

PLAYS
GHE
PROMPT

MICHELE'S BOOK!

THE BLIND MEN

by Michel de Ghelderode

Translated by Declan Donnellan

SECOND DRAFT

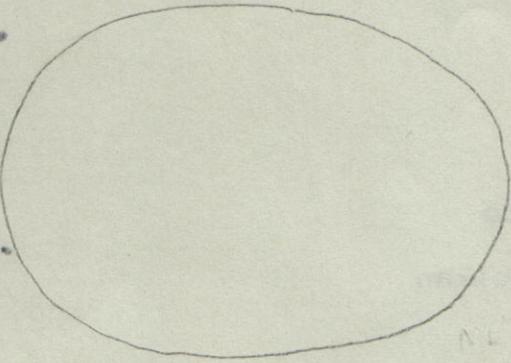
LX PRESHOW CHECK: LAMPRIDO (DSC)
HUG SPECIAL
BARON WINDOW
DS LIMIT FOR FREIZE

MON: 9-1
2-5
6-11.15

c Declan Donnellan 1992
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WICKET? BOOK 1



ACTORS ON FROM USR

GIVE BELLS

STBY SR + SR VOM Q LX

THEY

CUE PATRICK ^{SNAP} _{SNAP}

STANDBY
MR. BRIDGMAN
MR. FOXE
MR. M'FARLANE
MR. PETTIFER
MR. SHEEN

WARDROBE
SM
LX

STBY ACTORS, LX Q's 1-3
MIC + MSTR

HL + DRUM 3

DRUM GO GO (9 BANGS)

WHITE STICK ON

LX Q 1 ON GO

MIC ON FOR DRUM BEAT

ACTORS (SET ON GO

LX Q 1A+HL GO

1A COMPLETE

LX Q 2+HL DRUM GO (BANG)

B/O COMPLETE 8A

LX Q 3 GO

MIC DOWN

THE BLIND MEN

Hammy

CHARACTERS

De Witte David
De Strop Florian
Den Os Colin
Lamprido - the one-eyed King of the
ditch Country. Michael

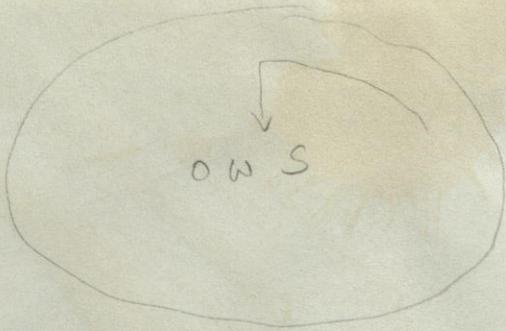
PLACE:

A road in old Brabant, near the capital
city. An echoing chant: pilgrims appear
on the road. The chant is quite slow,
although intoned by men in good health.
The pilgrims are blind. They move
forward tapping their sticks and
gripping each other by the hem of their
coats. This is their marching song:

Congaudeant catholici
Letentur cives celici
Die ista

(The pilgrims come to a halt.)

De Witte: (singing the last words) ... Die ista
(spoken).
Now what? I'm stopping I am.
I know God likes our pilgrim song, but
it doesn't make the stones any softer;



① ALL THREE ↓ CS:

DAVID SITS DOWN FACING US.

② ER MOVES 5 US

My feet are squelching in blood and my
throat's as dry as a crater.

That's not fair. ①

De Strop: Stop! As soon as one of us stops all
three of us has to stop. As soon as one
sings all three of have got to sing.
And as soon as one moves all three have
got to follow. What a fate!

