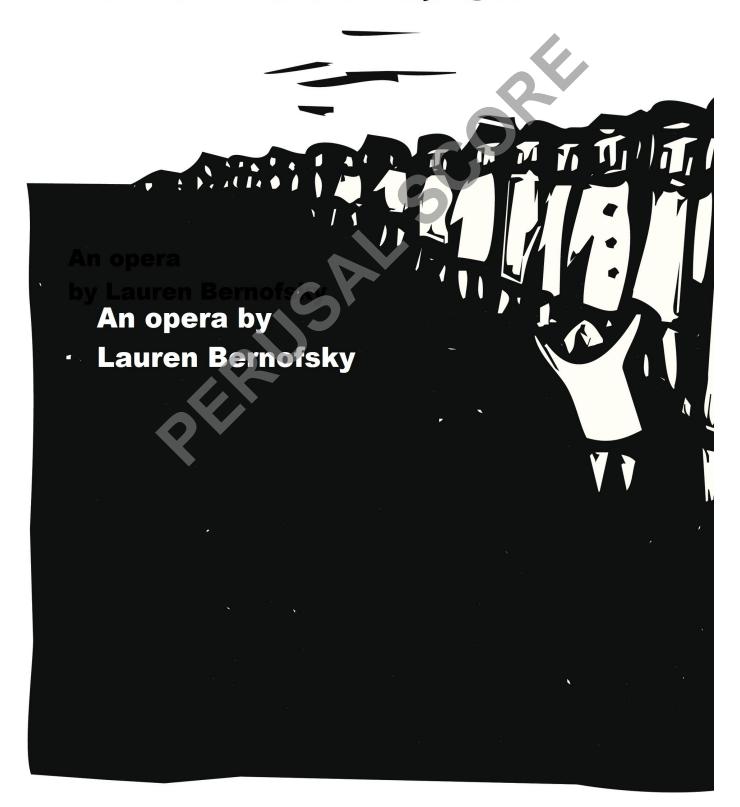
THE MENSCH



THE MENSCH

- An opera in three acts -

Words and music by

LAUREN BERNOFSKY

THE MENSCH is an in-progress opera by Lauren Bernofsky. Set during the Holocaust, it tells the story of the historical figure Anton Schmid and his heroic work saving hundreds of Jews from the Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania. The opera teams with danger and fear, but also humor, kindness, and even mystery.

Anton Schmid owns a radio shop in Vienna. He is drafted into the Wehrmacht and sent to Vilna, Lithuania to work in an office that re-unites lost German soldiers with their units. On the surface he appears to do his job, but undercover he works to aid the Jews in the nearby ghetto and support a resistance effort that spanned multiple ghettos across Eastern Europe.

Projected date of completion of full orchestration: June 1, 2026

Overall duration: 2 1/2 hours of music

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

ANTON SCHMID (Lyric tenor) Electrician, owns a shop selling electrical equipment in Vienna.

BERNHARD BERNSTEIN* (Lyric baritone) Jewish electrician who works in ANTON SCHMID's shop.

STEFANIE SCHMID (Coluratura mezzo soprano) ANTON'S wife, works in SCHMID'S shop.

EDUARD KANITZER* (Tenor) Jew working in SCHMID's shop. Trained photographer.

CUSTOMER 1* (Baritone)

CUSTOMER 2* (Mezzo soprano)

GERHARD KANITZER* (Boy soprano) Son of EDUARD (age 10-11)

FRAU TOPOR* (non-speaking) Jewish woman who owns clothing shop near ANTON's shop.

BOY 1* (Boy soprano) Viennese boy, is being trained as a Nazi youth.

BOY 2* (Boy soprano) Viennese boy, is being trained as a Nazi youth. (Optional)

BOY 3* (Boy soprano) Viennese boy, is being trained as a Nazi youth. (Optional)

VIENNESE POLICEMAN* (baritone) Wears Austrian police uniform with a swastika arm band.

GERTHA SCHMID* (Girl soprano) Daughter of ANTON (age 13).

HANS SPATZEK* (Baritone) Gentile who works in ANTON's shop.

LIESL KANITZER* (Mezzo soprano) Wife of EDUARD.

ANNELIE KANITZER* (Girl soprano) Daughter of EDUARD.

WOMAN 1* (Soprano or | Mezzo soprano) Jewish woman.

WOMAN 2* (Soprano or Mezzo soprano) Jewish woman.

SOLDIER 1* (Baritone or tenor)

SOLDIER 2* (Tenor)

CHILD 1* (Child soprano)

CHILD 2* (Child soprano)

CHILD 3* (Child soprano

PESSIA AHARONOWICZ (Dramatic coloratura soprano) Jew who escaped from Ponary and returns to ghetto.

ABBA KOVNER (Baritone) Jewish resistance organizer, age 22.

DR. WEINRIB* (Tenor) Doctor in the ghetto hospital.

YEHUDIT TROJAK* (Girl soprano) Escaped from Ponary and reurns to ghetto. Age 11.

GESTAPO POLICEMAN* (Baritone)

MAX HUPPERT (Baritone) Alias for Max Salinger, a Jew disguised as a Wehrmacht private.

SOLDIER 3* (Tenor or Baritone) Nazi soldier.

KARL HANS SCHNEIDER* (Tenor) Young Nazi soldier.

LUISA EMAITISAITE (Soubrette) Young Jewish woman.

FATHER GDOWSKI* (Bass) Catholic priest.

HERMANN ADLER (Baritone) Jewish resistance organizer.

ANITA DISTLER (Soprano) Jewish wife of HERMAN ADLER and resistance organizer.

JEWISH MAN 2* (Baritone)

NAZI OFFICER (Bass-Baritone)

LITHUANIAN POLICEMAN* (Bass-Baritone)

JEWISH MAN 3* (Tenor)

WORKER 1* (Tenor)

WORKER 2* (Baritone)

WORKER 3* (Baritone)

MORDECHAI TENENBAUM* (Baritone) Jewish courier for the resistance, friend of ANTON.

FRAU GLASSMAN* (Mezzo soprano) Jewish woman. Lives in ghetto and works with Jewish youth groups.

SOLDIER 4* (Baritone)

CHAIKA GROSSMAN* (Soprano) Young Jewish woman courier for the resistance

LONKA KORDSYBRODSKA* (Soprano) Young Jewish woman courier for the resistance

TEMA SCHNEIDERMAN* (Mezzo soprano) Young Jewish woman courier for the resistance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACT I

1. Ensemble - At the Shop-1	8
Anton, Stefanie, Bernhard, Eduard, Customers 1 and 2, Gerhard	
2. Aria - It's Not My Cameras	20
Anton	
3. Duet - The Sausage	24
Stefanie, Gerhard	<i></i>
4. Ensemble - Shattered Glass	
Anton, Boy 1, Viennese Policeman (Opt. Boys 2 and 3)	
5. Interlude	33
(instrumental)	
6. Ensemble - Home for Dinner	34
Stefanie, Gertha, Anton	
	39
Stefanie	
8. Recit	47
Anton, Stefanie	7/
9. Duet - When They Shattered the Window	49
Anton, Stefanie	
10. Ensemble - At the Shop-2	54
Hans, Bernhard, Anton, Eduard	
11. Trio - Sabbath Prayer	58
Dambard Edward Harr	
12. Duet - Pillage and Plunder	66
Liesl, Eduard	
13. Aria - When I was Young	73
Eduard	
14. Duet - An Outrage	77
Anton, Eduard	
15. Ensemble - After Dinner	80
Annelie, Liesl, Gerhard, Stefanie	
16. Aria - Summons	83
Stefanie	
ACT II	
17. Ensemble - In the Ghetto-1	87
Woman 1, Woman 2, Soldier 1 and 2, Child 1, 2, and 3	
18. Chorus-1	95
Chorus	
19. Aria-Chorus - Pessia's Story	00
Pessia, Chorus	99
	117
20. Aria - Letter of Sept. 1	112
Anton	11/
21. RecitAria - Jehudit's Story	116
Abba, Dr. Weinrib, Jehudit	

22. Ensemble - At the Ghetto Gate	
Gestapo Policeman, non-speaking chorus members	
23. Chorus-2	
Chorus	
24. Aria - Letter of Sept. 14, 1941	
Stefanie, Gertha	
25. Ensemble - Schmid's Office-1	
Max, Soldier 3, Karl	
26. Aria - I'm So Far from Home	
Karl, Anton, Max	
27. Interlude - Outside the Window	
(instrumental)	
28. Duet - Meeting Luisa	
Anton Luica	
29. Aria - There's Something About Her Eyes	
Anton 30. Duet - Schmid's Apt1	
30. Duet - Schmid's Apt1	
Anton Luigo	
31. Aria - Can You Imagine?	
7740	
32. Recit Where Are Your Parents?	
Anton, Luisa	
33. Ensemble - Meeting Father Gdowski	
Father Gdowski, Anton	
34. Duet - He's Calling the Gestapo	
Luisa, Anton	
35. Aria - Between Me and God	
Father Gdowski	
36. Ensemble - Luisa Thanks Father Gdowski	
Luisa, Father Gdowski, Anton	
ACT III	
37. Ensemble - Schmid's Office-2	
Max, Herman, Anton, Anita	
38. Ensemble - Schmid's Apartment-2	
Anton, Luisa, Anita, Herman	
39. Trio - What Kind of Nazi?	
Luisa, Anita, Herman	
40. Chorus - Hob Ikh a Por Oksn	
Children's Chorus	
41. RecitChorus-3	
Soldier 1, Soldier 2, Jewish Man 2, Chorus	
42. Duet - A Wedding in the Ghetto	
Anita, Herman	

43. Ensemble - Officers' Club	265
Chorus, Nazi Officer, Anton	
44. Ensemble - Outside the Ghetto Gate	270
Lithuanian Policeman, Jewish Man 3, Workers 1, 2, and 3, Anton	
45. Ensemble - Meeting at Schmid's-1	278
Mordechai, Frau Glassman, Anton, Anita, Herman	
46. Aria-Chorus - When I Walk on the Sidewalks of Vilna	287
Anton, Chorus	207
47. Ensemble - Schmid's Office-3	205
Max, Anton, Soldier 4	293
48. Ensemble- Aria - Cold-Blooded	298
Mordechai, Anita, Herman, Anton 49. Ensemble - Schmid's Apartment-4	215
•	313
Anton, Chaika, Lonka, Tema, Abba, Children's Chorus	222
50. Ensemble - The Manifesto	322
Chaika, Lonka, Tema, Abba, Anton	221
51. Trio - Chutzpah	331
Charka, Lonka, Tema	
52. Duet - The Adlers in the Basement	
Anita, Herman 53. Aria - The Last Letter	2.10
	348
Anton	
Death Toll-1	362
Man, Woman, Child	
Death Toll-2	363
Man, Woman, Child	
Death Toll-3	364
Man, Woman, Child	
Death Toll-4	265
Man, Woman, Child	303
Death Toll-5	266
	300
Man, Woman, Child	267
Death Toll-6	30/
Man, Woman, Child	260
Death Toll-7	368
Man, Woman, Child	260
Death Toll-8	369
Man, Woman, Child	

THE MENSCH

- An opera in three acts -

Total duration: 2 1/2 hours.

