MIKIS THEODORAKIS

THE BALLAD OF THE DEAD BROTHER

(A Musical Drama)

Play, lyrics, and music written by the composer.

Athens, 1962

Translated and Introduced by

George Giannaris

New York, April, 1970

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FIRST FAMILY (Papamerkouriou)

MOTHER [Sofia]

PAVLOS, her son, age 20, leftist

ANDREAS, her son, age 25-30, rightist

SECOND FAMILY (Stefanou)

FATHER

MOTHER

ISMENE, their daughter, age 18, loved by Pavlos

PERICLES, their son, rightist

THIRD FAMILY

MOTHER

NIKOLIOS, her son, age 20-25, leftist

FOURTH FAMILY (Charalambous)

FATHER

POPI, his daughter

[FIFTH FAMILY]

FATHER (Blind)

TASSIA, his daughter, age 16

OTHERS

TAKIS, leader of the Rightists

WOMAN, lost her son

DEAD SON

LEADER, with his men

CHARON, in black costume and papillon

GRIGORIS, leader of the Leftists and his men

[SERGEANT and his men]

LAIK (FOLK) ORCHESTRA [ ], plus clarinet and santouri

LAIK (FOLK) SINGER

LAIK (FOLK) DANCERS, three

MIME, two men (brothers), and a woman (mother)

SOLDIERS, A, B, C, ...

THREE CHILDREN

THE SUN, a little boy

Presented by:

The Elliniko Laïko Theatro Manou Katraki

World theatrical premier, October 15, 1962

Kalouta Theater, Athens

Directed by P. Katselis

Costúmes and designs by N. Nikolaou

Choreography by Z. Nikoloudi

First musical-ballet presentation:

Tenth Anniversary of Elliniko Chorodrama

Premier, April 20, 1962

Rex Theater, Athens

Directed by M. Cacoyiannis

Scenery by S. Vassiliou

Choreography by Rallou Manou

Recordings

TO TRAGOUDI TOU NEKROU ADELFOU (The Ballad of the Dead Brother).

Odeon: OMCGA 14, 33 1/3 R.P.M.

Original music in the composer's handwriting has been included in the edition of the play published by Ghonis, Athens, 1962.

Titles of songs included:

(1) April

(2) The Dream

(3) Lullaby

(4) The Chain

(5) One Nightfall

(6) Betrayed Love

(7) Pavlos and Nikolios

(8) In the Gardens

(9) Unite, (Glorification)

PROLOGUE

Setting: On the left — a half-destroyed wooden bridge. The house of Nikolios. A platform for the musicians. An opening leading to Mt. Hymettus. The two-story house of Ismene, with stone stairs leading up to a "covered balcony."

The three houses form a semi-circle, like an orchestra. Behind the three houses is a residential district. In the middle, behind Mt. Hymettus, is a large expanse of blue sky.

Music:

"Unite" (Glorification) [instrumental]. Stage. Neutral lighting. Three mothers, masked, sit at the doors of their houses, knitting. Two or three children are occupied with a grammophone out of which music comes ("Unite").

Pericles enters with Andreas, just arriving from work, unwashed. Pericles heads towards his mother; Andreas towards the grammophone. He lifts the needle. Silence. Darkness falls.

Music:

"April" [record or tape backstage?] The three mothers still in the same position and at the same

task, but unmasked. Three mimes perform in the distance, near the platform. Andreas is near Pericles who stands in front of the latter's house. Nikolios and Popi are near his mother.

The sky changes colours — from violet to red to deep blood-red. All, except the mimes and the three mothers, turn to look at it).

SONG - "April"

My April — blooming April and scented May
oh, my heart, how can you
my heart how, my heart how can you endure
in the midst of so much love and so much beauty

My star — my pale star, a ray of the moon
on your eyebrow
on your golden lace eyebrow
my heart is hung like a bird on a twig

My flower — aroma scented flower
and my scenting rose
to your mother — to your mother I shall go
to ask for her blessing and the pair that I love.

The neighborhood is filled with kisses and songs
my girl is called Lenió
my girl is called Lenió
my girl is called Lenió
I keep it a secret.

(Takis rushes in from the street, breathless, playing with his revolver. He comes to a sudden halt and so everything else on stage. The Music is cut sharply and all turn towards Takis. But before he catches his breath and is ready to talk, the rattle of a machine gun echoes in the distance, on the left. Light dims slowly and turns yellow).

Preparation for the PARODOS

(From the side of the bridge the musicians enter in order and dignity, followed by the singer. They are all dressed in dead black. Faces white-yellow. They hold their instruments in their right hands, parallel to their bodies. They proceed slowly towards the platform and take their seats.

A girl and two young men enter and head towards the proscenium preparing for the pantomime. The girl puts a black kerchief on her head to play the mother. The children scatter off to the sides, next to the mimes.

Light is cut slowly and is shed only on the musicians and the mime).

SONG - "The Dream"

You had two sons, my mother
two trees and two rivers
Two Venetian castles,
two spearmints, two worries

One goes to the East
the other goes to the West
And you, standing in the middle
speak and ask the sun

Sun, you who see the mountains
that see the rivers
and you who see our sufferings
and the wretched mothers

If you ever see Pavlos call me
and if you see Andreas tell me
I raised them with the same anguish
and with the same sob I bore them

But they took to the mountains
and they cross the rivers
One is seeking to find the other
one to kill the other

And there on the highest mountain
there, on the highest peak
one next to the other they sleep
and they share the same dream

That they both run to the mother's
oh, to the mother's death-bed
they both together join hands
to close their mother's eyes

And they plunge the knives deep
and firmly into the soil
And water sprang from there
for you to drink and slake your thirst.

(The mime must be nothing but an interpretation of the song).

Lights

(The Mother points to her sons who show their health and vigor. She is happy.

They part — one eastward [left?]; the other, westward [right?]. They are overcome with rage. The mother looks on in despair.

The SUN enters: A little boy holding a long stick on which a painted sun is nailed.

The mother talks with the SUN and exits with him over the bridge.

The two brothers take out their knives and bending, encircle and approach one another with madness.

The lie down to sleep, the one next to the other, without seeing each other.

They awaken abruptly and stand up. They run towards the street. They squat on their knees and give their hands to one another.

They come forward. They lift their knives high and down they plunge them into the floor with force. They depart, embracing.

With the plunging of the knives there are shots, lights, and movement).

Ismene's mother

Takis, what's going on?

Takis

(Playing with his gun). Before I tell you the latest

Takis (cont.)

news, allow me to greet the musicians and the singer. (Turns and bows slightly but with obvious reverence).

Hail Bithikotsis with your wooden voice which someone one day will try to plane. / You too will give in one of these days and you will become famous! / Today that you are among us, / I beg you to forget your teachers and become simple as before! / As simple as we are, / and these streets and the houses. / As uncultivated as our speech is / and as careless our acts. / For, this is how we were born and suddenly found ourselves / in the middle of the earth on a rocky land / wearing shepherd's shoes, with guns, and warm-blooded / but underneath with the heart of a child. / The just burns us and the unjust cuts us down. / But our philotimo* is that which rules us! / We live for a philotimo and we die for it. /

(Machine guns echo from afar. He changes tone of voice).

Oh, yes, with the "we die" I recalled the story of my uncle from Crete.

(He turns to the audience).

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* The word philotimo, although untranslatable, could be given as its closest connotation love of valor or reputation.

Takis (cont.)

It was Easter and joy in God / the vendetta was pleasant / the oil was overflowing in the barrels / and all had plenty. / And my uncle's uncle was drinking in the taverna / with his first cousin. / They were drinking and firing into the air. / And my uncle's uncle turns and says: / — "Eh you, why are you aiming at God?" /

—"Why, where do you think I can aim at? /

—"Aim right at my heart, here!" / And the cousin, not wishing to deny his heart's desire: /

—"With pleasure, cousin," and tore it apart. /

(Imitates the movements and his revolver turns and aims at the bridge over which Pavlos and Ismene were passing. She throws herself to cover Pavlos with her body. A moment of agony).

Takis

Pericles, tell your cousin to leave.

Ismene's mother

Ismene! (As she runs to her).

Pavlos

(Rushes on and comes to the middle of the stage, standing in front of Takis' revolver. To the audience):

— I am Pavlos and I am in love with Ismene / I live there, in that little house (points to it).

Pavlos (cont.)

I have a brother, a good worker / and his name is Andreas (points to him) I love his heart for it has remained his / but I hate his thinking for he has borrowed it from foreigners.

But above everything I hold my mother (points to her) / who has taught me to be modest among the modest / and thunder to the unjust.

MUSIC

Holding each other's hands / we had become a living chain in this neighborhood. / One trusted the other / and each filled the other's heart. / When we looked in the mirror / we were not a few but thousands. / And now at the dead end (points to Takis' revolver) / I read death in their eyes / and I feel sorrow and bitterness / because they can't see and know / what they are supposed to see and know. They will call me a traitor and they will kill me... /

PAUSE

Nikolios

(Raising his gun against Takis). Takis, don't be in such a hurry.

(The moment Takis turns towards Nikolios, surprised, the three—Pavlos, Andreas, and Pericles take out their pistols, aiming at each other. Moments of hesitation. Loud music from "The Dream").

Pavlos' mother

Oh, Pavlos, my son, think of your brother; he is older. He helped you grow up and be educated.

(As the mother speaks, they replace their pistols in their belts).

Takis

Mrs. Sofia, be a little patient.

(Sounds of battle).

Ismene's mother

What are you saying, my son?

Pericles

What do you expect, mother? They want war, they'll have it.

Takis

They started in Ayiannis all over again...Demonstrations, riots, and the rest. The same thing all over again. But our side decided today to put an end to this... They have encircled them and in a while there won't be a soul left.

Pavlos' mother

Pavlos, come here.

Andreas

(Angrily). Mother, your Pavlos will either come to his senses or will be the first to go.

Ismene

(Angrily). You can't believe what you're saying. You just now finished singing and dancing. So beautiful this nightfall...

Andreas

Ismene, you are a child... "So beautiful this nightfall," as if we were butterflies. Frats-frouts we fly from carnation to jasmine sipping freely the honey, freely the sun, and freely of life! What do I care about the twilight? Have I ever seen it, noticed it? One day my mother would be sick, the next I'd have to find money for this guy's education (points). The third buy a stove, the fourth shoes, the fifth, the sixth... That is what the nightfalls and the nights and the dawns and the middays have been for me. Work, work and blessed be the Lord.

Nikolios

And blessed be such a boss, too.

Andreas

(To the audience). I am a slave, I know it. And I also know that I live in a house in a poor neighborhood where my mother has to bring the water from far

Andreas (cont.)

away. A house built of dried mud. We wash [our bodies] every Saturday in a trough.

As for my boss — he eats with two spoons and five forks. He has a bathtub for each part of his body, and, I beg the ladies forgive me, the same number of chambers, suits and shoes and mistresses. (He turns towards the musicians).

Yet, I know that my roots are deep, / like my pride is as high as a mountain / my strength as wide as the sea / You come from afar / I say afar through the years / You have the age of Mt. Hymettus / You have seen everything / You know everything / For this I beg you tell me / where is my strength / what is my strength? (Pause).

My mother carries the water... But inspite of it, are we not happy? Was not our home a joy unto God; eating talking, and washing every Saturday in the trough, before the traitor walked out? But most important (turns towards the musicians again), in my small mind, the most important thing is to remain what we really are— Greeks! Poor, hungry, unwashed, but Greeks! That is what you tell me and you teach me. For this I hang from you lips. You say the same thing in a thousand ways. You are the descendants of a great people who

Takis (cont.)

for three thousand years exist to sing and dance. To teach the others how the stars rotate, according to what laws the sun is born and dies and how man dies and is reborn just the same... And from all this remains nothing but the song that you teach me. Always with the same words! [as at the fall of Constantinople]

The prizes of victory to the Warrior Madonna
to the Warrior Madonna

which means: remain Greek! As your father did, and the father of your father. And the grandfather of your father's father. And the great grandfather... back to Konstantinos Palaiologos and Alexander the Great.

Nikolios

Agamemnon, Helen of Sparta, the sons of Darius and Parisatis!

