

Socrates

Book, Music, and Lyrics by
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Cast of Characters

Socrates

Xanthippe

Plato

Crito

Phaedo

Apollo

Euthyphro

Menexenus

Meletus

Judge

Jailor / Guard

The Sophists (3)

Merchants (3)

Messenger

Jury

Townspople

TRACK 1. "OVERTURE"

TRACK 2. "PROLOGUE"

(SPEAKER walks onto a barren stage.)

SPEAKER: I am not an Athenian, nor a Greek, but a citizen of the world.

To find yourself think for yourself.

There is only one good — knowledge. There is only one evil — ignorance.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is a habit.

Beware the barrenness of a busy life.

I am too honest to be a politician.

Enjoy yourself. It's later than you think.

Eat to live, don't live to eat.

See one mountain and you've seen them all.

Call no man unhappy until he is married.

These are the words of Socrates.

(Three grotesque men enter. They are the SOPHISTS. The Sophists were the antithesis of Socrates, teaching skepticism about morality and knowledge.)

TRACK 3. "MEET THE SOPHISTS"

SOPHISTS

To those who know us not,
We are what life forgot
To give us force for right
We thank that oversight.

We live from day to day
Should things go wrong we say
That life is just a dream
And doesn't mean a thing.

The world exists for us
And yet we're turned to dust
Is this a just reward
For worshiping the Lord?

(SOCRATES enters.)

SOPHISTS (CONT'D)

Now here's a man of faith
Who thinks that men shall wake
To see their lives inside
Inside? That's where we hide!

(SOPHISTS exit.)

TRACK 4. "SOCRATES ENTRANCE"

(SOCRATES walks. He is in deep thought trying to hear his "divine voice." He is seventy years old, bearded, but still vigorous. He remains barefooted throughout the play. He notices the audience and kindly smiles.)

TRACK 5. "SOCRATES MONOLOGUE"

SOCRATES: Good evening. I would like to tell you a story. One day a friend of mine went to visit the oracle of Apollo at Delphi and asked whether there was anyone wiser than me. The priestess replied that there was no one. When I heard about this, I said to myself: "What does the god mean that I am the wisest man in the world?"

After puzzling about it for some time I set about to check the truth of it. First, I went to interview a man with a high reputation for wisdom. However, in conversation with him, I formed the impression that although he appeared to be wise he, in fact, was not. As I walked away it occurred to me that I am certainly wiser than this man. Whereas he thinks he knows something about which he does not, I am quite conscious of my own ignorance.

From that time on I interviewed one person after another — politicians, poets, skilled craftsmen, and by dog [!] my honest impression was this: that the people with the highest reputation were almost entirely deficient while others who were supposed to be their inferiors were much better qualified in practical intelligence.

So I concluded, true enough. I must indeed be the wisest man in the world since not only can I perceive my own ignorance but I can readily perceive the ignorance in others. And this ability, by the way, has caused me no small problem.

ACT I

SCENE 1 — THE AGORA (MARKETPLACE)

TRACK 6. "UNDERScore"

(MERCHANTS sell their wares such as linen, wool, jewelry, hats, mirrors, brushes, fruits, meats, and vegetables. It is a busy bustling atmosphere. PLATO enters. MERCHANTS entice him with their wares.)

1ST MERCHANT: Can I interest you in some fine jewelry?

2ND MERCHANT: Perhaps a mirror. Here, how about a brush?

3RD MERCHANT: Look here, young man, wonderful fruits and vegetables. Just cut this morning.

PLATO: To be honest, I'm not here to buy anything.

TRACK 7. "DIALOGUE"

PLATO: I'm looking for a man called Socrates. Do you know where I can find him?

1ST MERCHANT: Oh, you don't want to meet him; that is, if you want to keep your sanity.

PLATO: What do you mean?

1ST MERCHANT: Let's just say I'd rather fight a lion blindfolded.

2ND MERCHANT: Two lions.

3RD MERCHANT: Three.

1ST MERCHANT: But he should be here soon. He comes here almost every day around this time. But I warn you...

TRACK 8. "AFTER YOU MEET WITH SOCRATES"

1ST MERCHANT

You won't be able to sleep
After you meet with Socrates

2ND MERCHANT

Just prepare for quick retreat
After you meet with Socrates

3RD MERCHANT

Go now before it's too late
Impending doom if you should wait
You won't have a mind left to contemplate

THREE MERCHANTS

After you meet, after you meet,
After you meet, after you meet,
After you meet, after you meet,
With Socrates.

PLATO: Oh, come on. Nobody's that bad.

1ST MERCHANT: Ya wanna bet?

