

# Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

2400 THIRD AVENUE SOUTH  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404  
612-872-5108  
FAX 612-874-8119

## *Starry Messenger*

By  
Kari Margolis

*Starry Messenger* was originally produced by the Children's Theatre Company in the 1999-2000 season.

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**Characters:**

Young Galileo

Mother

Father Nincenzio

Moon

Teacher

Middle Aged Galileo

Maria

Housekeeper

Divine Leader

Head Senator

Scholar 1

Scholar 2

Scholar 3

Scholar 4

Scholar 5

Scholar 6

Storyteller

Old Galileo

Ensemble includes: Stars, planets, students, merchants, townspeople, housekeeper, and youth chorus

## **Opening Scene: The Dream**

Set: A single bed with headboard and footboard.

Lights: Only the bed is lit in the midst of total blackness.

YOUNG GALILEO is playing in bed. He is an adventurer; he is the center of all things. Stretchy white sheet fabric is attached to the bed and GALILEO can create many things out of the fabric. In the blackout we hear the howls of ghosts and scary noises.. This is accompanied by funny comic book music. Lights come up and the young GALILEO (about age 9) is completely wrapped up in his sheer like a ghost.

**GALILEO:** (speaking under the sheet) Watch out ghosts. I know you're not really there. (He makes spooky sounds and changes into different shapes) You can't scare me, I can see right through you! (His head pokes out from under the sheet as if looking through bushes.) I've hunted the darkest forests, and have fought a great wild bear. (He comically battles with the sheet as if he were beating up a bear.) I'm stronger than you are you smelly bear! (He turns the sheet into a sail) I've been the captain of a pirate ship, and have sailed the mighty sea (The sheet becomes an anchor as he throws one end of it off the front of the bed.) Ahoy there matey.. .land ho! . . . argh! I've discovered new lands and treasures. Rubies! Diamonds! Swords! And have been honored by royalty. (He reels in the anchor and wraps himself in the fabric.) I am like an eagle. I have great white wings with which to fly, and soaring through the clouds. I am the master of the sky. Hah! Hah! Up here no one can touch me. For I'm too fast and much too high.

There is a musical change and the bed takes flight with his imagination. He flies first through the clouds and then out into space. He is surrounded by stars and planets (large puppet heads on sticks -perhaps under black light. Faces are projected onto the planets when they speak.

**GALILEO:** WHEE!!! Look at me... I'm flying, flying free - hoorah! yippee! Flying higher - higher than the sky! (looks around him) I am the center of the universe! I know you; you're red and must be Mars. And there's Saturn, the Milky Way, Big Dipper, and Jupiter... (he takes a deep breath) Wow.. . I can almost touch the stars!

**SUN:** (pushes through the crowd) Look out boy, move over. You're right in my way. I'm busy. I'm working. Turning night into day.

**GALILEO:** Excuse me. I'm sorry. But I'm here to stay. For I'm the great adventurer Galileo Galilei.

*The stars and planets giggle.*

**SUN:** An adventurer you may be, but Galileo . . . You are just at the beginning of a very important journey.

**GALILEO:** A journey? A journey where and why?

**VENUS:** You may be young, but we know you as wise. What we tell you is true. Just open your eyes.

**ALL PLANETS:** *(whispering)* Just open your eyes.

**SUN:** All around you there are secrets and stories yet untold. Keep your eyes open. Let the truth unfold.

**STARS:** What do you see? Galileo Galilei. . . What do you see?

CHOREOGRAPHY - The SUN pushes its way to center and the other planets glide GALILEO'S bed to circle around with them.

**MARS:** Follow your heart. Follow your eyes.

**SUN:** There are signs Galileo.

**STARS:** The stars dimmer with clues.

**PLANETS:** Clues seen only by you...

We hear a hard knocking on a door (which is still not lit) and hear the voice of GALILEO'S MOTHER. At the sound of her voice the planets disappear and the bed quickly comes down to rest.

**MOTHER:** *(from offstage)* Galileo Galilei it's way past your bedtime!

**GALILEO:** Mother please I have spoken with the planets.

**MOTHER:** *(peeks her head onstage)* That's very exciting but now it's time to come back to earth.

**GALILEO:** But - I was taught a lesson by the sun.

**MOTHER:** *(enters and approaches his bed.)* How can you sleep with all those ideas in your head? The sun will be waiting for you in the morning. Let your imagination rest and go to bed!

**GALILEO:** But, but I must tell you about my journey. Things are not as they may seem.

**MOTHER:** No my darling boy. *(she looks at the stars)* They never are when you dream.

**GALILEO:** But...

**MOTHER:** Now quiet, hush not another word, peep or sound. Tomorrow is a new day with more discoveries to be found.

**GALILEO:** But this was real; the planets spoke to me...

**MOTHER:** What's real is your bedtime!

**FATHER:** Galileo... you heard what your mother said!

*MOTHER gestures for GALILEO to stop speaking, and tucks him in and leaves the room. A window flies in downstage of the bed as GALILEO tries to fall sleep. He cannot sleep and is drawn to the window.*

### **Someday Song**

**GALILEO:** Someday  
Maybe someday  
They will see the stars  
The way I do  
Someday Song can't  
Someday  
Maybe Someday  
They will see the light

The way I do  
The way I do  
In the darkness I can see  
The stars twinkling just for me  
Whispered secrets in the sky  
I can hear them but don't know why  
Moonbeams touch me with their glow  
There's so much I need to know  
Someday  
maybe someday  
They will see the stars  
The way I do  
The way I do

**MOTHER & FATHER:** Young man, if we have to come to your room one more time...

*GALILEO pulls himself from the window and tries once more to get some sleep. There are twinkling sounds, a moonbeam shines through the window and we hear the voice of the moon.*

**MOON:** Galileo I am the moon; your friend and guide. For it is I among all others who will remain at your side. Each night when you see me I'll remind you with my beams. *(gently whispering)* Remember Galileo. Remember what you've seen. Don't ever doubt this was more than a dream.

*GALILEO lays back down and falls asleep. The bed rolls off into the distance as the stage goes to black.*

## **Latin Lesson**

Lights come up on a classroom. All the children are seated at their desks facing upstage. The teacher is pacing back and forth.

