

THE INVENTION OF EDISON

**Book, Music & Lyrics By
John Gregor**

**Running time: 50 minutes
Accompaniment CD available
Cast size 5
Ability to add chorus
Set: Minimal**

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Perusal Copy

1882: Thomas Edison knows his lightbulb works better than any other, but how will he prove it to the world? By announcing that he will light up all of lower Manhattan, of course! Easier said than done in this adventure that takes us on a journey full of setbacks and triumphs.

THE INVENTION OF EDISON is about the make or break moment for the young inventor, with a message about hard work, persistence and humility.

CHARACTERS

Thomas Edison

(Early 30's) Inventor and visionary. Quick witted, charismatic, inquisitive and rather impressed with himself. Though he has an unwavering sense of determination, we watch him struggle under the strain of holding true to his promises.

Francis Upton

(Late 20's) Professor, brilliant mathematician, physicist and compatriot of Edison. Born into proper society, he struggles with the rough and tumble, ever-changing life of an inventor.

J.P. Morgan

(Early 40's) Legendary, larger than life banker and financier, nicknamed the "Napoleon of Wall Street." Backer of Edison's company, he becomes increasingly impatient due to a lack of results.

Jacob Hauser

(20's) One of many highly skilled mechanics who have immigrated from Germany in the latter half of the 19th century. A diametric opposite of Francis, Jacob is hands on and doesn't care much for erudite men.

The Reporter

Carries the story along, reporting on Edison's exploits. Comments on the mood of the play and the process of invention. Sometimes cynical, The Reporter gives us insight as to how journalism was just as, if not more sensationalist in the 1800's than it is today.

Except for Edison, all performers play multiple characters. The tone is light and playful, but characters portray their emotions with sincerity.

SUNG MOMENTS

1. OPENING RECIT/ WANT TO BE THE FIRST.....(*Edison, Company*)
2. ARRIVAL IN PARIS/ GEORGE BERGÉR.....(*Bergér, Edison*)
3. NEVER STOP ASKING WHY.....(*Edison, Spectators*)
4. THE LIGHTS OF PARIS.....(*Spectators, underscore*)
5. AS WE TRAVEL ALONG #1.....(*Company*)
6. THERE ARE NO MISTAKES.....(*Edison, Steward*)
7. I DON'T WANT TO MUDDY MY HANDS.....(*Francis*)
8. PUTTING PEN TO PAPER.....(*Edison, Inner Voice*)
9. AS WE TRAVEL ALONG #2 (Parts 1,2,3).....(*Reporter*)
10. WE'LL HAVE A JUMBO DYNAMO BEFORE YOU EVEN KNOW.....(*Company*)
11. AS WE TRAVEL ALONG #3.....(*Reporter*)
12. WE'RE NOT INTERESTED.....(*Businessmen, Edison*)
13. DO IT YOURSELF.....(*Reporter, Edison, Francis, Jacob*)
14. THERE IS NO ESCAPE.....(*Edison, Francis, Jacob*)
15. A GREAT ADVENTURE/WANT TO BE THE FIRST REPRISE.....(*Edison, Francis, Jacob, Morgan*)

Perusal Copy

(New York Harbor, January, 1882. EDISON stands on the gangway of a passenger ship. There are reporters, onlookers and stewards)

REPORTER

January, 1882!

CUE: OPENING STRAINS into OPENING RECIT

STEWARD

Welcome to New York harbor! We will soon depart on our oceanic voyage to France.

REPORTER

Mr. Edison, New York Times, what takes you on your journey to Paris today?

EDISON

The International Exposition of Electricity, to unveil an unparalleled, dazzling display of this glass bulb that will change the world.

REPORTER

And for the record, what are you holding?

EDISON

My incandescent light bulb. After years of experiments, I've found the exact filament that makes it last longer and brighter than anything in the world! It turns out to be bamboo. Who knew? Oh, yes, I did!

REPORTER

And how long does a bamboo filled piece of glass stay lit? *One hour?*

EDISON

Months. And to prove it, I'm going to astound each and every you.

REPORTER

Are you going light up my house?

EDISON

Oh, not just your house -I'm going to light up all of New York City!

(Francis and J.P. MORGAN almost faint and look at Edison at the same time)

REPORTER

Impossible!

EDISON

That's my favorite word!

EDISON

And to back me up, meet my friend, Mr. Francis Upton, (FRANCIS gives a nervous, unhappy smile) brilliant mathematician and physicist. I draw the plans and he sees if they work. He's a professor, plays the piano and speaks six languages. I've nick-named him, "culture."

REPORTER

Mr. Upton, how long has this plan been in the works?

FRANCIS

About twenty seconds.

EDISON

Oh, he's kidding! Now meet my financier, Mr...

J.P. MORGAN

-J.P. MORGAN richest and most powerful man in America no pictures please. I'm backing this project with full confidence. No one has ever trumped me before and they won't this time if my name isn't J.P. MORGAN richest and most powerful man in America no pictures please!

STEWARD

Now departing!

