JOSEF TAL

JOSEF

OPERA IN TWO ACTS (1993)

LIBRETTO: ISRAEL ELIRAZ

SCORE

VOLUME I

IMI 6970
PRONUNCIATION KEY

A = as in Albinoni
AY = EI as in Lorelei
CH = as in China
E = as in Enesco
H = CH as in Bach
I = as in Ibert
K = as in King
KH = guttural K
S = as in Sibelius
SH = SCH as in Schubert
TZ = TS as in Tsar
U = OO as in Oodels
V = as in Vivaldi
Y = J as in Johann
Z = as in Zoo
VOLUME I
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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Herman Family:  Father, Yakov (aged 65) - bass
                Mother (same age) - soprano
                Josef*, the son (aged 30) - tenor
                Frieda, the daughter (aged 22, with child) - soprano
                Rubi, her husband (same age) - tenor

Lena, bank clerk, Josef's girl-friend (aged 30) - mezzo-soprano
Doctor (aged 60) - baritone
Police officer (aged 55) - bass-baritone
Max, manager at the bank (aged 30) - baritone

Gate-keeper - baritone
2 Customers
2 Jailers
2 Murderers
2 Male Nurses from psychiatric hospital
Waitress
Street Cleaner
Strolling Musicians
Paper Sellers (boys)
Town people, clerks, emigrants (choir)
Mice (choir - ballet)

* In Hebrew the name Josef is pronounced Yosséf

THE STAGE

The stage comprises several acting levels at various heights, looks rather like a topographical map.
The scenes take place on the various levels of the stage. At times scenes take place simultaneously.
The opera is divided into scenes which follow one another without pause.
The curtain is up as the audience enters the theatre.
ORCHESTRATION

PICCOLO
2 FLUTES
2 OBOES/ENGLISH HORN
  CLARINET in E<sub>b</sub>
2 CLARINETS in B<sub>b</sub>
  BASS CLARINET
SOPRANO-SAXOPHONE/TENOR-SAXOPHONE
2 BASSOONS

4 HORNS in F
3 TRUMPETS in C
3 TROMBONES
TUBA

TIMPANI/GUIRO

PERCUSSION (4 players):

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<td>TUBULAR BELLS (Tub. Bls)</td>
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CELESTA
HARP

STRINGS

Accidentals valid within a whole bar, unless change indicated.
SCENE I. THE GATE DREAM

(Josef; the gate keeper)

(Empty stage.
Josef, in long underwear, enters holding a chair in his hand. He sits down and looks at the audience.
Gradual light on stage.)
(a gate descends)

-the gate keeper enters and stands erect in front of the gate-

Josef

Gate keeper

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.
(The keeper exits with the gate.
Josef cries out as if he was having a bad dream.
He kneels on the chair, wrapped up in himself.
Lights dim.)
SCENE II. THE CISTERN DREAM

(Two jailers, officer, Josef)

(Two jailers, with clubs, walk back and forth in front of a lattice which they bring in. Officer enters.)
(Josef's cry echoes back.
Two jailers exit with the lattice, officer marches them off.)
(exits)
SCENE III. THE ASSASSINS

(Two assassins, Josef)

Josef rises to escape and is confronted by two assassins. He passes them but they manage to trip him up with their feet and outstretched arms. Josef falls. They stand above him, passing a big knife from one to the other. They stop. One lifts the knife in order to stab Josef. Josef awakes shouting. The assassins vanish in the darkness. Light out on Josef, light on dining room.)
SCENE IV. THE DINING ROOM

(Father, mother, Frieda and Rubi)

(The family, about to conclude breakfast, is sitting around the table. Mother moves between kitchen and dining room. Father eats and reads the newspaper in front of him. Josef is absent.)
travolto

(travolto)

Perc. III

Mother

(travolto)

Father

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

(travolto)

Perc. III

Mother

(travolto)

Father

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

(a tempo)

(mother gives him the hat)

(a tempo)

(to Ruhi)
(The tower bell rings. Father checks his pocket-watch.)

Kisses Frieda lightly and exits.

Lights dims on kitchen where mother is still busy. Light beam on Josef sitting in his room, listening to Frieda's words that are addressed to the audience. As she finishes the light on Josef dims as well.)
SCENE V

(Frieda)

Frieda: Bevakar ha'ehad beyuni 1914, yom huладeto hashloshim, Josef mesarev lakum min hamita velavo el hashulhan. Ani lo mevina im ze bc'emet hamur. Ani menihu she'ed yavo'u d'varim hamurim yoter milavo-o-lo-lavo lashulhan. Kakh omrim.

Lo darki had'varim hofkhim lihyot sipur. Lo alay lasim seder bad'varim.


IMI 6970
(Father, Rubi, officer, two customers)

(Father and Rubi serve two customers. Father leads one woman, with a parcel in her hand, to the door.)

