THE MAGIC LANTERN

A one act opera for youth opera company and pianist

Duration 35-40 minutes
Suitable for ages 8 - 18

Libretto
and
Vocal Score

Words by Judi Sissons
Music by Omar Shahryar
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Libretto

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Score

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CAST
Ages noted here are suggestive of playing age

Maxine, 14 years old........ Soprano.......................... Very confident singer

Raimon, 18 years old........ Tenor............................ Very confident singer

Thomas Bonegrubber, 18 Tenor ............................. Very confident singer
(poss. doubling as Raimon)

Children's Chorus, 8-12 years old
Moderately skilled young singers, assuming the roles of:
- Young Lanternists (Prologue, scene 5) ...... Many voices in 4 parts
- Soldiers / Rebels (Prologue) ...................... Many voices in 2 parts
- Street children (Scene 2, 3, 4 and 5) ........ Many voices in up to 4 parts, with
  3 playing onstage Tin Whistles

Teen Chorus, 12-18 years old
Confident young singers, assuming the roles of:
- Young Lanternists (Prologue, scene 5) ...... Many voices in 4 parts
- Soldiers / Rebels (Prologue) ...................... Many voices in 2 parts
- Traders (Scene 2) ................................. 2-10 voices in 2 parts
- Grubbers (Scene 2, 3 and 4) ..................... 4-20 voices in 3 parts
- Marmots (Scene 5) ............................... 3-5 Rappers

'Grown Up' Chorus, 12-18 years old (playing older)
Moderately skilled young singers, assuming the roles of:
- The Lanternist ......................................... Speaking role
- Young Lanternists (Prologue, scene 5) ...... Many voices in 4 parts
- Soldiers / Rebels ..................................... Many voices in 2 parts
- Toffs and Dolls ...................................... 4-20 voices in 2 parts

INSTRUMENTATION

Piano with lid open
3 Onstage Tin Whistles in G, D and C

2 Off stage snare drums with wooden sticks
Off stage bass drum with large mallet

Sound effects

Score in C
HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Magic Lanterns were one of the first pieces of media technology ever to be mass produced before the discovery of electricity. Made of a wooden box with a light source inside (originally a candle, later using lime and gas), they would project images from hand-painted glass slides through a set of lenses and onto a wall in a dark room. Creative individuals would enliven their projection shows with stories, songs and clever animation techniques, such as using slides with moving parts, projecting multiple slides simultaneously or using smoke and mirrors.

As the magic lantern shows became more popular, the technology found its way into the hands of street performers. Around the turn of the 19th century, child economic migrants from Italy, Spain and Southern France would travel to larger cities such as Paris and London during the winter seasons in order to earn money doing various kinds of street jobs, including begging, chimney sweeping and performing magic lantern shows. At this time, so many children from the Mediterranean region migrated to urban centres that they became the object of fascination, consternation and inspiration, labelled collectively as “Savoyards”, after the French-Italian border region of Savoy where some of them came from.

Numerous composers of the era wrote operas on these themes, some of them being popular successes by names still known to us now. Salieri’s first singspiel, composed on the behest of the Emperor of Austria to augment the repertoire of German-language opera, was The Chimney Sweep (1781), a tri-lingual comedy about an immigrant Italian conniving a way to exploit the system in Imperial Austria. Cherubini also wrote two operas with Savoyard themes: Eliza (1794) and Les deux journées (1800); the latter of which influenced Beethoven's composition of the Egmont overture and Fidelio.

Citizens in urban centres knew of Savoyards, and they were the subject of much discussion. For one thing, the lives of these young people were full of danger, either through the risks associated with sweeping chimneys (getting stuck, falling down, or choking on soot) or through the threat of abduction, being sold into slavery or prostitution, or in one infamous case, being murdered to meet the demand for corpses used by the medical schools for their anatomical research. With the growth of the middle class, acts of charity and social concern were seen as increasingly morally imperative, and there were those who felt compelled to address the Savoyard problem and/or their plight.

Of those children who worked in street entertainment, many played instruments, displayed novelty animals such as marmots or birds, or sang songs. Some even reprised operatic hits from other cities in Europe. For some street spectators in London, for example, their first introduction to Rossini or Bellini might have been thanks to a Savoyard street performer. On the other hand, the increase of street noise proved to be something of a nuisance for many. Some street performers with instruments were not musically trained or

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1 Les deux petits Savoyards, Dalayrac (1789); Les Savoyardes, ou la Continence de Bayard, Propiac (1789); L’École des parvenus, ou la Suite des Deux Petits Savoyards, Devienne (1792). Source: Robert Ignatius Letellier, Opéra-Comique: A Sourcebook (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
able to play at all, and there were many instances of performers being paid to stop playing and move away. Flutes, whistles, hurdy-gurdies, organ-grinders – all instruments designed to be loud – were frequently played out of tune or with bastardised versions of songs people knew, leading some aurally fatigued denizens to claim the noise was making them neurologically ill.

SYNOPSIS

The Lanternist beckons the audience in and begins telling the story of two Savoyards. The year is 1793. Maxine (14) and her brother Raimon (18) are travelling from Savoy to The City to earn money with her family’s magic lantern and a crate of marmots. After accidentally walking into the middle of a revolutionary battle, Raimon is lost and presumed killed.

Maxine arrives in the city alone. This new beginning, with responsibility, brings self-doubt. Street children welcome her with bread. Some appear drugged, most are suspicious of her. They express an appreciation of Thomas Bonegrubber (18), their protector, though all is not what it seems. Bonegrubber is actually a child trafficker. He and his gang appear and show a great interest in the magic lantern, but the children protest that they want to see a magic lantern show.

Alone, Maxine tries to prepare a magic lantern show but lacks the confidence. She hears the voice of her brother, admonishing her that lanternists are men, not girls. With the encouragement of the street children, however, she determines to try. At that point her lantern is stolen. The Grubbers appear to snatch her away as well.

