

TWO BY TWO

Music by Richard Rogers
Lyrics by Martin Charnin
Book by Peter Stone

Time: Before, During and After the flood
Place: Act I In and around Noah's home
Act II The Fourty Days and Fourty Nights on the
Ark and atop of Mt. Ararat

Summery Act I

On his 600th birthday, Noah gets a message from God about the flood and the Ark. He calls his wife, three sons and two daughters in law together and tells them the news. They think he's crazy. Mysteriously, thousands of pairs of animals appear in their valley and the family is convinced. As they begin to build the Ark, Japheth, Noah's youngest son, argues with Noah over the justness of God's act. Japheth is appalled that God would wipe out mankind. We also learn that Japheth loves Rachel, who is married to his older brother Ham. As it is, Ham does not love Rachel and wants nothing to do with her. Japheth refuses to go on the Ark under the pretense that he is protesting God but truly it is because that he could not live for fourty days and nights so close to Rachel without being able to touch her. Japheth runs off to the village.

The family doesn't know how it will finish the Ark without him. Noah complains of how old he is and goes off to think. A miracle occurs off stage and Noah is made 500 years younger thus giving him the ability to fininsh the Ark. Noah and Esther, Noah's wife, desparatly want Japheth to marry because only pairs can go on the Ark. They try to convince him of marriage's merit when he returns to no avail. Suddennly, Goldie appears. She is a Golden Girl from the Temple of the Golden Ram in the village. She had met Japheth at the Golden Ram Parade when she saved his life from a Pagan crowd whom he had insulted with his talk of the flood. She has come to see if the stories were true. Esther convinces Goldie to join them while Noah knocks out Japheth and they all go on board when the rains begin.

Act II

Everyone is on edge after being on board for fourty days and fourty nights. Rachel wants Japheth, Japheth won't touch her. Ham wants Goldie and won't sleep with Rachel. Noah and Japheth are still mad at each other and Esther is now married to a man her son's age! After catching Ham and Goldie together, Noah tries to marry Japheth and Goldie. The ceremony is interrupted by a hole in the side of the Ark, an arguement about a rudder and the discovery of a hoard of dried waste briquettes -manure-that the edest son Shem had planned to sell to his family for dry fuel when the landed. Esther suffers a small heart attack. Noah becomes old again after turning to drink. He thinks his sons turned against him and the word of God by

JAPHETH TO
RAABEL
HAM TO
GOLDIE

demanding to have a rudder when there wasn't one in the plans supplied by God. Noah sends forth a dove. Esther asks as her final request that Noah marries the children to their appropriate mate. The dove returns, Esther dies and Noah marries the children. The Ark comes to rest on Mt. Ararat and all go off to start their new families.

Cast:

Noah-This character was originally played by Danny Kaye on Broadway. Noah is 600 years old when the play opens. He should look 600 yrs. old - grey beard and hair, stooped over, walking with a stick is possible. His clothing should hang from him and make him look decrepit. His basic garments are pegged tunic type pants, a long sleeved under garment, a below knee tunic with full sleeves, an over robe with small blue and brown tassles hanging from the corners of the over robe and sandles. Noah is not a poor man by any means but he dresses simply. No Yarmukle is necessary in that male Jews of this time period do not cover their heads.

When Noah reappears after the off-stage miracle, he should be in the same items of clothing but cut to fit a younger body - the beard is gone, the hair is brown, he walks upright. There is a song's length and a bit of dialogue for the change.

Esther is Noah's wife. There is still a lot of romance between the two of them. She is an energetic woman of his age. She wears the same garments thru out the rest of the show as does the rest of the family. A basic belted tunic dress with an apron and sandles is fine as a start for her. A wrap or a shawl would be nice to progression of time since the script jumps thru time with out telling you (let's hope the lighting designer is on the ball!). It should be noted here that married Jewish women of that time period never bared their hair in public; only virgins were seen without their hair covered.

Esther produces a hat in the first act that reappears twice in the following act. It is a large, wide brimmed impossible straw hat that is overflowing with artificial fruits, berries and flowers. It was once Noah's favorite but it really is gastly.

Shem is the eldest son of Noah. By the law he has received all of Noah's estate and is making a pretty profit off of it. He has little time in the day or room in his head for outside activities, pleasures or fantasies. While he is very wealthy his clothes don't necessarily show it. He is a cheapskate. His tunic should show wear and repair. He's a smart man but out for himself - a biblical yuppy if you will. Shem's garments consist of a long skirt, a long jacket with fur trim and medium width long sleeves that is belted at the waist, a bolero jacket or vest, a small cap and a pair of sandles.

Leah is Shem' wife. She is also a biblical yuppy. She sees no reason for her to lift a finger if she does not directly profit

from it. Leah combines a sharp penetrating tongue, a fierce loyalty to her husband and an appalling lack of humor. She has no sense of the irritation she causes other. Her clothes are nice and rarely soiled unless money is involved. A dress with nice trim and a belt is her basic. Adding a cape with a hood, sandals, and a simple ornamental headdress will finish her up.

Ham is the second son of Noah. He feels that he has never been given a fair deal in his life. Shem got the farm, Japheth got the love and he got to marry a "nice girl" whom he does not love. He's a little dark, a little bitter and greatly dissatisfied. Ham wears a long skirt, a mesh shirt, a long tunic jacket, a belt, and a pair of sandals.

Rachel is Ham's wife. She's a fine, delicate, simple young woman who is somewhat uncertain but always hopeful. While she loves Japheth she still tries at her failing marriage. It is important that her dress can open at the neck. There is a moment where Japheth comes upon her in a certain stage of undress as she sponges off the heat at the well. It is this awkward moment that starts the romance rolling. Rachel's dress is the simplest of all but it is clean, crisp and tasteful. She will need a belt and sandals as well. A headwrap or shawl is a nice touch in that occasionally she can bare her hair and be corrected by Esther. As well she could bare her hair in her scenes with Japheth commenting that she may be married but that does not mean she is not a virgin.

Japheth is the baby of the family. He is also the only independent thinking mind. He is a philosopher of sorts and his loves are deep and passionate. He is just as bull headed and stubborn as his father but just as loyal to his family. Japheth wears a mesh box cut shirt, a skirt about knee length to show his youth, a belt, a drape over one shoulder (a la Socrates) and a pair of sandals. His simplicity should mirror Rachel's.

Goldie was originally played by Madeline Kahn. She is a Golden Girl from the Temple of the Golden Ram. As her name describes, she is in gold when she first appears. A gold sheath, a white cape with gold trim, a gold headdress, sandals and long golden hair (that is not covered). Jewellery such as slave bracelets, ankle bracelets, earrings and a collar adds a nice touch to her vestal virgin look. In Act II when the family is on the ark, she could change into simpler attire but it is important that she is still seductive.

Note: At the end of the Act II there is a sight gag dealing with the three daughters and their state of pregnancy: Goldie is noticeably pregnant, Rachel is extremely pregnant, and Leah is huge!