

"Second Chance" - An Easter Play for Children

Music starts - "Nimrod", from "Enigma Variations". Mary Magdalen and two other women walk up the aisle and come to the tomb.

0.50 They arrive and look into the tomb

Magdalen The stone's been rolled away, look it's been rolled away

Mary Don't go in; I'm frightened

Magdalen goes in and find the cloths; she then comes out

Magdalen He's gone; Jesus is gone. They've stolen his body

Mary Where've they taken him

Magdalen I don't know. We'll have to go and tell Peter and the others.

They rush away. Music stops at 2.04

The 11 disciples approach the altar in small groups, looking aimless , their heads bowed. They sit or stand at different parts of the sanctuary

James 1 I still don't believe all this is happening; it's like a bad dream.

Philip It's not a dream, James, it has happened.

Bartholomew It was so good, being together, with him; it made you feel alive, like something really special had happened to you. Now it's all over.

Simon Why did he have to leave us? Why did he let them do that to him? He didn't have to.

Matthew Look, it's not him who left us, we left him. We were scared; we let him down; we deserted him.

Peter I can never forgive myself, never. I'll never be able to live with myself after what I've done.

Matthew Me neither.

Peter I'm the one who promised, no swore, I would never deny him. You know me, always the proud one, always have to be right. "though all these others deny you, I will never deny you," I said, "never", "never". Now look at me, not once, but three times in the same night.

Andrew Don't blame yourself, brother. We're all ashamed; we've all failed him.

Peter If we only had a second chance, to do it again, a second chance, so that we
happen to us. could make it right, and stay with him, no matter what would
that time How could we have done that, just left him, denied him after all
together; how could we?

Thomas Well we did, and that's the end of it, the end of it all as far as I'm
concerned.

Thaddaeus John went back, though, didn't you, John?

John I just wanted to say "sorry", you know for abandoning him like we did; I
wanted to be with him at the end. It was awful, truly awful. He didn't
deserve it; he didn't deserve to die, not like that, like a common criminal.
He'd done nothing wrong.

Thaddaeus He wasn't supposed to go and die on us; he was supposed to save us. He
promised us and we trusted him. I've never trusted anyone like that in my
life.

John But he was supposed to die, Thaddaeus; that's what he said all along, that
he would have to die, and we didn't believe him; we didn't understand
what he was really saying to us.

James 2 Well I blame Judas, if you ask me; if it wasn't for Judas, none of this
state. would have happened. Jesus would still be here, and we wouldn't be in this

Matthew Don't blame Judas, James; it wasn't his fault.

James 2 Wasn't his fault? Course it was his fault. He betrayed us; he betrayed Jesus
- brought the soldiers right up to him.

Matthew They would have found him anyway; they were looking hard enough.
Perhaps Judas thought he'd be safe if he was taken into custody, away
from the mob.

Bartholomew Anyway, Judas has paid the price now, so don't be blaming him. We're all
to blame. We only want to blame Judas because we're feeling guilty.

Andrew What can we do now? We can't stay cooped up in this room for ever.

Peter I suppose we'll just have to go back, back home, eventually. They've probably forgotten what we look like. My wife told me I was stupid in the first place just coming after him and leaving her, but you couldn't do anything else, could you?

Andrew No, you couldn't. We all felt it. That attraction, that need to follow him wherever he went, even to the end, to the end.

James 1 Well, the end has come, now, so there's nothing else to do except go back.

Matthew I can hardly go back to being a tax collector now, can I?

James 1 No Matthew, you'll have to come with us; we'll find you a job, if there are any jobs left for us. The boats will still be there, but someone's probably been fishing our waters while we've been away.

Thaddaeus We'll have to go back. There's nothing else to do now.

Thomas Well, he's gone, and that's the end of it as far as I'm concerned; it's all come to nothing - three years of a complete waste of time.

Philip Don't say that, Thomas, think of all the good he did, all the people he healed, all those he told about God and his love. That wasn't a waste.

Thomas Well, I'm going home. I don't see the point of hanging around here. It was all a big mistake if you ask me, trusting him, just one big mistake.

John Don't talk like that, Thomas, you make us all out to be fools.

Thomas Well we were, weren't we? And now we know it, but we don't want to admit it. I'm not making a fool of myself any more; I'm going home, to try to start again.

Simon Please don't go, Thomas, not yet, please.

Thomas Look, I've really got to get out of here; I need to get away. I'll come back in a day or two to see if you're all right. Will you still be here?

Simon Probably, I don't know.

Thomas Well, I'll see you, then.... Look, for what it's worth, thanks.

Thomas exits

Philip What do you think we should do, Peter?

Peter It's silly sitting around here frightened to go out; it's Sunday morning - it's been three days now. Maybe that lot out there will have forgotten about us by now, and we could slip away without being noticed

John Maybe we should stay just a bit longer, you know, just in case.

James 2 Just in case what?

John You know, what he said, about rising from the dead after three days

James 2 Rising from the dead, that's crazy.

John He did say it, didn't he, and let's face it, everything else he said came true.

Andrew Don't be stupid. Whoever heard of anyone rising from the dead?

Philip What about Lazarus? He did, didn't he?

Andrew Lazarus wasn't really dead at all.

Philip Yes he was, Andrew. He was all bound up in the tomb and Martha didn't want Jesus to go in because he might smell.

John Perhaps we should wait a bit longer; there can be no harm in it, can there? Who is to say what might happen?

Peter If we only had a second chance; everyone should have a second chance when they've made a mess of things, to put it right, to do it again. If only...

John If only.....

Magdalen runs up the aisle and bursts into the room.

Magdalen Peter, he's gone; Jesus is gone

Peter What do you mean, gone

Magdalen We went to the tomb to anoint his body. We thought we'd ask some of the guards to move the stone away so that we could get in, but when we arrived, the stone was moved. We went in and he was gone. Someone's taken him away.

Peter I'm going to find out. James and John come with me. The rest of you wait here.

They all exit to the sides and Peter, James and John run down the middle aisle. They get to the sanctuary and go into the tomb. John looks at the cloths lying on the ground and Peter rushes in. He comes out amazed. The music starts up again and at 2.43 they meet Jesus. A look of sheer disbelief comes over them and they fall at his feet.

Jesus Greetings. Don't be afraid. Go and tell the others that they must leave for Galilee. They will see me there.

They back off and run away. Jesus exist to the side and the other disciples come back on to the sanctuary. They arrive back at 3.30.

Peter He's alive; he's alive. Jesus is alive. I've seen him for myself.

James 1 Wounds in his hands and feet. It's really him.

John He's risen from the dead, just as he said he would.

The disciples huddle together with fear at first, then their faces light up with joy. As the music reaches its crescendo at 3.55, they grasp hands, and Peter stands up.

Peter A second chance, a second chance!

Music fades at 4.21.