



PENTATONE

TRACK
INFORMATION

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ROSTER

BACKGROUND

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LIBRETTO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Douglas Moore Giants in the Earth

SOUTH DAKOTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
DELTA DAVID GIER





Giants in the Earth

A world premiere of an opera in three acts and four scenes based on the novel by O.E. Rølvaag

Music by **Douglas Moore** · Libretto by **Arnold Sundgaard**

Composed 1949–1950 · Revised 1963

Disc 1

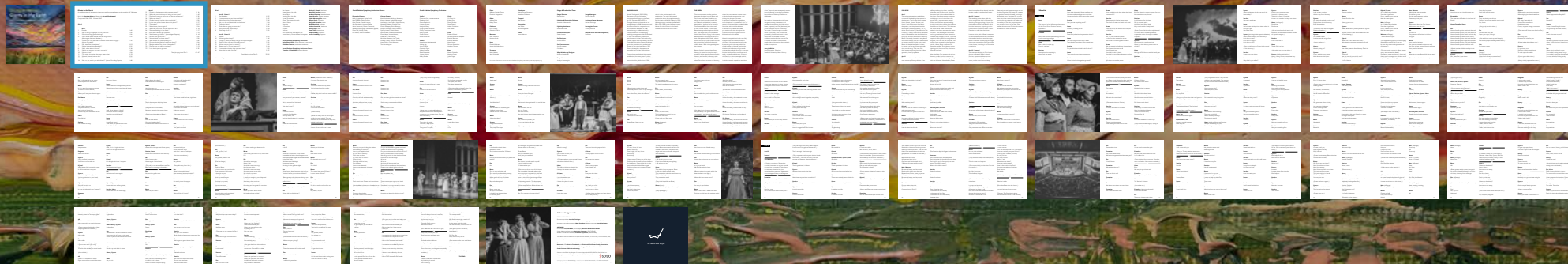
Act I

1	Prelude	1. 40
2	"Not a thing in sight yet, far as I can see."	3. 06
3	"Good morning, good morning!"	2. 06
4	"Ja, vi elsker dette landet som det stiger frem." (Norwegian National Anthem)	1. 59
5	"So this is it! The pastures of Goshen in the land of Egypt." (Home Founding)	2. 36
6	"Oh, dear God, bless them."	2. 02
7	"What happened to Borghild?"	2. 29
8	"Well, what about it Hans?"	2. 24
9	"We're not staying, we can't, we can't!"	2. 04
10	"Heave a line!"	2. 04
11	"The quiet, the quiet, the deep, deep quiet."	2. 52
12	"Mama! Mama! Look at this."	2. 20
13	"We can't stay."	2. 29
14	"No, no, no, aren't you afraid here?" (Home Founding Reprise)	2. 48

Act II

15	"Doesn't it feel strange with everyone gone?"	1. 16
16	"What do you think they will bring us from town?"	1. 45
17	"Per Hansa came to court me on Sunday afternoon."	1. 20
18	"What are these?"	1. 02
19	"Coffee is ready. Let's sit down and drink."	0. 58
20	"Is the man of the house about this place?"	1. 57
21	"The stakes!"	2. 05
22	"We're home, home again!"	3. 54
23	"What do you think, our last surprise of all?"	0. 41
24	"She was working in the fields."	1. 17
25	"And when did you get married?"	1. 12
26	"We'd better get home." (Home Again Reprise)	0. 41
27	"No, let that go for now."	2. 00
28	"You ask what you have done?"	1. 58
29	"Who do you say these belong to?"	1. 46
30	"Do you see that field of green out there?"	1. 04
31	"But the stakes, Per, what of the stakes?"	2. 45
32	"Per, Per, can we talk to you here?"	1. 51
33	"I will thank you to go now."	2. 59

Total playing time Disc 1: 65. 47





Disc 2

Act III • Scene 1

1	The Wedding	0. 35
2	"I now pronounce you Man and Wife."	2. 05
3	"We're ready for the baptism next."	3. 40
4	"No, no, this evil deed shall not be done."	1. 54
5	"Take her inside."	1. 40
6	"Rain. We are going to have rain."	0. 36
7	"Why have they gone away?"	2. 34
8	"God help all of us."	3. 02

Act III • Scene 2

9	Prelude	0. 59
10	"Where go the sheep?"	1. 40
11	"Forget it, Henry. Nobody can go out there tonight."	1. 45
12	"Stop it! How can you be brawling now?"	3. 02
13	"What can you hear in a storm?"	1. 39
14	"Beret, stop it. Do you hear me?"	2. 34
15	"I remember the day that we came here."	1. 50
16	"May God go with you, Per."	2. 35

Total playing time Disc 2: 32. 19

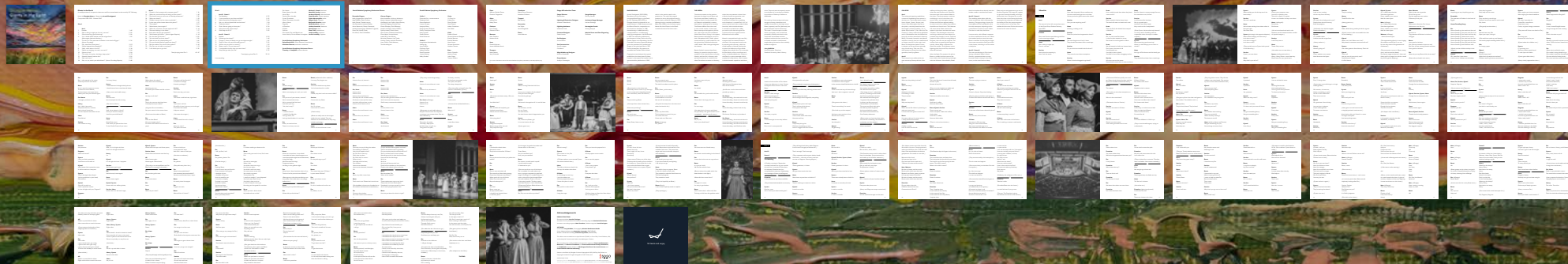
Live recording

Per Hansa
Beret Hansa, his wife
Hans Olsa
Sorrine Olsa, his wife
Syvert Tonsenten
Kjersti Tonsenten, his wife
Henry Solum
Dagmar
A Preacher
O'Hara
Sullivan
Ola Hansa, Per and Beret's son
Anna Hansa, Per and Beret's daughter

Michael J. Hawk, baritone
Meredith Lustig, soprano
Andrew Gilstrap, bass-baritone
Sarah Nordin, mezzo-soprano
Dylan Morrongiello, tenor
Megan Koch, soprano
Benjamin Dutcher, tenor
Abby Brodnick, soprano
Joshua Jeremiah, baritone
Steve Pence, bass
Peter Tuff, pantomime
Jude Lundeby, soprano
Lucille Lundeby, soprano

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra
Delta David Gier, music director & conductor
Nicholas Sharma, assistant conductor

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra Chorus
Timothy J. Campbell, chorus director





South Dakota Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Ensemble Singers

Molly Augspurger, Haley Dahl,
Meg DeBoer, Jason Douma,
Kate Friesen, Zander Larson,
Ally Quanbeck, Andrew Ridder,
Anna Stemsrud, Shawn Stemsrud,
Anders Svenningsen, Elizabeth Trygstad,
Peter Tuff, Kasidy Tvedt,
Eric Wicks, Shane Wuebben

Chorus Singers

Katie Andersen, Ashlynn Anderson,
Kjertin Aspaas, Aubrey Baumann,
Joel Brejda, Jon Callies, Katie Eliason,
Heather Engberg, Rachel Friez,
Claire Gillaspey, Paul Gillaspey,
Araylla Hennigar, Haley Hobbie,
Sydney Jessen, Mark Larson,
Alan Luense, Frederick Matthews,
Clara Meyer, James Moore,
Leslie Olive, Ana Olivier,
Nicholas Petersen, Joel Tjarks,
Lindsay Tjarks, Jennifer Tschetter,
Liam Swart, Collin Waltner,
Tim Worthington

South Dakota Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Doosook Kim, concertmaster
Elizabeth York
Grant Beckwith
Lauren Cooper
Marjorie Garry
Paige Towsey-Grishaw
Penny Thompson Kruse
Mary Lechelt
Sarah Richter
Katie Smirnova

Violin 2

Magdalena Modzelewska
Ashley Ng
Amy Carlisle
Christine Egan
Abbey Roemer
Barb Savereide
James Schrag
Kelby Strobel

Viola

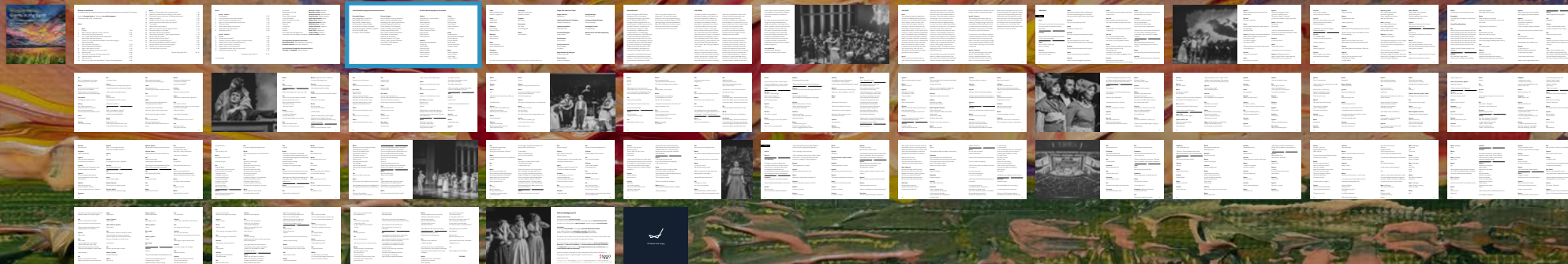
Yi-Chun Lin
Kelsey Farr
Drew Carlson
Sean Dostal
Adam Schechter
Sue Sidoti

Cello

Robbie Erhard
Sharon Mautner-Rodgers
Rachel Bottner
Rachel Bozonie
Matt Liston
Shireen Ranschau
Andrew Travers

Bass

Mario Chiarello
Marian Casey
John Casey
Tanner Chilson



Flute

William Cedeño Torres
Dominic Dagostino

Oboe

Jeffrey Paul
Kelley Tracz

Clarinet

Irina Chang
Orlando Scalia


Bassoon

John Tomkins
Nathan Koch

Horn

Daniel Kitchens
Jenna McBride-Harris

Trumpet

Mark Nelson
Amy Schendel

Trombone

Rubén Tovar Carrasco
Matthew Erickson

Timpani

Bob Adney

Percussion

Leo Taylor
Aaron Ragsdale

Piano

Anne Waltner

Stage & Production Team
Stage Director

Robert Neu

Lighting & Projection Designer

Antonio Colaruotolo

Lighting Assistant

Matthew Cook

Costume Designer

Sarah Larson

Set Designer

Victor Shonk

Set Construction

Ann Gumpfer
Cal Metts

Wigs & Make-up Designer

Kristina Sneshkoff

Props Master

Jocelyn Cartwright

Stage Manager

Erin Joy Swank

Assistant Stage Manager

Larissa Giddings

Norwegian Coach

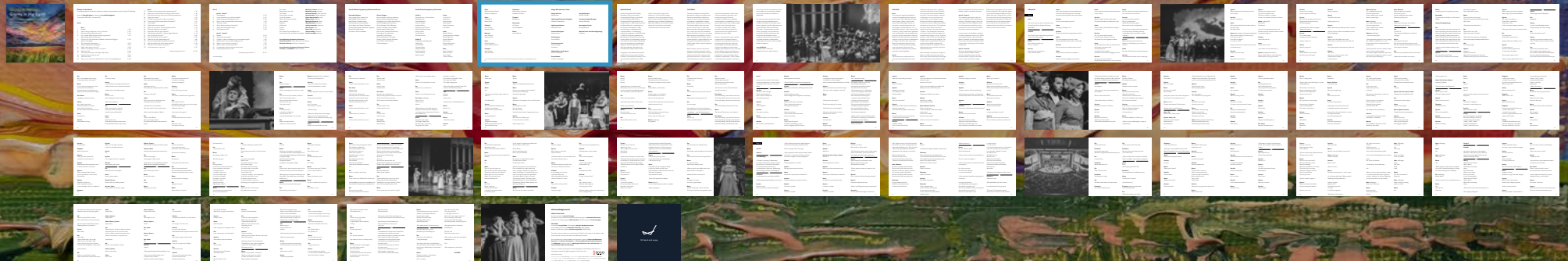
Solveig Zempel

Musical Score and Part Engraving

ProScore



For more information about the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, visit sdsymphony.org





BACKGROUND

Arnold Sundgaard (1909–2006), Broadway lyricist and author, recommended *Giants in the Earth*, by O.E. Rølvaag (1876–1931) to Douglas Moore as the basis for an opera libretto in 1948. Moore received the Rome Prize for composition at the American Academy in 1949, necessitating a collaboration by correspondence—a challenging working arrangement. Moore finished in 1950. He wanted a professional performance in New York at the City Center Opera or on Broadway, but the Columbia University Opera Workshop gave the premiere with professional singers in the principal roles in 1951. Shortly thereafter, the opera was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music.

