

LE SOLEIL ET LES AUTRES ÉTOILES

Freely inspired by the story of the monks of Tibhirine

Opera

Libretto and Music

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SYNOPSIS

Does the opera reflect the major issues of the world ? Ukraine, Black Lives Matter, Taiwan, China, Israël, Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela and many others... From Massada to Monségur, from Giordano Bruno to Spinoza, people always try to resist to violence and oppression. We must sing of their struggle and their hopes.

Although the story is clearly inspired by the massacre of the Monks of Tibhirine in 1996, the subject is treated without any precise reference (time, place, religion). The discourse focuses on the eternal oppositions: forced submission/consented submission, love/hate, death and resurrection.

In an isolated monastery, monks watch and pray. Scenes 2-5 show three of the major characters responding to each other without actually meeting. The maid reports disturbing events that seem to be approaching, announcing a tragic outcome. The novice comments on this unexplained rise in violence, moving from despondency to disbelief, then from supplication to revolt. The prior wonders what decision to make.

At the invitation of the prior, 3 monks recount the events that led them to choose monastic life (scenes 6, 8 and 9). Example and admiration for the first, metamorphosis of earthly love into mystical love for the second, redemption for the third. Scenes 7 and 10 amplify tension between an increasingly threatening exterior and an interior seeking a way out. The first act ends with painful confessions. Hesitation for the prior, resignation for the novice.

Three women (Parcae? Norns? Angels?) comment on the situation, repeating almost word for word the proclamations of scene 1. Their intervention suspends the evolution of time. The feverishness of the first act gives way to a stretching of durations, carried by the musical treatment. The monks decide to face their destiny without fear, faithful to their vows. This fidelity leads them from servitude to freedom, following in the footsteps of a thousand-year-old Fraternity. The novice pronounces his vows, he is transfigured by the example of his brothers' courage. Their sacrifice will not be in vain, one of them will bear the seed of a new world.

The profound message is that proclaimed by all those who refuse to submit to arbitrariness. Many cases can be mentioned: the struggle of minorities for the respect of their rights, the struggle of peoples for their freedom, the struggle of citizens for democracy, etc.

In the end, Love, in the sense of the Agapé of the Ancient Greeks, will triumph over negative forces.

The last words are those of the last verse of Dante's Divine Comedy "l'Amor che move il sol e l'altre stelle ». (Love that moves the sun and the other stars)

Time period	Nowadays
Location	An isolated monastery.
Roles	<p>The Maid, soprano The Novice, soprano The Young Girl, soprano The Mother, alto/mezzo The Prior, baritone Monk 1, tenor Monk 2, baritone Monk 3, bass-baritone</p>
Choir	8 soprani, 4 alti, 8 tenors, 4 baritones, 4 bass-baritones
Orchestra	<p>Flute 1, Flute 2 / piccolo, Oboe, English horn, Clarinet, Bass-Clarinet, Bassoon 1, Bassoon 2</p> <p>Trumpet 1 / flugelhorn , Trumpet 2 / flugelhorn Horn 1, Horn 2, Trombone 1, Trombone 2, Tuba</p> <p>Timpani</p> <p>Percussions (gran cassa, snare, marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, wood- block, bongos, gong, cymbales, tambourin, maracas, triangle, bell-tree)</p> <p>Harp</p> <p>Strings</p>
<p><u>ACT I</u></p> <p>About 70 mn</p>	

