to see (called a “preview”) with the world to discuss and debate.

Prepare your students to attend the show by thinking like a critic:

(PDE Academic Standards 9.1-9.4, 1.4- 1.5)

Actor choices—How did they move and speak? Did they seem like people we know? How did they relate to other characters?

Designer choices—What design element captured your attention the most - the set, costumes, lights, or sound - and why? How did the design elements work together to support the entire production? What choices did the designers make in materials, colors, intensity, detail, etc.? What symbols were in the design elements?

Director choices—What was the style, pace, and rhythm of the play? What stage pictures helped to tell the story? How did the director unify all of the elements of the production?

Interpretation—Did the director make a statement about life in our current time? How did the characters, design, and play make you feel? What did the play mean to you? What might it mean to others?

Evaluation—Why do you suppose the playwright wrote the play? Why was the play produced now? When were moments where the storytelling was very clear? When were moments you were confused about the story? Who would enjoy the play and why?

BEFORE & AFTER Ask students to complete the **Anticipation Guide** questions before attending Prime Stage’s production of *Perseverance*. Have them review it again after the performance and compare possible changes in their perspectives.

ANTICIPATION GUIDE WITH INDIVIDUAL OR CLASSROOM QUESTIONS:

- 1) What do you know about the story of *Perseverance* before you see Prime Stage’s production?
- 2) What do you know about the Holocaust?
- 3) Where did you get your information? What do you expect to discover?
- 4) Ask your students to write a review of *Perseverance* after the performance or create a work of art that expresses their response.

WRITE A CRITIQUE OF PERSEVERANCE

<https://cnec.cusd.com/Downloads/DRAMA%20CRITIQUE%20OUTLINE%20.pdf..pdf>

DRAMA IN REAL LIFE:

Who was Melvin Goldman?

Sometimes we are able to bring to life the stories of actual people who have lived remarkable lives.

Mieczyslaw (his name in Poland) or Melvin Goldman is one such person.



Above: Melvin in Squirrel Hill, a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA

Right: Melvin and his six siblings in Łódź, Poland. 1930's. Melvin (far right) and his brother Aron (second from left) were the only two to survive Auschwitz

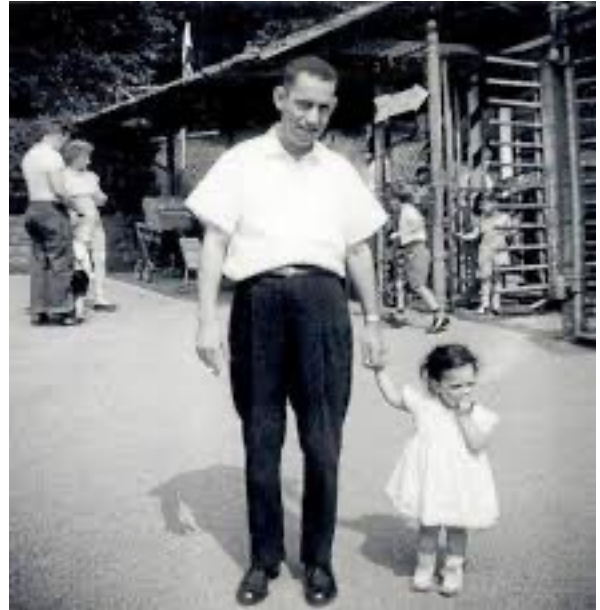


Mieczyslaw (Melvin) Goldman was born in 1923 into a prosperous Jewish family in Łódź, Poland. By his account, his childhood was nearly wonderful. He was 16 when Germany invaded Poland, and, as he put it, his youth was "cut down." His family was forced into that city's infamous ghetto. In 1944, all of them were transported to Auschwitz and Goldman never saw his parents or five of his six siblings again. He was liberated by U.S. forces and spent years as a displaced person in Europe, arrived in Ellis Island where his name was changed to Melvin before stepping off a train to Pittsburgh on Dec. 31, 1950. - Bill O'Driscoll (90.5 WESA)

