

THE STARRY MESSENGER

by

JUSTIN FLEMING

© JUSTIN FLEMING

110 HIGH STREET, NORTH SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA 2060

Tel (61 2) 9956 5797 Fax (61 2) 9954 0124

Email: justin@fleming.net

Agent: Curtis Brown, P.O. Box 19, Paddington, New South Wales, **Australia** 2021

Tel (61 2) 9331 5301 Fax (61 2) 9360 3935 email: fiona@curtisbrown.com.au

Curtis Brown, 28-29 Haymarket, **London** SW1Y 4SP, UK.

Tel: (020) 7396 6600; Fax (020) 7396 0110/1 email <joe@curtisbrown.co.uk>

The Barbara Hogenson Agency Inc. 165 West End Avenue, Suite 19C, **New York**, NY, 10023 USA

Tel: (212) 874 8084 Fax (212) 362 3011 email <bhogenson@aol.com>

*The Company**The Inquisitor**A heretic**James**Rachel**Vincenzo Galilei**Count Giovanni Bardi**Jacopo Peri/ Orfeo**Ottavio Rinuccini**Galileo Galilei**Dafne**Euridice**Arcetro**Musicians, Singers, an assistant, Maria de Medici, Henry 1V of France...**Wedding guests, a newsreader, a reporter.*

*The singers can double in all the minor roles. For reasons of clarity and identification, the "actors/ singers" carry the same name as their part in the drama. Throughout, Peri's **L'Euridice** and other pieces should as much as possible be sung live by the singers, except for the Compact Disc sections which are marked, or where live singing would unduly complicate a transition. The use of surtitles may be desirable for translation. The scene is mainly Florence, past and present.*

The Starry Messenger was presented in workshop by the Queensland Theatre Company and Opera Queensland with the following cast:

*Inquisitor.....David Glendinning
James.....Peter Marshall
Peri.....Simon Burvill Holmes
Galileo.....Adam Grosetti
Rinuccini.....Danny Murphy
Dafne.....Siobhan Lawless
Rachel.....Elise Grieg
Bardi.....Jim Vilé
Vincenzo.....Errol O'Neil*

The workshop was directed by Richard Wherrett. The Starry Messenger was given a performed reading at The Sydney Theatre Company Wharf 2 on April 9, 1997 and again on November 7, 1997 with the following company, directed by David Berthold:

*The Inquisitor.....Bob Baines/ Simon Chilvers
James..... Paul Bishop/ Chris Stollery
Rachel..... Essie Davis/ Susan Prior
Peri/Orfeo..... Jason Langley/ Glenn Hazeldine
Galileo..... . John Adam/ Joel Edgerton
Rinuccini..... . Jason Montgomery/ Josh Quong Tart
Dafne..... Veronica Neave/ Justine Clark
Bardi/Arcetro..... Robert Alexander
Vincenzo..... Ronald Falk
Stage Manager.... Rebecca Moore/ Jane Fitzgerald*

Starry Messenger Music cues

1. Scene One *16th Century Italian madrigal by Vincenzo Galilei (Singers)*
2. Scene Two *Io che d'alti sospir.* (L'Euridice)
3. Scene Three *Italian madrigal by Vincenzo Galilei*
4. Scene Four *Donne, ch'ai miei diletti* (Euridice)
5. Scene Four *O mio fedel* (Orfeo/Arcetro)
6. Scene Six *Dafne's Mime.*
7. Scene Seven *Per quel vago boschetto* (Dafne).
8. Scene Seven *Ma come spiri, e vivi?* (Dafne/Euridice/Arcetro/Orfeo.)
9. Scene Eight *O magnanimo core!* (Dafne/Arcetro/Orfeo)
10. Scene Ten *Poi che gl'iterni imperi.* (Gods of Hell)
11. Scene Ten *Che Narri* (Arcetro)
12. Prologue *No Way to Stop It, Part 1* (Singers)
13. Scene Eleven *No Way to Stop It, Part 11* (Singers)
14. Scene Twelve *No Way to Stop It, Part 111* (Singers)
15. Scene Thirteen *Che Narri* (Arcetro)
16. Scene Fourteen *James' Song* (James)
17. Scene Sixteen *Lassa, che di spavento e di pietate* (Dafne)
18. Scene Seventeen *Oime! che fia giamai?* (Arcetro/Dafne/Orfeo)
19. Scene Eighteen *O degl' orridi, e neri* (Orfeo)
20. Scene Nineteen *Imagine* (John Lennon).
21. Scene Twenty *Che Narri* (Arcetro)
22. Scene Twenty *Non piango e non sospiro* (Orfeo)
23. Scene Twenty *Per quest'aer giocondo* (Euridice)
24. Scene Twenty *Ballo.*

*About ten months ago a report reached my ears that a certain **Fleming** had constructed a spyglass by means of which visible objects, though very distant from the eye of the observer, were distinctly seen as if nearby.*

- Galileo, *Sidereus Nuncius (The Starry Messenger)*

ACT ONE

Prologue

Lights rise. The SINGERS perform a 16th Century Italian madrigal by Vincenzo Galilei. The style is overlapping, polyphonic, with elaborate counterpoint and wholly indecipherable. The singers retreat as the scene opens to:

ONE.

A torture chamber, inside the Dominican Cloister of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, Rome, about 1590. The INQUISITOR presides as a HERETIC is upon the rack, ready for torture.

INQUISITOR: Propositions forbidden. One, that the sun is stationary at the centre of the heaven. Two, that the earth is not at the centre of the heaven. Three, that the earth is not stationary. Four, that the earth moves by a double motion.

HERETIC: Nature does not lie. I will not lie for her.

INQUISITOR: The worlds operate by miracles, not by the design of man's rules. You will recant!

HERETIC: I will not recant!

INQUISITOR: Then let me explain the rules here. They are indeed man-made. Your legs will be drawn through the two sides of the three-planked rack. A cord will then be tied about your ankles. When the levers bend forward, the main force of your knees against the two planks will cause your hams to burst free of their sinews, and the lids of your knees will be crushed. Your eyes will startle, your mouth will foam and froth, your teeth will shatter, and blood will spring from the torn sinews of your arms, hands and legs. Your sex will be ripped from your body. It is ultimate and unendurable pain.

HERETIC: You punish truth with physical pain? Which God is this, then? The King of lies, and you, his prince?

INQUISITOR: You mustn't think of torture as punishment. It isn't. Punishment serves to atone for crimes. Torture is to prevent them.

The Inquisitor activates the rack. The sensation is horrific.

INQUISITOR: Confess! Withdraw! Recant! *(To the singers)* Sing, you fools! Sing!

The agony becomes full, with the screams of the heretic filling the space. The singers regroup and sing a madrigal over the cries, as if to stifle them. The lights fade. The madrigal transposes to a CD recording which plays through into the next scene. Just before the scene vanishes, the Inquisitor looks across time directly at Rachel in the next scene.

TWO

A balcony, modern Florence. A starry night. RACHEL and JAMES, with wine. Rachel slightly chilled at the experience of the inquisitor. From a CD player, the madrigal. James isn't at all keen on it. He looks at Rachel, puzzled. Rachel smiles, turns it down with a remote control. James leans across, kisses Rachel full on the lips.

JAMES: What do you call it, when everybody sings at once?

RACHEL: Torture.

JAMES: What do you call it when they not only sing at once, but also in different tunes?

RACHEL: Absolute torture.

JAMES: I love you. *(kisses her)*

RACHEL: It's a madrigal. 16th century. Italy.

JAMES: Madrigal. Because it sends you "mad", no doubt.

RACHEL: It was a composition for four or five singers. Unaccompanied.

JAMES: Surely four or five *is* company, isn't it?

RACHEL: Unaccompanied by instruments. It was supposed to stir the senses.

JAMES: It beats me how it could stir anything with everyone up to their tonsils in racket.

They kiss. With the remote control, Rachel turns it down.

RACHEL: *(sighs)* If only my father could see me now. He might have to eat some of his words: "Rachel, don't be a writer. You'll always suffer. And it's unsafe." But on this starry night, as a guest writer for the Florence Festival, drinking wine on a balcony in Florence with the love of my life, I ask: where's the suffering?

JAMES: Don't tempt fate. And don't get onto your father. All the romance will roll out of it. He was so dismissive of everything. "You want to be married to a drop-out, girl?

A...*singer*?"

RACHEL: I did take your side.

JAMES: Telling him that I was a singer who majored in physics didn't help. It made me harder to...

RACHEL: Dismiss?

JAMES: ... classify.

Rachel changes to another CD. We hear the opening of Jacopo Peri's opera, L'Euridice, with La Tragedia singing alone: the Io che d'alti sospir. It floats, beautifully.

JAMES: That's better.

RACHEL: Yes.

The CD plays

RACHEL: The world's first opera.

JAMES: The very first?

RACHEL: Well. To us, yes, the first. There was an earlier one. *Dafne*. Same composer.

Jacopo Peri. 1597. Florence. Lost.

JAMES: And this is...

RACHEL: *Euridice*. 1600. Performed here in Florence at the Palazzo Pitti for the marriage of Maria de Medici to Henry the Fourth of France.

JAMES: Sort of wistful.

RACHEL: What the world used to call melancholy.

JAMES: Has melancholy got lost as well?

RACHEL: Afraid so. Melancholy was a particular way of being sad, a pensive sorrow. Which is, yes, lost.

They kiss. Rachel puts her arms around him. The Euridice plays.

JAMES: Do you mean that opera was...*invented*?

RACHEL: No. The telescope was invented. Opera was *discovered*. It came from a movement to kill off this polyphonic singing and promote the single voice.

JAMES: Long name for a movement. Difficult to see that in initials.

RACHEL: You want initials? Okay. T.N.M. The New Music.

JAMES: This is your play, then.

RACHEL: Partly. The play is about the New Music *and* the New Science. They happened together. Well, sort of, anyway.

JAMES: I've got it: the telescope was invented so that the world could have opera glasses!

Rachel laughs.

JAMES: Well it might just be how it all works.

RACHEL: It?

JAMES: This discovery thing. I tried to have this discussion with your father once, but he was dismissive as usual. He was such an...*industrialist*. Industrialists *worked*. Everyone else faked it.

RACHEL: Tell *me* then.

JAMES: I said that all discoveries were assembled over time. I pointed out that it was amazing how nature permits the discovery of knowledge only in fragments. I mean, all these things are there, in the world or in the stars, hidden, waiting to be found, sort of smirking and saying "come and find me, then". It's as if it's all one big treasure hunt, and with each discovery, one of nature's secrets is flushed out of the closet. The movement of the earth, gravity, the behaviour of light. Which begs the question: what will be the *final* secret?

RACHEL: And what did my father say?

JAMES: That as a physicist, I sounded like a *singer*.

RACHEL: The Master of the Put-Down.

JAMES: So what *was* the connection then?

RACHEL: Okay. This little group, the *Camerata* - a kind of academy - met together late in the 16th Century here in Florence in the residence of Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio. Leader among them was Vincenzo Galilei.

JAMES: You mean...father of...?

RACHEL: Yes, father of the astronomer, Galileo. The Camerata were all about clarity. Just like the Greeks found truth in drama, Vincenzo wanted truth in music.

JAMES: And Galileo wanted truth in science.

RACHEL: The New Music of the Earth...

JAMES: ... and the New Music of the Spheres?

James pours wine. They kiss. The Euridice fades

THREE.

The Salon of Giovanni Bardi, Count of Vernio, Florence, in the late 16th Century. The SINGERS are singing a madrigal composed by VINCENZO GALILEI, who is seated listening. The madrigal is as incomprehensible as possible. With Vincenzo, are GIOVANNI BARDI, the poet OTTAVIO RINUCCINI and JACOPO PERI. The madrigal ends. All but Vincenzo applaud. The company speak all at once, overlapping, so that they too are wholly incomprehensible. This, until Vincenzo wins over:

VINCENZO: Stop! Stop! It's torture.

BARDI: But Vincenzo!

RINUCCINI: The composition is sound.

VINCENZO: Nothing *but* sound! Everybody singing over the top of everybody else. Too many melodies! Too many rhythms. Whatever happened to the natural rhythm of words? Oh, it's all so anaemic and sterile!

PERI: You'll upset the singers!

VINCENZO: I hate it.

PERI: But it's your own work!

VINCENZO: It's shit. I hate it.

BARDI: He hates it.

VINCENZO: Come on, confess! In your hearts, my friends, confess. You hate it, too. I don't deny us our conservative respect for music, but, confess: we hate it.

A pause

BARDI: It's terrible.

PERI: It's not shit, but...

RINUCCINI: It's similar to shit.

VINCENZO: There you are.

BARDI: Which is why Nature, who disposes herself to infinite beauty, has drawn us together. To challenge ourselves. We are the Camerata. The Academy of the New. So. Let us search our hearts. What are we to do?

VINCENZO: Gentlemen, there is, as we know, a precedent. We are lovers of things Greek. Should we look to the Greeks? Let us examine this. Is it mere nostalgia?

BARDI: Oh, no, no, no.

VINCENZO: No? Some idle and mindless reverence for the past, then?

RINUCCINI: Oh, no, no, no, no.

VINCENZO: Then perhaps some hidden intuition that Greek is innately superior to Florentine? A cultural cringe?

PERI: Oh, no, no, no, no, no.

VINCENZO: Or - is there a clue buried deep in the Greek world which whispers up to us, offering us a torch in the darkness?

RINUCCINI: Oh, no, no...

VINCENZO: Yes!

RINUCCINI: Ah!

VINCENZO: The Greeks cast an intense spell over the public. When they sang, it was monodic. Theirs was the kingdom of the single melody. And the Greeks knew that music gathers its life blood from words. That's why they sang the *whole drama*.

RINUCCINI: I like that. I like that very much.

PERI: A literary approach to music.

VINCENZO: A *natural* approach to music.

BARDI: Vincenzo, you have the floor.

VINCENZO: The Greeks began with a primitive religious ritual. So: what did the Greeks do about it? They invented the *actor*.

The group applauds

VINCENZO: Someone through whom the gods could express themselves. The *actor*. A figure who would carry the burden of mortality. The *actor*. A vessel to illustrate the destiny of man. A single shape in the dramatic terrain. He could cry out in the wilderness, announce his joy, communicate his pain.

RINUCCINI: I like that. I like that very much.

VINCENZO: Then: what was the next step?

BARDI: Sophocles.

VINCENZO: Sophocles!

PERI: Sophocles the dramatist!

VINCENZO: No, Sophocles the green grocer. Of course, Sophocles the dramatist.

RINUCCINI: Yes! He invented another actor! So now, there was drama! Soon there are many actors telling us - *singing* us - a story.

VINCENZO: Yes, singing us a story but from individual points of view. This, I believe, is what we must do. The chorus can observe, comment, distil the essence, but it is the individual who must be heard in our music stories, in a single melodic line. We must go forward now. We must sing the whole drama with individual voices.

BARDI: An excellent speech!

PERI: I am in agreement.

RINUCCINI: Clever, very clever! I like that...

PERI: He likes that very much.

VINCENZO: So: I have scribbled here what I will call a solo. Although it is my own composition, it owes its form to a fragment from a Greek hymn.

The others look at the manuscript. We hear a solo song by Vincenzo Galilei, as if in their minds. They are clearly impressed, especially Peri.

VINCENZO: The singer is Orfeo. I have imagined here that he is searching the underworld for his beloved Euridice.

PERI: It is perfection.

VINCENZO: No, no. I do not do perfect things. I just get ideas.

PERI: The instruments at the service of the lone voice. So gentle. It is a landmark, Vincenzo, and you are its pioneer.

A disruption. Galileo enters in a state of excitement.

BARDI: *(to Vincenzo)* It seems your son is here.

GALILEO: Papa! I knew I'd find you here!

VINCENZO: Galileo, I'm engaged right now. Is it something that can wait?

GALILEO: Papa, I am convinced Copernicus was right! It is mistaken to look at the heavens from earth. If you look at everything from the sun, it makes perfect sense. We are in motion!

Profound embarrassment in the assembly

VINCENZO: Gentlemen, excuse me. *(taking Galileo aside)* Galileo, don't do this.

GALILEO: But Papa!

VINCENZO: Please. I beg you. Don't do this.

GALILEO: Papa, it's important!

VINCENZO: Not here, not now, not ever.

GALILEO: Papa, it's so wonderful! I can't sleep for the wonder of it! It's absolutely amazing!

He throws a cute look to one of the singers (DAFNE) . She smiles back.

VINCENZO: Galileo! You don't seem to understand. You offend people. You are an embarrassment. The heavens are fixed, perfect and unchanging. The world does not move. You cannot look at things from the sun. You will respect me in this! You charge in here, can't you see we're about serious business here? You didn't greet anybody. You shame me in front of important friends. Do you like that? To shame your father? I am ashamed of my son!

Galileo goes quietly to the assembly

GALILEO: Count Bardi, I must apologise for disrupting the grace of your salon. Signor Rinuccini, you are a great poet, and I have embarrassed you. Signor Peri, I have insulted you, a composer and singer of great beauty. I have allowed my feverish love of the mathematics to corrupt my manners. I ask you all to extend to me the forgiveness which I do not deserve.

They all bow their heads with guarded conciliation

GALILEO: *(To Vincenzo)* It was never my intention to shame you.

He goes out, collecting the SINGER with whom he flirted. Vincenzo has a quiet word with the remaining singers, both apologising to them and dismissing them. They leave.

