

# The Conversion of Saul



A Chancel Drama  
Composed by  
Richard Dirksen

for the  
Dedication of  
The Munson Gates in  
Washington Cathedral  
on April 28, 1971

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## THE CONVERSION AND BAPTISM OF SAUL

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 9:1-18 (KJV)

NARRATOR medium voice  
JESUS high  
SAUL med. high  
ANANIAS med. low  
CHOIR med. and high voices  
ACCOMPANIMENT (ad. lib. - 4 handbells, small drum,  
and finger cymbals)

### PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

For the Evensong service of dedication of the Munson Gates, this lesson was chosen because it is the theme of the southernmost of the two beautiful wrought iron gates that flank the High Altar of the Washington Cathedral. Solo boys of the cathedral choir sang the principal roles from two lecterns (microphones used). Of the remaining choir boys, a small group mimed the entry of angry, threatening Saul and his attendants, and his falling to the floor when a bright light suddenly illuminated the sanctuary. When he was raised up, a black blindfold signifying the sightless Saul, he was led further along to the steps before the altar table for the Damascus scene. The rest of the choir (also the instrumentalists) formed the chorus of onlookers.

The music was pitched high because it best suited the brilliant range of the treble voices. In performances with adults, or children's "natural" voices, transpose the key down a whole step. It will sound less strained and be easier for the soloists to sustain.

The actors perform in cassocks with but a few accessories appropriate for Saul and his guards. Jesus is heard from a place apart. Ananias should wear a cotta, or surplice and stole, since he will be the "baptizer" during the Alleluias that end the drama.

Perf. time: approx. 7 min.

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Handbells

*f*  
Narrator Recitative, flowing and firm

Here beginneth the ninth chapter of the Acts of the A- pos- tles;

Choir

Al - le - lu - ia.

Narrator

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,

went un - to the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the / synagogues, that if he found any of this way,

whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Je - ru - sa - lem. And as he journeyed, he came near Da -

mas - cus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heav - ven:

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And he fell to the earth,  
and heard a voice saying un - to him,

Jesus  
Saul, Saul, Why per - se - cu - test thou me? Narrator  
and he said,

Saul  
Who art thou, Lord? Narrator  
And the Lord said,

Jesus  
I am Je - sus whom thou per - se - cu - test:

it is hard for thee to kick a - gainst the pricks.

Narrator

And he trem - bling and a - ston - ished said,

Saul (slower)

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Narrator

And the Lord said un - to him,

Jesus

A - rise, and go in - to the ci - ty, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

Narrator

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no men.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Da -

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mes - cus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ana -

ni - as; and to him said the Lord in a vi - sion, Jesus An - a - ni - as.

Narrator Ananias Narrator  
And he said, Be - hold, I am here, Lord. And the Lord said un - to him,

Jesus  
A - rise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tar - sus:

for, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named An - a - ni - as com - ing in, and put - ting

his hand upon him, that he might re - ceive his sight.

**Narrator** Then An - a - ni - es ans - wered, **Ananais** Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Je -

ru - sa - lem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

**Narrator** But the Lord said un - to him, **Jesus** *More slowly* Go thy way:

for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen - tiles, and kings,

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and the child - ren of Is - ra - el: \_

For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

Narrator (recit. tempo)

Ananias

And Ananias went his way, and entered  
into the house; and putting his hands on

him said,

Bro - ther Saul,

the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cam - est,

hath sent me, that thou mightest re - ceive thy sight, and be fill-ed with the



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Moderately fast

Ho - ly Ghost. *f* And im - med - iate - ly - there

fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he re - ceived sight forth - with, and a -

rose, and was bap - tiz - ed. Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le -

lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le -

lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le -

Tambs., Tabors,  
Finger cymbals, ad. 11b

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lu - ia, Al - le lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu -

*Slowing*

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a series of quarter notes with lyrics underneath. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, consisting of chords and eighth notes. A 'Slowing' instruction is placed above the piano staff towards the end of the system.

*ff* In time L.V.

ia!

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth staves of music. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, starting with a fermata. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, featuring a series of chords. A large oval graphic is drawn around the piano accompaniment in the first two measures. The system includes dynamic markings 'ff' and 'L.V.' (Larghetto), and the instruction 'In time'. The lyrics 'ia!' are positioned below the first staff.