

“Do not forget about me”

Gideon Klein (1919–1945)



Gideon with his sister Lisa (Eliška) in 1940

1919

Gideon Klein born in the Czech town of Přerov.

1931

Showing great promise as a pianist, he moves to Prague with his sister, Lisa, so that he can have the best musical education.

1931 - 1938

As a schoolboy, Gideon takes part in many public concerts.

1938

He enrolls at the Prague Conservatory to study piano full-time with Vilém Kurz.

1939

The Germans occupy Czechoslovakia. As a Jew, Gideon is prohibited from performing in public.

1941

Gideon is imprisoned in the Terezín (Theresienstadt) concentration camp and ghetto. He soon finds himself at the centre of musical activity, composing important concert works and arranging traditional Jewish, Yiddish and Zionist songs.

1944

Gideon's Trio for Violin, Viola and Cello is completed in September, ten days before he is transported to Auschwitz and then to the Fürstengrube slave-labour camp.

1944 - 1945

In Fürstengrube, Gideon manages to smuggle out his final letter; this is the last we hear of him. Addressed to a non-Jewish relative, the letter asks for food and warm clothes. “Do not forget about me,” Gideon writes three times in the letter.

27 January 1945

Gideon is murdered by the SS on the day that Auschwitz–Birkenau is liberated. It is also the birthday of Gideon's beloved Mozart.

Today

We have not forgotten about Gideon Klein, and his Trio, along with other works, continues to be performed all over the world.



Gideon performs Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto for his graduation concert, June 1939



Gideon at the piano, 1940



Manuscript of Gideon's String Trio



Gideon's letter, smuggled out of Fürstengrube

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Researching Gideon Klein teaches me about the fragility of our environments. But it also demonstrates how the cultural destruction of the Holocaust can lead to remarkable artistic rebirth.

Edinburgh, April 2015

Performers (Left to Right):
Gage Ehmann, Ruth Jacobs, Tom Widdicombe and David Fligg

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