

Piano-Vocal Score

Rufus AND Rita

Lauren
Bernofsky



THEODORE
PRESSER
COMPANY

Maya Rowley

Commissioned and premiered by
Reimagining Opera for Kids
Kimberly Carballo, Director

RUFUS AND RITA is a light-hearted opera for young audiences, scored for four adult singers of any voice type. Singers may adjust octaves as necessary, so any part may be sung by a male or female voice.

A chamber version of the accompaniment is also available from Theodore Presser Company (441-41031), scored for a flexible-instrumentation ensemble of piano with any two treble instruments and one bass instrument.

* * *

RUFUS AND RITA contains many improvised elements, from spoken dialogue to improvised vocal parts. Instructions are given throughout the score. The duration is approximately 30 minutes, depending on the length of the improvised sections.

The libretto is flexible – at several points in the show, the audience votes on what happens next, from choices given by a narrator. Some musical numbers, as well as props and set accessories, are determined by the choice. For instance, if the audience votes for Rufus to have found a dog biscuit, then 2a. The Dog Treat is performed (and 2b. Fido's Lament is omitted.) The pianist may serve as the narrator, who announces what is being voted on and tallies the vote by observing a show of hands.

* * *

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CHARACTERS

RUFUS: A dog. Rambunctious, good-natured, and a little goofy.

RITA: Rufus' owner. Friendly, good-natured, and wants the best for her dog.

SLOTH: A sloth. Speaks and moves maddeningly slowly.

VET/GRANDPA/GRANDMA: Calm, cheerful, and wise.

NARRATOR: May be taken by the pianist or an extra performer.

(One optional supernumerary)

SET

SCENE I: A living room. Sofa, coffee table, end table with lamp, bookshelf with books, etc. A working clock can help singers keep track of the time, for purposes of pacing the show. Some of the furniture and props should be made out of light-weight material so they can be thrown around "safely."

SCENE II: En route to the Vet's or Grandpa's/ma's. A scrolling backdrop could be used to create the impression of travel. (Backdrop could be trees and/or houses.) In a larger space, characters might travel through the aisles.

SCENE III: A vet's office or Grandma's/Grandpa's kitchen. The same basic set can be used (countertop, etc.), changing props as needed to go with either scenario.

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[TOTAL DURATION approx. 30 min.]

commissioned by Reimagining Opera for Kids
Kimberly Carballo, Director

Concept by
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and LAUREN BERNOFSKY

RUFUS and RITA

Words and Music by
LAUREN BERNOFSKY

SCENE 1

SETTING: a livingroom

[1:00]

1. Overture

*Rufus runs onto stage and furiously sniffs around, trying to find the source of an interesting smell.
(Overturns/throws furniture, lamps, etc.)*

Animated ♩ = 126

PIANO

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. The first system (measures 1-3) is in 4/4 time, marked *f*. The second system (measures 4-6) is in 4/4 time, marked *mf*. The third system (measures 7-9) is in 4/4 time, marked *cresc.*. The fourth system (measures 10-12) is in 2/4 time, marked *f* and *mp*, with the instruction "Rufus pants, growls, etc." above measure 11. The fifth system (measures 13-15) is in 2/4 time.

(Stops to scratch)

19

23

Rufus finds the source of the smell and lets out an excited bark. Holds up something brown and eyes it hungrily.

28 Hunkers down and begins eating.

29

NARRATOR: So here we have Rufus the Dog eating ... SOMETHING.
Is it a delicious dog treat,
OR is it a moldy old sandwich?

Narrator asks the audience members to vote by a show of hands.

If **DOG TREAT** is chosen, go to 2a. *The Dog Treat.*

If **MOLDY SANDWICH** is chosen, go to 2b. *Fido's Lament.*

[1:26]

2a. The Dog Treat (male voice)

Cheerfully ♩ = 132 *mf*

RUFUS

PIANO *mf*

5

RUF.

tast-i-est dog__ treat, the best that I've ev-er had. My own-er for

9

RUF.

got to hide__ them, but I'm aw__ flly glad. It has the

13

RUF.

chew-i-est cen-ter, but then it's crunchy out-side. The taste is like

17

RUF.

Heav-en on Earth, and makes me hap-py in-side. I

21

RUF.

must have some more of these, where can I get them, please? What can we do to find more

24

RUF.

treats as de-lic-i-ous as these? Treats as de-li-cious as these.

28

RITA

RUF.

mf

These are the tast-i - est dog treats

mf

These are the

32

RITA

RUF.

that Ruf-us ev - er did find. I've nev - er seen

tast - i - est treats, — that Ruf-us ev - er did find.

3

35

RITA

RUF.

such a hap - py dog, he's near - ly out of his mind. Be-cause you

RUFUS (spoken): HEY! I'm standing right here, okay?!
(annoyed)

39

RITA
like them so much, — be - cause these treats you a - dore, —

RUF.
Oh, yes, I like them so much. — (spoken) Oh, you

42

RITA
the rec - i - pe can't be hard — to find, and then we'll make you some

RUF.
BET I adore them!

45

RITA
more. Then we'll make you some more!

RUF.
mf Then we'll make me some more? And then we'll make me some

48

RITA *f* Then we'll make you some more!

RUF. *f* more, then we'll make me some more!

<IMPROVISED DIALOGUE ending in decision to travel to Grandpa/ma's house.>

NARRATOR: Alright – they're going to Grandpa/ma's house.
How should they travel there? By car ... or by bicycle? (*takes vote*)

<Go to 3. *Are We There Yet?*-1>

[1:26]

2a. The Dog Treat

(female voice)

Cheerfully ♩ = 132

RUFUS

PIANO

mf

mf

This is the

5

RUF.

tast-i-est dog — treat, the best that I've ev-er had. — My own-er for

3

9

RUF.

got to hide — them, but I'm aw — f'ly glad. — It has the