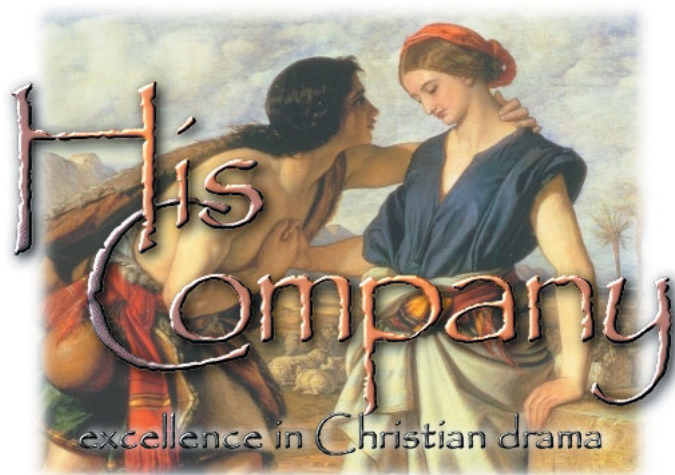


THE CHOICE

A THREE-ACT MUSICAL FOR EASTER

by
David S. Lampel



AUTHOR'S NOTE

The Choice is a variation on our play, *The Essence of His Death*. It is a complete three-act musical that uses some of the same characters and situations as *Essence*.

5 The overall story line differs from *Essence* in the following ways:

- Requires a complete chorus (choir)
- Does not include the Sanhedrin scenes or characters
- Does not include Peter or the "Denial" scene
- Uses songs to progress the story
- All scenes take place in Jerusalem

10

THE SCENES

ACT ONE: A marketplace in Jerusalem

ACT TWO: A marketplace in Jerusalem

15

A quiet garden

Golgotha

ACT THREE: The tomb of Jesus

Jerusalem

THE SONGS

20

The music used is from the choral musical, *The Choice*, by Robert Sterling (WORD/Thomas Nelson, 1993). They were still available as of Spring, 1996. Call 1-800-251-4000; item numbers are:

- Choral Book: ISDN #3010255012
- Cassette Trax: ISDN #3014233608X
- CD Trax: ISDN #3019351588

25

ACT ONE

The Marketplace

Chorus

By Faith

Chorus

30

Could He Be the One?

Sekhti & Dinah

Call Him Messiah

Chorus

Blessed Are They

Jesus (opt.) & Chorus

ACT TWO

35

Here He Comes!

Chorus

Thy Will, Not My Will

Dinah

Crucifixion

Instrumental, with Chorus

Could He Be the One?

Sekhti

40

ACT THREE

Why Do You Seek the Living Among the Dead?

Angel

I Choose Jesus

Sekhti

CHARACTERS

45	Dinah	-	our heroine
	Abigail	-	Dinah's obnoxious friend
	Fruit Seller		
	Sekhti	-	our hero
50	Hotep	-	Sekhti's simple-minded partner
	Jesus		
	Man with Question		
	Disciples	-	non-speaking
	Mary	-	non-speaking
55	Angel	-	non-speaking, but solo
	Mary's Friends	-	non-speaking

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Dinah

60 Our heroine is a pretty young woman in her early twenties (or late teens), bright, fresh, and just a little naive when it comes to the darkness in the world and in others. She carries romance in her heart, but has not yet found the man with whom she cares to share her life. Surely some of that romance has sifted into her interest in this new rabbi, Jesus—the teaching of whom Dinah has just recently been introduced. While she does not yet recognize Jesus as the Messiah, Dinah is excited over His teachings. She has heard him speak only a few times, and then only from a distance, but his words

65 have imbedded themselves deeply in her soft heart.

Vocal requirements: see chart

Size part: large

Sekhti (sek-tee')

70 Sekhti is in his mid- to late-twenties and an energetic purveyor of rare Egyptian essence (the base from which perfumes re made). He travels with his partner, Hotep, seeking to sell what they grow and manufacture themselves. Still unmarried, Sekhti is all business: impatient, penny-pinching and scrupulously dishonest—except when it comes to matters of the heart. He has traveled widely and romanced many, but is still searching for that one, exquisite flower that will bring some color to his rather monochrome existence.

75 Vocal requirements: see chart

Size part: large

Abigail

80 Abigail is an outspoken, obnoxious person whose sole reason for befriending Dinah may be that she can bully her about. She is older than her companion and feels it is her responsibility to create for Dinah the same tough, unfeeling shell that she has created for herself. Abigail has heard and believed nothing but bad news about this new rabbi, Jesus. She hates Him for stirring things up, and wants nothing less than for her city, her nation and herself to be finally rid of Him.

Vocal requirements: none (see chart for options)

Size part: small

85

Hotep (hoe' tep)

Hotep is a bit of a buffoon. Older than Sekhti, he is yet the submissive one, demurring to his more aggressive partner. Hotep is married to Neferma, his lovely but chronically aging spouse left behind in their hometown of Alexandria (where the Nile delta meets the Mediterranean Sea). He is a good-natured fellow who would wish no one harm.

90 Vocal requirements: none

Size part: medium

Jesus

95 Jesus was sent to be God in flesh—to be a person, a brother; He was not constructed of stainless-steel and plastic, and He did not glide through a crowd of people with a halo atop His head and a bland, simpering expression pasted across His face. It takes nothing away from Christ's deity to portray Him as a man.

The Chorus

100 Everyone in the Chorus (the Choir) is a character. Whenever they are on stage, they are people—not uniform stick-figures all in a neat row. Each person has a history, a personality, a reason to exist. They are fathers and mothers, shopkeepers and customers; they share joys and sorrows, anger, pain and relief. In this musical, the Chorus has, essentially recognizing transient patches of gray), three modes in which they operate:

People

105 In this mode, everyone on stage is equal—Chorus members and principals alike. It is used when there is no script dialogue taking place and when the Chorus is singing a choral number. When appropriate, actions and sounds should be normal—much as people would interact with each other on Main Street or in the mall—but contextual: i.e., if it is a quiet moment, everyone is quiet.

Scenery

110 In Scenery mode, Chorus members continue in character, but generally silent and with very small movements that will not distract the audience from the focal point elsewhere on stage. It is used when the principals are conducting scripted dialogue in a busy location, such as the Marketplace.

Frozen

115 Frozen mode is the next incremental step after Scenery mode. When in this mode, Chorus members do not move and do not speak. It is used to suspend time, so that something can take place elsewhere on stage that represents intimate thoughts of which no one else is privy—such as when Dinah and Sekhti sing to each other from opposite ends of the stage.

VOCAL REQUIREMENTS

	Jesus	Dinah	Abigail	Sekhti	Angel	Choir
The Marketplace		Optional	Optional			Chorus
By Faith		Chorus				Chorus
Could He Be the One?		Solo		Solo		
Could He Be the One? (reprise)						Choir Soloist
Call Him Messiah		Chorus				Chorus
Blessed Are They	Beginning					Chorus
Here He Comes!		Chorus				Chorus
Thy Will, Not My Will		Solo				Women
Crucifixion (underscore)		Present	Present	Present		Present
Could He Be the One? (reprise)				Solo		
Why Do You Seek The Living Among the Dead?		Chorus?			Solo	Chorus
I Choose Jesus				Solo		Chorus
I Choose Jesus (reprise)						Chorus

120 **Note: Act/Scene divisions in this script are for the purpose of script organization and rehearsal scheduling; they do not represent how the musical will be organized from the perspective of the audience (e.g., in the printed program).**

ACT ONE / SCENE ONE

125 *The Place: A marketplace in Jerusalem*

The set is a rude collection of permanent stalls, as well as vendors who carry everything with them. One shop deals in woven goods: fabrics for clothing and blankets; one shop sells pottery and/or metal containers: crude water and wine jars, imported brass, etc.; and one shop (near UR) sells fruits and vegetables and some bread. Colorful awnings shade the stalls from the fierce sun. Scattered throughout the crowd of people are individuals selling variations on these and other items. DR is a well or spring from which some women are collecting water in various jars and skin bags.

