

CHILDREN'S OPERA *BRUNDIBÁR* BY HANS KRÁSA – UNIQUE STAGE HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract

Brundibár, an opera written by the Czech composer Hans Krása in 1938, has gained worldwide fame since the end of World War II and has become a representation of the global resistance to genocide and crimes against humanity.

Brundibár was performed fifty-five times by the young Jewish inmates of the Theresienstadt concentration camp (Czechoslovakia) during 1943–1944. Depicting the victory of the helpless children over the tyrannical organ grinder Brundibár (“bumble-bee” in Czech), this opera symbolized the triumph of the good over the evil. It provided the prisoners of the camp with the hope for the liberation. In the autumn of 1944, composer Hans Krása, conductor Rafael Schächter, stage designer František Zelenka, and 150 young actors and members of the orchestra were deported in the cattle wagons to Auschwitz and other concentration camps. After the deportation of the artists, the most popular theatre production at Theresienstadt was silenced only to be revived after the end of World War II.

This paper aims to demonstrate that the role of *Brundibár* goes far beyond a common opera production. *Brundibár* has a great significance and a very special meaning when performed in the countries with the authoritarian regimes in the past, e. g. in Latvia, who faced mass deportations of the Latvians in 1941–1949 and lost the majority of its Jewish population during the Holocaust.

The paper talks about the importance of the art pieces about the genocide in the 20th century that should be presented to a wide audience to keep the traumatic memory of the past alive in the memory of the today's society.

Keywords: *children's opera Brundibár, Hans Krása, Theresienstadt, genocide.*

Introduction

October 2021 marks the 80th anniversary of the instituting of the Theresienstadt Nazi concentration camp. Despite the terrible living conditions, Theresienstadt had

a highly developed cultural life including first performances of children's opera *Brundibár* by Hans Krása. Hans Krása (1899–1944) was one of many composers imprisoned and actively composing at the Theresienstadt concentration camp during World War II. Although he is best known for the opera *Brundibár*, Krása created in almost all genres: orchestral music, solo instrumental and chamber music, solo vocal and choral music. Many of his works composed during imprisonment at Theresienstadt were kept by Krása's friends after he was deported to Auschwitz and published after his death. Even though, Krása's music has received many performances and attracted significant scholarship in recent decades, *Brundibár* and the circumstances of its performances at Theresienstadt have not been the subject of significant prior analysis and little is known about it.

The author analyses the circumstances and the history of the children's opera *Brundibár* creation and production. The unique stage history of the opera turned it into a symbol of the global resistance to genocide and authoritarian regimes. After the thorough examination of the evidence presented in the literature and in the memoirs of World War II survivors the author concludes that this musical piece has an exceptional role in the education of the society. The author highlights the active role of the art in the promotion and protection of human and civil rights.

Discussion

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed the Chancellor of Germany and within seven months the Nazi party was declared the only legal party in Germany. During the first years of Hitler's dictatorship, the Nazi state quickly became a regime in which citizens were not guaranteed basic civil and human rights. In his new position as Reich Chancellor, Hitler possessed the total control over the political system of Germany. Extensive propaganda was used to spread the Nazi party's racist goals and ideals. With the help of the Nazis, Hitler initiated the segregation of Jews and everyone else who did not fit his description of "Aryan," removing them from all society life aspects.

For genocide and crimes against humanity to occur, the dehumanization of the potential victims must happen first. The perpetrators of such crimes often use art as a tool helping them in accomplishing their goals. Undoubtedly, Hitler's and Nazi party's genocidal intentions could not be realized without intense propagandistic efforts of the National Socialists to demonize Jews, Africans, Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others whom they deemed "undesirable". As historian David Welch suggests, Nazi propaganda was used to convince those who were not yet persuaded of the importance of the Hitler's racial policies and to inspire those who already adhered to his views [Welch 1993: 84].

