

Yeah, he was saying that Theresienstadt was tame in comparison to Auschwitz. And in that truly surrealistic milieu, I suddenly heard music. And I thought I was hallucinating. But it was something like a very small orchestra, wind orchestra. And Martin Roman was part of that orchestra. And they were playing to the work gangs that were being marched out of the camp.

Yes. He told me he had to arrange marches in this way.

Yeah, they were playing marches.

Yes. Yes.

But speaking of light music, I loved listening to the ghetto singers. And I remember that the ghetto singers were doing a medley from Hans Krása's *Brundibár*. And Krása came to one of the rehearsals and stood there, shaking his head and admiring the orchestra because they had a very refined way of changing the rhythm, and sometimes, the intonation, and introducing glissandi. There were no glissandi in the original.

Yes, of course.

And I guess it was Fritz Weiss, the clarinet player, who arranged this. And I, being an admirer of jazz music, was once asked to try to play something jazzy, which I did. And it was-- I still remember, it was the song [NON-ENGLISH]-- "Alone with a Girl in the Rain." And I played it with my variations. And they laughed and said, Tommy, Papa Haydn Wood couldn't have done it better.

Yes.

And I admire that, for instance, Paul Cohen was an accomplished trumpet player and a very good classical cellist.

Right. Was he the brother of [? Viktor ?] Cohen?

Yes. It was a whole family of musicians.

Yes.

Their father, old Mr. Cohen, played the string bass.

In Terezín?

Yeah. And Pavel Cohen's wife, who was a very lovely person, was originally a pianist. And when Jews were no longer allowed to own a piano, she secretly learned the clarinet. And she was a née Katz. And we joked, you wanted to get rid of the Jewish name of Katz. And that's why you married Cohen.

Did you know Cohen personally?

Pavel Cohen?

Yeah-- ah, no, Viktor.

Yes. [INAUDIBLE].

Yes, because there's only one composition of his which is known. It's a prelude on the name of "Edelstein" for a string quartet. I don't know if it was performed in the ghetto--

I don't know.

--at all. That reminds me, there's another piece, which Karel Frohlich, after the war, in the '70s said that he

remembered performing. And that was Hans Krása's "Theme and Variations for String Quartet." And the theme was Hannah's song from incidental music that he composed to Adolf Hoffmeister's play, "Youth in the Game" in 1945. I wonder if, by chance, you've heard that word.

No, no.

Yes. Tell me a bit about Hans Krása.

Hans Krása was the typically elegant man, an artist who smiled at most things. And I remember his conversation with the pianist [? Juliette ?] [? Harani, ?] who was a very lovely person and a very gifted pianist. And she made a remark, isn't it sad? Now, I've been living for a year in Theresienstadt and I haven't slept with a man. And I was listening with great interest. And Krása told to me, Tommy, you should wonder how to get from C major into D major, how to modulate, and not listen to things unfit for your ears. And he was a great maestro of ironical wit.

Did you hear any of his music performed in the ghetto, including perhaps "Brundibár?"

Yeah, "Brundibár," I knew well, of course.

But other things-- he wrote two string trios.

I guess one of them, I must have heard.

One was a dance, and one was using some of the same melodic material of Passacaglia and Fugue. That was in 1944.

It's quite possible, but I don't remember.

Did you, by chance, in April '44 hear Karel Berman's recital in which he introduced the Chinese songs [BOTH TALKING]

Yeah, I remember that. And again, I was very impressed by Haas because I knew his study for strings, was it? And I somehow understood that he must be an all-round composer.

Yes, yes. There is a work, unfortunately lost, but Bernard Kaff played his cortita for solo piano.

Yeah. I remember Kaff was telling me that he was practicing it. Kaff, at one time, was tsar Alteste, elder of the so-called living quarters. And he sat behind his desk. And all the time, he was memorizing music.

Now, another kind of music that we haven't talked about yet, and I'm curious if you were aware of or heard, is, of course, cabaret-- the Czech cabarets of Karel Svenk and the German cabaret, "Karussell," which was done by Martin Roman and Kurt Gerron.

Of Kurt Gerron.

Did you?

