

PLAYBILL

BETH TZEDEC ZOOM THEATRE



Shul of Rock: Megillat Esther In Concert

March 17, 2022/14 Adar II 5782

7:30 PM

How Is This Purim Spiel Different from All Other Purim Spiels?



Purim is a particularly festive holiday. The Purim Spiel parody goes back centuries and in the internet age, it's easy to find an unlimited number of Purim spiel options characterized by taking the five primary characters and putting them into a fresh setting and rewriting dialogue and music for the cast to present (note to self: submarines and spaceships are still unexplored ideas).

Shul of Rock is not a parody. It is the Book of Esther faithfully translated to modern-English, performed in its entirety as a Juke Box Musical, taking place in Persia around 400 BCE using the music we grew up with, to make a 2500-year-old story fresh and relatable. We do not rewrite the lyrics. We do not sing those songs. We're good but we're not that good.

How is Shul of Rock Different from Last Year's "Motown: Megillat Esther"?

This year's music is mostly *live* performances and jumps from Beethoven to the Beatles to Broadway, classic rock to classical to country and western, in the order best suited to better understanding the Megillah.

Motown songs were amazing but, by definition, they excluded lots of musical genres and options. This production includes the most diverse musical selections of any of our programs.

For one winter night, there is no snow, ice, slippery sidewalks or freezing temperatures. The weather is perfect and we're all at our favourite outdoor concert arenas - together. While we won't be able to do the *Wave*, you can download a virtual lighter and be a visible part of our community.



Whether it's Ontario Place, Tanglewood, the Wollman Skating Rink, Jones Beach or elsewhere, everyone has unobstructed, centre-row floor seats to hear amazing *live* performances. Turn up your volume, watch on a big screen tv, set Zoom to *speaker view* and as they say, Bob's your uncle.

And please remember, live concerts have encores. So do we. It's not over until it's over. If we succeeded in getting you into a live concert mindset, you'll know when it's over and what's the encore.

Looking forward to seeing you soon, so please keep your cameras on.

—Larry Wallach February 9, 2022 / 9 Adar I, 5782

The Scroll of Esther – Overview

The Scroll of Esther opens in the third year of the reign of the King of Persia, Ahasuerus, who has been hosting a banquet for over 180 days. The wine is served “in abundance” with “no restrictions”.

His Queen, Vashti, is hosting a banquet for the women at the same time.

Ahasuerus is “merry with wine” and summons Vashti to his party to wear the royal tiara and display her beauty. There is some debate over whether the King wants Vashti to wear *only* her tiara, but regardless, Vashti declines.

The King and his advisers are panicked by the idea that Persian wives will imitate Vashti's willful disobedience (their panicked response perhaps heightened by their significant and steady consumption of wine) and thus begins a story told for centuries: the banishment of Vashti and the search for her replacement; Esther's selection as queen; Mordecai's perceived insolence to Haman; Haman's genocidal response which the King approves, Esther's reluctant but essential invitations to the King and Haman; Esther revealing her Jewish nationality, her mortal danger and Haman's plot; and at Esther's request, the King authorizing the Persian Jewish community to defend itself, which it does at a startling loss of non-Jewish life (upwards of 75,000 perish).

A Deeper Dive into the Megillah

The Scroll of Esther will be read in English in its entirety tonight. We have attempted to be faithful to both the written word and spirit of the Megillah by preserving the biblical text while updating some antiquated translations and eliminating some stylistic narrative repetitions, clearly differentiating dialogue from narration and interspersing it all with music to explain and amplify what is happening.

As we read the Megillah and listen to the musical narrative, you may wish to consider the following:

1. Vashti's response to being summoned.
2. The reaction of the King's advisors to Vashti's refusal.
3. Did Mordecai provoke Haman?
4. The traditional perception of Haman versus the reality that is Haman.
5. The role reversal in Mordecai and Esther's relationship.
6. The ferocity of the King's reaction to Haman's plan, given it was the King who authorized it.
7. Peter Pan syndrome and does the King ever really grow up?

Feel free to send me your thoughts and comments at ouvert247@gmail.com.

The Music of Tonight

The Soundtrack to *Shul of Rock: Megillat Esther*® is available to **Spotify**® subscribers. For the link, please contact me at ouvert247@gmail.com.

Previous soundtracks to *Motown: Megillat Esther*®, *Maccabees: The Musical Featuring the Book of Judith*® and *Megillat Ruth: The Musical*® are still available to **Spotify**® subscribers. For music links, please contact me at ouvert247@gmail.com.

The cast of *Shul of Rock: Megillat Esther*® consists of Canadians and Americans, united in using music to celebrate Jewish moments in engaging, innovative, unconventional and unique ways and sharing their passion with others.



Cast in Alphabetical Order

Darcy Dalton

Barry Frankel

Lorraine Gangbar

Sheldon Rotman

Nina Wallach

Gary Elman

Karen Frankel

Debbie Rothstein

Arnie Ursaner

Sharon Yale

Cantor Sidney Ezer

Rabbi Robyn Fryer Bodzin

Patti Rotman

Larry Wallach

Special guest appearance: Aviva Chernick

Feedback is always welcome. Free to contact me at ouvert247@gmail.com.