



PENTATONE

TRACK
INFORMATION

PERSONAL
STATEMENTS

ABOUT
ESTHER

THOMAS DE
HARTMANN

SYNOPSIS

LIBRETTO

ACKNOWLEDGE-
MENTS

A detailed oil painting of a woman with long, wavy, reddish-brown hair. She is wearing a yellow, sleeveless dress and a crown adorned with blue gemstones. Her jewelry includes a long necklace with blue and red beads and a large, ornate pendant. She is seated, with her right hand resting on a dark wooden chair. The background features two large, terracotta pots containing plants with yellow flowers. The overall style is expressive and classical, with warm, golden light.

De Hartmann Esther • The Lost Opera

CORINNE WINTERS

KIRILL KARABITS • BOURNEMOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Thomas de Hartmann (1884-1956)
Esther
The lost opera

Based on Jean Racine's play of the same name, as adapted by Thomas de Hartmann

World premiere recording of Esther (1946), Op. 76 (duration: 01:55:47)

Disc 1
Act I - Scene 1

1	Chantre/Chœur - Déplorable Sion, qu'a tu fait de ta gloire ?	3. 55
2	Esther/Élise - Est-ce toi, chère Élise ?	4. 17
3	Esther - Peut-être on t'a conté la fameuse disgrâce	2. 26
4	Esther - De mes faibles attraits le roi parut frappé	2. 20
5	Esther - Hélas ! durant ces jours de joie et de festins	1. 41
6	Élise/Esther/Chœur des femmes - N'avez-vous point au roi confié vos ennuis ?	4. 36
7	Chœur des femmes - Quand verrai-je, ô Sion !	4. 01

Act I Scene 2

8	Mardochée/Esther/Élise/Chœur des femmes - O reine infortunée !	5. 08
9	Mardochée - Laissez les pleurs, Esther	1. 29
10	Esther/Mardochée - Hélas ! ignorez-vous quelles sévères lois	2. 55
11	Esther - Allez : que tous les Juifs dans Suse répandus	0. 51
12	Esther - O mon souverain roi	3. 29

Act II Scene 1

13	Chœur - Adonāi	2. 39
14	Hydaspe/Aman - Venez. Partout ailleurs on pourrait nous entendre	4. 03
15	Aman - Dans les mains des Persans jeune enfant apporté	2. 11
16	Hydaspe/Aman - Vous serez de sa vue affranchi dans dix jours	3. 57

Act II Scene 2

17	Assuérus/Asaph/Hydaspe - Ainsi donc, sans cet avis fidèle	4. 50
18	Aman - O Seigneur	3. 05
19	Assuérus - Je vois, que la sagesse elle-même t'inspire	2. 17
20	Esther/Assuérus - Seigneur, je n'ai jamais contemplé qu'avec crainte	3. 35
21	Esther/Assuérus - O bonté qui m'assure autant qu'elle m'honore !	4. 00
22	Chœur/Chantre - Dieu d'Israël	4. 01
23	Orchestral interlude	2. 10

Total playing time Disc 1: 73. 45

Disc 2
Act III Scene 1

1	Danse Scythe	1. 42
2	Danse Hellenique	4. 32
3	Danse Assyrienne	5. 20
4	Danse Parthe	3. 41
5	Assuérus/Esther/Aman - Oui, vos moindres discours ont des grâces	2. 46

6	Esther/Aman/Assuérus - Esther, Seigneur, eut un Juif pour son père	6. 08
7	Esther - Notre ennemi cruel devant nous se déclare	3. 10
8	Assuérus/Esther/Aman - Mardochée?	2. 20
9	Assuérus/Esther - Mortel chéri du ciel	1. 30

Act III Scene 2

10	Chœur - Dieu fait triompher l'innocence	4. 34
11	Chœur - Réjouis-toi, Sion, et sors de la poussière	1. 52
12	Esther/Élise/Mardochée/Assuérus/Chœur - Réjouis-toi, Sion	1. 47
13	Mardochée/Esther/Élise/Assuérus - Que le Seigneur est bon !	1. 11
14	Esther/Élise/Mardochée/Assuérus/Chœur - Que son Nom soit bén	1. 22

Total playing time Disc 2: 42. 02

Corinne Winters, soprano
Yuriy Yurchuk, baritone
Andrew Foster-Williams, baritone
Bernard Richter, tenor
Olga Bezsmertna, soprano
Edwin Crossley-Mercer, bass/baritone
Paul Appleby, tenor

Esther
Assuérus
Mardochée
Aman
Élise
Hydaspe/Asaph
Chantre

The Grange Festival Chorus - William Vann, chorus master

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
Kirill Karabits, conductor

Producer's statement

It has been a dream of mine for quite some years that *Esther*, de Hartmann's largest and most ambitious work, be brought to the stage and also recorded. Notwithstanding that, I clearly and repeatedly "decided" that *Esther* could not be part of the plan I had formulated to fund and record the majority of de Hartmann's orchestral works. I had concluded the opera would be too expensive and improbable for me to realize. I had neither the resources, the connections or expertise. But, *Esther* kept pulling me, calling out- "please don't forget me- I am needed and I must be heard." So, looking back, I can say now that I didn't "choose" to produce *Esther*, but rather that *Esther* (or some other unseen force) chose me.

It was after the invasion of Ukraine in 2022 that the imperative became more insistent. *Esther* was inspired by de Hartmann's spontaneous need to make a statement

about the threatened extinction of the Jews in the 1940s. However, the opera's themes generalize to any threatened group or people. Ukrainian statehood and identity had come under threat, and anti-semitism and authoritarianism were on the rise globally. The modern day relevance of *Esther* was palpable.

But, why was *Esther* even in my consciousness? In 1976, Olga de Hartmann, the composer's widow, organized a concert performance with a college orchestra, chorus, and guest soloists. Olga had the concert recorded, and produced a private double LP, which I had listened to over the years. Although the recording's audio quality was poorly balanced, and the orchestra/chorus were not of a professional standard, the soloists were convincing, especially the excellent lead soprano, Christine Flasch. Looking past the recording's limitations, the music itself kept working on me. Something about it (including the vision of the work) embodied



a specific unique quality, difficult to name, and yet entirely accessible. While it didn't fit into any obvious style or category, it became clear that *Esther* deserved to be heard properly and preserved.

Eventually, succumbing to *Esther's* plea, I decided to fundraise, albeit with angst and trepidation, as this was unusual and uncomfortable for me. This activity consumed much of a year, and initially there was little response. So I came very close to abandoning the initiative. But, at a certain critical moment a handful of most welcomed and impactful pledges came through from some good friends, mostly long time former colleagues. With this momentum, other friends and family members joined in. I couldn't be more grateful for those initial donors who partnered with me early on. They know who they are.

My initial efforts to have *Esther* performed and recorded in the US were promising, but

they didn't coalesce. Advised to research German opera companies, I connected with a German friend, violinist Jacqueline Lambart, who became enthusiastic about the *Esther* project, generously provided good advice, and in time joined the de Hartmann Project team.

Nothing would have moved forward without the interest, advocacy, and participation of Maestro Kirill Karabits, who I had previously collaborated with on Hartmann's music. He became intrigued by the project, and strongly advised that the first step was not to seek a performance, but to produce a high quality recording, which would set the stage for future performances. We both agreed that the best option would be to record with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, which he led for fifteen years as Music Director. The orchestra administration (led by Dougie Scarfe and Heather Duncan), having great confidence in Kirill, reviewed and signed on to the project, created

a budget and found recording dates. They lined up the excellent sound producer/engineering team, and also reached out to William Vann, chorus master of the Grange Festival Chorus.

Top level vocal soloists were needed, and at the recommendation of Pentatone, we contracted with Renaud Loranger, an experienced expert in the field. Renaud led our collaborative casting team, which also included Kirill, Jacqueline, and myself. Casting work proceeded for more than half a year. The lead soprano role of *Esther* was quite challenging to cast, given the demanding requirements of the score. We are blessed that Renaud identified and connected with Corinne Winters, who embraced the challenge with her typical courage and enthusiasm, and the results are undeniable. The rest of the wonderful cast all exceeded expectations. Particular mention goes to Andrew Foster-Williams who filled in at the very last moment when another baritone unexpectedly became

unavailable. And, what a job he did. It was thrilling to witness Maestro Karabits lead the terrific Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra during the sessions.

So, with gratitude and humility, *Esther*, de Hartmann's lost and hidden treasure, is offered to the world now and for posterity. We look forward to future live concerts and fully staged performances. This recording is dedicated to Thomas de Hartmann who never got the chance to hear or see his brilliant work performed, and to Olga de Hartmann, who worked tirelessly so that the composer and his work would not be forgotten.

Efrem Marder
Executive Producer
thomasdehartmannproject.com





Bringing Esther to life through its world premiere recording has been an immensely rewarding journey. Working mainly with the handwritten score over the past year, my focus during the preparation was centered on ensuring the highest possible quality of the future performing material—a long but fascinating process that required an in-depth study of the composer’s manuscript, as well as a close analysis of his orchestral writing and stylistic language. This work, which essentially amounted to creating a new modern edition of the piece, would not have been possible without the invaluable involvement of Tom Daly, heir to the de Hartmann archive.

Esther is a unique work that blends elements of opera and oratorio, enriching the 20th-century repertoire. Composers like Strauss, Zemlinsky, Honegger, Poulenc, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky share a similar space with Thomas de Hartmann in this genre. The storytelling in the piece is happening mainly through monologues of

the main characters and commentaries from the chorus with the triumphant final full ensemble scene.

Stylistically, Esther offers an interesting and unique mixture of elements of the composer’s style that crystallised through his life and journey: born in the territory of modern Ukraine, educated in Saint Petersburg, de Hartmann’s early works reflect the obvious influences of Rimsky-Korsakov, Taneyev, and Arensky, as heard in his early ballet “La Fleurette Rouge,” which brought him first success and recognition. Over time, his quest for innovation led him to a distinct, unique style. His years in Munich, studying with Felix Mottl and collaborating with Wassily Kandinsky, and later his time in France and involvement with George Gurdjieff, profoundly shaped his musical style and writing. Through these experiences, de Hartmann’s music became a medium for profound emotional expression, a tool for self-exploration and intimate spiritual reflection. Esther, one of

his later works, encapsulates these influences and stands as a kind of credo for the composer, reflecting on a message of peace, justice and humanity.

In 2018, in collaboration with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, we launched the “Voices from the East” series, aiming to showcase lesser-known symphonic masterpieces from Eastern Europe. Esther, along with other de Hartmann still undiscovered repertoire, which was introduced to me by the Thomas de Hartmann Project was a revelation, and it became one of the central focuses of my repertoire and ongoing exploration.

Kirill Karabits



© Mark Allan

When I was asked to create the role of Esther, I knew very little about the Persian Jewish queen, and nothing at all about Thomas de Hartmann and his music. As I learned more about Esther's story, and the composer's life as a Ukrainian expat, spiritual seeker, and musician living through the Second World War, I understood why he was so inspired by this heroine and her deeply human, yet superhuman, nature: an unshakeable inner strength, arising not from force, but from disarming vulnerability — even in the face of hate.

← The piece is both contemplative and urgent, keeping the listeners (as well as the performers) on their toes. Thomas de Hartmann's orchestration is lush and vibrant, with flavors of Debussy, Ravel, Strauss, and Korngold, combined with modal harmonies and traditional Jewish melodies to create a completely unique sound world. As a woman with Ukrainian Jewish roots, I'm thrilled to take part in a project which has such personal significance for me, and to share this rediscovered work which, despite being written in 1946, is so poignantly relevant today.

Corinne Winters





← ...It is going to be a great hit. *Esther* is such a masterpiece AND bears a huge quantity of musical information—the beauty of the sounds..

Edwin Crossley-Mercer

...It's contemporary but very melodic. You can hear Strauss moments, and the final chorus is- wow- it's like Verdi or something, it's huge, it's big...

