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Ready?

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Ready?¹
A liturgical drama based on Matthew 25: 1-13
A play for actors and singers by John Steven Paul
Developed in workshop by Soul Purpose,
The Liturgical Drama Troupe of the Valparaiso University Theatre
First performance: Sunday, November 10, 2002, the Chapel of the Resurrection
Revised April 12, 2003

The Characters:

One, <i>a male</i>	Six, <i>a female</i>
Two, <i>a female</i>	Seven, <i>a male</i>
Three, <i>a male</i>	Eight, <i>a male</i>
Four, <i>a female</i>	Nine, <i>a female</i>
Five, <i>a female</i>	Ten, <i>a male</i>

The Bridegroom

Prologue

One:

Ready?

Six:

Ready?

Two:

Ready.

Seven:

Ready for what?

Three:

Ready for the beginning?

¹ *Ready?* has been published in *ARTS* 15:1 2003.

Eight:

Ready for the end?

Ten.

The end of what?

Eight.

Just the end.

Knocking heard.

Five.

What's that knocking?

Two.

What knocking?

One.

It's nothing. C'mon.

Pause

Four:

Ready?

Nine:

Ready?

Five:

Ready.

Ten:

Ready for what?

Two:

Ready for the wedding.

One:

Ready to sing.

Six:

Ready to dance.

Eight.

Like it's the end of the world, yeah!

Ten.

Yeah, go for it!

Knocking heard again.

Five.

There it is again.

Nine.

There's nothing.

Three.

No, I heard it too.

One.

C'mon. It's your imagination. (*Pause.*) Ready?

Nine:

Ready?

Five:

Ready.

Ten:

Ready for what?

Two:

Ready to go, to commence, to get on with it.

Seven:

Ready for some sun?

Five.

Where did the summer go?

Three:

Ready for the darkness?

Four.

It gets dark so early now.

Eight:

Ready to die?

Five.

What? What are you talking about?

Two.

Yeah, don't bring that up now, *especially* now.

Eight:

OK...uhm...ready for *the Kingdom*?

Seven:

I guess. What's the kingdom like, anyway?

Knocking heard again.

ii. Parable

Bridegroom:

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to

Ten:

“Ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.”

Three.

That sounds like the King James version...version....virgin....get it?

Ten:

Okay, fine. Now, where was I? Oh, yes. *Five* of them were foolish....

One:

...and five were wise. OK...you, you, uhm, you, and...you. (He points to two, three, four, and five.) Five wise (indicating GROUP ONE) and five foolish (indicating GROUP TWO). OK, let's go meet the B.G.

Three:

The whaa--?

One:

The Bridegroom.

Three:

Oh, yeah. Let's go.

Six:

Wait, that's not fair. Get me a bat. (*Somebody tosses in a baseball bat and ONE and SIX place hand upon hand to the top. SIX wins.*) Now, five were wise (*pointing to GROUP TWO*) and five were foolish (*pointing to GROUP ONE*).

Both groups.

(*In unison*) Five wise (*indicating themselves*); five foolish (*indicating the others.*)

All:

(ad lib) Whatever. OK, let's go.

Nine:

Where are we going?

Three:

To the wedding!

Eight:

Oh no, I think I, uh, *misplaced* my invitation.

Nine:

No you *didn't* here it is. *(Gives it to him)*

Eight:

Phew.

One:

OK, ready? *(They all produce their invitations.)*

All:

Ready. *(ONE leads GROUP ONE away.)*

Six:

(Calls GROUP TWO together, quietly.) Got your extra oil? *(They nod, silently.)* OK, let's go.

After taking different, circuitous routes around the playing area, the two GROUPS reassemble center.

They approach a large single door held by another actor up stage center.

One.

Well, look who's here!

Six.

So we meet again!

Eight

Got your invitations? (*GROUP TWO shows invitations.*)

Nine.

Got your lamps? (*GROUP ONE shows lamps*)

(*long pause.*)

Two.

Hoh-kay...Where is he?

Four.

Delayed, I guess.

Five.

(*to Three*) Go see what you can find out. (*THREE exits*)

One.

(*making conversation, ad lib*) Nice dress...for a virgin.

Nine.

(*to One*) Where'd you get that lamp?

Eight.

Big Lots. You?

Nine.

Bloomingdale's.

Eight.

Oh, yeah.

Ten.

What time is it?

Seven.

8:34 PM

Ten.

Thank you.

Seven.

And 43 seconds.

