

CHUMBAWAMBA'S
ABCDEFG

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE
BY
DALE YATES
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(Spotlights flash onto curtain. Spotlights dim as curtain opens, stage lights come up.)

1. EXT. URBAN STREET. NIGHT.

A group of people dressed differently in muted colors slowly stroll across a trash-strewn street backed by a brick wall plastered with police state posters and harsh graffiti. A solo guitarist sitting on a large, upturned bucket begins strumming the music.

Song: Introduction

(Bystander One stops, faces downstage.)

ONE: In the dark times,
will we be singing?
Yes, we'll be singing
of the dark times.

(Bystander Two stops, faces downstage.)

TWO: Every new day's dawn
ONE: In the dark times,
will we be singing?
TWO: brings a song of its own
ONE: Yes, we'll be singing
of the dark times.

(Bystander Three stops, faces downstage.)

THREE: Waiting to be sung.
TWO: Every new day's dawn
ONE: In the dark times,

(Bystander Four stops, faces downstage.)

FOUR: Waiting to be sung.
ONE: will we be singing?
TWO: brings a song of its own

ONE: Yes, we'll be singing
 FOUR: Waiting to be sung.
 ONE: of the dark times.
 THREE: Waiting to be sung.

TWO: Every new day's dawn
 ONE: In the dark times,
 FOUR: Waiting to be sung.
 ONE: will we be singing?
 TWO: brings a song of its own
 ONE: Yes, we'll be singing
 FOUR: Waiting to be sung.
 ONE: of the dark times.
 THREE: Waiting to be sung.

(Bystander Five stops in front of others,
 faces downstage.)

FIVE: Every new day's dawn
 brings a song
 of its own.

(Guitar trails off as stage lights fade,
 curtain closes. Two spotlights highlight
 arrival of two narrators.)

NARRATOR ONE (ONE): A
 confident, composed person,
 defensive of the role. Always
 enters from stage right,
 dressed formally and remains
 in formal attire for the
 remainder of the performance.

NARRATOR TWO (TWO): Free-
 spirited person who ranges
 from distracting to attention
 getting. Always enters from
 stage left, starts in
 business casual but has
 outfits that change
 throughout the acts.

ONE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

TWO
 (injecting)
 and genders of all kinds

ONE
 welcome to <theatre group's> presentation of Chumbawamba's
 ABCDEFG.

TWO
 Specifically referring to the musical notes A through G.

(Spotlight highlights artist in the band,
 who stands, plays musical scale from A to
 G. Spotlight off, artist sits.)

ONE
 (toward band)
 Thank you.
 (downstage)
 I am <name>,

TWO
 and I am <name>.

ONE
 We will be your guides as we journey together through time
 to explore moments of musical history, some good,

TWO
 some bad,

ONE
 some serious,

TWO
 some funny,

ONE
 but each one highlights how music represents the human
 spirit. To some, music is an escape, a refuge, an art that
 soothes and comforts.

TWO

Music can be a way of discovering the world or talking about it. A language both common and uncommon, a way of expressing joy, love, anger and fear.

ONE

For example, the introductory song we just heard was inspired by German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht who once said:

TWO

"In the dark times, will there be singing? Yes. There will be singing – about the dark times."

ONE

Even in our darkest moments, we humans sing. Music is something we cannot shake. It inspires us and re-enforces who we are.

TWO

It can provoke thought or dispel illusion.

ONE

Something so powerful will attract villains. This brings us to the first stop on our journey, all the way back to 11th century Europe. It is a story about a particular

TWO

(injecting)

or peculiar

ONE

leap from one musical note to another. Specifically a musical interval that spans three adjacent whole tones such as starting with an E flat

BAND

(plays an E Flat note)

ONE

to the A note above it.

BAND

(plays A note)

ONE

(toward band)

Thank you.

(downstage)

This kind of shift is known as a tritone, but it also has a name that is a bit more obscure.

TWO

(injecting)

And don't forget, sinister.

(loud whisper downstage)

There will be a test later, so pay attention.

ONE

(slightly annoyed)

There will NOT be a test. Back to this musical interval, in Latin it once was called

TWO

the devil in the music.

ONE

As the story goes, some in medieval times thought such a shift in musical notes was unnatural and encapsulated the very essence of evil. So sure of this they banned it.

TWO

Some claim they even resorted

(briefly strangles neck)

to torture to enforce the ban.

ONE

Maybe, maybe not. Either way, its other name

TWO

(injecting)

and demonic name

ONE

is the title of our next song: "The Devil's Interval".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens. Stage lights on.)

2. EXT. TOWN CENTER. MORNING.

A crier stands on a stump and faces a small gathering of citizens. Stage left is a small band.

CRIER: Dressed in a brown and tan suit. Exudes fire in their eyes and brimstone in their voice. Demands attention through fear and quick words. Wields a book in their left hand as if an extension of themselves.

CRIER

Hark, ladies and gentlemen. Whether ye be young or old, small or tall, I beg of thee to lend me an ear, for what I have to say imperils our very souls. Yes, it is as you fear. For dark forces are at work from none other than Lucifer himself.

(Crowd gasps, as others enter from offstage to join the gathering.)

CRIER

(lending in)

He slinks and slithers hiding in soot and shadow waiting to POUNCE ...

(Crier lurches at the crowd as everyone yelps in shock.)

CRIER

So please gird yourselves for Beelzebub hides everywhere, even in plain sight and ... even yet ... in the very sounds we hear.

(The small band begins the music.)

Song: The Devil's Interval

CRIER: If you should walk out in the morning
to fetch your water from the well,
good people please beware;
little children do take care –
watch out for the Devil's interval.

(Crier steps down, slowly walks through crowd, interacting with citizens)

CRIER: When strolling through the woods in springtime;
when evening blackbirds coo and call.
Such sounds of joy and sadness
may hide the Prince of Darkness –
beware the Devil's interval.

CROWD: Beware the Devil's interval.

(Crier slowly returns to stump)

CRIER: The kettle whistling in the kitchen;
the chiming clock that's in the hall ...
should they sound E flat to A,
then Lucifer is on his way –
here comes the Devil's interval.

CROWD: Here comes the Devil's interval.

(Crier back on stump. Crier and Crowd face band, band plays interlude)

(Crier faces crowd, fervently pleas)

CRIER: Don't take your loved one to the dance hall
lest music drag you down to hell.
Pay no mind to songs like these,
for I may be Mephistopheles,
singing the Devil's interval.

(Crier motions for crowd to face audience,
crowd complies)

CROWD: Singing the Devil's interval.

(Crowd begins singing Devil's Interval notes, trials off after the bar is repeated as stage light dim to highlight the band continuing the notes for a few more bars, fading out)

(Stage lights off. Curtain closes.
Spotlights on. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Dressed in 1910s casual wear a straw farmer's hat and carrying a large reel-to-reel recorder strapped around their shoulder.

TWO

Well, I don't know about you, but those notes did sound a bit creepy, like a horror movie.

