



## **The Virtual Concert at the Holocaust Memorial - the World's First Ever Virtual Concert on a Smartphone**

### **The Memorial's 2008 concert – performed live inside the field of stelae**

On 9 May 2008, a unique concert was staged to mark the third anniversary of the inauguration of the Holocaust Memorial. Specially composed for the occasion, *Vor dem Verstummen* by Harald Weiss received its world premiere within the Holocaust Memorial's field of stelae beside the Brandenburg Gate, when it was performed for an appreciative audience of thousands by musicians of the Berliner Kammer-symphonie orchestra under the baton of celebrated conductor Lothar Zagrosek. The performance was so costly and time-consuming to stage that it was never repeated.

The sound experienced by each member of the audience differed depending on his or her precise location amongst the columns. Each step they took through the Memorial changed their perception of the music; at one location a trombone would predominate, at another a clarinet, at another still the female vocalist. Small monitors provided the musicians with a visual link to the conductor.

Daniel-Jan Girl, a member of the Board of Sponsors of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe which organised the event, was the driving force behind the initiative and the project leader. The costs associated with the technical and organisational aspects of the performance were met by a large number of partners and sponsors.

Now this unique occasion can be experienced once again as the first virtual concert in the world.

### **The virtual concert**

Since early 2012, Daniel-Jan Girl has been striving to build upon the success of the concert by creating a virtual smartphone experience. That is why in December 2012, all twenty-four musical instruments and the vocal part were re-recorded using a technique designed specifically for the purpose with the support of rbb (the Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting Company) at the famous Haus des Rundfunks designed by Hans Poelzig.

Once again, both the recording and the innovative technology which later went into the application were possible only thanks to the contributions of numerous sponsors and partners. In addition to the Berlin-Brandenburg-Broadcast (rbb), these partners included many of Berlin's leading companies, the Memorial's Board of Sponsors, and the Memorial Foundation, the federal body responsible for the Holocaust Memorial.

The 'Virtual Concert at the Memorial' application is the first virtual concert in the world, and uses a new, innovative technological process to reproduce the instrumental sound appropriate to the location and movements of the user/listener based on the smartphone's precise whereabouts as determined by GPS. This means that the concert heard by each individual is personal to him or her, with different sounds associated with each location and stele. The pioneering technology of the interactive application has been designed specifically for the Holocaust Memorial with younger and future generations in particular in mind. It attempts to add another dimension to the Memorial and our culture of remembrance, and to make these more relevant to a modern-day audience.

### **The initiator and project leader**

Daniel-Jan Girl, born in Berlin-Wilmersdorf in 1980, has served for many years as a member of the Board of Sponsors of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. During this time, he has also

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been behind the creation of the virtual 'Room of Names' ([www.raumdernamen.com](http://www.raumdernamen.com)). His ideas and projects are motivated in particular by the question of what form our culture of remembrance could and should take in the 21st century, and how new and future generations can be drawn in. Smartphones – the favoured form of communication among this demographic – are potentially just as universally accessible as music in general, which everyone is able to understand at a primal level.

Daniel-Jan Girl is an entrepreneur, the managing director of the DGMK Deutsche Gesellschaft für multimediale Kundenbindungssysteme mbH. He made the new technology available for use free of charge, recruited partners and sponsors who volunteered their services, and raised the additional funding required to create the application.

### **From the pavements of Berlin direct to the World Wide Web**

In February 2014, the first of twenty-three internet paving stones (QR stones) was set directly into one of the pavements around the Holocaust Memorial, alerting visitors to the first virtual concert in the world, which they could experience then and there on their smartphone via the available link. Visitors could scan the Quick Response Code (QR Code) and obtain direct access to the virtual concert at the Memorial. This is the first time in Berlin that virtual content has been linked permanently with an actual location.

The new Internet paving stones are produced using state-of-the-art machinery at the oldest still active stonemasonry business in Berlin. Stonemason Frank Rüdiger, who is more accustomed to engraving Dürer's praying hands on tombstones, has now embarked on an entirely new path, which leads from the pavements of Berlin directly to the World Wide Web.

### **Project participants**

Musicians	Berliner Kammersymphonie conducted by Jürgen Bruns
Composer	Harald Weiss
Vocalist	Vanessa Barkowski
Initiator and project leader	Daniel-Jan Girl
Programming/implementation	DGMK GmbH in association with Ape Unit GmbH
Recording Sendesaal	under the direction of Heiko Nehse and Peter Avar at rbb's Kleiner

### **Details**

Devices required	iPhone 4S, 5 (Android coming soon)
Charge	currently free (later up to EUR1.79)
Website	<a href="http://www.virtuelleskonzert.com">www.virtuelleskonzert.com</a>
Size of application	about 180 MB (WiFi recommended for download)
App name	'Virtual Concert' (from the Apple App Store)
Music and duration	24 musicians, 1 vocalist – lasts 16:55 minutes
Free WiFi hotspots	Cora-Berliner-Strasse / Hannah-Arendt-Strasse, WiFi name: 'Virtual Concert'

### **Visit the Holocaust Memorial**

You will need to visit the Memorial to experience the concert in all its unique interactivity. The sound of the instruments changes depending on your location and route through the field of stelae, growing louder or softer, more passionate or muted. This means that the concert you hear will be personal to you.

Outside the Memorial, you can listen to the piece in offline mode in the conventional, non-interactive way.

### **Here's how it works:**

[www.virtuelleskonzert.com](http://www.virtuelleskonzert.com)



**Holocaust Denkmal Berlin**  
**Virtuelles Konzert im Denkmal**  
Eine neue Form der Musik

1. You need an iPhone 4S or 5
2. The download may take some time  
(at the Memorial, a free 'virtual concert' wifi is available at the corner of Cora-Berliner-Strasse and Hannah-Ahrendt-Strasse)
3. Please disable flight mode before launching the app
4. It may take more than a minute to launch

**Press info/contact details**

**dropbox**

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/l9njpisp9h16akg/13XDGEC7Nw>

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**YouTube video**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRULsrb\\_Q\\_U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRULsrb_Q_U)

**New studio recording of the concert**

<https://soundcloud.com/virtual-concert>

**Apple iTunes store**

<https://itunes.apple.com/de/app/virtual-concert/id674814220?mt=8>

[www.virtuelleskonzert.com](http://www.virtuelleskonzert.com)