130



Lights up full.



Full Choir enters in People Mode (see Introduction to this script).

135 *As the lights come up, people are briskly entering the marketplace, bustling about in various small groups and individually: taking their places as shopkeepers, chatting with neighbors, buying, selling. Dinah and Abigail enter—blending in, chatting with the friends they meet. The two local women are here to collect their water and exchange the usual gossip.*

140 *The elder of the two, Abigail, is a strong woman and opinionated. She is a friend to Dinah, but more as a school mistress is friend to her young pupils than as one woman to another. Abigail is a person who thinks little of religion—little, that is, until the comfortable status quo is challenged.*

145 *Dinah is a fresh, naive flower. In her is the innocence of youth and the beauty of a new day. She believes in the good in all people and is bruised by the cynicism and snappish tongue of her friend Abigail (although she is learning how to turn a deaf ear to the rantings of her older friend).*



Cue “The Marketplace”

150 *The crowd returns to their normal activity after the song, After a moment, the noise of the crowd diminishes to silence and their activity diminishes to only small, blocked movements (Scenery Mode); we then are privy to the conversation of Dinah and Abigail.*

Abigail

(arguing with the shopkeeper; holding a bunch of grapes aloft)

155 These are too ripe! How dare you charge so much for rotten fruit!

Dinah

(embarrassed by her friend's attitude and obnoxious tone)

Abigail, please!

Fruit seller

(indignantly)

160 Madam, the grapes are the correct ripeness for your evening meal.

Abigail

(with matching indignation)

Well!

Fruit seller

(with crescendoing sarcasm)

165 Or perhaps you'd like me to stomp on them a little so you can have wine!

Dinah

(taking the grapes from Abigail, handing them back to the shopkeeper, and pulling her friend away from the stall; politely, to the fruit seller)

170 Thank-you. We'll consider your offer.

Abigail

(as they turn away; protesting; to Dinah)

Dinah! What are you doing?

175 *(grinning with greedy delight)*

Just when I had him where I wanted him!

Dinah

(shaking her head)

It's a wonder you have any friends at all.

180 *Dinah, with Abigail following, moves to an "independent" seller of fruit in the crowd (DC) and picks up another bunch of grapes. She stares at them with a slightly transfixed gaze.*

Abigail*(sourly)*

185 I wasn't looking for a friend. Just some grapes—at a good price.

(settling down)

Girl, you'll never learn. How will you ever get along in this world?

Dinah*(with quiet cheerfulness)*

190 Oh, I'm getting along all right.

Abigail*(impatiently)*

What are you staring at?

(grabbing for the grapes)

195 Are there bugs in there?

(to the seller)

We demand a reduced price!

Dinah*(snapping out of it; to the seller)*

200 No, no—they're fine.

(handing a coin to the seller)

I was just remembering something the new rabbi said the other day.

Abigail*(rolling her eyes heavenward)*

205 Not him again.

Dinah and Abigail move D, away from the crowd.

Dinah*(after sampling one of the grapes)*

210 Let's see... what was it? Oh yes, He said, "A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit."

She grins at Abigail, pleased with herself for remembering what Jesus had said, then pops another grape into her mouth.

Abigail listens to this, standing to the side with her mouth hanging slightly open in disbelief.

215

Abigail*(dripping sarcasm; mocking the simplistic wisdom)*

As if from the very lips of Moses.

Dinah*(not acknowledging her friend's sarcasm)*

220 He was speaking of people who aren't what they claim to be: false prophets, fakers. He said we'd know them by their fruit—what they do, what they accomplish.

Abigail*(disgustedly; referring to her irritation with Dinah)*

225 Rotten grapes!

Dinah*(thinking Abigail is commenting on the false prophets)*

A lot of them. You have to be careful these days.

Abigail*(resoundingly)*

230 And just look who's talking. You're sitting there, taking in every piece of rotten fruit this guy's dishing out.

Dinah

235 No!

(struggling to remember what else Jesus said; stumblingly)

He said that any tree that doesn't produce good fruit—well, uh

(frustrated with herself)

240 Oh, I wish I could tell it better. It does sound odd when I tell it—but if you were only there you'd see—and hear—for yourself.

Abigail

Right. I'd see that you're more gullible than even I thought.

(wagging a bony finger at Dinah)

245 I've heard what people are saying; this new rabbi is speaking against everything we know to be right and true.

Dinah

But I believe Him.

Abigail

(incredulous)

250

Dinah! Snap out of it! You're making a fool out of yourself.

Dinah

To my ears, everything He says makes perfect sense.

Abigail

(wryly)

255

I'm a little worried about what's between those two ears. Dinah, how can you so easily exchange centuries of tradition for these scandalous new ideas?

260

A few members of the marketplace crowd are taking an interest in this conversation and moving closer. (These will be the soloists for the upcoming "By Faith.")

Dinah

(after pondering for a moment; not having considered this before)

Are they so new? Maybe these 'new ideas' are simply the next step in our faith.

265

Abigail

Faith?

Dinah

From the time of Abraham, we've been a people who lived by faith.

Abigail

(protesting confidently)

270

But don't include this man—

Dinah

When God told Abraham to leave his home for Canaan, it was a brand new idea. But he had faith—

275



Cue: "By Faith"

Abigail

But—

Dinah

280

(over Intro; gathering steam)

—when Hannah prayed for a son, she prayed by faith, and Samuel was born and given to the Lord.

Everyone (including Dinah) joins in explaining their heritage of faith to Abigail.



285

Let Trax roll through Underscore p56.

ACT ONE / SCENE TWO

As the crowd returns to normal after the song, they quiet down and gravitate toward R, continuing in Scenery Mode.

290 *Sekhiti [sek-tee'] enters at a brisk pace, L: stops, turns, and addresses his partner who is still off-stage.*

Sekhiti and Hotep have come up into Judea, through Bethlehem to Jerusalem, for the Passover. They know there will be many people in the city for the holiday—and they are there to separate some of them from their money. However, they know it will not be easy pickings; the Jews, under Roman domination—and Roman taxes—haven't an abundance of money to spend on perfumes and unguents. The two have a small plot of land in the Egyptian delta where they grow their flowers and produce the essence which is then made into perfume. They travel in an ever-expanding radius to market their wares, for they have not always been the most forthright in their business dealings.

300 *Sekhiti and Hotep are dressed in the simple white, linear attire of the Egyptian peasant. In their bags they carry a fragrant assortment of their product: flower petals, oils and unguents pressed from the blooms, and a small amount of spices for which they have traded on their journey north.*

305 *Sekhiti is the leader of the two by default. He makes the necessary decisions because Hotep will not. He is opinionated and—on occasion—abrasive to those in their company. Hotep, while older than his partner, is quieter, meeker, and more respectful of others.*

Sekhiti

(impatiently)

310 Come along, Hotep! Must you dawdle so!

Enter Hotep [Hoe' tep], reluctantly.