Ismene

(Runs to Andreas). Andreas, let me kiss you (embraces him). Oh, my God. This is the first time I heard you speak so beautifully. And how truly. Is it not so, Pavlos? (With embarassment). Isn't it so, Pericles? That was exactly what I wanted to tell you, to explain to you! But I couldn't express it with words. I remember when in school the teacher spoke to

Ismene (cont.)

us about Athanasios Diakos [whom the Turks skewered]. It was springtime just like today. / The Turkish pasha ordered that he be brought in his presence. / He was carried in tightly bound, for he was strong. / And he had curly blond hair / His eyes were blue... / The Turkish pasha tells him:

—Athanasios Diakos, I grant you your life.

—And what do you ask in exchange?

Diakos asked him; for he had guessed his thought.

—I promote you to be my Vizier, for you are brave and I admire you.

—And what if I refuse?

—Then prepare to die with the most painful of horrors.

And Diakos raised his head.

—If I am to die for Greece, let the laurel be sacred. One dies only once.

—Break his bones, one by one,— ordered the pasha. and then skewer him, —screamed the pasha to the executioner.

And break his bones they did, one by one. When they skewered him, a black tear ran from his eyes, for all around him spring was blossoming and he was young. Before he breathed his last, he turned his eyes all around to see the green valleys and listen to the birds.

Ismene (cont.)

—Look at what season death has decided to take me, / now that the branches blossom / and the earth brings forth the grass...

Pavlos' mother

(She slowly advances towards the audience). My God forgive me... I did meet the Turk in the heart of Turkey. If you did not bother him, he would not bother you. We lived our whole life together in peace. They were honest, hard-working and they were not any different from us. Except that they were not Christians. But even so, what differences did we have to settle? We had our churches and they had their mosques. Then, one day, the Greek royal guard came forth from home and we unfurled the Greek flag. We opened our houses to them... But, we, the most wretched, were left homeless; the Turks chased us away. We had no tears to cover our shame. There wasn't a girl left untouched nor a mosque unviolated. And thus we saw the eye of the Turk turn red. And oh, what misery befell two million of us... What I want to say, my daughter, is that these stories are beautiful to listen to. But what's the use?

Pavlos

Don't try to find some profit in every action. Athanasios Diakos died because he believed in something.

Pavlos' mother

Tell me, please, what can stand above the life of man?

Pavlos

Love for one's country.

Pavlos' mother

And what is country, son? Is it not us; is it not our lives that make a country?

Pavlos

Yes, but, if one is to sacrifice himself so that the others may be saved? The many? [What of it?]

Pavlos' mother

Is it necessary? Why can't we all live together and be happy, as we lived all those years under the Turks? Without half of us killed for the other half to live.

Takis

(With hatred, pointing to Pavlos). When I hear the word "country" come from his lips I feel nauseated.

Nikolios

When we were fighting the Germans in the streets, where were you, you super-patriot?

Pericles

That is exactly why you are all criminals. For each German killed, fifty Greeks were shot.

Pavlos

Fifty, a hundred, a thousand. There are no two ways to win your freedom. There is only one way: kill your enemy.

Andreas

Kill, kill, kill!

Pavlos

Kill in order not to get killed.

Nikolios

Yes, if you know you are right.

Takis

Right according to you.

Pavlos

The right to live.

Andreas

The right to live, eh? That is how they killed our father.

Pavlos

(Screaming). The Germans!

Andreas

In reprisals to avenge their dead.

Pavlos

Who burned and butchered?

Andreas

That is the law of war.

Pavlos

Shame on the one who accepts it.

Takis

You're exposing yourself. You bear the shame just the same as your father.

Pavlos

My father died proud because he knew the law of war.

Pavlos' mother

(With trembling voice). Which law, son?

Pavlos

(Surprised, he changes tone. Almost whispering, he replies): The tree of freedom, mother, needs blood to grow. (Pause. Takis is preparing to strike. He has already grasped the pistol which he takes out at the end of his lines).

Takis

(Sarcastically). That is what we say too. It needs blood. Even if its dirty like yours.

(Intense music from the introduction to "The Dream." Nobody motions. The fathers of Pericles and Popi enter. They both hold full shopping bags. They are happy that after a hard day's work they are home again).

Stefanou [Pericles' father]

(Joyfully). Good evening, good evening one and all.

Charalambous [Popi's father]

I bow to this most dear gathering. Popi, you are here too? (He embraces her).

Stefanou

We were told that you are enjoying yourselves, singing and dancing. Where is it? Oh, look, here are the instruments, too. Epaminondas, have you seen them?

Charalambous

Of course, of course... Our dear instruments and our sweet folk singer. I bow and hail.

Stefanou

May we have the pleasure of listening to a good bouzouki song?

Charalambous

Are you crazy? Can't you see how down they look?

Stefanou

Oh, well, okay, I understand. Ismene, where is your mother? You don't seem seem to be in good spirits (looks at Pavlos). Hm, how are you doing, my son Pavlos? Have you, as always, your mind above your head?

Charalambous

(To Takis). What a coincidence! Just now I was with your father at the coffee-house. He told me the story

Charalambous (cont.)

about the English officer at the Ellinikon airport. When someone was arrested in his attempt to steal some canned meat, the lieutenant would act real tough. The workers at the airport decided to play a trick on him. They placed a small box under his car in which they put the most valuable things from the storage. Meanwhile, they stole all the valuables that were there. Immediately an alarm was sounded and the general in charge came to investigate. The rumor was spread that the lieutenant had stolen the valuables. The general ordered a blockade and the tin box was found in the lieutenant's car. A typewritten piece of paper which they had placed amidst the ammunition was found, which read in English: "This will be the last cargo because the stupid general found out..." You know what that meant for the lieutenant... What intrigue.

Pavlos

(Bursts out laughing). Ha, ha, ha! What double intrigue, indeed. The father ridicules the British while the son is threatening us with a pistol "Made in England." It wasn't a good thing, Mr. Charalambous, to tell us this story. A family drama might be caused.

Pavlos (cont.)

Patricide, for instance.

Charalambous

Come on, boys. You can't be serious. Eh, Takis, what in heaven are you holding there?

Stefanou

What does that story prove, eh? That we are common robbers. That the British officer was performing his duty and that we, for our part, slander him and send him to prison, while the guilty rejoice.

Charalambous

Now, now, easy with the criminals. Easy, for they work for five hundred thousand drachmas a month (looks at Takis), like your father. For ten packs of cigarettes they work ten hours a day. After all, if you want to know, the lieutenant of His Majesty the King does not lower himself to stealing canned meat. Everyone knew he was selling truckloads of food as yet untouched.

(A Woman enters in tears).

Woman

They carry my son dead / They carry him dead / They told me he is being carried from across that bridge / I came to welcome him / Do you know what his name was; what he was called?

All

Yes, we do.

Woman

And do you know how old my son was?

All

We know that too.

Woman

He was tall; do you know how tall he was?

One

We know how tall he was and how handsome and good-hearted.

Woman

When and where was he seen for the last time?

All

Up on the hill.

One

In place of a heart he had a bird that sang. /
Thousands of other birds took him to his friend the sun.

Woman

Today, today he put on his fresh clothes. This morning before he left.

One

He knew he was going to a wedding, that he was going to a feast.

Woman

Macabre festivities and joys.

A

He was beautiful as a tree in spring!

B

He was tall like a castle.

C

Good-hearted like an infant.

D

Calm like death.

Woman

My son had money on him; I gave him spending money last night.

One

I knew he was going to drink and enjoy himself.

Woman

Death's wine and feasts.

Other

He was more alive than life itself. More just than justice.

Woman

My son could love so much

...They acquitted him this very morning.

One

This morning they acquitted him for he had too much love to give.

Woman

Do you know what the world will be like without my child?

All

We know, we know.

Woman

What the sun and the day will be like?

One

The day like a viper and the sun a bitter pain, and the world an uncurable wound.

Woman

They carry my son dead / They carry him dead. / They told me he is being carried from across that bridge / I couldn't go farther / Do you know what he is called?

All

Jesus.

Woman

Peter — Hans and Yiouri

Anna — Jack and Lion — Che!

One

He would tie the sun on the end of a string and play with it like a kite.

Woman

But how can it be possible? He was poor and illiterate.

All

A, B, C, D — A, B, C, D.

One

He will learn the alphabet now, by counting the stars and taking the bullets out of his corpse.

Woman

(Lamenting).

Oh bullets, my good bullets, enter softly into his tender flesh. I gave it to him bit by bit, night and day, for eighteen years. Do not cause him pain. Enter gently so he won't feel you and awaken.

MUSIC

"Lullaby"

(The dead boy is brought in. The mother takes him in her arms and cradles him:

SONG - "Lullaby"

Oh, go to sleep my angel child
Oh, go to sleep my little one
so you will grow, oh, infant mine
tall as the mighty plane tree

So you will become a man
in body and mind
and then, when you become a man
the right path you will find

Oh, sleep my angel, sleep my child
sleep sweetly with my lullaby

Oh, go to sleep my little dove
So you will grow as strong as steel
and your little heart, oh angel child
will grow and be as big as Christ's

So you will never say "I can't" in life
and even if you'll have to bear a heavy cross

Oh, sleep, my angel, sleep, my child
sleep sweetly with my lullaby.

(Music continues).

One

(He comes forward, facing the audience).

There is no greater sacrifice / than that for freedom and the people. / Pain, and even death, are small. / The bullets few and not many the tears.

Other

(Same position).

For Greece, / our country / the dead are few and few are the graves.

All

For freedom and the people / for Greece, our country.

PAUSE

Ismene

For the life — for the life / For the water, when you love / For the love when you thirst / The greatest sacrifice / is to live!

All

Death to death.

(They all sing).

"Lullaby"

(Music continues. The mother has fallen asleep on her dead son. While the singing continues someone approaches them and places two feathers on their backs. They rise slowly and walk towards the exit. The boy stops there, turns to the audience, and in the voice of a grammar school boy, he recites. Dead silence prevails).

Dead Son

Glory to the ancient spirit / a spring of universal light / Glory to the guns of heroic youth / that have delivered this earth / With the golden wisdom of the ancients / and with the sacred strength of these / let us make a new history / filled with glory and valor.

(Darkness for a few seconds. The lights slowly come on again).

Ismene's father

(To Ismene). Ismene, my good girl, come and I'll remind you of something which you surely have forgotten. It was not too long ago, but to me it seems that it took place in another time, remote from life. It was, I remember, when we took the little car for a Sunday picnic at Megalo Pefko. We left at day-break, a whole bunch of us. We stopped for an hour at Aghia Paraskevi. Two hours at Omonoia Square, three hours in the little car -- do you remember? Hunched over and crowded... But inspite of it we sang, oh God, how we sang. (He sings).

"Such blue eyes, / Wide like the ocean."

And the other one—

"I shall go to the Red Cross and report /
that the two of you are partners.

All

Yeah, what music! Mashed potatoes in honey!

Ismene's father

We arrived at noon. We spread out the blankets, and then the meatballs, the canned meat, smaller cans and more and more, all sizes...[Oh, what joy!] Remember now? Remember, when I was about to take a nap I heard your voice. At first I thought I was dreaming. Then your mother screamed; you were drowning. I ran to the

Ismene's father (cont.)

water. Your mother called to me: "Where are you going, you poor fellow, you don't know how to swim." Andreas was running ahead of me. He grabbed you, but there you went — the two of you sinking in the water. Pericles ran; he too sank with you. All three of you couldn't swim well. I was coming closer; what was I to do? Your mother was screaming. Andreas' mother, Mrs. Sofia, was tearing at her hair.

Then, from afar, like a whirlwind, came a boat from Phaneromeni. Takis was manning the oars together with Pavlos and Nikolios. Three hundred meters, two hundred meters, fifty metres. Takis dived in first and pulled out Pericles who was already on the bank. Then Pavlos jumped in and then Nikolios. They dived in, came out, once again they dived, and out again. Takis did the most... They finally brought you out on shore... The women were still crying. People gathered from here and there. Well, at any rate. That was something, eh? And then more people, and then the musicians too. We drank, and danced and rejoiced until late at night.

