

The-- when it was finished, he got a box of sardines.

A box of sardines? Yeah. So if you'll sit here, and then the microphones are here. And I think it picks up your voice very, very well.

Yeah. I should--

And so, I'll just say it. Today is-- what is the date? 16th?

16th.

16th of March, 1990. And I'm in Copenhagen, speaking with Mrs. Elsa Deutsch, the wife of Peter Deutsch. Maybe we could start a little bit about leading up to his going to TerezÃn. I understand you were not in TerezÃn.

No.

First of all, where and when was Peter born?

1901.

1901.

In Berlin.

In Berlin. Which date?

September.

September 18, 1901, in Berlin.

Yes. You see here.

I see. Uh-huh. And he passed away the 13th of March, 1965. Here in Copenhagen?

Yeah, Copenhagen. And he came to Denmark in March in '33.

March 1933, he came to Denmark?

Yes.

And where were you from?

Here.

Oh, you're from--

Yes.

An original Copenhagener.

Yes, born in Copenhagen.

I see. Yes. And what was your husband's musical background?

He was educated as-- and employed as opera Kapell master in Detmold.

And what was the name?

Detmold.

Detmold.

Detmold.

Detmold.

In Deutschland. In Germany.

Yes.

And when the inflation came, his salary wasn't good enough. He had to support his mother and his younger brother. And then he took his violin and played in a nightclub and to marriages and so on. And then he came into entertaining music and jazz.

Where did he study music?

In Vienna, in Berlin, and in Paris.

In Vienna, Berlin, and Paris?

Yeah.

And so he undertook it. This was at, I suppose, a music [GERMAN] and then at university.

Oh, yeah. Yes.

And academy and something like that.

Yes, something. I don't really know exactly.

Yeah.

But only what he told me. And in 1933, he had an engagement in the German, Berlin radio. And the manager came to him and said, Mr. Deutsch, I'm sorry to say we can't--

Engage you.

--engage you more. He had a contract for 10 concerts. And you'll be paid for all 10, but we-- we are not allowed to use you. And then he-- it was in March, and a Danish gentleman called him at the telephone. Do you remember me, Mr. Deutsch? I have lived besides your flat. And my husband cultural members-- there was a Danish gentleman in this flat.

Yeah.

What are you doing? Nothing, he said. Come here to Copenhagen. And he was very nice and very friendly to my husband. And he tried to get some engagement and jobs for him as a composer and arranger. But he couldn't come through.

Then he went one evening to the Tivoli. There was a big dancing hall with a conductor and a very fine orchestra. And then he went to the music room. And then one musician said, are you here? And the next at the room, three of them, he knew from Berlin.

I see.

Yes. And then the Kapell master, it was Erik [PERSONAL NAME]. He knew what his arrangement, what it was. And he engaged him immediately.

I see.

And then all doors were opened, in the film, in the gramophone. And he made the big concerts together with his orchestra.

So he was then conducting also?

No. No.

Arranging?

Arranging.

Arranging.

It was-- he was not allowed to conduct and not to play because the union. You know what is? But he had enough to do. And then we married in September '33.

'33?

Yes.

Yeah.

And his mother, his grandfather from the mother's side, he was Danish. And went-- he was a painter, but not good enough. And then he went to Germany in 1800s or something and married a German girl. And there was four daughters. His wife died, and he married once more and got three daughters-- seven daughters.

Seven daughter.

And my husband's mother was his youngest. And they visited us twice here in Copenhagen. But in '38, their passports were taken. And they couldn't come. Yeah. And we asked the foreign police that his mother could stay here, and she got allowed to.

Oh, she was permitted to stay?

She was permitted to stay here. But when she had to go from this youngest son, he didn't go, and they-- and then she, in 1939, we became cards, postcards. And she that they had to move. And since that we have not heard.

And this was from Berlin, you got the postcard.

That's right. Yeah.

And then you had no more contact?

No. No.

Yeah. Sorry.

So can you imagine? They were sent away.

Yes.

Yes.

Yes.

And so it was.