Music and libretto by Lauren Bernofsky

ACT I















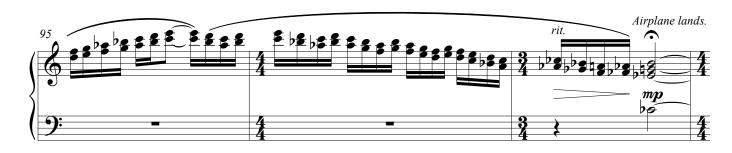






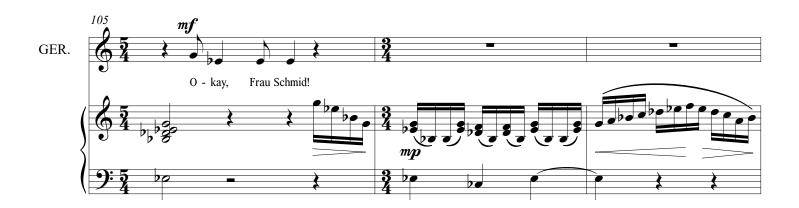








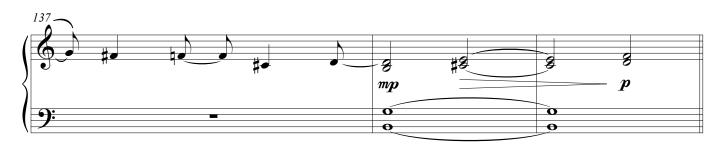












attaca

2. It's Not My Cameras









3. The Sausage







[Duration 1:40]

Schmid and his employees run outside to see what happened. A young Hitler Youth boy has thrown a rock through a shop window, and a woman stands next to her shop, crying. Schmid confronts the boy, and some other Hitler Youth friends run off to get a policeman. Gerhard Kannitzer is one of the people who witness the scene.

4. Shattered Glass













[Duration:58]

5. Interlude



[Duration: 3:00]









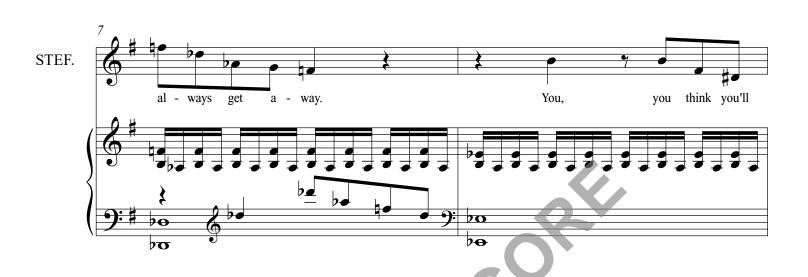


[Duration: 1:38]

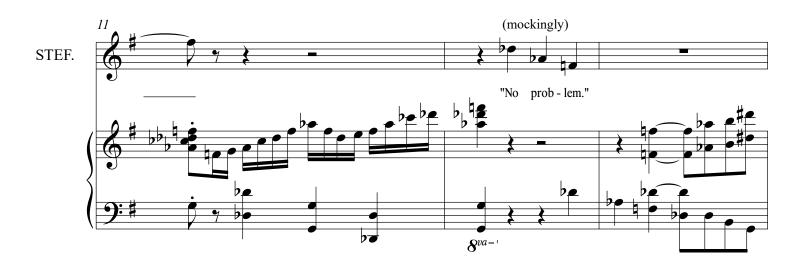
7. No Problem



40 7. No Problem









42 7. No Problem







7. No Problem



45



46 7. No Problem



8. Recit.



48 8. Recit.



9. When They Shattered the Window











[Duration: 1:30]

10. At the Shop-2











attaca

[Duration: 3:03]

11. Sabbath Prayer

Note: possibly expand this into a larger group number.























12. Pillage and Plunder













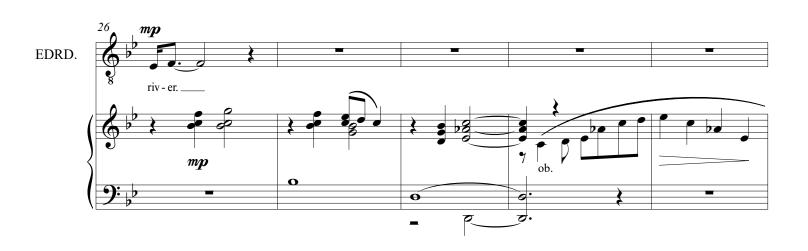


[Duration: 3:00]

13. When I Was Young





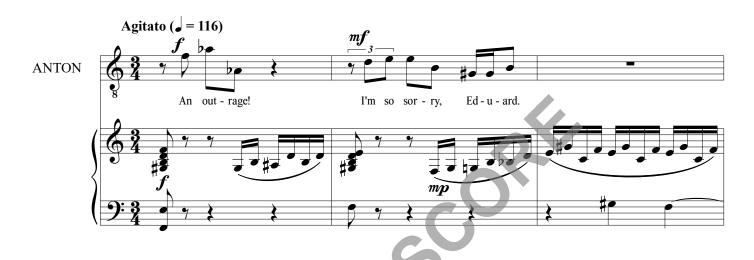


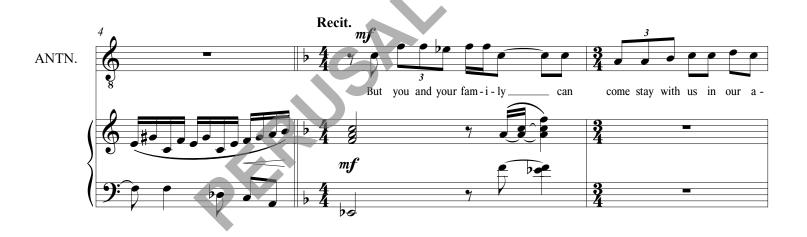


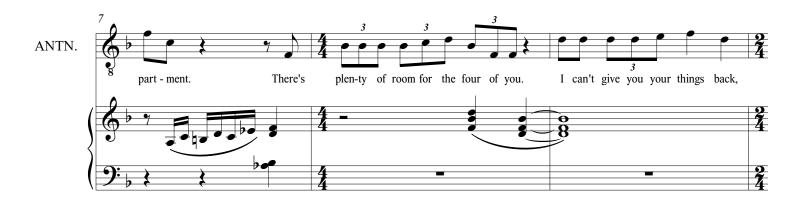


[Duration: :55]

14. An Outrage



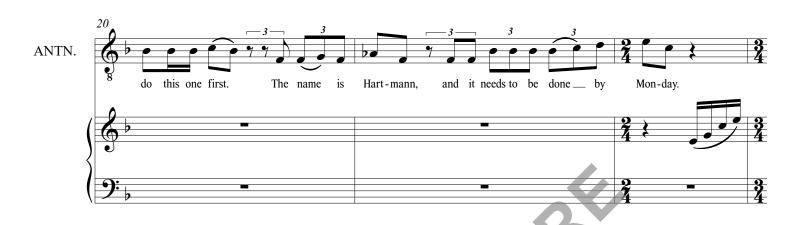


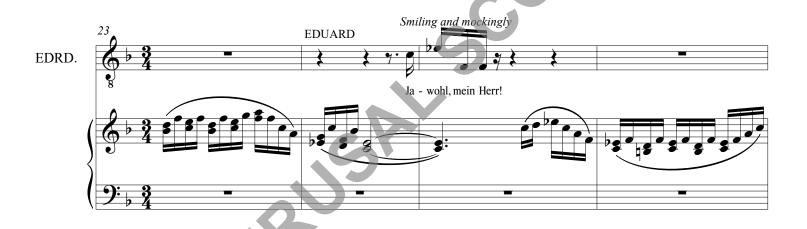














[Duration:1:08]

In Schmid's apartment. Seated at the dinner table are Schmid, Eduard, and Liesl. Gertha, Gerhard, and his sister Annelie are seated nearby playing "Schere, Stein, Papier" ("Scissors, Paper, Rock"). Stefi enters carrying the day's mail.

15. After Dinner

Schmid, Eduard, and Liesl quietly talking/laughing.







82 15. After Dinner

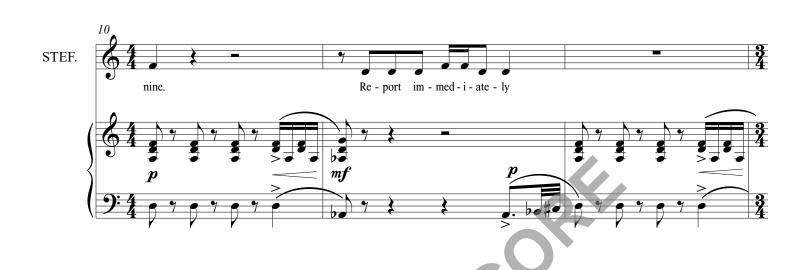


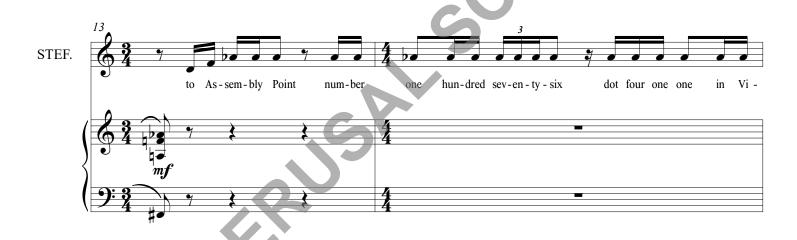
[Duration: 1:30]

