

Tape. It's running. Trudy, I'm speaking in Brengen, in Switzerland, outside Zurich.

Benglen, Benglen.

Benglen, Benglen, the 12th of October, 1994 with Gertrude Trudy Solarová. And we're having a conversation about music and about Trudy's musical life and acquaintances in Prague and in Pilsen, and so on. I want to say to the following. This is how we start. Edith Kraus told me that you owe her a piece of bread.

Do I?

Yes. And I said, Edith, what piece of bread? Because Trudy wanted to play the Italian concerto of Bach.

Yeah?

There were no notes in Terezín.

Ah, yeah?

And Edith said, I wrote it down from memory.

Oh, and I did.

And Trudy said she would give me a piece of bread. Tell her, please. I'm still waiting for the piece of bread.

Oh, thank you so much, I'll say.

Do you remember that?

No, I don't. But I'm very pleased about it. I'll give her this piece of bread. And I say her very, very, very much thank you for it because I don't remember it. And I'm ashamed. I really don't remember it.

But do you remember wanting to play the Italian concerto?

Yeah. And I did play it, of course. I did play.

And she wrote it for you?

That I don't remember.

She said, she wrote it down from memory.

I don't remember. It's amazing if she did it.

I know.

It's amazing. I didn't know that.

I know. I know. I know. I know. Look, OK, let's go back and just say a few words about your own musical background-- where your education was, what you were doing before Terezín.

Oh, I started music like a little baby. I was about, oh, only six years. And some-- I used this horn of a car and cried, mommy, mommy, mimi. And they to the piano. And they looked for the tune. And they found it. And they said, oh, she's not even going to school. But let her teach music.

And I had a very nice teacher which was not a very good teacher. But then after one year, two years, she said, it's a pity. Let her have a better teacher because she's very musician. So and I had a professor, which

was Hilda Stern, I remember, was her name. I think Hilda Stern. And she was the assistant of Eduard Steuermann. You know his name?

Sure, of course.

Yeah. And then I got to Steuermann. I was a pupil of Eduard Steuermann.

This was in Vienna?

Yeah, in Vienna, still in Vienna. And in '38, when Vienna was occupied by Hitler, my father was Czech. Czech nationality, I was obviously the [NON-ENGLISH] in school, you know? So I went-- one year before, I had not even finished a gymnasium, but I went because I went to Prague and joined-- it was a German gymnasium in Mikulandská in Prague.

And I went to William Kurz, not the first year, after-- I had first year to do with school. And so after one year, and it was about '39, I suppose, I went to Kurz William Kurz. And you know his name from [GERMAN]. And he taught me. And there, of course, I met Gideon because he was absolutely number one at that.

That was in the master class?

It was. I couldn't join in a class. It was the Jews.

Oh, I see.

And I was a private pupil, like every Jew there. We couldn't go to-- I would have gone to the master class. I could not. So he went. And he took me like a master class, but privately. And you do know it. I'm very, very amazed about that. But he didn't ask money from me.

Did he teach you at home or in the school?

In his home.

In his home?

Yeah, in his home.

And at that time, did you still have--

--on [CZECH], in Prague, in [CZECH]. And I remember exactly, once, it was very mad about it because I had to make my earning to live. And I gave lessons in German in Prague. And being from Vienna, it was no problem for me to teach German, of course.

And I had to earn my money for a living for playing my room, by the room. And I hired a piano. And so I was busy. And I was going to school, of course. And he thought, I'm-- Professor Kurz, of course, thought I'm absolutely lazy because I didn't work as much as he wanted because I was busy. Once, he took the-- had the musics, the musics--

The notes.

--the notes, yes. And he throw them against the door. And without this, you're getting buried. And I remember sitting there on the staircases, and weeping, and weeping, and couldn't get out. I held out.

But you continued with him even so.

Of course, it did. And then they had two months of vacances, you know. And they had no school and no lessons. And I worked eight hours a day. And when I came and I played him, he was very astonished. And he got up. And he embraced me. And kissed me on the forehead. And from this moment, it was absolutely

changed. Up till then, it was a few months, he showed me his, this-- how to say, this-- unsympathetic-- how do you say in English, his--

Displeasure.