Hotep

(dreamily)

Have you ever seen that flower before? It was beautiful!

315 **Sekhiti**

(coarsely)

We haven't time to stop for every strange flower you trip over. We haven't long before passover.

Hotep

(dismissively)

320 You worry so.

Sekhti

One of us has to.

325

Hotep

Our stock is the finest this season. We'll sell it all the first day—and return to Egypt with our bags filled with gold.

Sekhti

330

If our bags aren't filled with gold, your wife will have you sleeping in the street.

Hotep

(with a sigh)

Ah, Nefer-ma . . . my sweet-smelling rose.

Sekhti

335

(grimacing; aside)

His sweet-smelling rose lost her fragrance years ago.

Hotep

I'm hungry.

Sekhti

340

(impatiently)

Well, what have we got?

Hotep

(digging through his bag, as he moves toward Sekhti)

Running low.

345

(pulling the food out)

But, I can offer you a—

(sniffing)

slightly stale crust of bread

(hands the bread to Sekhti) or— (holding it at arm's length)

350

this ripe fish.

Sekhti

(disgustedly)

Some choice.

355 **Hotep**
(*dead-pan*)

Please. The fish is waiting.

Sekhti
The bread will do. And what am I to wash this down with?

360 *Hotep opens their waterbag, peers inside, then blows into it; dust billows back into his face. He looks at Sekhti apologetically.*

Sekhti
You do a great job of planning a trip, Hotep. Any suggestions?

365 **Hotep**
(*sheepishly*)
There was a stream about half-a-day back...

Sekhti
(*ruefully, staring at his crust of bread*)
I should never have left Alexandria.

370 *Hoping to redeem himself, Hotep looks around, sees the people in the marketplace nearby, then spies the well.*

Hotep
(*happily; relieved*)
There! There's a spring.

375 **Sekhti**
(*glancing in the direction Hotep is pointing; curtly*)
I'm not blind.

The two men cross toward the crowd. Hotep is heading toward the people thinking to slake his thirst; Sekhti, always the businessman, is thinking only of sales. Sekhti halts Hotep, stopping just short of the women.

380 **Sekhti**
(*to Hotep, but obviously to be overheard by the women; grandly*)
Yes, I've heard the same, Hotep. Why, it's common knowledge that there can not be found more friendly, kind, and compassionate women than the blessed ladies of Jerusalem!

385 *Wise to the two merchants, Abigail casts a knowing—and wary—eye toward the two strangers. Meanwhile Dinah, more friendly—and naive—quickly notices their plight and offers Sekhti something to drink.*

Dinah*(friendly)*

390 Please, have some of mine. The water from this spring is very sweet.

Sekhti*(using a trusty line, but suddenly—and quite unexpectedly—smitten by the girl)*

No more sweet than the one offering it.

395 *Abigail rolls her eyes to heaven, but reluctantly offers a drink to Hotep—who noisily guzzles it too quickly.*

Abigail*(impatiently)*

Not so fast. You'll give yourself a belly-ache.

Sekhti*(after drinking and wiping the back of his arm across his mouth)*

400 Ladies—

Abigail*(grimacing; sniffing the air)*

What is that smell?

405 **Dinah**
(sniffing)

Smells like . . . dead fish.

410 *Hotep turns away from the others and checks his breath by blowing into the palm of his hand. Finding nothing offensive there, he realizes it is his hand that smells of fish. He hastily wipes it down his tunic.*

Sekhti*(to Dinah; formally; rummaging through his bag)*

You've been so kind. Allow me to repay your kindness with a small gift.

Abigail*(warning Dinah as she leans away from Sekhti)*

415 Watch it, Dinah! You can't trust an Egyptian. The desert affects their brain.

420

Sekhti*(with grimacing diplomacy)*

Madam, my partner and I are from the delta region, an area rich and fertile.

(he pulls from his bag a tiny vial and hands it to Dinah)

425

Sweet essence, from one flower to another.

There are actually two scenes taking place simultaneously— one between Sekhti and Dinah, and one between Hotep and Abigail. Sekhti is clearly interested in a sale as he proffers a sample to Dinah; but he is also interested in her. Are his attentions purely opportunistic, or is he falling for the girl?

430

Meanwhile Hotep is having to deal with the crusty Abigail. As much in defense as to make a sale, he launches into their prepared sales pitch.

Hotep*(a memorized speech)*

435

The river Nile brings its life-giving silt and leaves it on our land—where we grow beautiful flowers which we turn into the sweet-smelling essence before you now.

Sekhti*(picking up the sales pitch, but becoming visibly smitten with Dinah)*

A fragile and exquisite blossom is crushed to extract the oils

440

(distracted by the pretty Dinah; his gaze caught by hers)

that will turn your soft skin . . . into a palette . . . of loveliness—

Abigail*(to Hotep; harshly; breaking into the quiet moment between Dinah and Sekhti)*

Well, what else have you got?

445

Sekhti and Hotep distribute samples to each woman—and to some of the other people who have been drawn toward them. As they sample the fragrance there are oohs and ahs all around. But one by one, even though the olfactory response has been favorable, each person hands the sample back to the Egyptians. While the two Egyptians try to sell something to those in the gathered crowd, Abigail turns to Dinah.

450

Abigail*(disgustedly)*

That's what I hate about Passover.

Dinah*(distracted; watching Sekhti)*

455

Uh, what'd you say?

Abigail*(gathering her things to leave)*

Passover. Draws all the riff-raff into the city. They prey on us like vultures.

Dinah*(still distracted by watching Sekhti)*

460

Yes, of course. Vultures.

Abigail, seeing that her friend is somewhere else and temporarily incommunicado, puts Dinah's belongings into her hand and begins leading her away. Out of the corner of his eye, Sekhti spies the two women leaving. Not wanting to lose contact with Dinah so soon, he camouflages his true intentions with talk of commerce.

465

Sekhti*(chasing after them)*

But ladies, you didn't buy anything!

Abigail*(coarsely)*

470

Go sell to the Romans. They're the only ones with money.

Abigail leads Dinah away from Sekhti, but loses contact with her in a small crowd of people. Abigail continues out (exiting) while Dinah lingers in the marketplace, her eyes on Sekhti. Meanwhile, Hotep rejoins Sekhti.

475

Hotep*(pulling at Sekhti's arm; pouting slightly)*

These people are just shoppers, Sekhti. Let's go back to that other market we passed coming into town.

Sekhti*(distracted; staring at Dinah)*

480

Yes, of course. The other market.

Sekhti permits Hotep to pull him away from Dinah, but keeps his gaze fixed on her. Most of the marketplace crowd drifts away, UC, UL & UR, leaving small clearings around Dinah and Sekhti.

485

Ⓔ

Crossfade stage lights to area lights (or follow spots) on Dinah and Sekhti.

☆

Choir in Frozen Mode.

490

Everyone on stage—except Dinah and Sekhti—freeze. Lights remain up on the two, who are on opposite sides of the stage. They sing their respective verses to the song while gazing upon each other from across the stage.



Cue: “Could He Be The One?”

Trax continue to roll after song for Underscore, p25.

495

ACT ONE / SCENE THREE

Ⓔ

As song decrescendos near end, slowly fadeout on Dinah and Sekhti—hitting black just at cutoff, Stage lights slowly up to full as Underscore plays.

