

ESTHER

A Musical Based on the Old Testament Book

Script by Aaron Alsmeyer and Beth Walsman
With much valuable input from the original cast

Music and Lyrics by Aaron Alsmeyer

OFFICIAL SOUNDTRACK

CAST

Esther ... Danielle Sault
Mordecai ... Scott Apple
Xerxes ... Aaron Alsmeyer
Haman ... Nathan Rollins
Zeresh ... Rebecca Jones
Kiana ... Sue Wickliff
Layliya ... Lydia Abbott
Mehuman ... Kevin Hicks
Queen Vashti ... Robin Tolbert
Hegai ... Zachary Francis
Harbona ... Dion Wickliff
Hathach ... Daniel Huston

Other featured voices ... Elli Jones, Daniel “Huffy” Tolbert, and Sally Anne Alsmeyer

Chorus: Raquel Dowley, Alexandra Gandy, Anna Spiars, Jessica Spiars, Kathryn Spiars, Robin Tolbert, Sue Wickliff, Aaron Alsmeyer, Matt Chafey, Daniel Huston, Micah Knutson, Jay Parks, Justin Staley, Ryan Staley, Sean Staley

ORCHESTRA

Violin ... Robin Scott
Cello ... Ahrim Kim
Flute ... Jennifer Page
Bass Guitar ... Aaron Alsmeyer
Drums/Percussion ... Dion Wickliff
Piano (tracks 5-15) ... Rebecca Jones
Piano (tracks 2, 3) ... Rebecca Platt
Piano (tracks 1, 4) ... Robin Tolbert

Recorded by Dion Wickliff and Aaron Alsmeyer

Mixed by Dion Wickliff

Mastered by Alan Johnson

Cover photograph by Kristi Witek

Cover design by Kendyl Adams

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TRACKS

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3. Queen Vashti's Reprise
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8. The Casting of the Pur
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LYRICS

***Song:* THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SEVENTH NIGHT**

NOBLE (*Sings*)

Here in one of the lushest gardens in Persia we gather

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

NOBLE

Feasting on the choicest morsels King Xerxes can offer

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

XERXES

I can't get enough of the food and the wine
And I'm glad for one more opportunity with my friends
To display the riches and wealth of my kingdom

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
Great King Xerxes! Show us your treasures!
Infinite pleasures from the palace's vault!
Every precious item that is in your possession
Feeds the obsession for the king we exalt!

XERXES

This one was a present from my grandfather Cyrus.
He would inspire us with his relics of old!

MEN

Old!

XERXES

These came from the wondrous temple of Bel
When the priest who defended it fell
And we captured the statue of gold!

MEN (*Yell*) Gold!

OFFICIAL (*Sings*)

Three years you have reigned as king and we can't help but marvel

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

OFFICIAL

As we hear accounts of Xerxian armies in battle

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

XERXES

I think of these years and I cannot count
The successes that flood to my memory
And I'm joyous that men like you can remember them with me

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
Great King Xerxes! Tell us of glories!
Tales and stories of your glorious reign!
One more story never hurt anyone
And I haven't heard anyone even try to complain!

XERXES

When the Babylonians tried to rebel
And the Egyptians did the same
I was there in defense of my fame.

MEN

Fame!

XERXES

Squelching the rebellion with my army unstoppable—
It was merely a game, but it spread my indelible name.

MEN (*Yell*) Name!

DUO (*Sings*)

Now as we've done many times before, we will look to the future

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

DUO

Here on the brink of our next bold conquest, we stand with our leader

MEN

For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

XERXES

We will go to war for a year or more,
But I know we'll return with a victory
When the Greeks are defeated in this campaign we are planning
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

MEN

The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!

ALL

The one hundred and eighty-seventh night!
Night! Night! Night! Night!

Song: QUEEN VASHTI'S REPRISE

WOMEN (*Sing*)

As the women of the kingdom, we feel we must counter the men
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.
We enjoy ourselves immensely, yet prove we are calmer than them
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.