Copyright issues delayed the opera's publication for three years. By then, interest in the opera had waned, but it was revised for publication in 1963,

which is the version used in this production. The only fully staged production since the premiere was by the University of North Dakota in 1974. Although many consider the *Ballad of Baby Doe* (1956) to be his finest opera, Moore felt that *Giants in the Earth* contained some of his best music.

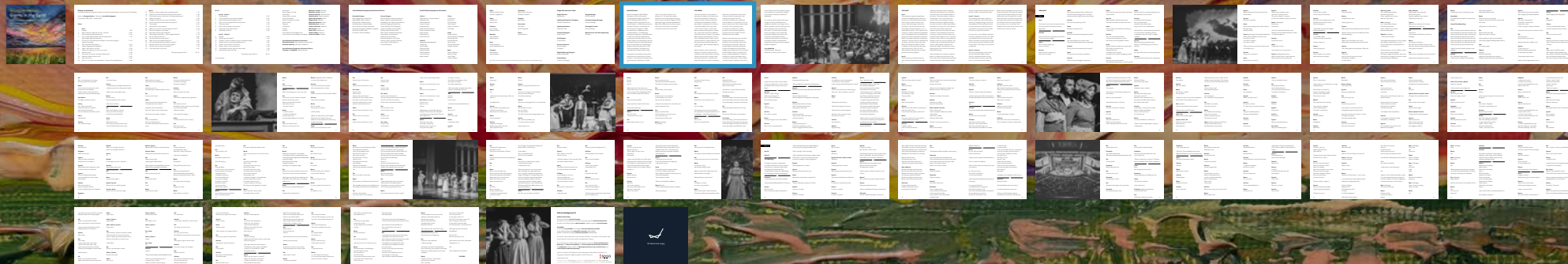
THE OPERA

The drama centers on the tension between the deep love of Beret and Per Hansa and Beret's inability to adjust to harsh, lonely, pioneer life on Dakota's uninhabited, austere, bleak plains, leading her to insanity. The libretto differs from the novel in two crucial scenes. In the novel, Beret interrupts the baptism of their son, and at the end, Per and Beret's friend Hans Olsa is dying. In the opera, Beret prevents the baptism, and it is their unbaptized child, Peder, whose immortal soul is in peril unless Per can bring back the Preacher before the child's death. Both changes heighten the drama.

Beret's father's ornate chest from Norway is central to the plot and is symbolic of her attachment to family, friends, and her life in Norway with spiritual overtones. It comforts her when Per refuses to return to Norway,

when her son presents a bone from a Native American gravesite, and during the plague of locusts. It serves as an altar for a wedding and a baptism. It reveals Per's "sin" of removing the land claim stakes hidden from her, which she finds there. It contains a prized silver coffee pot and a cross that she gives Per to protect him as he goes into the blizzard and to his death.

Moore's compositional style was fully mature when he started *Giants in the Earth*. He composed vocal music by starting with the text, which he would repeat to himself, letting the rhythm and inflection of the words suggest the melodic line. This accounts for the fluidity of the vocal lines and easily, understandable text. *Giants in the Earth* is a prime example of this method of composition, which results in little thematic repetition and short



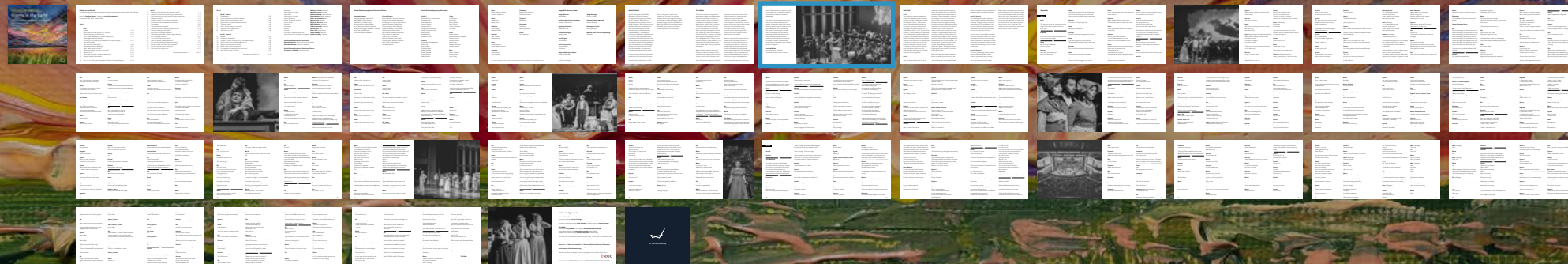


arias. These ariosos are expertly woven into the flow of a continuous melodic line similar to Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*.

For casting, Moore assigns the lower ranges to strong characters and weaker characters to the high voices. Beret (soprano) and Per (baritone) are good examples of this dichotomy. The music is tonal except to evoke terror or tragedy, such as the final, powerfully unresolved chord at the conclusion when Beret and the audience realize she has caused Per to freeze to death in the blizzard, emphasizing the tension that steadily builds throughout.

Jerry McBride

Head Librarian, Emeritus,
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SYNOPSIS

Act I

The orchestral opening establishes a sense of foreboding that returns in the last act. The Hansa family meets Hans, Kjersti, Syvert, Sorrine, and Henry, their Norwegian friends on the prairie, and they break into the Norwegian national anthem, "Ja, vi elsker ditto Landet" ("Yes, We Love This Country"). Henry looks for his girlfriend and is heartbroken that she feared the long trip, and has remained in Norway. Beret is intensely homesick and pleads with Per to return, but he is determined to forge a new life in this virgin land. Beret sits beside her father's chest in despair as Per and Hans excitedly sing a work song. Their son, Ola, then presents a bone from an Indian gravesite, horrifying Beret.

Act II

The women have coffee while the men are away. Beret pulls her silver

coffee pot from the chest, recalling when she and Per first met. She then discovers land-claim stakes hidden in the chest. The three women continue socializing in a trio in the form of a round. Soon, two strangers named O'Hara and Sullivan appear looking for their land-claim stakes they believe should be on Hans's land. The Irishmen will return later. Beret checks the stakes in the chest and sees the name "O'Hara." The Norwegian men enter and sing a waltz-time tune about the presents they bought in town. The final surprise is Henry and his new girlfriend, Dagmar, who are not yet married. The women insist on getting the Preacher quickly. Alone, Beret confronts Per about the stakes. The Irishmen return, fighting with Hans and Per, who force them off the land.

After the fight, Per presents his gift to Beret—a cradle for their soon-to-be-born child, which broke during the fight with the Irishmen. Nonetheless, Beret

feels her husband has sinned, and the broken cradle is another bad omen.

Act III - Scene 1

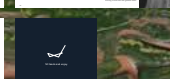
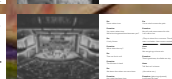
The wedding takes place with the chest as the altar and is followed by dancing. The group sings a hymn for the baptism of Per and Beret's child, but she interrupts, objecting to the name Peder Victorious as evil. While Per tries to calm her, she faints.

Locusts arrive, which Beret interprets as divine retribution for this evil. While the settlers battle to save the crops, Beret is terrified. As the plague surges, she moves toward the chest and sinks to her knees, clutching it as Per rushes to help her.

Act III - Scene 2

The men are drinking in Per's house during a blizzard. Beret's friend, Sorrine, commands them to stop because Peder is dying in the other room, so the men leave to sleep.

Beret arrives and prepares to go out to find the Preacher. Per stops her, agrees to get the Preacher himself, and sings about their love. She gives Per a cross from the chest as he leaves the house, praying for the salvation of Peder and the safety of Per. Her prayer restores her to sanity, but it is too late. She realizes she has sent Per into the storm where he will meet his death.





Libretto

Disc 1

Act I

The crest of a low hill, somewhere west of the Sioux River, Dakota Territory, April 1873.

Prelude

Hans and Sorrine stand facing the East in the morning sunlight.

Hans

Not a thing in sight yet,
Far as I can see.

Sorrine

How quiet the morning is,
How cool the earth.

Hans

How wide the prairie like an endless sea,
A boat would surely get lost out there
Unless you had a good man at the wheel.

Sorrine

Can you see anything at all?

Hans

Nothing, nothing at all.

Sorrine

Dear God, what has happened to them?

Hans

The Lord forgive me if only I knew.
They should have been here a week ago.

Sorrine

Do you think we should look for them?

Hans

They must be out there someplace.

Sorrine

What if she has begged to go back?

Hans

How could she ask that when they have
come so far?

Sorrine

Beret wouldn't feel at home here.
The land will seem so harsh and cruel.

Hans

Then, by God, she should have stayed
in Norway!

Sorrine

Oh, no, she loves Per Hansa.
It was he who wanted to come.
She loves him and agreed to follow.

Hans

We all wanted to build our homes here,
Per Hansa, the most of all.
You followed me.
You didn't hold us back.
You didn't slow us like a dragging anchor.

Sorrine

All wives are not the same.
Some break sooner than a man can know.

Hans

But Per Hansa is strong enough for two,
for more than two, for ten!

Sorrine

It will be hard for her here.
She is a gentle spirit,
And like a sea-borne shell,
May crack on this lonely beach.

(Enter Syvert. He has obviously dressed in a hurry and is fumbling with his suspenders when he stops in sudden surprise.)

Syvert

Good morning, good morning!
What is it that brings you so soon to
the hill?

Hans

No sign of Per Hansa and his family yet.

Sorrine

They should have been here a week ago.





Syvert

What makes you think they won't be here today?

Sorrine

We can't see them.

Hans

We've been waiting since dawn when it first got light;
We came here.

Syvert (pointing in the opposite direction)

What about looking over that way?

Isn't that a man?

Isn't that a wagon?

Isn't that a wife?

(They quickly turn as Syvert looks proud of his discovery.)

Sorrine

Syvert, you saw them.

Hans

Why didn't you tell us?

Syvert

Check your compass, man.

You ain't in Norway now.

This ain't a fjord, it's a plain.

A man can wander for days out there.

Hans (calling off)

Per Hansa.

Per Hansa.

(His voice echoes back and in the distance can be heard the faint rumble of a prairie wagon.)

Sorrine

Look! They see us.

Hans

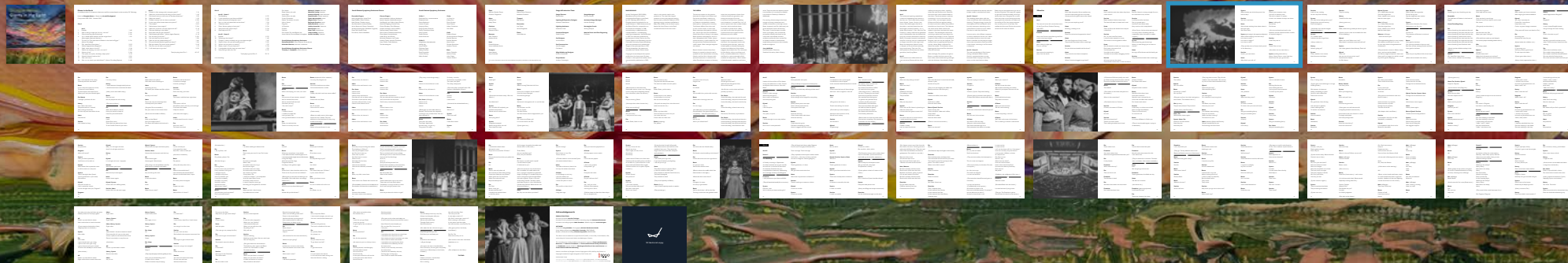
Thank God, at last.