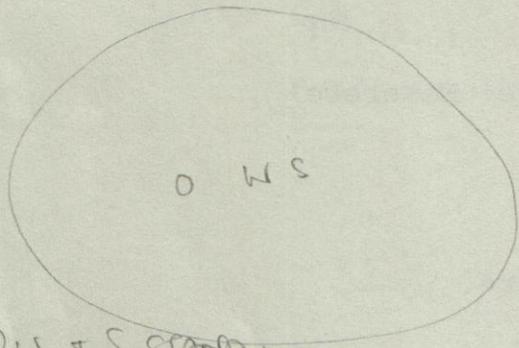
Den Os: *Yes!* What a fate! Walking down a road when
we can't see its end and singing a
complaint when we don't understand
Latin. Companions in misery, I propose
that we have a good old ^{moan} whine, all three
of us 'til we pierce the sky. Perhaps
either up in the clouds or down here on
earth there is someone who will hear us?
Go on ! ~~Whine!~~ *moan!*

② - either stops.
The Three: (out of harmony) Miserere! Miserere!
Miserere!

Voice: (in the distance) Miserere. *⊖*

De Witte: Did you hear that? (Silence. They
listen.)
There's nothing there.

0 STANDS



(2) W + S STAND

De Strop: I thought I heard something...
① It's the hunger and its the thirst,
mostly the thirst that's what'sjangling
up our senses.

Den Os: I heard it! Do you know what it is? An
echo! I'll test it. Either it's the
Devil mocking us in which case he won't
reply, or else its a completely honest
echo that must reply because I'll
provoke it ^{with some religion} religiously.

De Witte: Yes. Sing the mass at him

Den Os: (sings) Kyrie

The Three: Listen

Voice: (in the distance breaking into plain
chant)
Eleison ²

De Witte: That's no devil! That's an echo, a real
echo! Definitely the echo from a
monastery!

Den Os: If only that echo could give us some
^{money}
~~alms~~, or even a jug of brown beer.

① ~~BR~~ ↓

ONS

De Strop:

① Despair no more! Our pain, our hunger,
our thirst will soon end. I know it.
Can't you hear the good news? *Dand: how we can't* It's just
that I hear hear it clearer than you.

De Witte

Double liar. You were born as blind as
the rest of us.

Den Os:

Triple liar. You're the blindest of the
three. // But come say again, what's this
good news?

De Strop:

Friends of my wretchedness. Take this
in: we're not far from Rome!

The two others Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

De Strop:

Can't you feel that the sun's getting
warmer? We've been walking seven weeks
and now this. We've just heard an echo
and an echo who sings mass. In Flanders
there's hardly any echo at all.

Everything's flat. Plains and fens.

You need mountains for echoes. We're in
the mountains and that painter who just
drew us, the one who'd been in Italy,
didn't he tell us we'd have to pass
through the mountains? What was he

be more forward.

DWS

① 0 LEADS THEM IN CIRCLE → US

called that painter, the funny one who gave us a florin?

De Witte: Breughel, I think.

De Strop: Yes that was his name. Breughel! He mentioned that as soon as we crossed the mountains we wouldn't be far from Rome.

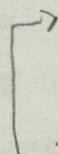
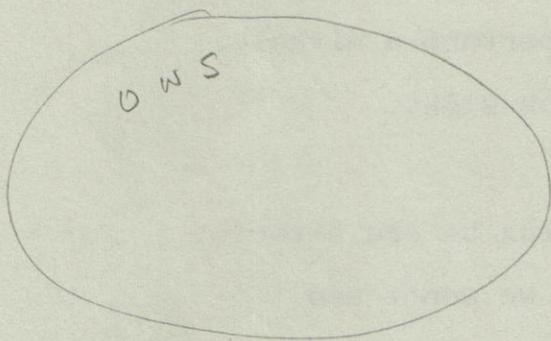
Den Os: He also told us that we could walk wherever we liked without care or fear and that we'd always get to our destination in the end because all roads lead to Rome. (1) 3 (S) SMALL CIRCLE

De Strop: Allejulah! We're going to meet the Pope in person and he'll perform a miracle. He'll give us back our sight.