VASHTI

Every single word we speak to encourage and never condemn.

WOMEN

Our Queen Vashti is the perfect example again and again
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night,
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night,
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.

Second stanza much the same as the first; we're content with the tune
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.
Who could ever ask for more than fine ladies with which to commune
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night?

VASHTI

Though we eat and drink and sing like we've done nearly all afternoon,

WOMEN

With maturity we realize we all must be off to bed soon
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night,
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night,
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.

No distraction will distract us from banqueting just as we please
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.
Ours the life of resolution to bask in our comfort and ease
For the one hundred and eighty-seventh night.

VASHTI

Camaraderie is sweet, every one of my maidens agrees.

WOMEN

We must treasure times we have quiet moments together like these.

Song: WHO IS THIS GIRL?

MORDECAI You must not use your Hebrew name. You are to leave behind the name
Hadassah. From hence forth, you will be called... Esther.

ESTHER ...Esther?

MORDECAI Yes. It means, "a star." It will be your Persian name.

ESTHER (*Sings*)

Who, who is this girl?
I've never met her.
You call her Esther.
And how, how can I learn,
When I don't know her,
Learn how to be her?
And how can you calmly tell me
My life here is over?
And why must I go so quickly?
No time to say goodbye.
I don't know what this is all about
And I won't know how to begin
To behave with a king.
I won't know what to do.

MORDECAI

When I took you in
To be my daughter
I was much younger.
And though I'm older now,
And maybe wiser,
I too have questions.
Like why must you of all people
Be so blessed with beauty,
A gift that you did not ask for
And could not refuse?
I don't know what I can tell you now
That you have not already heard,
Since I've poured
My whole life into you.

And though much will be said
Of your hair and your eyes and your skin,
Please realize
That the things on the outside
Are only important to men,
Not to God.

So take these words as you leave me
And hold to them, cling to them,
Now and always,
Whatever may come:

Follow after wisdom,
Do not turn to man's foolish ways,
Trust the Lord with your heart,
And you'll know what to do.

Song: BRAND NEW

HEGAI Your name?

HARBONA Harbona.

HEGAI Something's not right about this. Didn't anybody tell you about the dress code?

HARBONA I've... I've been sent by the king to check on the young ladies who have most recently arrived.

HEGAI Oh... follow me. You'll see women in all stages of the preparation process. We're getting new girls brought in all the time. The first step, as you can see here to your immediate right, is to saturate the new arrivals in oil of myrrh. This step takes approximately six months.

BEAUTIFYING WOMEN (*Sing*)

You think you're delicate now.
You think you're beautiful now.
You think you're elegant now.
But wait and see
And when the year is through,
When we're all done with you,
You'll be brand new!

YASLYN

She soaks in purified myrrh.
Six months resembles a blur,
But I'm resoundingly sure
That she'll agree
That when we're through with her,
She's not just prettier.
She is brand new!

HEGAI (*Speaks*) After the oil of myrrh, we proceed to step two: perfumes, spices, and cosmetics. The ladies you see here are currently undergoing this phase, which takes roughly another six months.

BEAUTIFYING WOMEN (*Sing*)

You have no definite clue
Which spices complement you,

But it is evident to
The rest of us
That when the year is through,
And we're all done with you,
You'll be brand new!

WOMEN BEING BEAUTIFIED

Though it's a terrible wait
To face our dubious fate,
Accommodations are great
And we can say
That when they're through with us,
In just a dozen months,
We'll be brand new!

HEGAI (*Speaks*) Finally, when a girl has completed the full year of treatments, we give her anything she wants to take with her to the palace when she goes to meet the king.

LADY BEING BEAUTIFIED (*Sings*)

All these magnificent things!
Barrettes and ornament rings!
No wonder everyone sings!
I can't believe
The person now I see.
I never thought I'd be
A brand new me!

