**A PLAY**

NARRATOR:

The 27th of January is the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, as well as a day we should devote to the prevention of crime against humanity. It is a day which reminds us about all the victims of World War II. On this day Soviet soldiers freed the Auschwitz concentration camp. The United Nations chose this exact day as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Holocaust is the name of the systematic persecution and destruction of European Jews committed by Nazi Germany and its allies from 1933 to 1945. Through this short play we will be introduced to the lives of four young people, our peers, all from different countries. These are the stories of their lives poured into one imaginary conversation.

(Four young people are sitting at a table, dressed in forties’ clothing, each with a David’s star tied to their wrist)

NARRATOR:

In the beginning, their lives were no different than the lives of all other teenagers.

ANNE FRANK:

My name is Anne Frank. I was born on the 14th of April 1929 in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. I have got two parents and a sister, Margot, who is three years older than me. I also have relatives, aunts, uncles, a good home and a family. I go to school, know many children, and could call about 30 people my friends. A whole bunch of boys can’t wait to see me every morning. I really love writing. Maybe I’ll become a writer or a journalist one day.

PETR GINZ:

My name is Petr Ginz. I was born in 1928 in Prague, Czech Republic. I too have a family, parents, a sister, Eva, two years younger than me. I go to school, have many friends. I really love writing and drawing. Sometimes, while I’m walking home from school, I observe the path I’m walking along – insects, broken glass – and then can’t wait to get home and draw it all. I’m also interested in the natural Sciences, Geography, languages, habits and customs of various people. One day I’d like to explore, draw, write something...

LEA DEUTSCH:

My name is Lea Deutsch. I was born in 1927 in Zagreb. I have a father, a mother, who is a housewife, and a brother named Saša. I hang out with a lot of friends at school, but what I love most is acting. I’ve been going to acting classes since I was five. I’ve acted in quite a few plays. Everyone agrees that I’m a great actress, and some even go as far as to say I’m a wonderkid. My favourite is when I get to act in the Croatian National Theatre, every single time it’s like a dream come true. One day I might even reach Hollywood, who knows.

AVRAHAM KOPLOWICZ:

My name is Avraham Koplowicz. I was born in 1930 in Poland. I have got a family, friends, relatives. I still don’t know what I’m going to be in life. Every day I want to be something new. I like writing, but I don’t know whether I want to be a writer, a pilot ... or who knows what. I can’t wait to find out what I’ll become.

NARRATOR.

The lives of these four young people began to change. Hitler started to implement racial laws which restricted the Jews’ freedom, freedom of movement, speech; they excluded them from everyday life, from jobs, schools ...

ANNE FRANK:

My father was the director of a company, so we somehow fled to the Netherlands. Anti-Jewish proclamations followed one another. I had to wear a yellow star, we were forbidden from driving a car, we even had to hand over our bicycles. We had to be home by 8 o’clock and we weren’t even allowed to the pool or tennis. But the worst of all was that we weren’t allowed to go to school with other children. I couldn’t hang out with my friends anymore.

PETR GINZ:

These laws were horrible. They kicked me out of the tram once, because Jews weren’t allowed to ride the tram, so I had to walk for a really long time. It was really difficult for me that Jews were banned from entering bookstores. I ran out of paper for writing and drawing, but I couldn’t buy it. I had to use old, already used paper.

LEA DEUTSCH:

My life was destroyed when the Jews were banned from going to the theatre. I wasn’t allowed to the HNK. The last play I performed in, was on March 15th 1941, called The Chess Game – at that time my friends played the chess figures and I guided them, explaining the moves to the audience. After the prohibition, I used to sit on a bench next to the theatre for a long time, watching both my effort and my life falling apart.

AVRAHAM:

I couldn’t go to the playground with my friends anymore, I couldn’t even ride a bike because we handed them in. In the evening, my mother would call me to go from the garden into the house, because after 8 o’clock we couldn’t even sit in the garden.

NARRATOR:

Despite all the prohibitions, they found ways to keep living. They hoped one day all this would be gone. Yet, the days that came kept getting worse. In 1942 a decision was made about the “final solution” to the Jewish query.

ANNE:

In the end, my family and another one with us had to run away. We hid in a secret shelter in an attic and spent the next two years there in darkness, silence, fear, indigence. We depended on good people that brought us food, risking their lives. During the day we had to make everything dark and stay quiet so nobody would know we were there, and at night we weren’t allowed to have any lights on. Two years without sunlight, fresh air, food, clothes, not to mention friends. I wrote a diary.

PETR:

I was taken to a Jewish camp at 14. I did many things, from morning till night. Two years later I saw my little sister enter the camp. I couldn’t even talk to her because they took her to the girls’ department.

LEA:

We were still in Zagreb at the time. Family friends helped us, but we were like prisoners in our own home. We lived in fear, every day and every night.

AVRAHAM:

We were sealed in a ghetto, a special part of the city, surrounded with barbed wire. I worked as a shoemaker at the age of 12.

NARRATOR:

Many young Jews ended up alone, with no close family, brothers, sisters, parents, uncles, aunts. They lacked their peers’ company, no one to talk with about the good times before the holocaust. They still had hope – Anne and Petr wrote diaries, Lea fantasized about the day she could act again and Avraham wrote a song called A Dream – a song about freedom.

When I grow up and turn twenty,

I’ll set off to see the wonderful world.

I’ll take a seat in a bird with an engine,

Fly up, soar off into space.

I’ll fly, sail and circle

This wonderful, faraway world.

I’ll float over rivers and oceans

Skyward shall I ascend and blossom,

A cloud my sister, the wind my brother.

(After Avraham finishes with the song, he goes to the choir while the narrator talks about what happened to him.)

NARRATOR:

Avraham wrote about freedom he will never feel. He was killed in Auschwitz in 1944 when he was 14 years old.

(The narrator will, when Avraham finishes, start with Anne's fate and she will gently stand up and walk away into the choir. So will the other students. One by one.)

Anne Frank and her family were found out in their refugee and taken to a concentration camp. Anne died in camp Bergen-Belsen in March 1945, two months before the release of the Netherlands. She wasn't even 16 years old.

Petr Ginz was taken to Auschwitz in September 1944. He never saw his family again. He was killed in a gas chamber. He was 16 years old.

Lea, her mother and brother were arrested in Zagreb and sent away to the concentration camp in cattle wagons. Lea died in the wagon on the way to the camp. She was 16 years old.

Now we are going to listen to a song named Donna, Donna by Sheldon Secund and Aaron Zeitlin, which talks about suffering of the Jews, respectively about going to the concentration camp. In 12 years of Nazi persecution, almost 6 million Jews perished, of which 1.5 million were children. They were guilty because they were Jews.