De Witte: Allejulah! We're going to see miracle upon miracle or else we won't see anything at all. One thing's for certain, that is that Rome is the most fabulous city of all Christianity and when we get there we'll drink ^{like fish} deep and ^{like pigs} eat leads and we'll have a good sleep and we'll dance there. I have it on very good authority that the Romans are carefree people and love the good life

DS → SL

① W STOPS THEM WS



ZITHER STARTS

and we'll never go back to Flanders
[again.] Me, I'm going to settle down on ^{myself}
the Basilica steps and I'll end my days
there basking in the sun.

De Strop: Hey, you'll be a good servant of his
Holiness! We'll do precisely what his
Holy Father orders us to do.

Den Os: Maybe he'll ask us to go onto Jerusalem?

De Witte: Or maybe [~~when he sees us~~] he'll tell us
to ^{piss off} go back home.

De Strop: Quiet. Listen hard

*they hear
music from
3 sides*

(They hear a peal of bells in the distance.)

Den Os: And now that. Church Bells. The Bells
of Rome!

De Witte: You're crazy! It's just a set of
chimes! And its beating out a tune I
know. Its a song they sing in the
markets at home.

De Strop: I'm telling you the truth. Its the
famous bells of Rome. The Pope's just
heard that three pilgrims have arrived

O.W.S

from Flanders and he's playing a Flemish
tune in our honour. Just listen to
that.

The Three: (Singing along to the chimes.) La La La
... Bing ... Bong, La ... La ... La ...
Bing ... Bong ... Bong ...!

(They cry out) Sing out you holy bells,
sing out. Sing out for the men from
Flanders! Here we are arrived! Long
live Rome and its thousand churches!

ZITTEER ENDS

De Strop:

*Fancy that hearing tunes from back home when
How poignant it is to hear on foreign
you've gone abroad. It does your heart good.
soil songs from the dear old country.
It gets you right here.*

De Witte:

I think I could make out the carillon
from Bruges where I was born.

Den Os:

No. It was Ghent. It was the chimes
from the proud belfry in Ghent, my noble
town.

8 mins

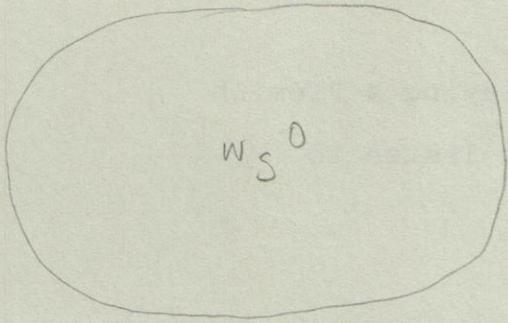
De Strop:

You're both wrong. They're from Antwerp
the richest of the lot where I first saw
light of day.

9 mins

(All three burst into tears noisily.)

L



Voice in the distance: (Laughing at their cries)

Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!

De Witte: Did you hear that? The whole horizon's erupting in laughter. What a wonderful country this Italy is! As soon as we cry, the echoes laugh to the angels. Let's laugh then! Let's laugh!

The Three: (Laughing) Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah!
Ah!

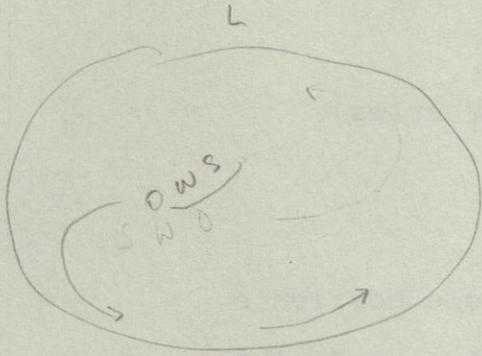
De Strop:

Keep Quiet
We shouldn't just be laughing. *messing about.*
Contemplate the snowy peaks before we *Let the mountains work their magic on us before we clap eyes on the domes and towers*
discover the cupolas and bells of the
eternal city.