500

Sekhti exits in blackout. Dinah remains in place.

☆

Choir in People Mode.

As stage lights come back up, the crowd is re-animated. General commotion and market activity resumes. Enter Jesus with a few of His disciples.

505

Jesus moves through the marketplace much as any other person: laughing with people, slapping friends on the back, stopping to chat with shopkeepers, etc. However, Jesus has developed a following because of His teaching. People do recognize Him as a well-known rabbi, so they begin gravitating toward Him.

510

After the lights return to full, Dinah pauses (as if transfixed) in the midst of the melee, still thinking about Sekhti. But when Jesus enters she snaps out of it, and moves toward Him along with everyone else.

Ⓔ

Cue “Could He Be the One?” reprise, p29. Trax continue to roll for “Call Him Messiah.”

515

Ⓔ

With Trax, crossfade full stage to isolated soloist.

☆

Choir in Frozen Mode.

As lights down on stage, crowd freezes during song (Frozen Mode). Soloist from Chorus sings while gazing upon Jesus from across the stage.

520

Ⓔ

As Trax transition to “Call Him Messiah,” lights crossfade from isolated soloist to up full entire stage.

☆

525

Choir in People Mode.

As lights come back up, crowd re-animates and begins singing.

530 *Dinah and the crowd sing “Call Him Messiah” while Jesus mostly listens to what they are singing. At p34 on m37, Jesus and the crowd begin moving toward DL, where Jesus will teach. The crowd remains standing through the end of the song; then after the cutoff, quiets down, some jostling for good spots, many sitting before the seated Jesus.*

ACT ONE / SCENE FOUR

535 ☆

Choir in a quiet People Mode.

Jesus

(conversationally)

When the Son of Man returns,

540

(gesturing to where he has sat down)

He'll take His seat on His throne.

(gesturing around the crowd)

And all the nations will be assembled around Him. Then He'll separate them from each other—just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the

545

goats. He'll put the sheep on His right and the goats on His left.

☹

Cue “Blessed Are They”

Jesus

(without pause)

550

Then the King will say to the sheep on the right, “Come, blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom I’ve prepared for you.”

Man #1

(seriously wanting an answer, but with a bemused chuckle)

Teacher, then tell us how we may be sheep—and not goats.

555

Jesus smiles at the man and ponders how best to answer. Deciding, He sings His reply.

m8: In reply to the man, Jesus sings this first phrase as a solo.

☹

Take out Jesus’ mic after bottom p41 (m27).

560

m14: If not earlier, all people join here.

m28: Jesus stops singing, allowing the people to carry the message themselves; He looks on, pleased that they have understood His words.

565

m45: Jesus stands and moves through the crowd toward the exit, making His personal

good-byes to a few; as He passes through, the people begin standing, slowly moving after Him, and finally bidding Him farewell as He exits opposite; at this point the crowd is spread out across the stage.

570 *m66: Everyone turns out (toward audience), maybe even taking a step forward on beat 1 of m68.*

m84: Everyone begins slowly exiting as the song diminishes, leaving only sufficient number on stage to finish the song, then they exit.

575 ☆

The entire choir has exited by the end of “Blessed Are They.” As each member exits, he or she should take position for “Here He Comes!” (2/1)

Act One / Scene Five

580 *Dinah (who has been in the middle of the crowd approximately DC) remains behind as everyone else exits.*



At cutoff to “Blessed Are They” prepare CD Trax for “Here He Comes!” but do not play.

585

Dinah

(introspectively; with gathering excitement)

He is. He is the one! Abigail said Jesus spoke against everything right and true. But, I never heard truth until today. I heard it in His words—I saw it in His eyes. He is the one.

590

(as she exits)

Jesus is the one!

Dinah exits.



As Dinah exits, lights go to black.

595



Cue second half of (taped) Underscore p59 after lights down.

While Underscore plays, all Chorus personnel quickly take backstage positions for their “Here He Comes!” entrance.

600

End of Act One

ACT TWO / SCENE ONE

Place: the Jerusalem Marketplace

605 ☹

Cue: “Here He Comes!”

☆

Full choir enters excitedly and quickly (in character!) on downbeat (People Mode).

♫

610

At tympani, (beat 3) all lights immediately up full.

Crowd (including Dinah) enters from all entrances—including from behind audience—with great excitement and energy. As they reach the stage, they mill about expectantly, facing and pointing toward the audience, going silent—but not freezing—at dialogue.

615 ☆

Choir in a silent People Mode.

Sekhti and Hotep enter, ignorant of the occasion, but caught up, nonetheless, in the excitement.

620

Sekhti

(calling to Dinah from a distance, then going quickly to her)

Dinah! Dinah! What’s going on!

Dinah

He’s coming!

625

Sekhti

Who?

Dinah

The Lord, silly. Jesus is coming.

Sekhti

630

But why all this?

Dinah

He’s our King—our Messiah!

Hotep*(peering into the distance)*

635 A king? All I see is someone riding a colt.

Dinah*(happily)*

That's Him!

640 *Dinah joins the Chorus in singing their anticipation of Jesus' entrance. Sekhti is excited and shares in their joy, but does not sing along; he is more a spectator than participant, but remains by Dinah's side. From time to time he glances at Dinah, watching and admiring her.*

645 *Hotep does not join in, more a distracted spectator, drifting off into the crowd after a few moments.*

8

At p70, m47, beat 3, houselights up.

650 *As the Chorus sings the final "Hosanna" group p70, m47, Jesus, with some of His disciples, enters from behind the audience and moves down one of the aisles toward the people on stage.*

As song diminishes, Jesus continues out—exiting UR—taking most of the people with Him.

☆

655 **All but a few members of the choir exit with, and following after, Jesus and His disciples. Those remaining silently mill about UR—in Scenery Mode—occupying themselves with conversation or business not related to scene being played out DC.**

ACT TWO / SCENE TWO

660

Dinah*(pulling on Sekhti; as music fades out)*

Come on. Let's go with Him.

Sekhti starts to go with Dinah, but Hotep returns and stops him.

665

Hotep

Sekhti, where are you going?

Momentarily befuddled, Sekhti looks back and forth between Dinah and Hotep with his mouth hanging open.

670

Dinah*(friendly)*

Hotep, come with us to hear Jesus speak.

Sekhti*(to Hotep; not really wanting him along)*

Sure, why not?

675

Hotep*(becoming exasperated)*

I'll tell you why not.

*(jingling his small purse;**there is the sound of only two small coins knocking together)*

680

We're coming up short on this trip—and my wife will be taking it out of my hide.

Sekhti*(grinning; making fun of Hotep's earlier remark)*

Ah, Neferma.

685

*(pointedly)*She's your rose, Hotep.*Sekhti turns to leave with Dinah, but Hotep grabs him again.*

690

Hotep*(about as angry and frustrated as Hotep ever gets)*

You mean we're going back empty-handed because you want to go listen to this Jewish teacher?

695

*Sekhti quickly grabs Hotep and steers him to the side, away from Dinah.***Sekhti***(confidentially)*

700

Listen, my simple-minded partner: Maybe you've got a wife to go home to, but I don't. We'll have plenty of time to sell our inventory. I don't care about this Jesus—but I do care about the one who does.

(glancing back, smiling and gesturing to Dinah; Dinah smiles back sweetly)

And I think I'll make better time if you weren't along.