Yeah. I still remember the German cabaret, the "Karussell." and Kurt Gerron looked to me like something out of the "Beggar's Opera." And he looked like a mixture of Rascal and Saint because he would perform for nothing for old people, who could no longer move about. And he did it, really, with only one purpose, to make them happy for a couple of minutes. Did you hear him sing the [INAUDIBLE] of [? Hilzen ?] and [BOTH TALKING]

Yeah, I did hear that. And it was a very convincing rendition.

Did he do it, I imagine-- I'm familiar with the recordings of him in the '30s. And I can imagine that he didn't do it all in normal bel canto, but semi-speaking.

No, no. Yeah, [GERMAN], something like that.

Yes, yes, yes. Did you by chance hear another one that he evidently also-- well, it was written for him-- all of them, of course, by Martin-- [GERMAN]?

I don't remember that.

That was a text, I think, either by Neil Strauss or Manfred [PERSONAL NAME] And Martin told me that the pieces that they performed for the film included the "Bugle Call Rag," the "Tiger Rag," and the "Karussell" song itself. But I had never heard until now, and I'm so pleased to hear, that they did an arrangement of [? Fritz?] Weiss of the "Wunderbar" music. That's fascinating.

Yeah.

Yeah. I didn't know that at all. I mentioned to you the other day, and I'd like, really, to hear whatever you have to remember about Robert Dauber. He was also--

A very--

--close to your age.

--gifted-- yeah, gifted cellist who was playing at the coffeehouse orchestra. And we planned to form a trio with the pianist [? Neto, ?] who was primarily a jazz pianist, but interested in classical music. But it never materialized because we all were deported to-- no, [? Neto ?] was, for reasons unknown to me, taken to the Kleine Festung small fortress and murdered there.

What was his first name? I haven't heard it.

[? Mirko ?] [? Neto. ?]

[? Mirko ?] [? Neto. ?]

[? Mirko ?] [? Neto. ?] I don't know what the accusation, if any, was. And Dauber and I were deported to Auschwitz so.

Now, in, 1942, there's a postcard that Robert wrote to his parents. Adolph Dauber, of course, was very well known. And he said that I'm playing in the Stadtkapelle. And we're playing in the music pavilion, I mean, an orchestra with 40 men.

This cannot have been '42.

No?

No, because the Stadtkapelle was, I guess, started performing in '43, I guess.

But he says, in a short time, my serenade will be performed. And this serenade is a very, very beautiful and sentimental piece for violin and piano. You don't recall having heard it or known about it?

No, no, no.

It's the only piece of music by him which survives. There was, by the way, another young man, named [? Jiri ?] [? Kuhlemann-- ?]

Yeah, I knew him.

--from whom there's one string quartet piece.

So it did survive. Because I mentioned this name to Joza Karas, who wrote the book music in Terezín. And he told me that the name sounded completely unfamiliar. And now, I'm learning that something survived.

This was the piece, the one-movement piece of a quartet.

And speaking of young people who vanished, the son of a medical doctor from Vienna, Georg [PERSONAL NAME] was a violinist who studied with Heinrich Taussig. And he was a very gifted violinist, playing the [INAUDIBLE] G major concerto. And he was sent to Auschwitz. And he, of course, his father was immediately murdered in Auschwitz because he was an elderly gentleman.

And naturally, Georg was very depressed. And I tried to cheer him up. And I still remember when one of the SS troopers started shooting at one of the prisoners. I said to him, [GERMAN], which is a quotation from the Fledermaus. And he looked at me in amazement and said, Tommy, I don't know how long I've been here. But I've never smiled. But now I can smile.

And I found out much later that he was deported from Auschwitz to Dachau. And in the extermination camp, Dachau-Kaufering-I, one, I found out that Georg [PERSONAL NAME] had been there, but died of typhoid fever.

What contact did you have, either personally or in hearing his music, of Viktor Ullmann?

I had quite a good personal contact. Both were in connection with his music and his personality. Victor Ullmann and my father were almost friends because both of them had been members at the anthroposophical society. And I had very many conversations with Ullmann on music.

And being the rebellious kid I was, I would say things like, tonality is a thing of the past. And he'd say, Tommy, how can you say such a thing? Such a subtle organism as tonality, and you simply dismiss it as something belonging to the past. Or I would say, counterpoint is a toy for fools. Really good composers didn't use it, like Beethoven in his concerto.