Six.

What time is it now—

Seven.

Eight-thirty-four and 52--

Three.

(re-enters) Hey y'all. The Bridegroom...

All (not THREE):

Yes?

Three.

...will be delayed.

All (not THREE):

Oh.

Four.

Told ya.

One.

Until when?

Three.

I don't know. They're taking pictures.

Seven.

Oh, man...

Six.

Well, let's make ourselves comfortable.

Seven.

Good idea.

Ten.

Man, this floor is hard.

Three.

Can I borrow your jacket?

Nine.

No.

Three.

Thanks, for nothing.

Six..

Shhhhh.

They fall off to sleep.

Time passes.

*A trumpet fanfare blares. A cry is heard **“Behold the bridegroom is coming. Go out to meet him.”***

The virgins awake and scramble to prepare themselves. Their lamps have all gone out. GROUP TWO pulls out Pennzoil bottles (yellow) from their bags pour oil in their lamps and restart them.

GROUP ONE has no way to re-light their lamps.

One.

Hey my lamp's out. Do you have any extra—

Two.

No.

One.

Oh. (to THREE) You?

Three.

No.

One.

Oh (to FOUR and FIVE) You?

Four & Five.

No. You?

Group One.

No.

Fanfare repeated.

One.

Say...

Group One.

(To Group TWO) "Give us some of your oil for our lamps are going out."

Group Two.

“No, lest there not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.”

Two.

Well, thanks a *lot*.

Five.

That’s not very friendly of you.

Seven.

I don’t see the adjective “friendly” used anywhere in this parable.

Eight.

That’s right. We’re wise and you’re (indicating condescendingly to Four that she should finish the sentence)...?

Four.

Mad! Let’s go.

Three.

Where?

One.

Wal-mart?

Four.

(snobby) Bloomingdale’s

Two.

That’s in Chicago.

Four.

Well, at least, Marshall Field’s.

Three.

How about Target?

Five.

Good. Let's go.

Two.

Wait, what if the Bridegroom comes while we're gone?

Three.

He'll just have to wait for us. We can't go in without lamps. How would that look?

One.

And He can't have the wedding party without us, can he?

Three.

Of course not. What fun would that be?

Two.

Let's hurry anyway.

They exit.

Shortly after, the Bridegroom, enters, accompanied by lots of noise. Group TWO follows in procession entering the wedding place.

TWO, who has come back ahead of the rest of GROUP ONE, enters.

Six.

(Turning back.) Where have you been?

Two.

Trying to buy lamp oil.

Six.

Now you're too late. I'll miss you terribly. Come with me now.

Two.

(hesitates) But what about the...

Six.

Don't be foolish. I have to go.

Two.

Wait—

Six goes in. The door closes hard behind her.

The rest of GROUP ONE returns.

One.

All right, everybody ready?

Three.

This is going to be *great!*

Two.

The door's closed.

One.

Well...of course. That's because...it's cold out here.

Four.

(to Five) Go knock.

FIVE goes to knock. There is no answer. She is joined by Four. Still no answer. Then by ONE and then THREE.

GROUP ONE.

Lord, Lord. Open to us!

Still no answer. Finally TWO comes to the door and knocks by herself. The door opens. The rest of GROUP ONE is relieved. Then a hand comes out and gives a note to TWO.

Door closes.

She reads it silently and drops it. ONE picks it up and reads...

One.

“Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.”

Door opens again. Hand comes out. Gives a note to TWO. TWO reads...

Five.

“Watch therefore for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

GROUP ONE finds itself outside the door.

iii. Point

One.

You know, I've never liked this story.

Two.

Why not?

One.

Well, no matter how you tell it, somehow somebody gets left out.

Five.

That's the point, isn't it?

One.

I didn't say I didn't get it. I said, I didn't *like* it.

Four.

It feels kind of....

Three.

Final?

Four

Yeah, and ah...ah-pah ...ah-pah-cah--

Five

Apocalyptic?

Four.

Yeah, that. At least it's not the end of the *world*.

Five.

(looks at Four incredulously, then)...fool!

Two.

Hey, come on, you two we've got to stick together. (*Five will **not** make up with Four.*)

One.

It's *not* the end of the world.

Two:

People always say that, "it's not the end of the world." Why do they always say that?

One:

Well, because it isn't.

Three:

But what if it is?

Four:

What?

Three:

The end of the world.

Five:

It's not life or death.

Two:

People always say that, too.

