

SUITCASE



A Show about the Kindertransport

***Suitcase* was originally performed at ten train stations across Britain in 2013 to mark the 75th anniversary of the first arrival of the Kindertransport. The script is available to be used free of charge but we ask that the following acknowledgement is included in any and all publicity material and other related information, whether printed or online:**

Original script written by Ros Merkin

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www.suitcase1938.org**

Further information about *Suitcase* and the Kindertransport can be found at www.suitcase1938.org and includes a link to a film of a performance at Liverpool Street Station, London on 2nd December 2013.

Characters (Possible doublings are suggested)

Mrs Hilton, an organiser in the Refugee Children's Movement. She is well spoken but a little thoughtless without realising she is. A no-nonsense English woman of an indeterminate age, happiest when she is in charge and doing something.

Hanni, 12 years old, from Vienna

Kurt, her younger brother, 8 years old

Stephan, 13 years old, from Prague

Anne Wilson, foster sister from local area, working class. 8 years old/**Ilse**, 10 years old

Edith, a well-dressed and well-spoken middle class woman who has aspirations above her station. She comes in to town once a week from one of the wealthy suburbs to do her shopping. She always has a cup of tea at the same table in the same café /**Eva**, a mother/**Mrs Goggins**

Edward Garbet, a well-dressed and well-to-do potential foster parent. He has his own small business/ **Harry**, 16 years old

Emma Garbet, his wife. She has never been able to have children but the issue is never discussed/**Renie**, 9 years old

Bill Prentiss, a local railway porter. A good union man/ **Eric**, 14 years old

A note on accents

The children speak in their own accents EXCEPT when they are speaking English i.e. when Kurt is practicing his English in 'Being a Grown Up' or when Stephan is trying to speak broken English in 'Jam Sandwich'.

All English characters can have accents appropriate to where the performance is happening apart from Edith who is very R.P.

A note on scenes

In the original, scenes 2-7 were played simultaneously in different locations with small groups of audience watching each of them. They were then repeated so all of the audience could watch them (i.e. they were each performed 6 times). A chaperone was assigned to each group and led the audience around the different scenes. You can follow this pattern or perform them one after the other. It doesn't matter which order they are performed in. there is also an additional scene at the end which can replace one of the others.

Scene 1: Arriving

As the audience arrive musicians are playing. With them children are performing; they are local children brought to the station to help make the kinder feel welcome. They are organised by Mrs Goggins, a well-meaning local woman who once played at the Bradford Alhambra. Music is of the period and in the 2013 tour included If I Had a Talking Picture of You, I'm Leaning on the Lamppost, Run Rabbit Run, Underneath the Arches, Moses (see appendix). As audience members arrive for the show, they are given coloured tags to identify their groups and are organised by volunteers/chaperones with clipboards. A volunteer for the Refugee Children's Movement (Mrs Hilton) orchestrates this with the help of the volunteers, talking to the audience and ensuring they are in the right place. Sometimes she checks the audience's labels against a list or asks them their names. She shakes hands and welcomes them to England. Near the start she chastises the musicians for playing sad music. They start on something a little more cheerful (Wish Me Luck as You Wave Me Goodbye) only to be told how inappropriate this is. As the children are made to leave by Mrs Hilton, the music plays – a slow klezmer version of Wish Me Luck. The mood has changed.¹

Mrs Hilton addresses the assembled audience.

Mrs Hilton: Hello, hello children...Can everybody see me? Oh... (*She looks around for something to stand on and eventually finds something*) Gather round, gather round. Oh, look at you all. That's right. Welcome, everybody. It's lovely to see...no, no. I've got something written down somewhere. (*Checking clipboard; her German is very bad*) Willkommen aus England. Ich...ich...heisse Frau Hilton (*she gives up*) Oh, it's such a difficult language, isn't it? Let's try something different. Right. My name is Mrs Hilton, and I will be looking after you today. And it is lovely to see so many smiling faces. (*Suddenly*) Stop scuffing your feet, young man. Yes, you at the back, I can see you. You'll ruin those good shoes.

Well, well look at you all, utterly confused bless you. (*To herself*) And some of you look old beyond your years. It's alright my dears. It will be fine. (*She's not totally sure that it will be but pulls herself together*). Right, we do have a lot to get through today, so let's get on with the important information first. Do you all have your label with your number on it? Yes? Well, you'll notice the labels are all in different colours and you must make sure that you keep hold of them as otherwise, children, you might get lost and you won't find your new families and that would be terrible. Just terrible... (*She notices a child who doesn't seem to have a tag on*). You there. Yes, you. What have you done with your label..? Your label. (*She says it with what she thinks is a German accent and maybe waves someone else's around*)...the number...die Nummer....Oh, never mind. Just stay close to someone who looks sensible. That will do. And the rest of you, when we move off, please make sure you

¹ In the 2013 touring version, this opening section started 10-15 minutes before the show. It was used to set up the world and to give the audience something to do while they were waiting for the show proper to start. Not everyone in the audience saw all of this. You can amend or discard this as fits your production.

stay with the children with the same colour label at all times or you might not have a new home to go to. (*Checking her list*)

Well, I am sure that you're absolutely starving after your long journey. Am I right? I'll see if I can rustle up some sandwiches...Jam I think. That should cheer you up. Yes, jam. And some nice milky tea. Mrs Goggins? Mrs Goggins? (*She looks around in vain*). I knew I should have got Mrs Jones and her scones....Mrs Goggins? Oh dear...it's all rather disorganised here today. (*Looking around*) I'm sure she'll turn up in a moment.

While we are waiting, let's plough on. I am sure you have all been told England is very different from your homes in Europe. I am certain your mothers and fathers would expect you to be on your best behaviour and with that in mind we do have a little leaflet for you here which tells you how to behave now you are in England. Do keep it safe. (*Volunteers hand out copies of the programme*²). It tells you important things like how you should spend all your spare time learning English and especially how to pronounce words correctly. I know...I know...my German is not very good. I do make an effort but we are in England and we speak English here. You should refrain from speaking German in public and never speak in loud voices. We don't like loud behaviour here so conduct yourself quietly and politely. Don't forget to say thank you, even when you get a ticket on the bus. And remember that it is customary in this country to give up your seats on trains and buses for elderly people and do try not to make yourself conspicuous by what you wear (*She aims this at someone in the audience with a pithy comment about their clothes – that kind of outfit won't go down well here*). Please make sure you read all this information and keep it safe. Now I will try and find someone to organise those sandwiches...so stay with your own organiser while I'm gone. They will tell you what to do. Does everyone know who they are? No. Can all organisers please wave at their groups or something. Yes, like that. That's it. That's lovely.

(*She turns to try and find the sandwiches when she notices that during the last section, the actors have assembled behind her carrying suitcases and standing in a rather forlorn group. She sees them.*)

Oh my...Oh my...who are you? (*She's desperately checking her lists and their labels. To one child.*) Who are you? (*They don't understand*) Where have all of you appeared from? This just will not do. I don't know what I'm going to do with you. There are simply not enough families for you to go to. Please wait here. I must check my list. (*As they start to move*) No, no. Please stay where you are until....

(*The children start to step forward and speak to the audience. Throughout, Mrs Hilton is desperately checking her lists and sometimes checks their numbers. She mutters to herself and occasionally interjects or says something*

² This was included in a small booklet/programme and can either be handed to the audience as they arrive or given out at this point.

to the audience. She might give a child an orange that she finds in her pocket or smartens up a child she thinks is not quite up to scratch. While they aren't speaking, some children talk to people in the audience near them. They might show them a picture of their parents or a toy or an autograph book, recite a list of everything they've brought with etc. They might ask the audience what they've brought with. Renie has with her a wicker basket that she occasionally talks to and tries to keep hidden. Hanni is writing in her diary. Separate from them is Eva, a mother. She is packing a suitcase. She may sing under some of the following.

Eric: I still have a sandwich in my bag. And there is a sausage too but I think it's beginning to smell and I don't know what to do with it. In her orderly way, my mother carefully packed my bag for the journey. She labelled the packages...

Eva: (*Putting sandwiches in a bag*) For lunch today, for breakfast tomorrow. Don't eat everything at once or you will be hungry. And don't forget this. (*She hands puts a hat on his head with care*)

Eric: (*To Eva*) Is there Weiner Schnitzel. It's my favourite. But there wasn't. I had to leave my violin at home.