705

Sekhti returns to Dinah and they exit together UR, leaving Hotep alone on stage, staring after them.

☆

The remaining members of the choir exit UR with Dinah and Sekhti. The entire choir is now off-stage, and will not return en masse until the crucifixion scene (2/5; approximately 15 minutes).

710

ACT TWO / SCENE THREE

Hotep heaves a loud sigh, and turns to exit opposite—just as Abigail enters, out of breath.

Abigail

(referring to Dinah and Sekhti; demandingly)

715

Where are they off to?

Hotep stares blankly at Abigail—remembering the face, but not quite placing the woman.

Abigail

(holding him by the shoulders; shouting into his ear)

I say, where are they off to?!

720

Hotep

(now he remembers)

Oh, Abigail—Dinah's friend.

Abigail

(sarcastically)

725

Always on top of things.

(beat)

I've been chasing her all morning. Where'd they go?

Hotep

Just to hear that teacher, Jesus.

730

(scratching his head)

It was the funniest thing. He came in here . . . all the people . . .

Abigail

(stopping him with an uplifted hand)

Don't strain anything. Now listen carefully: If I miss them again you have

735

to tell Dinah. Tell her to stay away from that man.

Hotep

Sekhti?

Abigail

No, you twit. Jesus.

740

(confidentially)

Word's out that the council is plotting against Him. I don't want Dinah getting caught in any trap they lay for Him.

(as she exits in the same direction as Dinah and Sekhti)

Tell her to stay away from Him.

745

Hotep watches Abigail leave, then turns to exit opposite.

Hotep*(rehearsing; mumbling to himself as he exits)*

Tell her to lay awake for . . . No. Tell her to stay away from, uh . . .

(with a grand gesture; loudly)

750

They're setting a nap—a lap . . . No. A trap—they're setting a trap. Uh . . .

Hotep exits.

⏸

Lights go to black.

⏸

755

Cue (taped) Underscore, p59—stop at m12, bottom of page—as soon as stage is dark.(Note: This same Underscore will be used again on script page 40, before scene 3/1.)

SET CHANGE FROM MARKETPLACE TO GENERIC EXTERIOR.

760

ACT TWO / SCENE FOUR

☆

765

A small group of women from the choir (no more than 9 or 10) take positions on stage in two or three clusters UR, C and UL—in Scenery Mode. They remain here throughout the scene with an attitude of silent conversation within each group—not necessarily frozen into place like statues, but doing nothing that would detract from scene between Dinah and Sekhti. These women join singing with Dinah at p91, m22.

Ⓐ

770

Lights up ½ DC as soon as Dinah is in place.

775

Dinah is seated C on a rude bench. She is quietly weeping. Several hours earlier Dinah was drawn to the garden of Gethsemane by rumors of the impending arrest of Jesus. She arrived just as the soldiers were leading Him back into the city. On the fringes of the crowd that had gathered, Dinah stared in disbelief that such a thing could happen. Her beloved Jesus—arrested! What would they do to Him? She could guess—but couldn't bear to think of such a fate for this one who had so recently become Her Savior.

780

Enter Sekhti. The events of the last few days have had a profound impact on the Egyptian. Normally one to come into an area, conduct what business he can, then leave quickly—Sekhti has been fascinated by the turbulent events that have transpired around him. Surprising even himself, he has taken to roaming the city, listening to the conversations of shopkeepers, women drawing their water, and gossip and rumors flying about the temple area. Such rumor has brought him to this garden.

SEKHTI

785

*(surprised, but happy to see her again;
cautiously: he still doesn't know her very well)*

Dinah! Why are you here?

(moving closer; discovers that she has been crying)

You've been crying.

DINAH

790

(with a curious blend of sorrow and anger)

There was little else I could do.

Sekhti

(jumping to conclusions)

Have you been hurt?

795

(posturing protectively)

Who did it?

Dinah*(quieting Sekhti; with a little irritation)*

Nothing like that.

800

Sekhti*(settling down; thoroughly confused)*

Boy, now this.

Dinah

What do you mean?

805

Sekhti

I've been to Jerusalem several times before, but I've never seen things so mixed up as this. Just the other day everyone was so happy—the entire city was celebrating. Now, suddenly, the city's filled with tension, everyone irritable—

810

(petulantly)

no sales—and now I find you here, like this.

Dinah*(quietly, but firmly—as if to convince herself this isn't just a dream)*

They've arrested Jesus.

815

Sekhti*(initially failing to recall the name)*

Jesus.

(the light dawns)

Oh, your teacher friend. The one the celebration was for.

820

(seriously)

Why?

Dinah*(bitter sarcasm creeping into her voice)*

You'd have to ask the ones who arrested Him.

825

SEKHTI*(innocently)*

Couldn't anyone stop it?

DINAH

(sharply; with bitterness; as if Sekhti should have known better)

830 The ones who could have stopped it were the ones arresting Him.

(pause; frustrated)

Oh, why? Why such a gentle man—a good man . . .

SEKHTI

(a little too glib)

835 Oh, they're usually the first to go.

DINAH

Well, aren't you the smart one!

SEKHTI

(suddenly sorry he said it)

840 I didn't mean it like that.

DINAH

(becoming almost hysterical)

Jesus is more! He isn't just a good man. The world's full of good men.

(bitter; angry)

845 And the world's full of bad men—who have to destroy the things they don't understand.

SEKHTI

(trying to calm her)

Why are so many interested in Jesus?

850 *(honestly wanting to know)*

What makes him so special?

DINAH

(after thinking a moment; quieting down)

Have you ever looked down into a baby's face?

855 *(enjoying the pleasant imagery)*

They smile at you with such deep, black eyes . . . why, you almost fall right into them. And they look up at you with such open trust and love. There's nothing held back. What you see in their face—their eyes—is what's in their heart.

860 *(looking directly at Sekhti)*

I don't know if I can tell you about Jesus.

(turning away; slipping back into her weeping)

I don't know if I can tell you about my Lord . . .

SEKHTI

865 *(compassionately, yet eager)*

Please try.

(hesitantly touching her to comfort)

I really do want to know.

(confidently)

870 Tell me, how did you meet him?

DINAH

(regaining her composure)

I've known Him only a short while, you know.

(pause, recalling their first meeting)

875 He was speaking—on a hillside just outside the city. At first, I was attracted by the way people were listening to Jesus. There was no fidgeting. Everyone was silent—clinging to every word. Then I really looked at Jesus. I was still a good distance from him, but even then I saw in his eyes something that attracted me.

880 *(blushing in response to the curious look from Sekhti)*

Oh, not like that. Not as a man. How can I explain? It was as if seeing his face, I was suddenly reminded of all the things I'd ever searched for—and now had found. All the happiness—the peace—that had been missing from my life I found in his face.

885 **SEKHTI**

(innocently)

They say there was the same countenance about our late king, the great Rameses . . .

890

Dinah*(irritated)*

I'm not talking about charisma. Jesus is not just some politician who can sway a crowd.

895

SEKHTI*(now irritated himself)*

You keep getting angry with me! I have no basis for understanding this person! How am I to know who he is—without knowing who he is not? Messiah! Messiah! That's all I hear! Half the people worship this man because they say He's God come down as man—and the other half hates him because he says he is and they don't believe! Which is he?

900

DINAH*(firmly)*

He is God!

