

# **Prince Kaspar**

**a fable**

**in 13 scenes**

**music by**

**Michael Matthews**

**libretto by**

**Per Brask**



# **Prince Kaspar**

**a chamber opera in 13 scenes, based on the story of Kaspar Hauser**

**for 5 singers, actor and small ensemble**

**Michael Matthews**

**Libretto by Per Brask**

**duration: ca. 90 minutes**

# Instrumentation

Bb Clarinet/Bass Clarinet

Trombone

## Percussion:

Glockenspiel  
Marimba  
2 Triangles  
2 Suspended Cymbals (ca. 55 and 40 cm.)  
2 Chinese Gong (large, small)  
3 Tam Tam (ca. 90, 70 and 40 cm.)  
Shaker (bamboo)  
Claves  
2 Wood Blocks  
Lion's Roar  
4 Tom Toms  
Bass Drum

Violin

Viola

Contrabass

Piano

The score is notated at concert pitch, with the exception of octave-transposing instruments (Glockenspiel, Contrabass).

N.B. — Contrabass harmonics sound an octave lower than written.

Accidentals apply for the entire measure in which they appear; courtesy accidentals are occasionally used for the sake of clarity..

## Cast:

KASPAR, a foundling, about 16. (Lyric Soprano)

GEORG, a teacher. (Baritone)

MAIA, a noblewoman, perhaps, could be in her 30s; a mother who senses she's lost a child. (Soprano)

LUDWIG, a philosopher, mid 20s, Georg's friend. (Tenor)

ANNA, a young woman, Georg's sister. (Soprano)

THE MASKED MAN, there's always a spoiler lurking somewhere. (Actor)

### Forward by Per Brask:

Though the historical incidents upon which this libretto is based occurred in the late 1820s - early 1830s, around Nuremberg, it is by no means intended to be a historical drama.

The story of Kaspar Hauser “merely” provides the peg on which I hang certain observations about how we idealize our beliefs and ourselves when we encounter innocence. (Just as, in reverse, we too often reject our own capacity for evil when we encounter it). When we encounter innocence we tend to see our own scientific or moral or ethical values validated. (Innocence easily becomes the proof as well as the disproof of our particular deity). Or, perhaps some of us feel that we've been unjustly denied intercourse with innocence and others that innocence somehow cannot be trusted and needs to be seen through, unmasked.

The presence of innocence can be troubling, a problem to be solved. Its naiveté must be reined in, subjugated to our view of reality; of what's right, proper and good. That way innocence will better reflect our own ideals. In consequence, we break it whenever we see it. That which could have taught us to see better, to see each other and ourselves better, is left splintered.

Kaspar is a stand-in for innocence in this libretto, which is a fable rather than a drama. A drama requires that people change, that they are, at least, somewhat different at the end; that the process of the dramatic action has taken us to a place different from where we started. Prince Kaspar doesn't do that. No one really changes and Kaspar is not a dramatic hero. A dramatic hero is usually someone who is faced with certain obstacles, which must be overcome in order to achieve a goal – and in the process of which we, and the protagonist, grow wiser, even in demise. Kaspar has no such goal, and though things happen to him and he responds, he isn't any the wiser as a result because he was already wise, so to speak. (The other characters, on the other hand, could have become wiser). Perhaps, then, he is a dramatic anti-hero. In this treatment, Kaspar is, after all, merely a cipher, or better, a mirror in which most of the other characters wish to see the better parts of themselves reflected. A metaphorical mirror, which they therefore destroy, because he is not they and they fail to see him for what he is – himself.

Had they, instead, accepted him as himself, they might have been able to see their own capacity for wild innocence, non-subjugated innocence, and realized, and henceforth learned to live with the credo that, in good as in ill, “Homo sum, humani nihil alienum puto.” (Terence, “I am human and nothing human is foreign to me”).

## Synopsis

Time and Place: Late 1820s - early 1830s, around Nuremberg

The work is presented as a series of vignettes, each exploring Kaspar from a slightly different perspective. Kaspar is a quasi-messianic figure, a metaphor for the uncorrupted spirit. Everyone in Kaspar's life hopes to fill him with their own content.

