

Reproduction of Secretary of State

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Produced by

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The play Altarpiece of Yumbel takes place at the townsquare of the same name, at the beginning of the year 80, in the month of January, on the eve of its patron saint, Saint Sebastian.

CHARACTERS:

Actors:

Alejandro (35 years old)

Marta (33 years old) (Alejandro's sister-in-law)

Eduardo (30 years old) (a friend of Alejandro and Marta)

Magdalena (28 years old) (Argentinian, in charge of wardrobe)

Actor 1 (30 years old)

(The actors represent: Alejandro, the emperor Diocleciano and the Roman Proconsul. Eduardo, Sebastian and the Tribune. Marta, Torucato the centurion, and a Roman horseman. Actor 1, Galerio).

Popular characters at the square:

Juliana, 18 years old, she sells candles at the plaza.

Chinchinero, his father, an orchestra man at the plaza.

Woman 1, from the town of Yumbel, who visits the prisoners.

Mother 1, from the Association of the Detained-disappeared.

Mother 2, (wife or mother of those in Yumbel).

Mother 3, (same as Mother 2, of peasant background, relative of those who appeared in Yumbel).

Other characters (doubled or added): An organ-grinder, a street vendor with a cart at the end; Mother 4, who in the second part represents Magdalena. And any others wished to be added for the procession scenes, or at the end of the celebration with the pilgrims.

(The play can be performed, with the double-ups, with a minimum of 9, 4 actors and 5 actresses).

SCENERY: A square with a platform on which is placed an altarpiece with three arches for the Roman "Episodes." The workshop, where the actors hang out when they are not acting, is introduced by isolating a light and some simple elements, a table with a mirror, easels, hangers. Arpilleras, or lienzos painted with scenes of the martyrdom of Sebastian, a banner with his image, red and yellow flags will be needed. A small, cute, rag pony, with scarfs and roman accessories (ornaments) that Marta ties around her waist. A rag angel, flying, for one of the arches. MUSIC: Aside from the incidental music, for the Roman episodes, we recommend the Gavota No. 6, English suite by Bach arranged by Jaime Soto, director of the Barroco Andino, which reminds us of our nortino folklore (dances from the Tirana and the Coast). The décimas were composed in the Chilean folklore style, and some are taken from those written in the Church of Yumbel between the images which narrate the life and martyrdom of Saint Sebastian.

(PART ONE)

Music of introduction, orchestral, dramatic.

A voice can be heard in darkness:

"Yahve asked Cain, 'Where is your brother Abel?' 'I don't know,' the latter answered, 'Should I be my brother's keeper?' And Yahve told Cain: 'Your brother's blood is crying out for me from earth!'

SCENE 1

The music changes into a lively folkloric dance (cueca) for the entrance of Julieta who is carrying the banner or flag of Saint Sebastian and her father, the Chinchinero, who plays his instruments, both dancing. Then the mothers are shown, as if they were coming out of church. The mothers go around the square once, following Juliana with the banner and the Chinchinero who marks the rhythm as soon as the dance stops. Juliana says the ten-line stanzas:

JULIANA - To the square of Yumbel

we come to salute you

dear Sebastian

with a candle and a carnation.

Sebastian is the young nobleman

to whom the pilgrims and the swindlers

sing their trills

with much tender devotion

then, carry out your mission

handing out divine favors!

CHORUS - Grant us your favors, Saint Sebastian!

CHINCHINERO - (TO THE AUDIENCE.) In case you don't know, the image of this saint we worship in the church of Yumbel is very old: it should be enough to say that it was brought here by the Spanish conquerors. Let's see, Juliana, say the stanzas.

JULIANA -

From Spain came to Chillan
the most worshiped image,
it happened in such a way that
it anchored here, in this church.
God allowed this feat:
a Colonel was carrying it
when he was passing by Yumbel
fleeing during wartime
and here in the sand he buried it
and then forgot about him!

CHINCHINERO -

Later on, the people from Yumbel
found the ~~image~~ (sacred) image.
When they dug in the sand
they saw the saintly nobleman.
From Chillan, they claim for him
the people from Yumbel respond:

JULIANA -

"We don't want to lose the saint
and no one will take him away."

CHINCHINERO - Not even with two pair of oxen
 were they able to remove him

MOTHER 2 - Fulfill our requests, Saint Sebastian!

MOTHER 3 - Yes, fulfill them, miraculous saint. . .

CHINCHINERO - (TO THE MOTHERS.) Be careful: he's
 miraculous but very cunning. He fulfills requests if his
 are fulfilled in turn. But if you forget to fulfill
 your vows, he goes back and returns the bad deed. (HE
 HAPPILY TURNS AROUND ONCE, PLAYING HIS INSTRUMENTS, HE
 WATCHES THE ACTORS ADVANCING ALONG THE ORQUESTRA, HE
 (DESIGNA) THEM TO JULIETA) The actors.

JULIANA - (SHE ADVANCES TOWARD THEM AND ANNOUNCES.) The actors
 are coming. They will rehearse in the square.

(SHE GOES TOWARD THEM AND HELPS THEM WITH SOME OF THE PROPS
 THEY ARE CARRYING TOWARD THE BACK, AND WHILE ALEJANDRO
 MARTA, EDUARDO AND MAGDALENA--THE LATTER ALWAYS WEARING
 SUNGLASSES--SET DOWN A BASKET OF WARDROBE IN A SECTION,
 "WORKSHOP," SHE RETURNS TO ANNOUNCE TO THE AUDIENCE,
 ACCOMPANIED BY THE DRUM AND CYMBALS BEING PLAYED BY THE
 CHINCHINERO): The twentieth of this month of January is the
 celebration of our patron, Saint Sebastian. The actors are
 going to stage a play entitled . . . (SHE AND CHINCHINERO
 MOVE) . . . (DRUMROLLS) Altarpiece of Yumbel!

