

“Baptizer”

by Mark Teagle

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www.markteagle.com

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Act I

- Scene 1: Jesus and a small group of disciples hear the news of John the Baptizer’s death. Jesus reminds them of John’s importance and ends with “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”. They are swept aside by a group on their way to see John at the beginning of his ministry as they sing “Got to See the Latest Show”. A group of seekers follow this with the plaintive “In the Dark so Long”.
- Scene 2: John emerges from this group, preaching at the Jordan “Are You Ready for the Lord to Come?” John, the crowd, and his detractors, the Pharisees and Sadducees, all intertwine with “Repent, Reform, Reorder your Lives”. While the crowd is eager to hear his words, the detractors challenge his authority. Elizabeth, John’s mother, pulls him aside to rest and sings him to sleep by recalling his promised birth in “Name Him John”.
- Scene 3: The next morning at the river, seekers come to be baptized. They ask what they ought to do with “Hey, Baptizer”. Meanwhile, the Pharisees and Sadducees plot against John with “Prophet of God” where they state that the prophets have mostly been crazy men. The crowd asks John if he is the Messiah. He points to another, answering with “After Me”. Then the Pharisees and Sadducees ask John about Herod marrying his brother’s wife. He boldly condemns that with “A Prophet Sees and a Prophet Speaks”.
- Scene 4: In Herod’s palace the courtiers toast his wife “Herodias” as the queen of the party. She reveals her ambition to rise to power by marrying Herod but worries that the Baptizer is getting too much attention. She vows to get rid of him.
- Scene 5: John remembers when Jesus came to the river to be baptized and recounts it with “Face to Face and Eye to Eye”.
- Scene 6: The crowds wonder who this Jesus is with “Could It Be Messiah?”. Herodias plots her revenge against John. John’s disciples worry that Jesus is getting all the attention. John tells them he’s just “The Friend of the Bridegroom”. As Act I ends, John is arrested for crimes against Herod.

Act II

- Scene 1: In his prison cell, John ponders what he is hearing about Jesus. In “Are You He?”, he asks if Jesus is indeed the one he pointed to.
- Scene 2: Back in Herod’s palace, the courtiers are drunkenly celebrating “Herod’s Birthday”. Herodias seizes the opportunity and has her daughter Salome beguile them with “Dance, Salome, Dance”. Herod reluctantly agrees to have John killed.
- Scene 3: Herod and Herodias each react to John’s approaching execution with “Look What I’ve Done!” John appears and reprises “A Prophet Sees and a Prophet Speaks” and “After Me” and is executed as the stage blacks out. Jesus and the disciples replay the first scene. “When you went into the wilderness, what did you see? A man in soft clothes or a wind-shaken reed? Did you see a prophet, yes, I tell you and more! He was the messenger, sent to come before. Of those born of women, none was greater than Baptizer. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” The full cast joins in the refrain “Are You Ready for the Lord to Come?”

CHARACTERS

John	The Baptizer
Jesus	
Elizabeth	John’s mother
Andrew	A disciple
Philip	A disciple
Anna	A disciple
Sarah	A disciple
Caleb	A courtier and in the crowd
Michael	A courtier and in the crowd
Miriam	A courtier and in the crowd
Dinah	A courtier and in the crowd
Joab	Among the Pharisees and Sadducees
Deborah	Among the Pharisees and Sadducees
Herod	Tetrarch of Galilee
Herodias	Herod’s wife
Salome	Herodias’ daughter
Captain	
Soldiers	

SETTINGS

The two principle settings are at the Jordan River and Herod’s Palace. Other scenes are transitional and can be achieved with lighting or using the apron. One option is to set this play in modern times and put John’s ministry at a freeway rest stop or other out of the way place.