Then we got in line to go back home. We reached Aghia Paraskevi, down to Tatavla, and there we were

Ismene's father (cont.)

stopped; a blockade! They rounded us all up and took us to an underground room in the local school. Yet we were still happy, I remember. Because we needed to be together. All of us together, and if possible, not to be separated ever.

Takis

I thought they were playing. When Nikolios said (stops) when Nikolios said: "Eh, they're drowning," I replied, "Oh, no, they're just playing..." He... (He intends to point to Pavlos but holds himself back) agreed with me. We saw the people alarmed and running we grabbed the oars and Ehh, Ohhh, Ehhh, Ohhh!

Pavlos, Nikolios, Takis

(In unison). Ehhh, Ohhh, Ehhh, Ohhh!
(They look at each other and stop).

Andreas

For a moment I saw you. I took heart. I was holding Ismene by the armpit, but Pericles was pulling at my shoulder and I couldn't get out. I had swallowed so much water.

Ismene

I don't remember a thing. It was only the sun that blinded me and everything looked flat — white, and in

Ismene (cont.)

between thousands of little sparkles of light.

Takis

I saw Pericles going straight down to the bottom; fifteen meters down he could dive.

Pavlos

Take it easy; don't make them thirty. Only once you went down seven meters, holding a rock!

Takis

I grabbed him by the hair and pulled him.

Nikolios

Personally, I liked that baritone — the tall one — who sang arias and operatic pieces for us. He could crack nuts with his voice.

Pericles

Do you know why I didn't say anything that night in the underground school room? Anna's father was next to me. He had caught us in the act in the chicken coop and I was afraid he would hit me. But fortunately he was more scared than anybody else, there in that underground room.

Takis

He was right.

Pavlos

Did you see how the man with the mask went straight to him?

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Andreas

They looked each other in the eyes for half a minute. He, obviously, recognized him.

Ismene

(Slowly). And then he slowly raised his hand (imitates the gesture). One finger had a black nail. He pointed him out. Remember, father, how tightly I held on to you?... [Ha!] And then Anna was running around broke. Then she found a job with the British, and was also seen with Indians with turbans!

Popi

I can't understand what they saw in them. They disgust me.

Ismene's father

I did see the mask for the first time that night, but... I remember something else... I was thinking that God has made us in such a way that one saves the life of the other. Were it not for Andreas, my children would have drowned. Were it not for Takis, all three would have drowned... But again, Takis alone would never have managed. Pavlos and Nikolios were needed too. Just like a chain; if you take out one link it is no longer a chain.

MUSIC

(Ismene's father begins the song slowly and the others follow, then all in unison).

SONG - "The Chain"

The heavy iron chain
I make into a swallow
The dark prison
I turn into a sunny day
The heavy iron chain
I, and you — and you, and you
together we break

The chain that speaks
I turn into a thunderbolt
The luxury of your palaces
I turn into a prison
The chain that speaks
I, and you -- and you, and you
together we shall build.

Freedom is won
Freedom is won
rayahs arise

Kitsos calls on

rayahs arise

Kitsos calls on

All men

— Break the chain

with iron

— Break the chain

with iron

— Break the chain

with shame

— Break the chain

with the swastika

— Break the chain

with jails

All women

Make the chain

with the waves

Make the chain

with the clouds

Make the chain

with lilacs

Make the chain

with hosannahs

Make the chain

body with body

(All sing together).

[Song - second stanza]

(A Police Patrol enters. The Police sergeant leading plays with a chain).

Sergeant

What's going on here?

Ismene and her father

We're just recalling the good old days.

Sergeant

Before the war?

Ismene's father

No, the Occupation.

Sergeant

Were you in the black market?

Ismene's father

No, we were prisoners.

Sergeant

(Looks him up and down).

You do know that gatherings are not allowed?

Nikolios

Can you tell us what is allowed?

Sergeant

With pleasure: arrests (signals to the others and they arrest him).

Ismene's father

For God's sake, Sergeant. Nikolios has saved the life of my daughter, Ismene.

Sergeant

How did that happen? Was it in the battle that just ended?

40

Ismene's father

No, Sergeant, at Megalo Pefko in 1943.

Sergeant

My man, you are joking, aren't you?

Pavlos

(Advances forward). A while ago, the first dead man in his mother's arms passed by. He needed the lullaby we just sang for where he's going, he'll be sleeping a lot.

Sergeant

The dead are not lulled. First they are chanted and prayed over, then they are buried. Our patrols work in shifts so that the work gets done. By the way, is there a suspect among you? One who does not have a new ID card?

Pavlos

(Advances forward). Even death is demanding nowadays. He wants new papers if he is to take you across. Especially a new ID card, or else he abandons you.

Sergeant

After the butchering at Ayiannis... I am sure you have heard that at the last minute they were reinforced so that none were left alive.

Takis

(Coming to himself). What are you saying? There, where we had them in our hands for sure? From where?... How

Takis (cont.)

did the reinforcements arrive?

Sergeant

We are well informed that they have two agents. They are hiding around here somewhere. They dispatched their information to them about our plans. They pretended they were besieged while waiting for the others to arrive. Our people found themselves in the midst of crossfire. Not a soul survived.

Pericles

(Pushes forward with force). Father, let me talk. (He points to Nikolios). I am ashamed for I owe him the life of Ismene.

Ismene's father

Pericles, are you crazy? I forbid you.

Pericles

That one is the agent you are looking for. As for the other... (Turns to Pavlos who managed to run off). The Sergeant runs after him, shooting. Then he comes back).

Sergeant

(Points to Nikolios). Handcuff him!
(To Pericles). You come along too to testify.

Ismene's father

(To Pericles, as he passes by him for a moment). I hope you never come back to earth.

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(Ismene falls into her father's arms).

MUSIC

(No one motions. Heads turned, as in the beginning, towards the back. They look at the sky which begins to turn red. They all sing the line from the song: "One nightfall, one nightfall, one nightfall / they tied you to the cross" / as the refrain; it is repeated while the singer carries on. At the phrase, "They nailed your hands," a dancer comes forth doing the zebekikos.* The other dancers remain motionless.

With the second introduction of the orchestra [second stanza] all the actors form a straight line.

At the phrase: "They've stolen my vision," they all embrace, arms over shoulders.

The three dancers perform motions while at the front of the stage.

With the third introduction [stanza] [the actors] bend once to the right, and again to the right, at a meter's distance. Heads down. The dancers bend their knees.

At the phrase, "Rush on the seas," all three jump and with their hands freed, dance like birds).

SONG - "One Nightfall"

One nightfall - one nightfall - one nightfall
they tied you on the cross

They nailed your hands

and nailed my entrails

They bound your eyes

and bound my soul

One nightfall - one nightfall - one nightfall

they broke me in two

They've stolen my vision

my touch they took

and only my hearing was left

to hear you, my son.

One nightfall - one nightfall - one nightfall

just like a golden eagle

Rush over the seas

and rush over the valleys

Make the mountains

and men rejoice.

ACT

ACT

(Same location. Night. Masks are hung in the places of the musicians. Enter a Blind man and Tassia, his daughter).

Blind man

Daughter of a blind old man, Tassia, tell me where and in whose town we have arrived. Who will, for today, wish to give me, a wretched man, a little help. As little as I ask I get little of less, and that is sufficient, for what I have gone through in the many years I carry on my back, and above all my unflinching heart, have taught me to endure my suffering. And if you, my daughter, see a free place to rest a bit and have a bite to eat, put me there and let me sit so we can also find out where we are. For we are strangers here and we must learn everything from the locals and do what we hear.

Tassia

Oh, my poor father, as far as I can see small houses and rocky fences surround the town. As for what we are stepping on now, I am sure it is a sacred place. And even if there isn't a living being, the orchestra and the folk singer are looking at us with eyes wide open like an owl's, and they see through the night and know how to read the thoughts of others.

Tassia (cont.)

Here, sit here near the rock and rest your legs for the road you took was too long for an old man.

Blind man

Let me sit then, and you look after your blind father.

Tassia

After all this time there is no need for me to get used to this work.

Blind man

Can you tell me then what this place we have arrived at is called?

Tassia

I know it is Athens, but I don't know which borough.

Blind man

Yes, but that is all we hear about, all day long, from the morning we started out, all about Athens.

Tassia

Do you insist that I knock at a door to find out what the name of the borough is?

Blind man

I am afraid it is too late, my child, and people will be sleeping.

(Pavlos enters cautiously).

Tassia

There is no need to wake up anyone because I see someone approaching.

Blind man

Is he coming towards us?

Tassia

He is already here and you can ask him anything.

Blind man

(Speaks to Pavlos who is frightened). Stranger, we just arrived in this neighborhood and I wanted to know where we are.

Pavlos

Please speak as softly as possible. Where do you come from?

Blind man

From Thessalia. They've told me that my sons run around your area, and we are looking for them. We passed Piraeus and through Phaliron and we are heading towards Athens... I want to know if we are near it.

Pavlos

Less than an hour away. But it depends on where you want to go. Where are your sons?

Blind man

How can I tell, my boy? They told us they were seen in Attica; others in Piraeus, and others at Eleusis. Also in Athens, one told us... But nobody was certain. They can't come back to the village. Nobody knows what awaits them. You go to sleep and you are not certain if you will ever wake up... A beast with a hundred heads and a thousand hands looms over our heads and destroys our hearth... As if the war and the Occupation were not enough, and what the enemies did to me was not enough.

Tassia

Father, there is no time now for such memories... Besides, the gentleman has no desire to listen to our sufferings.

Blind man

You are right, my child, you do well to stop me. When I begin I don't ever want to stop, because I am relieved when I talk.

Pavlos

If you have such a good daughter, and two sons, old man, what else do you want? After all, is there a house without bitterness and calamities?

Tassia

(Aside to Pavlos).

Sir, how can one tell him... It is over two years now

Tassia (cont.)

that my brothers were killed... I saw them with my own eyes at the train station in Larissa. They were wearing the clothes I had knitted by candlelight that winter. I made one sweater yellow and the other blue so they would be joyful for the liberation we awaited. But they did not like them... They put them on, though, while in prison, for it was wet and cold.

Pavlos

Who killed them?

Tassia

When the Resistance fighters blew up a train with Germans on it outside Pharsala, the next day the Commandant hanged fifty in Pharsala and fifty in Larissa!

Pavlos

How was your father blinded, or is it natural?

Tassia

When the Germans came to the village, suddenly one night, a little later they set fire to our house. My mother was lying in bed with rheumatism, and I was sleeping next to her. My father was in the other room. When the flames enveloped us my father rushed in to take my mother out in his arms. I tried to help but I was too little. "Go find your brothers," my father told me. I ran, crossing the flames to the

Tassia (cont.)

stable to find them and I fell upon the Germans. They kicked and pushed me towards the fire. I screamed out loud, refusing to go. Then I saw my father coming out of the flames. He was dragging my mother along. By the time he put her on the ground some distance away, she was half burnt. I still remember the smell... My father was burning like a candle too. He managed to save himself but he lost his sight.

Pavlos

Oh my God, what a tragedy. I too lost my father and thought there was no one more wretched than I.

Tassia

Was he killed or did he die of natural causes?

Pavlos

Are you joking? Who dies today of natural causes? What a coincidence! He was killed in Thessalia too by the Germans. He was taken there as a hostage from that big blockade in Kallithea. He was put in a compartment of the first wagon of a train along with other prisoners so that if it blew up the hostages would be the first to go. But later we heard he was shot. Where and when we did not find out. We only received a note without a date, saying: "Dear Sofia,"

Pavlos (cont.)

that is my mother's name, "they asked me to get ready. In a while I will not be alive. Forgive me for leaving you with two children. Yet, I know that you will manage. I want them to grow up honest, hard working, and good boys, and to love you. When they are grown up tell them that their father died for Greece and for our freedom."

Blind man

Phhh... I seem to have dozed off... I heard your talking. Son, we are not rich. You can see that. But if you are hungry, there is a little bread and onion for you. (To Tassia). My child, prepare something to eat for you do know we haven't eaten a bite of food since noon... I was just dreaming that I was with my sons Leonidas and Kostas...that might be a premonition! (To Pavlos). Son, do you believe in such things? They say that some times they come true. (Changes tone).