(JULIANA, CHINCHINERO, AND MOTHERS 2 AND 3 HAVE STEPPED UP TO THE
 FOREGROUND. Mother 1 stays in the back helping Marta, same as
 Magdalena, to fasten the pony. The other actors are preparing
 the wardrobe and props in the back).

CHINCHINERO -

It is a ^{show} (representation) ^{play}
 which narrates the cruel martyrdom
 of the young nobleman Sebastian:

MOTHER 2 -

It is true, and it's not fiction!

MOTHER 3 -

There's abuse and there's no sanction!

CHINCHINERO -

You will notice on the occasion
 that this world is still the same:

JULIANA -

The criminal is calm

MOTHER 2 -

And the innocent in prison

ALL THREE -

There's abuse and there's no sanction!

(DRUM AND CYMBALLS)

(THEY FREEZE IN THAT GESTURE, THE LIGHT PASSES TO THE FRONT
 SECTION)

(INCIDENTAL BRIEF MUSIC)

ALEJANDRO - (EN THE FRONT SECTION, AS NARRATOR.) Summer 1980. It

was Marta's idea. The idea of writing the play and staging ^{it}
 in the square for the celebration of Saint Sebastian
 (PAUSE.) I loved Marta. But she still loved her
 companion, --my brother Federico--, who fell in 1975. Eduardo
 took ~~the~~ the role of Saint Sebastian. We recruited another
 actor in Yumbel. And the women of . . . the "Association of
 Relatives" sent us Magdalena, a young Argentinian woman who was
 in charge of the wardrobe. (BEHIND, THEESE ACTORS ARE IN SEMI-
 DARKNESS GETTING READY .) (HURDY-GURDY MUSIC) They lent us a work-
 shop next to the church. It was always open, as ^{if} inviting the
 people from Yumbel to participate. The people circulating around
 the square looked happy. It was a nice square with majestic trees

and chirping birds. Nevertheless, it hadn't been long since the earth in Yumbel had opened to deliver the remains of 19 men, who have been executed, who appeared, since the military coup, in the lists of *the* "arrested-disappeared".

(HE LEAVES TAKING CLOTHES FROM THE BASKET AND ENTERS INTO THE COVERED ALTARPIECE. THE LIGHT NOW ILLUMINATES THE OTHER FRONT EXTREME, WHERE MOTHER 1 RELATES:)

MOTHER 1 - Nineteen leaders were executed for no reason at all-- as was proven in the trial--a few days after the military coup, during a transfer from Laja and San Rosendo to the barracks in the city of Los Angeles. In spite of the claims, the *countless* ~~multiple~~ requests and the long pilgrimage of mothers and wives, it was not possible to establish what happened *to* ~~with~~ that group *of* arrested men, whose personal information was lost *in* ~~on~~ the early morning of September 17, 1973. The identity of each of the victims, as well as that of their executors, was established during the trial. But just as it happened in Lonquen's case, that same year of 1979: the executors got ~~a~~ hold of, a law of amnesty formerly decreed, by the government of the Military Junta. (SHE LEAVES, THE LIGHT RETURNS TO THE CENTER, THOSE WHO HAD FROZEN COME TO LIFE.)

BRIEF MUSIC, THE CHINCHINERO BEATS HIS DRUM AS HE TURNS AROUND AND RECITES:

CHINCHINERO - In the play
that talks about Saint Sebastian
he who wants to see, will see
what happened in Yumbel
when the earth parted.

MOTHER 2 - They persecuted innocence
and this land in its mercy
wanted to release our loved ones
from oblivion:

MOTHER 3 - Heaven issued ~~the~~ a sentence!

CHINCHINERO POUNDS A FEW BEATS, THEY LEAVE AS ACTOR 1 APPEARS IN
THE BACKGROUND:

ACTOR 1 - The rehearsal begins: first episode. Turn off the
lights! (THE STAGE IS IN DARKNESS.) Music! (THE HAPPY
GAVOTA EXPLODES, THE FIRST BEATS, THEN FROM THE WHISTLE
(HORN) AND DRUMS, IT REMAINS DARK.)

Episode 1 of the ALTARPIECE

Bright and warm light over the golden parts of the Altarpiece,
now without a curtain. Fixed like two stamps, Dioclediano,
standing and his hand raised, Sebastian a knee on the ground
before him, with his legionary cuirass (breastplate, armour-
plating) and helmet; in search of the magic of religious imagery,
showy (gaudy), naive. TOGETHER WITH THE RETURN OF THE LIGHT,
CHINCHINERO, JULIANA WITH A BANNER OR A FLAG AND MARTA AS A ROMAN
HORSEMAN WITH HER PONY TIED AROUND HER WAIST AND A MASK ENTER
SPINNING, DANCING TO THE BEAT (RHYTHM) OF THE GAVOTA. THE MUSIC

STOPS.

JULIANA -

The emperor calls
 Sebastian the legionnaire
 the august Diocletian^o
 granted him a favor.
 Sebastian was Christian
 and people already knew
 that in those days there was
 a cruel persecution:
 death was the ration
 Christians ^{were dealt} suffered!

WITH A PIECE OF THE GAVOTA THEY LEAVE, ALWAYS WITH A SMALL
 CHOREOGRAPHY. WHEN THE MUSIC ENDS, THE CHARACTERS IN THE
 ALTARPIECE COME TO LIFE, CONTINUING (MAINTAINING) THE GESTURE
 THEY SHOWED IN THEIR STILLNESS. SEBASTIAN, KNEE ON THE GROUND,
 THE EMPEROR STANDING IN THE CENTER.

DIOCLECIANO - Legionnaire, I salute you.

SEBASTIAN - Oh holy one (HE BOWS,

DIOCELCIANO - (STOPPING HIS GESTURE)

You need not bend your knee ~~bend your knee~~
 nor kissing ~~ing~~ the fringe of my robe ~~robe~~.