VINCENZO: My son is a little naive, I'm afraid. He has this terrible energy, which seldom rests. He goes to the university at Pisa. He studies Medicine. So: is he a doctor? No. Instead he studies the mathematics with Ostilio Ricci in the Tuscan Court. Yet unlike his heaven, his heart is in the right place.

PERI: He's like you, Vincenzo. He's passionate. The world is too slow for him...

FOUR.

In the transition, a terrible explosion is heard.

Inside James' and Rachel's studio apartment. Radiant sunlight. In the transition, a news bulletin is heard on the radio. JAMES and RACHEL listening.

NEWSREADER: This News Report just to hand comes to you from the BBC World Service. Italian society is in a state of shock today after a powerful bomb exploded at the Uffizi Museum in Florence, which houses some of the world's greatest art treasures of the Italian Renaissance, as well as masterpieces of Flemish, Dutch, German and French artists, and includes antiques, sculptures, designs and more than 100,000 drawings and prints. At this time the measure of damage is uncertain. The perpetrators of the explosion are unknown but are believed to be a network determined to disrupt Italian society with violence aimed at the heart of its culture. Italian commentators appear reluctant to speculate on the exact source of the violence.

An on - location reporter takes up the story. As he/she does so, the scene between James and Rachel can proceed, over.

REPORTER: The Uffizi Museum has a chequered history. In 1559, Cosimo the First de Medici commissioned Giorgio Vasari to create the building to house the offices of the Judiciary. The building, a popular tourist attraction, is a leading model of the Italian mannerist architecture. The Uffizi was subsequently redesigned and extended in the late 16th Century when the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francesco the First de Medici engaged Bernardo Buontalenti to construct new chambers to contain the art treasures accumulated by the Medici. The exquisite galleries were again expanded in the 17th century at the request of Grand Duke Ferdinand the Second and his brother, Cardinal Leopoldo, who amassed portraits, including one of the Astronomer Galileo Galilei, which adorned the Vasari Corridor joining the Uffizi to the Palazzo Pitti, in front of the splendid Boboli Garden. In the 18th Century, the collections of the Medici passed in succession to the Lorraine dynasty on condition the works always remain in Florence. The Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo conferred upon the Uffizi the status of a public museum.

RACHEL: Why would anyone blow up the Uffizi?

JAMES: Yes, well. You may well ask.

RACHEL: The Uffizi, for God's sake!

JAMES: Why would anyone choose Florence at all?

RACHEL: Yes. City of Dante, Da Vinci, Machiavelli, Donatello, Cellini. The Galilei. Stacked with Raphaels, Titians, Tintoretts. Invented perspective in painting. Began the renaissance.

JAMES: *(after a pause)* Invented perspective? Is perspective something you invent? I mean, surely the eye just sorts it out. What was there before perspective?

RACHEL: You just drew things without the size-distance aspect.

JAMES: That's what you do in your writing. With time and age, I mean. You leave out the relative dimensions. You sort of bring it all up close, so nothing can hide in its usual distance.

A chilling glimpse of the Inquisitor, staring through the space at Rachel.

RACHEL: *(a kind of terror)* James.....

James kisses her. The Inquisitor raises his hand towards Rachel, with his index finger pointed at her. The image dies.

JAMES: You alright?

Rachel doesn't respond

JAMES: Hey, you. I'm talking to you.

RACHEL: This bloody world. Even art isn't safe.

JAMES: I'm sorry, Rachel.

RACHEL: It's not your fault.

JAMES: Somehow when things hurt you, I *feel* it's my fault for being so bloody powerless.

RACHEL: Who the hell's got any power?

JAMES: For a start, people with bombs.

RACHEL: I think I need to go and stand in the Boboli Garden. Just stand. And drink it in. The grottos, the statues, the orchards, glades, pools, fountains, trees, knolls.

JAMES: What on earth's a knoll?

RACHEL: A little rise. A small hill. A mound. A grassy knoll.

JAMES: Knoll.

They suddenly laugh

JAMES: So your play is to be performed in an amphitheatre behind the Palazzo Pitti surrounded by knolls.

RACHEL: I love you.

JAMES: Yes, but *forever*?

RACHEL: Like Orfeo and Euridice.

JAMES: *Euridice*. Tell me the story. Please?

RACHEL: Okay. Orfeo and Euridice are deeply in love. New, wonderful, unharmable love.

Rachel lies against James, remotely terminating the radio and activating a CD of Euridice singing the Donne, ch'a' miei diletti .

EURIDICE: Donne, ch'a' miei diletti (Women, who because of my delight/

Rasserenate si lo sguardo, e 'l volto (Radiate such cheerful glances/

Che dentro a vostri petti (So that within your breasts/

Tutto rassembra il mio gioir raccolto (Everything reflects my intense joy/

The CD yields to the live presence of EURIDICE taking up the aria. ARCETRO and the Chorus of SINGERS appear.

EURIDICE: Deh come lieta ascolto (How happily I listen/

I dolci canti, e gl'amorosi detti (To your sweet songs and amorous poems: /

D'amor, di cortesia graditi affetti. (The fitting emotions of love and kindness.)

In mille guise, e mille (A thousand times/

Crescon le gioie mie dentro al mio petto (My joy increases inside/

Mentro'ogn'una di voi par che scintilli (And from each one of you there radiates/

Dal bel guardo seren gioia e diletto. (From your serene faces joy and delight/

Ma deh, compagn'amate, (But, beloved friends/

La tra quell'ombre grate (Let's away to the pleasant shade/

Moviam di quell fiorito almo boschetto (Of that fertile grove of flowers/

E quivi al suon de' limpidi cristalli (And there to the sound of the crystal stream/
Trarrem liete carole, e lieti balli. (Let us have happy ballads and merry dances.

ARCETRO: Itene lieti pur: noi qui, fra tanto (Go there happily: while we here/
Che sopraggiunga Orfeo (Who await Orfeo/
L'ore trapasserem con lieto canto (Will pass the time with a happy song)

At the Coro's Al canto al ballo, lights return us to James and Rachel and the CD.

RACHEL: James, in the middle of *Euridice* there's this stage direction. You know what it says? It says "la scena si muta in Inferno".

JAMES: La scena...? "The scene ...changes to Hell"....

RACHEL: Yes.

JAMES: Why does the scene change to hell. They love each other?

RACHEL: Because Euridice goes wandering in a meadow of beautiful flowers.

JAMES: And?

RACHEL: And in the midst of this harmony, she is stung by a serpent. And dies.

JAMES: Why?

RACHEL: There are no explanations. Dafne, as messenger, tells Orfeo of the death of his lover.

JAMES: Cruel.

RACHEL: In a million people's lives, suddenly, one moment, one day, the scene changes to hell. I just don't understand who or what's in control. You read about that plane?

JAMES: Yes.

RACHEL: The nose of the plane fell away at 40,000 feet. The rest of the plane and all those passengers flew on for at least a minute before they began to fall into the sea. They suddenly had no pilot. The scene changes to hell. The Uffizi in Florence, the 747 from New York to Paris. Even the earth spinning while we hurtle round the sun seems dangerous to me. Where's the pilot, James? (*a pause*) It was the same thing with my dad. I see him faltering in the doorway. The scene changes to hell.

JAMES: Look, Rachel, you have this...this heightened sense of danger, personal danger, world danger. Okay, this Uffizi thing, it's weird. Seemingly arbitrary. Left field.

RACHEL: The serpent in the meadow.

JAMES: But basically it's ordered and safe.

RACHEL: Is it?

JAMES: You just have to fit your father in the scheme of things. You can barely remember your mother, and your father died too young. That's unusual. It's not the pattern, Rach.

RACHEL: It isn't that he died too young. It's that he died *unresolved*. And it's how he died.

JAMES: Rach....

RACHEL: He brought me up on this atmosphere of disapproval. Whatever I did wasn't right, didn't fit, or somehow embarrassed him. I lived with this mantle of shame. And his menacing way of interfering: *what was I writing? Why was I writing at all? Why I should not write*. Crazy, isn't it? But his voice, his presence, his authority, his crushing disapproval - all ended suddenly by a stroke. Just while walking through a doorway. As if some force silenced him forever. He died too soon. I lost something.

JAMES: Lost what?

RACHEL: I drew my courage from his dissent. I lost the chance to tell him that. The chance to say thank you for the challenge, for the disapproval, for every discouraging word that day by day made me stronger and stronger. I lost the chance to show him I can add up to something.

JAMES: You're on the syllabus at Charles University in Prague! And look, the scene can change to paradise, too, you know. Like when I met you.

RACHEL: And you're the other voice. The voice that encourages.

JAMES: And you're the voice that takes me out of the world.

She kisses him. James strokes her hair. ORFEO appears as the lights transfer.

ORFEO: O mio fedel, ne pur picciola stilla (O faithful one, not even a small drop/
A gl'occhi tuoi trasparente (Is visible in your eyes/
Dell'infinito mare (Of the infinite sea/
Che di dolcezza Amor nel cor distilla (Whose sweetness Love distils in my heart)

ARCETRO: Hor non ti riedi in mente (Do you not remember/
Quando fra tante pene (When you lost faith/
Io ti dicea sovente (I said to you often/
Armat'il cor di generosa spene (Arm your heart with generous hope/
Che de'fedeli amanti (For if young men are faithful/
Non ponno al fin delle donzelle i cori (The hearts of young women in the end/
Sentir senza pietá le voci ei pianti (Cannot hear their cries without pity/
Ecco ch'ai tuoi dolori (Therefore, faced with your sorrow/
Pur s'ammolliro al fine (In the end were softened/
Del disdegnoso cor gl'aspri rigori (The harsh demands of the unforgiving heart)

ORFEO: Ben conosc'hor che tra pungenti spine (Now I know well that/
Tue dolcissime rose, (In the sharpest thorns your sweetest roses are hidden/
Amor, serbi nascose; or veggio, e sento (Love, I see and feel now/
Che per farne gioir ne dai tormento. (That to give joy is the aim of your torments)

The lights transfer. Orfeo transfers to the CD.

JAMES: I wonder what happened to *Dafne*?

RACHEL: She was changed into a laurel tree by a jealous Apollo.

JAMES: No, the *opera Dafne*. The one that got lost. I mean, how did it get lost? How do things get lost?

RACHEL: They become buried under time.

JAMES: But in your play, how does *Dafne* get lost?

RACHEL: The manuscript blows off a rooftop during a telescope demonstration.

JAMES: You're kidding.

RACHEL: But this is balanced by Galileo dropping his early notes on both the theory of motion and the centre of gravity in solids.

JAMES: Dropping them?

RACHEL: Simultaneously.

JAMES: Where?

RACHEL: On the floor, during a performance of *Dafne* in the salon of Count Giovanni Bardi.

JAMES: Obviously before it was lost.

RACHEL: A very early sketch.

JAMES: Is it plausible?

RACHEL: Okay. Try this: you know the little square down here? There's a stone bench next to the old well beside the church. A man with a shaven head sits on the seat every day, then he walks. He walks around the seat, sometimes he strays wide. He wanders, but always he comes back to the seat to sleep. He is in orbit around that stone bench. So I

asked the priest. It turns out this man was left on the stone bench as a baby. He is convinced that sooner or later his parents will come back, and his orbit will come to a natural end. Plausible?

JAMES: No.

RACHEL: Well it is true.

JAMES: It may be true, but is it persuasive? It's the old thing. History, for example, isn't what happened but what people *believe* happened.

RACHEL: You're sounding just like the Inquisition. "The earth can't be in double motion because we can't swallow it. It may be the fact, but it is not the story we will tell".

JAMES: It's all about belief.

RACHEL: I hate the way people place belief above truth. "The earth is flat". "The holocaust didn't happen". "Bad things only happen by conspiracy".

JAMES: Simple belief is just a way of asserting hope over gloomy facts, that's all.

RACHEL: Okay.

JAMES: Relax.

RACHEL: Yes.

They listen to the music

RACHEL: My God, you look beautiful at night. Something to die for. The sun here makes everything shine as if we're mad. Today I watched the men cruising around the cafes, smoothing their hair, patting their groins, adjusting the backs of their trousers. Strutting past the low stone flower stalls. And I thought that with you there's no parade. Just you.

JAMES: I wouldn't swallow that.

Faintly, and seen only by Rachel who faces it, is a sinister glimpse of the INQUISITOR. He is looking at her. She shivers.

JAMES: What?

The vision fades out to nothing.

RACHEL: Nothing.

FIVE

A bed. GALILEO and the SINGER. As she is the singer who is ultimately DAFNE, we will know her by that name. They are naked, and standing at the foot of the bed. Suspense. Dafne tries to hold back her laughter.

GALILEO: Now!

They fall backwards onto the bed, landing at the same moment. They laugh, kiss, toss the sheets about, then become silent.

DAFNE: What's the matter?

GALILEO: Falling bodies.

DAFNE: Well!

GALILEO: The way they obey the law of uniformly accelerated motion.

DAFNE: Oh.

GALILEO: And generally upon the nature of parabolic fall.

DAFNE: Was it something I did?

They cuddle

GALILEO: Sorry. What do *you* want to talk about?

DAFNE: About your father.

GALILEO: Oh.

DAFNE: I know you don't think about such things. You're in other realms. But the music, what he's talking about, is very important.

GALILEO: Is it? I wouldn't know.

DAFNE: I went to the church. The one beside the stone bench beside the well. And I lit a flame. And I knelt to the Virgin. And I begged her. Please, Madonna, help Signor Vincenzo Galilei and his friends. Help them to make the new music.

GALILEO: Why is it so special?

DAFNE: When I sing the madrigals, I am just one lost voice in a mob, like a sheep bleating in a flock or a small ship among many in a deep fog. I am but a part of everyone else's sound. And although I sing, it is as if I am silenced by this sound. Do you understand?

GALILEO: Not really. I know a few musical expressions, but little else.

RACHEL: I want to sing alone. Your father and Signor Peri and Signor Rinuccini and the Count Bardi, they have the knowledge and the authority to make my dream come true. Imagine if everyone you know were all talking about falling bodies at the same time as you. How would you feel? You would feel you had nothing special to contribute. You want to sing alone, Galileo. All people, whatever they do, finally they want to find their own voice.

GALILEO: You, Signora, are the voice that takes me out of the world.

He seizes some note paper, pen and ink

GALILEO: Turn over.

DAFNE: Why?

GALILEO: I need to write something.

She turns and lies on her stomach. Galileo puts the paper on her bottom. He scribbles some notes.

DAFNE: Ow! That's a sharp point!

GALILEO: I have to make notes when the thought strikes me.

DAFNE: What is it?

GALILEO: I just had a small flash about the centre of gravity in solids.

DAFNE: You haven't heard a thing I've said.

He puts the note away

GALILEO: By the way, your bottom is perfect.

DAFNE: All the while I am speaking, you're thinking of something else.

GALILEO: You see, it's important, because your buttocks are two smooth, perfect orbs.

DAFNE: Galileo...

GALILEO: The people think that the heavens are like this. Smooth and perfect. While everything on earth is uneven, craggy, mountainous and in a general state of corrosion.

DAFNE: Like *your* bottom!

GALILEO: What's the matter?

DAFNE: You don't even listen to me when I tell you you're not listening to me!

GALILEO: I was praising your body, Signora.

DAFNE: My body is an instrument for my voice, not your whimsy! I do not like being used!

GALILEO: And there I was thinking that it was *you* who was using *me*.

DAFNE: What?

GALILEO: You want my father's admiration. The *route* to the father is through the son! Yes?

She slaps him. The lights fade.

SIX

The salon of Count Giovanni Bardi. A sketch from Peri's Dafne. VINCENZO, BARDI, RINUCCINI, PERI. RACHEL observes from her own space and time.

RACHEL: *(in her own space and time)* Dafne. Lost.

The assembly hears a song as Dafne "sings" it. MUSICIAN mimes playing. However, because the score is lost, we hear nothing. Dafne gesticulates the emotions. It would be better if she therefore has her back to us, facing them. To the assembly, the song is obviously very beautiful. To us, the silence is bizarre. The assembly express their delight, by, for example, variously joining their hands as if ecstatic, becoming tearful etc.

Galileo rushes in, clutching two bundles of notes, one in each hand. He is at once struck by the beauty of the "song". So much so, that he lets both bundles of notes fall to the floor. He stands, motionless in Dafne's spell. The "song" ends and the assembly applauds.

GALILEO: Sorry. Sorry.

BARDI: Never mind, Galileo.

GALILEO: It was....amazing. Truly wondrous. What is it?

BARDI: What you stumbled in on was a preliminary sketch from Signor Peri's and Signor Rinuccini's work in progress, *Dafne*.

GALILEO: The New Music!

PERI: Inspired by the ideas of your own father.

VINCENZO: Enough, Jaco....

GALILEO: I'm sorry I was late. When may we hear more?

RINUCCINI: You liked it?

GALILEO: I liked it very much. *Dafne*?

BARDI: Yes, *Dafne*.

PERI: As Giovanni said, this was merely an introduction.

RACHEL: *(at work in her own space)* Our work will centre on *Dafne*...

PERI: Our work will centre on *Dafne*, who, unable to satisfy the love of a jealous Apollo, has been transformed into a laurel.

Galileo laughs, stifles it. He shrugs at Dafne

BARDI: It is the most perfect song I ever heard. *Dafne*.

RACHEL: *(to herself)* Lost.

VINCENZO: *(To Dafne)* For those moments, Signora, you took us beyond the stars.