Scene 1 (p.1): Kaspar appears and is observed by Georg.  
(Kaspar, Georg)

Scene 2 (p.19): Maia watches Kaspar and imagines him to be her lost child.  
(Maia, Kaspar)

Scene 3 (p.31): Anna and Kaspar speak. They are drawn to one another, each in their own way. Georg interrupts their interaction.  
(Anna, Kaspar, Georg)

Scene 4 (p.57): Ludwig and Georg present their differing views of Kaspar; Kaspar is himself, oblivious to their ideas.  
(Ludwig, Georg, Kaspar)

Scene 5 (p.64): Kaspar's first meeting with the Masked Man.  
(Kaspar, the Masked Man, Maia)

Scene 6 (p.81): Ludwig and Anna discuss their differing views of love. Kaspar enters.  
(Ludwig, Anna, Kaspar)

Scene 7 (p.102): Georg and Kaspar speak. Georg is amazed at Kaspar's ability to perfectly mimic Latin; Anna and Ludwig also witness Kaspar's skill.  
(Georg, Kaspar, Anna, Ludwig)

Scene 8 (p.119): The Masked Man accosts and threatens Anna, attempting to frighten her into convincing Ludwig to stop his work with Kaspar.  
(the Masked Man, Anna)

Scene 9 (p.128): Ludwig, alone, expounds his philosophy.  
(Ludwig)

Scene 10 (p.137): Georg muses while Anna naps. Kaspar makes a surprising appearance from underneath Anna's skirt. Georg and Anna are appalled, and Georg lectures Kaspar about morality. Georg accuses Anna of corrupting Kaspar.  
(Georg, Anna, Kaspar)

Scene 11 (p.160): The Masked Man speaks to Kaspar, and then attacks him with a knife, stabbing him.  
(the Masked Man, Kaspar)

Scene 12 (p.170): Anna attends Kaspar's bedside.  
(Kaspar, Anna)

Scene 13 (p.180): Kaspar lies dead; the members of the cast reflect on their vision of Kaspar. It is clear that he had become, for each of them, a vehicle for their individual worldviews.  
(Entire cast)

## Setting

A stage with a playing area decorated with slabs of broken mirror everywhere (sides, floor, loft, if possible). Outside the playing area, the singers sit in full view. When outside the playing area, they are the chorus, which announces each scene. When they enter the playing area, they are in character.

# Prince Kaspar

Libretto by Per Brask

Michael Matthews

♩ = 72      *as if from a distance*      ♩ = 64

**Scene 1**      Cl.

Clarinet/Bass Clarinet      *ppp*      *pp*      *p*

Trombone      *Cup mute*      *ppp*      *pp*      *p*

Percussion      *Gisp.*      *mf*      *p*      *Shaker*

Violin      *ppp*      *mp*      *pp*

Viola      *ppp*      *mp*

Contrabass      *pizz.*      *p*

Kaspar

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Piano      *mf*      *p*      *pp*      *p*      *ppp*      *mf*

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. It begins with a tempo of 72 beats per minute and a 3/8 time signature. The music is marked 'as if from a distance'. The score includes parts for Clarinet/Bass Clarinet, Trombone, Percussion (with Glissando and Shaker), Violin, Viola, Contrabass, and Piano. The vocal parts for Kaspar, Georg, Maia, Ludwig, Anna, and Masked Man are shown as empty staves. The score features various dynamic markings such as ppp, pp, p, mf, and mp, along with performance instructions like 'Cup mute', 'pizz.', and 'mf'. The tempo changes to 64 beats per minute later in the piece.





rit. ----- a tempo (♩ = 120)

27

Cl. *p* *pp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mp*

Tbn.

Perc. *p* *pp* *mp* Glsp.

Vln. *pp* *mp* *p* *mp*

Vla. *pizz.* *p*

Cb. *pizz.* *mp* *p*

Kaspar

(Kaspar enters alone. His feet are bleeding through his boots. It is hard for him to walk. He holds a sealed letter in his hand. He looks about, scared, shielding his eyes against the light.)

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *pp* *p*

Cl. *pp* 3

Tbn. *pp* Straight mute

Perc. *pp* Tam Tam *p* l.v.

Vln. *pp* 3 *mp* 3 *p* *pp*

Vla. *pp* *p* *dim.* *pp* *ppp*

Cb. *pp* *p* *dim.* *pp* *ppp*

Kaspar (spoken, struggling to articulate) *mp* I..

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *pp*

This musical score page includes the following parts and markings:

- Cl. (Clarinet):** Starts with a rest, then plays a triplet of eighth notes starting at measure 5, marked *f*.
- Tbn. (Tuba):** Starts with a rest, then plays a triplet of eighth notes starting at measure 5, marked *f*. It ends with a *pp* dynamic.
- Perc. (Percussion):** Features a *Mrimba.* section starting at measure 3. It begins with a *p* dynamic and *cresc.* marking, then moves to *f* and *mf* dynamics.
- Vln. (Violin):** Starts with a *p* dynamic, then moves to *mf* and *ff* dynamics. It includes a *(pizz.)* marking and a *arco* section starting at measure 7.
- Vla. (Viola):** Starts with a *ff* dynamic and a *(pizz.)* marking. It includes a *arco* section starting at measure 7.
- Cb. (Cello):** Starts with a *ff* dynamic and a *(pizz.)* marking. It includes a *arco* section starting at measure 7.
- Kaspar:** Vocal line with lyrics: "L... L... L... L... I want... L... L... L... L... L...". Dynamics range from *mf* to *f*.
- Georg:** Bass line, mostly rests.
- Maia:** Treble clef line, mostly rests.
- Ludwig:** Treble clef line, mostly rests.
- Anna:** Treble clef line, mostly rests.
- Masked Man:** Treble clef line, mostly rests.
- Pno. (Piano):** Features complex textures with triplets, a *mf* dynamic, a *cresc.* marking, a *f* dynamic, a *dim.* marking, and a *p* dynamic. It includes a *Red.* marking and a *cresc.* marking at the end.