Now when did the Germans come and occupy in Copenhagen?

The 9th of April.

9th of April 193--

'40.

1940?

Yes. And we didn't hear that the airplanes were coming because it was my birthday on the 8th. And we had the family and friends and got late to bed, and we slept.

Yes.

And then the telephone rang. And the friends called. Have you seen? Have you heard so and so? Had many calls, and my husband was, of course, very nervous because we had heard in all other country they took the Jewish men first. But they sat and looking at the walls. Nobody spoke.

My daughter was into bed. And at 10 o'clock in the evening, the doorbell. And then my husband said, they are coming now to fetch me.

Yes.

But when he opened the door, it was the painter. He came with his picture.

With this picture?

With this picture. And--

This is your husband and your daughter.

And my daughter, yes. And he has painted me two years before. No, three years.

Yeah, 1934.

'34, yeah.

Yeah. Six years.

Six before, yes. And he sat with his wife and little daughter, visit us for dinner at the 10th of April and had the picture. And then he said to my husband, I'm coming to-- with your picture, and we are not coming tomorrow. So we understood that he was a Nazi. But we didn't know. We were very good friends.

And he was a Danish man.

Yes, he was a Danish.

And he had joined the party?

Yes.

Yes.

The Nazi party. And that's when he came in the night when it was dark and delivered. Then my husband said yes, but you shall have paid, and she gave him the money, and he went. After the war, we had a Dutch child through the Red Cross, that came. And I was on the way with my daughter and this child to the Rosenberg museum. And there he is, and his wife came towards me and just stopped.

And I stopped too. I said good day. [LAUGHS] Guten tag. How are you? Yes? No, I'm fine. Because I had my husband back.

Yes.

And then he didn't say.

He didn't say anything?

Anything. And his wife, he said-- she said, yes, my husband, he was in prison for the [NON-ENGLISH]. 1 and 1/2 year. But it was a fault, a mistaken.

Oh, it wasn't correct, what she was saying?

No. No, it was not correct that he was in prison because he has done nothing. But he was in the party, and he was well known. And his-- he has a very big school, with many pupils. And it was closed. Nobody would go to him after the war. And then I said goodbye.

That was the last saw him?

Yes. And they lived in the-- they had an old farm somewhere in the [NON-ENGLISH], where Karl [PERSONAL NAME] was born.

Yes.

You know Karl [PERSONAL NAME].

Yes, of course.

And then he died. And where she is, I don't know.

Now, when was your husband taken?

He was taken--

I understand you were here during the war. You didn't go.

Yes. Yes. I went-- I was--

Yes?

My husband was taken on the 29th of August, '43, when the government didn't-- they said, now, we are not the rule of the country.

Oh, when the government-- you mean, the Danish government said that we can no longer rule the country?

Yes.

Because of the occupation.

Yes. And they went.

Yes.

And the next morning, at-- my husband, he was always early up, and I was sleeping. I didn't hear the doorbell. And then he said, oh, the postman is here. I have not heard the clock. What do you call?

Oh, the bell?

No. The-- the ringing.

The alarm clock?

The alarm clock.

Oh, yes.

Yes. And he's jumped off the bed and opened the door. And there were three German soldiers. And three walked into the bedroom, where I was in bed. And in the garden, we have-- had lived in a house with a garden. And there were about eight or 10 German soldiers.

And then I asked the three, where do you take him. We don't know. We have only orders to-- to fetch him, to get him. And then later, I called the-- a well-known lawyer. She was married with a composer.

Yes.

And I called her because she was in what we call [NON-ENGLISH].

How do you call it?

[NON-ENGLISH], that's a government in the parliament.

Oh, the Parliament?

Yes.

Yes.

And she was in the board of the Social Democrat Party. And I asked her to find out where he is. Two hours later, she

called me back and said, he is in the school, in Westerbork, together with 400 or 500 other persons. A journalist, he went into the toilet and has written all the names and threw it out of the window. And then they knew where.

Was he allowed to take anything with him? Could he take anything.

