



The Berlin Boy

a chamber opera

Words by Peter Scott-Presland

Music by Robert Ely



17 Hathway House
Gibbon Road
London SE15 2AU
Tel: 07444 311 695
Email: homopromos@gmail.com

CAST

Gerald Hamilton. 50-ish, dyed hair, unconvincing toupee, fat. A grandiose way of talking. Totally untrustworthy. Think Sydney Greenstreet as The Fat Man in *The Maltese Falcon*.

BASS

Pauli Gastern. Rent boy. 22 or so, a knobbly face toughened by country hardships, but attractive in an unconventional way. Recent arrival in Berlin from the country. A certain wide-eyed wonder at Berlin.

BARITONE

Lotte Lange. Late 20s, very beautiful in a severe way. Intelligent, political, cabaret performer, knows her way around, cynican, especially about men.

MEZZO

Miscellaneous – Waiter, KDP member, NSDAP member. These can all be played by one person, who might elsewhere be part of the 'orchestra'..

SETTING

Winter of 1932 – 33. Open staging. One bench, two chairs to double as park bench, restaurant table, etc.

ORCHESTRATION

PROLOGUE

[A Berlin Cabaret, October 1930. LOTTE in evening dress.]

LOTTE:

The boys of Berlin

The boys of Berlin, they are charming
The boys of Berlin, they are kind
They never will find it alarming
Whatever you've got on your mind

Boys of Berlin, totally pliable
Randy and rampant, that's undeniable
Maybe they're not entirely reliable
Still – they're the boys of Berlin

See them lining the Kurfurstendam
Money for sex is money for jam.
Get a sample of what they're exposin'
Feel through the pockets of their lederhosen

The boys of Berlin are in flower
They offer themselves every day
Be quick, 'cos they fade by the hour
And soon they'll be all blown away

Boys of Berlin, throbbing and thrilling,
Out with the crowds in the Tiergarten milling
Quite inexpensive, wonderfully willing
Breathtaking boys of Berlin

Boys of Berlin, their pockets they're filling
Marvel at what you can get for a shilling
Others are planning on making a killing –
Say a prayer for the Boys of Berlin
If you care for the Boys of Berlin

[Exits to applause. Lights change.]

SCENE ONE: Early October 1932. Outside Friedrichstrasse Bahnhof
[International station]

[Enter GERALD off the train. One battered suitcase. He addresses the audience directly. A big theatrical intake of breath.]

GERALD: The smell of Berlin
 There's nothing like it.
 Sweat and mascara and spunk.
 More than you can imagine
 More than you could take in a lifetime
 Do you know,
 There are over three hundred bars in Berlin?
 Catering to a special clientele...
 Perverts with discernment and discretion –
 Well, not all with discretion, if we're honest.
 It's glorious to be back
 In the queerest city in Europe.
 A walk down to the Spree, I think,
 And over the Moltke Bridge.
 A stroll along the river will be pleasant
 This clear crisp day
 There are always young men fishing there
 Though not perhaps for fish.

[He starts to walk. Lights change. He is by the river. PAULI is lounging against a lamp post. GERALD walks past. They exchange a glance. GERALD returns. Classic cruising routine. GERALD produces a large cigar. Goes to PAULI.]

GERALD: Haben sie Feuer?¹

PAULI: I think I have some matches in my pocket.
 You speak German very well

GERALD: Thank you, thank you.
 I trained as a linguist for the Diplomatic Corps
 I can lie convincingly in eight languages.
 Er – the light?

¹ There is a question, which language are they speaking in. I hope this establishes that although the script is in English, they are assumed to be speaking German.

PAULI: I seem to have my hands full

[He doesn't. They are behind his back.]

Do you think you can reach into my pocket?
You can help yourself.

GERALD: I'm much obliged.

[He does so. There is a hole in the pocket of PAULI's shorts. His fingers grope around. He finds PAULI's member, and is highly gratified]

GERALD: Charming, charming.
Are you Jewish?