--displeasure, yeah. And from this moment, he was so impressed because I learned in these two months a whole-- it was a sonata. I don't know. I think-- which was it? I think the a whole sonata. It was the 30--

What was 31?

It was the number--

Tempest?

Tempest, yes, and then had the first album of the Chopin etudes. And that is hard work.

Chopin, obviously.

And then in two months, as you know, it was very-- he was very thrilled. And from this moment, he behaved to me with very-- absolutely with-- he honored me, somehow.

With respect.

With respect, yes, that's it-- very, very nice. He changed so much. And of course, I remember all of them. And Gideon was very-- and he had in his place in [CZECH], he had every-- I don't know exactly. But he had once in a year or twice a year, he had performances, private performances.

In the apartment?

In his place, yeah.

Because he was living with Eliska, also, I believe, at that time.

No, no, no.

No? He had his own place?

Oh, no, I talk about Kurz, excuse me.

Oh, still about Kurz.

Yeah, I talk about-- I [CROSS TALK] about Kurz, yeah.

Oh, Kurz, I understand.

And he had hit performances. And I played only once because the others played much more often. And always when Gideon played, it was really-- an [GERMAN]. What is it in English, an [GERMAN]?

[GERMAN]?

[GERMAN].

I don't remember. Never mind, I'll catch it later. It was-- it was a big thing when he played. Do you remember some works he played at that time?

He played, I remember one-- I remember him, it was "Appassionata" playing. It was [INAUDIBLE]. Yeah, I remember the "Appassionata" of him, yeah. I liked it so much. Yeah. And then Gideon went to Terežín. I

didn't know it, but Kurz told me that he was very sad. And not long after that, I had to go. We were aufgeboden. It was a-- we came-- became a letter where my transport number was AU1772-- AU1772.

And you went with your-- did you have family?

I absolutely--

No, you were just there yourself.

I was absolutely by my-- my sister went to England. She went like a cheery child, exactly-- she was with me in Prague about two months. And then she went because she was at the age she could go to England.

On the Kindertransport?

Kindertransport. And I was too old for that, a half a year too old. So my sister went to England. And I was occupied by myself.

Before you had to go yourself, you obviously knew that people were going to Terezín.

Yeah, but that--

You knew about it. But had you gotten your notification, do you remember when you got your actual notice to go?

Yeah, in May '42. And I went in May '42. A fortnight before I got it, I know that-- in what is the second half of May, I don't know exactly the day, maybe the 15th or-- and quickly.

Did any reports come back to those of you still in Prague about what Terezín was?

But now comes the interesting thing. Now, I want to tell you. And I went to Kurz to say him. And he said, don't worry. I'll let know Gideon. And he'll take care of you. Don't worry, he said. No. And the first thing he said, do you want to stay? Shall I try to hide you? And I said, no. Excuse me.

And I said, no. I don't want the risk for you. It's great of him. He offered me to hide me. I said, no, I don't think so. And then he said, if you go there, don't worry, because Gideon will take care of you. And he, I don't know which connection he had to Gideon, maybe via Eliza, maybe, I don't know whether Eliska. I know-- I don't know. But he got--

He wrote to him?

I don't think he wrote him. I don't know. But he left--

He left a note with somebody.

--note to somebody. And really don't know. I'm very interesting to know. I would like to know how it happened. But I don't know. And when I came out, it's a very interesting thing because my life is saved by Gideon. You know it from the book maybe. Because I know and the whole transport was a Straftransport. And it went directly to Poland. There was no Auschwitz still at that time. It was some-- it was Auschwitz [? family ?] camp, I think.

And a few ones, about-- I don't know, four or five-- or I can't say how much, but a few ones were kept immediately, taken out of the transport, which just-- which didn't stay even a night. They just went away from-- I don't know. Maybe we stayed the night. But I didn't see them because I was-- when we arrived by transport, they called a few numbers. And amongst these numbers were AU1772. And out I went.

And this was in Terezín?

It was in Terezín.

And the rest went on.

The rest went on.

So no-- and my life is really saved by Gideon.

That means that he would have known. First, he knew you were coming. And--

Yeah, do you know?

--so now, he would have known you're going.

