

## KINDERSANG-SONGS FROM KINDERTRANSPORT POEMS FOR SOPRANO AND VIOLIN

Kindersang-Songs from Kindertransport Poems for soprano and violin  
Composer, Deirdre Gribbin (Born Belfast, Northern Ireland)  
Performers, Amanda Boyd soprano, Emily Daggett Smith violin

The Bruno Walter Auditorium, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center  
in New York April 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 6pm.

Programme in context

Heinrich Biber's solo violin work based on the traditional hymn '*God, Give me an Angel*', Bach's poignant cantata seeking '*peace and quiet rest*' and Joseph Pinkhof's song, written in the Bergen-Belsen camp prepare the listener for '*Kindersang*' based on the text of Kindertransport poet Lotte Kramer. All the works embody the spirit of vulnerability and hope.

About Kindersang

*"Kindersang demands and deserves further performances so that its message can reach out and touch as many listeners as possible."*

Paul Conway Musical Times, London.

*"...this piece is clearly intended to go from heart to heart."*

The Irish Times

On November 10th 1938 Hitler's *Kristallnacht* pogrom prompted the Refugee Children Movement that rescued 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children from occupied Europe on *Kindertransport* trains to the UK during a nine-month period. Children travelled alone with nothing but a nametag and sealed suitcase. The majority of them never saw their parents again. I have marked this historical event by setting poems by the 97-year-old survivor poet, Lotte Kramer who came from Germany on one of the last *Kindertransport* trains.

She found herself in the UK living in the home of the eccentric Irishwoman Margaret Fyleman who had studied singing in Berlin before 1914 and had fond memories of Jewish hospitality there. One of her daughters was an actress who brought home cosmopolitan refugees who entertained with renditions of Shakespeare and Dickens. The young Lotte was divided between a fascination for this new bohemian world and a great longing for her parents. Her final communications with them were restricted to five word Red Cross messages.

Kramer's poems written directly about the period around *Kristallnacht* are poignant memories from childhood. The words evoke that real sense of fear felt around events that were unfolding in Germany. The poems are also full of simple family images of great intimacy. The characters she shares evoke a humanity and vulnerability through their stories.

My connection to the *Kindertransport* survival stories is deeply personal. My husband is New York Jewish and I often think about would have happened to our son Ethan, who has Down Syndrome, had he lived in German occupied Europe. Had he been lucky enough to survive how would he have processed family separation if he were one of the *Kindertransport* children?

At a time when freedom of thought, belief and movement is being challenged in Europe and the wider world in relation to border crossing, immigration and human rights, *Kindersang* and its historical resonances seeks to remind us that the courage and perseverance of committed individuals can overcome the reluctance of authorities to address the suffering of refugees.

Composer, Deirdre Gribbin 2018 ([www.deirdregribbin.com](http://www.deirdregribbin.com))

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