Cl. *mf* *cresc.* *fp* *cresc.* *ff*

Tbn. *mp* *cresc.* *ff*

Perc. *f* *mp* *cresc.* *f*

Vln. *mp* *cresc.* *ff* *ppp*

Vla. *arco* *mp* *cresc.* *ff*

Cb. *mf* *dim.* *p* *mf* *f* *ff* *mf*

Kaspar *f* *p* *ff* *p* *f*  
 I want I want to I... I... I... I... I... I... I want to be

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *mp* *mfp* *mfp* *f* *ff* *mp* *mf*

*senza sord.*

*arco*

*8va*

(Georg enters and observes Kaspar from afar, as if in a different time.)

70

Cl. *mp* *ppp* *p* *mf* *f* *ff*

Tbn. *p* *pp* *ppp* *f* *ff*

Perc. Claves *mf* Mrmba. *ff*

Vln. *p* *mf* *f* *pp*

Vla. *pizz.* *p* *f* *arco* *ff* *ff*

Cb. *p* *pp* *arco* *ff* *ff*

Kaspar *mf* *f* *p* *f* *p* *mf* *ff* *ff* *p*

I want I want I want I want I want to be No, No, no no,

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *p* *mp* *mf* *f* *ff* *ff* *mf* *p*

8<sup>va</sup>

8<sup>va</sup>



B. Cl. *p* *f*

Tbn. *p* *f*

Perc. *p* *cresc.* *f* W.B. Mmmba.

Vln. *mp* *dim.* *p* *pp* *f* *ff* *pizz.* *arco*

Vla. *cresc.* *f* *ff* *3* *3* *3* *3*

Cb. *p* *cresc.* *f* *ff*

Kaspar *p* *mp* *ff*  
 on a horse just like my father I WANT TO RIDE A HORSE JUST LIKE MY FA-THER!!!

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *dim.* *pp* *cresc.* *f* *ff* *5*

rit. ----- a tempo (♩ = 120)

99

B. Cl. *mf* *mp* *pp*

Tbn. *mf* *mp* *pp*

Perc. Trgl. *mp* l.v. Mmba. *p* *p*

Vln. *arco* *p* *p* *pp* *pp* *cresc.* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *pizz.* *arco*

Cb. *pp* *mf* *pp*

Kaspar *ff* *f* *dim.* *mp* *dim.* *mp* *(struggling, almost guttural)* *mp*

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *mf* *mp* *p* *dim.* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p*

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is for page 99 and includes parts for B. Cl., Tbn., Perc., Vln., Vla., Cb., Kaspar, Georg, Maia, Ludwig, Anna, Masked Man, and Pno. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 1-12, and the second system covers measures 13-24. The vocal part for Kaspar has lyrics: "I want to ride a horse to ride I... I... I...". The piano part features complex textures with triplets, quintuplets, and dynamic markings ranging from *mf* to *pp*. The woodwinds and brass parts have dynamic markings of *mf*, *mp*, and *pp*. The percussion part includes Trgl. and Mmba. parts. The string parts include Vln. and Vla. parts with various articulations like *arco*, *pizz.*, and *pp*.

Cl.

B. Cl.

Tbn.

Perc.

Vln.

Vla.

Cb.

Kaspar

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno.

*mp* *mp* *pp* *p* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

*p* *mp* *pp* *mf* *mf* *f* *pp*

*mp* *pp* *mp* *mf* *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

*pp* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

*pp* *pp* *mf* *f* *p* *mf* *f*

*pizz.* *arco* *pizz.* *arco*

*mp* *mf* *f* *mp* *f*

(sung) (again, struggling) (sung)

L... L... L... L... L... L... L... L... L... L... L...