Yeah, because he were aufbaukommando. You know, he had the chances. And he knew the names of the list. He had the chance to get information, the right ones, or to have some immediately. And so I was really saved by Gideon.

Let me ask you, too, just to back up a minute. When you knew him in Prague, was it only in the framework of both of you studying with Kurz? Or were you personally friendly with him also?

No, and I honored him. I was shy. He was like a star to me. It's like me being a human being and he being a real comet. I didn't. I got very close to, near to him in Terezín. And we got friends in Terezín.

And how did that start? I mean, so you arrived.

So I arrived at and he took care of me. He really, he was like a brother. Had a family member here there, I had nobody, but I had Gideon. And he was great, really. So and he said to go to the Jugend--

The Jugend Madchenheim.

Oh, yeah, Madchenheim. And then I had to do with children there. And he arranged, really, more or less, my being there, a very convenient and comfortable one, I must say because I had with a nice girl a bed together. And then he, when we had to-- he didn't know, probably, about that. There was a horrible piano there and monster piano. And he repaired it, all the strings which were broken. And here he was as-- he was a master of repairing glory, his mechanic work, all he did. You know about that, probably.

And they brought it to the camp.

Yeah, and then I had a chance to practice. And then he said, you do the watch, then, because we will make an evening for Beethoven sonatas. And you will play the watch then. And I did it.

Did you have notes or it was from memory?

I had notes.

That you brought with you?

No, never.

You found some there?

No, Gideon gave it to me. He was absolutely the leader. So I started working to [NON-ENGLISH]. And once-- and no, I must interrupt it because at the same time, meanwhile, Rafik Schachter started to do the [? proranka ?] for [NON-ENGLISH].

OK.

And now, I start with Rafael. Rafael, at this time-- in the meantime, Rafi started making his [INAUDIBLE]. And I was singing. I was very-- Rafael, remembered me somehow, Erna Grunfeldová because he was her friend.

Rafi was her friend?

Rafi was her friend, yeah. And he was-- I feel always like a little fit brother. He was fat, a little roundy. And I mocked myself about him. And I liked him very much. And so when he started, of course, I was in the choir. And the husband was in the choir as well. I was in the alt-- now, it's funny.

Did you--

I was-- and then my husband was in the highest tenor. And it's funny, no? And once, I-- now, going back, as a Dachkammer, we practiced by march time. Because I had a date. We had a date where we had to have it. Gideon was very serious. He said, now, you work. And you have it. And there came blond, a chap. And said, are you Trude Reis? I said, yeah, Reisová. And I said, yeah. May I please listen to your practice? Of course, and if you don't talk, I don't mind. And then when I went next, our proby for the [? proranka ?].

And was this on the fixed-up piano in the attic?

That was the fixed one. But then we had a proper in the [INAUDIBLE] with Rafael. And then he came to me. And they said, talking about music. And he said he's playing, he's a student. But he is playing organ. And I said, that must be marvelous. That must be the queen of all the-- or the king of all the instruments because you can do so much. And you use your feet and so on. And so we got in touch. And Gideon taught me [GERMAN]. But he was not happy about me. I think nobody would have been. I was most stupid for that.

But this was private lessons?

There in Terezín, you know.

Yes.

Yeah, he said, you should do something about. In this direction, he was really-- you know, he got the order of his master, of Kurz, to keep me-- how to say that-- yeah, to go on with me in working.

So you had enough free time to do this besides what you had to do?

Yeah, we did it the evenings, of course. I had evenings, evenings, at about 6:00, or 7:00, or 8 o'clock. Then I had once a week a lesson with him in harmony. But that was not too bad, but counterpoint, I hated. And he was amazed how stupid I could be. And once, he said-- he called me [NON-ENGLISH]. And he said me always you, in German Sie, or in Czech, you, as-- not you, like friendly, you like Sie, you know, in German, you.

Yes, sure, Du/Sie.

Sie.

Did you speak in German or Czech? Czech, always Czech. We spoke only Czech with Gideon. Always Czech, yeah, only [NON-ENGLISH] or Sie. [CZECH]-- now, I start Czech. Eliska told me once, I don't-- he's only two persons, he says, he says Sie. It's her, his-- he had a girlfriend, a very nice girl, a blonde one, in Terezín, and me. The others, he says Du. The only two which I was a bit closer to him later. And once, he said, I told you, I don't know about this blond chap. I don't give my finger for him. But he'll be your partner, I think so. And he was right.