Ilse: (*Interrupting*) I've got brought this (*she takes a piccolo³ from her suitcase*)

Hanni: But it's not allowed. What if you'd been caught on the train? You might have been sent back.

Eric: We might all have been...

Mrs Hilton: (*Mrs Hilton notices*) Excuse me. What is that? Oh dear...you were told not to bring anything valuable, weren't you? Did you pay duty on it? Are you planning to sell it to make money? No, no...we can't have that... (*She is about to take it away. There is a bit of a tussle*)

Harry: Maybe she can play it?

Mrs Hilton: Didn't understand a word of that. (*Harry mimes playing*) Well...can you? (*Eva doesn't understand. Mrs Hilton mimes playing. Eva plays Lilli Marlene. One or two children shyly take out instruments and join in. When she finishes a verse, she sings it in German. Mrs Hilton is not impressed and takes over in English. There is a short tussle about how the song is sung. Mrs Hilton may try and get the audience to join in; whatever happens, Ilse has the final word. At the end, Mrs Hilton applauds*) Ah...yes...Isn't that lovely?

³ Or whatever instrument the actor can play.

Eric: I wish I'd brought mine now. (*Starts to go. Taking off hat*) I need to lose this. (*Checking audience*) Nobody here wears hats like that. It'll look all wrong. And my clothes look all wrong too.

Some of the following can overlap as individual children tell sections of the audience their stories.

Stephan: I bought with me some books so I don't forget how to speak Czech. And Czechoslovak flag and (*taking a handkerchief carefully out of his pocket*) earth from my garden. And I left behind my Grandma, Grandpapa, Maminka and Tatinek, my sister Susanne, my Aunties and Uncles, all my cousins...Berta and Marta and Nina and Rosa and little Erika who is only three months old and Inge who is very ugly but tells good jokes and... (*During this, Ilse is nudging Renie and trying to get her to say something.*)

Harry: My father was taken away before I came but mother gave me the iron cross he won in the war. And

Eva: (*Giving him the photograph*) Your father in his uniform. Isn't he handsome?

Harry: Where is he now? (*Eva shakes her head and shrugs*) He disappeared on that night in November when it was all shouting and smashing and burning. Before then, the talk was all about visas. Exit visas, transit visas, entrance visas. (*To Eva*) I want to go to America.

Eva: Our number is too big. It won't come up for years. Maybe from England... (*A farewell moment*)

Harry: I haven't got much with me. Everything was smashed up...I was glad to leave.

Ilse: (*During the above, she has been whispering to Renie and trying to get her to say something about the basket. Finally, she approaches Mrs Hilton*) Please...

Mrs Hilton: What is it?

Ilse: Please... (*She is gesturing to the basket. Either Mrs Hilton opens it or Ilse does. There is a baby inside*)

Mrs Hilton: Oh my...

Renie: (*To audience*) When the basket was pushed through the window as we were leaving, I never dreamed I'd find a baby inside. Some of you thought it was cakes (*To someone in the audience*) you were disappointed weren't you Max? (*Going towards Mrs Hilton*) No! Don't take her...

Mrs Hilton: It's alright my dear. I'll look after her now...*(she's really not sure what she's going to do with it; maybe she give sit to someone in the audience to look after)*

Ilse: *(Trying to distract Renie)* I've brought my favourite teddy, Ollie...

Renie: I've got my best dog that Daddy bought for me when I was little.

Ilse: But I don't think I'll have much use for it here. *(Gives bear to the baby).*

Renie: I've got a gold locket. It has my initials on one side and some Hebrew letters on the other. *(She confides in the audience)* It has been hidden all journey in a pot of face cream and I've been so scared....

Ilse: Do you like my coat in the English style? My mother has a lot of new clothes made for me. Some of my clothes in my suitcase are in larger sizes for when I grow bigger...

Renie: I have new clothes too but they all fit me. My mother said they will be here soon, so she can make me new ones. Or Daddy will take me to one of the big department stores...

Ilse: I don't think they'll be here soon

Renie: He promised....Daddy always keeps his promises. *(To Mrs Hilton)* He will be here soon won't he?

Mrs Hilton: *(She can't understand what is being said to her)* I have no idea what...

Renie: *(starting to cry and sitting down somewhere)* I'm going to stay here until he comes. He said he'd be here and if I go anywhere else he won't know where to find me. *(She is overcome with tears)*

Ilse: Come on. I'll show you the clothes my mother made for me. There's a lovely hat which I think is too small for me....

She is interrupted by Bill, the porter, is pushing his cart through the children. He notices Renie and tries to cheer her up

Bill: What's all this then? No time for tears. Here we are. Who is this? *(He finds Renie's discarded dog)* "Hello. Are you alright? My name is Bob". *(Renie is not being comforted)*. Oh, don't cry darling. They'll be here soon for you. Everything will be alright. *(He exits)*

Mrs Hilton: Oh dear... *(Tries to comfort her, finds a handkerchief for her. It's Ilse who comes to the rescue taking her by her hand)*

Ilse: (to Renie) Renie, I've had to leave my best friend at home. Maybe we could be best friends?

Hanni: My best friend wouldn't talk to be any more. Why would she do that?

Ilse: It's not as bad as poor Inge over there. (*Pointing to someone in the audience.*) On the train, she told me no-one came to her birthday party last week. The table was all set with cakes and not one of her friends came. (*Silence. Eva might comfort the 'child' with no friends*)

Hanni: I have with me my autograph album. Father wrote a special poem in it for me before we left. He also gave me a leather book, full of empty pages and told me to write in it when I feel homesick or when something exciting happens so when I go home we can sit round the table and all read it together. (*Starts to go. Then.*) Come on Kurt...

Kurt: My mother and father said I couldn't bring my football boots or my ice skating boots. (*To someone in the audience*) Are Jews allowed in skating rinks in England? I used to go every day in the winter in Vienna until the ice rink was closed to Jews. I didn't think that was very fair... (*He would say more but...*)

Hanni: Come on. These people don't want to hear about that. Remember what Mother said....

Eva: Don't tell lies...

Kurt: (*reciting, as if trying to remember*): Be polite. Always say please and thank you. Eat whatever you are given, even if it's strange and unlike food at home. Do as you are told. Don't... (*He's trying to remember*)

Eva: Don't talk back to adults.

Kurt: I know. Don't talk back to adults. (*Looking at audience. To Hanni*) Why have they all got such pale knobbly faces and such bad teeth?

Eva: Kurt don't...

Hanni: Ssssh. Don't say that. They'll hear.

Eva: Kurt...Kurt... Come here...if you are going to find a sweetheart in England you need to learn to dance... (*He notices her. She goes to him. A dance; it's a German popular tune. Küß Mich, bitte bitte küß mich in a version by Rosita Serrano. It's a mother teaching her son to dance; clumsy at first but there is a moment where they dance with perfect synchronicity before the tune speeds up and Kurt plays around as 8 year old boys do. It ends with a farewell hug. The music continues slowly under the following.*)

Hanni: (*realising she can't see Kurt*) Kurt? Kurt?

Kurt: *(coming back to the present)* And Mother said always be helpful and...

Eva: Always be grateful...

Kurt: I thought she really didn't have to tell me that...She also said...

Eva: Be good. Work hard...

Kurt: Brush my teeth twice a day, wash behind my ears, and always to hang up my clothes...

Eva: I'll see you soon.

Kurt: And make my bed in the morning, change my socks every day,

Eva: Remember to say please and thank you

Kurt: Wash my feet... *(During the last, his sister is leading him away; Eva is waving a handkerchief)*

Eva: Write to me...write to me....

By now, all the children have left.

Mrs Hilton: *(re-enters)* Oh dear, oh dear. Where have they all gone? I distinctly told them to stay here. *(To the 'chaperones')* Can you please take these children *(indicating the audience)* to their meeting places? I'll have to see if I can find out what on earth is happening. And what we are going to do with them. I've really no idea. More mistakes as usual. It is simply too chaotic... *(etc. etc. as she too wanders off nearly forgetting the baby)* Now I don't know what we're going to do with you...

Music as audience is led off.