PAULI: That is not a question to ask a German
In Berlin nowadays.
As a matter of fact, I am not Jewish
I am from Kolberg
In the north
We have no Jews in Kolberg.

GERALD: I know it. A spa town

PAULI: I was a spa attendant

GERALD: I beg your pardon.
What is your name?

PAULI: Pauli

GERALD: A charming name.
You look like a Pauli

PAULI: *[Flattered]* Do I?

GERALD: Indeed you do. Boyish, yet dependable.
I imagine you as an ideal Friend.

PAULI: To me, Friendship is sacred.
And your name is –

GERALD: You can call me Gerald.

PAULI: You have an actor –
Sir Gerald du Maurier
I saw him in a film
He played a convict, imprisoned in error
And he escaped.
He was hunted like a dog
The hand of every man against him
But the women all were kind to him,
So kind and understanding
Because he was a gentleman.
I cried when he was caught again
He reminded me of boys like us
All the world against us.
Yes, I can see you are a Gerald
A gentleman, kind, considerate

GERALD: I am a gentleman, yes, by background
But I do not draw attention to it

PAULI: That is so English. I adore the English.

GERALD: Really? You must tell me all about it.
Though we would never admit it
We do rather like to be adored.
Do you have somewhere we can go?

PAULI: What about your hotel?

GERALD: That would not be convenient.
It is quite a refined and respectable establishment

PAULI: Which one?
I have been in many respectable establishments

GERALD: I am well-known there
I have many business interests
They might be jeopardised
Do you have somewhere?
Some charmingly insalubrious apartment?

PAULI: Insalubrious?

GERALD: Unhygienic.... Run-down... squalid...
Somewhere – working class

PAULI: *[Protesting]* We are very clean!

GERALD: We?

PAULI: I share a place with several other fellows
It is crowded. We cannot afford other.
And I am not sharing you with them!

[He pulls GERALD close to him.]

Do not worry. I know a bar

GERALD: A bar? That's much more like it

PAULI: A simple bar, no affectation
Just boys looking for work – or love –
And workers looking for boys

GERALD: It sounds marvellous!

PAULI: Here, let me carry your suitcase.

GERALD: *[Sharp]* No. That stays with me.
Papers, you know.... Important papers.

[They exit. Slow fade to blackout.]

SCENE TWO: Early October 1932. Noster's Cottage

[A table and two chairs. GERALD and PAULI enter to it.]

PAULI: A table – here –

[He politely stands to make way for GERALD. Sits after he is settled. GERALD accepts this as of right.]

GERALD: The Restaurant in the Hut –
Well, it is a hut. I don't see much eating.

PAULI: Here we eat with our eyes.

GERALD: Ha! Yes... very good, very good.

PAULI: In English it is Noster's Cottage.

GERALD: A cottage? Hah! That is more apt.
It is cozy. A simple curtain over the door
Simple benches.
This is so authentic. No side.

PAULI: Side?

GERALD: No pretention.
Will you have a cigarette?

PAULI: What are they?

GERALD: Players

PAULI: *[Disappointed]* I only smoke Salem Aleikum

[He takes one nonetheless.]

GERALD: Then Salem Aleikum you shall have –
Next time.

Waiter! A scotch and soda!
And a large brandy for my guest.

PAULI: How did you know that I drink brandy?

GERALD: You all do. You always do.
Waiter!
Now tell me about your early life
In Kolberg.
I want to know all about it.

PAULI: I was born there before the war.

GERALD: I fought during the war, you know.
In Ireland. Nineteen-sixteen.

PAULI: I would not fight in any war.
Except beside the Friend I loved

GERALD: There is that, yes
Let's not get morbid
Tell me about your youth

PAULI: We had a small farm
Just outside Kolberg
Inland from the sea
It was very cold in winter
Cold and damp and windy off the sea.

[GERALD comes forward and addresses the audience directly, while Pauli continues his story behind.]

PAULI: We had a few cows
But mainly grew potatoes.
There is nothing harder
Than planting and picking potatoes
And for what? For nothing
Money was worth nothing.
It grew worthless by the hour...