But I forgot to ask you; why do the instruments and the folk singer stay in the middle of the road at night? Whom do they perform for, or is a festivity about to begin?

Pavlos

Of course they're sitting and waiting for the great

Pavlos (cont.)

festivity. Besides, we have had some others in our neighborhood. But none so far has been as great as the one that will take place shortly.

Blind man

Some wedding, perhaps?

Pavlos

And what a wedding! The groom is the most well known man on earth.

Tassia

What do they call him?

Pavlos

Black Rider!

Blind man

Don't tell me that the Resistance chieftain, Aris Velouchiotis is getting married.

Pavlos

Velouchiotis, grandpa, is a toy compared to this one. Ask your daughter to tell you what the musicians and the singer look like.

Tassia

Indeed, father, they are unusual instruments. They are dressed in black, serious, pale and motionless, as if dead...

Pavlos

And whatever they play and sing is law! What they will say must be done and there is no human power to stop them.

Blind man

And who is the bride?

Pavlos

Her name is Ismene and her beauty is beyond words.

Tassia

Does she live around here?

Pavlos

(Turns and looks at the balcony). There, behind those flowerpots which contain the harmony of the world...

(The door on the balcony opens half way and Ismene appears in a long white nightgown).

Pavlos

The bride is here already. She sensed our talking and has come out to see us! (He cautiously goes behind the balcony).

Ismene

(Bends over and talks with precaution). You know quite well that gods and devils are chasing you and you come straight into the beast's mouth. Leave immediately if you love me.

Pavlos

(Feigning indifference). Not another word. I shall leave... Besides, I didn't mean to disturb you. I had to see my mother.

Blind man

(Chewing). Is the bride really beautiful, as he described her to us?

Tassia

More than that, father. She is wearing her wedding gown. We came just in time. In a while the groom will arrive. We haven't had a wedding in our village since Pentzaropoulos' and Evanthia's, years back.

Blind man

And our own Kostas was best man. I remember when he came on his horse. Just like a black rider.

Tassia

But this groom seems to be of some importance. Perhaps a chief of the gendarmerie...

Pavlos

I do not dare knock at the door of my house, it's as if a wolf were waiting to attack me.

Ismene

I do not believe he is inside. Pericles, however, has never shown up since then.

Pavlos

What is he afraid of? With the money he got he might

Pavlos (cont.)

be walking around in a new suit.

Ismene

In my family we are not used to selling ourselves out.

Pavlos

Selling yourselves out or not...

Ismene

In that case, there isn't any need to talk any longer. But know this, my father does not allow us to talk about Pericles in his presence. He is so ashamed that you won't even recognize him when you see him. He doesn't eat either.

Pavlos

You mean to tell me that your brother is in your house right this minute? And you want me to believe it? Don't you want news about the health of Nikolios?

Ismene

(Lowers her head).

Pavlos

You wouldn't like to talk about him, would you?

Ismene

I know everything; all the details. I get sick when I think about them. But I haven't come to hate Pericles. I believe that what he did for him was honest and clean.

Pavlos

Why don't you just say — "Heroism"!

Ismene

Yes, heroism. For he could as well do it secretly without anybody's noticing it. Just like so many others... Inspite of this, he preferred to be ridiculed in the presence of everyone; in front of me, you, father, and even in the presence of the folk orchestra.

Blind man

Did I hear "folk orchestra"? What, the bride desires to listen to them? Indeed, I haven't heard them play yet.

Tassia

It seems that they're waiting for something, perhaps the groom, and then they will start.

Blind man

Yes, but doesn't it seem to you a strange time and date for a wedding to take place?

Tassia

During the day the battles are fought and the men fight with guns in their hands. The girls prepare food and carry the bullets, just like we did with the Germans.

Blind man

And at night they marry and cheat death.

Pavlos

Whatever you may say —being of your own blood — you

Pavlos (cont.)

will defend him. Blood, you know, is cunning; one way or another, finally you will be persuaded to believe what is in its interest—to believe!

Ismene

(Somewhat fearful to say it. With grief).
You have been my belief. You know that.

Pavlos

(Surprised. With grief).
I was once... But now...

Ismene

(She bursts out).
Pavlos, this very minute I quit everything; my mother, my father, my home. I just want to be with you. We shall leave together. Far away from Athens—away from the war. We shall go to a village. Anywhere. To Peloponnissos, Roumeli, Macedonia.
(Raising her voice).
Unknown, strangers, strangers!

MUSIC

("The Dream" instrumental, accompanying the whole love scene. Ismene calms down, approaches him and caresses his hair affectionately, dreaming).

First of all we shall find a priest to perform the ceremony. We shall build a little house alone,

with our own hands, even out of reeds. You will find work on a farm and I will embroider and weave the clothing. And I will plant a garden on my own. I'll cook for you, do the washing and press your suits... When you will be leaving for work I'll be seeing you to the door, proud and happy.

Pavlos

(Drowned by the vision).
The most beautiful time is when night falls and you come home with work's dirt and sweat. You cross the doorstep and warm arms await you, and two shining bright eyes. (He takes her hands and puts them on his head). Two hands like doves, caressing your tired head and with their touch you feel light as a bird. Free like the wind!

Ismene

(She tightens herself to him).
Pavlos, I don't know, but when we are together everything, everything else except us seems meaningless to me. How can I make you understand? I feel that life is much more interested in us, in our union and happiness, than anything else. Am I being selfish?

Pavlos

(Kisses her).

Pavlos (cont.)

When I want to feel happiness deep in me, you know what I think of.

Ismene

I can guess.

Pavlos

You remember too?

Ismene

That is the only thing I do.

Pavlos

You remember all the details?

Ismene

Yes, all.

Pavlos

"In the sea caves
there is a thirst, and love
there is ecstasy"

Ismene

There, you've made a poem already.

Pavlos

It has been a poem...from the first moment. The moment we got on the bus and arrived at the sea-shore. The sea cave, our cave was made then, our own cave, the two of us and the sea only knew the secret...

(He comes to himself).

Pavlos (cont.)

Ismene, why do we remember these things now?

Ismene

(Embracing him with despair).

Pavlos, let's go. I never felt so close to you and totally yours as now.

(Echoes of battle).

Pavlos

(He slips away from her).

It is too late, Ismene, for I must go. I don't know where I am going, what will happen...

Ismene

What if you had to choose between me and the others?

Pavlos

There is no distinction. If I am to love you I must feel honest and to be honest means that I must go with the others.

Ismene

(In total despair).

And so I am losing you. Forever.

Pavlos

(Widening the distance).

I am not to blame. (With hatred). As long as the one who is responsible is alive, he will keep us apart. He has betrayed one of my best friends who has

Pavlos (cont.)

disappeared. As for me... (He grabs his neck) my days are numbered.

(Music ends slowly. Noise is heard at Pavlos' house. They hide).

Tassia

My God, he grabbed at his neck like he wanted to hang himself.

Blind man

His neck?

Tassia

Yes, yes, his neck. Oh father! The neck of a man, what is the neck of a man, father.

Blind man

You are telling me, my child, God bless the Germans. We gained so much experience in all manners of death... The cheapest of all for them was the gallows. They only paid for the soap. Half of Greece was hanged with the same rope.

Tassia

Of course the rope, half or double, is more than enough for the weak.

(Enters Pavlos' mother).

Pavlos' mother

Did I really hear the voice of Pavlos, or was I dreaming?

Pavlos' mother (cont.)

From the moment he left I can't tell between sleeping and waking. Now I dream and I think that I live, and then, I sit by the window and think I'm dreaming. Black dreams—black birds flying over black horses in black valleys. The riders in black too. Black has filled the homes and black the sun. The moon alone is silvery and looks at me with its dead light (looks at the sky). What else are you waiting for? So many corpses aren't enough? So many sons, so many brothers, death-stricken mothers. What do you want? What more? You are mistaken if you're waiting to see my son that way too. You are mistaken... (Pavlos enters. They run to each other and embrace). Oh, my sweet boy. My dearest dove. I was just talking with the moon about you.

Pavlos

I heard you, mother.

(Ismene appears behind the door, but as she sees them, hides behind it, listening).

Pavlos' mother

My boy, don't pay attention to what I say... I don't know what I'm talking about anymore. The moment you left me I lost my mind, my voice, my life... Are you all right, let me see. (She looks him up and down). You don't eat and wash—where do you sleep?

Pavlos

Wherever I find a place.

Pavlos' mother

Who makes your bed, my son?

Pavlos

There's no such need where I sleep.

Pavlos' mother

Is it at least safe?

Pavlos

You embrace me and yet you ask if I am safe. Of course I am. What beast can take a son from his mother's arms?

Blind man

Indeed, there is no beast... Except when it comes to the mother. In our village, Aetorachi, don't we all remember the tale of the brooding hen and the snake? A bloody fight with the snake exhausted the brooding hen, so she gathered her chicks under her wings and then let herself be eaten by the snake. The feathers from her body were left and the snake lay satiated near her remains. The chicks were unharmed, under her warm feathers.

Pavlos

(He points him out with his head).

Yes, mother, he is a stranger. He is not a beggar.

Pavlos (cont.)

Only there isn't a misfortune which hasn't befallen him and he knows half of them. He is blind and can't see the rest. That is the only happiness left to him.

Pavlos' mother

You speak in riddles, my son. I do not understand you.

Pavlos

Ask him why he has come to Athens.

Pavlos' mother

Good evening, stranger... Why do you sit in the middle of the street? Come, come to our poor hearth to get some sleep as you must be tired.

Blind man

I thank you, ma'am. But I am used to sleeping on the ground for months now. I have forgotten the meaning of bed and a man's life... If I am still alive, it is because I live with the hope of finding my sons again.

Pavlos' mother

Do you know where they live? Do you know their address?

Pavlos

They were seen around Athens. Tomorrow he will find out. He will find them.

(To his mother). The poor man. It would be better for him to die before he found out. Over two years

Pavlos (cont.)

ago they were hanged one opposite the other on the same spot and on the same day.

Pavlos' mother

(She was about to scream as Pavlos covered her mouth with his hand).

(Steps are heard).

Pavlos

(Hurrying). I must leave. Take this note to Vanghelis, the shoemaker (he hands it to her). It is a matter of life and death. I shall return at midnight sharp and I'll be under that bridge. Pack some food for me and some clean clothes. Vanghelis' reply too, most important. Remember—it is a matter of life and death.

Ismene

(Coming out). Pavlos, are you leaving? Pavlos, where are leaving for?

Pavlos

Perhaps nearby, perhaps far away.

(A group of armed civilians arrives).

Grigoris (The leader)

Guard the spots immediately. Charalambos—at the bridge. Yiorgos, at that corner. You, Exarchos and Sophocles, with me (looks at the blind man).

Grigoris (cont.)

Eh, pop, why did you pick this place to spend the night?

Blind man

Why, son? What is wrong with this place?

Grigoris

Well, it's okay. If you like the fiestas, this is the best spot you could have picked... (They all laugh).

Blind man

You have weddings and joys; you've brought the orchestra too...

Grigoris

I almost missed it. (To the orchestra).
People's voice, God's wrath. Ally of the poor; guide me correctly. Here, at the end of the world, where I have ended up, there is one step to take to either gain or lose my soul. You, that know and come from afar and see afar, tell me, where do I find so much strength and certainty to do acts above and beyond the limits of others?
(To the Blind man). You spoke rightly. With the only difference that the fiesta began many days ago and does not seem to stop. But the height of the festival is about to start. You will see it all.

Blind man

My young man, I understand well the double meaning of your words. You are wasting your time inviting me to such fiestas. I give you my wish; may God help you get out of that boiling pot. For there will be nothing left of you except the sauce which will be good for your foreign lords to feed to their pigs... That is all I have to tell you.

Tassia

Father, they are armed like the Resistance fighters—unshaven and dirty as they were then.

Grigoris

Yeah! Dirty and unshaven so that there would be no beggars to hold barefoot children instead of a cane.