BARDI: Let us not forget Jacopo and Ottavio for their wonderful music and words!

More applause

RINUCCINI: You are too kind.

BARDI: And now let us adjourn for an appropriate dinner.

All leave, talking enthusiastically, Vincenzo putting his arm warmly around Peri's shoulder. Galileo and Dafne remain. Galileo crosses to her, suddenly grabs her in his arms and kisses her passionately.

GALILEO: You are more beautiful than possible. Complete perfection.

DAFNE: Thank you, Galileo.

GALILEO: No, no, you have just done something wonderful. Forever the world will cherish this moment, this song. How soon before we may hear the entire work?

DAFNE: Not until Signor Peri and Signor Rinuccini will complete it. It may take a long time. This is very experimental. Only a sketch, you see. Early days.

GALILEO: To you a sketch, perhaps, to us a wonderland. Let's walk through Florence and take in the stars!

DAFNE: I cannot, Galileo. I must dine with the academy. They are waiting.

GALILEO: I wonder if I'm invited.

DAFNE: I think not.

GALILEO: Oh.

DAFNE: I think they're uncomfortable with you.

GALILEO: But I am perfectly harmless.

DAFNE: It's the things you say.

GALILEO: What things?

DAFNE: Tell me it isn't true.

GALILEO: What?

DAFNE: The rumour is about, that in the Tuscan Court, during a tutorial on Aristotle and Copernicus, you mentioned the Moon, Ptolemy, and my bottom in one sentence.

GALILEO: I assure you it was apt.

DAFNE: I don't want to be part of your clever talk.

GALILEO: You are the essential standard. Everything else is flawed. You just brought the leading men of music to tears. You caused me to drop my notes on solids and motion into a terrible muddle on the floor. I do not normally drop bundles of notes. And never simultaneously.

DAFNE: (*Tearful*) I do not want to be in your scheme. I want the stars above me and the world at my feet. Anything else would be too frightening for me.

She runs out, upset, Galileo too late producing a handkerchief for her. Bewildered, he begins assembling his notes from the floor

GALILEO: If only I could prove it to her.

BARDI appears

BARDI: Galileo. You are still here?

GALILEO: Sir, yes. Just collecting my notes.

BARDI: So I see.

GALILEO: You have a wonderful residence, Sir.

BARDI: I'm glad you approve.

GALILEO: Very spacious, very quiet.

BARDI: Except when they work on the Uffizi. All those stones crashing. Dear me.

GALILEO: You have come to invite me to dinner?

BARDI: No.

GALILEO: That's a pity. I'm very hungry.

BARDI: You have driven Signora to tears.

GALILEO: I'm sorry, Count Bardi. I meant only to compliment her.

BARDI: I have a small request, Galileo. Whatever opinion you hold upon the subject on which you seem unable to contain yourself, I ask that you do me the honour of never mentioning it under my roof. Am I understood?

GALILEO: Sir, yes. But as there's no one else here at present, just you and I, can I ask how it is that you, a man who does not accept tired conformity in music, can yet accept it in science?

BARDI: You would compare our purpose here to your heresies?

GALILEO: Heresies? Observation a heresy? Calculation a heresy? Truth a heresy? Sir, you do me a serious injustice.

BARDI: I think you should leave.

GALILEO: You inspire change where it suits you, yet deny it to me.

BARDI: Galileo!

GALILEO: You will allow the ear to hear new sounds but not the eye to see new wonders? And that is not a heresy?!

BARDI: You will control yourself in my house!

GALILEO: And in your new order, we can all drown in the music while our view is obliterated by ignorance?

BARDI: You have utterly misconceived our efforts here. We are concerned with monody in place of polyphony. Clarity, if you like, in place of cacophony. Truth in place of musical confusion. We want an actable story with a musicable verse.

GALILEO: And I? Do you not accord me the same integrity? Don't you see what I want? I want truth in heaven and earth! I want clarity in nonsense! Your precious Greeks got it wrong! There is no music of the spheres! Heaven and earth conform to laws deducible by man.

BARDI: That is what you say? To hell with miracle of the Creation??

GALILEO: The laws *are* the miracle of creation!

BARDI: So you make the rules?

GALILEO: No, I only find them.

BARDI: I see. So in your scheme, where is the Soul of Man? Where is that which you just heard float from the voice of Dafne?

A pause. Galileo, unable to answer, begins to leave. Bardi suddenly embraces him

BARDI: Oh, look...Galileo...Come and eat with us.

GALILEO: Oh, thank you, Sir, thank you. I haven't told you. You are a good man. A good, good man. Beyond everything, in the heavens and in the earth, it is this that matters. That which is good.

BARDI: Come then. Our guests are waiting.

GALILEO: Oh, Sir. I should tell you. I am in love with Signora.

BARDI: This is very complicated, then.

GALILEO: Sir?

BARDI: All of the guests are in love with Signora. We, with her music. You, apparently with her spheres.

GALILEO: No, Sir, tonight I fell in love with her soul. Where, indeed, does it come from? That voice! Where does she reach to find it? That sound? Those notes, that sorrow? That love?

BARDI: Yes.

Bardi starts to cry. Galileo produces his handkerchief for the second time.

GALILEO: This feeling. It's the same thing when I look at the stars.

BARDI: The stars?

GALILEO: Don't you see? The music is changing.

BARDI: Leave your papers here.

GALILEO: Count Bardi, I promise not to embarrass you at dinner.

BARDI: Please, Galileo, do not make a promise that you and I both know you cannot fulfil.

A moment. Then Bardi laughs. They both laugh. Bardi puts his arm around Galileo and guides him out. The lights change as:

SEVEN.

James' and Rachel's studio apartment. JAMES singing with the guitar. RACHEL comes in, with a bunch of flowers. She gives them to him, kisses him.

JAMES: At last you're home.

RACHEL: Read my lips.

JAMES: What?

RACHEL: *Circles.*

JAMES: Circles?

RACHEL: Circles.

JAMES: Nice flowers

RACHEL: It's all circles!

JAMES: Right.

RACHEL: No, James, go with me on this.

JAMES: Travelling.

RACHEL: Circle: a closed plane curve at all points equidistant from its centre.

JAMES: Okay.

RACHEL: Circle: the orbit of a heavenly body.

JAMES: I'm with you. The title for your play! *Circles.*

RACHEL: Circle: a place from which the audience watches a performance in a theatre.

JAMES: Circle: a group of people with a common interest, e.g. he moves in Music circles.

RACHEL: And Middle C is written like a ringed planet.

JAMES: Saturn.

RACHEL: Whatever. Circle: a space within which something has influence.

JAMES: Good girl.

RACHEL: Circle, vicious: two unproven theories used to prove each other. Circle: the circumference of a lens. Circle: an instrument for viewing the transit of stars.

JAMES: Circle: the halo of a saint.

RACHEL: Circle: A complete series.

JAMES: I think that's "cycle".

RACHEL: Never mind. Circle: the shape of a prison yard for solitary confinement. Circle: The wheel, symbol of invention.

JAMES: Circle: an idea that ends where it began.

RACHEL: Circle: a parallel of latitude in hell.

JAMES: Where'd you get that?

RACHEL: Dante.

JAMES: Florence.

RACHEL: Of course Florence.

JAMES: Circle. A bacterial disease in the nervous system of farm animals which has the effect of making them walk in circles.

Rachel looks at him blankly

JAMES: Okay. Forget that one. Circle. That which you get under your eyes from working too hard.

RACHEL: Circle. The ring of love.

She kisses him

RACHEL: Hence the expression in tennis for zero.

She kisses him

JAMES: So that's the title? "Circles?"

RACHEL: It's just a thought. I need to let it go round in my head for a while.

JAMES: Circle. Title going around in author's head. Well, it's better than *Composer Kicking a Telescope*.

RACHEL: You're beautiful.

JAMES: I found a couple of books at the library. One on the Opera and one on the Telescope. I don't think you've seen them.

James produces the books.

RACHEL: I don't need new stuff. It's all done. My brain can't take another thing. "Thank you, Rachel, the flowers are nice. "

JAMES: I said that!

RACHEL: I'll put them in a vase.

Rachel goes out. James picks up the Opera book. He browses. Something unsettling catches his attention. He looks at the spine.

JAMES: Oh-oh. Nino Pirotta. *(opens it again, reads some)* Who the hell is *Jacopo Corsi? Corsi*. Mmm. And what's this? ...A little boy from Lucca?

Rachel returns. with a vase. James puts the book aside.

RACHEL: What's the matter?

JAMES: Nothing.

He picks up the other book. He browses. Rachel shrugs, arranges the vase of flowers

JAMES: Here it is. The telescope. This is perfect for your props designer. It's all basic optical principles. The Flemish glassmakers. Galileo heard about it.

GALILEO appears.

GALILEO: My...God!

JAMES: A convex lens, that is, one curving outward, and a concave lens, one curving inward, are placed into the opposite ends of a tube. Bingo. A spyglass.

Galileo listens, apparently to James

GALILEO: *(calls Dafne)* Signora!!

No reply from Dafne.

GALILEO: A convex lens...and a concave lens...

JAMES: All seems so simple.

GALILEO: The tube should be lead.

JAMES: Rachel?

RACHEL: I know.

GALILEO: Signora?

JAMES: Incredible.

GALILEO: Absolutely amazing.

JAMES: So he built one in a single day!

RACHEL: You've caught the bug.

GALILEO: Magnify three diameters.

JAMES: He wanted a bigger one. He would even grind his own lenses.

GALILEO: Say, four point four centimetres in diameter with a magnifying power of 33 diameters!

JAMES: Ha! I was right! The principle is also used in opera glasses.

GALILEO: It's called a spyglass.

Rachel goes out with the vase of flowers

JAMES: Rachel? Do you know how fast we tumble round the sun? At a hundred thousand kilometres per hour...

James steadies himself on a chair.

Inside Galileo's house. DAFNE joins GALILEO. There is a telescope.

DAFNE: Galileo. I have a recital tomorrow. It's a while since I sang this. I need to prepare.

GALILEO: But this is incredible, my love! This is the most dramatic idea ever! It's a tidal wave on the sea of philosophy! It's the thing I need.

DAFNE: How does it work?

GALILEO: The large lens is called the object glass. You place the eye piece in the path of focus of the object glass, which is concave. It has a double power, you see. It has a magnifying power and a light-gathering power! The image is enlarged and the light intensified!

DAFNE: It's very clever.

GALILEO: Have a look.

She does

DAFNE: Ooohh! Look! You can see the priest's laundry! How does it make things so close?

GALILEO: The light-gathering power is proportional to the square of the diameter of the lens. It is better than our eye. Perspective is entirely a matter of perspective.

DAFNE: I can see the judges wandering in the Uffizi!

GALILEO: The magnifying power depends on the respective focal lengths of the object glass and eyepiece...

DAFNE: And the men, strutting past the flower stalls, smoothing their hair, patting their groins and adjusting their trousers.

GALILEO: ... which in turn depend on the curvature and makeup of the lenses.

DAFNE: What's that man doing? He thinks he's alone!

She giggles, stops

DAFNE: Disgusting.

GALILEO: What do you think?

DAFNE: It's impossible. I'm not quite ready to think about its consequences. I have to prepare my song.

GALILEO: I want to take the spyglass onto the roof.

DAFNE: Be careful.

Dafne, in her own light, sings her song. It is the Per quel vago boschetto, from Euridice.

DAFNE: Per quel vago boschetto, (In that grassy meadow,/
 Ove rigando i fiori (Nourishing to the flowers,/
 Lento trascorre il fonte degl'allori, (Where slowly flows the river of laurels,/
 Prende dolce diletto (The beautiful bride took sweet delight/
 Con le compagne sue la bella sposa (With her friends beside her. /

Gradually, an exquisite night of stars comes up in the space.

Chi violetta, o rosa (There were violets and roses,/
 Per far ghirland'al crine (To make garlands for their hair, /
 Togliea dal prato, o dall'acute spine (Picked from the meadow or among thorns,/
 E qual posand'il fianco (And some, stooping /
 Su la fiorita sponda (Over the flowery banks/

A moon appears. Galileo turns the telescope upwards.

Dolce cantava, al mormorar dell'onda; (Sang sweetly to the murmuring
 Ma la bella Euridice (But the beautiful Euridice/
 Movea danzando il pié su'l verde prato (Danced gracefully by a grassy knoll/
 Quand'ahi, ria sorte acerba! (When, alas, a bitter fate struck!
 Angue cruda, e spietato (A cruel and implacable serpent,
 Che celato giacea tra' fiori, e l'erba (Which lay hidden flowers and grass,/
 Punsele il pié con sì maligno dente (Bit her foot with such poisonous teeth/
 Ch'impalidi repente (That she turned pale instantly/
 Come raggio di Sol che nube adombri (Like rays of Sun eclipsed by clouds/

As she sings, the entire view changes, and is dominated by an astonishing close-up of the Moon, its craters, mountains and landscape.

E dal profondo core (and from deep in her heart/
 Con un sospir mortale (Came a mortal sigh/
 Si spaventoso ohimé! Sospinse fuore, (So terrifying, alas, and alarming
 Che, quasi avesse l'ale (That, as if they had wings/
 Giunse ogni Ninfa al doloroso suono (Every Nymph came running at that pitiful
 Et ella in abbandono (And she, failing fast/
 Tutta lasciassi all'or nell'altrui braccia. (Let herself fall into their arms. /
 Spargea il bel volto, e le dorate chiome (From her beautiful face and shining hair/
 Un sudor vié piú fredd'assai che ghiaccio (Came a sweat colder than ice;/
 Indi s'udio 'l tuo nome (And then your name was heard/
 Tra le labbra sonar fredd'e tremanti (To sound from her cold and trembling lips/
 E, volti gl'occhi al cielo, (And as her eyes turned to heaven/
 Scolorito il bel volto, e bei sembianti (The colour drained from her lovely face/
 Restó tanta bellezza immobil gielo (And what had been so perfect, was now a

These images and sound utterly dominate the space, as if for the first time, the heaven and the earth are one. Dafne's voice is their new music. Galileo's arms widen almost in a trance, as if he is adrift in the space. The INQUISITOR appears. Lights die on Galileo and Dafne.

INQUISITOR: You!

Rachel sits up in the bed. Beside the Inquisitor in the space, is one of the various paintings of St. Jerome, with a tame lion, and a cardinal's hat placed near him. Very bare light. Sinister, of course.

RACHEL: Me?

INQUISITOR: Yes, you!

INQUISITOR: You are summoned by the Holy Office of the Inquisition!

RACHEL: But I am free of you.

INQUISITION: You are never free of me.

RACHEL: What are you?

INQUISITOR: You will not write this play. You will withdraw it. You will renounce it under pain of death.

RACHEL: No! It is the function of art to tell the truth.

INQUISITOR: Is it, indeed? Look at this painting. Do you know it?

RACHEL: It is Saint Jerome. Very beautiful.

INQUISITOR: Saint Jerome, yes. He lived from the year 331 to 420 in the year of Our Lord. He is said to have tamed a lion by removing a thorn from its foot. So tame, in fact, that when the lion was accused of eating an ass, the lion strolled into town returning the ass, safe. Do you believe these things? Yet you find it beautiful. And here? What do you see? A cardinal's hat. It suggests, does it not, that St. Jerome was a cardinal. Yet the office and costume of Cardinal didn't come into existence until 800 years after Saint Jerome. So: your art got it wrong! The facts are in error. Does this mean you would trash the art? Does mere error of fact take away from the miracle of creation? The painting is a miracle. The painting is like the heavens and the earth. Facts do not matter. One must ignore the facts, and respect the miracle. To assert the facts over the miracle is a heresy. Do you understand me? You will not reveal forbidden propositions.

RACHEL: I am in Italy centuries after you. I am correcting your view.

INQUISITOR: I am in Italy centuries after Saint Jerome. Yet I do not correct the view. I treasure it. You will treasure my view. You will desist in your work.

RACHEL: I will not be stifled.

INQUISITOR: Then I will come for you. Across the centuries, I reach you. My view is not to be trashed. Remember this: doctrine is an art. The greatest art of all.

RACHEL: I will not renounce my work.

INQUISITOR: Have you read your contract? Clause 27. You will not unfairly, improperly or in any other way misrepresent Italian society.

RACHEL: I will not recant. I will not.

INQUISITOR: Then all of your work will be lost.

She returns to the bed, lifts the sheet. James has a dagger in his heart. Rachel screams. Total blackout. We hear Pluto's Triofofi oggi pieta ne campi inferni from Peri's Euridice. When the lights rise, the music fades. It is morning. Rachel is alone in bed. James comes in, sits on the bed and sings gently until she wakes. Rachel hugs him and sighs.

JAMES: Come on, sleepy head. It's a beautiful day. The sun is shining, all the flowers are out and breakfast awaits on the balcony.

RACHEL: All of my work could end up lost.

JAMES: What brought that on?

RACHEL: So much of Sophocles was lost, you know.

JAMES: What, arms, legs, that sort of thing?

She throws a pillow at him. He catches it.

RACHEL: Who knows what's at the bottom of the Aegean. (*Falls back on bed*) What will be said about us in future times?

JAMES: Oh, a verdict of very smart, I think. Some good pioneering moments. Men on the moon. Women in politics. Twist top beer. Digital Van Gogh.

RACHEL: No, but what will people of a future age say was our great misconception or ridiculous belief? What will we be *wrong* about? And I mean *completely* wrong?

JAMES: Okay. In the future, people will say that we thought our universe was the original. But in fact it's just a copy.