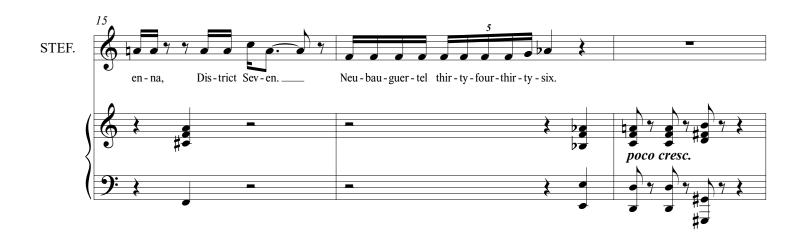
16. Summons



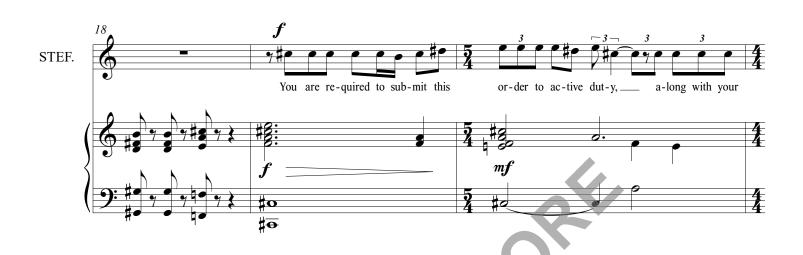
84 16. Summons



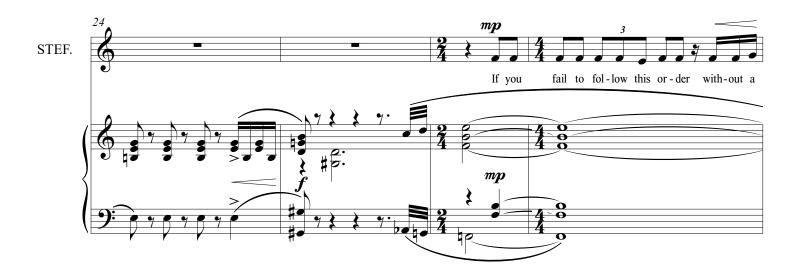




16. Summons 85







86 16. Summons



[Duration:2:42]

Setting:Street scene. Dilapidated buildings. Crowded, dirty, many Jews (adults and children) sitting on sidewalks or milling about, most in ragged clothing. Some people sitting/standing silently with vacant stares. A woman is frantically searching for her husband.

ACT II







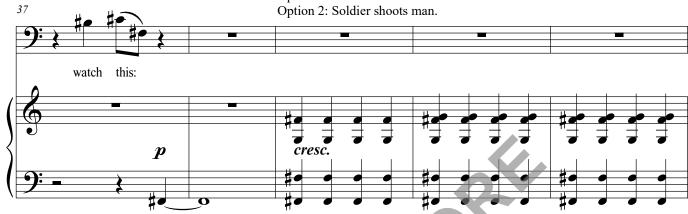




Soldier 1 takes his bayonet and whisks the hat off the head of a seated elderly Jewish man. Man, with great difficulty, gets up to retrieve hat. Option 1: Soldier shoots hat.

Option 2: Soldier shoots man.

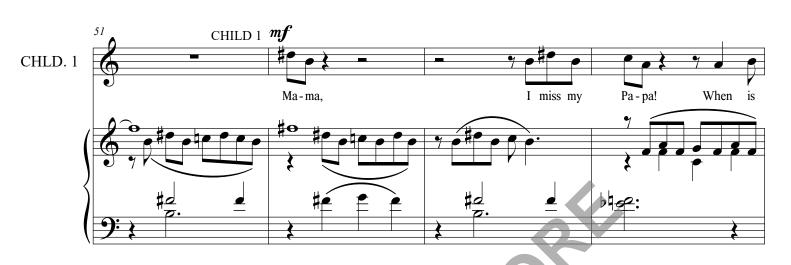


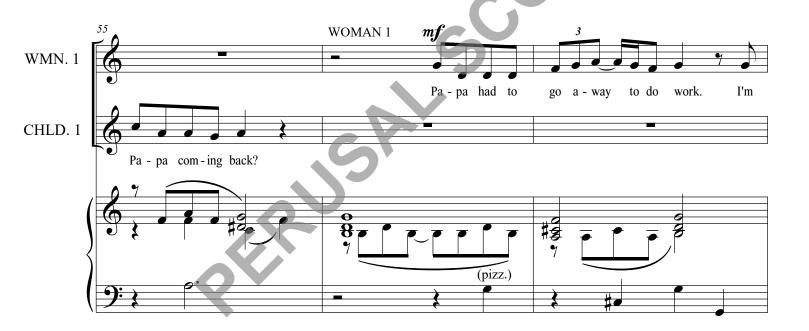


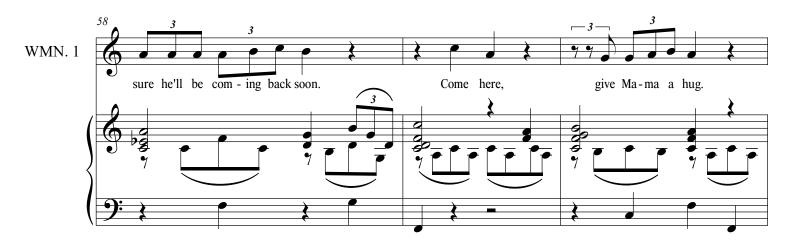
















[Duration: :51]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Streets are crowded with Jews in ragged clothing sitting, standing, crouching, etc.

18. Chorus-1







98 18. Chorus-1



[Duration: 3:26]

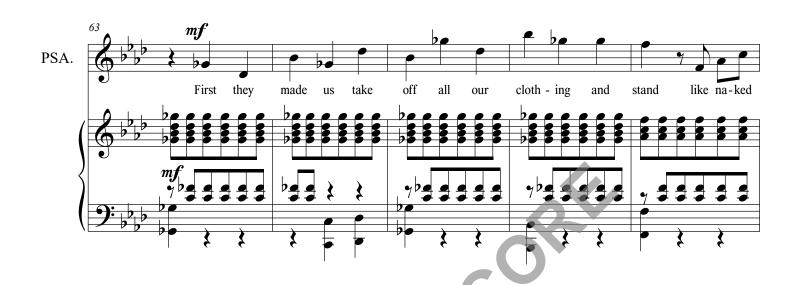
Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Pessia Aharonowicz runs onto stage and reports that she has seen the mass killings at Ponary.

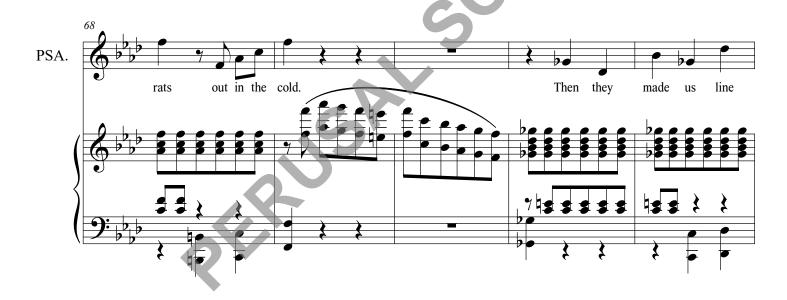


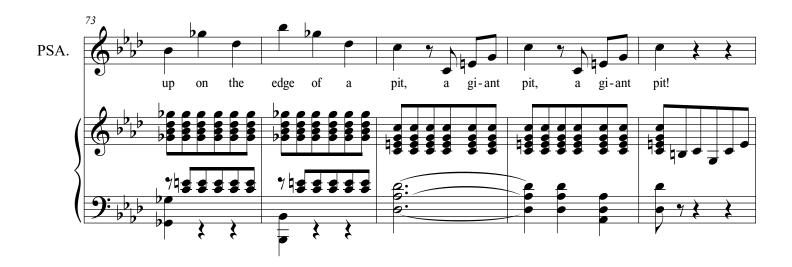










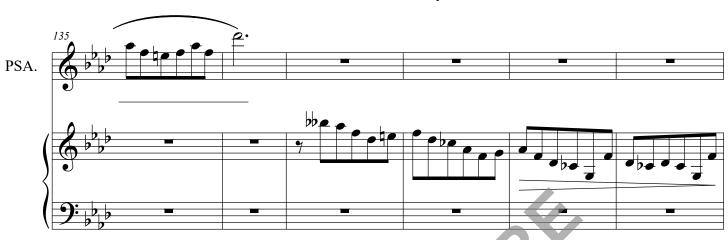




























[Duration: 1:26]

Setting: We see Schmid in a non-descript small room writing a letter to Stefi.

20. Letter of Sept. 1









[Duration: 5:35]

Setting: In the ghetto hospital, 11-year-old Yehudit Trojak lies in a hospital bed. Her shoulder and upper arm are bandaged. The doctor welcomes Abba Kovner into the room and leads him over to Yehudit.

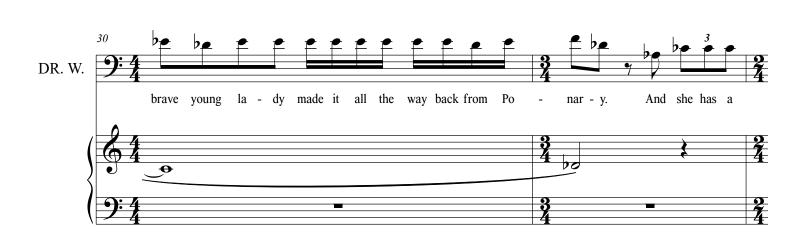
21. Yehudit's Story





 $m\overline{p}$









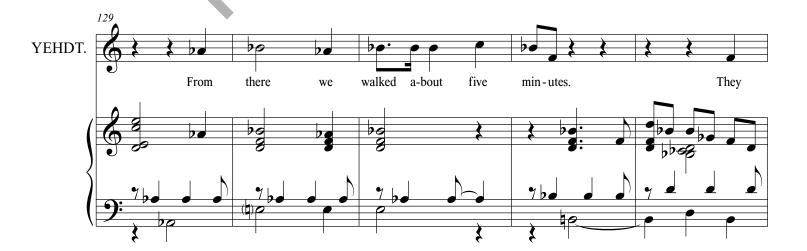














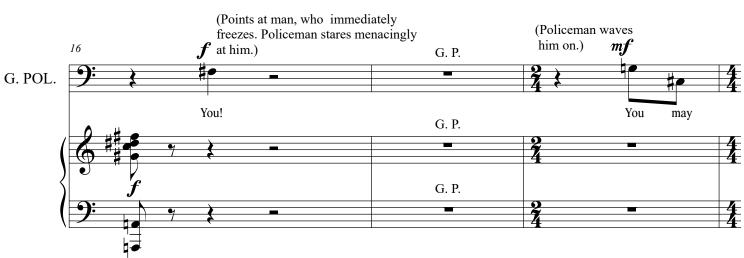
[Duration 1:40]

Setting: At the ghetto gate. Jewish men (and some women) are returning from work. A Jewish policeman is stationed at gate.

22. At the Ghetto Gate











[Duration: 1:26]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. Streets are crowded with Jews in ragged clothing sitting, standing, crouching, etc.