And that was Gustav?

That was Gustav, that's right. And he knew him, of course. And I made them know each-- I introduced them.

So did you have the concert?

Yeah.

Who else played?

Gideon.

What did he play? Which Beethoven?

"Appassionata."

He played the "Appassionata." And was it the third or just the two?

Yeah, it was the third. And it was-- if I know the name, he was from Brno. He was older.

Oh, Bernard Kaff.

That's right. You help me. I say, I see. I see the person for wise. But I don't remember his name-- Bernard Kaff. And he played-- I don't know what. No, I don't really. I can't remember.

But he was professor already.

He was professor. And he was third one. We were three.

And how was the audience?

Oh, great.

Yes?

Yeah, great.

Yes. All up in the attic. I know that attic. We've recorded for the BBC film in that attic.

Yeah, it was great. And this professor was very busy. And had-- we were mocking him. We were laughing about him because he had a-- do you say "stum"?

Oh, a stump-- he had what's called a dumb keyboard.

A dumb keyboard, yeah.

Dumb keyboard.

He had a dumb keyboard. And he was always practicing. And I said, what is he doing? It's no sense in it, I mean, if you don't listen what you do. He was so practicing always on this instrument, which had no voice.

That was Robert Schumann wrote these house rules and maxims for young musicians.

Yeah?

And he said, practicing on a dumb keyboard is the same as having a person who cannot speak teach you to speak.

Oh, that's right. I thought I didn't know. But I found it like that. And we were very laughing about him, even Gideon. Because he was always practicing this with his piece of work, dumb keyboard, as I said. Yes, I remember that. Oh, we were both musicians. As a matter of fact, I remember Krása because I liked "Brundibár" there very much.

You heard "Brundibár?"

Yeah, and I knew him. I knew him, of course. Did you know him from Prague?

No, no.

Only in Terezín.

Only in Terezín.

And when you say you knew him, you got to know him personally?

No, of course. We met, all of us met. Of course, we did. And we had lots of discussions or so. But I was not friendly with him. I was very friendly with Gideon. I was very friendly with Rafael, but not with Krása. But I appreciate this is very much. I liked it so much. It's a sweet, it's really.

How was he as a person?

Strange.

Strange?

Yeah, strange, somehow strange. I don't know. I could get very warm with Rafael. And I could get-- I wouldn't say warm with Gideon, but very intellectually warm. With Rafael, it was a feeling like a family member. With Gideon, it was more, it was always a little-- like saying me always Sie, and [NON-ENGLISH], not Trudy, [NON-ENGLISH]. And it was always a cultural and intellectual contact. Yeah.

And he was like-- yeah. I had too much respect for him. I think I was-- I felt a little girl with a-- I tell you, with a comet. Because he was not only a pianist, which he was great, but he was so bright in mathematics, in everything. Everything, I just knocked and I talked to him. He knew so much that he was impressing me. And I was not even 19 years old. It's very easy to be to impressed, of course. He was not much older than I am, about four or five years. But he knew so much. And I felt so stupid.

Did you hear him perform besides that? He gave several recitals. And he played chamber music with Pavel Kling, and Freddie Mark.

Yes, of course, I was always present.

Great kind of concert.

Yeah, yeah, of course. And there was a good-- if you would like to know about music, so it was a very good string quartet we had.

Of Karel Frohlich?

Yeah.

Karel Frohlich and then Heinrich Taussig, Roman Zusman, and Freddy Mark.

Freddy Mark. And Freddy Mark was the best of them, if you ask me.

Really?



Yeah. It was the best, absolutely the best of the four. He was the best.

Do you remember the pieces on any program that they gave?

No, I was always when they had their-- how do you call [NON-ENGLISH]?

A rehearsal?

Not really, a program, a rehearsal. They always informed me. I was always present.

Because they gave one program, which started with Gideon's Fantasy and Fugue for string quartet and then a Beethoven Opus 18.

Yeah, that's right, the 18. Yeah, that's right.