Oh, no, no.

Oh, just get dressed and go.

Dressed and go, yes. And I have the permission not to visit him in the school because nobody-- only the beer brewery. They sent Tuborg and Carlsberg beer and tobacco-- cigarettes and all these things. And then after four days, they divided. Some of the prisoners came to Vestre prison here in Copenhagen, where they took my husband. And some of them were sent home again. And some of them were taken to a prison in the province.

Yes.

And then I visit him twice because I--

In the prison here in Copenhagen?

Yes. I went to the German headquarters and said he has a pastor. And then we had to [INAUDIBLE] wedding day. And I were allowed to--

You were allowed to visit him.

--to visit him and take a pillow and cigarettes and fruit. And he asked for paper to write his compositions.

Oh, for music? Right. Right.

The music writing, yes, with the sheets and so on. And then we spoke about 10 minutes with a lady who--

Yes.

--a woman. I don't say a lady. And then the last-- the second time I came, then walk in, this is this woman. He said, oh, it's so nice because we know her. We knew her. She was married to a Jewish industry worker. And she was a communist. And she was born a German.

Yes.

And then she couldn't stand the communists and don't like them. And she-- her husband was going hiding. And at last he couldn't hide anymore because they were after him. It was the Danish police at that time.

So the Danes were really quite cooperative, I understand.

Yes, because the police-- not the usual policemen, but the--

The high officers of the police--

Yes.

--were cooperating with the occupying Germans.

Yes. Yes. He was. And the manager from the railway station in Denmark, the railways, he was too. They disappeared after the war. I don't know.

And so when were these Jews, or when was a group sent to Terezin?

And then he was in prison for until October, the beginning of October because we went to Sweden, the whole family-- my parents and I and my brother's fiancée. And we came in one boat and the other family in from other places.

Did you have difficulty leaving to go to Sweden?

Our friends helped us. And people we have never seen helped the Jews. And we were lucky. We came over, and my elder sister was married in Sweden. So they had a shop. It's a--

Clothing shop.

A clothing shop. And then my brother-in-law, he came with a trunk with woolen things, pajamas and stockings and warm scarfs and so on. And we were in Sweden, the whole family. And I worked 10 months, not in the beginning, but 10 months, the last 10 months in the shop for my sister and her husband.

And my daughter, she came later. She was sick, and I called the doctor and said what shall I do? Put her in the hospital, in the Children's Hospital here in the-- here near. And he was under another name, not her real name.

And our friend said don't take her. It's too dangerous. And the war is soon over. In two months, the war is over. But, you know, the war stopped. And it took some years, 1945. Yeah.

Right.

And then she came over with a [INAUDIBLE]. And then in '45, just before the war was over, the Red Cross, Danish Red Cross came and with the white crosses, with this-- called them, and they came through Denmark to Sweden.

Yes.

And there we wait.

Your husband came back?

He came back.

Yeah. There were only a few who died in Theresienstadt because they were sick, they were old and-- so when they opened, you know the name.

I know the name.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Their father, he so religious, he wouldn't eat the food. And he died of hunger. But when the-- our rebbe said you shall eat.

Yeah, of course.

Yes.

Rather than die.

Yes.



Sure.

Yes.

So what did your husband tell you about his stay in Terezin?

The first nine months was terrible with hunger. And then the Red Cross, from here they go, and from Sweden, were sent--

Packages.

--packages. in the food. And then the orchestra, when he came to Theresienstadt, there was a full symphony orchestra with a Czechish conductor.

Karel Ancerl.

Karel Ancerl, yes. And then they were sent away. Just before-- I think before the big concert, some-- what do you call it? From-- let's see.

The performance of the Verdi Requiem?

Yes. Yes. Yes. They were sent away. And then they had-- the Germans wanted a new orchestra.

Yes. This was already in '44?

Yes, in '44. And then there were a competition. And there were, I suppose, three who wanted to--

To conduct.

Yeah. And the prisoners-- and there were many music people and so on. And they were excited to take my husband as a conductor. And then he got a room together with another Danish man. And he had permission to have a light, one--

Oh, a light bulb.