2ND MERCHANT

Might as well concede defeat
Before you meet with Socrates

3RD MERCHANT

Should you like to think or speak
Then never meet with Socrates

ALL MERCHANTS

Leave now you mustn't delay
Quick man, he's coming this way
Are you sick man?
Then lie down and stay

(MERCHANTS push PLATO to the ground and hold him there, virtually sitting on him. PLATO struggles to get up but to no avail.)

MERCHANTS & TOWNSPEOPLE

The terror of Greece with no surcease
With just a glance you're in a trance
Those piercing eyes to hypnotize
And by the way, did we not say?
Avoid the gaze throughout this play
Called *Socrates*.

(SOCRATES enters. He is followed by his students CRITO, PHAEDO, and APOLLO.)

TRACK 9. "DIALOGUE"

SOCRATES: Well, let's see who we can poke fun at today.

(PLATO gets up, dusts himself off, and walks over to SOCRATES.)

PLATO: Excuse me, sir, but would you be Socrates?

SOCRATES: I am. And who are you?

PLATO: My name is Aristocles, but my friends call me Plato.

SOCRATES: What can I do for you, Plato?

PLATO: I understand that you are a teacher, a teacher of life.

SOCRATES: Life? No, not life, young man, but the good life. It's the good life that interests me.

PLATO: Then how can I live the good life?

SOCRATES: It's easy. All you need to do is practice the "ities."

PLATO: The "ities"?

SOCRATES: The "ities." Gentlemen!

TRACK 10. "THE ITIES"

PHAEDO

Sincerity, veracity

CRITO

Humility, tenacity

APOLLO

Integrity, nobility

ALL THREE

And that's how you reach immortality.

PLATO: I get it, the "ities"! All those words end in I-T-Y.

SOCRATES: That's right. But wait, there's more. Phaedo!

PHAEDO

Serenity, simplicity

SOCRATES: Crito!

CRITO

Charity and purity

SOCRATES: Apollo!

APOLLO

Fixity and equanimity

ALL THREE

And that's how you reach immortality.

PLATO: Can I try? I have a few "ities" of my own somewhere.

CRITO: Sure, brother, let's see what you got.

PLATO

Don't forget generosity
And his friend magnanimity
Always have a lack of vanity

ALL

And that's how you reach immortality.

(Four TOWNSWOMEN walk by. The four young men — PLATO, CRITO, PHAEDO, and APOLLO — tap them on the shoulder, then engage in a lively swing dance. The WOMEN exit, and the STUDENTS return to SOCRETES.)

SOCRATES

So you see the simplicity
How to reach immortality
If you practice then you can't lose

(SOCRATES, PHAEDO, CRITO and APOLLO sing to PLATO.)

SOCRATES, PHAEDO, CRITO & APOLLO

All you gotta do is sim-po-ly choose
All you gotta do is simply choose
All you gotta do is

SOCRATES

Si -

PHAEDO

im -

APOLLO

pul -

CRITO

ly...

ALL

choose!

PLATO: I choose. I choose you. May I join?

SOCRATES: I am not a school, young man. My words are free to anyone who will listen. So, of course. You may join.

PLATO: Thank you.

SOCRATES: Gentlemen. Meet Plato.

(PHAEDO, CRITO and APOLLO receive PLATO warmly as the scene ends.)

SCENE 2 — SOCRATES' HOME

(SOCRATES and PLATO return to Socrates' home from the marketplace.)

SOCRATES: So tell me something about yourself. Are you married?

PLATO: No, not yet, but there is a young lady I'm thinking of asking.

SOCRATES: Well, by all means you should marry. But just remember this: If you get a good wife you'll be happy. If you get a bad one you'll become—

XANTHIPPE: *(shouts)* Socrates!

SOCRATES: —a philosopher.

PLATO: Your wife?

SOCRATES: Xanthippe herself. You go now. I'll introduce you at a better time, perhaps when she's sleeping.

PLATO: See you tomorrow then?

SOCRATES: See you tomorrow.

(PLATO exits. SOCRATES summons the courage to face his wife. He enters his home as XANTHIPPE is preparing Socrates' meal. She is carving some meat with a knife.)

TRACK 11. "DIALOGUE"

XANTHIPPE: Well, if it isn't my dear husband, returning from a hard day of, what's that you do? Oh yes, giving everyone in the marketplace a splitting headache. And what, by the way, are this week's great words? Oh wait. Let's not forget last week's words. Correct me if I'm wrong. *(She prepares as if about to give an important speech.)* "He who is not content with that he has will not be content with what he doesn't have" to which I replied "Try me! Try me!" So what are this week's words?

SOCRATES: *(under his breath)* The unexamined life is not worth living.

XANTHIPPE: Excuse me?

