

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This document focuses on work undertaken to perform Stravinsky's *l'Histoire du Soldat*. The recital itself, in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Music in Instrumental Conducting, was presented on March 31, 2009 in Quance Theatre, on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan, and was unique in the sense that Stravinsky's music was performed twice in the same evening: first with the traditional libretto by C.F. Ramuz followed by a more contemporary libretto by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. The event was, in part, an experiment in aesthetics. I was curious about different ways in which the audience might perceive the music as it supported two dramas, the one by Ramuz and the other by Vonnegut. More intrinsic to the project, however, was my goal of achieving a deeper understanding of Stravinsky's composition as it is shaped by the contributions of two very different librettists. Finally, I wanted to recreate the conditions of what Stravinsky calls *théâtre ambulant* in order to render two historically authentic performances.¹

L'Histoire du Soldat includes a mélange of styles and socio-historical references as do many of Stravinsky's other works. Martin Luther, who penned the hymn "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott" which forms the backbone of "Grand Choral," may well have provided the seed material for the entire work; J.S. Bach rewrote Luther's hymn tune in

¹ A more in-depth list of objectives is found in Chapter 2. *Théâtre ambulant* is defined in Section 1.2.2.

1715, and Stravinsky incorporated Bach's version of the chorale in *l'Histoire*'s climactic "Grand Choral." Further, the libretto by Ramuz is a rewriting of a folk tale published by Alexander Afanasiev in Geneva in 1872,² and Kurt Vonnegut's libretto rewrites a real life story based on the execution of Eddie Slovik. Cut from a colourful cross-cultural cloth and pasted into a coherent and fresh pattern by the ingenious Igor Stravinsky, *l'Histoire du Soldat* emerged as a masterpiece of collage that has endured as one of the best-loved pieces of music in the genre of chamber musical.

1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 Chamber Musical and Chamber Theatre

Throughout this document I will refer to the genre of *l'Histoire du Soldat* as "chamber musical." The *English Chamber Theatre* website defines chamber theatre as a concept of theatre which is "simple in execution, with concentration on text and performance, rather than elaborate sets, costumes and effects. Often biographical in content, it always demands the highest standards of acting."³ The term "chamber musical" describes a piece of chamber theatre that includes orchestration and live musicians. Unlike "chamber opera" which Donald Jay Grout described in 1947—in the "heyday" of Stravinsky's career—as "sophisticated in feeling and declamation, calculated

² Jack V. Haney, "Mr. Afanasiev's Naughty Little Secrets," *Slavic and East European Folklore Association Journal* 3, No. 2, (Fall 1998). Web. 1 Feb. 2008.

³ Jane McCullough. *English Chamber Theatre Website*. July 11, 2009. Web. 12 July 2009.

to appeal to invited guests of aristocratic tastes and education,”⁴ a chamber musical is characterized by its broad audience appeal. The concept of chamber musical is derived from an ancient tradition of traveling musicians which includes *jongleurs* or *ménéstrals* (“minstrels”), a “class of professional musicians who first appear about the tenth century: men and women wandering singly or in small groups from village to village...singing, playing, performing tricks, and exhibiting trained animals—social outcasts often denied the protection of the laws.”⁵

1.2.2 Théâtre ambulant

Comprising elements of both “chamber theatre” and “chamber musical,” *théâtre ambulant* is a traveling show, suitable for touring. Stravinsky described his vision for *l’Histoire du Soldat* thus:

The thought of composing a dramatic spectacle for a *théâtre ambulant* had occurred to me more than once since the beginning of the [great] war, however. The sort of work I envisaged would have to be small enough in the complement of its players to allow for performances on a circuit of Swiss villages, and simple enough in the outlines of its story to be understood.⁶

⁴ Donald Jay Grout, *A Short History of Opera* (New York: Columbia UP, 1947), 69. [I consulted the early edition because it was written near the time of *l’Histoire du Soldat*.]

⁵ Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music*. 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1980), 65.

⁶ Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Expositions and Developments* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), 101.

1.2.3 “Cut-and-paste”

The term “cut-and-paste” refers to Stravinsky’s collage technique; one in which he recycles and recasts segments of “used” melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic material into different patterns, resulting in a new composition.

2. Objectives

In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the degree, the March 31st performance and this document have several musical, scholarly, and professional objectives, as outlined below.

2.1 Creating Authentic Performances

With an eye to creating two stylistically authentic performances, I borrowed Stravinsky’s organizing principle of “cut-and-paste” for many aspects of the March 31st production of *l’Histoire du Soldat*, elements including casting, costumes, publicity, and staging. A second consideration was to make the performance portable; that is to say, easily transportable and suitable for touring. I reasoned that by recreating the conditions, including the logistical limitations, that Stravinsky himself faced in the conception and realization of the work, I might end up with an authentic production, in the sense of performance practice, which might in fact, tour to the countryside of Saskatchewan, just as Stravinsky had hoped to do in the Swiss countryside in 1918.

Staging the Vonnegut libretto was simple, owing to the fact that it is a contemporary English-language play and the stage directions are clear. I would have liked to consult a video recording of a production of this version of *l’Histoire du Soldat* to help with choreography which is not indicated in Vonnegut’s book, especially the

original 1995 production at Alice Tully Hall, but to my knowledge no such recording exists.

2.2 Gaining Conducting Skills

While I knew that conducting *l'Histoire du Soldat* would stretch my abilities to the utmost, I expected the study, practice, and performance to improve my skills as a conductor in technical, theatrical, and musical senses. Indeed, I was urged to “think big” by conductor Earl Stafford, who said, “If you can conduct *The Soldier’s Tale*, you can conduct anything.”⁷ The musical sophistication and the technical demands of the works are considerable. The preparation required expansion of my repertoire of gestures and my rhythmic discipline.

Additionally, as an established professional musical director in the theatre, I wished to gain experience and insights through my recital and research project, experience that I could adapt to other productions. With trends in live theatre moving towards smaller professional productions and high quality multi-media events, I adopted the goal of doing everything as simply as possible, with the view of possibly taking the double work on tour in the future. Simple props and lighting were used so that the performance could just as easily be mounted on a festival stage, at a school, or in any rustic small-town theatre. The diverse appeal of the two plays—with their engaging narratives combined with a small ensemble and choreography—is considerable. The program is both practical and cost-effective for a chamber theatre company.

⁷ Personal conversation, May, 2007.

Two fundamental questions guided my research: 1) how can a chamber musical director use her or his imagination to evoke scene and mood through gesture and is the process the same for both pieces? and 2) what specific techniques can a conductor employ to forward the plot, portray characters, and create sensations of action appropriate to each segment of the two works?

2.3 Analysis and Comparison of Two Libretti: Ramuz and Vonnegut

My objective during the study period that preceded live work on the productions was to analyze and compare the unique characteristics in the two libretti, and even though I was thoroughly prepared for the performance, moving from the early to the final stage of the project was a surprising and elucidating experience. Many similarities and significant differences emerged in structure, tone, and impact of the two works. Both versions of the morality play end with “the devil” winning, but each libretto takes a unique path toward that end, creating different experiences for the orchestra and audience alike. Much turned upon the musical and theatrical issues surrounding the movement “Grand Choral” in each of the libretti. I detail the experience in Chapters 4 and 6, below.

2.4 Exploring the Bond Between Music and Action

Motivated by the goal of effective musical direction, I investigated the interface between drama, text, and music and how best to conduct the chamber musical by 1) researching the historical contexts in which each of the works was written; 2) analyzing “Grand Choral” which underscores the pivotal events in each libretto; and 3) rehearsing and conducting the works.

I sought to address how the cultural, social, and economic contexts in which each of the libretti was written impacted upon the players’ performance and the audience’s

perception of each work. Significant here were the structural devices, rhythmic qualities and harmonic factors that contribute to action, suspense, characterization and dramatic impact in *l'Histoire du Soldat*. I will address these concerns in Chapter 4.

2.5 Stravinsky and the Wind Orchestra

Because my M. Mus. degree centered on instrumental conducting, primarily with the wind orchestra, I wished to study a composer who was seminal in the development of the wind orchestra. Frederick Fennell, former professor and conductor at Eastman School of Music, states that “with the orchestra of Igor Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* and in his music for ensembles of wind instruments, the modern orchestra and its instruments became fixed as we know it today.”⁸ Stravinsky contributed immeasurably to the art of orchestral scoring in broad senses. For one thing, he expanded the size of the orchestra with the three ballets of 1910-1913, *Oiseau de Feu*, *Petrushka*, and *Le Sacre du Printemps*.⁹ Equally crucial, however, are the innovations he made in terms of wind instruments in the small ensemble in 1918 with *l'Histoire du Soldat* (clarinet, trumpet, bassoon, trombone, percussion, violin, double bass, narrator, and dancer),¹⁰ *Renard* (two tenors, two basses, flute [doubling piccolo], oboe [doubling *cor anglais*], clarinet [doubling Eb clarinet], bassoon, two horns, trumpet, percussion [timpani, triangle,

⁸ Frederick Fennell, *Time and the Winds: A Short History of the Use of Wind Instruments in the Orchestra, Band, and the Wind Ensemble* (Kenosh, WI: Leblanc Publications, 1954), 34.

⁹ Fennell, 31-32.

¹⁰ Igor Stravinsky, *Histoire du Soldat*. (London: Chester, 1924).

tambourine with bells, tambourine without bells, cylindrical drum, cymbals, bass drum], cimbalom [or piano], two violins, viola, cello and double-bass)¹¹ and *Les Noces* (soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and bass soloists, mixed chorus, and two groups of percussion instruments – pitched percussion, including four pianos, and unpitched percussion).¹² With the outset of World War I, Stravinsky was forced to discover ways to achieve maximum musical and theatrical impact from a “stripped-down” orchestra since he could no longer enjoy the means used in *Le Sacre du Printemps*, to wit, one hundred players.¹³ The score of *l’Histoire du Soldat* illustrates this innovation.

In many ways, Stravinsky elevated the winds and percussion to a place of greater prominence in the orchestra; Stravinsky’s imaginative use of the bassoon is a case in point. How Stravinsky maximized the impact of each of the instruments in the ensemble will be outlined in Chapter 6.

¹¹ Igor Stravinsky, *Renard*. (New York: Kalmus, n.d.).

¹² Igor Stravinsky, *Les Noces*. (Vienna: Chester, 1922).

