

BETWEEN REALITY AND MEMORY. VIOLINIST DANIEL POMERANZ

Summary

The name of Daniel Pomeranz (1904–1981) – a prominent interwar Lithuanian Jewish violinist – was brought to public attention around 1990, during the period of Lithuania’s restoration of independence, when the memory of the immense pre-World War II contribution of Jews to Lithuanian culture began to gain recognition. However, although studies of Lithuanian Jewish culture have advanced significantly in recent decades, knowledge about many musicians is still limited to a few basic facts, often unverified by historical sources. Until now, Daniel Pomeranz has been among such figures. This monograph is the first attempt to shed light on the undiscovered pages of his biography, shaped by the dramatic events of the twentieth century and the changes of seven political systems. The violinist was born and raised during the Tsarist era, while his early adolescence was marked by World War I and German occupation. Pomeranz came of age in an already independent Lithuania, then went on to study and began his career as a professional musician in Berlin during the Weimar Republic, eventually returning to independent Lithuania (Kaunas), where his musical career flourished. During the Nazi occupation, he endured the loss of many family members and imprisonment in the Kaunas ghetto, as well as several concentration camps. After the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp, Pomeranz returned to Lithuania, where he then lived and worked for nearly 30 years under the Soviet regime. Finally, in the twilight of his life, he emigrated with his wife and daughter’s family to the free Western world (Canada).

This monograph consists of two parts. The first part reveals the key factors that shaped the violinist’s creative journey within the historical and cultural context. Drawing from archival material, interwar Lithuanian press and the recollections of people who knew Pomeranz, the study reconstructs episodes from his biography. The documents found are often fragmentary, containing contradictions and inaccuracies, but all data have been included in the study as significant testimonies to the complex history of the twentieth century. This section also focuses on the fates of Pomeranz brothers and sisters, and provides essential information about other Lithuanian Jewish musicians associated with Pomeranz’s activities, as well as

their fate during World War II. The second part of the monograph consists of seven thematic interviews with Pomeranz's daughter, violinist, former Boston University professor Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich (b. 1941).

Part One. Searches and Discoveries in the Biography of Daniel Pomeranz

The Pomeranz Family and the Fate of Its Members

The violin was the most popular musical instrument among Lithuanian Jews – not only because of its expressive, passionate tone, which resonates with a wide variety of emotions, but also because of the instrument's practicality and cultural significance, as the violin was a constant presence in the daily lives of nearly every family. Abram Mausha Pomeranz (1872–1930), a butcher from the town of Čiobiškis (Širvintos District), also played the violin for his own enjoyment. On July 23 (August 4) of 1895, in Vilnius, he married Beila Golomb (1872–1934), who was from Musninkai (Širvintos District). The couple had a total of ten children (nine of whom survived), including the future violin virtuoso Daniel Pomeranz.

Due to the complex historical circumstances of the first half of the twentieth century – frequent changes in political regimes, two world wars, Nazi and Soviet occupations – and for other reasons unknown today, people often listed different dates and places of birth in various documents, altering their information depending on the specific situation. Many Jews imprisoned in ghettos and concentration camps adjusted their dates of birth, claiming to be younger or older than they actually were – this could have simultaneously increased their eligibility for forced labour and their chances of survival. This was also the case with the Pomeranz family – some family members, when providing personal information to officials of the occupying regimes, repeatedly altered their own and their relatives' years and places of birth, including their statements regarding their professions. In some cases, the personal information provided in the documents regarding the educational institutions where the individuals pursued their studies does not match. Therefore, based on the fragmentary and often contradictory biographical information found, it is not possible to coherently reconstruct the life of the Pomeranz family. According to data from 1920, a large part of the family was no longer living in Vilnius, but in Šiauliai instead. Abram Pomeranz died in Šiauliai on September 24, 1930, and Beila

died on April 24, 1934, in Kaunas, where she had stayed for the last few years after her husband's death, as four of her children were living there at the time.

The eldest son, Shneyer Pomeranz (1896–1944), followed in his father's footsteps and went into business in Kaunas, where he opened a shop selling "small items and fruit" on Laisvės Alley in 1930, working there alongside his wife, Reiza Shapira. During the Nazi occupation, the couple and their young daughter Sima were confined to the Kaunas ghetto and were killed during its liquidation in July 1944.