Blind man

Beggar in Athens, son! But in Aetorachi I was strong like a tree, with three sons, three Venetian castles.

Ismene

Where to, big chiefs? There you won't find but women and old people.

Grigoris

We shall find someone else too. Except if the curses of Nikolios' mother affected him... But nothing of this sort could affect such scum. This (kisses automatic rifle) blessed iron is the only means...

Grigoris (cont.)

(Signals to Exarchos and Sophocles to enter Ismene's house).

Ismene

Save your kisses, you great warrior Kolotronis, for they go to nought. If you want to show us your bravery, you have knocked at the wrong door. Indeed, how the times change. Were you not the Grigoris who told me one night: "Ismene, you are the most magnificent girl in the world. I want you to have me as your friend through all your life. Any time I am in need."

Grigoris

I am tied in with the group... I don't know if you understand that.

(The two armed civilians exit with Ismene's parents).

Sophocles

We searched everywhere thoroughly.

Grigoris

Except there where there might be a hideaway.

Sophocles

Impossible... I told you we have searched everywhere inch by inch.

Grigoris

Mother, where is your Pericles?

Blind man

(To Tassia). It would be better for us to leave as soon as possible... I feel that great calamities are approaching. There is no heart left to us for more tears. We have paid well for our share and most dearly. Tomorrow, with the help of the Madonna, we will rejoice.

Ismene's father

I fought the Turks chest to chest in Bizani. I was gravely wounded and I was put in an ambulance to be taken to Preveza—one week's journey. One day, I remember, the general stooped over me smiling and I cried out of joy, for despite my misery I was helping with my own blood, my brothers to be free. I am not learned, but I know right from wrong. I will never accept betrayal, even when it comes from my own child.

Blind man

Your words touched me deeply... Youth can't understand any longer that it was us who expanded our country from Pharsala up to the gates of Constantinople and Aghia Sofia. We gave them a nation and they gamble it away.

Ismene

They too speak about the country, and for the country they want to kill and get killed.

Tassia

Murdered, hanged, burned; all spoke for the country.

Grigoris

That is right. There is no individual, relation, friendship or compassion that can stand above the country. There isn't any evil or unjust act either. That is why, right now, words are a waste. (To Ismene). I take upon myself all the responsibility, if you wish. I believe though, that the betrayal of Pericles must be paid back. We shall take your father with us, and if you love your brother, send him to us as soon as possible.

(Exeunt).

Pavlos' mother

How dare my son; an old man, innocent like a bird...

Ismene

Grigoris, come back for it will be too late for all of us pretty soon.

Blind man

What is going on, my daughter?

Tassia

They took the father along and left.

Blind man

The one who shouldn't, will pay/
and the other who must, double will pay /

Blind man (cont.)

when he learns that 'twas his fault /
with red blood was painted /
the grey paternal hair.

Ismene

(Holding her mother who has fallen against the door in her arms. Talks to Tassia).
Run around the corner by the bakery. Knock three times and talk loudly so they can hear you. Tell them to come at once, for the catastrophe is approaching... Run, run!

(The Blind man, Ismene and her mother remain motionless. Lights dimmed slowly. Charon enters, boasting).

Charon

(To the players). When I see you and compare you with myself a contradiction is born within me; we both are an oppositional unity. We both come from time and both remain and defeat time. But you serve life and I... (rubs his hands).
I am happy to see you in this corner of the world which I adore. Besides, I got tired with the Prussian bureaucracy of Dr. Eichmann... It wasn't too exciting any longer with all those millions of Jews, Slavs and Balkans. Every scientific detail was used, first the shower, then the crematorium... I got bored, the routine rattled my nerves.

Charon (cont.)

The trip to this corner, Greece, was an oasis for me. Every minute my heart beats fast with joy; these people, I must say, have imagination, inspiration, intrigue and most of all, originality. Each candidate comes unexpectedly, just out of nowhere; such gifts that come to me!

(Approaches the musicians).

Hm, I like the folk songs, although deep down I despise them—see, antithesis again. But of course, there is life because there is death. Isn't that so? Everything begins with me and ends with me—I am the natural course of things. But what agony and suffering, so much pain and so many tears for a small event, for a slight passage through the night of the stars! For so many years they kill, they kill, and they get killed. Ah, they'll never learn.

(Turns to Ismene).

Oh, miss, I am sure you thought me crazy. Of course, I am crazy. Here, I'll sing an Argentinian tango for you.

"Who doesn't know who Ephialtis was
That he was the first traitor
a sinner even then, he was taken as such
Both Gods and men punished severely a traitor.

Who doesn't know who Ephialtis was
Whose profession in later years was to betray
The traitors would go to work
just like salesmen to their stores
to sell their products
and collect a steady income
Marrying they were from among their own clan
So the race wouldn't diminish

So many years lasted the story of Ephialtis
and was turned to virtue
and duty for the traitors
honored on special occasions;

"I, the country, assign to the modest traitor
the state prize"
Who can't remember Ephialtis?"
(Turns to the Blind man).
Ah, for you, my man, I've kept a joyful and very
modern song; a swing!
"With one hand he holds the yellow
and the other the blue
What could it be?"
And another happy one:

Charon (cont.)

"What you search for walking for miles
forms a right angle with you."

(He disappears).

Blind man

(As if just awakening). Thought I saw a black incubus... I heard the riddles clearly—Yellow and Blue. Two colors deeply sunk in the darkness of my mind. If I were only able to tell the red from the red (Tassia enters) and the yellow from the yellow or the blue...

Tassia

(Loudly). What are you saying, father?

Blind man

(Frightened). What makes you scream, my child?

Ismene

(To the audience).

"I, the country, assign to the modest traitor
the state prize."

Tassia

(To Ismene). Mr. Takis has come to see you urgently.

Ismene

Who asked for him? (Loudly). I said, who asked for him?

Takis

(Enters running). Here I come, Ismene.

Ismene

It would have been better for you not to come.

Takis

Did you call me?

Ismene

Now it is too late.

Takis

Too late for what?

Ismene

For the betrayal.

Takis

What do you mean by betrayal?

Ismene

"Ephialtis was the first traitor. Who perhaps could be the last?"

(Complete darkness. The actors remain stationary. The musicians and the singer take their seats. Lights go on. Pavlos' mother comes out from the house cautiously).

Takis

Where to, Mrs. Sofia? If you're going for Andreas, he's at the bakery.

Pavlos' mother

I thank you. (Advances towards the exit).

Takis

Knock three times. The guard will recognize you all right.

Ismene

Takis, please don't let her go alone in the dark. You'd better go with her.

Pavlos' mother

I know the way quite well, Ismene. Besides it is so bright out.

Ismene

Yes, but at any moment the shooting might start.

Pavlos' mother

Then I'll come back and hide myself.

Ismene

From so far away?

Takis

The bakery is not more than two miles away, Ismene.

Ismene

The bakery yes, but the shoemaker's no.

Pavlos' mother

What shoemaker are you talking about?

Ismene

Is it a matter of life and death?

Pavlos' mother

Oh, poisonous snake—what have I gone through to make a grandchild!

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Ismene

Takis, ask her. Is it more a matter of life of death?

Pavlos' mother

It is a matter of death for the wretched traitor!

Takis

Ismene, please, tell me what's going on.

Ismene

Neither crimes, nor profession, nor duty. Betrayal of love only, and pain. Come and listen.

Pavlos' mother

Old man, I'm heading straight into the abyss. At midnight everything ends for me... I have no way of informing my son; he will fall into the deadly trap like an innocent deer, right before my eyes.

Blind man

I predicted everything and, indeed, I can't think of a greater calamity than yours.

Pavlos' mother

Please, give me some hope.

Tassia

Your son may be hindered...

Pavlos' mother

He will do everything possible to come, for like he said, it is a matter of life and death. We know by now...

(Enter Pericles).

Pericles

Ismene (runs to her arms).

Ismene

You've come too late. Everything is too late. Time is beyond measure. It is galloping and can't be caught.

Pericles

Don't give up hope. Nothing has come to an end yet, for nothing has yet started.

Ismene

It hasn't started? They already took our father and left.

Pericles

They'll release him when I turn myself in.

Ismene

Which of the two disasters is smaller, can you tell me?

Pericles

I'm going to run before it's too late.

Takis

You can't go anywhere.

(Enter Andreas and his group).

Andreas

Mother!

Mother

You should call Charon mother from now on.

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Andreas

Mother, I don't understand you.

Mother

In about an hour I won't be alive. Isn't that what you wanted? Before long you'll see with your own eyes your brother being slaughtered.

Andreas

Where, how, when?

Mother

Ask your friends. They can tell you better how and where they will drink his blood.

Andreas

I just came to tell you that I was called to join the army. In two days I am leaving for the mountains. I am leaving you behind and alone, mother.

Mother

Now you may go in peace; you leave no mother behind.

Andreas

(To Takis). Could you tell me why my mother is talking in riddles?

Takis

In riddles yes, but correctly —Pavlos will fall into our trap in a few minutes.

Pericles

Now I understand why you won't let me go.

Takis

We have them in our hands. How much can your father count compared to the head of a leader?

Ismene

(With agony). Will you exchange them?

Takis

You're crazy. First they'll let your old man go and then we'll take care of him. In a while the police will come.

Andreas

Who told you to pass on the information?

Takis

Nobody. I decided to by myself.

Andreas

Since when can you decide on the life of my brother?

Takis

Pavlos, your brother? Aren't you the one who wanted to drink his blood?

Andreas

I myself would drink his blood. Nobody else has any right to touch him. Who turned him in?

(Silence).

Andreas

Who turned him in?

Mother

He, with his own blood, warned the viper.

Andreas

(To Ismene). With so much love, how could you?

Pericles

What about my father?—or are you forgetting that he is her father too?

Takis

Andreas, take your mother and beat it. Nothing else can be done.

(Enter Nikolios' mother).

Blind man

Why this silence, my child? Has, perhaps, the horrible moment arrived?

Pavlos' mother

Black birds as you fly through the sky /
Black birds with your hooked claws /
And beaks sunk in blood /
Take a breath of air from the Pleiades /
Take two breaths from the moon /
And three breaths over Hymettus /
Then swoop down on me /
Take out my eyes—my entrails /
Devour my heart
That the pain may be lessened. /

Nikolios' mother

(To the audience).

As I took my son Nikolios to school /
I bought him pretzels and cheese in the yard /
I gave him a drachma to buy sweets which he loved /
The shoemaker asked to adopt him /
to teach him the trade and help around the house /
But I preferred to work a double shift /
to get him through school and make him a real man /
and rid himself of misery and ignorance /
Today, I was told, he is first in his class /
and that he would be given a prize /

(Popi and her father rush on).

Popi's father

They're dragging Nikolios in chains. We saw them carry him down Angyras Street, guarded by heavily armed men.

Popi

I recognized him by his clothes.

Andreas

You figured out everything without waiting for the end. Mother, stay here. I'll run to get hold of Pavlos.

Pavlos' mother

May God bless you, my son. I knew that a brother's love is above everything else.

Takis

(Pointing his gun). Put your gun down and raise your hands. May he be brother or cousin—Pavlos Papamerkouriou will die.

(Enter army detachment).

Takis

You can have him; he was ours, but the blood of brotherhood awoke in him and conquered everything else.

Pavlos' mother

(Screaming). Pavlooos... (As she runs towards the bridge she is grabbed and carried back).

Blind man

(To the audience). In our presence (points to the hall) / and in the presence of these (points to the instruments) / disgraceful acts are committed. /
So far has gone the boldness of man /
as to exceed all human bounds /
such boldness is paid for heavily /
by both the guilty and the innocent.

Andreas

I always wanted to remain what I really am—a Greek, /
but they have torn my heart apart /
I only hope that when your turn comes /
eyes that love should see your end, so they redden /
with blood and pain. / Just like ours...

(They lead him, along with his mother, to the rear).

MUSIC

(Played by a clarinet and santouri. Lights are dimmed. Night is falling).

Blind man

Remember, Tassia, when in winter you were knitting sweaters for Leonidas and Kostas?

Tassia

No, father, I don't.

Blind man

Try a little harder. It was when you had a quarrel over the colors.

