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SF PERUSALS

THE LAST SUPPER

A MUSICAL ENACTMENT

MUSIC BY

GARY WILLIAM FRIEDMAN

BOOK AND LYRICS BY

THOMAS MITZ

BASED ON AN ORIGINAL CONCEPT BY

ANDY KREY

ARRANGEMENTS AND ORCHESTRATIONS BY

GARY WILLIAM FRIEDMAN

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830
NEW YORK HOLLYWOOD LONDON TORONTO
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(NAME OF PRODUCER)

Presents
(100%)
THE LAST SUPPER
A Musical Enactment

(50%)
Music by
Gary William Friedman

Book and Lyrics by
Thomas Mitz

(25%)
Based on an Original Idea by
Andy Krey

Arrangements and Orchestrations by
Gary William Friedman

When Song Selection appears in Program, an asterisk (*) *must* appear by the song "You Are the Light" to indicate: Lyrics by Thomas Mitz and Stevie Holland.

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The Score (music and lyrics) to *THE LAST SUPPER*
is published by 150 Music.
www.150music.com

CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

THE CHOIR
LEONARDO
THE ANGEL
PETER
PHILIP
BARTHOLOMEW
LITTLE JAMES
MATTHEW
JOHN
MARY
MARTHA
SIMON
THADDEUS
PRIOR
ANDREW
JUDAS
JAMES
THOMAS
JESUS

SETTING

Dinning Hall of the Monastery Santa Maria Delle Grazie, 1497,
and the imagination of Leonardo

PRODUCTION NOTES

THE LAST SUPPER is easy to produce. It is accessible to both professional and amateur performers and church groups in particular. It is not necessary to cast singing actors. The singing is done by a choir and soloists who perform a function similar to a Greek Chorus by expressing the meaning and emotion of the action through song, and the spoken text, primarily monologues, is delivered by actors. The exceptions to this are Jesus, who sings and speaks, and the Angel, a woman who steps out of the choir. The show can be performed in a theater, a church, or in practically any space. The only indispensable prop is the table at which the final tableau takes place. Simple toga-like costumes add much to the production and can be copied from a reproduction of Leonardo's painting. The choir can be dressed in robes, formal wear or simple black. There should be something about the Angel that sets her apart. Ideally, for the representation of the full spectrum of the score, the choir would consist of three sopranos, three altos, three tenors and three baritones but any combination or number of singers will work. If need be, the entire score could be performed by one soloist. A piano is needed; bass and flute parts are also available.

COMPOSER'S INTRODUCTION

Very little of what I'd been doing in the theatre prepared me for the incredibly unique and 'religious' experience I had while working on the composition and subsequent productions of THE LAST SUPPER.

It began on a day in the fall of 1998 when Thomas Mitz called to tell me that he'd been commissioned to write the libretto and lyrics for a show about how Leonardo Da Vinci came to paint the mural depicting Jesus and his disciples at what was to be forever known as *The Last Supper*.

Knowing that I was not a Christian, he asked with some trepidation if I'd be interested in composing the music for the show.

The question I asked myself was: could I, a composer who is Jewish, create music for a production so firmly rooted in an event so deeply meaningful to Christians? I searched my conscience to seek some kind of answer that could enable me to become a part of the endeavor.

I thought that insofar as *The Last Supper* depicted a Passover Seder led by Jesus, who was a Rabbi, it would be in keeping to have the Jesus character sing and speak in Hebrew. This insight somehow gave me the confidence to proceed. I could now be true to Christian history as well as to my Jewish roots.

The theatrical 'modus' of the show is to humanize the Apostles, each of whom comes forward as if right out of the imagination of Leonardo to express his fears and joys at the prospect of devoting his entire life and being to following this Rabbi, a man whom all sense was in imminent danger.

Each (spoken) statement by an Apostle is characterized and commented upon by the Choir which sings in a highly charged emotional and inspirational manner—a kind of hip Greek Chorus.

As the first production in New York got underway, it was apparent that yet another character needed to be introduced and developed—a character who would serve as an inspirational muse for Leonardo. Thus the Angel was "born," and having the luxury of my wife Stevie Holland nearby, I proceeded to create musical numbers around her extraordinary voice and presence.

The climax of the show occurs when Jesus appears at the Passover

table and begins to chant the Hebrew prayer *Sh'ma Yisrael* as well as the Blessing (in Hebrew) over the bread and wine. When He exclaims: "One of you will betray me!," all the Apostles freeze and become a tableau of Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

The Chorus then sings the *Sh'ma* in English translation—that is, The Lord, Our God Is One!...and to a thundering **AMEN** the show ends.

May it go on to inspire, enlighten and entertain forever.

Gary William Friedman

(A basic black stage. PLATFORMS, Stage Left or Stage Right, for CHOIR to stand on. A large WHITE FLAT, 16 feet, along back wall, Center Stage to Stage Right. A TABLE, 14 feet long, in front of WHITE FLAT. Seating (BENCH or STOOLS) for 13 between table and WHITE FLAT.