ONE

Good ear. Maybe the tritone's ban is just a story to scare people, but today this shift in musical notes is widely used in horror films and heavy metal songs.

TWO

(attempting to sound spooky)

Maybe they hope to conjure evil.

ONE

Highly unlikely. But the tall tales of the tritone's history might have inspired a few. ...

(Narrator One's voice trails off as they peer toward Narrator Two, who is clicking buttons on the recorder.)

ONE

What are you playing with there?

TWO

Oh, this old thing. It's a reel-to-reel tape recorder. Found it in my grandfather's attic. He said I could have it.

ONE

That is very generous of him. However, must you play with it here and now of all times?

(motions toward audience)

You are being rude to our guests.

TWO

It's cool and kind of reminds me of those cassette tapes my parents keep going on about. You know, the whole "back in my day" deal.

ONE

It is not the same thing. Does that ancient contraption even work?

TWO

I don't know. I haven't got it to do anything yet.

ONE

(sighs)

That would be a "no" then ... That does, however, give me an idea for our next time travel stop. From the United Kingdom's early 1900s, there comes a story about one Edward Alexander who went from town to town attempting to save history by recording folk songs.

TWO

That doesn't sound so bad, but let me guess, it didn't go well.

ONE

Not exactly. The story is more about his blind desire to be the one to preserve history that he failed to sort fiction from truth.

TWO

Many a city folk don't get country life; the townsfolk must have smelled him coming a mile out. How'd they mess with him?

ONE

For that, we will need to listen closely to our next number: "The Song Collector".

TWO

This gonna be good.

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens.)

3. INT. FORMAL HALL, ALLEY & INN. NIGHT.

The stage is split in three. Stage right is a baroque meeting hall. Stage center is an ally marked with a wooden crate and an oil lamp pole. Stage left is a rural English inn dinning hall.

(Light comes up to highlight the room that's stage right. The rest remains dark.)

A table sits in the middle of the room. On the table is a small brass bell and ringer, and a large leather case shaped like a box.

(A small crowd of 19th century aristocrats enters the hall with much senseless chatter and pile around a central table. Someone lifts the bell from the table and strikes it with the ringer three times before setting them down again. The group rumbles to a silence as the group's leader works his way to stand behind the table facing downstage.)

LORD THOMPSON: A slightly rotund and elderly fellow in an ornate suit, a couple of overly decorative medals pinned on the chest. Carries himself with an air of insufferable nobility.

THOMPSON

Hear here, I call to order the weekly meeting of the Greater Britain Folk Society.

(The group proudly gives themselves a quiet, brief clap.)

THOMPSON

Before we begin this evening's festivities, please greet our esteemed member who has brazenly offered to shoulder our noble mantle to the field, Mister Edward Alexander.

(The group offers another brief but more forceful clap. As Edward Alexander works his way through the group to stand next to Lord Thompson.)

EDWARD ALEXANDER: A wiry, sharp-dressed fellow in black and white, sporting slick hair, a faint mustache, a toothless smile but boisterous attitude. Quick to do anything to climb the perceived social ladder.

EDWARD

(approaching Lord Thompson)

You are too kind, my lord.

(faces group, straightens jacket)

Thank you, everyone, for your indulgence. Here before you

(opens leather case on the table revealing a reel-to-reel recorder)

is the absolute latest in auditory facsimile machines, and with it, I shall endeavor to capture the rural history that has made our empire the greatest; thereby, dutifully executing our beloved society's charter. So, before I take to field, I bid you all a fond farewell.

THOMPSON

(steps closer, pats Edward's shoulder)

Listen here, my good man, it is we who shall wish you Godspeed in our traditional way.

(Thompson raises the bell once again and gives it one firm ring. The entire group begins the song a cappella.)

Song: The Song Collector

GROUP: The Folk Society meet on Thursday nights;

clear their throats and put their coughs to
flight
to sing the dusty cobwebs from the room –
a repertoire both and out of tune.

GROUP: Don't assume a singalong, or worse;
there's history in song and countless verse
pays homage to the man who, long ago,
collected all the songs the singers know.

GROUP: Collected all the songs the singers know.

(Music begins, lights dim on stage right
and rise on center stage to light the
alley. Edward enters the ally. Leaning
against the oil lamp post is a Townie.)

TOWNIE: Dressed in slightly
worn work clothing with
suspenders and a flat cap. Is
the passive observer of the
events to unfold.

TOWNIE: Edward Alexander, man of action,
(Edward places hands on the recorder
strapped on shoulder)
armed only with his reel-to-reel contraption,
(Dons a trench coat hanging on the wall
stage right)
one hundred years ago in mac and boots
(Proudly strolls downstage to the inn's
door)
set out to faithfully preserve the region's
roots.

(Lights dim on ally, come up on stage left
to highlight inn. Townie shifts over to be
in the inn as Edward enters the door and
scans the patrons inside)

TOWNIE: And every night in some small village inn,
fortified with fortitude and [gin / grin],
(Edward lifts a golden coin from his
pocket, shows the patrons)
Mister Alexander, for a shilling,

(Edward holds out a microphone as a patron pretends to sing for two or three seconds then gets a coin)

would thus record your song if you were willing.

(The patron sings the next to the others in the inn.)

PATRON: Would thus record your song if you were willing.

(Patrons start a line, cycling at a quick pace receiving a coin each time.)

TOWNIE: So word got around, and soon there formed a queue,
 (A few more patrons enter from offstage, join the line, patrons still cycle at quick pace)
 and the line of willing singers grew and grew. Brass for oohs and aahs? You can't go wrong when there's someone paying a shilling for a song.

(Edward lowers mic, looks at recorder and shrugs at patrons)

TOWNIE: When all his tapes are filled up, Edward leaves.
 (Edward gather self, heads out door as light returns to the alley)
 There's a history preserved, so he believes,
 (Couple of patrons see Edward out then return to the inn)
 but all the so-called singers back inside
 (Edward slowly strolls down alley as patrons gather in arms and laugh)
 they know they took a city scholar for a ride.

(Patrons face audience)

PATRONS: We know we took the city scholar for a ride.

(Lights dim on inn. Townie returns to alley)

TOWNIE: For they shook the man for every coin he'd got
 (Edward turns out pockets on coat)
 with words and tunes all made up on the spot,
 (Edward returns coat to wall peg)
 invented tales not twenty minutes old.
 (Enters dark room stage right)
 So history, like [ale / oil], is bought and
 sold.

(Lights return to stage right room with
 Edward inside)

TOWNIE: The old contraption's packed away and boxed,
 (Edward places recorder back on table)
 and a century is marked upon the clock.
 (Spotlight focuses on the recorder as the
 other lights dim)
 So tradition holds the Edward's great
 collection
 (Edward exists stage in shadow)
 is honored with a weekly resurrection.

(Folk Society group begins returning to
 the room in the darkness)

TOWNIE: Honored with a weekly resurrection.

