

Bestemming- concerto for cello, orchestra and narrator
Narration *Sharon Farber, Richard Stellar and Beth Wernick*

In 2013, at Temple of the Arts in Beverly Hills, CA, I met a man that forever changed my life. Curt Lowens, a Holocaust survivor and a hero of the Dutch resistance, has showed me, and many others, what real courage of an individual truly means. This remarkable man has inspired me in ways that will forever affect my life and I feel blessed to have known him.

Curt Loewenstein was born on Nov. 17, 1925. He and his family were living in Berlin when their synagogue was burned down by the Nazis during Kristallnacht in 1938 and his Bar -mitzvah postponed.

Curt and his parents fled to Holland, where at the young age of 14, he joined the Dutch Resistance and saved 150 Jewish children. Then, in a courageous act of heroism and selflessness, Curt went on to rescue two downed American airmen — receiving a commendation from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

On that special evening of Yom Kippur, Rabbi Baron recounted Curt's heroism. As he told the story of how Curt saved the lives of those two pilots, Curt was asked to 'turn around', and to the stage came the children and grandchildren of one of the pilots, who came to embrace and thank the man who saved their father and grandfather. It was a moment that I will never forget; Here was a Jewish boy who, with courage and valor not parallel to his young age, changed the lives of thousands of people, who would not exist save this young boy's remarkable spirit and selflessness.

I knew that I had to set Curt's story to music, so that his voice, along with the many other fading voices of Holocaust survivors, would never be forgotten.

Bestemming (Destination in Dutch) - concerto for cello, orchestra and narrator, is the result of my love and respect for Curt. In addition, this concerto closes a certain circle for me: My Great- grandfather, Yosef Barzilai, was a Cantor in Saloniki, Greece. In 1938, my grandfather brought him to Israel for a visit and begged him to stay. Yosef declined, conveying that his community needed him. Shortly after his return, he was murdered, along with his community, by the Nazi's killing machine.

This is my gift to Yosef and to the ghosts of my extended family who perished only because they were of the Jewish faith. I believe that as artists, we have the immense privilege to create a meaningful mark that might, even in a small way, make a difference. May we one day come to realize that we are all one and learn to live together in harmony.

Curt Lowens sadly but so very significantly, left us on May 8th of this year, surrounded by those who loved him with all their hearts. Curt died on V-E Day – the day that marks Nazi Germany's surrender and the end of World War II.

He won- one boy against darkness.

Thank you, my dear friend, for the gift you have given me and for your part in celebrating and inspiring the human spirit. I miss you every day.