<p>Scene 1</p>	<p>Quartet <i>Monks' choir backstage (8 divided tenors, 4 baritones, 4 bass-baritones)</i></p> <p><i>The prior and 3 monks appear on stage.</i></p>	<p><i>Backstage choir</i> Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum</p> <p><i>A monk</i></p> <p>Brothers!</p> <p><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>At the gates of the desert, we watch.</p> <p><i>A monk</i></p> <p>Brothers?</p> <p><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>In this monastery, in the heart of silence, assembled.</p> <p><i>Monks</i></p> <p>Who are we?</p> <p><i>A monk</i></p> <p>Men, simple men, awake in the night...</p> <p><i>Monks</i></p> <p>What do we do?</p> <p><i>A monk</i></p> <p>The echo of our voices responds to that of our brothers. The fleeting wave of our songs slides in the wind, gets lost in space, pierces the ether and returns to us haloed with light.</p> <p><i>A monk</i></p> <p>In the secret of the places where the spirit blows,</p> <p><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>meditation, contemplation and prayer also contribute to the balance of the world.</p> <p><i>Monks</i></p> <p>Who says so?</p> <p><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>The poets, the fools, the sages and the prophets!</p> <p><i>Monks</i></p> <p>Who knows?</p> <p><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>The world knows it, but has forgotten it, too busy with the vain struggles of the day.</p>
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	<p><i>They leave, while the monks' choir resumes backstage</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The old order no longer guarantees the continuity of the world.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">In these troubled times, what do they say about us?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">According to some, we would be useless, unproductive and derisory warts. We would even be cowards, running away from the century and its challenges.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Others say...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Others?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Others say we are strangers,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">would like to chase us away,</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">decree our presence impure!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Monks</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What shall we say?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where shall we go?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What will we do?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Backstage choir</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum</p>
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<p>Scene 2</p> <p>Day 1: The events reported took place the previous evening</p>	<p>Duet</p> <p><i>The maid enters.</i></p> <p><i>She addresses the audience.</i></p> <p><i>The novice enters, sung by a soprano, (cf. Cherubino in Mozart or Oktavian in Richard Strauss)</i></p> <p><i>The novice thinks aloud.</i></p> <p><i>The two are not necessarily in interaction.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>The rumor of the world is only a breath of wind. Sometimes it comes from there, sometimes from here, and changes its name by changing sides. Who will know the truth in this troubled time?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>I was looking forward to a new day where peace and friendship seemed to be promised to all. How could I know that it would plunge us into anxiety?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>I went into the evening, attentive, as far as my eyes could see through the brilliant and late rays. And little by little a smoke was coming towards me, black as night. There was no place to take shelter from it. It deprived me of my eyes and of the pure air.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Who would believe that in this place one wants to quarrel? How can a bitter fruit be born from a sweet seed?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Shouts, cries in the far away! Who knows? Maybe the wind?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>We can only love, pray, care.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Maybe the wind? Perhaps the muffled moan of the burnt trees?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Then what dark soul would disturb our task?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>A blind evil seems to lurk.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>What would they do to those who wish them harm...</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>The earth shivers!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>if they condemn who loves them?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>The earth shudders, the water itself holds its course!</p>
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		<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What unknown motive would lead to acts that all faith condemns?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No one knows if there is danger, or if some mirage has set the sky on fire?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">But all this is a distant rumor. What do we really know? Who told us? Let's leave these arguments here. They will not enter the enclosure of silence and prayer.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The stars shone again, sparkling and distant. The river flowed gently to the sea, washing away the mists of the night.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A timid glow flickers within me like a star in the sky. Let providence guide each of us, who know no other song than that of sharing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">I was going away, shy, pensive...</p>
	<p><i>Back to a more meditative setting showing the prior on the side of the stage. 3 monks enter and go back to their cell, materialized by a door or a curtain of light..</i></p>	
<p>Scene 3</p>	<p>Solo</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The prior</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Already, by the splendors of the dawn which are to the pilgrim all the sweeter as he goes on the way of the return, darkness flees on all sides and my sleep also flees.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Already, the rites of the morning resound and conjure the dull fears of the night.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Already, the desire revives the will that makes life sprout in the stars. Does this day, which comes to us by its own will, bring peace? Does it hear our prayers? Will we know how to be? Will we know how to live?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Love must be the seed in us of all virtue.</p>

