CHRIST IN THE CONCRETE CITY

A thesis production of a religious drama
dramatized by P.W. Turner

An Abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Drama

by

James Joseph Mapes

April, 1969
The abstract of James Joseph Mapes is approved:

Committee Chairman

San Fernando Valley State College
April, 1969
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ABSTRACT

CHRIST IN THE CONCRETE CITY

A thesis production of a religious drama
produced and directed
by
James Joseph Mapes
Master of Arts in Drama
April, 1969

P.W. Turner, the author of Christ in the Concrete
City, has attempted to portray the Passion Story of Jesus
Christ on three levels of action and has offered the
following suggestions:

The play is the story of events in Biblical history.
The playwright has taken many liberties with the Gospel
text. In order to include the essential facts into the
play, Turner found himself forced to compress the Biblical
narrative, and even in some cases, "to put phrases on lips
where they do not belong," in order to get the facts into
the play. He states in the preface to the play:

The actors step into and out of the his-
torical characters. Thus, when the third
man represents Pilate, he acts the part as
long as the text demands, and then forgets
about it. There is no necessary continuity
between the various characters played by an
actor.

Secondly, the story of the Passion is one
of universal significance, speaking time-
lessly to all mankind. Here the cast act
as a chorus, as a unit with a number of
voices rather than as a group of individuals.
These passages require a formal presentation both in speech and movement.

Thirdly, the Crucifixion and Resurrection are events of personal significance speaking intimately to the individual in the secret places of his own soul, and urging him to action here and now. So in the play there is a third level of action which tries to show the modern equivalent of the events or ideas brought out in the other themes. For the most part these sequences are caricatures.

The ideas and philosophy expressed in this play are very conventional. There is the basic fundamental tragedy of the Passion of Christ expressed symbolically in modern language. In this respect the play is traditional; but by employing common everyday elements of humanity, the Biblical narrative is reduced to a basic humanistic everyday level. This level represents the main difference between the play and a conventional religious service. The play brings out certain human elements in society that are lacking in a formal religious service. These elements in the play should establish a particular awareness on the part of the viewer concerning the contemporary relevance of the Biblical narrative.

The playwright has expressed his philosophy of the play, to which the director has tried to remain faithful in his production. This philosophy was not necessarily demonstrated with the use of visual images, but was found in the concept of the manner in which the play was presented.

The style of the production was "presentational" in
keeping with both the formalistic style of the script and
the physical formalism of the church setting. No stage
sets were used to portray locale as the sense of place was
created through the use of dialogue and pantomime. To set
the stage and to begin the story, scripture was read as a
prologue. The scriptural passages described the story of
Passion Week beginning with Christ's entrance into Jeru-
salem and ending with the Passover supper. By eliminating
traditional stage sets, the physical elements of the church
were used to enhance the production and to maintain the
respect and reverence inherent in the subject matter.

A few theatrical elements, however, were added to the
church setting. These included special lighting equip­
ment (three spotlights on each of two tree stands, two
dimmers, cable) and stylized costumes consisting of color-
ed capes worn over contemporary dress.

To compliment the visual elements of the church san­
tuary setting and to create atmosphere, various religious
musical pieces were added. The performance began with a
Gregorian chant which created a mood of reverence and end­
ed with "The Glory of the Lord" From Handel's Messiah to
emphasize the theme of the play-hope for mankind.

In conclusion, a formalistic style of presentation,
interpolated music, and scripture were employed to portray
the timeless universal and individual significance of the
Passion of Jesus Christ as contained in the play, Christ
in the Concrete City.
TOURING PROCEDURE

The director utilized a flexible production scheme in order to adapt to various church situations with a minimum of change. To accomplish this adaptability, a prior knowledge of each church sanctuary was necessary. The advance preparation made possible the arrival of the company two hours before a performance to prepare both the technical and performing aspects of the production.

A minimum of lighting equipment was used to make the handling and mounting of the technical elements as simple as possible thus eliminating many of the technical problems that would usually be encountered in a touring production. The same basic light plot (consisting of four basic areas) was followed in every production so that the lights would be adaptable to any situation.

AUDIENCE REACTION

The audiences were somewhat inhibited in their overt response to the play probably due to the fact that congregations are conditioned to respectful silence while in a church. However, this inhibition was not found to be present at one of the productions. This particular performance was not totally comprised of adults, but included many children who openly showed their feelings through verbal response of laughter and applause during the more humorous moments of the play. The adults, however, expressed verbal appreciation after the performances indicating that the production was well received.
PROGRAM SCENERIO

MUSIC: Chant-Victimae Paschal from the Easter Mass

SCRIPTURE: The Gospel according to St. Matthew
21: 1-27; 24: 1-5; 26: 14-29

MUSIC: Agnus Dei by Giovanni de Palistrina
Tristis est anima mea by Orlandus Lassus
O Vos Omnes (All ye that pass by...)