23. Chorus-2









23. Chorus-2 133





134 23. Chorus-2



[Duration: 2:56]

Setting: The Schmids' apartment in Vienna. Stefi opens the mail and reads Anton's letter to Gertha.

24. Letter of Sept. 14, 1941



















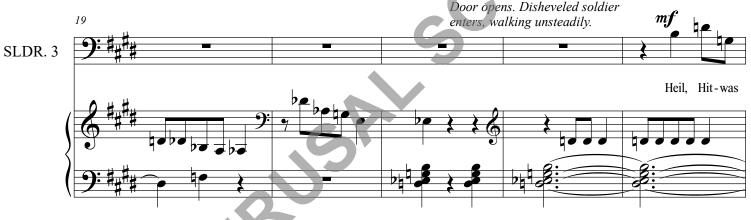
[Duration: 2:15]

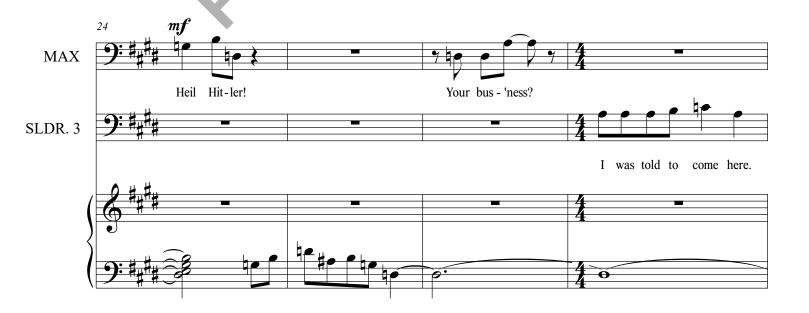
Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office in Vilna. Schmid is seated at a desk. Max Huppert sits at another desk, typing. A number of German soldiers, bedraggeled, sit on chairs a in a waiting area.

25. Schmid's Office-1



















[Duration: 4:02]

Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office in Vilna. Schmid is seated at a desk. Max Huppert sits at another desk, typing. A number of German soldiers, bedraggeled, sit on chairs in a waiting area.

26. I'm So Far from Home















[Duration: :38]

Schmid looks outside his office window onto a staging area where Jews are being assembled before being moved on. The Jews are being cruelly mistreated by Nazi guards. Schmid is horrified at what he sees.

27. Outside the Window



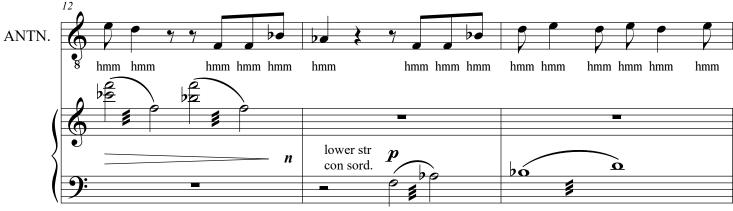


[Duration: 3:12]

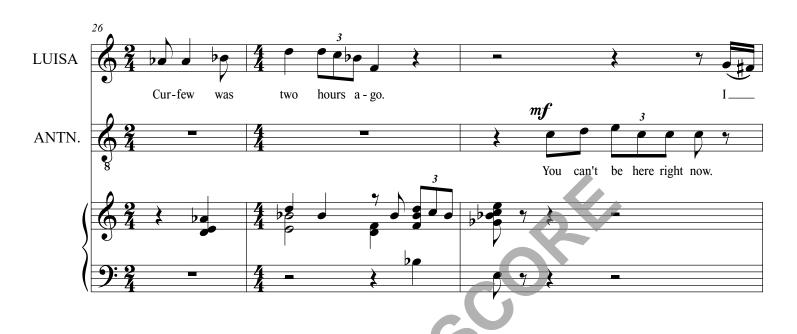
Oct. 1941. Residential street in Vilna, nighttime. Anton is on his way back from the officers' club with a few drinks in him. Luisa Emaitiseite, a young Lithuanian Jew, was outside the ghetto past curfew, to avoid the raid that day. She is now locked out. She hides in the shadows of the entrance of a derelict house.

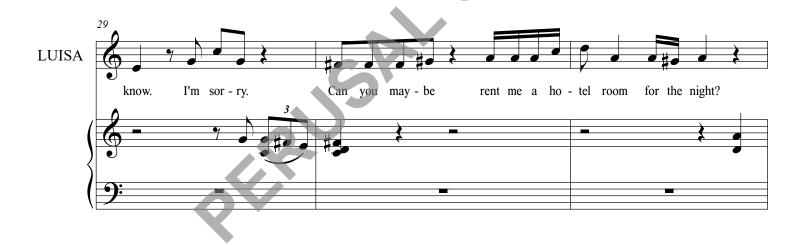
28. Meeting Luisa

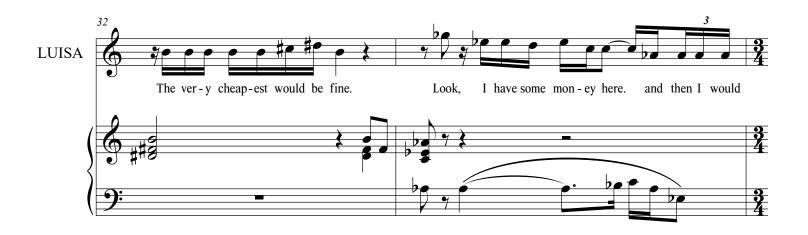






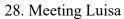






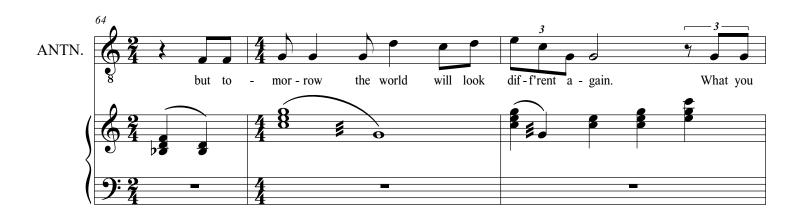








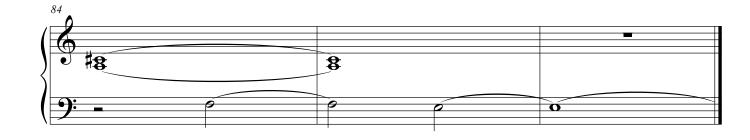












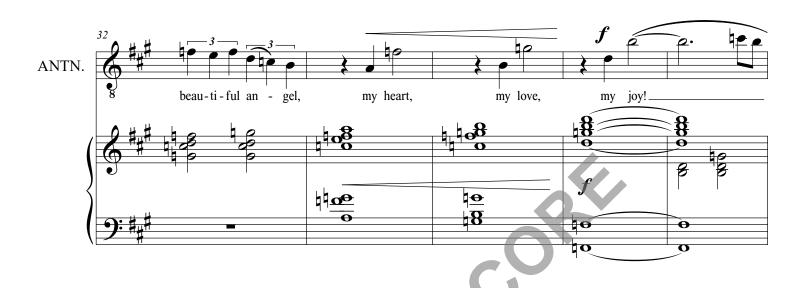
[Duration: 3:47]

Schnmid has just met Luisa, late at night on a street outside the ghetto and he muses about his daughter Gertha.

29. There's Something About Her Eyes

















[Duration: 1:35]

In Schmid's apt. in Vilna. Morning. Luisa sits at table holding a cup of coffee. Schmid is busy in kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down at table.

30. Schmid's Apt.-1 (Luisa)





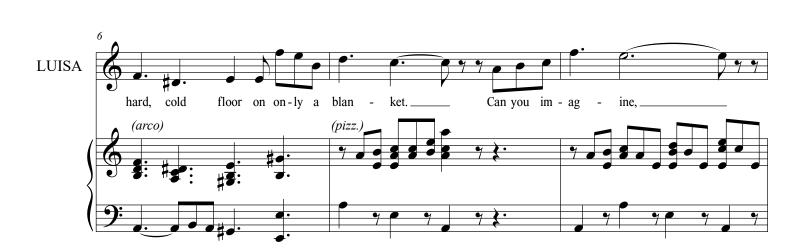


[Duration: 3:35]

In Schmid's apt. in Vilna. Morning. Luisa sits at table holding a cup of coffee. Schmid is busy in kitchen. He pours himself a cup of coffee and sits down at table.

31. Can You Imagine?















[Duration: 3:46]

Still in Anton's kitchen, Anton and Luisa continue their conversation over breakfast.

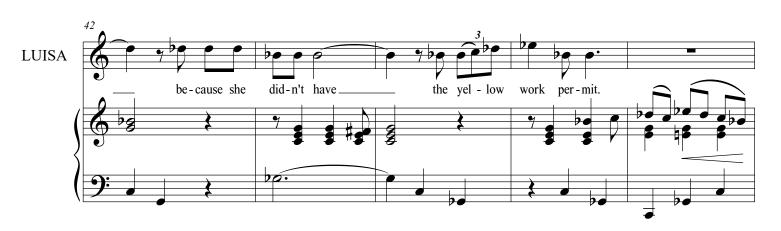
























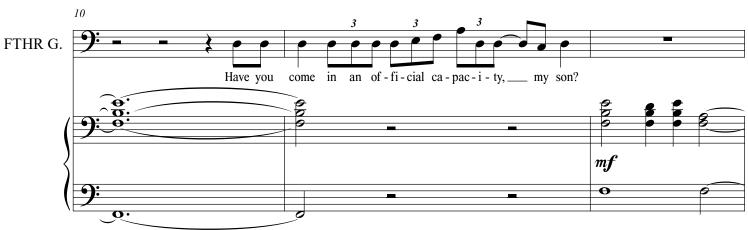


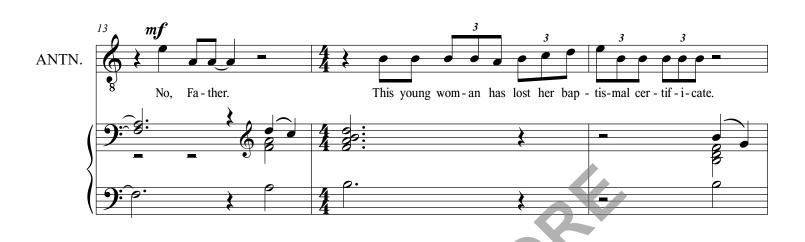
[Duration: 2:35]

Anton and Luisa visit Father Gdowsky's chambers at the Monastery of St. Theresa of the Barefoot Carmelites. They approach Gdowski, who is sitting behnd a desk (Luisa walks in timidly behind Anton.)