SEBASTIAN - (HE STANDS UP.) Lord, may the heavens grant you a
 long life.

DIOCLECIANO - (HE LAUGHS.) So be it. The higher you rise
 the more your existence is in danger. And the power,
 Sebastian gained with violence
 with violence could be lost.

But, that's enough! the Empire is at peace.

I hope the pomp of my palace will not dazzle you:

tonight, share supper with me.

SEBASTIAN - (HE MOVES BACK SOMEWHAT.) Mylord, I'm not your
equal. . .

DIOCLECIANO - (POINTING.) My sanctuary intimidates you?

Like loot from war we bring captive
exotic gods from the conquered nations.

SEBASTIAN - The emperor doesn't honor the gods of Rome?

DIOCLECIANO - They provide little consolation and no hope.

Enjoy the pleasure that life ^{grants} ~~dispaire~~ to you, my son,
because nothing lies beyond death

I, the "August" invite you: drink from my cup.

SEBASTIAN - Forgive my being simple and frugal.

(A GESTURE OF REJECTION.)

DIOCLECIANO - ^{Beware!} (Soft you! You behave like a Christians

they fear pleasure, and richness,
since "a camel--his doctrine preaches--
can pass through the eye of a needle
before a rich man can enter the kingdom of heaven."

Speak: what happens upon entering that kingdom?

SEBASTIAN - At the end of times, we shall be judged.

DIOCLECIANO - (HE SMILES.) Judged, by whom?

SEBASTIAN - By the Christian god.

DIOCLECIANO - They say he inspires fear. . .

SEBASTIAN - He sent Jesus Christ, his son, to this world
to teach men love! love.

DIOCLECIANO - (CUNNING) Do you love me, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN - Yes, Mylord. You, and all those who serve you.

DIOCLECIANO - I, ^{who am not} ~~without being~~ a Christian, feel love
for you, who serve me.

SEBASTIAN - (POINTING OUTSIDE) And for him, your slave?

DIOCLECIANO. No. (PAUSE) Am I, therefore, a cruel man?

SEBASTIAN - (TIMIDLY) He who ~~is~~ ^{are} served, ignore^s the sufferings
of those who, ^{to} forced, serve him.

DIOCLECIANO (EXCLAIMS) And I? Am I not always serving you,

^{I was} "Forced", Sebastian, I made war.

I conquered lands with sufferings for the glory of Rome.

^{I was} "Forced" ^{to} ~~I~~ straightened ^{out} what (in this Empire) was crooked,
~~Forced~~ ^{and} ~~I had to~~ put and end to anarchy. ^{I was} ~~And~~ forced,
^{to} ~~I~~ constructed ~~palaces~~ and my beautiful city of Nicomedia.
What should the ^h Cristian's god reproach me?

Or will he condemn the Emperor for living in luxury?

SEBASTIAN - (MURMURES) OH, Sacred One...

DIOCLECIANO - Speak!

SEBASTIAN - Mylord, your jewelry, your crown...you wear them
without wondering ^{about} the suffering it cost
to the miserable ~~slave~~ who seeks each gem
exposing his life. For your embroidered robe
how many sleepless nights! And for the rich loot

You've brought from war so much blood!
 So much whipping and punishment
 to wear on your finger...an emerald!

DIOCLECIANO _ Enough! (SARDONIC) Now in everything that surrounds me
 I will see hard work and fatigue.

You are courageous, Sebastian, to remind me
 that those who serve, are never served.

(CALLING) Slave! My slave, have supper with me.(PAUSE)

It's an order!

No, I beg you. (PAUSE.HE POINTS:) See: he vanished.

SEBASTIAN - For such a sacrilege, he may ^{lose} ~~lost~~ his life.

DIOCLECIANO- That's the way it is. So what is the purpose of your speech?

Do you want Diocleciano to sign an edict
 to order the rivers to change ^{their} ~~course~~,
 the lion to become tame and the lamb fierce?

SEBASTIAN - No, Mylord. But you can sign an edict
 that stops the persecution of Christians.

DIOCLECIANO -(SERIOUS) What one edict says, no other can retract.

But, if you have a friend in the dungeons
 I will pardon him, if you prove his innocence!

SEBASTIAN - Your jails are full of innocents! (PAUSE)

I am speaking, sir, of justice. Not mercy.

DIOCLECIANO - Slow, Sebastian: there's arrogance in your voice.

I delegated this issue ^{to} ~~in my~~ Cesar Galerius -

SEBASTIAN - Galerie ^{us} is unjust and cruel with Christians.

DIOCLECIANO - And they, aren't they rebels? aren't they impious?

The teachings of the one they call "Jesus"

have endangered the peace of the Empire.

And enough! (MELANCHOLY.) Speaking of Christians irritates
me.

Sebastian, do you know I have a daughter
who secretly makes the sign of the cross?

And Galerie ^{us} should be feared.

SEBASTIAN - Sir, your word IS THE LAW!

DIOCLECIANO - I can't take away the power I've granted him.

(PAUSE.) Sebastian, distance yourself from the Christians

Get closer to me! And give me your love,

today I distinguish you from everyone else

I make you captain of my Pretorian Guard!

captain of my Pretorian Guard!

SILENCE.

SEBASTIAN - (HE MOVES BACK.) Sir, I'd rather serve you as a
legionnaire.

DIOCLECIANO - I want you here, in my palace, always besides me

With your words ^{you} / wanted to take care of my soul:

take care, then, of the body my soul inhabits.

SEBASTIAN - But I, sir. . .

DIOCLECIANO - No! I do not accept your rejection:

Come. Bend your knee (HE HESITATES IN DOING IT

Do as I say.