**TEACHER:** Lackadaisical Dilatorious. It is always Galileo we are waiting forius!

GALILEO comes running in out of breath.

**STUDENTS:** (*taunting*) It is always Galileo we are waiting forius.

The TEACHER and GALILEO run into each other in the center aisle, and all of GALILEO'S books go flying.

**TEACHER:** Laborius Explorious

TEACHER has their back turned and is writing on the blackboard. The STUDENTS are teasing GALILEO by passing his books around the room.

**STUDENT 1:** Expiorious Laborious

**TEACHER:** Laborious Explorious

**STUDENTS 3&5:** Laborious is snorious!

**TEACHER:** LABORIOUS (*turning around*) EXPLORIOUS! (*Catches GALILEO sanding away from his seat*)

**GALILEO:** Isn't learning glorious? (*he slinks back to his desk.*)

**TEACHER:** Twinkie twinkle little starrus

**STUDENTS:** Every planet near and farrus.

**TEACHER:** Is a perfectly orbulus glassy bauble...

**STUDENTS:** Held up by angels so it won't wobble!

**GALILEO:** But how?

**STUDENTS:** HUH?

**TEACHER:** Lugubrious Salubrious. Such questioning is dubious. Practicus Exacticus what's the answer to this riddlus:  
The sun circles round and...

**STUDENTS:** ... the earth is in the riddlus.

**GALILEO:** But what if...

**TEACHER:** Preposterous rhinoceros. Your questioning is disastrous.

**STUDENTS:** His questioning is disastrous.

**GALILEO:** But why?

**TEACHER:** Terminus finis end of lesson one! Formulaurn ad nausum, on to lesson two. Presentum inventum, here's a question for you:  
Tiny pea or big lead ballus: Which of these will fastest fallus?

**STUDENT:** Tell us which will fastest fallus!

**TEACHER:** You can see that the big lead ballus Is much heavier and will faster fallus. The slower one is the tiny pea ...

**GALILEO:** *(Standing on his desk )* Why don't we try this ourselves and see?

**TEACHER:** *(Holding on to his head, trying to get control)* Insania mania you're questions are wracking my crania!

**GALILEO:** But What if...

**TEACHER:** ... I AM A SCHOLAR! *(silence)*

**GALILEO:** *(slinks down off his desk)* You didn't have to holler.

**TEACHER:** *(regaining composure)* Practicus Exacticus lesson number three.  
Ignoramus non-totallus, listen very carefully. Didactus Galactus. A factus is a factus.

**STUDENTS:** Didactus Galactus

**STUDENT 2:** *(the know it all)* Factus equals factus.

**GALILEO:** *(Almost to himself)* I think...

**TEACHER:** What?

**GALILEO:** *(almost to himself)* I think...

**TEACHER:** Think?

**STUDENTS:** THINK? *(all the students laugh)*

**TEACHER:** *(With music)* Strike the harp and join the chorus  
The ancient thinkers  
Did our thinking for us

**STUDENTS:** Strike the harp and join the chorus  
The ancient thinkers did our thinking for us

**GALILEO:** Think! Thinking showed us that the world isn't flat...

**STUDENT:** *(stops for a moment)* How come the Ancient Thinkers didn't know that? *(he joins GALILEO)*

**GALILEO:** Think! Thinking means "don't just look but see"

**STUDENT :** Do you think this thinking thing could work for me? *(he joins GALILEO)*

**GALILEO:** *(joined by his two new friend GALILEO is obviously enjoying this sparring match immensely - the three become like the three musketeers chanting think to the remaining students who are less willing to join them)*

**TEACHER:** *(trying in vain to bring order to the classroom)* Cavortium consortium medulla oblongata upside downus inside outus Ignoramus totallus absurduum verabtim mopsy flopsy tipsy topsy turvium!

**GALILEO &  
FRIENDS:**

*(now joined by several other students they are all standing on their chairs  
and throw papers into the air) Think!*

*(Black-out)*

### Music Lesson

*Lights come up, and Galileo is swinging on a swing looking at the evening sky.*

**GALILEO:** Big Dipper, Little Bear, -Milky Way...

**VINCENZIO:** Galileo my boy, it's time for your music lesson –

**GALILEO :** But father look - come see how the moonbeams are playing hide  
and seek among the stars.

**VINCENZIO:** It's amazing you don't fall over with your head always turned  
upwards - come inside and practice your scales.

**GALILEO:** *(To Vincenzo)* Why look how that star is so much brighter than its  
neighbors. Do you suppose that twinkling is the way the stars  
speak to one another? Do you think the stars are lonely? Do you  
think the stars sleep during the day? Do...

**VINCENZIO:** Do you know what's good for you!!!

**GALILEO:** *(Looking very down trodden)* Yes Father, I suppose I do, it's time to  
practice ... *(He heads back towards the house, looking downward and  
shifting his feet. Vincenzo observes this and suddenly has a wonderful  
idea)*

**VINCENZIO:** Think of the sound of a storm out at sea  
What notes would the waves play  
An F sharp or a high C?  
*(Galileo stops and starts to consider his father's question.)*  
Or clouds blown by the wind  
What would be their song?  
*(Galileo thinks this a bit silly but can't help but become intrigued)*

**VINCENZIO:** Now think of the planets, all the stars and that crescent moon  
If they were singing what would they be saying  
What would be their tune?

**GALILEO :** *(Turns back and is drawn in by his father's question. He is looking up at the sky and starts humming sounds to himself.)* Well.. . looking at the stars and how they twinkle and shine, I suppose they're like crystal bells and.. . *(proud of himself)* I'm sure that they would chime!

**VINCENZIO :** And what if we were to imagine.. . let's say.. .that these planets were our orchestra

**GALILEO:** ...and that they could really play!

*Youth Chorus Appears in groups of two around the theater. Animated images of planets and stars are video projected on to the walls of the theater and the youth chorus sings their sounds when Galileo points to them.*

**VINCENZIO:** *(Points to a planet and we hear a note sung)* Mars!

**GALILEO:** The Stars! *(music)*

**VINCENDO:** *(Vincendo laughs and puts his arm around Galileo)*  
The sky is the limit  
When we don't just look but see  
*(reaches down, picks up a twig and hands it to Galileo to conduct)*  
This priceless gift is yours for free  
For imagination (and a little practice!)  
Is all you need  
To play the celestial melodies!