The biography of Itsik Pomeranz (1898–1941) is linked to various musical and educational activities: he was the cantor and choir director at the Great Synagogue in Šiauliai, later the cantor at the Vilkaviškis Synagogue, as well as a music and singing teacher at Vilkaviškis Jewish Gymnasium; he also taught music and singing for several years at Marijampolė Jewish Gymnasium. After returning to Šiauliai from Marijampolė, Itsik Pomeranz led the choir of the Šiauliai branch of "Makabi" – Lithuanian Jewish Sports and Gymnastics Union. He was murdered in Šiauliai in 1941, most likely alongside his wife and two daughters.

Yudel (Giuliano) Pomeranz (1900–1996) became a renowned Italian pianist, organist, and composer. In the 1930s, he lived and studied in Berlin, where for two years he was a member of the famous ERKLA piano quartet and performed with various ensembles across Europe and North Africa. In 1933, he fled Germany due to Nazi persecution and settled in Italy in 1934, where he changed his first name to Giuliano. In 1937, Rome, he married Italian actress Rosa Cinquetti and had two sons – Alberto and Daniel, who became well-known musicians. Yudel, a Holocaust survivor, performed as a classical pianist and organist, gave private music lessons and composed academic music, as well as music for dance, films and dramatic TV series.

No information could be found regarding the fate of Feiga Pomeranz (1902–?), who, according to records from 1924, lived in Šiauliai and was unmarried. Fania Pomeranz-Nowitzki, later Levis (1903–1967), was a pianist, who married the merchant Hilel Nowitzki and had a son, Efraim. Hilel and Efraim died in 1944 in one of the subcamps of the Dachau concentration camp, whereas Fania, like her younger sister Sara Pomeranz, later Broza (1912–2010), managed to survive the Stutthof concentration camp. After the war, the sisters lived in Rome with their brother Yudel; in 1950, they emigrated to the United States, settling in New York. Samuel Pomeranz (1908–1942), who played the drums, lived in Kaunas before the war and lost his life in a concentration camp in 1942, Estonia; as did Sara's twin sister, Sima Pomeranz (1912–1942), who had studied piano at the Kaunas Conservatoire.

*The First Two Decades of Daniel Pomeranz's Life:
Between Vilnius, Kaunas, and Šiauliai*

Research into the biographies of individuals who have experienced persecution and threats to their lives requires careful consideration of the phenomena of memory and shifting identity. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, survivors were compelled to confront traumatic memories and come to terms with the loss of family members – experiences that frequently resulted in enduring physical and psychological health problems, as well as memory impairments. Moreover, memory is shaped by context and influenced by the circumstances in which recollections are shared, as well as by the intended audience. Biographical research must therefore examine the reciprocal relationship between the individual and society within changing historical contexts. The biography of Pomeranz provides a compelling case study of the reconstruction and deconstruction of memory, demonstrating how recollections of the past are influenced by the enduring effects of trauma and by the shifting political, social, and psychological contexts of the present. The complexity of Pomeranz's life reconstruction is further compounded by the rapid succession of historical events that characterised the first half of the twentieth century, the resulting loss of documentary evidence and inaccuracies within surviving records, as well as the deliberate modification or omission of personal information through self-censorship.

Given the aforementioned context, the different versions of Pomeranz's date and place of birth, as well as his educational background preserved in surviving documents should all be regarded as equally significant, since each form a part of the violinist's personal history. The most reliable source of information regarding date and place of Pomeranz's birth is the register of Vilnius Jewish Rabbinate, according to which Daniel was born on March 2 (15), 1904, in Vilnius. A later year of birth, 1910, while retaining Vilnius as the place of birth, appears in his prisoner registration record from the Stutthof concentration camp. A different birthplace first emerges in documents compiled immediately after the World War II. The list of repatriated Soviet citizens accommodated in Kaunas and his 1945 registration form completed upon his return from the concentration camps indicate that Pomeranz was born in Kaunas, 1904. This discrepancy was most likely the result of a deliberate decision on the part of the violinist, driven by the following key factors: the hope of finding his wife and daughter alive, from whom he had been separated in the Kaunas ghetto, as well as his determination to return to the city where he had

lived and worked before the Nazi occupation, and had established a distinguished professional reputation. For Pomeranz, Kaunas embodied the hope of rebuilding his life and returning to a sense of normalcy.