(SEBASTIAN OBEYS, AND DIOCLECIANO TOUCHES HIS SHOULDER)

More than captain of my Guard, ~~more~~

I shall name you, Sebastian . . . my ~~more~~ faithful friend!

(THE LIGHT DIMS WITH THE FIGURES REMAINING IMMOBILE FOR A MOMENT LIKE IN THE BEGINNING OF THIS EPISODE, AS IF THEY WERE RETURNING TO THE STILLNESS OF THE STAMP, BRIEF MUSIC FOR SEPARATION.)

SCENE II

shadows
FROM THE ~~PENUMBRA~~ RISES, WITH AN INTIMATE LIGHT, THE LIGHT ON THE WORKSHOP AREA, WHERE THE ACTORS LEFT THE BASKET. ALEJANDRO, TAKING OFF HIS WIG AND ROBE WALKS IN THAT DIRECTION. MARTA AND MAGDALENA, WITH HER SUNGLASSES, ARE ALREADY LAYING OUT THE COSTUMES. UPON SEEING ALEJANDRO APPROACHING, MAGDALENA LEAVES, SHE MOVES IN SILENCE. (MARTA IS LEAFING THROUGH A BOOK.)

ALEJANDRO - (BECAUSE OF HER, TO MARTA.) - Is she still mute? (MARTA ASSENTS.) What have you got there? (HE POINTS TO THE BOOK THAT MARTA HANDS HIM, TAKING IT, HE READS THE SPINE.) Roman History. . .

MARTA - I marked something for you on Dioclecian^o. (SHE SITS DOWN TO SEW HER TUNIC OR ACCESORY.)

ALEJANDRO - (READING.) "He establishes an iron military bureaucracy, he undertakes reforms to beat the economic crisis. . . (HE SKIPS SOMETHING.) From the "Junta" of four, two Augusts and two Cesars, who were to succeed him,

Diocleciano maintains absolute power. (PAUSE.) He rules without limits or restrictions." (MARTA IS ENGROSSED IN HER SEWING.) Marta, did you hear that?

MARTA - Yes, Alejandro. (SHE SEEMS ABSENT.) Is it true that Diocleciano had a Christian daughter?

ALEJANDRO - It's ^a historical *fact*.

MARTA - That's probably why Sebastian hoped to convert him to Christianity.

ALEJANDRO - But Cesar Galerio kept him from doing so. (HE READS.) According to Gringberg: "The measure adopted by Galerio is a cold measure and was methodically calculated to exterminate the Christians. (MARTA IS ENGROSSED, SHE STOPS SEWING.) Because they had come to form a power within the State." (LOOKING AT MARTA.) Marta, you are not listening.

MARTA - Yes, Alejandro. (SHE SMILES SWEETLY.)

ALEJANDRO - (UNAFFECTEDLY.) I love you. (SHE STARES AT HIM FIXEDLY.) I remind you of Federico, don't I?

MARTA - You look very much like my brother.

ALEJANDRO - (UPSET.) But I'm not him. (HE ARRANGES THE COSTUMES FOR THE NEXT SCENE IN WHICH HE WILL BE A PROCONSUL, WHILE HE SAYS:) Marta, you look without seeing, you listen without hearing, as if you weren't entirely real.

MARTA - Then we're equal: we both love a being who barely exists.

ALEJANDRO - My brother barely exists? Federico exists much more than I.

MARTA - (SHE SMILES, NOSTALGIC.) He used to say: "he who gives

his life for an ideal only absents himself."

ALEJANDRO - He didn't even absent himself. You have the gift of reviving the past as if you were recovering it for the present. All of a sudden, something makes you set out toward some point in memory, and you leave. . . with him, I suppose. Your companion was an exceptional human being, but he's no longer with us. (SHE LOOKS AT HIM.) Well, I mean, even though he appears in these lists of "imprisoned-disappeared," we know he's not going to return. (SHE REMAINS SILENT.) You know, don't you? (SHE AGREES.) Then, it is time to think . . . about going on with life. I hope you would, because . . . (HE STOPS TALKING.)

MARTA - Because?

ALEJANDRO - Because I love you.

MARTA - (SOMEWHAT ABSENT.) Yes. You have already said it.

(SHE SMILES AT HIM.) I'm sorry, Alejandro.

ALEJANDRO - "I'm sorry, Alejandro. . . " (HE PICKS UP THE BOOK AGAIN, UPSET. HE READS.) "In the year 313, Cesar Galerio is struck by a terrible pain. Fearing a punishment from the God of the Christians, he makes peace with them. They are seen, then, coming out of prisons and catacombs, like an army of ghosts. They gather strength and sing their hymns....they walk around in circles of light..." (HE SETS THE BOOK DOWN.) (DREAMY.) Our Sebastian didn't see his hope fulfilled.

MARTA - Neither did Federico. (PAUSE.) It's not fair. His faith was so strong

ALEJANDRO - Don't be sad. (THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER, HE TOUCHES HER HAND, THEN THE TWO OF THEM TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO THE COSTUMES.) Marta, what made you join us?

MARTA - (IT TAKES HER A WHILE TO RESPOND.) My reasons . . . are very simple.

ALEJANDRO - Tell them.

MARTA - I can't stand children begging.

ALEJANDRO - Okay. The truth is that we're always shuffling concepts, entangled in catchwords, ~~instructions~~, instructions, slogans). . . and one often forgets the essential (PAUSE.) "Children begging" Why not? Unjustice has many names. Did you know that in the Caribbean there are 12 year-old boys who handle rifles? Those of their fathers fallen in action I guess it's their right to go on living. (PAUSE)

"No more children begging, no more children with rifles."

MARTA - (IN A QUIET VOICE.) No more torture."

ALEJANDRO - When we were in prison, Federico told me: "What distresses you, more than the physical pain, is. . . the cruelty of your torturers."

MARTA - Till when, Alejandro? Death, persecution. . .