<p>Scene 4</p> <p>Day 2</p> <p>The events reported took place the night before</p>	<p>Duet</p> <p><i>The maid comes again to warn that the events are confirmed and become more and more worrying.</i></p> <p><i>Entrance of the novice.</i></p> <p><i>The choir of the monks, backstage</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Already came the time when the air was darkening. Sleep, which often knows the news before a fact, had disturbed me so much that I wandered in the night.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Do we still hear them? The sounds are already lost in the distance... No! They are still close, you can hear them clearly!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>The anxiety was there, others were even crying so loudly that their voices echoed the crash of the thunders.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Cursed violence! I will dare! If I must! Why not?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>They are ours though. But sometimes the same tree produces more or less good fruit depending on the species.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Blood goes to blood, fury spreads like a hydra foaming with rage. And why not? If it is necessary! I will dare!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>But let the bitter and poisonous juice go away! Yet it seems close, much closer than yesterday.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>Cursed violence! It is your turn to walk through the valley of pain. No star will come to illuminate your sky, sky of storm, lightning and thunder.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Silence them! Silence these cries that tear the thick air, the crimson vapors, the slimy effluvia of blood.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>If my time has come, I will bring my murderers before the supreme authority. We will see who of us will emerge victorious.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Fortunately the arrow that was foreseen is slower to come. Seeing it coming we will know how to avoid it. It is time to resume the wandering of the good days. The return will be all the more joyful.</p> <p>To leave, yes! Leave this refuge, if it is threatened. Let's see what we need! What luggage, what trunks to fill? Some wine? Barely ripe fruits that will make the trip? Our people are thrifty and frugal!</p>
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<p>Scene 5</p> <p>Day 3, at night</p>	<p>Solo</p> <p><i>The Prior paces the stage, coming to life and knocking on several doors to summon and gather the brothers.</i></p> <p><i>Each monk leaves his cell and his meditations.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>Already, the fading shadow makes us feel the sun going down, it gives way to other shadows and deafens our prayers. Our voices seem to get lost in the evening. Furious echoes pierce the beneficent silence of our retreat!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Orchestra)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Brothers, the world is blind and deaf to the misfortune of others!</p> <p>But here we are gathered, sharing the freedom of will. This will that calls for joyful, lucid and fraternal submission.</p> <p>You who are happy here, do you want another place? Shall we step aside? Shall we withdraw to another home? Should we back down in front of an obscene threat that pretends to annihilate what we are by terror, we who call ourselves the knights of the impossible, the lovers of the absolute?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Orchestra)</i></p> <p>But before making a decision, tell me the steps that led each one. Were they light, heavy or confident? What flash of light, what star guided your way?</p>
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<p>Scene 6</p> <p>Duet</p> <p><i>The monk evokes his mother. He begins by recounting in the past tense.</i></p> <p><i>The mother is not really present, it is her memory that is present.</i></p> <p><i>They speak in the present tense, to better relate the past.</i></p> <p><i>"She": his mother. The monk returns to the past to return for a moment to the present.</i></p> <p><i>Return to the present to say the past</i></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2</p> <p>(to the prior and the other brothers) I was young, indolent, ordinary and without patience. The form often does not agree with the intention of the art, so heavy and deaf is the matter to answer it. But hope sprouted one day, then faith flooded me. Still my road remained fragile, my path uncertain.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother</p> <p>(To her son) My son, how can you refuse your heart to the waters of peace that flow from the eternal spring?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2</p> <p>And I: Mother, tell me the good.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother</p> <p>The faith that is yours, it is refused to me. And I have cried in vain, I have sounded the darkness and the wind. I prayed in the cold, but my vain prayers received no other echo than an icy silence, cold as a winter's evening, heavy as the footsteps of an exhausted pilgrim, wandering in a starless night.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2</p> <p>Teach me the vibrant song that will carry my steps towards a radiant sun.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother</p> <p>Your faith will be the faithful shadow of your days.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2</p> <p>But you, what was your path of justice, your sacred way? What oath has sealed your destiny?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother</p> <p>Fleeing all hope and without the precious viaticum of faith, I shuddered at the complaints of the innumerable crowd. Humble nurse, salvation came to me through a mission in a tormented place populated by beings in unspeakable suffering. The oath I took that day, to love, to care, to reassure, to share the bitter daily life of the forgotten, this oath gave me the strength of an oak, the vigor of a trunk vibrating with sap.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2</p> <p>Mother! I follow you towards the tops greened by the breath of a new spring!</p> <p>From branch to branch, she had led me so high that we were approaching the last leaves. It was a burning sun that awaited me higher up, and I remained silent, contemplating the world eager for love that was only waiting for my prayers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother</p> <p>Grace, which motto with your spirit, has opened your mouth so far as it should be opened. Your tongue will henceforth be that of prayer, your song that of forgiveness and humility.</p>
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		<p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2 I bless you O Mother!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother You will be given more than you need, and the surplus will go to the thirsty and languishing hearts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2 I bless you O Woman!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mother You will be one of those who watch over the salvation of the world, who in the night fervently look for the return of a brighter morning.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 2 I bless you, O Lady, in whom my hope was born. If you leave the trace of your steps in this hell, your soul will fly to other rewards.</p>
<p>Scene 7</p> <p>Day 4, in the morning. The facts mentioned took place the evening before</p>	<p>Quintet <i>Return of the maid, with three women of the village (choir).</i></p> <p><i>Entrance of the novice</i></p> <p><i>The monks and the prior see and hear. But the women do not see them.</i></p> <p><i>They leave the room, a little panicked to go and meet the news.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The maid Screams, cries, dull and ferocious noises come from all sides. In the hellish darkness of a night without planets, a man staggers.</p> <p>I saw him bending towards the earth, weighed down by death. But his eyes were still open to heaven. What to believe, what to say, what to do? He calls me, I stagger, he grabs my arm, I free myself and run without turning around.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The novice (to the audience) You who have understanding, see what is hidden under these strange rumors.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The maid Here I am!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We are doomed!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The novice See my tears, listen to my cries. What have I done that is so vile that I must write here the last chapter of my life? My youth has barely blossomed, and I should already be mourning it? My eyes hardly opened on the world, I should close them forever?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The maid What salvation does he hope for who is already judged? If not in flight, in a sudden departure.</p> <p>Unexpected! Quick! An ordered exodus is better than a sacrifice. No divinity will find grace in the taste of our blood.</p> <p>Quickly! There is still time, and I am running to see if retreat is still possible for us.</p>