One of the first items Hitler addressed in his new position was music. Professional composers and performers were further encouraged to achieve, promote, and consolidate a sense of national identity. The Nazi regime initiated a politico-socio-musical system which they considered to be a vehicle for “*strengthening the nation and the race, recognizing its ceremonial, educational, and disciplinary value*” [Potter 1998: 17]. According to Hitler and Goebbels, the three master composers that represented good and acceptable German music were Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Wagner, and Anton Bruckner. Evidently, this policy did not start with Hitler. In 1929 Alfred Rosenberg, Nazi theorist and ideologue, founded so called *Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur* (Fighting League for German Culture). The purpose of the *Kampfbund* was to attack artistic modernism and to preserve purely German values. Rosenberg asserted that this organization would “*inform the German people about the interconnection between art, race, knowledge, and moral values and give whole hearted support for genuine expression of German culture*” [Levi 1994: 9]. The *Kampfbund* facilitated the promotion of German music with the strong political support of the Nazi party.

The Nazi regime used music and other arts as a political tool to unify and indoctrinate the German nation [Shelton 2005: 713]. *Entartete Musik* was the name given by the Nazis to a wide variety of composers and musical genres as part of their propaganda machine. *Entartete* (*degenerate*, a term connoting psychologically abnormal behaviour) signified something aberrant about the art, thus perceived as a threat to German society. Modern music was generally met with hostility. Many among German public disliked the new atonal, futurist and jazz trends that were increasingly present on the world stage. Hitler himself viewed modernists and internationalists with disgust and considered that this was “*symptomatic of a sick society*” [Meyer 1991: 267]. Nazi propaganda promoted the idea of German superiority in the art of composition and the inferiority of any music touched by Jews. The public was “protected” from cultural pollution by a ban on the performance, recording, and publication of this music. The policy *Entartete Kunst* (degenerate art) was initially introduced at an exhibit of visual arts displayed in Munich in 1937. The following year, in Dusseldorf, music received similar perception at the *Entartete Musik* exhibition.

In accordance with the Nazi Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service of 7 April 1933, German Jews involved with the arts were dismissed from their positions, as were all Jewish employees in the public sphere. The Nazis had excluded Jews from participating in public cultural life, forbidding their participation in orchestras, music schools, theatres, and dance halls to “protect” Aryan culture from Jewish influence.

Even though Jews had a history of being particularly influential in musical culture, the Nazi state prohibited the performance of music by Jewish composers

as well as the performance of German music by Jewish musicians. Nazi ideology viewed Jewish and German music as contradictory to each other. Joseph Goebbels stated: “*Jewry and German music are opposites; by their very nature they exist in gross contradistinction to each other*” [Kater 1997: 76]. The Nazis religiously followed Goebbels’s orders, going to great lengths ostracizing Jews. For example, the Nazis were extremely troubled by the firmly established music of Felix Mendelssohn in German national culture. Elaborate efforts were made to discredit him, Mendelssohn was portrayed as an artist who had struggled to become “German”, but failed. On 15 November 1936, three years after Adolf Hitler came to power, the *New York Times* reported that the bronze statue of Mendelssohn outside the Gewandhaus in Leipzig had been removed and destroyed. This violent action clearly signalled that music by composers of the Jewish faith or tradition would no longer be performed in opera houses and concert halls. Whether they were deported to a concentration camp or were able to escape the Nazis, these composers’ lives and social circles had been completely changed, and their music was not given a chance to be widely heard.

On 10 October 1941, the Nazis established the Theresienstadt transit concentration camp in the fortress city of Terezín (Czechoslovakia), Jews from all Central Europe were held in this transit concentration camp and then sent to the extermination camps in the East. During the three and a half years of its existence, around 160,000 people were brought to Theresienstadt from the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Slovakia, and other countries. For most of them, it served as a way station to the extermination camps and other killing sites. The total number of survivors was around 23,000, including 4,000 of the deportees who survived [Ludwig 2005: 713].

Theresienstadt functioned not only as a transit camp to the death camps, but also as a propaganda vehicle designed to deceive the world community about the true nature of the *Final Solution*. The Nazis tried to conceal Theresienstadt’s function as a way station on the road to death from the eyes of the international public and presented it as an idyllic place to live. Theresienstadt was publicized as a “model camp” for Red Cross representatives and foreign dignitaries. The Nazis SS command implemented extensive propaganda efforts to demonstrate the camp’s organization and humanity, which involved fostering the creation of cultural programmes for the Jewish inmates. Outstanding Jewish writers, professors, musicians, and actors gave lectures, concerts, and theatre performances. This active cultural community included many of Europe’s most gifted performers, conductors and composers. Many of the musicians imprisoned at Theresienstadt had been part of active musical life in Prague, Brno and elsewhere in Europe in their pre-war lives. As performers and composers, they contributed to the German Neues Deutsches Theater and the Czech Národní Divadlo [Shelton 2005: 714]. Evidences showed that, despite hopeless

circumstances, composers imprisoned at Theresienstadt strived to convey messages of hope through their music. Many composers did not survive the Holocaust, but fortunately, their music did.