--in the-- because when the German wanted something, music, they called him always in the night. And he had permission to go out in the night. And then he got the Red Cross packages started to come, it was better.

And then he said he was so busy with his orchestra and with the music that it helped him to get through.

Of course.

Yes.

Did he say-- was this the orchestra of the Staatskapelle?

Yeah.

There were musicians from Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and Prague Symphony, and all the best, you know, the ladies here.

Yes.

Yes.

Now what I'm curious is that this-- oh, no, no. That's right. This was early in-- OK, in '44. It's all right. There is a poster of the Staatskapelle orchestra. It mentions two of the conductors, Peter Deutsch and Carlo Taube.

Yes. Yes.

On that particular poster.

Yes.

OK.

Yes.

I'm confusing dates.

Yes.

Of course, they were there.

And though there was music in the-- in the place, in the--

Outside.

--outside.

Yes, this was actually the Staatskapelle.

Yes.

It was in the town square.

Yes.

They kind of put in--

Now the other symphony orchestra was in the hall.

In the [NON-ENGLISH]? He didn't say which one? Yeah.

I don't know.

Yeah.

And then I got a card. And that means-- when they sent a card, they-- they were not allowed to thank for the parcel. But when they sent a card, it's a meaning they have-- there come a parcel, and send a new one. And then my husband wrote, I played with the orchestra at the marketplace every afternoon. And people are sitting, listening, and drinking coffee and eating ice.

And my Swedish married sister, she looked at me. And then she said, don't you think he's got crazy? And I couldn't-- I couldn't stop laughing because of the face and the-- how she said. But I have the-- my-- the sense told me, he is-- he's not crazy. He's living. Something is going on that I don't know.

But I was always so optimistic. And I had the feeling he will come back again.

And of course, he did.

And he did.

Yes. Yes.

And then the Danish Red Cross had come and visit. And they made a fuss. I said it was like Potemkin's cruise. What do you call it?

Where they had the cruise in the boat.

Yes.

Yes.

And they opened a school. There were no children because they were on holiday, summer holidays. But the windows were opened, and the benches-- and they cleaned the school room. And the kindergarten, there was an Dutch painter. He decorated the--

Oh, that would have been Joe Speer.

Yes. Yes. Yes. Decorated with flowers and so on. And a tailor-- people could buy clothes, and a tailor took measures. Yes. And a baker was opened. And the people could buy cakes and bread. Of course, they couldn't deliver the bread. But the clothes they had to deliver back again.

And the person who was difficult, were difficult, they were put into the cellar somewhere, the whole day, without drink and without food. And they all were told, the Danish group, they were told not to say anything. But the Red Cross, one of the men, he whispered to the [NON-ENGLISH], I have a greeting from the king, because he was decorated and he was very known.

Yes.

And the orchestra, with my husband, were sitting on the stage the whole day, until they came, together with Dr. Eichmann. And when he arrived, then he got the sign to start the music. And Dr. Eichmann sat and listened together with this gentleman. And then he-- one or two numbers, and then he went.

Did your husband say anything about what pieces he remembers that they played or what he had arranged?

Yes. He played all the classical Rubinstein and Mozart, but not Wagner.

Yes.

And then every day at the marketplace, they played a march. And it was composed by a Danish composer, actually Frederiksen. And it was the "Kobenhavner March."

Ah, the "Kobenhavner March."

But they called it "Theresienstadt March."

Yes.

Every day.

Every day this march was played?

Yes.

And was this-- all of this music was arranged by your husband for the orchestra that they had? Or not all of it?

No, not at all because they had--

They had enough instruments to--

Yes, he-- he asked for scores. And they--

Ah, scores and parts were sent to him?

Yes. Yes.

Who arranged that? Who?

This is not my husband has arranged. Because he knew the music. But all the other things-- they had to perform a children's opera.

Brundibar.

Yes. And got all the-- two scores and all the music and costumes and all. And there were singers enough.

Yes.

Beautiful singers.

