



WE ARE HERE

GYORGY KADAR

a visual testimony

www.wearehereconcert.com

György Kádár (1912-2002), born in Budapest, was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau—the first of four camps he would eventually see—in June 1944, along with nearly 500,000 other Hungarians. He made drawings while a prisoner, dozens of which survived hidden deep in the carnage of the Nazi death camps. After being liberated from Buchenwald in April 1945, he spent six months back in Budapest expelling the scenes seared into his memory onto paper. 76 drawings completed inside the camp and in the months after the end of the war were acquired by Vanderbilt University in 1988 to complement a lecture series on the Holocaust. The goal of the acquisition was not to instruct students on the astounding facts of a devastating World War and the systematic execution of 6 million Jews and millions of others; rather the goal was to use art to humanize those who were dehumanized during the war and have been reduced to statistics after the war. If one sees the art, hears the music, and understand the words produced by survivors, the hope is the hatred that led to the Holocaust would not be replicated.

The visual arts, like music, is a necessity. We create even in the most hostile conditions. Just as the musicians who composed the works performed in *We Are Here*, visual artists found scraps of paper, bits of charcoal, and other discarded materials to make art that told their story, that witnessed the best and the worst of the human condition, and survived the horrors of the Holocaust. Embedded within this art is a deeper story about the movement of people, about the rise and fall of empires, growth and schisms within religions and cultures, and about war and liberation. While imprisoned at Buchenwald, Kádár depicted his experience inside the camps; the drawings themselves also witnessed these atrocities and embedded deep within the material upon which they were drawn are the stories of those who were imprisoned, how they comforted each other in the face of horror and famine, how they held on tightly to their culture and beliefs, how they came together to make joy to quiet their fear, and the unthinkable fate of millions. These works, in addition to the survivors, saw all of this.

This is a poignant time for these drawings to resurface—for Vanderbilt and this nation; they have reemerged at a time in which antisemitism and political polarization are on the rise and venom is the common language of disagreement. These drawings were deaccessioned to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum by the Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery in 2013, but they are seared into the mind of one alumna who encountered them in a classroom back in 1988, brought them to be viewed in Chicago in the early 1990's, and it is through his efforts, and those of the "We Are Here" team, that Kádár's work is once again surfacing from storage for air. These drawings, made during Kádár's internment and in the six months after liberation, are difficult to look at because they play with the complexities of humanizing and dehumanizing, perpetrators and victims, imprisonment and liberation, and separation and community. They are raw, and, knowing where they were made, connects the viewer directly to this gruesome part of our shared history.

Amanda Hellman, PhD
Director
Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Director.

Dear Friends –

It has been four years since Ira put his arm around me at Temple Sholom in Chicago and asked if I had any ideas on how to take a few songs created in the worst of times and bring them to life. We looked each other in the eye, smiled, and said “let’s go to work!” It was not our intention to build a nascent organization of like-minded friends and acquaintances to work hard and create a “once in a lifetime event,” only to put it on the shelf due to the Covid pandemic. On April 26, 2022, I am proud to say we “got the band back together” and were able to bring Ira’s vision to reality with a sold-out crowd at Temple Sholom in Chicago. Three days later, Ira called with two words on his mouth – “Carnegie Hall!”

So, here we are today. I hope you are prepared for what I am sure will be an historic and emotional presentation of music created when, quite literally, the world went mad. However, we are also planting more seeds in our effort to help a new generation understand the dangers of antisemitism and racial hatred. The artwork of Gyorgy Kadar moved me as a college student, inspired me as a young adult when in my own ways, I pursued the Jewish concept of *TIKKUN OLAM* (“*repair the world*”) and once again, today, returns to the forefront of my life as an essential tool to battle the dangers of emerging cultural hatred.... not just of Jews, but all of man’s inhumanity towards man.

Over the next 90 minutes, please immerse yourself in the music, the images, and the history – both old and emerging....and ponder what small steps, like Ira’s hug to an old friend, you might take to “repair the world.” Further, as we move into 2023, please keep your eyes on www.wearehereconcert.com as some of the seeds we have planted begin to sprout!

In addition to losing 25 members of his family in Birkenau, his wife and family being murdered on the shores of the Danube River on New Year’s Day, 1945, Gyorgy Kadar’s brother was killed...the day his camp was liberated.

But for the grace of God go I....
John Bradford.