ALEJANDRO - Who knows? (CHEERING HER UP WITH A HAPPY VOICE WHILE THEY ARE GETTING READY.) Marta: we don't know anything about the future. It could be the bomb: ~~an~~ explosion, and it's over! (HE SMILES.) But, it could also be. . . the opposite!

MARTA - And what's the opposite?

ALEJANDRO - Well, men have always believed in the great values,

Haven't they?

MARTA - (ADJUSTING HER STUFFED PONY.) Yes, I suppose so.

ALEJANDRO - Then it's not impossible that one day they'll decide. . . to put them to practice! Or we could count on a hope of thee galaxies, as Federico used to say. Travellers from other worlds will come to give us back common sense. Let's dream, Marta. Who's to say that our children won't start ^{will never} training, morning races ⁱⁿ at the parks, ^{will} daily exercise to become the best? In a great championship! A world championship to end injustice! (HE LOOKS AT MARTA WHO'S WEARING THE PONY, HE GETS CLOSE TO HER WITH A LOT OF TENDERNESS.) No, now you don't go out with the pony: you will be the centurion Torcuato. (HE HELPS HER TAKE OFF THE PONY AND HANDS HER THE CHAINS IN THE BASKET, WHILE SHE PUTS THEM ON or HE PUTS THEM ON HER HE TELLS HER, WITH THE SAME SIMPLE TONE OF HIS "I LOVE YOU\$:") Marta, I would marry you, even knowing that you can only love Federico. . . (MARTA TURNS AROUND STARTING A GESTURE OF PROTEST, ALEJANDRO ADDS, SMILING SLYLY.) To take care of you, see what I mean?

THEY BOTH GO OVER TO THE PLATFORM WHERE THE ALTARPIECE CAN BE FOUND, WEARING THEIR MASKS. THE LIGHT DIMS TILL IT IS DARK, WHILE THE BEATS OF THE GAVOTA EXPLODE.
A BRILLIANT LIGHT ON THE ALTARPIECE:

Episode 2 of the Altarpiece

ON THE PLATFORM ARE THE PRECONSUL, ALEJANDRO, IN WHITE AND WEARING A MASK, AND MARTA, AS TORCUATO, SHORT TUNIC, CHAINS, MASK, AS IF SHE WERE HANGING IN THE TORTURE. ACTOR 1 HAS FIXED A CURTAIN WITH TORTURE INSTRUMENTS ON THE SIDE. THE PROCONSUL HAS A PARCHMENT.

WHEN THE LIGHT COMES BACK ON JULIANA ENTERS WITH THE BANNER AND THE MAN-ORQUESTRA. THEY PERFORM A BRIEF CHOREOGRAPHY AND THEN JULIANA RECITES:

JULIANA - By ~~the~~ *dict*, Diocleciano
sends Torcuato, saintly man,
in judgement of horror and dismay (terror)
to be tortured by the Romans.
With refined means of torture
they bleed the heart
and tear apart the body
of this noble centurion:
They cruelly torture him
because of his faith for his religion!

THEY LEAVE, SPINNING. THE ONES AT THE ALTARPIECE COME TO LIFE.)

PROCONSUL - Being the 8^{*day*} before the ~~calend~~^{*appears*} of April, in this immaculate court ~~is present~~ before me, the Roman Proconsul, a centurion accused of committing actions punishable by the law. Identify yourself!

TORCUATO - Christian.

PROCONSUL - Impious word! Say your name.

TORCUATO - Christian.

PROCONSUL - Hit him on the mouth so that he won't respond one thing ^{for} ~~an~~ another. (SYMBOL OF TORTURE.)

TORCUATO - Christian is the name I hold ~~as~~ mine). But, my parents called me Torcuato.

PROCONSUL - It is written in these writings that were confiscated from you: (HE READS FROM A PARCHMENT.) "The princes of the priests reunited in Council said: 'What will we do with this man Jesus? He (does) a lot of wonders. If we continue to let him preach his doctrine, the whole nation will believe in him. . .'" (TO TORCUATO.) Don't you know that those who hide such writings are punished by death? The imperial proclamation says: "Secret Christian assemblies and the possession of writings that refer to their impious doctrine are prohibited." Did you know the proclamation?

TORCUATO - Yes, I did. ~~about it~~

PROCONSUL - You tore the military insignia and disposed of your arms!

TORCUATO - My doctrine says "thou shalt not kill."

PROCONSUL - Your crime is high treason. Jesus was a rebel who pretended to rise the Jews against the Romans: your duty was to turn in these writings to be burned.

TORCUATO - Burn me first!

PROCONSUL - Torture him! (STAGE DESIGNING IN SOUND?, AND SYMBOL OF TORTURE.) Enough. To whom did you read these writings?

TORCUATO - To my brothers in ~~(of)~~ the Christian faith.

PROCONSUL - Turn in your brothers and you can go free.

TORCUATO - I'm not ~~a betrayer!~~ *an informer*

PROCONSUL - Put him on the stocks?, until he ^{*rack*} ~~confesses~~ ^{*tell us*} all their names! (SYMBOL OF TORTURE.) Enough. Torcuato, I officially instruct you to ^{*do a*} ~~sacrifice in front of~~ ^{*to*} Jupiter's altar as the emperors do, to whom you owe honor and obedience. ???

TORCUATO - The emperors are wrong.

PROCONSUL - Burn his feet and hands for blasphemous ~~y~~

TORCUATO - Why do you torture me in such a way? I'm only praising the true God!

PROCONSUL - Pour salt on his wounds for saying "god" and not "gods!" Torcuato, knowing that they will continue to torment you, do you still persist in what you said?

TORCUATO - I persist

PROCONSUL - Fool, crazy Christian, Do you happen to love death?

TORCUATO - I love life, but I don't fear death.