HEGAI (*Speaks*) So the women here are all very much the same. Some take a little more perfume than others; some take a little more spices than others. But other than that, there's very little difference. Although there are exceptions. Esther, for example... Over the last year, she's earned herself the nicest room, the choicest food... and I even gave her seven maidens of her own who are assigned just to take care of her! And nobody would deny that she deserves it. Everybody likes Esther. In fact, there she is now!

ESTHER (*Sings*)

Whatever you've done with your hair you should continue.
I heard your favorite bread is on this evening's menu.
My dear, I hope that if I tell you once again, you
Will believe your parents miss you too.
A thousand faces fill the scene,
With only one belonging to the future queen.
What will the others be?
And each expression seems to show
That we will never truly know
That we're worth something
To somebody.
I wish we all could know.

Please take some flowers to the ladies in the southwest hall
And ask Anousheh if her rash is clearing up at all.
I haven't met you; would you care to join me on the walking path
When you're finished with your bath?

Song: SOMETHING TO BE EXPLORED

XERXES Rise... and look upon your new queen. Queen... Esther! Only the king of the
greatest empire in the world is deserving of beauty as measureless as yours.

(Sings)

Precious as gifts of India,
Rare as the snow in Syria,
Like the Nile River glorious
Is this romance.
I've always known, and yet not quite,
I wanted something more.
Someone that I cannot comprehend
With just one glance.
How did you read this mind, this thought?
What I need I cannot afford.
Someone with something that cannot be bought,
Something to be explored.

ESTHER

Strength like the trees of Lebanon,
Fame like the ancient Solomon,
Eyes like the pools of Heshbon,
Stirring and deep.
Can such a king be human too?
Seems that the answer lies in you.
Everything I see is pointing to
Wonderful secrets you keep.
I can see you have more to give
That so many have just ignored.
Past the thin surface where few dare to live,
Something to be explored.

XERXES

What lies beyond the farthest seas?
What joy can desert flowers bring?
Who designed the course of Pleiades
So long ago?

ESTHER

What tinge of blue was Adam's sky?
What song do stars of morning sing?

What did Moses see on Sinai,
Making him glow?

XERXES AND ESTHER

How many mysteries yet unknown
Via wisdom or wealth or sword?
We have the chance to solve one of our own.
Something to be explored.
Something to be explored.

Song: TAKE THIS MESSAGE

MORDECAI The king is in danger! I must tell Hadassah immediately! Oh! Ladies! Ladies!
You must speak to... Queen Esther for me! Ladies, you must listen to me. My name is
Mordecai.

KIANA What do you want?

MORDECAI (*Sings*)

I like to sit beside the gate each evening,
When nobody knows I'm there.
Often I will hear things that are useful later
Uttered by the gabby people passing unaware.
Take this message to Queen Esther:
Tell her that King Xerxes may be murdered in his bed.
Teresh and Bigthana were discussing the arrangements,
So she should tell her husband if she doesn't want him dead.

(*Speaks*)

You must hurry! Thank you!

KIANA AND LAYLIYA My queen! My queen! My queen!

ESTHER Ladies! What is it?

KIANA AND LAYLIYA (*Sing*)

When we were gathered with the other women,
Someone stopped us in our tracks.

KIANA

He said his name was Mordecai.

LAYLIYA

He said the king is gonna die,

KIANA AND LAYLIYA

'Cause he heard two men plotting
As he hid behind their backs.

ESTHER

Take your message to King Xerxes.
You have information that he surely needs to know!
Likely he will have a friendly talk with these assassins,
But make sure you give credit to the man who told you so!
(*Speaks*)
Quickly!

KIANA Come, Layliya! ... Mehuman?

MEHUMAN Yes?

KIANA AND LAYLIYA (*Sing*)

We need a messenger who's fast and faithful!

MEHUMAN

I'm the right man for the task!

KIANA

Mordecai told us and we told Esther

LAYLIYA

And she said to pass it on 'cause it's important

KIANA AND LAYLIYA

Which is why we've come to ask,
Take this message to King Xerxes:

LAYLIYA

Two of his own guards have rather sinister intent!