¹³ Igor Stravinsky and Nicolas Roerich, *The Rite of Spring*. (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, Revised, 1947).

3. Historical Context

The European milieu that set the stage for the creation of *l'Histoire du Soldat* was rich and dramatic. Stravinsky was among the innovators in the art world of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century and, as much as anyone else, changed the face of music, theatre, and the arts forever. He, together with the many ex-patriot Russians and native French artists established a hub of creativity in Paris that influenced the future of modern art. The confluence of the vibrant art world and Stravinsky's compositions is layered with interdisciplinary connections, as Stravinsky's compositional style became more and more "hard-edged and steel-tipped,"¹⁴ possibly in response to the atrocities of the Great War.

3.1 Stravinsky and the Theatre

The first half of the twentieth century in Europe saw an unprecedented intermingling of the arts. Theatre, music and the plastic arts borrowed freely from one another as artists, individually and collaboratively, created works of mixed media. One of Stravinsky's theatre connections was by way of his being the son of an opera singer. He grew up in the shadow of the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, where he had glimpsed Tchaikovsky, and where he attended premieres of the Chekhov plays directed by Constantin Stanislavski.¹⁵ Stanislavski was the actor-turned-director who founded the

¹⁴ Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise*. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2007), 96.

¹⁵ Igor Stravinsky, *Chronicle of my Life* (London: Gallancz, 1936).

school of method acting and realism which influenced all aspects of modern theatre.¹⁶

Although Stravinsky was ultimately to move away from Stanislavski's realism in his own work,¹⁷ the Stanislavski method nevertheless furnished a certain sensibility in Stravinsky's formative years, even if it was merely a sensibility against which to rebel.

3.1.1 Context and Background of *l'Histoire du Soldat*

From its original conception, Stravinsky's *l'Histoire du Soldat* was "to be read, played, and danced"¹⁸ and Stravinsky recruited friends and colleagues to collaborate in the production of the work. His collaborators included a conductor, two dancers, a painter, and the French novelist Ramuz, who was Stravinsky's wartime neighbour in Switzerland.¹⁹ Stravinsky and Ramuz decided to center their story on a stylized folk tale collected by the Russian Afanasiev (1826-1871).²⁰

L'Histoire du Soldat involves three "partnerships" which are equally-weighted: 1) the "neutral" narrator who enters the action halfway through the work; 2) the actors/dancers; and 3) the musicians. Stravinsky claimed, "The three elements of the piece ...by their close co-operation were to form a unity... Our idea was that the three

¹⁶ David Allen, *Stanislavski for Beginners* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1999), 1.

¹⁷ Stephen Walsh, *Stravinsky A Creative Spring*. (New York: Knopf, 1999), 170.

¹⁸ Igor Stravinsky, *Histoire du Soldat*. (London: Chester, 1924).

¹⁹ Stravinsky, *Chronicle*, 124-126.

²⁰ For an English translation of Afanasyev's complete text see Richard Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Tradition*. (Berkeley: UC, 1996), 1295-7.

elements should sometimes take turns as soloists and sometimes combine as an ensemble.”²¹ This unity reflects the three parties in Stravinsky’s war: the good guys (ostensibly the Allies) the bad guys (perhaps the Germans) and the pacifists (maybe the Swiss). In direct contrast to Luther’s hymn which has only two sides—God/good and the devil/evil—Stravinsky writes a parody whereby all parties are guilty, and no one is redeemable.

3.1.2 The Wars

At its heart, *l’Histoire du Soldat* is concerned with the metaphysical war between good and evil and the point being that neither concept represents an absolute. The bones of each of the collaborators’ stories are assembled from personal experiences and views on war. I will focus here on Luther’s, Stravinsky’s, and Vonnegut’s wars.

In Luther’s war, as in Afanasiev’s Russian folk tale, the battle is between good and evil: opposite forces with clear-cut boundaries. Good (God, the soldier, the violin) is pitted against Evil (the Devil, the drums.) “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” uses vivid, militaristic language depicting God as a sanctuary from the devil. The hymn is bold in its pronouncement that “our God” is a firmament against utmost evil; but whose God is it? If God was on the German side, in the context of the war, this could offer little consolation to the likes of Stravinsky.

²¹ *Chronicle*, 123.

Stravinsky's war, the First World War, was described by Vonnegut in a 2006 interview with *New York Magazine* as "the most horrible war for soldiers in history."²² Rumours of unprecedented cruelties played havoc with Stravinsky's imagination as he passively watched from his exile in neutral Switzerland, caught between his Russian roots, French ties, and Germanic musical heritage. Stravinsky himself was never a soldier, but his parody shows war as a complicated, multi-dimensional puzzle whose pieces continually get mixed up, rearranged and confused.

Vonnegut's war was the Second World War. The event that informed nearly all of his writing was the firebombing of Dresden by the Allies, which he witnessed firsthand as a prisoner of war, when he was forced to remove thousands of dead civilians from the ensuing debris. He wrote ironically of this carnage as "a work of art...to commemorate the rage and heartbreak of many who had had their lives warped or ruined by the indescribable greed and vanity and cruelty of Germany."²³

3.2 Stravinsky's "Anachronistic" Collaborations

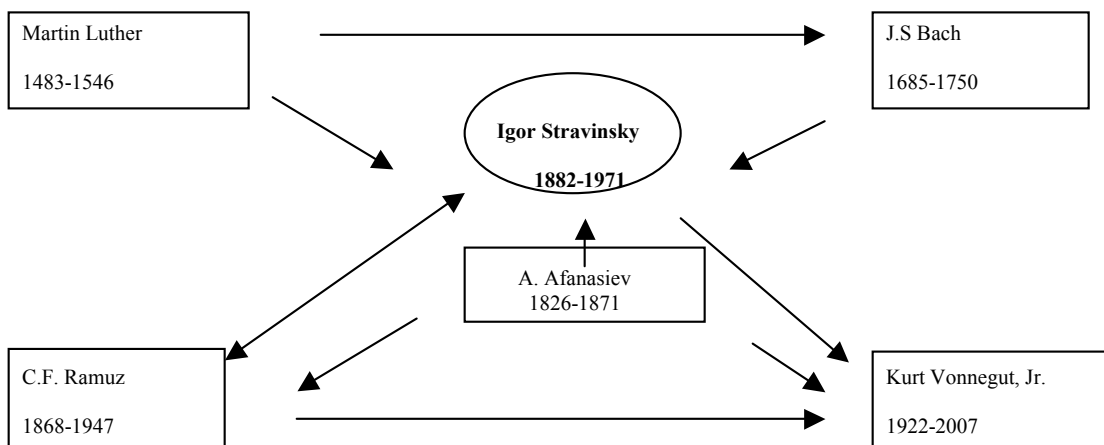
Igor Stravinsky's collaborations with the likes of Picasso, Nijinsky, and Cocteau are well documented.²⁴ Less familiar, however, are the cross-century collaborations

²² Alicia Zuckerman, "Life During Wartime." *New York Magazine*, March 26, 2006. Web. 2 Nov. 2009.

²³ Dinitia Smith, "Kurt Vonnegut, Novelist Who Caught the Imagination of His Age, Is Dead at 84," *The New York Times*, April 12, 2007.

²⁴ For a fascinating and comprehensive overview on Stravinsky's collaborators see Walsh, *Stravinsky A Creative Spring*, especially the chapter entitled "Never More Go

suggested in one short movement Stravinsky composed in 1918. “Grand Choral” from *l’Histoire du Soldat* parodies J.S. Bach’s Cantata 80 from 1715²⁵ which, in its turn, is based on Martin Luther’s hymn, “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” (“A Mighty Fortress is Our God”), purportedly dating from 1529.²⁶ Two libretti followed: one that Stravinsky knew about—the traditional text written in 1918 by Ramuz, based on a Russian folk tale collected by Afanasiev—and one that he did not, written twenty-two years after his death by Kurt Vonnegut. A short synopsis of each of the “collaborators’” texts is outlined below. Example 1 shows how the various parties intersected with each other.



Example 1: How The Parties Intersected With Each Other.

Home.” A more concise snapshot of the Paris scene is offered by *New York Times* music critic Alex Ross in “Dance of the Earth,” quoted in *The Rest is Noise*.

²⁵ J.S. Bach, *Cantata 80*. (London: Eulenburg, 1926).

²⁶ *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. (London: Clowes, 1909), 548-9.

3.2.1 Martin Luther and J.S. Bach

“Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott” describes God as a fortress against the “craft and power” of the “Prince of Darkness,” whose power is unequalled on earth. In a synoptical sense, any man who thinks he can win the battle against this hateful foe is sadly mistaken, for Satan’s devils fill the world. God, however, can destroy Satan with a single word, if the man but turn his life over to God, including his property and wife. The hymn remains today as the quintessential Lutheran “theme song,” with some of the language updated to reflect current social mores. J.S. Bach wrote his Reformation cantata around this hymn. Example 2 shows the melody, phrase structure, and text for the first verse of Luther’s hymn, below. The two principle motifs used by Stravinsky are labeled “A” and “B.”

A: motif in Grand Choral, B: "heaven-to-earth" descent broken by Stravinsky

Ein' fes - te Burg ist un - ser Gott, Ein gu - te Wehr und Waf - fen. Er
A migh - ty for - tress is our God. *A* fine de - fence and wea - pon. He

hilft uns frei aus al - ler Not, Die uns jetzt hat be - trof - fen. Der
A helps us free - ly from eve - ry peril that has now us be - fall - en. The

alt' bo - se Feind, Mit Ernst er'st jetzt meint, Gross'
A an - cient e - vil foe, with intent he now means great

Macht und viel List Sein grau - sam Ru - stung ist, Auf Erd ist nicht seins - glei - chen.
A might and much cunning are his cruel ar - ma - ments On earth is not his e - qual.

Example 2: “Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott (Word-For-Word Translation)

3.2.2 Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz

Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1868-1947), Stravinsky's librettist for *l'Histoire du Soldat*, rewrites elements of Russian folklore in 1918, which in turn are overwritten by the American novelist and liberal political activist Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. in 1993. In order to tell that story, I must give a rather detailed overview of both Ramuz's contribution and of how—and why—Vonnegut felt compelled to overwrite it in 1993.