Yes. Yes.

And it came from Prague.

Ah. All of this was--

All-- yes, he had to write down what he used.

I see. I see. And tell me about his arranging the music for the propaganda film.

I don't know what music he used.

You just know that he said that he did the arranging?

Yes. He made the music and conducted--

Yes. Yes.

--the orchestra.

I hope one time that you'll be able to see this film.

I should like it very much. Yes.

Of course. Of course. Well, Paul has it.

A part of it.

He has-- I think he has all which is possible to have at the moment.

Yes. Because my husband told me, they took the [INAUDIBLE] girls with blue eyes, and they were-- had swimming suits from Prague. All things were fetched in Prague.

Yes.

And they're swimming in the Eger.

Now that's interesting because I heard that there was a Czech girl who was the champion swimmer.

I see.

But because she was blonde and looked Aryan, they didn't film her. They tried to avoid. I was told that they avoided the ones who looked--

All the ones-- my husband told it.

That's why it's interesting to hear this.

Yes.

Because it's different.

Because it was a propaganda film.

Could be. Could be.

It nobody from the Danes, the Czechish leader from the-- he had to write on the list who is going to sending to him-- transport. And then he said, the Danish 500 and whatever it was. They were just coming. And then he was told the Danish are--

Protected.

Protected. And why? Nobody could find out. But I suppose it was because Hitler has done with the Danish King and no, no [INAUDIBLE].

Yes. Some kind of an agreement with him.

Yes. But they occupied Denmark.

Yes.

But they had to-- and there is-- the German says that the Jewish, they have a-- a Jewish--

Star?

Yes. What do you call it?

The Magen David.

Yes. Then the king said, then I will take it to-- and then they dropped it. And they had to-- it was a [NON-ENGLISH].

They got lots of food, fine food. And when they came, the soldiers had to have a rest, a holiday, they came to Denmark. And therefore, in the start, they were very--

Careful here.

--careful. But, and therefore, the Danish people say, oh, they're so nice. And their officers, they're very handsome, [INAUDIBLE] in uniforms, and the girls and so on. But--

All the big deceit.

Yes.

The big deceit.

I think there were people, Danish people, they started to--

Tell me, after the war, did your husband have any kind of-- either did he bring back any pieces of music or any kind of papers or something?

From Theresienstadt?

From TerezÃn?

No.

No. Or did he write down anything about it afterwards?

No.

No.

He-- we had-- he had difference in Theresienstadt. And here, where the [INAUDIBLE] came for dinner and parties and so on. And when they were all together, they only spoke of things where they laughed. Do you remember? And do you remember? But my husband never want to talk about it.

No, he preferred not to speak about it.

No, because of his mother, his brother. And it was too painful for him. And he couldn't talk. He couldn't work. And he had to--

You mean after the war.

And [INAUDIBLE] because he had a family.

Yes. Yes. Of course.

And she was very busy.

Did he resume his musical work here in Copenhagen?

Yes. Yes. Yes. And then he started making all these compositions.

Yes.

All that you see here and more. Of course, he has not written down.

Yes.

He was very busy.

So these are all compositions, which he either arranged or composed--

Composed.

--after the war.

That is-- that is composing, all the-- then and-- not songs for the film, but--

Instrumental pieces.

Yes. I see.

It's only what we could find out. But he has done industry film. It is not written down here.

Ah, so actually, you found this out by-- because he made such a list, or you reconstructed it by going through the--

Some that he has written down to the coda, what you call [INAUDIBLE]. The royalty is very good.

Oh, yes. The copyright.

Copyright, yes.

Yes. I see.

Here in Denmark.

Did he say whether or not he had anything to say regarding the choice of the music in the propaganda film? Or did he just arrange what they asked him to do? Because when he--

No, he chose it.

Oh, he himself chose the music?

Yes. Yes.

Did he ever mention what the music was?

No.

No. No.

No.

Because there is a list from the papers of Kurt Geron, who was the producer and director, until he himself went to Auschwitz in fall of '44.

Yes.