Melvin Goldman founded G&S Jewelry Store at the corner of Darlington Road and Murray Avenue in the Pittsburgh neighborhood of Squirrel Hill. While customers knew Goldman in his showroom as "upbeat, positive and encouraging," he would retreat into the privacy of his back office to recount the difficulties of his past by audio taping them. His daughter, Lee Goldman Kikel, compiled the tapes into a book entitled: *"Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America."* Goldman died in 1996 at the age of 73 from "war-related" health issues.- credit: Pittsburgh Magazine, www.leekikel.com

The Keeper of the Flame:

Lee Goldman Kikel explaining the importance of Melvin's choice to share his experiences:



Lee experiencing her family heritage in Poland Lee and her father Melvin at the Pittsburgh Zoo

“This book is a tribute to my father, Melvin Goldman, and his family. On the audiocassettes he recorded in the late 1970s, while in his mid-fifties, he clearly said he wanted the story he was telling to be preserved in a book, and finally the time seemed right for me to see that through. With this book, I honor his request.

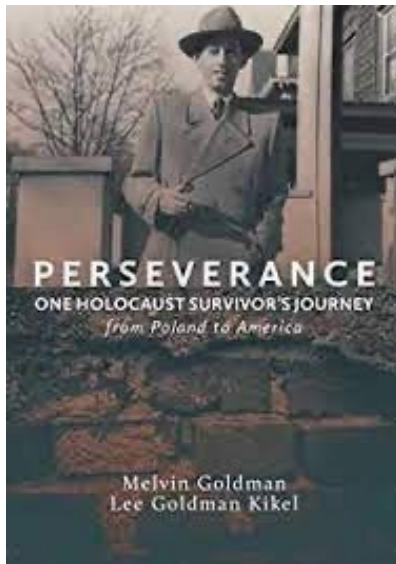
It wasn't until fairly recently that I realized how significant it is that my father recorded his story on his own initiative, and in the late 1970s. My father simply “talked to his tape recorder” in snippets, when he had free moments at his jewelry store, with no one asking questions for clarification or to shape his narrative. He worked alone. That makes his story rare among Holocaust survivor accounts in the United States. The great majority of them were collected years later than this, and in collaboration with organized institutional efforts.

Without any prompting, and at a time when the relatively fresh collective trauma of the Holocaust inspired silence rather than reflection, my father knew that he had an obligation—to his family, to himself, and to the world—to give voice to his own experiences. Reliving his most painful years through telling his story took tremendous courage, and wanting a book published took great foresight and wisdom.”

-Credit: www.leekikel.com

ESSENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTION: There are two famous sayings - “*Silence equals complicity*” and “*Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.*” Discuss these in the context of remembering the tragic consequences of the Holocaust.

FROM A MEMORY TO A BOOK TO A PLAY



The artistic evolution of an idea: Melvin Goldman's memories (and personal request) inspired his daughter, Lee Goldman Kikel, to write the book ***“Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor’s Journey from Poland to America”***. The book, in turn, helped inspire the playwright L.E. McCullough to write the staged version, ***“PERSEVERANCE”***.



JOURNAL PROMPTS or CLASSROOM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) If you were inspired to adapt a book into a play, which book would it be? Why is it inspirational to YOU?**
- 2) Why is it important for meaningful stories from the past to be preserved and shared with future generations? Can you think of other examples of important books made into plays or films (or both)?**
- 3) Select a famous piece of literature (that has not been adapted for the stage) and decide why it’s important to make it into a play. What themes are present that “speak” to you? Imagine who would play the main characters and “cast” actors who you think would tell the story best. Give reasons to support your decisions.**

Example of how a scene in a book is portrayed in a play on stage:

• PERSEVERANCE, the book:

It became a wretched life in the ghetto. I do not think anybody, nobody unless they went through this horrible mess, could understand what the ghetto really means. In the ghetto there were always Germans around with guns, armored trucks, and dogs. We heard all kinds of rumors but didn't know what was actually happening outside. From time to time, somebody smuggled in a German paper and we read it. But we couldn't make out how the war was really going. We had hopes that on the Stalingrad Front or anywhere the Germans were fighting that they would lose. We heard rumors about England coming to help. So many rumors, always talk, always with uncertainty, but always with some hope.