Tassia

Oh, yes, I remember vaguely.

Blind man

What colors did you choose, remember?

Tassia

Black, as always.

Blind man

No, no. It was something else, which they didn't like. It was too much of a feminine taste. Do you remember?

Tassia

Was it green?

Blind man

(Imitates). In one hand he holds yellow and in the other, blue.

Tassia

What is it, father?

Blind man

Was one yellow, perhaps, and the other blue?

Tassia

Yes, perhaps, father, but why?

Blind man

Were they wearing them in prison?

Tassia

That's possible.

Blind man

Are they still wearing them?

Tassia

(Raising her voice). Of course they're still wearing them.

Blind man

They haven't taken them off?

Tassia

Why should they take them off?

Blind man

Do they wear them continuously?

Tassia

Perhaps they want to remember us.

Blind man

Do you think they remember us like we do?

Tassia

Just like we do.

Blind man

And that's why they don't take them off?

(Midnight).

MUSIC

(Ismene sings leaning on the door of her house. Towards the end she looks towards the bridge with agony).

SONG - "Betrayed Love"

At midnight, when the hours meet
my betrayed love
At midnight, when the hearts meet
my betrayed love
Dan, dan, dan, dan, tolls
dan the end of our love

Two birds, two doves
travel through the stars

At midnight, when the sun is far
my betrayed love
At midnight, when our lives are close
my betrayed love
Dan, dan, dan, dan tolls
dan the end of our love

Two birds, two doves
travel through the stars

At midnight, when I will wait for you
my betrayed love
as the moon sinks into darkness
my betrayed love
Dan, dan, dan, dan tolls
dan the end of our love

Two birds, two doves
journey through the stars.

(Enter Pavlos).

Ismene

(Screams). Leave, Pavlos!

(He runs towards the bridge. Machine guns echo from all directions. She stands in the middle as if struck by lightning. Wounded to death, she falls in the middle of the stage. Pause. His mother and Pericles run and fall on her, speechless. The police and the armed civilians arrest Pavlos. They remain motionless while on the right to the rear the shadow of Nikolios appears, a little light is shed on him and on the guards. The leader approaches and talks to him while he is still shown in half-light).

Leader

Who asked you to go to Ayiannis and inform them?

Nikolios

Pavlos Papamerkouriou.

Leader

Who organized you?

Nikolios

Pavlos Papamerkouriou.

Leader

Who ran to Kallithea for the dispatching of reinforcements?

Nikolios

Pavlos Papamerkouriou.

Leader

Who ordered the arrest of Mr. Stefanou?

Nikolios

Pavlos Papamerkouriou.

Leader

Who murdered Ismene Stefanou?

MUSIC

Singer

SONG - "Pavlos and Nikolios"

Pavlos and Nikolios
have been taken on a journey
on a boat without sails
on a ship without masts

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Fire burned the sails
and a thunderbolt took the masts
and the journey is death
from which there is no return

The mothers of Pavlos and Nikolios
go along together
They ask the soil to tell them
but it's dripping blood

It is not a sigh
that comes from the soil
It is only a yearning fountain
to drink and quench your thirst

It is only a yearning fountain
to drink and quench your thirst.

(Music continues).

Blind man

Let's go, Tassia. It is the first time I thank God for my blindness. What disaster—you can only see it if you have eyes, I don't have them...but I heard everything. But I hope, I still hope.

Pavlos' mother

Hope for what, old man?

Blind man

(Downcast, he slowly turns to her). Oh, poor mother. You, of all mothers on this earth, are the most wretched.

Pavlos' mother

Oh, my man, what about you?

Blind man

I was deeply hurt. Your pain, though, has no end. (He moves to go).

Pavlos' mother

(Observes him, drowned in her sorrow).

Blind man

Now, I strongly desire, more than at any other time, to hold my sons close to me. Let us hurry, my daughter.

SONG - "In the Gardens"

In the gardens amidst the blooming orchards
just as before we shall set a dance
and Charon we shall invite
to drink and dance together

Hold the clarinet and the flute
and I shall join in with my little baglama
Ah! I shall come.
Into the fire of battle you dragged me, Charon
let us go to the gardens to dance

In the gardens amidst the blooming orchards
if I get you Charon in the wine
and if in song and dance I get you
then grant me one night of life

Hold your heart, sweet mother
and I am your son who returns for your glance
Ah! Just for a glance
As I left for the front, oh mother
you didn't come to see me off
You were cleaning others' houses and alone I took the train
that took me far beyond life.

(Music continues).

Blind man

I feel so hurt by your pain, mother. But despite my tears and whatever I might say to you, I'll be a stranger.

Pavlos' mother

Yes, indeed, for you are blind and can't see your double pain.

Blind man

(Trembling with emotion). What do you mean to say?

Pavlos' mother

That which you haven't seen and never will, I see and know well.

Tassia

(Pulls him). Father, it is time to go, come.

Blind man

(Motionless). Where to, my child?

Tassia

(Whispering). To find Leonidas and Kostas.

Blind man

(Exhausted). He holds the yellow in one and the blue in the other.

All

(Aloud): What could it be?

Blind man

In the left he holds the sea
and in the right, the valleys.

Pavlos

Farewell, mother. (Turns to Ismene). Your flower pots won't be watered and you won't know it. (They take him out. Nikolios, the mothers and their guards follow. Lights lowered bit by bit during climax).

Singer

SONG - "Unite" (Glorification)

Unite stone and stone
unite hand in hand
The mountains and the ravines begin the song.

Cities and harbors join in the dance
Today we marry the sun
the sun to the bride, the dearest, the Joy!

Oh, our Joy, our daughter
Valleys, seas, our mountains
mothers, daughters—dead brothers—fathers
one tree, with one root, one well, one spring
Today we marry the sun
the sun to the bride, the dearest, the Joy!

(Darkness. Music begins: Introduction to "In the Gardens." Lights go on slowly, first on the orchestra. Then on the three mothers sitting at their doorways, knitting. Three soldiers enter. Music stops. The mothers remain silent, do not react, do not participate).

First Soldier

We are looking for Mrs. Papamerkouriou.

(Pause).

Second Soldier

We were together with her son, Andreas, in the same platoon.

(Pause).

First Soldier

He was killed at my side by a mortar bullet. We had

First Soldier (cont.)

agreed that whoever lived should go to the other's house.

Third Soldier

I am carrying his belongings.

(Introduction to "In the Gardens". The actors exeunt hidden behind moving sets representing gardens and flowering plants. When the song starts, Andreas enters embracing another dead soldier, to dance the last dance in front of his mother).

SONG

(Music continues with the introduction of "Unite". The song is sung by all. Lights go on, full brightness. The actors come out from the sets raising their back sides which are decorated with byzantine mosaics. The mothers continue their knitting, indifferent. All the actors in the play turn towards the audience, sing "Unite".

SONG

END

PROPOSED CONCLUSION

(While all sing on stage lighting is abruptly cut. Complete darkness on stage. The song is brought to an immediate halt. A military march blares forth and a raspy Papadopoulos-like voice announces the coup d'état of April 21, 1967).

Voice

INSERT TEXT OF SPEECH

(As military orders and maneuvers are heard lights slowly go on. Bands of soldiers have occupied various spots and arrest people like Pavlos, Ismene, Pericles, Nikolios, Grigoris and the singer. They are handcuffed and guarded by armed soldiers. The Police have joined the coup.

As light is slowly shed on the stage a bright sign reading: APRIL 21, 1967 moves over the crowd of people on stage. Directly underneath is written: GREECE OF CHRISTIAN GREEKS. As people and objects become more easily distinguishable in the stronger light, a tank is seen moving from left to right, in front of the actors on stage. (If necessary) two flags fly from the tank: in front, a Greek flag [the larger of the two], with the junta's emblem of the Phoenix and the soldier; and, in the back, a smaller American flag.

Lights are cut, darkness prevails on stage. End of scene and play).

FOR THE DEAD BROTHER

(ΤΟΥ ΝΕΚΡΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ)

-Τραγούδι-

FOR THE DEAD BROTHER

(ΤΟΥ ΝΕΚΡΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥ - Τραγούδι)

-.-

CHARACTERS

Three families - Neighbourhood women - young men - girls - children

First Family

The Mother	Charwoman-laundress
Andrew	Her son, 30 years old, salesman in a shop
Paul	Her son, 23 years old, student of an evening school for mechanics.

Their father was executed during the enemy occupation by the Germans in revenge for the blowing-up of a bridge by the Guerrilas. The mother and Andrew hold the Guerrillas responsible for the execution. Paul the Germans.

Second Family

The Father	Owns a small shop. The Guerrillas had taken him as a hostage.
The mother	Housewife
Pericles	Works in father's shop, 25 years old, a friend of Andrew's
Ismene	I8 years old. She loves Pail in secret.

Third Family

The father	In prison
The mother	Works as a factory hand
Nikolios	I8 years old. On the lookout for a job. A friend of Paul's
	Five more children, the youngest one IO years old.

Other characters

Aristides	A friend of Paul's and Nikolios'
Takis	A friend of Andrew's and Philip's
A postman	

Stage Sceneries

On the left,backstage,the poor neighbourhood houses pile up one upon another,stretching from the foot to the top of the hill. On the left,front,a ravine with a wooden bridge over it.On the left,backstage,a platform for the singers and their instruments. Sideways,on the right,

Nikolios' house,one-storied,with one room. Two windows and a low, flat wall in front of the door.Sideways,on the right,next door to it,the mother's house. One storey,two rooms,two windows and the low ,flat wall.Next to it,a narrow strip of barren garden and in front of it, a low stone wall.In the background, a few trees, an olive-tree, a cypress tree.Next to the garden,Ismene's house. Two-storied, with a wooden balcony full of flowerpots and a low, flat wall a little higher.A narrow street to the right of the house, disappears in the distance.Behind the houses,fields that climb up the Hymettus'slopes.

It is April - falling dusk - by the time our story begins,the characters have already taken their stand in the two groups which are preparing to fight each other to death.Nothing is missing but the spark,

The P r e t e x t

Hatred has already taken root in their hearts, yet, outwardly, they still keep to their old ways and relationships.

A group of young men and girls are dancing.The others,all of them, sing with them, laugh and clap their hands.In the midst of the group,Andrew and Pericles, arm in arm, are dancing the Hassapiko. Paul is seated on the low, flat wall in front of his mother's house. Ismene helps her mother with the housework.

S o n g : " Dear, fair April"

April dear - Dear, fair April and May full of scents, how can you stand, oh my heart,
how can you, how can you, oh my heart, how can you stand ,such great love ans still greater beauty.
The neighbourhood is swamped
with flowers and kisses.

My girl's name is Lenio, my girl's name is Lenio,
my girl's name is Lenio but I keep her name a secret.

Dear Star,dear, pale star and dear, pale moonbeam
On your arched eyebrow my heart has hang
My heart has hang on you arched eyebrow
like a little bird caught in a bird-trap
The neighbourhood is swamped
with flowers and kisses.

My girl's name is Lenio, my girl's name is Lenio,
my girl's name is Lenio but I keep her name a secret.

Sweet flower, sweet-smelling flower and rose full of ~~secret~~ scent
To your mother I shall come
To you mother, to your mother, to your mother
To ask for her blessing and for the mate I love
The neighbourhood is swamped
with flowers and kisses.
My girl's name is Lenio, my girl's name is Lenio,
my girl's name is Lenio, but I keep her name a secret.

-.-

As the third stanza is being sang,Aristides and Nikolios,anxious and suspicious-looking,enter the scene from across the bridge. Nikolios' mother is away,but his brothers and sisters recognize him and run up to him.He drives them away gently.Paul gets up and goes up to

to them / To the left,front /. The others do not seem to have noticed them. They talk seriously and in low tones.Suddenly, as the song is drawing to its close,Takis enters the scence running, arm in hand.Instantly,the three friends leave the bridge.Takis, after having chased them for a while,turns to Andrew and Philip.