PROCONSUL - (HE YELLS TOWARD THE EXECUTIONER.) Scrape his ribs with sharp shells, hang him from his feet and put him over the fire, let his body burn, but don't let him die. . . !

(IN THE MEANTIME, THE SYMBOL OF TORTURE CONTINUES.) I'll force you to waste away slowly before I have you beheaded! And don't ~~expect~~ ^{*expect*} postumous glory, because I'm not going to allow those whores to come and cover you with balsams and perfumes, and give you an honorable ~~honor~~ ^{*honor*} burial.

Your remains will be thrown where they won't find them

...you, damned Christians! ~~with all of these damned Chris~~

Take him back to the dungeon!

DARKNESS. BREIF MUSIC CLOSING THE SCENE.

THE LIGHT(ING) PASSES NOW TO A FRONT SECTOR, WHICH REPRESENTS A CORNER IN THE PLAZA, WITH SUN, DAYLIGHT. THE ACTRESS WHO PLAYS THE ROLE OF MOTHER 2 IS THERE AND MOTHER 3 APPROACHES, (NOW THEY ARE DESIGNATED AS WOMAN 1 AND 2, THEIR CLOTHES ARE DIFFERENT.) WOMAN 1 CROSSES THE SCENE AND GETS CLOSE TO WOMAN 2, LOOKING OUT (AROUND) AS IF SHE WERE WAITING FOR THE BUS.

SCENE 3

WOMAN 1 - (SHE SITS ON A BUNDLE SHE'S CARRYING, AND TELL WOMAN 2 TO SIT ON THE FLOOR, WITH HER BASKET OF GOODS.) I was taking food and clothing to the prisoners at the jail of Concepci n, but I came back with everything!

WOMAN 2 - Why?

WOMAN 1 - Guard Gonzlez kicked me out, "for talking such nonsense" - he said.

WOMAN 2 - I see. And what did you tell him?

WOMAN 1 - I asked him how he could work in those houses where they *misfeat* ^{*frstare*} innocent young people. And he said: "They are not innocent. And even though the job is ugly, someone's got to do it."

WOMAN 2 - And what did you answer?

WOMAN 1 - "If the job is so ^{*ugly*}, look for another one." And he: "With so much unemployment? Besides, wearing a uniform, my children will never lack anything." So, I asked him: And

if they ^{take} one of your young children and they starve him to death,
/ what will you do?

WOMAN 2 - And he?

WOMAN 1 - "I'll kill him", he said, like this. using the very words, "even if they they execute me afterwards". "You see - said I-, that's the difference! You grieve only over your children, and those you have arrested, they grieve for all children, everybody's children". "You rhink so?" he laughs, making fun of me. And I: "Don't you know that those youbg peaple are fighting so that every child can get food and education? And shoes. Shoes are important to children." So, I told him.

WOMAN 2 - And he, what did he said?

WOMAN 1 - "All you talk about is children ^{grown up} -said he.- This ^{is a} war ~~is~~
~~an adult's war~~ (between adults). Children have nothing to do with it."

WOMAN 2 - Hear, hear!

WOMAN 1 - "Children are involved - said I - since all them start life hungry and barefoot, sleeping on doorways and breathing drugs."
(LOOKING) There's the Bus...(SHE GETS UP) Let's see if this time the guard let me in. (SHE LEAVES, FOLLOWED BY WOMAN 2)

DARKNESS, beats of the "^{He}gavota", that announces an épisode of the ALTER-PIECE.

LIGHT ON THE ALTERPIECE: Torcuato is ^{on} ~~in~~ an arch, imprisoned, chained.
AT THE EXTREME, hanging from abov, is a rag, or golden angel,

ANGEL, FLYING. THE CHINCHINERO AND JULIANA WITH THE BANNER ENTER, THEY PERFORM THEIR BRIEF CHOREOGRAPHY.

SCENE 4

JULIANA - Sebastian, pious soul
suffered when he saw ~~any~~
his tortured brothers
in the dark of the dungeons

(ALEJANDRO ENTERS AND STOPS HER WITH A GESTURE.)

ALEJANDRO - Wait, Eduardo's missing. (JULIANA LEAVES AND RUNS INTO EDUARDO WHO'S ENTERING, HE'S HOLDING HIS HELMET AND LIBRETTO IN HIS HAND.) (MARTA DESCENDS FROM THE PLATFORM.)

EDUARDO - (VERY UPSET, HE READS IN HIS LIBRETTO.) "Turn in your brothers and you will be free." Marta, Alejandro, I never told of Federico! Even though they asked me about him all the time! I gave only some false addresses. (HE FLOPS DEPRESSED ON THE EDGE OF THE PLATFORM.) And then. . . a real one, according to what was agreed.

MARTA - Eduardo, what are you talking about? SHE GETS CLOSE TO HIM, AFFECTIONATELY.)

EDUARDO - About tortures. You can stand the electric spur, the blows, the mock executions, but not suffocation, (AGGRESSIVE, HE HITS THE LIBRETTO.) Alejandro, when you wrote the play, you forgot "suffocation", in the torture scene!

ALEJANDRO - (HE CALMS HIM WITH A GESTURE.) Calm down, Eduardo.

MARTA - No one has ever said that you turned him in!

EDUARDO - (WITHOUT HEARING.) I shouldn't be here playing the role of a ~~hero~~ ^{hero}! ~~... ..~~ ^{... ..} Federico would've done it with more conviction: he never opened his mouth!

ALEJANDRO - Listen. . .

EDUARDO - And don't tell me that I'm not to blame!

MARTA - But, blame for what?

EDUARDO - (EXCITED, WITHOUT LISTENING.) (ABOUT THE LIBRETTO)
And here is another speech by Sebastian, about those who deny their faith. (HE READS.) "they curse their weeakness and are never able to find peace. . ." (TO ALEJANDRO.) Did you have me in mind, Alejandro? (HE TURNS HIS BACK ON HIM, ASHAMED.)