Some compositions, which were composed in TerezAn, that's the first group.

Yes.

Second group is from the repertoire of the Staatskapelle.

Yeah.

And the third was repertoire from the jazz band, apparently the Ghetto Swingers.

I see. I have never heard.

And some of those pieces we know were actually recorded.

Yes, but the-- the jazz band, did they exist?

There was a jazz band already in 1943.

Yes, but my husband came in the late--

Yes. There was another-- it became known as the Ghetto Swingers when--

I heard of that.

Yes. There was a man born in Berlin named Martin Roman.

It's a name, yeah, Roman. Yeah.

Martin Roman.

Yes. But [CROSS TALK]

And he came through Holland. And he came together with Kurt Gerron. And they persuaded him to become the leader. And then he was asked by-- how do we call the Kommandant of the camp, Rahm, to make American, quote, American arrangements for the benefit of the visiting Red Cross.

I see.

And that's what he did.

Yes, but my husband had never mentioned this band. I suppose they were out of Theresienstadt with the Danish group.

No, no, no. They were there in June of '44. Absolutely. At the time of the filming, and they went on the last transports, probably in the fall. But I think, my impression is, having spoken with many survivors, they were very busy in their own area of--

Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

And the singers were busy with their concerts. And your husband was undoubtedly so busy with this--

He was very busy.

It was hard to be aware of the--



And he had a secretary.

Ah, he had a secretary. Aha.

And told where he was-- he was young, but he played the trumpet.

Played the trumpet.

And therefore, he got permission to play in this orchestra.

Yes.

And [PERSONAL NAME], he-- yes, when my husband played on the marketplace, the orchestra went together on the stage. And then he came, and he was not allowed to bear his-- carry his--

Baton.

--baton.

Oh, he wasn't it.

At night, it was [INAUDIBLE].

Oh, he carried the baton for him, and then gave it to him. I see.

If my husband couldn't conduct with his usual suit, he got a smoking jacket.

I see.

With a white shirt.

Did you mention ever anything specific, incidents in rehearsals or concerts or something of some individual player that he mentioned by name?

Well, yes, he know there is a-- I have forgotten his name. We have met him in Holland when we came with a Jewish orchestra. He was always there. And his wife died. And he has two children.

This was a Dutch musician?

He was in Holland, yeah, a Dutch, here in the Concertgebouw orchestra. He was the leader.

Oh, the leader.

Yes. And then he got the second place and so on. But when my husband died, it was-- I had no connection with them.

I wonder who that could be. A Dutch one?

Yes. And then there were-- was-- I think he was journalist at the Telegraph. And he invited us together with his daughter here in a restaurant. But this violinist, he-- we stayed at home, at his home. And he always came. We were three times in Holland. And he came every time.

He married again with a Jewish girl. She was in England. She had a married sister there. And her parents went out of Holland in time. And she was engaged. And the young man and his family never came back. And then she could [INAUDIBLE] and show them that she was going to be married with him.

And she-- they had an antique shop with Austrian gifts, things, very, very beautiful things and money and so on. And she got all this, what do you call it? Inherit.

Inheritance.

Yeah.

Inheritance. Just coming back for a moment to the orchestra, then as I understand, so your husband actually chose which pieces to be recorded.

Yes.

Did the arrangements.

Yes.

Conducted them.

Yes.

And--

The arrangement, Mendelssohn was arranged.

No, but I mean he made the arrangement, apparently, for the instruments which they had.

Yes. Yes.

Certainly, it was a bit smaller orchestra because--

Yes. But they got the-- through the Red Cross should come, they had a full orchestra. And they got a beautiful instrument. My husband could have taken it, but he didn't. They were much-- some of them took a while, you know. So he could have done it, but it didn't.

Yeah.

It was not belongs to him.

This other material that you have here, which you-- in these papers, this is what you and your daughter wrote down, essentially the same things that you're telling me now?

Yes.

I see.

Yeah, so, that's not so much.

This is the list of some of the pieces.

It was this. It's the last [INAUDIBLE]