• PERSEVERANCE, the play:

SFX: Look for the IMAGE of the Łódź Ghetto in the performance. Look for this dialogue in the performance:

MELVIN GOLDMAN: By May, 1940 the Nazis have crowded 150,000 Jews into a neighborhood barely one square mile in size. One hundred fifty thousand people sealed off from the world, behind barbed wire fences and soldiers with machine guns. No running water, no sewer system. Before the war it was the poorest part of the city. Now it is called the Ghetto. It is where we are allowed to live. For who knows how long?

Notice how the lights change during this scene.

MELVIN GOLDMAN: I think of it as a zoo. A place where I see human beings become animals. Not only those who are beaten and tortured and slowly starved to death, but those who do the beating and torturing and starving. Savagely. Efficiently. Gleefully.

I am seventeen years old, my brother Aron is fifteen. We are put to work in a factory, making belt buckles for the German army. Our family is crowded into a broken-down building with sixty others. Each day you see Nazis committing the worst crimes against helpless people. Your mind somehow tries to make sense of what you know is madness. Your life is not ruled by reason or merit or even morality, it ... (*falters*) you ... somehow, you ... it, no, this is not, cannot — (*shouts and slams fists at the air*) yahhhhhh!!

He is bent over for several seconds, breathing in loud gasps ... he slowly calms, straightens.

MELVIN GOLDMAN: But the people fight back.
How do you respond to this moment in the play?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Take a passage from your favorite novel and write it out as if you are writing a scene for a stage play. How will convey the meaning, theme, and action? What do you have to adjust to make the scene clear for an audience?



MEET THE AUTHOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

Lee Goldman Kikel (*Author*)

Lee is the author of *Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America*. Much of Lee's childhood was spent in her parents' family business. She graduated from playing jacks on the floor to selling jewelry and merchandise to happy customers. She valued her years spent learning the jewelry business and meeting many wonderful people. Lee completed her Bachelor of Science and Master of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. She was a rehabilitation counselor at a community mental health organization for a number of years, working with adults facing mental health issues and addiction. Later, she and her husband John Kikel founded a company where they created games that were used as school supplements to educate and engage children. After completing *Perseverance* and the research behind it, Lee transitioned to speaking about her father's life. She hopes people find meaning in his story and appreciate the value of perseverance. Currently, she is a generations speaker with the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. She's excited to meet new people and learn their stories.

L.E. McCullough, Ph.D. (*Playwright*)

Lawrence is a Pittsburgh author of 52 books of fiction, non-fiction and plays, including 218 published stage works performed at schools, community centers, festivals, museums, historical societies and theatre venues in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, Africa, Asia, Polynesia and the Middle East. His commissions include plays on Galileo, journalist Ernie Pyle, 1920s jazz artist Charlie Davis, pharmacist Eli Lilly, Catholic activist Dorothy Day, Mercy Hospital founder Frances Warde, President Grover Cleveland, singer-heiress Libby Holman and, for the National Constitution Center, a play on the U.S. Constitution. The New York premiere of his *Blues for Miss Buttercup*, based on the life of blues piano legend Leroy Carr, won an Emerging Playwright Award and 2 New York Bistro Awards. He is the book writer for *Orphan Train* (lyrics-Michael Barry Greer, music-Doug Katsaros), a featured presentation of the 2013 Grand Central Terminal Centennial. He is a member of Prime Stage Theatre's Board of Directors and Teacher Advisory Council. educationalclassroomplays.com



A BRIEF CONVERSATION WITH THE DIRECTOR

DIRECTOR: Art DeConciliis

Art is honored to return for a second year with the enGAGE project, having directed last season's *The White Rose*. Art has been acting and directing with a number of Pittsburgh theater companies, including Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater, Duquesne University, The Theater Factory, Little Lake Theatre Co., and others for more than 38 years. This is his fifth production with Prime Stage, having previously directed *Karloff* and performed in both *Twelfth Night* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

Q: As a director, what kind of research was necessary for you to acquaint yourself with Melvin Goldman's story?