So you were at that concert?

No, only to hear this. Yeah.

So you probably heard the Fantasy And Fugue, which he wrote for them there.

Ah, maybe.

And if you didn't at the time, when you hear--

That I'm glad. Thank you very much.

--the recording, it will refresh your memory.

That may be. Yes. It's a long time. It's a long time ago.

And any chamber music when Gideon was the pianist, trios or piano quartets?

Yeah, I heard it. Yeah, I heard it. Of course, only rehearsals. No, I heard one. Oh, no, I remember I heard one, one performance. I see it. I see it for me. I don't know where it was. I see it, how it happened, but I can't remember where it was. It's-- it was amazing. Yes, it was one rehearsal. And Karel Frohlich, I remember playing there. Do not know whether I to met with him. Does he live?

Not anymore, but he did until the '70s. In the 1970s, he passed away.

Oh, where did he play?

Well, he continued his career.

Where?

I think in the States and Europe. He finished living in New York.

Pavel Kling, I met two or three years ago because he's a friend of my daughter's family.

Yes. Let me jump a minute just because we touched on it and go back to Hans Krása. You said he behaved sort of in a strange way. Did you hear, besides "Brundibár," any of his music?

Oh, yes, because I once-- he was keen to show me his works. And I was really interested, and he felt I'm interested. So I remember me-- it's always, I see now, it's 50 years ago. And I see myself in the age of 18-19 sitting near Krása.

It was some-- I remember him so quiet, a bit little red-haired and a little too with strange because he was-- he was seen. And I would say, his face was a little like an U, a U, so this form. And he-- and you can't exactly say what was so funny in him. But he was a little funny. Little funny, even just his voice-- because I'm a musician, I'm depending on voices. And I like the voices when they are relaxed and low [GERMAN].

Did he have a tense, higher voice?

A little higher, yeah. And it was-- I can complete with his looking-- it looked like in his voice was actually a unit, a unit for me.

When he showed you these pieces, did he play it for you or just show you the score?

No, he sang. He sang.

Was it one of his string trios, maybe?

No, yeah, maybe it was. But he had no instrument. And he showed it to me, the song and the dance, write it. And he showed me his notices. And he sang. And I always liked him very much when he-- his music was gay, somehow, I find, gay. And in the time, was not gay. And I appreciated that very much. And I myself was a gay person, a very gay and a very [? riff ?] person. And I liked that on him.

Now, here's something that would interest us very much. Did you attend, by chance, a recital with-- what was his name-- Walter Windholz--

No.

--and Rafi Schachter playing the piano.

No.

OK.

No, no.

Because they did lieder. And they did Ullmann's songs and Hans Krása's songs. So you wouldn't have heard that.

No, no, yeah, no.

You wouldn't have heard that.

No. Maybe I was away already.

When did you leave Terezín?

No, if I knew that.

The big musicians left in the last transports in October '44.

I left earlier.

You left before?

I left before, yeah. So maybe that's the reason why I don't know these things. I left before. Yeah.

It could be. It could be

I left before.

It could be. Did you have any contact or remember anything of Ullmann?

I didn't even know him.

You didn't know him?

No.

And you didn't hear any of his music?

No, no.

And what about Pavel Haas?

I knew him, yeah. Yeah.

Did you by chance-- if you would have heard it-- it was in April '44, he did a recital-- no, he didn't do the recital. It was Karel Berman and Rafi Schachter

Oh, yes I know well.

They did Beethoven, Dvorak, Smetana, and Pavel Haas's Chinese songs.

Yeah, yeah.

You heard that first concert?

No, I didn't hear it. The concert, I didn't hear. But I heard them working, yeah.

You heard them working.

Because Rafael showed me. Ah, but only the start. Maybe I went away before this was.

Could be. Could be.

It could be the reason because Rafael would have told me.

Yes, yes. And did you hear Edith Kraus performing?

Of course.

Yes?

Yeah.

Recitals and so?

Yeah, yeah, yeah. She was she was a active person.

Yes.

Yeah.

Yes. She gave an all Bach concert.

Yeah, yeah, very much. Yeah. And [INAUDIBLE], I remember, as well.

I think so. And she played Mozart.