(He rushes out to meet them.)

Syvert (calling behind him)

Henry, Henry Solum, come here boy.

Good news for you, good news.





Sorrine

Look at 'em coming,
All the way from Norway.

Syvert

Oh, don't that look good to you?
People from the old country,
Real Norwegians.

*(He breaks into the Norwegian
National Anthem.)*

Syvert

Ja, vi elsker dette
Landet som det stiger frem

(Henry rushes in.)

Henry

What's going on?

Syvert

Furet, værbitt over vannet
Med de tusen sind hjem.

Sorrine

They're coming.

Henry

Thank God for that.

(Henry goes out.)

Syvert

Elsker, elsker det og tenker på vår far og mor

*(Kjersti comes in like an excitable hen late
for the feeding.)*

Kjersti

What can it be? What can it be?
Why doesn't someone come and tell me?

Syvert

Just a few guests in from Norway. That's all.

Kjersti

That's all.
Are you out of your mind, man?
Some friends indeed.
It's Per Hansa.

Kjersti, Syvert

Ja, vi elsker dette landet
Som det stiger frem
Furet, værbitt over vannet
Med de tusen hjem.

Men (offstage)

Ja, vi elsker dette landet
Som det stiger frem
Furet, værbitt over vannet
Med de tusen hjem.

Women (offstage)

...Med de tusen hjem.

*(The approaching family is now singing
the anthem and all join in as one
by one they enter to be greeted and
embraced.)*

*(The procession comes in. Beret, weary,
worn, and somewhat dazed.
Per Hansa, eager and proud. Hans and
Henry pull in a wagon on which a small
boy and a girl lie sleeping.)*

Men, Women

Elsker, elsker det og tenker
På vår far og mor
Og den saganatt som senker
Drømme på vår jord.

Syvert

Welcome to America, Per Hansa,
Welcome to our fair city.

Per

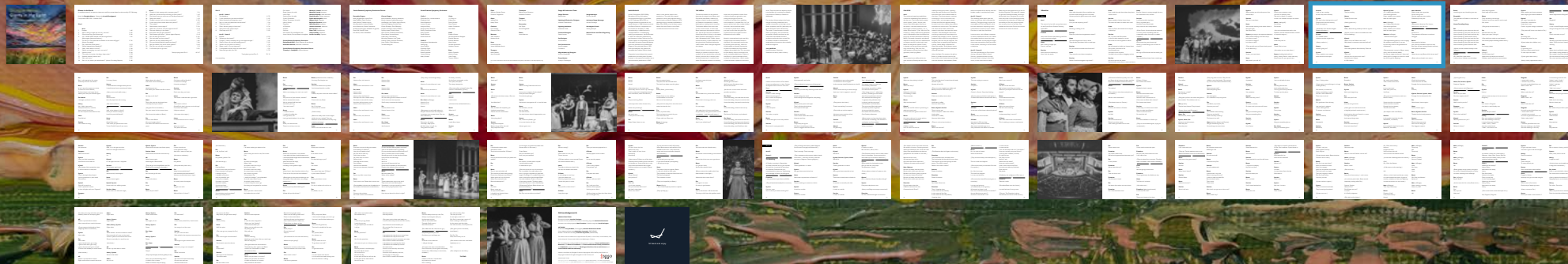
So this is it.
The pastures of Goshen in the land
of Egypt.

Beret

How good to be here.
Our journey seemed to have no end,
But now, at last, among friends we know,
How good to be here.

Per

What do you say, Beret child, do we stay?
(Beret almost breaks into tears.)



**Beret**

Anything you say. Anything you say.

Ensemble

The pastures of Goshen in the land of Egypt!

Home Founding Song:**Per**

Home founding, the seed and the sod.
Home founding, the plow and the clod.
Home founding, the earth and the sky.
Home founding, where rivers run by.
Home founding, the wind and the rain.
Home founding, the hope and the pain.
Home founding, the child and the star.
Home founding and God from afar.

(Kjersti notices children asleep in the wagon.)

6

Kjersti

Oh, dear God, bless them.
Look at that, children sound asleep.

How they've grown.

God, keep all little ones.

Beret

They are tired, poor things.
Some of us are not used to such travel.
Ola, Anna.

(She gently touches them.)

Per

We are here now, Ola.
Open your eyes, little girl.

(Ola and Anna wake up and sleepily look at the people standing before them.)

Ola

I'm hungry papa.

Kjersti

Hungry?
Did you hear that?
What kind of people are we here?
Children starving and we stand about.

Syvert

Well, maybe you know someone
Who might give them breakfast.

Kjersti

Yes, that I certainly do.
Come Ola, come Anna.
Help them, man.
Come, my poor hungry creatures.

(They start off. Anna runs back to Per.)

Per

Go along now,
Kiersten will care for you.

(Kjersti takes the children out.)

Syvert

I'll go along, too.
She may need a good hand
To wait upon the table.

(Syvert goes after them.)

(Henry slowly approaches them.)

Henry

What happened to Borghild?

Per

Borghild?

Henry

I have a letter Borghild wrote
Long time ago she was coming.

Per

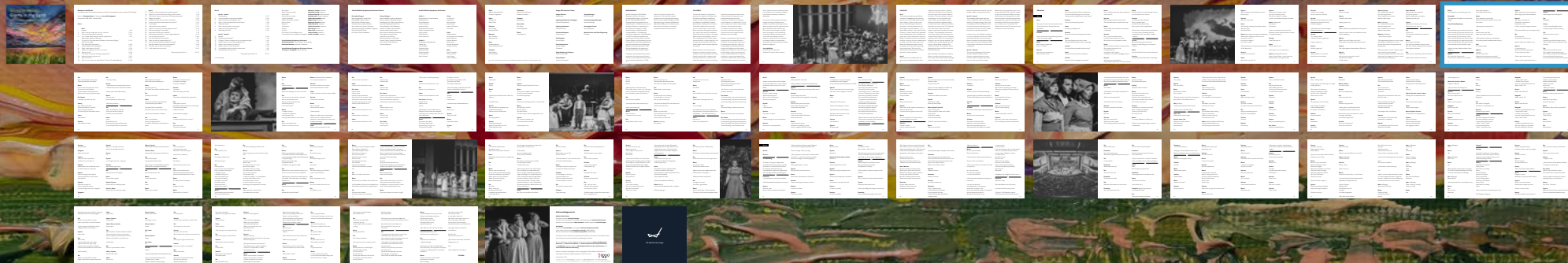
Didn't she write to you?

Henry

We don't get mail out here so very often.
That's the last I heard she was coming.

Per

When the time finally came,
She couldn't bring herself to go.
She couldn't leave her friends behind.
She was afraid of being lonely.
She cried and she swore she loved you.



**Per**

But, it all seemed so far away,
So lonely and she was afraid.

Beret

It isn't easy for anyone to come,
To leave so much behind,
To leave home and never know
When you'll see your friends again.

Per Hansa

I thought you knew all this.

Henry

No, I didn't know this.
She promised me, I waited,
And so long I loved her;
I'm the only one here who's alone.

Hans

Poor fellow!

Sorrine

He's waited so long.

Per

I'm sorry, Henry.

Henry

I came because I thought she'd join me.
I should never have come here all alone.

(Henry turns and walks away.)

Beret

She was torn.
Not all people are this strong.

(Per turns to Hans.)

Per

Well, what about it, Hans?
Have you saved a scrap of
Land for your old friends?

Hans

Land!
Good God, man!
Take what you please from here
To the Pacific Ocean if you want.

Per

What about this place?
I like what we're standing on.

Hans

Anything you say.
Put down your stakes and file a claim.

Per

As easy as all that?

Hans

That's the way we do things here.
I already have your stakes.

(He gives Per some stakes.)

See your name in the corner there.

(Per shows the stakes to Beret.)

Per

Look at that Beret!
Can you imagine that?
Put down the stakes and the land is
yours!

Beret

Our home will be like this?
It seems so strange.
How do you begin?

Sorrine

You learn.
Each new day, you learn.

Hans

The house could be here, right here.

Per

Then here it will be!
Good God, that's the way to do things!
Put down the stakes.
Help me unload.

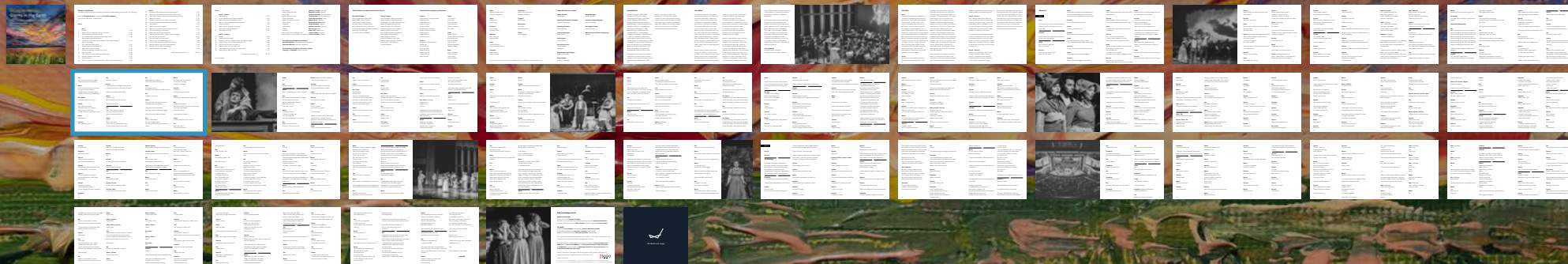
(He starts the wagon.)

Hans

Is there need for such a hurry?

Per

Why not, man?
The years are short!





Beret

No!

Per

What's wrong?

Beret

We're not staying, we can't, we can't!

Per

Are you out of your senses, woman?

We've crossed the ocean,

We've crossed half the land

And then you say,

"No, don't stay?"

Beret

I couldn't face it!

I couldn't live like this.

Let's go back, Per.

Let's go back before it is too late.

Per

Beret, we settled that.

There is no time; not now.

Beret (*ashamed of her outburst*)

I'm sorry, Per, forgive me.

Sorrine

You won't feel that way when

You've been here for a while.

Hans

Coffee, why don't we have some coffee?

Sorrine

Come with me, Beret.

Beret

No, I'll sit here.

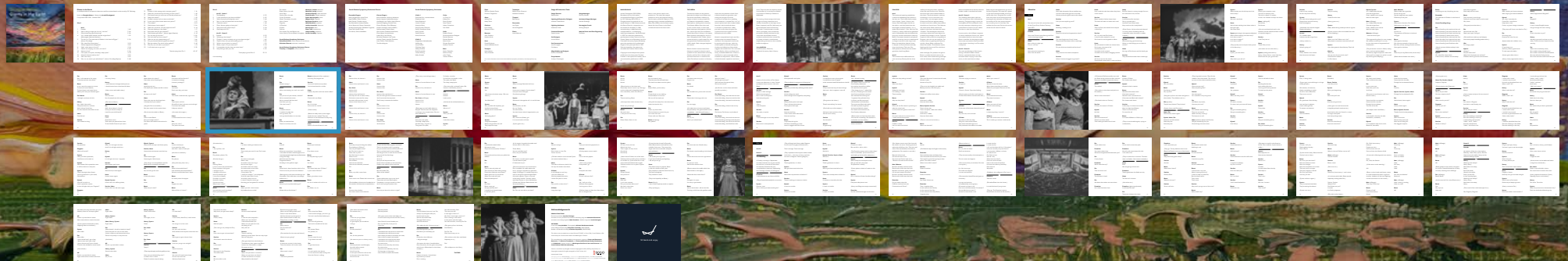
Let me sit for a while.

