RECONCILING BRUNDIBÁR: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRODUCING HANS KRÁSA’S CHILDREN’S OPERA

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RECONCILING BRUNDBÁŘ:  
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRODUCING  
HANS KRÁSA´S CHILDREN´S OPERA  

DISSERTATION  

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Musical Arts  
in the School of Music at the University of Kentucky.  

By  
Daniel Chetel  

Lexington, KY  

Director: John Nardolillo, Professor of Orchestral Conducting  
Lexington, KY  

2014  
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

RECONCILING BRUNDIBÁR:
PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRODUCING
HANS KRÁSA’S CHILDREN’S OPERA

Brundibář, the children’s opera by Czech composer Hans Kráša (1899–1944), is the story of two children who go to town to seek some milk to help their sick mother. When they arrive the children are bullied by the Brundibář, a mean adult who plays the organ grinder and takes the children’s money. To fight back against the overbearing Brundibář the children seek the help of the town’s young people—along with three fairy-tale animals—to make the town square a safe place again.

The piece was performed in 1942 by the children of Prague’s Jewish orphanage, and then presented with child singers in the Terezín concentration camp 55 times during World War II. A performance of Brundibář was a central part of an International Red Cross visit to Terezín in 1944, and sections of the work were later included in a Nazi propaganda film. In 2003 a third version of work was produced with a new English adaptation of the text by Tony Kushner. The composer and many of the original performers were killed before the conclusion of the war; however, one survivor, Ela Weissberger, who performed the role of the Cat in the Terezín production, now lives in the United States and often visits productions to speak about her experiences and help contextualize the work.

Brundibář remains a moving and powerful work of art, both as a children’s opera and as a symbol of resistance against the Nazi regime, but it presents many logistical and artistic challenges to directors and producers who may be interested in mounting a production. This project will provide some background on the work, including the circumstances of its creation and performance history. It will then lay out the work’s unique performance challenges and offer practical solutions to make the process of designing, rehearsing, and performing Brundibář more accessible and effective.

KEYWORDS: Hans Krása, Brundibár, Terezín, Holocaust Music, Children’s Opera

Daniel Chetel

April 22, 2014
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April 22, 2014
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1.1 THE COMPOSER, THE PIECE, AND THE CREATION OF THE THREE VERSIONS

Hans Krása was born in Prague on November 30, 1899. As a young man Krása studied piano with Terese Wallerstein and composition with Alexander Zemlinsky. He held musical positions in Prague and Berlin, but did not attend conservatory or receive a formal music education. While his compositions were performed in Western Europe and the United States, Krása did not often travel to conduct or attend.\(^1\) Krása’s family was of both German and Jewish descent, and he became very involved in the life of Czech music and the arts in Prague which included avant-garde influences from Paris in the form of Maurice Ravel, Claude Debussy, and the composers of “Les Six.”\(^2\) Krása’s personal style, fostered and encouraged by Zemlinsky (and certainly applicable to the musical style of Brundibár), is “characterized by its brevity, irony, humor verging on comicality, and grotesqueness.”\(^3\)

While living and working in Prague, Krása struck up a collaboration with the writer Adolf Hoffmeister, for whom Krása wrote instrumental music and song settings for Hoffmeister’s comedy Mládí ve hře (“Youth in Play”) in 1934. Four years later they would collaborate again, this time to create the children’s opera Brundibár (the name of the title character, and Czech for “bumblebee”).\(^4\)

Brundibár was first written in 1938 as a submission to a children’s opera competition sponsored by the Czech Ministry of Education and Culture. Soon after the competition was completed, the German army invaded Czechoslovakia and the piece sat unperformed until 1942 when the premiere production was mounted at the Vinohrady Jewish Boy’s Orphanage in the Prague ghetto.\(^5\)

By the time it was premiered on August 10, 1942, however, Krása and the production’s conductor Rafael Schaechter had already been sent to the Terezín concentration camp.\(^6\) Despite losing the composer, the conductor, and the full score, the performance took place, featuring the boys of the orphanage, accompanied by a pianist, violinist, and drummer, all reading from the piano score, and conducted by the orphanage director’s son Rudolph Freudenfeld.\(^7\) This version of the opera,

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\(^2\) Les Six was a group of early Twentieth-Century French composers including Georges Auric, Louis Durey, Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Germaine Tailleferre.
\(^4\) Joža Karas, Music in Terezín, 77.
\(^7\) Karas, Music in Terezín, 80.
performed in the orphanage (and utilizing the full orchestral forces Krása originally called for), is known as the “Prague Version.”

Terezín (or in German, Theresienstadt) was a unique prison within the Nazi camp system, designed to collect many of the artistic and intellectual thinkers from the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. In this old barracks town the Nazis allowed Jewish art to exist and be performed, in an attempt to show the world that the Jews were being treated well. Despite this charade, throughout the war the prisoners of Terezín were sent on trains to the Nazi death camps.

At Terezín, Krása was the musical director of the Freizeitgestaltung, a group of prisoners tasked with organizing cultural activities for the entire camp. When Rudolph Freudenfeld, the conductor of the original Prague production, was sent to Terezín, he smuggled in a piano score to Brundibár. From this document and his own memory Krása reconstructed the opera, taking into account the performing forces available to him in the camp, especially a few virtuosic adult instrumentalists for whom some of the orchestral parts were personally written. This version of the piece is known as the “Terezín Version.” It contains much of the same music as the original with many small musical discrepancies as well as some substantial changes to the format of the show.

Beginning with a performance on July 23, 1943—again conducted by Rudolph Freudenfeld—the Terezín Version was performed 55 times in the Terezín camp over the course of the next year. A performance of Brundibár was central to an International Red Cross visit to the camp in June 1944, during which the visiting delegation was deceptively shown what the Nazis wanted to communicate to the international community: a healthy and happy Jewish population. Sections from a recording of another performance were also included in a Nazi propaganda film released in 1944 under the title Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt (“The Führer gives the Jews a City”) directed by Kurt Gerron, an actor and filmmaker who was also a Jewish prisoner in the camp. As the war was nearing its close, Krása himself was taken on a train that left Terezín on October 16, 1944, and he was killed in a gas chamber at Auschwitz two days later.

One performer in the Terezín productions was an eleven year old girl named Ela Weissberger (then Ela Stein), who was cast in the role of the Cat. After surviving the war, she lived in Europe and Israel.