Olga Bezsmertna

...the music is rich and dense and has this depth to it so that even though I sing for a very short time I think it is very expressive and to me very emotional. The text is something like a prayer which in the context of the piece is very easy to understand and approach.

Paul Appleby

I think it's wonderful that at the end of this piece there is actually a happy ending... and given where the composer was in his own life at the time, I think it's even more relevant today- we can see that these situations of conflict could, would, and should be resolved in a way that brings hope to us- we need that more than anything.

Andrew Foster-Williams

...[de Hartmann] wanted to impose a challenge- in that way we have to trust ourselves. He wants us, not to destroy our voice, but to find the limit...

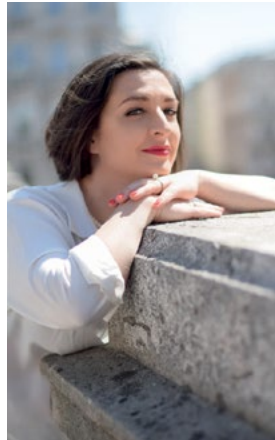
Bernard Richter

→ ...The musical style is incredible. A lot of the tunes, and also the absence of tunes- puts you on your toes, when it needs to. You can tell it's a high quality product which he spent quite a bit of thought to put together- it works in unexpected ways at times and then sometimes gives you the harmonic resolution you are looking for... Audiences are going to be in for a treat.

Yuriy Yurchuk



Edwin Crossley-Mercer
© Julien Benhamou



Olga Bezsmertna
© Sergey Kovbasyuk and Svitlana Buder



Paul Appleby
© Jonathan Tichler



Andrew Foster-Williams
© Paul Foster-Williams



Bernard Richter
© Kiran West



Yuriy Yurchuk
© Inna Kostukovsky





About Esther

The story of Esther in the Hebrew Bible recounts how an orphaned Jewish girl, raised by her uncle or guardian Mordecai, came to marry Ahasuerus, a Persian king of the Achaemenid dynasty, and how, as queen, she was able to reverse a decree issued by the king's chief minister to annihilate all the Jews in the Empire. Commemorated during the Feast of Purim, this story affirms the courage, piety, and devotion of Esther, memorializes the diasporic experience and survival against the threat of extinction, and celebrates an overturning of the established order.

The origins of de Hartmann's opera *Esther* can be traced to the Second World War, when Thomas and Olga de Hartmann were living in Garches, just outside of Paris. They had moved there in 1938 after living in Courbevoise, also in the Paris suburbs, for almost a decade following their departure from the residence they

had established with the mystic George Gurdjieff and others at the Prieuré des Basses Loges in Fontainebleau. Their hilltop home in Garches was taken amid the Nazi occupation of France to establish an anti-aircraft battery, so Thomas and Olga took their piano and some furniture and moved into a deserted home nearby, where Thomas de Hartmann continued composing orchestral and chamber works.

While getting settled in the new home, de Hartmann discovered in the henhouse of their new home's garden an eighteenth-century leather-bound, gilded copy of the plays of Jean Racine (1639-1699) and started reading the first play in the volume: Racine's *Esther*. "Suddenly," de Hartmann recorded in his memoir, "it struck me: Oh, the time which we are living through, is it not the time of Purim (the biblical episode of Esther and Mordecai)? I began to be enticed to write a musical tragedy on the text of Racine." Mindful of Hitler's desire to annihilate the Jewish race, Thomas de

Hartmann identified "peace and justice" as themes guiding his composing of *Esther*. In a radio interview in 1976, Olga de Hartmann reflected: "Esther is a symbol and an inspiration for everyone who is trying to save the world from the terror, which threatens to engulf...all Europe."

De Hartmann's source then for *Esther* is not the Hebrew Bible's account, but instead Racine's soberly religious play, grounded in the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint) and apocryphal Additions. At the request of the royal governess and subsequent secret wife of Louis XIV, Madame de Maintenon (1635-1719), Jean Racine completed his three-act Biblical play *Esther* in 1689 during the reign of Louis XIV, describing it as a "tragedy pulled from Holy Scripture." Highlighting the "subject of piety and morality" and emphasizing Esther's purity and virtue over her beauty, Racine's *Esther* was first performed at a school for girls, the Maison Royale de Saint-Louis at



1950 de Hartmann composing at Frank Lloyd Wright's home in Taliesin, Arizona (Score of *Esther* in the foreground)

Saint-Cyr, not far from Versailles, with choral interludes by Jean-Baptiste Moreau (1656-1733). Racine's play opens with a prologue delivered by Piety and overall deviates from the Book of Esther in several ways, including trimming the account of Ahasuerus's first wife Vashti and her banishment for disobedience, as well as the massacre of the persecutors at the end of the story. Musical interpretations of the Esther story preceding de Hartmann's, whether modeled



Esther and Ahasuerus

by Gortzius Geldorp (1612)

Courtesy of the Leiden Collection

on Racine's play or not, include the first English-language oratorio George Frederic Handel's *Esther* (1718, revised 1732), Józef Kozłowski's 1816 opera, Reynaldo Hahn's incidental music for an 1898 production of Racine's play produced by Sarah Bernhardt, and Darius Milhaud's opéra-bouffe *Esther de Carpentras*, composed in 1925-26 on a libretto by Armand Lunel and premiered at the Paris Opéra-Comique in 1938.

De Hartmann's libretto draws directly from Racine's text, setting only a third of the play's lines by cutting entire scenes and several choral passages, compressing monologues, abbreviating dialogue, and in a few cases re-ordering lines. Following Racine's model, de Hartmann calls his opera a "musical tragedy." The action is set at the royal palace in the Persian capital of Susa during the period of the Jews' Babylonian Exile. Together with a mixed chorus and dancers, de Hartmann calls for an orchestra of winds, brass, strings, percussion, piano, celesta, harp, guitar,

and organ. Seven singers form the cast of this opera: Esther (a dramatic soprano), Élise (soprano), Aman (tenor), the Cantor (tenor), Mardochée (baritone), King Assuérus (baritone), Hydapse (baritone). Three characters in Racine's play are cut entirely or drastically reduced by de Hartmann: Aman's wife (Zarès), one of Esther's attendants (Thamar), and the role of Asaph, a palace officer, who has only two lines in one scene of de Hartmann's version. In addition to a series of numbers resembling formal arias, a wide range of vocal styles is included, from *parlando* or "recitando" (as marked by de Hartmann) to expressive, lyrical writing that recalls older operatic styles. Whether for the opera's Persian setting, the libretto's references to Jewish identity, or dances reflecting other regional ethnicities, flashes of an exoticist style are invoked regularly through instrumentation, rhapsodic gestures, or modal inflections in the harmony, as elsewhere in de Hartmann's orchestral music.



Act I of de Hartmann's opera follows Racine's plan almost exactly with little to no cuts and few moves. As the opera opens, a momentary orchestral introduction is followed by a lament on the loss of Zion ("Déplorable Sion") sung by the chorus, drawing on lines sung by daughters of Zion visiting Esther in the second scene of Racine's play. The first scene opens in Esther's palace chamber with Esther and her childhood companion Élise, who is visiting Esther after believing she had disappeared and died six months earlier. Esther recounts how she came to marry Assuérus by the guidance of her guardian Mardochee and become the Persian queen, singing the aria "De mes faibles attraits" as she relates winning the king's heart while also secretly lamenting the ruined state of Jerusalem and its Temple ("Hélas! durant ces jours"). Esther explains to Élise that the king does not know she is Jewish ("Le Roi... ignore qui je suis"). A group of Jewish maidens are invited to join them in the chamber to

sing a song mourning the loss of Zion ("Ô rives du Jourdain!"), which is intoned by solo saxophone and features an extended trio for two flutes and clarinet. Mardochee then enters to deliver the calamitous edict declared by Aman, the king's chief minister, to exterminate from the Persian Empire the Jewish people ("Au sanguinaire Aman nous sommes tous livrés"). He urges Esther to go to her husband Assuérus and plead for the lives of Jews ("Laissez les pleurs, Esther"), but she expresses fear that she, like others, is a subject of the king and cannot approach him unless called ("Hélas! Ignorez-vous quelles sévères lois"). Enraged, Mardochee claims that her destiny as queen is to save His people ("sauver son peuple") and that God allowed Aman's criminal insolence ("l'audace criminelle") to test her zeal ("éprouver votre zèle"). After resolving to place herself as a sacrifice for her people, an English horn solo introduces Esther's prayerful aria "Ô mon souverain Roi" to conclude Act I, as she seeks the courage to

and correct words to convince her husband the king to reverse the violent edict.

De Hartmann opens Act II with an agitated chorus singing "Adonai, ah, Adonai," taking inspiration from Racine's Act I conclusion of choral pleas dreading the approaching persecution and begging for God's intervention. The second act's action opens in the king's throne room with Hydaspes confiding in Aman that the king has been kept awake by a nightmare concerning threats on his life. Aman reveals to Hydaspes the motive behind his declaring the execution edict, which takes effect in ten days: Mardochee's insolent refusal to bow down before him, a wealthy and powerful noble, second only to the king himself ("Ah! Que ce temps est long à mon impatience!"). His impatience leads to Aman and Hydaspes considering an attempt to kill Mardochee sooner. In the next scene, the king Assuérus has learned during his sleepless study of court records that Mardochee had saved him from an

assassination plot, and that he is Jewish. Seeking advice on how to best honor a loyal subject, Assuérus asks for the counsel of Aman, who is convinced the question concerns an honor to be given him. Aman therefore proposes a royal treatment ("O Seigneur, vous voulez d'un Sujet reconnaître le zèle"), so Assuérus informs Aman to give these honors to Mardochee ("Je vois que la Sagesse elle-même t'inspire."). Esther arrives, approaching the king in fear—even fainting in Racine's version—to his initial alarm until he recognizes her and reassures her with the clemency of his golden scepter then with loving praise ("Croyez-moi, chère Esther"). Esther broaches the request to end her present woe and make her the happiest of queens ("Ô bonté, qui m'assure) and states she will break her silence, if she can first arrange a banquet for Assuérus, which Aman must attend ("Permettez avant tout qu'Esther puisse à table"). Assuérus consents and Act II ends with a soloist leading the chorus, invoking the God of



Israel to “blow away this blight,” “to allay the prophet’s grief,” and “take away the veil” (“Dieu d’Israël, dissipe enfin cette ombre”).

For Act III, de Hartmann cut the first three scenes from Racine’s third act. In their place, de Hartmann opens with four orchestral dances, each representing ethnicities of the women brought from across the Persian Empire as possible brides for Assuérus following his first wife’s banishment: Scythian, Greek, Assyrian, and Parthian. De Hartmann explained in a letter to organist Jack Herman Ossewaarde that he did not turn to “folklore themes,” but instead sought “to find in the contemporary dances of ancient peoples an inspiration for something new.” The action opens with Assuérus, Esther, and Aman in the palace gardens at Esther’s banquet, as Assuérus asks Esther to finally explain what is troubling her. Esther reveals her Jewish origins and sings three extended speeches, recounting the destruction of the

Temple and Jewish exile (“Ces Juifs, dont vous voulez délivrer la Nature”), exposing Aman’s treachery (“Notre Ennemi cruel”), and defending Mardochee (“Il restait seul de notre famille”). Speaking, Aman pleads for mercy from Esther, to which she replies, “Va, traître, laisse-moi” [“Go, traitor, leave me], and Assuérus delivers one line to end his life as the guards take him away. Mardochee, “chéri du Ciel” [beloved of Heaven], arrives and is honored by Assuérus with Aman’s position as chief minister. A stirring orchestral passage leads to Esther’s final lines: “O God, by what strange ways unknown to man/Thy wisdom weaves its everlasting plan!” The scenery is then transformed into a Temple of Justice and Peace and the concluding, joy-filled chorus of thanksgiving to God for delivering the nation serves as the tragedy’s apotheosis.