(Ally lights fade, spotlight on recorder
 expands to show the entire room and group)

GROUP: And now the old Society sing the songs
 word for word, and kept where they belong,
 as once again, they eulogize the past ...
 you can hear the ghosts of history laughing
 last.

(Lights return to inn revealing patrons
 facing audience)

PATRONS: You can hear the ghosts of history laughing
 last.

(Patrons laugh as the spotlight narrows
 onto the recorder that loudly clicks off

and all lights cut off. Curtain closes.
Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Dressed in a
simple T-shirt and jeans.
Carries a cellophane-packaged
pickle in hand.

ONE

So Edward Alexander was so focused on capturing folk music
about history that he never realized the people just made
up songs on the spot especially since he was foolish enough
to pay them per song.

TWO

(shaking the packaged pickle to make
a point)

Pretty clever con, if you ask me.

(Narrator Two begins to noisily open the
pickle's packaging.)

ONE

It says less about a griff and more about our natural
inclination to be musical, to be able to sing about
anything, but our fool was so wrapped in being the one to
preserve true history that he was blinded to those songs
being fictional tales just for the fun of singing.

(Narrator Two begins crunching on the
pickle partially distracting Narrator
One.)

ONE

After all, music comes from our soul and can represent
everything or nothing. It is a primary way ...

(glances at Narrator Two)

a primary way we ...

(glares at Narrator Two, annoyed)

What do you think you are doing?

TWO

(with food in mouth)

Eating a pickle.

ONE

Obviously. Must you do so now of all times?

TWO

I'm hungry.

ONE

That may be, but this is highly disruptive to me and our generous audience. Yet there you are, bothering us without a care in the world and sans any apology.

(pinching the bridge of their nose)

Why must I suffer you?

TWO

(food in mouth)

My mom's the producer.

ONE

(sighs, appearing defeated)

That explains so much.

TWO

Don't look sad. A good, crunchy pickle is music to the ears.

ONE

Music? That's not music; that's ...

(Narrator One stops, appears stunned in thought.)

TWO

You okay?

ONE

This just reminds me of another musician.

TWO

You're welcome.

ONE

Famed folk singer and songwriter Martin Simpson was once asked during a radio interview about people, like the Folk Society we talked about previously, who want to keep songs faithfully unaltered.

TWO

Compared to what?

ONE

(slightly miffed)

Compared to singing from the heart. Maybe fast, maybe slow, altering for mood or better fit for a different instrument or change the lyrics to fit the situation.

TWO

(briefly hums in contemplation)

You mean like changing the end of those "roses are red, violets are blue" limericks?

ONE

First, those are not limericks, just poems, but yes, I believe you understand the premise. So when Mister Simpson was asked if music should always remain unaltered from the moment it was created, he said, "That's not music ... that's a pickle."

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens.)

4. INT. PARLOR & STOREROOM. AFTERNOON.

Stage left is a lone piano lit with a solitarily light from above. On top of the piano sits a large crystal clear flower vase containing water and a colorful arrangement of flowers. Stage right, there is a small storage room, barely noticeable because it is unlit.

PIANIST: In tuxedo and tails. Carrying a black leather music folder. Formal and expressionless.

(The pianist calmly walks from off-stage toward the piano and places the folder and sheet music on the music rack before

facing the audience and bowing. The pianist sits while flaring the suit's tails and raises the fall board. From the shadows upstage comes the singer now highlighted by spotlight.)

SINGER: Dressed in green
sequins. Carries self with
the air of a renown,
respected Las Vegas crooner.

(The singer saunters in front of the piano and lifts a microphone that was waiting on top of the piano. The two quietly acknowledge one another.)

(The singer appears to begin but is stopped by the pianist who loudly clears their throat to get the singer's attention. When the singer faces the pianist, the pianist raises one finger as if to signal a pause. The pianist stands, lifts the flowers from the vase and tosses them stage left. Then the pianist retrieves from an inside suit pocket a pickle and drops the pickle into the vase where it floats in the water.)

(The pianist looks to the singer, and the singer nods in approval. Then the pianist sits once again and begins playing.)

Song: Pickle

SINGER: Preserved and safe on a high-up shelf
(Faint spotlight highlights a record box
on a top shelf in the storeroom stage
right)
where soiled little fingers can't mess.
Cataloged, labeled and rarely played,
polished and pure and possessed.

(CHORUS x2)

Ahh,
Ahh,
That's not music.

Ahh,
 Ahh,
 That's a pickle.

(White-glove hands of an unseen person enters the light to bring the box down and set it on a table. The spotlight keeps trained just on the box; the owners remains shadowed.)

SINGER: Best keep your songs in the safety of darkness
 (The white gloves lightly dust the box lid before lifting and laying it to the side.)
 and never expose them to light.
 (Lifts a record sleeve. Let's the record roll out slightly.)
 Open with care,

PIANIST: Shhh!

(White gloves quickly roll the record back into the sleeve, sleeve back in the box, lid back on, hands resting firmly on lid.)

SINGER: Back in the box.
 Or your songs might grow wings and take flight.

Ahh,
 Ahh,
 That's not music.
 Ahh,
 Ahh,
 That's a pickle.

(White gloves rotate box to reveal the image of a pickle on the box.)

Ahh,
 That's not music.
 Ahh,
 Ahh,
 That's a pickle.

(White gloves return the box to the top shelf.)

SINGER: Pickle, pickle, pickle, pickle.
 Pickle, pickle, pickle, pickle.
 Pickle, pickle, pickle, pickle.

(Singer steps back as the singer's spotlight shifts to the pianist and the keys for the ending of the song.)

(Lights fade. Curtain closes. Spotlights on. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Wearing olive combat fatigues and a World War One helmet.

ONE

Music should never be a pickle. Music changes; it adapts. Country songs become rock songs; pop songs become jazz songs. Lyrics can change, update, modernize. We even changed ...

(glances at Narrator Two)

... these songs ... somewhat.

(Narrator One, with arms akimbo, stares at Narrator Two who is just smiling at the audience. Noticing the silence, Narrator Two glances at Narrator One twice.)

TWO

What?

ONE

Didn't I tell you to stay out of the prop room? I thought I had locked it this time.

TWO

You did. I got this

(taps helmet)

from my Great Uncle, thank you very little. He said it's called a Brodie.

ONE

Who names a hat, but more importantly, why are you wearing it?

TWO

It's an old timey war helmet. Thought I'd bring it along for any war songs.

ONE

There are, but they are less songs about war and more songs about trying to live during war. Songs allows us to express worries and concerns; they can also remind us of home and peace when we are so far from loved ones and facing the darkest aspects of humanity.

TWO

(saddened)

Well, you can be right bummer.

ONE

War is nasty business. But for soldiers during the Great War, as in World War One, trench warfare was flashes of intense fighting with long stretches of just trying to keep hopes alive among the mud, filth and disease, not to mention the death.

TWO

(repulsed)

Remind me to never invite you to a party.

ONE

You need not worry there. Back to our soldiers, keeping it together just to see tomorrow often needed music. There's no better way to pass the time than by "Singing Out the Days".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens.)