RACHEL: A copy?

JAMES: Well, yes.

RACHEL: If it's all just a copy, where's the original?

JAMES: Lost.

RACHEL: Lost?

JAMES: Well if you can lose Sophocles in two and a half thousand years, and *Dafne* in four hundred, imagine what's been lost in billions of centuries. The original universe and many other versions besides.

RACHEL: *Versions!*

JAMES: Some earlier, some parallel, some still to come but with different outcomes every time.

RACHEL: So our parallel cousins might have wings or three arms or two moons.

JAMES: Who knows?

RACHEL: How did it happen?

JAMES: How *does* it happen?

RACHEL: Go.

JAMES: Well, I like to imagine two cargo trains full of sheet music. The crash is so powerful that all the scored notes fly off the pages and are blasted through cracks in the tunnel wall, and tumble onto new pages in a new arrangement on the other side. The melodies are different but the source is the same.

RACHEL: A copy, but in a different order?

JAMES: Yes.

RACHEL: So each time the trains collide, the music is new.

JAMES: (*He points at her as an affirmative*) And, ergo, differently played.

RACHEL: (*a pause*) Like variations?

JAMES: Well, yes.

RACHEL: Us. The world. The universe. A variation?

JAMES: Variation. Re-arrangement. *Copy*. I call it *Train Theory*.

RACHEL: In your train theory, then, the trains collide in a sort of...mating moment. Like tunnel sex.

JAMES: Yes. Transpose that to physics and you get not new melodies but baby universes.

RACHEL: Through cracks in the wall.

She rises from the bed, crosses the space, turns and faces him.

RACHEL: So who knows how many times we have *been*. Or how many universes are doing it at the same time? If only we could cross from one universe to another, and then another and another, we might eventually come face to face with the Concert Master.

JAMES: Or Signal Driver.

RACHEL: In all His Glory.

JAMES: Or perhaps discover that there *is* no Signal Driver or Concert Master and we are in fact back at the same point we started out from.

RACHEL: This is the wormhole thing. Lots of unseen dimensions? Little tunnels right in front of our noses but we can't see them.

James crosses to her. He kisses her.

JAMES: Oh it's all about holes. Worm holes. Holes that make remote possibilities more accessible. Holes in our jeans. Black holes, where everything gets sucked in so powerfully that it has nowhere to go but to explode out the other side.

RACHEL: Which would look like The Creation.

JAMES: Oh yes, but it's just another Big Bang in Paradise.

RACHEL: So is it fact or fiction?

JAMES: When you're in that deep, what's the difference? (*laughs*)

RACHEL: What?

JAMES: One piece of lavatory graffiti from the urbane Department of Physics: "*Black holes really suck.*"

RACHEL: So what we live with isn't Mother Nature, but it could be Daughter Nature, or Cousin Nature?

JAMES: Or facsimile nature.

RACHEL: A faxed copy?

JAMES: Yes. It could even be a forgery.

RACHEL: Our universe?

JAMES: A fake. A pirate copy.

RACHEL: And the original is lost.

JAMES: Take Peri's story. *Euridice*. He took it from the Greeks. Which particular Greek?

RACHEL: The evidence is lost.

JAMES: And where did the unknown Greek get it from?

RACHEL: The evidence is lost.

JAMES: Vincenzo gave the story to...?

RACHEL: Jacopo Peri.

JAMES: Who gave it to...?

RACHEL: Ottavio Rinuccini.

JAMES: And who took it from Rinuccini?

RACHEL: Oh, Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Gluck, Strauss, Offenbach, Tennessee Williams. And, in one form or another, almost every culture in the world.

JAMES: What we get are only the re-inventions, the secondhand deal. Art, science, the world. The Universe. The Creation.

RACHEL: Copies.

They both fall back on the bed. James leans up, strokes Rachel's brow as he looks down at her.

JAMES: Why didn't Peri keep copies of *Dafne*?

RACHEL: He may have.

JAMES: If a manuscript fell off a rooftop during a telescope demonstration, what happened to the copies?

RACHEL: They were ruined in a flooding of the Arno.

JAMES: Says you.

RACHEL: Says me. The river has been known to swallow quite a lot of things in its time. It has consumed two of the world's most wonderful bridges, but it managed to regurgitate the Church of the Four Seasons, giving the world the title for

JAMES:a fairly popular pizza?

RACHEL: Vivaldi's masterpiece. Somehow, always, there is restoration.

ORFEO appears with EURIDICE before DAFNE and ARCETRO, who are in awe at the resurrected Euridice.

DAFNE: Ma come spiri, e vivi? (But how do you live and breathe?/

Com'oggi nell inferno, (How, today in Hell/

Spoglian de' pregi suoi gli eterni Divi? (Were the eternal gods divested of their prize?

EURIDICE: Tolsemi Orfeo del tenebroso regno. (Orfeo rescued me from the shadowy realm.

ARCETRO: Dunque mortal valor cotanto impetra? (So mortal courage can achieve such a goal?

ORFEO: Dell'alto don fu degno (Deserving of so great a gift/

Mio dolce canto e 'l suon di questa cetra. (Were my sweet song and the sound of this lyre....)

The lights fade.

EIGHT

Inside the residence of Vincenzo Galilei. Night. VINCENZO, in a nightgrobe, with a lamp, admits Peri.

PERI: Vincenzo, I know it's late, but I have such a weight on my soul.

VINCENZO: Jaco, you're welcome at any time, but what can this weight be? And how may I be of assistance?

PERI: You have put this ghost in my head, Vincenzo, and it will not go away.

VINCENZO: Ghost? What ghost is this? Has Jacopo Peri lost his senses?

PERI: Oh, don't make fun of me, Vincenzo.

VINCENZO: Tell me, then. What ghost?

PERI: Orfeo.

VINCENZO: Orfeo?

PERI: Your song.

VINCENZO: My song?

PERI: Ever since you showed me this lover searching the inferno for his lost Euridice, I am as a man possessed. I must tell you. I want to make a work on this story. I owe my inspiration to your composition. There, I've said it.

VINCENZO: You wake me up in the middle of the night to tell me you want to make a work on Orfeo and Euridice.

PERI: But it was *your* idea.

VINCENZO: So what? Others have had it before me.

PERI: Not with such power. I don't want to be accused of...stealing.

VINCENZO: Are you serious? Take stealing out of art and we'd all be lost.

PERI: I want to ask Rinuccini to write the lyrics. It will take time, of course. I have barely begun *Dafne*, but I needed to have your permission before...*(he falters)*

VINCENZO: Before I die? Is that it?

Peri is silent.

VINCENZO: Jaco. Jaco. You worry about such things? Orfeo and Euridice, they're a field free for the raiding. I don't own the world. My discovery is your discovery, Jaco.

PERI: I am from a proud family, Vincenzo.

VINCENZO: Oh dear...

PERI: My descendants would mock my memory that I stole from the great Vincenzo Galilei, inventor of the solo song.

VINCENZO: Inventor of the solo song? Oh, Jaco. People have been singing alone for centuries!

PERI: But not as drama.

VINCENZO: I found a fragment of an ancient Greek hymn. It inspired me. So I composed a song. So I inspired you. If I did nothing else in my life but this, then I've done well.

PERI: But Vincenzo, it mystifies me. You have the ideas. You have the music. Why haven't you made a work on Orfeo? How can you resist?

VINCENZO: Because you do it better, Jaco. You are the one who must tell the world this story.

PERI: You mean...? You have a discovery, but you would give it away? You would let the world honour *me* with it?

VINCENZO: You're a young man. I'm old. It's nice to give something to this world without taking at the same time. It's only an idea. The world's full of them.

He produces a pile of manuscripts of his solo songs.

PERI: These are your songs? So many!

VINCENZO: I write them for leisure until I grow sleepy. (*He selects one*) Ah, here it is. *Orfeo looking for Euridice*. What does art amount to, Jaco? No more than the greed of composition? The jealousy of discovery? The lust for attribution?

He tears up the song

PERI: Vincenzo!

VINCENZO: There you are. Gone.

PERI: You're crazy.

VINCENZO: I have plenty of other songs. You must agree to say nothing of this.

PERI: Such generosity is rare.

VINCENZO: So are hen's teeth, but who really wants them? Now let's have a drink.

PERI: But they will credit me and Rinuccini with the original.

VINCENZO: The original was in Greece.

PERI: I don't know.

VINCENZO: What do you mean, you don't know?

PERI: I have a friend at Pisa.

VINCENZO: And?

PERI: In the University. A scholar of Greek Music. He has a theory.

VINCENZO: Ah, Pisa. City of theories. Some wine?

PERI: Thank you.

He pours wine.

VINCENZO: So what did he say, this scholar?

PERI: I told him what we are doing. He had read your Dialogue on Ancient and Modern Music, in which you attack modern theatre, your music teacher, Zarlino, and polyphonic composition.

VINCENZO: I attack everything. It is a general and tremendous attack. As for Zarlino, his method of tuning is a national disgrace. He even farts out of tune.

PERI: My friend says that we of the Camerata misunderstand the Greek style. We are laying an emphasis on fragments which do not reflect the whole picture. He says they didn't sing the whole play.

VINCENZO: You mean I have drawn inspiration where there was none to be drawn?

PERI: That's what he meant, yes.

VINCENZO: That's the best thing I've heard in years.

PERI: So if the Greeks in fact *didn't* sing the whole play, then it is *you* who is the inventor of the sung drama.

VINCENZO: Ha! Even if your friend is right, which I doubt, I am not the inventor of Orfeo in hell. I am not the inventor of Euridice in love. I am not the inventor of emotion in Man! The new music is not an experiment! And even if it were, what am I? The doctor or the monkey?

He pours more wine

PERI: To us.

VINCENZO: To us...and to the mystery of creation.

They drink. The lights dim. Vincenzo leaves. It should be as natural a transition as possible. Peri is seen in his own light, as ORFEO where the scene with DAFNE and ARCETRO resumes...

DAFNE: O magnanimo core! (O Magnanimous heart!/
Ma che non puote Amore? (Is there anything Love cannot do?)

ARCETRO: Come quel crudo rege, (So cruel a king,/
Nudo d'ogni pietá, placar potesti? (Devoid of all pity - how did you charm him?)

ORFEO: Modi or soavi, or mesti, (Modes now gentle, now sad,/
Fervidi preghi, e flebili sospiri, (Fervent prayers and plaintive sighs/
Temprai si dolci, ch'io (I tempered so sweetly /
Nell'implacabil cor destai pietate: (That I stirred pity in his implacable heart:/
Cosi l'alma beltate (In this way, my life-giving beloved,
Fu mercé, fu trofeo del canto mio. (The trophy of my song, was restored to me.)

The lights fade across to:

NINE

A balcony. DAFNE and GALILEO. Breakfast.

GALILEO: They have offered me mathematics at Pisa.

(a silence)

DAFNE: That's a surprise. You'll accept, no doubt.

GALILEO: It would mean less time in Florence.

DAFNE: Yes.

GALILEO: I'll miss Florence.

DAFNE: Pisa. How nice. All those students.

GALILEO: My love....

DAFNE: A perfect forum for your clever talk.

GALILEO: A high honour. Low pay.

DAFNE: Yes, but see it as a reward for your work. It is a reward, isn't it? Isn't that how it works? You think of something clever, and your colleagues reward you for the clever thought?

GALILEO: I must admit, there has been the odd orgasm over my hydrostatic balance.

DAFNE: What could be more erotic?

GALILEO: My treatise on the centre of gravity in solids. But I suspect Pisa really wants me as a kind of handyman. If they want to expand liquids, I can expand liquids. They need to calculate, I make them a compass. They want to measure the density of objects, ask Galileo. A practical, commercial appointment.

DAFNE: *(coldly)* It's a mystery to me. How you think of these things. How numbers can have so much importance. Me, I sing. It is a question of air, and nerves, and the shape of my body. You, it's some dark power.

GALILEO: You want to know where the real power of the world resides? It's in the eyes. The way we look. The way we are looked at. The way we see. The way we are seen. You, for instance. Your eyes go on forever. Deep, eternal, powerful. And I want to look into them, to die looking into them. I want no other view. When I do this, nothing exists outside your eyes. Eyes. So good to look into. So good to look out of. A person is what happens in their eyes. The unspoken realm of meaning. Yes, eyes. In sorrow, they cry. In joy, they sparkle. In anger, they glare. In terror, they expand. In death, they lose their infinity. Where does it go? Eyes are the absolute statement of life. When I take my eyes from you, I want only to look at the stars.

DAFNE: Galileo...

GALILEO: Come with me.

DAFNE: ...Don't ask me...

GALILEO: To Pisa. Why not?

DAFNE: I can't.

GALILEO: It's beautiful there. It has balconies, too, and wine, and starry nights, and minds of great learning.

She turns away

DAFNE: It hasn't reached home, has it?

GALILEO: What?

DAFNE: That I am actually onto a life here.

GALILEO: What's the difference whether you sing here or there? You said hardly a moment ago that it's just air and nerves and the shape of your body....

DAFNE: How can someone so clever be so stupid?! How can one so clear-sighted in the heavens be so blind on earth?

GALILEO: That is offensive.

DAFNE: Just for a change, turn your spyglass on me! I am part of a movement here that will revolutionise our world.

GALILEO: I didn't know it was so important.

DAFNE: You obviously planned Pisa without even bothering to consult me, as if I am either part of your luggage or something happily left behind.

GALILEO: I thought you'd come to Pisa.

DAFNE: Jacopo Peri is already thinking of another work with Ottavio Rinuccini. They want me to be in it.

GALILEO: You didn't consult me.

DAFNE: I had no idea you were scheming to leave Florence.

A silence

GALILEO: Why does Peri tell you everything?

DAFNE: Not everyone is so secretive as you.

GALILEO: I see. *(A pause)* Your role?

DAFNE: A messenger.

GALILEO: Oh.

DAFNE: In the Greek sense.

GALILEO: Of course.

DAFNE: I am a messenger of death.

GALILEO: Whose death?

DAFNE: That of Euridice.

GALILEO: A serpent, wasn't it?

DAFNE: In a field of flowers. And I report the tragedy to her lover.

GALILEO: Orfeo.

DAFNE: You know it.

GALILEO: My father is a lover of things ancient. Orfeo and Euridice especially. It wouldn't surprise me if my father handed your Peri the idea in gift wrapping. He hardly strikes me as the type to think of it himself.

DAFNE: So the Galilei have a monopoly on original thinking? *(a pause)* I wasn't supposed to discuss this....yet. Jacopo's secret.

GALILEO: Oh, so there is in fact a limit to Peri's generous candour?

DAFNE: You mustn't mention it.

GALILEO: I don't see how I could reveal it at Pisa in the guise of an expanding liquid.

DAFNE: Well. What's to become of us?

Galileo reflects. He suddenly takes up, and opens, some wine.

GALILEO: I'll tell you what's to become of us. When compared to the distance between us and our closest friend, the moon, the distance between here and Pisa is as nothing. I shall go to Pisa. You shall perform in Florence. I shall return here at every possible moment. You may even like to come there for the odd break. Let's try to regularise it, like a sort of orbit.

He pours the wine. A moment passes. He takes her hand. They drink. Vincenzo appears.

DAFNE: To us, then.

GALILEO: To us.

VINCENZO: Galileo.

GALILEO: Papa?

VINCENZO: Signora.

DAFNE: Signor Galilei.

VINCENZO: I'll call later.

GALILEO: Papa, come and drink with us.

VINCENZO: So early. Is there a celebration?

GALILEO: Oh yes, Papa. I'm going to The University of Pisa...

VINCENZO: Yes. I heard. Congratulations. It's a great honour.

GALILEO: ...and Signora is...well, she is celebrating with me.

VINCENZO: I wanted to offer you a little advice.

DAFNE: (*leaving*) Excuse me.

GALILEO: Yes, Papa.

VINCENZO: When you are at Pisa, great men will know your name. As I understand it, you are already quite a subject for discussion.

GALILEO: Idle cafes and flattering journals?

VINCENZO: Many people will hear you.

GALILEO: Yes, well, I shall try to be interesting.

VINCENZO: Perhaps you will also try to be careful.

GALILEO: Careful?

VINCENZO: I need hardly remind you that the Holy Office of the Inquisition....

GALILEO: Papa...

VINCENZO: ...has the authority to act against what it considers to be heretical depravity throughout the entire Christian Commonwealth.

GALILEO: Papa...

VINCENZO: (*undeterred*) It is the arbiter of written doctrine. There is, under its auspices, a number of prohibited opinions.

GALILEO: Don't worry, Papa. They're timid of mathematics.

VINCENZO: They are timid of nothing! All people, high or low, are dispensable! The Inquisition is mighty. It stands wild at the centre of a vast circle and watches the circumference of activity. The reach of its claw is immense and dazzling. You're so reckless! You jabber on everywhere about ...Motion. Can't you understand? Motion is a punishable idea!

GALILEO: What is it with you? I am here celebrating a post of distinction, and you dump on it.

VINCENZO: Galileo, they torture people!

GALILEO: Every time I achieve, every idea I have, every thing I do, you wreck it! Why can't you ever be pleased with me? What is it, envy?

VINCENZO: How dare you speak to me like that!

GALILEO: No? What then? You just don't want me to have success, do you? Well I am tired of your shame. I want a place in this world, and you want to take it away from me! I know you're humble! Good, eat your humble pie alone! I don't want to be at your party! Do you understand me?