Composers Gideon Klein, Pavel Haas, Hans Krása and Viktor Ullmann were among the central creative forces in this extraordinarily rich cultural community. Before their imprisonment, these musicians were active participants in the principal trends of European culture and were among the gifted students and musical successors of Arnold Schoenberg, Alois Hába and Leoš Janáček. Their works were performed under the direction of such notable conductors as Leopold Stokowski, William Steinberg, George Szell, and Serge Koussevitzky. Deported to Theresienstadt, they were important figures in the *Freizeitgestaltung* (Administration for free time activities).

Freizeitgestaltung, a Jewish-run organization instituted by the Nazis, was responsible for a wide range of cultural activities for prisoners. Amateur and professional musicians formed a variety of ensembles. Egon Ledec, a former associate concertmaster of the Czech Philharmonic, formed the Ledec Quartet, one of several string quartets and ensembles at Theresienstadt. Kurt Geron, who was the original “Tiger Brown” in Kurt Weill’s *Three Penny Opera* and co-starred with actress Marlene Dietrich in *Der Blaue Engel* (“The Blue Angel”), produced cabaret performances. In the sphere of jazz and popular music, Martin Roman led the Ghetto Swingers. Czech choirmaster Raphael Schächter directed the performances of Giuseppe Verdi’s *Requiem*. Between 1943 and 1944, he and over 150 fellow prisoners rehearsed and performed *Requiem* 15 times for inmates and for the Nazi elite. The chorus was reduced twice by transportation to Auschwitz. Operas performed at Theresienstadt included Puccini’s *Tosca* and *La Bohème*, Verdi’s *Aida* and *Rigoletto*, Bizet’s *Carmen*, Pergolesi’s *La Serva Padrona* and Strauss’s *Die Fledermaus*, some in a concert version with piano and some fully staged with orchestra. Two operas by Czech composers, Bedřich Smetana’s *Prodaná Nevěsta* and the children’s opera *Brundibár* by Hans Krása, were the favourites of the Czechs and also the large majority of the camp’s prisoners. The most infamously associated with Terezín opera is Viktor Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, the only opera that is known to have been composed entirely in the camp [Levi 1994: 57].

While performances by orchestras, chamber ensembles, jazz bands, and choirs as well as recitals and opera performances characterized life at Theresienstadt, it remained a concentration camp, where prisoners lived in insufferable conditions. The inmates were exposed to all the hardships of camp life: malnutrition, starvation, poor hygienic conditions, infections, and tragic lack of medicine. To create a protective atmosphere, the adults tried to create a separate world for the children, where art,

music, and theatre would help them to escape the terrible reality of the camp. Drawing and theatre lessons had an invaluable therapeutic effect and significantly helped the children to bear oppressive reality around them [Makarova 2004: 268]. These activities helped the children express themselves, release fantasies and emotions. The children constantly communicated in their drawings and theatre performances the hope of their happy return home. Only a small part of the children who passed through Theresienstadt saw this hope fulfilled. Most of them were transported further east and virtually all perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Of 15,000 children who passed through Terezín, only 150 children (1 percent) survived the war [Ludwig 2005: 713].



Figure 1. A propaganda photograph taken by the Nazis of the *Brundibár* cast at Theresienstadt concentration camp (National Film Archive, Prague).