In summer I would go to the beach -
There was a long sandy beach –
With my friends in the Wandervogel
We swam naked in the sea -

GERALD *[to audience]*: This is how you get the boys
By remembering their names
And the story of their life
Of course, they will all go with you
If you pay them.
They are anybody's for ten marks -
Twelve shillings and sixpence.
But what they all really want
Is a great passionate Friendship.
If they think you are their friend
It works out cheaper.
I must be careful with money
At the moment I am short of funds,
Until I make contact *[He indicates the suitcase]*

[He takes out his wallet, counts carefully.]

Not too many brandies, I hope.

[He turns back to PAULI at the table. Sits]

Do you like opera?

PAULI: *[confused]* I don't know.

GERALD: I can get tickets for the Staatsoper.
Erich Kleiber – Marriage of Figaro
I know you would adore it.

PAULI: Don't you have to wear evening dress?
I don't have any clothes...

GERALD: I will buy you the clothes –
When I am in funds.
Where is that waiter?
Oh, to hell with him.
Might I have the pleasure of this dance?

[He takes PAULI's hand and they waltz off as the lights fade, GERALD leading.]

SCENE THREE: Late October 1932. Another bar – Die Gruner.

[PAULI and LOTTE sitting. LOTTE is stylishly dressed in a well-tailored three-piece suit.]

LOTTE: Why do you have to invite me here?
I expect the police to come in any moment

PAULI: They won't

LOTTE: It's always being raided
If only all you boys
Would give up stealing
Or pickpocketing
Or blackmail

PAULI: Have a heart. We have to live
We can't all be as talented as you.
If you don't like it here
Why don't you invite me to the Monopole?

LOTTE: I can't invite you there
Too many former lovers I must avoid
You have no idea how tedious it is
Love should be like that song in *Words and Music* –

PAULI: I do not know this

LOTTE: The new English review by Noel Coward
Gertrude Lawrence brought the records with her
When she came to Berlin after her filming.
I met her in the Damenklub Pyramide
She comes here to shed her inhibitions

PAULI: Did you - ?

LOTTE: A lady never tells – what do you think?

[She looks very complacent and sings]

Let our affair be a gay thing
And when these hours have flown

Then, without forgetting
Happiness that has passed
There'll be no regretting
One that didn't quite last –

PAULI: Pretty

LOTTE: There's one that you would like more –
Mad about the Boy
From everything I hear,
Herr Coward would be mad for you

PAULI: No, I am spoken for now
I have found my Friend.

LOTTE: Are you crazy? He is fat, he is ugly
And he never could be trusted.
Besides, he is a Nazi

PAULI: I don't believe you.

LOTTE: When you introduced us - remember? –
He put his wallet on the table.
I sneaked a look.
There was a party membership card.
How can you trust him? A fascist?

PAULI: He has been good to me.
Anyone who is not a Communist
Is a fascist to you.
The democrats are Social Fascists
According to you.

LOTTE: Well they are.

PAULI: I do not understand politics -
All these labels.

LOTTE: And he doesn't like women.
No, I don't trust him.

PAULI: I do trust him.

He is kind. He listens to me
He takes me seriously.
His mind is not ugly,
And as for being fat –
There is something of comfort
Pillowing your head
On a large, smooth, warm belly
Sinking in the flesh
His arms around your shoulders –
I feel so safe. Nothing can touch me.

I hear his little trills and gurgles
It is like his tummy is talking to me
And then I sleep – and dream

I dream of going to England
Where every man's a gentleman
Where I can work – and keep house for him
In a little flat, or cottage

That is what I dream

LOTTE: My God! Claire Waldorff is right when she sings
"All men are stupid".
He will walk away. You will see.

[Pause]
I wish mine would walk away.
They never do
Cling, cling, cling
"Why can't we be friends?"
We're not friends,
We were gaping for each other
And now we're not – end of story
Lovers can't be friends –
No, not even lovers, sexual partners
But no, they hang on
To every pathetic scrap of memory
"Do you remember when –
"You said – you did"
No – I – don't
And no – I – won't
I remember your salt taste on my tongue

Between your thighs
And that is quite enough.