Often writing by candlelight through the many power outages of the war, de Hartmann began composing this three-

act opera in the early 1940s, completing the score in 1946 in Garches then finishing the orchestration after Thomas and Olga had moved to New York City in 1951. In New York, Patrica Neway (1919-2012), a soprano and New York City Opera company regular, prepared an English translation of the opera and attempted to organize a performance of selections. Orchestral excerpts from *Esther* were performed numerous times in the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S. and Europe.

De Hartmann extracted the four dances from Act III of *Esther*, sharing them with conductors Leopold Stokowski (1882-1977) and Nikolai Malko (1883-1961), who programmed them in performances in Houston, Dallas, Chicago, Copenhagen, England, and elsewhere. Ann Holmes, writing for the *Houston Chronicle* in 1955 about Stokowski’s inaugural season at the helm of the Houston Symphony Orchestra and his premiering of new works, praised de Hartmann’s dances for their “brilliance of color and unconventional sounds,” singling

out the “pentatonic sounds that issue from the woodwinds in the Assyrian dances and the strumming violists serenading like guitarists. Exotic and ceremonial, they cast a gentle spell of their own.” The conductor Nikolai Malko remarked that de Hartmann achieved a masterful “unity of construction” and was unafraid of “simplicity and laconism,” capable of evading “sameness or falling of interest” amid repetitions in the dances. Two decades after Thomas de Hartmann’s death in 1956, an abridged, English-language concert performance of *Esther* was arranged in 1976 by Olga in Syracuse, New York, performed by the Oswego College Orchestra and Chorus, led by Robert Henry, and featuring Christine Flasch in the role of Esther. At Olga’s direction, this performance was recorded and released as a private label, double LP.

Evan A. MacCarthy

*Visiting Associate Professor of Music History
University of Massachusetts Amherst*

The Life and Music of Thomas de Hartmann

Thomas Alexandrovich de Hartmann (1884-1956) was born on his family's estate outside of Khoruzhivka, Ukraine. From the age of 11 he studied composition with Anton Arensky, teacher of Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev and Scriabin, and later with Sergei Taneyev, a master of counterpoint and advisor to Tchaikovsky. By the age of 15 his music was published by the Jurgenson Edition in Moscow. An accomplished pianist, he studied with Annette Essipova-Leschetzky, who also taught Prokofiev and Scriabin. He graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory when he was 18.

In 1907 he was catapulted to fame in Russia with the performance of his ballet *La Fleurette Rouge*, with Nijinsky, Fokine, Pavlova and Karsavina in the cast. It was staged numerous times in St. Petersburg and Moscow before the outbreak of World War I. In 1908 he went to Munich, where he

met his lifelong friend, the painter Wassily Kandinsky, and joined the avant-garde in art and music. He was an original member of the *Blaue Reiter* Group.

In 1916 de Hartmann met his spiritual teacher, Georges Ivanovitch Gurdjieff (1877-1949) in St. Petersburg. With the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, they fled with a small band of followers across the Caucasus. Eventually they settled in Fontainebleau, outside of Paris, where Gurdjieff set up his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man in 1922. In an unusual collaboration they composed a large body of sacred music from the East, mostly for piano.

In 1929 de Hartmann left Gurdjieff's Institute and moved to the outskirts of Paris. He had already begun writing film scores while still with Gurdjieff in 1928, and this work now supported him financially through 1935.



1911 Munich - Wassily Kandinsky, seated; Thomas de Hartmann, far right; also pictured, left to right: Maria Marc, Franz Marc, Bernhard Koehler, Heinrich Campendonk



1911 Thomas and Olga de Hartmann



Portrait of **George Ivanovich Gurdjieff**



The years from 1934 marked de Hartmann's most productive period. He composed many large works for solo piano, voice, chamber ensemble and orchestra, including 7 concerti, 4 symphonies, suites, ballets, and an opera. By the late 1940s he was well known in France and Belgium, where many leading musicians performed his music, including Paul Tortelier and Pablo Casals, cellists; Jean-Pierre Rampal and Marcel Moyse, flutists; Alexander Schneider, violinist; and the conductors Eugene Bigot, Serge Koussevitzky. He developed a strong friendship with Pablo Casals, who played and promoted his work at the Prades Festival.

He moved to the United States in 1950, where his last works were composed in the modernist idiom. He established relations with the conductor Leopold Stokowski and a few other influential musicians, but his health was failing and he struggled for recognition. He died suddenly from a heart attack in Princeton, NJ on March 28, 1956,

weeks before he was to give a recital of his own compositions at New York's Town Hall.

De Hartmann's earliest music reflects the Romantic taste of the Russian aristocracy, and also of his teacher Anton Arensky. It is reminiscent of Chopin, Schumann and Mussorgsky. *Trois Morceaux Op. 4* and the *Six Pieces Op. 7* for solo piano, as well as the *3 Romances Op. 5* for soprano and piano showcase the precocity of the young composer, still in his teens. They were published in 1899 and 1902.

In the first decade of the 20th century new influences came into de Hartmann's writing. Already in the *3 Preludes (Op. 11, ~1908)* he was experimenting with Impressionism, rapidly changing rhythmic meter, and unusual harmonic structure. The success with his ballet *La Fleurette Rouge (Op. 9, 1907)* enabled him to be released from military duty and to travel to Munich. While there he worked with Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944) and the dancer

Alexander Sacharoff (1886-1963) towards a synthesis of the different artistic media of painting, dance and music, best exemplified in the ballet scenario *Der Gelbe Klang (The Yellow Sound)*.

As successful as he was outwardly, de Hartmann began to look for something more in his work with music. He writes in his autobiography *Our Life with Mr. Gurdjieff* (Penguin Books, 1992):

"To my great surprise, I took myself to account and began to realize that all that had attracted me in my youth, all that I had dearly loved in music, no longer satisfied me and was, so to say, outdated. It was clear to me [...] that to be able to develop in my creative work, something was necessary – something greater or higher than I could not name. Only if I possessed this "something" would I be able to progress further and hope to have any real satisfaction from my own creation..."

In 1916 de Hartmann met his spiritual teacher Gurdjieff, who provided him with what he was looking for. Over the next 13 years he learned many techniques for inner growth and an encyclopedia of musical ideas from their collaborative work in composing the sacred music from the East. Gurdjieff asserted that there was such a thing as "objective music" which could have a specific effect on the emotions and the psyche of the listener, not dependent upon taste or style.

De Hartmann's later work shows a remarkable eclecticism. He drew from many different styles, often to be found in the same piece. The *Violin Sonata (Op. 51, 1937)* combines Romanticism, Impressionism, Eastern melody, jazzy harmonies and hints of bitonality. The second movement of the *Double Bass Concerto (Op. 64, 1943)* includes a romantic, Russian-sounding *Romance 1830* sandwiched between a first movement filled with dissonance, and the third based on folk elements.



1956 Town Hall Program—
De Hartmann died suddenly just
weeks before this important NYC
presentation of his work.
The concert went ahead in tribute



1950s Thomas and Olga de Hartmann in their apartment in New York City



De Hartmann and Alexander Schneider of the Budapest String Quartet
rehearse the Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 51, in the presence of Pablo
Casals. They performed the work on 8 March 1952 in Princeton, New Jersey

The extensive catalog of vocal music shows a wide-ranging literary curiosity, which includes poems by Pushkin, Shelley, Proust, Verlaine, James Joyce, and Racine’s play *Esther*, which was the inspiration for de Hartmann’s opera. His vocal output also demonstrates a great interest in the music of different cultures. Examples include the Three Bulgarian songs; Lamentations of a Princess in Exile from 13th century China; and *La Tramuntana*, sung in Catalan.

The orchestral music also has much variety and illustrates de Hartmann’s gift for colorful instrumentation in this medium. He wrote seven concerti which feature the piano, flute, harp, double bass, violin and cello. His four symphonies include an hour-long

Symphonie-poème (Op. 50, 1934). There are ballet scores and the opera, *Esther* (Op. 76, 1946), featured on this album.

Until recently only a few of these works had been recorded, and they were only distributed privately. That has now changed, with the release of four orchestral CDs. This recording of *Esther* combines many of the composer’s eclectic styles in his grandest work. It is now clear that Thomas de Hartmann was a master of large-scale works.

Towards the end of his life de Hartmann turned to greater dissonance in his music. Many, but not all of his compositions are shorter and more compressed, with a definite program. There is sometimes an ironic commentary on the human condition in this music, with subtitles such as “The banality of life which cannot be conquered by man” (Op. 84 No. 2), as well as *La fête de la patronne d’après Degas* (Op. 77, 1947), which portrays a brothel in Montmartre, and the *Humoresque Viennoise* (Op. 45, 1945), which adds some disturbing dissonance to Strauss’s *Blue Danube Waltz* and the foxtrot. Other works point in a different direction,

towards what de Hartmann saw as man's possibilities: The Music of the Stars (Op. 84, 1953): "Look into the depths of Eternity" and the Second Sonata for piano (Op. 82, 1951) "dedicated to P.D. Ouspensky and the idea of the Fourth Dimension."

De Hartmann's music with its many styles is held together by his inner search, aspects of which find expression through his composition. It is not necessary to be aware of all that he is trying to say in order to enjoy the music, with its colorful palette and wide variety. However, the enquiring listener may well be rewarded by the depth of what is conveyed and revealed upon repeated listening. Beyond the intriguing musical forms, we are engaged with a particular understanding and experience that de Hartmann was determined to explore and bring forth. The many styles which he drew from were always at the service of this aim, and the result is the creation of a unique sound world.

Pablo Casals, with whom he had an extensive correspondence, writes:

"Pay no attention to the taste of your Parisian colleagues - Rare all of those who have a real talent, more rare yet those who dare to be themselves."

Elan Sicroff

*Artistic Director
Thomas de Hartmann Project
sicroff.com*



ca. 1930 Thomas de Hartmann as Thomas Kross. Publicity photo for film company Synchro-Ciné, Paris

The Thomas de Hartmann Project

The Thomas de Hartmann Project (TdHP) was initiated in 2006 by pianist Elan Sicroff (Artistic Director) and Robert Frupp (Executive Director). Utilizing recordings, performances, writings, videos and lectures, TdHP aims to preserve and recover de Hartmann's musical legacy and rightful place in the classical repertoire.

A five-year recording project in the Netherlands (2011-2015) was the product of a unique collaboration between pianist Elan Sicroff and Producer Gert-Jan Blom. The recordings were released in 2021 by Nimbus Alliance- and comprise a double CD of chamber music, a double CD of solo piano music, and a CD of songs.

In 2018, Efreem Marder took the initiative for de Hartmann's orchestral repertoire, and in 2020 contacted cellist Matt Haimovitz and violinist Joshua Bell about the respective de Hartmann concertos. Both artists

responded with enthusiastic interest based upon their immediate recognition of the music's quality and the special value they could bring to the TdHP recording project.

In 2021, the festival "Thomas de Hartmann in Ukraine- a Forgotten Master," was organized in Lviv in collaboration with Ukrainian/American Maestro Theodore Kuchar and the Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine. In addition to three concerts, the festival produced three CDs of first time studio recordings released in 2022- two by Toccata Classics, and one by Nimbus Alliance, which was conducted by Maestro Tianhui Ng.

In 2023, TdHP helped facilitate American premieres (in Massachusetts) of de Hartmann's cello, violin, and piano concertos. In the UK, Maestro Kirill Karabits premiered de Hartmann's 1907 ballet suite La Fleurette Rouge with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in 2024, and in 2025 they performed de Hartman's Fairy Tales.



Also in 2025, Kirill performed de Hartmann repertoire on a BBC Symphony radio broadcast, and also in Armenia.