SOCRATES: *(louder)* The unexamined life is not worth living.

XANTHIPPE: Well, this must be my lucky day. Until now I thought my life was pretty worthless. But I was wrong because there's not a woman in Athens who has examined her life more than I have. Especially married life!

SOCRATES: Oy!

TRACK 12. "OH WHAT A JOY TO BE MARRIED TO YOU"

XANTHIPPE

Oh what a joy to be married to you
When neighbors come by and ask what you do
And I have to say I haven't a clue.
Oh what a joy to be married to you.

Oh what a terrible turn of events
I sit here alone while you're out with your friends
And talk about things that don't make no sense.

SOCRATES: That don't make any sense. 'Any'.

(XANTHIPPE brandishes a knife.)

XANTHIPPE: It's you or me, bud. It's either you or me.

XANTHIPPE

Oh what a terrible turn of events
Oh that I only had listened to mom
With one look at you she started to run
And now I just heard she's drowning in rum
Oh that I only had listened to mom.

Why? Why? Why?
Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

XANTHIPPE: Stop the music!

(Music stops.)

XANTHIPPE: Not only do I have a lousy husband, but I can't even get a decent bridge to sing!

XANTHIPPE

Oh that I only would catch a disease
And bring me relief from this Socrates
Unfortunately, I'm stronger than he
Oh, that I only would catch a disease.

What did I do to deserve such a fate?
I worship the gods, I tell them they're great
Then they turn around and give me this clown
What did I do to deserve such a fate?

Oh what a shame I got married to you
You haven't a job, not even a shoe
My life is a mess, I wear the same dress
We haven't a dime.

SOCRATES: What's a dime?

XANTHIPPE: Never mind.

(She brandishes the knife.)

XANTHIPPE

You call this a house, not fit for a mouse
You're starting to stink.
What the neighbors must think!

XANTHIPPE: Forget it. They already thought.

(She stares long and hard at Socrates.)

XANTHIPPE

Oh what a joy to be married to you.

XANTHIPPE: Now go say goodnight to your son. You remember we have a son, don't you?

SOCRATES: Yes, I remember.

(SOCRATES enters his son's room. MENEXENUS is reading under a candle.)

MENEXENUS: Papa!

SOCRATES: There's my boy! Did you have a good day? How was school?

MENEXENUS: Not too good, Papa. I'm not so good at arithmetic.

SOCRATES: Let me see that. (He looks at the book, appears puzzled.) Hmm, you know, son,
I'm sure your mother can help you with this first thing in the morning.

(XANTHIPPE hears this and looks up exasperated.)

SOCRATES: But now you need your sleep.

MENEXENUS: Okay. *(gets into bed)* Papa?

SOCRATES: Yes?

MENEXENUS: Can you sing to me? I love when you sing to me.

SOCRATES: Sure, just close your eyes.

TRACK 13. "LULLABY"

SOCRATES

Sleep, darling, go to sleep,
Dream away your cares
Let tonight hide from sight all your fears
Till the sun whispers time to reappear.

SOCRATES (CONT'D)

Dream, darling, may you dream,
Of worlds so rich and fine
May your dreams capture things gone away
May you see endlessly a bright new day.

Somebody needs a heart to share
Someone just like you
Somebody who needs someone like you

Somebody needs a heart to share
Someone just like you
Somebody who needs someone like you

(SOCRATES and XANTHIPPE sing together from different areas.)

SOCRATES & XANTHIPPE

Little boys and little girls,
Go to sleep all around the world
And awake investigating all they see
Till it's time to bed they climb and pray to thee

That someday tomorrow across the land
Children will all join hands.

(SOCRATES walks into the kitchen area. XANTHIPPE serves him his meal. He holds out a hand which she takes, though reluctantly.)

SCENE 3 — AN OPEN FIELD

(PLATO walks home alone. He sings and dances to the "Ities", a cappella.

TRACK 14. "A CAPPELLA"

PLATO

Sincerity, veracity
Humility, tenacity
Integrity, nobility
And that's how you reach immortality
Serenity, simplicity
Charity and purity
Fixity and equanimity
And that's how you reach, yeah!
And that's how you reach, yeah!
And that's how you reach
Immortality

PLATO: Immortality. (*laughs*) Only one man there today will ever be immortal, and that's Socrates — the wisest and kindest man I have ever met. I'll be lucky if I even get mentioned. (*He imagines a conversation.*) "Plato... Wasn't that Socrates' barber?" "No, I think he was a blacksmith." Oh, what I wouldn't give to be like him.