<p>Scene 8</p> <p>Duet</p> <p><i>The monk evokes the young girl.</i></p> <p><i>She is not present, it is her memory that is present</i></p> <p><i>They have the revelation together of the omnipotence of mystical love</i></p> <p><i>The young girl has also devoted herself to the monastic life.</i></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>(to the prior and the other brothers) I walked like a man troubled by too great a desire. The dawn was gaining on the morning hour which was fleeing before it. I was wandering alone. (to his memory) You walked without fear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The young girl</p> <p>(To the monk) I had only taken a few steps when the sound of water became so close to me. This water flowed in peace. Without time or the sorrow of ancient hours holding back its course.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>As soon as she was there where the grass is already bathed by the water of the beautiful river, she gave me the gift of looking at me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The young girl</p> <p>Like me do you seek the comfort of an ideal asylum? Like me, do you hear a distant bell that chimes a soft and plaintive song?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>Like you!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The young girl</p> <p>Do you seek a life greater than your own?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>Like you!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The young girl</p> <p>Are you secretly looking for the most serene love, the light and the joy of a new life?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>Like you! Like you! From that day on, we were going along with our exchanges.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The girl</p> <p>We read one day for pleasure. This deep text seemed to us so sublime that several times the reading made us raise our eyes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>That day, we did not read further. Astonished until the last moment, a light from heaven enlightened us.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The girl</p> <p>We stayed there. Then, before in its immense space the horizon had taken a unique color and that the night had spread all its treasures, I submitted with delight to the vibrating call to which I answered "Ecce Ancilla Domini".</p>
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	<p><i>The apparition slowly moves away</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monk 1</p> <p>From the first day I saw her face in this life, to this day, the course of my song has not been broken.</p> <p>Before I left her for the vows that brought me here, my voice rang out to her one last time: Will you recognize me if we meet again in heaven?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The young girl (turning around one last time)</p> <p>The world of love is not the world of immortality but the world of metamorphosis</p>
<p>Scene 9</p>	<p>Solo</p> <p><i>The prison</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Monk 3</p> <p>For me, an orphan, I was going aimlessly and without landmarks. My childhood was running away, and with it my dreams.</p> <p>There is no greater pain than to remember happy times in misery.</p> <p>The light in my eyes was fading like the horizon darkened by the gray clouds of a coming storm.</p> <p>Violent mirages perverted my soul, and I was intoxicated with a liquor so deep that it made the crooked path seem straight.</p> <p>As sails swollen by the wind crumble wrapped when the mast breaks, so fell my poor youth.</p> <p>There is a place over there that the darkness saddens.</p> <p>I would have been lost there if a voice from the farthest kingdom had not pierced me:</p> <p>"See the sun shining on your forehead, see the wind, the wave, see the grass, the flowers, the birds and the bushes".</p> <p>The nettle of repentance stung me so much then, that all that had blinded me until then became my enemy.</p> <p>And the voice redoubled:</p> <p>"With poverty, you must want justice rather than wealth with vice. The love of the rose is enough for the nightingale".</p>