Den Os: Or rather sniff the strange perfumes.
I'm quite sure the flowers smell of incense!

De Witte: And me, I can tell from a sun dial that its time to get back on the road. Walk and sing. Who's going to go first? *(others say me)*
STOS! Me!! *COO* I want to be first to enter the mystical city. *9mins*

OP!
Den Os: ~~No me! I can see better than you.~~



① THEY SET OFF IN CIRCLE

② THEY STOP USC

③ O LEADS THEM 1 CS.

STBY.
LX Q 4

De Strop: Why not me? I'm the least blind of the three.

Witte No me, I can see better than you.

Den Os: Off we go and lets hold each other by our cloaks and beat our sticks in time. ①

(They walk and sing.)

The Three: Plenus pulchris carminibu
Studeat atque cantibus
Die ista.

10 mins

The Voice: Die ista ...

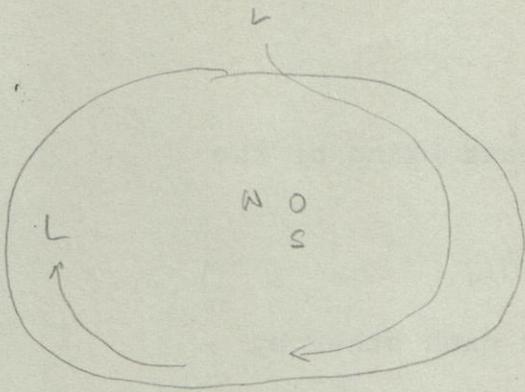
De Witte: [Stop!] ² The echo sounds different. What point of the compass is it coming from?

De Strop: Have we gone back on ourselves [instead of getting nearer to Rome?] *either stops*

Den Os: That'd be a disaster. ³ I propose to interogate the echo. Seeing as he understands Latin he must know something about Geography. Leave it to me.

(Solemnly)

My Lord Echo. Would you deign to speak to three blind pilgrims who've lost their way? Where exactly are you, clever echo?



15mins

LX Q 4 GO

① L ENTERS W SR

LAMPRIDO JUMPS ONTO STAGE

② 3 FALL TO THEIR KNEES

LX Q 4 GO

Voice of Lamprido I'm up a tree but I'll get down to
humour you. I'm a voice on legs and
I'm coming down to you.

(1) *either starts again*

De Strop: I knew it. Its a man. So much the
better. He'll give us ^{money} alms. I can see
him coming. He's a great big man with a
round hat

De Witte: Its a little man with a square hat.

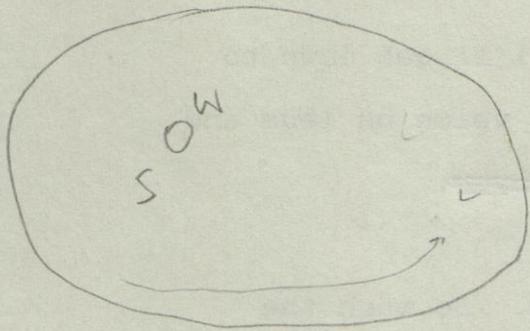
Den Os: Keep quiet! Its a big man who looks
like a little man because he's so
hunchbacked that he's bent double and
his hats' just a bonnet with medals sewn
on.

Lamprido: Here I am, lads.

(The three take up their poses as beggars and take up a
chant in falsetto)

(2)

The Three: ^(col) Here he is. Oh good Christian take pity
on three poor blind, notorious sinners:
^{BR} take pity on some calamitous pilgrims
^{col} making their way through this vale of
tears.



① L → SL

10 min

X Q 4 G.O

② L → SR PILGRIMS FOLLOW HIM

SR
L Q 4

Lamprido: Will I take pity on three blind, sinful pilgrims? Of course, I will. (1) (He laughs)

Den Os: What's he laughing at? (Furious) Who are you?