(Woman exits. Rubi concludes tying the parcel for second woman who pays the bill to father, who rings it in on the till.)

IMI 6970
(Rubi exits with woman, parcel in his hand.
Father alone, takes a bottle out of his pocket
and swallows some pills from it.)

(Rubi comes back and puts empty boxes back on shelves)

(Rubi ka-ze ka-ze shel kaf-to-rim ka-ri-yot ka-tet shel av-zamim shel si-kot shel kra-sim shel ha-go-
(They laugh. The door bell rings. A police officer enters.)

Rubi

Father

- mesh ha - hem

Officer

(to Rubi)

bo - ker tov Yu - ‘a - kov Her - man bo - ker

Father

IMI 6970
(they laugh)

 ze me-shal-mim li
 Her-man lo yi-ta-khen she-yesh le-kha be-mile re_ kaf tor mal - kha-

IMI 6970
(Father approaches, changes his spectacles, studies the buttons on the policeman's coat)

(Rubi climbs a ladder and brings the box. Father matches a button to those on officer's coat.)
(The tower bells strikes noon. Officer and father check their pocket-watches. They nod to each other and return the watches to their pockets.)

(father and Rubi exchange glances)
(officer lights a cigarette)

Father

risemen

parlando

hu lo?

perushed

(Father takes watch out and looks at it again. Rubi does the same.)

(Lights out. Darkness.)
SCENE VIa - UPHEAVAL AT THE SHOP
(orchestra)

Picc.

Cl. in Eb

Hn II

Hn IV

Tpt I

Tpt II

Tuba

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.
V

Perc.

Cl. in Eb

Hn II

Hn IV

Tpt I

Tpt II

Tuba

Perc. I

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

with sticks

with snare

pizz.
SCENE VII. THE BANK

(Max, Lena, typists, clerks)

(On various levels of the stage clerks are typing. A huge and varied noise fills the bank. Unseen doors slam; rows of clerks go up and down, with folders and papers in their hands. This ballet of labyrinthine bureaucracy continues for a while and then all exit, banging the doors shut.
After a while the light focuses on Max’s office. He is walking back and forth, angry. He dictates a letter to Lena, which she types on a big typewriter.)
(Silence. He wipes his forehead. (Lena types) He takes his hat and cane and exits quickly. She takes the letter out of the typewriter. Lights off office and stage.)

(Pauses)

(Al haletatum veikhade veikhode, Shishi rashum ve'al-yede shal'ah meyudah.)
SCENE VIII. THE KITCHEN

(Mother, Josef, Frieda)

(Mother enters with letter)
(Josef opens envelope, reads)

(He sets the letter on fire with a lighter.
Frieda rushes towards him, takes the burning letter from him and throws it on the floor, putting the fire out with her foot.
Josef takes the letter from her, sets it on fire again and holds it until it turns into ashes)
(She leaves him and helps mother to prepare a meal)
(Josef turns the soup plate upside down on the table)  
(cleans up quickly)  
(Josef smashes plate on the floor)
(throws the cloth at him and exits)

Frieda

Mother

Josef

Vlas I

Vlas II

Vlas

Vels

D.B.

Nake, h'azzed, he'atsmohut!

a-ta mav-hit et Frieda ze lo tov bish-vi-la le-hi-ba-hev a-ta

lo me-vi-na

lo me-vi-na

at lo me-vi-na
(Josef exits the kitchen to the backyard, lights a cigarette, smokes)
(Lights dim slowly on kitchen. A single light on Josef who listens to his mother speaking.)
Mother

— be'u-get ta-pu-him lo har-be yo-ter mi ze
SCENE IX. THE GARDEN
and later THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER
(Officer, Lena, Josef, town people, emigrants, Max)

(Noon. Passers by on the bridge. In the garden there are emigrants: men, women and children. Their clothes suggest that they are foreign and different from the local passers by on the bridge. The emigrants are surrounded by parcels and suitcases. A fight starts. People hit each other. It is very tense. As the officer enters they run towards him and surround him. Unintelligible voices and much noise. The officer pushes them off with disgust, cleans his uniform. He notices Lena who leans against the railings of the bridge at a distance. He approaches.)
(he looks at her attentively now, for the first time)
(he points at the river)

Officer

"-ma li-bish-ta-tot gev-ti? at mir-'et bo-se-dar ga-mur gev-ti

D.B.
(stops, laughs)
(Lena kisses his cheeks lightly, he salutes and laughs. She exits and he lights a cigarette.
Josef enters running. He makes his way not that easily, through the many emigrants.
Some try to cling to him, search his pockets. They steal his watch from him and remove
his hat. He reaches the officer, breathing heavily. Officer stops him.)
Perc. I
Perc. II
Perc. III
Perc. IV

with sticks

Officer

im a-ta me-ha - pes mi she - me-ha - pes ot-khu ze sham
(He points in the direction in which Lena left. Josef is about to exit but officer trips him. Josef falls.)
(Officer laughs. Offers him his hand and lifts him.)