905

SEKHTI

Well, the closest I have to that is Pharaoh. Since Caesar, Egypt hasn't had it's own king. But when we did,

(with awe)

he was a god. He was Son of the Sun! Lord of the Two Lands! A god among us.

910

DINAH*(skeptically)*

And you believe that?

SEKHTI*(shrugging)*

That's what the priests tell us—and from childhood we're taught to believe what the priests tell us.

915

DINAH

We too are taught to believe the priests. But our priests don't believe Jesus. They say he's a fraud and a blasphemer.

920

SEKHTI*(patiently)*

Dinah, I don't know your people or their ways.

925

(with a gentle smile)

I don't even know you that well. And although I've seen Him around you, I've never really met this man Jesus. But He's left his mark on you, and I suddenly find myself wanting to hear more . . .

DINAH*(getting up, moving about)*

930

I'm only a simple woman. There's so much about Jesus I don't understand. There's mystery in some of the words he speaks—

(chuckling)

but since He's mystified our scribes, I'll not feel badly that I'm confused.

935

In the short time I've known him, Jesus has touched my heart more than my mind. His words fill me with peace . . .

(soberly)

and just a bit of sadness. And a hunger to hear more.

SEKHTI

940

He sounds like a great teacher.

DINAH*(bemused)*

Teacher. Since when have you heard a "teacher" speak to God as his Father?

945

SEKHTI

Our teachers and priests in Egypt speak to the gods all the time! And they address them as children to a parent.

DINAH

Yes, but when did you last hear that parent reply?

950

SEKHTI*(chuckling)*

Never underestimate the sorcery of an Egyptian Priest.

DINAH*(angered)*

955 Sorcery!

(regaining her composure)

960 Sekhti, you believe what you wish. I can only tell you what I've seen and heard. It was just a few days ago when Jesus was speaking to His disciples and a small company of Greeks. As always, the moment he began speaking a crowd gathered. I hurried to hear his words. Since that first day, I found myself being drawn closer to him—being drawn away from...

(searching for the words)

965 from my old life, my old friends. Their companionship had become something brittle and uncomfortable. They had a most unkind response to my new life. So, I spent my time with my new friend: Jesus.

(smiling at Sekhti)

And I felt no loss.

(soberly)

970 He was very serious this day, troubled, with an intensity that was almost frightening. In a very strong voice he said, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified!"

(excitedly)

975 Sekhti, how can I tell you that more than the words he spoke, it was the authority with which he spoke them that astounded us?! He spoke them as one with all authority before men. I know it sounds absurd, but I heard the authority of God in his voice. He stood, and with those penetrating eyes he looked at each one of us—I swear he looked right at me—me! He said, "If anyone wishes to serve me, let him follow me; then where I am, my servant also will be. And if anyone does choose to serve me, the

980 Father will honor him."

SEKHTI*(simply)*

Serve him how?

985

DINAH*(caught off-guard)*

Uh, I'm not really sure.

SEKHTI

Bring his meals? Carry his water? Run errands for him?

990

DINAH*(after a moment's thought)*

There's another level of serving—and there's a love that transcends any earthly love.

(pause)

995

I've always dreamed of my marriage and how I'd love my husband with all my heart. But that love pales against the love I feel for Jesus.

SEKHTI*(not wanting to make her sad again, but reminding her nonetheless)*

But Dinah, he's just been arrested.

1000

DINAH*(wearily)*

Oh, how can we know.

(pause)

1005

That same day, while he was speaking with us, one of his disciples—the one called Simon Peter—asked Jesus a question. From where I was I couldn't hear what was asked—but suddenly Jesus stood, and with a most peculiar look on his face, said: "And what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?'" He looked at us all, and I could feel the agony in his soul. You could see it in his eyes. Such pain. Such love. Then he said: ☹️ "It is for this very reason I came to this hour." And tonight . . . Here, in this garden . . .

1010

Dinah finishes this line with a distant expression on her face as she—with this retelling—reaches a deeper understanding of Jesus' purpose.

☹️

1015

Cue "Thy Will Not My Will"

☆

Women on stage join with Dinah. They remain in place until lights go to black at end of scene.

1020

SEKHTI*(after song; incredulous)*

He came to die?

1025

DINAH*(smiling)*

Yes. I see it now.

SEKHTI*(failing to understand)*

I'm lost.

1030

DINAH*(taking Sekhti by the arm)*

Lost. That's it, Sekhti. You are lost. We all are—until we believe that Jesus is dying for us.

SEKHTI

1035

But why should he die for me? He doesn't even know me!

DINAH*(effervescent, her eyes sparkling)*

But he does! He always has.

SEKHTI

1040

(drawing closer; blurting out as he looks into her eyes)

I love you, Dinah!

DINAH*(caught by surprise)*

What?

1045

(almost giggling)

What are you—

SEKHTI*(gathering courage)*

1050 I'm saying I love you.

(as Dinah tries to speak)

Don't say it. I already know it's crazy. I can't explain it. I've never been so twisted up inside like I am now.

(moving away)

1055 The first time I saw you . . .

(looking at her)

You are so pretty. But then you started telling me about Jesus. I don't know why, but somehow that made you all the more beautiful—beautiful inside.

1060 *(drawing closer)*

Dinah, I've fallen in love with you.

(surprised himself)

And I think I'm falling in love—with Jesus.

8

1065 **Lights begin to fade slowly to black.****DINAH***(looking deeply into Sekhti's eyes before speaking; maturely)*

Yes. I think you are.

1070 *They exit as soon as lights go to black.*

9

Cue Underscore, p94, when lights go to black.

☆

Women on stage exit when lights go to black.

1075

ACT TWO / SCENE FIVE

Note: This entire scene (during the Crucifixion Underscore) is performed in mime—acting out behavior and emotions without the spoken word.

1080 ☹️

Cue “Crucifixion” Underscore; let Trax continue to roll for “Could He Be The One?” reprise, p103.

🕯️

Lights up ¾.

1085 ☆

Choir members begin entering in assigned order and attitude, in silent People Mode. In the stage directions below, the Choir or Chorus members are referred to as a group as “The Crowd.”

1090

Note: The procession (imagined, but described by those on-stage) comes from the left wall of the auditorium, about 10:00 from DC, and passes over the heads of the audience. Jesus is crucified (the focal point for everyone on stage) in the center of the auditorium, just over the heads of the audience. The Chorus—as well as the principal actors—should rehearse following this “procession” in a synchronized manner. The procession stops and Jesus arrives at the point of His crucifixion on p99, m19, beat 1.

1095

p98

m2-m10

Dinah, Sekhti and Abigail enter in great agitation—continuing an argument begun earlier. Abigail is trying to get Dinah away from Jesus. She has heard a lot of rumors, the town is in an uproar, and she knows that there is great danger for anyone aligning themselves with this man. The urgency of the moment is seen in the dark intensity of her argument and in her face.

1100

Dinah is responding with equal emotion—not understanding why Abigail hates Jesus so much. Why can’t she see who He really is?

1105

Sekhti is mostly supportive of and trying to calm Dinah—certainly taking her side against Abigail. He is the one who is cognizant of goings-on around the trio: the rush of people, the heightening emotions and disquiet.

The Crowd is generally agitated—expressing unrest and confusion, rather than any specific anger toward Jesus and/or the soldiers.

1110

m11-m16

Sekhti interrupts the womens’ argument to point out that there is a procession approaching. He points L (about 10:00) over the heads of the audience.