Bonegrubber holds Maxine captive. Furious, Maxine at first refuses to show him what the lantern does. Yet seeing Bonegrubber haunted by voices in his head, Maxine has an idea to use the lantern to escape. She convinces Bonegrubber to watch her innocent lantern show, but phantasmagoric apparitions come alive, each suggesting a different grim method to dispatch Bonegrubber. Terrified, Bonegrubber flees. Maxine and the street children are free.

Maxine, the great magic lanternist, gives a grand show for the street children. Her marmots appear and try to tell her of what they’ve seen on their adventures. As comic and grotesque characters appear from the lantern to sing and dance, Raimon returns and witnesses Maxine fulfilling her potential.

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5 Ibid., 98
6 Ibid., 102-104.
7 The Savoyards travelled with marmots, little animals that live wild in the Alps, using them in their street performances or exhibiting them for money.
LIBRETTO
By Judi Sissons

The LANTERNIST, an old showman, invites the audience to a Magic Lantern show in the dark, closed down market. Lantern images show two young Savoyards travelling from their home in the Alps, through countryside. (These could be simple silhouette images). The boy carries a magic lantern, the girl carries a box of marmots.

LANTERNIST
Draw close people, hear my tale.
See the lantern’s magic pictures.
Two young Savoyards, a brother and a sister leave their mountain home for the city.

CHORUS
Their magic lantern has stories to tell,
Fabulous pictures Illusions to sell.
Roll up, roll up, roll up, for their Galantee show.
They bring entertainment wherever they go.
Colourful pictures in their Galantee show.
They bring entertainment wherever they go.

Lantern images show the pair enter a dark forest, lit only by moonlight. Mist rises. In the distance, shouts and screams and other weird sounds.

CHORUS
(low voices) Night falls in the forest,
Strange sounds all around.
Night falls in the forest,
Strange sounds all around.

Shouts and screams getting closer. Images of soldiers searching for rebels are now projected around the stage by small, hand-held children’s lanterns. Smoke and chaos. Gunfire. Explosions. Drums beat. A bell rings. RAIMON and MAXINE appear either side of the stage, lit in silhouette in the style of magic lantern slides.

RAIMON
We’ve fallen into hell.

MAXINE
Who’s fighting who?

RAIMON
Impossible to know.

MAXINE
We’ve fallen into hell.

RAIMON
Who’s fighting who?
MAXINE Impossible to know.
RAIMON Rebels!
MAXINE Soldiers!
CHORUS Run! Run!
MAXINE Rebels!
RAIMON Soldiers!
CHORUS Run! Run! (CHORUS run off)

Loud explosion. Sudden silence. Light on RAIMON goes out.

MAXINE Raimon! Raimon!
Where are you my brother?

BLACK OUT

SCENE 1

The Market Square. Night time. The market is closed. Empty market stalls, packing boxes etc. MAXINE enters alone, exhausted and bedraggled. She now carries the Magic Lantern on her back.

MAXINE A brother lost.
My marmots gone.
I’m all alone and can’t go on.
My mind is numb.
My heart is broken.
I’m all alone and can’t go on.

This lantern was my brother’s pride
It’s all I have of him.
To seek our fortune in this city was our plan
Now all is lost.

She hides the lantern under some old rags and crawls under a market stall to sleep.

LIGHTS FADE
SCENE 2

Morning. The market starts to come to life. Street traders set up their stalls and call out their wares. Punters and toffs coming and going.

TRADERS
A penny a score
An ‘aypenny a skin
A penny a score
An ‘aypenny a skin
Buy, buy, buuuy.

Now’s your time
Pick em out cheap
Now’s your time
Pick em out cheap
Buy, buy, buuuy.

STREET CHILDREN come out from under the stalls. They approach MAXINE. She is asleep and looks like a bundle of rags.

CHILDREN
What is it?
It’s a girl.
Who is she?
Is she dead?
Sleeping
Where’s she come from?
Knackered. Deadbeat
She’s exhausted
Ssshhh

Some of the CHILDREN find the magic lantern.

CHILDREN
What is it?
Looks expensive
Take it! Steal it!
We could sell it
Let's sell it!
For money
Or for food!

CHILD 1
I’m hungry

MAXINE
(wakes up) Hey! Don’t touch that!

CHILDREN
Says who?
MAXINE         Says I. Don’t touch my brother’s magic lantern!

The CHILDREN back away.

CHILDREN     It’s magic! She's a witch.
             Can it conjure spirits?
             Could magic make us rich?
             She’s a sorcerer.
             She'll cast a spell on us.

CHILD 1      I’m frightened.

MAXINE       It can conjure stories.

CHILDREN     What use are stories when we’re starving?

MAXINE       Stories of the past
             Inspire us to be strong
             Stories of the future
             Impel us to go on

             Stories from far distant lands
             Underneath the sky
             Stories live forever
             Stories never die.

TOFF and DOLL walk by, stop and stare at the children, looking sorry for them. They throw them a few coins then walk on. The CHILDREN scrabble for the coins. BONEGRUBBER and his gang the GRUBBERS are lurking, unseen by the CHILDREN and MAXINE.

CHILDREN     People always gawp and stare,
             ’specially if you got dark hair.
             Like we're some exotic fruit
             They don't reckon that we're cute.

             We're their exotic fruit.
             We're their exotic fruit.

             But those toffs they all get shook
             When they take a second look
             At our scabs and our diseases.
             They all fear our coughs and wheezes.

             We are exotic fruit
             We are exotic fruit
TOFF and DOLL

See that.
Look there.
Dark eyes! Dark skin!
Dark lips! Dark hair!
But see they’re out here on their own.

Disgrace. The shame.
Despair. That face.
To live in filth.
But oh, if we could take them home.

CHILDREN

This old city that we call home’s
A cold stepmother with a heart of stone
Good ol’ Boney is our salvation
From the workhouse and transportation

Underneath the market stall
There are hundreds of us all,
Some get by with little jobs
Sweeping muck for toffs and snobs,
While there’s some who’s chimney sweeping
Others get their bread by thieving.
Like some rotten fruit we roll
As we perish in the cold.