5. EXT. DIRT TRENCH. DUSK.

Five dirty soldiers are sitting on the ground with their backs against a waist-high trench wall. All appear weary and cold.

(Stage right to left)

SOLDIER ONE: Mindlessly wiping dirt off his boots with a rag not making much difference. Often warms hands using his breath.

SOLDIER TWO: Focused on cleaning his rifle between shivers.

SARGE: Leaning back with his hat down over his eyes as if napping but is just hoping for a moment of peace.

SOLDIER THREE: Sits with a stubby pencil on paper propped on his knees with the help of a broken plank of wood. Faces a mental block in writing a letter.

SOLDIER FOUR: Cleaning mud and dirt from a harmonica using a small stick.

(Soldier One finishes with his boots, spins around and barely peers over the top of the dirt trench. After a brief pan he pauses before sitting down again.)

SOLDIER ONE

There's motion at the south nest.

SOLDIER FOUR

(peers up as if checking the sun's angle)

Well, it is about that time.

(All are quiet for a moment.)

SOLDIER TWO

(glances at Soldier Four)

Who ya writin'?

SOLDIER THREE

(hesitates)

I was going to write my ma, but ... not sure what to say that isn't all gloomy.

SOLDIER FOUR

(blows dirt out of the harmonica)

I miss my mother's lasagne.

SARGE

(without lifting his head)

Quite, you. You'll go and make me hungrier than I already am.

SOLDIER FOUR

(continuing, locked in verbal thought)

I didn't care for it much when I was home, but now I find myself missing it. Funny that.

SARGE

Quite, I said.

SOLDIER FOUR

Yes, sarge.

(Soldier Four hums in contemplation.)

SOLDIER ONE

Just be honest. As long as it comes from the heart, your ma will understand.

SOLDIER TWO

(nodding)

Gotta agree with you on that.

(Soldier three briefly closes his eyes as he takes a breath, then begins writing as faint music begins, and he starts the song.)

Song: Singing Out the Days

THREE: Half the front's out there, half-buried;
some of them alive.
The rest of us, we freeze and pray for spring.

THREE: Dearest mother, fill my lungs 'til victory
or food arrives.
What else can we do out here but sing?

ONE: Sixteen years and never been kissed.

SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.

FOUR: Jumped the queue and waiting list.

SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.

SOLDIERS: Civvy suits and new recruits,
clean your rifle, polish your boots,
learned to give the correct salute.

SARGE: Singing out the days.

SOLDIERS: Singing,
singing,
singing, singing out the days.

SARGE: (spoken) Hut, Two, Three.

SOLDIERS: We march until we drop,
then we go over the top.
Singing, singing out the days.

TWO: Lice and rats along the trench.

SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.

THREE: [Coffin nails / handkerchiefs] to cover the
stench.

SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.

SOLDIERS: For thirty weeks we hold the line
while all the toffs get reassigned.
Apart from the war, we're doing fine.

SARGE: Singing out the days.

SOLDIERS: Singing,
singing,
singing, singing out the days.

SARGE: (spoken) Hut, Two, Three.

SOLDIERS: We march until we drop,
then we go over the top.
Singing, singing out the days.

ONE: Songs for drowning out the shells.

SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.

FOUR: Songs to prove you're alive and well.
 SOLDIERS: Singing out the days.
 SOLDIERS: Songs for our humanity
 in the face of inhumanity,
 to demonstrate your sanity.
 SARGE: Singing out the days.

SOLDIERS: Singing,
 singing,
 singing, singing out the days.

SARGE: (spoken) Hut, Two, Three.

SOLDIERS: We march until we drop,
 then we go over the top.
 Singing, singing out the days.

(A warning bugle sounds. The soldiers spin
 around, grab rifles and crouch on their
 knees.)

COMMANDER (O.S.)
 (loudly)

Charge!

(The soldiers spring up and over the wall
 with upstage filled with red and yellow
 flashes and the sounds of rifle fire,
 before fading as the curtains close.)

(Spotlights on. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: In blue
 overalls, pushing a broom in
 short strokes very slowly
 sweeping the stage toward
 Narrator One.

ONE

(notices Narrator Two then attempts
 to ignore)

As mentioned before, we will even sing in the dark times
 about the dark times. Music is the avenue that allows the
 human soul to cry out, to make some sense out of the
 insane.

TWO

(stops and leans on the broom handle)

I completely agree, but I heard the soldiers use an odd word: "toffs".

(singing)

"while all the toffs get reassigned".

TWO

(mildly surprised)

My, you do have a good ear. "Toff" is a bit of British slang for someone who is a titled undergraduate, in this case, the officers who were allowed to return to the rear as the grunts stayed on the front.

TWO

Sounds more like a slur.

(Narrator Two resumes sweeping.)

ONE

If you say. Meanwhile, the other side of any war front is the people back home. So we will now return to the United States; however, this time it is during World War Two.

TWO

The Greatest Generation.

ONE

Exactly. While our soldiers were defeating the Nazis, back home music was flipped on its proverbial head. There were no shellac to press records, rolling blackouts shut down dance halls, gasoline shortages meant musicians couldn't get to gigs. Times were tight.

(Narrator Two finally reaches Narrator One and bumps the broom against Narrator One's feet.)

ONE

(frustrated)

Seriously? You are interrupting my story.

TWO

I'm sweeping.

ONE

But why?

TWO

Thought I'd get ahead of cleaning up.

ONE

You are something else.

(grabs broom away from Narrator Two)

Just stand there quietly and let me finish my story.

(Narrator Two begins to speak and stops when Narrator One throws them a sharp look. Then Narrator One resumes facing the audience.)

ONE

Also, during World War Two, the American Federation of Musicians went on strike to make record companies pay musicians for broadcasting their songs on the radio and jukeboxes. However, singers were not considered musicians, so greed drove record companies to seek songs that only featured singers; hence, the rise of a *cappella* groups during this time. These were often cheerful novelty songs or sentimental ballads, just simple tunes with no instruments.

TWO

Sounds boring.

ONE

For many, it was. That time is encapsulated in our next number: "That Same So-So Tune".

(faces Narrator Two, speaks slightly quieter)

As for you ...

(puts Narrator Two's ear in a pinch hold)

come here.

(Narrator One drags Narrator Two by the ear and the broom off-stage. Narrators Two quietly yelps in protest.)

(Spotlights off. Curtain opens.)

6. INT. DANCE HALL. EVENING.

Tables and chairs are scattered around a dance floor. There's a small stage facing downstage toward the dance floor. Various instruments dot the stage.

JIM BARRETT: Proprietor. Dressed in a blue button-up shirt with open collar and rolled sleeves. Currently placing chairs on tables as he sweeps.

DRUMMER: A small, quiet person who's entire world is centered on percussion of all kinds. Here tonight to use the opportunity to clean and conduct general preventive maintenance on the drum set, if not getting in a bit of play if possible.