Joshua Bell, Maestro Dalia Stasevska, and the INSO-Lviv Symphony Orchestra recorded de Hartmann’s violin concerto in Warsaw Poland Jan 2024 and also featured the concerto in a Ukraine Benefit Concert. Matt Haimovitz and Maestro Dennis Russell Davies organized a 2022 concert and recording in Leipzig, with the Leipzig MDR Radio Orchestra, and an EP was released by Pentatone in 2023.

The album “Thomas de Hartmann Rediscovered” featuring both of the above-mentioned concerto recordings, was released by Pentatone in Aug 2024. In 2024, Matt Haimovitz took the cello concerto on tour in Ukraine with the Odessa Philharmonic, in the midst of the war. In 2025, Joshua Bell and Dalia Stasevska performed de Hartmann’s violin concerto with five major orchestras in the

UK, US, Canada and Norway, and the audience reception couldn’t have been more enthusiastic.

This April 2026 release of Esther has been a long journey, described more fully in the Producer’s personal statement. It is worth highlighting here that Kirill Karabit’s invaluable contributions went far beyond that of a conductor, and that Jacqueline Lambart, in her role as Director of Artistic Operations, generously provided her time, expertise, and dedication to the Esther project over the last years. This included effectively facilitating logistics at the recording sessions, coordinating between the conductor, the soloists, and the orchestra.

All TdHP initiatives have depended on the collaboration of Tom Daly, inheritor/ owner of the de Hartmann estate. Tom has made a significant ongoing effort to have the scores prepared for performance, and ultimately for publication. In particular,

the Esther project required from Tom a heroic voluntary effort, and also from Kirill.

More recordings, concerts, music publications, podcasts, and written materials are in the works. Appreciation goes to the ongoing involvement of Robert Fripp, Elan Sicroff, all donors, and all members of the TdHP team.

Efrem Marder
Executive Producer
thomasdehartmannproject.com



Thomas de Hartmann in 1956, pencil drawing
© Burak Ciceker

Special thanks

Heartfelt thanks go to the forty eight generous donations from individuals, and also for grants from two foundations, without which the Esther project could not have been realized. In addition, the Producer acknowledges all individuals who freely provided advice, moral support, and valuable consultation.

We are grateful to the Pioneer Valley Symphony, of Greenfield MA, USA, who acted as the initial nonprofit fiscal sponsor for the receipt and administration of donations.



Synopsis

The Persian Queen Esther is convinced by her uncle Mordecai to courageously reveal her Jewish identity to Ahaseurus (the King) at the probable cost of her life.

It was the only hope to persuade the King to rescind an edict, instigated by Haman (his Vizier), to exterminate all the Jews of the kingdom.

Act I - in Esther's apartment

Following a brief prelude in which the Cantor and the Chorus (the people of Zion) deplore the loss of Zion, Esther is reunited with her confidant Elise and recounts how she became Queen. Esther finds solace in the singing and dancing of the "daughters of Zion" at her Court. Mordecai arrives, beseeching her to go to the King and reveal her identity to try to save the Jews. Esther is persuaded, knowing that she may likely face her death. She requests the prayers of all



Racine-Esther book belonging to Thomas de Hartmann
Courtesy of Yale Gilmore Library

the Jewish people, and she herself prays ardently for divine assistance.

Act II - in the anteroom of the King

Haman declares to Hydaspes (the King's attendant) his wish to execute Mordecai, along with all the Jews, as revenge for Mordecai refusing to bow to him. The King enters and asks Haman's advice about how someone should be honored who has provided exceptional service to the King. Assuming the King is planning to honor him, Haman proposes that the King order a grand procession through the city. To Haman's surprise, the King commands Haman to present this special reward to Mordecai, in recognition of having once saved the King's life. After Haman leaves, Esther enters with trepidation, knowing that no one (at the pain of death) is allowed to approach the King without first being beckoned. But the King holds out his sceptre and spares Esther. She implores him to grant her an audience regarding a

matter of great importance, and requests that he join her for a special feast at her palace, and that Haman should also be present.

Act III - in the Queen's palace

Esther presides over a feast for the King and Haman, during which four dances are presented. The King requests that Esther speak. She reveals her Jewish identity, pleads for her life and for those of all the Jews. She extolls the glory of God, describes the history of the loss and recovery of the Jewish temple, praises Mordecai, and exposes Haman's deceit. The King realizes he has been misled, sends Haman for execution, and saves the Jews. The apotheosis, celebrating the goodness of God and the restoration of Zion, concludes the opera.



Libretto

Disc 1

Acte I

Scène 1

(Le théâtre représente l'appartement d'Esther)

Chantre

Déplorable Sion, qu'a tu fait de ta gloire ?

Chœur

Tout l'univers admirait ta splendeur :
Tu n'es plus que poussière ; et de cette grandeur
Il ne nous reste plus que la triste mémoire.
Sion, Sion, jusqu'au ciel élevée autrefois,
Jusqu'aux enfers maintenant abaissée.

*(Un second rideau tombe lentement et couvre le Chantre et le Chœur.)*Chantre *(derrière le rideau)*

Puissé-je demeurer sans voix,
Si dans mes chants ta douleur retracée
Jusqu'au dernier soupir n'occupe ma pensée !

Act I

Scene 1

(The stage represents Esther's apartment)

Cantor

Desolate Israel, what has come of thy glory?

Choir

Once all the world felt thy terrible might!
Thou hast fallen to dust and art lost in their sight,
nothing remains of thee but thy mournful story.
Zion, Zion, once to heaven thy praises would fly,
Now in the depths is thy Destiny wrought.

*(A second curtain falls slowly and hides the Cantor and the Choir.)*Cantor *(behind the curtain)*

May I in muted silence lie,
If with my woe my songs are not fraught.
Unto my dying sigh, Thou art my only thought!

2

Esther

Est-ce toi, chère Élise ? Ô jour trois fois heureux !
Que béni soit le ciel qui te rend à mes vœux :
Toi qui, de Benjamin comme moi descendue,
Fus de mes premiers ans la compagne assidue,
Et qui, d'un même joug souffrant l'oppression,
M'aidais à soupirer les malheurs de Sion !
Combien ce temps encore est cher à ma
mémoire !
Mais toi, de ton Esther ignorais-tu la gloire ?
Depuis plus de six mois que je te fais chercher,
Quel climat, quel désert a donc pu te cacher ?

Élise

Au bruit de votre mort justement explorée,
Du reste des humains je vivais séparée,
Et de mes tristes jours n'attendais que la fin.
Quand tout à coup un prophète divin :
« C'est pleurer trop longtemps une mort qui
t'abuse,

Esther

Is it thou, dear Elise? Oh, thrice happy day!
Oh, how blessed is heav'n which has sent thee
this way.
Thou, who from Benjamin art descended as I,
Who in earliest youth both were bound by one tie.
Suff'ring together the yoke of the infidel,
Sighing sigh for sigh in our woe for Israel!
And the remembrance of our love is still so tender!
But thou, hadst thou not heard thine Esther
reigned in splendor?
And while these many months I sought thee
far and wide,
What remote, hidden clime has kept thee
from my side?

Elise

They told me thou wert dead and oppressed
by my grief
I turned from all mankind, bitter tears my relief.
I waited and I hoped for the end of my days.
Then came a Prophet with eyes all ablaze
"Tis too long thou hast wept and hast made
thyself sickly,



Lève-toi, m'a-t-il dit, prends ton chemin vers Suse :

Là tu verras d'Esther la pompe et les honneurs, Et sur le trône assis le sujet de tes pleurs. »

Je cours. De ce palais j'ai su trouver l'entrée.

O spectacle ! ô triomphe admirable,

Digne du bras qui sauva nos aïeux.

Le fier Assuérus couronne sa captive,

Et le Persan superbe est aux pieds d'une juive !

Par quels secrets ressorts, par quel enchaînement

Le ciel a-t-il conduit ce grand événement ?



Esther

Peut-être on t'a conté la fameuse disgrâce De l'altière Vasthi, dont j'occupe la place, Lorsque le roi, contre elle enflammé de dépit, La chassa de son trône ainsi que de son lit. Dans ses nombreux États il fallut donc chercher

Quelque nouvel objet qui l'en pût détacher.

De l'Inde à l'Hellespont ses esclaves courent :

Les filles de l'Égypte à Suse comparurent ;

Celles même du Parthe et du Scythe indompté

Raise thyself" he said to me, "go forth to Shushan quickly.

There thou wilt see thine Esther just as she now appears.

Reigning upon a throne is the subject of thy tears."

I ran and to this palace quickly found my way.

Oh! what wonder! What magnificent triumph,

Wrought by the God who will save Israel!

A slave crown'd beside the proud Ahasuerus!

The mighty Persian bows at the feet of a Jewess!

By what mysterious means, by what Divine decree

Hath heav'n above made this marvel come to be?

3

Esther

Perhaps thou didst come to hear how the Queen was forsaken.

She was the mighty Vashti whose place I have taken Since she aroused the wrath of the King thru her pride She was cast from the throne and banished from his side.

Thus they began thru every kingdom and race Searching to find the maiden who might take her place.

From far and wide his slaves brought the maidens they captured:

Daughters of India, Greece and Egypt were enraptured; Maids from Persia itself and the Scythian plain,

Y briguèrent le sceptre offert à la beauté.

On m'élevait alors, solitaire et cachée,

Sous les yeux vigilants du sage Mardochée :

Tu sais combien je dois à ses heureux secours.

La mort m'avait ravi les auteurs de mes jours.

Du triste état des Juifs jour et nuit agité,

Il me tira du sein de mon obscurité ;

Et, sur mes faibles mains fondant leur délivrance,

Il me fit d'un empire accepter l'espérance.

À ses desseins secrets, tremblante, j'obéis ;

Je vins : mais je cachai ma race et mon pays.

De mes faibles attraits le roi parut frappé.

Il m'observa longtemps dans un sombre silence ;

Et le ciel, qui pour moi fit pencher la balance,

Dans ce temps-là, sans doute, agissait sur son cœur.

Enfin, avec des yeux où régnait la douceur :

All were seeking the sceptre which beauty would attain.

Hidden and solitary, peacefully my life went by, Always under the gaze of Holy Mordecai.

Thou knowest well how he sustained me faithfully When death took away both my loved ones from me.

The plight of the Jews obsessed him by night and by day,

From my dark seclusion he tore the veil away; And in my unworthy hands he placed their liberation,

Hoping that I was destined for the crown of this nation.

Although I trembled at his plan I had to yield; I came, but my race and my country I kept concealed.

4

When the King first beheld me, I seemed to please him.

Then he observed me long wrapped in silent attention; And the heavens whence I prayed for divine intervention

Must at that time have moved in his soul, and in his heart.

At last, with all the sweetness his voice could impart:





Soyez reine, dit-il ; et dès ce moment même,
De sa main sur mon front posa son diadème.
Pour mieux faire éclater sa joie et son amour,
Il combla de présents tous les grands de sa cour ;
Et même ses bienfaits, dans toutes ses provinces,
Invitèrent le peuple aux noces de leurs princes.

Hélas ! durant ces jours de joie et de festins,
Quelle était en secret ma honte et mes chagrins !
Esther, disais-je, Esther dans la pourpre est assise,
La moitié de la terre à son sceptre est soumise,
Et de Jérusalem l'herbe cache les murs !
Sion, Sion, repaire affreux de reptiles impurs,
Voit de son temple saint les pierres dispersées !
Et du Dieu d'Israël les fêtes sont cessées !
Adonaï.

Élise

N'avez-vous point au roi confié vos ennuis ?

"Be thou Queen," he said, and to fix that solemn vow,
He himself placed the royal crown upon my brow.
And to further express the joy filling his heart,
From his bounty each noble at court shared a part;
And he bestowed his wealth throughout his mighty nation
And invited the people to join the wedding celebration.