In Ramuz's libretto, a Soldier on three days' leave marches home to his village. He rests along the way, takes out his fiddle, and plays. The Devil persuades the Soldier to trade his fiddle for a magic book, which will earn him immense wealth. The Soldier flies off with the Devil to a netherworld, where he teaches the Devil to play the violin. When he returns to real life, the Soldier discovers that three years have passed and he is now a fugitive. He enters another magical kingdom to save a Princess, at which point the Narrator suggests that the Soldier challenge the Devil to a game of cards to win back his violin. The Soldier loses his money, but wins back his soul, and marries the Princess. The couple, however, is cursed to remain in the magical kingdom forever. "Grand Choral" plays while the Narrator delivers the moral of the story,²⁷ and the Soldier decides to take his chances by returning to his village, but the Devil snatches him and leads him away, powerless to resist.

In *Chronicle of My Life*, Stravinsky states, "It was [the] essentially human element of the tragic story of the soldier destined to become the prey of the devil that

²⁷ "The thing you were before you changed you can't be anymore." Ramuz, trans. Sams.

attracted Ramuz and myself.”²⁸ While Stravinsky captures the humanity of the tale in his music, Ramuz falls short of the task. According to Anastasia Tsioulcas, Stravinsky was constantly in search of a new English version of *l’Histoire du Soldat*, and in the 1960s he approached Tennessee Williams with just such a project in mind.²⁹ Unfortunately, that collaboration never came to pass.

3.2.3 Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

In 1993, twenty-two years after Stravinsky’s death, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (1922-2007) wrote his libretto for *l’Histoire du Soldat*, based on the true story of Private Eddie Slovik, the last American soldier to be executed for desertion.³⁰ The human element which Stravinsky sought for *l’Histoire du Soldat* finally emerges in a libretto that is both realistic and pointed. As mentioned, Vonnegut had witnessed the firebombing of Dresden as a PoW in the Second World War, and was forced to remove thousands of dead bodies from the ensuing debris. This singular event informed much of his subsequent writing, including *l’Histoire du Soldat*.

Vonnegut’s version of the tale overwrites Ramuz’s in much the same manner as Stravinsky’s music overwrites Bach’s chorale. In essence, Vonnegut collaborates with

²⁸ Stravinsky, *Chronicle of My Life*, 120.

²⁹ Anastasia Tsioulcas, “Irons Narrates Stravinsky’s Unearthed ‘Tale,’” *Billboard Magazine*, June 2007. Web. 1 Jan. 2009.

³⁰ Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. “*L’Histoire du Soldat*.” *The Paris Review*. 148 (1998): 188.

[Eddie’s desertion mimics the fugitive Soldier in Ramuz’s libretto, who also deserts.]

Stravinsky himself by restructuring Afanasiev's folk tale and Eddie's story, just as Stravinsky restructured Luther's hymn via Bach's chorale.

The 1993 play opens with a prologue, in which a narrator speaks for Vonnegut, the author, telling the audience what they are about to see and why he rewrote the libretto. The narrator calls Ramuz's text silly, unlike Stravinsky's music, which is "anything but innocent. Its folkloric merriment is so soured by wry melodic ironies that it might in fact be a setting for a real down-and-dirty soldier's story."³¹ The narrator then assumes the character of a World War Two general and the play begins, with the entrance of a soldier, a member of the military police, and a cynical nurse.

Eddie Slovik, a young draftee from a lower-class immigrant family, has deserted from his platoon. He is a mediocre soldier who lacks heroic qualities, and presents a problem for the General. According to the military manual, Eddie is to be placed before a firing squad of his peers and shot to death, but the General does not want to make a martyr out of him. The General attempts to convince Eddie to return to his platoon. Eddie refuses, preferring to die by execution rather than fight, noting, "At least I'll know who did it and why, which is more than I'd know if I were some poor runt at the front."³² Eddie is led to his execution and, during the performance of "Grand Choral," Eddie succumbs to his fate.

Like the contorted cadences in Stravinsky's music, Vonnegut's story decries tidy endings and stylistic conventions. Gone are the magic fiddle and book from Ramuz's

³¹ Vonnegut, "L'Histoire."

³² Vonnegut, "L'Histoire."

libretto; gone is the supernatural in the guise of time-travel, of flying carriages, and miraculous cures. What is left is raw humanity with its disturbed decisions, dire consequences, and crucial questions. Theatrical details such as costume pieces fall away. Humanity speaks, and uncomfortable truths hang in the air unadorned. The cast steps out of character and, in a chilling parody of liturgical chant, intones unison responses to historical facts. Bits of melodic debris from Bach's chorale begin to fall, settling into awkward forms. Vonnegut takes the shards and shapes them into a firing post, a deadly gateway to the evil of which Luther warned, but which Ramuz so decidedly avoids.

In sum, Stravinsky's original purpose of telling a human soldier's tale is given voice by Vonnegut, who wades into the horror as he literally was forced to do in 1945 Dresden, to gather up mutilated body parts.

4. Analysis of “Grand Choral”

4.1 The Chorale

Stravinsky dismantles and reassembles motifs from Bach’s chorale, upending Bach’s homophonic style to create a startlingly individual piece of music, immediately recognizable as a distortion of the well-known hymn. Most compelling, however, is what Stravinsky leaves out: the text. The silencing of Luther’s muscular—and vivid—sentiments on salvation results in a story of mute despair. As the words to the well-known hymn insinuate themselves into the listener’s mind, there is a bizarre, if implied, twist: “A mighty fortress is our God: a bulwark never fading” becomes “A mighty fortress is our God: ancient, evil foe.” Stravinsky’s cadences are formally laid out like Bach’s, but are grotesquely disfigured.³³

The transformation of Saviour into villain offers a stark insight into Stravinsky’s views on World War I. The impact created by words that are neither sung nor spoken onstage, but rather are implanted in the listener’s mind via association, invites the audience into Stravinsky’s internal monologue in compelling ways.

The juxtaposition of phrases makes a mockery of the venerated Lutheran hymn. Stravinsky’s music tells a hollow tale laced with irony; there are no “good guys” in this story. Stravinsky strips the flesh from Bach’s cantata setting and in the process the bones of Luther’s exalted testimonial sentiments fall to the floor in an unrecognizable heap. Stravinsky then meticulously begins to reassemble the parts to tell a rather different tale.

³³ An example of the verbiage that results when Luther’s text is laid under Stravinsky’s rearranged phrases is found in Example 3 on p. 22 of this document.

4.2 Vonnegut & Stravinsky Unite

Vonnegut and Stravinsky unite in something of a spiritual collaboration in their approach to parody, and in their ironic views of good and evil. They use similar techniques to drive home their points, including repetition, mimicry, montage, and aborted conclusions.

Consider the case of Vonnegut's Master's Thesis entitled "The Fluctuations between Good and Evil in Simple Tales,"³⁴ which offers an insight into his attraction to Stravinsky's *l'Histoire du Soldat*. Although ultimately rejected by the University of Chicago, the Thesis was written shortly after Vonnegut returned from World War II, and speaks to a preoccupation with opposing "truths" and a lack of faith in the ideals of absolute good and absolute evil. Vonnegut's shift from shocking theatricality to stripped-down realism two-thirds of the way through his libretto underscores the futility of trying to make sense of war, and hence serves as the perfect foil to Stravinsky's dilemma of 1918.

The utter futility of attempting to find meaning in the chaos of World Wars I and II is reproduced by both Stravinsky and Vonnegut through their use of repetition; repetition with only slight variation eschews any notion of development or progression toward a goal. Daniel Cordle, writing of this technique comments " [Vonnegut] displays discomfort at the idea of a simple, progressive chronology, suggesting that it [linear

³⁴ Smith, "Vonnegut."

progression] panders to our desire to find meaning in our lives and is a powerful form of self-deception.”³⁵

Example 3 (p. 22) is a transcription of the melody of the first segment of “Grand Choral,” which indicates that the melodic fragment taken from measures 1-2 of the Bach chorale (earlier, in Example 2 (p.14), labeled “A”) is repeated no fewer than eight times by Stravinsky, with only subtle variations. The one-note fragment at measure 2, characterized by a fermata and the implied word “God,” is repeated nine times, signified in Example 3 with asterisks.

³⁵ Daniel Cordle, “Changing of the Old Guard: Time Travel and Literary Technique in the Work of Kurt Vonnegut.” *The Yearbook of English Studies* 30 (2000), 170.

(Bach mm.) 1-2 * 1-2 * 2

(CLARINET)

f ...ste Burg ist un ser Gott, Burg is un ser Gott (Gott)
 ...ty for - tress is our God, (fortress is our God God)

5 9-10 10-11 1-2 * 2

meno f alt' bo - se Feind ernst er's jetzt meint ist un ser Gott (Gott)
 an - cient, e - vil foe. earnestness he now means is our God (God)

10 1-2 9-10 1-2 * 2

(TRUMPET)

p ist un ser alt' bo - se Feind ist un ser Gott (Gott)
 is our an - cient ev - il foe is our God (God)

15 6-8 with second half of 7 missing at the V, ending in new "key area" 8-9

(CLARINET) **(TRUMPET)** **(CLARINET)**

Die uns jetzt ...trof fen Der alt - - bo(seFeind)
 That we now over - ta - ken by the an - - cient e(vilFoe)

18 10-13 with 12 missing at the V and a swerve into a new "key area"

(TRUMPET)

(Mit) ernst er's jetzt meint Gross' viel List
 (With earnestness he now means great, much cunning.

23 1-2 1-2 * * 2

pp Ein fest e Burg is un(ser) Gott grau sam Rue stang ist, (Gott) (Gott)
 A migh - ty fortress is our God cru - el wea - pons are (God) (God)

29 1-2 1-2 * 2 * 2 * 2

(CLARINET)

pp Burg ist un ist un ser Gott, (Gott) (Gott) (Gott)
 Fortress is our is our God. (God) (God) (God)

Example 3: "Grand Choral" With Implied Textual Underlay

In the same manner that Stravinsky parodies Bach's phrase structure, Vonnegut mimics Ramuz's rhyme scheme, inserting banal questions into the later libretto like the

tongue twister “How much wood can a woodchuck chuck?” and the oddly-placed “Oh, beautiful for spacious skies/ for amber waves of grain,” each of which is meant to parody American culture. Bits of colloquial war songs are sung, such as “We don’t want no more of your bullshit... We just want to go home.” The play ends with the actors mimicking Dwight Eisenhower, as the commander-in-chief attempts to defend his decision to sign Eddie’s death warrant.