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9 Karas, Music in Terezín, 84.
10 Rovit, “The ‘Brundibár’ Project”; 111.
and now resides in the United States. Having published a children’s book *The Cat with the Yellow Star*,\(^{11}\) based on her experiences as a child in Terezín and her life since then, she travels the country speaking to the students who perform—and the audiences who experience—*Brundibár*, including a visit to Lexington, Kentucky in 2011. This visit coincided with a production by the University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, which I had the privilege to conduct. Mrs. Weissberger brings with her stories of her time at Terezín, her experiences with the opera, and a message of love and inclusiveness that transcends the work itself. She often concludes her talk by showing her audience the actual yellow star that she wore in Terezín, protected simply in a plastic sandwich bag.

After World War II, in an effort to revive awareness of the show and its story, the American playwright Tony Kushner and the writer and artist Maurice Sendak decided to update and reimagine the story of *Brundibár* with a new adaptation of the text by Kushner and sets by Sendak. A picture book, also entitled *Brundibár*, was published by Hyperion Books and an opera production was mounted in Chicago in 2003 based on their new concept.\(^{12}\) This is the third version of the work, which I will call the “Kushner Version.” For this Kushner Version Maurice Sendak created a large-scale production fit for a modern opera house. While dramatic, the sleekness and high production values of the Kushner Version arguably take something away from the intimately personal origins of the work. Kushner’s adaptation of the text has also been criticized for being too cute or too silly, and not acknowledging the complexity of the original version. By contrast, the original sets and costumes were designed by František Zelenka, who was involved with both the production at the orphanage in Prague and the production in Terezín, after he was imprisoned there as well. They had some color but were mostly limited to simple canvas backgrounds, and some of the costumes were pulled together by the people involved in the production, even the children themselves.\(^{13}\)

Kushner also added a final epilogue to the opera, spoken by the title character of *Brundibár*, which some felt was not entirely true to the message of the opera. *Brundibár* says:

> They believe they’ve won the fight,  
> They believe I’m gone – not quite!  
> Nothing ever works out neatly—  
> Bullies don’t give up completely.

\(^{11}\) Susan Goldman Rubin and Ela Weissberger, *Cat With the Yellow Star: Coming of Age in Terezín* (New York: Holiday House, 2006).


One departs, the next appears,
And we shall meet again, my dears!
Though I go, I won’t go far…
I’ll be back. Love, Brundibár.¹⁴

This speech, a completely original creation by Tony Kushner, mainly serves as a warning to the children that evil is never truly gone and vigilance is always required.

The opera reads like an allegory against Nazi occupations across Europe (and the fact that the title character Brundibár’s mustache resembled that of Adolf Hitler of course supports that reading). Now it is also used in school systems around the world to demonstrate the dangers of bullying in general.¹⁵ However, both of those readings are adult conceptions of the piece. Holocaust survivor and Terezín prisoner Mirko Tuma wrote of the work: “it was an elaborate production of a clever and sophisticated work. Its allegoric impact, however, was superimposed only by the circumstances under which it was revived.”¹⁶ Joža Karas, conductor, scholar, and author of the English translation provided in the 1993 Tempo Praha vocal score of Brundibár, writes:

The ill-natured Brundibár personified Evil. When the children began to sing the final chorus: “Brundibár defeated, we got him already…” there was no doubt in the minds of all present that they were singing about Hitler himself. To make the point even more obvious, the poet Emil A. Saudek altered the very last few lines of the opera to express the universal feeling of resistance and the ultimate belief in justice. While the original said, “He who loves so much his mother and father and his native land is our friend and he can play with us,” Saudek’s version read: “He who loves justice and will abide by it, and who is not afraid, is our friend and can play with us.”¹⁷

Karas’s writing speaks to the way in which the meaning—in the context of the prevailing geopolitical situation—was explicitly grafted on to the work as a powerful symbol of resistance, even if the underlying messages had been present in the story from the beginning.

In Terezín, rehearsing and performing Brundibár was an opportunity for fun, play, and adventure in an otherwise sad situation. When Mrs. Weissberger spoke to our cast of elementary and middle school aged performers in Lexington she described the way in which Brundibár was an emotional

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¹⁴ Kushner and Sendak, Brundibár, 51.
¹⁵ One example is described here: Wallace McKelvey, JCC production of Brundibar teaches anti-bullying theme, Press of Atlantic City (Posted: Wednesday, April 6, 2011 12:01 am).
¹⁷ Karas, Music in Terezín, 88.
escape for the children involved. In Terezín all the Jewish prisoners of the camp were required to wear yellow stars with “Jude” written across each star to identify them as Jews. However, when they were “in costume” for Brundibár they could take the stars off: this symbolic act represented the emotional freedom that Brundibár provided to them and was an essential part of their survival. Rudolf Laub, a fifteen year old member of the chorus in Terezín eloquently wrote: “Brundibár will soon disappear from the minds of those who saw it in Terezín, but for us, participants, it will remain one of the few beautiful memories, which we will have from Terezín.”

These disparate readings and meanings of the piece speak to some of the challenges in designing a production of Brundibár. The multiple published versions of the work exist, in part, to address issues of authenticity that can be difficult to define. There are two distinct versions which themselves could be considered “authentic,” but there is evidence of how the original production team was modifying the piece, even during their internment, to expand its meaning. The modern reimagining by Kushner is intended to serve the piece and its message by making it more accessible to a modern audience, but is admittedly a departure from the original text.

In the present day, the piece serves as a symbol of resistance and remembrance, and provides an artistic entry point into historical and educational discussions about the Holocaust and the complex personal and political stories that come from that time and place. Perhaps, precisely because it means so many things to so many different people, it is even more imperative to improve the functionality of the work so that it can continue to be that center locus for memory, discussion, and debate.

18 Ibid.
1.2 PUBLISHED MATERIALS AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

For those wishing to present a production of *Brundibár*, there are relatively few published materials with which to contend; however, the fact that they do not match each other can make designing a functional production challenging. Below is a listing and explanation of the relevant documents.

**VOCAL SCORE – TEREZÍN VERSION AND PRAGUE VERSION**


This is the most comprehensive document on *Brundibár* in the English language. The goal of this vocal score is to make it possible to produce either the Terezín or the Prague Versions of the work. The score includes a thorough preface, numerous footnotes in the score itself, and an appendix including a few alternate musical sections.

What is essential to understand about this document, is that the one thing you cannot do is simply open the score to page 1 and sing straight through to the end, since this will result in a version of the piece that is not supported by any set of orchestral parts. My project, in part, seeks to make it possible for an opera company to be able to sing straight through the score, which is what most directors want to be able to do.