TRACK 15. "IF I COULD BE"

PLATO

If I could be just like he
And see the world philosophically
Then maybe then by small degree
I'd understand humanity
If I could be like he

If I could be just like he
Through subtle wit and irony
I'd move a man to concede
The fallacy of his belief
Yet all the while remain as friends

Though egos bruise
They will soon mend
With certainty
If I were he

But then again is that the goal
To imitate another's soul?
Perhaps it's not to be like him
But to be more like me

If I could be just like me
I'd take the words of Socrates
And be so strong to withstand
The mighty blows of lesser men

Yet not too strong to ignore
The words of those who can teach me more
If I could be like me

SCENE 4 — EUTHYPHRO

(Stage is barren. SOCRATES walks from one end, EUTHYPHRO from the other. They meet each other center stage as if by chance.)

SOCRATES: Euthyphro!

EUTHYPHRO: Ah, my good friend Socrates. What a pleasure to see you again. How have you been?

SOCRATES: Getting a bit on in years, I'm afraid. Seventy now. Can you believe it?

EUTHYPHRO: But you're still young mentally and that's what counts.

SOCRATES: You are much too kind. So what brings you to Athens?

EUTHYPHRO: Not good. I'm here to bring a charge of manslaughter.

SOCRATES: Against who?

EUTHYPHRO: Someone by whom I am increasing my reputation for craziness.

SOCRATES: Why is that? Is he such a nimble opponent?

EUTHYPHRO: Not at all. In fact, he's quite an old gentleman.

SOCRATES: So... who is it?

EUTHYPHRO: My father.

SOCRATES: My good man, your own father?

EUTHYPHRO: That's right. He accidentally killed one of our hired hands so I've come to Athens to prosecute. Needless to say, my entire family is against me on this.

SOCRATES: *(ironically)* Hmm... hard to imagine.

EUTHYPHRO: Yes.

TRACK 16. "PIETY"

They say it's an act of impiety for a son to prosecute his own father. But they simply don't understand the difference between piety and impiety.

SOCRATES: And you do?

EUTHYPHRO: Perfectly

SOCRATES: Please then. Teach me.

EUTHYPHRO: Very well...

EUTHYPHRO

The difference my friend is surely not difficult
Piety is what pleases the gods.
And what pleases them most is to prosecute criminals
And what pleases them least is to let them go free.

SOCRATES: That's it?

EUTHYPHRO: That's it.

SOCRATES: Punishing wrongdoers?

EUTHYPHRO: That's right.

SOCRATES

But don't you agree there are acts just as pious
Without which our lives would only seem violent
Give to the poor, protecting the young,
Care for the sick, or helping your mom?

EUTHYPHRO: Hmm. Perhaps you're right. Well then...

EUTHYPHRO

Piety is what the gods find agreeable.
Impiety is what they must hate

SOCRATES: That's it?

EUTHYPHRO: That's it.

SOCRATES: But didn't Zeus once put his own father in chains?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes he did. So?

SOCRATES

So then it must hold that the gods often quarrel
They fight and they bicker and hold different opinions
About what is right and about what is wrong
About what is good and about what is bad.

SOCRATES: So could not the gods also disagree about what is pious and what is impious?

EUTHYPHRO: (*annoyed*) Hmm. Perhaps you're right. (*thinking*) Ah!

EUTHYPHRO

Then piety is to attend to the gods.
Impiety is not to do so.

SOCRATES: An excellent answer!

EUTHYPHRO: You really think so?

SOCRATES: Absolutely. But may I ask just a few questions?

EUTHYPHRO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: When you say "to attend to" do you mean

SOCRATES

As a horse trainer attends to a horse?

EUTHYPHRO: Yes!

SOCRATES

As a dog trainer attends to a dog?

EUTHYPHRO: Exactly!

SOCRATES

As cattle farmers attend to cattle?

EUTHYPHRO: Precisely!

SOCRATES

Then when you attend, do you aim to benefit
or harm the thing that's attended to?

EUTHYPHRO: *(laughs)* Socrates, you're funny. I aim to benefit it, of course. *(continues laughing)*

SOCRATES

So, if piety is to attend to the gods,
How do the gods benefit?

EUTHYPHRO: *(pause)* What?

SOCRATES: How do the gods benefit from our attending to them? Does it make them better?

EUTHYPHRO: Of course not. They can't become better. They are gods.

SOCRATES: Then what do the gods accomplish by using our services?

EUTHYPHRO: They achieve many splendid results, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Such as?

EUTHYPHRO: Well, they... Uh, they... Uh, they... ¹

SOCRATES: Well, since you can't answer perhaps we need to start our inquiry all over again.

EUTHYPHRO: I'm sorry Socrates, but I have an important engagement somewhere.

SOCRATES: Where?

EUTHYPHRO: Anywhere! And it's time for me to be off.