As mentioned earlier in this analysis, Stravinsky’s soldier’s tale is somewhat of a puzzle with its continually mutating configurations, but as the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and structural elements of “Grand Choral” originating with Luther and Bach take shape, Stravinsky tells a compelling story.

After reassembly, the shards are bound together in a way that appears random, but that actually has a literary meaning which is far from the message Luther told in his story. The listener is enjoined to fill in the gaps where the missing text would be placed, and assigns Stravinsky’s recomposed meaning to the phrases. As the old phrases snap together, the new textual orientations wreak havoc with Luther’s stark theology.

Similarly, Vonnegut works with a collage of literary forms such as documentary, exposé, sermon, and drama. He, too, borrows elements from varied sources: history, liturgy, popular culture, and even William Shakespeare. Vonnegut’s characters transmogrify over the course of the chamber musical as Bach’s motifs do under Stravinsky’s reassembly. For example, the neutral narrator at the beginning becomes first an unpleasant General and later a sympathetic figure. The puzzling and enigmatic nurse transforms into a fervent activist for Eddie’s cause. Eddie himself fluctuates between being victim and victor.

The juxtaposition of unlikely events assigns any number of ironic meanings to the whole. Vonnegut's placement of "Grand Choral" beside the execution of Eddie identifies the chorale as death music, taking the message of the chorale a step farther than even Stravinsky himself in his, that is Stravinsky's satirization of Luther's and Bach's "mighty fortress." Stravinsky causes the God-as-a-righteous-weapon metaphor to backfire in his music; Vonnegut uses that weapon to kill Eddie. And, in yet another real-life irony of which Vonnegut must have been aware, "Ein' feste Burg," (along with "Onward Christian Soldiers") was sung by a choir at Eisenhower's funeral in 1969."³⁶

Aborted conclusions and unsatisfying resolutions abound in Stravinsky's music; one of the most telling being Stravinsky's treatment of Bach's satisfying octave-long descents in the consequent phrases of the chorale setting, labeled "B" in Example 2 on p. 14 of this document. Although these lines appear elsewhere in *l'Histoire du Soldat* -- for example, the trombone melody in "Marche Royale" -- such "pat" answers do not belong in Stravinsky's chorale. In "Grand Choral," the descending scale motif from Bach measures 6 - 8 appears twice with a missing section, indicated by the large "V" in Example 3 (p. 22). To add to the sense of unease, the cadences swerve into "wrong" keys.

Dramatically, Vonnegut's *l'Histoire du Soldat* fizzles out just as "Grand Choral" does, dynamically losing energy with each scene. In Stravinsky's "Grand Choral" subsequent phrases decrease in volume and move lower in pitch. The tessitura of the piece is two complete octaves, where Bach's is one octave, creating another metaphor for

³⁶ *The Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum*. Web. 14 July 2009.

utter decline. When the end finally comes, it does—in the words of T. S. Eliot—“not with a bang but a whimper.”³⁷

³⁷ T.S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men.” *Poems: 1909-1925*, (London: Faber, 1925), 123.

5. Process And Performance

5.1 Score Study and Rehearsal

The process of score analysis, research and practice began in June, 2007 and continued up to the day of the performance, on March 31, 2009.

5.1.1 Score Analysis

My preliminary score analysis included a formal/harmonic layer analysis and an analysis of Stravinsky's techniques of collage, context/modeling, and substitution as outlined by Carl Wiens.³⁸ Additionally, I created an orchestration-and-texture timeline as recommended by Frank Battisti and Robert Garofalo.³⁹ Battisti and Garofalo advocate the charting of real-time moments and events, intended to enhance the conductor's memory. Finally, a gestural analysis was adapted from *Score and Podium*,⁴⁰ *The Conductor and His Score*,⁴¹ and the teachings of Dr. Dale Lonis.⁴² Lonis's system uses

³⁸Carl Wiens, "Igor Stravinsky and Agon." Ph.D. Diss. U of Michigan, 1997.

³⁹ Frank Battisti and Robert Garofalo, *Guide to Score Study: For the Wind Band Conductor* (Fort Lauderdale: Meredith, 1990).

⁴⁰ Frederik Prausnitz, *Score and Podium: A Complete Guide to Conducting* (New York: Norton, 1983).

⁴¹ Nicolai Malko and Elizabeth Green, *The Conductor and His Score* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975).

⁴² Dale J. Lonis, Lecture entitled "Essential Rehearsal Techniques for Unifying your Ensemble Sound," presented at the University of Saskatchewan, 21 February, 2008.

simple and specific icons placed directly into the score to facilitate consistent and mindful conducting gestures. Included in the gestural analysis was the construction of an “emotional plot” as inspired by Sir Adrian Boult.⁴³

5.1.2 Research

I compared four different versions of the English text of *l'Histoire du Soldat*: the original translation of Ramuz's libretto by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black;⁴⁴ the Kalmus version by an undocumented translator;⁴⁵ Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s 1993 adaptation based on the true story of Private Eddie Slovik, the only American soldier executed for desertion since the Civil War, who died in 1945;⁴⁶ and a 1986 version by R.O. Blechman used in his animated short film modeled on the Ramuz script.⁴⁷ In addition, I listened to audio recordings and viewed video productions of several other works of Stravinsky, concentrating on the so-called “Russian period” in order to get a feel for style, choreography, and flow.

⁴³ Adrian C. Boult, *A Handbook on the Technique of Conducting*. 7th ed. (Oxford: Hall, 1959).

⁴⁴ C. F. Ramuz, *Histoire du Soldat*. Trans. Michael Flanders and Kitty Black.

⁴⁵ *The Soldier's Tale* (New York: Kalmus, 1960).

⁴⁶ Vonnegut, *L'Histoire du Soldat*.

⁴⁷ *The Soldier's Tale*. Dir. R.O. Blechman. (New York: Koch Lorber, 2004), DVD.

5.1.3 Rehearsal

I began the first phase of the rehearsal process, individual conducting practice, in June 2007. A great deal of the process was concerned with the physical practice of gesture and stance; the goal was to establish “automaticity,” the ability to conduct automatically in precise patterns while the mind is engaged with other musical matters. It was necessary to internalize the sound of the score, a process Marcia Ann LaReau calls auralization, “the perception of internal musical sound without external stimulus.”⁴⁸ Traditional methods of conducting practice such as practicing with a metronome, singing lines, and transposing parts were employed. In January, 2008, I created an electronic MIDI file of exercises based on the score of *l’Histoire du Soldat* which has proven useful for “automatizing” difficult passages, and especially in time signatures such as 7/16.⁴⁹

My concert was postponed from June 2008 to March 2009, and I found myself with nearly an extra year of preparation. This offered me the luxury of spending many hours singing the melodic lines in a somewhat random parody of *solfeggio*, which yielded excellent results toward the goal of auralization.⁵⁰ I played everything on the piano,

⁴⁸Marcia Ann La Reau, “An Auralization-Based Curriculum as a Methodology for Advanced Aural Skills Training for Wind Band Conductors.” Diss. U Michigan, 1989), 8.

⁴⁹ The mixture of traditional and non-traditional time signatures is a hallmark of Stravinsky’s writing.

⁵⁰ This practice became useful in rehearsals when certain players were absent for then I was able to sing the missing lines.

singing one line while transposing and playing the other lines; a labor intensive but worthwhile process.

Acting rehearsals started on February 1, 2009, rehearsing in three-hour periods on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Six three-hour musicians' rehearsals began two weeks before the performance. The actors and dancers were present for the initial read-through in the performance space, Quance Theatre, and returned for the last two rehearsals with the musicians, one of which was a dress rehearsal which was videotaped.⁵¹

I had conducting lessons on *l'Histoire du Soldat* with Dr. Glen Gillis and Earl Stafford, Musical Director of the Saskatoon Symphony and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, each of whom have previously conducted the work (in the original version, with Ramuz's libretto).

The performance took place in Quance Theatre and was well attended by University of Saskatchewan students and members of the Saskatoon community.

5.2 The Roles of the Personnel

The names of the personnel in the March 31 production are listed in the printed program attached as Appendix A, p. 52 of this document.

5.2.1 Conductor

As a conducting student, my primary focus was to learn the music, assemble and rehearse the chamber orchestra, and conduct the performance. Because of the

⁵¹ Footage from this rehearsal and the final performance appears on a DVD which was filmed by Angela Edmunds and edited by Marcel Petit and Nick Nostbakken, two of the actors in the production.

interdisciplinary nature of the work, however—it includes acting, narration, and dancing—and logistics such as budget and time restrictions (much as Stravinsky himself experienced in 1918), I also became producer, designer, wardrobe coordinator, publicist, stage manager, transcriber, and stage director.

5.2.2 Producer, Designer, Wardrobe Coordinator, and Publicist

As producer, it was my task to find a theme, a *raison d'être* for the performance. I used Stravinsky's compositional technique of cut-and-paste to give unity to each aspect of the performance. To cast the show, I used the players I had at hand, an assemblage of professional associates from the community, students from the music and drama departments, and even my son. Costumes were chosen according to similar principles, consisting of a ragbag of eccentric items borrowed from the Drama Department. I created posters literally by cut-and-paste, using the "ransom-note concept," another example of collage technique, with individual letters cut out of various magazines.⁵²

5.2.3 Stage Manager and Transcriber

I combined staging directions from the Kalmus and the Chester editions of *l'Histoire du Soldat*. I assembled scripts for the actors based on the two published versions of the Ramuz libretto, but the day before the first rehearsal I found a recording

⁵² I did this in order to create a slightly sinister mood. A sample poster is found as Appendix B on p.56.

of the work with a translation by Jeremy Sams which I preferred, and so I transcribed Sams' version from the recording.⁵³ I retained the stage directions from the other two editions. I downloaded the Vonnegut libretto (which is unpublished) from the internet.

I created a schedule for memorization and a job-list for the cast; for example, each cast member was responsible for obtaining property items and costume pieces. When they failed to deliver, which happened on more than one occasion, I did it. I organized rehearsal space with the help of one of the actors and set up the stage before and struck the space following each rehearsal. Most of the acting rehearsals took place in a dance studio, Saskatoon's *Step on Stage*, which was adequate for our purposes and offered to me free of charge.

