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Dramatic Publishing

A full-length play with music by
C.P. Taylor



GOOD

Drama with music. By C. P. Taylor. Cast: 6m., 4w. (plus an optional number of musicians.) “GOOD is a triumphant, wonderful and incandescent evening in the theatre,” wrote critic Clive Barnes in the *New York Post*, and Frank Rich in his *New York Times* review called it, “A flawless display of theatre craft.” Indeed, it’s a play that invites the combining of all the theatre arts. The writing, the interplay of music and drama, the stark simplicity of the staging that takes the audience into the complexity of a mind that can deal with warm humanity and chilling horror almost within the same moment make this production both a challenge and an opportunity. Alan Howard, in the leading role, was voted Best Actor by the London drama critics. “History is a nightmare into which the antihero of GOOD sleepwalks,” is how critic T.E. Kalem of *Time* magazine began his review. Set in Germany at the time when Hitler has just come into power, the play takes place partly inside the mind of a “good” man, Professor Halder. Unconsciously, this well-meaning scholar is led into participation in the hell that follows, as do the disturbing questions about...”good.” As a critic summed up, “With a shattering climax, GOOD achieves a high pitch of luminous moral gravity.” *Bare stage w/ props. Orchestration available. Code: G39.*

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A Play With Music



By

C. P. TAYLOR

**Stage directions from the
Royal Shakespeare Company production
on Broadway, under the direction
of Howard Davies.**

Additional stage directions by
stage managers, Janet Beroza & Jane Tamlyn.



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(GOOD)

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GOOD

A Full-Length Tragedy
for Six Men, Four Women, Optional Musicians

C H A R A C T E R S

JOHN HALDERlecturer in German literature, early forties
MAURICEHalder's Jewish friend and analyst, forties
MAJOR (FREDDIE) S. S. Major, forties
HELEN Halder's wife, late thirties
MOTHER Halder's mother
SISTER head nurse
BOULLER Nazi Over-Leader
ANNE Halder's student and lover, early twenties
DOCTOR S. S. doctor
EICHMANN Nazi Over-Leader
BOK S. S. officer
DISPATCH RIDER in the S. S.
HITLER The Fuhrer
MUSICIANS

Time: The Nineteen-Thirties

Place: Germany

Author's Note

Although *Good* is obviously based on facts of recent history, documentary material, and is peopled in some cases by real characters, this story of how a 'good' man gets caught up in the nightmare of the Third Reich is a work of the imagination.

What the tragedy which I have written as a comedy, or *musical comedy* is about, will hopefully emerge in the performance. If it proves the good play we hope it is, like all good plays, it will have a special meaning, or shade of meaning, for each person who experiences it.

I grew up during the war under a deeply felt anxiety that the Germans might win the war, overrun Britain and that I and my mother and father would end up, like my less fortunate co-religionists, in a Nazi Death Camp – perhaps specially built in Scotland or England.

There seems to have been some pressure building up in me for a long time to write a play about the Final Solution, marking and responding to a great historical and personal trauma. Not as a Jew, wanting to add my wreath to those already piled high at the graves of the Six Million, but as my own little gesture to revive their memory in our consciousness. It still seems that there are lessons to be learned if we can examine the atrocities of the Third Reich as the result of the infinite complexity of contemporary human society, and not a simple conspiracy of criminals and psychopaths. The 'Inhumanities' seem to me only too human and leading to a final Final Solution to end all Final Solutions – the solution to the Human Problem, a nuclear holocaust.

C. P. Taylor

Act One

This is a play with music. The music, which is heard in the mind of John Halder, and through him by the audience, serves as punctuation to the action on stage.

The musical accompaniment may be piano only or perhaps a single violin or an accordion. (C. P. Taylor first conceived the band as a group small enough to move with Halder around the stage.) In the Broadway and London productions, a thirties dance band ensemble was used. We are including in this playbook many of the directions for the Broadway version with, of course, the directions for the small orchestra. However, directors are encouraged to use as much or as little of the accompaniment as they see fit. The play could even be done without accompaniment.

