



OperX Ensemble

Songs of Survival

Featuring

Krasa's *Brundibár*,

with the Augustana Chamber Orchestra

and the Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble

Augustana College



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happening
there...



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...and what
it means
here.

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THINGS
CONSIDERED**

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Even a cursory investigation into the role music has played historically in the face of life-threatening oppression would indicate that singing is, in fact, a matter of survival. Our program hopes to give you a taste of that wonder and to encourage you to reflect on the sometimes dissonant complexities involved. Yes, music has been a means of resistance, solace, and strength for people in countless oppressive situations throughout history. And music has also been used by perpetrators of evil for sinister purposes. *Brundibár* at Terezín was both.

A charming fairy tale opera seems the antithesis of the dark world of the Jewish Holocaust in Hitler's Germany, but that is precisely the soil in which *Brundibár* first came to life. Composer Hans Krása had worked with artist friends between 1938 and 1941 to mount a performance of his opera at a Jewish orphanage in Prague, but they weren't successful until 1942-43, after they had been taken, with thousands of other Jews, to the concentration camp at Terezín. By then the transports of children to Terezín had begun, and some of those children became the first cast of this adorable little opera. A few of those children survived. You will hear them recall their memories.

Meanwhile, on the Japanese front of World War II, in a women's prison camp in Sumatra, two musicians—string players—got the idea to arrange orchestral and piano scores from memory, to teach them by rote to a “vocal orchestra,” and to perform them. This story is beautifully told in *Song of Survival* by Helen Colijn, and in the major motion picture *Paradise Road* (1997). The vocal orchestra became a reason for the prisoners to face their situation with dignity, a project to work on together, something in which they could take pride and joy in the face of cruelty and inhumanity. Some survived to tell us about it.

For Americans in 2018, concentration camps seem surreal, although we are reminded all too often that the hatreds that cause human society to so deteriorate are still very much with us. Even more sobering for its quiet banality and our lack of resistance is a dehumanization where face-to-face encounters are increasingly less central to our social lives, where machines are too often and too quickly thought to be adequate replacements for human capacities and skills, and where automation is steadily eroding our humanity: our empathy, our sustained curiosity about the world outside our heads, and the cultivation of virtues like patience and hope. Music in our world is in danger of becoming merely a preference, a marketable commodity, instead of a force for bringing people together for good, a tutor in skills of active listening and how to make harmony amid diversity and difficulty. Perhaps these stories have something to say to us after all.

At one point in their lives, the musicians in these terrible war camps were just ordinary music students, doing their musicianship homework, practicing the piano, attending ensemble rehearsals, slowly but surely cultivating musical skill. They had no idea it was going to be a matter of survival!

– Michelle Crouch, *director*

SONGS OF SURVIVAL

Prelude

HANS KRÁSA Overture for Small Orchestra
(1899-1944) (1943-44)

The Overture for Small Orchestra was one of a few works for chamber ensemble that Krása wrote while imprisoned in Terezín with the sounds of *Brundibár* ringing in his ears, and presumably for instrumentalists who were fellow prisoners.

Augustana Chamber Orchestra

Daniel Chetel, *conductor*

Charles Schmidt, *piano*

Part One

MARGARET DRYBURGH Largo from the New World Symphony
ed. Norah Chambers (1942)

This piece was one of 30-some arrangements Margaret Dryburgh transcribed from memory and taught to the women by rote while interned in a Japanese prison camp in Sumatra between 1943 and 1945.

PAUL A. AITKEN Flanders Fields (2018)

Canadian physician John McCrae (1872-1918) wrote the poem "In Flanders Fields" in the World War I trenches in 1915, upon seeing the graves of his friends abloom with wild poppies. He also died in the war. This poem still has a central place in war commemorations in Europe, North America and Australia. Aitken arranged this for treble voices for the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, "Lest we forget."

MARK MILLER *I Believe* (2017)

This text was written on a cellar wall in Köln, Germany, during the Holocaust. The words epitomize the struggle to hold onto hope and goodness in times of utter despair. Singing them embodies the fact that singing has often helped oppressed people resist the corrosive effects of suffering and evil on the human spirit and hold onto hope.

Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble

Michael Zemek, *conductor*

Gail Baldwin, *accompanist*

Interlude

“How the Nazis Conned the World” 60 minutes, CBS News, Daniel Schorn, Feb 23, 2007. (Used with permission of CBS Inc.)

Part Two

HANS KRÁSA *Brundibár: Opera in Two Acts*
(1899-1944) (1938-1944)

Brundibár was first written in 1938 as a submission to a children’s opera competition sponsored by the Czech Ministry of Education and Culture, but sat unperformed as the German army invaded Czechoslovakia and many of the individuals involved were sent to the Terezín concentration camp. When a piano score of *Brundibár* was smuggled into the camp, Krása reconstructed the opera, taking into account the performing forces available to him in the camp. Beginning with a performance on July 23, 1943, *Brundibár* was performed 55 times in the Terezín camp over the course of the next year. A performance was central to an International Red Cross visit 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. As the war was nearing its close, Krása himself was taken on a transport that left Terezín on October 16, 1944, and he was killed in a gas chamber at Auschwitz two days later.

OperX Ensemble

Michelle Crouch, *director*

Augustana Chamber Orchestra

Daniel Chetel, *conductor*

Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble

Michael Zemek, *conductor*

Text for Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble pieces

Flanders Fields

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

I Believe

I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.
I believe in love even when I don't feel it.
I believe in God even when God is silent.