The text is provided in Czech, English, and German. The English version by Joža Karas is functional and captures the original youthful flavor of the work, even if it can be a little awkward at times.

**FULL SCORE & ORCHESTRAL PARTS – TEREZÍN VERSION**


This full score (and accompanying orchestral parts) are available on rental from Boosey & Hawkes in the United States. The score and parts are strictly aligned with the Terezín Version of the piece and therefore do not contain all the music in the vocal score. In addition, this orchestral score only includes the text in German, meaning that the conductor will need to write in whatever English translation is being used.
FULL SCORE & ORCHESTRAL PARTS – KUSHNER VERSION


These performance materials represent the version of Brundibár conceived of by Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak. In the United States, the score is available for rental from Boosey & Hawkes; however, with the exception of one specific selection of music I will address later (see section 2.3 – Orchestration and Instrumentation, Act II Chase Music), the orchestral parts are the same as the Terezín version, above, and present the same challenges.

AUDIO RECORDINGS

One significant challenge of producing a functional production of Brundibár is that even professional recordings do not match up exactly with the published performance materials. Because the orchestral parts are often acquired late in the rehearsal process, it is possible for a production team not to realize this issue until the vocal and staging rehearsals are well underway, and it is too late to change the run of the show.

Below I address an example of a widely available commercial recording that is an excellent resource for getting to know the piece and its style, but can lead a production team astray because it does not strictly adhere to any single version: a 2007 recording of Brundibár on the Naxos label conducted by Gerard Schwarz, with a cast of vocal soloists, the Northwest Boy Choir, and Music of Remembrance, a Seattle-based performance ensemble dedicated to promoting the music of Holocaust musicians.¹⁹

Using the Kushner Version as its basis, this recording is presented at a professional level, and all of the spoken text of the Kushner Version is included, making it an excellent resource. However, if a production team listens to this recording while following along with the vocal score they may not be aware that this version is not truly supported by the performing materials. In fact, a number of choices throughout the opera combine different versions of the show. I outline a selection of these choices below—after each point of choice I include the version from which this recording takes its cue:


• Act I – VII. Song One: Song One is presented in C major, rather than B-flat major (Prague Version).

• Act I – VII. Song Two: This recording includes this musical selection despite the fact that it is not included in the Terezín version (Prague Version).

• Act I – VIII. Finale: The opening section of the Act I Finale is a collection of repeated verses sung by the Brundibár character. Three verses are printed, but seven are sung (Kushner Version).

• Serenade: The instrumental Serenade placed between the two acts is only in the Terezín Version, and it is included here (Terezín Version).

• Act II – II. Morning Exercises: In the Act II Morning Exercises movement the Prague and Terezín Versions differ in where the strophic repeats exist and also in the length of the coda (Terezín Version).

• Act II – IV. March of the Schoolchildren: There are two versions of the March of the Schoolchildren which modulate to different keys (Terezín Version).

• Act II – V. Ensemble: There are two versions of the opening of the Act II Ensemble section which are different in length and key (Terezín Version).

• Act II – V. Lullaby: An eight measure refrain is inserted between the verses of the Lullaby, but it only exists in the Prague Version (Prague Version).

• Act II – V. Chase Music: The Chase Music that accompanies the final triumph of the children over the character Brundibár only exists in the Prague Version (Prague Version).

• Act II – VI. Finale: The very ending of the show includes an additional snare drum roll and Kushner’s epilogue for the character Brundibár (Kushner Version).

This recording is the most widely available English-language recording of the piece, which makes it very useful. However, it does not match up with any of the published versions of the show—in fact, it includes elements of all three—making it a problematic document to use as the basis of a production.

Ultimately, the most likely scenario is that the director will ask the music staff if it is possible to perform the unique hybrid version that has been rehearsed rather than having to change the run of the show. (The motivation for a hybrid version may also come from a desire to make this relatively short show as long as possible.) If that occurs, then this project can serve to alleviate the challenges of moving forward with the production (and be a document that can also be referenced proactively to help a team mount the best possible production).
For additional context, I have surveyed four commercially available recordings in the United States to outline how each recording treats these points of interest. The four recordings included in this survey are:

1. The 2007 recording on the Naxos label conducted by Gerard Schwarz, with a cast of vocal soloists, the Northwest Boy Choir, and Music of Remembrance. The work is sung in English using the Tony Kushner Adaptation.\textsuperscript{20}

2. A 1996 recording conducted by Robert DeCormier featuring members of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Symphony Orchestra Chorus, and Essex Children’s Choir. The work is sung in English, using the translation by Joža Karas provided in the Tempo Praha vocal score.\textsuperscript{21}

3. A 1993 recording featuring the Disman Radio Children’s Ensemble conducted by Joža Karas, a Terezín scholar and author of the English translation provided in the Tempo Praha vocal score. The opera is presented in the original Czech.\textsuperscript{22}

4. A 1996 recording by the Group for New Music and released by eOne Music International Classics. The opera is presented in the original Czech.\textsuperscript{23}

See chart below:

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Hans Krása, \textit{Brundibár} Disman Radio Children's Ensemble, Joža Karas (Channel Classics B000VRRKOQ, CD, 1993).
\textsuperscript{23} Hans Krása, \textit{Brundibar; Anna's Song; Dance Passacaglia And Fugue}, Group for New Music (eOne Music International Classics B004HS8J90, CD, 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Terezín Version</th>
<th>Prague Version</th>
<th>Kushner Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Act I Finale</td>
<td>The children's speeches are omitted.</td>
<td>The children's speeches are included.</td>
<td>The children's speeches are included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measure</td>
<td>The Chase Music is omitted.</td>
<td>The Chase Music is included.</td>
<td>The Chase Music is included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeats</td>
<td>Three verses are sung.</td>
<td>Three verses are sung.</td>
<td>Three verses are sung.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song One</td>
<td>Sung in Czech.</td>
<td>Sung in English.</td>
<td>Sung in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Two</td>
<td>Sung in Czech.</td>
<td>Sung in English.</td>
<td>Sung in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantomime</td>
<td>The accordion plays two waltzes.</td>
<td>The accordion plays two waltzes.</td>
<td>The accordion plays two waltzes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>An eight bar refrain is placed for each verse.</td>
<td>An eight bar refrain is placed for each verse.</td>
<td>An eight bar refrain is placed for each verse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>The opening section of the Act II Ensemble is omitted.</td>
<td>The opening section of the Act II Ensemble is included.</td>
<td>The opening section of the Act II Ensemble is included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songs</td>
<td>Two different lengths and keys.</td>
<td>Two different lengths and keys.</td>
<td>Two different lengths and keys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coda</td>
<td>The codas are a collection of repeated verses sung by the Brundibár character.</td>
<td>The codas are a collection of repeated verses sung by the Brundibár character.</td>
<td>The codas are a collection of repeated verses sung by the Brundibár character.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Section II: Creating a Functional Production of *Brundibár*

