

ABRAHAM'S JOURNEY

A PERSONAL CALL FROM GOD

A COMPOSITION FOR DANCERS, MUSICIANS,
AND VOICES IN PRAISE AND
LOVE FOR GOD

ACT 1 The Journey 10-15 minutes

1. The Call- After everyone is seated, the church becomes dark and people enter from the back of the sanctuary. The voices at this point are located around the church. One male voice whispers "ABRAM", there is slight rustling, ^{percussion} louder whispers until it is a voice and rustling becomes greater. Finally, a candle is lit by Abraham and he says "What Lord?" The voice says, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:1-3). The candles are lit by the dancers one by one and they circle in and out of each other, with murmurings of their voices.

2. The Journey-A five minute piece of music accompanies the journey which is done down all three isles by all of the dancers, including men, women, and children. Voices sing, Woman: For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant.
Man: And he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:
Woman: And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people:
Man: That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws.
All Voices Together: Praise ye
Praise ye
Praise ye the Lord. (Psalm 105:42-5)

The journey weaves in and out of the isles towards the altar with people holding back, until the light becomes brighter as they arrive at the altar. At the approach of the dancers to the altar, a Woman's Voice says:
"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)

3. The Arrival-All dancers meet on the altar, some on the stairs, there is silence for a long moment. A Man's Voice reads: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: there fore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers." (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)

The dancers gather sticks to build an altar, one stick to a dancer and in a circle begin a circle dance around altar. The voices have gathered together in one place and sing, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host the earth; and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. Thou art the Lord the God who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham; And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and has performed thy words; for thou art righteous." (Nehemiah 9:6-8)

Everyone ends kneeling and bowing in prayer.

ACT II The Family 10-15 minutes

1. Abraham and Company-The dancers begin setting up tent. As the dancers appear to be exchanging conversation, a kind of square dance with dancers on the steps doing the same movements as people behind them, simultaneous duets, trios, and solos, the woman's and man's voices are singing, —

Woman: By faith, Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Man: By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

Woman: For he looked for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Man: Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed and was delivered of a child when she was past age because she judged him faithful who had promised

Both: Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. (Hebrews 11:8-12)

The dancers gradually all disappear until Abraham and Sarah are the only ones left standing on the steps together.

2. Abraham and Sarah-A duet to music

Before duet begins, as Abraham and Sara present themselves on steps, a woman reader

reads in silence: For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered.

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. (1 Peter 3:5-9)

The duet begins with Sara not believing that she and Abraham can have a child. Then she makes motions of being pregnant and turns her back to audience as Abraham is pacing back and forth like an expectant father. Sarah turns around rocking her arms as if she has a baby in them. She goes to put the baby down and Isaac (another

dancer) appears on the floor rolled up in a ball. Isaac grows up in front of them and there is a trio. Isaac then joins the other children as they appear one by one from different corners of front. *✓ goes to them in another place*

3. Children's Dance-in Song- There follows to voices a children's dance which consists of games such as leap-frog and tag and ends up in fighting and playing until all the children are so exhausted they fall down and sleep and everything becomes dark again except for spotlight on Isaac. *The Medium-Menotti - what kids would sing playing*

ACT III The Sacrifice

10-15 minutes

1. The Angel of the Lord-A candle is lit in the back to a woman dressed in white. A voice reads: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Genesis 22:2)

Solo of Angel to music about three minutes long. It takes place in the center aisle. She comes up to Abraham and hugs him. Abraham is shaking with fear, but bows down. The Angel then disappears to the side but the candle remains lit and she is watching. The lights come on dim during her solo and the candle is lit again at the end of the solo.

2. Abraham, Isaac, and Sara Journey to Sacrifice- It begins with music as Sarah will not let go of Isaac. Abraham pulls him away and carries him on journey in half-light. Music continues as meanwhile two dancers are raising cross (wooden) in another part of sanctuary to a standing position. The voices sing as they approach the cross. Abraham slows down, staring fixedly at the cross-----

Voices Singing: They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly:
 Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath
 prepared for them a city.
 By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that
 had received the promises offered up his only begotten son
 Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:
 Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead:
 from whence also he received him in a figure. (Hebrews 11:14-19)

3. The Cross and the Sacrifice-in silence Abraham carries Isaac up to the
 cross and binds him to the cross with rope. He then gathers sticks and piles
 them in front of the cross. He stretches forth his hand to slay him with a knife
 and the Angel appears behind the cross and prevents his hand. The Angel then lifts
 Isaac off the cross. The male voice reads: "Lay not thine hand upon the lad,
 neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing
 thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." (Genesis 22:12)

Half the singers sing: Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made.
 He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one,
 And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

The other half sing: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels
 for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour,
 that he by the grace of God should taste death for every
 man. (Hebrews 2:9)

During these voices Abraham, Isaac and the Angel stand absolutely still. The
 cross appears alone in the spotlight in silence- for a long pause-----

ACT IV The Blessing 10-15 minutes

Beginning- Angel goes to Abraham with Blessing - I will

1. The Blessing-The long pause ends with music beginning. The Angel walks *I will*
 off to the back of the church. Abraham and Isaac recover themselves and one by *bles*
 one the other dancers reappear saying together, "And the Scripture was fulfilled
 which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness:
 and he was called the Friend of God." (James 2:23)

Form A B B A

The dancers start moving around slowly weaving in and out of each other, using repetition and levels while a man's voice sings:

For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel after those days saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying 'Know the Lord'; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 8:10-13)

From the altar all of the dancers descend the steps around the church with Abraham Isaac, and Sarah remaining on the stairs.

2 Praising God. The Round- After all of the dancers have reached their places, all of the voices read: He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations which covenant he made with Abraham and his oath unto Isaac. (Psalm 105) Then the round begins: Half the voices begin: I will bless you, and I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore.

The other half of the voices sing: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

This becomes a round with half the dancers and half the singers taking each part in song and movement. until at the end it blends into the same movement and song. The dancers and singers gather up front and in a parade file out down the front aisle.

The End