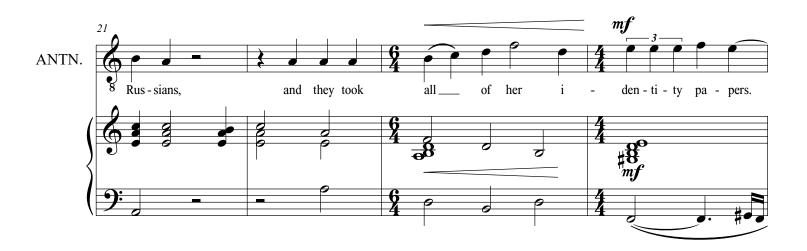
33. Meeting Father Gdowski















[Duration: 1:40]

Anton and Luisa wait nervously for Father Gdowsky's return.

34. He's Calling the Gestapo















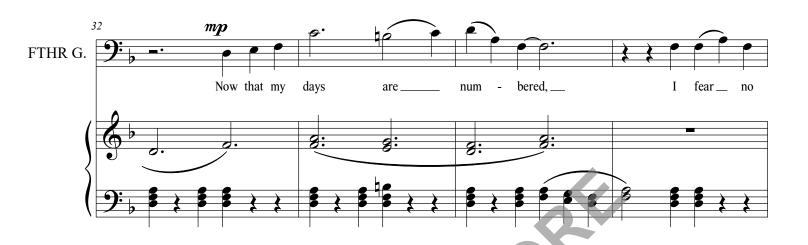
[Duration: 3:50]

Father Gdowsky returns, holding an old typewriter that's so heavy, he can barely carry it. He then hands Luisa some Ostra Brama letterhead.

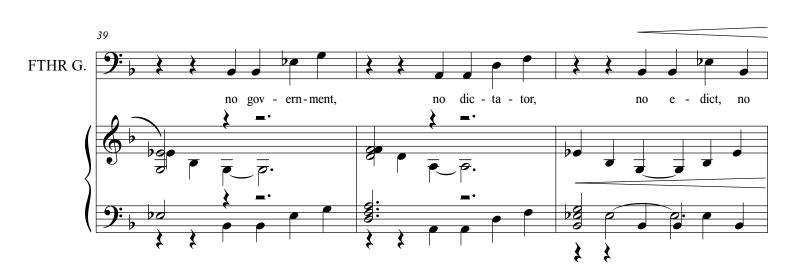
35. Between Me and God















[Duration: 1:03]

36. Luisa Thanks Father Gdowski

Luisa goes to kiss Father





[Duration: 4:00]

Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office in Vilna. Schmid is seated at a desk. Max Huppert sits at another desk, typing. A number of German soldiers, bedraggeled, sit on chairs a in a waiting area.

ACT III

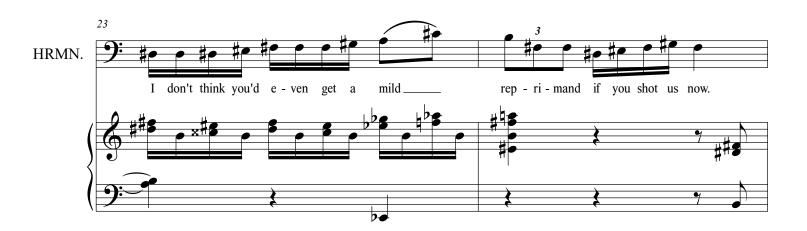
37. Schmid's Office-2



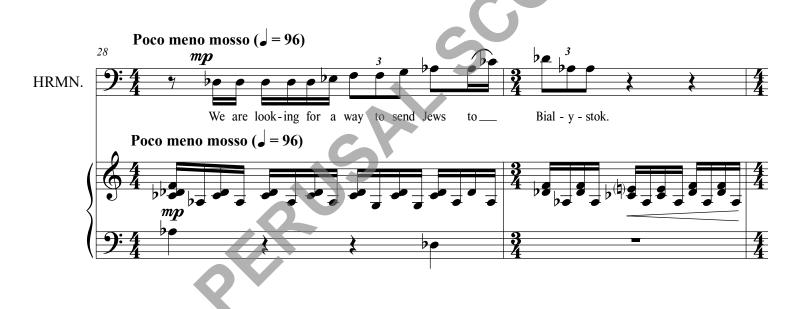






























[Duration: 1:50]

Setting: The kitchen in Schmid's Wehrmacht apartment in Vilna.

38. Schmid's Apartment-2











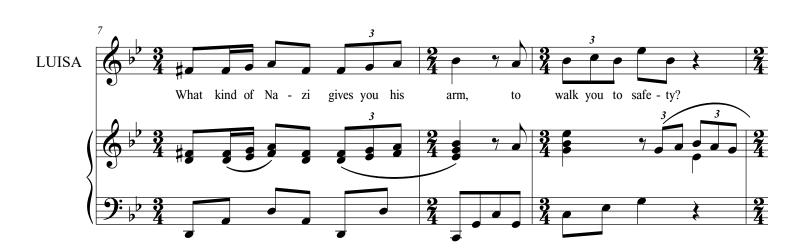


[Duration: 2:44]

Setting: Schmid's kitchen.

39. Trio: What Kind of Nazi?





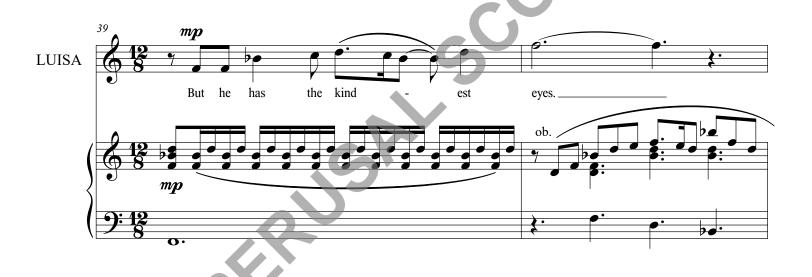


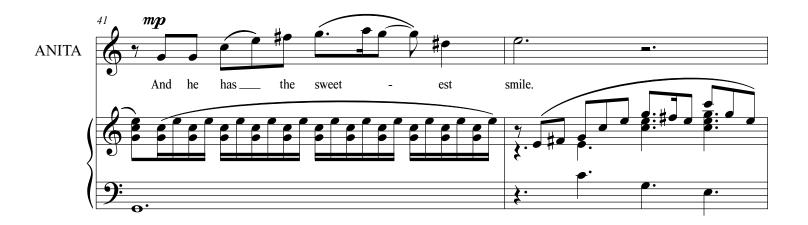








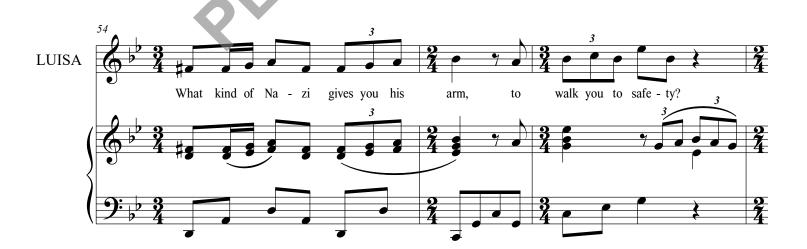




















[Duration: :50]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. We hear children singing offstage -- they come onto stage singing and snaking in a grapevine that then becomes a circle. Their singing is interrupted by some soldiers ominously approaching.











[Duration: 3:00]

Setting: Street scene in the ghetto. The children's singing game is interrupted by some soldiers entering.

41. Recit - Chorus-3

Some German soldiers walk up.

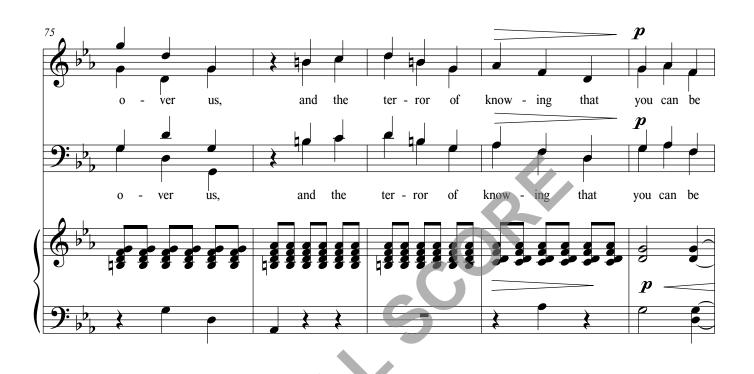


























[Duration: 4:15]

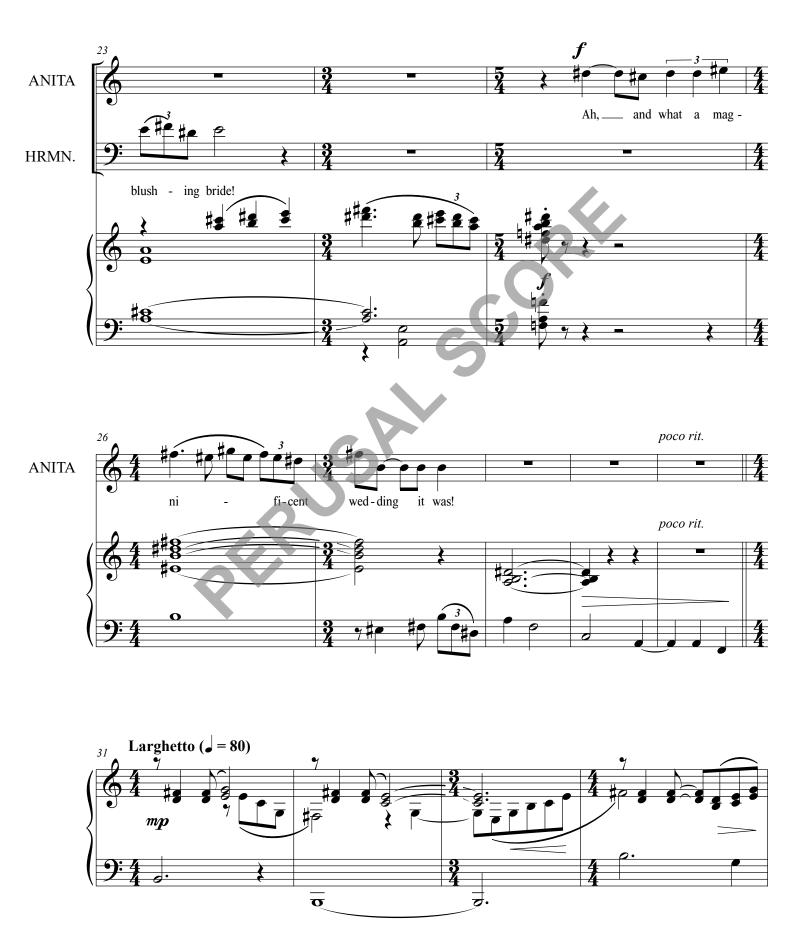
Setting: The spare room in Schmid's Wehrmacht apartment in Vilna.

