

Das hat Rrrrasss

for speaker and pianist

Ian Pace

Dedicated to Alwynne Pritchard

Composed in 2018, based in part upon some
early sketches from 2005.

Text: Ian Pace

Performance Instructions

1. The speaker's part is spoken throughout, never sung nor delivered as *Sprechgesang*.
2. The speaker's part is intended to resemble a flamboyant but somewhat malevolent character. It should be delivered in an arch manner, stressing qualities of artifice and exaggeration rather than naturalistic delivery. The piece as a whole should resemble a variety of cabaret act.
3. Nonetheless this can be undertaken in many different ways, and the speaker is free to choose accent (or accents) employed, the outfit to wear in performance (which could be extravagant, garish or other possibilities, though the pianist's outfit should look more 'neutral' in comparison), and other theatrical elements. One option is for the speaker to sit on a high stool (as might be used by a cabaret singer) throughout, but it could also be performed in a more physically active manner, involving changes of position around the stage.
4. The speaker should use a microphone to ensure their words are clearly projected during the most active moments in the piano part.
5. All indications of rhythm and pitch in the speaker's part are approximations mostly to give some general idea of the diction, inflection, and co-ordination with the piano. For the most part, the rhythms are relatively independent of those in the piano, though a few points where these coincide (for example with some of the reiterated staccato bass chords in the middle section) should be observed carefully. The notated pitches purely indicate general contour of speech and points of emphasis in this respect.

6. Similarly, while the piano part involves many very detailed rhythms and polyrhythms, these should not be interpreted in an over-literal and metronomic fashion except where indicated as such. The basic tempo in the opening piano section in particular should be flexible and the performer can thus present some relatively smooth transitions between different successive tuplet groups. Complex polyrhythms are often intended to convey multiple simultaneous metres or tempi, and when this effect is palpable, the performer is welcome to execute them with a fair degree of freedom. The profiles of lines and gestures are more important than precise timing of individual notes, except for the low staccato chords in the middle section.
7. A performance can employ different types of staging or stage set, and especially lighting (some red-infused, quasi-expressionistic lighting is especially favoured). Performances in venues other than traditional concert halls are also welcomed.

First Performance: City, University of London, 27 November 2018. Alwynne Pritchard, speaker; Ian Pace, piano. Part of concert 'Decennials', celebrating Alwynne Pritchard and Ian Pace at 50, Kunsu Shim at 60, Gwyn Pritchard at 70 and Hans-Joachim Hespos at 80.

Programme Note

The idea for *Das hat Rrrrass* first came to me in the early 2000s, after reading a passage reproduced in David Hirst's history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, *The Gun and the Olive Branch* (first published in 1984), a remarkable open letter written by right-wing Israeli satirist Ephraim Kishon to King Hussein of Jordan, and published in the *Jerusalem Post* on 16 June 1967, thus just six days after the Six-Day War of 5-10 June. The letter was a satirical account of the events leading up to the war, essentially parodying the idea that the whole situation had been engineered by the State of Israel so as to appear as if they were fighting a defensive war against the belligerent states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria, when in reality it was a calculated war of expansion, above all to allow Israel to take control of the whole city of Jerusalem. Hirst and others believe that this satire actually gave in many ways an accurate rendition of events.

A work of music-theatre such as this is not the place for a serious and sober historical engagement with the causes of and responsibilities for the Six-Day War. Rather, the piece constitutes a response to the very audacity embodied in this open letter (which is echoed in other of Kishon's writings), mocking a view in order actually to assert it, in the knowledge that the one to whom the letter is addressed has no real response to make, as they would only look foolish as a result. The mentality lies somewhere in a realm where the flaunting of privilege and high theatrical camp intersect, an area which has long fascinated me.

The text set is my own, not Kishon's, but takes some inspiration from the latter. The work constitutes a short and rather malicious mini-cabaret act based upon this type of model. It also draws upon two numbers from Lehár's *Die lustige Witwe*, the first of which the aria 'Da geh'ich zu Maxim' from near the beginning of the opera, in which Count Danilo Danilovitsch, first secretary of the Paris embassy of a Balkan principality, Pontevedro (based on Montenegro) sings quite shamelessly of how he does little work and mostly just hangs around his favourite club, Maxim's, to watch the dancing girls there. The other is aria (with chorus) of Hannah, the Pontevedrian widow of the title, 'Ein flotter Ebestand soll's sein', from the Finale to Act 2. In this, she taunts Danilo (who has been set up by others to marry Hanna in order that her wealth will not leave his poverty-stricken country) by announcing her engagement to French aristocrat Camille de Rosillon. However, she sings about how they will be on the surface a respectable married couple, but will actually both have plenty of affairs on the side, in the 'Parisian style', leading to the chorus 'Das hat Rrrrass' (not really translatable, but comparable to the English phrase 'that's got style' or 'that has class' to describe something outrageous).