Scene 2: Collecting for Baldwin

As audience walk to this section of the play, Lord Baldwin's appeal speech is playing. We hear some of it. Bill, a local boy through and through, welcomes them, shakes hands, thanking them for coming, saying that he's happy to meet them, introducing himself as Bill Prentiss, a porter at the station, saying good morning (or whatever is appropriate) and promising not to hold them up for too long as they are busy people etc. etc. Eventually, slowly leans to turn off the recording.

Bill: That there was Lord Baldwin asking for your help for the safety of the children suffering in Europe. I won't explain what you already know about the 'orrible things 'appening over there. Instead, I would like to tell you what the speech meant for me. It was one of those moments when you will always

remember where you are when it 'appened. Me, I was sat with my son, Norman, and my wife, Phyllis, eating our tea. As it started I thought, "Ark at him. What's all this got to do with me?" I was about to switch it off when something he said really made me sit up and take notice. "Time is of the essence...delay may prove fatal... Thousands of parents are appealing to the Refugee Committee to take their children out of Germany even though they may never see them again" and I looked at our Norman and began to think how can we stand idle and just let these children suffer? It's not Christian is it? And so close to Christmas.

If I'm honest, I did nearly forget about it, good intentions being what they are but, what with all this talk of war, we keep being moved around on the railway to do essential work, so a day or two later, I happened to be working at Liverpool Street Station when one of the trains arrived. I'd been on the night shift, so I was tired and grouchy, and I wanted them off the train and out as soon as possible so I could get some kip. But as soon as I saw them, the grouchiness disappeared. I suddenly felt guilty. More guilty than I ever felt in my life. How could I worry about getting to bed, when these little nippers stood there all afraid and all alone? Now I'm not a man who gets emotional. Heaven forbid. But standing there looking at their faces, I broke down and it was all I could do not to pick some of them up and take them home though I don't know what my missus would have said. One little lad who can't have been bigger than so high (*he gestures*) even tried to tip me for helping him with his suitcase. He looked the same age as my Norman. How could children that age be forced to leave everything they know? Well, me boss tries to send me 'ome, but I says, "No. I want to help these kids." And so I worked none stop till 6pm, making sure they found their new 'omes.

After that, me and the boys, we began collecting for the fund in our own little way which is why I'm here talking to you. I've been made the public face of the Railway Union, encouraging you all to give a little something. And the money has been rolling in. We've had some really big cheques but the contributions that move me the most are from those who have made a sacrifice to send us something. One little 10 year old gave up her Christmas party to send 3 guineas. Another one sent a quid saying he wasn't going to have any Christmas presents this year because he had enough toys. I've even got the family involved and our Norman is going round the houses with his mates singing Christmas carols. They've raised ten bob...Not bad for a group of ten year olds who can't sing a note (*He might give us an imitation*). Maybe that's why they've collected so much. People are paying them to go away...

But not everyone's been quite so helpful. When the stars of stage and screen organised a day to raise money there were disturbances at some events caused by those Blackshirts. I found one of their leaflets on a table over there (*gesturing towards where Edith is*), which I think has got something to do with that posh lady who seems to have nothing to do but drink tea. Here we are – "We have been asked in the past four years to support Abyssinians, Basques, Chinese, Czechs, Austrians, Spaniards and now Jews. Mosley

says: Not a penny for aliens while Britons starve. Our own miners, textile workers, agricultural workers are desperately in need of rescue from Unemployment and semi-starvation. Charity Begins at Home.” Now, you might be thinking the same. And I know that some people think like I used to that they’d rather not dwell on such ‘orrible things because it gives them nightmares and anyway we can’t really do anything about it. But I happen to think we can and we should, whether it’s putting our hands in our pockets or countering rubbish like this (*He screws up the leaflet and throws it away*) What that Moseley knows about starvation I don’t know...

And, if you have already turned out your pockets ladies and gents, you could go home and see what else you might be able to give. I know most of us have things we don’t really need and wouldn’t really miss if we gave them away. Ladies, how many of you can put your hands on your hearts and tell me you don’t have an outfit in your wardrobes that you’ve never worn or one which no longer fits you and which you know in your heart of hearts will never fit you again. (*He might pass a comment about somebody’s outfit*) I know my Mrs has a two piece she bought for a wedding, very proud of it she was but I’d be happy never to see again. Between you and me, it never really fitted her. And our Norman would be over-joyed to see the back of the coat she found for him at the jumble sale which never fitted him. His arms stick right out the ends of the sleeves and I keep saying to her that red is not a good colour for a young lad especially as he’s not even an Arsenal⁴ supporter. He gets teased something rotten. But I bet there’s a little girl on one of those trains who would be really happy to have that coat when winter really sets in.

I know some of you will think that the Jews should look after their own and that you’ve got quite enough to be worrying about what with Christmas coming up. But I should tell you that the Jews have been raising money to help refugees since Hitler came to power and have collected a small fortune. Nor are all the children coming over here Jewish. That surprised me that did when I found out. As no doubt it surprised some of them to find out they were Jewish when the laws over there were changed. Can you imagine? You go to church or whatever every Sunday and one day someone tells you that because one of your grandparents was Jewish you are as well and what’s more you are no longer German and are no longer wanted there. And some of the children have got parents who have been trying to get rid of that Hitler and are now having to leave. I’d like to think if I was there, as a good union man, I’d tell him what’s what but then my Norman would be in trouble and I’d have to send him away. (*He pauses, thoughtful. He can’t imagine what that would be like*)

I do know the only help those children are going to get is from you. Some people seem to think they arrive here with their suitcases stuffed full of money. Ten German marks is all they are allowed to bring and I hear many of them have that stolen from them by the Nazis at the border. And this ‘ere

⁴ Or Manchester United or Liverpool or Southampton or ...

government has made it quite clear that while they are happy to let them come in they can't and won't pay for them. So we have to raise all the money. £50 for each child which is more than most of us has got stashed away. But don't worry if you can't manage that. No sum is too small. . No, ladies and gentlemen, it is up to us to rescue these children before it is too late. I hope I've encouraged you to dig in your pockets for your loose change. And do remember. This is not a question of helping these children have a merrier Christmas or have a little luxury, although I've no doubt they wouldn't say no to a bar of chocolate. This is about helping people who have lost everything and could lose their lives if we don't come to their aid.

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. If you feel moved by the plight of these children, please do drop a few coins, if you can spare 'em, into the collecting tin. You might already be giving to the Quaker Shilling Fund for the refugees in which case I'll let you off. If not, I'd be very grateful for any spare change, and so would the little refugees. *(He switches radio back on. Princess Elizabeth's speech to children. He shakes hands and passes round the collecting tin encouraging people to contribute)*

Scene 3: Afternoon Tea

A well-dressed and well-spoken lady is taking afternoon tea, as she does every week after shopping in town. Parcels and a handbag are on the table. She is reading a newspaper. Gradually, she catches sight of the audience which makes her increasingly uncomfortable.

Edith: What are you staring at? *(She checks her reflection in a powder compact in case she has dirt on her face).* Didn't anyone in your country tell you it's rude to stare? Go on, go away...shoo *(she goes back to reading her paper)* I'm not going to give you any money; there's a man over there collecting for you. Mind you, you don't look as though you need any money. The quality of that coat is impeccable. It's better than my son's coat and we bought that at Harrods. *(She returns to her tea and newspaper.)*

You're still here. *(She pours some tea)* You children keep arriving expecting us to do something. Last year it was all those socialist children from Spain and now you. Train after train after train. The newspapers are full of your sob stories but are they true? Maybe things aren't so bad in your country. Anyway, if they are, somebody else should take you in. Australia or Canada, they've got plenty of space. Or Palestine - You can go there and grow things in the desert. And what of America? I expect you'd all rather go there, hmm. But oh no, they won't let many of you in, will they? Some Americans think it's against the laws of God for you to be separated from your parents and I agree. I've never heard of a proper mother sending her child to another country. *(To someone in the audience as if they have spoken to her)* Boarding school? That is quite another matter.

(She goes back to her newspaper and finds an article about refugees) As for these adult refugees, thinking they can come here and take our jobs when we're suffering with unemployment and the depression. My husband had to lay off some of his men only last week. I know the Home Secretary...what's his name? Small man...bald...sounds Jewish although my husband tells me he is a Quaker... Hoare! Yes that's it, Sir Samuel Hoare. He says some refugees have set up factories, workshops and created employment. But heaven knows what the conditions or the pay are like, and I expect they employ their own kind instead of local men.