SOCRATES: What a way to treat a friend. You going off like this and dashing me from my great hope of learning the difference between piety and impiety. After all, you must know all about piety or you would never think of prosecuting your own father.

¹ *Euthyphro's inability to answer could be done over an extended period of time as Socrates remains expressionless throughout.*

SCENE 5 — THE MARKETPLACE

(SOCRATES enters the marketplace. A MERCHANT reluctantly approaches him. He is goaded on by the other MERCHANTS.)

TRACK 17. "DIALOGUE"

1ST MERCHANT: Socrates, we've been thinking.

SOCRATES: Really? I'm impressed.

1ST MERCHANT: No, seriously.

(SOCRATES is about to say, "But I am serious" but restrains himself.)

1ST MERCHANT: Why don't you take a vacation? You know, go somewhere. Go to the forest. Sit by a river. Take the family. Relax.

SOCRATES: I appreciate your concern, but I don't think so. To be honest, if I ever left this city wouldn't know what to do with myself. No, this is where I belong. And another thing, I have nothing to learn from trees.

TRACK 18. "THIS GREAT CITY"

SOCRATES

In this city we call Athens,
I'm quite an attraction
A gadfly they call me,
No one can control me

(ALL in the marketplace move to hear SOCRATES sing.)

SOCRATES (CONT'D)

How the haughty enthrall me with logic so faulty
Were I to extol them I'd really insult them.

(ALL laugh.)

SOCRATES (CONT'D)

In their wisdom, a schism.

MERCHANTS

Hey, hey, hey.

SOCRATES

I cannot dismiss it
If I do so, I'm complicit in logic illicit.

(ALL laugh.)

SOCRATES (CONT'D)

But a good man will listen to my criticism
But they are the exception.
Most keep their direction

(Socrates' STUDENTS enter. They greet Socrates warmly. The atmosphere is highly festive. A dance ensues.)

SOCRATES (CONT'D)

So I'll stay here and ponder the world soon upon us
If we're honest and noble I shall remain hopeful

STUDENTS

But the darkness around us seeks only to drown us
How tired the waiting for clouds to start breaking

MERCHANTS

Still tomorrow's a good day

STUDENTS

Hey, hey, hey.

MERCHANTS

To plant for the season
The seeding inspires those who still wander.

SOCRATES

So you see now how silly to leave this great city
Relax with Xanthippe? It's simply not in me.

(ALL laugh. There is a feeling of great warmth towards Socrates.)

1ST MERCHANT: Yeah, we still love ya, Socrates, even if you are a pain in the butt sometimes.

2ND MERCHANT: This place just wouldn't be the same without you.

3RD MERCHANT: You're like an old slipper. Oh, I forgot, you don't like to wear shoes.

(ALL laugh.)

1ST MERCHANT: Alright, let's get back to work.

(MERCHANTS return to their jobs. TOWNSPEOPLE continue shopping.)

PHAEDO: That was nice. Very nice.

(MESSENGER enters.)

MESSENGER: A message for Socrates from the Assembly.

(HE hands a scroll to Socrates. SOCRATES unravels the scroll and reads it to himself.)

PLATO: Master, may I see that?

(SOCRATES hands it to him. PLATO reads it aloud.)

PLATO: “Socrates is guilty of refusing to recognize the gods. He is also guilty of corrupting the youth. The penalty is death.” What is this? “Corrupting the youth”? You didn’t corrupt us.

SOCRATES: Yes, I did. I taught you how to think.

(CRITO reads the message.)

CRITO: And this? “Guilty of refusing to recognize the gods?” Where is that from?

SOCRATES: Euthyphro.

CRITO: Euthyphro? The man who prosecuted his own father?

SOCRATES: That’s the one.

APOLLO: That poor old man languishing in prison like that. He must’ve died of a broken heart.

PLATO: Anyway, it doesn’t matter. We will be there for you.

CRITO: We’ll do anything you ask. Just tell us.

SOCRATES: *(half-heartedly)* Thank you.

APOLLO: Master, why do you say like that? You don’t believe us?

SOCRATES: We’ll see.

ALL STUDENTS: Master!

TRACK 19. “THE SOLDIERS OF TRUTH”

STUDENTS

We are the soldiers of truth.
We will fight for you
We will die for you too
Just tell us what we should do.

We’re an invincible chain
We’re unbreakable
Nothing can wear us down
Through life and in death we are bound.

SOCRATES

I’ve heard this so many times
All the things you are
All the things you will do
In time I’ll see if it’s true.

STUDENTS

You have no reason to doubt.

SOCRATES

I've heard this before

STUDENTS

We'll be standing there
When the flames are about
You have no reason to doubt.

