

Brundibár

November 6, 2010 ~ UNM Center for the Arts

A children's opera by Hans Krása (1889–1944)

Kathleen Clawson Director
David Felberg Conductor | Chatter Co-founder
Regina Carlow Music Director UNM Children's Chorus
Julia Hoffman Co-conductor UNM Children's Chorus
Aimee Deans Costume Designer
David Torres Props Master/Scenic Design
Jocelyn Montoya Choreographer

Soloists

Pepícek * Walker Durell
Aninku * Bethany Herrera
Organ Grinder Brundibár * Gary Cooper
Sparrow * Monica Padilla
Cat * Casey Short
Dog * Alex Harden
Policemen Lonny Thornburg ~ Ana Kilgore
Milkmen Nola Bartlit ~ Casey Haynes
Baker Sophie Ellis-Young
Ice Cream Sellers Drake Wilson ~ Tzvi Bat Asherah
The Gypsy Karli Montoya
* Participant in Young Voices of the Santa Fe Opera Program

Chorus

Dylan Adamson, Miranda Andrego, Amaris Aultman, Nola Bartlit, Tzvi Bat Asherah, Spencer Butler, Zachary Butler, Tessa Cheshire, Aubrey Clemens, Suzanne Eisenberg, Sophie Ellis-Young, Caven Elsaesser, Alexis Garcia, Aria Garcia-Salas, Julia Gonzalez, Isaac "Estevan" Gutierrez, Gabrielle Gutierrez, Jordyn Gutierrez, Casey Haynes, Jean-Marie Heffenger, Rex Hoeltke, Ava Jahner, Ana Kilgore, Fiona Kilgore, Teresa Lechuga, Julia Loveless, Olivia Loveless, Sabina Lueras, Alexa Mason, Karli Montoya, Caleb Moser, Katelin Moser, Maylin Murray-Krezan, Nisali Piyasena, Deven Raman, Roma Ramirez, Camella Rosenberg, Iliana Sandoval, Jasmine Schmidt, Alexander Schweim, Moritz Schweim, Shaylene Sierra, Jessica Silva, Sierra Sisneros, Carlos Steele, Masha Swalin, Lonny Thornburg, Elisabeth Williams, Drake Wilson

Musicians | Chatter, A Chamber Ensemble www.chatterchamber.org

Ikuko Kanda ~ Roberta Arruda ~ Carol Swift-Matton ~ Debra Terry ~ violins
James Holland ~ cello
Jean-Luc Matton ~ bass
Jeremy Mayne ~ guitar
Valerie Potter ~ flute
Lori Lovato ~ clarinet
John Marchiando ~ trumpet
Douglas Cardwell ~ percussion
Wenci Fan ~ piano

SPECIAL NOTE

January 28–March 13, 2011

At the UNM Art Museum there will be an exhibition entitled *Through a Narrow Window* showing works by Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and students to whom she taught art in the Terezín concentration camp.

THANKS TO

UNM Music Prep School,
Diane Bonnell, Director

UNM Children's Chorus,
Jennifer Warren, Manager

Dorothy Baca
Andrea Fellows-Walters
Richard Hess
Jiim Linnell
Charles MacKay
Emilee McVey
Dean Squibb

The Young Voices Program of the Santa Fe Opera selects fifteen high school students, with a demonstrated interest and love for singing, and takes them to the next level. Participants commit to a rigorous training process which includes individual voice lessons and musical coachings, master classes, attendance at cultural events, and performance opportunities. Instruction is given by Santa Fe Opera Artists and Music Staff. More information is available on the Opera's website at www.santafeopera.org

The UNM Children's Chorus is a non-auditioned chorus for children from K–10th grade in the Albuquerque Area. Any child who wishes to sing is welcome. The new season begins January 26, 2011. Please call 277-8816 to register. For more information visit our website at www.unmchildrensing.com

More information on reverse

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Brundibár, a children's opera by Jewish Czech composer **Hans Krása** with a libretto by **Adolf Hoffmeister**, was originally performed by the children of Theresienstadt concentration camp in occupied Czechoslovakia during World War II. The name comes from a Czech colloquialism for a bumblebee.

Krasa and Hoffmeister wrote the opera in 1938 for a Czech government competition, but the competition was cancelled due to political developments. However, the first performances of the opera, under the Nazi regime, were scheduled during the winter of 1942. The performers were children living in an orphanage who had been separated from their parents. By July 1943, nearly all of the children of the original chorus, Krasa, and the orphanage staff had been sent to Theresienstadt. Only Hoffmeister was able to escape Prague.

In Theresienstadt, Krasa reconstructed the full score of the opera, based on memory and a partial piano score he had kept with him, adapting it to suit the musical instruments available in the camp: flute, clarinet, guitar, accordion, piano, percussion, four violins, a cello and a double bass. For the set several flats were painted as a background. Brundibár was shown 55 times in the following year.

A special performance of *Brundibár* was staged in 1944 for representatives of the Red Cross who came to inspect living conditions in the camp. What the Red Cross did not know was that much of what they saw during their visit was a show. One of the reasons the Theresienstadt camp seemed comfortable was that many of the residents had been deported to Auschwitz in order to reduce crowding. Later that year this *Brundibár* performance was filmed for Nazi propaganda purposes. This film is included in the Emmy-Award winning documentary "Voices of the Children" directed by Zuzana Justman, a Terezin survivor, who sang in the chorus. Ela Weissberger, who was the original cat, appears in the film. Most of the participants in the Theresienstadt production,

including the composer Krása, were later exterminated in Auschwitz.

The plot of the opera shares elements with fairytales such as Hansel and Gretel and The Town Musicians of Bremen. Aninka [in English Annette] and Pepíček (Little Joe) are a fatherless sister and brother. Their mother is ill, and the doctor tells them she needs milk to recover. But they have no money. They decide to sing in the marketplace to raise the needed money, but the evil organ grinder Brundibár [who represents Hitler] chases them away. However, with the help of a fearless bird, a keen cat, a wise dog, and the children of the town, they are able to chase Brundibár away and sing in the market square.

The opera contains obvious symbolism in the triumph of the helpless and needy children over the tyrannical organ grinder, but has no overt references to the conditions under which it was written and performed. However, certain phrases were to the audience clearly anti-Nazi. Though Hoffmeister wrote the libretto before Hitler's invasion, at least one line was changed by poet Emil Saudek at Terezin, to emphasize the anti-Nazi message. "While the original said, 'He who loves so much his mother and father and his native land is our friend and he can play with us,' Saudek's version reads: 'He who loves justice and will abide by it, and who is not afraid, is our friend and can play with us.'" (Karas, p 103).

The version of *Brundibár* being performed today is an adaptation from a picture book by playwright Tony Kushner with illustrations by Maurice Sendak published in 2003. Sendak emphasized the symbolism of the opera by drawing the character of Brundibár with a Hitler moustache. The book was named one of the *New York Times* Book Review's 10 Best Illustrated Books of 2003. In 2005, the book was turned into a full production of the opera, which is being presented today, with libretto by Tony Kushner adapted from the original.



By arrangement: Bote & Bock Berlin and Boosey & Hawkes, Inc

These performances are sponsored in part by grants from

National Endowment for the Arts

New Mexico Arts, A Division of the Dept of Cultural Affairs

City of Albuquerque Urban Enhancement Trust Fund