Officer

Temp.

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

Officer

Temp.

Perc. II

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Officer

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

429

432

IMI 6970
Picc.  
Cl.  
Hns  
Perc. II  
Perc. III  
Perc. IV  
Officer  
Vla  
Vcl.  
D.B.  

ha·yi·ti   to·ke·'a   mas·mer  
u·vo·ne  
ha·yit  
le·kha  
dag  
ba·mikh·na·sa·yim?

IMI 6970
(Laughs rudely. Josef is about to hit him. Officer stops him easily and firmly.)
(Josef looks at his wrist and does not find the watch. Officer laughs, satisfied with this immediate proof.)
(Josef about to exit but officer trips him again and Josef falls.
Officer offers him a hand and lifts him, laughs.)

(Max enters. Searching. Approaches the officer and whispers something in his ear.
Officer replies in a whisper pointing in the opposite direction to the one which Josef took.
Max exits. Officer lights a cigarette.)

(Lights out. Darkness.)
(A small coffee table on wheels with a coffee set and a birthday cake with 30 lit candles on it. On the side, on a shelf, a big gramophone. A waltz record. Josef and Lena dance. She wears thin gloves. Occasionally he whispers something in her ear and she laughs. The dance continues for a while.)

LENA'S ROOM
(they dance)
(They dance until they reach the cake. They stop, laugh.
Josef blows the thirty candles out as Lena applauds.
Lights out. Darkness. Lights up immediately.
Some time passes.)

Josef blows the thirty candles out as Lena applauds.
(Lena sits, a cup of coffee in her hand, drinks. Josef smokes, at a distance. Silence.)
(Lena bursts into loud laughter. He does not join her. Lena stops.)
she-va sha-nim a-nah-nu nif'ga-shim be-yom

Yom shli-shi a-har ha-tzu-horayim
ve'a-ni ki-vi-ti she-yom e-had u-lay ha-
"Kshe’ani mahit bakh
ani ru’e lehavot esth’
kahh a-mar-ta
kahh a-mar-ta?

kahh a-mar-ti

Lena

Josef

Vla

Vcl.

T.-Sax.

B.Cl.

Bn I

Bn II

Trb.

parlando

parlando

parlando

Lena

Lena

parlando

parlando

"Kshe'ani mahit bakh
ani ru’e lehavot esth’
kahh a-mar-ta
kahh a-mar-ta?

kahh a-mar-ti

Lena

Josef

Vla

Vcl.

T.-Sax.

B.Cl.

Bn I

Bn II

Trb.

parlando

parlando

parlando

Lena

Lena

parlando

parlando

"Kshe’ani mahit bakh
ani ru’e lehavot esth’
kahh a-mar-ta
kahh a-mar-ta?

kahh a-mar-ti

Lena

Josef

Vla

Vcl.

T.-Sax.

B.Cl.

Bn I

Bn II

Trb.

parlando

parlando

parlando

Lena

Lena

parlando

parlando

"Kshe’ani mahit bakh
ani ru’e lehavot esth’
kahh a-mar-ta
kahh a-mar-ta?

kahh a-mar-ti

Lena

Josef

Vla

Vcl.

T.-Sax.

B.Cl.

Bn I

Bn II

Trb.

parlando

parlando

parlando

Lena

Lena

parlando

parlando

"Kshe’ani mahit bakh
ani ru’e lehavot esth’
kahh a-mar-ta
kahh a-mar-ta?

kahh a-mar-ti

Lena

Josef

Vla

Vcl.
(She laughs again. He looks at her in pain.)

(Josef doesn’t move. Lena approaches him and strokes his cheek.)

(Lights out. Darkness.)
SCENE XI. THE COFFEE HOUSE

(Josef, doctor, waitress, officer)

(Josef and doctor sit at a table, on the pavement, not far from the fishermen’s wharf.
Workers with nets, ropes and boxes occasionally pass by. The street cleaner sweeps.)
Doctor

Vln i

Vln ii

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.
(Waitress enters)

Ma'im minarall'im,
velekhna?