**GALILEO :** Jupiter! Venus! Saturn, etc...

*Voices of youth chorus. As he points each planet glows brighter and zooms in larger and responds with a sung musical note (live from youth chorus). Galileo starts to conduct the universe. When the song is in full swing the Scholars enter and interrupt.*

## **The Music Lesson: Part II**

*A group of six scholars enter on an angled rolling platform upstage left.*

**ALL SCHOLARS:** We the holders of the Sacred Books

**SCHOLAR 6:** The Ancient Books

**SCHOLAR 2:** The only Books

**SCHOLAR 4:** Have come here today

**SCHOLAR 5:** Not yesterday or tomorrow

**SCHOLAR 3:** Or a minute too late!

**SCHOLAR 2:** To tell you that

**ALL SCHOLARS:** We do not approve of your music

**SCHOLAR 1:** And we are registering a complaint.

*Scholars do a quick choreographic reaction of moving their hands from one place to another over their ears.*

**VINCENZIO :** Why, look at you now with hands over your ears.

**SCHOLARS:** Huh?

**VINCENZIO:** How can you snub what you can't even hear?

**ALL SCHOLARS:** Vincenzo Galilei

**SCHOLAR 1:** Put a cork in it.

**SCHOLAR 2:** Cease your blustering

**SCHOLAR 3:** And flustering

**SCHOLAR 4:** Your music is different.

**ALL SCHOLARS:** And breaks all the rules

**SCHOLAR 2:** Didn't you learn anything

**SCHOLAR 5 & 6:** When you went to school?

**VINCENZIO:** I learned that a man that's afraid to think - is no more than a fool!

**SCHOLARS:** (*Cacophony*) Fool? Fool? FOOL!!!

**SCHOLAR 5:** Speak like that and you'll have no friends!

**SCHOLAR 1:** It is not for you to speak to the minds of men

**SCHOLAR 3 & 4:** You are just a musician

**SCHOLAR 2 & 6:** Don't try to change the world Vincenzo.

**ALL OTHER SCHOLARS:** Don't make us put our complaint to paper and pen.

*They roll offstage as their voices become part of stylized soundtrack. Vincentio is angry and stomping around like a little boy.*

**VINCENZIO :** (*Calling after them*) You're narrow-minded and scared.

**GALILEO:** (*Tugging at his father's robe*) Father, must we stop. . .

**VINCENDO:** (*Ignoring Galileo, pulling him along- hollering after the scholars*)  
You think that anything that's different  
Is something to be feared!

**GALILEO:** (*Almost whispering*) Is our music something they can take away?

**VINCENZIO:** (*Touched by the question, calms down and becomes gentle*)  
Sometimes there's a price to pay  
When others are jealous or fearful of your way.

**GALILEO:** But we were only playing - singing with the planets - having fun.

**VICENZIO:** Life's not always so easy my son.  
And being strong in your beliefs is not always fun.

**GALILEO:** What do you suggest then? Is it better to give in?

**VINCENZIO:** NO! Standing-up for what you believe is right is the best way to begin.

**GALILEO :** Yes! Standing-up for what I believe is right...

**BOTH:** . . .is more important than fitting in!

*They laugh together and return their gaze to the sky.*

*Black-out.*

## **Time Scene II**

*Scene is at the outskirts of the village. Entering are farmers, merchants etc. Each of the townspeople's costumes are stylized incorporate their daily trade or activity. For example the Fisherwoman's dress is a very long net filled with fish, and the sheppards have boots that look like sheep.*

**FISHERWOMAN:** Fresh fish! Fish for sale! Pesce! Grosso pesce vendesi!

**COOKS:** Pesto! Pasta!

**FISHERWOMAN:** Pescare.

**COOKS:** Mangere !

**SHEPRDS:** Sheep's wool! Soft sheep's wool! Lana soffice!

**FRUITWOMAN:** Fresh fruit today! Frurto a fresco! (*showing each fruit*) mela! . . .  
Piera! . . .Pesca! . . .

**FISHERWOMAN:** Pesce!

**SHEPARDS:** Pecora!

**WINEMAKER:** Vino! Red wine! . . . Vio rosso!

*Galileo enters with his wagon full of found treasures.*

**FISHERWOMAN:** Pesce yosso!

**COOKS:** Pesto ! Pasta!

**MOTHER:** *(Enters followed with all her children)* Basta! Basta! Mi piccolo bambino! *(Hugging them.)*

**WINEMAKER:** Vino! A dolce vino!

*Winemaker tries to lift his barrel but it is too heavy. Galileo sees the winemaker trying unsuccessfully to lift his heavy barrel. He pulls out a series of odd shaped objects that he tries to put together to build an invention but they fall apart. The other townspeople begin to take notice of his antics.*

**GALILEO :** Hmm... use your head.. . usa la testa! There must be a soluziane but what would work the best?

*He pulls out a log and a plank of wood. He lays the plank over the log like a seesaw. He rolls the wine barrel onto the lower end He pushes down on the high end lifting the barrel up so the wine maker can leverage it on to his back. The Townspeople applaud and laugh and begin to go on their way.*

**FISHERWOMAN:** Aah! *The tide is in its time to fish and prendere con la rete! (she mimes catching fish with her net.)*

**COOKS:** Ooh! The water's boiling it's time to cook pomodores and spaghetti!

**SHEPARDS:** It's time to call the sheep back home.. .

**MOTHER:** The same with my bambino's

**WINEMAKER:** It's time for me to squeeze the grapes and turn them in to vino!

**ALL:** It's time to go.. . it's time to work.. . it's time...

GALILEO: Excuse me - Excuse me! Don't leave just yet! I've one question to ask you... . Not even two

SHEPARDS: *(smiling)* One question - Really?

FISHERWOMAN: *(Teasing him)* Why one hundred questions would be more like you!

GALILEO: But this one little question will hardly take any time

WINEMAKER: What about time?

GALILEO: My question precisely!  
Do you know what time is?  
What is time to you?

MALE COOK: Well, I don't know what time looks like  
To say I did would be a lie

FEMALE COOK: But of one thing we are certain  
And that is that time flies

GALILEO: But if time flies  
When you're having fun  
Then can I speed it up  
When I start to run?