VINCENZO: I am trying to warn you that this fame can be fatal, that you are a child playing with fire!

GALILEO: I am a man, Papa. I am given Mathematics at Pisa! Does my father sing my praise? Does he want to celebrate with his son? No! Instead he crushes him with a lecture on the proper way to think! Why? Because a mob of ignorant bullies in Rome are terrified that we are all tumbling through an unfinished Creation and don't want anyone to find out!

VINCENZO: Can't you see? Speaking like that is dangerous!

GALILEO: What would you prefer me to do? Commerce on the docks? Industry in the shipyards? My voice is in the stars! I will not be stifled!

VINCENZO: Whatever you may think, I came here because in all the world, there is nothing so terrible to me than for a child of mine, of whatever age, to suffer pain.

He goes out.

TEN

Inside the University of Pisa. A lecture.

GALILEO: The final test of a theory is to be found in nature herself. I think that in discussions of physical problems we should start not with the authority of the Scriptures, but with the experience of our senses. We are creatures of faculty: sight, sound, smell, touch, taste. Are these senses the design of a mischievous God, determined to mislead us? To banish us from knowing? Surely they are the tools and the torches which open up for us the immense imagination of nature. We stand, you and I, in the vault of the great visible scheme. We can stand and watch the dazzling orchestra of the worlds....

Lights cross to:

Vincenzo's residence. VINCENZO enters, lights a candle, removes his coat and stops, startled, to see the INQUISITOR step from shadow.

INQUISITOR: Vincenzo Galilei.

VINCENZO: Who are you? What are you doing in my house?

INQUISITOR: There is no place in which I am forbidden.

VINCENZO: Perhaps I know why you are here and I have spoken to my son. You need concern yourself no further. He is naive, yes, I admit. But he is a good man. He wishes only to share knowledge. I don't spoil him with flattery but he is an excellent son. I am proud of him. *(Suddenly extremely passionate)* I beg of you not to harm him.

INQUISITOR: *(laughs)* Now, what on earth made you think I came to talk about your son? If I need to speak to him, I'll speak to him. But clearly you seem to think I have some cause to speak to him. Thank you for alerting me.

VINCENZO: No...I didn't mean in any way to...

INQUISITOR: ...implicate your son. No of course not. But you just couldn't help yourself, could you? I am most grateful.

VINCENZO: For any wrongdoing of my son, I am entirely responsible. I am his father. Yet I know of none.

INQUISITOR: Good. Now. Let us examine *your* activities.

VINCENZO: *Mine?*

INQUISITOR: I understand you have been working as somewhat of a pioneer in music, Signor Galilei.

VINCENZO: It is one of the circles in which I move, yes.

INQUISITOR: I see.

VINCENZO: Is that a crime? Surely you're not concerned with *music*?

INQUISITOR: I am interested in the views held in Italian society. To check, as it were, any perverse influence which may fester there.

VINCENZO: But... surely not the culture?

INQUISITOR: Culture, Signor Galilei, has a propensity to drift above, and to sink below, acceptability. I am the monitor of such unhappy discrepancies.

VINCENZO: I thought you were only interested in heresy.

INQUISITOR: Quite right. But heresy is a most accommodating notion. If I reach far enough into the darkest chambers of every human mind, I'll be bound to scratch a heresy.

VINCENZO: Then are you not your own perversion?

Vincenzo instantly regrets this

INQUISITOR: An unwise remark, I think. But let me not be diverted by challenge. (*A short silence*) In recent evenings, alone, quite late into the night, you have been...composing?

VINCENZO: Here in my home, yes.

INQUISITOR: By a lamp, with oil and ink and good paper? With wine?

VINCENZO: How do you know these things? Surely a man is free in his home to do as he desires, whether for industry or leisure.

INQUISITOR: Am I correct in assuming that your industry, as you so politely refer to it, proceeds upon the premise that traditional music requires change?

VINCENZO: That's true.

INQUISITOR: So am I to conclude that you are unsatisfied with the role the Church plays in providing music to the populace?

Vincenzo hesitates

INQUISITOR: Answer, please.

VINCENZO: I preach variety, that's all. Variety is good. In my opinion.

INQUISITOR: Tell me, Signor Galilei, which subject you would prefer to "preach" in the great sphere of music: The Son of God Made Man, or The Love of Apollo Made Laurel Tree?

VINCENZO: You take me by surprise.

INQUISITOR: Is that your answer?

VINCENZO: Novelty is refreshing.

INQUISITOR: So, I am correct in deducing that the direction in which you would take music is to make it profane, secular? An entertainment?

VINCENZO: They're harmless Greek legends.

INQUISITOR: Harmless, perhaps, for clowns and gypsies.

VINCENZO: The people love old legends.

VINCENZO: You would replace the influence of an Almighty and Merciful God with the lust of a jealous Apollo?

VINCENZO: You're putting words into my mouth.

RACHEL: (*working in her own space*) I may yet have to.

INQUISITOR: I may yet have to.

VINCENZO: What?

INQUISITOR: Where exactly are the fruits of your labours?

VINCENZO: My work?

INQUISITOR: Yes. Yes. Produce it please.

Vincenzo produces the bundle of manuscripts. The Inquisitor inspects them.

INQUISITOR: Thank you.

VINCENZO: They're only sketches.

INQUISITOR: But there is only one voice here.

VINCENZO: Yes. Solo songs.

INQUISITOR: I see. No counterpoint.

VINCENZO: It's called monody.

INQUISITOR: Monody?

VINCENZO: Yes.

INQUISITOR: One melody. No team effort, then?

VINCENZO: The music serves the individual.

INQUISITOR: Oh, so everyone is to be an individual? Each parading his own private little tune? To the devil with harmony? To hell with the common needs of our people?

You would throw out the music that unites them and replace it with the voice that dominates?

VINCENZO: You make it sound evil.

INQUISITOR: Oh but it is. The interests of the flock are to be outsung by the selfish love of one man? The unshared pain of one woman? So any person may raise his voice in song, setting up his own misery against that of the Crucified Saviour? Every broken heart is to have its own Music? Every death, its own orchestra? For every opinion, there is to be a symphony? What unbelievable vanity!

VINCENZO: The common needs of the people are met when they identify with the singer. They cannot identify with any one if everyone always sings at once.

INQUISITOR: Who gave you the authority to make these rules?

VINCENZO: I wasn't aware that authority was needed in such matters!

INQUISITOR: Oh, Signor Galilei. Authority is always needed. If you intend to deviate from conformity, approval is indispensable. Without it, you will always be stopped with tremendous force.

VINCENZO: And where, may I ask, does this force draw its power?

INQUISITOR: From the need for pure souls. From the human fear of exquisite violence.

Vincenzo is silent. The Inquisitor places the songs in a bin, and sets fire to them with the candle. He leaves. The SINGERS, in the reaches of the space, sing the Gods of Hell chorus from Euridice, Poi che gl'iterni imperi. Vincenzo, sickened, stumbles away.

GODS OF HELL: Poi che gl'iterni imperi. (Ever since the eternal empires,
Totlto dal Ciel Saturno (When Saturn was turned out of the heavens,
Partiro i figli alteri (Were divided among his lofty sons,
Da questo orroe notturno (From this nocturnal horror/
Alma non tornó mai (Never has any soul returned/
Dal Ciel á' dolci rai. (To the gentle light of the sky above.)

The lights change, and GALILEO resumes his lecture

GALILEO:... Philosophy teaches us that we are unique because we alone imagine. We alone ask questions. If the Creator had wanted to conceal the workings of nature from us, surely he would have done so.

Dafne appears

DAFNE: Galileo...

Galileo holds up a hand to her, restraining her interruption

GALILEO: The worlds are spun by discoverable laws...

DAFNE: Please...Galileo...

GALILEO: There is no divine injunction against discovery.

DAFNE: Your father...

Galileo stops

DAFNE: ...Your father has died.

He stands, utterly still. Eventually:

GALILEO: Papa...? No. No. Not yet.....

In dim light, we see Vincenzo, dead. In the reaches of the space, ARCETRO sings the Che narri, interspersed as indicated with Galileo's spoken words to the dead Vincenzo

ARCETRO: Che narri? (What are you telling me?)

GALILEO: *(To Vincenzo)* ...I have no gift for you.

ARCETRO: Ohime! (Alas!)

GALILEO: Only my sorrow to guide you from the world.

ARCETRO: Che sento! (What am I hearing?)

GALILEO: I believe you, papa.

ARCETRO: Misera ninfa... (Unhappy woman....)

GALILEO: You wanted only the best for me.

ARCETRO: ..e piu misero amante! (And more tortured man of love)

GALILEO: I beg you, Papa...

ARCETRO: Spettacol di miseria e di tormento. (What a sight of sorrow and pain)

GALILEO: Do not die ashamed of me. Give me another chance!

The lights die. Again, the Gods of Hell sing calmly in the dark.

INTERVAL

ACT TWO

Prologue.

Richard Rodgers' and Oscar Hammerstein's "No Way To Stop It", performed by the SINGERS sharing the lines. First, the preamble and Verse One only, ie:

SINGERS:

- "You dear, attractive dewy-eyed idealist,
Today you have to learn to be a realist.
- You may be bent on doing deeds of derring-do,
But up against a shark what can a herring do?
- Be wise, compromise.
- Compromise and be wise.
Let them think you're on their side, be non-committal.
- I will not bow my head to the men I despise.
- You don't have to bow your head, just stoop a little.
- Why not learn to put your faith and your reliance
On an obvious and simple fact of science:
A crazy planet full of crazy people
Is somersaulting all around the sky
And every time it turns another somersault
Another day goes by.

And there's no way to stop it
No there's no way to stop it
And you can't stop it even if you try.
So I'm not going to worry
No I'm not going to worry
Every time I see another day go by...."

The singers disperse, as:

ELEVEN

A Stake of The Holy Roman and Universal Inquisition, set for the burning of a heretic. The INQUISITOR, with the HERETIC.

INQUISITOR: The scene changes to hell. You will experience mainly the sense of smell. The effect of fire quenching itself on your body. Its appetite is voracious. You are its meal. First, a few easy licks of flame will cook your genitals. Your tongue, which has uttered these heresies, will evaporate in its own small furnace. Your eyes will boil. Then the first layer of skin, crisping and flaking, bursting open as the hot white teeth of fire lust for blood beneath. Boiling blood. You will feel your bones heat like stone, and crack, as they are gripped by the flames. And this is but a trifling taste of utter hell, to which you will proceed only when the final spasm of your life has been scalded from the world.

HERETIC: I will not recant.

INQUISITOR: You seem to have lost control of your bowels.

The inquisitor pushes the heretic to the stake. An assistant enters with a flaring torch. The inquisitor nods to the assistant to light the stake. The scene fades with the sound of flames, as: the singers re-group. Verse two of "No Way To Stop It."

SINGERS:

"While somersaulting at a cock-eyed angle
 We make a cock-eyed circle round the sun.
 And when we circle back to where we started from,
 Another year has run.
 And there's no way to stop it
 No there's no way to stop it
 If the earth wants to roll around the sun.
 You're a fool if you worry
 You're a fool if you worry
 Oh for anything but little number one...."

TWELVE

James' and Rachel's balcony. Sunlight. RACHEL is with the actor who plays VINCENZO. There is some remains of wine. Rachel is annoyed. NOTE: from now on, the actors, whether in or out of character, will have the same name as they do in Rachel's drama.

VINCENZO: We have a problem, Signora.

RACHEL: Shoot.

VINCENZO: I received a letter from a group known as *The Friends of Jacopo Corsi*.

RACHEL: Corsi?

VINCENZO: He was a theatrical theorist four hundred years ago.

RACHEL: Four hundred years after his death, he has *friends*?

VINCENZO: Friends, family, descendants, yes, of course. Italians, Signora, they take their music and their history very seriously.

RACHEL: You said you received a letter.

VINCENZO: The Friends of Corsi have read your play and have decided to, well, to put their leg down.

RACHEL: Foot.

VINCENZO: The Friends claim that it was Corsi and not Vincenzo Galilei who invented the opera.

RACHEL: Oh, do they?

VINCENZO: According to them, Count Giovanni Bardi merely hosted talks on the subject of dramatic music, but the breakthrough in fact came later in the salon of Jacopo Corsi, who himself suggested the principles of the New Music.

RACHEL: Fine. The issue may make an amusing program note.

VINCENZO: In 1953, a musicologist in Rome by the name of Nino Pirotta wrote a book tending to prove that Corsi was indeed the father of the opera.

RACHEL: Well I chose to proceed upon the alternative theory, well supported by scholars, that it was Vincenzo Galilei who gave the ideas to Peri in the salon of Giovanni Bardi.

VINCENZO: You realise that Corsi was Peri's teacher?

RACHEL: Peri probably told Corsi about Vincenzo's ideas: the pupil informing the master.

VINCENZO: And what's more, the new scholarship says that Corsi didn't get the idea from the Greeks, but from the French Ballet.

RACHEL: Riveting.

VINCENZO: There's another thing, Signora.

RACHEL: I can hardly wait.

VINCENZO: The chronology.

RACHEL: What about it?

VINCENZO: The telescope was discovered nine years after the first performance of *Euridice* in the Palazzo Pitti at the marriage of Maria de Medici to Henry the Fourth of France. In your drama, everything seems to happen at the same moment.

RACHEL: I wanted to free the drama of any limited perspective. Time and events are to be laid in front of our eyes like the pre-Florentine art.

VINCENZO: Nobody in your play seems to age.

RACHEL: And Richard the Third didn't have a hunchback. Or crutches. Or a solar wheelchair powered by the Sun of York. Where have you been? And Saint Jerome wasn't a cardinal.

VINCENZO: You're pulling my foot.

RACHEL: Leg. The office of cardinal didn't come into existence for 800 years after Saint Jerome.

VINCENZO: Signora...

RACHEL: And he never tamed a fucking lion.

VINCENZO: Rachel....

RACHEL: Tear down the art. Preserve the facts.

In dim light, the Inquisitor laughs. The image dies.

RACHEL: The worlds are spun in our minds. The music, in our hearts. This is drama. What finally matters is how we *behave*.

VINCENZO: And lastly...

RACHEL: Oh, there is an end....

VINCENZO: They are not convinced that Galileo could have been at the marriage of Maria de Medici to Henry the Fourth of France.

RACHEL: Why not?

VINCENZO: Even Maria de Medici was not at the Wedding of Maria de Medici to Henry the Fourth of France.

RACHEL: In which case an Italian wedding would appear to be an eccentric occasion.

VINCENZO: It was achieved by proxy.

RACHEL: What, instead of *I do, I do* it was *She does, she does*?

VINCENZO: Where is the evidence that Galileo was invited?

RACHEL: What is this Corsi group, some sort of archival watchdog, trying to flush out the odd historic gate crash?

VINCENZO: You will push them too far.

RACHEL: Oh for Niagara Falls.

VINCENZO: Look, I hate to tell to you your job. This isn't easy for me. I don't like to teach my grandmother to suck cocks.

RACHEL: Eggs.

VINCENZO: Eggs?

RACHEL: Though, chronologically, which came first, the cock or the egg, is a matter for speculation. There may have been nine years in between.

VINCENZO: Why did you choose Vincenzo over Corsi?

RACHEL: For dramatic reasons.

RACHEL: It would be possible to change your play to make *Corsi* the inventor of the sung drama?

RACHEL: No. No it wouldn't.

VINCENZO: Surely the opinions and speeches of Vincenzo could simply be transferred to the mouth of Corsi. I will make a new character....

RACHEL: When I say dramatic reasons, I mean...*my* dramatic reasons. *My* drama.

VINCENZO: You will still be the writer. What difference does it make?

RACHEL: *(after a deep sigh)* My father was a great man of the establishment. He expected great things of me. But he had no time for the art which I wished to practise. *(She considers not going on, but:)* Yet I loved him. *(a pause)* And though he tried to suppress my inner voice, I wanted always to prove my worth and my love for him through my own art. Sadly, I could never convince him. And so...he died ashamed of me. After his death, I couldn't write for a time. Not until this: the chance to work in the Florence Festival. I needed a father and child in whom to dramatise my own struggle. Hence....

VINCENZO: The Galilei.

A silence

RACHEL: What did you do about this letter from the Friends of Corsi?

He hands her the letter

VINCENZO: I ignored it.

RACHEL: *(she glances at it)* Good.

VINCENZO: So they visited me.

RACHEL: They visited you, the Friends of Corsi?

VINCENZO: They asked me to talk to you.

RACHEL: Just let me get this straight: this little band of Corsi-ites laid their hands on a copy of my play?

VINCENZO: Have you read clause 27 of your contract?

RACHEL: Of course I have.

VINCENZO: "You will not unfairly, improperly....

RACHEL: "...or in any other way misrepresent Italian society." What of it?

VINCENZO: These people are permitted free access to cultural and historical data. Your play is announced in Festival brochures by the Ministry of Culture...

RACHEL: I will not change my work. Tell them.

VINCENZO: Signora, the modern Corsi family own a movie empire.

RACHEL: Well they should stay out of the theatre.

VINCENZO: You don't understand. These are powerful people.

RACHEL: Art will win over them every time.

VINCENZO: You believe that?

RACHEL: I believe *in* that.

VINCENZO: I must go now. Please, Rachel. Think on this. Oh, one incidental other thing I forget. The role of Dafne was apparently sung not by a woman but by a little boy from Lucca.

He goes. Moments pass. James comes in, eating a hamburger.