5 Alas! Thru all these days of joy beyond compare,
How I suffered in secret shame and dark despair!
"Esther," I said, "Oh Esther, Now the Royal robe enfolds thee,
Half the earth, as it bows 'neath thy sceptre, extolls thee.
And yet, Jerusalem's flower fades from these lands!
Zion! Zion, stained and defiled by ungodly hands
Thy Holy Temple's stone into the dust is cast!
For thy God, Israel, The days of joy are past!"
Adonaï!

Elise

And hast thou told the king thou art in despair?

Corinne Winters & Olga Bezsmertna
© Jacqueline Lambart



Esther

Le roi, jusqu'à ce jour, ignore qui je suis.
Celui par qui le ciel règle ma destinée
Sur ce secret encor tient ma langue enchaînée.

Élise

Mardochée ? Hé ? peut-il approcher de ces lieux ?

6

Esther

Of both my race and creed he still is unaware.
The one whom heaven chose as my guide and my shield
'Tis he who has commanded my lips to be sealed

Elise

Mordecai? But has he come to visit thee here?

**Esther**

Son amitié pour moi le rend ingénieux.
Cependant mon amour pour notre nation
A rempli ce palais de filles de Sion :
Il faut les appeler. Venez, venez, mes filles.

1re fille de Sion

Ma sœur, quelle voix nous appelle ?

2e fille de Sion

J'en reconnais les agréables sons.

Chœur des Femmes

C'est la reine.
Courons, mes sœurs, obéissons.
La reine nous appelle :
Allons, rangeons-nous auprès d'elle.

Esther

Mes filles, chantez-nous quelqu'un de ces
cantiques
Où vos voix si souvent, se mêlent à mes pleurs.

Esther

By artful means he always keeps himself near.
Still I felt quite alone away from our land,
So I had Zion's daughters brought here at my
command.
And thou shalt see them now. Oh, come, oh,
come my maidens.

First Daughter of Zion

Oh sister, her voice! Dost thou not hear her?

Second Daughter of Zion

My heart rejoices at the lovely sound!

Women's Choir

'Tis the Queen
Sisters, obey, gather around!
Oh, sisters, do you hear her?
Come quickly let us gather near her!

Esther

My daughters, oh sing us a chant of Israel
Which your voices have often mingled with
my tears!

Alto Solo

O rives du Jourdain ! ô champs aimés des cieux !

Chœur des Femmes

Sacrés monts, fertiles vallées.

Alto Solo

O rives du Jourdain ! ô champs aimés des cieux !

Chœur des Femmes

Sacrés monts, fertiles vallées,
Par cent miracles signalées !
Du doux pays de nos aïeux
Serons-nous toujours exilées ?
Toujours, toujours, toujours !
Quand verrai-je, ô Sion ! relever tes remparts,
Et de tes tours les magnifiques faites ?
Quand verrai-je de toutes parts
Tes peuples en chantant accourir à tes fêtes ?
Quand verrai-je, ô Sion ! relever tes remparts.
Sion ! Sion ! Sion !

Alto Solo

Jordan, river of old, meadows ever green!

Women's Choir

Sacred hills, and beautiful slopes.

Alto Solo

Jordan, river of old, meadows ever green!

Women's Choir

Sacred hills, and beautiful slopes,
in thee all loveliness prevails!
Always waiting for the hour
when exile will end, but naught avails.
Always waiting, always!
When, alas! shall I see Holy Zion again?
And her great splendour Praised among all
the nations?
Shall I see her women and men rejoicing as
they sing at her great celebrations?
When, alas! shall I see holy Zion again?
Zion! Zion! Zion!



7

Quand verrai-je, ô Sion ! relever tes remparts, Et de tes tours les magnifiques faites ? Quand verrai-je de toutes parts Tes peuples en chantant accourir à tes fêtes ? Quand verrai-je, ô Sion ! relever tes remparts	When, alas! shall I see Holy Zion again? And her great splendour Praised among all the nations? Shall I see her women and men rejoicing as they sing at her great celebrations? When, alas! shall I see holy Zion again? Zion! Zion! Zion!
--	--

Sion ! Sion ! Sion !

8

Scène 2	Scène 2
Mardochée O reine infortunée ! O d'un peuple innocent barbare destinée ! Lisez, lisez l'arrêt détestable, cruel... Nous sommes tous perdus ! et c'est fait d'Israël !	Mordecai Queen be thou desolate! Hear thy innocent people's barbarous fate! And hear the foul decree I have come to foretell! All, all of us are lost! They have doomed Israel!

Esther & Élise Juste ciel ! tout mon sang dans mes veines se glace.	Esther & Elise Mighty Heav'n! All the blood in my veins is frozen!
---	--

Mardochée On doit de tous les Juifs exterminer la race. Au sanguinaire Aman nous sommes tous livrés ; Les glaives, les couteaux sont déjà préparés : Toute la nation à la fois est proscrite. Aman, l'impie Aman, race d'Amalécite, A pour ce coup funeste armé tout son crédit ; Et le roi, trop crédule, a signé cet édit.	Mordecai They will destroy all the Jews, they will blot out the chosen. 'Tis thru the cruel Haman that we have been ensnared; The lances and the knives are already prepared: All his forces follow the dire proclamation. Haman, impious Haman, of the Agagite nation, Can carry out his purpose and strike! as he is free! For the King, who believes him, has signed the decree!
--	---



Andrew Foster-Williams, Yuriy Yurchuk, Olga Bezsmertna & Corinne Winters





Prévenu contre nous par cette bouche impure,
Il nous croit en horreur à toute la nature :
Ses ordres sont donnés, et dans tous ses États
Le jour fatal est pris pour tant d'assassinats.
Cieux, éclairerez-vous cet horrible carnage ?
Le fer ne connaîtra ni le sexe ni l'âge ;
Tout doit servir de proie aux tigres, aux vautours ;
Et ce jour effroyable arrive dans dix jours.

Chœur des Femmes

O Dieu, qui vous former des desseins si funestes,
As-tu donc de Jacob abandonné les restes ?
Ah, Ah.

Esther & Élise

Ciel, qui nous défendra, si tu ne nous défends ?

Warned against us by Haman steeped in his foul insinuation,
Thus the king at last concurred and signed this accusation:
The orders have been given and in all of the land
The fatal day to shed our blood is near at hand.
Heaven, dost thou foresee the horror soon to be raging?
They will not spare the women, the young or the aging!
All will become their prey, torn by the raging beasts,
And in ten days this frightful decree will be released.

Women's choir

O God, didst Thou not know their design was to end us?
We are children of Jacob. Oh, wilt thou not defend us?
Ah, Ah.

Esther & Elise

Heaven, who will protect us, if it be not Thou?

Chœur des Femmes

Ah, Ah, Ah.

Mardochée

Laissez les pleurs, Esther, à ces jeunes enfants.
En vous est tout l'espoir de vos malheureux frères :
Il faut les secourir ; mais les heures sont chères ;
Le temps vole, et bientôt amènera le jour
Où le nom des Hébreux doit périr sans retour.
Toute pleine du feu de tant de saints prophètes,
Allez, osez au roi déclarer qui vous êtes.

Esther

Hélas ! ignorez-vous quelles sévères lois
Aux timides mortels cachent ici les rois ?
Et la mort est le prix de tout audacieux
Qui sans être appelé se présente à leurs yeux,
Si le roi dans l'instant, pour sauver le coupable,

Women's Choir

Ah, Ah, Ah.

Mordecai

Oh, Esther, dry thy tears, let thy maids shed them now,
For thou art all the hope which we have in our power.
To save the Jewish race we must count ev'ry hour!
Soon enough time will pass, and we will see the day
When the name of the Hebrews will forever pass away.
Thou who hast so much blood of all our Saintly prophets,
Go thou, and declare to the King thou art a Jewess!

Esther

Alas! dost thou not know there is a rigid law
Which must be obeyed when the king doth withdraw?
For the one who breaks it, death is the prize
If without being summoned, he comes before his eyes.
Still the king can save him if he forgives him



Ne lui donne à baiser son sceptre redoutable.
Je suis à cette loi, comme une autre, soumise ;
Il faut pour lui parler qu'il me fasse appeler.

Mardochée

Quoi ! lorsque vous voyez périr votre patrie,
Pour quelque chose, Esther, vous comptez
votre vie !

Dieu parle, et d'un mortel vous craignez le
courroux !

Que dis-je ? votre vie, Esther, est-elle à vous ?
Et qui sait, lorsqu'au trône Dieu conduisit
vos pas,

Si pour sauver son peuple il ne vous gardait
pas ?

S'il a permis d'Aman l'audace criminelle,
Sans doute qu'il voulait éprouver votre zèle.
Il peut confondre Aman, il peut briser nos
fers

Par la plus faible main qui soit dans l'univers :
Et vous, qui n'aurez point accepté cette
grâce,
Vous périrez peut-être, et toute votre race.

By letting him kiss the sceptre which he brings him.
And to this rigid law I myself am subjected;
Unless he calls me first, I cannot see the king.

Mordecai

What? Even as thou seest thy country's bitter
strife,

Oh, Esther, how canst thou dare to value thy life!
God speaks, and in thy fear of man thou
dar'st to decline!

What say I? Is thy life, mine Esther, is it thine?
And who knows if the plan of God led thee to
this throne,

Or if He planned to save our race thru thee
alone?

If he allows the cruel Haman to be audacious,
It is perhaps to prove if thy faith be tenacious.
He can destroy Haman, or he can break our
sword,

For thru weakness, destruction will be our reward.
And thou, who could be the instrument of
salvation,
Thou, thou perhaps wilt perish, and with thee
all thy Nation!

11

Esther

Allez : que tous les Juifs dans Suse répandus,
Me prêtent de leurs vœux le secours
salutaire.

Demain, quand le soleil rallumera le jour,
Contente de périr, s'il faut que je périsse,
J'irai pour mon pays m'offrir en sacrifice.
Qu'on s'éloigne un moment.

(Le chœur se retire vers le fond du théâtre.)

Esther

Go! May all the Jews in the great Shushan
Nation
Pray that I gain their sure salvation.
Tomorrow, when the sun harkens the day,
Content to die, if that must be the price,
I shall go for my country as a sacrifice.
Leave me for a while.

12

O mon souverain roi,
J'attendais le moment marqué dans ton
arrêt,
Pour oser de ton peuple embrasser l'intérêt.
Ce moment est venu, ma prompte
obéissance
Va d'un roi redoutable affronter la présence.
C'est pour toi que je marche : accompagne
mes pas
Devant ce fier lion qui ne te connaît pas ;
Commande en me voyant que son
courroux s'apaise,
Et prête à mes discours un charme qui lui
plaise.

O most sovereign Lord,
I have longed for the day when Thou wouldst
take command,
That I might bear the burden which oppresses
our land.
Now that moment has come, and now my
duty calls me,
I will venture before him whatever befalls me.
It is Thou who inspires me. Be Thou ever with me
Until I face him, who knows nothing of Thee;
And when he sees me let Thy gentle hand
appease him,
And give unto my words a charm which will
please him.

Les orages, les vents, les cieux te sont
soumis ;
Tourne enfin sa fureur contre nos ennemis.

All the tempests, all winds, the heavens
bow to Thy might;
Cast out in righteous wrath Thine enemies
from Thy sight.

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Acte II
Scène 1

*(Le théâtre représente la chambre ou est le
trône d'Assuérus.)*

Chœur

Adonai, Ah, Adonai, Ah, Ah, Ah
Adonai, Ah, Adonai, Ah, Ah.

Hydaspe

Venez. Partout ailleurs on pourrait nous entendre.

Aman

Quel est donc le secret que tu me veux
apprendre ?

Hydaspe

Le roi d'un noir chagrin paraît enveloppé ;
Quelque songe effrayant cette nuit l'a frappé.
Pendant que tout gardait un silence paisible,
Sa voix s'est fait entendre avec un cri terrible.
J'ai couru. Le désordre était dans ses discours :
Il s'est plaint d'un péril qui menaçait ses jours,
Il parlait d'ennemi, de ravisseur farouche ;

Act II
Scene 1

*(The stage represents the room where the
throne of Ahasuerus sits.)*

Choir

Adonai, Ah, Adonai, Ah, Ah, Ah
Adonai, Ah, Adonai, Ah, Ah.