Lamprido: I am Lord Lamprido, King of Ditchland. (2)
A wise man who prefers to sit perched in my tree instead of going on a wild goose chase to a Rome you will never reach. *w: what's he on about.*
You want alms? I can give you apples, pears, plums, peaches, honey, and duck eggs.

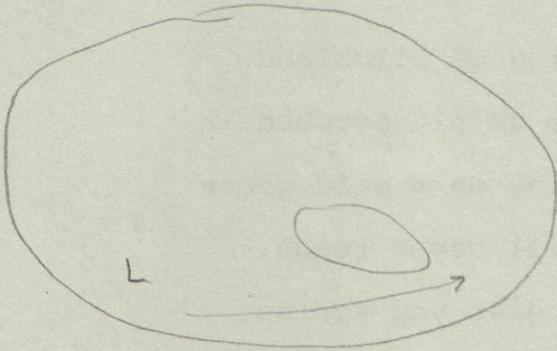
De Strop: We don't want any of that. We want money.

Lamprido: You won't get a penny out of me. But you can have some advice and help for free.

De Witte: We don't want your advice, nor your help. Blind as we are the three of us, we can see that clear enough.

Lamprido: How proud you are. But do you know where you are?

ZITHER STARTS



$\text{DL} \rightarrow \text{DSL}$

De Witte: We know perfectly well where we are.
We're up in the tall mountains on the
threshold of the Roman campagna! (+)

Lamprido: Alas! Now listen to me!

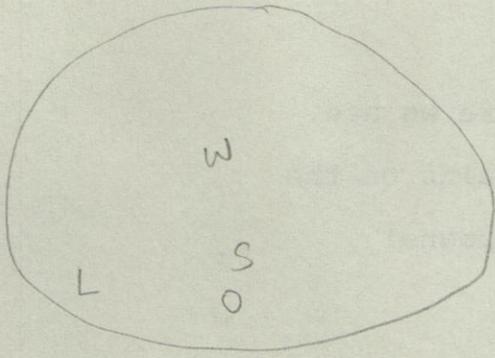
Den Os: Yes, yes, yes. We're blind but were not
deaf. Those are the bells of Rome. 8

Lamprido: Innocents. You're in the Ditch country.
You'd better believe me because I have
one advantage over you. I can see with
one eye, in fact I only have one. But
one's enough. There are lots of blind
people in ditch land and I'm their King!
Me, one-eyed but clear-sighted!

(The three burst out laughing.)

The Three: ^{Daw} Ha! Ha! Ha! He's a cripple. Ha! Ha!
^{Bl} Ha! And he says we haven't got to Rome
at all.

Den Os: Off you go, one-eyed King. We don't
want anything to do with you. You're a
liar, and Ditchland doesn't exist. Our
long sticks have eyes on them and tell
us exactly what the country looks like. 12
Get out of here or we'll beat you.



① THEY ↑ US

② THEY STOP HITTING.

The Two Others: Yes beat him. Yes. Out of our way!

De Strop: Who's that hitting me?

Den OS: Murderer! It's me you are hitting.

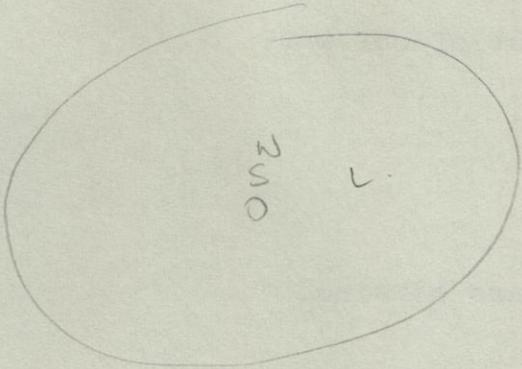
De Witte: Someone's hitting me! Oh my God. ⁽¹⁾

Lamprido: The tragedy of mistrust. They're beating each other and it cuts them to the quick. Hit away. Hit 'til you think you're going to drop. ⁽²⁾ No! Why are you stopping? All right then, be calm. Now listen to me. I'm going to do you an act of charity.