And he told me, look, can you sing or whistle to me the main theme? Which I did, and said, Tommy you're fighting against your own positions. It's a feat of counterpoint. It looks like a scale, but it basically is. And he explained why. But he would talk about other things too, about architecture, and philosophy, and anthroposophy. And he had-- which is a little-known fact, a very good sense of humor.

Oh, I was going to ask that. Yes.

And he sometimes would say, if I were a German professor, I'd say, [GERMAN]. So I must do some little research having 15 minutes left. So I'd say, I have to do some composing.

Did you hear any of his music performed?

I was a member of the little orchestra that was performing the stage music for [INAUDIBLE] ballads, which were performed on stage. And the music was by Victor Ullmann.

Yes.

And it continued a violin too. And that was me. And so I was able to reconstruct for the Swedish Kulturhuset the pirate song from the [INAUDIBLE].

Which, when you related this to Ingo Schulze, of course, he printed it--

Yeah, yeah.

--in that book?

In his book.

Yeah, yeah. Were you aware of or in attendance at the rehearsals, if you were still there in September '44, of the Kaiser von Atlantis?

Yeah. I didn't play in the orchestra, but I listened to the rehearsals. And I was greatly impressed, especially by the main theme played at that part of the score by the oboe. And I recognized the music when I heard it again in the late '80s on TV.

The oboe, you refer to?

No, the theme.

Or the trumpet? [VOCALIZING].

No, no, it was something something.

Oh, it's just after the prologue.

Yeah. In Terezín, it was played by the oboe.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. There's a banjo accompaniment in eighth notes. And suddenly, it runs away from me. But I know exactly what it is. The saxophone comes in. It's the first intermezzo immediately after the prologue and before the [INAUDIBLE] begin their duet.

I recognize the music, which is an incredibly powerful argument in favor of this music. Because if you have heard a thing once or twice and recognize it after decades, it cannot be better.

Did you hear enough in hearing the rehearsals to be aware of a number of quotations?

No.

No?

No.

No. Because his seventh piano sonata, which was not performed in Terezín, is also full of all kinds of quotations, including from his own music. And one person who heard it in the '80s in Munich said, if we had heard that there, we would have gone crazy because of the symbolic significance of these various quotations that we heard. Well, we could go on, and on, and on. Are there any other things which stand out very strongly of the musical life in your memory?

Yeah. By the way, I remember now the composers name of "La Serva Padrona," it was Pergolesi.

Of course. Of course, of course.

And look, one of the great sorrows to me, personally, is-- and this is only words to any listener-- the music by Heinz Rosensweig. I even now recall the main theme of his concerto for violin. And I still insist that he is a composer was a genius. And not one single note of music has survived.

He was deported to some extermination camp even before Auschwitz was functioning. He was deported, I guess, in April '42, together with his mother. And his father and his brother were living in the Soviet Union, escaped there, and vanished without a trace too.

The name, I don't know.

So the whole family vanished as if they had never lived. And there are so-- look, there was that poet-- he

doesn't belong to our conversation, so to say-- but Georg Kafka. He was a distant relative of Franz Kafka. His poetry hasn't survived. I had a very dear friend who worked with me in one of the work groups in Dachau-Kaufering-III. His name was Hans [? Goldman. ?] He was a very talented poet. His poetry has not survived. And he died in Kaufering thereabout.

I think at least one poem is printed in Adler's book.

Yeah, you are right. Yeah, one poem.

Yes. He's a cousin of the pianist who recorded the fifth and seventh sonatas on our first CD, Robert [? Goldman, ?] who lives in Munich. And it's actually Robert's, I think, brother for whom he played the seventh sonata in '85. And he got so excited. He said, if we only had heard this music. Tell me, the last work of Gideon was, of course, a string trio. And it was completed nine days before he went on the transport, on October 16. Did you-- one person, Elisa Schiller, who was here, said that she remembers hearing it. Did you hear it?

No. I didn't hear it.

No. No. Well, did you, by chance-- I didn't ask that. Did you know the singer Walter [? Windmiller? ?]

I don't remember the name.

You don't remember. Because on one of his recitals, there's three songs of Hans Krása, which should have been the [? Rambo ?] songs with clarinet, viola, and cello. But there's so many things. Did you hear Edith Kraus perform?

Yes, I did hear her.

Which concert might that have been?