2.1 – **OUTLINE OF NUMBERS AND RUN-OF-SHOW**

The two original editions of the opera have slightly different numbering systems for the sections of the show, and since both are included in the vocal score they can create confusion when members of the production staff discuss specific sections with colleagues in meetings or rehearsal. Below I’ve outlined the two schematics and also recommended a third blended version that will likely apply to a modern production. Making sure every staff member names every section in the same way can help the staff avoid issues down the line with miscommunications and misunderstandings.

To help with that issue my functional run-of-show will also relate to the numbers printed in the commercially available vocal score. (That is why something like “III/IV. The Vendors” is included: this allows someone to use the standard vocal score without getting too confused or needing to re-label everything in the vocal score.)

My suggestion for how to label and number the sections aligns as much as possible with what is already printed in the vocal score, the sections of the story, and the logical flow of the opera. The chart below shows three runs-of-show: the Prague Version, the Terezín Version, and a functional blended version which represents my best suggestion and is supported by the explanations and arrangements presented in this document. In the blended version, the source of each section of music (or specific details regarding that section of music) is indicated with either a “P” or “T,” representing the Prague or the Terezín Version, or “P & T” meaning that the identical music is found in both versions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT I</th>
<th>Prague Version (T)</th>
<th>Functional Blended Version (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Two Children are walking in the middle of the street</td>
<td>I. Two Children are walking in the middle of the street</td>
<td>I. Two Children are walking in the middle of the street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The street is full of people</td>
<td>II. The street is full of people</td>
<td>II. The street is full of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III/IV. Vendors / Ensemble</td>
<td>III. Window Chorus (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>III. Window Chorus (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Policeman's Song</td>
<td>V. Policeman's Song (T)</td>
<td>V. Policeman's Song (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Pantomime</td>
<td>VI. Pantomime (T)</td>
<td>VI. Pantomime (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Song One</td>
<td>VII. Song One (T)</td>
<td>VII. Song One (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantomime, cont.</td>
<td>V. Pantomime Reprise (T)</td>
<td>V. Pantomime Reprise (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Finale</td>
<td>VIII. Finale (T)</td>
<td>VIII. Finale (T)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT II</th>
<th>Prague Version (T)</th>
<th>Functional Blended Version (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Waking up</td>
<td>I. Waking up (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>I. Waking up (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Morning Exercises</td>
<td>II. Morning Exercises (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>II. Morning Exercises (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Window Chorus</td>
<td>III. Window Chorus (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>III. Window Chorus (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. March of the Schoolchildren</td>
<td>IV. March of the Schoolchildren (T)</td>
<td>IV. March of the Schoolchildren (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Ensemble</td>
<td>V. Ensemble (T)</td>
<td>V. Ensemble (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lullaby</td>
<td>Lullaby (with Refrains) (P)</td>
<td>Lullaby (with Refrains) (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Chase Music</td>
<td>VI. Chase Music (P)</td>
<td>VI. Chase Music (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Chorus</td>
<td>VII. Chorus (P)</td>
<td>VII. Chorus (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. Finale: Victory Song</td>
<td>VIII. Finale: Victory Song (T)</td>
<td>VIII. Finale: Victory Song (T)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT III</th>
<th>Prague Version (T)</th>
<th>Functional Blended Version (F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. Song Two</td>
<td>II. Song Two (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>II. Song Two (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The middle of the street is full of people</td>
<td>III. The middle of the street is full of people (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>III. The middle of the street is full of people (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Pantomime</td>
<td>IV. Pantomime (T)</td>
<td>IV. Pantomime (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Ensemble</td>
<td>V. Ensemble (T &amp; P)</td>
<td>V. Ensemble (T &amp; P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Serenade</td>
<td>VI. Serenade (T)</td>
<td>VI. Serenade (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. Finale: Victory Song</td>
<td>VII. Finale: Victory Song (T)</td>
<td>VII. Finale: Victory Song (T)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Figure 2**: Three Versions of the Run-of-Show
2.2 – ROLES AND CASTING

Figure 3, Dramatis Personae

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dramatis Personae</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Joe [Pepiček]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annette [Aninka], his sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brundibár, an organ grinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice Cream Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milkman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policeman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Children

Example 1, Little Joe [Pepiček] Vocal Range

Example 2, Annette [Aninka], his sister Vocal Range

The two main roles are written for a boy and a girl, but the ranges of the two characters are nearly identical. In fact, the lower B-natural in Aninka’s part occurs exactly once, in the Act I – VIII. Finale, and much of their singing is in unison. The high G-naturals (G5) occur in the Act I – III/IV. Vendors scene. It is ideal for these singers to be able to reach this note, but a D-natural (D5), a fourth below, is a secondary option.
When identifying the music for these characters, be sure that they can sing along with the Window Chorus as well. The Window Chorus is often written in two parts, and Pepíček and Aninka can join in, each singing one of the two parts.

It would not be disruptive to cast two girls in the main roles, and if the production is using adults instead of children, the combination of a true soprano singing Aninka and a mezzo singing Pepíček in a pants role offers an interesting variation of color.

Brundibár, *an organ grinder*

Example 3, Brundibár Vocal Range

![Brundibár Vocal Range](image)

The role of Brundibár has a very compact range. A boy whose voice has not changed can sing the role easily in the printed range. If the production uses adults, an adult man can sing the role down one octave. Because Brundibár never sings with any other character, there is a great deal of flexibility in this character’s casting.

The Vendors

Ice Cream Man (spoken only)

Baker (spoken only)

Example 4, Milkman Vocal Range

![Milkman Vocal Range](image)

The three vendors are featured early in Act I; each has a monologue selling his or her product. Only the Milkman goes on to have a sung solo part. The vendors can be played by children of either
gender. Depending on the staging, all three should be prepared to sing the Victory Song at the end of the show and to participate in choral numbers.