(She goes back to her Situations Required section of the newspaper) There's an abundance of Situations Required advertisements: for cooks, gardeners that type of thing. Here's one: "Urgent! Would noble minded people assist Viennese couple to come to London; knowledge of English, French and Italian; wife excellent cook; husband up to now an editor, perfectly trained manservant." *(She passes comment)*

How they think they can simply walk into a job and without decent references is beyond me. Of course, they all claim to speak good English and be excellent cooks but they can't cook proper food; British food. My Alfred is very particular about his porridge and his scrambled eggs and his Yorkshire pudding come to that. If we took someone on, they'd just feed us foreign muck and then disappear in a week or two. Any excuse to find their way into this country, make their fortune and expect us to pay for the privilege. Really! If you have to come here then the Government should set up camps for you. Out of sight is out of mind. We don't want to share our parks and swimming pools or our families with you. You might steal something, you might bring disease into the house and you, or you, or any of you might murder us in our beds. This is what the nation is thinking and someone ought to say it.

And I know what you're thinking and you're wrong: I don't hate the Jews, but we are over-crowded enough as it is. No - the line has to be drawn somewhere.

(She checks her watch) ...Heavens, the time, I'm going to miss my train. It's all your fault. *(The last section is said as she is gathering her things up and going off to catch her train)*

Scene 4: A Jam Sandwich

Stephan is sitting rather forlornly on his suitcase. As the audience arrive, he takes out a picture of his mother and goes up to people, starting to ask them – and any passers-by – if they can give her a job.

Stephan: *(this is hesitant and halting as if he can't really speak English)* My mother...she needs a job...please...she is a very hard worker and very clever... she is a Dr of Philosophy...at...at a school...a big school...Hitler, he says no more Jewish Drs in schools...please she will do anything...she is a

perfect cook...she makes the best fruit dumplings...and cleaning...anything...please...she doesn't need money...please...please she is a good house keeper...and very pretty...you will like...please save my Mother from Hitler and the Nazis... and children...she can look after children...like me.

Stephan does not notice as Anne enters. Anne comes from whichever town the performance is in. They can't understand each other – when Stephan speaks longer sentences he is talking to the audience, as if he is speaking in Czech. Anne chatters.

Anne: Hello. (*Checks his number*). 178. Yes, you're ours. (*Stephan doesn't understand*) Mum is just over there filling in a form. (*She's been sizing him up*) My name is Anne (*Stephan still doesn't understand*) Me...Anne...A...N...N...E

Stephan: Anne?

Anne: Yes. Who are you?

Stephan: Stephan

Anne: Hello Stephan. (*She tries to shake hands with him. He is confused*)

Anne: You're coming home with us. We are a little pushed for space at home...I'll hate sharing a bed with Jane and Ruth. There's only two beds between the six of us see? It's all right in the winter though 'cos it keeps you nice and warm all being shoved in together. No, don't worry because this man came round and he said, "Oh, you can't have them sharing a bed" and Mum so wanted to take you in...So she bought you a bed didn't she. Oh not a new one. Mrs Hill down the road died three weeks ago and her son was selling her old furniture. You don't look German.

Stephan: (*shaking his head and gesticulating*) No German. Czech.

Anne: Czech?

Stephan: Yes

Anne: Czech what?

Stephan: Czechoslovakia.

Anne: Czecho...zschechoz...

Stephan: Prague.

Anne: Prague? Where is Prague?

Stephan points to the distance

Anne: *(to the audience)* How did he get here? Stephan....Prague *(She points to where he has pointed. He runs off to 'Prague')*. Here...England *(She points)*. How? Stephan, how did you get here?

Stephan: Yes

Anne: Oh... *(She tries to mime with her hands from there to there. Then she has a thought.)* Did you walk *(She mimes; suddenly Stephan understands, he shakes his head and then mimes a train)*. Of course. I'm so stupid. He got a train. I never thought of that. I've never even been on a train and he came all that way. Stephan, did you get the train all the way from Prague? *(Stephan is miming his journey. He's a train and then he stops. There's a moment of fear as guards get on and then he jumps out and marks a line of the floor. He jumps over it)*. What's he up to? There's a line and... *(Stephan suddenly grabs her and dances singing and swinging her round. They laugh and then she stops him)*. Stephan?

Stephan: Yes?

Anne: *(Going up to the line he's drawn)*. Germany. *(Jumps over line)*. Here?

Stephan: Holland

Anne: Holland? And did you get another train. *Stephan starts to mime being in a boat. He takes a hat from his pocket to be the boat. He shows a finger; that is him)*. Oh that's him. *(Stephan puts his finger in the hat)*. And now he's in a hat. What are you doing in there? Oh, it's a boat. A boat? You got a boat from Holland? And what happened on the boat?

Stephan mimes being sick.

Anne: Were you sick?

Stephan: *(shaking his head and then...)* A little.

Anne: And after Holland and the boat, what happened?

Stephan briefly mimes a train and then arrives.

Stephan: *(to audience)* My mother told me England was land of angels but from the train London looks so dirty and houses look so small. And they all had little buildings outside. What are these?

Anne: You got here. Oh...I've prepared a tune to welcome you. *(She plays a tune on a piccolo or a recorder. Stephan might take out an instrument and join in. It's a moment where two children connect even though they can't understand each other. As she puts her instrument back in her*

pocket, she can feel something. Taking it out...) Stephan, are you hungry?

Stephan can't understand.

Anne: Ehh... (*Mimes being hungry or eating*)

Stephan: Yes

Anne: (*handing him the package*). It's a jam sandwich

Stephan: (*As if the words mean nothing to him.*) Jamsantwich?

Anne: Yes. Sorry, it's got a bit squashed.

Stephan: (*He takes a tentative bite and then spits it out. To audience*) What is this white bread? Bread is brown. I can't stay anywhere the bread tastes so awful. (*He turns back to Anne and smiling, hands back the sandwich*)

Anne: Nice isn't it? I knew you'd like it.

Stephan: (*Taking cake from his pocket or his bag and handing it to Anne*) Babovka.

Anne: Bab-what? For me? (*She takes the cake and tries some*). Mmmm. That is cake.

Stephan: Cay-ke...My mother...cook...

Anne: Your mother made that? (*Holding up sandwich*). My mother made that. (*Thinks for a moment*). Swopsies. (*She gives Stephan the sandwich, and then hears something*). Oh, that's Mum shouting. She must be finished. (*She is gathering up Stephan's case and starting to go*).

Stephan: (*Following her*) Does she need cook?

Anne: A cook? I don't think we can afford one. (*Stephan is deflated*). But there are some big houses near us. Maybe we could go and ask them when we get home? Come on... (*Linking his arm*). We don't want to lose you.

Stephan hands someone in the audience the remains of the sandwich and follows. Anne is cheerfully chattering away.

Scene 5: The Wrong Child

A well-dressed couple approach the audience, arguing.

Edward: I do hope we are not late.

Emma: I don't think we are. Can you see anybody?

Edward: Emma stop fussing. Look. Over there.

Emma: Where? Oh right. Come on.

Edward: Hello (*During the following, he shakes hands and introduces himself to some of the audience; Emma follows suit.*) Are you here to collect children also? I'm Edward Garbet and this is my wife Emma.

Emma: Hello, this is rather exciting isn't it? I wonder when they will arrive. They are going to be so tired the poor things. I hope he likes the coat Edward, do you think he will?

Edward: I am sure he will love it Emma.

Emma: Do you think it will fit? (*She has a small boy's coat*). I am not convinced. We were not sure what size he would be so we had to take a guess. I was tempted to wait till he arrived but I am glad I got it in advance now, it's very cold. Do you think it will fit Edward?

Edward: I am sure it will fit fine Emma, and if it happens to be too big it will fit in time. We are expecting a boy, Augustus

Emma: Yes. Do any of you know what child you will be getting? I know some people have already seen photographs. We haven't but we know we have child 558.

Edward: 558. That's right.

Emma: Edward was thrilled when we knew it would be a boy.

Edward: I know we are not Jewish and that of course will make it difficult but we do have a Synagogue down the bottom of our road.

Emma: And we've researched the Jewish diet. Oh...er...Kas....

Edward: Kashrut dear.