1115

Dinah and Abigail stop their arguing and turn in that direction. What they see is the solemn march of Roman soldiers leading three condemned prisoners. One of the prisoners struggling under the load of His crossbeam is the bloody and badly scarred Jesus.

Dinah reacts with surprise heavily laced with horror. She can’t believe that Abigail was right: the Romans at the behest of the Jewish rulers are going to execute her Savior. But

- 1120 *why? What has He done to deserve this?*
Abigail is initially mildly surprised that indeed her information had been correct. But quickly her surprise melts into smug satisfaction. She never liked this man and the ways he was stirring things up. Now she and the rest of Israel will be rid of him at last.
- 1125 *The Crowd begins to betray its various factions: Some are as horrified as Dinah, not believing that this could be happening to Jesus; some are not pleased that the Romans are treating any of their people this way and have a visible disdain for the soldiers; others are overjoyed that this troublesome Jesus will finally be removed from their lives.*
- p99**
- 1130 *m17-m20*
Dinah's horror increases, spreading across her face—until, at m19, beat 1, she crumples to her knees, her face buried in her hands.
Sekhti stands beside her in mute confusion. He has witnessed nothing about this man that would call for this brutal punishment. He recalls not only what he has seen with his own eyes, but the deep love with which Dinah has described Jesus. Why would the Jews be doing this to such a man—and one of their own?
- 1135 *Abigail, spying another friend in the crowd (one of like mind), leaves Dinah and Sekhti.*
- m21-m28*
- 1140 *Dinah jerks her head up at the first sound of the hammer striking (m21, beat 3), glaring straight ahead at her suffering Lord. Her face is an anguished mask mirroring the torment He must be experiencing. As the spikes are driven into His flesh, her body sags and a deep sadness washes over her face.*
Sekhti stays where he is, beside Dinah, but turns his face away from the scene repelled by this horrible method of death.
- 1145 *As the spikes are driven home, the various groups of the Crowd cease their activity/conversation one by one, and turn D to face the sight of the crucifixion. As choreographed by the Director, each person in each group turns D, staring at the cross with a glazed expression; each person is motionless, silent, overwhelmed with a sense of “what have we done?” By p100, m36, every person on stage will be staring forward, motionless, and remain there until m42.*
- 1150
- m28*
- 1155 *Dinah looks up to Sekhti—for comfort, for solace, for an explanation—a reason for these events.*
Sekhti has no explanation, but he can comfort as best he can.
- p100**
- m36-43*
- 1160 *Mary, the mother of Jesus, and two women with her, push their way forward, DC, from out of the Chorus, standing apart from Dinah and Sekhti. At first, Mary cannot work up the courage to look into the eyes of her suffering son, but finally, at m39, she does—slowly lifting her gaze from the ground, over the blood spattered rocks holding His cross in place, up past His pierced feet, His twisted limbs, His heaving chest gasping for breath—until her eyes meet His and Mother and Son have silent communion that no one else could understand.*
- 1165 *The three stand, transfixed, until Mary can take no more and, around m43 collapses into*

the arms of one of her friends. They lead her away, all the while glancing back over their shoulders.

1170 *(While the three women are DC, Dinah and Sekhti turn their attention to them.)*

m49

1175 *At the dramatic suspension before m50, Dinah's eyes widen as she hears Jesus speak His last. During m50-51, her horror deepens, fear spreads through her body, she clasps her hands to her head as if it is suddenly splitting open. Then as the music climaxes at m52, beat 1, she lets loose with a piercing scream.*

1180 *Sekhti experiences the horror of Jesus' death, but in a more subdued way. He does not yet feel anything in his heart for this man; his connection with Jesus is still tied to his affection for Dinah. But at this moment of His death, something snaps in Sekhti's mind. He suddenly puts some of the pieces together and realizes that this has been no ordinary death. Jesus was no ordinary troublemaker being quickly put of the way. Whatever He is—whether He is truly God, as Dinah says, or just an important teacher, as some others say—Jesus is certainly no ordinary person.*

1185 *The Crowd generally mirrors the reactions of Dinah, but in a more subdued way.*

m52-end

1190 *At Dinah's scream, general panic ensues and everyone in the Crowd makes every effort to leave the premises as quickly as possible. (These exits will be choreographed by the Director.)*

Sekhti kneels beside Dinah, takes her in his arms to comfort her and shield her from the crowd that is seemingly out of control.

1195 *Dinah accepts his comforting and protective attentions, but cannot pry her eyes from the cross and her lifeless Savior. Dinah has not forgotten her wise conclusion in the garden, when she suddenly realized that Jesus must die to accomplish the task for which He was sent. Her faith—her trust in Jesus as the Messiah—has not wavered; she has just been overwhelmed by the sight of Jesus suffering so horribly and dying with such finality. Even though in her heart she knows this is not the end but a fulfillment of everything Jesus was, her temporal logic is having a difficult time seeing anything more than just a dead, crucified, man.*

1200 *While the stage empties of everyone else, Dinah and Sekhti huddle together.*

At the cutoff of the music—but as the thunder continues—Sekhti looks back up at the cross. He stands, slowly, gazing almost peacefully at Jesus.

Ⓐ

Bring down all stage lights except for area lights for Dinah and Sekhti, DC.

1205



Cue “Could He Be the One?” reprise, p103.

Sekhti sings.

1210



Area light(s) slowly fade to black as song diminishes.

Dinah and Sekhti exit in the darkness.

1215

End of Act Two

ACT THREE / SCENE ONE

1220

Place: The Tomb
Set stage for Tomb, DR.



When stage is set, cue Underscore, p59 (cassette).

1225



At m9, beat 1 of Underscore, bring up all stage lights to ¼ or ½.

1230

Enter Dinah and the two women who had previously accompanied Mary, the mother of Jesus. They are on their way to the tomb to further anoint the body. They move across the stage in an almost skulking manner, heavily cowled, not speaking to one another.



As the women approach the tomb, cue “Why Do You Seek the Living Among the Dead?” (which begins with tympani and thunder).

1235

At the sound of thunder, the women collapse and cower to the ground, trembling with fear.
As the women are doing this (and drawing the attention of the audience), the angel appears in front of the tomb.

1240



At p107, m14, bring area light up slowly on angel to ½ (no higher!).

As the angel sings, the women lift up their heads and slowly rise to their feet—all the while holding on to each other.

1245



At p108, second time through, the Choir begins sifting in from UL and DL, (in People Mode), as those who have heard the report and have come to investigate that it is really true. Choir ends up roughly scattered across the stage.
Choir sings p109, m34 (including Dinah and two women).

1250



At p112, m56, beat 1, Choir spreads apart and faces audience.

⌚

At p112, m58, beat 1, kick all lights up full!

1255

⌚

After cutoff, lights go quickly to black.

☆

1260

Choir exits quickly and quietly.

Return set to pre-Tomb state.

⌚

Once Sekhti is in place, Cue Underscore, p118.

1265

ACT THREE / SCENE TWO

Sekhti enters in the darkness and positions himself UC.

1270 8

Lights up ½ on Sekhti UC.

1275

Sekhti is deep in thought. The events of this week have been a perplexing mix of joys and agony. The crucifixion of Jesus—not to mention the supernatural resurrection—has had a troubling impact on him. What is he to do with this Man who calls Himself God? The very concept of giving himself over to the teachings of this man is foreign, to say the least. But that’s precisely what he feels like doing. Why?