Policeman

Example 5, Policeman Vocal Range

The Policeman has one solo song in Act I. The role is typically played by a boy, although it is not essential. Most of the character’s song stays in a compact range but the high E-natural (E5) in the last bar is very exposed. Depending on the staging, the Policeman should be prepared to sing the Victory Song at the end of the show and to participate in choral numbers.

The Fairy-Tale Animals

Example 6, Sparrow Vocal Range

Example 7, Cat Vocal Range

Example 8, Dog Vocal Range

The three Fairy-Tale Animals have the most involved parts in the entire opera. Krása wrote characteristic solo sections of music for each of these three characters that return throughout the opera when each character sings. In addition, the Animals sing significant portions of music in parallel thirds that shift up and down by step. Despite the fact that the Dog needs a somewhat lower voice for that character’s B-natural, it would stand to reason to cast three young people with voices that blend
effectively. Three girls, three boys, or a mix if they have similar ranges and vocal qualities, would be possible.

While it would be theoretically possible for all three roles to be played by three adult men and sung down an octave, that is not recommended. The ethereal quality of the music associated with these characters blends well with the wispy character of young voices, and they sing in unison with Pepíček and Aninka as well.

Chorus of Townspeople

Example 9, Chorus of Townspeople: Upper Part Vocal Range

Example 10, Chorus of Townspeople: Lower Part Vocal Range

The toughest note for this group is unfortunately the very first one: the high G-natural (G5) at the top of the range in the Act I – III/IV. Vendors scene. If this is not achievable, then D-natural (D5), a fourth below, is a secondary option. Either way, it needs to be coordinated with Pepíček and Aninka, who sing the same figure. Some parts are in unison while others are divided into two lines. Depending on the staging, this chorus should be prepared to sing the Victory Song at the end of the show.

Chorus of Children (Window Chorus)

Example 11, Chorus of Children (Window Chorus): Upper Part Vocal Range

Example 12, Chorus of Children (Window Chorus): Lower Part Vocal Range
This chorus has some of the most touching moments in the entire show as it is paired with both the Fairy-Tale Animals and the two main character siblings at various points. Some parts are in unison while others are divided into just two parts, often in very close harmony, creating interesting two-part dissonances and resolutions.

The upper part is generally easier, making it possible to include young children with relatively little musical experience. In one specific section in the Act II – V. Ensemble, there is an extended passage of music in which the upper part sings repeated A-naturals while the lower part changes pitch almost every bar.
2.3 – ORCHESTRATION AND INSTRUMENTATION

The two original versions of the piece call for slightly different instrumentations. The Kushner Version uses the Terezín Version as a starting point and therefore calls for that instrumentation and ensemble as well.

Figure 4, Orchestration and Instrumentation of the Prague and Terezín Versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prague Version</th>
<th>Terezín Version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flute</td>
<td>Flute/Piccolo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Clarinets in B♭</td>
<td>Clarinet in B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trumpet in B♭</td>
<td>Trumpet in B♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percussion (2 players):</td>
<td>Percussion (1 player):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snare Drum, Cymbals, Bass Drum</td>
<td>Snare Drum, Bass Drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano</td>
<td>Piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin I (section)</td>
<td>4 Violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violin II (section)</td>
<td>Cello</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cello (section)</td>
<td>Double Bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guitar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accordion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whether mounting an authentic original production of the Prague or Terezín Version or using the Kushner/Sendak production as a starting place, I would recommend that a production team use the Terezín Version orchestral parts as its starting point. It is important to understand that the Terezín orchestral parts will be for the instrumentation of the Terezín Version, listed above on the right. The maximum number of players needed is 13, but there are a number of general and specific considerations that are worth taking into account.

In general, it is helpful if the players contracted for the orchestra have some experience with Eastern European music or Klezmer styles. Each player, including the four solo violins, plays independent solo lines that need to include the soloistic slides and vibratos associated with this style. The wind players may be more accustomed to these techniques and style, but string players who are less experienced or are more accustomed to playing in sections may need some extra help assimilating the style.
Accordion:
The accordion is not a traditional orchestral instrument, but it brings a unique sound to this show. The accordion only plays 34 measures in the entire opera (two identical 17-measure solos), which is not a lot of music to learn. However, it is preferable for the accordion player to be somewhat familiar with the orchestral or ensemble experience (and be effective at reading music) to be able to contribute fully to the production. If no accordion player is available, or hiring one is too costly, I have provided an arrangement of the accordion music for members of the Terezín ensemble (see 2.5—Arrangements).

Guitar:
The guitar is used throughout the opera and contributes to the sense of street music or folk music that Krása evokes. As a non-traditional orchestral member, it is again important that the guitar player be somewhat familiar with the orchestral or ensemble experience to be able to contribute fully to the production. Because the guitar is much more integrated into the ensemble than the accordion, the guitar player’s ability to read and rehearse in an orchestral manner is even more essential. However, the guitar can be omitted with the exception of one moment: the Serenade between the two acts.

If a guitarist is not available or is too costly, the best solution for the Serenade is to ask the orchestral pianist to play the left hand (the quarter-note chords) from the piano accompaniment in the vocal score. You can even experiment with the pianist playing the chords slightly rolled and in the guitar’s octave to better approximate the effect of the guitar sound.

Piano:
Any production would use a rehearsal pianist for the process of coaching the singers and staging the work, but there is an orchestral piano part as well. It can be helpful to use the same individual to serve both functions, even though that is often not necessarily the way a professional orchestra would do its hiring. If the same person is able to serve both functions, he or she can provide an excellent source of stability for the ensemble, which will likely have very little rehearsal time.

In addition, it is possible to use the piano part from the vocal score to help cover parts in the orchestral setting, especially when there are discrepancies between the editions which cannot be easily reconciled. The pianist will, of course, need to learn two independent parts—the piano accompaniment to the vocal score and the orchestral piano part in the orchestral parts—and then can switch from one to the other as required.
If these two roles will be filled by two different individuals, it would be worth providing the orchestral pianist with both parts so he or she can become familiar with them both. It would also be productive to invite the orchestral pianist to a rehearsal or run-through during the staging process.

**Act II – V. Ensemble:**
There is one moment of stagecraft that can be accomplished through the orchestra. In measure 47 of the Act II – V. Ensemble the score calls for the school bell to be rung.24 The simplest way to achieve this is to write a one-measure triangle roll into the percussion part at this moment. The percussionist will have time both before and after the roll to move between instruments. It is essential to communicate this to the percussionist in advance of the first rehearsal so that he or she is sure to bring a triangle, even though it is not officially listed in the front of the part.