Among the most significant sources in which Pomeranz provides information about himself and his family members – albeit in a fragmentary form and with evidence of deliberate self-editing – are the archival files relating to his employment in the orchestra of the Kaunas Musical Comedy Theatre (1945–1948), the Radio Committee orchestra and, subsequently, the orchestra of the State Philharmonic Society of the Lithuanian SSR (1949–1965); the special investigation file compiled by the State Security Committee (KGB) of the Lithuanian SSR concerning his applications for permission to travel abroad (1966–1974), and the file of the Visa and Registration Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Lithuanian SSR, documenting the Pomeranz family's application to move permanently to Israel (1974). Of particular importance among these archival materials are three concise autobiographical statements written by Pomeranz. The earliest, composed in Lithuanian in 1945, was followed by two later versions, written in Russian in 1949 and 1965. In all three autobiographical statements, he identifies Kaunas as his place of birth. By contrast, according to the testimony of Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich, her father told her that he had been born in Šiauliai.

Pomeranz's accounts of his general and musical education likewise raise critical questions, as the information he provided concerning the dates and institutions of his studies is commonly inconsistent. In his 1945 autobiographical statement, he claimed to have received both secondary and musical education in Kaunas; meanwhile in his 1949 autobiographical account, he instead identified Šiauliai as the place where he had completed these studies. The possibility that he could, in fact, study in Šiauliai is supported by certain documentary evidence. Records show that the Pomeranz family was residing in Šiauliai in 1920, where they obtained Lithuanian internal passports. Further evidence comes from 1922, when Šiauliai was recorded as the place of residence of the eighteen-year-old Daniel in the documents submitted in support of his application for a passport to travel abroad. Together, these records lend credibility to the assertion that at least part of his education may have taken place in Šiauliai.

In an explanation accompanying a 1965 application form to travel abroad, Pomeranz noted that his brother Yudel had been his first music teacher until the age of 16. Furthermore, there are assertions that Pomeranz began his musical studies in Vilnius under the prominent Lithuanian violinist and conductor Isaak Vildman-

Zaidman, who taught at Vilnius Music School from 1914 to 1919. It is also claimed that Pomeranz studied under Vildman-Zaidman at Juozas Naujalis Music School in Kaunas; however, no documentary evidence has been found to support these claims. The third decade of Daniel and Yudel lives was spent in Berlin, where they pursued an academic education in music and matured as performers of classical and popular music.

Brothers Daniel and Yudel in Berlin: Between Academic Traditions and Jazz

By 1925, Berlin had become the largest city in Europe, with a population exceeding four million. For aspiring musicians, the metropolis offered multiple opportunities to pursue musical training at the highest academic level. Its leading institutions included Berlin State Academy of Music (known as the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin until 1918), as well as the private Stern Conservatoire and Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatoire. Each institution had their own specialized programmes, collaborated with one another and had a significant impact on the quality and vitality of Berlin's musical life. A considerable number of young people from various Lithuanian cities studied at all three educational institutions, a large proportion of them being Jewish. The most popular majors were piano, violin, voice, and cello. Among the young musicians from Lithuania who studied in Berlin and later achieved professional recognition were the pianists Aviasaf Bernstein and Nadezhda Dukstulsky; the violinists Samuel Bernstein, Boruch Liftman, Gregor Mankowski, Abrom Stupel (who later entered the history of Lithuanian music as the concertmaster of the Kaunas ghetto police orchestra); the cellists Mendel Budnicki, Maizin Fink (who subsequently performed in Pomeranz's ensemble at the *Konradas* café), Daniel Hofmekler, Ruvim Hofmekler; the singer Hilel Lipschitz, and many others. The story of Yudel and Daniel is connected to all three institutions of higher musical education.