(*Sorrine exits*)

(*Beret sits sadly next to the wagon while the men unload. They are oblivious to her loneliness as they sing a brisk work song.*)

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.





Per

Heave a line, oh, heave it.

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.

Per, Hans

Heave a line.

Heave a line.

Heave a line and leave it.

Our ship will sail at dawn today.

Go down to sea and far away.

And who will ever hear us say,

Heave a line! Heave a line!

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.

Per

Heave a line, oh, heave it!

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.

Per

Heave a line.

Heave a line.

Hans

Heave a line.

Heave a line.

Per, Hans

Heave a line and leave it!

Oh, see that girl that stands on shore?

You'll never see her anymore.

She'll marry someone else before.

Per

Heave, heave a line.

Heave, heave a line.

Hans

Heave a line.

Heave a line.

Per, Hans

Heave a line.

And Leave it!

(They carry some things away.)

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.

Per

Heave a line, oh heave it.

Hans

Heave a line and heave it over.

Per, Hans *(offstage)*

Heave a line.

Heave a line.

Heave.

(Beret gets up and walks about in despair. She removes the tarpaulin covering a very ornate chest. She sits down beside it.)

Beret

The quiet, the quiet,

The deep, deep quiet.

No bird song, no gull cry.

The grass is so quiet,

So lonely, no echo;

So far from my people, so far.

The quiet, the quiet,

The deep, deep quiet.

(She cries softly to herself when Ola rushes in followed by Syvert.)

Ola

Mama!

Mama!

Look at this.

(He hands her a bleached bone.)

Beret

What is it?

Syvert

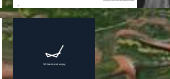
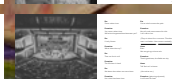
Can't you tell?

Beret

Looks like a bone.

Syvert

It is.





Beret
Antelope?

Syvert
Indian.

Beret
No.

(She throws the bone away. Ola runs after it.)



You killed him?

Syvert
No, we didn't kill anybody, yet.
He died around here.
Graves are all around here.

Beret
A burying place?

Syvert
A regular boneyard.
Bones are good for the soil.
They help the crops.
30

Beret
Syvert.

Syvert
What's wrong? We didn't kill him.

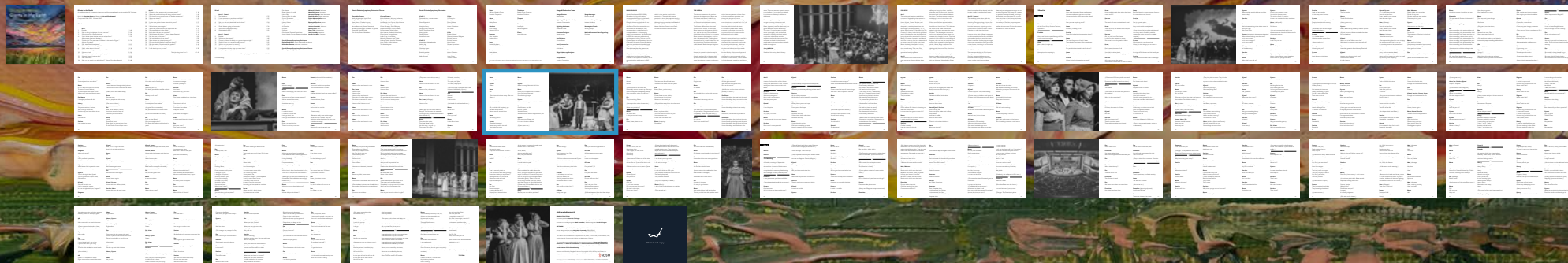
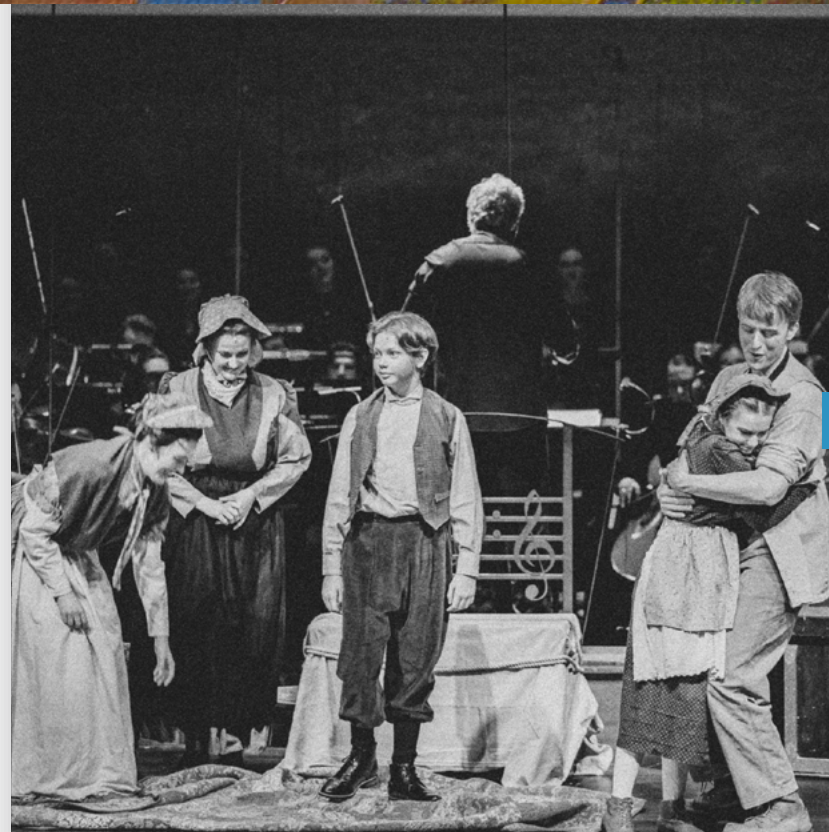
Beret
Have you no respect for the dead?
How you have changed
Since leaving Norge.

Syvert
We haven't changed at all. It's our life here.

Beret
Our life here, our life.
No, no, Syvert.
You don't know,
You don't know what's happened to you.

Syvert
Oh, come now, Beret, girl.
It's not as bad as all that.

(Syvert goes out.)



**Beret**

Never!
Never!
Never!

(Beret hurries to the chest and frantically tries to cover it up. She tugs at the cords and is breathing heavily from the effort, when Per returns.)

Per

They're waiting, Beret.

(He stops short when he sees her.)

What are you doing?

————— 13 —————

Beret

We can't stay.
I told you we can't stay.

Per

Beret, Beret, listen to me.

Beret

No, we mustn't stay.
They become like animals here.
The devil has taken over this place.

Per

Beret, Beret, you're weary.

Beret

Please listen to me, darling.
Listen before it's too late.
We can all be saved yet.

(Per pulls her away from the chest and takes her hand in his.)

Per

Beret, my dear child,
This has been too much for you.
You must rest now.
Come with me. Rest now.

Beret (weeping)

Per, please.

Per

I've been cross with you,
Forgive me.

Beret

I'm afraid.

Per

You shouldn't be, you're with me now.

Beret

Please don't be angry with me.

Per

I'm not angry.

(He takes her in his arms and kisses her powerfully. She gives herself to him completely... and then pulls away.)

————— 14 —————

Beret

No, no, no,
Aren't you afraid here?

Per

Afraid of what?
Of this glorious land?
We'll become like giants here,
Rich as this earth.

(He lifts her on the chest and looks proudly up at her.)

Per, Beret

Home founding, the seed and the sod.
Home founding, the plow and the clod.
Home founding, the earth and the sky.

Per

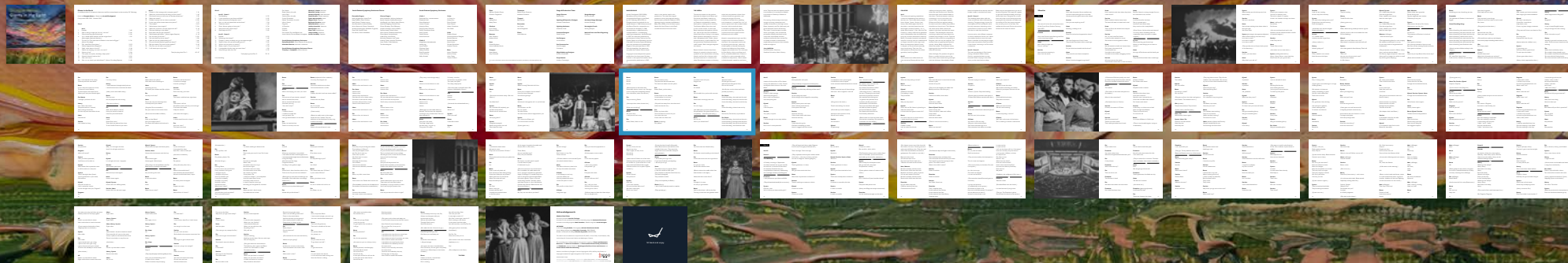
Home founding, where rivers run by.

Beret

Per Hansa, Per Hansa, my husband.

Per, Beret

Home founding, the wind and the rain.
Home founding, the hope and the pain.
Home founding, the child and the star.
Home founding, and God from afar.



**Act II**

*Interior of the sod hut of Per Hansa.
A summer afternoon in June. Sorrine
and Kjersti have come to visit with
Beret.*

Sorrine

Doesn't it feel strange
With everyone gone?
Not a man on the place
And everyone gone.

Kjersti

I like it,
I like the quiet.

Sorrine

Yes, quiet, so quiet.

Beret

I never thought it was noisy before.

Sorrine

But now it's more peaceful.

Kjersti

More peaceful and quiet.

(They sit silently in enjoyment of that quiet.)

Kjersti

What do you think they will bring us from town?

Sorrine

All the things we need.
All the things we've longed for, everything.

Kjersti

Mostly fence posts and rope.
That's all they think about;
Fence posts and rope.

Sorrine

Harness and hay;
I like to hear them talk about
Harness and hay.

Beret

I hope they bring the
Children something to wear.
Anna is ragged and Ola is bare.

Sorrine

I would like to see a plum again.
I would like to see an apple.
In the summer there'll be berries on the hill.

Kjersti

I have never had any of those things.
And now I don't suppose I ever will.

Beret

Wait!

(She goes to the chest.)

There's something I've saved.

(She holds up a silver teapot.)

We have never used our silver,
We will use it today.

Sorrine

You shined it!

Kjersti

So gleaming!

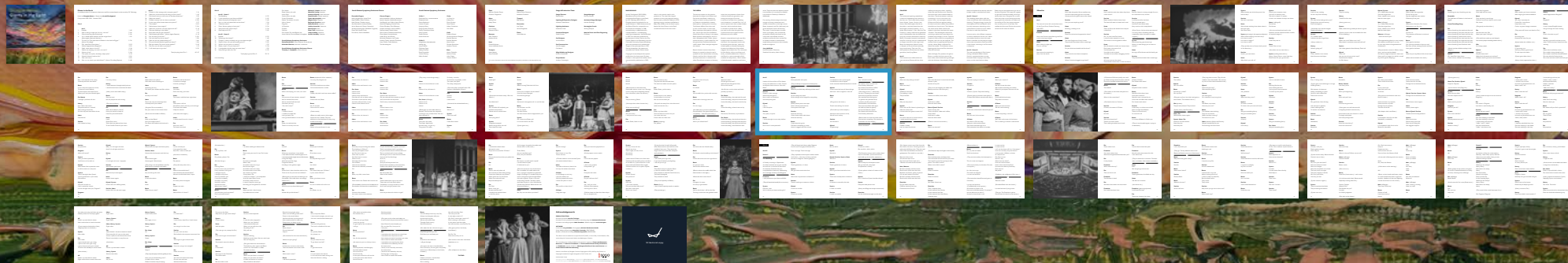
Beret

Yes, I shined it today.

Per Hansa came to court me
One Sunday afternoon.
My mother served him coffee.
He used this silver spoon.
"One lump or two," I asked him.
He said, "Please give me three!"
And from my father's window
We watched the shining sea.
"It gleams like polished silver.
It shines just like your eyes."
Like breezes in the balsams,
The room was filled with sighs.
He held my hand as gently
As he ever held this spoon.
Per Hansa said he loved me,
One Sunday afternoon.