SHEPARD: Time makes things grow  
Like a cow from a calf

SHEPARDESS: More time is better  
So take time and a half

GALILEO : Now "Time and a half" is an odd thing to be  
If I times it by two  
Will the answer be three?

TOWNSMOTHER: Look here - Look here  
Start with fact not with rhyme  
Begin at the beginning

You know, "Once Upon a Time"

GALILEO: If Once upon a time  
Is how a story begins  
Then what time would it be  
When the story ends?  
*(Muttering to himself as he moves downstage. Music begins.)*  
If there's "time off"  
Then is there "time on"  
Is it possible to find a way  
To hold on to time  
So that time won't slip away...

### **Time Song / Introduction of the Middle Aged Galileo**

TOWNSPEOPLE: "Time is of the essence"  
Heals all wounds, even flies

GALILEO: Time makes me grow older  
Is there a "Time to live and a Time to die?"  
"The test of time shows"  
I grow bigger each day  
You're becoming quite the young man  
Is what the grown-ups say

TOWNSPEOPLE: Why just look at the size  
Of his hands and feet  
He'll be taller than his father  
In just a heartbeat

GALILEO: *(Middle Galileo joins in.)*  
Time passing  
But where does it go  
In the blink of an eye  
It seems I have grown

TOWNSPEOPLE: Time passing  
Day and Night

GALILEOS: Sun and moon  
In eternal fight

TOWNSPEOPLE: Time passing  
Impossible to see

GALILEOS: Each day more is  
Expected of me

MIDDLE GALILEO: Time passing  
Impossible to see  
With each day  
I've more responsibilities

### **The Study**

At the end of Time Song the middle Galileo is downstage center and we hear knocking on a door upstage. The lights reveal that we are in Galileo's study. There is a table filled with experiments he is doing with momentum, inclined planes and balls etc. The young Galileo moves to downstage and becomes an observer. Galileo becomes deeply involved in his experiments by rolling balls down the inclined planes: he is humming and clearly enjoying himself.

GALILEO: (In response to knocking at door) Please! Please! Go away! (To himself.)  
And don't come back another day.

HOUSEKEEPER: Signor Galilei, it's your daughter Maria she has something she wants to show you.

Galileo goes to open the door to tell the Housekeeper that this is not the best time when Maria comes rushing through the door to show Galileo the beginnings of a scarf she is knitting for him.

MARIA: (She is skipping around Galileo singing)  
Stitch I - stitch out  
Horsehair and sheep's wool  
Twist it and pull it  
And tie it in a knot...  
Father look what I am learning to do,

for three days I've been knitting this scarf for you.

GALILEO: Why that's beautiful Maria! Now why don't you pull up your favorite chair.. . *(he goes back to work)*

MARIA: . . .But father see the pattern!

GALILEO: Pattern? *(taking a closer look)* Why yes it's lovely.. .like the stars on a summer night. *(He turns it upside down)* or - or like the Milky Way... *(he is drawn back to his experiments and away from Maria)*

Knocking on door.

HOUSEKEEPER: Signor Galilei, the sun is high in the sky and your students are here for their lesson.

GALILEO : Why is the sun high in the sky just when I'm on to something big!

He reluctantly goes and opens door, a horde of young students come bounding in all talking at the same time.

STUDENTS: *(cacophony of voices)*

STUDENT 1: Professor Galilei my father is of the opinion...

STUDENT 2: . . . that your lessons are not logical

STUDENT 3: Why do we have so much homework?

STUDENT 4: Can we try that experiment again?

STUDENTS: Professor Galilei.. . *(knocking on door starts again)*

GALILEO: Yes, yes what now!

HOUSEKEEPER: Signor Galilei, your colleagues from the university have come to speak with you.

GAIILEO: Can you send them away, tell them I have the flu

HOUSEKEEPER: But.. .

*Door bursts open and Scholars enter all speaking at once.*

SCHOLAR 6: Professor Galileo. . .

SCHOLAR 5: . . . about your lecture of last evening.. .

SCHOLAR 4: . . . as your colleague and a specialist in the matter.. .

SCHOLAR 3: . . .I must duly disagree!

SCHOLAR 2: Wrong, wrong admit your mistake...

SCHOLAR 1: ... ice floats due its shape not due to its weight

*Galileo tries to respond but the knocking on the door starts again.*

HOUSEKEEPER: Signor, Signor perhaps you should not shut your door. There are several people here who say they need to speak to you about unpaid bills!

GALILEO : Tell them I've passed away and have left them everything in my will!

*The door flies open and more and more people keep streaming through. Everyone wants or needs something from Galileo. In the midst of the chaos the light goes to silhouette and the scenery begins to change. The study table rolls off and the spiral staircase rolls in to simulate the leaning tower of Pisa.*

*Lights out on the upper deck and back to full on the stage. Galileo starts up the staircase acting like a baker at a medicine show.*

### **Falling Balls – Redefining the Laws of Gravity**

*Galileo climbs the spiral staircase calling the attention of the townspeople and Scholars below. Galileo is carrying two imaginary balls which we are told are of very different weights.*

GALILEO: *(like a barker at a medicine show.)* This is a day to remember - how can you forget what you are about to see. This is a day you will speak of forever, for today I will ... right here in front of your eyes, with the simple release of these two brave balls, (for you too would be brave if you were willing to fail all the way into history) defy what you now know to be the laws-of-gravity.

TOWNSPEOPLE: Gravity? . . etc.

SCHOLAR 6: The Ancient Thinkers tell us; things that are more like earth will fall faster to the earth...like attracts like. Therefore...

GALILEO: Here in one hand I hold a ball of lead, weighing more than a sack of potatoes, and here in the other one made of wax which weighs barely more than the heel of your shoe. So if you know what will happen when I let these balls fly - place your bets now for the stakes are high.

*Cacophony of townspeople voicing their opinions.*

WINE SELLER: Even a dunce knows the heavier ball will land first!

SCHOLAR 3: Is he a lunatic - or a disbeliever?

SCHOLAR: 5: Does he think he can prove us wrong?

SCHOLAR 3: How dare he humiliate us with such a spectacle!

STUDENT: I know! The big lead ballus will be the one to fastest fallus!