The Three: (Whining in chorus.)
Have pity on some poor blind men,
condemned to go on a pilgrimage for
their sins.

Lamprido: Not a penny, not a brass farthing. I can tell from your breath that you're too fond of beer. Hear me out. I want to do you a favour. You're on the path to disaster and I want to turn you back.

(Silence. The three listen, mouths gaping.)

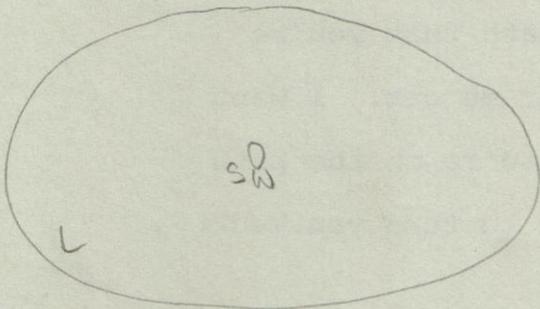


CALL :

STBY FOR INTERVAL
AND SCENE CHANGE

DONT FOOL 1/4 HOUR
~~LA...~~
(BAR BELLS)

① L DSL → DSR



Lamprido: The suns about to set and the mist is turning violet. I've been sitting here for weeks watching you go up and down the same path which does not lead to Rome. You haven't even left Brabant and the bells which you can hear are those in the belfry of St. Nicholas in Brussels. From my solitary pupil I can make out the city ramparts, the towers of St. Gudule and the extraordinary warrior St. Michael aflame on his white stone arrow.

16.

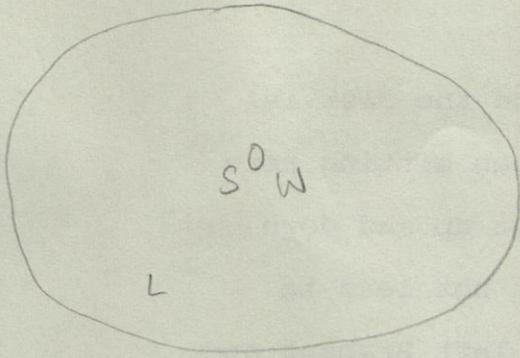
Den Os: It's a scandal - making fun of three blind wretches.

De Witte: It's all lies. It ^{is still light} ~~isn't noon~~ and we left the Low Countries eight weeks ago.

De Strop: Beware Lamprido. You're a rogue. We'll denounce you to the Pope! My God comrades! This must be a highwayman who's going to cut our throats? Dear God!

+ complete.

Lamprido: One last time I tell you, you're in Ditchland and ^{this} your path is going to take you over marshes and bogs and flooded fields. One false step and you'll sink



① 3 ↷ ANTI C'WISE

② L ↑ CS

SIB

LX 5

LX 5

1. READING START TO FINE

LX 5 GO

and dissolve in the depths. Let me take you by the hand and lead you to the refuge of the abbey where you can spend the night. This, is an act of charity that you'd do well to accept and the only one I'm willing to perform.

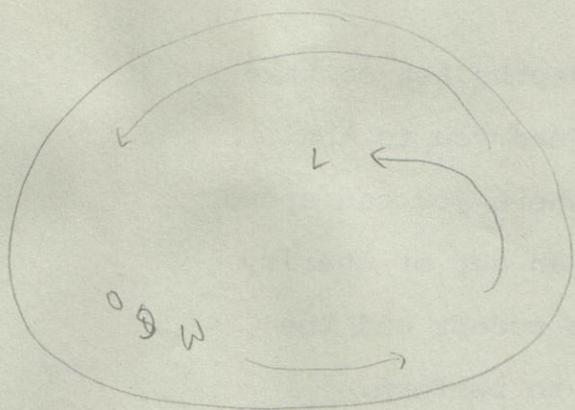
17

De Witte: On we go! Let's finish our journey.
Let's leave this idiot to his ramblings.