The children's opera *Brundibár* ("bumble-bee" in Czech) by Hans Krása with lyrics by Adolf Hoffmeister became the most famous theatre production of Theresienstadt. Krása and Hoffmeister wrote *Brundibár* for the Czech State Opera in 1938. *Brundibár* is a relatively short opera performed by a baritone, children's choir, and orchestra. Because of the complete occupation of the country by the Nazis in March 1939, the rehearsals of the opera were postponed. They started only in 1941 at the Prague's Jewish orphanage which served as a temporary educational facility for children separated from their parents by the war. The first rehearsals with the children

were carried out under the joint supervision of the conductor Rafael Schächter and the teacher Rudi Freudenfeld. František Zelenka, an architect and stage designer of the National Theatre and Liberated Theatre, created a simple set of three large fences made up of several boards with three posters stuck on them. The posters had a sparrow, cat and dog presented. The animal characters would stick their heads through the poster when they first appeared in the action. The opera was performed twice in October of 1942. It was performed in secret, as Jewish cultural activities were already forbidden by that time.

By July 1943, nearly all the children of the original chorus and the composer Hans Krása were transported to Terezín. Only the librettist Adolf Hoffmeister managed to escape. Rudi Freudenfeld smuggled the piano score of *Brundibár* into Terezín in his allotted 50 kg of luggage. At Theresienstadt, Krása reconstructed the full score of the opera, adapting it to suit the musical instruments available in the camp: flute, clarinet, guitar, accordion, piano, percussion, four violins, a cello, and a double bass. To Krása's great surprise, Rafael Schächter, who was too busy with other musical projects at the time, gave Rudi Freudenfeld the task of conducting this production. A set was again designed by František Zelenka: several flats were painted as a background, in the foreground there was a fence with drawings of the cat, dog and sparrow and holes for the singers to insert their heads.

After Krása reorchestrated *Brundibár* in accordance with the available instruments, rehearsals began at the so called "Dresden barracks." Rehearsals were constantly disrupted by the deportation of young actors to the East concentration camps and their replacement by newly arrived children. Two of the principals had already played singing roles in a performance of *Prodaná Nevěsta* and other operatic productions. Schächter selected them immediately for the main roles: Pintá Mühlstein (Pepíček) and Greta Hoffmeister (Aninka). Ela Steinova played the Cat, Stefan (later Rafi) Herz-Sommer played the Sparrow, and Zdeněk Ornest played the Dog. Honza Treichlinger played Brundibár in every performance. The production was directed by František Zelenka with assistance of Kamila Rosenbaum, a choreographer from Vienna. After more than two months of rehearsals, the Terezín premiere of *Brundibár* took place on 23 September 1943. On average, the opera was performed once a week on Saturdays.

The opera tells the story of Aninka and Pepíček, a fatherless sister and brother. Their mother is ill and needs milk to recover, but they have no money. Aninka and Pepíček decide to sing in the marketplace to raise money, but the evil organ grinder Brundibár chases them away. However, with the help of a fearless sparrow, keen cat, wise dog, and the children of the town, they can defeat Brundibár.

Multiple sources cite the use of allegory in Theresienstadt's productions of *Brundibár*. Existing photos from Theresienstadt's production show the boy (Honza



Figure 2. The original poster for *Brundibár* (Jewish Museum, Prague).

Treichlinger) in the role of Brundibár wearing Hitler’s moustache. Alvin Goldfarb asserts that *Brundibár* served as an “allegorical attack on Hitler’s Europe” [Goldfarb 1976: 10]. Tony Kushner and Maurice Sendak clearly depict Brundibár as Hitler in their children’s book [Kushner and Sendak 2003]. The simple story of the struggle against the mean and rude street musician was used to symbolize the victory of good over evil. An opera about the triumph of the helpless children over the tyrannical organ grinder was a great success among the inmates of the camp, served as a form of resistance and even gave them hope for liberation [Karas 1995: 120].

Though Adolf Hoffmeister wrote the libretto before Hitler’s invasion, certain phrases served as an appeal to fight evil and sounded clearly anti-Nazi to the audience. At the end, children and animals overpower Brundibár and sing: “*Brundibár is beaten, he runs into the distance, strike up the drum, the war has been won.*” Joža Karas, a former inmate of Theresienstadt and a conductor of the first post-war production of *Brundibár* in 1975, declares that the “opera acquired a political connotation aided by a textual alteration to emphasize the anti-Nazi message”. He indicates that “the poet Emil Saudek altered the very last few lines of the opera to express the universal feeling of resistance and the ultimate belief in justice” [Karas 1995: 120]. 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 reads: “He, who loves justice and will abide by it and who is not afraid, is our friend and can play with us.” The opera was performed

in Czech, and the camp authorities did not understand the anti-Nazi message of the production.