It was the concert in the hall, where the so-called bank was working. And she was a wonderful pianist. And I did hear Hertz, the pianist.

Alice Hertz.

Alice Sommer Hertz, playing "Les Adieux" by Beethoven.

Oh, really? Edith gave an old Bach program. She gave a mixed program, which included Bach's chromatic fantasy and fugue and a number of other works. She played the Mendelssohn early sonata, which Victor wrote a wonderful review, and he said, one could imagine the young Mendelssohn herself playing. But she gave an astonishing recital, which began with Schumann's "Christ Liliana," then had the world premiere, at his request, of his sonata number six and the Brahms F minor sonata. You would remember if you had heard it--

Yeah, I don't think I did.

--for sure. For sure.

I remember two other piano recitals, one by Bernard Kaff, playing, among other things, Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata with incredible virtuosity, the eighth. And I remember Carlo Taube, who had been a Busoni student. And he hadn't been playing the piano seriously because he had somehow to make a living. And he played in nightclubs. In Theresienstadt, he found his way back to classical music. And he played the Liszt sonata.

Yes. Yes. Those programs of his were printed also from the orchestra of the Freizeitgestaltung. But he also conducted the Stadtkapelle orchestra. Did you play in the Stadtkapelle?

Yeah, I did play. But I remember chiefly Peter Deutsch.

Oh, I want to ask about Peter Deutsch because he chose and arranged the music for the background music for the propaganda film. And did you play-- I know you played in the string orchestra of Ancerl. But did you also play in the orchestra conducted by Deutsch for the film?

No, not for the film. I usually played under the baton of Peter Deutsch.

Because one of the works that they performed parts of was the potpourri of Adolf Dauber called "Am Sabbat Abend." And it was Hasidic songs and a variety.

Doesn't ring a bell.

Where were you when you were performing before the cameras the Haas study?

I thought it was absolutely worthless. I knew that the Germans had lost the war. And I assumed the film would vanish somewhere and be destroyed. I didn't pay much attention to it.

And I've heard that many tried to walk away from the cameras if they could.

I thought it was totally unimportant and uninteresting whether they did this film or not. It wouldn't change anything.

There's one other work I'd like to ask, I'm always asking to see who, by chance, remembers such and such a piece. This was completed by Ullmann in July of '44. And it was a setting of 12 of the poems from Rilke's "Die Weise von Liebe."

Yeah, I did hear that.

--composed Cornet Christopher Rilke.

Yeah.

You heard it?

I heard it.

Did you? Please tell me as much as I remember of that. Rafi Schachter played. And the actor was, I think, Fritz Lerner or some [BOTH TALKING]

That I-- I'm not familiar with names of the actors. I remember that it was a very, very impressive combination of words, impression, contents of the words, music. It was an absolutely convincing piece of art. And I remember, even, that the details, where in the poetry, it says, [GERMAN], so you could hear that in the piano accompaniment. And of course, the changes of mood, where he describes the sudden attack at night. It was written with an incredible empathy and understanding of the poetry.

I think it's one of his most beautiful work. Absolutely. Absolutely. Well, I'm very, very indebted to you and grateful for this conversation.

Well, it was a pleasure and a very sad pleasure.

Yes. But as always, interesting little bits and fragments come floating up from these memories, recesses and add very much to our picture. I did such an interview some years ago with Pavel Kling.

Ah, good.

And also, there were a lot of things that he remembered as well. So I will send you a transcript.

Do it.

I will send you a copy of the tape. And I don't know how much of the-- actually, I can stop it now.

[GERMAN].

You know, I forgot to ask one thing. When did you leave Terezín?

In September '44.

September '44. And you went to Auschwitz?

Yes, Auschwitz-Birkenau.

And to a labor camp or something?

I spent a short time in Auschwitz and then was deported to Dachau-Kaufering number III.

And after the liberation, did music become your profession?

Yes.

And it had been all these years?

Until '60, I was teaching at the conservatory in Ostrava, where my wife was teaching too. She is a concert pianist. And in 1960, I escaped through North Africa, which was a very, very rough thing to do. And eight months later, I managed, with the help of the writer Heinrich Boll, to have her smuggled out of Czechoslovakia.

And in '60?

I escaped in '60 and she in '61.

I see. I see.

Something for the Guinness Book of Records.