*(Beret starts to close the chest when
she notices something. She reaches in
and takes out four stakes.)*

What are these?



Kjersti

What are they doing in there?

Beret

What are they?

Kjersti

Stakes for the land,
For making a claim.
They're stakes.

Beret

Why are they here?

Kjersti

Don't tell me Per Hansa is planning to
take out more land.
Is that what he's gone to town for?

Beret

He never told me. He never said so.
I surely would have known.

Sorrine

Coffee is ready.
Let's sit down and drink.

36

Kjersti

This is the first time I've sat down all week,
Almost a year,
Almost all my life.

*(They sit to the brightly set table and
Beret pours from the silver pot.)*

Sorrine

Cakes and coffee, little cakes.

Kjersti

And here is coffee.
Here are little cakes.

Beret, Kjersti, Sorrine

Time to stop, rest.
Time to stop for cakes and coffee,
Little cakes.
And here is coffee,
Here are little cakes.

(There is a knock at the door.)

Beret

What can that be?

Kjersti

The men trying to scare us.

Sorrine

I'll open it.

Kjersti

Come in, Syvert. Stop that fooling.

*(Sorrine goes to the door and opens it.
O'Hara and Sullivan stand at the door.)*

Sorrine

Yes.

O'Hara

Is the man of the house about this place?

Beret

No, he's not, he's not here.

O'Hara

My name is O'Hara, lady.
We got a claim around here.
Got some land belongs to us.
Only someone has taken our stakes.

Beret

Won't you come in?

O'Hara

We don't have the time.
We've been searching our stakes.
When do you expect the man of the
house?

Beret

He should be back soon,
They went into town.

O'Hara

We're just west of here.
Tell him we're waiting.

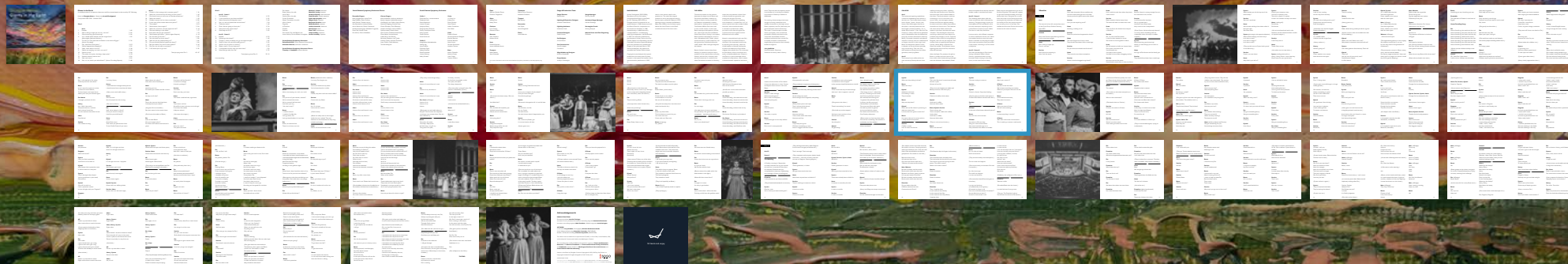
Beret

Is there anything I can do?

O'Hara

We'll talk to the man of the house.
This is nothing a woman could settle.

37





(O'Hara and Sullivan quickly turn and go. Beret slowly closes the door and her eyes turn horrified toward the chest.)

21

Beret

The stakes!

(She rushes to the chest and jerks out the stakes.)

What is the name here?

(She hands them to Sorrine.)

Sorrine

O'Hara, the name is O'Hara.

Kjersti

No! No!

Sorrine

Who has done that?
There's no crime worse
Than taking another man's land.

Beret

O'Hara, O'Hara.
Per Hansa took them!

Kjersti

Maybe he had a reason.

Beret

Would he hide them here
If he had a reason?
Would a man conceal his sin
If he were not filled with shame?
Per Hansa took them!

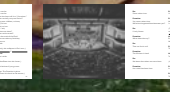
Sorrine

In Norway, no crime was so bad.
Here it might be different.
There is so much land,
So much for all.

Beret

It is never different in God's eye.

(They sit at the table again, trying to understand.)





Sorrine
The coffee.

Kjersti
Yes, the coffee.

Beret
Per Hansa, a thief?
Oh, my God!

(She gets up from her chair and goes to the window. The children rush in.)

Ola *(spoken)*
They're here, Mama! They're here!

(Syvert, Hans, and Per enter.)

————— 22 —————
Hans, Per
We're home, home again.

Syvert, Hans, Per
Home to our old women.
Here they are.
Here they are.

(They hug their women. They lift the children over their heads. The women try not to show their troubled minds.)

Kjersti
How was your trip?
Was everything fine?

Sorrine
You were gone,
So it seemed a very long time.

Per
And Beret, my sweet,
How are you now?

Beret
The children were waiting.
They sat on the hill.
When are they coming?
The house is so still.

Hans *(aside to Kjersti and Sorrine)*
We got something for you,
Some things we must show.

Kjersti
A present!

Sorrine
A present!

Hans
Yes, presents.

Kjersti
What are they, man?

Syvert
Sit down, woman,
Sit down and you soon will know.

Per
We got something fancy.
We got something fine.

Sorrine
A fancy!

Kjersti
How fancy!

Syvert
Just an old ball of twine.

Per
Nothing like fancies
And nothing like lace.
You've got to have presents
To cheer up the place.

Kjersti
A present.

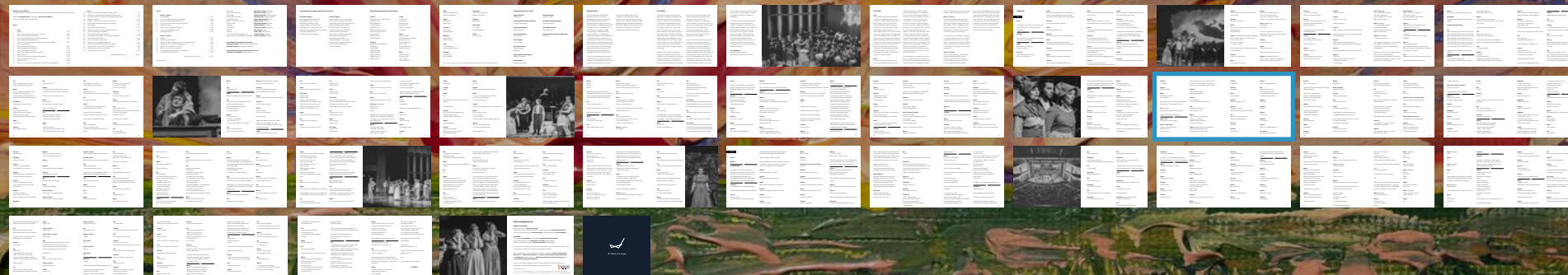
Sorrine
Present.

Kjersti
Fancy that.

Sorrine
Fancy that.

Syvert
We got something fancy.

Per, Hans
We got something fine.



Syvert

First, I'll bring mine.

(Syvert goes out and brings in a huge coffee grinder.)

Old woman, old woman,
Here's something to grind
You fill it with coffee and
Then start to wind.

Kjersti

Oh, goodness. How shining.

Just see how it gleams,
A real coffee grinder
To answer our dreams.

Sorrine

How wonderful,

Beret

Wonderful,

Sorrine

Beautiful,

42

Beret

Beautiful,

Beret, Sorrine

Just fancy that.

Syvert

We're just beginning.

Per

Wait and you'll see.

Hans

Now let me get mine.

(Hans goes out and returns with a brightly painted cannister set.)

Now look at this set I found in a store
For sugar and spices
And many things more.

Sorrine

Now isn't that fancy?

Now isn't that fine?

Syvert

Yes, really much better
Than a ball of old twine.

Per

It's my turn now.
Wait and you'll see,
You'll see.

(Per goes out and returns with two bolts of cloth.)

Some cloth for my woman,
Some cloth for my wife.
Enough for her dresses,
The rest of her life.

(He drapes cloth over Beret.)

Sorrine

It's beautiful cloth for his wife.
Wonderful, wonderful,

Kjersti

It's wonderful cloth for his wife.
Beautiful, beautiful,

Hans

Cloth for his woman,
Some cloth for his wife,
Enough for her dresses forever,

Per

Forever,

Kjersti, Sorrine, Syvert, Hans

Enough for her dresses for life.

Per

We're home, home again.

Hans

Home, home again.

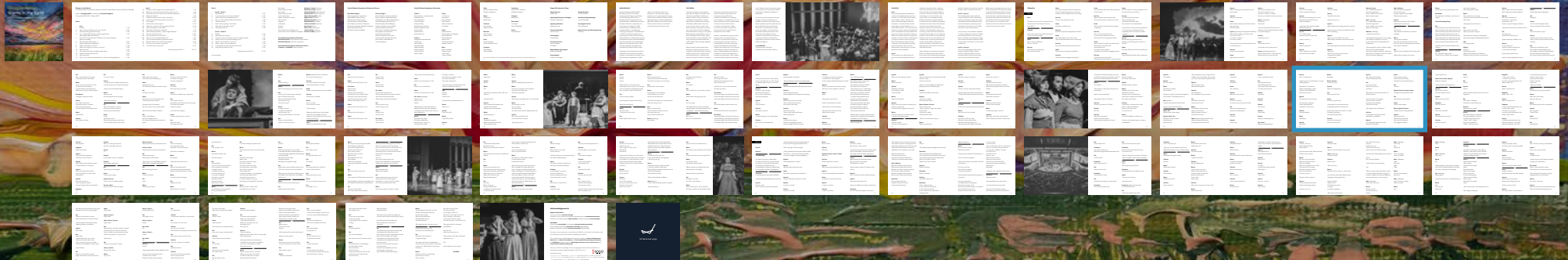
Beret, Kjersti, Sorrine

Thanks for the lovely presents.

Syvert

Now for the last.
Please close your eyes.
Now we will bring you
Our biggest surprise.

43





(Syvert goes out.)

Hans, Per, Sorrine, Kjersti

Surprise. Surprise.

(Syvert returns with Dagmar.)

————— 23 —————

Syvert

What do you think
Our last surprise of all?

Kjersti

Well, how do you do?

Dagmar

How do you do?

Syvert

Don't she look fine?

Kjersti

Whose present are you?

Sorrine

Where is Henry?

Hans

Henry!

Per

Henry!

Syvert

Henry!

(Henry enters and puts his arm around
Dagmar.)

Per

Her name is Dagmar.
And she's a real Norsky, too.

Sorrine

Where did you meet?

————— 24 —————

Henry

She was working in the fields.
She was working in the hay.
I came along and saw her.
"Hello," said I, "hello."
And she smiled back,
"Hello," said she to me.

Dagmar

I never said a word.
I couldn't say a word.
He took my pitchfork from me.
What could I do?

Henry

What could she do?

Dagmar

What could I do?

Henry

What could she do?

Dagmar

He took my pitchfork from me.
I never said a word.
I couldn't say a word.
He took my pitchfork from me.
"Hello, hello, hello."

Henry

I took her pitchfork from her.
She was working in the fields.
She was working in the hay.

I came along and saw her.
"Hello," said I, "hello."
And she smiled back,
"Hello," said she.
And I said,
"Well, let's marry."

————— 25 —————

Beret

And when did you get married?

Henry

Well, that's the thing
We ain't done yet.

Beret

But where will you find a preacher?

Syvert

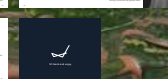
Oh, my gosh!
Think of that.

Hans

No preacher.

Per

No preacher.



**Sorrine**

No preacher.

Dagmar

What will we do?

Syvert

Until you find a preacher,
You'll have to live with us.

Kjersti

We'd better find a preacher soon.
It will be easier on everyone.

Syvert

That's the right idea, Kjersti.
You've got brains in your head,
Old woman.

Kjersti

She will live with us
Until a preacher comes.
Is that all right with you, Dagmar?

Dagmar

Ja.

46

Kjersti

Well, if it's all right with her.
And if it's all right with him—

Henry

Ja.

Kjersti

It's all right with me. I suppose.

Sorrine

We'd better get home.

Per

We're home, home again.

Hans

Home, home again.