DRAMA: Christ in the Concrete City

MUSIC: "And the Glory of the Lord" from The Messiah by Handel

Note: The entire program lasted approximately one and a half hours.
CAST LIST

Man 1..................................................Michael Tabib
Man 2..................................................Robert Gelff
Man 3..................................................Lionel Hansard
Man 4..................................................Bart Johnson
Woman 1...............................................Leonie Goldstone
Woman 2...............................................Stella Martin

**Bass**
- Jules T. Loventhal
- Harvey W. Durrett
- Arthur Cole
- John Redmon

**Soprano**
- Edith M. Hill
- Gloria Kulchin
- Theresa La Voie
- Nancy Cofer

**Tenor**
- Bart Johnson
- Edward Cansino
- John Coombs

**Alto**
- Melody K. Bunting
- Gerri Rickard
PERFORMANCE DATES

March 23..............St. Paul's United Methodist Church
                      Tarzana

March 25..............Thousand Oaks United Methodist Church
                      Thousand Oaks

March 26..............St. James Presbyterian Church
                      Tarzana

March 30..................First Methodist Church
                        Van Nuys

March 31..................Bethel Lutheran Church
                        Encino

April 2....................Wilshire Methodist Church
                        Los Angeles

April 3....................St. Nicholas Episcopal Church
                        Encino
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ABOUT THE PLAY

CHRIST IN THE CONCRETE CITY, in combination with music and scripture, is being presented as a thesis production as partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts Degree. The production will tour under the sponsorship of San Fernando Valley State College, Northridge, California.

PROGRAM

MUSIC: Chant-Victimae Paschali from the Easter Mass

Read by James J. Mapes and Lionel Hansard

MUSIC: Agnus Dei by Giovanni de Palistrina
Tristis est anima mea by Orlandus Lassus
O Vos Omnes (All ye that pass by...) by Luis de Victoria

DRAMA: Christ in the Concrete City

MUSIC: "And the Glory of the Lord" from The Messiah by Handel

Christ in the Concrete City
Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Curtain time for all performances - 8:00 p.m.
CHRIST IN THE CONCRETE CITY

by

P. W. TURNER

A Thesis Production for
San Fernando Valley State College

PRODUCED AND DIRECTED

by

James J. Mapes

CAST

MAN 1 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Michael Tabib
MAN 2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Robert Ge If
MAN 3 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Lionel Hansard
MAN 4 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Bart Johnson
WOMAN 1 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Leonie Goldstone
WOMAN 2 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Stella Martin

CHOIR

ALTO

Melody K. Bunting
Gerri Rickard

SOPRANO

Edith M. Hill
Gloria Kulchin
Theresa La Voie
Nancy Cofer

BASS

Jules T. Loventhal
Harvey W. Durrett
Arthur Cole
John Redmon

TENOR

Bart Johnson
Edward Cansino
John Coombs
PRODUCTION STAFF AND CREWS

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ............. Donna Jean Steines
MUSICAL DIRECTOR ............... Vince Cole
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR ............. Kim Reed
LIGHTING ......................... Kim Reed
                   Linda Collins
COSTUME CONSULTANT ............. John Furman
PROGRAM DESIGN .................. Ray Crenna
FACULTY ADVISOR .................. Owen W. Smith

TOURING SCHEDULE

March 23 ........ St. Paul's United Methodist Church
                 Tarzana
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Lilian Colman       Frank Rice       Lucille Monson
CHANT

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer your thankful praises.

He Lamb the sheep hath ransomed: Christ, by sin undefiled, reconcileth sinners to the Father.

Death and Life in a conflict sore and wondrous contended: Life's Captain, he that died, deathless reigneth.

peak, Mary, declaring, what thou sawest wayfaring? is tomb, who passed through its portal, His glory, who rose from death immortal.

e know that Christ is risen henceforth ever living: have mercy, Victor King, pardon giving.

Amen. Alleluia.

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Ein Blumlein Wenn's die Sonne Spuret

Rose, touched by sun's warm rays, all its petals gently does unfold.

you, when touched by God's great mercy, let joy and gladness win your soul.

O Vos Omnes

all ye that pass by, is it nothing unto you? hold, and see, yea consider, If there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Behold, and see, all people, ev'rywhere, yea, consider my reproach;

hold my sorrow: if there be any sorrow, like unto sorrow.