Maurice Sendak (1928 – 2012), American writer and illustrator of children's books, b. Brooklyn, N.Y. Largely self-taught, he has been widely acclaimed as the 20th-century's most important children's book artist. His illustrations—beautifully drawn, wildly imaginative and stylistically varied, often emotionally complex, and sometimes controversial—appear in dozens of children's books, beginning with The Wonderful Farm (1951) and including The Sign on Rosie's Door (1960) and Where the Wild Things Are (1963), which he also wrote, as well as In the Night Kitchen (1970), Outside over There (1981), and We Are All in the Dumps with Jack and Guy (1993). From the mid-1980s on, he devoted much of his time to theatrical work, but in 2011 Bumble-Ardy, the first children's picture book written and illustrated by him in 30 years, was published. His lyrical and elegiac My Brother's Book (2013), inspired by his late brother, was published posthumously. Sendak also illustrated a number of adult works, e.g., Melville's Pierre (1995).

The musical productions Sendak designed include Mozart's The Magic Flute, a musical version of Where the Wild Things Are, the Metropolitan Opera's production of Prokofiev's Love for Three Oranges (1985), and the Holocaust-themed A Selection (1999), created with the Pilobolus Dance Theater. Brundibar, a 1938 children's opera by Hans Krása that was originally performed (1943) in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, was directed and designed by Sendak in 2003, with a libretto by Tony Kushner; the two also penned the picture book Brundibar (2003) and then collaborated on a version of Martinů's 1937 opera, Comedy on the Bridge (2005). Sendak also was the artistic director of his own theater company, the Night Kitchen.


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