Hydaspe

Come here, my lord, for no one must overhear.

Haman

What secret is this thou hast guarded for
mine ear?

Hydaspe

The king awoke today unusually perturbed!
For his dreams thru the night were extremely
disturbed.
While o'er the Earth nothing pervaded the stillness.
He made a cry which rent the palace with its
shrillness.
I ran. All the things he said were quite confused:



Même le nom d'Esther est sorti de sa bouche.
Mais quel trouble vous-même aujourd'hui vous agite ?
Votre âme en m'écoutant paraît toute interdite :
L'heureux Aman a-t-il quelques secrets ennus ?

Aman

Le nom de Mardochée est-il connu de toi ?

Hydaspe

Qui ? ce chef d'une race abominable, impie ?

Aman

Oui, lui-même.

Hydaspe

Hé, Seigneur ! d'une si belle vie
Un si faible ennemi peut-il troubler la paix ?

He declared that his enemies must be accused.
Then he spoke of a traitor threatening his very life;
Then he cried out for Esther as if calling for his wife.
But thou also art occupied with thoughts which distress thee.
Thy spirit does not heed the words which I address thee.
Has gay Haman some vexing secrets indeed?

Haman

Dost thou know the name of Mordecai?

Hydaspe

Who? The leader of that impious and abominable race?

Haman

Yes, the same.

Hydaspe

Oh, my Lord, dost thou trouble thyself
With a trivial enemy whom thou shouldst ignore?

String section of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

**Aman**

L'insolent devant moi ne se courba jamais.
D'où lui vient, cette impudente audace ?
Toi, qui dans ce palais vois tout ce qui se passe,
Crois-tu que quelque voix ose parler pour lui ?

Haman

He refuses to bow before me though it is law.
Whence comes this impudence with which he conspires?
Thou, who art aware of all that transpires,
Dost thou believe that someone here doth speak for him?

**Hydaspe**

Seigneur, vous le savez, son avis salutaire
Découvert de Tharès le complot
sanguinaire.
Le roi promit alors de le récompenser.
Le roi, depuis ce temps, paraît n'y plus
penser.

Aman

Dans les mains des Persans jeune enfant
apporté,
Je gouverne l'empire où je fus acheté ;
Mes richesses des rois égalent l'opulence ;
Environné d'enfants, soutiens de ma
puissance,
Il ne manque à mon front que le bandeau
royal :
Mais Mardochée, assis aux portes du
palais,
Dans ce cœur malheureux enfonce mille
traits ;
De ces appartements il assiège la porte :
À quelque heure que j'entre, Hydaspe,
Son visage odieux m'afflige et me poursuit ;
Et mon esprit troublé le voit encor la nuit.

Hydaspe

My Lord, dost thou recall, it was his accusation
Which uncovered the plot of the king's
assassination.
The King was grateful and he promised to
reward him then.
But he has never spoken of that day again.

Aman

I was only a child when the Persians brought
me here,
But the race which enslaved me I now domineer.
I have wealth which no royal monarch can rival.
I have descendants who ensure my name's
survival.
All I lack is the Royal band upon my brow.
But Mordecai just sits at the palace gate,
And in that hidden heart burns an undying hate!
Within these very rooms I would swear I have
seen him,
And whatever hour I enter,
That same face is there, always afflicting my
sight;
And in my troubled sleep I see him through
the night!

Et toute ma grandeur me devient insipide
Tandis que le soleil éclaire ce perfide.
Ce matin j'ai voulu devancer la lumière :
Je l'ai trouvé couvert d'une affreuse
poussière,
Revêtu de lambeaux, tout pâle ; mais son
œil
Conservait sous la cendre encore le même
orgueil.

Hydaspe

Vous serez de sa vue affranchi dans dix jours :
La nation entière est promise aux vautours.

Aman

Ah ! que ce temps est long à mon impatience !
C'est lui, je te veux bien confier ma vengeance,
C'est lui, c'est lui qui, devant moi refusant
de ployer,
Les a livrés au bras qui les va foudroyer.
Un homme tel qu'Aman, lorsqu'on l'ose irriter,
Dans sa juste fureur ne peut trop éclater.
Je veux qu'on dise un jour aux siècles effrayés :
« Il fut des Juifs, il fut une insolente race ;

Oh! how insipid seem all my splendid possessions
While he, a traitor, dares continue these
transgressions.
Just today I awoke before the sun's early flashes:
I found him there covered all over with ashes.
Clothed in sackcloth he sat, pale and
haggard, but his eyes
Still retained 'neath the cinders all the scorn
and pride.

Hydaspe

Thou wilt ever be freed from his sight in ten days:
For these insults all his impious nation pays.

Haman

Ah! How I wait impatiently for that moment!
For him, my revenge must become bitter torment.
For him, who will not pay any homage to me,
They all are delivered up to great misery.
With such a man as Haman, if one dares to
cross his path,
Let that man beware. He will suffer my wrath.
All I desire one day is for the world to say:
"There were the Jews, they were an insolent race,



Répendus sur la terre, ils en couvraient la face :
Un seul osa d'Aman attirer le courroux,
Aussitôt de la terre ils disparurent tous. »
Un je ne sais quel trouble empoisonne ma joie.
Pourquoi dix jours encor faut-il que je le voie ?

Hydaspe

Et ne pouvez-vous pas d'un mot l'exterminer ?
Dites au roi, Seigneur, de vous l'abandonner.

Aman *(parlé)*

Je viens pour épier le moment favorable.

Hydaspe

Que tardez-vous ? Allez et faites promptement.

Aman

J'entends du bruit ; je sors.
Toi, si le roi m'appelle....

Hydaspe

Il suffit.

Spread throughout all the earth, they went
from place to place.
Though only one of them dared to anger Haman,
From that day all the Jews from the face of
the earth are gone!"
Why must my joy be poisoned at last by this ill?
Why is it that for ten more days I see him still?

Hydaspe

Thou knowest well but one word and it need not be.
Ask the king, my Lord, to give him up to thee.

Haman *(spoken)*

I await the favorable moment.

Hydaspe

Why delay? Go and do it at once!

Haman

I can hear some noise; I am leaving.
Thou, if the king calls me....

Hydaspe

I understand.



Andrew Foster-Williams

Paul Appleby





Edwin Crossley-Mercer, Kirill Karabits & Yuriy Yurchuk

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Scène 2

Scene 2

Assuérus

Ainsi donc, sans cet avis fidèle,
Deux traîtres dans son lit assassinaient leur roi ?

Je veux bien l'avouer : de ce couple perfide
J'avais presque oublié l'attentat parricide ;
Mais ce sujet zélé qui, d'un œil si subtil,
Sut de leur noir complot développer le fil,
Quel honneur pour sa foi, quel prix a-t-il
reçu ?

Asaph

On lui promet beaucoup : c'est tout ce que
j'ai su.

Assuérus

O d'un si grand service oublié trop
condamnable !

Ah ! que plutôt l'injure échappe à ma
vengeance,

Ahasuerus

Thus it says, in this faithful writing,
There were two traitors who plotted to slay
their king.

This attempt on my life which was so
ill-begotten,
And their bold treachery I had almost forgotten;
That zealous subject whose watchful and
subtle sight
Brought their two betrayers' plot out of
darkness to the light.

What reward for his faith, what prize hath
he received?

Asaph

That he was promised much is all that
I perceived.

Ahasuerus

Oh, to forget such service merits just
condemnation!

I would far rather my revenge become
defection



Qu'un si rare bienfait à ma reconnaissance !
Et je dois l'autant moins oublier la vertu,
Qu'elle-même s'oublie. Il se nomme, dis-tu ?

Asaph

Mardochée est son nom, Israël sa patrie,
il est donc Juif.

Assuérus

Il est donc Juif ? Oh ciel ! sur le point que la vie
Par mes propres sujets m'allait être ravie,
Un Juif rend par ses soins leurs efforts
impuissants !
Un Juif m'a préservé du glaive des Persans !
Mais, puisqu'il m'a sauvé, quel qu'il soit,
il n'importe.
Holà, quelqu'un !

Hydaspe

Seigneur ?

Than so rare a deed escape from my recollection!
And I would rather forget the way of virtue
Than forget such a deed. And his name didst
thou say?

Asaph

Mordecai is his name, and his land Israel.
He is a Jew.

Ahasuerus

He is a Jew? Oh, Heaven, what has come of
our life
That among my own subjects such turmoil is rife,
That now a Jew must seek out these
murderers in their den!
A Jew must save my life from the knives of
Persian men!
But since he saved my life, who he is does not
matter.
Hey! Come here!

Hydaspe

My Lord?

Assuérus

Regarde à cette porte ;
Vois s'il s'offre à tes yeux quelque grand de
ma cour.

Hydaspe

Aman à votre porte a devancé le jour.

Assuérus

Qu'il entre. Approche, heureux appui du
trône de ton maître,
Dis-moi donc : que doit faire un prince
magnanime
Qui veut combler d'honneurs un sujet qu'il
estime ?

Aman

O Seigneur, vous voulez d'un sujet
reconnaître le zèle ;
L'honneur seul peut flatter un esprit
généreux :
Je voudrais, Seigneur, que ce mortel heureux,
De la pourpre aujourd'hui paré comme
vous-même,

Ahasuerus

Look out into the courtyard,
See if any of my nobles is coming this way.

Hydaspe

Haman is in the courtyard. He rose at break
of day!

Ahasuerus

Then call him! Approach thou, oh favored of
the throne of thy master.
Tell me now what reward is proper
compensation
For a subject valued high in the King's
estimation?

Haman

If, my Lord, 'tis the zeal of this subject thou
wishest to honor,
Then honor alone could reward such a
generous heart.
Thus to this happy man these honors I would
impart
Place the purple robe upon him like unto thine,



Et portant sur le front le sacré diadème,
Sur un de vos coursiers pompeusement orné,
Aux yeux de vos sujets dans Suse fût mené :
Que, pour comble de gloire et de
magnificence,
Un seigneur éminent enfin de votre empire
après vous le premier,
Par la bride guidât son superbe coursier ;
Et lui-même, marchant en habits
magnifiques,
Criât à haute voix dans les places publiques :
« Mortels, prosternez-vous ! Mortels,
prosternez-vous, c'est ainsi que le roi
Honore le mérite, et couronne la foi. »

Place on his brow the royal crown divine.
On one of thine own steeds, gilded and
garlanded,
Thus before the people of Shushan let him be led.
But that his cup be filled with magnificent glory,
Let a great noble man chosen by thee alone
from thy lands far and wide,
Take the bridle and guide thy magnificent steed.
As this noble man marches in his splendor and
fame,
In all the public places let him loudly proclaim:
"Ye mortals prostrate thyselfs! Ye mortals
prostrate thyselfs! It is thus that a king
Honors a man and crowns him for a faithful
offering."

19

Assuérus

Je vois, que la sagesse elle-même t'inspire :
Va, ne perds point de temps : ce que tu m'as
dicté,
Je veux de point en point qu'il soit exécuté :
La vertu dans l'oubli ne sera plus cachée.
Aux portes du palais prends le Juif Mardochée
C'est lui que je prétends honorer aujourd'hui :
Ordonne son triomphe, et marche devant lui ;

Ahasuerus

I see that it is wisdom herself that inspires thee.
Go, lose no time; all which thou hast advised
I wish in all details to be fully realized.
Now let virtue in forgetfulness no longer lie!
Go to the palace gate, take the Jew Mordecai;
'Tis he whom I intend thus to honor today
Confer on him this triumph and lead him on
the way.

Que Suse par ta voix de son nom retentisse,
Et fais à son aspect que tout genou fléchisse.
Sortez tous.