To whom do I owe the piece of bread?

Edith.

Oh, that's great. That's a history of my life. I will-- I'll tell it to everyone.

You see--

I don't remember. She really did write it, the concert for me? I didn't know it. if she tells it, it will be true.

Sure. And Edith is very-- she's very modest. And sometimes, you have to really prod her to get information. For example, for a long time, I knew that she gave the premiere at Ullmann's request, of the sixth sonata. But I didn't know. I said Edith, one day, what was the program? She said, oh, a recital. Silence. Said, what did you play? Well, I opened with Kreisleriana Schumann. Then I played Ullmann number six. And then I played the Brahms F minor sonata. Did you by chance hear that program?

No, sorry.

No, no, no.

No. Maybe I was away.

Yes, yes.

No, I'm sure I was already away, which I'm sorry because I missed a lot.

Yeah. What were your feelings being in this camp, having Gideon to look after you a bit, becoming friends with Rafi Schachter and so on, but not having family, and knowing what the conditions were, and certainly suffering a bit-- or a lot, as everybody did, and having a fear of what's really coming? We don't know. And transports are going on.

Not at all, I must say.

Did you feel it?

No, I must have been absolutely idiotically stupid because I really was an optimist. And I was a-- I had some instinct I will survive. And I didn't bother. I really did not bother. I tell you, if my child asks me, Mommy, why don't you tell about the concentration camp, I say always, I don't know what I should tell you. I can only since I'm an adult tell you the things I have the responsibility. I pay for it. And I am very careful because I have the responsibility.

But there's one thing, I always feel like a bird. You can shoot a bird. It has no responsibility. And I felt the whole time easy because I had just no responsibility. The other ones who hurt me had the responsibility. And they had to suffer for it, but not I. That is my freedom. And that is why I don't suffer about all. And I had a bad time in the concentration camp. I don't talk about it. It's like having a pneumonia or a very hard grip or something, and flu.

But you said, you did have a bad time?

A very bad time. If you ask me, I can tell you. But it was a very bad time. I tell you, it was really a bad time. But I can't-- it's like having a bad flu with-- or something, and you have a high fever. But it gets over and you don't remember it. Do you remember a very bad flu or a pneumonia where you had 40 degrees and you were suffering? Not really. And that's the same with my whole time.

But was your music, your music-making, your music-hearing, was this something so dominant that somehow, it compensated for the very bad time that you also had?

Yeah. I could always believe in musics here. I could even listen to musics if I had none. I could really, if I wish, I could today. I sit down and I hear some concert which is in my brain or in my memory. But not even that. I think it's a naivete which kept me free from all. I am somehow-- I stay till my death a child-- not childish, but a child. You can't harm a child, really. It can be unhappy. But it won't suffer for long. It will weep. And that's my way how I survived.

Did you hear any of the big performances? Did you hear the Verdi Requiem? Did you hear any operas?

Of course I-- did you hear?

So you heard Verdi?

Of course. [VOCALIZING]. I start to.

That must have been tremendously exciting.

Oh, it was absolutely high spot. See, Verdi was absolutely the high spot in my music life in Terezín. It was the high spot. And was Gideon playing the piano, the orchestra part of the piano?

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, that must have been.

No, it was Rafael. No, it was Rafael.

He conducted?

He conducted. And then yes, Gideon, yeah. And he played in the rehearsals. He played as well. Yeah. But it's a concert Gideon played, yeah. It was-- the choir was, I would say, professional. And Berman was singing. His voice was not strong enough. But he was very clear. But this girl, the blonde, what was her name?

[PERSONAL NAME]?

Yeah. She was so good, it's a great thing. She was so good.

She was the alto or the mezzo?

Yeah.

Yes. Who was the soprano? I don't remember who without looking.

Who else is on there?

Ada Schwartz?

Yeah.

Ada Schwartz played.

Yeah, yeah. Richtig, yeah. You remember the name, I remember the faces. You know, I see the person singing.

And the tenor was David Grunfeld.

[GERMAN], yeah.

Tell me anything you remember of Grunfeld.

Not much. I don't know him. Don't know him. Did you have any contact-- two musicians that I'd be very interested. One was a young boy, maybe 17 years old, named Robert Dauber. He was a cellist and a pianist. And he played cello in the quartet part of "Brundibár."

