

Artur Gold (17.03.1897–1943)

composer, conductor, violinist, co-founder of a dance orchestra



Artur Gold was born on March 17, 1897 in a Warsaw family of musicians. His father, Michał Gold, was a flautist in the orchestra of the Warsaw Opera, and his brother, Henryk Gold, like Artur, was a musician and composer. Artur Gold led the orchestra with Jerzy Petersburski at the “Qui Pro Quo” theater, as well as in the popular Adria restaurant. In this and other restaurants he also performed as a pianist. In the 1920s and 1930s, he recorded albums for such labels as Syrena Record, Odeon, Columbia Records. In the interwar period, he composed a huge number of popular hits to the words of Andrzej Włast. The melody of the song composed by him to the words of Stanisław Biernacki “Come to Praga” became the bugle-call of the Praga-Północ district of Warsaw.

In 1940, like other Warsaw Jews, he was forced to move to the ghetto. Together with his orchestra, he gave concerts there, among others in the Nowoczesna cafe at Nowolipki 10 St. In 1942, he was transported by the Germans to the Treblinka extermination camp. In the camp, he was recognized as an outstanding musician, and at the last moment he was pulled out of the crowd driven to the gas chambers. The deputy commander of Treblinka, the famous Kurt Franz, nicknamed "Lalka", ordered him to organize an orchestra among the prisoners. This band was forced to perform for the Germans on various occasions. Gold also composed a melody for a song by Walter Hirsch from the Czech Republic, known as the Treblinka anthem. He had a privileged position in the camp, as it were. For this reason, many prisoners disliked him. Nonetheless, Gold used his status to support members of his orchestra. He shared additional food rations with them and negotiated that they would be released from slave labor during their trials. He was shot in 1943, in the last period of Treblinka's functioning.

translated by Adam Grossman

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