We are exotic fruit.
We are exotic fruit.

MAXINE

Where are your parents?

CHILD

We’re orphans. This market is our home.

MAXINE

This city is a stony-hearted stepmother.

CHILDREN

Show us what the lantern does. We want to see the magic.

MAXINE

I can’t show you. This lantern is my brother’s.

CHILDREN

Where is he?

MAXINE

Lost in the forest. Along with my poor marmots.

CHILD

Marmots? What are they?

MAXINE

Small animals you’d love. They were my pets. I taught them how to dance and whistle.

CHILDREN

Dance and whistle? Can we eat them?
CHILD 1  I'm hungry.

MAXINE  No! Mon Dieu!

BONEGRUBBER enters. GRUBBERS seethe round him like a pack of dogs.

GRUBBERS  We are the bonegrubbers  
            Our fathers were grubbers too  
            Scavenging is our business  
            Grubbing for bones in other people’s rubbish  

            Our fathers were grubbers too  
            Grubbing like our fathers  
            In the mud and the sludge of the grimy river  
            Grubbing for bones in other people’s muck  
            Grubbing in the muck for other people's bones  
            Now we don’t want just any old bones.

GRUBBERS run in, laughing and chase the CHILDREN who scatter and hide. MAXINE remains. BONEGRUBBER approaches her.

BONEGRUBBER  Well hello my lovelies.  
               Why're you all hiding from old Boney?  
               Don't you love your Uncle Boney no more?

The CHILDREN come out of hiding. He hugs some of the CHILDREN roughly. They are uncomfortable with it.

Come on. What have you got?  
Let's be 'avin' the 'ole lot!  
I think someone’s taken a few pennies today.  
Am I right?

The CHILDREN hand over the money. In return BONEGRUBBER gives them some sweets.

BONEGRUBBER  Is that all there is?

CHILDREN  Is that all there is?

BONEGRUBBER  And what have we here? A magic lantern eh?  
               Well that’s just lovely.
And who is this young lady?
Ah! Where are my manners?
How could I forget?
My dear, I don't believe we've met.
Thomas Bonegrubber at your service.

BONEGRUBBER rattles the lantern. The GRUBBERS sniff around.

BONEGRUBBER How does this trick work?
MAXINE It's not a trick. Don't do that. You'll break it.
BONEGRUBBER Oh she's a lively one.
Go on. Show me your magic trick.
MAXINE The lantern only works for those with a good heart.
BONEGRUBBER Ha! Well I've a good heart my dear.
Ask my street dogs – how kind am I, boys?

The GRUBBERS pretend not to hear him. They whistle a tune.

BONEGRUBBER A fancy toy like this is worth a lot of dosh.
MAXINE It's not a toy.
BONEGRUBBER I know a toff who'll take that off your hands. Get you a good price.
CHILDREN (whispering) Don't trust him.
MAXINE It's not for sale.
BONEGRUBBER I drive a hard bargain. Get you a good deal.
CHILDREN Don't trust him.
MAXINE It's not for sale.
The children want to see a lantern show.

GRUBBERS In the mud and the sludge of the grimy river
We're on the lookout for lively young bones
Now we don't want just any old bones
Give us bones with plenty of meat on them.

MAXINE This lantern is my brother's.
BONEGRUBBER Is that right?

CHILDREN We want to see the lantern show. We want to see the magic now.

MAXINE He'll be coming soon to claim it.

The CHILDREN encircle MAXINE protecting her and the lantern.

CHILDREN We want to see the magic now! We want to see the lantern show!

MAXINE Wait until it's dark.

MAXINE puts the lantern away, under a cloth.

BONEGRUBBER We all want to see this show. So, we can wait until it's dark. Right boys?

GRUBBERS We're on the lookout for lively young bones Scavenging is our business. Give us your bones with plenty of meat on 'em. We are the bonegrubbers.

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 3

The market has closed. It is dark. MAXINE is practising her patter for her first lantern show.

MAXINE Roll up. Roll up for the show. I can’t do this. Confidence. I don’t have confidence. My brother always told me so. He said,

LIGHTS come up on RAIMON in silhouette.

RAIMON I am the showman, the great entertainer. You are the sidekick my girl.
MAXINE  Charisma. I lack charisma.  
My brother always told me. He said,

RAIMON  You’re my assistant. The girl with the marmots. 
Play with the children my girl.

MAXINE  I was his apprentice.  
Always in the shadows. He said,

RAIMON  Call yourself a lanternist.  
Don’t make me laugh. 
Watch and learn my girl.

MAXINE  Confidence. I don’t have confidence.

CHILDREN  Where are the pictures? 
We want the magic pictures 
Where are the stories? 
Tell us the stories.

MAXINE  Perhaps I can do it.  
This lantern is my heritage.

CHILDREN  We want the pictures 
We want the stories 
You can be the lanternist 
You know you can do it now!

MAXINE  I can be the lanternist 
stories are forever 
stories never die. I’ll do it.

MAXINE goes to get the lantern from under the cover. It has disappeared.

MAXINE  The lantern! 
Where’s the lantern? 
Did you move it? 
Where’s it gone?

The CHILDREN begin to search for the lantern.

CHILDREN  The lantern. 
Where’s it gone? 
Someone’s nicked it! 
Or it’s lost. 
Stolen.
Someone thieved it.
Magicked it away.
It's in the pawnbrokers.
Who knows where it is by now?

**MAXINE**
Who could have taken it?
Did you see anyone round here?
It must be somewhere round here!
Someone must have seen.

*The GRUBBERS enter. The CHILDREN run away.*

**GRUBBERS**
Lost something ‘ave you?

*The GRUBBERS grab MAXINE and take her off stage.*

**BLACK OUT**

**SCENE 4**

Bonegrubber’s Lair.