Is that the time?
I have to get to the Eldorado
It's the opening night
Conrad Veidt is performing the ceremony

PAULI: I must wait for Gerald.
He has some business to perform.

LOTTE: Dirty business, I'm sure

PAULI: No! He is a businessman
Import – export

LOTTE: Importing what? Exporting what?
What can he carry in that little case?

PAULI: Papers... licences... letters or credit
He is a big man - a genius –
He has many deals

LOTTE: Bah!

[She leaves.]

SCENE FOUR: Late October 1932. A Street Corner in the Hallische Tor district

[GERALD is waiting under a lamppost. Shades of Lili Marlene]

GERALD: There is nowhere colder than Berlin in November
The wind whips all the way from Minsk
Across the Polish plains.

[Looks at his watch] Where is Thalmann?
Blooming communists are always late
Look at Lenin, late for his own revolution

[Enter an apparatchik of the KPD.]

You're not Thalmann.

APPARATCHIK: How do you know?

GERALD: I read the papers like anyone else.
His face is always in them.
How do I know you are a member of the KPD?

APPARATCHIK: *[Takes out card]* My party membership. And you?

GERALD: My party membership.
I have always supported the Party.
I was in Moscow in 1922
Fine man, Lenin. An inspiration.

[APPARATCHIK considers a moment, and then grunts and nods.]

APPARATCHIK: You have the list?

GERALD: I do. And you shall have it.

[APPARATCHIK reaches for it.]

GERALD: One moment.
Herr Thalmann must have mentioned –
My commission.

APPARATCHIK: But it is for the good of the party

GERALD: I cannot serve the party if I can't eat.
[He holds out his hands]
My commission was agreed.
In dollars.

[APPARATCHIK reluctantly hands it over. There is an exchange]

GERALD Here.

[He hands over As he counts money]

You will thank me. I have saved you.
If the party had found out
You meant to chisel them
You would likely have ended in the Spree.

It is a list of targets for the Brown shirts
And the planned dates of the attacks.
Jewish... left wing ... trade unions... ah, homosexual

APPARATCHNICK: Where did you get this?

GERALD: Ernst Rohm's private office.
Quite authentic, I assure you.

APPARATCHNICK: But did no-one see you?

GERALD: It was a private meeting.
He was interested in – certain specialist magazines
From America I was able to offer him.
I offered him a sample to peruse,
And while he was deep in contemplation...
On his desk, a carbon copy...

APPARATCHIK: Thank you.
Forewarned is fore-armed.
The party will be remember this with gratitude.
Who shall I say –

GERALD: Better leave my name out of it

Say that it came from Pauli.
Pauli Gastern.

[To Audience]

It will stand him in good stead
If the Commies come to power
You know it makes sense.

BLACKOUT

SCENE FIVE: 4th November 1932. The Moka Efti club

[LOTTE in performance mode again. She is Diana the Huntress, in classical tunic, with a bow, and arrows over her shoulder.]

LOTTE:

[Verse]

I love to swim in the Wellenbad
Where the flesh is flaunted by the yard
The girls are easy and the men are hard
Out in the park in the open air.

[Repeats]

Forget your clubs and forget your balls
Forget their lure when it's – "Nature calls!"
Far from the city and from these four walls
The wind can blow through your wanton hair

There are lots of sights to see
Do you want to come with me?

[Chorus]

I'm going out on a deer hunt
Got my arrows and my bow
Some folk think that it's a queer hunt
But what do some folk know?

I'm searching there, I'm searching here
I'm searching far, I'm searching near
I won't despair that a deer'll appear
And put me in a whirl
Though I've seen a bear, I'm very clear
I don't want a bear, I want a deer
I'm searching for a deer
Searching for a deer
Searching for a dear, dear girl.