*(Esther entre s'appuyant sur Élise :
quatre Israélites soutiennent sa robe.)*

Sans mon ordre on porte ici ses pas !
Quel mortel insolent vient chercher le trépas ?
Gardes... Comment, c'est vous
Esther ? quoi ! sans être attendue ?
Vivez : le sceptre d'or que vous tend cette main
Pour vous de ma clémence est un gage certain.

Esther

Seigneur, je n'ai jamais contemplé qu'avec
crainte
L'auguste majesté sur votre front empreinte !

Assuérus

Croyez-moi, chère Esther, ce sceptre, cet
empire,
Et ces profonds respects que la terre inspire,

Let all of Shushan's voice be raised to honor him,
Command that in his presence all kneel down
before him.
Leave me.

*(Esther enters leaning on Elisha:
four Israelites support her gown.)*

Who comes without the King's Command?
What insolent mortal comes here asking to die?
Guards!.. What Esther is it thou?
Here? Without being called?
Live! By this my sceptre of gold be thou blest,
My clemency to thee is a certain bequest.

20

Esther

My Lord! With trembling heart, I have ever
respected
The mighty pow'r which in thy person is reflected!

Ahasuerus

Believe me, Esther dear, this sceptre, and this
empire,
And the respect and fear which these powers
inspire,



À leur pompeux éclat mêlent peu de douceur,
Et fatiguent souvent leur triste possesseur.
Je ne trouve qu'en vous je ne sais quelle
grâce
Qui me charme toujours et jamais ne me
lasse.
De l'aimable vertu doux et puissants attraits !
Tout respire en Esther l'innocence et la paix :
Du chagrin le plus noir elle écarte les ombres,
Et fait des jours sereins de mes jours les plus
sombres.
Que dis-je ? sur ce trône assis auprès de vous,
Des astres ennemis j'en crains moins le
courroux,
Et crois que votre front prête à mon diadème
Un éclat qui le rend respectable aux dieux
même.
Osez donc me répondre, et ne me cachez
pas
Quel sujet important conduit ici vos pas.

Esther

O bonté qui m'assure autant qu'elle
m'honore !
Un intérêt pressant veut que je vous implore :

All these pompous displays, often only annoy
And deprive their poor possessor of any joy.
It is only thru thee I have all I require;
'Tis thy charm by which I live and of which
I never tire.
Virtue and honor forever in thee increase!
And in Esther abides innocence and tranquil peace.
Thru despair black as the night she makes the
shadows seem lighter
And the darkest of days thru her alone seems
brighter.
What say I? As I sit beside thee on the throne,
Fighting my enemies, I am no more alone.
I knew that when I placed that royal crown
upon her,
Esther would bring to that royal crown and the
Gods, honour.
Darest thou now to ask me, and nothing thou
must hide.
What important request led thee to my side?

21

Esther

Oh, how thy goodness and thy kindness heal
and restore me!
Mine is an urgent cause which I come to
implore thee:

J'attends ou mon malheur ou ma félicité ;
Et tout dépend, Seigneur, de votre volonté.
Un mot de votre bouche, en terminant mes
peines,
Peut rendre Esther heureuse entre toutes les
reines.

Assuérus

Ah ! que vous enflammez mon désir curieux !

Esther

Permettez, avant tout, qu'Esther puisse à sa
table
Recevoir aujourd'hui son souverain seigneur,
Et qu'Aman soit admis. J'oserai devant lui
rompre ce grand silence ;
Et j'ai pour m'expliquer besoin de sa
présence.

Assuérus

Dans quelle inquiétude, Esther, vous me
jetez !
Vous, que l'on cherche Aman ; et qu'on lui
fasse entendre
Qu'invité chez la reine, il ait soin de s'y rendre.

I know my misery or my happiness
Only depend, my Lord, on your graciousness.
One word thy lips will say can end my tribulations,
And make me happiest among the queens of
the Nations.

Ahasuerus

Oh, how strangely thou set'st my desire aflame!

Esther

By your leave, first of all Esther humbly desires
The presence at her table of her Sovereign
Lord today.
Let Haman come as well, and our long
silence will be broken by his acquiescence.
For I, to explain myself, have the need of his
presence.

Ahasuerus

Esther thou hast wrought uneasiness in my
mind!
You! Go and seek Haman. This summons let
him hear:
In the chamber of the queen he is asked to
appear.



(Le rideau tombe lentement, puis se lève. On voit le peuple d'Israël en prière.)

Chœur

Dieu d'Israël,

Chantre

Dieu d'Israël, dissipe enfin cette ombre :

Chœur

Des larmes de tes saints quand seras-tu touché ?

Chantre

Quand sera le voile arraché
Qui sur tout l'univers jette une nuit si sombre ?

Chœur

Si sombre. Si sombre.

Chantre

Dieu d'Israël, Dieu d'Israël, Dieu d'Israël,
dissipe enfin cette ombre :
Jusqu'à quand seras-tu caché ?

(The curtain falls slowly, then rises. The people of Israel are seen in prayer.)

Choir

God of Israel,

Cantor

God of Israel, dispel the dark around us.

Choir

When will the tears of thy Saints bring thee to our sight?

Cantor

When wilt thou illumine the night
Which above all the world in blackness surrounds us?

Choir

Blackness surrounds us.

Cantor

God of Israel, God of Israel, God of Israel
dispel the dark around us!
When, oh God, will we see Thy light?

Chœur

Dieu d'Israël dissipe enfin cette ombre :
Jusqu'à quand, jusqu'à quand seras-tu caché ?

Chantre

Dieu d'Israël, Dieu d'Israël, Dieu d'Israël,

Chœur

Dieu d'Israël.

Choir

God of Israel, dispel the dark around us!
When, oh God, when, oh God, will we see Thy light?

Cantor

God of Israel, God of Israel, God of Israel.

Choir

God of Israel.



The Grange Festival Chorus





Corinne Winters

Disc 2
Acte III
Scène 1

(Le théâtre représente les jardins d'Esther, et un des côtés du salon où se fait le festin.)

Pistes 1 à 4 : Danses
Assuérus (à Esther)

Oui, vos moindres discours ont des grâces secrètes :
Une noble pudeur à tout ce que vous faites
Donne un prix que n'ont point ni la pourpre
ni l'or.
Quel climat renfermait un si rare trésor ?
Mais dites promptement ce que vous
demandez :
Tous vos désirs, Esther, vous seront
accordés ;
Dussiez-vous, je l'ai dit, et veux bien le
redire,
Demander la moitié de ce puissant empire.

Act III
Scene 1

(The stage represents Esther's gardens, and on one side is the living room where the feast is made.)

Tracks 1-4: Dances

5

Ahasuerus (to Esther)

Ah, thy most trifling discourse proves
a graceful token:
And a noble prudence pervades all thou hast
spoken.
'Tis a prize far above even crown or throne.
What rare country has called such a treasure
its own?
But speak without delay what thou wouldst
now demand:
All thou desirest is but thine to command;
I vowed this and I will vow it once again:
Thou may'st ask even the half of my great
Domain.

**Esther**

Je ne m'é gare point dans ces vastes désirs.
Mais puisqu'il faut enfin expliquer mes
soupirs,
Puisque mon roi lui-même à parler me
convie,

(Elle se jette aux pieds du roi.)

J'ose vous implorer, et pour ma propre vie,
Et pour les tristes jours d'un peuple
infortuné
Qu'à périr avec moi vous avez condamné.

Assuérus *(parlé)*

A périr ! Vous ! Quel peuple ? Et quel est ce
mystère ?

Aman *(tout bas)*

Je tremble.

Esther

Esther, Seigneur, eut un Juif pour son père :
Ces Juifs, dont vous voulez délivrer la nature,

Esther

I do not crave, my Lord, such a supreme bequest,
But since I must at last dare to make my
request,
And since the King himself has given leave to
his wife,

(She throws herself at the feet of the king.)

Let me dare to implore thee for my very life,
And for my unfortunate people now let me cry,
For my people, with me, thou hast condemned
to die.

Ahasuerus *(spoken)*

To die? Thee? What people? What is this
mystery?

Haman *(softly)*

I tremble.

Esther

Esther, my Lord, had a Jew for her father!
These Jews whom thou condemnest to final
destruction,

Que vous croyez, Seigneur, le rebut des
humains,
D'une riche contrée autrefois souverains,
Pendant qu'ils n'adoraient que le Dieu de
leurs pères,
Ont vu bénir le cours de leurs destins
prospères
Ce Dieu, maître absolu de la terre et des
cieux,
N'est point tel que l'erreur le figure à vos
yeux.
L'Éternel est son nom, le monde est son
ouvrage ;
Il entend les soupirs de l'humble qu'on
outrage,
Juge tous les mortels avec d'égaies lois,
Et du haut de son trône interroge les rois :
Des plus fermes États la chute
épouvantable,
Quand il veut, n'est qu'un jeu de sa main
redoutable.
Les Juifs à d'autres dieux osèrent s'adresser :
Roi, peuples, en un jour tout se vit disperser ;
Sous les Assyriens leur triste servitude
Devint le juste prix de leur ingratitude.

Whom thou hast scorned, my Lord, as the dregs
of the earth,
Once were blest with great gifts in the land of
their birth,
While they were faithful to the God of their
land,
They were rewarded with great blessings from
his hand.
That God, who is the absolute lord of the skies,
What thou knowest of him can be nothing
but lies.
The Almighty is his name, this world is his
creation;
But he listens to ev'ry humble supplication,
And he judges all men justly and equally,
Even kings on their thrones must bow to His
Majesty.
All the power and strength of any mighty
nation
Is as nothing against His divine indignation.
These Jews adored a god other than their own:
King and people were totally overthrown;
Under the Assyrian yoke their painful servitude
Became the just reward for their ingratitude.
But to punish our captors in their turn,



←

Mais, pour punir nos maîtres à leur tour,
Dieu fit choix de Cyrus avant qu'il vît le jour,
L'appela par son nom, le promit à la terre,
Le fit naître, et soudain l'arma de son tonnerre,
Brisa les fiers remparts et les portes d'airain,
Mit des superbes rois la dépouille en sa main,
De son temple détruit vengea sur eux l'injure :
Babylone paya nos pleurs avec usure.
Cyrus, par lui vainqueur, publia ses bienfaits,
Regarda notre peuple avec des yeux de paix,
Nous rendit et nos lois et nos fêtes divines ;
Et le temple déjà sortait de ses ruines.
Mais, de ce roi si sage héritier insensé,
Son fils interrompit l'ouvrage commencé,
Fut sourd à nos douleurs. Dieu rejeta sa race,
Et vous mit en sa place.
Que n'espérions nous point d'un roi si généreux !
« Dieu regarde en pitié son peuple malheureux,
Disions-nous : un roi règne, ami de l'innocence. »


God appointed a land which he made his concern.
Cyrus was its name and with infinite wonder
He created a nation, and then arming that land with his thunder,
Shattered the mighty walls so they could not withstand
Babylon's mighty kings were as spoil in his hand,
For his temple destroyed thus they made restitution:
Babylon for our tears paid a great retribution.
Cyrus, His chosen victor, published her great increase
And regarded our people with the eyes of peace,
We renewed ev'ry law and each sacred celebration;
For our temple began a complete restoration.
But to this king so wise was born a most vicious son,
This son dared to cut off the work we had begun.
He would not hear our pleas, and God destroyed his race,
Putting thee in his place.
We could not hope for more than such a generous king!
"God has pitied his people in their suffering,"
Thus we said: "This king reigns us in a fatherly fashion,"

Partout du nouveau prince on vantait la clémence.
Les Juifs partout de joie en poussèrent des cris.
Ciel ! verra-t-on toujours par de cruels esprits
Des princes les plus doux l'oreille environnée,
Et du bonheur public la source empoisonnée !
Dans le fond de la Thrace un barbare enfanté

Everywhere they proclaimed his kindness and his compassion.
The Jews ev'rywhere cried out in transports of joy.
Heaven, must thou always thy cruel delights employ?
That such a prince by poisoned words could be misled
And thru that poison our happiness forfeited?
From the depths of Thrace in its barbarity

→

Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Grange Festival Chorus & Kirill Karabits





Est venu dans ces lieux souffler la cruauté ;
Un ministre ennemi de votre propre gloire...