5.2.4 Stage Director

Originally, I planned to hire a professional director. Although I have directed several amateur productions of light-hearted musicals, I did not consider myself qualified for the task of directing the two involved chamber musicals based upon the Ramuz and the Vonnegut libretti. After considering my detailed and substantial concept of the final production, however, I realized that bringing in an outside director would be, at best, confusing to the cast, and at worst, raise possible conflicts with respect to my vision of the work—something that was well developed after two years of research; furthermore, my knowledge of the libretti and the music was far more extensive than that of any director hired at a late stage in the project; therefore, I was the obvious candidate for the

⁵³ This CD also features a never-before-released studio recording of Stravinsky conducting *l'Histoire du Soldat* in 1961.

job. I reasoned that if I were to seek assistance from members of the cast who have directorial training, we could collectively craft a viable product.

My role in rehearsals, then, was to communicate to the actors what I knew of Stravinsky's conception for the work and to explain to them what happens in the music (in the absence of the musicians). I sought to provide a context for the actors in which they could "find" their characters while expressing Stravinsky's music and the libretti of Ramuz and Vonnegut. The main objective of the blocking was to establish a visually pleasing and clear picture of the action.

I took in the developing stage work, giving minimal directions, and encouraged the cast to discuss and implement their own ideas.⁵⁴ My rationale for adopting this approach was based on the expertise and experience of the cast, and the fact that I trusted their instincts as much as, if not more than, mine.

5.2.5 Choreographer

The principle dancer in the production also choreographed the show. She was in charge of some of the blocking as well, and because she was off-stage during most of the two plays, she was able to serve as a second pair of critical eyes.

5.2.6 Assistant Directors

Two assistant directors helped to solve theatrical problems such as blocking when they arose; the one assistant has experience and training as a drama teacher in the

⁵⁴ This cooperative process worked quite well, although I did hear some complaints after the fact that some of the actors would have preferred to be told exactly what to do.

Saskatchewan school system and the other has professional training at the Canadian College of Performing Arts in Victoria. The choreographer transcribed my instructions to the cast (including blocking) so that we would have a record of progress from week-to-week. Both assistant directors freely offered ideas and suggestions which were, for the most part, well accepted by me and the rest of the cast. In the case of artistic disagreement, I made the final call.

5.2.7 Actors, Dancers, and Musicians

The actors also assumed crew duties. The break dancer and the ballet dancer had the additional responsibility of choreographing their own dances and rehearsing these on their own time, outside of scheduled rehearsals. The musicians' roles were self-explanatory.

6. Conducting *l'Histoire du Soldat* With Two Libretti

6.1 The “Superobjective”

Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) coined the phrase “superobjective” when he proposed his acting method.⁵⁵ The superobjective incorporates a system of inner work and outer work that is highly relevant for conductors of music as well as for actors. Inner work—that which Stanislavski calls “psycho-technique”—is designed to help the actor (and for my purposes, the conductor) “live the role.” Stanislavski’s outer work incorporates physical techniques; that is, movement, breath, voice, and relaxation, each of which is intended to “help the actor [conductor] to express the inner life of the role [music] in an artistic, scenic form.”⁵⁶

The process of *perezhivanie* (“living through”) consists in creating a “score” of the role, a superobjective, and its active attainment by means of the through line of action.In every role, there must be a sense of continuous life...an unbroken line. If this line is broken, then it means the actor [conductor] no longer understands what he or she is saying and doing—the life of the character [music] stops.⁵⁷

The connection of Stanislavski’s approach in a musical sense is made by Nicholas Nabokov who asserts that a “mechanical succession of events” is the ruling idea of all of Stravinsky’s dramas and permeates Stravinsky’s musical scores. Nabokov writes:

This approach extends beyond his choice of subjects. It controls the very treatment of musical materials, to which [Stravinsky] so cleverly applies

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Hapgood, *Stanislavski’s Legacy* (New York: Theatre Arts, 1958).

⁵⁶ Allen, *Stanislavski*, 117.

⁵⁷ Allen, *Stanislavski*, 136-137.

this mechanization. He does it [creates the effect of a mechanical succession of events] by means of the most scrupulous measurements of timing, expressive lines, dynamic changes and interval relations. He reconstructs in a dramatic work the precise mechanics of a dramatic situation. He leaves the listener no room for an interpretative variation or a vague fantasy.⁵⁸

Though there is nothing indicating that the two men from St. Petersburg ever met, Stanislavski and Stravinsky together caught the *zeitgeist* of their overlapping generations.

6.2 The Role of the Conductor

Technically, the conductor of *l'Histoire du Soldat* is presented with numerous challenges and opportunities for making technical, interpretive, and musical choices. Although Stravinsky meticulously detailed interpretive issues in the score, the imaginative conductor, while remaining true to Stravinsky's indications, can place a stamp of personal vision on the work. Cross-rhythms, asymmetrical metres, and the discipline of strictly defined tempo indications combined with timbral intricacies in the orchestration call for an intimate knowledge of every nuance of the score, and a finely honed muscle memory nurtured by hours of conducting practice with a metronome.

6.2.1 Tempo and Rhythm

The level of precision in tempo and rhythm required in *l'Histoire du Soldat* has been addressed by many. George Balanchine claims:

As an organizer of rhythms, Stravinsky has been more subtle and various than any single creator in history. And since his rhythms

⁵⁸ Nicolas Nabokov, "Stravinsky and the Drama," *Stravinsky in the Theatre*. Ed. Minna Lederman (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1949), 116.

are so clear, so exact, to extemporize with them is improper. There is no place for effects. With Stravinsky, a fermata is always counted out in beats. If he intends a rubato, it will be notated precisely, in unequal measures.⁵⁹

The good news for conductors is that the performance will be successful if each musician executes exactly what is written; the bad news is that achieving a flawless performance is difficult, given the virtuosity of the parts. The role of the conductor in *l'Histoire du Soldat*, as in any work, is to:

- Know the melody and harmony in order to balance the chords;
- Find the best players available to play the parts;
- Organize an adequate rehearsal schedule;
- Maximize time in rehearsals to attend to technical challenges while making time for some explanation of the dramatic principles, so that the players themselves understand the “role” of the music.

In addition, it is particularly vital in conducting *l'Histoire du Soldat* to:

- Clearly show the downbeats so that the group remains coordinated, or failing that, finds its way back together;
- Inspire the players to trust themselves. The slightest hesitation in the music is deadly;
- Inspire the players to trust the conductor. They must know that s/he knows where each and every downbeat falls, especially with regard to the asymmetric meters and steady tempo.

⁵⁹ George Balanchine, “The Dance Element in Stravinsky’s Music,” *Stravinsky in the Theatre*. Ed. Minna Lederman (New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, 1949), 75.

- Stay out of the players' way and let them perform.

6.2.2 Embodying Style

A wealth of musical styles exists in *l'Histoire du Soldat*. Dances, chorales, marches, and mood-setting music offer opportunities for conductors to explore and expand their repertoire of gestures and to consider aspects of physical embodiment. Physical embodiment is the ability of the conductor, through gesture and stance, to “look like” the score in order to convey its style and substance.⁶⁰ Music derived from folk idioms in general, and the score of *l'Histoire du Soldat* in particular, requires that the conductor internalize the critical defining elements of each of the idioms, because there is simply no time to externalize these elements in fanciful ways. To adapt Stanislavski's method, the conductor “lives the role” [the music], the players perceive the inner meaning, and relay it to the audience by means of their collective performance.

6.2.3 Balance, Timbre, and Characterization

Issues surrounding intonation, blend, and balance present unique challenges in the chamber musical, where there is only one player on each part. Each player is a soloist with a specific role, sometimes portraying a mood, an action, a character, or a moral aspect of the drama. For example, Stravinsky claimed that “the characteristic sounds of

⁶⁰ Joseph A. Labuta, *Basic Conducting Techniques*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004).

Histoire are the scrape of the violin and the punctuation of the drums. The violin is the soldier's soul and the drums are the *diablerie*.”⁶¹

Often the mark of effective conducting is the achievement of a uniform sound; however, in *l'Histoire du Soldat* there are relatively few moments when unity of sound, or blend, is called for in the score; rather, the individual solo lines are meant to stand on their own, jar the senses, and purposefully create a sense of non-uniformity. The exceptions to this are found in instances of instrumental pairing, which are documented under the following subheading “Specific Issues in the Movements.”

6.3 Specific Issues in the Movements

To describe the specific conducting issues I encountered in rehearsals and performance, I will follow the format of describing: 1) issues common to both libretti; 2) problems that were particular to the Ramuz libretto, if any; and 3) changes that were made in the Vonnegut version, if any. “Part One” and “Part Two” are Stravinsky's musical designations and do not refer to the two performances on March 31. The English titles are included for the sake of clarity, and because they are in common usage.

6.3.1 Part One: “Marche du Soldat”: “Soldier's March”

This recurrent and musically charming movement is deceptive; it contains several challenging moments, especially the measures between rehearsal markers 7 and 9, where the bass and percussion play off the beat. Prior to studying the score in a serious fashion, I made the mistake of repeatedly listening and “conducting” to a recording of this piece.

⁶¹ Stravinsky and Craft, *Expositions and Developments*, 104.

My brain interpreted the offbeat sections quite differently than the way in which Stravinsky notates them and I was subsequently unable to embody the actual rhythms in the fullest sense owing to my initial misinterpretation. Exacerbating this problem was the fact that the first recording I studied was slightly erratic in terms of tempo, which I did not realize until I became more familiar with the work. For these reasons, I would strongly recommend to any first-time conductor that they study the score and rehearse the gestures at slow speeds and with a metronome prior to studying recordings.

Grouping the asymmetrical measures between rehearsal markers [3] and [4] results in one stray 3/8 measure, but in the remainder of the movement, grouping the measures results in symmetry, most satisfactorily in the *fortissimo* section between rehearsal markers [10] and [13], a section that was difficult to learn, but not that difficult to execute in ensemble.⁶²

Seemingly quite simple, a demanding issue in the Ramuz libretto is the Narrator's part in "Marche du Soldat," which is written out metrically. The required degree of coordination with the music is not always easy for actors to achieve. First, there is no Narrator's part included in the score, and so even if the actor reads music s/he will have to consult the conductor's score. More likely, the Narrator will be forced to listen to a recording to get a sense of the meter and tempo. In our performance the gender articles

⁶² However, in the second act of the March 31 performance, I inadvertently hesitated for a fraction of a second at the rest on the downbeat at rehearsal marker [10] and there was a moment of anarchy in the ensemble before we were able to synchronize.

were changed to accommodate the female soldier, so the actor playing the Narrator did not want to listen too much to a recording for fear of internalizing the gender articles or someone else's interpretation. Unfortunately, because rehearsal time was at a premium the Narrator did not have adequate exposure to the live orchestral timings.