Stage directions from The Royal Shakespeare Company's production are being included here. They are meant to be helpful, but not to serve in any way as a limitation to your own directorial creativeness.

AS THE LIGHTS COME UP: The stage is bare except for an upright piano UC with its keys facing the audience. An accordion leans against the back wall, as well as fourteen folding chairs set there at random. Four music stands are near the chairs. Another chair is visible UL. An S. S. uniform has been laid out across this chair, a pair of shiny jackboots stand beside it.

As the play is about to start, four **MUSICIANS** walk onto the stage from the exit door R with their instruments. They unpack, leaving their cases along the back wall, and set up chairs and music stands in the four corners of the central playing area.

Another man, the **BAND LEADER**, follows the **MUSICIANS** on with a stack of music folders. He places two of the chairs by the piano, distributes the folders to the **MUSICIANS**, and sits at the piano.

Once they have tuned their instruments, the **MUSICIANS** begin to play: Music Cue Number One, "DU BIST MEIN STERN."

JOHN HALDER rushes in through the door R. His jacket is over his arm. He is late and is just strapping on his watch. He circles the stage while the **MUSICIANS** play. Then **MAURICE** strides on and moves to the left corner of the piano. After a quick look at the Band Leader's music, **MAURICE** sings as **HALDER** settles upstage to listen.

MAURICE.

DU BIST MEIN STERN

DU BIST MEIN MOND UND MEINE SONNE

MADAM YVONNE

DU SUBE FRAY

DIE ROSEN ROT

DIE BLUTEN ZART

SIND DEINE LIPPEN

OH LOB MICH LIEBEN

DEINEN SU BEN BAUCH
IN DEINEN AUGEN LIEGT DEN HIMMEL
DEINE TRENE
UND SCHAU ICH TIEF HINEIN
DANN FUHLICH DICH AUFS NENE
DU BIST MEIN STERN
DU BIST MEIN MOND UND MEINE SONNE
MADAM YVONNE
DU SUBE FRAU.

(MAURICE exits and the BAND segues into another tune:
Music Cue Number Two, “MONTE CARLO.” HALDER
moves up behind the piano as if to sing, but the BAND plays
something he isn’t expecting. He turns to exit.)

(An S. S. MAJOR enters. HALDER goes upstage. The MAJOR
goes to the right corner of the piano to sing.)

MAJOR.

EINE NACHT IN MONTE CARLO
MOCHT ICH WANDELN UND AUF PALMEN MIT DIR
SIEHST DU VON PALMEN DEN HIMMEL NICHT
KRIEGST DU DEN HIMMEL VON MIR
EINE NACHT IN MONTE CARLO
MOCHT ICH LERNEN UNTER STERNEN
WIE SCHON ES IST
WENN MAN EINE KUST
DIE MAN NIE VERGIST.

(The BAND plays an instrumental during which the COMPANY
enters through the door R. They take chairs from the back
wall and set them up in the central playing area. HELEN

takes a chair DL and sets it up for MOTHER, who sits down. HELEN gets another chair which she places up and to the left of Mother's chair, and sits. MAURICE gets a chair and places it left of the piano, then stands just in front of it. The SISTER gets a chair and places it DR, then sits. BOULLER gets a chair and places it behind the piano. He remains standing by the chair. ANNE gets a chair and places it up and to the right of the MUSICIAN UL, then moves UC. The DOCTOR gets a chair and places it DR, near the SISTER. HITLER is the last to enter. He carries a small banjo which he leans against the back wall. The MAJOR resumes his singing.)

MAJOR.

EINE NACHT IN MONTE CARLO
MOCHT ICH LERNEN UNTER STERNEN
WIE SCHON ES IST
WENN MAN EINE KUST
DIE MAN NIE VERGIST.