Heavily modified, perhaps unrecognisable, renditions of these two arias are used in the second and fifth sections of this piece. These are superimposed with freer post-tonal material and also some further allusions, to the 'Tanz der sieben Schleier' from Richard Strauss's *Salome*, to Wagner's *Tannhäuser* (the opera to which Theodor Herzl listened and gained inspiration when writing his 1896 book *Der Judenstaat*), and to another act of musical outrage, the section in the 'Intermezzo Interrotto' in Béla Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra in which the composer savagely parodies a theme from the first movement of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony.

The piece as a whole aims to say something about the power of artifice, of appearing to lie in order to tell the truth (there is at the end of the first section a musical ‘sneeze’, as used by Zoltán Kodály at the beginning of *Háry János*, which according to Hungarian folklore indicated the speaker was telling the truth), and Old World privilege expressed in the most naked and brazen fashion, including that expressed by those who think that very fact gives them the right to usurp the land and property of others.

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Das hat Rrrrass

For Alwynne Pritchard

Still but free ♩ = c. 56

Ian Pace

Voice

Piano

ppp

pppp!

molto ped.

ppp

5:3

5:4

7:5

4

pp

pppp!

8:7

7:6

pp

(these and other rhythms should always be flexible, never metronomic)

7

pp

pppp!

pp

pp

3

6

19

16

19

16

2 9

19/16 6:5 6:5 4:3 5:3 8/4

10:8 10:8 6:5 4:3 5:3

ppp

ppp

10

8/4 4:3 4:3 4:3 p 7/4

(pp) *mp* *(>)* *ppp*

p

11

7/4 *pp* *legato possible* 5:4 6:4 7/4

pppp! 7:4 9:8 10:8 *pppp!*

pp *p*

(less than left hand)

12 *pp* *ppp* *p* 3

Musical score for measures 12-13. The piece is in 5/4 time. Measure 12 features a melodic line in the right hand starting with a half note, followed by quarter notes, and ending with a half note. The left hand provides harmonic support with chords. A slur covers measures 12 and 13. Dynamics include *pp*, *ppp*, and *p*. A fermata is present at the end of measure 13. A note in measure 13 has an accent (>). Time signatures 5/4 and 3/2 are indicated.

13 *pp* *ppp* *pp*

Musical score for measures 13-14. The piece is in 5/4 time. Measure 13 continues the melodic line from measure 12. Measure 14 features a more complex melodic line with sixteenth notes. The left hand has long, sustained chords. Dynamics include *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp*. A slur covers measures 13 and 14. A note in measure 14 has an accent (>). Time signatures 5/4, 3/2, and 6:5 are indicated. The instruction *pp sempre* is written below the bass staff.

14 (*>*) *mp* *p* *mp* *pp*

Musical score for measures 14-16. The piece is in 9/8 time. Measure 14 features a melodic line with sixteenth notes. The left hand has chords. Dynamics include *mp*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*. A slur covers measures 14 and 15. A note in measure 14 has an accent (>). Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. Time signatures 9/8, 6:4, 5:4, and 4:3 are indicated.

15 *p* *pp*

Musical score for measures 15-16. The piece is in 9/8 time. Measure 15 continues the melodic line from measure 14. Measure 16 features a melodic line with sixteenth notes. The left hand has chords. Dynamics include *p* and *pp*. A slur covers measures 15 and 16. Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. Time signatures 9/8, 6:5, and 2/4 are indicated.

16

5:4 6:4 5:4

17

7:4 6:5 5:4

ppp *f*

Allegretto ♩ = c. 84

18

8:5 13:12

ppp *sfz* *p sempre*

always in strict time, almost automatic, staccato/semi-staccato throughout

19

8:7 4:3 11:6 7:5

p

Musical score for measures 21-23. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 21 starts with a *ppp* dynamic. Measure 22 features a *pppp* dynamic and includes time signature changes from 2/4 to 7/4 and back to 2/4. Measure 23 ends with a *pp* dynamic. Performance markings include slurs with durations of 7:5, 11:10, and 6:5, and a crescendo leading to *pp*.

lower part slightly accented, not foregrounded, but half-perceptible within the surrounding material.

Musical score for measures 23-24. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 23 starts with a *ppp* dynamic. Measure 24 includes a *p* dynamic and a *ppp* dynamic. Performance markings include slurs with durations of 4:3, 8:7, and 4:3, and a trill in the upper staff.

Musical score for measures 24-25. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 24 starts with a *ppp* dynamic. Measure 25 includes a *pp* dynamic. Performance markings include slurs with durations of 15:12, 15:10, and 4:3.

Musical score for measures 25-27. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. Measure 25 starts with a *ppp* dynamic. Measure 26 includes a *p* dynamic. Measure 27 includes a trill and a *ppp* dynamic. Performance markings include slurs with durations of 3:2, 7:5, 13:8, and 3:2.

