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Dramatic Publishing

THE FOURTH WISE MAN

A Play with Music

by

**JOY CHAITIN, MARILYN D. ANDERSON and
SARAH STEVENS-ESTABROOK**

Music arranged by

JOY CHAITIN

and

SARAH STEVENS-ESTABROOK

Based on

The Story of the Other Wise Man

by

HENRY VAN DYKE



Dramatic Publishing

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JOY CHAITIN, MARILYN D. ANDERSON, and
SARAH STEVENS-ESTABROOK

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HENRY VAN DYKE

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(THE FOURTH WISE MAN)

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No one knows exactly how many Wise Men actually came to visit the Christ Child. This play is based on *The Story of the Other Wise Man*, written by Henry Van Dyke over a century ago.

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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

Scene I: The Temple of the Seven Spheres

Scene II: In Artaban's yard; the same night

Scene III: On the road; the next night

Scene IV: An oasis; three days later

Scene V: The Temple of the Seven Spheres; three days later

Scene VI: Slave market; that day

Scene VII: The Temple of the Seven Spheres; the next night

Scene VIII: On the road to Bethlehem; two days later

Scene IX: Manger; two days later

Approximate running time: 30 minutes

THE FOURTH WISE MAN

A Play with Music
For 10-20 men, 10-20 women

CHARACTERS (In order of appearance)

HASSAN (m), a servant, 50s
KASPAR, an old man
MELCHIOR, a nobleman, 40s
BALTHAZAR, a heavy-set man, late 30s
ARTABAN (m), about 30
OBED, THE CAMEL (2 actors)
SAID
NABIEL
FARIDEH, Artaban's mother
JACKALS 1 & 2
KAREEM (m)
SHEPHERDS 1, 2 & 3
SHEEP
FOUAD (m), slave trader, 40s
RAHAB, a 10-year-old girl
NASSEIM, a 9-year-old boy
MARTA, a 12-year-old girl
ASA, Marta's 6-year-old brother
TAMAR (f)
HABIBAH, Tamar's 8-year-old daughter
SOLDIER
MARY
JOSEPH
ANGEL CHOIR

**For Gil, Ken and Gray,
our three wise men.**

THE FOURTH WISE MAN

SCENE ONE

SETTING: *Music up. Song No. 1: "We Three Kings of Orient Are." Lights up to reveal meeting room in the Temple of the Seven Spheres, R. A table is set with a platter of pita, dishes of olives and various vegetable mixtures and a bowl of fruit, all of which are surrounded by an assortment of scrolls, maps and charts.*

AT RISE: *HASSAN is looking out the window, L. KASPAR is bent over a scroll. MELCHIOR is kneeling in front of a coffer of gold, counting its contents. BALTHAZAR is helping himself to the food.*

KASPAR. Hassan! How many times do I have to tell you?
Get away from the window!

HASSAN. I'm sorry, Master. I was just ...

BALTHAZAR. He wanted to be the first one to see it, that's all.

HASSAN. I was just trying to help. *(To BALTHAZAR.)*
You know the Master's eyes ...

BALTHAZAR. There's nothing wrong with his eyes.

MELCHIOR. They're just tired. He's been studying that scroll for so long ...

KASPAR. ...and the writing is so faint... *(Reads.)* "...a baby shall be born of such importance that God will send a star to mark his birthplace!" *(He goes to the win-*

dow and looks out. Pause.) How much more important could a baby be?

BALTHAZAR. In that case, the star will be so bright, we won't be able to miss it!

MELCHIOR. And when it does appear, it will beckon us to follow it.

KASPAR (*returning to table*). Just think what it would be like to be the first one to meet him! (*Reads.*) "... and the star will mark the birthplace of a new king!"

MELCHIOR. I'll kneel in front of him, and say, "Your Highness, please accept my gift of gold."

BALTHAZAR (*raising urn*). And mine of frankincense!

KASPAR. And mine of myrrh!

MELCHIOR. Then what's left for Artaban to bring?

BALTHAZAR. You mean, assuming he even gets here?

KASPAR. If his mother lets him come! (*They laugh.*)

HASSAN (*back at the window*). Master?

MELCHIOR. I don't think he's ever been in the right place at the right time!

BALTHAZAR. Let alone bringing the right thing.

HASSAN. Master?

KASPAR. What is it, Hassan?

MELCHIOR. He probably isn't even looking at the sky!

(HASSAN points. Offstage CHOIR sings Song No. 2.)

CHOIR. "Star of wonder, star of night..."

KASPAR (*runs to window*). There it is!

MELCHIOR. Look!

(Offstage CHOIR sings Song No. 3.)

CHOIR. "Star with royal beauty bright!"

(CHOIR hums remainder of Song No. 3 under following dialogue. BALTHAZAR consults diagrams.)

BALTHAZAR. Just like the scroll predicted!

MELCHIOR. So now what do we do?

KASPAR. Just what we planned. Hassan! Start packing!
(He starts gathering up scrolls, etc.)

MELCHIOR. But what about Artaban? What if he doesn't see it?

KASPAR. We already agreed. If he's not here by a week from tonight, we're leaving without him.

SCENE TWO

(Crossfade: out on Temple; up on ARTABAN, L. He is also consulting a scroll, which is rolled out on a pouf. Just DL of him is his camel, OBED.)

ARTABAN *(to OBED)*. A week... That's not much time. You think we can get there in a week? *(OBED nods.)* You have so much confidence, my friend. It's a long way to the Temple of the Seven Spheres. *(He looks up.)* If only the sky would clear, and we could see the stars! I'm afraid it's there, and we'll miss it! It's bad enough everybody thinks I'm crazy.

(Spot on SAID and NABIEL, UC.)

SAID. Artaban, you're a dreamer! A fool!

NABIEL. This is just going to be another wild goose chase.
ARTABAN. No, it won't!

(Spot up on FARIDEH, UL.)

FARIDEH. Artaban, why can't you just stay home and be a shepherd, like your father?

ARTABAN. Because if this star really does signal the birth of a Prince of Peace, I want to follow it! *(Spots out. To OBED.)* Wouldn't you? *(OBED nods.)* What could be more important than greeting the Prince of Peace? The baby who will grow up to be King of the Jews? *(OBED lifts his head, as if detecting a change in the air.)* Nothing! Let them make fun of me! *(Taking a pouch out of his robe.)* So what if I sold my house for a sapphire? My furniture for a ruby? And my sheep for a pearl? A king deserves the best that money can buy! Right? *(He empties the jewels out of the pouch and shows them to OBED.)* Right! *(OBED lifts his head to the sky.)* Hm... It's clearing... Obed, look!

(ARTABAN points. Offstage CHOIR sings Song No. 4.)

CHOIR. "Star of wonder, star of night..."

ARTABAN. Do you see it?

(Offstage CHOIR sings Song No. 5.)

CHOIR. "Star with royal beauty bright!" *(Music continues.)*

ARTABAN *(over music)*. That's it! It has to be! *(He picks up scroll and puts it in saddlebag; puts bag on OBED.)*

We need to get going! (*Puts jewels in pouch and pouch back in his pocket.*) Up, Obed! (*OBED stands up.*) Let's go! (*ARTABAN leads OBED off. Lights fade.*)