Ma'am'a'im ma'am'im
minarall'im.
(Waitress exits. Doctor examines Josef’s eyes.)
(takes Joseph's pulse)
(checks neck's gland)
Doctor
ve'na ta mahl lit la-ha-roset et atzimemekha ma n-ta me-nna-

Vln I
Vln II
Vla
Vcl.
D.B.
Picc.
Fl. II
Ob. I
Ob. II
Cl. in E
Cl. II
Bn I
Bn II
Tuba
Perc. I
Perc. III
(examines his ears)
(checks his shoulders and back of neck)
(Doctor takes a bottle of pills from his pocket and puts it in front of Josef)
(takes another bottle and places in front of Josef)
(breathes heavily)

al ma a · tu me · da · her

men · na · hel ha · bank he · ash − ray

solo
(Josef, with one stroke of his arm, sweeps all the bottles off the table and exits. The street cleaner sweeps up the scattered bottles. Doctor wipes his forehead with concern. Suddenly the officer stands beside him.)
(Doctor puts his hat on firmly. He looks at the sky and then at the sea.)
Scene XII. Josef's Room

(Evening.
Frieda enters with a tray of food which she puts on table.
A little light on kitchen where mother prepares the pie with a lot of care.
Josef, dressed, lies in bed.)
(Frieda sits on the bed, beside him)

Frieda

Josef

-shekh ze vu vim ve'akh-hu-rim

Frieda

a ta hole a ta mir' e a-

Josef

-yan

lekh lir'ut ro fe

ra ti gam
(Josef kisses her on her cheek)

Josef

hu ka va
she 'a ni ho ke
she 'a ni nir ye a yom
she 'a ni ho res et atz mi
(she goes to the tray, pouring, preparing a piece of bread)
shuv ve-shuv hoz-rim ha-lo-mot hoz- rim ve-hor-sim et mo- hi bo- i Fri- da
(she sits beside him, he hugs her and speaks to her)
Vcl. I
\textit{ff} p\textsubscript{sub.}

Vcl. II
\textit{ff} p\textsubscript{sub.}

Vcl. III
\textit{ff} p\textsubscript{sub.}

Vcl. IV
\textit{ff} p\textsubscript{sub.}

\textbf{B. Cl.}

\textbf{Josef}

\textbf{Frieda}

\textbf{Vcl. I}

\textbf{Vcl. II}

\textbf{Vcl. III}

\textbf{Vcl. IV}

\textbf{701}

\textbf{702}

IMI 6970
(Josef looks lost. He rises and takes the knife from the tray and almost stabs himself in the chest.)

(Frieda screams)
(He drops the knife. Hugs her warmly, almost crying.)
(hold his head in his hands) (bent with pain, revives)
(Frieda exits with tray. As the door slams the light shifts to the nightmare scene.)
SCENE XIII. NIGHTMARE SCENE

(Some mice enter the stage. In the beginning it seems as if they are playing with each other and with Josef like children having fun. Very quickly Josef realizes that they are chasing him and are a danger to him. He tries to get away from them. Wherever he turns, seeking escape - a mousetrap opens in front of him. Once or twice he manages to avoid getting caught. Eventually he is caught in a big trap. He is in and they are out. The mice dance happily. Josef pounds the walls...)

(orchestra)
beginning at centre, going to the rim
tremoli in irregular movements behind the bridge
over all four strings
<768>
Bn

Timp.

Perc. II

Perc. III

2 Congas (with sticks: high on the edge, low on the centre)

<771>
B.Cl.

Bn

Timp.

(p.p)

<774>
B.Cl.

Bn

Timp.

Cymb.

IMI 6970
(Lights out. Darkness.)
SCENE XIV. JOSEF’S ROOM, later SHOP and KITCHEN

(Josef, father, mother, Frieda)

Josif alone, wonders, appears bewildered, as if he has just woken from a dream. Looks around. He takes a mouse out of his pocket and frees it. After a short pause the door slams and father enters, with the same tray of food. Josef and father look at each other. Father is drunk.)
(Father puts down the tray. Takes a bottle from his pocket and offers Josef who refuses. Father drinks, belches.)
sul pont.

sul pont.

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(Father throws the bottle and breaks it. Josef stops.)

Ata nish'ar kan Ishmo' a
ma sheyesh li lomar lekha, ben.

le 'on a ta ho lekh?
(Light on shop. Rubi ties parcels. Light on kitchen as well.
Mother sits by the table and combs her hair languidly.
Frieda enters and hugs mother from behind.)
Fl. I

Ob. I

Hn I

Perc. III

Perc. IV

Mother

Frieda

Josef

Father

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.

shum da-var

le-yad

Vln I

Vln II

Vla

Vcl.

D.B.
(to Frieda) 
Le-nu bu-hu-ra me-tru-ye-net me-tru-ye-net at tir'i tir'i

(to mother) 
ma-har ha-kol ye-ra'-ye-ra'-e a a-

shum da-var.

sha

div. 

IMI 6970
(Father shakes Josef and suddenly Josef shakes father. The two wrestle, roll about exhaling.
Frieda braids her mother's hair. Light dims on kitchen. Light dims on shop.
Father rises, takes his belt off and lifts his arm to hit Josef.)