



Honoring His Righteous Among the Nations



Adam Han-Gorski, a Holocaust Survivor and internationally acclaimed musician, will discuss his recent participation in a special ceremony honoring the Righteous Among the Nations, including the heroic stories of the couple who saved him and the man who saved his father. The ceremony was held on April 17 in Warsaw, Poland.

When the Germans attacked Poland, September 1st 1939, Adam's parents Helena and Szymon Haan fled Cracow for Szymon's hometown of Jaworów in eastern Poland. (a shtetle near Lvov). Within 2 weeks, the German Army reached Jaworów. The whole Haan family prepared for suicide but were warned by a friendly Ukrainian neighbor not to do anything rash... a few days later the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact allowed the Soviet's to occupy that territory of Eastern Poland.

Helena Haan, a concert pianist was lucky to get a job with Trembita, the Ukrainian Ensemble. Shortly thereafter, Arno Haan (aka Adam Han-Górski) was born on March 26, 1940. A year later while his mother

then along with the rest of the Jews was put in the Jaworów Ghetto. He was fortunate to work in a tractor repair station nearby. It was in that garage where he met Kazimierz Seko, the man who later saved his life. Little Arno was taken care of by his fathers' parents in Jaworów.

The oppression worsened and Arno's grandfather was taken away — never to be seen or heard from again. His grandmother, aunt and cousin were hidden on a farm, in a hole dug by his uncles. The uncles later perished. Arno was sent to his mother's parents in Cracow.

Helena, was on tour in Kazakhstan, the Nazis attacked the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, and she was unable to return home...until summer of 1944. Obviously, she had no idea what happened to her family. His father Szymon had worked in the Opera until that attack,

In November 1942, while the Jaworów Ghetto was liquidated, Szymon managed to escape and hide in a tank at the railway station. Kazimierz Seko overheard that a Jew had run away and had not been found, following his intuition he searched the train station at night and indeed found Szymon hiding in a cistern wagon. Szymon managed to obtain a fake ID under the name of Tadeusz Górski and with



Seko's help got a job in a different town. Unfortunately the situation worsened there as well. Seko organized Szymon's escape as a volunteer to the Eastern Front in disguise of a Wehrmacht soldier! Incredibly, the plan worked out, however as soon as Szymon succeeded in getting over the

frontline to the Russian side, he was accused of spying and sent to the labor camp in the Donbas gulag.

At that time in 1942, Arno's maternal grandparents (now relocated to the Cracow Ghetto) were notified about being deported. Not knowing

their fate, yet sensing imminent doom, (in fact, they were sent to Belzec extermination camp) they contacted Katarzyna Chytra who had cared for the child before, and asked her to try to get the child out. (His grandma's letters miraculously survived) Without any hesitation the woman agreed to take the boy in, fully realizing that such actions carried a death penalty. By the time she arrived at the Ghetto, the grandparents were already taken away and she found the child left with the neighbors.

Back in Lvov, she obtained fake documents for him as her son. Arno became Adaś Chytra and later, Adaś Witz, when Katarzyna married widower Jan Witz, a former Ulan of the Austrian Cavalry and father of two adult daughters. Jan undertook the obligation to raise Adam fully aware of the consequences of such a brave decision. For three years, Mr. and Mrs. Witz took great care of the boy and surrounded him with love as if he were their own child, whereas Adam Han-Gorski respectfully refers to them as "Mom and Dad."

In 1944, when the Germans were pushed out of Lvov, Helena was able to return and that was where she ac-



cidentally ran into Katarzyna on the street who told that her son was safe and well. When Helena visited their home, she was introduced to Adam as his aunt.

In the mean time, Adam's father Szymon was still imprisoned in Russia. An incredibly audacious escape plan succeeded and he too arrived in Lvov. The city now was integrated into the Soviet Union so his situation as an escapee became again precarious. As soon as Poland was liberated all three families; Haan/Gorski, Witz and Seko's left Lvov and settled in Silesia.

Two years later, 7-year-old violinist, Adam Han-Górski, commenced his musical career making his debut on the stage of the Silesian Philharmonic in Katowice in a concert filmed by the Polish News Service, instantly becoming a nationwide celebrity. In 1955 he was the youngest participant

Since 1963 a special commission of Yad Vashem of Jerusalem, headed by the Israel Supreme Court, has been awarding medals and certificates of honor to individuals called Righteous Among the Nations, who were putting their lives in danger in order to rescue Jews doomed to extermination. Over twenty-three thousand individuals, including more than 6000 Polish heroes have been recognized and honored so far.

and prize winner at the International Music Competition in Warsaw.

Taking advantage of the first political "thaw" in 1957 the family emigrated to Israel, yet they remained in contact with their wonderful wartime friends and their children. Adam continued his music studies at the Tel Aviv Music Academy, graduating in 1961. Following an audition in Paris, where he played for the greatest violinist of all times - Jascha

Heifetz, Adam was accepted to his Master Class at USC and thus came to the US at the end of 1961. For the next 40 years he concertized all over the world and was concertmaster of major orchestras including the Minnesota Orchestra in the 70s, followed by 25 years as concertmaster of the Vienna Radio Orchestra

After retiring he left Austria in 2004 choosing Minneapolis as the best of all the places around the world in which he lived.

links: YouTube - Adam Han-Gorski 1948, www.israel.pl, <http://picasaweb.google.com/ambasada.izraela> http://uwaga.tvn.pl/58914,wideo,353608,ocalony_wirtuoz_skrzypiec,ocalony_wirtuoz_skrzypiec,eportaz.html



At the ceremony held in Warsaw, 13 individuals were honored, including descendants of Adam's rescuers. Participating in the ceremony, in addition to representatives of Yad Vashem, were Bogdan Borusewicz, the Speaker (President) of Senate of Poland and Zvi Rav-Ner, the Israeli Ambassador to Poland. Adam Han-Gorski together with the Ambassador of Israel presented the medal awarded to his wartime parents, Katarzyna and Jan Witz, into the hands of their granddaughter, Ewa Hübner-Parńczyk of Lublin as well as to the widow of Kazimierz Seko -Barbara Karwat-Seko of Katowice.

The musical program for the ceremony was presented by Professor Adam Han-Gorski (violin) accompanied by Professor Maria Szwajger-Kuřakowska.