GERALD: Long time friend of Jim. Here to just visit and help Jim clean the dance hall for the next time they can open. Currently sitting on a bench and polishing a brass instrument.

(The lights in the dance hall briefly flicker and dim. They all look up as the lights return to their previous brightness.)

JIM

There it is. Won't be long now, maybe ten minutes. Sorry, fellas.

GERALD

No need to apologize to us, Jim. I'll go in the back and get a lamp.

(Gerald places the brass instrument on its stand and leaves.)

DRUMMER

Ain't yer fault. You've been good to us. We'll have another day.

(There's a knock on the door. Jim heads over and opens it to reveal a young woman.)

MARGARET: Wears a brightly colored dress and white gloves. Visiting the dance hall is her primary escape from worrying about her fiancé who was sent to the war front.

JIM

Why, Miss Margaret, what do I have the pleasure to do for you this evening?

MARGARET

Thank you, Mister Barrett. It's quiet, so I fear the answer, but will you be open tonight by chance?

JIM

Unfortunately, no, miss. I've been expecting another blackout, and we just got our warning flash just a moment ago.

MARGARET

I see.

(pauses, lost in thought for a moment)

Is there any chance I can still visit for a bit until then? The bus won't be back around for another hour.

JIM

Oh, my apologies, miss.

(opens the door all the way, motions
to invite the visitor in)

You are always most welcome here.

MARGARET

(entering)

Thank you, as always. I was just hoping for a bit of relief
from being in that empty apartment.

JIM

(bringing a chair down and offering
it)

Of that I have no doubt. Any update on when he might return
from the front?

MARGARET

(sits and shakes her head slightly)

Actually, I haven't received a letter in two weeks, so I
hope I will in the coming days.

(Gerald walks back in carrying a small oil
lamp.)

GERALD

Oh, hello Miss Margaret. What brings you tonight?

MARGARET

Hi, Gerald. I just needed to get out and not be cooped up
all day.

GERALD

I hear that, but we have nothing planned due to the
blackout.

MARGARET

(nodding slightly)

I heard much the same from Jim.

(The drummer, who had been taking an
interest in the conversation, decides to
start playing a light, jazzy beat in hopes
of offering a bit of cheer.)

(All look to the drummer and exchange smiles.)

JIM

Bang! The little drummer takes a solo, reaching his young hands all over traps and kettles and cymbals and foot-peddle. Boom! A fantastic crash of sound. What will happen?

(Gerald sets down the lamp then sits at the piano to join in. Soon thereafter Margaret begins the song, while Jim just smiles as he continues sweeping.)

Song: That Same So-So Tune

MARGRET: The dance halls are dark now;
the ballrooms are closed.
No wax for my needle,
and I don't suppose
you'll be swinging by anytime soon,
singing that same so-so tune.

Nobody's playing,
no one's been paid.
The music's all stopped, and
you never said
you could wait from September to June,
singing that same so-so tune.

While brothers are fighting,
working to rule,
here's a tired sentimental old song.
It goes "Ooh, baby, baby,
treating me wrong."
We'll be back where we belong before long.

(Jim stops near drummer, leans on the broom handle, nodding to the beat of the interlude)

JIM: It's the beat of the heart.
It's the beat of the heart.
It's the beat of the heart.
It's the beat of the heart.
It's the beat of the heart.

MARGRET: While brothers are fighting,
 working to rule,
 here's a tired sentimental old song.
 It goes "Ooh, baby, baby,
 treating me wrong."
 We'll be back where we belong before long.

I've heard all the stories,
 it's wild, and it's new:
 Hot sounds in the city,
 but what can I do?
 Might as well shoot for the moon,
 singing that same so-so tune.
 Singing that same so-so tune.

(The stage lights flicker again then turn
 off. Curtain closes. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Carrying an
 analog radio and appears
 distracted while adjusting
 the dial.

ONE

To this day, record companies, radio stations and streaming
 services have the ability to exercise considerable control
 over the kinds of music we hear, and they have the ability
 to stifle any dissenting music.

(A burst of static sounds from Narrator
 Two's radio.)

TWO

Sorry.

ONE

(toward Narrator Two)

You did not listen during our talk?

TWO

(ignoring the question)

But I'm searching for a pirate radio station.

ONE

For what it is worth, I hope you find one. Many governments have gone to great lengths to control the music its citizens hear. When the United Kingdom restricted the playing of rock music, pirate radio stations sprang up in response.

TWO

Just like that movie "Pirate Radio".

ONE

Very much so. By the way, that movie is also known as "The Boat That Rocked".

TWO

(pointing briefly at the radio)

Yea, and if I pick up the voice of Phillip Seymour Hoffman or a Radio Caroline jingle on this, you'd be so jealous.

ONE

I would be more surprised, but let us not digress yet again. Another example of such oppression occurred in East Germany. Following World War Two, Germany was split into two countries that did not reunite until 1990. During this separation, East Germany was a communist state with oppressive control of its citizens.

TWO

Ugh! That sounds like it sucked.

ONE

It did. But one musical group, The Klaus Renft Combo, fought back with songs like "Die Ketten Werden Knapper".

TWO

That's "The Chains Are Getting Tighter".

(Narrator One appears shocked.)

TWO

What? I took German.

ONE

Very well. This band referenced sensitive topics like compulsory military service and escaping to West Germany. As one can imagine, the East German government did not appreciate the band's attitude. So when it came time for them to renew the group's performance license, they were summoned before the Ministry of Culture.

TWO

We're gonna zip through time again, huh?

ONE

The year is 1975, the city Leipzig, East Germany. Here is "You Don't Exist".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens.)

7. INT. OFFICE. AFTERNOON.

A long, nondescript room has barred windows and a door on one side. A plain table sits in the middle. On the other side of the room from the door is a band; there is a tape recorder hiding behind a guitar on a stand but visible to the audience. Sitting on the opposite side of the table is a woman. Behind her stand two guards.

OELSCHLÄGEL: Smartly dressed in muted colors. Remains cold and emotionless. She is going through the motions but the decision has already been made.

GUARDS: Military uniforms. Stern faces. No nonsense attitudes.

KLAUS RENFT: Bearded and mustachioed gent in a red T-

shirt, brown pants, brown coat, and gray fedora.

BAND: The remaining band members are dressed in various clean and neat, but casual, clothes.

(The band ends a song and looks toward Comrade Oelschlägel for a response. She remains quiet for a while.)

OELSCHLÄGEL

(lowering steepled fingers)

Comrade Renft, your lyrics have absolutely nothing to do with our socialist reality. Frankly, the working class is insulted. You will no longer perform as a combo.

KLAUS RENFT

(shocked and scared)

Are you saying we are banned?

OELSCHLÄGEL

We didn't say you were banned. We said you don't exist.

(The intro music comes up as the guards go around and escort the band members to their chairs at the table facing Oelschlägel as the lights dim onto the table, and Oelschlägel begins the song.

Song: You Don't Exist

OELSCHLÄGEL: Take a seat; have a [cigarette / croquette].
(offers cigarette pack or plate of snacks, the band members decline)

We're here to help you to forget,
to snap you shut like a castanet.

