cents for the last few generations have found release from, and expression of, that same mute pain.

"The flesh has its own spirit," Wedekind once wrote. And surely his gorgeous threnody already has the soul of song within it. But I never dreamed that, by letting his characters actually sing, we would end up so profoundly transforming his work.

Then, perhaps there is something in the nature of song itself that opens the door to story—that admits us to the heart of the singer—as if every song tells of a sort of unacknowledged "I want." For, what we sing is what is unspoken, what is hidden. The "real story."

As we began work, I vowed to remain true to Wedekind's fierce original intent. But I soon found that once we had access, through song, to the inner workings of our characters' hearts and minds, we engaged with them differently—we embarked on journeys with them. Before long, we found ourselves altering the structure, even the substance, of our source material, to account for the places those songs had taken us.

From the start, my thought was that the songs in our show would function as interior monologues. Characters would not serenade one another in the middle of scenes. Rather, each student would give voice to his or her inner landscape.

Surely, the original play is full of exquisite monologues—a dramatic technique Wedekind inherited from his countrymen Goethe and Schiller. But our monologues were meant to be truly interior—a technique more familiar in twentieth-century fiction.

Instinctively, I felt I did not want to write lyrics which would forward the plot, and so chose not to follow that golden rule of musicals. I wanted a sharp and clear distinction between the world of the spoken and the world of the sung. And yet, I also wanted to create a seamless and ongoing musical counterpoint between the languages of those distinct worlds.

The infamous twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein famously wrote: "What we cannot speak about, we must pass over in silence." And, yet, song seems to let us pause within that silence, to find ourselves articulate within it.

Within our show, the songs soon came to function as subtext. The boy and girl fumble to make polite conversation; but

underneath, each of them already senses the enormous story about to unfold between them: "O, I'm gonna be wounded . . ."

We wrote songs as confession ("There is a part I can't tell, about the dark I know well"). Songs as denial ("Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh . . . well, fine") or admission ("It's the bitch of living as someone you can't stand"). Songs as cri de coeur ("But there's nowhere to hide from the ghost in my mind . . ."). Somehow, I felt, we still remained true to that inchoate yearning of Wedekind's youths.

But of course we were also up to something else: in our show, the scenes set out the world of nineteenth-century repression, while the songs afford our young characters a momentary release into contemporary pop idiom. (Caught in the relentless dramas of our adolescent lives, we are all still rock stars in the privacy of our own bedrooms.) The time-jumping structure of our show is meant, thus, to underscore the sadly enduring relevance of our theme.

Some of my earliest efforts to transpose nineteenth-century yearnings into contemporary attitudes and idiom were fairly straightforward. A failure at school, a virtual pariah at home, stymied in his efforts to flee provincial Bavaria, Wedekind's Moritz wanders to the river at dusk and declares: "But then, it's better this way . . . I don't want to cry again—not today . . ." *Our* Moritz wanders into the same dusk, but soon ignites into neon—a post-punk kid at a mike who sings: "Awful sweet to be a little butterfly . . . 'Cause, you know, I don't do sadness . . ."

Certainly, my original vow was to remain true to Wedekind's text. Still, I have been alternately touched and bemused that so many critics have spoken so highly about how faithful we have been to the original, how admirably we have distilled it. *Maybe*. But, at the same time, we have fundamentally altered it. (I remember when Stephen Spinella, who joined our show just before our Broadway transfer, asked to see my uncut translation from Wedekind of several of his scenes. I had nothing to show him. He continued to press his suit: he really wanted to see Moritz's scene with his father in its longer