As the theme repeats in the underscore (m2, beat 3), Sekhti speaks.

1280

SEKHTI

(to God)

I don’t know what to say to you! My heart’s saying things without words. Do you speak Egyptian? Well, this is all very new to me. I never expected this. I came here to sell—not to buy.

(resoundingly)

1285

I came here for profit.

(surprised; realizing what he has just said)

I came here with my purse empty, and You filled my heart. But I’m not sure I want you there. My life was easier before—I moved from place to place, I didn’t care about . . . about . . .

1290

(not wanting to say the word “people” out loud; long pause; with sad resignation)

Why did you bring her into my life.

(angry; clenched)

1295

I didn’t want to love just yet. ☹️ I didn’t want to have to choose between one woman or another. And I didn’t want to have to choose only one God over the many I’ve known. But I can’t ignore Jesus. He holds onto me, and I don’t know what to do about it.

Sekhti sings.

☹️

Cue “I Choose Jesus”

1300

Dinah enters with the Chorus, but moves off to DL to listen to Sekhti. She does not sing along.

☆

1305

As Sekhti begins singing second verse (p123, m37), Choir begins drifting in from off-stage (in character!), listening to what Sekhti is singing, focusing their attention on him. At p125, m48 they join singing.

♫

At p126, m53, kick lights up to full!

ACT THREE / SCENE THREE

1310 ☆

After any audience reaction, Chorus settles back into loose groupings. Those closest to dialogue focus their attention on the actors.

1315

Dinah moves toward Sekhti. Just before she reaches him, Sekhti notices Dinah and steps toward her.

SEKHTI

(surprised to see her; happily)

Dinah!

Dinah crosses to meet Sekhti about C; they embrace.

1320

SEKHTI

Are there words for this feeling?

DINAH

No.

SEKHTI

(exuberantly)

1325

I didn't think so.

(moving away; with gathering excitement)

But something inside me wants to break out! And every time it tries, it catches in my throat, like—

1330

(turning toward Dinah)

—like wanting to tell someone how you feel about them, and by the time the words get from your brain to your mouth, they just sound foolish.

DINAH

1335

I know that feeling. It's the excitement Jesus puts into your heart. It's the joy of it all—the need to tell others about him.

SEKHTI

(shaking his head)

Too many changes. How can I tell others of something still so new to me?

DINAH

1340 Just live your life, Sekhti. But live it as one who has seen the Christ!
Remember, a few of us have been with Him. We've seen Him, heard His
voice—looked into His eyes. A few of us—even you.

SEKHTI

1345 I came here looking to fill my bag with gold. I'm leaving with my heart
filled with a gift from a stranger.

DINAH

Jesus is no longer a stranger.

SEKHTI

And I'm no longer the person I was.

1350 *(happily—expecting to stay)*
I don't want to leave—I can't.

DINAH

(gently; not wishing to hurt him)
There's no life for you here.

1355 **SEKHTI**

(surprised that she doesn't want him to stay)
And there's no life without you.

DINAH

Take the person you are now back to Egypt. Share the gift with them.

1360 **SEKHTI**

(firmly)
Not without you.

DINAH

I can't go.

1365 **SEKHTI**

But I thought . . . I mean, weren't you paying attention last night?

DINAH

You know it would never work.

SEKHTI*(quickly serious)*

1370 No, I don't know that.

DINAH

We've shared something special—something I'll never have with anyone else.

1375

SEKHTI*(with sarcastic petulance)*

Next you'll say you think of me as a brother.

DINAH

I'm not saying that.

1380

Enter Hotep carrying all their bags.

Hotep*(shouting to Sekhti)*

I thought I'd find you here.

1385

Dinah, wishing to break the direction of their conversation, takes the opportunity to move away from Sekhti—opposite Hotep's entrance.

SEKHTI*(distracted, needing to reply to Hotep, but not wanting to lose Dinah; to Hotep)*

I told you to wait for me.

Hotep*(with a bemused smirk)*

1390

Well, I thought you might have found a distraction, so, uh . . .

(gesturing off-stage, back to Egypt)

how about it?

SEKHTI*(as Dinah moves further away; to Dinah)*

1395

Dinah, wait!

(to Hotep)

You wait, too.

(going to Dinah; after a pause)

1400

There has to be more.

DINAH

I don't want this, either.

(firmly)

But it's the way it has to be.

1405

SEKHTI

But why? Am I to lose you on the day I find my Lord? I love you, Dinah.

How can that be wrong?

DINAH

(tenderly)

1410

Love is never wrong. But our love has become entangled with our love for the Savior. Tell me you can tell them apart.

SEKHTI

Why must they be divided?

DINAH

1415

One of us has to come first. Can you choose?

SEKHTI

(trying, wanting to answer 'yes', but realizing that he can't)

No.

DINAH

1420

Neither can I.

(compassionately)

There may come a day, but right now my love is too young—for both of you.

(she goes to him)

1425

Sekhti, we both have a new master. He'll tell us when it's right.

As much as it hurts, Sekhti knows Dinah is right. He heaves a sigh of resignation and takes her into his arms. They cling to each other for a moment, then:

SEKHTI

(gazing into her eyes)

1430

I'll be back.

DINAH

In my heart, you will have never left.

1435

They embrace again, tenderly, yet with restrained passion. Then they slowly draw apart, their eyes still in an embrace. Dinah says nothing, as Sekhti moves away, but gives him a reassuring smile.

SEKHTI

(whispering)

I'll be back.

1440

Dinah turns away and exits through the crowd of people while Sekhti watches her leave with sad resignation. Meanwhile, Hotep moves toward Sekhti, struggling under their cumbersome belongings.

Hotep

(babbling as he drapes Sekhti's various belongings on his shoulders, arms)

1445

Boy, you sure had me going there. Thought I'd have to go back by myself.

Well,

(chuckling)

you've always been a ladies man. It's happened before—it'll happen again. Anyway, just in time: the caravan's leaving for Alexandria. We've got to—

1450

Sekhti

(stopping Hotep by placing a firm hand on his shoulder)

Hotep, do you think Neferma has been missing you?

Hotep

1455

Oh, she always misses me . . . why, just the other day she said, "Hotep—"

Sekhti

(with exaggerated patience)

Well, that'll be very convenient, since I think on the next trip you'll be staying home.

1460

Hotep

(happily)

Really?

(suddenly suspicious)

Really?

1465 **Sekhti**
(brightly)
 Really! These trips are becoming much too strenuous for you. I think it's time we opened up a shop in Alexandria, don't you think? You and your wife could run it when I have to come back to Jerusalem.

1470 **Hotep**
 You're coming back?

Sekhti
(seriously)
 Count on it.

1475 *(with his arm around Hotep; as they exit)*
 Meanwhile, let me tell you about Jesus.

Hotep
 Who?
They exit.

1480 ☹️ **As Sekhti and Hotep exit, cue "I Choose Jesus" reprise, p130.**

☆ **Choir spreads out across entire stage and sings.**

1485 🕯️ **After reprise, lights down full stage; leave lights up DC.**
Pastor steps onto stage and addresses audience.

🕯️ **At the end of Pastor's remarks, stage lights up full,**

1490 ☹️ **As lights up full, cue "I Choose Jesus" reprise again, p130.**

🕯️ **During final reprise, houselights up slowly to full.**

END OF ACT THREE

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