

*See the sweetheart on his knees,
So faithful and adoring.
Says he loves her,
So she lets him have her—
Another summer's story...*

As the story of the song changed, this chorus became:

*Had a sweetheart on his knees,
So faithful and adoring.
And he touched me,
And I let him love me.
So, let that be my story . . .*

While Moritz finally succumbs to the humiliations of society (he can no longer face the prospect of a world that brooks no failure), our Wendla chooses to remember the love she has felt, to ignore the ghostly whispers of society, and embrace the new life already whispering within her.

And with that move, our play made its pro-choice stance explicit. Wendla's abortion was, in a sense, transported into our own century: a century in which a "bourgeois idea" such as abstinence is still widely preached as the only form of safe sex; where the widespread dissemination of contraceptive devices is described by some within our Department of Health and Human Services as demeaning to women. One can only hope that a century from now the world will finally hear, and honestly answer, the cries of its Wendlas.

And so I am left pondering how and why all this ever came to be. I remember the first time I walked by our marquee, feeling almost baffled: "*Spring Awakening*—A Musical? Wait, no, isn't that just the name of a book in my room?"

I can honestly say that my earliest sense of why this "kindertragodie" could work as a piece of musical theater was instinctual. Even so, the entire eight-year siege of developing it entailed nothing harder than learning to trust our instincts. As Michael has recently said, we didn't set out to "revolu-

tionize the musical theater," nor with the express intention of doing something different. Rather, we had a story we wanted to tell, and a way we all felt we wanted to tell it.

Through all those years, through the darkest hours when our project fell off almost everyone's radar, Michael never lost heart, never lost faith in our ability to pull the thing together. For all the endless nights he spent going through line after line, every syllable of this text with me . . . well, this text—the show itself—are all I have to repay that.

As for the debt to Duncan . . . who can explain the mystic thing that happens when I hand him a lyric and he somehow hears a song in it. When (in a moment indelibly etched in my memory) he first looks through those words, picks up his guitar and strums: "There's a moment you know . . ." And then he pauses, looks up with a grin, and sings: "you're fucked."

S.S.
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