**BONEGRUBBER** *is holding the lantern, trying to understand how it works.* MAXINE *is watching.* **GRUBBERS** *guard the door.*

**BONEGRUBBER**
Show us how it works What does it do?

**MAXINE** says nothing.

**GRUBBERS**
He hasn’t a clue. Ha!

**BONEGRUBBER**
You little wretch you think you’re clever.
Without that lantern you’ll have nothing.
Young girls come here with dreams.
They have no choice but work for me
Or end up on the streets.

**BONEGRUBBER** *examines the lantern. He can’t make it work.* MAXINE moves away.

**MAXINE**
This lantern was my brother’s pride
Now it’s all I have of him.
How can I give up my freedom?
Or face the streets alone without the lantern?
What kind of choice is that?
What shall I do?

There is an eerie sound of distorted children’s voices.

CHORUS
(Children’s voices OFF)
We are exotic fruit.
We are exotic fruit.

BONEGRUBBER
What's that? Who's there?
Who makes that ghostly sound?

GRUBBERS
Master hears voices in his head.
He has bad dreams at night.

(taunting him) They say that evil haunts this place,
where graves are opened wide,
a murdered child, a boneless wraith,
a hopeless suicide.

CHORUS
(Children’s voices OFF)
We are exotic fruit.
We are exotic fruit.

GRUBBERS
There’s restless spirits who walk these streets,
always unforgiving
of the crimes they’ve suffered,
seeking vengeance on the living.

The voices stop.

BONEGRUBBER
Superstitious claptrap
It’s a trick of the wind.
Yet some nights I hear the jabber of their voices in my mind.

Whispering voices return and fade.

CHORUS
(whispering) Bonegrubber. Bonegrubber.

MAXINE
Must be his guilty conscience.

MAXINE returns to BONEGRUBBER.
MAXINE The lantern shines a light into the darkest corners of your mind. Are you sure you want to see what it can do?

BONEGRUBBER I've nothing to fear. My conscience is clear.

MAXINE Then I'll show you. (She operates the lantern).

MAXINE operates the lantern. The images are charming and innocent. The images become darker; something lurks in the corners. A brief flash of a ghostly image horrifies BONEGRUBBER.

BONEGRUBBER What kind of magic is this?

The charming images return, but the faces are sad or scared.

MAXINE Apparitions come to haunt you,
Remind you of your crimes.

BONEGRUBBER turns away. Suddenly, phantasmagoric images of ghosts and ghouls appear everywhere around the stage projected by small, hand-held children’s lanterns. The voices return making ghostly sounds. BONEGRUBBER is terrified.

BONEGRUBBER Make it stop.
Take it away.

BONEGRUBBER runs out.

BLACK OUT

SCENE 5

The closed down market. Dark.

MAXINE is preparing to give a lantern show to the CHILDREN.

MAXINE Roll up, roll up, roll up,
for my Galantee show.
I bring entertainment wherever I go.

Draw close, people! Draw close!
Hear my tale, see the lantern’s magic pictures.
Two young Savoyards, a brother and a sister
Leave their mountain home for the city.

The MARMOTS screech and career onstage. They encircle MAXINE, squeaking at her and sniffing her face. MAXINE and the CHILDREN do not understand what the
MARMOTS are saying.

MARMOTS  Maxeeene! Maxeeene! Maxeeene!
[8 bar rap about finding Maxine after a long search]

MAXINE  My Marmots! You're alive.
Look at you. You've grown – so – big!

The MARMOTS squeak and whistle.

MARMOTS  [8 bar rap about wanting to be fed, get fat and hibernate]

They sniff the CHILDREN.

CHILDREN  Look marmots!
They're so sweet.
Can we stroke them?
What do they eat?

MAXINE  They have their own language
of little squeaks and whistles.
They're trying to communicate as if they're really talking.

MARMOTS  [16 bar rap about feeling patronised by her comment and that they're actually very clever and 'street']

MAXINE  How did you get here on your own?
My brother must have perished.
If he were alive, he would be here.
Oh, I wish that you could tell us what you've seen.
Oh, where is Raimon?

MARMOTS  [8 bar rap about having seen Raimon in the forest but that she mustn't worry and do her lantern show]

CHILDREN  They're trying to communicate as if they're really talking.

MAXINE  gathers herself and begins to operate the magic lantern show. Beautiful, uplifting images are projected. The CHILDREN are enthralled. RAIMON enters and stands watching.

RAIMON  My sister. My sister.
The great entertainer.
No more the sidekick, my girl.
MAXINE  Raimon! I was your apprentice.  
            Always in the shadows.

RAIMON  Step into the light now, Maxine.  
            Your brother couldn’t see you.
            Step into the light now, dear sister.  
            Step into the light.  
            I can see you now.

MAXINE  Confidence. I found my confidence.  
            These stories are for sharing, dear brother.

RAIMON  Now you are the lanternist.  
            This lantern is our heritage.

MAXINE  I have found my confidence.  
            I step into the light.  
            Now I am the lanternist.

ALL  Stories of the past  
        Inspire us to be strong.  
        Stories of the future  
        Impel us to go on.
        
        Stories from far distant lands  
        Underneath the sky.  
        Stories live forever.  
        Stories never die.

THE END
COMPOSER'S NOTE

The piece is devised for a large youth opera company with performers between the ages of 8 and 18 years old, potentially rehearsing in discrete groups. Playing ages are suggested in the Cast List, but performers can be older or younger in reality. A very talented child singer can join the Teen's Chorus singing an octave above the written part, for example, and similarly boys whose voices have broken can join the Children's Chorus and sing the octave below the written part.

The performance begins outside of the auditorium with a couple of young people in character performing (singing, playing the flute or other talent) for money or begging, mingling with the audience. Whatever participation had taken place would need to be made clear to the audience before the performance. Information could be provided in programmes (sold by performers in character as street newspaper vendors, perhaps) or as a pre-performance exhibition. The Lanternist's first call to beckon everyone into the auditorium is the start of the opera.