Yes, yes. How would you say, maybe just a final summarizing, of-- I mean, all survivors live with this day after day. And some sublimate it totally. And some speak about it almost professionally. And some vacillate a little bit in the middle.

Yeah.

But how would you say, in your post-war continuing career as a musician, what remained of the impact of your musical experience in Terezín as you went on in your musical life?

I guess the knowledge that music is something infinitely precious. And even in Terezín, I knew Schopenhauer's word that music is something all art would like to be, that is the representation of the total reality within one homogeneous material. So that's-- and even says, if you could explain music to an alien coming from a different planet, you would have explained the total of our earthly reality to him. And Terezín, somehow, proved that this is true. And I'm no longer a violin chauvinist. But I am a music chauvinist, although I make-- I'm a writer now.

And one final thing, I'm just very curious, how was it that-- and I assume it was after you escaped Czechoslovakia-- that you went to Germany?



That was part-- in a way, it was natural because my mother tongue is German. I was always tied up with German culture. And I finished the Academy of Music in Prague playing Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, which was very unusual at the time. And then, secondly, it was a matter of coincidence because from the penitentiary in Egypt, I was brought to a camp in Greece.

And the American counter-intelligence people immediately said, you are not Thomas Mandl. You are a Soviet, a KGB agent. And we are not equipped for that kind of work. We will send you to Germany. And in Germany, my friend, whom I have already mentioned, Hans Günther Adler, had a friend who was head of the scientific department of the American Consulate General, Anton Calvelli-Adorno, a cousin of the philosopher. And we became friends and established contact with the writer Heinrich Boll. And then Heinrich Boll smuggled out my wife.

And I found a job in Germany. I was working. I was first playing for the so-called Little Orchestra of the Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne. And then I became a member of the Czech desk of the Voice of Germany, Deutsche Welle. And we tried to settle down in the United States. Well, my wife did succeed. She became a teacher at Seattle University.

Seattle University?

Yeah.

Great. That's where my wife was teaching, in the University of Washington in Seattle. I'm originally from Seattle.

How very surprising.

So she was teaching there. And you were in?

I was working at Western State Hospital, which is an institution for the psychically ill.

In Seattle?

In Tacoma.

Oh, in Tacoma.

And doing all kinds of work, like group therapy, and that.

Yes.

But then when we were approaching 45, we came to the conclusion, we have to stop being adventurers. And we have to do something to earn a steady living. We did give recitals, and quite successfully. But this was not a steady income. And we had come to the conclusion, look, we have to do something.

And at that time, there was a terrible shortage of teachers in Germany. And for some reason, we both landed at Catholic schools. My wife is a Catholic. But the more surprising thing is that I ended at a Catholic school. And I'm historically unique in that I'm the only Jewish violinist from Czechoslovakia who, by teaching English, has become a German public servant of the Catholic Church.

Incredible. Incredible, incredible. Two final things-- one, you mentioned about being penitentiary in Egypt. And you might have mentioned it earlier, but somehow, it slipped me. Could you just say, why were you in prison?

Yeah. I entered Egypt as a member of a tourist's group. And the whole group had one passport. When I jumped, when I left the group, I was there without a passport. And at that time, in Egypt, everything that was not clear was automatically sent to jail.

Oh, I see.

And from jail, I was sent to a penitentiary.

And this was actually to escape? I mean, you were with a group of tourists as well.

Yeah, well, with the idea to escape to escape.

To escape, yes. Now, the other thing, and not related, you mentioned that one of your teachers, if I'm not mistaken, was Edward Weiss.

Yeah.

Was he in Terezín?

Yeah. He was in Terezín.

Could he also have been known as Evald Weiss? ?]

No, no, Evald Weiss is somebody else. I knew both of them.

OK. Because there's one cabaret song of [? Evald ?] [? Weiss. ?]

Evald, yeah.

So it's not Evald, I'm sorry. It's not the same person.

No, it's not the same--

Not the same person.

--same person.

Good, good.

Edward Weiss was an old gentleman, a viola player from the Vienna Philharmonic, who even had composed an opera. [INAUDIBLE] was the name of the opera. I guess the material is lost. And the whole family must have perished because they were deported to Auschwitz in '42 or '43. And it's inconceivable that a person in his 70s could survive.

OK. Good. I think now we will.