A: Definitely reading the source book material, as a start. It was great having the unusual opportunity to meet the author - Lee Kikel - and discuss "Perseverance: One Holocaust Survivor's Journey from Poland to America".

It was also amazing to listen to the tapes and speak with Lee not just as the author, but also as Melvin's daughter. She was able to provide a tremendous amount of insight about her family which in turn I was able to use as inspiration when directing the cast. I also found meaning in exploring the experiences that Lee provided to explore.



Q: PERSEVERANCE is being performed both live and recorded for virtual presentation.

What directorial adjustments did you need to make so that each venue worked well?

A: When Prime Stage produced THE WHITE ROSE last season at Prime Stage, we had a similar challenge. Essentially, we adjust the audiences "sight lines" when we toggle between venues. The live audience has a wider scope of view; the camera-viewing audience has a more limited frame. We tightened/loosened the set and actors' movements based on each situation.



Q: What are three things that you hope audiences will take away from viewing PERSEVERANCE?

A: First, the realization that human resiliency is powerful, as is the will to survive - regardless of how difficult circumstances may be. Second, we all have a moral imperative to do what is right and to be a custodian for good. Third, horrible things happen. The important thing to remember is that we can persevere in spite of this.

MEET THE PERSEVERANCE CAST



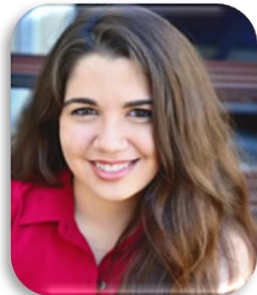
Amanda Anne Leight

Playing the roles of Balcia Goldman, Hospital Administrator, Miss Weinstein, Mildred Goldman, and Shop Customer



David Nackman

Playing the role of Melvin Goldman



Anne Rematt

Playing the roles of Lee Goldman, Mrs. Fruendt, Łódź Woman, and Ship Passenger



Matthew J. Rush

Playing the roles of Chaim Goldman, Pawel Goldhersh, Ellis Island Officer, Shop Customer, and Nazi Thug



Johnny Terreri

Will portray the roles of Aron Goldman, Łódź Man, and Ghetto Singer

RESOURCE MATERIALS

FROM THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM IN WASHINGTON, DC.

Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial

<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism>

“Antisemitism is prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, is history’s most extreme example of antisemitism. Violent antisemitism and hatred did not end with the defeat of Nazi Germany. It is important to stand up to antisemitism in all of its forms today” (US Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Resources to teach antisemitism

<https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism/explained>

Resources to teach the Holocaust

<https://www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust>

The Łódź Ghetto

<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/od-ghetto>

Displaced persons and camps

<https://www.ushmm.org/search/results/?q=displaced+person>



Ellis Island from National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/classrooms/curriculummaterials.htm>

Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty

<https://www.statueofliberty.org/ellis-island/>

Squirrel Hill neighborhood in Pittsburgh

<https://www.visitpittsburgh.com/neighborhoods/squirrel-hill/>

<https://www.uncoversquirrelhill.com/>

DID YOU KNOW: APRIL IS GENOCIDE AWARENESS MONTH?

**HOLOCAUST
CENTER OF
PITTSBURGH**

HOLOCAUST CENTER OF PITTSBURGH

MISSION: The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh connects the horrors of the Holocaust and antisemitism with injustices of today. Through education, the Holocaust Center seeks to address these injustices and empower individuals to build a more civil and humane society.

We build relationships across communities, working to end antisemitism, racism, and prejudice in our neighborhoods. We provide educational public programming for audiences of all ages, reaching tens of thousands of students, adults, and educators per year across Western and Central Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and parts of Ohio.

Interested in Learning More? Visit: www.hcofpgh.org



MISSION: Through the power of Theatre and Partnerships, Prime Stage Theatre and the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh engage the world in education, understanding, and actions against the atrocities of genocide.

More information at: www.primestage.com