

Young Love

By A. Ashman

Play no. 95

Opening show: 20/10/1949

Produced by: A. Baratz

Music: Felix Mendelsohn-Bartholdy

Setting by: Genia Berger

Music: A. A. Boscovitz

Choreography: Gertrude Kraus

The Cast

Michal, daughter of King Saul: S. Ravid

Merav, her elder sister: P. Perach

Ritzpa Bat-Aya, Saul's concubine: S. Duer / R. Lupovitz

Jonathan, Saul's eldest son: N. Buchman

Armoni, son of Saul and Ritzpa: A. Ninio

Doeg, the Edomite, in charge of Saul's herdsmen: I. Becker

Jephuneh, a herdsmen: M. Benyamini

In King Saul's courtyard the almond trees are in blossom and the water in the pool is quivering. Young hearts too are blossoming and quiver with the advent of first love and the beating of the secret pulse of destiny.

King Saul is far from home, engaged in a campaign against the Philistines led by the giant Goliath. The King's proclamation in his camp that the slayer of the Philistines giant "would be richly rewarded by the King and would receive his daughter in marriage" has reached as far as his court and has aroused great excitement. The boy Armoni, son of the King's concubine, trains himself incessantly in the art of war, assisted by Jephuneh,, the herdsmen. Michal and Merav, the King's daughters, discuss the meaning of the King's proclamation. Which of them does he mean to be given to the victor? Michal wishes to become the wife of David, the son of Issai, the Beth-lehemite, the King's musician, with whom she is in love. She is confident that her elder sister Merav will be given to the man who defeats Goliath, the Philistines. Michal does not know that her sister too is secretly, in love with David, but conceals her hopeless passion behind a mask of scorn, referring to him as "that contemptible young herdsmen"...

One thing neither of the sister knows, and that is that David has been secretly anointed King of Israel long ago to replace their father. Doeg, the Edomite, who is in charge of the King's herdsmen, brings this news to the court but discloses the secret to Ritzpa, the King's concubine, alone. They decide to keep the matter quiet until the King's return from the wars and to arrest and imprison David in the meantime. However, through the intervention of Michal, the plot miscarries: even before Doeg reaches the court, Michal permits David to leave for Beth-lehem, his native town, for a two days visit to his father's family.

Two days have passed and David does not return. Doeg, in love with Michal, hopes that she will be given to him by the King, and is therefore prepared to

put an end to his rival. To this end he and Ritzpa conceive a new plot for the success of which they need the sheep's fleece which David had given to Michal as a token of his love. They try by devious means to secure the fleece. Unexpectedly it falls into their hands by accident, and Doeg, who had formerly asked Armoni to help him in this matter, now drives the boy away with abusive words.

In the meantime Jonathan, Saul's eldest son, arrives at the court from the battlefield and announces Goliath's defeat by David. This news greatly excites the two sisters. Now Merav, as the eldest daughter, claims the right to be given in marriage to the victorious David, while Michal fears she may lose her happiness after all.

The news of David's triumph throws Ritzpa and Doeg into a panic, but they do not abandon their plan. Instead they introduce only one change: Doeg will not go to Beth-Lehem but to the Elah valley to meet David as he returns among the soldiers from the battle, and will trap him with the fleece in his possession.

However, at the last moment Jonathan learns that the fleece has been lost and he frustrates Doeg's plan with the help of Jephuneh and Armoni, who had originally admired Doeg but has now become his enemy because of Doeg's insult.

The plot to kill David has come to nought. But which of the two sisters will be crowned with the bridal wreath and meet the returning victor? Jonathan, in his wisdom and candour, succeeds in prevailing upon Merav to renounce her plan. She does so in despair and despondency. Ritzpa regrets the failure of her plan and Armoni is bitterly depressed because of the sorrow he has caused his mother in aiding Jonathan to defeat Doeg, her friend and ally.

Michal is bewildered at the riddle of destiny which has transformed her own happiness into a source of grief and suffering to her dear ones. The girls wind the bridal wreath around her head and accompany her as she sets out, in mingled happiness and grief, to meet the secret of her future.