David Mendelson
Producer and Ira Antelis’ “Friend in Life”

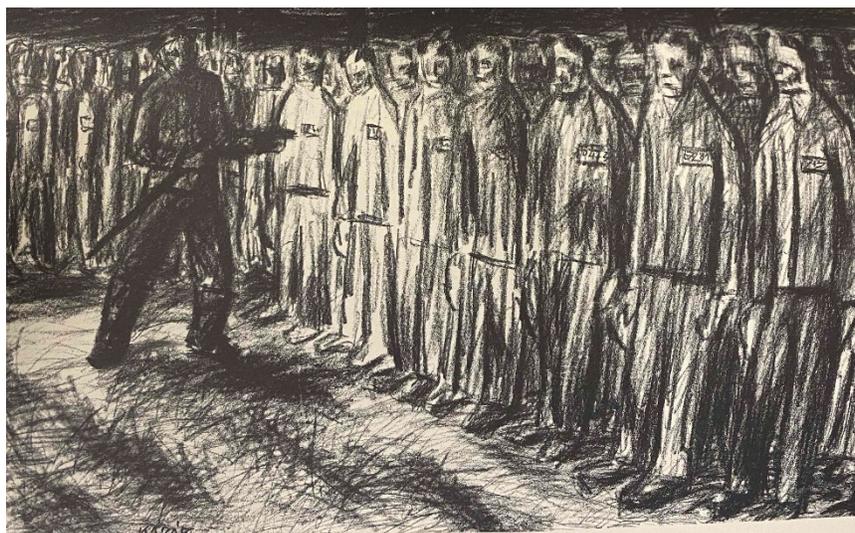
ON THE WAY TO THE GAS CHAMBERS - AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU



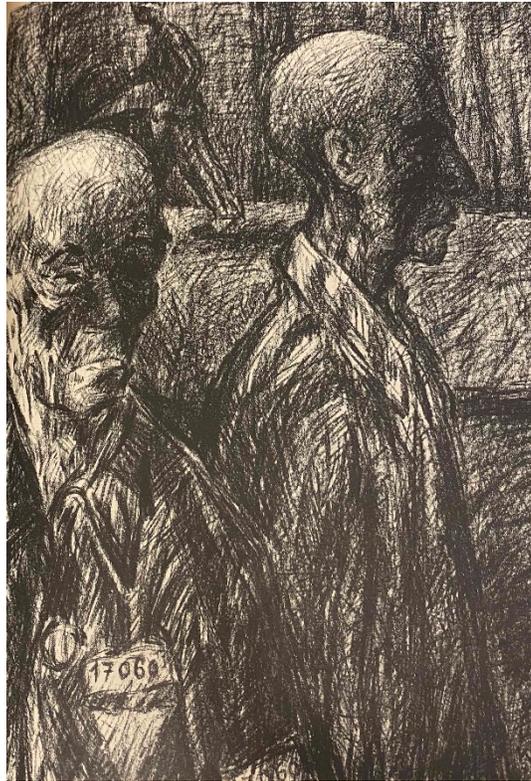
WHAT THEY WERE AND THE WAY THEY WANTED TO SEE THEMSELVES - AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU



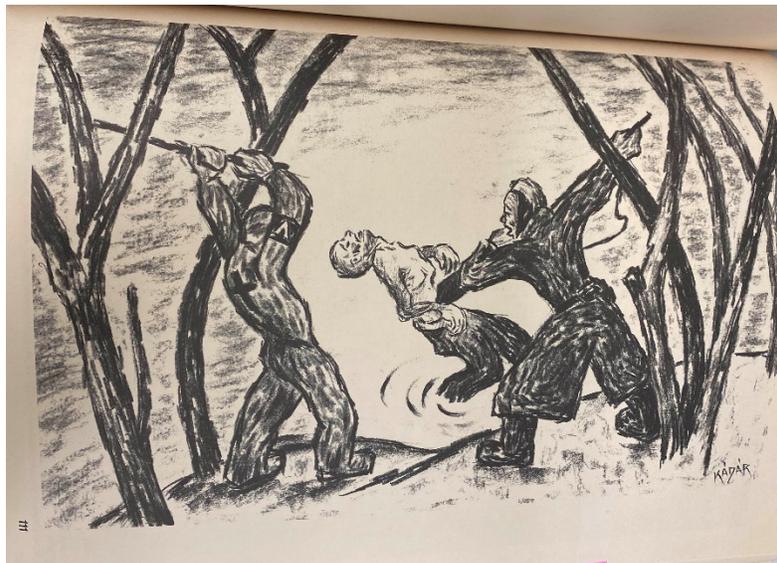
ROLL CALL AT NIGHT - OHRDRUF/NORDLAGER



TWO FRIENDS - SACHSENHAUSEN



THE DEATH OF MY FRIEND, THE ARTIST GYORGY BEKEFFI - OHRDRUF/NORDLAGER



AND WHERE NOW - BUCHENWALD



A LIBERATED FRENCHMAN - BUCHENWALD



HELP! HELP! EVACUATE THE CAMP - BUCHENWALD



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