(As the MAJOR finishes, HITLER comes downstage to the right of the piano with a chair which he opens so that there is a noisy clunk that punctuates the last note of the Major's song. The MAJOR moves away behind the piano. HALDER moves in closer, a few paces up and to the right of the piano. The music segues into Music Cue Number Three, "I'M ALWAYS CHASING RAINBOWS.")

MAURICE.

AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW
THERE'S HAPPINESS,
AND TO FIND IT, HOW OFTEN I'VE TRIED.
BUT MY LIFE IS A RACE,

JUST A WILD GOOSE CHASE,
AND MY DREAMS HAVE ALL BEEN DENIED.
WHY HAVE I ALWAYS BEEN A FAILURE?
WHAT CAN THE REASON BE?
I WONDER IF THE WORLD'S TO BLAME?
I WONDER IF IT COULD BE ME?

(As the houselights go out, HALDER steps up to the piano and speaks, over the music, to the audience.)

HALDER. The bands came to me in nineteen thirty-three. So you can't say they came with the rise of the Nazis, exactly. The Nazis were on the rise long before that. To some extent, it was a device that was with me from childhood. Bringing music into the dramatic moments of my life. But from thirty-three, they became an addiction. Jazz bands . . . cafe bands . . . tenors . . . crooners . . . symphony orchestras . . . depending on the particular situation and my mood. (He crosses DL.) A strategy for survival? Turning the reality into fantasy? It was a dance band, that day. (He moves R.) What they were playing was an English song . . . or an American. Is there any difference? (The SISTER steps C.)

SISTER (impatiently). Doctor Halder?

HALDER. Yes. I'm coming. (To the audience, as music ends.) Stolen, of course, from Chopin . . . *Fantasia Impromptu* . . . nice, wallowing-in-self-pity kind of thing.

SISTER. Visiting hours are between seven and eight, Doctor Halder. (HALDER steps up to the SISTER.)

HALDER. I live in Frankfurt, you see.

SISTER. I see.

HALDER. Long journey to Hamburg . . . Busy time at the university, just now. Coming up to examinations.

SISTER. You can go and see her for ten minutes or so. But we

are about to serve lunch. (The SISTER returns to her chair. HALDER turns his attention to MOTHER.)

MOTHER. Johnnie. Listen to me. Get me out of here. Another day, and I'll go out of my mind. Get a chair for Helen. (She looks at the spot where she imagines HELEN to be.) Helen, have pity on me.

HALDER. Helen's not there, Mother.

MOTHER. Will you get your wife a chair? This isn't the time or place for jokes, son.

HALDER. Mother, you're imagining it. She's not here.

MOTHER. She's not standing beside you?

HALDER (moving to C). It's just you're confused, just now. That's all.

MOTHER. Listen, are you trying to make me mad altogether? Helen, tell him. He has to get me out of here. Have pity on me.

HALDER. You've been in a coma, Mother. A thyroid deficiency . . . one of the effects . . . you see things.

MOTHER. Helen's not there? Are you not there, Helen? Wait a minute. Do you think I'm going out of my mind? If I'm going out of my mind . . . that's a bad business.

HALDER. It makes you confused. That's all.

MOTHER. Wait a minute. Last night. Did that happen? You were drunk . . . and banging away at the door all night to get in?

HALDER. Imagination.

MOTHER. John . . . come closer to me, a minute. (HALDER moves in closer to MOTHER.) Is anybody listening to us? (HALDER looks around and notices the OTHERS leaning closer to listen.)

HALDER. No one is near us.

MOTHER (in a stage whisper). You're not a Communist?

HALDER. You know that. I could never accept Marxism. Parts

of it . . . yes.

MOTHER. I'm *talking* to you, son. You're not a Communist and Hitler's not going to put you in prison. Your trial's this afternoon.

HALDER. For God's sake, Mother!

MOTHER. Oh, thank God! Thank God! You're *not*?

HALDER. Mother!