Tell me where it all went wrong.
Why don't you write the kind of songs
for people to sing along?

(Renft stands defeated, facing downstage)

RENFT: I used to play the violin ...

now I spend my days just listening in.

(Guards push Renft back into seat)

OELSCHLÄGEL: You have no friends;
 (Chorus x2) you won't be missed.
 I'm here to tell you that you don't exist.

OELSCHLÄGEL: There's just one door out of here;
 (thumbs over shoulder at the door
 behind her)
 you can save your career,
 or you can "disappear".

Our Glorious Leader would advise
 some kind of compromise;
 anything else would be unwise.

(Renft stands again, still defeated,
 facing downstage)

RENFT: I used to play the tambourine ...
 now I spend my days just listening in.

(Guards push Renft back into seat)

OELSCHLÄGEL: You have no friends;
 (Chorus x2) you won't be missed.
 I'm here to tell you that you don't exist.

(Curtain closes. Spotlights on. Narrators
 return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Wheels out a
 standing board upon which is
 a large flag. The flag is all
 red except for the upper left
 corner where there is a
 golden depiction of the
 malleus, incus and stapes
 bones of the inner ear.

TWO

(while pushing the board onto the
 stage)

That got dark. Did they wack them?

ONE

No. They did not "wack" them as you crudely put it, but they did silence the band for a while. When Germany reunited in 1990, so did the band. While Mister Renft is no longer with us, the band retains his name and continues to perform.

TWO

(standing next to the mounted flag)

That's good to *hear*.

(winks at the crowd for his pun)

ONE

(glaring at Narrator Two and the flag)

What are you up to, and why do have a Soviet flag ...

(trails off)

Wait, that is not a Soviet flag, but it seems styled after one. What is that in the corner?

TWO

Thank you for asking. That, my good friend, is the malleus, incus and stapes bones of the inner ear, otherwise known as ...

ONE

(interrupting)

Hammer, anvil and stirrup, so you have read the script. Here I was thinking this whole time that you may not have, considering how you seem bent on distraction.

TWO

I'm not distracting; I'm enhancing. You have to admit this is a great pun, considering our next bit.

ONE

That is debatable and beside the point.

(points a hand at audience)

They have not read the script so will not get it.

TWO

Then why don't you stop complaining and explain it to them. They're waiting.

ONE

(grumbles)

I am not done with you.

(faces audience, composes self)

The story in question takes us to the Soviet Union under the dictatorship of Joseph Stalin. Stalin had very strict censorship on all forms of artistic expression; any artist that violated those censorship rules disappeared into one of the many labor camps.

TWO

In other words, he was dictating what your ear bones were allowed to hear.

(pointing to the flag)

So instead of a Soviet hammer and sickle on the flag, it's a hammer, stirrup and anvil.

(smiles)

ONE

Yes. I believe they get your reference by now. Let us move on. One rebellious artist found himself under Stalin's watchful gaze: Dmitri Shostakovich spent half his life playing cat-and-mouse to avoid detention. He wrote many state-approved performances but kept his best work hidden away in a private drawer.

TWO

I'm starting to admire this Dmitri fellow.

ONE

Here is "Hammer, Stirrup & Anvil".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart with the flag. Curtain opens.)

8. INT. ORNATE STUDY. MID-DAY

Large study. There is a credenza against the back wall with a large picture of Stalin on one end. There's a desk facing the door and a window behind the desk. Dmitri sits at the desk.

DMITRI: A talented, yet nervous fellow in small, round, black-rimmed glasses; white shirt; black tie; and brown coat. Remains guarded, obsessed with cleanliness and laced with a tick-ridden fragility.

(There's a knock on the door.)

(Dmitri is lost in writing a score.)

(There's another knock as the door slowly opens and a head pokes through.)

YURI: Young man wearing gray and black tweed. Up and coming actor, knows Dmitri from working in the same theater.

YURI

Are you busy, Dmitri?

DMITRI

(half distracted at first)

What? Ah, Yuri, my friend, so good to see you. I did not hear you enter please come in.

YURI

(enters room completely, a bit nervous)

Thank you, comrade.

DMITRI

(motions to the credenza)

Would you like something to drink?

YURI

No, I won't be long, but thank you. I have much to do today still. I was nearby and thought it best to visit in case you have not heard.

DMITRI

You seem tense. What have I not heard?

YURI

It's Nikolay.

DMITRI

Yes?

YURI

He was arrested; the Gulag has him now.

DMITRI

(concerned, distracted)

Again? Anna must be devastated; I must write her.

YURI

She saved him once before; mayhap she can again.

DMITRI

(face twitches followed by a grimace)

I'm not so sure. Zhdanov's doctrine is harsher now. It may not be long for me as well.

(looks off in thought)

YURI

I wouldn't worry about Comrade Zhdanov; he would be a fool to arrest you. The outcry would be greater than he can contain.

DMITRI

A fool he may be, but he remains a Stalin puppet, and I am not as well liked as you may hope.

YURI

You're too nervous, comrade, but I do have to go. I have other appointments to keep. Just promise me to lessen the so-called formalism in your work and be careful.

(Yuri heads toward the door.)

DMITRI

(standing)

As should you, comrade. Keep your wits about you, and do please call on me tomorrow. I would rather know you are still with us.

YURI

I will. Tomorrow.

(Yuri departs.)

(Dmitri's attention gravitates back to score on his desk. He sets it down and approaches to gaze out the window and appears to be listening to the music in his head as it begins.)

Song: Hammer, Stirrup & Anvil

(faces audience)

DMITRI: Our Glorious Leader
 (motions to Stalin's picture)
 declares by decree:
 "The music of the Glorious State
 from this time on will be
 square-jawed and dreary,
 for the good of us all."
 Hammer, stirrup and anvil under state control.

My name is Dmitri,
 a man of some renown.
 In this symphony of spies,
 I keep my ear to the ground.
 Stave, crotchet and quaver
 under the editor's scrawl.
 Hammer, stirrup and anvil under state control.

(Gathers stack of pages from desk,
 approaches credenza)

An operetta for our leader;
 (Places page before Stalin's picture)
 a quartet for the drawer.
 (Places page in drawer)
 He gets the rank cantatas,
 (Places page before Stalin's picture)
 and I keep the score.

(Places page in drawer)
 A libretto for the death camps;
 (Places rest of pages in drawer)
 some day you'll hear them all.
 (closes and locks drawer)
 Hammer, stirrup and anvil under state control.

(Approaches window, stares out window)

Hammer, stirrup and anvil under state control.

(Curtain closes. Spotlights on. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Wearing
 headphones and listening to
 music while near-aimlessly
 strolling onto stage.

ONE

Following Stalin's death, Dmitri's hidden music was found and celebrated. A point for trivia, the beginning of that song included Dmitri's musical motif, or his signature for his compositions, and that motif is engraved on Dmitri's tombstone. If you convert those notes into German musical notation, it is Dmitri's first initial and first three letters of his last name.