<p>Scene 10</p> <p>Day 5</p>	<p>Solo/Choir</p> <p><i>New interruption of the maid,</i></p> <p><i>The choir</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p>Misfortune pursues me, terror precedes me and freezes me. Like the one who, out of breath, goes out of the sea to the shore, turns back to the perilous water and looks at the fatal flood from which she narrowly escaped, so I flee again, turning back to look at this place that left no one alive.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The villagers</i></p> <p>They are like pigs in the garbage, showing a horrible contempt for everything. They are like rabid dogs, biting and tearing flesh, burning and slaughtering with the ferocious hatred that crushes their faces and hearts. They are drunk with blood, they are feverish with the devouring passion of evil. Who can ever quench their thirst?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(3 X)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The maid</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(In response to the chorus the 2nd and 3rd time)</p> <p>Let's run away! Let's run away ! we will stay alive. Or let us kneel before the barbarian ire. Who knows? Who knows?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will stay alive, if we are submitted,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will stay alive,</p> <p>Maybe it would be enough to give up some names or pay some money?</p> <p>Like dogs biting and tearing flesh, burning and slaughtering hating all life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Come on, others have done it, we will stay alive!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For some names...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For some money...</p> <p>Stories attest to this, written for the victors by the blood of the vanquished.</p> <p>From now on, my word will be shorter, even with regard to what I remember.</p>
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<p>Scene 11</p>	<p>Trio</p> <p><i>The 3 monks</i></p> <p><i>The prior listens to them and looks at them.</i></p> <p><i>The 3 monks go out...</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Trio</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Brothers ! Let's not take our vows lightly. Let's be faithful!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faithful as the dawn that brings back the day. Faithful as the rain that waters the thirsty lands.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faithful as the wind that brings the ship back to port.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Faithful as the stars in their immutable abodes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By the firmness of our commitment, let us avenge the offenses committed against fraternity!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Is there a distress, is there a pain that it does not awaken by its clarity?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will pray for all people on earth. From West to East. From North to south. From east to west.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">We will stay, pray, love, hope...</p>
<p>Scene 12</p>	<p>Solo</p> <p><i>The Prior remains alone</i></p> <p><i>He kneels down and prays.</i></p> <p><i>The Novice enters</i></p> <p>Solo</p> <p><i>He does not see the Prior, and the Prior does not see him.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ardent faith, exemplary courage...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What about me?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A heavy body sliding in a dark water...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A chalice is handed to me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hesitant arm, trembling hand...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It burns my fingers!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">If I must submit, let them give me the terms.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If I must bow down, let them show me the place where I will lose my hopes with shame.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hopes of dignity, hopes of truth, hopes of joy, faith and certainty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If I must submit...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If I must bow down...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hope of life...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hope for peace...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hope...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">End of Act I</p>