GAIILEO : Now move back, give me room, make some space! For in an instant you will see what happens when these two balls of different weights are allowed to race. *(there is a lighting change as all around him fades out for a moment and only Galileo is lit in a special. He looks up to heaven and says to himself)* Now I trust my lucky stars that the small and simple experiments I made alone in my study will hold up to this grand public test! *(lights return to as before) (hesitantly)* Take a moment...hold your breathe...I'm about to release them...here I go...set ready.. .it's about to happen ... on the count of three.

CROWD: One...

SCHOLAR 1: Galileo you are clearly going against our teachings.

SCHOLAR 2 & 4: And risk your official position!

CROWD: Two.. .

TOWN FARMER: Maybe it's his head that's heavier than a sack of potatoes!

CROWD: Three!

GALILEO : Galileo this may be the gamble of your yet short life!

Galileo leans over and mimes the release of the balls. Two bright colored balls of different sizes are slowly lowered from invisible strings. First one gets ahead of the other ... but the two hit the ground at the same time. The townspeople let out a huge roar, balls appear from everywhere, they are being juggled, tossed bounced and passed The scholars are watching the celebration and bouncing and tossing balls zip and down in a very percussive manner.

Text is melded in with the choreography.

GAIILEO: (Jumping up and down just as surprised as everyone else!) It worked, it worked, why it is just as I thought. All objects fall at the same speed regardless of their weight. Imagine.. .two thousand years of belief disproved with the simple bounce of a ball!

SCHOLAR 2: Braggart

SCHOLAR 5: But how can this be?

SHEPARD: Can you teach us...

SHEPARDESS: ...how to do what you did today?

GALILEO: (to himself) What new and marvelous discoveries are yet to be revealed?

SCHOLAR 4: Not possible

SCHOLAR 5: Clearly wrong

SCHOLAR 6: Is it?

COOKS: Can you do it again?

SCHOLAR 6: Is it?

GALILEO: *(Reciting scientific jargon to himself)*

SCHOLAR 1: Fear not, this is a passing matter and his fame won't last for long.

TOWN MOTHER: Would a ladle fall as fast as a cradle?

*The choreography starts to fade and the stage is emptying out.*

*Scholars are speaking among themselves as they exit - Galileo catches the end of their conversation.*

SCHOLAR 2: And for this disrespect

FARMER: Or a plough as fast as a cow?

SCHOLAR 4: And outrageous display

SCHOLAR 1: He should be relieved of his duties as professor,

SCHOLAR 2: To re-acquaint himself with the Sacred Books

SCHOLAR 3: Their teachings

SCHOLAR 5: And their ways.

TOWN STUDENT: I'm going to try this From my rooftop!!!

GALILEO: *(Galileo is left alone in the tower)* My experiment. My proof! I have given them undeniable grounds for belief.. .  
But what do they see? Two balls hitting the ground at the same time, as if this were some sort of carnival trick presented for their entertainment! And then there are my University colleagues who

understand only too well what my experiment has proven. But do they rush forward to honor me! NOOOO! They shake in their boots and run in fear of losing their jobs.

I refuse to wait for history  
To embrace the true weight of my discovery  
How am I to proceed? Where to go, what to say  
How to build on what I discovered today...

### **Pendulum Scene**

*Church bells begin to toll. Lights come up on stage and Maria returns holding her knitting which has grown noticeably longer. She looks up to Galileo at the top of the tower.*

MARIA:                    Father its Sunday a rest day, a day of good faith. Please come down and be with me and for once let's not be late!

*Beautiful renaissance church music fills the space. The pews are set facing upstage with the Divine Leader at the pulpit facing downstage.. Galileo takes his place on the pew next to Maria. He joins in with the Latin prayer when suddenly a breeze blows open a shutter and causes a large crystal chandelier to begin to sway. There is a change in music and lighting, with Galileo and the chandelier becoming much brighter than the rest of the scene. Galileo 's attention is drawn to the chandelier. We can tell from his body language that he is connecting to the rhythm of the chandelier 's swinging. He takes off his coat, rolls up his sleeve and begins to time the swinging to the rhythm of his pulse.*

Galileo:                    (To himself)  
One, two, three  
One, two, three  
One, two, three

For three beats of my heart it swings to the left and then (*he stops and counts*) it swings exactly three beats to the right. Hmmmm... this is quite unexpected - and totally contrary to what I was taught. Big swing or little the timing stays exact. I don't know what this means but it is totally astonishing!

He can hardly contain his excitement, he gets up from his pew and is practically dancing. Music begins.

GALILEO: How is it I've never noticed this harmony, this balance, this natural rhythm? Why it is positively perfect and perfect I'm positive must be.. (he suddenly stops and starts to look quickly around him as if he expects to catch something)... Clearly this is a vision. Think Galileo think! Count your lucky stars.. It's a clue! (he is swaying back and forth with the chandelier and brings his hands to his head)

MARIA: Father please, people are starting to notice.

GALILEO: Yes take notice; take notice this is a miracle they won't want to miss!

Galileo turns around to look at the congregation. Everyone is moving in slow motion and it soon becomes apparent that they are moving in sync with the chandelier. The pews are on wheels and start to slide apart accentuating the swinging motion of a pendulum creating a humorous choreography.

Galileo moves downstage and a group of his young students roll in his desk which is full of all kinds of swinging objects and pendulums. The students surround the desk as Galileo begins spewing forth his theories and trying different experiments.

The Divine Leader and two scholars remain upstage-- they are watching Galileo.

GALILEO: (he is speaking so quickly we can hardly understand him) Attach to two threads of equal length-say three or four feet-two equal leaden balls and suspend them; now pull them aside from the perpendicular, the one through 80 or more degrees, the other through not more than four or five degrees, so that, when set free, the one falls, passes through the perpendicular, and describes large but slowly decreasing arcs of 160, 150, 140 degrees, etc., the other swinging through small and also slowly diminishing arcs of 10, 8, 6, degrees etc.

STUDENT: So what you're saying is ...

GALILEO: (Cutting him off.) Yes. yes! Absolutely

*Upstage on a second level we see the young Galileo appear peeking through an open door.*

STUDENT: So whether we swing the balls in long or short arcs ...