Emma: Oh right. Yes. They can only eat certain animals you see, if it has hooves and...oh, there is something else... (*She is trying to remember*)

Edward: And chews the cud, dear, then it's alright.

Emma: I'm not sure about bacon though.

Edward: No bacon.

Emma: It's all so confusing.

Edward: We have looked into Hanukkah too. That's a Jewish holiday like a Jewish Christmas but it lasts nine days. Or is it eight days?

Emma: Nine I think dear.

Edward: Yes. Nine...I'm not sure dear...

Emma: It's all so fascinating.

Edward: We don't want the boy feeling out of place

Emma: What time is it? I do hope they arrive soon. Did you remember to pack something to eat?

Edward: No it's alright. I am not that hungry anyway, dear. She is always trying to feed me.

Emma: Not for you Edward, for the child. I don't know, I ask one thing from him today. Just one thing. *(To audience)* Do you have the same trouble with your husband?

Edward: Not now dear. Let's not argue, not today. I have always wanted a boy to help run the family business. And, Emma, that spare room has been empty for too long.

Emma: *(An awkward moment)* Yes. I know Edward, don't I?

Edward: I didn't mean anything...

Emma: *(Changing the subject)* Do you I do think he'll speak English?

Edward: Oh I am sure he will, dear, but have you brought the dictionary just in case?

Emma: Oh yes. It's in your pocket. Do any of you speak any German? A few words?

Edward: We have tried to learn a few simple phrases nothing fancy. It was one of those questions on that enormous form we had to fill in, wasn't it dear?

Emma: Yes. I must say, I thought some of the questions we had to answer were a little unnecessary. Mind you, it wasn't as bad as that woman coming

round to see if the house was acceptable. Running her fingers along the table like that as if I don't keep a spotless house.

Edward: Never mind dear. We passed the test. But we didn't want to leave anything to chance so I have been practising my German. Guten Tag, Wie gehts?

Emma: Untig.

Edward: You mean Unartig. Naught. It's quite a queer language. Hard to get your mouth around some of the words.

Emma: Which is why I really do hope he speaks English. I really did think they would be here by now. I do hope they arrive soon.

Edward: I'm sure they will Emma, just stay calm there's no rush.

Emma: (*Spotting something in the distance*) Oh wait Edward, I think they are here. Look over there.

Edward: Alright dear. Stay calm and remember to breathe because you pass out if you don't breathe.

Emma: Quickly come on.

Emma and Edward walk around the audience and address them as children. Edward checks the boy's numbers. Emma is also checking numbers and is rather surprised when she finds 558.

Emma: Oh, er, hello 558, yes that's you.

Edward: Yes indeed hello.

Emma: You're not Augustus are you? Augustine? Oh gosh.

Edward: I'm sorry but you're not quite what we were expecting.

Emma: No, but a surprise though

Edward: (*aside to Emma*) Surprise is one word Emma. Shock is another. (*To audience loudly and slightly slowly as if they don't speak English*) Please do excuse us a moment. (*Aside to Emma*) It's a girl, Emma

Emma: Yes Edward I can see it's a girl.

Edward: I wanted a boy, dear. I ordered a boy specifically. In all the correspondence, I said I wanted a boy. And that coat will look ridiculous on her.

Emma: Would you like to calm down a moment dear? We need to think about this logically. Where is the last letter?

Edward: It's in the bag dear.

Emma: (*Takes letter out of bag*) Right well, yes, here it says under gender: madchen. See man. Madchen. Man. We definitely ordered a man.

Edward: Well we can't have her. Have you got a little brother? Is he still on the train?

Emma: Edward...

Edward: We'll just have to get another one. (*Starts looking through audience for someone more suitable*). What about this one?

Emma: No, we can't just leave her here. I suppose we could send her to someone else....

Edward: I really don't care what we do, I just don't want her. Look at the size of her. She's really big. She must be at least 14.

Emma: Edward just stop it. We cannot just send her back. We wanted a child and we've got one. Let's be grateful.

Edward: Yes but it's the wrong one. We wanted a boy. Look at her she doesn't even need looking after. I demand to speak to an official Emma. I am not happy about this at all. (*He moves off, asking people if they are in charge here. Over his shoulder*) I've taken a day off work to come here.

Emma: Oh dear. What am I going to do? Hello....ermm I mean...Guten tag. Wie gehts? Oh she cannot understand me.

Edward: That's just spiffing. Not only is she a girl, she's also stupid.

Emma: I don't think she is stupid Edward. Don't you be so rude. She is just scared and your face is doing nothing to help. Try smiling dear. (*He does but it's a grimace*). That's nice, but don't overdo it. Spreken de English? (*Very loudly and slowly*) Do...You.....Speak.....Eng-lish-en?

Edward: Oh this is ludicrous Emma, let me try. Hello, Halloa, Good day. You...are.....not...ours....you are a mistake.....Understand? What did she just say to me? Emma I do not like her tone.

Emma: Oh look at her she looks so confused.

Edward: Well I'm bloody confused.

Emma: Edward!

Edward: Emma, we are leaving this child here. I have had enough of this nonsense. Let's go. Come on, we are going to find that official. She will sort this out.

Emma: Edward please. Augustine. Stay there. I will be back

Edward: *(Over his shoulder)* Emma Garbet.

(She chases after Edward and they disappear arguing).

Scene 6: Being a Grown Up

Kurt is wandering around and eventually goes to sit on his suitcase. Hanni, his sister, is writing in her diary. She looks up and notices him.

Hanni: You will break it.

(Kurt stands up and then tries to sit on his sister's suitcase)

Hanni: Don't sit on mine. You'll break that too.

Kurt: *(Seeing something behind the audience.)* Who's died?

Hanni: What? What do you mean who's died?

Kurt: Look at all those undertakers.

Hanni: No they're not undertakers...they're police men.

Kurt: They've got the wrong hats on.

Hanni: No they haven't. They're the hats that English police men wear. Mum showed me a picture. *(Noticing his face)* You've got make up on your face.
(She laughs)

Kurt: No I haven't.

Hanni: Yes you have.

Kurt: It's from all those ladies kissing me when I got off the train...

Hanni goes to wipe it off by spitting on her finger. Kurt pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and cleans it away himself. He goes to shove it back into his pocket.

Hanni: Don't shove it in like that Mummy would be very angry. Fold it up...
(Kurt does it wrong and Hanni helps him.)

Kurt: Danke.

Hanni: No thank you...say thank you....practice your English.

Kurt: I know all the England football team... (*Starts to recite: Sam Barkas, Cliff Bastin (he scored first in 1938; known as Boy), Eric Brook, Frank Broome (centre forward), Wilf Copping, Jack Crayston, Stan Cullis, Ted Drake, Michael Fenton, Albert Geldard, Leonard Goulden, Willie Hall, Eddie Hapgood (he was the Captain at the Olympics, Arsenal), Stanley Matthews (played for Stoke), George Mills, John Morton, Jackie Robinson, Bert Sprotson (right back, played for Leeds), Joseph Stephenson, Don Welsh, Ken Willingham, Vic Woodley (goal keeper, Chelsea), Alfred Young*)

Hanni: No...proper English...

Kurt: “The dog is under the table” und “one lump or two” und “My handkerchief is in my pocket”

Hanni: Well done

Kurt: I can speak English. I can speak English. (*He kicks over a suitcase and then runs around the station making plane noises*)

Hanni: Stop doing that. Mummy wouldn't want you to be messing around where people can see us. You won't get chosen....no one is going to want to take you home.

Kurt: Someone will come for us soon. They won't just leave us here. Now leave me alone. (*He sits, rather sulkily*).

Hanni: Are you hungry?

Kurt: No. When Mummy gets here next week she can cook us lovely food again...

Hanni: I don't think they will be here in a week

Kurt: Yes they will, daddy told me so.

Hanni: Oh you don't understand.

Kurt: Don't say that to me. You're not mum.

Hanni: I know I'm not but she told me to look after you. I'm older than you.

Kurt: (*Defeated*) Yes. Yes you are. (*He sits on the suitcase. Then he starts to fidget. Then he gets up and starts to walk around*)

Hanni: What's wrong? (*Kurt shakes his head.*) Tell me what's wrong, Kurt. (*He shakes his head again*) Do you need the toilet? (*He nods*)

Kurt: Yes I'm sorry.