6

p subito

27

3:2

3:2

3:2

p

ppp

30

3:2

16:15

p

31

11:8

tr

12:7

11:8

p

ppp

33

3:2

p

ppp

9:7

36

Musical score for measures 36-37. The vocal line (treble clef) starts with a whole rest in measure 36, followed by notes for "You stepped right in -". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex rhythmic pattern in 7/8 time, with a 11:8 ratio indicated. The piano part includes a 13/16 time signature and a 13/16 measure at the end of the system.

37

Musical score for measures 37-38. The vocal line (treble clef) continues with "to our lit - tle trap - but you weren't". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with a 13/16 time signature and a 15:13 ratio indicated. The piano part includes a 13/16 time signature and a 13/16 measure at the end of the system.

38

Musical score for measures 38-39. The vocal line (treble clef) continues with "a - lone". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a 12:8 ratio and a 3:2 ratio. The piano part includes a 13/16 time signature and a 2/4 time signature. The piano part includes a 13/16 time signature and a 13/16 measure at the end of the system. The score concludes with the instruction *poco sf*.

40

pp (more than before)

5 3 2

7

R.H.

p

mp

7

13

pp

43

with a clearly artificial sense of awe

These ven-e-ra-ble states - men, all o-ver the

pp

pp

46

world, we out - wit - ted them all. Our en-em-ies

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 46 through 49. The vocal line (top staff) features lyrics: "world, we out - wit - ted them all. Our en-em-ies". The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) includes a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The music is in a key with two flats and a 4/4 time signature. Measure 49 ends with a 3-measure rest.

50

and our friends.

spread if necessary

Detailed description: This system contains measures 50 through 52. The vocal line (top staff) has the lyrics: "and our friends." and "spread if necessary". The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) features a 3-measure rest in measure 50, a 4/4 time signature change in measure 51, and an 11-measure trill in measure 52. The piano part includes various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

53

loco

Detailed description: This system contains measures 53 through 55. The vocal line (top staff) is mostly empty. The piano accompaniment (bottom two staves) includes an 11-measure trill in measure 53, a 7:4 time signature change in measure 54, and an 8:7 time signature change in measure 55. The piano part concludes with a *loco* marking.

54

6:5

Did you real - ly think we had - n't planned this all

slightly suppressed giggle,
half-adolescent, half-hysterical,
vaguely imitating piano LH

55

well, in ad - vance?

L.H. *sffz mf*

58

louder, slightly sneering

You lit-tle hus- sy,

RH more deliberate, somewhat acerbic, both parts becoming reckless

mf

59

you are quite ri dic - u - lous

f poco a poco cresc.

f poco a poco cresc

60

16:11

61

cunning

But let's look at how you were out - wit - ted

8:7

1262

ff

tr

3:2

3:2

staccato

63

64

joyous, very malicious

What a fool you were!

fff

heavy

5:4

5:4

65

ffff

3:2

3:2

3:2

6:5

66 Completely still ♩ = c. 54

69

calm, measured, rational

hold posture through silence, suspended in mid-phrase

72

still in the same manner

74

We would take the ci-ty But we knew we'd

76

ne-ver get a-way with it un-less you at-tacked us first

exaggerated and over-slow, as if talking down to a child

rhetorical

77

So... we had to find a way to coax you in-to do

79

ing that.

legato

6:5
pp *pppp!*

(note change of chord)

81

less exaggerated, but still slightly arch

First we had to get rid of the Old Man.

82

They'd be scared of him.

legato

3:2

7:4

p *pp* *ppp*

84

86

focused

87

somewhat excited

triumphant
but mocking

88

And we got our peo-ple on to the in ves-ti-ga-ting com-mit-tee. They could

Much faster, ♩ = 72

with a sense of purpose, driven

89

spin it_our way. We leaked some briefs and plan-ted dis - in - for - ma - tion. very deliberate, somewhat lyrical

mp

ppp sempre (independent of other parts)

91

more rhetorical

It all worked beau - tif - uly.

mf *mp*

92

excited again

The Old man fi - nal - ly went. We per -

3:2 9:8 4:3

93

sua - ded eve - ry - one that his suc - cess - or was a comp -

4:3 4:3 p

94

focused, driven again

- ro - mi - ser and a wa-ver - er. Both he and his

3:2 9:8 4:3 7:6 5:4 L.H. mp (lower part) L.H.

95

dep - u - ty played a - long.

f (upper part) *mf* (upper part)

p (lower part)

(L.H.) 7:4 9:8

L.H.

96

With - in a few years we'd per-sua-ded ouren em-y that they'd

mp (upper part) *mf* (lower part)

L.H. L.H.

97

— be safe to at - tack us. But there were in - ter - nation

f (upper part)

L.H. L.H.