A document preserved in the archive of Berlin University of the Arts and dated December of 1924 significantly revises the limited information previously available about Pomeranz's studies in Berlin, additionally revealing new aspects of his biography. At the age of twenty, Daniel submitted a request to the State Academy of Music asking the institution to certify his residence in Berlin and preparation for admission in the forthcoming spring semester, in order to obtain permission to remain in Germany. His letter indicates that he had already met personally with Professor Willy Hess, who had assessed his suitability for admission to the State

Academy of Music. Following this meeting, the Academy's administration encouraged him to submit a formal application in order to enable the institution to assist him in completing the necessary administrative procedures. In his written evaluation, Willy Hess, who was one of the most distinguished violinists and pedagogues of the Weimar Republic, confirmed that Daniel Pomeranz was a talented violinist who intended to apply from the summer semester and was being prepared for the entrance examinations by Hess' student, Alfred Hofmann. Such private preliminary auditions with prominent professors, followed by recommendations to prepare for the entrance examinations under the guidance of their assistants or advanced students, constituted a common practice for prospective applicants to the State Academy of Music. In March 1925, Daniel Pomeranz sat the entrance examinations. According to the surviving examination record, his performance was assessed as good, while his knowledge of music theory received the highest evaluation, thus he was recommended for admission to the violin class of Professor Rudolf Deman, who held an outstanding reputation as a performer. Under his supervision, Daniel studied at the State Academy of Music for three semesters, and in September 1926 enrolled at Stern Conservatoire, where he was admitted to the violin class of Latvian-born Professor Maxim Jacobsen. According to the Conservatoire's surviving annual reports, he remained there for two years. Daniel also travelled to Vienna to take private lessons with the renowned violinist Bronisław Huberman, who was known for mentoring gifted young violinists. Huberman's most enduring contribution, however, extended far beyond the sphere of violin pedagogy. At the end of 1936, he founded the Palestine symphony orchestra, thus providing employment and refuge for numerous Jewish musicians that had been deprived of their professional positions in Germany and other countries under Nazi rule.

Yudel Pomeranz studied in the kapellmeister class of the State Academy of Music only for one semester, from October 1925 to March 1926. Subsequently, he enrolled at Klindworth-Scharwenka Conservatoire, where he studied from 1927 to 1929 under Professor Moritz Mayer-Mahr – a distinguished pianist and pedagogue whose teaching and artistry received widespread recognition and was held in high esteem throughout Germany. During the academic year of 1927–1928, Yudel also served as a piano instructor for students in the Conservatoire's lower divisions. A significant milestone in Yudel Pomeranz's career was his participation in ERKLA (Erstes Klavier-Quartett) piano quartet during the years 1928–1929, together with the pianists Alexander Zakin, Adam Gelbtrunk and Leopold Mittmann. In their performances ERKLA combined classical music arrangements with original jazz

compositions for eight hands, toured various cities in Germany and obtained great success, especially among younger audiences.

Around 1930, Daniel Pomeranz successfully established himself on Berlin's popular music scene. The instrumentation of his ensemble reflected the typical configuration of an entertainment orchestra – or jazz band – of the late 1920s, centred on piano, violin, banjo, and percussion, including additional instruments such as saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, or accordion. According to oral history sources, Daniel Pomeranz's years in Berlin were also associated with engagements with two of the city's most celebrated popular music orchestras of the violinists Leon Golzmann (better known under the stage name Dajos Béla) and Marek Weber.

In 1933, following the rise of the Nazi regime, Jewish musicians were compelled to leave Germany, therefore Yudel and Daniel also departed Berlin in late spring of that year and returned to Lithuania, where they secured temporary employment performing in resort towns during the summer season. Yudel, however, had lost his Lithuanian citizenship because of bureaucratic obstacles and was thus able to enter Lithuania only on a temporary tourist visa. After leaving for Italy in 1934, he did not return to his home country.