Hanni: Don't be sorry. Let me look for one. (*She goes to leave*)

Kurt: Don't leave me.

Hanni: I have to leave you to look for a toilet. We can't take the suitcases.

Kurt: NO, NO! Don't leave me. Mummy said you wouldn't leave me at all while she wasn't here. What if I get lost?

Hanni: Don't worry, I'll look from here. (*Standing on her tip toes*) I can't see one...

Kurt: I'm sorry but I really need to go...

(*Hanni hears her number being called*)

Hanni: That's my number being called. I've got to go and see what they want. Stay here Kurt. I won't be long. Stay with the suitcases. Be a grown up. (*She leaves*)

Kurt gathers up suitcases and sits on them. He is trying to be a grown up. He tries to remember the names of the football team. Hanni re-enters. She is upset and unsure but also trying to be grown up.

Hanni: Here's my new address.

Kurt: Danke. No, no. I mean thank you.

Hanni: Keep it safe. (*She helps him fold it into his handkerchief. She picks up her case. Kurt picks up his as if to go with her*).

Hanni: No, Kurt. It's just for me. You have to wait here. They'll call you soon

Kurt: Don't leave me.

Hanni: I have to. Someone will come for you soon. I promise. (*She hugs him and leaves.*)

Kurt is left on stage clutching his suitcase tightly. He's crying but he is trying to be a grown up. He tries to remember the names of the football team.

Scene 7: Children by Numbers

Mrs Hilton is well meaning but sometimes seems a little thoughtless in her tone. She has a clipboard with a lot of paper. The wicker basket with the baby is with her. The children in the scene are mimed.

Mrs Hilton: Well, firstly a huge welcome and thank you so much for volunteering. How lovely, there are so many of you. Now being a volunteer for the Refugee Children's Movement is no easy task but it is most worthwhile. Bear with me one moment. It's a nightmare today. (*Consulting clipboard*) Number 355 Hans Faith...come along Hans. There's a good little chap. Number 355 will now be collected by Mr and Mrs Roberts...Mr and Mrs Roberts? Are you here? No? (*To a passer-by*) Are you Mrs Roberts? Mr Roberts? No? Ah...now Hans, if you just want to sit...yes, SIT. Lovely. Good boy. Now...stay. Well I did warn you, this is no job for the faint hearted. But, please do not be alarmed, someone will be along to collect this little chap in no time at all. I am sure there has just been a simple mistake. Although we do seem to have been having a lot of silly mistakes recently. Oh well, one can't complain, can we young man, at least we are not at Bloomsbury House. It quite simply is chaos there. Do you know, at one point it seemed as if every person in this country had responded to the arrival of children like little Hans here with an out pouring of cutlery, crockery, linen, dolls...and you're smiling because you remember... rocking horses! I mean what were they thinking...rocking horses, I ask you. You simply couldn't move without tripping over something.

Bear with me. Number 380 Elsa Lawri...that's right, Elsa, go round the back...will be collected by Mrs Dickens. Yes, Mrs Dickens, that's right, that way. (*She spots an adult taking another child and rushes in to stop them*) (*To another guarantor*) Excuse me...excuse me...yes you. Come back here. You can't simply take that child. I don't care if you are her aunt and haven't seen her for two years...you must wait your turn. Well really. Hans, just wait there please my dear, your new parents will be here in no time at all. No, no, don't cry.

Well I can see from your faces that may have seemed a little insensitive, rude even, but if you are going to be a volunteer it is absolutely vital that you command authority and maintain control at all times or this station would descend into even greater chaos than it already is. The adults must be watched like hawks. I have lost count of the times that I have searched the station for a child presumed lost only to discover that they are on a train halfway to Barnet ⁵and we really don't want that, do we? Personally, I find the use of a referee's whistle the most effective way of controlling rowdy guarantors. A quick toot on this (*she demonstrates*) and they are back in the palm of my hands.

⁵ Place names can be substituted for those most appropriate for where the performance is taking place.

Excuse me one moment...Number 381 George Hacker will now be collected by a...does that say MISS Jones? (*Checks with someone in the audience that this is not a mistake*). It does, doesn't it. Right off you go George with MISS Jones...yes. Straight down there MISS Jones. No not you Hans, you just sit tight, that's a good boy. Yes that's right. (*To audience*). Well, I do hope that boy will be alright. I don't think that woman is even married. (*To Miss Jones*) Oh no, Miss Jones. I was just telling these people what a marvellous job you are doing giving George a home. Very well done Miss Jones. Oh well, better he is here and better he is going to a home rather than one of those hostels. (*To Hans*) Don't cry Hans and do stop wiping your nose on your hands. I don't know what you've done with your handkerchief.

It does beg the question, doesn't it, what does one do with children who are left behind? All I can say is that it doesn't get any easier. I am after all only an amateur not, as you might think young man, a trained professional. But it is ordinary people like you and me who have made the entire operation possible. Sorry? You are quite right but you might have let me finish. As this young man rightly points out we can't take all the credit. That would be extremely rude. The Quakers have done a marvellous job...and those others...what are they called...rather a strange name...(as if someone in the audience has told her) ah, indeed, thank you, the Woodcraft Folk. And then there is the Central British Fund for German Jewry and the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany and (*prompted by someone in the audience*) the CRREC, indeed. Would you like to tell everyone what that stands for? No? Well, I think you can see the disappointment on everybody's face. We all had high hopes for you. Luckily, this young lady will help you out...well done. Did you hear that everyone? She said it stands for the Chief Rabbi's Religious Emergency Committee. You might watch her. She will go far.

I understand there is rather a lot to remember. But here at the RCM, we are lucky to have Mrs Hardisty or as I like to call her, Dorothy (*she's rather proud that she's allowed to call her by her first name.*) Do you know Mrs Hardisty? No? Marvellous woman, very calm and she has a most prodigious mind. Very sadly, she can't be here today. She's been called away to deal with an emergency at a hostel in Croydon. So she said to me, Frances, it's left me in a most terrible pickle, and I said fear not. I can step into the breach. And so here I am. (*Noticing a child*) Yes, I know you are there child. I'm just talking to these people. What's your number? 382? (*Checks her list*). Rosie Medas? Alright, round you go. You are being collected by Mr Medas. Yes, Rosie, that is Mr Medas. Off you go. Good luck. (*To the audience*) Did you see that? Oh dear, oh dear. (*Confiding*) Do you know, until I started here I did not know that there were any poor Jews. Some of the relatives turn up in terribly shabby clothes. One feels they really could make more of an effort. But, I don't judge.

Well, I think that is all the information that I had to pass on to you, except for saying a huge thank you for joining us on what I am sure will be a marvellous adventure. So, I look forward to seeing you on Monday.

Right, now Hans my poor dear, what are we going to do with you? I know everyone else has gone but someone will be along for you in no time. What's that? No, no. We're not going to send you back. If they don't come we can send you to a hostel. Would you like some nice tea with milk in it? I wonder if we could find you an orange. *(She leads him away. He is dragging her back)* Hans, don't drag your feet...*(Realising she has forgotten the baby)*. Ah, the baby. Thank you Hans. Now what are we going to do? Things like this never happen when Dorothy is here....

Scene 8: A Future

At the end of the 6th showing, the audience are moved back to the starting point. They are helped by organisers or by the actors. In some cases, actors playing adults change back into children in front of the audience. They ask the audience to help them, maybe get them to carry their cases. As the actors arrive back together they are writing or reading letters. While waiting for the audience groups to arrive back, the band is playing; this should include Refugee Blues (see appendix for lyrics)

Renie: *(writing a letter)* Dear Mutti.... *(Thinking. Starts writing)* I am so unhappy here. Mrs Fraser... *(Crosses out)* Auntie Fraser...is always telling me off and says I am lazy because I can't speak English... *(Crosses it all out and screws it up)*. Dear Mutti. Everything here is good. Auntie Fraser is so kind and.... *(To the audience)* What else could I do? I wanted to protect them. What would you have done?

Eva: Liebling...

Harry: My dearest son, I am so please that you will be going to a good school. You are after all a talented boy and studying is better than becoming a tradesman.

Eva: My dear little Spatz

Kurt: I am happy that you like England so much.

Eva: My warm congratulations for your birthday.