SOCRATES

I've heard this so many times
Through the centuries
Man persistently lies
And all that he says he denies.

STUDENTS

We are the soldiers of truth.
Please believe in us
Can't you see we are new?
Just tell us what
Just tell us what
Just tell us what we should do.

(SOPHISTS enter. They speak in unison.)

SOPHISTS: Use your head to wear a hat. That is what the head is for
If you think it's more than that, then prepare for what's in store.
If you follow Socrates you will just be led astray
We will give you all you need, just do everything we say.
Spoken gently, much like a mother soothing a child.
Wild thoughts you cannot eat, there is nothing to decide
You have only to repeat.

TRACK 20. "I SERVE THE STATE"

I serve the state, it will provide.
I serve the state, it will provide.

(SOPHISTS fan out around the marketplace repeating: "I serve the state, it will provide." Soon everyone in the marketplace is repeating it. The people who minutes earlier were friendly to Socrates look menacingly at him. APOLLO, too, is seduced by the Sophists. He leaves Socrates repeating the phrase as well.)

PHAEDO: Apollo! Apollo!

(The CROWD now begins to walk toward SOCRATES in a threatening manner repeating the phrase "I serve the state, it will provide" with increasing volume and ferocity.)

CRITO: Master, run! Run, Master, run!

SOCRATES: *(sternly)* We walk. We will walk!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

TRACK 21. "INCIDENTAL MUSIC"

SCENE 1 — THE ASSEMBLY

(ALL enter the Assembly Hall during Incidental Music. SOCRATES speaks with CRITO, PHAEDO, and PLATO. The JUDGE sits center stage. A GUARD stands on one side of him. MELETUS, Socrates' chief accuser, speaks with a JURY MEMBER as other JURY MEMBERS take their seats. The three MERCHANTS speak among themselves. There is much commotion.)

TRACK 22. "THE APOLOGY"

1ST MERCHANT

There stands Socrates with his band of thieves
Spinning more of their worn out hypocrisies

2ND MERCHANT

Must we have to wait
What will be his fate
Just reward for all that we have endured.

3RD MERCHANT

Just get on with it
There's no reason to acquit
Nothing further we must hear

ALL THREE

The verdict is clear, is clear

JUDGE: The trial against Socrates will now begin. Socrates is accused of disrespecting the gods and corrupting the young. The prosecution will speak first. Meletus, you may begin.

MELETUS

In the marketplace, there is not a trace
Of respect or fealty before the gods
And with clever tongue he corrupts the young
With his words all we've built will be undone.

Do not be deceived by his ingenuity
He is still the enemy and enemies all lie

All lie

JUDGE: Socrates, you may now speak.

SOCRATES

All I am is a man who wants to be free
To say what I feel, to say what I need.
All I am is a man who says only this:
Accept not what is, continue to ask

JUDGE: The jury will now decide.

(JURY convenes. One JURY MEMBER tallies the vote. There is much anticipation.)

JURY

No use, Socrates. We have all decreed
You to die, by poison you shall receive
And with no regret we sentence you do death
Better still your mem'ry we'll soon forget
So be gone with you and take your noble few
Atheni can now endure for centuries or more, or more.

SOCRATES

Do you think that with my passing
You'll be safer and free without me?
Do you think that with my passing
The youth will no longer pursue a life lived in truth?

PLATO: *(to Phaedo)* Go! Talk to him.

(PHAEDO approaches SOCRATES.)

PHAEDO

Oh poor Socrates, did you once believe
That your words would be so well received?
No, you could not win against such common men
They are blind and thus could never bend.

SOCRATES

All I've said is for Man to look within himself
Cast aside the lies that hide and bind his soul, his soul,
his soul,

SOCRATES: ... his soul. *(He speaks with renewed strength.)* The hour of departure has arrived
and we go our ways, I to die and you to live. Which is better only God knows.

TRACK 23. "SOCRATES ENTRANCE TRANSITION"

(SOCRATES says goodbye to CRITO, PHEADO, and PLATO. The GUARD escorts him to prison.)

SCENE 2 — IN PRISON

(A prison cell. SOCRATES is sleeping on a bed against the back wall. He wears leg chains. CRITO sits on a stool watching SOCRATES sleep. SOCRATES opens his eyes, and sees CRITO. There is an open window.)

SOCRATES: Crito! Did you just come in?

CRITO: No, I've been sitting here quite a while.

SOCRATES: Why didn't you wake me?

CRITO: You were sleeping so well. I didn't want to disturb you.

SOCRATES: I appreciate that. But tell me, why are you here?

CRITO: I have bad news.

SOCRATES: The boat from Delos has arrived?