(slight pause)

What? No comment this time.

(looks to Narrator Two, pauses in disappointment, then yells Narrator Two's name)

TWO

(taking off headphones)

Huh?

ONE

(upset)

What's the meaning of this?

TWO

Sorry. I was lost in the world of my headphones.

ONE

Why not join the rest of us? Whatever you are listening to cannot be that important.

TWO

If you must know, I'm listening to Maria Todyn's performance of Madame Butterfly.

ONE

(with doubt)

Seriously?

TWO

Yes, seriously. Do you honestly think I would torture myself with some metal song like "Fuel" or "Enter Sandman", do you? No, thank you.

ONE

My apologies. It appears that I may have misjudged you.

TWO

You have, thank you very little.

ONE

Let us move on, shall we?

TWO

Yes, let's.

ONE

For this next moment in musical history, it needs explaining because it involves something that is a tad obscure.

TWO

Obscure? All these songs are from Chumbawamba. You can't get much more obscure than that.

ONE

Preposterous. They had a hit.

TWO

One. They had one hit. And that was on their punk album. Doesn't count.

ONE

I disagree, but the obscure reference I am attempting to explain comes from German artist Kurt Schwitters, who created many artistic pieces, one of which was a poem that used sound instead of words. It was titled "Ursonate".

TWO

Wait! Do you mean "Fümms bö wö tää zää Uu", that Ursonate?

(Narrator One stands flabbergasted at Narrator Two.)

TWO

What's that look for?

ONE

Twice in one minute you have shocked me.

TWO

Well, I'm more than just a pretty face.

ONE

(sneers)

I refuse to acknowledge that.

TWO

You just did.

ONE

(ignoring Narrator Two)

Back to the story, jazz musician George Melly was known for telling a great story about being robbed one night. They had a knife, and all he had was the sound poetry of "Ursonate". We take you now to that wonderful night in Manchester, just outside the club called Band on the Wall. So without further delay, here is "Ratatatay".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart. Curtain opens.)

9. EXT. STREET OUTSIDE A CLUB. NIGHT.

Dark urban street. On one end, two thugs barely noticeable in the darkness. On the opposite side is a

green corner door below a simple neon sign that reads "Band On The Wall". On the same side of the sidewalk of the club, is a bus stop, on the bench sit three folks: a singer and two musicians of woodwind and brass.

BUS STOP BARD: White suit, black shirt, white tie, white hat, two-tone spatz shoes, silver topped white walking stick.

MELLY: Wearing a loose pinstriped burgundy suit, white silk shirt, pocket handkerchief, cravat, burgundy Homburg hat, patten-leather shoes. He seems to always be dancing, if not strutting, when he has nothing else to do.

(The musicians begin playing, as the Bard leans forward with both hands on top of the walking stick. The door opens and out swaggers Melly. The bard turns, notices Melly and begins singing.)

Song: Ratatatay

(During the description Melly straightens or lightly dusts the respective parts of his outfit.)

BARD: George looks gorgeous in pinstripes, pocket handkerchief and cravat, swaggering out of the Band on the Wall in a burgundy Homburg hat, singing "Ratatatay, ratatatay."

Ratatatay, ratatatay.

(George begins dancing to the opposite side of the stage.)

BARD: George after hours and [worse for whiskey / a wee bit sleepy],
when somebody shouts:

THUG ONE: "Hey, you!"

BARD: In a pitch-black Manchester back street ...
well, what's a poor singer to do
but sing "Ratatatay, ratatatay."

Ratatatay, ratatatay.

BARD: Two men flashing a knife blade saying,

THUG TWO: "Give us your notes and your watch!"

BARD: Singing the back-street standoff
to the rhythm of the fear and the [scotch /
dodge].

BARD: George, not wanting to feel the knife,
cornered and speeding and scared.
From the back of his mind comes "Ursonate",
sound and fury and words.
He sings, "Ratatatay, ratatatay."

Ratatatay, ratatatay.

(Melly throws arms wide and makes a dramatic presentation as he begins his rendition.)

MELLY: Fümms bö wä tää zää Uu, pögiff, kwii Ee.
Oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo,
dll rrrrrr beeeee bö fümms bö, beeeee bö.
Rattata rattata ...

BARD: Ratatatay, ratatatay.
Ratatatay, ratatatay.

BARD: So the robbers are stuck to the spot now,
watching George as he sings for his life.
Menace turns to panic, and they turn and they
run,

(Thugs get scared, run away offstage,
dropping a chrome dagger/switchblade)
and the song waves good bye to the knife.

Singing "Ratatatay, ratatatay!"

(Bard & Band join Melly at center stage to dance together.)

BARD: Ratatatay, ratatatay.
Ratatatay, ratatatay.
Ratatatay, ratatatay.

(Curtain closes. Spotlights on. Narrators return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Playing with a mobile video gaming system, partially distracted.

ONE

Whether or not Mister Melly was genuine with his story is less important than simply enjoying a good story told here through music. Music is great for story telling, comedy, sharing emotions and, yes, even evil. Our next story honors a hero but must begin with a villain, arguably the worse villain: Adolph Hitler.

TWO

(not looking away from the game)

Did you know I killed him?

ONE

(disbelief)

You what?

TWO

Killed Adolph Hitler.

ONE

(mockingly)

You were alive during World War Two, were you?

TWO

No.

ONE

(indignant)

Yet you make the outlandish claim that you, of all people, killed the man responsible for the Holocaust, the mass murder of six million people? How then: time travel, a past life, the power of positive thinking?

TWO

In a video game.

ONE

(stupefied, stumbling over the words)

In a video—you know—I aught—nevermind.

TWO

What? He deserved it for sending all those Nazi zombies after me.

(Narrator One recomposes self while briefly shaking an upraised finger at Narrator Two.)

ONE

My apologies, folks. The story continues. Adolph Hitler admired the music of one Wilhelm Richard Wagner. Wagner was talented but mean in his own right. Some of his writings and music were antisemitic.

TWO

(lowering the game system, starting sarcastically)

You think?

He specifically wrote an essay claiming Jews ruined European music.

ONE

That essay sure contributed, but when Hitler claimed that Wagner's work embodied his Third Reich vision for Germany, that cemented the Nazi appropriation. While Wagner's talent secured his place as an influential artist and master composer, he never shook the Nazi connection to his music making it forever politically problematic.

TWO

What a rotten association to have, but he was antisemitic too, so the shoe fits.

ONE

Wagner remains a controversial composer to this day. As a matter of fact, in October 2000, the Symphony Orchestra in Rishon LeZion, Israel, made the bold decision to play some of Wagner's compositions. During the concert, protesters gathered outside, and inside, an 80-year-old who had survived the Nazi concentration camps did not approve.

TWO

Of all places to play Wagner's work; they were asking for it.

ONE

Let us transport you to that day. Here's "Wagner At The Opera".

(Spotlights off. Narrators depart.)

