

Anne Frank: A Living Voice Program Notes

Anne Frank: A Living Voice, was commissioned by the San Francisco Girls Chorus in celebration of its Silver Anniversary. The text is based on excerpts from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, taken from the 1952 and 1991 English translations of the book. The first section, *It Is The Silence*, was premiered by Chorissima on November 1, 2002, and the entire composition in seven movements premiered on May 6, 2004.

Anne Frank was between 13 and 15 years old when she wrote her *Diary*, while living in a secret upstairs annex over a warehouse in Amsterdam with her family, the Van Pels family, and Fritz Pfeffer. Despite all the fears and frustrations she experienced in over two years of hiding from the Nazis, Anne learned how to survive, to find beauty in small things, and to hold on to her ideals.

Composer Linda Tutas Haugen writes, “My goals for this composition are to honor the life of Anne Frank, and to gain a deeper understanding of what she, her family, and friends experienced during the Holocaust.”

The text excerpts are chronologically arranged, and span more than two years. They portray a psychological progression from fear and despair to strength and hope. The first three movements explore the grim reality of the war and her situation. Anne’s feelings of helplessness are expressed when she discovers that one of her best friends, Hanneli Goslar, has been captured and deported.

In the next three movements, she finds meaning and purpose in nature, her writing, and her first love with Peter Van Pels. In the final movement, she recognizes the chaos and destruction of society and ideals, and faces the likelihood that she and her family will not survive. Amazingly, she is able to look beyond the present and herself, to a time when she believes that peace will return. The hope that one day she would be able to realize her ideals and dreams, gives her strength and courage.

Through her words, Anne Frank portrays the triumph of the human spirit in the midst of suffering and cruelty. Otto Frank, Anne’s father and only annex survivor, states: “I hope that Anne’s book will have an effect on the rest of your life so that insofar as it is possible in your circumstances, you will work for unity and peace.” The composer adds: “It is my hope that *Anne Frank: A Living Voice*, sung by these young women, will also be an inspiration to this end.”

The *Diary* has been published in 67 languages, and over 31 million copies have been sold.