The Magic Lantern has one musical co-creative window where participants must devise their own rap lyrics for the Marmots to perform over music that exists in the score. The lyrics for the rap must be fun, clear and engaging, utilising the musical qualities of grime (lyrical phrases, or 'bars', should emphasise the first beat of the musical bar), and in terms of content should follow the guidelines for creation in the score.

Performers are encouraged to mount their own devised magic lantern shows to lead the audience out of the auditorium at the end of the opera, in much the same spirit as the audience would have been led in. This would represent Maxine's dissemination of lanterning skills to the children, who would use the skills to earn money. Collaborating on the creation of their own magic lantern shows could provide the performers a richer experience to engage with the content of the opera and its historical context. From a musical perspective, the young performers could reference and re-contextualise music from the opera, or music that the opera itself references, in a creative process that would follow what lanternists and street performers would have done in the past.

The piano lid (ideally of a grand piano) should be open from the start of the piece, ready for the strings to be brushed.

For conductors, some suggested cue points have been indicated in the score with the following marks:

- Right hand cue – for a major cue point
- Left hand cue – for minor cue points
MISE EN SCENE

The opera is set between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, at a time before the wide availability of electricity and just after the French Revolution, which left society in Europe in a state of upheaval and tension. Set and costume need not be naturalistic, but should provide a context for a world wherein magic lanterns are exciting and astounding “new” technology.

It is important that the young performers be involved in the designing of the production and particularly in the creation of magic lanterns and slides. Almost all the scenery in the opera, and even some of the characters, can be projected with the use of magic lanterns of various sizes. Phantasmagoria images (as they appear in Scene 4) should use stage smoke.

The piece is also suitable for promenade performances and production in non-traditional space. However, the space must be dark enough to project magic lanterns and performers need to be close enough to a piano most of the time.
The Magic Lantern

Prologue

The LANTERNIST, an old showman, invites the audience to a Magic Lantern show in the dark, closed down market. Lantern images show two young Savoyards travelling from their home in the Alps, through countryside. (These should be simple silhouette images). The boy carries a magic lantern, the girl carries a box of marmots.

LANTERNIST spoken in the entrance to the performance space

Draw close, people! Draw close! Hear my tale, see the lantern’s magic pictures.

Two young Savoyards, a brother and a sister, leave their mountain home for the city.

CUE 1

As the audience enter the performance space, performers helping audience to their seats

Conductor right hand cue

Their magic lantern has stories to tell. Fabulous pictures, illusions to sell.

CUE 2

stop at Cue 3

(continue)

CUE 3

They bring entertainment wherever they go!
As the audience are almost completely settled

Whistles staggered breathing until Cue 6

The LANTERNIST steps into a spotlight
Lantern images show the pair enter a dark forest, lit only by moonlight. Mist rises. In the distance, shouts and screams and other weird sounds.

Night falls in the forest. Strange sounds all around.

All except soloists, staggered breathing

Night falls in the forest. Strange sounds all around.
Shouts and screams get closer. Images of soldiers searching for rebels are now projected around the stage by small, hand-held children's lanterns. Smoke and chaos.

SOLDIER: À tête!

2 Snare drums far offstage, coming gradually closer

Solo offstage shouts, antiphonal (Rebels stage left, Soldiers stage right)
Who's fighting who?
We've fallen in to hell!

REBELS prepare for a skirmish.
REBELS off stage left

SOLDIERS off stage right

REBEL 1: Égallez-vous!
REBEL 2: Égallez-vous les gars!!

REBEL 1: Rambarre!
All REBELS: (like a war cry) Rambarre!

SOLDIER 1: Tournez!
SOLDIER 2: Tournez l'ennemi!
Wh. (G)
Wh. (D)
Wh. (C)
Maxine
Raimon
Children 1
Children 2
Perc.

Who's fighting who?

The SOLDIERS load a cannon, REBELS drop to the floor.

REBEL 3: Ventre à terre!

REBELS try to press forward into hand-to-hand combat.

SOLDIER 3: Feu!

A cannon fires.

Muskets / balloons stop

off stage right (approximate timing, follow the shouted cue: "Feu!")

move Bass to just

The Soldiers load a cannon, REBELS drop to the floor.

REBEL 3: Ventre à terre!

SOLDIER 3: Chargez!

A cannon fires.

Muskets / balloons stop

REBELS try to press forward into hand-to-hand combat.

SOLDIER 3: Feu!

off stage right (approximate timing, follow the shouted cue: "Feu!")

move Bass to just

The Soldiers load a cannon, REBELS drop to the floor.

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off stage right (approximate timing, follow the shouted cue: "Feu!")

move Bass to just

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REBEL 3: Ventre à terre!

SOLDIER 3: Chargez!

A cannon fires.

Muskets / balloons stop

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off stage right (approximate timing, follow the shouted cue: "Feu!")

move Bass to just

The Soldiers load a cannon, REBELS drop to the floor.

REBEL 3: Ventre à terre!

SOLDIER 3: Chargez!

A cannon fires.

Muskets / balloons stop

REBELS try to press forward into hand-to-hand combat.

SOLDIER 3: Feu!

off stage right (approximate timing, follow the shouted cue: "Feu!")

move Bass to just
Loud explosion.
Sudden silence.
Lights on RAIMON
go out.

Maxine

Reb-els!
Sol-diers!

Raimon

Sol-diers!
Reb-els!

Children 1

Run!
Run!
Run!

Children 2

Run!
Run! SOLDIER 3:
Chargez
SOLDIER 3:
Feu!

Perc.

just offstage,
ad lib. 'explosion'
anywhere in this bar,
surprise us.

B. D.

fff

BLACK OUT

freely, spoken

Just offstage,
ad lib. 'explosion'
anywhere in this bar,
surprise us.

Raimon! Raimon!
Where are you my brother?

pluck string from inside piano

fff

PRAG
Scene 1

The Market Square. Night time. The market is closed. Empty market stalls, packing boxes etc. MAXINE enters alone, exhausted and bedraggled. She now carries the Magic Lantern on her back.