42. A Wedding in the Ghetto

Anita chips away at ice in a water jug.



















[Duration: 1:47]

Setting: Officer's club (a bar) above Schmid's office. Many Nazi officers seated at tables, drinking/talking/laughing.

43. Officers' Club

Ein Heller und Ein Batzen













[Duration: 3:42]

Setting:Street scene outside ghetto gate. Several police standing about. A Jewish man walks by.

44. Outside the Ghetto Gate









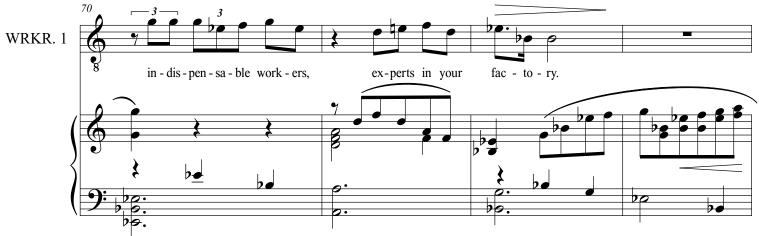












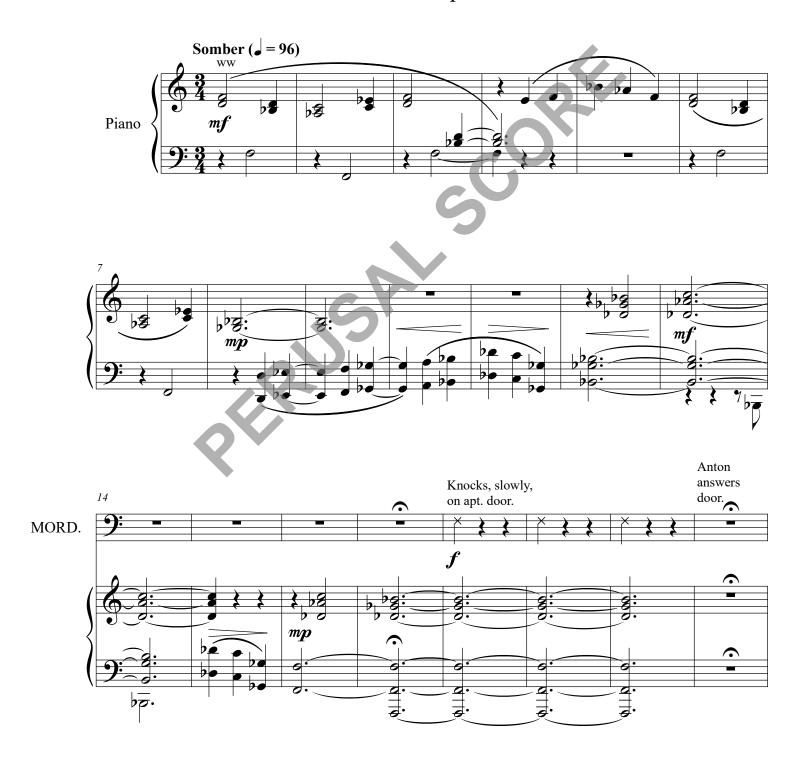




[Duration: 3:38]

Setting: In Anton's kitchen. Food and drink are laid out on table. Anita and Herman are seated with Anton, and they are quietly conversing.

45. Schmid's Apartment-3



















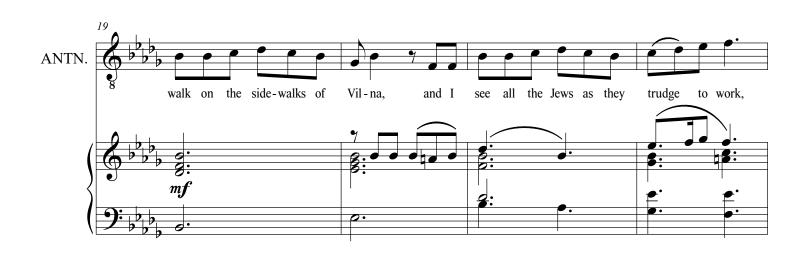
[Duration: 3:13]

Setting: In Anton's kitchen. Anton sings to Hermann and Anita Adler, Mrs. Glasman, and Mordechai Tenenbom.

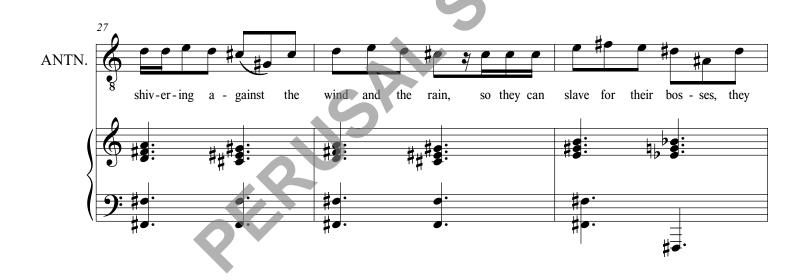
46. When I Walk on the Sidewalks of Vilna

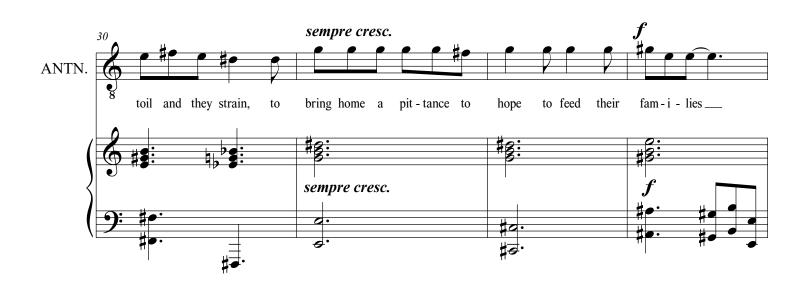








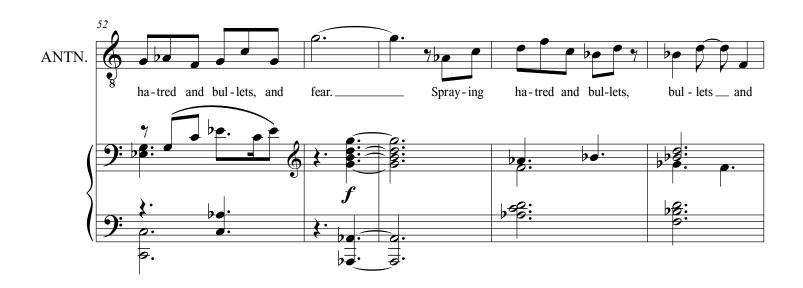


















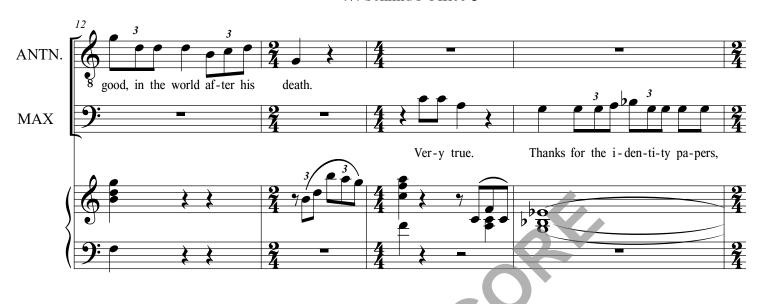
[Duration: 1:03]

Setting: Schmid's Wehrmacht office (the collection point for lost soldiers)

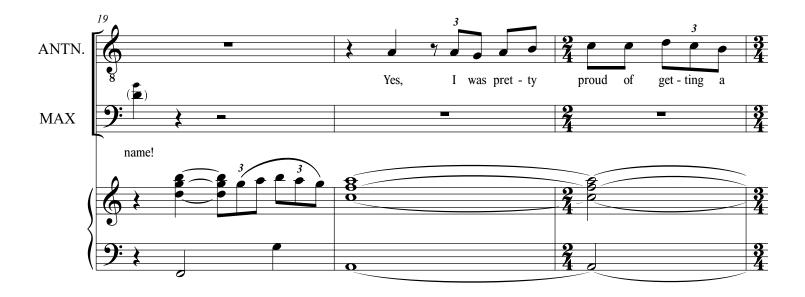
47. Schmid's Office-3











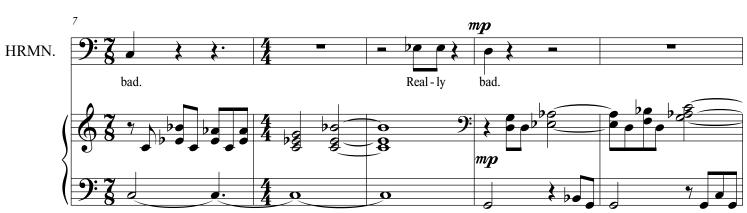


[Duration: 5:37]

Setting: Schmid's apt. Mordechai Tenenbaum, Anton, and the Adlers are present. Mordechai explains how he travels in disguise.

48. Cold-Blooded











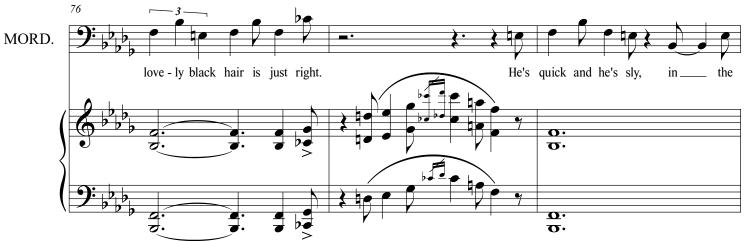






























[Duration: 5:27]

Setting: In Anton's kitchen. Chaika, Lonka, and Tema enter from the spare bedroom, where they had been resting.

49. Schmid's Apartment-4















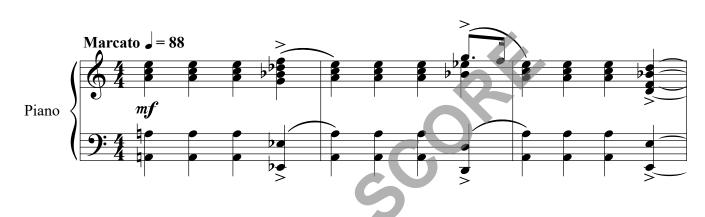
attaca



[Duration: 5:27]

Setting: In Anton's kitchen. Chaika, Lonka, and Tema enter from the spare bedroom (they had been resting there.)