**Act II Chase Music:**
The Act II Chase Music is a 29-measure selection of music which is intended to accompany the final triumph of the children over Brundibár right before the concluding Victory Song. This music only exists in the Prague Version and therefore is written for the Prague instrumentation. However, even productions based on the Terezín Version may want to include this selection of music.

It is worth noting that the orchestral parts accompanying the Kushner Version do have the Chase Music included in the back; however, it is still written for the Prague Version instrumentation, making it not immediately playable by the ensemble. The instrumentation of this music is for flute, 2 clarinets, trumpet, 2 percussion players (snare drum, bass drum, cymbals), piano, violin I (section), violin II (section), and cello (section). This instrumentation and music can be adapted as follows for the Terezín orchestra:

- **Strings:** The four solo violins can be divided between the violin I and violin II sections, two players on each. Cello and double bass can play the cello part.
- **Percussion:** It is not possible for the one player to play all three instruments but the snare drum is by far the most important. Asking the percussionist to focus on the snare drum part would be the simplest solution. Because the bass drum and cymbal parts are not very complicated, depending on the formality of the performance situation, it may be possible to enlist the guitar and/or accordion player to cover those parts for this brief section of music.

(Hiring a second percussionist to perform this one moment in the opera should not be necessary.)

- Flute: Play as written.
- Clarinet and Trumpet: For the first eight bars of the Chase Music there are two clarinet parts and no trumpet part. Starting in bar 9, there is one clarinet part and one trumpet part. With both the clarinet and trumpet written in the key of B-flat, it is easy enough to ask the trumpet player to cover the second clarinet part for the first eight bars and then switch to the trumpet part at bar 9. It may be necessary to create a new part for the trumpet player that combines these two elements for ease of reading.

I’ve included an arrangement of the Chase Music that represents these performance suggestions in 2.5—Arrangements.

If the director needs some music to be performed underneath the activity on the stage but using this additional arrangement is not possible, another solution is to identify a section of music from earlier in the show that has a similar character and length. The most obvious candidate is from Act I – II. The Street is Full of People. This selection of instrumental music has the same energetic quality, uses the correct instrumentation, is a little under one minute long, and can accelerate towards the climax of capturing Brundibár. While this solution reuses music, it solves the specific problem without much issue for the orchestra, since it is already written into their parts. If one decides to use the Act I – II. The Street is Full of People music it’s important to decide this early so that the director can stage a chase that is of the appropriate length.
2.4 - EXPLANATION OF EDITION DISCREPANCIES

While these three basic editions exist in the published record, it is likely that the staff of a modern production will choose to blend the editions to create a unique run-of-show, which can accommodate specific artistic choices by the director and conductor, or simply extend the length of the show itself.

I suggest using the Terezín Version as the basis for this blended version and recommend that a production rent the Terezín orchestral parts with the Terezín instrumentation. The notes and suggestions below are based on that premise. While there are many small discrepancies of rhythm, note length, and the like, I will address only those with structural ramifications that must be addressed in order to produce a functional version of the work.

**Act I – IV. Ensemble:**
A note in the vocal score states that the opening four bars are only in the Terezín Version. Regardless of the version the production team has in mind, these bars should be performed as printed in the vocal score, which includes the opening four bars.

If they are not included it can be difficult for the chorus to find its G-natural after the Milkman’s monologue.

The first note for the chorus is different in the two Versions: a G-natural in the Terezín Version and a D-natural a fourth below in the Prague Version. I prefer the G-natural, but it can also depend on what works for the voices employed (see 2.2—Roles and Casting). Either way, it would make sense to make the same decision for the chorus entrance and for the children’s entrance which repeats the same music eight bars later.

At rehearsal number 4 in the Terezín Version, the children stop singing along with the chorus. I would suggest that they just sing to the end and ignore the footnotes which state that in the Terezín Version Annette and Little Joe do not sing to the end of movement. Dramatically, the chorus and the children are asking the same thing—for the Milkman to give them some milk—and because the singers playing the children are probably two of the strongest, they can act as good musical leaders if they are included.

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25 Ibid., 17.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 20.
Act I – VI. Pantomime:

The score indicates that the second measure of rehearsal 3 should be deleted as indicated in the Terezín version. 28 This is a minor point, but I think that the one-measure introduction fits in better with the off-kilter style of the music. The two-measure introduction sounds more regular and therefore less appropriate for the piece. If the piece is performed by solo accordion, then only one individual needs to be aware of this small change. My arrangement of the material for the Terezín ensemble instrumentation includes the one-measure introduction (see 2.5—Arrangements).

Act I – VII. Song One/Song Two/Pantomime Reprise:

It is important that Song One is rehearsed and presented in the appropriate key. The song is in B-flat major in the Terezín Version and C major in the Prague Version. The B-flat major Prague Version of the song is what is presented in the vocal score, although the C major Terezín Version of the song can be found in the Supplement in the back of the vocal score. 29 If using the Terezín orchestral parts, then it is important that the song is rehearsed in B-flat major with the singers from the beginning.

Song Two does not exist in the Terezín version; however, it is often included in modern productions if only to add another two minutes to the run time of the show and to showcase the two main performers. If the production staff would like to include Song Two but is using the Terezín orchestral parts there are two basic solutions: 1) ask the orchestral pianist to play the piano part from the vocal score as the accompaniment; or 2) use the following orchestration of the piano part arranged for the ensemble of the Terezín instrumentation, which I have provided (for the score of the arrangement see 2.5—Arrangements).

When the Pantomime waltz returns, you have the same issue from the second measure of rehearsal 3 at the second measure of rehearsal 6. 30 It would be logical to make the same decision in both settings.

Act I – VIII. Finale:

The opening section of this number features the character Brundibár singing repeated verses. The Terezín and Prague Versions have three verses whereas the Kushner Version of the text has seven verses. The orchestral parts are written with a repeat sign, so one can simply increase the number of repeats, depending on how many verses of text the director chooses to include.

28 Ibid., 24.
29 Ibid., C major version on page 25, B-flat major version on page I.
30 Ibid., 29.
Four bars before rehearsal number 11, the orchestra will play what is notated as the “Terezín ossia” in the vocal score. This substitution does not really affect the singers or how the parts line up, but it is just good for them to know what to expect, especially the three Fairy-Tale Animals whose entrance immediately follows.