JAMES: *He* didn't look happy.

RACHEL: Oh James.

JAMES: What's the matter?

RACHEL: Jacopo Corsi. And a kind of censorship known as Clause 27.

JAMES: *(reads the letter)* Oh.

RACHEL: Is that all you can say - *oh*?

JAMES: *(studying the letter)* Come on, it was 400 years ago. There's bound to be a divergence of opinion by now.

RACHEL: Don't spill hamburger all over it.

JAMES: They haven't given you much time for re-writes.

RACHEL: I am not going to re-write. Let them drag me into litigation. Vincenzo invented the sung drama. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

JAMES: Can't you tell the Corsi mob that they're wrong?

RACHEL: Red rag to a bull, from what I gather.

JAMES: I mean, if people can be wrong about the moon, they can be wrong about the invention of opera.

RACHEL: Wrong about the moon?

JAMES: "Fly me to the Moon". Great. Watch my lungs collapse. "This time we almost made it to the moon, didn't we, Girl?" But our heads started to cave in from the pressure. "I like the Moon in June, how about you?" Yes, give me a pile of defunct old craters any month, but why not June? "By the light of a Silvery Moon". The Moon has no light and is not silver. And "Let's wish upon a Star"? That's a laugh. A star. Boiling flames. Skin cancer looking for a place to happen. Does it mean the love was bad? Or the song was *wrong*? In

time, someone will claim that the only thing Corsi invented was, oh let's see....the hamburger.

He eats some of it. Stops. Holds up what's left of the hamburger. Rachel looks at him. A smile breaks.

JAMES: You with me? A line here and a line there.

RACHEL: The hamburger?

JAMES: Yes. You know, *with* onions, *ma non troppo*. And what is an onion but a series of concentric rings?

RACHEL: Circles.

JAMES: Hamburger with *the works*.

RACHEL: The works?

JAMES: Plural of *opera!* After centuries of casserole, the starved imagination arrived at the view that meat could actually be cut in a round shape.

RACHEL: Circles.

JAMES: Yes.

RACHEL: You're totally insane.

JAMES: And as the earth got rounder, the meat got flatter. Corsi's Law. The Flat Meat Society and all that.

RACHEL: I love you.

JAMES: And instead of a loaf of bread, it doubtless occurred to Corsi that the geometrically correct innovation was the bun.

RACHEL: Bun?

JAMES: A vaguely spherical shape of bread. In biblical terms "*and Corsi said: let there be bread above and below the meat.*"

RACHEL: Corsi invented the hamburger?

JAMES: 'Course he did.

RACHEL: (*laughing*) 'Course he did. I love you. And if you're not inside me before the light's out, I'll fly you to the Moon.

She pulls James into her arms and kisses him as the lights fade, and the singers re-group for the final verse of "No Way To Stop It."

SINGERS:

That's I and I and I and me -

-That all-absorbing character -

-That fascinating creature -

-That super special feature - ME!

- So every star and every whirling planet

And every constellation in the sky

Revolve around the centre of the universe

A lovely thing called I.

And there's no way to stop it

No there's no way to stop it

And I know though I cannot tell you why.

So as long as I'm living

Just as long as I'm living

There'll be nothing else as wonderful as I."

THIRTEEN.

The studio of Jacopo Peri. PERI, RINUCCINI, DAFNE and ARCETRO, in rehearsal.

RINUCCINI: I have a new way to do the scene. It is so perfect I cannot believe.

PERI: The same scene?

RINUCCINI: The same scene, yes. Dafne, the messenger, has told Orfeo that Euridice has died from the serpent.

PERI: As before.

RINUCCINI: Yes, but in such circumstances, to whom do we give our pity? Traditionally, I mean.

ARCETRO: To the receiver of the message, of course.

DAFNE: To Orfeo.

RINUCCINI: Yes! To Orfeo. But what about the poor messenger who has carried this message?

ARCETRO: Dafne?

RINUCCINI: Exactly. When she tells Orfeo her sad message, Arcetro, an observer, should give his pity first, not to Orfeo, but to Dafne, the messenger! True, Orfeo is the one who loses the love of his life, but the messenger has borne the terrible burden of the news alone in her heart all the way from the death to the ears of the aggrieved!

PERI: This is marvellous!

RINUCCINI: I like that. I like that very much. We pick up from the moment she has told Orfeo.

Dafne, Orfeo (ie Peri) and Arcetro take their places. A moment of silence.

RINUCCINI: Arcetro, embrace her, the messenger.

ARCETRO: *(embracing her, sings)* Che narri? Ohime. Che sento! Misera ninfa...

RINUCCINI: And only now, turn to Orfeo...

ARCETRO: *(doing so)* ...e piu misero amante! Spettacol di miseria e di tormento...

PERI: It's brilliant! A change in the order of emotion!

DAFNE: A tribute to the suffering of the messenger!

RINUCCINI: It has also the practical advantage of giving Orfeo a little more time to digest the news!

DAFNE: Perhaps I should weep helplessly at this gesture, and maybe collapse? Perhaps a fit of madness?

RINUCCINI: Please, no.

DAFNE: Sorry.

ARCETRO: Have I enough lines to sing for this? Because it's a big moment.

PERI: This is getting ridiculous, Ottavio.

RINUCCINI: This is not a big moment! It is a small, small moment. A moment of detail. The polishing of the diamond. We will keep it simple.

PERI: *(smiles)* It's coming on.

FOURTEEN

The Bar della Luce. JAMES setting up a stool on his singing area. It's early. One or two patrons, perhaps DAFNE enters.

DAFNE: Are you open?

JAMES: Just about to. Come in.

DAFNE: Thank you.

JAMES: Good rehearsal?

DAFNE: James, there is trouble brewing.

JAMES: Trouble?

DAFNE: This Corsi thing.

JAMES: What now?

DAFNE: Everyone has just received letters.

JAMES: Listen to me: this play has to happen. It's for Rachel. It's a kind of, a kind of vindication. It's so...vital. I will not stand by and see her heart broken by these people. It's more than her art, it's her life. She's that kind of writer.

DAFNE: I understand this.

JAMES: *(taking her by the shoulders)* Do you? You know these paintings, these statues, all the bronze and the paint and the art and the science in this city. You know how it was done by people at a time when life was lived intensely. Well Rachel is like that. Maybe she's out of her time. Maybe she's four centuries too late. But that's what she does. She lives it intensely. Nothing must stop her.

A silence, broken by the arrival of the actors and singers. They claim tables and chairs.

VINCENZO, sitting alone, reads over a letter. James goes to his stool. He sings a song. During it, RACHEL comes in, joins Dafne at a table.

DAFNE: James is very beautiful.

RACHEL: He is.

DAFNE: You are very much in love with him.

RACHEL: Yes.

DAFNE: I have this secret, you know.

RACHEL: A secret?

DAFNE: I am also very much in love with him.

Rachel looks at her, taken aback.

DAFNE: But don't be worried. This is something he will not know. It is something only that I bear in my heart. I promise you. Perhaps what I love in him is the way he loves you.

A moment passes. Rachel smiles.

RACHEL: You're so...honest.

DAFNE: Thank you, Rachel.

RACHEL: So tell me, then. What's going on?

GALILEO arrives, sits with Vincenzo. James sings gently under.

GALILEO: Sorry I'm late. I had to see the moon drawings.

VINCENZO: Yes, yes.

GALILEO: What's the matter?

VINCENZO: Nothing. Nothing.

GALILEO: (*seeing the letter*) Oh, Corsi Films! Well, well.

VINCENZO: What do you mean: "well well"?

GALILEO: I also received one of those offers.

Vincenzo puts it in his jacket. Galileo throws a kiss to Rachel, who is listening to Dafne, privately. Rachel smiles across to Galileo.

GALILEO: That woman is all heaven to me. Her eyes flash, her heart is full of grace, I like her words. She is completely beautiful.

VINCENZO: The play is in trouble.

GALILEO: What do you mean, in trouble?

VINCENZO: The Corsi will sabotage it.

GALILEO: What?

VINCENZO: What do you think these letters are about?

Focus shifts to Dafne and Rachel

RACHEL: Letters? What letters?

DAFNE: From the Corsi empire.

RACHEL: *Empire?*

DAFNE: One of the things they do is make films.

RACHEL: So. What's this got to do with us?

DAFNE: They are offering us contracts. They offer big money, of course. And the dates of the engagements clash completely with the dates of the Festival. What's more, they say that if we refuse, we will never work in movies again.

RACHEL: But...but that's

DAFNE: Sabotage, I know.

RACHEL: You all have contracts with the Festival Committee...

DAFNE: The Ministry of Culture would release us all from our agreements if we support the Corsi claim that the play is against clause 27.

RACHEL: The scene changes to hell.

The focus shifts to RINUCCINI, PERI, BARDI and EURIDICE

RINUCCINI: I don't like this. I don't like this at all.

PERI: But they're offering three times what we would earn in the Festival.

EURIDICE: Thirty pieces of silver?

PERI: She is in breach of her contract.

RINUCCINI: There is a principle.

PERI: There is also a lot of money. And we would never work in pictures again.

EURIDICE: The Corsi suffer from family pride. Well what about the pride of the artist: us?

RINUCCINI: Yes! If we succumb to this strategy, we are renouncing our honour as artists in the theatre.

PERI: What about the honour of Italian society?

RINUCCINI: That is nonsense. Art must be free to depict society however it pleases!

PERI: To hell with truth?

RINUCCINI: There is not one truth! There is artistic truth and there is documentary truth. She is not writing a documentary! She is presenting impressions, not facts:

impressions which lead us to the judgment of many truths! Nino Pirotta's case is only a

theory! The Vincenzo case is just as strong! Who cares? This is not theory against theory! This is art! The place for the documentary is on the television!

Bardi speaks to the whole assembled company.

BARDI: Friends, friends. Calm yourselves. This has always been a fair land, a good country. This is a great, ancient, beautiful society. Are we going to let it change? Are we going to let evil thinking replace the goodness? Can clause 27 be used to silence protest? We must let our voices be heard! This play we have been working on insists that the policies of the state be wise and just, not tyrannical and oppressive. This play seeks to free the angel and contain the devil. Do we want a society where the angel is put back in her cage, and the devil encouraged to run rampant? Unless art is free to explore its own truth, then our society will never grow. And grow it must. Our society must learn to see that corrupt conduct and all kinds of high mischief is wrong. Our financial security is not the centre of the universe. It is the human heart that should be the centre of our society. I say we push on!

RINUCCINI: Excellent speech. I like that...I like that very...

PERI: Shutup, Ottavio.

He sits. A silence. James sings softly. The dialogue continues over his singing,

VINCENZO: I am sorry. I say we pull out. These are powerful people.

PERI: I agree.

Consternation. Everybody talks at once. James' singing is drowned. He stops.

RACHEL: Stop. Stop. Well. All my life I have fought this. This thing that doesn't want me to be heard. But there is a solution. I will withdraw the play from the festival. This monster of silence seems to have a most extensive claw. Sign up for your movies everyone. I'm out.

JAMES: No! Rachel!

Rachel leaves. The company talk incomprehensibly among themselves. They leave, except for Dafne, James and Galileo.

DAFNE: James, her spirit is down. You must bring it back up. Give her the courage.

Dafne places her hand firmly on his shoulder. James looks her squarely in the eyes.

JAMES: Yes.

GALILEO: Tell her I am with her.

JAMES: Yes. I will.

FIFTEEN

James and Rachel, in bed.

JAMES: I just can't believe you're giving up.

RACHEL: It all got too much for me.

JAMES: But like you said, you've always fought to express yourself. Why stop now?

RACHEL: Because it is finally stronger than I am.

JAMES: No, it isn't.

RACHEL: It is, James. It has energy and resources I lack.

JAMES: *It* being a self-righteous, influential mob of Corsi loonies.

RACHEL: And just where is the alternate influential mob who are on *my* side? Are they silent or do they simply not exist? It seems only the destructive have influence now. And the foe gets bigger every day. I can't fight it any more. We've lost Peri and Vincenzo at this late hour.

JAMES: You haven't lost Galileo. Your inspiration.

RACHEL: Now I understand why he recanted. In the end, it is all too painful. And you know something, James: my father was right.

JAMES: Don't say that. Don't ever say that.

RACHEL: He said "Don't be a writer. You'll always suffer. And it's unsafe."

JAMES: This, from an industrialist? People get injured and burned and poisoned. Industry is *safe*?

RACHEL: But he was right: I'm suffering for what I believe.

JAMES: Rachel. Creation is unfinished. You have to keep working until society can laugh at the Friends of Corsi. Until clause 27 is a laughing stock. Until corruption is as outrageous as a flat earth: something no one believes in.

RACHEL: You're the other voice. The voice that encourages.

JAMES: You can win this fight. Like Orfeo in Hell: what harder heart was there than Pluto? And Orfeo softened him with his song. And he won back what seemed impossible! What I'm telling you is stronger than any discouragement you've ever heard in your life. I, James, love you, Rachel. You, Rachel, can win this fight.

RACHEL: You're not human. You're some transfigured angel.

JAMES: Read my lips: Corsi invented the fucking hamburger.

Sudden light change. Rachel turns, confronts the Inquisitor. James sleeps.

RACHEL: You!

INQUISITOR: Me?

RACHEL: Yes, you.

INQUISITOR: It is not for you to summon me. I, alone, summon.

RACHEL: Times have changed. The world has turned. You are accountable.

INQUISITOR: To you?

RACHEL: To me.

INQUISITOR: And whence do you derive this authority?

(Rachel holds up a pen or quill)

RACHEL: You see this. It's a writing instrument. Oh yes, there's more sophisticated technology now for writing, but this remains the symbol.

INQUISITOR: The *symbol*?

RACHEL: Of the power of writing. And it has informed on you. It has exposed you.

INQUISITOR: I will not be spoken to in this fashion....

RACHEL: Yes. Yes you will! Because on behalf of the human race, I *demand* enlightened policy!

(The Inquisitor, curious, does nothing to prevent the flow)

RACHEL: And if you use power to implement official lies, then I will write and write and write until what is written is more powerful than your lies. More powerful than torture or death.

(The Inquisitor does a mock applaud)

RACHEL: You will not patronise me. I am putting you, and your regime, under duress.

INQUISITOR: By putting words in my mouth? Why must you always fight me on this?

RACHEL: Like this pen, you are a symbol. The symbol of the oppressor. Everyone else is wrong. Every one else must withdraw, recant, confess! So tell me one thing - why is it that you never stop for a moment to imagine that it is you who is wrong, you who should recant?

INQUISITOR: This is a heresy.

RACHEL: There's no such thing as a heresy any more. There is informed and uninformed opinion.

INQUISITOR: The Almighty - the *Creator* - has placed in our hands a series of decrees.

RACHEL: It is the state that makes the decrees. If the powerful mislead us, you should burn in hell for it.

INQUISITOR: You will be silent!

RACHEL: In my hand, is the pen which you tried to stifle!

INQUISITOR: You are too familiar with me!

RACHEL: Too familiar? I know you!

(A strange silence)

INQUISITOR: Rachel...

RACHEL: You're the Ultimate Negative. The social Almighty. Always preaching *Thou Shalt Not!*

INQUISITOR: *(sudden rage)* I always act in best interests!

RACHEL: How would you ever know *my* best interests?

INQUISITOR: Because it is my duty to decide best interests.

RACHEL: Well I beg to disagree.

They hold each other's gaze, until:

The scene transforms to the stage of the theatre. James, Inquisitor and Rachel leave. The bed, now a set piece, remains. DAFNE gets into the bed. with her script. Dafne waits in the bed. Eventually, PERI appears, with his script.

PERI: Where is she?

DAFNE: I'm here. Waiting to rehearse our bed scene.

PERI: No. Not you. Rachel.

DAFNE: We all thought you weren't coming back.

PERI: I know.

DAFNE: You and Vincenzo.

PERI: Where is she?

DAFNE: There is a plan to replace you.

PERI: Rachel!

DAFNE: She has a newfound determination. James inspired her.

PERI: Rachel!!

Rachel appears.

RACHEL: Well. I didn't expect to see you back.

A pause. From a cold face, Peri erupts into laughter. Dafne and Rachel just look at him.

RACHEL: What?

Peri laughs. He holds up the script.

DAFNE: He is back but he is mad.

PERI: The new script! Ha!

RACHEL: What is the matter?

PERI: It nearly killed me.

DAFNE: What?

PERI: Corsi!

RACHEL: Are you alright?

PERI: There's more to Corsi than meets the eye. Corsi invented the hamburger!

He roars laughing. Peri takes up his position in the bed next to Dafne. He is still chuckling right up to when Rachel says:

RACHEL: Okay let's run the scene.

Lights change. Peri and Dafne in bed.

PERI: Have I told you....*(he laughs)* Sorry.

Peri composes himself

PERI: Have I told you.....

Dafne laughs now.

PERI: Have I told you that you were magnificent as Dafne? *(pause)* Nine years ago.

DAFNE: I loved every minute of it. Is it nine years?

PERI: Whatever. It stays in my mind like a flower you water every day. To me, you *are* Dafne. One and the same. *(pause)* For a little boy from Lucca, you make an extremely convincing woman.

DAFNE: What?

PERI: Never mind.

DAFNE: Oh, Jacopo. I feel so guilty. Here. With you.

PERI: You still miss that madman.

DAFNE: Galileo believes passionately in his views.

PERI: A monkey believes passionately in his excrement. It hardly bestows it with virtue.

