

Esther

An opera in one act for three singers and medium orchestra
Libretto by Anne Cluysenaar. Music by Geoffrey Palmer.

Esther/Hada'ssah, Queen of the Persians, a Jew. *Soprano*
Ha'man, Chancellor of Persia. *Tenor*
Xerxes, King of the Persians, *Bass*

Orchestra:

2 Flutes (2. doubling Alto flute)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets (Bb) (2. doubling Eb Clarinet)
2 Bassoons
2 Horns (F)
2 Trumpets (C)
2 Trombones (2. Bass trombone)
Percussion (Xylophone, Vibraphone, Triangle, Miniature bells, Clash cymbals (2 cym.), Suspended cymbal, Tam-tam, Wood block, Snare drum, Bass drum)
Harp
Celesta
Strings (6/6/5/4/4 approx.)

The score is "in C": all instruments sound as written

Glissando lines join notes seamlessly - do not take new bows or breaths on new notes unless indicated.

Set:

The Palace at Susa, fourth century B.C.

A semi-circular backdrop, in broad planes of white and violet (the royal colours) providing a series of gaps or arches through which we see Esther from time to time on her journey to confront Xerxes (as indicated in the score).

Mid stage, there is the ceremonial throne of King Xerxes (perhaps on a raised dais) with, above it, the winged disk, emblem of Ahura Mazda, from the Palace at Susa.

When the action begins, the throne is backlit so that King Xerxes, who is already seated, remains invisible to the audience.

Duration c. 32 minutes

For the real Esther — E.R.M. — with love.

Prelude

Pesante
♩ = 63

Flute
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Oboe
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Clarinet (in B)
actual sound
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Bassoon
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Horn (in F)
actual sound
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.
almost imperceptible

Trumpet in C
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Trombone
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

Percussion
Bass drum
fp
fp
p

Harp

Violin I
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.
mp
p

Violin II
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.
mp
p

Viola
f dim.
sighing
f sim.
mf sim.
mp

Violoncello
f dim.
sighing
f sim.
mf sim.
mp

Double bass
f dim. - sighing
f sim.
mf sim.

♩ = 72

10 15 20