No, sorry. Have I seen him? I don't know how he looks.

And the other one was Zikmund Schul.

No, neither.

No?

No.

Neither of them.

No, neither one.

Tell me, did you hear any of the light music? Did you hear the Ghetto Swingers jazz band playing in the Stadtkapelle?

Absolutely not.

Not light music?

No I didn't. I was not interested.

So you wouldn't have heard cabaret of Karl Schwenk.

Oh, Karl Schwenk was a very good, a close-- I know that Karl Schwenk. Oh, Karl Schwenk was in love with me. So it's very--

Oh, please, tell. I'll tell you why afterwards. But tell everything that you can remember of Karl Schwenk.

I can't because it hurts me. My heart is bleeding. It's so hard. Karl Schwenk was such a nice chap, so sweet. And I felt so sorry for him because he was in love with me. And I could really not feel his feelings. But I liked him so much. And I feel guilty, somehow, because he was--

How did you meet? What brought you together? I mean you were in a different world of music than he was. He was in theater and cabaret.

Yeah, of course, but he-- I was really interesting him. So here, he just asked me. And he just started talking to me. And he asked me if I could not go comment and have a look at his things. And I had. He really was looking for me. So that's the way how we got in touch, a young man and a young girl. But unfortunately, he was not my type. I had Gustav already.

Yes, of course. So did you hear?

Yeah, of course.

You heard some cabarets?

Yeah, of course. Schwenk was a friend of mine. But he's not a musician. You asked me about musicians.

No, well, but he's-- I'm not only interested just in musicians. But Schwenk was a good friend of mine.

And he made these cabaret songs.

Yeah, he made so. And he was such a clever person, somehow clever. Very clever, really. And we had chatters about-- we could sit-- he always found a place. I see myself. I can't tell you where it was. I see myself on a bank, in a shadow, and talking together, and because he was seeking for my presence, you know.

Was it up on the-- how do you call it these ramparts?

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

You would go up above it?

No, no, it was-- no, not that. It was in the hidden room. No, the [NON-ENGLISH]. No, no. That's where I went with my husband before [INAUDIBLE]. That's where. And then we had now a funny things with my husband.

When we walked on the [PLACE NAME], these green places, yes, there were three trees. One was beautiful. And we called him the Beethoven. One was lovely, and it was our Mozart. And we said. And we had-- all the trees had a name. It was so. We are always musicians. And we said, how must the world be if there are lots of trees? These three trees were the world for us, especially the Beethoven. Was a huge tree with many, many leaves. Oh, was beautiful.

When did you marry your husband? It wasn't in Terezín.

In Terezín.

In Terezín?

Yeah, the first marriage. But we also married again in Prague, of course.

After the war?

Yeah, after the war. We were second-- twice, we were twice. This is.

And the marriage in Terezín, it was with a rabbi? It was Jewish marriage?

No, we-- it was-- we were registrated.

Yes.

That's all. You couldn't make more. And we got a huge present of cucumbers and tomatoes. And also, we had a bit of--

Oh, a luxury.

We had luxury.

What luxury.

Yeah.

Yeah, yeah. Who could even somehow find it to give you such things?

Oh, yeah, they were working in the agriculture. They were a friend of ours, was working there in the agriculture-- how do you call the district. And she brought us, this whole fruits and all the things, yeah.

Yes. To go back for a moment to concerts, I suppose that you must have heard Alice Herz-Sommer play?

Of course.

Yes.

I know her very well.

Does she live still?

In London.

Does she live in London?

Yes, yes, she does.

Do you see her sometimes?

When I'm in London, yeah.

Can you please tell her to give her my-- can you do that--

I will, I will.

--and tell her my address?

I'll give-- when I'm back, I'll make a note of it. I'll send you the address of Edith. I'll send you the address.

Yeah, of Alice Herz-Sommer, I would-- yeah.

Also, sure. Sure.

That would be very interesting.

They would be delighted.

That's very nice.

Now, that was-- by the way, and I interviewed her. I spoke with her. I didn't really make an interview. She's Dutch. She lives near Amsterdam in a small town. I've forgotten her name. I can't remember it at the moment. You must have been gone by the time the visit of the Red Cross was in June '44.