"...the Celebrated Pomeranz's Jazz Kapelle": Years of Success in Lithuania's Temporary Capital

Kaunas, which had de facto become the provisional capital of Lithuania in 1919, had already undergone significant changes by the early 1930s. Once a modest provincial town, it had developed into a European metropolis with well-developed infrastructure, modern architecture, flourishing cultural and academic institutions – such as Vytautas Magnus University, the State Conservatoire and the State Theatre – and a variety of entertainment venues. Kaunas Radio broadcasted not only classical music but also popular melodies from musicals and films around the world. The Hofmekler and Stupel families significantly contributed to the flourishing musical life of Kaunas. One of the first ensembles to regularly perform popular music in Kaunas restaurants and cafés was led by Michel Hofmekler, a violinist of the State Theatre.

In September 1933, Pomeranz and his ensemble were invited to inaugurate the new season at *Metropolis* – the most renowned restaurant in Kaunas. Before long, the ensemble was performing there regularly during lunchtime and evening hours. However, Pomeranz was required to complete his mandatory military service that

he had previously deferred due to his studies and residence in Berlin. Consequently, from late 1933 until early 1935, he served in the Eighth Infantry Regiment of Duke Vaidotas of Kaunas and was stationed in Šiauliai as a musician-soldier. Upon completing his military service, Pomeranz was invited to establish an ensemble in *Konradas* café. Founded in 1852 by the German Konrad brothers, the café had endured numerous hardships and had undergone repeated modernization. It was widely regarded as one of the best-known establishments in Kaunas and served as a prominent gathering space for artists – particularly writers – as well as a venue for creative exchanges and intellectual discussions. Pomeranz served as the kapellmeister of the *Konradas* café orchestra until 1941. Under his direction, the ensemble became one of the most popular musical groups in the city. Audiences were especially drawn to the Pomeranz's virtuoso solo performances, in which he combined classical, romantic and light music in his repertoire, and particularly enjoyed performing pieces by Pablo de Sarasate, Niccolò Paganini, Fritz Kreisler and Henryk Wieniawski. The sound of his violin was deep and expressive, and his technique was characterized by freedom and flexibility. During the summer seasons Pomeranz's ensemble performed in Palanga – Lithuania's most popular and largest seaside resort – where they would receive considerable acclaim. At the request of summer visitors, Pomeranz also gave solo recitals.

The Pomeranz's ensemble had always been composed of highly accomplished professional musicians, including the pianists Isaak Bank and Gord Stupel; violinist and saxophonist Chaim Ceitel; cellist and percussionist Maizin Fink; xylophonist Antanas Garčiauskas; trumpeter, bassoonist, and one of Lithuania's first accordionists Valerijonas Dzevočka; the brothers Liudas Jakavičius (pianist and accordionist) and Artūras Jakavičius (saxophonist and cellist); harmonica player and trumpeter Fabijonas Novogrodskis; trumpeter Balys Fedaravičius and others. Closely associated with the activities of the Pomeranz's ensemble was the singer (tenor) and multi-instrumentalist Antanas Dvarionas – the culmination of their collaboration was the 1936 collection of eleven shellac records produced in London by the Columbia record company. On August 9, 1940, Pomeranz married Riva (Liusia) Zolk (1907–2002) – a preschool teacher who was born and raised in Kretinga. By that time, Lithuania had already been occupied by the Soviet Union. Soon thereafter, the country entered an even darker period, during which almost the entire Lithuanian Jewish community was annihilated.

Between Inhumanity and Hope of Survival: The Holocaust Period

On June 22, 1941, the German army invaded Lithuania and immediately initiated the persecution and mass murder of the country's Jewish population. Local collaborators played an active role in organizing and carrying out these atrocities. During the summer and autumn of that year, entire Jewish communities in Lithuania's provincial towns were annihilated in mass shootings. As the Nazis and their collaborators established and consolidated the major ghettos in Vilnius, Kaunas and Šiauliai, they also murdered thousands of Jews from these cities. Historians divide the history of Kaunas Jews under Nazi occupation into three periods. The first lasted from June 22, 1941, to the end of October and was marked by violence, terror, and mass executions, during which approximately half of Kaunas Jewish population was exterminated. The second, commonly referred to as the "period of relative stability", lasted from November 1941 to October 1943, when living conditions for ghetto inmates improved to a limited extent (largely because Jews were needed for forced labour). During this period, the ghetto's main institutions (including cultural ones) were established. The third period, spanning from October 1943 to July 1944, was characterized by the liquidation of the Kaunas ghetto.