6.3.2 “Musique de la 1ère scène”: “Airs by a Stream”

Again, I first learned this movement “by ear” from recordings and misperceived the meter in the early part of my study process. The same problems as noted in “Marche du Soldat” ensued. “Musique de la 1ère scène” is quite long and complex, and one of the most error-prone movements of the work. The way I finally mastered it was by singing the bass line and counting out loud, while playing the violin part on the piano with my left hand and conducting with my right. I followed this approach starting at half speed and working up to full speed. At first, I set the metronome to the eighth note and eventually—after grouping the asymmetrical measure—was able to conduct with the metronome reflecting quarter notes. The grouping works out beautifully between rehearsal markers [5] and [11], with a solid landing on the downbeat of rehearsal marker [11].⁶³

The 7/16 measure just in advance of rehearsal marker [13] is conducted in the manner of a 2/4 measure with the second beat “clipped.”

⁶³ The double stops required of the violin are difficult, and so our violinist played single stops at one measure after rehearsal marker [10] as a means of maintaining rhythmic flow.

“Musique de la 1ère scène” must not be rushed, so it is very important to keep in constant eye contact with the musicians, especially with the bass player who must play steady eighth notes throughout.

It is effective to introduce a *pianissimo* for the last nine bars, although this is not indicated in the score. All the recordings I consulted contained such a dynamic decrease.

6.3.3 “Musique de la 2ème scène”: “Pastorale”

“Musique de la 2ème scène” is sparsely scored and the clarinet and bassoon parts are exposed. Both eerily beautiful and highly evocative, it is of all the movements in the work the most emotionally charged and reflective of the mindset of the actors onstage. “Musique de la 2ème scène” is, however, written in a very high tessitura for the bassoon and is to be performed at a soft dynamic, and so it is fraught with many challenges for the player.

Beyond instrumental performance issues, though, the movement contains inherent demands on the conductor. Earl Stafford suggested gestural practice “leading the metronome,” conducting the line, and under no circumstance allowing myself to linger on the beat.⁶⁴ Consciously subdividing the beat internally and externally will simplify the process, but the conductor requires a great deal of mental stamina to execute this piece without allowing the tempo to become bogged down by the ensemble.

⁶⁴ Private conducting lesson, March 3, 2009.

6.3.4 “Musique de la 3ème scène”: “Airs by a Stream”

This movement, a reprise of “Musique de la 2ème scène,” is shortened and is heard twice. Each time it has a slightly different dramatic effect, requiring sensitivity to mood and the action onstage. In the Ramuz libretto, the first iteration underscores the Soldier’s longing for “something real.” The second time, the movement underscores the emotionally-charged scene where the Soldier realizes he is doomed, throws the violin, and tears the magical book into a thousand pieces. Conductor discipline in terms of tempo is crucial here.

6.3.5 Part Two: “Marche du Soldat”: “Soldier’s March”

The reprise of “Marche du Soldat” markers the beginning of the second half of the Ramuz libretto where the Narrator commences again. It may even be that the audience has a sense of *déjà vu* with “everything just as it had been before.”⁶⁵

This movement incorporates minute departures from the original “Marche du Soldat,” which can be problematic; for example, at rehearsal marker [1] there is only one measure of rest for the trumpet and trombone (there were two in the original “Marche”) and at rehearsal marker [3] the abrupt “cadence” tends to catch the musicians “off guard.” The full stop one measure before rehearsal marker [5], where monologue is inserted, requires special acuity, since this stop does not occur in the first version of “Marche du Soldat.”

In the Ramuz performance, a potential balance problem arises at rehearsal marker [5]. The Narrator is required to shout above the *tutti* ensemble playing *mf*. In

⁶⁵ Ramuz, *L’Histoire du Soldat*.

performance, I miscalculated the acoustics of the room, and as a result it was difficult to hear the Narrator's lines. I should have restricted the dynamic level of the ensemble to *mp*.

In the Vonnegut libretto, this movement seems redundant since nothing happens onstage during its performance and the audience has already heard this music (at the March 31 concert) five times, so I made a cut at two measures after rehearsal marker [3]. I would not recommend doing so, however, as cuts increase the margin for error in stressful performance situations and should only be incorporated when the saving in real time is significant. In our case, we only saved a minute of time by making the cut, and playing the extra minute of music would have been a safer choice. Indeed, one player forgot about the cut and kept playing.

6.3.6 “Marche Royale”: “Royal March”

One of the most satisfying and joyful movements in *l'Histoire du Soldat*, “Marche Royale” poses unique challenges. It is not particularly demanding to learn individually or to practice, but in ensemble if even one of the musicians rushes at all, the off-beat rhythms become impossible to execute. At four measures after rehearsal marker [9], it is taxing to keep one's focus on the 3/4 meter, with the percussion and bass playing in 2/4. At rehearsal marker [10], with the entire ensemble playing unified chords, *forte*, in 2/4 time, it is even more challenging for the conductor and the trumpet player to remain in 3/4.

The tie at the beginning of measure 5 is one place where the trombonist may tend to rush. The trumpeter has a precarious part throughout, and may tend to slow. The conductor's rigorous task is to refrain from following the musicians and instead to keep

the tempo steady and the downbeats “visible” at all times: not an easy feat in this movement.

6.3.7 “Petit Concert”: “Little Concert”

The longest and possibly the most intricate and exhausting piece for the players, “Little Concert” is especially demanding of the trumpet player. Out of necessity, we adopted a tempo of approximately ♩=112 instead of Stravinsky’s ♩=120.

In the Ramuz libretto, the main conducting requirement is concentration, due to the repetitive nature of the piece. From rehearsal marker [22] onward, the piece seems to disintegrate almost into randomness. Each instrumentalist is placed in their own little world, and the Narrator is forced to shout above the music, fighting to be heard. Chaos has the potential to reign supreme; however, by turning ones attention to individual fragments, a recurring pattern emerges. Fragments of melody from earlier movements are tossed into Stravinsky’s mix with a sense of manic optimism taking hold as the story approaches its denouement.

Between rehearsal markers [22] and [26], where the Narrator shouts over the loud and densely scored orchestration, the conductor has to find a way to maintain the *staccato e leggiero* effect, and this despite the difficulty of: a) the long trill and subsequent run in the clarinet at rehearsal marker [23]; b) the indicated dynamics of *forte* and *mezzo-forte*, and accent indications such as *sforzando*; and c) the high tessitura.

6.3.8 “Trois Danses”: “Tango”; “Waltz”; “Ragtime”

“Tango” is basically a duet between the violinist and the percussionist, and the conductor’s role is limited to showing the downbeats and tending to the clarinet entries at rehearsal markers 4 and 7.

The *segue* into “Waltz” is somewhat difficult to execute. The bass and bassoon lines do not have violin cues written in their parts and it is thus difficult to know when the “Waltz” is about to begin because of tempo and meter changes at rehearsal marker 8 of the “Tango.” I conducted the “Waltz” in one, with the feel of a Viennese waltz, and with exaggerated, round gestures. This was physically tiring and felt somewhat “forced” to maintain, but thinking in long, irregular phrases helped to keep the intensity level quite high. Of particular note are the “vamps” in between the long phrases, as for example at measures 7-10.

Despite the relative simplicity of this movement, I found it difficult to “chill out” as Earl Stafford counseled,⁶⁶ though I wanted to convey a sense of carefree relaxation for the sake of the violinist, who has an awkward part which must sound easy.

Initially, “Ragtime” appears to be the most rhythmically complex movement of *l’Histoire du Soldat*. In fact, once the rhythms are internalized, “Ragtime” is by far the most intuitive of all of the movements. It actually “grooves” in a jazz sense. Stravinsky accomplished with this piece what countless composers have tried to do and failed: he notated “feel” in a manner that actually works. If everyone plays their part, “Ragtime”

⁶⁶ Private lesson, February 27, 2009.

requires no “jazzing up.” Each of the players and the conductor struggled with this piece individually, but in rehearsal, “Ragtime” fit together without particular difficulty.

6.3.9 “Danse du Diable”: “Devil’s Dance”

Performing “Danse du Diable” is a euphoric experience, but I felt it necessary to draw down the tempo slightly to accommodate the “knotty” unison sixteenth-note passages. In our performance, we incorporated break-dancing in the Ramuz libretto, capitalizing on the grotesque nature of the Devil.⁶⁷ This piece presents no special challenges for the ensemble, as long as the conductor gives a pronounced cue at rehearsal marker 6 where the ensemble plays together in 3/8 time.

6.3.10 “Petit Choral”: “Little Chorale”

Replete with loud, long tones, “Petit Choral” is short but intense. The conducting issues are the releases and attacks necessary to achieve a uniform chorale sound.

This piece is labeled “the embrace” in the Ramuz libretto, but in the Vonnegut libretto it signals the execution of Eddie.⁶⁸ In order to exemplify the darkening mood in the Vonnegut version, I took the tempo slightly slower than indicated in the score. This

⁶⁷ Though historically anachronistic, the break dance we employed in the Ramuz setting captured Stravinsky’s style and musically underscored the devil’s tortured “coming back to life.”

⁶⁸ “Grand Choral” also underscores Eddie’s execution, an example of Vonnegut’s structural device of repetition. The action “folds in on itself.”

piece, along with “Grand Choral,” offers an ideal opportunity to observe how music is interpreted, defined, and transformed by the action onstage, in decided ways. The joyous quality inherent in the Ramuz performance, where this piece underscores the happiness of the couple’s unification, turns to one of despair in the Vonnegut performance, demonstrating that opposite emotions can be invoked by the playing of the same music.⁶⁹

6.3.11 “Couplet du Diable”: “Devil’s Song”

Musically speaking, this movement is little more than a vamp, a sparse accompaniment to a chant in the Ramuz libretto. In the Vonnegut performance, I had to make a decision whether to include “Couplet du Diable” since Vonnegut wrote no text for it. The movement is referenced in Vonnegut’s libretto, however, and its inclusion had a rather sinister affect, underscoring the dramatic emptiness of the scene, with the actors standing stock still at center stage. The effect was chilling. In a directorial decision, I inserted the last line of Ramuz’s chant (“He’ll be begging me, let me die. I’ll sit and stare and watch him fry”) into Vonnegut’s libretto, for the sake of emotional affect.