KIANA

Teresh and Bigthana want to slay the king at bedtime,

LAYLIYA

And also please make mention of the man from whom we're sent!

MEHUMAN (*Speaks*) Dear oh dear! I must be on my way!

XERXES Mehuman?

MEHUMAN (*Sings*)

My king, it looks like you're alive and that means

I did not arrive too late.
Someone by the name of Mordecai reported
Teresh and Bigthana have been planning your demise by the front gate!

XERXES (*Speaks*) Really?

MEHUMAN Truly.

XERXES (*Sings*)

Take this message to Bigthana and Teresh:
If they want to kill me they should learn to do it right.
Next time they should have their conversation where it can't be heard and
Then they won't get executed like they will tonight!

Song: THE CASTING OF THE PUR

ZERESH We will now cast the Pur, to determine which day of which month the Jews will be
destroyed. Let the preparations begin!

BASSES (*Sing*)
Vi-ya

TENORS
Vi-ya-xa-na*

Vi-ya

WOMEN
Vi-ya-xa-na

Mā-ha

TENORS
O-wa-ya-u-vā

Vi-ya

WOMEN
Vi-ya-xa-na

Vi-ya

TENORS
Vi-ya-xa-na

Vi-ya

WOMEN
Vi-ya-xa-na

Mā-ha

TENORS
O-wa-ya-u-vā

Vi-ya

WOMEN
Vi-ya-xa-na

Gar-ma

TENORS
Gar-ma-pa-da

(BASSES)

Gar-ma

Mā-ha

Gar-ma

Gar-ma

Gar-ma

Mā-ha

Gar-ma

Za-na

Za-na

Mā-ha

ALL

Vr-ka-za-na

WOMEN

Gar-ma-pa-da

TENORS

O-u-ra-vā-ha-ra

WOMEN

Gar-ma-pa-da

TENORS

Gar-ma-pa-da

WOMEN

Gar-ma-pa-da

TENORS

O-u-ra-vā-ha-ra

WOMEN

Gar-ma-pa-da

TENORS AND WOMEN

Vr-ka-za-na

Vr-ka-za-na

O-āi-gra-cis

* The lyrics for the chant are derived from ancient Persian names of months. Approximate meanings are as follows: Ouravāhara = "month of strong spring"; Oāigracis = "Garlic-collecting month"; Garmapada = "heat-station month"; Vrkazana = "month of wolf killing"; Owayauvā = "The terrible one"; Viyaxana = "Digging-up month"; Māha = old Persian word for "month"

Song: FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS/IF I PERISH

ESTHER Yes... yes, I am a Jew. Oh, it feels so good to say it! But now... now it means death. Did my cousin say anything more?

HATHACH He did. And this may be the most difficult part. He urges you to go before the king and plead for your people.

ESTHER Before the king? I... I can't. The queen may only go when she has been called. He could have me killed for this!

HATHACH So, what message shall I take to Mordecai?

ESTHER (*Sings*)

Dearest cousin, do you not know
What every servant under the king knows?
That anyone who dares to come before the king in his courts
Without being summoned is put to death
With one exception: If the king holds out his golden scepter
He spares his life. But I've not been called for thirty days
And if I go now, I'll perish.

MORDECAI

Oh Hadassah, do not think that
You can escape the plight of your people.
And if you choose to remain in the apparent comfort of silence,
Safe in the palace, then you will die,
As will your family; and the Jews will be saved another way.
But who knows? Maybe you have come to royalty
For such a time as this.

ESTHER

Go, dear Mordecai, and gather
All of the Jews in Susa together
And fast for me; and neither eat nor drink for three days and nights
And I and my maidens will do the same.
And when it's over, I will go to the king
Even though it is not according to the law.
And if I perish, I perish.

ESTHER

Who,

Who is this girl?

You called her Esther.

I think I know now that she

Has found her place
Has found a calling, a purpose,

But still I'm scared.