ALEJANDRO - Eduardo: that was written in the third century.
SILENCE.

(ALEJANDRO AND MARTA WATCH EDUARDO WHO SEEMS CONFUSED.)

EDUARDO - (HE HESITATES, THEN LIVENS UP?.) Okay. Don't worry. Let's continue with the rehearsal. (HE BECOMES QUIET.) And on with my role. . . as a fantastic ~~guy~~ ^{guy}.
(HE IS GOING TO GET ON THE PLATFORM, MARTA STOPS HIM.)

MARTA - No. Eduardo, all this time you were in exile you have been tormenting yourself for no reason. (PAUSE.) The agreement was to wait two days. Before talking.

EDUARDO - (CUTTING.) I waited less than that!

MARTA - Well, to wait as long as you could. It's the same thing.

EDUARDO - How can it be the same thing!

MARTA - We said it was impossible to judge what someone can

or can't withstand ~~when~~ being tortured. No one has the right to judge his behavior.

EDUARDO - Except for the one who was tortured. ~~He can't live~~

ALEJANDRO - Enough, Eduardo: you had nothing to do with what happened to my brother. ~~The fact that he was tortured~~

(EDUARDO LOOKS AT HIM DOUBTFUL.) (TO MARTA:) Eduardo refuses to believe it. He wants proof, but there is no proof.

EDUARDO - Then, who's fault was it?

MARTA - (SHE STANDS BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM.) I know!

EDUARDO - (POINTING AT MARTA.) She says that to give me back peace.

ALEJANDRO - (TO MARTA.) What do you mean "you know ^{whose} ~~who's~~ fault it was?"

MARTA - There you are blaming and forgiving yourselves! Don't you remember that the only ones to be blame are "the others?" Those who torture and kill! (PAUSE.) "Guilty are those who persecute as ^{if} ~~the worse crime~~, man's hope to live in justice and dignity, ~~were the worst crime~~" (POINTING TO THE LIBRETTO IN EDUARDO'S HANDS.) Isn't that what you wrote here, Alejandro? (TO EDUARDO.) ^{These are the} ~~These are the~~ words of the tribune.

SILENCE.

EDUARDO CHANGING ATTITUDE HUGS MARTA, APPROACHES ALEJANDRO AFFECTIONATELY. THEY KEEP SILENT FOR A FEW MOMENTS.

EDUARDO - (TO MARTA.) Come one, "Torcuato," put on your chains. (HE HIMSELF HELPS HER, ALEJANDRO LEAVES.) Where

did Juliana go? (JULIANA LOOKS IN, THIS TIME WITH THE RAG PONY TIED AROUND HER WAIST AND WITH THE BANNER.) The scene at the prison begins again. (HE SAYS IT WHILE HE AND MARTA TAKE THEIR POSITIONS ON THE PLATFORM.)

DARKNESS.

BRIEF MUSIC OF THE GAVOTA. LIGHT ON JULIANA.

Episode 3 of the Altarpiece

BRIEF CHOREOGRAPHY OF JULIANA AND CHINCHINERO. THE MUSIC STOPS.

JULIANA - Sebastian, pious soul
he suffered when he saw so many
 of his tortured brothers
 in the dark dungeons.
 In secret and cautiously
 outwitting the guards
 he visited the prisoners
 soothing that pain:
 He gives consolation and prayer
 true and saintly love!

THEY EXIT AND AT THE ALTARPIECE, PRISONER TORCUATO AND SEBASTIAN :
 COME TO LIFE.

TORCUATO - A captain from the Emperor's Guard! What do you
 want?

SEBASTIAN - To comfort you, brother.

TORCUATO - Brother?

SEBASTIAN - I only wear the *blue* soldier's uniform to help the
 Christians. You were courageous, Centurion.

TORCUATO - There's light in your face!

SEBASTIAN - It's your soul that brightens this dark place!

TORCUATO - Oh, what will become of me!

SEBASTIAN - Tomorrow the Proconsul will interrogate you again.

TORCUATO - I won't be able to resist! What's your name?

SEBASTIAN - Sebastian.

TORCUATO - Sebastian, my brother, since you're carrying a sword, kill me!

SEBASTIAN - I came to give you life, not to take it away.

TORCUATO - You will lose yours if they catch you in the dungeon. . .

SEBASTIAN - Say the Scriptures with me: "May your heart not worry nor get frightened, as I will not abandon you. . ."

TORCUATO - "Because no one has a greater love than this one, which is to risk your life for your brothers." I no longer feel the weight of my chains! Your strength fortifies me.

SEBASTIAN - Repeat with me: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you."

TORCUATO - "They will persecute you. . ."

SEBASTIAN - "But if they have kept my word, they will also keep yours."

BRIEF MUSIC, A LIGHT PASSES IN FRONT OF THE PLATFORM, SEBASTIAN LEAVES.

MARTA, TAKING OFF HER MASK AND CHAINS KNEELS, SITTING ON HER HEELS, IN THE FRONT PART, LIGHT OVER HER.

S C E N E I V

MARTA - (IN ABSORTION, TAKING OUT OF HRT CLOTHES A FOLDED LETTER)

"If they have kept my word, they will also keep yours" Your words, Federico. (SHE OPEN THE LETTER, AND READS.) "Marta, my sweet ~~love~~, don't be sad. Don't remember me immersed in blood and pain. There is so much light between the walls of a dungeon! Being so close to death, you learn the meaning of live..."