By August 15, 1941, all Jews in Kaunas were required to move to the ghetto in Vilijampolė (Slabodkė) – one of the poorest parts of the city with dilapidated wooden housing. On October 11, 1941, in a ghetto basement, the daughter of Daniel and Riva was born. Soon afterwards, on October 29, the largest mass murder of Jews in Lithuania – the Great Action – was carried out. Approximately 10,000 Jews, deemed unfit for physical labour, were executed at the Kaunas Ninth Fort. Following the Great Action, about 17,000 prisoners remained in the Kaunas ghetto. Although killings of Jews continued periodically, health care facilities, clandestine educational and cultural institutions, and an arts sector were established at that time. Since the Kaunas ghetto held musicians from the State Theatre orchestra, Conservatoire teachers and students, as well as leaders and performers of popular music ensembles, the idea to organize cultural and communal activities plans gradually emerged. The proposal to establish a musical ensemble within the ghetto, however, generated considerable hesitation even among the musicians themselves, but in the end, those who supported the idea of an orchestra prevailed. The founding date of the Kaunas ghetto orchestra and of its first concerts vary in both the works of historians and the memoirs of former inmates of the ghetto. It is likely that the concerts mentioned in sources as having taken place in the summer of 1942 were

singular events, and that the orchestra began to hold regular weekly concerts only after officially acquiring the status of the ghetto police orchestra in late 1942. The ghetto police orchestra was formed by Michel Hofmekler, who became its leader and conductor, and Abrom (Boris) Stupel, who was the concertmaster and one of the principal soloists. The list of members of the Kaunas ghetto police orchestra, compiled in Lithuanian language and approved on December 28, 1942, consisted of 27 positions.

Based on surviving concert programmes and eyewitness accounts, it can be concluded that the number of musicians listed was not final, and that the orchestra's composition varied depending on circumstances in the ghetto. The orchestra performed with several soloists, including violinist Maja Gladshtein-Kapit, the distinguished actress Rachel Berger, the singers Dvoira Rachko, Liuba Kupric and her husband, the actor and singer Moisej Kupric; the pianist Leia Sheinberg, the pianist and composer Percy Haid. Pomeranz is listed as a soloist in two surviving programmes.

The Kaunas ghetto police orchestra held 77 concerts for the ghetto's inmates and three performances for SS officers, as well as visited the ghetto's forced-labour camp units in Aleksotas and Palemonas. Concerts were usually held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons and evenings, and the programmes consisted of anywhere between 9 and 18 pieces (in rare cases even up to 22). The music of German and Austrian composers that constituted a large part of the European classical repertoire was banned from being performed in the Kaunas ghetto. Nevertheless, the surviving concert programmes reveal that the orchestra had prepared a diverse repertoire of classical, romantic, operatic, early twentieth-century, and salon music; among the composers whose works were performed were many names that are virtually unknown or forgotten today. Among the performed pieces, the largest percentage consisted of works by Jewish composers, including Joseph Achron, Joel Engel, Abraham Zvi Idelsohn, Yehuda Perlmutter, Abraham Ellstein, Max Halm, Sholom Secunda, Abraham Goldfaden, Efreim Zimbalist, Louis Lewandowski, Leo Zeitlin, Heinrich Schalit, Solomon Golub, Joseph Jaffe, Leo Low, and Mischa Elman – as well as arranged traditional dances and music for Yiddish plays. Due to instrument shortage, the ghetto musicians adapted the pieces to the specific composition of the orchestra. The concerts also featured traditional and original songs based on texts by Yiddish writers and poets. The concert programmes subtly considered the peculiarities of the Jewish calendar, marking annual holidays such as Purim, Hanukkah, and Yom Kippur.