MOTHER. Listen . . . I'm going out of my mind. Johnnie, I've got to go home.

HALDER. You can't *see*, Mother.

MOTHER. What about your house?

HALDER. With the children and Helen . . . I couldn't cope with you, Mother. *I* would . . . but how can I ask the children and Helen . . .

MOTHER. Listen. Is that my imagination, too? This place, it's a *front*. Men come up here to go with the women. That sister, there . . .

HALDER. This hospital's a front for a brothel?

MOTHER. Is it not? Johnnie, this is a bad business. I'm going out of my mind.

HALDER. I could cope with you for a *week*, Mother. We'd *like* to have you for a week or so. But you know what Helen's like. She can't even organize the house with just *us* in it. You wouldn't be happy. You never are there . . .

MOTHER. The best thing is to take twenty or thirty of my pills and finish myself off once and for all.

HALDER. You could do that. It's against the law, but . . .

MOTHER. What have I got to live for? I can't see. My eyes are finished. Nobody wants me. I'm better out of it. What have I got to live for, for God's sake!

HALDER (moving downstage, away from MOTHER). A difficult question, that.

DOCTOR. Can I help you?

HALDER (stepping UR). This is Tiergartenstrasse Four? (The DOCTOR shifts upstage next to the SISTER.) I'm looking for the Committee for Research Into Hereditary Diseases . . . Over-Leader Philip Bouller . . .

DOCTOR. You've come down the wrong passage. I'll show you where his office is, Herr . . .

HALDER. Professor Halder. Is this some new committee? I've never heard of it before.

DOCTOR. It's just been set up, Herr Professor. You have an appointment with the Over-Leader?

HALDER (backing away to C). I have an appointment. Yes. Pleasant place . . . to work in.

DOCTOR. It used to be one of the best residential areas in Berlin, Charlottenburg. I'll see if the Over-Leader is free, Herr Professor . . . (MAURICE moves a chair DC for HALDER and helps him hang his jacket across the back of the chair. BOULLER moves a chair from behind the piano and sits in the place MAURICE has just vacated.)

MAURICE. Will you stop bloody wandering around, man. Sit down. Bands?

HALDER (sitting). Have you got to be a doctor, Maurice?

MAURICE. I am a doctor. It's an automatic response. Somebody comes to me as a doctor, I'm a doctor. What do you want to do . . . pull me into *your* neurosis. I've got my own, thanks.

HALDER. How could I come to you as a doctor? The question I'm putting to you . . . as my closest friend . . . my only friend . . . should I see a psychiatrist?

MAURICE. Why? You have a bad attack of bands?

HALDER. Not very big bands . . . music, generally. Odd times, the Berlin Philharmonic . . . last Senate meeting, it was the Phil . . . playing the storm movement of the *Pastoral* . . .

MAURICE. What's he saying to me? I don't understand what

you're saying to me. You've made a decision to try and throw off this neurosis you've been living with all your life to give your work and family relationships a more healthy basis. What does *that* mean, Johnnie? That's just words. We don't work like that, for Christ's sake . . . you and me.

HALDER. I want to *try* . . . All my work so far has been based on this bloody anxiety neurosis . . . I do . . . I want to see what work I can do, free of it . . .

MAURICE. People don't go to analysts to streamline their lives . . . they go to free themselves from agony. Just now, my agony . . . my neurotic track . . . that wakes me up at four o'clock in the morning in a panic . . . I'll tell you about it. Give you insights into yours. (He crosses away, DL and back.) I can see . . . objectively . . . intellectually . . . the Nazis . . . That's just flag waving to get hold of the masses. This anti-Jewish hysteria . . . now it's got them where they wanted to go . . .

HALDER. I can't get lost, you see. I can't *lose* myself in people or situations. Everything's acted out against this bloody musical background. I mean, could it be some subconscious comment on my loose grip of reality? The whole of my life's a performance. Is that too glib, do you think, Maurice?