She hides the lantern under some old rags and crawls under a market stall to sleep.

Scene 2

Morning. The market starts to come to life. TRADERS set up their stalls and call out their wares. Punters and toffs coming and going.

A moderately skilled TIN WHISTLER starts performing in the street:

A pen-ny a score! An 'ay-pen-ny a skin!
An unskilled TIN WHISTLER 2 starts begging, playing ineptly:
leave the B hole open but frantically twiddle the other finger holes
repeat ad lib.

Now’s your time!
Pick ‘em out cheap!

STREET CHILDREN come out from under the stalls. They approach MAXINE. She is asleep and looks like a bundle of rags.
Wh. (G)

Wh. (C)

Children 1

Children 2

Children 3

Children 4

Pno.

69

Knack-er'd

Dead-beat.

Shhh!

73

Knack-er'd

Dead-beat.

Shhh!

Where's she come from?

She's ex-haust-ed.

Who is she?

It's a girl.

Is she dead?

It's a girl.

Is she dead?
The 2 TIN WHISTLERS converse (ad lib. musically) about how to approach/search the body; a third TIN WHISTLE (in D) makes its appearance as the lantern is found.

Some of the children find the lantern, \( \text{♩} = 110 \)

Wh. (G)

Wh. (D)

Wh. (C)

Children 1

Children 2

Children 3

Children 4

Pno.

what's that?

Take it

Steal it

Looks expensive!

We could sell it

What is it?

Who is she?

It's a girl.

Is she
Let's sell it! Take it Steal it

Looks expensive! We could sell it

For money! For money!

dead? Or for food!

Hey! Don't touch that! Says I! Don't touch my brother's magic lantern!

CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

Says who?

Says who?

food! Says who?

CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

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U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!

U CHILD 1: I'm hungry!
Children 1
It's magic!

Children 2
It's magic! Can it conjure spirits? She'll cast a spell on us!

Children 3
It's magic! She's a witch! Could magic make us rich?

Children 4
It's magic! She's a witch! Could magic make us rich?

Pno.

The CHILDREN back away.
Children 1

She's a sorcerer!

I'm frightened...

Children 2

She'll cast a spell on us!

Children 3

witch!

Could magic make us rich?

Children 4

witch!

Could magic make us rich?

Pno.

Maxine

It can conjure stories.

Solo

What use are stories when we're

Pno.

Maxine

Hesitant, unsure

Stories of the past remind us to be strong.

Children 1

Dream-like

H

What use are stories when we're
They throw the CHILDREN a few coins then walk on. The CHILDREN scramble for the coins.

BONEGRUBBER and his gang the GRUBBERS are lurking, unseen by the CHILDREN and MAXINE.

They are soon joined by others.

DOLL and TOFF walk by, stop and stare at the children, looking sorry for them.

They live... spoken freely

Stories from far distant lands.

Stories of the future compel us to go on.

Stories for ever...
Children

Grown ups

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children

Children
The image contains sheet music for a song titled "We're exotic fruit!" arranged for a choir and piano. The sheet music includes musical notation with appropriate dynamics and markings such as "sempre staccato." The text in the music is as follows:

**Children 1**

We're they're exotic fruit. They all get shook.

**Children 2**

We're they're exotic fruit. We're they're exotic fruit. Exotic fruit!

**Pno.**

The notation includes musical symbols and instructions like "wheez.", "At our scabs and our diseases.", and "They all fear our coughs and wheez.", indicating the musicality and dynamics of the piece.
Children

Grown Ups 1

Grown Ups 2

Pno.

This old city that we call "home."

home. Simile

Children

Pno.

from the workhouse and transportation. Our salvation!

Children

rall.

Our salvation! Good ol' Bonney! Good ol' Bonney!
Children 1

Children 2

Pno.

206

Un - der neath the mar - ket stalls

207

Some get by with lit - tle jobs.

hun - dreds of us all.

Sweep - ing muck for toffs and

sempre staccato

209

rall. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . A tempo =150

Children 1

Children 2

Pno.

While there's some who's chim - ney sweep - ing.

snobs.

Oth - ers get their bread by theiv - ing.

Like ex - o - tic fruit we roll

There are hund - reds of us all

Just to per - ish in the cold.
Children 1

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 1

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 1

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 1

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 1

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!

Children 2

We are ex-otic fruit!

Pno.

We are ex-otic fruit!
This city is a stony-hearted stepmother!

Show us what the lantern does. We want to see the magic!

Lost in the forest,

Where is he?

Along with my poor marmots.

Marmots? What are they?

Small animals you'd love. They were my pets. I taught them how to dance and whistle.
Maxine THOMAS enters. GRUBBERS (in 3 voice groups) see the
around him like a pack of dogs.

No! Mon Dieu!

whistle from offstage

Dance and whistle?

Can we eat them?

I'm hungry!

Like digging through muck
Proud, resentful

We are the bone grubbers.

We are the bone grubbers.

246 GRUBBERS 1

(2nd time only)

We are the bone grubbers.

P

Our fathers were grubbers too. We are the bone grubbers. Our fathers were grubbers too. Scavenging is our bus'ness.

251

Our fathers were grubbers too. We are the bone grubbers. Our fathers were grubbers too. Scavenging is our bus'ness.
Teens 1

Sea-veng-ing is our bus'-ness. Grub-bing for bones in oth-er peo-ple's rub-bish. Grub-bing for bones in

Teens 2

Sea-veng-ing is our bus'-ness. Grub-bing for bones in oth-er peo-ple's rub-bish. Grub-bing for bones in

Pno.

GRUBBERS run in, laughing and chase the CHILDREN who scatter. MAXINE remains. BONEGRUBBER approaches.

Teens 1

oth-er peo-ple's rub-bish. Our fa-thers were grub-bers too. Grub-bing like our

Teens 2

oth-er peo-ple's rub-bish. Our fa-thers were grub-bers too.