10. EXT. OUTSIDE A CONCERT HALL. NIGHT.

The curtain remains closed. The band conductor loudly taps a baton to draw the audience's attention, and the band starts playing Wagner's "Siegfried Idyll".

SHLOMO: 80-year-old man, dressed in casual suit and tie, has Nazi Concentration Camp tattoo on his left arm. The tattoo is visible when he raises his arm to swing a wooden cog rattle.

(About 15 seconds into the music, Shlomo loudly stomps through the audience swinging a wooden cog rattle trying his best to drown out the music. The band stutters but attempts to keep playing while the conductor is visibly annoyed but tries to ignore the rattle noise.)

(Shlomo grabs a chair near the conductor and stands on it while continually swinging the rattle.)

(Three ushers scurry toward Shlomo. One grabs Shlomo's arm and pulls him off the chair before yanking the rattle from his hand. When that happens, the other two ushers carry Shlomo away.)

SHLOMO

(yelling while being carried away)

This is insulting! You should be ashamed of yourselves!

(When Shlomo is carried out of sight, the band slowly quiets then stops and goes dark.)

(Curtain opens.)

The stage backdrop places
Shlomo laying facedown
outside the musical hall.

Song: Wagner at the Opera

(Artist playing a washboard enters from offstage to begin the song, Shlomo lifts self on elbows)

SHLOMO: I'm lying on the pavement,
and the last thing I recall:
Picked up by the arms and legs
and taken from the hall
for squaring up to culture
in the circle and the stalls.

(Shlomo stands)

All because they're playing
Wagner at the opera.
All because they're playing
Wagner at the opera.

(Artist playing a plastic bucket enters)

Hurt can make you act
without apology or regret.
Over half a century

but still I can't forget:
 Ideology makes a mockery
 of a string quartet.

ALL: All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.
 All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.

(Artist playing a folding chair enters,
 Shlomo stands on a riser)

SHLOMO: When they came to take me,
 I was standing on a chair:
 I can't keep quiet!
 I have something to declare!
 Listen to my rattle,
 for my rattle says, "Beware!"

ALL: All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.
 All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.

(Artist playing whistle enters)

SHLOMO: A rattle for remembering
 the rattle of the chains,
 a rattle for remembering
 the rattle of the trains
 from Warsaw down the decades,
 to hell and home again.

ALL: All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.
 All because they're playing
 Wagner at the opera.

(Artists stop music, Shlomo raises arm to
 reveal tattoo, begins swinging the cog
 rattle)

SHLOMO: For everyone we lost,
 I swing the rattle loud and long;
 I'll swing it 'til I drown out
 all the music and the songs.

This tattoo last forever,
and my memory is long.

(Artists resume music)

ALL: Here's to no more playing
Wagner at the opera.
Here's to no more playing
Wagner at the opera.
Here's to no more playing
Wagner at the opera.

(Curtain closes. Spotlights on. Narrators
return.)

NARRATOR TWO: Has returned to
wearing business casual.

ONE

Our hero there later told reporters his name was Shlomo.
While he survived the Holocaust, the rest of his family did
not. He is worthy of respect for standing up against
something tied to the raw hatred that slaughtered so many.

TWO

Such symbols of hatred are all around, relics of past
conflicts, fights, wars.

ONE

Our world is wracked with war to this very day whether or
not it makes the local news. One person who saw war first-
hand is English poet and decorated hero of the First World
War Siegfried Sassoon. He wrote about the horrors of war;
he also wrote about singing.

TWO

Sassoon's poem "Everyone Sang" is about people celebrating
together at the end of World War One.

ONE

As it has in the past, music can bind us all to one
another, give us a collective sense of unity, of community.

TWO

Much like spontaneous songs and chants at a sports game. If you haven't had the pleasure of experiencing it yourself, you must know it can be electrifying.

ONE

Before the advent of music streaming,

TWO

Or music videos

ONE

Before radios and jukeboxes in restaurants

TWO

Even records in homes

ONE

Before all of that, people did not just sit around waiting to listen to music; wherever they were, people created the music: People sang. Someone would just strike up a song

TWO

And the rest of us would sing along.

ONE

On that note, before we begin our last song of the evening, on behalf of everyone at <theatre troupe>, thank you for joining us on this journey about the power of music. If the mood strikes, everyone is welcome to join us in our final tribute.

TWO

You don't even need to know the words. After all, singing together is what this whole story is all about. Here is, "Voices, That is All".

(Spotlights off. Narrators remain. Stage lights on. Curtain opens.)

11. EXT. CITY PARK. NOON.

An urban city park or town center. People sitting on benches, feeding birds, jogging by, waiting for a

bus, etc. Music begins and
Narrator One starts the song.

Song: Voices, That Is All

(Edward from Act 3 enters)
NARRATOR: Siegfried Sassoon on the Dunbar End.
ALL: Everyone sang.
(Dmitri from Act 8 enters)
NARRATOR: When strangers became your new best friends.
ALL: Everyone sang.
(Soldier from Act 5 enters)
NARRATOR: It was Armistice Day, and peace broke out.
ALL: Everyone sang.
NARRATOR: Sometimes a melody is louder than a shout.
ALL: Everyone sang.

NARRATOR: Somebody struck up a song;
we didn't know the words
but still we sang along.

ALL: Just our voices, that's all,
everywhere a concert hall.

Voices, that's all –
lullaby and call.

(Melly from Act 9 enters)
NARRATOR: Chucking out time at the [bar / club] on the
corner,
ALL: Everyone sang.
(Oelschlägel or Renft from Act 7 enters)
NARRATOR: From [Albion tap room / old East Germany] to
California.
ALL: Everyone sang.
(Margret from Act 6 enters)
NARRATOR: In the olden days before they put in a
jukebox.
ALL: Everyone sang.
NARRATOR: "Pleased to put a penny in the old man's voice
box."
ALL: Everyone sang.

NARRATOR: Somebody struck up a song;
we didn't know the words
but still we sang along.

ALL: Just our voices, that's all,
everywhere a concert hall.

Voices, that's all –
lullaby and call.

(Shlomo from Act 10 enters)

NARRATOR: Lost in the middle of a demonstration.

ALL: Everyone sang.

(Crier from Act 2 enters)

NARRATOR: All power to imagination.

ALL: Everyone sang.

(Singer from Act 4 enters)

NARRATOR: Your song it sounds a whole lot better

ALL: Everyone sang.

NARRATOR: when everyone sings that song together.

ALL: Everyone sang.

NARRATOR: Somebody struck up a song;
we didn't know the words
but still we sang along.

ALL: Just our voices, that's all,
everywhere a concert hall.

Voices, that's all –
lullaby and call.

ALL: Just our voices, that's all,
everywhere a concert hall.

Voices, that's all –
lullaby and call.

(Music stops)

NARRATOR: Just our voices, that's all.

ONE

Have a great day, everyone, and wherever you go

TWO

Whatever you do

ONE

Don't forget to sing.

(Stage lights fade as the curtain closes.)

THE END