MAURICE. If you knew the unconscious like I do . . . nothing's too glib for that bastard. What I'm saying to you . . . (He moves away UL, then notices that Halder's attention has wandered.) . . . Listen to me. It's interesting, sometimes, listening to other people. You don't need to make too big a habit of it . . . (He crosses back to HALDER.) . . . but odd *times* . . .

HALDER. I'm *listening*.

MAURICE. I'm telling you . . . I know, for Christ's sake . . . The Nazis are politicians above everything else. *Realists*. I know that.

DOCTOR. Professor Halder?

HALDER (sitting up and shifting his attention). I'm slightly early. I can never time appointments. I'm sorry.

DOCTOR. Over-Leader Bouller has someone with him at present. He will see you shortly.

HALDER. That's all right. That's fine. I have my book here. This is a new committee . . . I gather . . .

DOCTOR. You will have to excuse me. (He executes a sharp Nazi salute.) Heil Hitler.

HALDER. Yes, of course. (He waves weakly.) Heil Hitler.

MAURICE. Politicians are practical people. I know that . . . They live in the world as it is.

HALDER. Maurice . . . maybe we should just have some coffee . . . forget about my problem . . .

MAURICE (ribbing HALDER). Listen . . . if it's sex, Johnnie, I can understand that . . . sex is difficult. Coming to a friend about your problems of getting it up . . . or maybe tastes you've developed like having to be tied up or something. (He crosses behind HALDER and to his right.) Listen, you'd be amazed how common transvestism is.

HALDER. I've never been attracted to bondage or flogging or anything like that, Maurice . . . definitely not . . . I don't think I have . . .

MAURICE (moving DR). Listen, I know how much Germany depends on Jewish brains . . . Jewish business . . . Hitler's got all the power he needs now. They're bound to drop all that racial shit they had to throw around to get their votes . . . they can't afford *not* to. I *know* that . . . but I can't *believe* it. You see what I'm getting at . . . I'm sorry . . . I'm developing an obsession . . . I'm in a bloody panic state . . . look at me. (The SISTER moves her chair forward for MAURICE, then steps back to the piano. The DOCTOR sits. HALDER moves in, urging MAURICE to sit.)

HALDER. I'll get you a drink, Maurice . . . Relax. You're right . . . all that anti-Jew rubbish . . . you're right. Just balloons they throw up in the air to distract the masses . . . you're right.

MAURICE. I *know* I'm bloody right. I'm telling you . . . But my bloody anxiety neurosis has fixed on to it . . . and I can do shit all about it . . . Listen, what do I want to run off to America for . . . or Shanghai?

HALDER. Shanghai might be interesting. China . . .

MAURICE. This is my home. I love Frankfurt. I love Hessen. I love the whole bloody place.

HALDER. Take a bit of cheesecake, Maurice.

MAURICE. I'm a German. I was born here. Look at me. Jewish? It could well be my grandmother had it off with some Bavarian peasant or plumber or something . . . who the bloody hell knows?

HALDER. Maurice . . . you're right . . . the Racist program is not practical . . . they'll drop it . . . they'll have to drop it.

MAURICE. I said I *know* I'm right. Stop bloody telling me . . . I know . . . I don't want any cheesecake, for Christ's sake! This is my home . . . every morning . . . before breakfast . . . I take a walk in Nizza Park . . . along the river . . .

HALDER. Yes . . . you're right . . . talking about impotence complexes . . . I might have a bit of . . .

MAURICE. I'm telling you about my feelings for bloody Frankfurt! (Halder's attention wanders. Music begins: Music Cue Number Four, "SEPTEMBER SONG.") Walking about Frankfurt in the morning. Looking at the river and the trees . . . and the wonderful buildings. The *pride!* For Christ's sake . . . you are . . . you're proud to be a German . . . to live in a city like this . . . walking by the cathedral . . .

HALDER (to himself). He's a nice man. I love him. But I cannot get involved with his problems. So in the next few months