**Act II – II. Morning Exercises:**
This short movement has a number of elements that need consideration. Firstly, everyone involved should simply be aware that while the vocal score writes out the verses sequentially, the orchestral parts are written with multiple repeats of the verse section.

In the Terezín version the four-bar introduction to each verse is omitted. One can choose to omit those four bars on the grounds that one is trying to create an authentic production, but I actually think that it is easier for everyone involved to have those four bars to recover between each verse and would recommend leaving them in. It helps to stabilize the pulse in the ensemble and allows the singers to take a substantial breath before each verse of this tricky passage. If that decision is made, the necessary modification to the orchestral parts is simple: just move the left repeat sign from bar 5 back to bar 1, including the four-bar introduction in the repeat of each verse.

The number of verses is flexible depending on the translation being used. The orchestral parts say there are three repeats of the opening verse before going on, but that is easy enough to change if there are additional or fewer verses desired.

Finally, as noted at the bottom of page 46 in the Vocal Score, the five bars before the Coda will need to be omitted because they do not exist in the Terezín orchestral parts. This doesn’t affect any singing but does affect the staging of the conclusion to this number.

**Act II – IV. March of the Schoolchildren:**
In the March of the Schoolchildren it is important to notice that this movement in the vocal score is intended for the Prague Version. This Prague Version begins in D minor and then modulates to A major. If a production is using the Terezín Version, it will be necessary to use the March of the Schoolchildren selection in the Supplement in the back of the vocal score which is associated with the

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31 Ibid., 40.
32 Ibid., 50.
33 Ibid., 53.
Terezín Version and begins in D minor before modulating to B-flat major. The Terezín orchestral parts, of course, match the Terezín Version in the vocal score by modulating to B-flat major.

In the third measure from the end there is one last “Mom-my” on two F-natural eighth notes. This is only in the Prague version, but I think it makes sense to include it. The children enjoy being able to sing right up to the end of the number, and it continues the rhythmic augmentation in an effective way. Either way, it does not impact the orchestral parts.

**Act II – V. Ensemble:**
It is important to note that the version included in the vocal score is intended for the Prague Version. Just like the treatment of the March of the Schoolchildren, the section of the vocal score that works with the Terezín orchestral parts can be found in the Supplement in the back of the vocal score. The Terezín Version is in a different key and also contains a different number of measures between rehearsal numbers 2 and 3. Using the Terezín Version of the Supplement will match the Terezín orchestral parts.

**Act II – Lullaby:**
At Rehearsal 9, a 16-measure lullaby is followed by an 8-measure refrain. (This 24-measure structure is repeated to create two verses and refrains, followed by a coda). As is noted in the vocal score, the refrain is only in the Prague Version, and therefore the orchestral parts for the Terezín version do not contain that music.

There are multiple solutions to this discrepancy. The simplest is to omit the 8-measure refrain, bringing the vocal score into alignment with the Terezín version orchestral parts. However, some productions do choose to include the refrain, both because it adds a minute or so to the overall run time of the show and because it seems a shame to omit any of this beautiful music. If the refrains are included, the orchestral pianist should play the piano accompaniment from the vocal score to those measures and the orchestral players should add 8 measures of rest where the refrain exists. Do note that the vocal score is written with repeats whereas the orchestral parts are through-written: as a result, you will need to add in the 8 measures of rest twice for the orchestra, once in each location.

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34 Ibid., Prague Version on page 57, Terezín Version on page II.
35 Ibid., 58.
36 Ibid., Prague Version on page 58, Terezín Version on page IV.
37 Ibid., 66.
Act II – Chase of Brundibár:
The Allegro giocoso music (listed as P:VII in the vocal score) in between the end of the ensemble and the Finale is not in the Terezín version of the orchestral score or orchestral parts, as it is strictly only part of the Prague Version.38 However, if you are using the Kushner Version’s orchestral parts, it can be found in a Supplement in the back. One tricky element is that even though the music is included as a helpful supplement to the Terezín-based Versions of the performance materials, it is still orchestrated using the Prague Version’s instrumentation. Solutions to this issue are suggested later in this paper, section 2.3–Orchestration and Instrumentation. A functional arrangement of this music for the Terezín Version ensemble can be found in section 2.5—Arrangements.

Act II – VI. Finale:
First, everyone should be aware that in this number the verses in the vocal score are written out sequentially, but the number is written with repeat signs in the orchestral parts. This is a simple matter, but knowing it in advance will save rehearsal time and confusion.

In the vocal score one measure needs to be deleted in order for the Terezín Version to match the orchestral score: the one bar before Little Joe enters with his speaking part.39

A film recording of the prisoners of the Terezín concentration camp singing the final Victory Song is included in the Nazi’s 1944 propaganda film Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt (“The Führer gives the Jews a City”). On this film, the cast and orchestra seem to have placed fermatas over the penultimate and antepenultimate notes:

Example 13, Victory Song ending, with fermatas

\[\text{Example 13, Victory Song ending, with fermatas}\]

38 Ibid., 69.
39 Ibid., 71.
There is a general marking of “rit.” in the vocal score edited by Blanka Cervinkova but no explicit indication of these fermatas. This has not been a part of either production in which I have been involved, but it would not be challenging to include it.
2.5 – ARRANGEMENTS

There are three specific sections of music in the opera which will benefit from having arrangements already composed for the Terezín instrumentation: I) Accordion Music; II) Song Two; and III) Chase Music.

I. Accordion Music:

There are two places in Act I where the accordion is given a 17-bar solo (the two sections are identical to each other). The use of the accordion represents the availability of the instrument in the Terezín camp and in many ways contributes to the unique sound world of Brundibár. However, for a modern production it may be difficult to find a professional accordion player, and if an organization can find one, that player may not have any orchestral or ensemble experience, or read music at a professional level. If an accordion player is hired, extra communication with that individual about the expectations of preparing the music will be needed. Extra time with the music may also be required.

It would be unfortunate, however, for the opera as a whole not to be performed because of the lack of an accordion player. Therefore, I have provided the following arrangement of the music for an ensemble of the Terezín instrumentation: piano, four violins, cello, and bass. My arrangement of that music is a direct transcription of the music itself and is intended to capture the flavor of the style. It can be provided to players in the form of inserts for their parts.
Example 14, Accordion Music Orchestral Arrangement

This arrangement is a direct transcription of Krása’s music for accordion as published by Boosey & Hawkes in its performance materials and Tempo Praha in its vocal score. The orchestration of the music is my original work.
II. Song Two

Song Two does not exist in the Terezín version; however, it is often included in modern productions if only to add another two minutes to the run time of the show and to showcase the two main performers. If the production staff would like to include Song Two but is using the Terezín orchestral parts there are two basic solutions: 1) ask the orchestral pianist to play the piano part from the vocal score as the accompaniment; or 2) use the following orchestration of the piano part arranged for the ensemble of the Terezín instrumentation, which I have composed.