CUE: OPENING RECIT/I WANT TO BE THE FIRST (*Edison, Company*)

REPORTER

Mr. Edison *you will* return to hold true to your promise?

EDISON

Of course! Unless the French would rather have me light up Paris than any of you!

REPORTER

Well, the proof is in the pudding.

EDISON

You'll be eating your words very soon.

REPORTER

IF YOU DO, YOU'LL HAVE HOLD TRUE TO YOUR WORD!
IF YOU HAVEN'T HEARD
BIG CLAIMS THAT FAIL TO DELIVER
CAN RUIN A MAN'S LIFE, HIS CAREER!

EDISON

DO YOU HEAR?
MARK MY WORD
WRITE THIS DOWN
BY THE END OF THE YEAR
I WILL LIGHT UP THIS TOWN!

FRANCIS

(In disbelief) Light up the city? Do you actually think we can do that?

EDISON

I suppose we have to now!

FRANCIS

-You're a risk taker! Of this worst variety.

EDISON

What variety is that?

FRANCIS

(Exasperated) The kind that can persuade even a practical man like me!

*(The ship departs. All characters move tightly
across the stage as they make the trip across the ocean)*

EDISON

SOME PEOPLE ARE OBSESSED WITH PERFECTION

I'LL CONFESS
I'LL PROFESS
I'M THE WORST

BUT THE WORLD IS HEADED IN A NEW DIRECTION
YES I'LL LEAD THE WAY AS THE FIRST

THERE'S A RACE FOR THE LATEST INVENTION
AND WITH THE COMPETITION I'M IMMERSSED
BUT I HAVE EVERY INTENTION
OF SAYING THAT I WAS FIRST

AND SO MANY, MANY PEOPLE WANT TO BE MADE OF MONEY
AND ANOTHER MAN, FOR ADORATION STRIVES
THAT'S FINE AND ALL FOR THEM, BUT THEY'LL NEVER KNOW THE FEELING
OF MAKING SOMETHING THAT COULD CHANGE OUR LIVES

STEWARD

Eastward bound!

FRANCIS

(HE'S COCKY
IMPATIENT
TAKES MORE THAN HE CAN CHEW
HE MAKES CLAIMS
HE'LL INVENT THINGS
BUT BEFORE HE SEES THEM THROUGH

A BRILLIANT MAN, THAT'S CLEAR
AS CREATIVE AS CAN BE
BUT WHAT I'M DOING WITH HIM
IS A MYSTERY TO ME

I'M WORRISOME
GET SEASICK
AT HANDS ON, I'M THE WORST
THIS CERTAINLY WILL BE
A FIRST)

J.P. MORGAN

(HE'S PUSHY,
HE'S ARROGANT
HE'S CONFIDENT, THAT'S CLEAR
HE JUST ANNOUNCED A VENTURE
THAT COULD RUIN MY CAREER

A PROJECT
THAT EASILY
COULD MAKE MILLIONS FOR ME
BUT IF THAT REALLY HAPPENS
I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE

I'M HOPING FOR A MIRACLE
EXPECTING FOR THE WORST
THIS CERTAINLY WILL BE
A FIRST

EDISON

AND SO MANY, MANY PEOPLE WANT TO BE MADE OF MONEY
AND ANOTHER MAN, FOR ADORATION STRIVES
THAT'S FINE AND ALL FOR THEM, BUT THEY'LL NEVER KNOW THE FEELING
OF MAKING SOMETHING THAT COULD CHANGE OUR LIVES

EDISON

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT
WILL BE THE LIGHT OF THE FUTURE
AND IT WILL BE MY LIGHT!

CHORUS

AHH
AHH
AHH

SO FULL SPEED AHEAD TO THE FUTURE
AND THE FUTURE IS LOOKING PRETTY BRIGHT

J.P. MORGAN

THERE'S STORM BREWING ON THE HORIZON

FRANCIS

AND APPROACHING FAST AS THE SPEED OF LIGHT

EDISON

BUT I PROMISE WHEN THE YEAR IS THROUGH
THIS EIGHTEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-TWO
NEW YORK WILL BE ASTOUNDED BY THE SIGHT

AND WHEN ALL IS SAID AND DONE
OF THOMAS EDISON,
THE WORLD SAY, HE FOUND A WAY
TO MAKE THE NIGHT AS BRIGHT AS DAY
HE WORKED TO HIS CAPACITY
THROUGH GRIT AND PURE TENACITY
HE CROSSED A BRIDGE THAT NO ONE HAD TRAVERSED

BUT MOST OF ALL
BUT MOST OF ALL
HE WAS
THE FIRST

FRANCIS:
THIS IS
FIRST

J.P. MORGAN:
THIS IS
FIRST

CUE: ARRIVAL IN PARIS/ GEORGE BERGÉR (*Bergér, Edison*)

*(They arrive in Paris to a fanfare of La
Marseillaise)*

GEORGE BERGÉR

MR. EDISON, MONSIEUR GEORGE BERGÉR,
COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION OF ELECTRICITY!
WE ARE SO HONORED TO HAVE YOU AMONGST ALL OF OUR MOST DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.