	<p>INTERMISSION (?)</p>
	<p><u>ACT II</u></p> <p>About 40 mn</p>

<p>Scene 13</p>	<p>Trio</p> <p>Three women observe and wonder</p> <p>Fates? Norns? Angels?</p>	<p><i>Backstage choir</i> (3-voice vocalise 8 divided soprani, 4 alti)</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>Sisters ?</p> <p><i>Woman 2</i></p> <p>In the silence, we watch.</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>Sisters?</p> <p><i>Woman 3</i></p> <p>Before our eyes a strange mystery is played out</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>Who are we?</p> <p><i>Woman 2</i></p> <p>Mute spectators, impassive witnesses of a struggle that extends to the limits of the world.</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>What do we do?</p> <p><i>Woman 3</i></p> <p>We let everyone choose their place.</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>Crazy people with crazy people</p> <p><i>Woman 3</i></p> <p>The wise with the wise</p> <p><i>Woman 2</i></p> <p>The poets will sing this immortal fight</p> <p><i>Woman 1</i></p> <p>The prophets will announce it until the end of time.</p> <p><i>The 3</i></p> <p>Let us wait! Let us observe! Let us hope!</p> <p><i>Backstage choir</i> (Vocalization with 3 voices, 8 divided soprani, 4 alti)</p>
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<p>Scene 14</p> <p>Day 6</p>	<p>Quintette + Choir</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p>We go with slow and counted steps to accomplish the short way of this life which flies towards its end.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>It is already the hour which carries to the nostalgia the exhausted pilgrim.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">But who fills the one whose faith never wavers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The novice</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Alone in the depths of a hostile forest, off the lost path, I went.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>Happy are those whom grace enlightens. Happy are those who live in the light.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our life is prayer.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our prayer is testimony.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our testimony is Love.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>My heavy steps tore me with difficulty from the mud of the furrow. But one day they led me to this inspired asylum.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">How can we know ourselves, if not by action?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">My place is here, among those whose wisdom lifts me!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let us do our duty and we will know who we are!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">My place is here, among those whose friendship honors me!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">But what is this duty?</p>
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<p><i>Other monks (Choir, 4 tenors -2 baritones - 2 bass- baritones) join the stage.</i></p>	<p><i>Transfiguration of the young novice</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>A monk</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The one required by the present hour.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p>But here is that the sweet talk of a distant bell revives in me a strange pain.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The 3 monks</i></p> <p>If you want a joy that surpasses your sorrow, sing with a firm voice, love with a heart swollen by the salty wind of an immense ocean.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pain and joy that mingle!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>A divine wind, on the capricious waves guides the ardent traveller towards the stars.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Elan and stupor that clash!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior</i></p> <p>To the stars and to the sky, which is pure light full of love, love of true good, full of joy.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Shadow and light alternating!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior and the 3 monks</i></p> <p>By the vow taken of our own free will, by fidelity, we go from servitude to freedom.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Light that sparkles, like a sunbeam in pure water!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior and the 3 monks</i></p> <p>If necessary, we will die like this, without separation, forming one forever. Without end, without anguish, anonymous and glorious.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice + female choir backstage</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Light !</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Prior and the 3 monks</i></p> <p>Happy are those who walk in the footsteps of the millennial brotherhood.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The novice + female choir backstage</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Light !</p>
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<p>Scene 15</p>	<p><i>Each of the monks takes a candle in his hand and lights it at a main candle</i></p> <p><i>The young novice solemnly pronounces his vows.</i></p> <p><i>He in turn receives a candle and goes towards his destiny with his brothers.</i></p> <p><i>The monks are standing in the center of the stage, motionless. They kneel down one after the other.</i></p> <p><i>As the young monk goes to kneel in turn, the prior stops him.</i></p> <p><i>He speaks in his ear.</i></p> <p><i>The young monk, incredulous at first, finally bows with respect. The prior then entrusted him with the main candle.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>The 3 monks, the prior, the novice + choir</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Day seems to have been added to day, as if the Almighty had adorned the sky with a second sun.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The glory of Him who moves all things penetrates the universe.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">All is heaven in heaven.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Orchestra)</i></p>
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<p>Scene 16</p>	<p>CHOIR TUTTI</p> <p><i>The prior and the monks kneel one after the other.</i></p> <p><i>Entrance of the maid, the mother, the young girl and the chorus of the villagers (choristers 4 tenors, 2 baritones, 2 bass-baritones, 8 soprani, 4 alti).</i></p> <p><i>The young monk moves away, sneaks among them, and leaves.</i></p> <p><i>The monks still kneeling, blow each one their candle, put in front of them, and and go to bed.</i></p> <p><i>Maid, mother, young girl and villagers come to the front of the scene, masking the monks' bodies.</i></p> <p><i>On the last notes, the young monk appears in a ray of light.</i></p> <p><i>In the distance and high up, he walks slowly without turning around, his candle in his hand.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>(Orchestra)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The villagers + the maid, the mother and the young girl</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, the chain does not break, its rings are pure metal.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">If one falls, another one comes out of the shadow.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, the grain does not die, it rests in the earth, faithful.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It waits for the dawn of a new day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It hopes for the water from the sky, the warmth of the light and the wind.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It knows, it has always known.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No, the chain does not break. No, the grain does not die.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For it is Love that moves the sun and the other stars.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">END</p>
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