GAIILEO: The resistance of air seems to be the same

YOUNG GALILEO: Why if this is true than.. .

GAIILEO: *(Starts off at an excited rapid speed again)* Now if what my colleagues at the university say is fact and air did offer more resistance to the high speed than to the low, the frequency of vibrations in the large arcs of 180 degrees or 160 degrees, etc.. ought to be less...

YOUNG GALILEO AND MIDDLE GALILEO *(are speaking together at a slower pace):*  
...than in the small arcs of 10 degrees, 8 degrees, 4 degrees etc., and even less than in arcs of 2 degrees, or 1 degree.

STUDENT: *(imitating the way Galileo would speak.)* But this prediction has not been tested.

GALILEO: Ahah! So we must continue our experiment!

*Galileo reaches for the two lead balls. He pulls one far back and the other hardly at all. The students rise and crowd around the desk. Their body language tells us they are following the wings of the pendulums and counting out loud.*

*Lights grow dimmer on stage and brighter on the Divine Leader and Scholar on the second level stage.*

DIVINE LEADER: Brilliant! Extraordinary.. .he's on to something...

SCHOLAR 4: He's on the road to no good!

DIVINE LEADER: But his discovery can be used for good.

SCHOLAR 5: Is it good to disprove the Ancient Thinkers?

STUDENT: *(breaking out of crowd)* Why even after counting tens of times they do not differ by a single swing, not even by a fraction of one.

GALILEO :           Therefore one can only conclude that the resistance of the air does not affect the motion of this swinging weight at high speeds more than those at low speed-- contrary to the opinion of the Ancient Thinkers.

STUDENT:           So what does this mean?

GAIILEO:           It means we can trust that the swing of the pendulum will remain constant.

STUDENT:           But for what purpose?

GALIIEO:           Now that's a perplexing question indeed. *(he begins mumbling mathematical equations to himself.)*

YOUNG GALILEO: The swing of the pendulum is one more clue, one more sign -Thank ones stars! The answer is so simple. ..

GALILEO:           Eureka! I've got it! ... Another piece of the puzzle...

BOTH GALILEOS: ... the swing of the pendulum can be used to tell time!

*All the students react with amazement and congratulate Galileo. The scholars upstage are visibly upset. We hear a cacophony of clocks ticking, chimes and church bells. The students roll Galileo's study offstage, the young Galileo pulls back and closes the door. The sounds of clocks transforms into the sounds of a faire.*

### **Transition to Father, Father Song**

*Galileo goes back to his experiments as Maria comes running out on to stage with a group of young girls. They form a maypole and she is dancing with them. Their fathers enter and the girls all run into their father's arms leaving Maria by herself: She runs to Galileo.*

Maria:               *(excited and speaking quickly)* Father, it's solstice, a miracle  
Longest day of the year  
And all my friends fathers  
Are taking them to the faire  
They'll feast on mutton

And pig stuffed with figs  
Walk barefoot through market  
Dance a wild, gypsy jig

She pulls Galileo from his chair to dance with her. He awkwardly tries to do so.

GALILEO: Maria, sunshine.. . I don't know how.. .

MARIA: It's simple father...it's a pattern...two steps to the left and one to the right...

GALILEO : Why of course! That's twice as many steps to the left. Soooooo Maria - if we were to dance fifty steps to the left how many steps would we dance to the right'?

Maria attempts to answer but Galileo's become caught up in his mathematical thinking and is drawn back to his study.

MARIA: But - Father the faire...

### **Father, Father Song**

MARIA: Father, Father can't you see.. .  
*(musical line)*  
Is there something I should do?. . .  
*(musical line)*

*(she leans over his books speaking)* Now if the arc of the parabola is divided by...

GALILEO: Maria you know you mean the stars to me - It's just that I'm in the middle of a very important experiment!

MARIA: Put aside your experiments  
Those tests and charts  
You cannot calculate  
What I feel. . . *(musical phrase finished the thought)*

MARIA: I can always see  
By the look in your eye  
That you're looking right through me  
Straight up to the sky

GAIILEO : Now this Maria is surely not true  
For the most beautiful sky  
Is the one that shines blue  
And twinkles and sparkles  
As only your eyes do

MARIA: As the sun sets  
I know you'll leave me soon  
To spend time alone  
Just you and the moon

Up in your study  
Your eye on the world  
It easy to lose sight  
Of just one little girl

GALILEO & MARIA: Father, Father don't you see  
Daughter, Daughter don't you see

GALILEO : You are my shining star

MARIA: I want you to spend time with me

GALILEO: You are my universe

MARIA: Is there something I should do?

GAIILEO: You are my.. *(cut off Galileo sees the comet)*  
...my. Oh My! That's the most beautiful thing.. and this is no lie!

## **The Coming: of the Comet**

Youth chorus is on the upper deck adding vocally to the soundscape. There is a large rolling window used in the staging. As the scene progresses the different perspectives of the characters are expressed through the frame of the window. Townspeople enter.

WINEMAKER: The sky's on fire.

FISHERWOMAN: There's a tire in the sky.

FRUITLADY: It's the long arm of Lucifer.

SHEPARDS: It's the evil eye

SCHOLAR 5: Be calm, be calm

SCHOLAR 6: Have no fear

SCHOLAR 5: The ancient thinkers will tell us

SCHOLAR 6: What this is

SCHOLAR 5: And why it's there

TOWNSPEOPLE: What is it? What's happening? Why, why, why?

SCHOLARS 2, 3 & 4: The answer is here.

SCHOLAR 1: This book doesn't lie.

GALILEO: *(To himself)* Not within the memory of man has there been such an extraordinary sight. How marvelous.. . but what is this mysterious moving light?

MOTHER: It's an omen of illness.

COOKS: A sign of the blight.

SCHOLAR 6: I know the answer it's right here on page three!

SHEPARD: Page three! Page three!

MOTHER: The only answer is to flee.. .

ALL SCHOLARS: No, No, No!

SCHOLAR 4: This apparition lies beneath the moon

SCHOLAR 3: It's just cosmic dust

ALL SCHOLARS: . . . and will pass very soon!

GAIILEO: *(again to himself)* I gamble on instinct a sense in my gut.. . *(out loud for all others)* I believe this starry orb travels in the celestial sky Far beyond the sun and the moon.