Kjersti, Syvert

Home with our coffee grinder,

Sorrine, Hans

Home with our salt and sugar,

Kjersti, Syvert

Home with the rope and fence posts,

Sorrine, Hans

Home with the harness and the hay.

All

We're home again.
Home again. We're home.

*(They all go out except Beret and Per.
Beret starts to prepare the table.)*

Per

No, let that go for now.

Beret

It has to be done.

Per

Later.

Beret

What do you want?

Per

I want to hold you.
I was gone four days
And now I want to hold you.

(He tries to embrace.)

Beret

Per, please.

(She pulls away from him.)

Per

What's the trouble here?
Has someone become bashful?
We are not all brides here, I hope.

Beret

It's nearly time for supper.

Per

Supper can wait.

Beret

Who will fix it if I don't?

47



(He seizes her.)

Per

I will, by God, I will.

Beret

Per, please, please. Per.

(Per lets her go.)

Per

Darling, Beret,
It hurts me to see you like this.
Every moment I was gone
I thought of you.
I thought of my love
And my need for you.
I love you so deeply,
So deep is my need,
And now I return,
You are not here.
What have I done?

Beret

You ask what you have done?
Don't you really know?

48

Per

I've done nothing to deserve this.

Beret

Then surely your soul is lost, Per Hansa.
Evil.

Per

You talk so strangely.
When I left,
You didn't want me to go.
Not for one night,
You didn't want me away.
You were warm to me then.
You cried in my arms.
"Hurry back, Per,
I need you tonight," you whispered.
Your lips were warm to me.
Your body close to mine.
It wasn't easy for me to go,
Knowing you hungered for me then.

Beret

When you left I didn't know
My husband was a thief.

Per

A thief!

Beret

When we came here, I was afraid.
I was afraid of what would happen to us.
I saw that people might become like beasts,
Living like dogs;
We'd become like dogs,
Forgotten beasts,
Howling in the godless night.

Per

What have I done here but tried to live,
Tried to live for you and our children?

*(Beret goes to the chest and brings out
the stakes. She holds them accusingly
before him.)*

Beret

Who do you say these belong to?

Per

Where did you find them?

Beret

Where you hid them.

Per

Give them to me.

Beret

Do they belong to you?

Per

Yes. Mine!

Beret

The name here says "O'Hara."
Is your name O'Hara?

Per

Beret, give them to me.

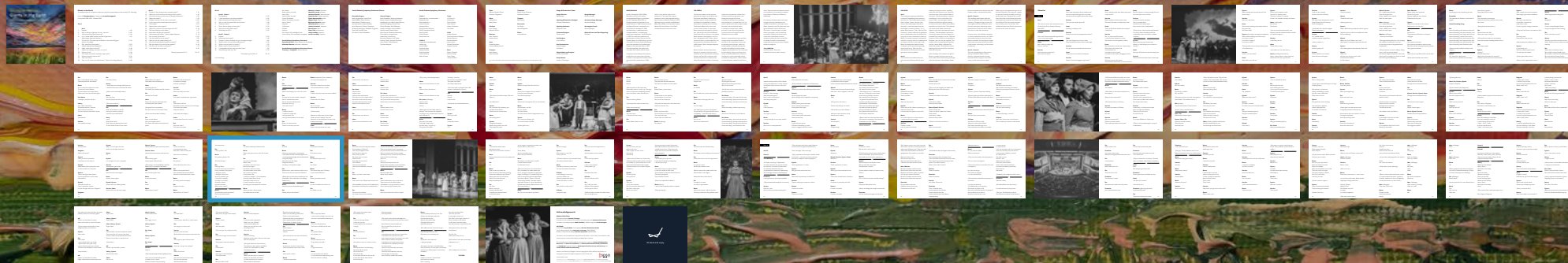
Beret

So, this is stolen soil we live on.

Per

No, Beret, no, no.

49





Beret

Then why are you hiding the stakes
That belong to O'Hara?
How do you explain that?
No, Per, don't even try.
Don't ever try that.
Oh, God, here is a man
Fallen on evil.
God help all of us here,
Our children.
Here we are damned.
Here we are damned, damned.
Evil.

Per

Beret, my child, come here.

Beret

Don't touch me. Please don't touch me.

(She shudders in his arms as he takes her to the window. He forces her to stand there.)

Per

Come to the window.
You must come to the window.
50

30

Do you see that field of green out there?
That is our wheat and it is growing.
Do you see that earth so black and rich?
That is our land and it's ours to keep.
We will grow rich in that land out there.
Here we will live like kings:
All of us,
All of us
And you will be proud of me
Proud of the wonders to be done here,
Deeds to be talked of far and wide.

31

Beret

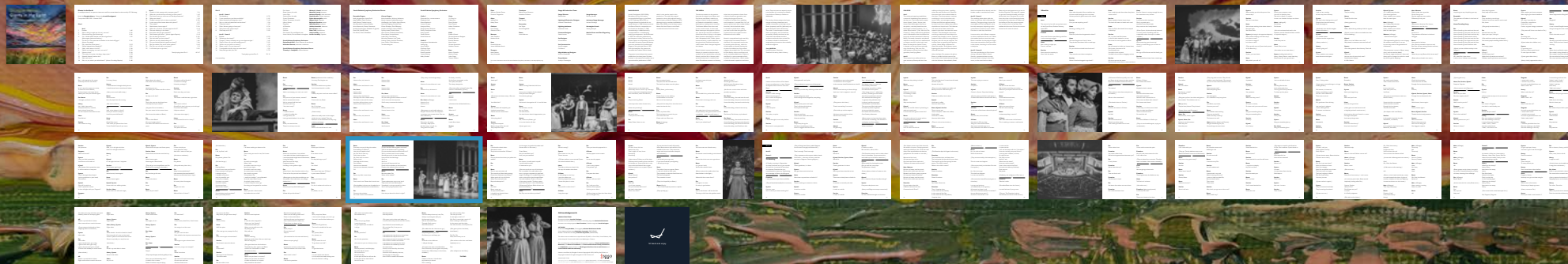
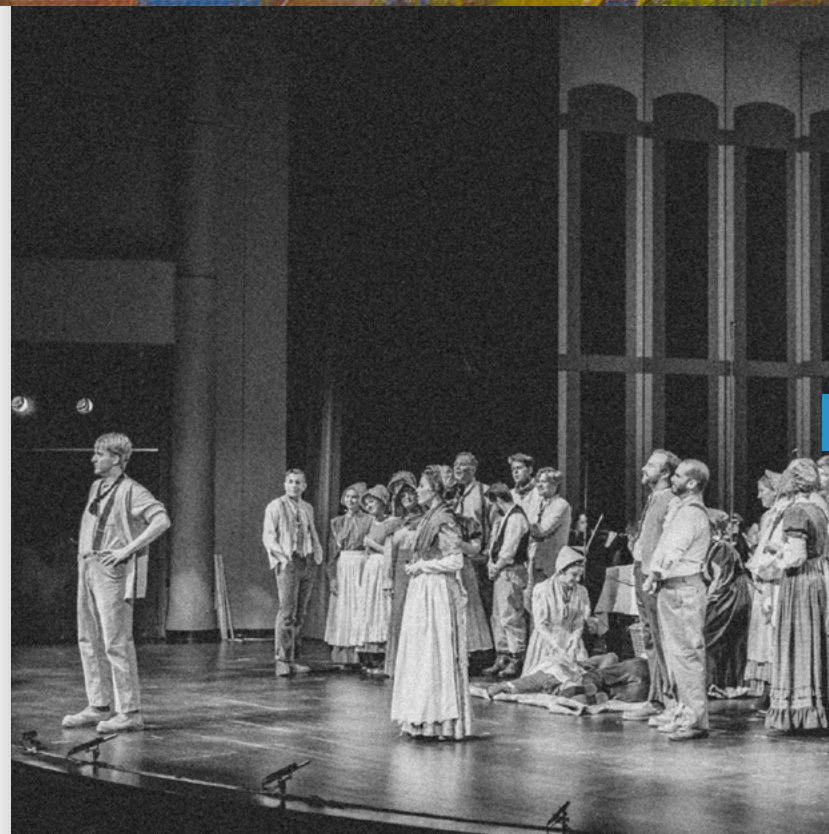
But the stakes, Per,
What of the stakes?

Per

Those stakes were not on our land.
They were on Hans Olsa's place.
Somebody is trying to steal his claim
And I was trying to protect him.

Beret

How do you know his claim is right?



**Per**

I checked the deed when
We were in town.
They had no name like "O'Hara."

Beret

Did you know that when you pulled the
stakes?

Per

No.

Beret

Then it was only their evil
That saved you from being wrong.
Does that make you any better?
What good will any of this be
When our souls are sunk
Beyond redemption?

Per

Oh, God.
Beret, must you
Always talk like this?
I should have burned them
In the first place.

52

*(In his anger, he grabs the stakes and
thrusts them in the stove.)*

There, Beret,
Are you satisfied now?
Now, are you satisfied.

Beret

Per Hansa, I would watch myself.
I would watch myself
If I behaved as you.

*(She turns and runs out of the house.
Per is troubled. He walks about the
room, trying to suppress his grief and
anger. He brings in a cradle and puts it
next to the gift he has brought Beret.
He rocks it gently. There is a sound
of shouting outside. The door opens
and Hans hurries in. He is followed by
O'Hara and Sullivan. Behind them are
Syvert and Henry.)*

—32—

Hans

Per, Per, can we talk to you here?

Per

What's wrong?

Syvert

Don't listen to 'em, Per.
Throw 'em out.

*(O'Hara makes a move toward Syvert
who ducks behind Hans.)*

Hans

This fellow claims my land is his.
He says his stakes were there.

O'Hara

It all belongs to me I say.
I put the stakes out
And he jumped the claim.
I know this piece is mine.

Per

Did you file a claim for it?

O'Hara

Long time ago.

Per

Then you have the papers for it.

O'Hara

All the papers a man needs.

Per

Let us see the papers.

O'Hara

I don't carry papers
Everywhere I go.

Per

Everyone else does.

O'Hara

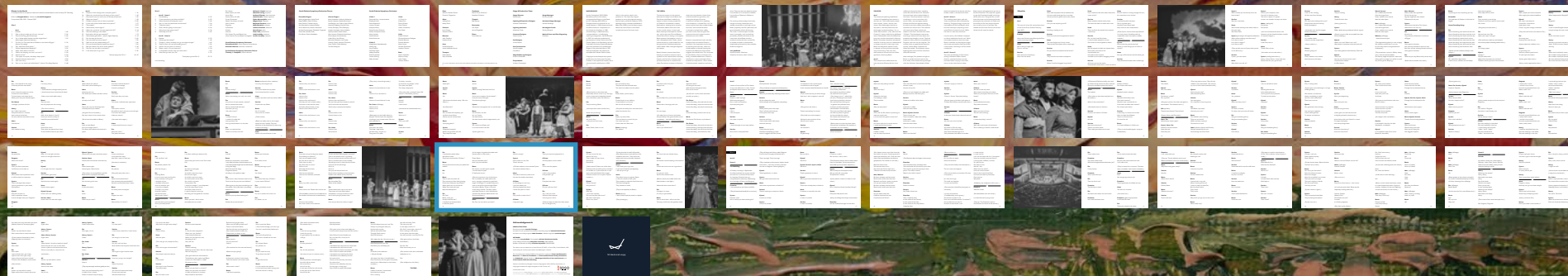
Do you call me a liar?

Per

Yes, I call you a liar.
Without those papers
You've got no claim.

*(Sullivan leaps at Hans but Hans drops
him to the ground.)*

53



**Syvert**

Hit 'em, Hans, hit 'em.
Watch out, boy.
That's right, hit 'em, Hans.
Good boy!
Good boy!

*(Hans tosses O'Hara out of the door.
Sullivan picks himself up from the floor.
As he does so, Syvert kicks him in the
rear and ducks behind Hans again.
Sullivan rushes out in a panic. Kjersti
rushes in.)*

Kjersti

Syvert! Syvert!
Are you hurt?

Syvert

Hell! No!
I ain't hurt woman.
Did you see that fellow run?
We had it that time,
Didn't we, Hans?