I've got a mind to try a few
I've got my eye on one or two
Perhaps I've got my eye on you
I'm searching for a deer
Searching for a deer
Searching for a deer
Searching for a dear dear girl.

Through the forest I'll pursue
But if a deer is not in view
Perhaps a little pussy'll do
Searching for a dear dear girl

*[She acknowledges applause, bows, then holds her hand for silence.
Spoken]*

Seriously, ladies and gentlemen. On Sunday we have the Reichstag elections. I don't believe in this rotten Weimar republic, but the one thing I do know is, we must keep the Nazis out of power. The only way to do that is to vote for the KPD, the Communist Party of Deutschland. Remember a vote for the Communists, a vote for Ernst Thalmann, is a vote against the Nazis, against Adolph Hitler, and against the thugs of Ernst Rohm's Brown Shirts.

[March]

Let's drag the Brown shirts down
Let's drive them off the streets
We have to save this town
Kick them in their big brown seats
We have a duty, we have to fight
It's no time for being polite
Fighters for right we are
So three cheers for the Antifar

[She is joined by the APPARATCHIK from the last scene, who helps to lead the audience in a chorus]

Let's turn the Brown shirts red
Now we must spill their blood
And when we're sure they've bled
Trample them in the mud
Shoulder to shoulder, let us advance
Never give the fascists a chance
So let's all sing Hurrah!
So all hail to the Antifar

[There is the sound of a brick coming through a window, and screams as offstage Nazi thugs lay into the audience. LOTTE makes to go towards the fight to join in. The APPARATCHIK draws her away]

APPARATCHIK: Now is not the time
 The party needs you.

[He leads her away, protesting. The clamour rises]

Blackout

SCENE SIX: November 8th, 1932. Noster's Bar

[PAULI and GERALD.]

GERALD: Waiter! A scotch and a large brandy.

PAULI: Lotte says you are a Nazi

GERALD: I am not.

PAULI: You joined the party.

GERALD: I am a member of the RAC
But I do not drive a car.

[A look from PAULI] An organisation for motorists.
It runs an excellent club.

Look, Pauli. There are some things
It is better not to know too much about.
[Vaguely] Politics...

PAULI: Are you a spy?

GERALD: Shhh!

[WAITER appears with the drinks. Puts them down. Waits to be paid.]

GERALD: Put them on my tab.

WAITER: No, no more tab.
You have too much debt.

GERALD: Pauli.. liebchen... I have a difficulty
A temporary embarrassment I assure you.
Only till I get the bank draft from London.
Could you be so kind?

[PAULI hesitates] Purely temporary
I will of course repay you
When my cash arrives.

[Still he hesitates] For friendship's sake

[PAULI gets out his money immediately.]

If you could settle the whole account...

[PAULI holds up his wallet. The WAITER extracts some notes. It is more than PAULI expected, more than he can really afford.]

GERALD: Pauli, my angel. You are truly one in a million.
That was the act of a true friend.

[He puts his arms round PAULI, who settles comfortably into them, his concern forgotten.]

GERALD: Tell me about your time in Kolberg

PAULI: I've told you everything

GERALD: I want to hear it again
I like to hear you talk
I like the sound of your voice
Your rough country voice. *[Kisses him gently]*
Go on.

PAULI: Where shall I start?

GERALD: The steam baths
I like to hear about them
You were sixteen...

PAULI: My father had died in the flu
When I was ten.
I had to work the fields
So did my mother.
It was back-breaking
And I was still at school
Do you wonder when we went to the beach
I looked with envy at the fat burgers
In their striped costumes
In their bathing huts
And on the pleasure boats.

I stood outside the Maximilian Spa Hotel
One day when I was twelve
The manager came out to me.
I did not know anything then
But I could tell he liked me.

“You look a likely lad.
Well-set-up. Strong.
Are you willing?
We like boys here willing and discreet.”

GERALD: Willing and discreet – charming.
It sounds a fine hotel

PAULI: It was. I met many gentlemen
My mother did not have to work again.
Money was worth nothing,
But I took food from the hotel.