Commotion - Confusion - The mother and Ismene run forward, followed by Pericles and Andrew who are armed.The women fall down in front of them and ,all at once, shots are heard.All are frozen where they stand and stay still.The shots stop and the singers with their instruments enter the scene slowly from across the bridge as if nothing has happened and take their seats on the platform in utter silence and stillness.The lights are dimmed until darkness is complete.Only the platform is lit with a pale light. They begin to sing : -

" T h e D r e a m "

Two sons you had, dear mother, two trees, ~~tow~~ two rivers,
Two Venetian walls, two spearminths, two reasons for worry,
One for the East - the other for the West,
And you, alone in the midst - speak to the Sun,you ask him.
Dear Sun,you who have a commanding view of the mountains and of the great rivers
you, who oversee our suffering and the poor mothers,
Please ,call me if you happen to see Paul and if you see Andrew tell me
for I am the mother who has, with the same worry, brough them both up
And gave them birth with the same pain.

But they roam the mountains, they cross wide rivers,
Looking for each other, murder in their hearts
And up there on the tallest mountain,at the tallest of tall peaks
They lie side by side and dream the same dream

They both hurry to their mother's death-bed,
They clasp hands, close the mother's eyes
Their knives thrust deep into the earth
And up springs water for wayfarers to drink and find rest.

-.-

A veil drops ~~over~~ across the stage.

A spotlight lights up the Mother's face / Doublure / She stands in the middle of the stage.

The spotlight moves slowly downward towards her two arms which hold / as if under wings / fer two sons / Doublure / Both sons are dressed all in black.The light becomes stronger.The two brothers go away, turning their backs to each other,menacingly and contemptuously. They make for the two corners where they stand with their backs turned. An actor enters from backstage / the garden/ holding a painted Sun. The mother talks to the Sun and then disappears into the narrow street./ Right / The brothers produce their knives and look for each other. They come to the middle without having seen each other and lie down side by side. They spring up simultaneously and run towards the narrow street, where they see their Mother lying on an iron bed.They clasp hands and cry over the Mother.With one movement, they thrust their knives into the earth - Darkness - And soon after light. All the characters are in the same places as at the time when the shots were heard - SHOTS - The characters take on life.

Mother B! Taki, what is the matter ?

Pericles / who talks in place of Takis/. What do you think is the matter,mother? It is war they want and they are going to have it.

Takis They have started the usual trouble at St.John's but our party has closed in and it seems that we shall arrest them all.

Mother A! What will become of my Paul ?

Andrew Your Paul,mother,will be among the first to be done away w

Mother Damn you, dirty dog,do you talk like that for your brother

Andrew Do you forget my father?It is they who killed him. Paul's party.

Ismene The Germans !

Pericles Go away, you bitch,before you regret it.

Mother A! / To Andrew menacingly/ Here, give me immediately that dirt iron thing you are holding and come in.It is dinner time.

Mother B! / To Perikles / You do the same before your father sees you and reads you the riot act as he did the other day.

Takis But don't you realize that life nowadays has been reduced to " my life for your life "?

Andrew They have in their possession even machine-guns!

Ismene I saw them leaving armless !

Pericles You are a liar! Do you think we do not know your dirty story with Paul?But I must catch you in the very act and then I shall make you both spit blood-Go in and don't you ever dare to appear before me or you will regret it.

Takis Leave the girl alone! Don't you see that she is in love?
(Giggling)

Mother B. You listened to your shame! Go away before your father hears of it and who is going to save you then!
/ Ismene makes for her house/The shots are heard nearer and nearer.

Mother A! /almost shouting/ Andrew, I am calling you for the last time!

Andrew Why don't you also call your Paul ?

Mother A! You come first.I'll teach him afterwards.

Andrew Mother, did you get it? I am not going to sleep under the same roof with him any longer.

Mother Why,son? Aren't you brothers ?

Andrew In name only.But in reality I'll suck his blood.

Mother Why ? What has he done to you ?

Andrew He killed my father. Your husband. Do your forget ?

Mother He was hardly a boy of ten.

Andrew It amounts to the same thing. He was killed by his party,the people who have the same ideas with him, who have sold their hides,the degrated,the traitors !

Mother You know very well that Paul is not a traitor.

Andrew It amounts to the same thing since he follows them. They lead him the nose as if he is drugged. And you want me to be friends with him!Then, go and tell him to leave them and come with us, On the sight track.

Takis I think they are coming this way. They must have been attacked from the Height over St.John's and they must have started coming down. I bet they will go past here on their way to their hideaways.

Pericles We must lay in ambush and attack them.

Takis We must first of all evacuate the place.

Andrew Come on,mother,come in.Shut yourself up in the house.

Mother Not before I drag you in even by force

(Andrew pushes her away)

Mother Don't you dare touch the mother who gave you birth or you will accursed.

Mother B! Pericles ! For the last time : Either you come in or I go and call your father./shots - voices - swearing - very near the bridge - at once, they all run away and hide, Takis hides behind the wall.Andrew and Pericles in the narrow street,with arms pointed towards the bridge. Paul enters from across the bridge and runs towards the house.Before the others have the time to come forward and catch him,the mother steps forward and puts her arms round him./

Andrew /with arm pointed, he approaches menacingly /
Step aside,mother,and leave us alone !

Paul Throw away the rifle first and then come and reckon with me.

Andrew What did you think,that we were playing hide and seek ?
Haven't you yet realized that your life is at stake ?

Takis Don't overdo it, Andrew; you scare your mother.We are not savages after all...Paul is a nice chap deep down.He only needs a little talking to realize his mistake.Come with us, you need not be afraid of anything.

Mother A I know you and your discussions very well.
/As they are approaching/Don't comenear because I am not afraid of your dirty rifles.

Paul If you feel like discussing, we can as well discuss on the spot.

/ shots /

Andrew Mother, you will regret bitterly what you are doing.

Mother A! What ? that I love my child ?

Andrew I have already told you! You know well that he is a killer, a murderer !

Paul You and your party are murderers! Sold hides !

Takis What are you talking about, you traitor ?

Andrew Taki, leave us alone to clear up things between us, like brothers.

Mother A The right word has escaped you! You said"like brothers" you ,wretched soul !

Andrew Above all, there is the Nation,the society which they are undermining,

Paul I wonder if you know what means Nation and Society,Don't you realize that you are starving?That your mother is a laundress ?

Mother A! I am not ashamed of it, my son.

Paul I only wanted to say that he has sold his hide.

Andrew Listen, listen, there speaks the paid traitor !

/ He rushes upon him /

/ The hree start-fighting. Shots are heard very near.- Voices and footsteps approaching. Takis disappears under the bridge. The Mother manages to drag Paul into the House and shut Andrew outside. Takis returns and tells them something. They take their places. From across the bridge there come two young Warriors. One of them is fatally wounded and the other one almost drags him along, looking anxiously all around. He catches sight of Paul's house and makes for it with difficulty. He finally stretches the wounded man out on the small verandah's steps in such a way as to be seen by everybody. The wounded man assumes the attitude of Christ with bent head and outstretched arms. He stays still. The other one bends over him, anxious to hear his heartbeat. It is there that he is caught by the three who have approached him stealthily in the meantime. They lead him toward the narrow street, slowly at first but then with increasing speed. The three doors open all at once and the three mothers get out, attempting to run up to them. They shriek . " DONT T". But the men have already disappeared in the darkness. As the mothers stand there motionless, they turn their eyes to the wounded man who is being lit up little by little. A song begins : -

" A late Afternoon "

A late afternoon, a late afternoon, when the sun was going down, to the Cross they bound you

Your hands they nailed, they nailed your liver,
They closed your eyes, they closed my heart.

A late afternoon,a late afternoon,when the sun was going down
they chopped me up in two
My sight they took away, they stole away my touch,
My ears only were left me a sound to catch from you my son.
A late afternoon,a late afternoon,when the sun is going down,
like a Golden Eagle
Rush over the oceans, over the plains rush
And cause flowers to blosom forth on mountains and joy in
men's hearts.

/ While the song is being sang a group of women with their heads covered with black kerchiefs enters from across the bridge and makes for the dead man. A friend of his enters running and bends over him in an effort to hear his heartbeat. He then gets up with bent back and heavy as lead and begins to dance to the dead man. When the words:"like a Golden Eagle" are being sang,he moves his arms as if they are wings.Paul appears just then,rifle in hand,leaving stealthily through the garden gate,his mother seeing him off. By the time the song is over, the women have sat down round the dead man,in a circle,like dirge-singers /

M I D N I G H T

Quiet - Night - Semi-darkness - the dead man, the women- utter stillness - A shadow slips alongmwith great precaution,from across the bridge,looks around carefully and then makes signal to the others to follow him. A group of armed men enters. They go straight to Pericles'house, It is then that they see the dead man. The young men lift him and ,together with the women,they make for the bridge.The others enter the house. One of them, their leader, knocks. No answer. He knocks again. At last Mother B! asks from inside the house:

Mother B! Who is it ?

Leader We have come to search. Open !

Mother Search what ?

Leader Just search!..

Mother Come in the morning

Leader You talk too much.Open quickly !

Mother Who are you? The Police ?

Leader Yes,the Police;

Mother You are lying! Show me your papers !

Leader Open,if you want me to show them to you./ He knocks loudly and pushes the door with his back / Is your precious one in?

Mother Who ?

Leader Pericles !

Mother No,no !

Leader Open and let us have a look.And don't delay if you don't want us to break the door and turn everything upside-down.

/ They knock and push /

Mother /Half opens the door/I told you that Pericles is not in.

Leader /He pushes with force /We shall see if this is so.

/Three men enter the house in a hurry/

Mother Oh,my son,what curse has fallen upon us! Just imagine that brothers should fight each other,asking tit for tat !

Leader /Looks at her intently but keeps silent/

Mother I am thinking of your poor mother.She won't be able to sleep a wink, like me. What a calamity,what a curse! Surely,there can be no greater calamity in the world/ she recognizes him/ But aren't you Costas,the schoolmistress' son?I know your mother quite well.

Leader Your son has killed our best comrade,Leonidas.

Mother The shoemaker's son ?

Leader Exactly

Mother No,my son.My son can't have done such a thing.

Leader He killed him with his very hand outside the Cemetery

Mother No,no,there must have been someone else.Pericles cannot hurt a fly.

Leader Nor can I, mum. But a man I can kill because man is a wild beast.

/They get out of the house,pushing the Father and Ismene/

A man It is only these two that we have found.The guilty one has left.

Leader Are you sure?Did you look every where?

/In the meantime,the guards signal them that,something suspicious is in sight./

Another man More than sure.We have looked even into the trunk,and into the oven !

Leader Goodbye Ismene. Sorry for your trouble.

Ismene Costa,what have my old parents done to you?

Leader I know,Ismene,I have a mother myself and you know where she is and in what a state...

/ Ismene bends her head /

Father Now boys,you have looked every where.Go home now.

Leader You come with us / He signals to his men /

Mother /With a shriek/ Oh, misfortune,oh curse ! What has the old man done to you? Don't,don't !!

Ismene /With a shriek / Don't, don't, cowards !

Father Aren't you ashamed of the women?

/They push him along the street and disappear/

/ Doors and windows are flung open.People come out - Shots - Takis,Andrew and Pericles enter the scene together with a group of armed men and a boy in shorts.Ismene runs up to

them and flings herself upon Pericles /

Ismene /with sobs / They have taken father away.

Takis There must be those who make for the Cemetery.Let us go quickly and stop them.

/They all go except Pericles,Ismene and the two mothers/

Mother B /quietly/Noting is left to me now but drown

Pericles They will catch them,mother, any minute now and father will be set free.

Mother B Why did you do such a thing, son ?

Ismene What did he do,mother?What can Pericles do ?

Mother B Man is a wild beast.../loudly suddenly/Man is a mad cat.

Ismene I don't understand you,honestly I don't

Mother A /talking to herself/Man is kind deep down. He has a kind heart if only they did not make him kill.

/The others do not take any notice of her /

Ismene Mother, will you tell me ?

Pericles Leave her alone.Distress has undone her.

Mother B /Suddenly to Pericles/Did I teach you to take people's lives ?

Pericles Are you in your senses, mother ?

Mother B! I am perfectly sane. Do you think I did not see you as the three of you were carrying along Leonidas,the shoemakers's son ?