DAFNE: It is a puzzle to me. We all more or less experience the same world, yet people hold such opposing passions.

PERI: Will you see him when he returns to Florence?

DAFNE: I will try to resist him, but I'm sure he'll win through. It's his eyes and his heart. It's his way of seeing and persuading. He wins. I'm sorry.

PERI: So he's my rival. Well. It's good for you to have me. Just in case anything happens to him.

DAFNE: You make me sound like Mars. She has two moons apparently.

PERI: I hope you haven't caught his bug.

DAFNE: Of course not, Jacopo.

PERI: (*He produces a manuscript of Dafne*) I have something to give you.

DAFNE: *Dafne?*

PERI: It's my original. I want you to have it.

DAFNE: Your original manuscript! Oh, that's too kind, I cannot take this, for fear of losing it.

PERI: I have copies. I store them safely in a basement by the Arno.

DAFNE: It is a gift more beautiful than possible. I will treasure it always.

PERI: It is something to remember me by, when you go back to *him*.

Lights fade as the scene changes.

SIXTEEN.

A rooftop, Florence. A starry night. A Moon. The song fades out. The telescope is set up. GALILEO appears, with a reluctant DAFNE, who is clutching Peri's manuscript .

DAFNE: This is too high.

GALILEO: Nonsense.

DAFNE: Galileo, I'm frightened.

GALILEO: Come on, it's wonderful.

DAFNE: I have to go in.

GALILEO: I want to show you something.

DAFNE: Please, Galileo.

GALILEO: Just imagine you're riding on the top of your voice. Imagine you are being carried heavenward on a note of music.

DAFNE: I can't imagine when I'm terrified.

GALILEO: Oh, but you can. Fear is an instrument of the mind's great orchestra!

DAFNE: You want to push me off for being with Peri tonight.

GALILEO: No, this is your reward for being with Peri tonight.

DAFNE: My reward?

GALILEO: Anyone with the stomach for Peri's libido cannot possibly be afraid of heights.

DAFNE: How did you guess, anyway?

GALILEO: Observation. Calculation. And of course, you come here clutching under your arm a copy of *Dafne*.

DAFNE: No. It's the original.

GALILEO: A gift.

DAFNE: It's cold. I want to go inside. It's too windy.

GALILEO: Cold? Windy? No! It's warm. Hot air rises. You can even smell the onions from Corsi's house.

DAFNE: Onions?

GALILEO: He's experimenting. Something with bread, beef and onions. Terrible.

DAFNE: But Corsi's a composer.

GALILEO: Is he? Then perhaps onions are the subordinate motif in the culinary rondo.

DAFNE: Galileo, take me in. Why must I go through this ordeal?

GALILEO: I want you to look.

DAFNE: I can't open my eyes this high.

They are at the telescope

GALILEO: Look.

She hesitates, then looks into the telescope

GALILEO: It's Venus.

DAFNE: My...God.

GALILEO: Now, ask yourself. Why does it not blind you, so close?

DAFNE: Please, Galileo. I've looked.

GALILEO: Tell me about the light.

DAFNE: It's...like a mirror...so gentle. Or a lake.

GALILEO: Yes, it is lit by the sun like a torch lights the opera. Watch. Watch the light move. Venus. See, we are in a rhythm with her. And remember what I told you about the sunspots.

DAFNE: Please...

GALILEO: Remember!

DAFNE: Yes. That they move across the sun.

GALILEO: They move. Venus moves. We move. Where do we move?

DAFNE: Galileo, I'm scared.

GALILEO: Come on, I need your answer. Where do we all go?

DAFNE: We'll fall...

GALILEO: We won't fall. Think it through.

DAFNE: Circles.

GALILEO: Yes!

DAFNE: It's a journey. Us and them. The planets.

GALILEO: Yes, yes!

DAFNE: And the sunspots.

GALILEO: So?

DAFNE: We go round and we come back!

GALILEO: Isn't it wonderful?

DAFNE: Galileo, I'm dizzy...

GALILEO: We are partners in a song and dance! Look! The sun conducts the music! We are whirling around the floor! You know what this means? It means that celestial and terrestrial phenomena are bound by the same laws.

DAFNE: What?

GALILEO: There is no distinction between behaviour above and below the Moon. We go round and we come back.

Dafne is dizzy, taken by the spell. A silence

DAFNE: Galileo...we're moving...

GALILEO: The heaven is full of rock and fire.

DAFNE: (*dazed*) Did you hear me? We're...

GALILEO: Yes.

DAFNE: ..moving.

GALILEO: At an unthinkable speed!

DAFNE: I'm going to faint...

GALILEO: Don't you see? It means that everything out there must take a new form in our heads.

DAFNE: Where... *are* we then?

GALILEO: From which, in turn, it follows that mathematics and physics are not separate things.

DAFNE: What...is holding onto us?

GALILEO: And philosophy is a different field.

DAFNE: I said WHAT IS HOLDING ON TO US??

GALILEO: Good question.

DAFNE: Help me!

GALILEO: Something that doesn't show itself is throwing us through the space.

DAFNE: Help me! Help me!

GALILEO: Why are some things visible and others hidden?

DAFNE: Galileo! Oh! Oh! We're alone! We're alone. GALILEO!! What have you done??

HELP ME! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE???

She throws up her arms, sending the Dafne manuscript blowing off the edge. Pages swirl, and fall. Dafne sinks, terrified to the ground, clinging on. Galileo laughs

DAFNE: Who will save us? Who will save us? Stop it! Stop, stop, stop! STOP!

She is hysterical. Galileo comforts her on the floor.

GALILEO: You can't stop it. There, there, it's alright. It's been doing this for a very long time!

DAFNE: What if it lets go?

GALILEO: It?

DAFNE: WHATEVER'S DOING THE THROWING!!!

GALILEO: It won't let go!

DAFNE: How can you know that?

GALILEO: I don't know what *it* is, but I trust it! It loves us.

DAFNE: Forever throwing us in the dark!

GALILEO: Calm, calm. Why don't you sing?

DAFNE: SING?? Are you CRAZY? How can you sing and vomit at the same time??

GALILEO: Vomit?

DAFNE: I need to vomit!

GALILEO: It's Corsi's onions.

DAFNE: HELP!!!!

GALILEO: Feel the music!

DAFNE: WHAT MUSIC?

GALILEO: The new music!

DAFNE: I can't hear anything!

GALILEO: LISTEN!

At first, silence. She slows her breathing. She stares madly. The instrumental that precedes Dafne's Lassa! Che di spavento is heard.

DAFNE: Where does it come from?

GALILEO: Listen. It's within you and beyond you. Listen. Concentrate. Sing.

DAFNE: (*sings*) Lassa, che di spavento e di pietate (Alas! what terror and pity/

Gelami il cor nel seno. (Freeze my heart inside my breast/

Miserabil beltade, (Miserable beauty,/

Com' in un punto, ohime, venisti meno.(How in a moment came you to death?/

Ahi! che lampo o baleno (How like a flash of lightning/

In notturno seren ben ratto fugge,(Which strikes the serene night and vanishes/

Ma piu rapida l'ale (And yet even more rapidly /

Affretta umana vita al di fatale....(Does human life hurry its flight towards death.

During Dafne's song, slowly, like worlds changing, the next scene assembles, and ARCETRO takes up hi Oime! che fia giamai following Dafne's last words.....

SEVENTEEN

A Performance of Peri's Euridice, in a chamber in The Palazzo Pitti, 1600. The COMPANY assembles as the Wedding Company of Maria de Medici's marriage to Henry the Fourth of France. ARCETRO, DAFNE and ORFEO (Peri) perform the sequence from Euridice beginning with Arcetro's Oime! che fia giamai in the second part of scene two. MARIA DE MEDICI dabs her eyes, absently. HENRY smiles.

ARCETRO: Oime! che fia giamai? (Alas what has happened?/
Pur or tutta gioiosa (I just left a young woman full of joy/
Al fonte degl'allor costei lasciai (At the edge of a river of laurels)

DAFNE: O giorno pien d'angoscia, e pien di guai (O day full of anguish and woe/

ORFEO: Qual cosi ria novella (What bad tidings/
Turba il tuo bel sembiante (Disturbs your beautiful appearance
In cosi lieto di, gentil donzella (On this happy day, gentle lady?)

DAFNE: O del gran Febo, e delle sacre Dive (Great Phoebus and the holy Muses/
Pregio sovrani di queste selve onore (Whose sovereign is honoured by these woods
Non chieder la cagion del mio dolore (Do not ask the cause of my sorrow.)

ORFEO: Ninfa, deh sia contenta (Nymph, be contented/
Ridir perche t'affanni (Tell us why you are upset/
Che taciuto martir troppo tormenta (For a silent martyr torments us too much.)

DAFNE: Com'esser puo giamai (How can I ever/
Ch'io narri, e ch'io riveli (Tell and reveal/
Si miserabil caso? o fato; o Cieli! (So wretched an event? O Fate, O Heavens!/
Deh lasciami tacer, troppo il saprai (Let me be silent, else you'll know too much.)

ARCETRO: Di' pur: sovente del timor l'affano (Tell us: often the fear of sorrow/
E dell'istresso mal men grave assai (Is worse than knowing the truth.)

DAFNE: Troppo piu del timor fia grave il danno (Tragedy is much worse than the fear of
it/

ORFEO: Ah! non sospender piu l'alama turbata (Ah! do not keep in suspense the troubled
soul.)

*Lights change as if time shifts to the end of the performance. The Wedding company applauds.
Maria and Henry greet Peri and Rinuccini, who bow.*

PERI: Your Majesties.

MARIA: May we thank you for such a splendid wedding gift, Signori.

RINUCCINI: Vous l'aimez?

HENRY: Nous l'aimons beaucoup.

Galileo is shielding himself behind a veiled telescope.

DAFNE: Galileo, I didn't know you were invited.

GALILEO: I'm not here.

BARDI: Galileo is never invited but is always in attendance.

Galileo does a stage cough. The Royals turn. Peri and Rinuccini look exasperated by this distraction. Galileo unveils the telescope at a window and veils himself. The King and Queen approach and inspect the telescopic view. Maria first, followed by Henry.

MARIA: Oh! One captures the heavens in one's eye!

HENRY: Well! How gratifying to be wed on the same day as the marriage of art - *(he gestures to Peri, Rinuccini and Dafne)* - to science. *(The telescope)*

Applause. The Royals leave and the formality dissolves. Count Bardi kisses everybody. Galileo re-appears, kisses Dafne, and shakes hands with Peri and Rinuccini. Peri kisses Dafne, with intimate fervour. Galileo notices.

PERI: I heard you had been appointed to Padua, Galileo.

GALILEO: Yes, well, it's love that keeps bringing me back.

ARCETRO: Well done, Professor Galilei. *(for Peri's benefit)* For Padua, I mean.

PERI: So. How does Padua compare to Pisa?

GALILEO: The people are different but the mathematics is the same.

PERI: Well. Congratulations.

GALILEO: No! Congratulations to you!

RINUCCINI: *(to Galileo)* You liked it.

GALILEO: *(to Rinuccini)* I liked it very much. It was perfect, perfect. So rounded, so mellifluent, so....full of love! The King and Queen were in your thrall.

PERI: *(pointedly)* Thank you, Galileo.

BARDI: Though at times I felt the Queen seemed rather distant.

RINUCCINI: Yes, she occasionally dabbed her eyes, absently.

GALILEO: What is it with song? We can be stone, and it makes us honey. We can be ice and it makes us a fountain! We can be lame, and it gives us wings!

BARDI: How Vincenzo must smile upon this day. I sometimes feel his smile, you know, like rays of sun.

GALILEO: *(Pointedly)* My father would *indeed* be well pleased!

PERI: Your father?

GALILEO: With his love of Orfeo and Euridice. How ever did you think of it?

PERI: *(Guiltily)* Oh..... things Greek.

GALILEO: Things Greek indeed. *(Aside to Peri)* By the by, Jacopo, I understand that you have honoured the Greek Messenger by sharing with her what is left of your libido.

PERI: Are there no secrets?

GALILEO: Yes there are, but they suffer from a state of gradual revelation. Galileo's law.

PERI: I would call it indiscretion..

DAFNE: Galileo! What are you on about?

GALILEO: Just asking Peri whether the earth moves for him.

DAFNE: I knew it. I'm afraid Galileo is contagious.

RINUCCINI: He is like a meteor which is out of control.

DAFNE: By the way, Ottavio, I understood that Signor Corsi would be here for the wedding.

BARDI: I'm afraid he is preoccupied. I saw him at the markets today. He seemed to be buying rather a lot of minced meat and flour. Very sly about it, too.

PERI: Minced meat?

GALILEO: There's more to Corsi than eyes the meat. *(pause)* Sorry.

Laughter

PERI: I must say that as a teacher he did generate rather a lot of heat.

BARDI: He mumbled words to the effect that he was going to do something with *the works*.

PERI: His own works?

BARDI: And something about the circles of the Bulb of Cepa.

RINUCCINI: The Bulb of Cepa? A working title?

DAFNE: No. The bulb of cepa is just another name for an onion.

GALILEO: Concentric Circles.

BARDI: And something about a salad.

GALILEO: A sallet? That's part of a knight's armour! Is Corsi going into battle?

RINUCCINI: Knight's armour? I thought a salad was an amalgam of various green leaves and tomato.

PERI: This is getting ridiculous, Ottavio.

BARDI: There is an interesting story about this.

RINUCCINI: Salad?

BARDI: Salad. Yes. And eggs.

PERI: Eggs?

BARDI: And onions. A story from here in Florence. During the 1430s The Emperor of Byzantine was touring here and owing to a mishap of protocol he and his entourage were momentarily without accommodation. But a Florentine - one Giovanni di Jacopo di Latino de Pigli de Peretola...

PERI: Who?

BARDI: Giovanni di Jacopo di Latino de Pigli de Peretola...

RINUCCINI: He obviously had little doubt about his identity.

BARDI: Well this Giovanni di Jacopo di...

ALL: ...Latino de Pigli de Peretola...

BARDI: ..he made his own humble abode available to the emperor. All he had to offer were salad, eggs and onions, ordinary old fodder to us Italians but to the Emperor of Byzantine - the most delicate of luxuries! So Giovanni breaks the eggs onto hot bricks and serves up onions, salad and fried eggs! The Emperor was delighted!

PERI: Did you, by any chance, mention this recipe to Corsi?

BARDI: As it happens, I may have.

GALILEO: So whatever Corsi is working on may have had its origins in a mid fifteenth century cock-up in protocol?

GALILEO: Corsi steals from everybody. Not very nice, eh Jacopo?

PERI: I...well....no. I suppose not.

DAFNE: Never mind. I pray his meat is as green as his envy. You have turned the world of music on its head.

PERI: Ah, the pot calling the kettle black.

GALILEO: We mustn't be unkind about poor old Corsi, lest we bring his wrath upon our heads.

Suddenly, out of time and place a discordant crash of music and a blast of stormy lightning. The INQUISITOR appears, in a cloak of death. The Wedding disperses, but the same setting remains.

INQUISITOR: You! Galileo Galilei! You are summoned by the Holy Office of the Inquisition!

He pushes Galileo into a chair

INQUISITOR: You will deny that the earth is in double motion around the sun!

GALILEO: I will not recant.

INQUISITOR: Your fingers will be placed in the screw. Gradual pressure will smash them! You will then be placed on the rack. Your legs will splinter and your body will burst! Then!

An assistant brings a large body board with an arc to fit round the waist.

INQUISITOR: This board will pinion your arms while maggots attack your flesh. Your remains will be burnt.

GALILEO: So! Is the truth in my fingers? Break them off? Is the truth in my knees? Smash them? Is the truth in my heart? Have your worms eat it out? And in case any skerrick of truth remains, burn it away?

The Inquisitor pushes the body board around Galileo's waist, pinning him to the chair

INQUISITOR: Doctrine is the greatest art of all!

GALILEO: Truth is the greatest art of all!

INQUISITOR: We will not be ruled by lenses and mathematics!

GALILEO: You think fear purges away the nature of the worlds?

INQUISITOR: So you are the high priest of certainty!

GALILEO: No! I am the low servant of inquiry!

INQUISITOR: Inquiry yields error!

GALILEO: Doctrine yields terror!

The Inquisitor thrashes him across the face, sending him into a huddle on the floor

INQUISITOR: However great you imagine your mind to be, you will be reduced to the most primitive yelps of pain! I have seen it. Minds of immense brilliance dissolved into whimpering spasms.

GALILEO: What are you afraid of? That Nature is revealed in a form you cannot digest?

INQUISITOR: You insolent scum! Let me tell you the most wondrous terror of all! It's in the mathematics! Infinity! The perpetual displacement of certainty. With every one of your pronouncements, you plunge the wretched humanity into uncertainty!

GALILEO: I invite them to knowledge.

INQUISITOR: Your knowledge makes them lonely under the dark skies. The Saviour died to bring meaning to loneliness.

GALILEO: The Saviour died to purge the world of sin, not reason.

INQUISITOR: Enough!

GALILEO: No, not enough! You love mountains on earth, but deny them in the heaven. You torture people here because Nature is a greater thing than you can fit into your doctrine! Sir, I am right.

INQUISITOR: Right? What is that? A very pompous mantle, I think.

GALILEO: I am right.

INQUISITOR: Do you have to repeat it like a caged bird?

GALILEO: I am right.

INQUISITOR: Oh! I know the game. You want me to deny it three times? Like a musical triplet that somehow cements the denial forever. This mathematics is a straightjacket.