One day a year ago
A man offered to take me to Berlin
Berlin! How could I refuse?
He was married, to be sure,
But he set me in a small apartment
In Charlottenburg.
It was so exciting – all the lights!
The crowds – the noise –

Then his wife found out – he said –
And I was on the streets.

GERALD: Ah yes, married men!
You can never trust a married man

PAULI: I have trusted too often.
They always make promises
They never keep

GERALD: Your poor bruised heart...
Why didn't you go back to Kolberg?

PAULI: I could not go back –
I did not want to go back -
To the cows – and the potatoes.

GERALD: But your poor mother?

PAULI: She was religious
I would bring her shame.

GERALD: But she is still your mother

PAULI: How can she be my mother
When I am 'no son of hers'?

GERALD: Tell me about the boys again...
The naked boys on the beach...

[LOTTE enters, excited. She has the remains of a black eye.]

LOTTE: The election results have come,
They are in the evening papers.
The Nazis have lost thirty seats
The tide has turned.
The KDP has gained eleven.

GERALD: They are still the largest party

LOTTE: But they are not unstoppable now
And we can stop them.
The Nazis now will never get to power
They have lost their impetus

PAULI: *[changing the subject]* How is your poor eye?

LOTTE: Better.

PAULI: She was set on going home
From the club on Friday.
The Nazis broke the club up.

GERALD: That should not have happened

LOTTE: You sound like you know something

PAULI: I have talked with Gerald
He is not a Nazi
It is something special
Something secret

GERALD: Please, Pauli –

LOTTE: This is scheiss

GERALD: I really can't discuss it.
Come, Pauli.
Let us find somewhere more quiet
And sympathetic –

[He gets up to leave. PAULI follows him.]

LOTTE: Pauli -

PAULI: *[A hopeless gesture]* He is my Friend

LOTTE: He is not your friend.

[They leave. She calls out after him.]

He is not your friend, Pauli.

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN: 9th November, 1932. Unter Den Linden, outside the State Opera

[A NAZI is waiting under the street lamp. He has a swastika armband. Enter GERALD.]

GERALD: Ah, Herr Armfeld.
You can always rely on the fascisti
To be on time.
Like Mussolini's trains.

NAZI: We are not fascisti
We are socialists – National Socialists

GERALD: Yes, yes. Heil Hitler

NAZI: Do you have it?

GERALD: The passport? Of course I do.

[He brings out a passport. Dangles it invitingly. He is playing with the NAZI.]

NAZI: *[Impatient, snaps his fingers]*
Quickly. Give it here.

GERALD: Why are you in such a hurry?
The train to Denmark isn't for three hours.

NAZI: How do you know?
What do you know?

GERALD: I read the paper.
A girl who was dancing at the Moka Efti
Was set on by a gang
The paper called them hooligans.
And now she has died.
I am assuming one of yours
Was responsible,
And needs to go away
To avoid investigation.

NAZI: We deny everything.
But one of our lieutenants
Has urgent business in Copenhagen
And cannot wait for the proper channels.
The passport, please.

GERALD: My fee, please –

[He snaps his fingers in imitation of the NAZI.]

Five thousand Reichsmarks –

NAZI: Do not be impatient

GERALD: Are Nazis the only ones allowed to be impatient?

*[NAZI produces a wallet and starts counting out 50 x 100 mark notes.
GERALD pushes his hands down, out of sight.]*

GERALD: For heaven's sake! This is a public place.
If passers-by should see us
They'll think we are suspicious.
Here *[he snatches the money]* I'll count it later.

NAZI: You trust a Nazi? Are you sure?

GERALD: I don't need to trust you
You wouldn't want me to shop you.
It would be so easy to bring you down.

NAZI: I think in time we shall see who will bring who down.

GERALD: You will always need fixers and movers like me.

NAZI: When we have the Third Reich
We will fix things for ourselves.
Herr Benson...

[A formal bow. He exits. GERALD starts counting the high denomination notes.]

GERALD: One... two.... *[to Audience]* I wanted dollars,

But they refused to use Jewish money.
And I need the cash too much.
It is getting to the time to make an exit.

