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21L.016 / 21M.616 Learning from the Past: Drama, Science, Performance  
Spring 2009

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*The Life of Galileo* scene breakdown (circa 1947, 48)

1. Galileo Galilei, a teacher of mathematics at Padua, sets out to prove Copernicus's new cosmogony. (a rather wretched study in Padua)

In the year sixteen hundred and nine  
Science's light began to shine.  
At Padua city in a modest house  
Galileo Galilei set out to prove  
The sun is still, the earth is on the move

2. Galileo presents the Venetian Republic with a new invention (the great arsenal of Venice, alongside the harbor).

No one's virtue is complete  
Great Galileo liked to eat.  
You will not resent, we hope  
The truth about his telescope.

3. 10 January 1610. Using the telescope, Galileo discovers celestial phenomena that confirm the Copernican system. Warned by his friend of the possible consequences of his research, Galileo proclaims his belief in human reason. (Galileo's study in Padua. Night. Galileo and Sagredo at the telescope wrapped in heavy overcoats—.

January ten, sixteen ten:\  
Galileo Galilei abolishes heaven.

4. Galileo has exchanged the Venetian Republic for the Court Of Florence. His discoveries with the telescope are not believed by the court scholars. (Galileo's house in Florence. Mrs. Sarti is preparing Galileo's study for the reception of guests. Her son Andrea is sitting tidying the star charts).

The old saw says: What I've always done I'll always do.  
The new says: If you're useless you must go.

5. Undeterred even by the plague, Galileo carries on with his researches.

a) Early morning, Galileo at the telescope, bent over his notes. Enter Virginia with a traveling bag.  
b) Outside Galileo's house in Florence. Galileo steps out and looks down the street. Two nuns pass by.

6. 1616 The Vatican research institute, the Collegium Romanum, confirm Galileo's findings. Hall of the Collegium Romanum in Rome. It is nighttime. High ecclesiastics, monks and scholars in groups. On his own, to one side, Galileo. The atmosphere is extremely hilarious. Before the ginning of the scene a great wave of laughter is heard.

Things take indeed a wondrous turn  
When learned men do stoop to learn.  
Clavius, we are pleased to say  
Upheld Galileo Galilei

7. But the Inquisition puts Copernicus's teachings on the Index (March 5th, 1616) Cardinal Bellarmine's house in Rome. A ball is in progress. In the vestibule, where two clerical secretaries are playing chess and making notes about the guests, Galileo is received with applause by a small group of masked ladies and gentlemen. He arrives accompanied by his daughter Virginia and her fiancé Ludovico Marsili.

When Galileo was in Rome  
A cardinal asked him to his home.  
He wined and dined him as his guest  
And only made one small request.

i.e. continue to research...just declare that Copernicus is wrong

#### 8. A conversation

(In the Florentine Ambassador's palace in Rome Galileo is listening to the little monk who whispered the papal astronomer's remark to him after the meeting of the Collegium Romanum.

Galileo feeling grim,  
A young monk came to visit him.  
The monk was born of common folk.  
It was of science that they spoke.

9. After keeping silent for eight years, Galileo is encouraged by the accession of a new pope, himself a scientist, to resume his researches into the forbidden area: sunspots

(Galileo's house in Florence. Galileo's pupils – Federzoni, the little monk, and Andrea Sarti, a young man now – have gathered to see an experiment demonstrated. Galileo himself is standing reading a book. Virginia and Mrs. Sarti are sewing her trousseau.)

Eight long years with tongue in cheek  
Of what he knew he did not speak.  
Then temptation grew too great  
And Galileo challenged fate.

**10.** During the next decade Galileo's doctrine spreads among the common people. Ballad-singers and pamphleteers everywhere take up the new ideas. In the carnival of 1632 many Italian cities choose astronomy as a theme for their guild's carnival processions

A half-starved couple of fairground people with a baby and a five year old girl enter a market place where a partly masked crowd is awaiting the carnival procession. The two of them are carrying bundles, a drum and other utensils.

The poem is replaced by a lengthy song sung by them

**11. 1633.** The Inquisition summons the world-famous scientist to Rome Antechamber and staircase in the Medici palace in Florence. Galileo and his daughter are waiting to be admitted by the Grand Duke.

The depths are hot, the heights are chill

The streets are loud, the court is still

## **12. The Pope**

Room in the Vatican. Pope Urban VIII (formerly Cardinal Barberini) has received the Cardinal Inquisitor. In the course of the audience he is robed. Outside is heard the shuffling of many feet.

## **13 Before the Inquisition on June 22nd 1633 Galileo recants his doctrine on the motion of the earth**

In the Florentine ambassador's palace in Rome. Galileo's pupils are waiting for news. Federzoni and the little monk are playing new-style chess with its sweeping moves. In one corner Virginia kneels saying the Ave Maria.

June twenty-second, sixteen thirty-three  
A momentous day for you and me.  
Of all the days that was the one  
An age of reason could have begun.

## **14. 1633-1642. Galileo Galilei lives in a house in the country near Florence, a prisoner of the Inquisition till he dies. The "Discorsi"**

A large room with table, leather chair and globe. Galileo, old now, half blind, is carefully experimenting with a bent wooden rail and a small ball of wood. In the antechamber sits a monk on guard. There is a knock at the door. The monk opens it and a peasant comes in carrying two plucked geese. Virginia enters from the kitchen. She is now forty years old.

## **15.1637. Galileo's book, 'the 'Discorsi' crosses the Italian frontier**

Little Italian frontier town in the early morning. Children are playing by the barrier. Andrea standing beside a coachman, is waiting to have his papers checked by the frontier guards. He is sitting on a small box reading Galileo's manuscript. On the other side of the barrier stands the church.

The great book o'er the border went  
And, good folk, that was the end.  
But we hope you'll keep in mind  
He and I were left behind.  
May you now guard science's light  
Kindle it and use it right  
Lest it be a flame to fall  
Downward to consume us all.  
Yes, us all.