

HERR NEUMANN, Ilse's father
HERR SONNENSTICH
HEADMASTER KNOCHENBRUCH
FATHER KAULBACH
DOCTOR VON BRAUSEPULVER
SCHMIDT

TIME, PLACE AND SETTING

The action of the play is set in a provincial German town in the late nineteenth century. When singing, however, the Boys and Girls assume the manner of contemporary teens. The lights shift with the songs, and we enter the private and timeless world of the character who is singing. That character may be joined in his or her solitary song by other voices that fill out the chorus of longing.

PRODUCTION NOTES

From the inception of this project, Duncan, Michael and I imagined that when the characters broke out of their nineteenth-century confines, they would pull hand mikes from their pockets and rock out. And indeed, that is just what they've done, to great effect, in both our New York productions. Seeing "the kids" step into a spotlight in period costume and sing mike in hand, or from behind a mike stand, has been dynamic. It has given us a visual embodiment, a clear signal, of the break between our bourgeois German province and our alt-rock concert.

Though this script is divided into many scenes, I always imagined that the play would unfold with great fluidity: a minimal amount of transition, as one moment morphs into the next. Given that the show also shifts continually between scene and song worlds, it made real sense to play on a near-empty stage, with a nonrepresentational set. Lighting, then, became the thing.

On that front, too, we had a strong idea: our young characters live in the shadow of social convention, but their inner worlds are utterly electric. And, the effect of a sudden break from a world lit by lanterns to one ignited by neon has been pretty spectacular.

Finally, in our staging, all of the characters have remained present and visible throughout the show. This has greatly facilitated the entrances and exits of the chorus of Boys and Girls into and out of the songs.

But I offer these thoughts only as notes from our journal. I am genuinely excited to see how others choose to address the potentially tricky staging issues raised by this most-particular, and long-begotten, text.