Kurt: Keep well, and enjoy the nut chocolate *(He takes chocolate from his pocket)*. A kiss for you. *(Eva blows a kiss)*

Eva: Dearest

Hanni: You cannot imagine the pleasure we had with your cards and letters. For now it is our only consolation and you must continue to write to us daily...

Eric: My son, I was very happy with your dear letter...

Eva: Only there shouldn't be so many spelling errors...

Harry: Please study hard, in this way you will be helping me. Times are serious now and only an education will count for somebody in England.

Eva: My dearest little mouse –

Kurt: Hopefully this card will reach you already in your new home and you will be enjoying your stay. Be a very good little boy. Be obedient.

Eric: Take your meals properly...

Eva: And don't fill up with sweets.

Eric: Mum...

Eva: And don't go to sleep too late.

Eva: Little one...

Kurt: I hope that you always help your Aunt.

Eva: A thousand kisses for you

Harry: I beg you, in the beginning, study even the whole day until your precious head hurts. As a foreigner you must study even harder than the others...

Renie: (*writing; Eva is reading this and maybe pointing things out to the audience*) I have already written to Father for his birthday. I went to the zoo and Kew Gardens. Aunt Vi wants to take me to the dentist. I'll probably have braces in my mouth. I'll write to you more next time.

Eva: Meine liebste...

Stephan: Your letters come to us like sunshine.

Eva: It's our future that gives us big worries. We yearn to get away from here.

Stephan: It will be a difficult task for you to bring us over there...

Eva: But I have a feeling you will manage it in time.

Hanni: Vienna 8th May 1939. My dear, dear Hanni...

Eva: We have such a high number for the USA that we will probably have to wait at least another few years. We have had a water pipe installed in the

attic rooms so we can let them... (*She pauses and sings Küss Mich under the following.*)

Hanni: It would be wonderful if all of us could be together again in England.

Ilse: (*writing*) For my birthday you wrote me that I always have to be brave as you can't be happy if I'm not.

Renie: Darling. I'm glad that you are well and happy.

Ilse: I can assure you that I always grit my teeth and smile.

Renie: I hope war will not come. If he is coming, God bless you. With a lot of kisses, your Daddy

Eva: I keep running to the post. Every line from you overwhelms me.

Kurt: Every day I thank God that you are in such good hands.

Hanni: (*a Red Cross Letter*) Vienna 12th August 1942. (*Music for My Dear Little Spatz starts under*)

Eva: Dearest

Hanni: I'm glad about your health and progress.

Harry: Our destiny is very uncertain. Write more frequently.

Hanni: Many, many millions of kisses

Stephan: My dearest

Eva: Liebchen

Stephan: Please regard this as a kind of farewell letter

Eric: Farewell, my dear son. I wish you all the best.

Eva: I cannot write anymore. My heart is bleeding.

Stephan: I do not know when

Renie: or if

Renie and Stephan: I will ever have a chance to write to you again.

Eva: Auf Wiedersehen. (*Giving letter to someone in the audience*) Please keep this safe for my children.

Stephan: You must be aware of the situation in which we find ourselves here.

Harry: I hope that life will become easier for you too one day

Kurt: Many kisses from your mother

Ilse: Although none of our closest circle has yet been affected by the measures

Eric: we are to expect everything...

Stephan: ...sooner or later

Hanni: probably sooner....

Renie: (*a postcard*) 4th September 1942.

Kurt: We are heading East and...

Eva: ...this is my very final goodbye to you Liebling. (*Pause*)

Song: My dear little Spatz

My dear little Spatz

A thousand kisses for you

Many, many millions of kisses...(*pause*)

Please, please write me often

My dear, dear son

There's always a calm after the storm

Liebchen, I keep running to the post.

Liebchen, I keep running to the post.

Every line from you overwhelms me.

Every day I thank God that you are in such good hands.

Pause

Write more frequently

My dearest little mouse

Your letters come to us like sunshine...like sunshine

It would be wonderful if all of us could be together again in England

Together again in England

Together again in England

Together again....(*repeat until fade*)

Ilse: (*during the above she has been looking at the envelope she has in her hands*) VE Day was just wonderful. We all danced in the streets...And I just thought, well, this is it, I'm going to see my parents next week. That's all I thought about. I went straight back and wrote to both of them through Red Cross messages to Theresienstadt. The letters were returned to me about three or four months later...All it said on the back was 'deported to Auschwitz 28 10 44'. That's how I found out.

(A beat. Some music. Then: it is 1947/8.)

Hanni: I wrote in my diary nearly every day and father was right. It did help me when things were bad. But I also wrote about good things, things I wanted to share with my parents. About fish and chips and learning to play ping-pong and my first kiss (*Laughs*) And I wrote about meeting Rolf. We're getting married soon and all my foster family will be there. I'm so grateful to them for everything....

Kurt: (*interrupting*) Grateful? I'm sick of that word. Why do I always have to be grateful?

Hanni: Kurt

Kurt: I was moved around from family to family, then from hostel to hostel, from London to Leeds to the middle of nowhere. No-one wanted me. Hanni, don't you remember what happened when they tried to send some of us to Bournemouth?

Hanni: Come on. These people don't want to hear about that.

Kurt: They should know. When we arrived, the shul committee voted to give us ten shillings and send us back to the station because they thought all these foreign children would turn the English against the Jews who have been here for so long. I should be grateful for that?

Eric: Yes.

Harry: What would have happened to you if people in England hadn't taken you in?

Hanni: That was one place, Kurt. Look what so many other people have done.

Kurt: I'm just so tired of having to say thank you all the time. Will we still have to be grateful when we're 80? I suppose they'll still be calling us kinder then as well.

Hanni/Eric: Yes (*Kurt is about to go. As he does so he turns back*)

Ilse: I was always worried. Would I see my parents again? Would I pass the entrance exam to high school? Would I ever be able to speak English properly? Would the Roberts ever like me? But, gradually it got easier though somewhere I still miss home and the smell of mother's baking.

Stephan: I still miss Czech food. In fact I was homesick for everything Czech – not just my parents but everything. I was so scared of forgetting my language that I read the books I had with me over and over and over again,

till they fell apart. And I had long conversations with the dog in Czech, who didn't understand a word.

Renie: I never spoke German again. They didn't want me, so I wanted nothing to do with them.

Stephan: I was so proud of everything Czech. When I heard a story about Czech forces on the radio, my heart swelled. Those men were my real heroes.

Renie: I was ashamed of being German.

Stephan: I am Czech. I will always be Czech.

Renie: I'll never set foot in Germany again.

Ilse: The day I stopped feeling like a refugee was the day I was evacuated. Until then I'd always felt different from the other children but when we all had to go to the country and we were all without our parents, then we were the same.

Harry: The day I stopped being a refugee was the day I joined the army. I was interned as an enemy alien for a while on the Isle of Man but then I was released and allowed to join the Pioneer Corps – the King's Own Aliens. We weren't allowed to fight but I did swear allegiance to the king. I'd never been prouder. Eventually, they let us into the regular army and I changed my name to Harold Atkins in case I was caught by the Germans. I was dropped behind enemy lines. That was a good day – no, that was a great day.

Eric: My foster family were Christians...

Mrs Hilton: (*rushing over to him with a hat*) I've been looking for you. This hat is yours I believe (*she is slightly disdainful of it*). It was left on the train. Really – you must learn to look after your things better. What would your mother think?

Eric: (*slightly embarrassed by it but saying nothing*)...and I was in a small village with no other Jews. When I arrived the farmer's wife had persuaded her husband to kill a pig so I could enjoy a slap-up roast. What could I do? I think my mother would have understood. (*He puts on his hat*)

Dona Dona plays softly under the last speech and continues as candles are lit and suitcases and other belongings of the kinder are piled into a memorial. The actors sing – the first verse in Yiddish and the second in English. It is a moment of reflection for those who did not survive. Gradually, the music becomes more upbeat. Children/actors start dancing with each other and with the audience. Or join in with the band; a tray of doughnuts is shared with the audience. The chorus repeats. It's a moment to celebrate a Chanukah miracle and survival and new lives.