MORDECAI

I never knew

When I
First called you Esther,
What it would cost you.

You had a choice
That few could face,
But you remembered
The things I taught you.

BOTH

And how I wish I could see you
At this crucial moment

ESTHER

I stand in the darkness,
Afraid just yet to move.

MORDECAI

You stand alone in the darkness,
Afraid to move.

BOTH

For moving means moving forward
To a fate we cannot foresee.

ESTHER

Like you said I would,
I know what to do
And if I perish, I perish.

MORDECAI

But at least you know
What to do
At such a time as this.

Song: ONE MORE MOMENT

KIANA Hopefully the king is more favorable towards a queen who disobeys by *coming* to him rather than by *not* coming to him.

ESTHER Well, there's only one sure way to know. I have to go now.

LAYLIYA My queen! Now?

KIANA We're not ready!

ESTHER But I *am* ready.

KIANA But *we're* not ready.

(Sings)

Have just a drink of water
Or test another pair of shoes.
Stay for a little longer.
We don't care what excuse you use.

LAYLIYA

For if the worst should happen,
You'd be our second queen to lose.

KIANA

I know you have a mission,
A calling you cannot deny.
But can your endangered people
Wait one more moment till you try?

KIANA AND LAYLIYA

We need that one more moment,
For we don't know if this is
Goodbye.

ESTHER

Remember all the times we had when I first came here?

KIANA

I knew when you arrived, it wouldn't be the same here.

ESTHER

But I can say that I became what I became here
Thanks to you, and several others too.

LAYLIYA

A hundred memories come to mind,
And yet I cannot seem to find
The words to say.
You know them anyway.

ESTHER

The time you thought you lost your ring...

LAYLIYA

The time we raced each other to the southwest wing...

KIANA

The time that Hegai fell...

ESTHER

And broke his goblet thing!

KIANA

He didn't take it well.
You made a hard decision
In which we did not have a voice.
We want to help you do this,
Though we still struggle with your choice.

LAYLIYA

We're holding to a hope that
We'll yet have reason to rejoice.

ALL MAIDS

We know you have a mission,
A calling you cannot deny.
Can your endangered people
Wait one more moment till you try?
We need that one more moment,
For we don't know if this is
Goodbye.

Song: THE MAN THE KING WANTS TO HONOR

XERXES Haman! Tell me, what should I do for a man that I want to honor?

HAMAN A what?

XERXES There is a certain man that I would like to honor. How should I do this?

HAMAN Oh! A man you would like to honor? No doubt a great man, one who has proven his worth to you?

XERXES A hero. Noble. Selfless!

HAMAN Yes, yes. I understand. You are having trouble deciding just how to reward such a man for all he has done for you?

XERXES Exactly!

(Sings)

This is a man that has proved he is loyal.

HAMAN

You want to give him the treatment that's royal.

XERXES

How do I honor a man that's so worthy of honor
That he should be honored?

(Speaks)

So tell me...

HAMAN Okay, for the man that the king wishes to honor...

XERXES Yes?

HAMAN Let the royal apparel be brought!

XERXES Ah!

HAMAN The robe that the king himself wears!

XERXES We should be writing this down. Here.

HAMAN So the royal apparel is brought out, the robe that the king actually wears, and it is used to array this man... the man that *you* want to honor.

XERXES All right, I think I understand! See if this sounds right...

(Sings)

He'll wear my robe,

The one that I wear when I sit on my throne,
The one with all the velvet on the cuffs
And yards of opulent foreign material shoulder to floor
With the accents of gems lining the hems.

BOTH

This is the man that the king wants to honor.
This is the man that the king wants to honor.
That's how you honor a man that's so worthy of honor
That he should be honored!

XERXES (*Speaks*) This is brilliant! But surely more should be done for this man?

HAMAN Oh, yes! He should also ride your horse!

XERXES My horse?

HAMAN The mighty steed that the king himself rides, looking its very best and being led by one of your most prestigious noblemen!