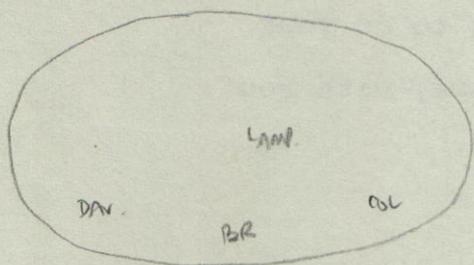
De Strop: We may be blind but we ^{have} love our dignity.
Do you think we would stoop so low as to take assistance from someone with ^{only} one eye? Off we go to Rome. We'll get there tonight! (1)

Lamprido: Off you go to Rome, but take care first to commend your souls and your bodies to providence. Those who won't take the word of a one-eyed man are blind a hundred times over! (He gets angry)
All roads lead to death. (He laughs with contempt.) There are many vanities and one of them is trying to do your neighbour a good turn! Away with you! (2)

The Three: Off we go.



② L → DSC



125/37

PAGE 2
LX Q 5

STBY

LX Q 5

STBY

LX Q 6-8

LX Q 6-8

AS MEN FREEZE (!)

LX Q 5 GO

LX Q 5 GO

De Strop: Goodbye old one-eye! And thanks for the alms.

Den Os: Good-bye, King of Ditches, King of frogs and tadpoles.

De Witte: Goodbye drivelling echo. Get back up your tree and chatter to the owls. Our time time has come, friends. Off we go and hold my cloak!

Den Os: I've got your cloak, have you got mine? Who's going first?

De Strop: To the east. Straight ahead!

Lamprido: So you're off to the east? Straight into the stinking mud. Straight into nothingness. Off you go.

The Three: Make way for the glorious pilgrims of Flanders! ②

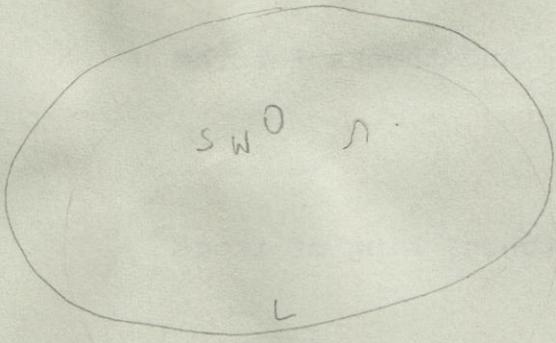
(They move off into the distance intoning their chant.)

congaudeant catholici
② *habetur curis celici Die Ista.*
Haec est dies laudabilis

~~Divina luce nobilis ...~~ (!)

another verse

(Their song breaks off ...)



STBY

LXQ'S 6, 7 + HL(0)
MUSICIAN

↓5

LX Q 6 GO

HL
MUSICIAN
LX Q 7 ^{F₀A} + HL GO

CALL :
LIGHTS DOWN
LIGHTS DOWN ON BLIND MEN

Voices of the Blind Men: ^{col} Help us! Don't push! You're
pulling me! ^{col} Lamprido, come
and help us. ^{col} It's water.
Have mercy. I'm ^{dev} stuck! I'm
sinking! ^{col} Will you help us?
Will you save us?

(The cries are getting more and more desperate and finally the voices give way to silence.)

Lamprido: I can do nothing for them. The ditches are so deep. They'll sing no more, the blind men; they've completed their journey! Sleep my brothers, sleep, in the ancient clay which shapes every mortal thing. Night thickens. I'm going back up my tree and there among the sleeping birds I'll pray for your blind souls, poor blind men.]

(He goes off. The carillon chimes happily as dawn breaks.)

END

INTERVAL CHANGE: SET CHAIRS + PROPS.

BLACK IN

→ FLAG, PRESET + Q CHANGE
LX GO