20

al_ forces in the way

11:10

L.H.

L.H.

L.H.

punctuated with piano LH staccato chords

but their gene - ral did - n't let us down.

ff

mf (upper part)

5:6

L.H.

mp (lower part)

a little matter-of-fact

The en - em - y took ov - er the straits,

3:2

5:4

f jubilant (upper part)

legatissimo

3:2

L.H.

101

5:4

and the in - ter - na - tion - al for - ces just with - drew,

L.H.

serious, ominous

102

3:2 5:4 5:4

a - fraid of all hos - ti - li - ties.

legato

p

f jubilant

3:2

103

3:2 3:2

This was all ac - cor - ding to our plans

pp

feigning a tone of innocence

105

105

We asked an-xious-ly

ppp!

5:4 8:5 5:4 3:2

107

107

when they would a-gree a pact?

in a stately manner, but still, without any strong sense of individual phrases

mp

3:2

110

110

We wai - ted for a long time, but no-thing happ - ened.

mp sempre

3:2 5:4 5:4 5:3

113

3:2

You would-n't budge.

slightly detached, dancing

mf (right hand)

116

with an almost erotic relish

117

3:2

We were out - rag-eous as we temp-ted you.

f

mf

5:4 5:4

12/8

We plea-ded with the in ter nation-al fo-rces to pro- tect us.

4:3 4:3

8:7 3:2

8:7

120

3:2

Our lea - der

4:3 4:3

4:3 4:3

121

3:2 3:2

gave a hes - i - tant fal - ter - ing speech, we looked

f 4:3 4:3

8:7

from here to the end, increasingly relaxed and matter-of-fact (but always projected over the piano)

122

weak. So you *f* (upper part)

mf (lower part)

4:3 4:3

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measure 122. It features three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano upper part in the middle, and a piano lower part at the bottom. The vocal line begins with a rest followed by notes for the words "So" and "you". The piano parts consist of complex rhythmic patterns with various rests and notes. The upper part is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic, while the lower part is marked with mezzo-forte (*mf*). Time signatures of 4:3 are indicated for both piano parts.

123

joined with our en - em - y, pledged to help each oth - er.

mp cresc.

7:5 3:2 8:7 3:2 4:3 3:2 3:2 3:2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measure 123. It features three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano upper part in the middle, and a piano lower part at the bottom. The vocal line contains the words "joined with our en - em - y, pledged to help each oth - er." The piano parts are highly rhythmic and complex. The upper part includes time signatures of 7:5, 3:2, 8:7, 3:2, 4:3, and 3:2. The lower part includes time signatures of 3:2, 3:2, 3:2, and 3:2. The dynamic marking is mezzo-piano (*mp*) with a crescendo (*cresc.*).

124

We breathed a sigh of re - lief.

somewhat frantic

mf cresc.

4:3 8:5 4:3 14:9 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

Detailed description: This block contains the musical score for measure 124. It features three staves: a vocal line at the top, a piano upper part in the middle, and a piano lower part at the bottom. The vocal line contains the words "We breathed a sigh of re - lief." The piano parts are highly rhythmic and complex. The upper part includes time signatures of 4:3, 8:5, 4:3, and 14:9. The lower part includes time signatures of 3:2, 3:2, 3:2, 3:2, and 3:2. The dynamic marking is mezzo-forte (*mf*) with a crescendo (*cresc.*). The piece concludes with a double bar line and a 6/8 time signature.

125

f cresc.

126

The next day, we brought in our man,

ff

ff cresc.

127

and you know the rest.

clangorous *ffff!*

ffff!

128

15/8 15/8

25:23
dim.

8:7 8:7 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

fff *dim.* *f dim.*

33/16 33/16

129

33/16 33/16

mf dim. *p*

4:3 4:3 4:3 4:3

3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2 4:3

mf dim. *p senza pedale*

130

unexaggerated

5/4 5/4

3:2 3:2

Sor - ry you did-n't learn those tricks at your expensive school.

4:3 *mf* *mp*

131

Musical score for measures 131-132. The vocal line (treble clef, 5/4 time) features a melodic line with a 3:2 ratio bracket over the final two notes. The lyrics are "But we had to do it. We wan -". The piano accompaniment (bass clef, 5/4 time) includes a "p (lower chord)" marking and a "p semi-staccato" marking. A 5:4 ratio bracket is shown under the first two notes of the piano part. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

tapering off, slightly hurried,
as if with a tinge of guilt.

132

Musical score for measure 132. The vocal line (treble clef, 8/4 time) features a melodic line with two 3:2 ratio brackets. The lyrics are "ted that ci - ty so bad - ly." The piano accompaniment (bass clef, 8/4 time) includes "mf" and "p" markings. A 5:4 ratio bracket is shown under the first two notes of the piano part. The piece concludes with a double bar line.