MARIA: *(Is being pulled into Galileo's excitement)* How magical - can it be?

FISHERWORNAN: How can that be? *(others join in)*

GALILEO: If you study the arc of this fiery tail  
I believe the facts will take us  
Down a whole other trail

MARIA: Oh Father, look at the pattern, I can see what you see - it's as beautiful as jewels.

GALILEO: Yes, Maria - you can see what I see!

SCHOLAR 1: No, no, no! This is just a visual trick.

GALILEO: Just imagine for a moment that this apparition is a riddle- a sign.

SHEPARD: It's a hex

GALILEO: A clue

SHEPARDESS: A hoax

GAIILEO: A key

FRUITLADY: A promise of harm

WINEMAKER: A pox upon

MOTHER: A plague upon.

ALL: The Prophet of Doom!

SCHOLAR 6: No, no, no riddles or sips

ALL SCHOLARS: (*Cacophony*) No Plagues, No poxes, No promise of harm, No hoaxes, No hexes!

SCHOLAR: (*to Galileo*) You know this.

SCHOLAR 2: You've been told this

SCHOLAR 1, 2 & 6: Again!

SCHOLARS 2, 3 & 5: And Again!

SCHOLARS: (*They all quickly thumb through their books to page ten and read out loud together*) Nothing-beyond-the-moon-can-ever-move-or-even-bend

GALILEO: But what if the stars are not static but actually move.

SCHOLAR 2: The celestial is perfect and does not shift.

SCHOLAR 4: The maker gave us the universe as an unchanging gift.

FISHERWORNAN: But it is changing before our very eyes

FRUITLADY: It's a bird of ill omen

WINEMAKER: (*to the scholars*) Give us a word of the wise

COOKS: What does the book say –

SHEPARDS: How do we rid ourselves of this evil spirit?

SCHOLAR 1: Just give us a moment we have to check.

SCHOLAR 2: *(whispers to Scholar One)* Look up evil spirit in the index!

GALILEO: Peel your noses from your books  
The answers are before us--glorious! *(He is carried away by his awe of the comet, starting to get giddy.)* Just look, look, look! *(he is pointing to the stars, dancing as punch drunk.)* Glance, gaze, gape, stare.

ALL SCHOLARS: Do you suggest the answers aren't here?

SCHOLAR 2: This is heresy!

SHEPARD: He speaks like a sinner!

*Galileo is so awe-struck by the sight of the comet before him that he forgets about the people around him.*

GALILEO: Oh radiant, ravishing messenger of light  
I know not yet your meaning  
Yet I cherish the sight  
Of your defiant journey across the sky

SCHOLAR 1: The words of an irreverent fool

MARIA: *(Recognizing the building danger around Galileo.)* Father please, do you know what you're saying?

*Galileo takes Maria's hands and starts spinning and dancing with her. She is troubled and tries to calm him down – he is oblivious to the turn of events around him.*

SCHOLAR 4: A fool who tries to frighten you.

SCHOLAR 2 & 3: And fill your heads with and gibble gabble.

ALL SCHOLARS: And mumbo jumbo and gobbledy gook...

SCHOLAR 5: Why he's so befuddled he's forgotten how to read the Ancient Books.

GALILEO: Moon and stars I see this sign you're sending me is proof - proof that things are not as they may seem. (*Maria has pulled away – Galileo is dancing alone laughing uncontrollably.*)

FRUITLADY: He acts like an ignoramus!

WINE SELLER: Why he's just a simpleton.

MOTHER: A buffoon!

*They begin to point and laugh at Galileo. At first, Galileo thinks they are laughing with him, sharing his enthusiasm. As he stops laughing they all laugh harder turning into a slow motion nightmarish image as the stage fills with smoke.*

MARIA: Father, can they take you away? They say to believe in the things you say is a sin.

GALILEO : Not so Maria, for fighting for what you believe is right is more important than fitting in!

*Galileo sees the image of himself as a young boy flying in his bed among the planets. He ascends staircase but the image fades away just as he reaches the top.*

GALILEO : (*speaking to the empty universe*) Why do you tease me? You were just within my grasp. Don't be so distant - speak to me again as you did when I flew among you as a child.. .I am watching and listening for a hint or even a wink. (*Two Scholars enter and meet for a secret rendezvous - Galileo overhears this conversation from the tower.*)

### **Scholars Discuss the Dutchman**

SCHOLAR 2: I have news

SCHOLAR 6: From Who

SCHOLAR 2: From he who knows

SCHOLAR 6: Who knows?

SCHOLAR 2: Knows who?

SCHOLAR 6: Knows news

SCHOLAR 1: New news?

SCHOLAR 6: No news is new news

SCHOLAR 2: If no news is new news then what news is my news?

SCHOLAR 6: Your news in no news - I knew you knew no new news

SCHOLAR 2: My news is big news and new news to you

SCHOLAR 6: If you know news that's new news to me than speak of it now before I count to three.. . One ... Two.. .

SCHOLAR 3: THREE.. . miles from here -just over that mountain

SCHOLAR 6: The one that's so high?

SCHOLAR 2: Comes a man with a miracle that will boggle our mind

SCHOLAR 6: I know. It's a contraption to turn hay to gold or something of this kind.

SCHOLAR 2: Nope –

SCHOLAR 6: Aha! It's a device to make us move so fast that we're never left behind!

SCHOLAR 3: Don't be a dope  
It's a gadget he calls a telescope

SCHOLAR 6: A tele what?

SCHOLAR 2: Not a tele what -a telescope! A crystal tube that makes what is small seem big.

GALILEO: What is small seem big - why this is huge.

SCHOLAR 6: They say he comes to sell it to our holy royal court.

SCHOLARS 2 & 6: Holy Royal Court!

GALILEO: It will surely take him at least a day to travel from so far. That give me 24 hours to build one better-- an optical glass so clear it will make what is far seem near. (*extremely excited*) If I could sell this invention to the court I could buy the time I need to study the stars!

