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**Istituto Italiano di Cultura Toronto presents *The Saved Music: Francesco Lotoro*
Toronto Premiere of Chamber Music Recovered from Concentration Camps
November 12, 2018, 6:30 PM at 918 Bathurst | Free admission**

Francesco Lotoro, piano | **Charles Osborne**, baritone | **Mark Skazinetsky**, violin | **Igor Gefter**, cello

“Playing this music, which was lost and forgotten for 70 years, is like bringing the Library of Alexandria back to life. It’s my reason for living.” —Francesco Lotoro

Italian composer and pianist **Francesco Lotoro** brings the fruits of 30 years of painstaking research to Toronto for the first time with [The Saved Music](#), a concert of chamber works composed by musicians who were persecuted in Second World War concentration camps. Presented by the **Istituto Italiano di Cultura Toronto**, the program is a precious testament to artistic creativity as an act of resistance. *The Saved Music* includes solos and duets performed by Lotoro and three Toronto-based musicians — cantor [Charles Osborne](#); [Mark Skazinetsky](#), violin; and [Igor Gefter](#), cello. This free concert takes place on **November 12, 2018 at 6:30 PM at 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media, and Education.**

Amid the horrors of the concentration camps, musicians continued playing and secretly composing in the hopes that their music would be performed again some day. For more than three decades, Francesco Lotoro has scoured archives and camp barracks looking for hidden musical manuscripts that were scribbled on notebooks, toilet paper, burlap bags, food wrap, mess tins, or committed to memory by survivors and witnesses.

Lotoro’s small apartment in Barletta, Italy, has become the greatest archive of concentrationary music in the world. His monumental mission has been featured in the Washington Post, The Guardian, NPR, and The New Statesman, and is the subject of an award-winning documentary film, [The Maestro](#), presented by the Istituto Italiano di Cultura earlier this year on the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

“During the most tragic event in history, humanity set into motion the most civilized mechanisms of self-preservation and managed to spark an explosion of creativity. The composers would create music regardless of their surroundings. Deprivation, loss of freedom and physical discomfort were not obstacles to his creativity; they were, in fact, a powerful incentive. Although it was not possible to save the lives of many musicians who were deported

to the camps, we were able to save their music. With this concert we restore life and dignity to thousands of musicians and their music,” says Lotoro.

The Saved Music is presented by the [Istituto Italiano di Cultura a Toronto](#) in collaboration with [Foundation ILCM Institute of Concentrationary Music Literature, 918 Bathurst Centre for Culture, Arts, Media and Education](#), and [iConcerti](#).

ABOUT FRANCESCO LOTORO

The son of a tailor in Barletta, Puglia, Francesco from a very young age had a passion: the piano. Having completed piano studies at the conservatory, Francesco was admitted to the prestigious Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. There he plunged into music and studied the great musicians of Central Europe. Until one day he noticed that the biographies of many of them came to an abrupt end in the autumn of 1944.

In 1990 in Prague, Francesco quite by chance came across a score composed in a Lager. He was 27 and it left such an impression on him that he proceeded to dedicate his life to recovering scores composed in Second World War concentration camps.

The first composition he found was a piece by Gideon Klein. Francesco remembers how his heart missed a beat when the sister of the pianist handed over the first manuscript in a record store. That exact moment was when Francesco’s mission started.

He started reading everything he could find about the Czech pianist, who was born in 1919, deported to Terezín in 1941, transferred to Auschwitz in 1944, and died in the coal mines of Fürstengrube. “His body was never found. Salvaging his music for me is the only way of bringing him back to life,” says Lotoro. “Playing this music, which was lost and forgotten for 70 years, is like bringing the Library of Alexandria back to life. It’s my reason for life.”

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