6.3.12 “Grand Choral”: “Great Chorale”

The challenge in conducting “Grand Choral” is to sustain the intensity of the chorale from the first loud, high chords through to the end of the movement, where the

⁶⁹ Two external examples of this type of emotional duality in music are Bach’s “Air on the G string” from *Orchestral Suite No. 3* and Handel’s “Largo” from *Xerxes*, which are, in my experience, two of the most-requested pieces for both weddings and funerals.

tessitura sinks by two full octaves. Additionally, it is vital in the Ramuz version to maintain the forward thrust of the melody throughout the pauses and the narration. For the conductor, the release points pose a challenge, since different groups of instruments release at different times. For the violin and bass, who often hold very long notes very quietly, the matter of release requires special attention. The Vonnegut version involves no narration, and so the music itself relays the “moral of the story” without the benefit—or hindrance—of words. Decisions have to be made about the correct length of time to sustain the *fermati*. In his 1961 recording of this piece, Stravinsky holds the quarter notes for one extra beat and the half and whole notes for two extra beats, which are strictly counted.

6.3.13 “Marche Triomphale du Diable”: “Triumphant March of the Devil”

The final movement in *l’Histoire du Soldat* is not as hard to play as the score might make it out to be. The violinist and percussionist are engaged in a competitive dialogue, a type of “survival-of-the-fittest” death-grip for dominance, which the percussionist ultimately wins. Even the conductor eventually “gives up the ghost,” stopping conducting when the violin line expires, and the piece ends with the percussionist smugly “having the last word” as the Devil (in the Ramuz libretto) slithers victoriously away.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The Results

I informally asked a random selection of audience members if the music sounded different when heard in the context of the Ramuz and the Vonnegut libretti: overwhelmingly the consensus was yes. A few factors other than the obvious ones, such as mistakes in performance, may account for this difference in perception. I summarize these factors below.

7.1.1 Structural considerations.

In the Ramuz script almost all the acting and narration takes place in Part One. Part Two is nearly continuous music, danced or mimed, with little narration. In the Vonnegut script, there is a more predictable structural relation to the music throughout. Audience members suggested that the music seemed to fit better with the play in the case of the Vonnegut version. This may be because the music is used to divide the scenes more directly.

7.1.2 Performance issues

Different performance errors occurred in the Ramuz and the Vonnegut versions. On the one hand, musicians were warmed up and had had a complete run-through by the time the Vonnegut libretto commenced resulting in less anxiety than they experienced in the Ramuz performance; but on the other hand, they were tired, and it took a few minutes to get the adrenaline level back up for the second performance. In this sense, concentration was more of an issue in the case of the Vonnegut version. The “letdown”

reflex happened after the Ramuz setting and led to a psychological difficulty in “getting back into it” for the Vonnegut version.

7.2 Summation

The book upon which Vonnegut based his libretto, *The Execution of Eddie Slovik* by William Bradford Huie,⁷⁰ was out of print, but has been reissued in a new edition from 2004. Ironically, the soldier’s tale, Slovik’s, was forgotten by the public for two decades but has experienced a resurgence of interest and has found a new audience in the twenty-first century.⁷¹ The irony for Vonnegut is that his creative telling of *l’Histoire du Soldat* has never been published together with Stravinsky’s music and is seldom performed.

In contrast, Bach’s cantata, Luther’s hymn, and Stravinsky’s music live on, with performances occurring all over the world in any given year. Ramuz’s script is regularly performed, in newer and better translations.⁷²

Collaborations spanning five centuries play out in these two performances (the Ramuz and the Vonnegut) in interesting ways, with a reminder that even though “the thing you were before you changed, you can’t be anymore.”⁷³ That said, creators can and do continue to change, enhance, and add to the work of those who have gone before

⁷⁰ William Bradford Huie, *The Execution of Eddie Slovik*. (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2004).

⁷¹ An internet search revealed many recent versions, including a film, of Eddie’s story.

⁷² The most recent being Jeremy Sams’ 2006 English translation of the French libretto, which I used on March 31.

⁷³ Ramuz, *L’Histoire du Soldat*.

them, which is, after all, as it should be, and in any event, stands as a fitting byline in the storied history of *l'Histoire du Soldat*.

APPENDIX A

Recital Programme

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

GRADUATE RECITAL

Angelene Tysseland, conductor ***L'Histoire du Soldat* by Igor Stravinsky**

Tuesday, March 31, 2009

7:30 p.m.

Quance Theatre

L'Histoire du Soldat

Libretto by Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz

Marche du Soldat
Musique de la 1ère scène
Marche du Soldat (reprise)
Musique de la 2ème scène
Musique de la fin de la 2ème
Musique de la 3ème scène
Musique de la 3ème scène
Part Two Marche du Soldat
Marche Royal
Petit Concert
Trois Danses
 Tango-Waltz-Ragtime
Danse du Diable
Petit Choral
Couplet du Diable
Grand Choral
Marche Triomphale du Diable

Alexis Korchinski, Soldier
Nick Nostbakken, Devil
Braden Penno, Dancer
Ashleigh Clark, Princess

L'Histoire du Soldat

Libretto by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Soldier's March
Airs by a Stream
Soldier's March (reprise)
 Pastorale
Airs by a Stream (reprise)
Part Two Soldier's March
 Royal March
 Little Concert
 Three Dances
 (Tango-Waltz-Ragtime)
 Devil's Dance
 Little Chorale
 Devil's Song
 Great Chorale
Triumphant March of the Devil

Marcel Petit, General
Nick Nostbakken, Eddie
Alexis Korchinski, Red Cross
Braden Penno, MP
Ashleigh Clark, The Post

Brent McFarlane, narrator
Kim de la Forest, violin
Natalie DeJong, trumpet
Alyssa Thompson, clarinet
Staci Nahirney, bassoon
Jonathan Ahern, contrabass
Justin Boechler, trombone
Roy Sydiaha, percussion

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music (Instrumental Conducting)

L'Histoire du Soldat

L'Histoire du Soldat (The Soldier's Tale) was written in 1918 toward the close of World War I in neutral Switzerland, where the Russian Stravinsky was living in exile. With his friend, the French novelist C.F. Ramuz, and joined by a conductor, an artist, and two dancers, Stravinsky created a touring show that was intended to be taken into the countryside with a small ensemble. Each of the financially destitute collaborators was hoping to make some money on the project; however, after opening night in Geneva, members of the orchestra and the conductor were stricken with the Spanish flu and the tour had to be cancelled. It was not until 1924 that the show was staged again, and this time in Paris.

Stravinsky was never satisfied with the English version of *L'Histoire* and throughout his life tried to come up with a new English libretto, even approaching Tennessee Williams in the 1960s to take up the task. No one rose to the challenge until 1993, twenty-two years after Stravinsky's death, when Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. decided to write a "real down-and-dirty soldier's tale."

Tonight's performance showcases the original 1918 and the 1993 libretti, both with the same music. The well-known Ramuz retelling of the classic Russian folk tale is presented in a recent 2006 translation by Jeremy Sams. In our production, the soldier is a woman on leave from the present-day war in Iraq, rendered in the time-honored (and Stravinsky-sanctioned) tradition of staging folk tales in contemporary settings in order to relate the universal truths found therein to current issues of the day. No content has been changed (with the exception of the requisite gender pronouns).

Vonnegut's rewriting was envisioned by Robert Johnson, the artistic director of the New York Philomusica Chamber Ensemble, and the first performance was in Alice Tully Hall, featuring Eli Wallach, Ann Reinking, Malcolm Gets, and Martin Vidnovic.. Vonnegut's story is a dismal tale, made even more gruesome by the fact that it is based on a true story: that of Eddie Slovic, the last American soldier to be executed for desertion. Vonnegut himself was a prisoner of war in World War II and after witnessing the fire-bombing of Dresden first-hand, was forced to find and remove dead bodies from the ensuing debris, an experience from which he never fully recovered. The events of that period of Vonnegut's life inspired most, if not all, of his subsequent writing, including his libretto for *L'Histoire du Soldat*. He became a fervent and outspoken anti-war protestor right up to the time of his death. During the commemorative events in New York City on the first anniversary of 9/11, Vonnegut spoke against the war in Iraq at the same New York church where The Refiner's Choir, which I was conducting, sang the next night.

Stravinsky and Vonnegut employ many similar compositional techniques. Note the use of repetition. The same fragments of melody, text, and rhythm pop up again and again. Both writers also employ parody to assign grotesque meaning: Vonnegut quotes William Shakespeare ("tis bitter cold and I am sick at heart" from Hamlet, Act I scene 1) and other sources from popular culture. Stravinsky mimics Martin Luther ("A Mighty Fortress is Our God" in "Grand Choral") as well as elements of Russian folksong and American jazz. Both writers employ a cut-and-paste technique, juxtaposing disjunct, dissonant, and abrasive motifs to jar the senses. There is nothing soothing or sentimental to be found in either Vonnegut's script or in Stravinsky's music.

Does each story influence the hearing of Stravinsky's music? For example, "Grand Choral" is used by Ramuz to underscore the happy uniting of the soldier with her beloved. Vonnegut uses the same music to accompany the execution of Eddie. Does the context cause the music to sound different? Please email me with your views at angie@cosmicpad.com.

Synopsis: L'Histoire de Ramuz

A Soldier on three days' leave marches home to her village. She rests along the way, takes out her fiddle, and plays. The Devil persuades the Soldier to trade her fiddle for a magic book which will earn her immense wealth. She flies off with the Devil to teach him to play the violin. When she returns, she discovers that three years have passed and she is now a fugitive. She enters a magical kingdom to save a Princess, at which point the Narrator suggests that the Soldier challenge the Devil to a game of cards to win back her violin. The Soldier loses her money, but regains her soul, that is, the violin, and goes to live with the Princess. The couple is cursed to remain in the magical kingdom forever. "Grand Choral" plays while the Narrator delivers the moral of the story, and the Soldier decides to take her chances by returning to her village, but the Devil snatches her and leads her away, powerless to resist.