GALILEO: Can the honest man deny what he believes to be true?

INQUISITOR: Yes! To believe *in* is greater than to *believe*. One can *believe*, if you like, the motion of planets or the colour of apples, but one doesn't believe *in* them. One believes *in* the miracle. One believes *in* the creator.

GALILEO: Can you imagine the bird which, looking left, sees a beating wing. Looking right, it sees another beating wing, but yet denies their function, and cries out: "It's a miracle! I'm flying!"

INQUISITOR: You'll push me too far.

GALILEO: Oh for Niagra Falls.

INQUISITOR: What?

GALILEO: Why did the creator allow us this inner mind if its voice is never to be heard?

The inquisitor throws the body board across the room. Galileo covers on the floor. An eerie silence

INQUISITOR: Have some wine with me.

Silence

INQUISITOR: Please. *(He pours wine from the decanter)* This is a lonely art. Torture. Here, drink with me. *(He hands Galileo a glass of wine. Galileo sniffs it.)*

No, it isn't poison. *(a pause)* You, Galileo, are the most...important man in the world. It's good to drink with you. So, tell me, why do you hold and defend these opinions?

GALILEO: *(drinks)* Because they're true.

INQUISITOR: Leaves are green. This is true. Do you endlessly parade the fact?

GALILEO: Only if the Inquisition insists there's no such thing as leaves.

INQUISITOR: Come, don't patronise me.

GALILEO: I want to share the universe with my fellow human beings. With you.

INQUISITOR: I think I am like others. Always I see my grave, my flesh becoming the earth. And always it is raining, raining on my cold corpse. And so I imagined my spirit far away in a smooth heaven, where the stars light our souls. But now you have got into my head. Heaven is just another graveyard and we are the dead among the heartless stars, spinning round a laughing sun, which, like us, grows colder. So the whole scheme is a dying parody of mocking silence. Our bones cry out for deliverance, for absolute meaning. And all that comes back to us is the echo of the mountains. So I drink wine. We sit together, drinking wine, huddled against the dark in which only numbers have no end.

GALILEO: *(a shocked realisation)* You...believe. You have looked in the spyglass.

INQUISITOR: *(looks at telescope)* Oh, Galileo. It is you who crushes me, with your...instrument of torture.

GALILEO: You stand mighty against the light. You're the eclipse. And you burn the people you believe.

INQUISITOR: We are frightened, Galileo. God save us from discovery! Who knows what lies hidden? Our pens are nervous and busy on the parchment, describing the unknowable so that we can bear to live. Do you understand me, Galileo?

GALILEO: Yes. Yes I do.

INQUISITOR: Please. Recant. Withdraw your statements. To torture you is somehow a sacrilege.

GALILEO: My father feared nothing in the world but pain to me.

INQUISITOR: I met your father. I watched him at work through a spyglass. How he loved you. He was very proud of you. No doubt he knew that the world will finally spin with reason - its grandest music. Don't make me torture you.

GALILEO: If I recant, what's the deal?

INQUISITOR: First, here in this room, and never beyond it, I myself, to you, will recant.

GALILEO: You...recant?

INQUISITOR: Everything you say is true. But now is not the time for the frightened people to know it.

GALILEO: The propositions are forbidden, but true?

INQUISITOR: We understand each other. I will arrange a house. You will be imprisoned there. We'll provide the necessary funding.

GALILEO: Instead of funding my research, you fund my silence?

INQUISITOR: Inside the house you may write, shut off from the world. See it as a closed circle of light in a world of darkness. The alternative...well I think you understand the alternative.

A silence. The Inquisitor fills Galileo's wineglass, as:

GALILEO: I...Galileo Galilei, son of the late Vincenzo Galilei...hereby renounce, abjure, curse, and detest all my aforesaid errors and heresies...and generally every other error and sect whatsoever contrary to the Holy Church...and I swear that in future I will never again say or assert, orally or in writing...anything that might furnish occasion for suspicion against me....

Thunder and lightning.

EIGHTEEN.

The stage of the theatre. Peri rehearses ORFEO's plea to PLUTO. Beyond, is the ragged soul of EURIDICE.

ORFEO: O degl' orridi, e neri (Hear me, in the dark and terrible/
Campi d'inferno, O dell'altera Dis (Fields of Hell, Of proud Hades,/
Eccelso Re, ch'alle nud'ombre imperi (Supreme King, Ruler of these bare shadows/
Per impetrar mercede, (To beg for mercy/
Vedovo amante, e questo abisso scuro (A widowed lover, to this dark abyss/
Volsi piangendo e lacrimando il piede (With tears of sorrow, I wander.)

VINCENZO has appeared. RACHEL steps from the shadow.

VINCENZO: I came to return the script.

RACHEL: So you are deserting us.

VINCENZO: That was my intention.

RACHEL: *Was?*

VINCENZO: Something happened to me when I entered the theatre just now. It's hard to explain. Is it the old ghosts? Or the music. Some new emotion. I don't know. I remembered what you said.

RACHEL: What I said?

VINCENZO: About your father. How he died ashamed of you. And I realised...that in your play, I am your father. I am bringing him back to you. Back from the dead. So if I were to desert you.....I would be taking your father from you for the second time. And denying you the chance to make your peace.

RACHEL: (*deep pain, now*) I have never denied his love. (*She almost cannot go on*) Only the manner of its execution.

Rachel stands, motionless.

VINCENZO: We're brighter than the stars, you know. Unlike the stars, we can change, turn, and go the other way. We can be wise. (*touches his heart*) From here.

Peri resumes his Orfeo. Vincenzo sits, reads his script. Rachel remains standing, looking at him, as if unable to move.

ORFEO: Dhe, se la bella diva, (O if the beautiful goddess,/
Che per l'acceso monte (Who on the burning mountain/
Moss'a fuggirti in van ritrosa, e schiva (Timid and shy, tried once to escape you,/
Sempre ti scopri, e giri (If she still looks to you, smiling/
Sereni, i rai della celeste fronte, (And warms you calmly with rays from her celestial face/
Movat'il tristo suon de miei sospiri (Then look anew on the sound of my sad sighing/

Rachel slowly crosses to Vincenzo, and with an outpour of deepest feeling, she puts her arms around him as if claiming something long lost. Vincenzo places his hands serenely on her arms, as Peri sings.

ORFEO: Vagliami il dolce canto (And judge my sweet song/
Di questa nobil cetra (From this noble lyre/
Ch'io ricovri da te l'anima mea (That I might regain my Love's spirit/
L'alma, dhe, rendi a questo cor dolente (Please restore her to my sad heart/
Rendi a quest'occh'il desiato Sole; (Restore to these eyes their cherished Sun/

A quest'orecchie il suono (To these ears, restore the music/
Rendi delle dolcissime parole; (Of her sweetest words/
O me raccogli ancora (Or else take me, too/
Tra l'ombre spente ove il mio ben dimora. (Among those dead shadows where my beloved
dwells.)

NINETEEN

Two spaces: James' and Rachel's balcony. A starry night. And the stage in Rachel's play.

JAMES pours drinks for RACHEL and DAFNE. John Lennon's "Imagine" on the CD player.
They toast:

DAFNE: To *The Starry Messenger*.

JAMES & RACHEL: *The Starry Messenger*.

RACHEL: As a title, it only just beat *Circles*.

JAMES: I voted for *Composer Kicking a Telescope*, but *Starry Messenger* looks better in the publicity.

DAFNE: (*laughs*) Oh, James.

JAMES: What?

DAFNE: *Composer Kicking a Telescope!*

They drink

The stage. A storm crashes. Heavy rain. Galileo dismantling the telescope. Peri appears, in a state.

PERI: Where is she?

GALILEO: Who?

PERI: She has my original!

GALILEO: Ah.

PERI: God is angry with us.

GALILEO: Calm down, Jacopo. What's it all about?

PERI: *Dafne!*

GALILEO: *Dafne?* Not here, I'm afraid.

PERI: This mad rain. All ruined. Copies, I mean!

GALILEO: Ruined? How ruined?

PERI: Alas, my basement is flooded. The Arno has risen like a beast of hell!

GALILEO: Alas, indeed. (*realises*) Your...copies? Of *Dafne*? All ruined?

PERI: Where is that woman?

GALILEO: Jacopo....

PERI: All that work! Unrepeatable work! Maybe some idle monks will copy it for me from my original. She has my original, you see. Very important. In things musical.

GALILEO: Things musical? Yes...

PERI: To keep the original separate from the copy.

GALILEO: Yes, well...

PERI: Or in this case, copies plural. Will she be long, do you think?

GALILEO: Jacopo. About the original.

PERI: You have it?

GALILEO: I'm afraid *Dafne* is, well, gone.

PERI: *Gone?*

GALILEO: Yes. Gone.

PERI: Gone where?

GALILEO: Forever.

PERI: Forever? Goneforever? Are you insane?

GALILEO: We were on the roof looking through the spyglass.

PERI: (*agitated*) Whatdoyoumeangoneforever??

GALILEO: There was quite a high wind.

PERI: Quiteahighwind?

GALILEO: Er, yes. And the storm, you see.

PERI: Stormyousee?

GALILEO: The world was spinning, and we were hurtling through space at a fairly amazing speed.

PERI: Worldwasspinning.....?

GALILEO: What?

PERI: What?

GALILEO: Yes, and, er, a sort of accident....arrived at us.

PERI: Accidentwhataccident?

GALILEO: I'm afraid that the world went one way, and *Dafne* went the other.

PERI: Agh.

GALILEO: Just sort of, you know, blew off.

PERI: Agh.

GALILEO: Corsi managed to catch the odd page, apparently.

PERI: Theoddpage?

GALILEO: But, alas, he used them to wrap what he calls *The New Sandwich*.

PERI: TheNewSandwich...?

GALILEO: It's a working title.

PERI: Agh. Agh. Agggh. Lost. My *Dafne*. Lost.

GALILEO: Jacopo, I'm sorry.

PERI: Looking....

GALILEO: What?

PERI: Inthespyglass....ontheroof. Whatwasshedoingontheroof?

Whatwasshedoingontheroofwithmymanuscriptlookingthroughhaspyglasswhiletheworldwent the otherway?

GALILEO: You're becoming incomprehensible, Jaco.

PERI: Agggghhhhhhhhh.

Peri begins kicking the telescope. Galileo tries to stop him.

GALILEO: No! Jaco! No. Stop! Stop!

PERI: Agghhhhhhhh!

GALILEO: Jaco!!!

Peri drags the telescope away. When he is out of sight, there is a dreadful crashing sound.

GALILEO: Madman! Lunatic! Composer!!!

He sits, huddled out of the rain, head in hands.

Rachel and James have begun to dance to the CD player. Dafne watches them.

Rachel breaks, sits down.

RACHEL: *(To Dafne)* Your turn.

DAFNE: What? No.

RACHEL: Yes. James, dance with her.

James offers his hand. Dafne hesitates, then joins him. They dance. The song plays on. Dafne rests her head on James' shoulder as they dance. Rachel watches them. She smiles. She looks out.

RACHEL: Look at the stars. There's so much going on. Things hurtling towards each other. Things drifting round each other. Things leaving each other. All little and big fires. In the sky. On the earth. In the heart. Just little and big fires. So much...going on.

Lights change. James drifts into Rachel's arms. Dafne drifts into Galileo's space, where he sits, despondant. Whatever's left of the music plays through to:

DAFNE: This is a very damp place to sit.

GALILEO: Then shall we warm it with our wisdom?

Dafne sits with him and leans on his shoulder. Through the scene, the weather clears and a moon appears

DAFNE: I've been wondering....

GALILEO: Yes...?

DAFNE: How did it all get started? Our world moving around the sun?

GALILEO: It probably began like a ...dream, erupted like a volcano, and then set like a... cake.

DAFNE: But how does something this ...big just begin to move?

GALILEO: Well, quite. The point is, what came first, the movement or the laws which require the movement?

DAFNE: The laws?

GALILEO: Yes. You see, things have no choice but to obey them. So: where did the laws come from?

DAFNE: And where did the *obedience* come from?

GALILEO: Exactly.

DAFNE: Perhaps it's not so much a law as a recipe.

GALILEO: Recipe? If it were a recipe, it would follow that it has all been madebefore. My love, you're a genius!

DAFNE: It was what you said about a cake.

GALILEO: No false attributions, please. You are remarkable. Copy the recipe. Repeat the mix. Like Corsi in his kitchen. Something the Emperor of Byzantine got from Giovanni somebody. All that was missing was the meat.

DAFNE: *(off with her own thoughts)* You see, it's like a song. A song is two things. There's the song on paper, and there's the song being *sung*.

GALILEO: *(takes notes)* The laws on paper - *(gestures to the sky)* - and the laws being sung!

DAFNE: You've caught the bug.

They laugh, embrace, huddled together out of the storm.

GALILEO: However madly they are thrown together, things in the universe don't like to leave each other.

DAFNE: You think they have feelings?

GALILEO: Some *sort* of feeling, yes, as if they like to be together. As if something pulls them into each other's lives. Something which chooses to be invisible.

DAFNE: Like love.

GALILEO: Like love indeed. When love casts two people into each other's eyes, an orbit begins. One is the flame, the other the rock. If one leaves or dies, the other returns to a state of drifting. If the earth melted or crumbled away, the music would be different and the moon would fly off in search of another partner.

DAFNE: How sad.

GALILEO: Yes.

They kiss.

TWENTY

James' and Rachel's apartment. JAMES is looking out through a small pair of opera glasses. In a chair, is the actor who plays RINUCCINI.

JAMES: I bought them for Rachel. A first night present.
RINUCCINI: But it is the perfect gift. She will love them!

DAFNE enters. James looks at her through the opera glasses. But Dafne is clearly distressed. James lowers the glasses.

JAMES: What are you up to, creeping in on us?
DAFNE: Oh, James....
JAMES: *(taking in her state)* What is it? What's wrong?
DAFNE: Something terrible has happened.

In the distance, ARCETRO sings the Che Narri.

RINUCCINI: What, what? Tell us.
DAFNE: There has been an explosion behind the Palazzo. A bomb attack, and a very great fire.
JAMES: Whatare you saying?
DAFNE: James, Rachel was there.
JAMES: No...
DAFNE: James, I'm sorry. Rachel is dead.
JAMES: *(more defiantly)* No.

A helpless moment. Rinuccini comforts Dafne.

JAMES: This...can't happen.

Rinuccini comforts James, sitting him gently in a chair.

DAFNE: They think it's the same people.
JAMES:Who? *Why?*
DAFNE: Nobody knows who they are. Some private war against us.
JAMES: Rachel....no, no. Not yet....
DAFNE: James, she spoke your name.
JAMES: I have to go to her...I have to be with her...
DAFNE: She spoke your name.

James goes out.

RINUCCINI: My God. Will we never be out of reach...?

Upstage, PERI sings Orfeo's Non piango e non sospiro, as:

Lights dim in the apartment space. A smoky ruin develops. A blue flashing light. RACHEL on a stretcher, among the dead. JAMES enters the smoky ruin, searching for Rachel among the dead.

Beyond the moment, ORFEO laments the dead EURIDICE.

ORFEO: Non piango e non sospiro (I do not weep or sigh)
 O mia cara Euridice. (O my darling Euridice)
 Che sospiar, che lacrimar non posso. (For I am unable to sigh or weep)
 Cadavero infelice (O unhappy corpse)
 O mio core o mia speme o pace o vita (O my heart my hope o peace o life!)

Rachel's hand protrudes from the sheet. James lifts back the sheet, and draws her up into his arms, a lifeless doll.

ORFEO: Oime! chi mi t'ha tolto, (Who has taken you from me?)

JAMES: Rachel...Who could have done this?

ORFEO: Chi mi t'ha tolto, ohimé! Dove sei gita? (Who has taken you from me?
 Where have you gone?)

JAMES: Who could take you from me like this...?

ORFEO: Tosto vedrai ch'in vano (Soon you will see that it wasn't in vain)

JAMES: You said my name...I love you, my darling...

ORFEO: Non chiamasti morendo il tuo consorte (That in death, you called your lover's name.)

JAMES: I bought you a present. Opera glasses...

He places the opera glasses in her hands at rest on her chest.

In dim light, EURIDICE wakes from death.

ORFEO: Non son, non son lontano: (I am not far away/
 Io vengo, o cara vita, o cara morte. (I come, o dear life, o dear death.)

James remains with Rachel. The lights change in the mist. RACHEL wakes, looks through the opera glasses at ORFEO and EURIDICE.

RACHEL: (To James) Look, Euridice wakes! Death has given her back to Life!

James looks at her through tears.

RACHEL: Always there is restoration.

Rachel smiles. James kisses her. She sinks back, as before, dead.

EURIDICE: Per quest'aer giocondo (With this blissful air/
 E vivo, e spir'anch'io (I also live and breathe:/
 Mirate il mio crin biondo (Behold my golden hair,
 E del bel volto mio (And my beautiful face,
 Mirate, donne, le sembianze antiche (Behold its familiar appearance;/
 Riconoscete omai gl'usati accenti, (Know once more my voice of old/
 Udite il suon di queste voci amiche.(Listen to the sound of my loving words)

DAFNE enters quietly. She stands, looking at James and Rachel. James turns, looks at her.

Behind the scene, the INQUISITOR appears in thin light. A cold expression.

Then the lights fade. The orchestral interlude from the final Ballo of Euridice.

Curtain.