CRITO: Not yet, but I'm told it will be here tomorrow. And according to the law you will then have to end your life.

SOCRATES: Well, Crito, if the gods will it, so be it.

CRITO: Now look here, Master, and listen carefully. It is not too late for you to escape. I know quite a few people who are more than willing to get you out of the country. In fact, there's one man, Simmias of Thebes, has brought money for this very purpose. So you don't need to worry about money. And please, forget what you said you wouldn't know what to do with yourself if you left this country. There are plenty of places that would welcome you. If you went to Thessaly, for example, I have friends who would give you complete protection.

SOCRATES: I see.

CRITO: Now, I'm sorry, Master, but I need to say a few things you might not like to hear.

SOCRATES: Go ahead.

CRITO: All right. (*pause*) I just don't feel it's right what you're doing – throwing your life away when you could save it. You're just treating yourself the same way your enemies did when they decided to ruin you and, and it pains me to say this...

SOCRATES: Go on.

CRITO: (*pause*) I'm ashamed of you.

SOCRATES: And why is that?

CRITO: Well, first there was the way you came into court. Then there was the conduct of your defense. And now (*getting excited*) to complete the farce we get into this situation. There, I've said it. Now, make up your mind. No, don't make up your mind. It's too late for that now. You should have made it up already. The whole thing must be carried out tonight or it's too late. So I beg you, please, take my advice (*becoming hysterical*) and don't be unreasonable!

SOCRATES: My dear Crito.

TRACK 24. "CRITO"

SOCRATES

So you think that if I escape then all is well.
But haven't we thought that living well
A greater belief than living long
In my life I always have tried to do what's right
Can't you see that if I escape I also leave my dignity?
I always have tried to obey the law
Must this change?
Though this be unfair have I a claim?

CRITO

Socrates, I only want what is best for you
On my knees I beg you to leave
You've nothing to lose.

SOCRATES

Nothing to lose? Only my word, my sacred bond
How could I ever again teach right from wrong?
In Thessaly disorder and license reign supreme
Who would be so open to hear a man proclaim

That life should be of virtue and justice everyday.
They would see that I did not live with what I say
So let it be with God as my guide I am not afraid
Whatever you say will be in vain

CRITO

I have nothing to say. I...

SOCRATES

Please...

TOGETHER

... understand.

SOCRATES: Now tell the others be here tomorrow around mid-day.

CRITO: I will. Anything else?

SOCRATES: Yes, I owe a rooster to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?

CRITO: I will.

SOCRATES: Good. You go now. I need my rest. Seems I have a busy day tomorrow.

SCENE 3 — IN PRISON THE NEXT DAY

(SOCRATES is asleep. JAILER opens the cell door and enters. The noise wakes SOCRATES up.)

JAILER: You won't be needing these anymore.

(JAILER takes off the chains.)

SOCRATES: The boat from Delos has arrived?

JAILER: Just this morning

SOCRATES: My lucky day.

JAILER: 'fraid so, Socrates. But I just want to say one thing. And please not a word of this to anyone. It's been a pleasure having you here. Not once did you curse or get angry at me like others do.

SOCRATES: Why should I? You're just doing your job.

JAILER: That's right. Anyway, it's been a pleasure knowing you. *(He turns to leave, then turns around.)* Oh, I almost forgot. Your wife is here. Should I let her in?

SOCRATES: My wife? *(SOCRATES appears nervous.)* Send her in.

(SOCRATES quickly makes himself look presentable. XANTHIPPE enters. They stare at each other from opposite ends of the room. SOCRATES begins to cry.)

TRACK 25. DIALOGUE

SOCRATES: I have a problem.

(XANTHIPPE rushes and embraces him.)

SOCRATES: I am so sorry. I was not a good husband for you. I never gave you those things a woman loves. Nice clothes, jewelry...

XANTHIPPE: My dear husband, don't you know me? I never needed those things. I was the richest woman in the world. I had you.

SOCRATES: You mean that?

XANTHIPPE: Yes.

TRACK 26. "YOU WERE STILL MY STAR"

XANTHIPPE

When I made fun of you,
When I embarrassed you
When I laughed at you
Harassed and disparaged

You were still my star.
You were my star,
You were my star
Always, always

XANTHIPPE (CONT'D)

When I got mad at you
When I spat at you
When I berated you
When I said I hated

You were still my star
You were my star
You were my star
Always, always

And at night as I laid next to you
I felt a light so bright I knew
That this man I called my husband
Was really somethin'

XANTHIPPE: Look at you, you're such a mess. Let me at least fix your hair. (She fixes Socrates' hair.) You have to look nice for the ferryman.

SOCRATES: I know.