The Pomeranz's daughter spent approximately two years in the Kaunas ghetto. Whenever they learned of an impending *Aktion*, Daniel and his wife concealed her as best they could, however, due to the constant danger, they decided to bring her out of the ghetto. Through her sister's connections Riva contacted the famous opera singer's Kipras Petrauskas (1885–1968) wife, the actress, poet, and director Elena Žalinkevičaitė-Petrauskienė (1900–1986), and asked her to save their little daughter. Balys Simanavičius (1907–1984), the director of the “Lapė” fur factory in Kaunas and an acquaintance of Riva, took it upon himself to bring the child, who he named Dana, to the Petrauskas family. After taking the child into her care, in order to avoid attracting attention, Petrauskienė left with Dana and her other children for the family's estate in Rainiai, later relocating to Palanga. Due to the rapidly advancing front in the summer of 1944, Petrauskienė and the children were compelled to retreat to Germany.

In July 1944, the liquidation of the Kaunas ghetto began, along with the final deportation of the remaining Jews. Some of the musicians were killed in Kaunas, while many members of the ghetto police orchestra – including Pomeranz, Hofmekler, Stupel and others – were deported to concentration camps. Pomeranz was brought to Stutthof on July 17, 1944; later on August 18 he was transferred to a forced-labour camp of Utting. Official music ensembles or orchestras were established in most of the major concentration camps. The imprisoned musicians were not only compelled to perform for high-ranking SS officers and their guests: the Nazi authorities also exploited camp orchestras during punishments and executions of prisoners, or when columns of inmates were commanded to forced labour. At times music presented a practical means of survival, such as when Nazi officials rewarded prisoners for giving music lessons by providing them with an occasional additional portion of food. Music was one of the most important factors that helped Pomeranz to survive.

After the Second World War: Continuing Professional Activities and the Journey Towards the Free World

After his liberation in May 1945, Pomeranz set out for Kaunas, driven by the hope of finding his wife and daughter alive. Exhausted, he returned to Soviet-occupied Lithuania on August 27, 1945, reunited with Riva and was employed at the orchestra of Kaunas Musical Comedy Theatre (now Kaunas State Musical Theatre). In summer 1946, Daniel and Riva adopted Rūta, the eight-year-old daughter of Riva's murdered sister Rocha Lopianskienė, and in early autumn of 1948 they were reunited with

their daughter Dana (or Danutė), who returned from Germany with Petrauskienė. In early summer 1949, Pomeranz joined the symphony orchestra of the Republican Radio and Television Committee (in 1957, the orchestra was renamed the State Philharmonic symphony orchestra) and the family consequently moved to Vilnius. Dana was enrolled in the class of the renowned violinist Aleksandras Livontas (1920–1974) at Vilnius Ten-year music school, later also studied with him at the Lithuanian State Conservatoire, before being admitted to the Moscow Conservatoire into the class of David Oistrakh (1908–1974), one of the most eminent violinists of the twentieth century. Shortly thereafter, she married Ukrainian violinist Yuri Mazurkevich (b. 1942), who had also studied in Oistrakh's class.

Pomeranz did not limit himself to working in a symphony orchestra. In the 1950s and 1960s, cafés and restaurants in Vilnius maintained popular music ensembles, which, though required to comply with strict ideological regulations, were permitted to perform dance music. Professional musicians from various orchestras earned their supplementary income through participation in such ensembles. Pomeranz played at the *Palanga* café (later a restaurant) in a dance music ensemble, which consisted of a violin, saxophone or clarinet, accordion, double bass, and percussion. Though Pomeranz retired in September 1965, he continued his musical activities and played in the so-called Jewish amateur ensembles that operated at the Lithuanian Republican Palace of Trade Unions. A string orchestra and a folk instrument orchestra, both led by Solomon Ber Meyerovich, typically comprised between 20 and 29 musicians of varying levels of ability, ranging from trained professionals to self-taught performers who were not able to read music.

In the spring of 1965, an event of profound significance for the family took place in Vilnius – after a thirty-two-year separation, Pomeranz finally met in person with his brother Yudel (Giuliano). The meeting rekindled Pomeranz's hope of seeing his sisters as well. In comparison to the Stalinist period, the 1960s brought a modest easing of restrictions on temporary travel abroad from the Soviet Union, though it remained a strictly controlled, lengthy process. In 1967, having overcome all the necessary bureaucratic obstacles, Pomeranz travelled to New York, though unfortunately, he was too late to see Fania – she had passed away just before his arrival. Sara and Daniel had not seen each other since 1942. After spending six months in New York, before returning to Lithuania, Pomeranz visited Yudel and his family in Rome.