### **Building the Telescope and Race of the Dutchman**

*Galileo sees the image of a shadow puppet of the man from Holland coming with his telescope. The shadow starts rip high stage left and travels in a crisscross pattern from left to right. Galileo races against this image knowing he has to develop a better telescope before this character arrives. He is sputtering mathematical formulas as he is trying to run down the staircase to his study that has been set up by his students below. He is working so furiously that smoke is coming out from under his desk. He is moving in triple speed ordering everyone about. He cannot figure out how to make a telescope.*

*In a moment of panic he leans forward and his eyeglasses fall to the floor and the lenses fall out. The students all stop what they are doing thinking that Galileo is about to explode. But instead Galileo makes a huge discovery. He picks up the lenses and holds one in front of the other - one convex and the other concave. This was the breakthrough he needed to build the telescope. All the while the shadow puppet is getting closer and closer. Just as the shadow character exits the scrim stage right and enters onto stage from stage right, the Divine Leader arrives with his entourage from stage left. The man from Holland is approaching the Divine Leader when Galileo cuts right in front of him. As Galileo gets all the attention the man from Holland slowly does an about-face and dejectedly exits whence he came.*

### **Presenting Telescope to the Divine Leader**

*The Divine Leader arrives with a great fanfare surrounded by senators, scholars, businessmen and townspeople.*

HEAD SENATOR: As head of the holy royal court and with the blessing of the Divine Leader I bring before you on this day the *(begrudgingly)* distinguished scholar and inventor Galileo Galilei.

GALILEO: I can't believe that you have gone to so much fanfare all in honor of me - a simple mathematician devoted to working in your service. Why even if it has taken me ten years to perfect my latest discovery.. .

STUDENT : *(cuts in)*. . .ten years, why it has only been ten hours since..

GALILEO: *(Puts his arm around the student and pulls him a little too harshly to his side)* . . .since this brilliant and insightful young man convinced me that this new invention was worthy of your greatness!

DIVINE LEADER: Then keep no secrets, don't be so humble.

GALILEO: *(He holds up a gold package)* Why what I have here is a cleverly crafted optical tube with perfectly polished convex and concave lenses that refract the light at such an obtuse yet precise angle that..

DIVINE LEADER: Don't speak in gibberish

HEAD SENATOR: . . .what is this new and magnificent prize?

GALILEO: *(box falls open and he makes a big hoopla about revealing it.)* Aah! This is a prize that knows no rival - don't be fooled by its smallness of size. For what lies here is an instrument of such value it can bring a ship that's miles away so very close it will seem it is sailing only inches from your eyes.

HEAD SENATOR: *(carried away as he Snatches the telescope from Galileo)* Oh my, Oh my, what a wonderful surprise!

SCHOLAR 4: *(sarcastically)* Yes, the brilliant Galileo has succeeded in building a very interesting - toy!

DIVINE LEADER: *(shaking his head in thought)* Why this is more than just a toy - Think of the power this, this.. .

GALILEO : This Te-le-scope

DIVINE LEADER: . . .this te-le-scope will bring our court great power. Why we will be able to see our enemies hours before they can see us, right from the fortress tower. *(The onlookers applaud in awe. Galileo is quite content with the way things are going.)* You are a most honorable servant and for your immeasurable contribution to your Leader and our land, I will double your salary to 1,000 scudi. Senior Galilei you are now a very important man.

Student: *(as an aside to Galileo, but said just a little too loudly.)* Now you will be able to pay your bills *(Everyone stops and looks at Galileo)*

Galileo : Yes! Yes! The ability of this telescope is truly powerful! *(pulls student aside)* This is a device that will do much more than fill my purse. I plan to use it to study the moon, to search the stars and journey the universe.

*Everyone crowds around Galileo except the Scholars, who pull back and look on suspiciously. Lights start to fade on the scene, but lag on the Scholars.*

HEAD SENATOR: *(to other Scholars)* The best use for this contraption may be keeping a closer eye on Galileo and making sure the Divine Leader can see what a threat he really is to our teachings.

### **Seeing the Moon for the First Time**

*Galileo is on the rooftop of his house beautifully lit by moonlight. He is setting up his telescope. As he looks through the telescope a giant projected image appears behind him, we see stars etc. At one point the image of the moon appears, but out of focus. He pulls his eye back, moves the telescope a little, looks back in and refocuses the lens. The screen becomes filled with the moon's surface.*

GALILEO: *(looking through the telescope)* Remarkable, Fantastic,  
Staggeringly, Stupefying  
Extraordinary, Phenomenal

When he reaches out in front of him we see the image of his hand appear to be touching the moon. There is a moment where he is moving in slow motion as if weightless and actually walking on the moon. He pulls his eye from the telescope, wipes away a tear.

GALILEO: Oh moon my friend and guide  
You've shown me the sign of signs  
*(looking back through telescope)*  
The hugeness, the grandeur  
The infinite beauty of the sky  
Is speaking to me through the  
Tiny iris of my eye  
From my cortex  
Through a vortex  
To the very depth of my soul  
I can't believe what I am seeing.. .  
The moon's surface has holes!

YOUTH CHORUS: What do you see  
Galileo Galilei?

GALILEO: I can see mountains and valleys  
Like on earth but in space

CHORUS: *(echoing Galileo)* I can see

GALILEO: I can see clearly why the moon has a face  
I can see the valleys are dark  
And the mountain tops bright  
Can it be? Can it be?

CHORUS: Yes! It's the sun that gives the moonlight

GALILEO: So moonlight is sunlight  
Can that be right?  
Then the moon is no jewel, no perfect crystal in the sky.  
*(he steps back from the telescope taking in the universe)*  
There is no difference between heaven and earth. We are in heaven  
and heaven is on earth.  
*(he look once more through the telescope)*

GALILEO:           *(lighting effect throws a huge moving shadow of Galileo across the stage)*  
Ohhhhhh! But there is more! Look, look how that shadow is stretching, it, it, actually seems to change - but wait - the direction it's growing would seem to prove - no this can't be true - is it possible that the earth does really move? Can it really be turning on an axis?

*(Voices of the Planets from the prelude are overlapping and washing over him)*  
"We've always known you as wise", "What we tell you is true -just open your eyes",  
"Don't ever doubt this was more than a dream"

GALILEO:           The Ancient Thinkers were wrong though surely they would not lie. They could not understand what they could not see.. . But now they can see!

*Lights come up on upper deck stage left to see the Divine Leader with his telescope also looking at the moon. Youth Chorus Sings.*

*Black out and Intermission.*