50. The Manifesto

























Setting: In Anton's kitchen.

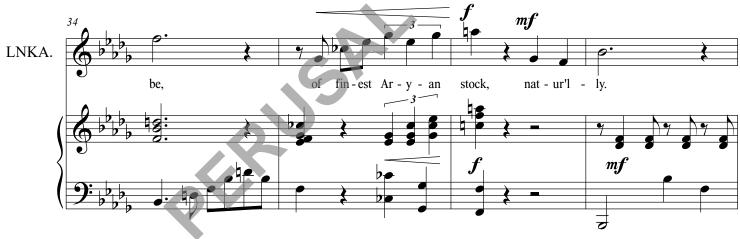
51. Chutzpah



















Setting: The basement under Schmid's apartment. Anita and Hermann are cowering in a dark corner.

52. The Adlers in the Basement

(Sounds of battering ram from a distance as the

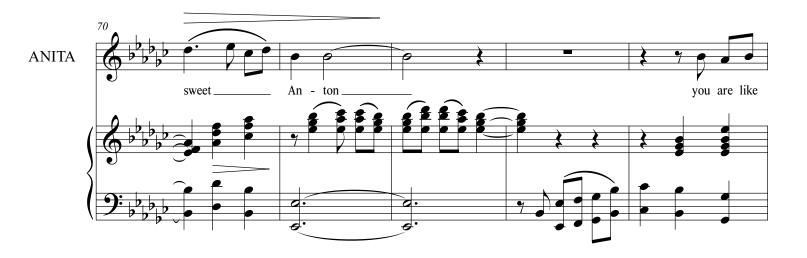






















Setting: Schmid sits, alone, in a prison cell, writing a letter.

53. The Last Letter



















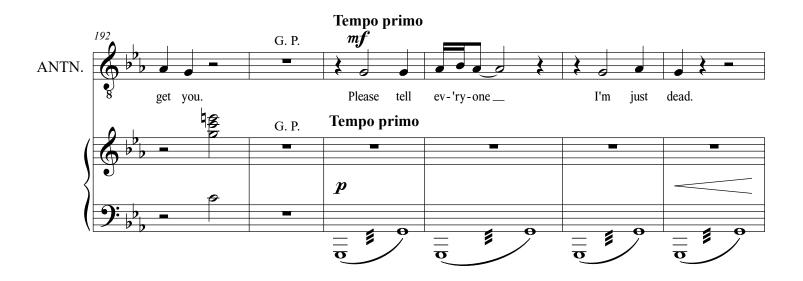


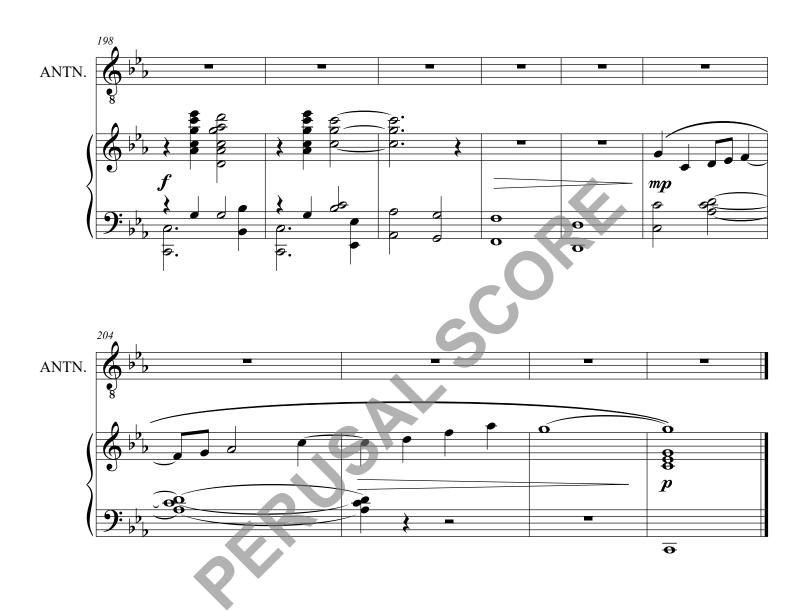










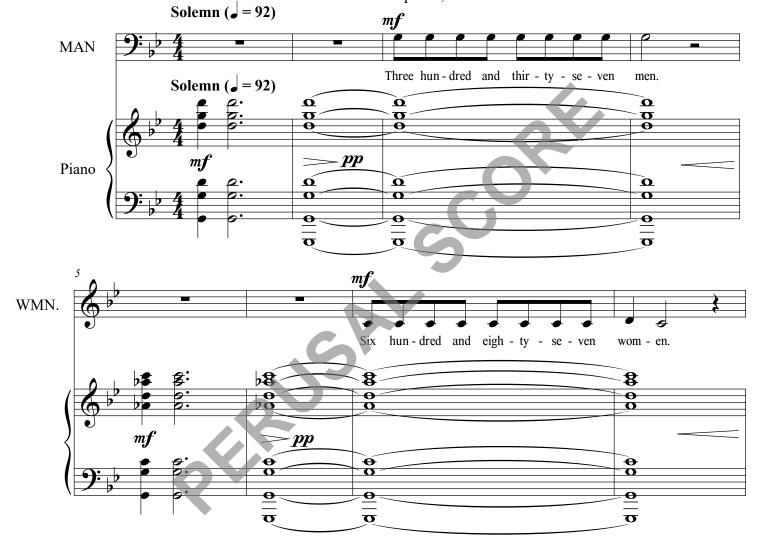


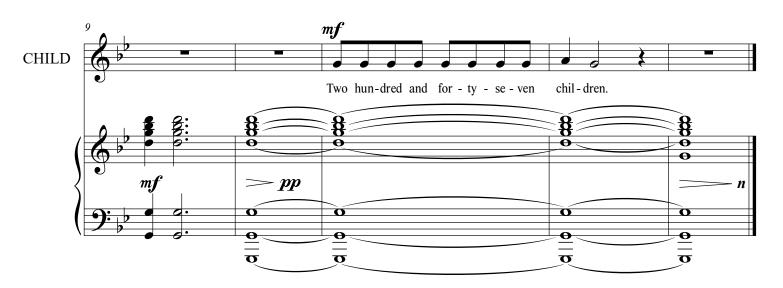
Note: The Death Tolls are optional, to be added between other movements at the Director's discretion.

Setting: Image of Einsatzkommando report may be projected onto screen.

Death Toll - 1

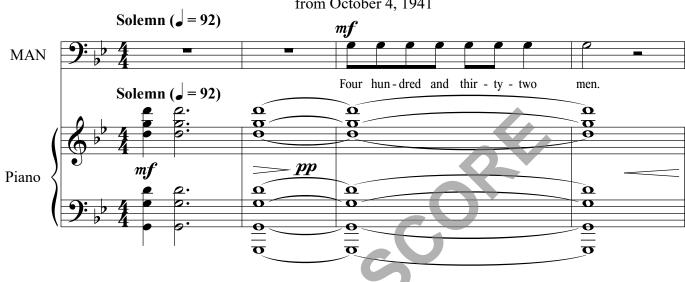
Einsatzkommando report from Sept. 17, 1941

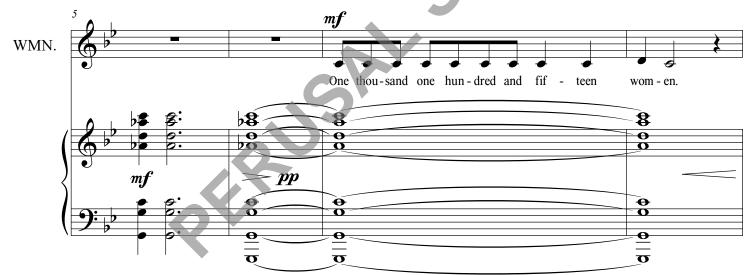


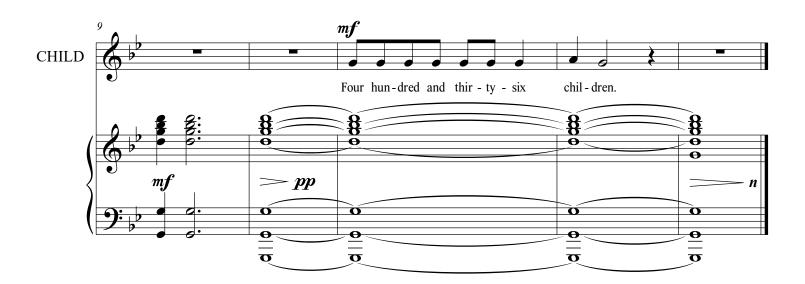


Death Toll - 2

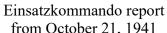
Einsatzkommando report from October 4, 1941