By this time, the movement advocating the right of Soviet Jews to emigrate permanently to Israel was already gaining momentum in the Soviet Union. Exit visas, issued based on invitations from relatives abroad, were granted under the principle

of “family reunification”. In the summer of 1974, Daniel and Riva, along with their daughter Dana’s family, received permission to move to Israel after being invited by the family of Riva’s sister, Mirjam Jaffe. Their departure marked their permanent break with the Soviet system. Israel, however, was not to be the destination of the Pomeranz and Mazurkevich families’ journey. After arriving in Vienna, the families decided to settle in Canada, and were soon transferred to Rome, where the largest office of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) processing refugee and immigration cases was located. The Mazurkevich family received permission to emigrate to Canada at the end of 1974, while Daniel and Riva followed several months later, arriving in Canada in mid-1975. With the assistance of the Jewish Immigrant Aid Services (JIAS), the Canadian government, and the local Jewish community, the couple settled in Toronto, where they began the final chapter of their lives, residing in a home where many retirees and immigrants from the Soviet Union lived. The residence hosted lectures and film screenings, while its social club offered opportunities for socializing and dancing. There the Pomeranz couple gave chamber music concerts – Daniel performed on the violin, while Riva accompanied him on the piano and sang. They became a beloved and widely recognised couple within the community.

The violin, alongside his inner positivity, remained Pomeranz’s driving force until the end of his life. He passed away in Toronto from a heart disease on 24 September 1981. Both Daniel and Riva, who survived her husband by more than twenty years and died on 8 November 2002, were buried in accordance with Jewish tradition at the Bathurst Lawn Memorial Park Jewish Cemetery in Toronto.

Part Two. Conversations with Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich

The conversations with Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich, conducted between 2022 and 2024 both online via the Zoom platform and in person during the violinist’s visits to Vilnius, cover seven thematic areas: the family during the interwar period and World War II; both Pomeranz and Petrauskas families after the Holocaust; the affinity to the violin and the years of study; emigration and experiences on stage; encounters with personalities; pedagogical approaches, and longing for Lithuania and the preservation of memory.

The interviews offer intimate portraits of Dana Pomerantz-Mazurkevich’s parents and current reflections on her rescue from the Kaunas ghetto, as well as on

her relationships with both the Pomeranz family and the Petrauskas family – whom she likewise regards as her parents – and with her sisters, Rūta Lopianskaitė (Pomerancaitė)-Gorinienė and Aušra Petrauskaitė. They also illuminate the principal circumstances and influential figures – most notably Aleksandras Livontas and David Oistrakh – that shaped the violinist’s artistic development and life trajectory. In addition, the conversations explore the atmosphere during Pomerants-Mazurkevich’s years of study at the Moscow Conservatoire, most significant experiences of her performing career, the distinctive nature of artistic partnership with her husband Yuri Mazurkevich, and her concert appearances with other internationally renowned musicians, including the violist William Primrose, the pianist John Ogdon, the double bassist Gary Karr. In these interviews Pomerants-Mazurkevich shares the fundamental principles that have guided her work as a violin professor, among which was the aim to develop students’ own musical and individual thinking, as well as the aspiration to help students unlock their inner creativity, which is fostered by a close relationship based on mutual trust. Particularly compelling are reflections of Pomerants-Mazurkevich on her dual Lithuanian and Jewish identity, on the power of music to sustain hope in the face of adversity, and on the artist’s responsibility to convey a personal understanding of the historical era and social environment. One of the most important and recurring topics in these interviews is Pomerants-Mazurkevich’s father, Daniel Pomeranz, with whom she maintained a particularly close relationship.

In cases where archival data was found to corroborate the facts or events mentioned by Pomerants-Mazurkevich, it supplements or clarifies her account through footnotes that are also used to describe the relevant historical and cultural context. In addition, the footnotes also incorporate the recollections of other individuals that enrich or complement Pomerants-Mazurkevich’s account of a specific event.