[Lights fade on GERALD counting.]

SCENE EIGHT: 2nd February – 31st March 1933. The Moka Club again and various

[There has been a subtle change of atmosphere in the club. It is sombre, apprehensive. LOTTE's appearance is not light-hearted.]

LOTTE:

When the cold winds are blowing
And the storm clouds are growing
Cheer up! There's no need to be afeard
You can put up an umbrella
If you find yourself a feller
Get out there and be sure to find a beard

A beard can be terrific for transforming you
So no-one will be able to suspect
It can shelter and hide you while it's warming you
And nobody can possibly object
Yes no-one can be harried
If their passport says they're married
Cos for married couples, everything's correct.

So girls, if you've a lover
Get a husband as a cover
And by the gestapo you'll be cleared
If they're homosexual
The Nazis will not vex you all
For nobody can argue with a beard.

We all will start to grow our girlish tresses
Perhaps we'll tie it up in pretty bows
Away with the suits! On with the dresses!
Sew on lots of frills and furbelows.
You can look like Theda Bara
Using hubby's best mascara

- If the brown shirts come a-knocking
- Wear your hubby's best silk stockings
And you'll see that no-one ever knows

So girls, it may astound you
But when you look around you
The lesbians you knew have disappeared

And any girl that's mannish
Has found a way to vanish
Because she's found a way to grow a beard

- But not a "van dyke" for heaven's sake.

[She leaves the stage quickly without applause, lights fade. Up again as she enters hurriedly to PAULI]

LOTTE: I can't believe it. Hitler as Chancellor.
It is insane. We know what he will do
He has said it and written it a thousand times.
Of course, we expect it of Hindenberg
The President is senile, He rambles all the time -
But those who advise him?
Those who finance him?
Are they so deluded to think they can control him?

PAULI: It will not be as bad as that.
You are in shock at the news.
I can't believe it is going to be
As bad as you're predicting

LOTTE: It's going to be worse, far worse.
Already they are starting the round-ups.
They have closed the Moka Efti
They have smashed the windows
Of Magnus Hirschfeld's institute.

LOTTE: It is the end of all opposition.
It is the end for people like us.
Already they are building temporary camps,
They make no secret of it.

PAULI: We will be safe.
Uncle Ernst will protect us.
I know several of the boys
Who have been with Rohm.
Many of our kind have joined the SA.
And the SA is two million strong.

LOTTE: I must find my comrades

Shall we fight? Shall we go into exile?
I don't know what to do.

[Exits. Quick crossfade of lights. GERALD comes to PAULI.]

GERALD: I must leave Germany at once.
It is not safe to stay here.

PAULI: Then I will come with you
You are my Friend.
I have lived with you these six months.
I can make a new life in England,
Yes, with you, with you.
We will have a cottage in the country
In Isleworth, that is your home, yes?
I will cook steak and kidney pudding
Just the way you like
And in the evening we will go to the pub
And drink beer and eat muffins outside.

[GERALD is getting evasive]

GERALD: Of course, you will need a passport

PAULI: You are right. There is no time to lose
You will help me. You have connections

GERALD: Perhaps, perhaps not. Not any more.

PAULI: You have done so much for others
You can do it for me I know.

GERALD: I assure you I will try.

PAULI: I know you can do it.
You can do anything
You are my man, my friend
And I love you.

GERALD: Yes, yes. *[He is distracted, irritated]*

PAULI: Do you love me?

[GERALD looks deep into his eyes.]

GERALD: What do you think?

[A quick peck on the forehead, or the arm, and a hasty exit. Quick crossfade of lights. Enter LOTTE.]

LOTTE: They have closed the KPD HQ
They say it will be the office
Of the local Gauleiter.
They are clearing it out.
It is full of Brown Shirts
Going through the papers.
The Hitler Youth are burning
Everything they can.

Brecht has fled to Prague
Weill has gone to Paris.
I have been warned to flee
But I wouldn't get a passport,
I am too well-known.