Teens 3

Our fa-thers were grub-bers too. Grub-bing like our fa-thers in the

Pno.

GRUBBERS 3

Our fa-thers were grub-bers too.

Thomas

Well__ hel-lo__ my

Teens 1

fa-thers in the mud and the sludge of the, the grim-y ri-ver Grub-bing for bones in oth-er peo-ple's

Teens 2

Grub-bing like our fa-thers in the mud and the muck of the, the grim-y ri-ver. Grub-bing for bones in

Teens 3

mud and the muck of the, the grim-y ri-ver. Grub-bing for bones in oth-er peo-ple's muck, Grub-bing
The CHILDREN come out of hiding. He hugs some of them, roughly. Some of them are uncomfortable with it.

The CHILDREN hand over the money. In return BONEGRUBBER gives them some sweets.
I don't believe we've met, Thomas Bonegruber at your service.

How does this trick work?

It's not a trick. Don't do that. You'll break it!

Oh she's a lively one!

Go on! Show me your magic trick.

The BONEGRUBBER rattles the lantern. The GRUBBERS sniff around.
They all whistle a tune:

The GRUBBERS pretend not to hear him. They all whistle a tune:

The GRUBBERS pretend not to hear him. They all whistle a tune:

The GRUBBERS pretend not to hear him. They all whistle a tune:

The GRUBBERS pretend not to hear him. They all whistle a tune:

Well, I've a good heart, my dear. Ask my Street Dogs - how kind am I, boys? How kind am I?

Come on, my Street Dogs! How kind am I?
Children

Don't trust him.

Teens

Get you a good deal.

Pno.

Everyone freezes.

Maxine

It's not for sale.

It's for sale!

Thomas

Toy like this is worth a lot of dosh. I know a toff who'll take that off your lands.

Whispered

Don't trust him.

Children

Price. I drive a hard bargain.

Pno.

The children want to see a lantern show

We want to see the

We want to see the

GRUBBERS 1

in the mud and the sludge of the grimey river

GRUBBERS 2 & 3

p

in the mud and the sludge of the grimey
This lantern is my brother's. He laughs.

Is that right?

We want to see the lantern show.

We want to see the lantern show.

on the lookout for lively young bones. Now we don't want any old bones. Give us bones with

riv-er We're on the lookout for lively young bones. Now we don't want any old bones, any

He'll be coming soon to claim it. Wait until it's dark.

We want to see the magic now!

We want to see the magic now!

plenty of meat on them, plente of meat on them.

old bones. Give us bones with plente of meat on them.
Children 2

Thomas

Children 1

We want to see the lantern show!

Children 2

We want to see the lantern show!

Pno.

Pno.

500

390

So we can wait until it's dark. Right boys?

GRUBBERS disperse, continue singing from offstage

396

whistle

Teens 1

mf

We're on the lookout for lively young bones. Sca-veng-ing is our bus'-ness.

Teens. 2

we're on the lookout for lively young bones.

Pno.

Pno.

490

Teens 1

Sca-veng-ing is our bus'-ness. Give us your bones with plenty of meat on 'em.

Teens. 2

Sca-veng-ing is our bus'-ness. Give us your bones with plenty of meat on 'em.
Scene 3

The market has closed. It is dark. MAXINE is practising her patter for her first lantern show.

Maxine

Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll up! Roll up for the show... oh

I can't do this. Confidence. I don't have confidence. My brother always told me so.

He said:

I am the show-man, the great entertainer. You are the side-kick, my girl.
Maxine

Raimon

Pno.

You're my assistant, the girl with the mar-mots. Play with the children, my girl.

Pno.

Raimon

Call yourself a lan-tern-ist? Don't make me laugh!

Pno.

molto rall. A tempo = 50

Maxine

Raimon

Watch and learn, my girl!

Watch and learn, my girl!

Pno.
MArion

MAXINE is surrounded by the voices of the CHILDREN.

Where are the pictures? We want the magic pictures. Where are the stories? Tell us the stories.

Perhaps I can do it. This lantern is my heritage. Perhaps now!

We want the stories. We want the pictures. You
MAXINE goes to get the lantern from under the cover. It has disappeared.
The **CHILDREN** begin to search for the lantern.

Maxine

- lantern? Did you move it?

Children 1

- The lantern! Some-one's

Children 2

- Where's it gone?

Children 3

- (8)

Pno.

Panicking, freely faster than tempo

Maxine

- Who could have taken it?

Children 1

- Nicked it... Stolen!

Children 2

- Or it's lost. Some-one thieved it!

Children 3

- The lantern!

Children 4

- Where's it

Pno.
Who could have taken it? Did you see it round here? It must be somewhere round here!

Magicked it away! Who knows where it is by now?

It's in the pawn-brokers.

Some-one's nicked it...

gone? Or it's lost.

The GRUBBERS enter. The CHILDREN run away:

Some-one must've seen!

GRUBBERS whistle from offstage

The GRUBBERS grab MAXINE and take her off stage.

Lost some-things have you?
Scene 4

Bonegrubber's Lair.

**BONEGRUBBER** is holding the lantern, trying to understand how it works. **MAXINE** is watching. **GRUBBERS** guard the door.

**MAXINE** says nothing.

**Thomas** is holding the lantern, trying to understand how it works. **MAXINE** is watching. **GRUBBERS** guard the door.
GRUBBERS

Show us how it works. What does it do?

He has-n't a clue.

They laugh

Young girls come here with dreams.

They have no choice but work for me or end up on the
BONEGRUBBER examines the lantern. He can't make it work. MAXINE moves away.

Maxine

brother's pride.

Now it's all I have left of him. How can I give up my freedom?

Thomas

dreams,

They have no choice, but work for me.

Pno.

Or face the streets without the lantern? What kind of choice is that? What shall I do?

Or end up on the streets.

Maxine

There is an eerie sound of children's voices.