Dona Dona Dona

Verse 1

Oyfn vogn ligt a kelbl	On a waggon bound for market
Ligt gebundn mit a shtrik	There's a calf with a mournful eye
Oyfn himl flit a foygl	High above him there's a swallow
Flit un dreyt zikh hin un tsurik	Winging swiftly through the sky

Chorus

Lakht der vint in korn	How the winds are laughing
Lakh un lakht un lakht	They laugh with all their might
Lakht er on a tog a gantse	Laugh and laugh the whole day through
Un a halbe nakht, hey!	And half the summer's night
Dona, dona, dona, dona	Donna, donna, donna, donna
Dona, dona, dona, don	Donna, donna, donna, don
Dona, dona, dona, dona	Donna, donna, donna, donna
Dona, dona, dona, don	Donna, donna, donna, don

Verse 2:

Calves are easily bound and slaughtered
Never knowing the reason why
But whoever treasures freedom
Like the swallow has learned to fly

Chorus

Mrs Hilton: Oh – the baby in the basket? He is doing rather well for himself...I think he might go on to do something really great. (*Noticing the doughnuts*) Ah...at last, some food...

Appendix

There were 3 original songs that formed part of the 2013 production with music by Max Reinhardt. The lyrics for *My Dear Little Spatz* are in the body of the text (page 25). Of the songs below, *The Jew* formed part of the pre-show and *Refugee Blues/Let Them In* (sung in Gracie Fields style) became part of the music the audience encountered as they came back together for the final section. Other music included *Sheyn Vi Di Levone* which, in various incarnations and guises, became the music the audience encountered at points as they walked through the station.

The Jew

(Lyrics Isaac Rosenberg)

Moses (Moses)

From whose loins I sprung

Lit by a lamp in his blood (in his blood)

Ten immutable rules, a moon (a moon, a moon, a moon, a moon)

For mutable lampless people (for mutable lampless people)

Mmmmmm/mmmmmm

Mmmmmm/mmmmmm

The blonde (blonde), the bronze (bronze)

The ruddy (the ruddy, the ruddy, the ruddy)

You know we've the same heaving blood (the same heaving blood)

Keep tide to the moon of Moses (Moses)

Then why do the sneer at me?

The why (why) why (why) why (why) why (why)

Why do they sneer (why do they sneer) at me?

Why do they sneer (why do they sneer) at me?

Refugee Blues/Let Them In

(Verses from WH Auden *Refugee Blues*)

Say this city has ten million souls,

Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:

Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said;

"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread":

He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Chorus

Could be your baby or your mother

Let 'em in, Let 'em in

Could be your sister or your brother

Let 'em in, Let 'em in

There's oh so many people knocking

(oh so many people)

oh so many people knocking

(oh so many people)

oh so many people knocking
You've got to let them in
You've got to let them in

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors:
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.

Chorus

Could be your baby or your mother
Let 'em in, Let 'em in
Could be your sister or your brother
Let 'em in, Let 'em in
There's oh so many people knocking
(oh so many people)
oh so many people knocking
(oh so many people)
oh so many people knocking
You've got to let them in
You've got to let them in
(Let 'em in, Let 'em in)
You've got to let them in
(Let 'em in, Let 'em in) etc.

Additional Scene: Home

A girl of 12 is holding a baby wrapped tightly in a blanket. She is cooing to it and trying to rock it to sleep, singing a lullaby. The audience are other children waiting.

Margot: Sssssh, ssssh, please don't cry. Ssh...we're going to have some great adventures here little one. Learning to speak English, riding on the upstairs of a bus. Imagine that, a bus where you can go upstairs. Ssh, ssh... That's better. You do understand that your parents had to put you on the train, don't you? When your basket was pushed through the window just as we were pulling away, I never dreamed that I would find you sleeping inside. I don't think any of us knew what to do. *(to the audience)* You were all looking at me, weren't you? I think I was the oldest in the carriage, so I had to find out what was in the basket. I'm glad it was you, though some of the little ones, like Max over there, hoped you might be cakes. How silly. I did look out of the window to see if I could see your parents but there were so many people on that platform I had no idea where to begin.

I'd always be able to recognise my parents. My Mutti has the most shiny, brown hair which curls itself so tightly it looks like a little doll's. And Vatti, well he has the kindest eyes of grey blue and the strongest arms, just perfect for picking me up and holding me tight...That's what he did right before I got onto the train. He wrapped me up and whispered to me "Margot, be good. We will see each other again, I don't know when, but we will." He was nearly crying and I've never seen him cry before. His face looked tired and there was something missing in his eyes. And Mutti's hair, it didn't seem to curl so tightly on that station platform. But as the train pulled away, it was as if there was no one else there, just my Mutti and Vatti.

I'm sure your parents were thinking of you too. Maybe you will see them again someday when all this is over. That is what all the little children on the train were talking about. Some of them were excited for all the new things they are going to see and do now that we are in England. Inge over there thought the queen and the two little princesses would be there to meet us with flowers...Isn't she silly?

Things are bad where we are from, little one. I don't understand it all but I hear whispered conversations and I see things I wish I hadn't and I know that it isn't safe in Vienna now. One morning when we went into the streets, they were full of new uniforms and people wearing a red band round their arm and I didn't know what that meant. And there were new red flags everywhere with a white circle and a black swastika. I knew something bad had happened because my parents rushed me back into the flat. After that day everything was different. And people shouted things at Jews on the street, things I'm not allowed to repeat and you are too young to hear. We were supposed to say "Heil Hitler" when we went into a shop but Mutti discovered – she's very funny sometimes, little one – that we could say drei liter instead and nobody noticed. We laughed at that, but not at much else.

It's never like that in the movies, is it? I loved to go to the cinema. Me and the girls would get together and watch a film every other week. Whether it was the same one or the newest picture showing, it didn't matter, I just loved to go. I can't count how many films I've seen. Austrian, German, English, American, it didn't matter. I just wanted to see the places and the costumes, hear the music, watch the dancing. And the women. Their dresses, their hair, their red lips – Greta Garbo, she's so beautiful. I tried to wear my hair like hers once but I don't think I'll ever look like that. She's beautiful. Camille – that's my most favourite film. They were showing it at the cinema so I went down there with a few of the girls but they wouldn't let me in. They said I was Jewish and because of that I couldn't watch films there anymore. The other girls went in without me. I walked home alone. Vienna had never felt stranger to me. It wasn't my home anymore, I could definitely feel that. I lay awake for so long that night. And then I had to go to a different school and after that, Lisel, who I thought was my best friend, wouldn't see me anymore. Why would she do that, little one? No-one would tell me anything. Mutti and Vatti would only talk about visas and embassies – exit visas, transit visas, entrance visas and such strange countries – Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela, Argentina, Shanghai, the Dominican Republic. I've no idea where that is but it sounds a long, long way from Vienna. I asked why we couldn't go to America where the pictures were made. But they said we'd have to wait too long.

And then came that horrible night in November. You must have been born by then Liebling. There was such chaos, shouting and smashing and soldiers on the street running up and down throwing rocks and bricks. They looked drunk. Do they let soldiers drink? I could smell smoke. I could see from my window the glow of flames all around the city. I asked Mutti what was happening but she wouldn't say anything. Vatti had been out and had not come back. The next day we heard from our neighbours that many of the Jewish men in the city had been rounded up and taken away, but we didn't know where. Vienna was a mess. All the Jewish shops - the tailors, the bakers, the butchers - they had been burnt down or broken into. Vatti finally came home a few weeks later. He had been held in a prison, he wouldn't tell me anything more than that but he wasn't the same. All his lovely hair had been shaved and he was always cold. But when he came home, they started to talk of England, saying I should leave as soon as I could and that he and Mutti would join me soon after. I didn't put up a fight. It felt that anywhere would have been better than Vienna. Mutti packed my case, she even put my special dress in, the one I think makes me look like Greta Garbo in Camille. Last Sunday, we went for a picnic. Not to the Prater like we used to because there were signs saying Jews were forbidden but on the tram to our favourite place in the Vienna Woods. But now there was a new sign saying no Jews, no dogs. So we just went home. Vatti kept telling me they would come and meet me in England and I smiled and nodded and hugged him back, but I don't think I will see them here. I have their picture but I think that's it.

(The baby is asleep) Oh dear, I think I've been boring you. But all that crying has stopped, I'm glad mein lieblich, there's no time for tears, we're in England. I think someone will be collecting me soon. Maybe there will be princesses. And maybe I could ask if they will have you too? I don't want you to go just yet. *(She sings a lullaby to the child. She starts an Austrian one but corrects herself and sings an English song)*