XERXES Wonderful! Now let me see if I can say this correctly... but first, tell me what you've already written...

HAMAN (*Sings*)

He'll wear the
Robe that you wear when you sit on the throne
With the velvety cuffs and the hems with the gems
And the opulent foreign material shoulder to floor

XERXES

And he'll ride a steed,
With one of my noblemen taking the lead,
All dressed up in his finest
And the horse will be an Arabian with a tiara that matches its crest
And its flanks will have class with armor of brass.

BOTH

This is the man that the king wants to honor.
This is the man that the king wants to honor.
That's how you honor a man that's so worthy of honor
That he should be honored!

XERXES (*Speaks*) Good! What next?

HAMAN Well, once the man is clothed in your robe and seated on your horse, the nobleman will lead the horse through the streets of the city—

XERXES So that his worth may be displayed for the people!

HAMAN Exactly! The nobleman will shout as he walks, proclaiming that this is what is done for a man the king wishes to honor!

XERXES It's all coming together now! Let me see if I have understood you completely...

HAMAN Okay, but first wouldn't you like to review the notes we've taken already?

XERXES Oh... yes.

HAMAN (*Sings*)
He'll wear the robe that you wear when you sit on the throne

XERXES
With the velvety cuffs and the hems with the gems

HAMAN
And the opulent foreign material shoulder to floor

XERXES
And he'll ride on a steed, an Arabian horse,
With a man in the lead in his finest, of course

HAMAN
And the horse will be decked with the brass with the class
And a crest on its head with tiara to match...

XERXES
And they'll walk the road,
Performing a truly spectacular show,
And all the crowds of people that they pass
Will unmistakably know that they're witnessing somebody grand,
But in case they can't tell, the noble will yell

BOTH
This is the man that the king wants to honor.
This is the man that the king wants to honor.
That's how you honor a man that's so worthy of honor
That he should be honored!

XERXES (*Speaks*) Okay, let's practice! I'll act like I'm the nobleman, and you be the man that the king wants to honor!

HAMAN Me??!

XERXES Of course! Now, you're wearing a royal robe, and I'm leading your horse...

(Sings)

This is the man that the king wants to honor...

(Yells)

Switch!

HAMAN *(Sings)*

This is the man that the king wants to honor!

XERXES

This is the man that the king wants to honor!

HAMAN

This is the man that the king wants to honor!

XERXES

This is...

HAMAN

The man that...

XERXES

The king wants...

HAMAN

To honor!

XERXES

This is...

HAMAN

The man that...

XERXES

The king wants...

HAMAN

To honor!

BOTH

That's how you honor a man that's so worthy of honor—

XERXES *(Speaks)* Haman!

HAMAN Yes...?

XERXES You're probably wondering just who this man is, the man that I wish to honor in such a manner...

HAMAN I think I may have a guess...

XERXES Make haste! Take the apparel and the horse, as you have said, and do all of these things for Mordecai, the Jew, who sits at the king's gate! Do not fail to do any of the things that you have suggested for him!

HAMAN My king...?

XERXES Go! Hurry! ...Now I'll never get to sleep!

Song: IF THE LORD HAD NOT BEEN ON OUR SIDE

LITTLE GIRL Mordecai! Hadassah! Our people have been saved! You did it!

MORDECAI No! The Lord our God... Jehovah did it!

ALL JEWS

If the Lord had not been on our side,
O let all of Israel say,
If it had not been the Lord who was on our side
When men rose up against us,
Then they would have swallowed us up,
When their wrath was kindled at us.
Then the waters would have overwhelmed us all
And the torrent would have swept over us.
The raging waters would have swept us away.

(Shout)

Hey!

(Sing)

O blessed be the Lord who has not
Let us be a prey to their teeth.
Our souls have flown like a bird
From the snare of the fowler.
The snare is broken and we have escaped.
Our help is in the name of the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth,
Who turned mourning into dancing
And turned sackcloth into joy.

(Shout)

Hey!