Synopsis: L'Histoire de Vonnegut

Eddie Slovik, a young draftee from a lower-class immigrant family in America, deserts from his platoon. He is a mediocre soldier, lacking in any heroic qualities, and presents a problem for the General. According to the military manual, Eddie is to be shot but the General does not want to make a martyr out of him. The General attempts to convince Eddie to return to his platoon. Eddie refuses, preferring to die by execution rather than fight, noting, "At least I'll know who did it and why, which is more than I'd know if I were some poor runt at the front." Eddie is led to his execution, and during the performance of "Grand Chorale" Eddie is shot by a firing squad. The cast steps out of character and, in a chilling parody of liturgical chant, intones unison responses to historical facts. Bits of melodic debris from Bach's chorale begin to fall, settling into awkward forms. Ultimately, the devil wins, this time in the guise of General of the Armies, Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Igor Stravinsky was born in Russia and spent his youth living in the shadow of the great Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, where his father served as an operatic bass. The young Igor studied with Rimsky Korsakov, and commenced Law School, soon abandoning it for a career as a composer. For the notorious impresario Diaghilev and *Les Ballets Russes*, Stravinsky composed several ballets including *The Rite of Spring*. After World War II Stravinsky emigrated to the U.S.A., settling in Hollywood, where he lived for the remainder of his life, composing and conducting to his last days.

Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (1868-1947)

A Swiss novelist who wrote in French, Ramuz spent some years in Paris where he associated with its many illustrious painters and poets, and struck up a friendship with Stravinsky. Ramuz wrote on simple, rustic themes often concerning mountaineers, farmers, or villagers fighting dangers both real and mythical. Among Ramuz's best-known works are *La Grande Peur dans la montagne* (1925) *La Beauté sur la terre* (1927) and *Derborence* (1934).

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (1922-2007)

One of the most influential American novelists of the 20th century, Vonnegut's work blends social commentary, the absurd, literature, and science fiction. His most famous novel, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, draws on his experiences in Dresden and includes time travel and aliens. He wrote a secular requiem, and two of his plays have been turned into operas.

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Thank you to the talented ensemble. Thanks, also, to Beverly Kobelsky and the U. of Saskatchewan Department of Drama, Susan and Murray Ashton, Cosmic Pad Studios, Step on Stage Dance Studio, St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Mae Star Productions and m.pet productions for their assistance in various ways. Special thanks to the U. of Saskatchewan Department of Music for generous financial support.

The Ensemble

Alexis Korchinski (*Soldier, Red Cross, assistant director*) was last seen on the Globe Theatre stage in *Anne of Green Gables-The Musical* in Regina and before that in Rosthern in the Station Arts Centre production the same show. A graduate of the U. of Saskatchewan in Music and Education, Alexis has recently returned from two years of teaching music abroad.

Alyssa Thompson (*clarinet*) completed a linguistics and music performance degree last spring. This year she is playing with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra and freelancing in the Saskatoon area.

Angie Tysseland (*conductor, director*) has been a music director for the theatre since 1997 and a choir director since 1984. She has worked in seven Equity productions, three for which she wrote the music, and has toured Canada, Italy, and the U.S. with collaborators in chamber music, opera, pop, and art music. She has worked as a jazz singer and is a noted pianist.

Ashleigh Clark (*Princess, The Post, choreographer, assistant director*) Ashleigh received her training at The Canadian College of Performing Arts, finishing the enriched program in 2007, studying acting, voice, and dance. She danced with Saskatoon's *Free Flow Dance Theatre*, under the direction of Jackie Latendresse. Other favorite performances include "Blue Skies" (Victoria Symphony), and "Danse Macabre" (Pacific Ballet Theatre).

Braden Penno (*break dancer, MP*) Braden teaches break dancing at Def Sol and Step on Stage dance studios. Braden is currently taking international studies at the U of Saskatchewan.

Brent McFarlane (*Narrator*) graduated from the U of S BFA Acting Program, where he performed in *An Experiment with an Air Pump*, *Nothing Sacred*, *Elizabeth Rex*, and other plays, including *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Newman Players. He is a director (*The Bald Soprano*), writer (*The Man from Nantucket*), and co-founder of the local sketch comedy troupe *SKIT SKIT!*

Jonathan Ahern (*contrabass*) While studying with Richard Carnegie, principal bass of the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Ahern was bassist for the University Jazz Ensemble and Wind Orchestra. He has toured with the National Youth Band of Canada and performed in Carnegie Hall in New York with the National Collegiate Wind Ensemble.

Justin Boechler (*trombone*) is a fourth-year composition and theory student at the U. of Saskatchewan and plays trombone in several local ensembles.

Kim de la Forest (*violin*) is a fiddle, violin, and viola performer and teacher based in Saskatoon. As a member of the Saskatoon Symphony, Kim has served as the assistant concertmaster, principal second violin, principal viola, and section viola player. Kim coaches Saskatoon Fiddle Orchestra and first violins of the Saskatoon Youth Orchestra, and is a member of a pilot project that is bringing fiddle music into Saskatoon core area schools www.kimdelaforest.com.

Marcel Petit (*General*) is an independent producer, filmmaker, writer, photographer, activist and actor from Saskatoon, SK where he runs his independent production company *m.pet productions*. He recently finished four short documentaries for *SCN's 15 Minutes of Fame* series and a feature length documentary, *Hookers. A Documentary*.

Natalie DeJong (*trumpet*) Natalie is a freelance trumpeter and is the founder and Artistic Director of HeliOs Brass, a new ensemble in Saskatoon. She is the Executive Director for the Station Arts Centre in Rosthern, SK. She has been a member of Imperial Brass, Crescendo Brass, and the Princeton Brass Band. She has performed with Musica Raritana and Concert Royale, and recently appeared with the Philadelphia Big Brass. Natalie completed a Master of Music degree and began Doctoral studies at Rutgers University after studying at the U. of Calgary and the Vancouver Academy of Music.

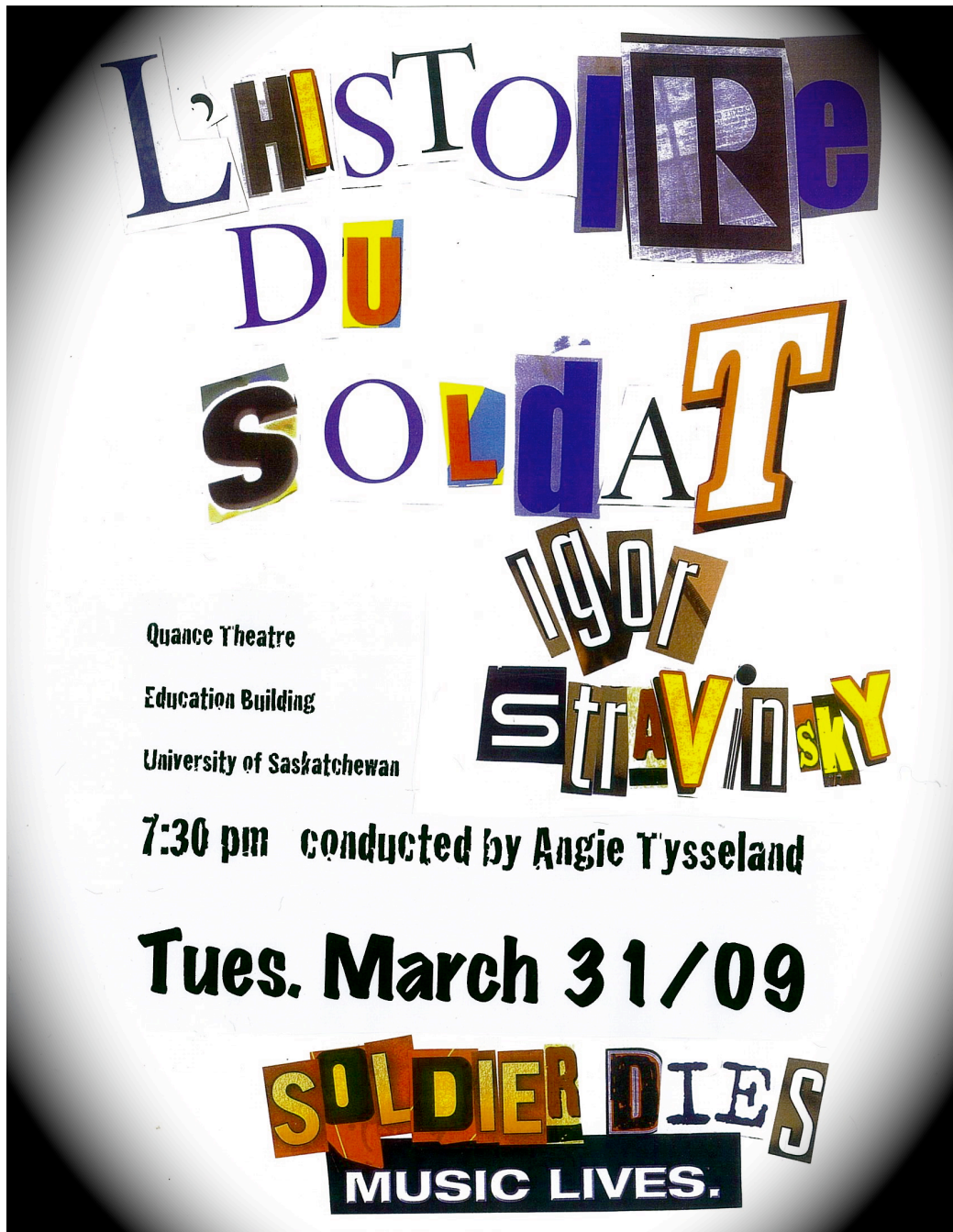
Nick Nostbakken (*Devil, Eddie*) is a student at the U. of Saskatchewan and a former member of the Greystone Singers. He acted with Braden and Ashleigh in high school, where they did many acting and directing projects together.

Roy Sydiaha (*percussion*) is the Principal Percussionist with the Saskatoon Symphony and a busy freelance percussionist, drummer and teacher in Saskatchewan. After receiving a B.Mus. from the U. of Saskatchewan in 1991, Roy returned to study Conducting in 2007. He has enjoyed this, his third crack at *L'Histoire*.

Staci Nahirney (*bassoon*) has recently graduated from the U. of Saskatchewan with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Studies and is working in Saskatoon. She is currently playing with several music groups in town and teaching bassoon lessons.

APPENDIX B

Recital Poster



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