The CHOIR enters and takes its place on stage.)

SONG: OVERTURE

CHOIR.
TREACHERY!
BETRAYAL!
AND LOVE AND FEAR
AND FAITH AND DOUBT
AND HOPE AND DEEP DESPAIR,
AND SCHEMES AND GREED AND WHAT WE NEED—
ALL THIS WITH YOU WE SHARE.

A MAN WITH MANY GIFTS
ABANDONED HIS IDEAL.
ANOTHER MAN WAS VILIFIED
FOR TRUTHS HE DARED REVEAL.
DESERTED BY HIS FRIENDS HE DIED,
BETRAYED AT THEIR LAST MEAL.

WHERE IS OUR FAITH?
ONCE IT WAS STRONG.
WHERE IS THE LOVE
THAT HELD US TOGETHER SO LONG?
HAS IT LEFT US FOREVER?

WHO WILL DECEIVE?
WHO HAS THEIR PRICE?
WHO RUNS AWAY?
WHO MAKES THE GREAT SACRIFICE?
WILL ANYONE REMEMBER?
SO COME AND JOIN WITH US

AND ENTER IN OUR FOLD.
A FADED PAINTING ON A WALL
HOLDS SECRETS AGES OLD.
SEEK WITHIN AND YOU SHALL FIND
A STORY TO BE TOLD.

(LEONARDO enters. He is a man with long hair, dressed in stylish fifteenth century clothing.)

LEONARDO. I've looked down into the mouth of hell many times. It's always paralyzing. My personal vision of hell is not one of agonized bodies writhing in pain. Satan, that supreme ironist, has made my hell white — a pure field of white — like a blank piece of paper. Or like this wall. *(LEONARDO rises and turns his back to the audience. LIGHTS UP on WHITE FLAT.)* For sheer terror, nothing compares with a blank surface. At one time in my life it spurred me into action, confident of victory. I drew from a bottomless well of inspiration. Today the blank surface sets off a different reaction — fear of failure and humiliation, guilt. It has been ten years since my last painting — a portrait of one of the Duke of Milan's empty-headed paramours. Despite such a negligible subject I created a majestic portrait of breathtaking beauty integrated with a magnificent background combining nature and antiquity, expressing the deepest principles governing the cosmos. Unfortunately, someone pointed out to the socially ambitious beauty that a cracked vase in the painting represented her loss of virtue. She complained to the Duke and the Duke had the entire background painted black. Pearls commissioned by swine. Why bother to paint when a painter is regarded as nothing more than a tradesman? A decorator. Which is precisely why I had left Florence and entered the Duke's service to begin with. Florence — a city overrun with painters — scores of them, begging for commissions by day and filling the taverns by night — dirty, paint splattered — drinking, bragging, back stabbing, whoring — nearly as bad as sculptors. This was Leonardo? Not if I could help it! When I wrote to the Duke of Milan, offering my services, I described myself as an inventor, an engineer, a man capable of making machines of war, casting cannon and creating equestrian statues. Only at the very end did I mention that I was also a painter. Having a gift for painting served me well in the beginning. I was born the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary — not an auspicious beginning. When I was eight years old, I painted a dragon on the door of our house that sent my father running in terror when he came to visit his mistress, my mother, thus proving that art can have a func-

tion. Soon after that I was sent away — apprenticed to the master painter Andrea del Verochio — and it wasn't long before I was painting all but the finishing touches of his commissions. When I was fourteen he let me paint an angel in a major work. I used no model. I could see the angel as clearly as if she were sitting in front of me.

(The ANGEL appears.)

LEONARDO. *(continued)* Even as a boy my mind would formulate wonderful plans — plans that would bring me honor and glory and wealth far beyond those of a painter. I would become so exalted that the disgrace of my birth would be obliterated. And so it seemed to happen. The Duke accepted the offer of my services. Glory was within my reach. I came to court adorned in velvet. I was received with the respect I had longed for. And what happened? Promises, made with the greatest enthusiasm, were never kept. Military designs that inspired awe where never financed, my inventions the subject of ridicule. My function? To play the lute and decorate the garden. So I'm back where I started. I am to paint this dining hall in the Monastery Santa Maria Delle Grazie with a depiction of the Last Supper so the fat monks have something to gaze upon while they stuff their faces. Here is my hell — the white surface — to be faced alone.

SONG: VISIONS

ANGEL.
YOU ARE NEVER ALONE, LEONARDO.

LEONARDO. *(Spoken)* I used to be able to summon inspiration at will.

ANGEL.
WHEN YOUR PROBLEMS ARE GREAT

LEONARDO. I just don't know what to do.

ANGEL.
FIRST YOU MUST ASK,

LEONARDO. Dear God, tell me what to do.

ANGEL.
THEN YOU MUST WAIT.