XANTHIPPE

When I threw sticks at you
When I threw bricks at you

(SOCRATES holds his forehead, smiling.)

XANTHIPPE (CONT'D)

When I played tricks on you
And even put a hex

SOCRATES: You did?

(XANTHIPPE nods her head.)

XANTHIPPE

You were still my star
You were my star
You were my star
Always, always

XANTHIPPE: I brought our son. He doesn't know.

SOCRATES: *(nodding)* All right.

(XANTHIPPE goes out and brings back MENEXENUS.)

MENEXENUS: Papa!

SOCRATES: Hi, son.

MENEXENUS: Mama says you're going somewhere. Where you going?

SOCRATES: A little far I'm afraid.

MENEXENUS: When you coming back?

SOCRATES: (holding back tears) I don't know, but I want you to promise me a few things, will you?

MENEXENUS: Sure.

SOCRATES: Good. The first thing is listen to your mother. If she asks you to do something, you'll do it, right?

MENEXENUS: Right.

SOCRATES: And the second thing is study hard. You should always study hard.

MENEXENUS: Even arithmetic?

SOCRATES: Even arithmetic. Now give your papa a big hug.

(They hug.)

XANTHIPPE: (to *MENEXENUS*) Wait for me outside. I'll be right there.

MENEXENUS: Bye, Papa.

SOCRATES: Good bye, son.

(MENEXENUS exits. XANTHIPPE and SOCRATES look deeply into each other's eyes. They embrace one last time.)

XANTHIPPE: My star.

(XANTHIPPE exits. SOCRATES tries to regain his composure. PLATO gently enters.)

PLATO: Master?

SOCRATES: Come in, come in.

(PLATO, CRITO, and PHAEDO enter.)

PLATO: How are you feeling?

SOCRATES: Fine. Almost cheerful

PLATO: This is certainly no day to be cheerful.

SOCRATES: Why not? Finally, I can go to a place free of earthly desire. Just think. Think how much this body distracts us. Every day we're filled with so many loves, hatreds, fears, desires there's never enough time to think about anything else. What I mean is there's never enough time to be... philosophers.

CRITO: That may be all well for you. But for us this is a great calamity. We are losing a father, and we will be orphans the rest of our lives.

SOCRATES: Please, please, do not feel that way. Look after yourselves and follow the line as I have laid it down and you will be fine.

PHAEDO: We will do our best.

SOCRATES: Good. Well, let's get on with it. Call the jailer in.

(PHAEDO exits to get the jailer. CRITO is agitated. He speaks with PLATO away from SOCRATES. JAILER and PHAEDO enter. JAILER holds a cup containing the poison.)

SOCRATES: (to jailer) So, my good fellow. You understand these things. What do I do?

JAILER: Drink it and walk around a bit. When you feel your legs getting heavy, lie down.

CRITO: Master, wait! There's no need to hurry. The sun's still up. You have plenty of time. I know where people have dinner with family and friends well into the night.

SOCRATES: But what do I gain by drinking the poison later? Really, Crito, why cling to life when it has no more to offer? It will only make me look ridiculous. *(He holds up the cup as if to make a toast.)* So gentlemen, my final words: be of good cheer and know this as a truth-no evil can happen to a good man either in life or after death. *(He drinks the poison.)* Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to take a walk.

(SOCRATES walks in a kind of circle, then falls to his knees.)

JAILER: *(to students)* Pick him up. Get him to the bed.

(PLATO, CRITO, and PHAEDO lead SOCRATES to the bed. They lay him down and stand over him.)

JAILER: Move away. Move away!

(STUDENTS stand to one side. SOCRATES covers his face with his hands. JAILER hits SOCRATES' foot hard.)

JAILER: Did you feel that?

SOCRATES: No.

(SOCRATES shakes as the poison makes his body grow cold. He covers his face. His body trembles a little more before he passes away.)

STUDENTS: *(profound grief)* Master! Master!

(They place a sheet over him. Birds are heard singing overhead. PLATO looks out the open window.)

TRACK 27. "THE DEATH OF SOCRATES"

PLATO

See the birds flying high through the sky
And up above they

CRITO

mourn and hope to find
A sign of love

PHAEDO

Let us look at this life
Realize that love exists

ALL

Persist to visualize to this man
Each one of us can rise.

(As music is played, each member of the cast enters and places a flower on Socrates' bed, pauses for a moment, then exits. XANTHIPPE and MENEXENUS enter last. They remain on stage with PLATO, PHAEDO, and CRITO looking down at Socrates' body. As music nears the end, PLATO steps forward signifying the passing of the teachings from Socrates to his most prized pupil.)

END OF PLAY

TRACK 28. "THE BOWS"

TRACK 29. "EXIT MUSIC"