

Redemption Blues and the Legacy of the Holocaust

Chiara Basso (February 01, 2019)



According to Peter Stastny, director of the documentary "Redemption Blues," redemption "is reaching out for something that you cannot reach, but at least you make the effort," while music, in particular playing with other Jewish musicians in New York, is that personal "place where you can move forward in a Jewish way even if you are not religious." In his movie, presented yesterday at NYU Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimo', Stastny explores what redemption means for the last survivors of the Holocaust. Often people who belong to the second generation, like him, feel the weight of that tragedy, the Shoah, but might spend their life with parents or relatives who never wanted to talk about what happened, like the director's mother.

Peter Stastny knows that moving away from the past, the Holocaust, but also from the present with the situation in the Middle East, is not an option because it might help him and others understand better the present and the future. Therefore, to dig deeper into the meaning of the past, the director starts a deep, emotional journey, his [Redemption Blues](#) [2]. [Stastny](#) [3] interviews the last survivors of the Holocaust, people who dealt with the past in different ways.

One of them **Walter Feiden**, the most colorful character in the film, is so attached to life that he



would like to live other six or seven or more lives. He is a die-hard and for the future, he hopes two things: a world without religions, "which can cause only troubles to humanity," and a new planet where to transfer and live. Walter is not really interested in talking about what happened, he looks forward and feels younger than his son, he says.

After all, Stastny doesn't want to know what happened in the camps either, he wants to understand the legacy left behind.

Also **Stella Levi**, 96 years old, who attended the event yesterday night despite the cold weather and who is one of the movie's protagonists, is not interested in talking about what happened during the Shoah. "I prefer to talk about what happened before and after," she told us, "as I did recently in a school where I met 13-year-old kids. I told them how I felt when I was 15 and couldn't go to high school because of the new racial laws in Italy."

She then told us that she was taken to Auschwitz from Rhodes, where she was living with her family, after a 21-day journey, eight days via sea and 13 days on a train through Europe. "How could other European countries not see us? Of course, they did!" she says.

Yet, she has a contagious smile and incredible energy that she spreads all around her. We asked her how is it possible to keep irradiating such a positive vibe after what she went through. She has no doubt: "We all need to do our part, although a small one, to make this world a better place."

This event is part of *Giorno della Memoria* under the auspices of the [Consulate General of Italy](#) [4] and in collaboration with [Centro Primo Levi](#) [5]. The screening At [Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò](#) [6] was followed by a discussion between director Peter Statsny and [Paola Mieli](#) [7] (Après-coup Psychoanalytic Association).

Source URL: <http://ftp.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/art-culture/article/redemption-blues-and-legacy-holocaust>

Links

[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/walterfeidenredempionbluesjpg>

[2] <http://www.redemptionbluesfilm.com/>

[3] https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0823736/?ref_=tt_ov_dr

[4] https://consnewyork.esteri.it/consolato_newyork/it/

[5] <http://primolevicenter.org/>

[6] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/>

[7] http://www.apres-coup.org/mt/archives/author/2004/12/mieli_paola_1.html