Ismene Do you mean ,mother ...

Mother B! And why should you do such a thing and not your leader, worthly Mr Takis? What sort of differences did you have with the poor boy?

Pericles Please mother,don't listen to such things.

Mother B! /goes on / And why not Andrew,our neighbour who is, moreover,older than you by 5 years?

Mother A /talking to herself/ My Andrew has a kind heart.He found once, a wallet in the shop and handed it over to his boss right away. And his boss congratulated him and said : " You are honest and you will make good progress".

Iamene /To her mother/ Pericles is right,mother.You should not listen to rumours.

/Takis and the others enter the scene./The women spring to their feet/

Mother B! Where is my husband ?

Takis /Bends his head/

Mother B! What ???

Andrew They must have taken another route or they must have hidden somewhere.We'll find them in the morning.

Mother A! Andrew, put on a pullover.Your ~~sup~~ soup has turned cold.Won't you eat ? Won't you sleep ?

Andrew Please,mother,go and rest and leave us alone with our worries.

Takis I have an idea/ He talks privately to Pericles and Andrew/

Pericles Ismene !

/Ismene approaches them.The women enter their houses slowly/

Pericles Listen,Ismene.One thing only is left us, if we are to find father, that is, if he is still ~~active~~ alive...you must find out where Paul hides...He is sure to know.

Ismene What has Paul got to do with it ?

Andrew Ha,ha! Paul, my dear,knows everything.

Ismene What do you mean ?

Takis That Paul is one of the leaders.

Ismene You mean that he knew about father?

Andrew Certainly,he may have even given the order himself.

Pericles I have not the slightest doubt about it.They come directly to our house.It is from your neighbour that you should expect the worst.

Ismene What about Nikolios ?

Pericles But these two ~~they~~ are flesh and nail.

Ismene And what is it that you want me to do ?

Andrew You'll try to fish my mother.She knows.It is she who gives him food and clothing behind my back !

Ismene What about Paul ?

Pericles What do you mean ?

Ismene I mean,if you catch him,what will you do with him?

/ They glance at each other/

Takis Absolutely nothing,if he only tells us where they have taken your father.

/ Mother A! comes out/

Mother A! Andrew, are you still there? Come in,I have just warmed up your soup again. Takis,Pericles,come in too. You,too , Ismene,come in, my dear,it is chilly outside.

Andrew Let us go in and eat, boys,As for you,Ismene,as we have agreed.

Ismene Mrs Costaina,I would like to talk to you...

/The boys enter the house/The mother approaches Ismene suspiciously/

Ismene If my father is not found till the morning,I am afraid that mother won't be able to stand the blow !

Mother A! He will be found !

Ismene Who can know ?

Mother A! He will be found ! He is an old man, he cannot do them amy harm.

Ismene He'll be neither the first nor the last one.

Mother A! God is all merciful.Man must never lose hope in Him.

Ismene I am also afraid of Paul.

Mother A! I know, my dear,that you love him. He loves you too. Accursed be the hour when the dirty dogs threw us into

turmoil ,the worst disaster for man !

Ismene What are you talking about, Mrs Costaina ?

Mother A! About the Godless foreigners ! My boy had talked to me, quite some time ago.Of course,not clearly about you, but I knew. I am not stupid.Witthe the degree from his school he could find a decent job to relieve his poor mother and also to start a ~~chance~~ home of his own.He likes home life, books, ~~hend~~ home-made food, yiogvarlakia. I stuff them with plenty of bread and they are very tasty. He is crazy about them! Then you know what a quiet and straight-forward boy he is.The other ~~are~~ one too...I have brought them up, my daughter.God alone knows how,to become honest men and good family men like their poor father whose equal the world has not seen.

Ismene My own father too/ she cries / and to think that..../ decisively/ I must see Paul !

Mother /~~cumingly~~ cunningly/ I wish I could see him myself !

Ismene It is a matter of life and death.

Mother A matter of death, my dear, of death ...

Ismene /puzzled/Of death? What do you know ? ~~thing~~ !

Mother I am a mother and a mother knows everything !

Ismene I want to see him.I want to go with him. I can no longer stand people's teasing and my brother's treatment.

Mother Where he is there is no room for girls in love.

~~S~~Ismene Please, don't pull my leg...I have ~~heard~~ heard something which is very important for Paul and his friends.I must see him by all means and tell him.

Mother You tell to me and I tell him

Ismene Why, don't you trust me ?

Mother Times are evil, my dear.Besides, do you think I myself know here he is ?

Ismene Well, here is the secret: / She approaches her/ Pericles' party has decided that, in case my father should be killed, they would burn down Nikolios' house and all the boys who live in it.

Mother Oh , God:

Ismene And to hang Paul and Nikolios from the garden olive-tree :

Mother Oh, Virgin Mary : It cannot be true ! How can a human mind think such a thing ?

Ismene But human insanity ca :

Mother We must find Paul. We must find him the soonest possible.

Ismene We must send him a message

Mother We must send him a message with Mrs Stella's son.

Ismene Little George ?

Mother Yes, little George / We must send him word so that he comes here with Nikolios tomorrow at midnight,

Ismene Come here ?

Mother Yes, here, He knows the place.

Ismene What place ?

Mother Behind the ravine.Under the bridge.

Ismene Under the bridge

/ Sudden darkness/

/ Midnight of the next day.Shadows hidden in the garden and in the narrow street. Ismene sings in front of her door /

" Betrayed Love "

At midnight when the hours fade away- my betrayed love
At midnight when lovers meet - my betrayed love
Ding, dong, ding, dong, it strikes
Ding, dong, the end of love.

Two birds travel among the stars, two pigeons,
Among the stars two pigeons travel,two birds.

At midnight when the sun is far away - my betrayed love.
At midnight when our lives are near - my betrayed love.
Ding,dong,dong, dong ,ding,dong ,twice is strikes
ding, dong, the end of love.

Two birds travel among the stars, two pigeons
Among the stars two pigeons travel,two birds.

At midnight I'll be waiting for you - my betrayed love,
In the darkness after the moon has set - my betrayed love
Ding,dong,ding,dong,ding, dong, it strikes
Ding, dong, the end of our life.

Two birds travel among the stars, two pigeons,
Among the stars two pigeons travel, two birds.

/ The moon sets behind the mountain /

/ The mother disappears behind the half-opened door/

/Paul's and Nikolios' shadows appear
as they climb ~~dam~~ down the ravine and approach the bridge/

/ A shadow moves in the garden.Then,Ismene rushes
forward towards the bridge ~~Shaiting~~ shouting/

Ismene Go away,Paul,~~teh~~ they'll kill you,

/Shots from all three sides at once. From the bridge,
the garden,the narrow street/

/ Ismene drops in the middle of the stage/ Mother A!
rushes up to her /

Mother A! You gave me away, you dirty bitch !

/ Her nother comes out /

Mother B! My daughter, my Ismene,my heart!

/She falls upon her/

/Paul leaves the ravine and runs up to Ismene.He bends over her and he is caught/

Mother A Paul my son !

/They catch Nikolios too/

Mother C Nikolios, my son !

Mother B' Everything is over...the world is ~~lots~~ lost to me.

Pericles A great disaster this,mother.

Mother B' Lost, lost !!

Pericles ~~They~~ There could be no greater disaster !

Takis Hurry up before they catch us.It may be a trap. Lead them you know where and I am coming in a minute.Come on Andrew, Pericles.

Andrew I am staying with my mother

Mother A Go to Hell! Either you bring back your brother or you'll be accursed for life !!

Song "Paul and Nikolios"

Paul and Nikolios have been taken to a long voyage
in a boat without riggings,in a ship without masts
Fire has burned the riggings,storm has destroyed the masts
Death is the voyage and nobody returns from it.

Paul's and Nikolios' mothers go togester
asking the earth to tell them and the earth blood sweats
It is not a sigh that swells up from the earth
but a rich fountain in which to quench your thirst.

The women mourn ever Ismene. Pericles and the other carry her slowly to the house.Nikolios' mother with her children clinging to her apron wants to go towards the garden but they prevent her.

Paul's mother leans against Andrew's shoulder,exhausted. The stage is emptied little by little. The mothers walk together and leave the scene. Towards the end, before the song is over,darkness spreads. The song is over. Darkness lingers on for a little while. Utter silence. The light goes up little by little. The three mothers, in back, knit and spin, seated in front of their door. At the feet of Mother C,two of her younger children.

Mother C' You'll have news any moment now.

Mother B We have been saying so for two months

Mother C The Post Office service is slow these days...Besides, where they are..../ pause/

Mother B' Where they are... you have put it well....where they are... / pause/

Mother C I have applied for appointment once again.

Mother B' Well ?

Mother The usual answer.

/ pause /

/ Enters the postman /

/ The women go on knitting quietly /

Postman Euridiki Const,Papamerkouriou ! Does she live here ?

Mother C Mrs Constaina, it is for you !

Mother B' Is there a letter for me? Carlis,Periclis Carlis, Periclis Vas....

Postman No letter for you. Mrs Papamerkouriou, a letter about your son.

Mother A' From my son ,Andrews !

Postman About your son.

Mother It is the same.I can't read./ To mother C/ Will you read it out for me, Phrosso ?

Mother C /Takes hold of it,reads two lines and stops/ The others stop knitting/

Mother C/To the postman /Do you mind reading it ~~at us~~ out as I can't make out the writing ?

/ They begin to knit mechanically/

Postman / Takes hold of the letter/ It is typewritten/ He reads/ To Mrs Euridiki Const. Papamerkouriou. It is with ~~great~~ deep regret that we announce to you that your son Andrew fell bravely on 23rd inst., while fighting for his country on height 255. His example will shine brilliantly in our History. Your hero son was posthumously awarded the Cross for exceptional services. In return for your son's sacrifice you will awarded a pension for life.

/ The three women go on kniting without uttering a word, their heads bent. With the closing words of the letter, actors enter the scene holding painted gardens in full bloom. The postman leaves. The lights are dimmed. The song begins. Four young men, dressed half in uniform and half in civilian clothes, with their ~~helemts~~ helmets hanging against their shoulders, dance with Death /

Song " In the Gardens "

In the gardens, in the gardens that are in full bloom
We shall start dancing as of old,
And we shall invite Death to drink a glass with us.

And together with us to sing
Hold the clarinet and the zourna
And I shall bring along my small ~~bagland~~ baglama
Oh, I shall also join you.
Oh, Death, you took me away at the height of the battle
Let us go to the Gardens to dance.

In the gardens, in the gardens that are in full bloom
If I win You, Death, in drinking
I I win You in dancing and in singing
Then give me one night's life
Hold your pain, mother dear,
it is me, your son, come back to catch a glimse of you
Oh just for a glimse of you
For the front when I set off,mother dear,you did not see me off
You were working as a laundress and I took alone
the train that carried me beyond this world.

/ Dancers and painted gardens disappear towards the narrow street as the song fades away. Only the three mothers remain,knitting all the time. The light gets stronger little by little. The sun rises and the whole of Greece follows. City men, peasants, young men, children, a priest, a Gendarme, a fisherman. With the Sunrise, a glory song begins which mounts higher and higher together with the Sun, till the End.

A Glory Song(Δοξαστικό)

Come together rocks-rocks- Come together hands- hands
Mountains and ravines begin to sing
Cities and harbours enter the dance
For today our Sun,our Sun is getting married today to the
only-begotten bride Paschalia
Paschalia dear, sweet girl, plains,seas and mountains,
Mothers, daughters, killed brothers, fathers
One big tree with one root, one spring, one tap,
Today our Sun, our Sun is getting married today to the
only-begotten bride Paschalia

(ᏗᏣᏅᏍᏗᏓᏕᏲᏅ)

Eternal, blessful day, ὑπερμάχῳ, ὑπερμάχῳ
Mountains and ravines begin to sing,
Cities and harbours enter the dance
For today our Sun, our Sun is getting married today
to the only-begotten bride Paschalia.

/ The crowd form a semi-circle round the mothers and they finally stay still, chanting and looking at the three mothers as they go on knitting. At the height of the song.

THE CURTAIN

-.-.-.-.-.-.-