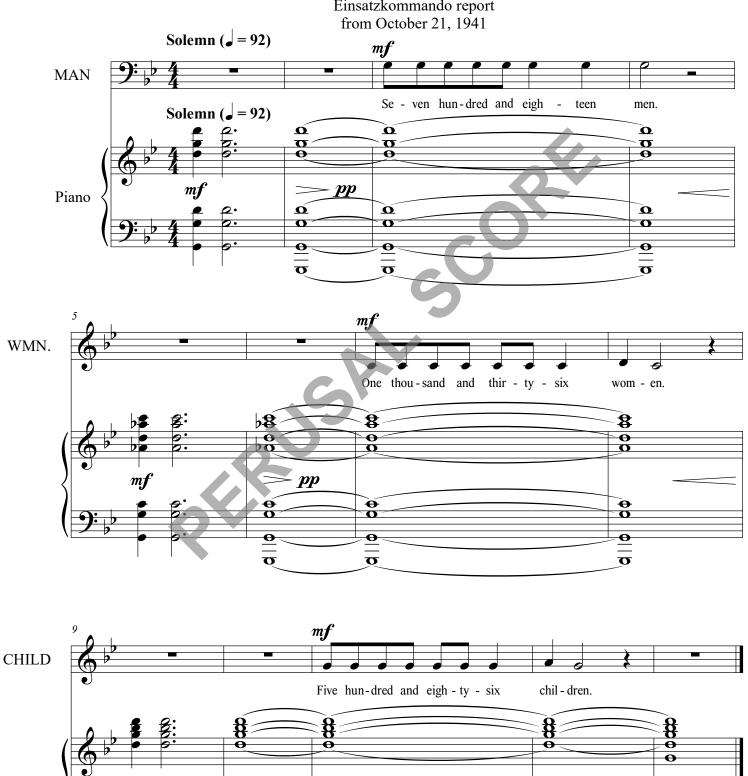






Death Toll - 3





>pp

0

Q

ò

0

 $\overline{\mathbf{o}}$

Ò

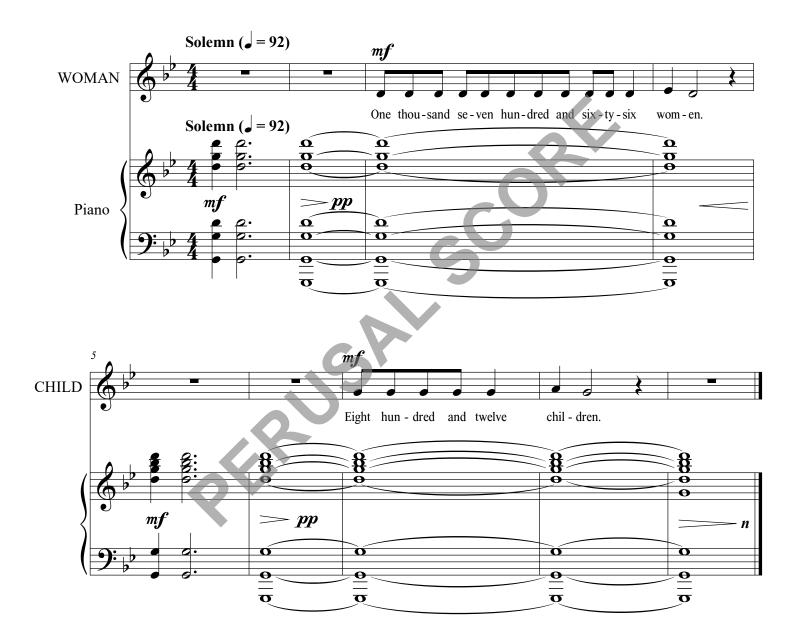
 $\mathbf{\sigma}$

0

σ

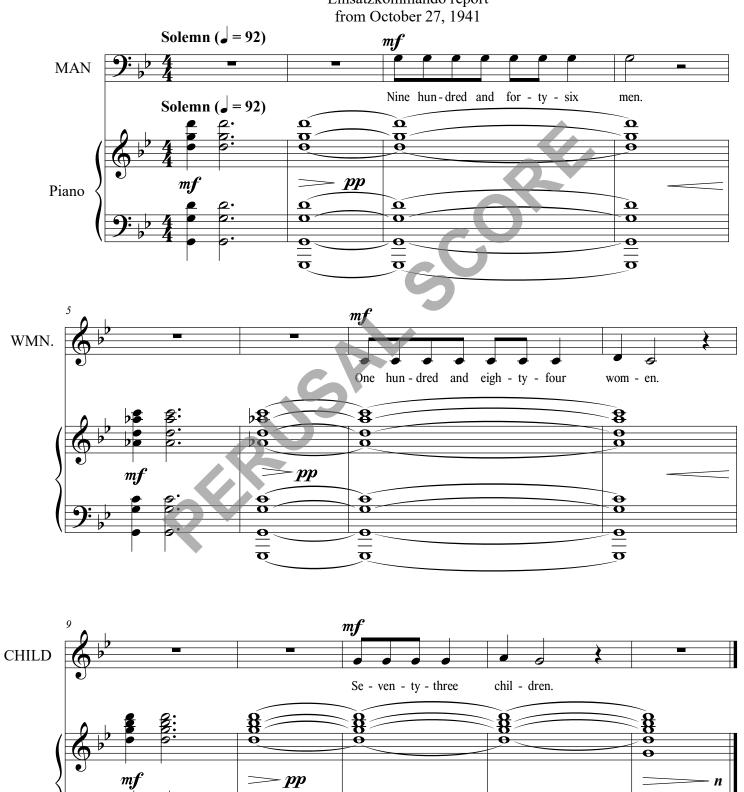
Death Toll - 4

Einsatzkommando report from October 25, 1941



Death Toll - 5

Einsatzkommando report



Ó

0

 $\overline{\mathbf{o}}$

0

 $\overline{\mathbf{o}}$

Ò

0

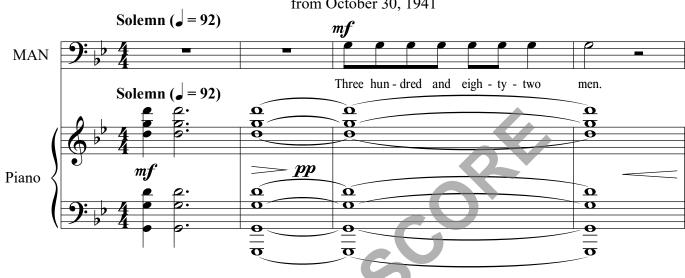
Ò

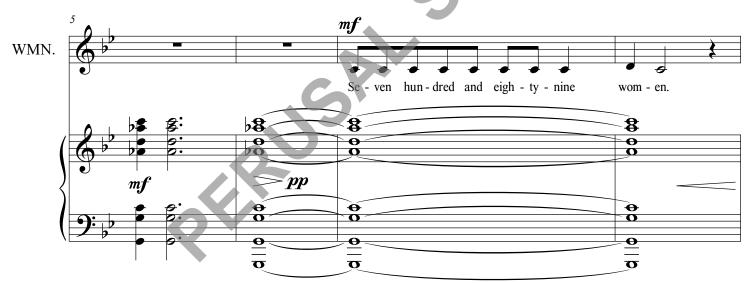
0

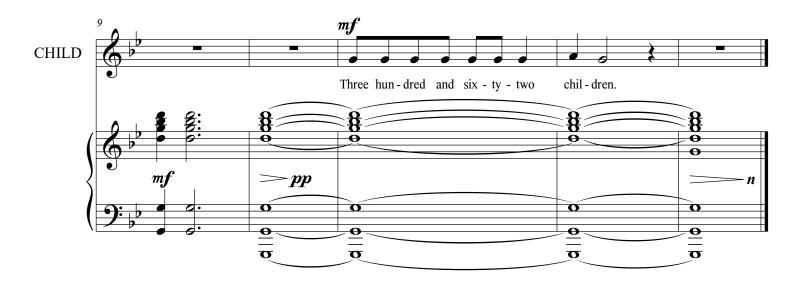
 $\overline{\mathbf{o}}$

Death Toll - 6

Einsatzkommando report from October 30, 1941

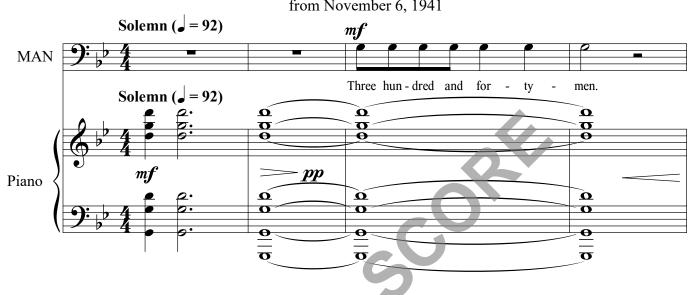


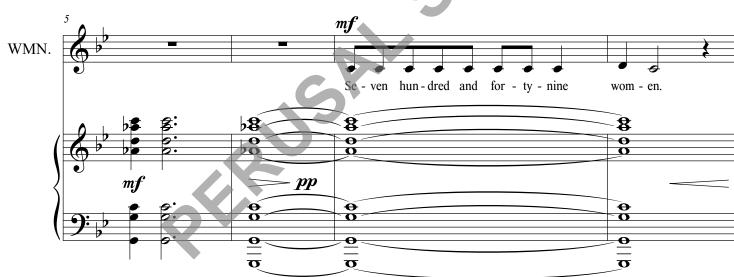


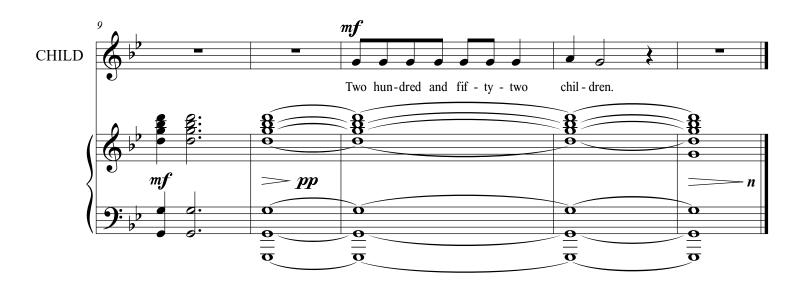


Death Toll - 7

Einsatzkommando report from November 6, 1941

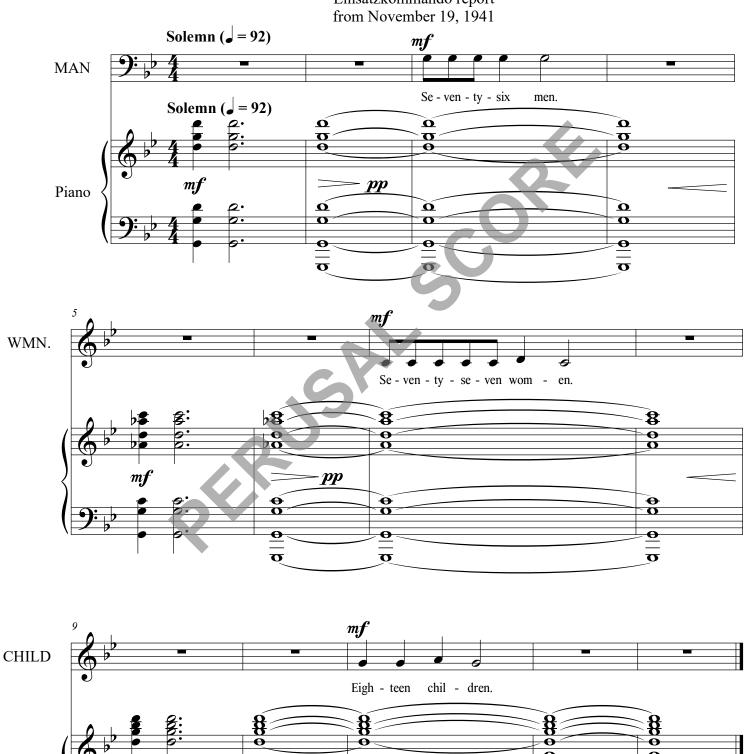






Death Toll - 8

Einsatzkommando report



>pp

Ò

0

Q

Ó

0

 $\boldsymbol{\sigma}$

Ò

0

 $\overline{\mathbf{o}}$

Ó

0

 $\overline{\mathbf{q}}$