Aman

De votre gloire ! moi ! Ciel ! le pourriez-vous
croire ?
Moi qui n'ai d'autre objet ni d'autre dieu...

Assuérus

Tais-toi.
Oses-tu donc parler sans l'ordre de ton roi ?

Esther

Notre ennemi cruel devant nous se déclare.
C'est lui ; c'est ce ministre infidèle et
barbare
Qui de tant d'horreurs dicta l'ordre
effroyable !
Partout l'affreux signal en même temps
donné
De meurtres remplira l'univers étonné :
On verra, sous le nom du plus juste des
princes,
Un perfide étranger désoler vos provinces ;

There came a man who was bred only in cruelty.
This evil minister plotting against thy glory...

Haman

Against thy glory? I? Heav'n! canst thou
believe this story?
I, who have no other thought nor other god...

Ahasuerus

Be still!
Canst thou presume to speak without the
Royal will?

Esther

Our cruel enemy made the great accusation:
'Twas he, he who was born of a barbarian
nation,
Who dictated the orders of the foul
declaration!
Thru all the world the frightful alarm was sent,
That rampant murder would come to the
innocent.
They will see under the name of the kindest of
princes,
Desolation which this evil stranger evinces;

Et dans ce palais même, en proie à son
courroux,
Le sang de vos sujets regorger jusqu'à vous.
Et que reproche aux Juifs sa haine
envenimée ?
Quelle guerre intestine avons-nous allumée ?
Les a-t-on vus marcher parmi vos ennemis ?
Fut-il jamais au joug esclaves plus soumis ?
Adorant dans leurs fers le Dieu qui les
châtie,
Pendant que votre main sur eux appesantie
À leurs persécuteurs les livrait sans secours,
Ils conjuraient ce Dieu de veiller sur vos
jours,
Ils conjuraient ce Dieu de rompre des
méchants les trames criminelles,
De mettre votre trône à l'ombre de ses ailes.

N'en doutez point, Seigneur, il fut votre
soutien :
Lui seul mit à vos pieds le Parthe et l'Indien,
Dissipa devant vous les innombrables
Scythes,
Lui seul aux yeux d'un Juif découvrit le dessein
De deux traîtres tout prêts à vous percer
le sein.

And even in this very palace, as a prey to his wrath,
He sheds the blood of thy subjects who dare
come in his path.
Canst thou reproach the Jews with such
venomous hate?
Have we ever warred against our king and our
state?
Have we ever marched with thine enemies?
Or hadst thou any slaves submissive as these?
In their chains as they bow to God's eternal will,
They feel the power of thy hand on them still.
As they see nothing but persecution in sight,
They pray their God to guide thee by day and
by night.
They pray their God to bring punishment on
the ones from whom these evils spring,
To put thy throne beneath the shadow of his
wing.
Do not doubt, my Lord, he is ever with thee:
He brought Persia and India 'neath thy
supremacy,
He dispersed 'neath thy sword the hordes of
the Scythians,
Thru him alone a Jew made the plot manifest
Of two traitors who wanted a knife in thy breast.



Hélas ! ce Juif jadis m'adopta pour sa fille.

Alas! That Jew had once taken me for his daughter.

8

Assuérus

Mardochée ?

Ahasuerus

Mordecai?

Esther

Il restait seul de notre famille.

Mon père était son frère. Il descend comme moi

Du sang infortuné de notre premier roi.

Il n'a devant Aman pu fléchir les genoux,
Ni lui rendre un honneur qu'il ne croit dû
qu'à vous.

De là contre les Juifs et contre Mardochée

Esther

He of all my family escaped the slaughter.

He was my father's brother, and the line from
which we spring

Is the unfortunate blood of our first King.

He would not bow before Haman, nor bend
the knee,
Thinking this honour should be due to no one
but thee.

From this the revenge on the Jews and

Mordecai came,
But his hate, my Lord, he concealed 'neath
another name.

In vain thy benefits by Mordecai were shared.

At thy portal Haman already has prepared
That an infamous death meet him there on
the gallows. In an hour...

Cette haine, Seigneur, sous d'autres noms
cachée.

En vain de vos bienfaits Mardochée est paré :

À la porte d'Aman est déjà préparé

D'un infâme trépas l'instrument exécutable ;

Dans une heure...

Aman (à Esther)

D'un juste étonnement je demeure frappé.

Les ennemis des Juifs m'ont trahi, m'ont
trompé :

Parlez : vos ennemis aussitôt massacrés,
De ma fatale erreur répareront l'injure.

Quel sang demandez-vous ?

Haman (to Esther)

About these lies I stand quite amazed,

By the enemies of the Jews they were surely
raised.

Speak! Their certain death will remand this
fatal error!

Whose blood wouldst thou demand?

Esther

Va, traître, laisse-moi :

Les Juifs n'attendent rien d'un méchant tel
que toi.

Esther

Go, traitor, let me be.

The Jews want nothing from such a vile thing
as thee.

Assuérus

Qu'à ce monstre l'âme soit arrachée.

(Aman est emmené par les gardes.)

Mortel chéri du ciel,

Viens briller dans le rang qui t'est dû.

Assuerus

Have this monster taken out to be hanged.

(Haman is led away by the guards.)

Dear mortal from heaven,

Come and shine in the light which is thine.

Esther

O Dieu ! par quelle route inconnue aux
mortels

Ta sagesse conduit ses desseins éternels !

Esther

O, God, by what unknown designs thou dost
guide us men,

'Tis thy wisdom has wrought our salvation again!



Olga Bezsmertna

Edwin Crossley-Mercer & Bernard Richter

Scène 2
Chœur

Dieu fait triompher l'innocence,
Chantons, célébrons sa puissance.

Alléluia.

Il a vu contre nous les méchants s'assembler,
Et notre sang prêt à couler ;
Comme l'eau sur la terre ils allaient le répandre ;

Du haut du ciel sa voix s'est fait entendre ;
Alléluia, Alléluia, Alléluia,
Alléluia, Alléluia, Adonai.

L'homme superbe est renversé,
Ses propres flèches l'ont percé.
Ses flèches l'ont percé.

J'ai vu l'impie adoré sur la terre ;
Pareil au cèdre, il cachait son front dans les
cieux.

Il semblait à son gré gouverner le tonnerre,
Foulait aux pieds ses ennemis vaincus.

Je n'ai fait que passer, il n'était déjà plus.
Alléluia, Alléluia, Alléluia.

Scene 2
Choir

This is God's triumphant hour:
Let us praise his almighty power.

Hallelujah.

As He was watching this villainous menace grow
And as our life's blood was to flow:
As if water on earth would be spilled and
would glisten

Out of the heavens His voice caused them to listen;
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Adonai

That haughty man is overthrown,
the piercing arrows were his own.
The arrows were his own.

That impious man thought the world should
adore him;

For as a cedar he hid his forehead in the skies.
He made it seem the heaven's thunder would
bow before him,

He made the vanquished bow if he was near.
I did but let him pass, he is no longer here.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.



Réjouis-toi, Sion, et sors de la poussière ;
Quitte les vêtements de ta captivité.
Rompez-vous fers, Tribus captives ;
Rompez-vous fers, Tribus captives ;
Tribus captives, Rompez vos fers.
Repassez les monts et les mers,
Repassez les monts et les mers ;
Rassemblez-vous, rassemblez-vous,
Rassemblez-vous des bouts de l'univers,
des bouts de l'univers.

Esther

Réjouis-toi, Sion, reprends ta splendeur.
Les chemins de Sion sont ouverts.

Esther, Élise, Mardochée, Assuérus

Réjouis-toi, Sion, reprends ta splendeur,
Les chemins de Sion sont ouverts.

Esther, Élise, Mardochée, Assuérus, Chœur

Réjouis-toi, Sion, reprends ta splendeur,
Les chemins de Sion sont ouverts.

O, rejoice, Israel, take off sackcloth and ashes;
Leave behind thee the clothes of thy captivity.
Break thy fetters. Thou art not tribute.
Thou art not tribute. Break thy fetters,
Fly to the mountains of thy birth,
Fly to the mountains of thy birth;
Gather again, gather again,
Gather again from over all the earth,
Over all of the earth.

Esther

Be thou joyful Israel. Take up thy splendour.
Now the way to Zion is free again.

Esther, Elise, Mordecai, Assuerus

Be thou joyful Israel. Take up thy splendor;
Now the way to Zion is free again.

Esther, Elise, Mordecai, Ahaseurus, Choir

Be thou joyful, Israel; take up thy splendor,
Now the way to Zion is free again.

Chœur

Réjouis-toi, Sion, quitte les vêtements de ta
captivité.

Sion!

Mardochée

Que le Seigneur est bon ! que son joug est
aimable !

Heureux qui dès l'enfance en connaît la
douceur !

Esther, Élise, Mardochée, Assuérus

Que le Seigneur est bon, que son joug est
aimable,

Heureux qui dès l'enfance en connaît la
douceur.

Esther, Élise, Mardochée, Assuérus, Chœur

Que son Nom soit béni ;

Que son Nom soit chanté.

Que l'on célèbre ses ouvrages

Au-delà des temps et des âges,

Au-delà de l'éternité !

Jahvé, Jahvé, Jahvé.

Choir

Oh, rejoice Israel, leave behind thee the
clothes of thy captivity.

Zion!

Mordecai

See how the Lord is good, how his yoke is no
burden!

Happy he who from childhood knew his sweet
gentleness!

Esther, Elise, Mordecai, Ahaseurus

See how the Lord is good, how his yoke is no
burden,

Happy he who from childhood knew his sweet
gentleness.

Esther, Elise, Mordecai, Ahaseurus, Choir

Worship His holy name;

Worship His majesty.

Bless'd be His works in all their glory.

This will be the wonderful story

For all time and eternity!

Yahwe, Yahwe, Yahwe.

The English translation by soprano Patricia Neway was commissioned by Olga de Hartmann in 1957.



Adrian Peacock, Efreem Marder, Jacqueline Lambart, Renaud Loranger & Kirill Karabits
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PRODUCTION TEAM

Executive producer **Efreem Marder** (Thomas de Hartmann Project)
Recording producer & editor **Adrian Peacock** | Sound engineer **Chris Caton**
Pro Tools operator **Tim Scott** | Mixing & Mastering **Dave Rowell**
Preparer/owner of scores & librettos **Tom Daly** (Thomas de Hartmann Project)
Director of Artistic Operations **Jacqueline Lambart** (Thomas de Hartmann Project)
Casting **Renaud Loranger** (lead consultant), **Kirill Karabits**, **Efreem Marder**
& **Jacqueline Lambart** | French diction coach **Nicole Tibells** | BSO Head of Concerts
& Artistic Planning **Heather Duncan** | BSO Head of Digital & Marketing **Anthony Brown**

ARTWORK

Liner notes **Evan MacCarthy** & **Elan Sicroff** | Synopsis **Efreem Marder**
English lyrics translation **Patricia Neway** | Session photography **BSO** & **Jacqueline Lambart** (as credited) | Artwork painting © **Ben Marder** | Cover design **Marjolein Coenrady** (PENTATONE) | Booklet coordination & design **Karolina Szymanik** (PENTATONE)

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PENTATONE TEAM

Managing Director **Sean Hickey** | Label Director **Silvia Pietrosanti** | A&R **Alice Lombardo**
Product Management **Ana Milovanović** | Press **Allie Summers** | Distribution **Camilla Vickerage**
Audio **Wirre de Vries** | Finance **Adrie Engels** | Admin **Lineke Steffers**



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