Thomas

offstage

What's

Children 1

offstage

We are exotic fruit.

Children 2

We are exotic fruit.
Molto rubato

Very freely

that? Who's there? Who makes that ghostly sound?

staggered breathing

[hum] staggered breathing

[hum] steady pulse around \( \frac{5}{50} \)

ppp

strum strings inside piano \( \text{Iv.} \)

GRUBBER Solo 1 conversational

GRUBBER Solo 2 conversational

GRUBBER Solo 3 delightful in telling a scary story

Master hears voices in his head.

They say that evil haunts this place, where

He has bad dreams at night.

We are exo-tic fruit.

We are exo-tic fruit.

graves are op-ened wide!

A bone-less wraith...A hope-less suicide!

A murdered child...
556

The GRUBBERS enjoy teasing THOMAS

Some GRUBBERS are playing a rhyming game.

A low, expectant drone (like anticipating someone take a penalty kick)

There's restless spirits that walk these streets.

Colla voce

They laugh

They laugh

They laugh

They laugh

Always un-forgiving of the crimes they suffered,
Sup·er·sti·cious clap·trap! It's a trick of the wind.

Yet some nights I hear the jab·ber of their voic·es whispered together, slowly, repeat
Bonegrubber. Bonegrubber. whispered together, andante, repeat
Bonegrubber. Bonegrubber. whispered together, fast, repeat
Bonegrubber. Bonegrubber. whispered freely, repeat

MAXINE has an idea. She returns to BONEGRUBBER

Must be his guilt·y con·science. This lan·tern shines a light in·to the dark·est cor·ners of the

Are you sure you want to see what it real·ly can do?
CHILDREN emerging from the shadows

Where are the pictures? We want the magic pictures. Where are the stories? Tell us the stories.

GRUBBERS

Where are the pictures? We want the magic pictures. Where are the stories? Tell us the stories.

Pno.

simile

molto rall. . . . . . . Slow

G.P.

Maxine

Then I'll show you.

I've nothing to fear. My conscience is clear.

Pno.

ff

Musical cues follow stage action, vamp between phrases ad lib.

L.L.

irregular pulsing, around 3/50

"undead knocking"

(keep sustain pedal down until *)
The images become darker; something lurks in the corners.

Stage action must follow musical cues:

The charming images return, but the faces are sad or scared.

Apparations come to haunt you.

What kind of magic is this?

MAXINE (spoken)

BONEGRUBBER turns away:

Remind you of your crimes.
Suddenly, phantasmagoric images of ghosts and ghouls appear everywhere around the stage projected by small, hand-held children’s lanterns. The voices return making ghostly sounds. BONEGRUBBER is terrified.

**BONEGRUBBER:** Make it stop!

**BONEGRUBBER:** Take it away!
Scene 5

The closed down market. Dark.

MAXINE is preparing to give a lantern show to the CHILDREN.

Calling out confidently in the manner of the Lanternist

repeat ad lib.

Draw close, people! Draw close! Hear my tale, see the lantern's magic pictures.

Two young Savoyards, a brother and a sister, leave their mountain home for the city.

MARMOTS screech and career onstage. They encircle MAXINE, squeaking at her and sniffing her face. MAXINE and the CHILDREN do not understand what the MARMOTS are saying.

MARMOTS rap about finding Maxine after a long search

excited

My mar-mots! You're a live!
Children 2

Marmots

Children 1

Marmots

Pno.

Maxine

Look at you! You've grown so big!

MARMOTS rap about wanting to be fed, get fat and hibernate

The MARMOTS squeak, whistle and sniff the CHILDREN.

Maxine

Why yes!

They

Marmots

Children 1

mar-mots! They're so sweet! Can we stroke them? What do they eat?

Children 2

Mar-mots? Look! Mar-mots! Will they bite us?

Pno.

Maxine

have their own language of little squeaks and whistles. They're trying to com-mun-i-cate as if they're real-ly talk-ing!
MARMOTS rap about feeling patronised by that comment and that they're really clever and 'street'.

Maxine
My brother must have perished.
If he were alive he would be here.

Marmots
MARMOTS rap about having seen RAIMON in the forest but that she must do her magic lantern show.

MAXINE gathers herself and begins to operate the magic lantern show. Beautiful, uplifting images are projected. The CHILDREN are enthralled.

RAIMON enters and stands watching.

My sis-ter, my sis-ter. The great en-ter-tain-er. No more the side-kick, my girl.
Raimon: prentice. Always in the shadows.

Maxine: Step into the light now, Maxine.

Pno.

Raimon: Your brother couldn't see you. Setp into the light.

Pno.

Raimon: now, dear sister. Step into the light. I can see you now.

Pno.

Raimon: Now you are the lanternist. This lantern is your heritage.

Pno.

Maxine: I have found my confidence. I step into the light.
Maxine

Now I am the lanternist.

Stor-ies of the past inspire us to be strong.

Raimon

Now you are the lanternist.

Stor-ies of the past inspire us to be strong.

Pno.

Maxine

Stor-ies of the future impel us to go on.

Stor-ies from far distant lands underneath the sky.

Raimon

Stor-ies of the future impel us to go on.

Stor-ies from far distant lands underneath the sky.

Pno.

Maxine

Stor-ies live for-ev-er.

Stor-ies nev-er die.

Stor-ies of the past.

Raimon

Stor-ies live for-ev-er.

Stor-ies nev-er die.

Stor-ies of the past.

Children 1

Stor-ies of the past in

Children 2

Stor-ies of the past in

Pno.
Maxine
Sto\-ries nev\-er die
3.
Stories nev\-er
die.

Raimon
Sto\-ries nev\-er die
3.
Stories nev\-er
die.

Children 1
div. 3
2.
1.
Stories nev\-er
die.

Children 2
div. 2
2.
1.
Stories nev\-er
die.

Pno.
2 2 2 2 2

END

Maxine
die

Raimon
die.

Children 1
die.

Children 2
die.

Pno.