This arrangement is for flute, clarinet, trumpet, piano, four violins, cello, and bass. It is a direct transcription of the musical elements of the piano accompaniment from the vocal score and adds some color and variation to each phrase.
Example 15, Song Two Orchestral Arrangement

This arrangement is a direct transcription of the piano reduction printed in the Tempo Praha vocal score. The orchestration was written with an awareness of the Gerard Schwarz Naxos recording with some elements of this arrangement being borrowed from that recording (i.e., clarinet melody, followed by trumpet).
III. Chase Music

See section 2.3 – Orchestration and Instrumentation for a detailed discussion of this selection of music. The arrangement provided below represents the performance suggestions discussed in that section of this paper.
Example 16, Chase Music Orchestral Arrangement

The conception of this arrangement began with a direct transcription of the Chase Music provided by Boosey & Hawkes as part of the rental of performance materials for the Kushner Version of the work. While the Kushner Version of the opera is based on the original Terezín Version (and therefore the Terezín Version’s instrumentation), Boosey & Hawkes provides this selection of music from the Prague Version, employing the Prague Version’s instrumentation. This arrangement maintains the identical musical elements while making it possible to perform this music using the Terezín Version’s instrumentation.
2.6 – ENDING THE SHOW: CONTEXT AND CONSIDERATIONS

Anyone who produces or performs the work should be aware that one must decide how to treat the ending of the show, and that any of these possible decisions will participate in the ongoing conversation about the meaning of the work itself. Here I will attempt to summarize the common options, as well as the considerations that come along with each of those options.

The first and simplest option is to conclude with the entire cast singing the final Victory Song. This is how the ending is printed in the published materials. It is true that the opera does end somewhat suddenly, and part of the reason some of these other options have come into existence is because of general unease with the pacing of the story. That being said, this sudden conclusion is what the composer wrote. The pacing of the story is challenging throughout the entire opera and deciding to try to alter or “fix” it in this one spot seems somewhat arbitrary.

In contrast, the Kushner Version concludes with an additional speech from the title character Brundibár, meant to serve as a warning to the children of the town (and, in an allegorical manner, to the audience as well). This speech is simply delivered after the Victory Song.

In both of these two situations, directors can make additional choices to further contextualize the opera. In a 2012 production with the Reading Symphony Orchestra and Berks Opera Workshop in Reading, Pennsylvania, the director created the following conclusion to the show: when Brundibár finished his speech, the entire cast (and orchestra, which was seated on stage) all pulled out yellow stars from their pockets and put them on their chests. Then everyone on stage just started going about their business, chatting, and sweeping while the curtain slowly fell. The intention was to give the audience the idea that the show was being performed in the Terezín camp itself, and when the performance concluded the cast returned to their daily lives as prisoners in Terezín.

Ela Weissberger, who played the Cat as an eleven year old in Terezín, has her own tradition when she visits productions. When the opera concludes with the Victory Song, she will come on stage to join the cast in a reprise of the Victory Song itself. In Lexington in 2011, she joined the line of children holding hands and marching in place while they all sang together, the students singing the English version they had learned and Ms. Weissberger singing the Czech of her childhood and of the original production. Here in Lexington, when the reprise of the Victory Song concluded the entire cast simply sat down on stage and listened to her speak to the assembled audience about her experiences in
Terezín, the impact this piece of music and drama has had on her life, and her many friends who did not survive the war.
2.7 – CONCLUSION

It is my hope that this document can make it easier to perform this important work in the future. While the logistical challenges that accompany a production of Brundibár are significant, they should not impede anyone’s desire to present the opera, nor do they need to. The information and solutions presented in this project are intended both to make it possible to produce the blended version of the opera described in this document, and to alert producers and performers to the challenges they may face, so that a production team can make informed choices and address logistical issues in their own production of Brundibár.
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January 31, 2010
Singletary Center for the Arts, Recital Hall, University of Kentucky

Die Zauberflöte by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, libretto by Emanuel Schikaneder
Fully-staged opera production by University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, Undergraduate Production
April 17-18, 2010
Memorial Hall, University of Kentucky

The Pirates of Penzance by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan
Fully-staged opera production by University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, Undergraduate Production
April 15-17, 2011
Memorial Hall, University of Kentucky

Brundibár by Hans Krása, libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister
Fully-staged opera production by University of Kentucky Opera Theatre and the Academy for Creative Excellence
March 11-13, 2011
Singletary Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, University of Kentucky

Reconciling Brundibár: Practical Considerations for Producing Hans Krása’s Children’s Opera
A Lecture Recital, including a concert production of the complete opera
Tuesday, April 1, 2014
Singletary Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, University of Kentucky
VITA

Educational Institutions Attended and Degrees Already Awarded

Master of Music. Orchestral Conducting, University of Maryland, May 2008
Bachelor of Arts. Music, Harvard University, June 2006

Professional Positions Held

Music Director & Conductor, Central Kentucky Youth Orchestras, 2011-present
Guest Conductor, Reading Symphony Orchestra, 2012
Part-Time Instructor, University of Kentucky, Fall 2011
Cover Conductor, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, 2009-2010
Assistant Conductor / Music Librarian / Orchestra Operations Assistant, Opening Ceremonies of the 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games, 2010
Cover Conductor, Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, 2009-2011
Assistant Conductor, DiCapo Opera, 2011
Assistant Conductor, University of Kentucky Symphony Orchestra, 2009-2011
Assistant Conductor, University of Kentucky Opera Theatre, 2009-2011
Intensive Community Program, Program Coordinator, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, 2008-2009

Scholastic and Professional Honors

Awarded a Presidential Graduate Fellowship for the 2011-2012 academic year, University of Kentucky
Awarded a fully-funded Graduate Assistantship, 2009-2011, University of Kentucky

Awarded the Nicholas and Virginia Neville Graduate Assistantship in Orchestral Conducting, University of Maryland, 2006-2008

David Lewin Award for Undergraduate Musical Performance, Harvard University, 2006

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