Hanellore Brenner wrote that “*Brundibár represents the evil that has brought misery into the lives of the children, because they see him as Hitler, as his Nazis, and as all supporters of his dictatorial regime... The wellspring of sudden energy that fuels their common cause against Brundibár seems inexhaustible. It is an energy that flows from all sides – from the audience, from the musicians in the orchestra, from the very streets and barracks of Theresienstadt, and, of course, from the hearts of the performing children... “Brundibár poražen!” (“We have defeated Brundibár!”) cry one and all. Good has triumphed over evil. It was like a fairy tale, yet for the moment this was reality. It was a vision of the future transported to the stage, borne up by the principle of hope and belief in the victory over Hitler*” [Brenner 2009: 186–187]. Handa Drori, a living Theresienstadt survivor, recalled, “*When at the end we all sang “Brundibár poražen”, we firmly believed in ourselves and in our victory... At that moment we looked optimistically into the future*” [Brenner 2009: 187].

Following *Brundibár’s* successful premiere, Dr. Kurt Singer, a musicologist from Berlin and inmate of Theresienstadt, stated, “*Brundibár shows how a short opera of today should look and sound, how it can unite the highest in artistic taste with originality of concept, and modern character with viable tunes... We have also a Czech national coloration (at which Krása is a master), a clever balance of scenic effects between the orchestra pit and the stage, an orchestra used with taste and economy and a singing line which is never obscured or smothered by the instruments... Whether it be cast in a large or small form, whether it be a song or symphony, chorus or opera, there can be no higher praise for a work of art*” [Karas 1999: 195].

Realizing the propagandistic potential of this enormously popular production, the Nazis arranged a special performance of *Brundibár* for the representatives of the International Red Cross, who, in response to the growing concerns over the extermination of Jews, came to inspect living conditions at the camp. The Nazis deported 7500 inmates to Auschwitz before the visit of the Red Cross representatives trying to hide the overcrowding at Theresienstadt.

On 23 June 1944, the Red Cross delegation visited Theresienstadt’s school, theatre, hospital, cafes, and kindergarten and attended *Brundibár* performance. For the visit, the production of *Brundibár* was moved to the large Sokol Hall outside the ghetto. The performers were given resources for the set and costumes improvement. The opera’s final scene was later captured in the Nazi propaganda film *Theresienstadt*, better known under the deceptive title *Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt /The Führer Gives the Jews a City*.

This was the last of the fifty-five performances in the Terezín ghetto. In the autumn of 1944, as soon as filming was finished, composer Hans Krása, orchestra

members, conductor Rafael Schächter, director and stage designer František Zelenka, and 150 young actors as well as most of Theresienstadt's cultural establishment were shipped in cattle wagons to Auschwitz. The deportation of the artists silenced the most popular theatre production in Terezín.

Since the end of the war, *Brundibár* has gained worldwide fame, becoming a symbol of global resistance to genocide and authoritarian regimes. *Brundibár* was introduced to the English-speaking world in 1975. German premiere took place in 1985. After the Opera de Paris production in 1997, *Brundibár* has been widely performed in France. Since *Brundibár* became a popular pedagogical tool, performances of the opera emerged all over Europe and USA. Sofia Pantouvaki noted that “*the frequency of repetition of contemporary Brundibár performances is so high, that one could go around the world by attending one performance after another*” [Pantouvaki: 4]. Only in 1999, one hundred and thirty performances of *Brundibár* were produced in Germany. Rebecca Rovit called this phenomenon “*a national obsession*” [Rovit 2000: 112].

The popularity of *Brundibár* continues today worldwide. Recently, this opera was premiered at the Teatro Regio (Turin, Italy), Teatro Real (Madrid, Spain), Opera de Lyon (Lyon, France), Theatre de la Capitole de Toulouse (Toulouse, France) and Mariinsky Theatre (Saint-Petersburg, Russia). By now, the libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister has been translated into many languages, including English, German, French, Italian, Hebrew, Russian, Norwegian, Spanish, and others. The Latvian translation was made by the famous poet Jānis Elsbergs for the Latvian premiere of the opera.