Yeah.

And when they were filming the propaganda film. You must not have known about it.

No.

No.

No.

Where did you go from Terezín?



First to Auschwitz. And I was not long in Auschwitz, how long-- not long.

So you went to a labor camp?

Yeah. And I was delivered in Mauthausen. And with a bad, bad, bad TB because there was a Polish girl, beauty of a girl, typically Jewish beauty-- black eye, black hair. And she had some tremendous red cheeks, the cheeks were red. And she was high fevered. And when she died, she had a [NON-ENGLISH]. How do you call it in English? Blood lungs. How do you call it?

A rupture.

Yeah, a ruptured blood. And when-- and I hold her in my arms. And then she was so thirsty. And I gave her water out of my S shoes. And I did not care. If somebody dies and wants water, you don't think about your S shoes.

What is S shoes, your drinking cup?

No, we had one thing where we had for tea, for soup. It's such like a soldier. And you put.

Oh, I see. It's like a pot.

Yeah, a pot.

S shoes-- S shoes.

In the propaganda film, I've seen one picture in particular, two ladies are going down the street near maybe the Magdeburg kaserne. And they're carrying these pots.

These S shoes, S shoes, [GERMAN], S shoes. [GERMAN]. And as a matter of fact, when we went in the transport before they were delivering, before we came to Mauthausen, then we met our needs in this. And then we had our drinks of this, where we had that. And we were like-- it was a lot for 30 kettles. And there were about 100 persons. And we couldn't really sit. We were standing like sardines. And you couldn't even move. And everyone-- it was a train. That's not important.

Well, what do you remember of hearing Heda Grabova?

She was a good voice.

Yes? You heard some program?

Yeah. Sure.

Did you hear it-- you know, there were concerts of Jewish music.

No, I haven't heard it.

Local recitals of Jewish music.

No, I have not heard it. All the music I had was always in connection, yeah, in connection with Gideon and Rafael.

Now, maybe you heard because they were on it. There were four concerts produced by Viktor Ullmann for the Studio für die Neue Musik.

No, I have not heard it.

You didn't hear it.

I had heard about it, but I have not heard it.

And there was a song cycle by Gideon called "Die Best."

I have so unfortunately not heard it.

A pity, that's a pity.

But you have not heard that?

Pavel Kling played in that concert. He remembers it.

I have not heard it.

And that is the one main major--

When was it, please? When was it? '44?

I think it was-- no, no, it was before.

Earlier?

'43, perhaps. Oh, maybe I was-- I was months ill with encephalitis in Terezín. It was two months, two months out of all, I was in a hospital there. I had encephalitis. It was one of the four cases which were, for two months, paralyzed. I could move. But I got out of it.

You didn't hear any programs where he was a pianist, but he played accordion before there were very many pianos, Wolfi Lederer?

The name, I know.

He gave a recital with Karel Frohlich.

Yeah, I know him.

And they played Kreutzer sonatas accompanying on accordion.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

You heard it?

Yeah.

That must have been very strange.

I didn't like it. I hated it.

I can imagine.

I think I heard it and Gideon did. And we said both said with a curse. We cursed, really. Yeah, I think that was not nice. No, I don't like it.

Well, it was just out of desperation to do with whatever you have. And if you have something, you do it, even though it sounds bad.

Maybe. But we are not tolerant enough.

Since you had to do with, well, maybe with the children, there was the poet-- she was a poet and other things. And she was in charge of the children's infirmary, Ilse Weber. She was a nurse.

I know the name.

And she accompanied herself sometimes on some of her own songs, which was--

But she was a bit older than I am. Was she older?

She would have been.

Yeah, I know. I know. I know her, yeah. I remember a little.

And she used to sing some of her songs-- [GERMAN].

Yeah.

You might have heard her.

Yeah.

I suppose. I don't think she played at concerts.

No, no.

No, there was one, one poster in the Karl Herman collection actually has her on a program.

Yeah?

Or at least her songs.

I don't remember.

I don't know if she played or not. I don't think she played. But somebody sang her songs.

That may be, yeah.

Somebody sang her songs.