*(Syvert brushes himself off proudly
when Beret returns and stands in the
middle of the room. They sense her
anger and scorn and seem sheepish
and subdued.)*

33

Beret

I will thank you to go now
If you have finished your fighting.
I will ask you to go.

Hans

They didn't have no papers, Beret.
It was all a bluff on their part.
They wanted to take the land from me,
The land I ploughed,
They wanted to steal.

(They look hopefully at Beret.)

Beret *(firmly)*

I don't think anybody needs to explain.

(They quietly go.)

Per

You have sent our friends away.

Beret

Do friends come brawling in the house?

Per

I knew the claim was not a good one.

Beret

It is just as I said;
We live like animals here.

*(Beret notices the cradle which has
been broken in the fight.)*

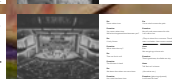
Where did that come from?

Per

I bought it in town.
I'm sorry it got broken.

Beret

And to think that I will be the first
To bring a child into this godless world.



Disc 2
Act III
Scene 1
The Wedding

*A Sunday morning in September.
An altar has been set up just outside
the sod hut. It consists of the chest.
An itinerant Preacher has just
completed the ceremony celebrating
the marriage of Henry and Dagmar.*

Preacher

I now pronounce you Man and Wife.

(They all stand awkwardly for a moment.)

Syvert

Kiss her, man.

Ain't it what you been waiting for?

*(They all laugh and Henry takes Dagmar
into his arms hungrily and kisses her.)*

That's enough. That's enough.

*(They separate and everyone shakes hands
with them — the men to Henry and the
women to Dagmar. Dancing begins.)*

Kjersti

Thank goodness, it's done.

Syvert

We got them married at last.

Hans

Was there anyone here to forbid it?

Sorrine

There's nothing so sweet as a bride.

Kjersti

It took us a while.

Syvert

It took us a while.

Hans

But we did it.

Kjersti

We did it.

Kjersti, Sorrine, Syvert, Hans

We did it.

Sorrine

Thank goodness it's done.

Kjersti

We've got them married at last.

Syvert

There was nobody here to forbid it.

Hans

A woman to stand by his side.

Syvert

It took us a while.

Sorrine

It took us a while.

Kjersti

It took us a while

But we did it, did it, did it.

*(The Preacher returns with a white shawl
over his shoulders. Syvert notices him
and holds up his hand for attention.)*

Syvert

We're ready for the baptism next.

Ola, go and tell your papa

The preacher is ready.

*(Syvert places a basin of water on the
chest.)*

Kjersti

Isn't it fine how Syvert handles things?

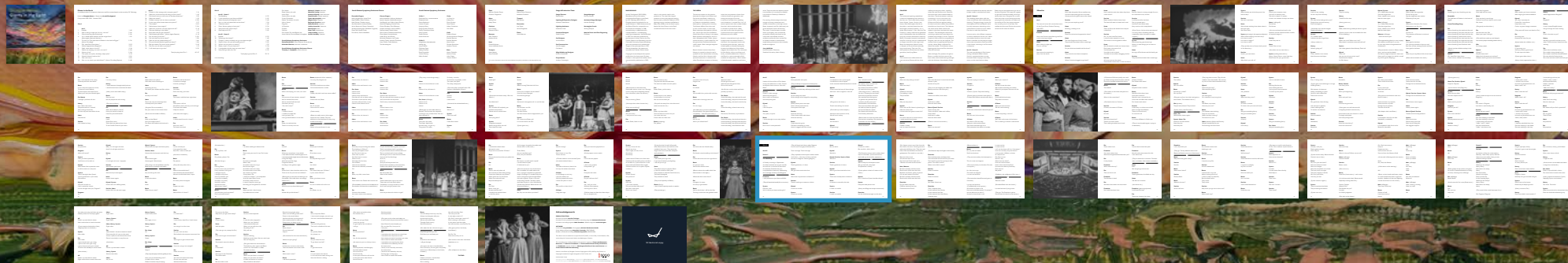
Syvert

Everyone take places now.

(Henry and Dagmar escape unnoticed.)

Preacher

Let the child be brought to this altar.





(Per Hansa comes out of the hut with the child in his arms. Sorrine goes and takes the child from him. Then she and Hans Olsa stand before the altar as godparents. Per stands to one side.)

Beloved of the Lord,
All men are born in sin.
Our Lord and Savior hath said,
"Be born of water and be saved."

Men, Women

Be born of water and be saved.
Receive this child unto the Lord.
Beseech our Savior, grant us peace.
Lift up your hearts unto God.
Be born of water and be saved.
Receive this child unto the Lord.

Preacher

Do you desire that this
Child be received into the
Communion of Christ?

Per
We do.

(The Preacher dips his fingers in the water.)

Preacher

The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make his face shine up on thee.
The Lord lift up his face and give thee
peace. The child's name?
What is the child's name?

Sorrine

Peder Victorious.

Preacher

Peder Victorious.

Sorrine

Yes, Peder Victorious.

Preacher

Then, I baptize thee
In the name of the Father,
In the name of the Son,
In the name of the Holy Ghost,
I baptize thee.

(Beret rushes in.)

_____ 4 _____

Beret

No, no, this evil deed
Shall not be done.

(They are stunned by the interruption.)

This sin must not happen.

(She moves slowly to the altar. Per tries to stop her.)

No. No, let me go.
This shall not happen.
It must not be done.

(She wrenches herself free and goes to the altar.)

It must not be done.
(Confidentially to the group.)
All around us there is evil.
How can a child be named "Victorious?"
Are we blind not to see it?
Around us here there is evil.

It must not be.
It must not be.
I will not let them call him "Victorious."
How can we defy our poor Savior?
I see my poor children, so bare,
So cold, so lost.
Oh, God, so lost.
And all I ask,
What have we done?
How can we be saved?
Here is the work of the Devil.
He must not take my little boy.
God, save us.
We perish.

(Suddenly, she collapses in Per's arm.)

_____ 5 _____

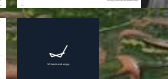
Preacher

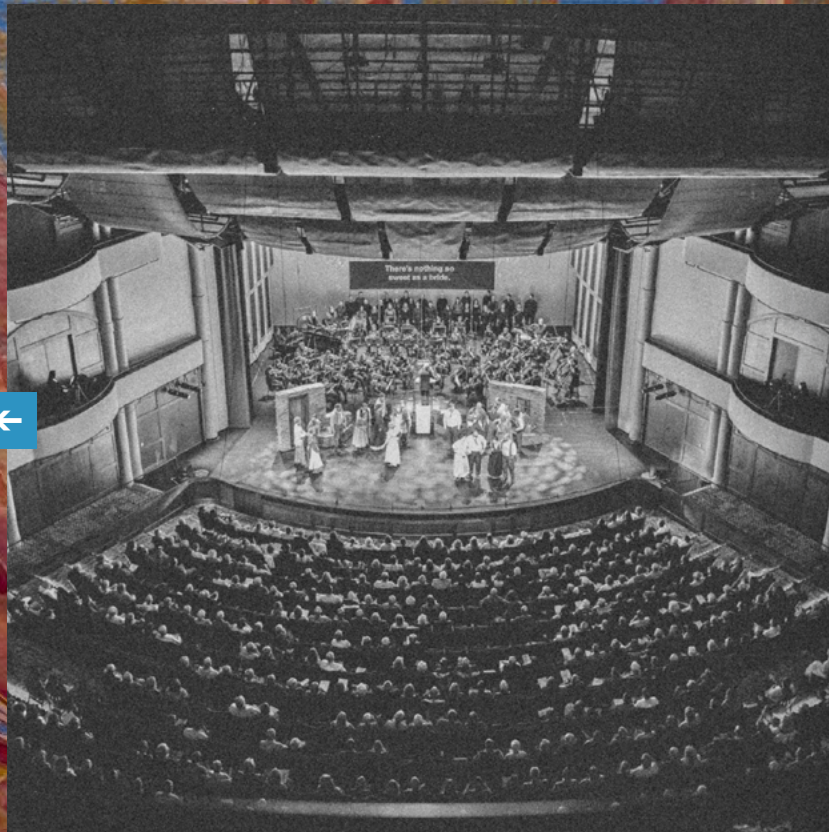
Take her inside.

(Per takes Beret into the house.)

It would be best if you go now.

*(They go. The Preacher is alone.
He removes his shawl as Per returns.)*





Per

Some other time.

Preacher

Yes, some other time.

What has happened here between you?

Per

If only I knew.

Preacher

What does she say?

Per

That we live in evil.

Preacher

The life here is hard.

Per

We knew that when we came here.

Preacher

Her mind has been hurt.

Per

I have tried to ease the pain.

Preacher

Not all souls were meant for this.

I will talk to her.

(They sit there for a moment. The skies seem to darken. Hans enters excitedly.)

6

Hans

Rain.

We are going to have rain.

Preacher

Thank goodness, the fields are dry.

Hans

Tell Sorrine I'm home.

(He rushes out.)

Preacher *(glancing skyward)*

It will soon be here.

Per

There are chores to be done.

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Preacher

I will come with you.

*(They go. The sky darkens even more.
Beret and Sorrine come out of the house.)*

Beret

Why have they gone away?

Sorrine

Not far.

Beret

What have I done?

Sorrine

Please, Beret.

Beret

Where is the sun?

Sorrine

Soon it will rain.

Beret

No, thunder comes and
Nothing is cool.

Sorrine

So calm and still.

Beret

I have hurt my Per.

Sorrine

He will understand.

Beret

I have tried in my soul.
What is wrong with me?
I want to help my dear Per,
But the fears come.
They come.
They come.

Sorrine

Why don't you go out to him now?

Beret

What shall I say?

Sorrine

Stand beside him.

Beret

Will he know?

Sorrine

Stand beside him and he will know.

Beret

I love him so deeply.
My Per is so kind.

Sorrine

Now he needs you.

Beret

He is so kind.

Sorrine

You'll stand beside him.

Beret

So kind to me.

*(She starts to walk in the direction
of Per. She is radiant. Syvert bursts in
wildly.)*

Syvert

God help all of us.
Here we are doomed!

Sorrine

What is it?

Syvert

Locusts!
Locusts down from the sky.
God help us.

Sorrine

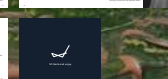
That's rain.

Syvert

Not rain. Locusts.

Sorrine

That cloud?



**Syvert**

Locusts, I tell you,
Dark against the sky.
God, help us!

*(Syvert hurries away. Beret clutches
Sorrine's arm in fear.)*

Beret

Oh, God, you see them?
Now He strikes us down.
Now He avenges.
Now His sword falls on us here.
The Lord, swift to anger.
The Lord, mighty in battle.
Oh, God, you know,
You see, you see.

(Syvert rushes in again.)

Syvert

They've reached the fields.
They're eating the wheat!

(Syvert runs out.)

64

Sorrine

We must help.

Beret

What is the use? What can we do?

Hans (offstage)

Sorrine! Sorrine!

Sorrine

Beret, come.

(She runs out.)

Beret

Dear God, have mercy. I can't move.

*(It is almost pitch dark. Beret stands
helplessly looking after Per.)*

Sorrine, Sorrine.

Where's Per?

Per! Where are you?

Locusts!

It's God's judgment.

(She sinks to her knees.)

Oh, God, have mercy.

Help us.

Forgive our sins.

Save us from this evil.

Save us from the flames of hell.

(A man with a flaming torch runs across.)

God!

Oh, God, the flames.

(A fire seems to be starting.)

Ah!

*(Beret, on her hands and knees, starts
to crawl toward the chest. A glow of
torches; shadows of the men fighting
locusts are thrown on the house.)*

Men (offstage)

That way! That way!

Beret

Flames of hell!

Lord, have mercy!

Mercy!

Men (offstage)

That way!

No!

That way!

Beret

Save us, Father,
Save us, Father!

Men (offstage)

Here,

No, here,

Here,

Here.

Beret

Oh, God, the flames!
Spare us!