Today, *Brundibár* goes far beyond a common opera production. *Brundibár* is a deeply impressive music work about the subject that has not lost its actuality and impact until now. The circumstances of *Brundibár*'s first performances possess special power and significance. Listening to the piece today, one still feels those tragic events woven into its very fabric. It is of a great importance to preserve the memories and understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust, as well as of the violations of the human and civil rights in the 20th century. The message should be conveyed to the younger generations which should know about these atrocities, but never be witnesses of their recurrence.

Modern society needs more initiatives that would play an active role in the promotion and the protection of human and civil rights. Providing information about the authoritarian regimes of the past still remains essential in promoting democratic values and preventing violations of the human rights. *Brundibár* has a great significance and a very special meaning to the countries with the authoritarian regimes in the past, particularly to Latvia as the country that faced mass deportations

of the Latvians in 1941–1949 and lost the majority of its Jewish population in the Holocaust. The first production of *Brundibár* in Latvian is scheduled for summer 2022 to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Communist and Nazi genocide in Latvia.

No doubt, pieces about genocide in the 20th century should be presented to a wide audience to keep the traumatic memory of the past. On the opera stage, there are few pieces that remember the heroes of resistance. *Valentīna* by Arturs Maskats, *The Diary of Anne Frank* by Grigory Frid and *Brundibár* by Hans Krása are among them.

Arturs Maskats' opera *Valentīna* focuses on the central motives of biography of the legendary Latvian theatre and film historian Valentīna Freimane (1922–2018). The opera revisits a dramatic period in the history of Latvia – 1939 to 1945 – a chapter that was crucial not only for the country's culture and political future, but also for the coexistence of Latvia's different ethnic groups. Freimane's parents and husband were murdered in the Holocaust, Freimane herself survived the war in hiding. The opera heroine is depicted as a personality who remains true to herself and the people she loved, as a force which must survive and continue to live. The character of Valentīna encompasses her entire era and reflects people who lived beside her and who helped her to survive. The opera *Valentīna* was staged at the Latvian National Opera in 2014.

The Diary of Anne Frank, the memoir that has touched the hearts of millions, was given an extra dimension by the 20th century composer Grigory Frid. In his opera, Frid selected passages from the diary of a 13 years old Jewish girl, Anne Frank, who was hiding with her family in a house in Amsterdam from 1942 until their arrest by the Nazi police in August 1944. Grigory Frid's opera is the only music version of the book translated into 65 languages. The composer came across Anne Frank's diary in 1969 and immediately conceived the idea of a musical staging. Vivid and memorable, this dramatic opera recreates the world of Anne Frank in living in hope for freedom and peace. In the 60-minute performance, Anne reveals her emotional pressure, profound thoughts, moral power, reflections on the first romantic feelings and unbending will to live. Her different moods and emotions, her pleasures and fears – all find moving and expression in the Frid's score for solo soprano and an instrumental group of nine. The opera was first performed with piano accompaniment in Moscow in May 1972, but it was worldwide acknowledged only after the European and American productions in orchestral version which took place at the very end of the 20th century in German and English. In summer 2012, *Operabase* listed it as the most frequently staged lyric work by a living composer over the previous five years.

The productions of *Brundibár* at the leading music theatres in Europe and the USA emphasized an exceptional place for *Brundibár* in the musical repertoire.

It is intended for a wide audience, while at the same time revealing the historical truth to the young generation. *Brundibár* could be considered as a remembrance and commemoration of the facts of genocide teaching children about these events. Learning, understanding, and perceiving cultural history is essential in order to establish democratic values of life [Pantouvaki: 7]. Thus, *Brundibár* serves as an accessible history lesson. *Brundibár* touches everyone, causes empathy, raises awareness about human rights and promotes alternatives to xenophobia, militarization, totalitarian thinking, warns against authoritarian regimes. It seems emblematic that the *Brundibár* opera was named after the mean character. That represents the idea that the evil hides away and is not totally defeated, it may be back at any time. At the end of the performance in Tony Kushner's English version of *Brundibár* the *evil* character appears once again and threatens to return. The reappearance and the threat of *Brundibár*'s return have often been referred to as a conception of the evil always lurking in our everyday lives. Today, *Brundibár* is intended as a warning that "tyrants of all times, in every generation, can be and must be resisted":

*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.
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, Brundibar!* [Kushner 2003: 9]

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