(with a mixture of fascination and disgust)

*mf* *mp* *f*

His face His face

*pp* *p* *pp* *cresc.* *mf* *mf* *f* *pp* *p* *p*

Cl. *pp* *pp* *espr.* *pp* *p*

Tbn. *pp* *ppp*

Perc. *p* *pp* *ppp*

Vln. *pizz.* *p* *arco* *ppp* *mp* *pp* *p* *3* *pp* (7)

Vla. *pp*

Cb. *ppp*

Kaspar *p* *p* *(distorted quasi-speech) mp* *mp* *f*  
 L... L... L... L... L... L... I want to ride I want to ride

Georg *mp* *mf* *p* *3* *p* *mp* *mf*  
 his face the low-er part of his face his face He looks

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *ppp* *ppp* *pp* *mp* *pp* *pp*

Cl.

Tbn.

Perc. Tomtoms *pp* *cresc.* *mp* *f*

Vln. *pp* *cresc.* *mp* *mf* *ff* *pizz.* *pp* *ppp* *p*

Vla. *pp* *ppp* *p*

Cb.

Kaspar

Georg hor - ri - ble hor - ri - ble scream - ing like that the way his mouth pulls down as

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *mp* *mf* *ff* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

♩ = 84

rit. ----- ♩ = 120

Cl. *mp* *pp* *mp* *ppp* *mp*

Tbn. *Straight mute* *mp* *pp*

Perc. Claves *mp* *mf* *pp* *mp* B.D. *p*

Vln. *mp* *p* *mf* *pp*

Vla. *mp* *p* *mf* *pp*

Cb. *p* *mp* *pizz.* *arco* *p* *pp* *mf*

Kaspar

Georg *mp* *p* *mp* *f* *mp* I want to ride  
if as if it could go on for ever as if he could

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *pp* *p* *cresc.* *mp* *p* *cresc.* *f* *dim.* *mp* *pp* *p* *ppp* *mp*

*8va* *espr.* *8va* *Red.* *Red.*

Cl. *ppp* *mp* *f* *p* (Straight mute)

Tbn. *p*

Perc. *mf* *p* Mrmba.

Vln. *mf* *f* *mf* *p* arco gl. pizz.

Vla. *mf* *mp* *pizz.*

Cb. *p*

Kaspar *mp* *f* *ff* *f* *mp*  
 I want to ride a horse ha ha ha ha ha! ha ha ha ha ha! ha ha ha ha ha! ha ha ha ha ha!

Georg *mf* *mp*  
 Oh, dear God a laugh like that

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *ppp* *mp* *f* *f* *8va*

B. Cl. *ppp*

Tbn.

Perc. Claves *ppp*

Vln. *mp* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Vla. *p* *mp* *pp*

Cb. *p* *pp*

Kaspar *pp*  
I want \_\_\_\_\_ to ride \_\_\_\_\_ I want to ride \_\_\_\_\_ a horse \_\_\_\_\_ just like my fa - ther \_\_\_\_\_

Georg  
\_\_\_\_\_ could kill you with joy \_\_\_\_\_ Oh, \_\_\_\_\_ dear God

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. *p* *pp* *pp*

B. Cl. *ppp* *p*

Tbn. (Straight mute) *ppp* *p*

Perc. Trgl. *pp* L.v. (above) W.B. *pp* 3 5

Vln. *p* *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp* *ppp*

Vla. *ppp*

Cb. *pp* *ppp* *p* *ppp*

Kaspar to ride to ride a horse to ride a horse

Georg

Maia

Ludwig

Anna

Masked Man

Pno. 7-32a/5 *pp* 7-32a/11 *pp* 7-32a/8 *ppp* *p* *ppp* *pp*

Detailed description of the musical score: This page contains a full orchestral score for measures 172-177. The score is in 4/4 time and features a variety of instruments and vocal parts. The woodwinds (Bass Clarinet and Trombone) and strings (Violins and Viola) play melodic lines with dynamic markings ranging from *ppp* to *p*. The Percussion part includes a triangle (Trgl.) and wood blocks (W.B.). The vocal parts for Kaspar, Georg, Maia, Ludwig, Anna, and Masked Man are shown, with Kaspar having lyrics. The Piano part features complex chordal textures and arpeggiated figures, with specific chord voicings (7-32a/5, 7-32a/11, 7-32a/8) and dynamic markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and performance instructions like 'Straight mute' and 'pizz.'.

♩ = 72

♩ = 60

♩ = 44

♩ = 72

B. Cl. *ppp* *p*

Tbn. *ppp* *p*

Perc. B.D. *pp* *p* *pp*

Vln. *ppp* *mf* *ppp* *mp*

Vla. *p* *ppp* *p*

Cb. *p*

Kaspar *ppp*  
Scene two, a no - ble wom - an, who thinks she has

Georg *ppp*  
Scene two, in which a moth - er a no - - - ble wom - an, who thinks she has

Maia

Ludwig *ppp*  
Scene two, a no - - - ble wom - an, who thinks she has

Anna *ppp*  
Scene two, a no - - - ble wom - an, who thinks she has

Masked Man

Pno. *p* *pp* *mf* *mp*