A VISION CAME TO ME,
A REVERIE OF HARMONY,
A BEAUTY I COULD NEVER
LIVE WITHOUT.

BUT VISIONS FADE AWAY
WITHOUT THE FAITH TO MAKE THEM STAY,
SO QUICKLY DISAPPEARING
INTO DOUBT.

THE WORLD ALL AROUND US
IS MERELY A FAÇADE
THE VISIONS THAT SURROUND US
ARE GLIMPSES OF GOD.

OH VISIONS, COME TO ME,
WITH OPEN EYES LET ME SEE
THE BEAUTY AND THE MEANING
OF LIFE AGAIN.

(LEONARDO has changed gears, his creative mind begins to work. MUSIC UNDERSCORED.)

LEONARDO. A moment frozen in time. The moment at the Last Supper when Jesus tells the disciples, "One of you will betray me." Who were these men? How did they react? It was Passover. One week after Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem when the masses threw palms in his path and welcomed him as the chosen one. Just days earlier he had shocked his disciples by using violence to throw the money changers out of the Temple. Crowds of people listened to him every day and followed him wherever he went. And among those crowds were spies and informers. Jesus wished to spend Passover with his disciples and he gave them instructions to find the secret room for the meal. The disciples must have been overflowing with excitement. For three years they had given up their former lives, their possessions, their families to follow one man. All they owned was faith. They knew the hour of destiny was near. After this Passover meal nothing would ever be the same again. I must try and understand what led each one of them to this table.

CHOIR.
THE WORLD ALL AROUND US
IS MERELY A FAÇADE.
THE VISIONS THAT SURROUND US
ARE GLIMPSES OF GOD.

ANGEL.
OH VISIONS, COME TO ME.
WITH OPEN EYES LET ME SEE
THE BEAUTY AND THE MEANING
OF LIFE AGAIN,
THE BEAUTY AND THE MEANING OF LIFE.

(LIGHTS FADE on LEONARDO as he goes to wing Stage Right. He sits unobtrusively and draws. LIGHTS UP as PETER enters. We see each DISCIPLE enter as he is named by PETER and take his place on stage.)

PETER. I've got two swords hidden under my cloak, two short Roman stabbing swords, double-edged, sharp as a razor. If I knew who the traitor was I'd shove one of them between his ribs right now, even if it were my brother Andrew. But it's not him. I never trusted that Zealot, Simon; he's a political revolutionary at heart. He's for Jesus if he thinks Jesus is for the cause. And Thaddeus was mixed up with that lot too. The Romans could have something on him. Or Matthew, once a tax collector, always a tax collector and he hasn't collected any tax in a long time. On the road to Jerusalem James and his pretty boy brother John were arguing about which one of them would sit on Jesus' right hand. Jesus put them in their place but good, right in front of everybody. John is close to the Master and James has a fool's courage, it could be either one, or both. Bartholomew and his friend Philip deserted John the Baptist for Jesus, who's to say they wouldn't desert Jesus for someone else? Judas gets messages from his family claiming he left them starving and begging for money, and Thomas — never trust a man who thinks too much, especially if you can't understand what he's talking about half the time. And Little James, the small quiet one nobody notices, just biding his time, that's the type you have to look out for. Whoever the traitor is hasn't reckoned on Peter being here, or these swords of mine. I'll never leave his side. Anyone who tries to lay a hand on him is dead. And that goes for anyone who doesn't do the right thing and defend him. Maybe I shouldn't have drunk so much Passover wine — I haven't had wine or meat in a year. No, I'm glad I did. Otherwise I might show mercy

on the traitor. I'm ready.

SONG: STAND LIKE A ROCK

CHOIR.
HOW CAN THIS ANGER STAY LOCKED UP INSIDE?
I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN KEEP IT FROM BREAKING OUT NOW.

SOLO.
HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE ME TO SEE
ANYONE CAN TELL YOU A LIE?
NO MATTER HOW THEY TRY,
OR WHAT THEY GUARANTEE,
YOU NEVER KNOW ON WHOM TO RELY.

CHOIR.
THINK ABOUT A PLAN TO SURVIVE.
FIND MYSELF A WAY TO BE STRONG.
I'M NOT THE ONE WHO'S WRONG.
I'LL KEEP MY PLAN ALIVE
AND FIGHT THEM IF THEY DON'T GO ALONG.

SOLO.
I'LL NEVER BEND.
LIKE A BLOCK
OF SOLID ROCK
I'LL STAND UNTIL THE END.

CHOIR.
I'LL NEVER RUN.
HERE TO STAY,
I WON'T BETRAY
THE WORK THAT I'VE BEGUN.

SOLO.
LOOKS LIKE I WILL HAVE TO ARRANGE
TO SHOW THEM WHAT A ROCK I CAN BE.

CHOIR.
THE PRESSURE'S NOW ON ME
TO TRY AND MAKE A CHANGE,
TO TRY AND TEACH THE BLIND TO SEE.

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