AUGUSTANA CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Daniel Chetel, *conductor*

Violin

Grace Dwyer

Josh Iyer

Hannah Riley

Xavier Slininger

Viola

Gabriel Lance

Emma Nordmeyer

Cello

Grant Estes

Stephanie Tillman

Lauren Tropinski

Flute & Piccolo

Sarah Lisak

Clarinet

Joel Padgett

Christine Rogers

Trumpet

Madison Parks

Allison Rodwell

Percussion

Kathryn Weber

Piano

Charles Schmidt

JENNY LIND VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Michael Zemek, *conductor*

Gail Baldwin, *accompanist*

Soprano I

Sarah Anderson (window)
Shannon Conniff (townsperson)
Adrienne Fouts (child)
Jessica Gallagher (child)
Rebecca Garbe (window)
Lucy Kebler (fence)
Kirsten Lancaster (child, percussion)
Julia Levy (child)
Ashley Massey (child)
Alyssa McCannon (window)
Emily Minarik (window)
Helene Paulson (ice cream man)
Cheyenne Powell (baker)
Annie Stanislawski (townsperson)
Megan Wagenknecht (townsperson)

Soprano II

Giselle Barajas (child)
Jessica Bolton (fence)
Elise Campbell (window)
Maddy Cuasay (fence)
Samantha Flipp (window)
Emily Graziano (window)
Nina Iraci (window)
Grace Kim (child)
Katie Kleve (child)
Meg McDonald (fence)
Kirsten Parr (window)
Alivia Phelps (fence)
Amanda Schar (fence)
Julia Shaw (townsperson)
Amelia Sorensen (window)
Taryn Woell (child)
Madison Woodrum (window)

Alto I

Izzy Bartscher (window)
Bela Costa (townsperson)
Moira Dunn (fence, percussion)
Rediat Ephrem (window)
Sarah Hanson (window)
Jenna Hartman (fence)
Jordan Mar (fence)
Keridwen McDaniel (window)
Liz McKee (fence)
Megan McLaughlin (window)
Sarah Rebban (child)
Carl Schwanebeck (window)
Shelly Summers (townsperson)
Anna Triska (fence)
Courtney Veitch (townsperson)

Alto II

Olivia Albrecht (townsperson)
Breena Brncich (window)
Margaret Cannizzaro (child)
Lauren Clapp (fence)
Taylor Curley (window)
Tessa Damien (window, guitar)
Bex Fernandez (fence)
Brittany Harn (fence)
Colleen Jennings (townsperson)
Mary Maraist (fence)
Shannon Rees (window)
Eva Schmitt (child)
Maria Wood (fence)

CAST OF *BRUNDIBÁR*

Annette	Zoë Haenisch
Little Joe	Sophie Nevel
Sparrow	Sabrina Massa
Cat	Amber Mraz
Fido the Dog	Camille Myers
Brundibár	Nathaniel Bohrer
Policeman	Elliott Peterson
Milkman	Allison Anstead
Ice Cream Man	Helene Paulson
Baker	Cheyenne Powell
Chorus	Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Stage Manager	Emily Keiner
Set Design	RaeEllen Walker
Set Construction & Lights	John D'Aversa
Costumes	Ellen Dixon
Publicity & Marketing	Kevin Carton
Ticket Office	Danielle Roman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Both the Krása works in this program are performed by arrangement with Bote & Bock Berlin and Boosey & Hawkes, Inc.

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Gene Taets tuned the piano.

Mike Turczynski and Ed Skelton moved the orchestra equipment.

Sincere thanks to all!



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COLLABORATORS FOR SONGS OF SURVIVAL

OperX Ensemble

Using a range of genres, including opera, cabaret and a capella, OperX Ensemble seeks to transform singers' abilities to combine singing and acting into diverse skills of collaborative musical storytelling. OperX Ensemble creates two or three distinctive events each year in addition to collaborating with the theatre arts department in presenting a spring musical. These events include a full opera production, a scenes program and a cabaret night with a strong story map to guide students' creative submissions of acts. Auditions for these events are open to all students taking applied voice lessons. Exploration of opera during the past 20 years at Augustana has offered undergraduate singers and actors unique opportunities to learn musical dramas from the 12th to the 21st century, from ancient liturgical dramas to contemporary Broadway musicals and everything in between. OperX Ensemble continues this tradition with renewed energy for the creative possibilities of musical storytelling as singers are trained across genres, cultures and time periods.

Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble

Named after Jenny Lind (1820-1887), a Swedish opera singer known as the "Swedish Nightingale" and considered the finest coloratura of her day, Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble is a select treble ensemble for those wishing to develop advanced choral skills and a better understanding of various styles of choral music composed for sopranos and altos. The ensemble's chosen repertoire—from folk to contemporary, ancient to modern—focuses on moving forward and upward, overcoming challenges and celebrating compassion. Jenny Lind Vocal Ensemble performs concerts on campus each term, at community events and on its annual tour.

Augustana Chamber Orchestra

Augustana Chamber Orchestra (ACO) provides an intensive and varied opportunity for orchestral students. Recently formed under the direction of Dr. Daniel Chetel, ACO plays a diverse collection of repertoire—specifically focusing on baroque, classical, and 20th- and 21st-century works written for a smaller symphonic or string ensemble. This ensemble also serves as the ensemble for OperX Ensemble productions and other potential collaborative projects. In addition, ACO aspires to offer a friendly artistic environment that cultivates participation in and advocacy for music on campus and in society at large. Membership is by audition or invitation, and requires advanced musical skills on an orchestral instrument.