Three:

And what if it is?

Five:

Life?

Three:

Or death.

One:

It's only one wedding...right? And we're young.

Five:

There's always another wedding. I've got a drawer full of invitations.

Two:

That door closed awfully hard.

Three:

What did that note say, again?

Two:

It says "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."

Three:

That's...what I was afraid of.

Four:

Now what?

One:

I don't know about you, but I'm going to get out of these clothes.... Play some ball...or some...thing. (*He sits down.*)

Five:

Yeah, me too. I'm outta here. (*She sits down.*)

Two:

(*To ONE*) Jon. I feel...creepy.

One:

Like it's the end of the world?

Two.

Like there will be no more weddings...except, that one. In there.

Five.

Only funerals.

Four.

How come the other five got in and we're left out here in the cold?

Two.

Because they were ready.

Five:

And because, if you recall, we weren't here when the Bridegroom came. We were at Target. They were all out of oil, but *you* just *had* to have a look at the pajamas. Remember?

Four.

I know.

One.

But I *was* ready... once. Who knew he'd be gone so long? How much more ready could I have been?

Two.

You could have been reconciled to your brothers and sisters.

One.

I am. Except...for.... Well there is.... And then.... OK, that's a point.

Five.

You could have stopped all that lusting!

Three.

Why are you looking at me?

Five.

You know why. And I quote, "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away."

Three.

I know. You're right.

One.

Do not swear...

Four

At all? Ever?

One.

At all.

Three.

(to FIVE) If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.

Five.

If there's one thing I've got to burn, it's cheek!

Four.

(to TWO) Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Two.

(defensive) I love my friends.

Four.

That's too easy.

One.

It's not like He didn't tell us. "The blessed ones," He said are...

Two.

Merciful

1, 3.

Hungry and thirsty for righteousness.

1, 3,4.

Pure in heart.

1,3-5

Peace-makers

Three.

Not just once in a while.

Four.

Or, “mostly.”

Five.

But for the long run.

One.

Because nobody knows the day or the hour.

Two.

We could have been ready.

One.

But let’s face it,

1-5

We weren’t.

Pause

Two.

So, that’s it then.

Three.

No more weddings.

Four.

What am I going to do with this dress?

Five.

(going to One.) I'm cold. So cold.

Two.

It's the time of year.

One.

Funny. I thought I'd be hot, you know. Flames and ... like that.

iv. Postlude

The door opens. The BRIDEGROOM appears. He descends to GROUP ONE.

One.

Who are you?

Bridegroom.

(shrugging) Nobody.

Two.

I've seen you before.

Bridegroom

I'm the, uh, ... the Bridegroom.

Five.

Oh sure. A wise guy, huh?

Two.

He is wearing a tux. *You are* the Bridegroom.

Three.

Really?

Bridegroom.

Yup.

One.

So you were in there (*points to door*). Up there.

Bridegroom.

(*Nods "yes."*)

Four.

Were you having a good time?

Bridegroom.

A divine time. You have no idea. Too bad you missed it.

An uncomfortable pause.

Four.

Why'd you leave?

Five.

Got kicked out, did you?

Bridegroom.

Not exactly.

One.

Then why are you out here? Down...here?

Bridegroom.

So I can be with you.

Five.

Fool!

One.

Hey, weren't you listening back there?

Bridegroom.

She's right.

Five.

(catching herself) No; I'm sorry; I'm beyond redemption.

Three.

Aren't we all? What difference does it make now anyway?

Bridegroom.

Ask and it will be given you.

One.

I'm afraid not. Haven't you read this story? We're the Famous Foolish Virgins of Matthew 25. We're toast.

Five.

Stick a fork in us.

Four.

Huh?

Five.

We're done.

Two.

We're weeping.

Three.

Moaning.

Five.

Gnashing our teeth.

Bridegroom.

Search and you will find.

One.

You're stuck back there in chapter seven. Up on the mount.

Bridegroom.

Nope. I'm already up to chapter 28. "Remember I am with you always to the end of the age."

Five.

Even here?

Bridegroom.

I descended into Hell.

Five.

Whose fault was that?

Bridegroom.

Yours. Everybody's. You weren't ready. You *won't* be ready.

One.

We won't be ready. But you're here anyway.

Bridegroom.

Doesn't sound very wise, does it?

Five.

Sounds downright...foolish.

One.

Knock and it shall be opened unto you?

Knocking heard.

Bridegroom.

Keep knocking.

END