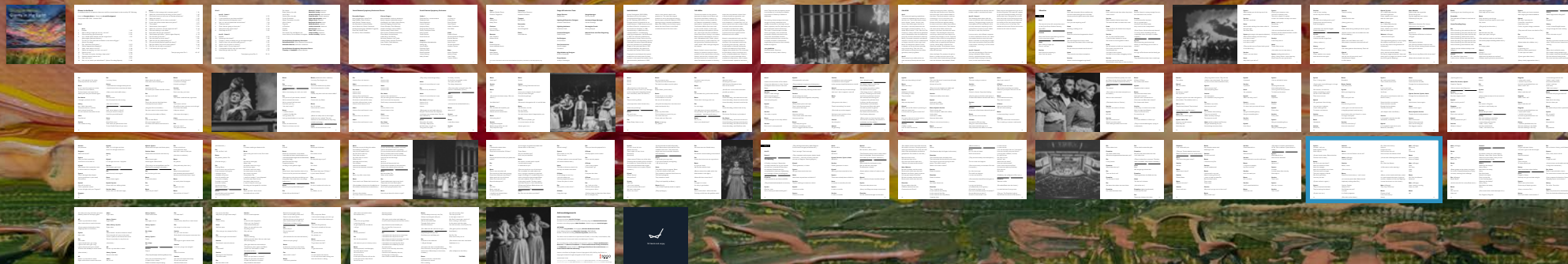
Men (offstage)

Here, coming, coming,
Here, no, here.

Beret

Ah!

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Men (offstage)
Now.

Beret
Ah!

Men (offstage)
Now. Fire.

Beret
Ah!

(Beret grasps at the chest in anguish
as a shot is heard followed by a volley
of shots; cheering from offstage.)

Per (offstage)
Beret! Beret!

(At the sound of his voice, Beret turns.)

Beret
Per!
Oh, my love.
Help me!

Scene 2

Prelude

An interior of the hut. Late night in
February. Hans Olsa, Syvert, and Per
Hansa sit at the table; Henry at the
window looking outside.

Henry

Where go the sheep?
Away, away,
Mountains are steep,
Away.
Run little lamb,
Alone in the night.
Don't you be lost
In the morning light.
Where go the sheep?
Away, away,
Mountains are steep,
Away.

(The sound of the wind interrupts him.)

Oh, Dagmar, Dagmar.

Syvert

I'd give up hope, Henry.
You won't get to see her tonight.

Henry

She'll be worried.

Syvert

That's her job,
To worry about you.

Henry

She's never been alone before.

Hans

Forget it, Henry.
Nobody can go out there tonight.

Syvert

She'll have to find some
Other way of keeping warm.

(Henry comes to Per.)

Henry

Don't you think I could make it?

Per

Not a chance, Henry, you'd freeze.

Syvert

Here, man, have a drink.

Henry

I might as well.

(He sits down at the table and takes
a swig from the bottle.)

Per, Hans

Drink it up and drink it down.
Ten more miles to reach the town.

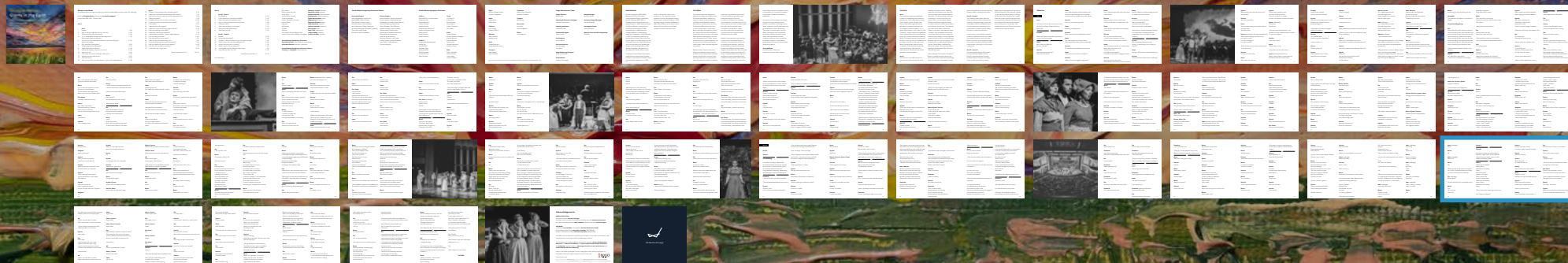
(Henry passes the bottle to Syvert,
clapping Syvert on the back.)

Henry

Ten miles. Ten miles.

Syvert

What do you do with a throat that's dry?
Don't let the little old bottle go by.





You take your swig and then you pass.
Nobody cares for an empty glass.

All

Drink it up and drink it down.
Nine more miles to reach the town.

*(Syvert passes the bottle to Hans,
clapping Hans on the back.)*

Syvert

Nine miles.

Per

Nine miles.

I got a barrel and I got a keg.
I got an arm and I got a leg.
I got a throat and I got a mouth.
Time for this whiskey to travel south.

(Hans drinks.)

All

Drink it up and drink it down.
Eight more miles to reach the town.

Hans

Eight miles.

Henry, Syvert

Eight miles.

Hans, Henry, Syvert

Eight miles.

Per

What should I do with a bottle in hand?
Pour every bit of it out on the sand.
I know a place much better than that
Down in my belly is a very fine vat.

(He drinks.)

All

Drink it up and drink it down.

Henry, Syvert

Seven more miles.

Hans

No, it's six.

Henry, Syvert

Seven more miles.

Per

He's right, it's six.

Henry, Syvert

Seven.

Per, Hans

Six.

Henry, Syvert

Seven.

Per, Hans

Six.

Sorrine

Stop it!

(They stop abruptly and look guiltily at her.)

How can you be brawling now?
A child is sick in there.
Peder Victorious may be dying.

Per

Is it that bad?

Sorrine

I don't know, dear God, I don't know.

Per

Let me go in to him now.

Sorrine

No, you can't do that.
She's afraid to let anyone come near him.

Per

We've got to get a doctor here.

Sorrine

How can you go out tonight?

Per

Peder Victorious.

Sorrine

You men will need some sleep.
Go out now and rest.
We have fixed room



For you on the floor.
Why don't you get some sleep?

Syvert

Come, Henry.

Hans

We'll be quiet.

(The men go out, except for Per.)

Per

How can we get a doctor here?

Sorrine

She doesn't want the doctor.

Per

Is she mad?

Sorrine

She says it's the Preacher
The child needs.

Per

But the child is sick.

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Sorrine

He was never baptized.

Per

It was she who stopped it.
What can I do, Sorrine?
I stand here before you.
What can you tell me to do,
Anything at all?
Only tell me.

Sorrine

There is nothing,
Nothing can be done. We can only hope.
We can only pray.

*(She goes back into the bedroom.
The bedroom door opens and Beret
comes out. She walks in a daze.
Per stares at her.)*

————— 13 —————

Beret

What can you hear in a storm?
What can you hear out there?
A child can be lost in a storm.
Why should he die alone?

Blow the long night away.
What can be hiding there now?
Down in the earth below
We found bones on the ground.
Now another shall lie here, too,
Deep down, so deep, so low.

————— 14 —————

Per

Beret, stop it.
Do you hear me?
Stop it!

(She reaches for the coat and shawl.)

Where are you going?

Beret

If there are no men in the house,
Then the women will do the work.

Per

What work is that?

Beret

I will find a preacher.

Per

Now, stop that, Beret.
I have stood enough, you can't go.
You can't see five feet before you.

Beret

The Lord will guide me,
The Lord is mindful of his own.

Per

No, please, Beret.
No, please, no.

Beret

Do you want his soul
To go down into hell?

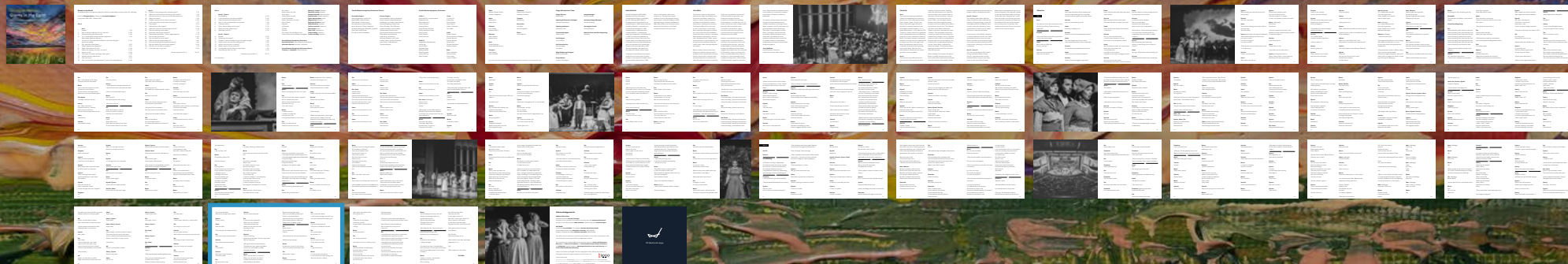
Per

I'll get the doctor.

Beret

It's too late for the doctor.
It's his soul that needs saving now.
Now the Savior is calling.

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*(She starts toward the door.
Per restrains her.)*

Per

I won't let you go, Beret.
I won't let you go.
I'll get help for you somehow.
I will go.

Beret

For the preacher?

Per

Yes, for the preacher.

(He starts to put on a heavy coat.)

Beret

God be praised, Lord Almighty.
My child will be saved.
His soul will live.
He will not die.
In the eyes of God he will not die.
In the eyes of our dear Savior
He will not die.

God be praised.
God be praised.

*(She goes to the chest and takes out
a cross which she puts around Per's neck.)*

Now God will never forsake you.
Oh, my dear Per, I love you so.
I love you.

Per

I remember the day that we came here.
I remember the day that we met.
How sweet you were, how sweet you were,
Like a child so sweet and tender.
I remember we stood by the shore.
I remember we walked by the sea.
You were mine.
I knew, as we stood by the shore,
You were mine.
I knew as we walked by the sea,
So long ago, so long ago,
Like a child so sweet and tender.

Beret

You will always have my love, Per,
Always my love goes with you,
My love and my pity.
We are all sinners here.
Through God's mercy
We find salvation.

(Per takes the skis. He turns to go.)

May God go with you, Per.
God bless you and keep you.

Per

Go back to the child now.
I will get through.

*(He opens the door. A terrible blast
from the storm, but he goes out quickly
and shuts it. Beret drops to her knees,
exultant.)*

Beret

Father in heaven, I thank thee.
My little boy is saved.
Per is coming.

You will save him, God.
This was your will.
It was right, wasn't it?
Oh, God, it was right, wasn't it?
Per is coming in the storm.
In the storm and the night,
You will save him, save my Per. Per.

*(She gets up from her knees,
bewildered.)*

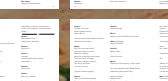
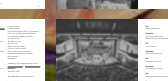
Per. Per. Per.
God, have mercy on us.

*(She rushes to the door and beats
helplessly on it.)*

Per!

(She collapses on the floor.)

THE END





Acknowledgements

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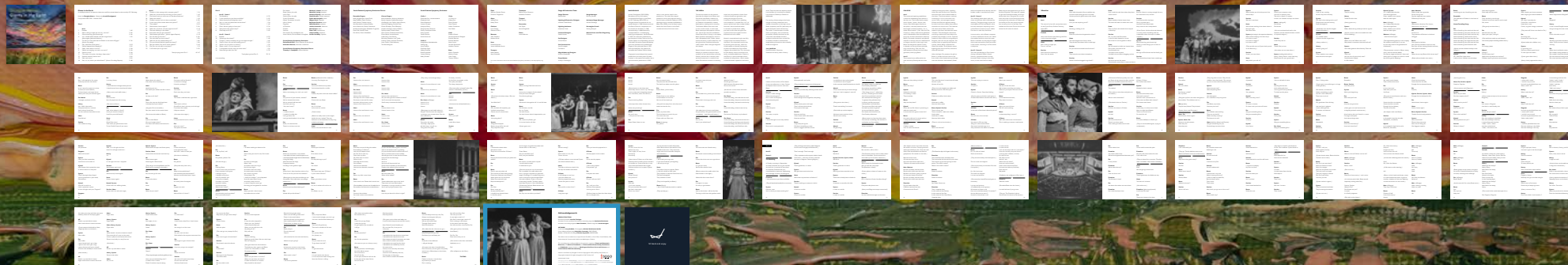


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Sit back and enjoy