PAULI: Perhaps Gerald can get you a passport.
He's getting me a passport.
We can all live together
In Isleworth.

LOTTE: Pauli, stop dreaming. Be realistic.

Have you thought about what I said?
Will you marry me?
If we marry we can protect each other.
I can start performing for the Nazis
People still need to be entertained.
They are opening new clubs
With happy, vacant songs.

PAULI: Could you do that?

LOTTE: If others can, I can.
Selli Engler can write a play

In praise of Adolph Hitler.
Ruth Rolling put queer Berlin on the map
With her guide to lesbian bars.
Now she writes a novel against the Jews.

I could do it if I had to, to survive.
One day the Communists will return
And I will be ready to join them.

Everything else will be idle gossip
If I am married to you.
I could even change my name –
Frau Gastern. Frau Lotte Gastern.
How does that sound?

[A pause. PAULI is very conflicted]

PAULI: I must go. I must go with my Friend.
He will need me.

LOTTE: And am I not your friend?
Your oldest friend?
Will you leave me to their mercy?

PAULI: Come with us. Please.

LOTTE: Gerald is not the altruist you think.
He does not like women.
He will not do it for me.

PAULI: But I can ask. Please.

LOTTE: I will not beg to men like Gerald.

PAULI: *[Shouts]* But you will lick Hitler's arse!

[Quick fade of lights. Lights up again on PAULI on his own, with a sheet of paper.]

PAULI *[reading]*: My dearest Pauli
My sweet sweet friend
There is no easy way to break this to you.

To cut a long story short
I could not get a passport for you.

[Light up on GERALD, whose voice comes in in a duet, and gradually takes over.]

I tried my damndest, really I did
But the red tape is a nightmare
And will not take less than a month,
Which I can ill afford.

[PAULI visibly collapses like a burst balloon. He sobs silently, his shoulders heaving. GERALD solo, other lights slowly dimming to leave him in a single spot.]

GERALD: I have of course found passports in the past
Through less orthodox channels.
But circumstance has changed.
My contacts are no more –
Promoted to other offices
Or exiled to a camp.
This is not the time to ask for favours.

So I will have to leave you.
I leave with the most sincere regret.
I wish it were not so, with all my heart,
And one day in a finer world
Maybe we'll be reunited.
And have that cottage that we dreamed of.
You have been a precious, blessed friend
I will remember only with gratitude.
I will always carry you close to my heart,
Like your picture in my wallet.
Take care, my precious angel
I will be thinking of you
And, I hope, watching over you.
Farewell, Pauli – or maybe au revoir.

[GERALD takes PAULI's picture out of his wallet. Looks at it.]

The conversation left a lot to be desired
But the intercourse was bliss.

[He tears up the photo and scatters the pieces. To audience:]

What would you do?
How could I take him back to London?
They don't like foreigners in Isleworth.
Besides, I think my wife might object.

[He goes through his pockets, produces two passports. Weighs between the two.]

Gerald Hamilton.... Cosmo Fanshawe
I rather like the name Cosmo
New name, new phase, new life.

[He picks up his suitcase and exits. A lights change. Wedding music. PAULI and LOTTE enter solemnly dressed as bride and groom. They turn upstage and freeze. As they do so, the NAZI from before, now a high official in the Interior Ministry, steps into a spotlight. He is looking intently at the sheets of paper which GERALD handed to the APPARATCHIK a year earlier². There is a note attached to the front of them by paper clip. He peers at this to try and identify illegible handwriting. Slowly, spoken -]

NAZI: Pauli... Gastern...

[He produces a notebook and writes the name in it.]

Pauli... Gastern...

[He looks at the paper again. Decisive, brutal:]

Pauli Gastern.

[He takes the paper and crushes it in his hand. The music swells discordantly, a herald of what's to come. Adolph Hitler's first speech as Chancellor in February 1933 rises slowly to full volume.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjFnVTxteDs>

SNAP BLACKOUT. THE END

² There must be a way of instantly recognising them.