(SHE PUTS DOWN THE LETTER AND MURMURS:) After midnight, I think of you, Federico. But ^{'thinking'} it's not only ^{just} that, "thinking" I am pulling the threads of ^{my} ~~your~~ memory ^{is of you} and, suddenly, you are there. Your presence, once again, overcomes me. You are so real, as if you had never ^a ~~deied~~. Perhaps because ^{is} ~~is~~ delusion, the bond is even stronger, the bond that ties me to you. (SHE CONTINUES READING THE LETTER) "...so close to death, you learn

the meaning of life and love it so much...The words you pronounce ^{more around go} ~~go~~ on, and pass ^{they} ~~pass~~ from cell to cell. And ^{from} ~~escape~~ the prison

through secrets ways, till they reach our people. ~~Nothing~~ is lost, neither the great gestures, nor the small sacrifices.

And now, let me tell you thar I did well...I'm talking about the "dark tunnel of tortures". Martha, I succeeded in surviving, if you can give this vegetating a name. And what I'm now saying will reach you one day..." (SHE LOOKS UP, AS IF SHE COUL FELT FEDERICO'S PRESENCE). No. You are not dead. I suppose you walk somewhere in a distant country. So far away...^O perhaps so close to me that I can't touch you... (SHE REMAINS QUIET)

(ALEJANDRO ENTERS FROM BEHIND, SHE PERCEIVES HIM WITHOUT TURNING AROUND. SHE RENEWS THE READING OF THE LETTER.)

MARTA - "I crossed the last threshold, and my lips didn't open, Marta, ^{you} Know why? Because the only word I wanted to say, that ~~that~~ I should've ^{yelled} at them, was not in my memory!" (SHE BREAKS DOWN; SHE REMAINS KNEELING ON THE GROUND. ALEJANDRO, BEHIND HER, LEANS OVER TO PICK UP THE LETTER.)

ALEJANDRO--(READING THE LETTER) " ...Because when they stick knives on your flesh, when you are not more than a bleeding wound, then, you look desperately for a word...the word that contains the reason of your fight. ^{It} Should be a simple word, but violent, stronger than ~~the~~ hate. As sharp as lightning, as the blade of a sword, ^{is} capable of ending all cruelties! It exists, right? My sweet, look for that word. Please. I suppose it's written in the galaxies, from where they must be looking at us, with infinite compassion..." (HE GIVES BACK THE LETTER TO MARTA)

MARTA - (GETTING UP) He was always talking about the galaxies.

ALEJANDRO - (SMILES AT HER) He should be there now, don't you think?

MARTA - Then, he must have already found that word.

ALEJANDRO - Do you know it?

MARTA - No. I don't.

ALEJANDRO (WHILE HE PUTS ON THE WIG AND ROBE) Yes, you do. (WITH TENDERNESS, GETTING CLOSE.) The word is "LOVE".

MARTA Are you ^{sure} sure? (HE AGREES, SILENTLY) Why?

ALEJANDRO - (PAUSE, WHILE HE PUTS ON THE WIG AND ROBE.) Yes,

-
You do (WIHT TENDERNESS, GETTING CLOSE.) The word is "LOVE".

MARTA - How do you know?

ALEJANDRO - Because love was the only thing those men who were torturing him DIDN'T have! (THEY HOLD THEIR ATTITUDE FOR AN INSTANT, LOOKING AT EACH OTHER, WHILW THE LIGHT DIMS UNTIL IT DARKNES.)

THE BEATS OF THE "GAVOTA" ^{He}EXPLODE.

EPISODE 4

WHEN THW LIGHTS COMES BACK ON, JULIANA ENTERS WITH THE PONY, SPINNING AND DANCING, FOLLOWED BY THE CHINCHINERO. WHEN THE MUSIC STOPS, JULIANA RECITS:

JULIANA: In the time of Diocleciano^{He}
without restraint
a Roman Cesar^{al} persecutes
those who stand by their faith.
A Tribune, willing to defend the Christians
demands pity for them:
Speaking out against death
the Tribune lost his life!

JULIANA LEAVES. AT THE ALTARPIECE, DIOCLECIANO, IN THE CENTER,

ON ONE SIDE. ACTOR '1', with a mask, as GALERIO, ON THE OTHER, THE

TRIBUNE (SEBASTIAN, WITH A MASK AND DIFFERENT CLOTHES) COME TO LIFE.

DIOCLECIANO - You have come, one to accuse, and the other to defend the Christians:

because you are higher in rank, Galerio, speak.

GALERIO - Sir, the actions of this sect are such that they are calling the people to anarchy! They preach that all men are equal that wealth is a vice and poverty a virtue, they condemn slavery as unjust

in sum, it has to do with an internal enemy hidden and tame, but ^{more} dangerous

than the barbarians you fight at the border: they invade the ^{Gaul} Galias, ⁿ Carthage, the Orient, in Rome they have mined the ground you step on like the moles they excavate their catacombs!

Aim at ~~destroying their sect~~ ^{for the very heart of their sect} or soon a Christian will rule the Empire!

(WISPERING) They say you can find them among the nobles and patricians and even in your own palace...

DIOCLECIANO - Galerio, speak ^{wisely} accurately and slowly! Don't make a mistake if you're accusing someone.

GALERIO - May the gods keep me from being a ^{traitor} traitor. But, if there's someone who abuses your trust, watch out for him, my lord. . .

SILENCE

DIOCLECIANO - Speak, Tribune.

TRIBUNO - I want to remind you, oh sacred one,

that in the times of Nero, the Roman people

used to clamored ~~ed~~ "the Christians to the beasts!"

then Christians were killed without trial or sanction

only to amuse the people with their blood.

And why ~~are~~ *were* they persecuted and condemned?

Only because they refuse to worship

some gods in which no one believes anymore,

gods who fight, devour and kill each other

the beauty of for a queen's ~~beauty~~. (PAUSE)

Lord, the moral strength of the Christians

is not harmful to the Roman people,

but rather a benefit to them

GALERIO - (SARDONIC.) What is it that you call "moral strength," Tribuno?

TRIBUNO - Remember that in the past in the circus arena when the wild beasts saw the Christians they stayed still, without harming them.

GALERIO - (ACCUSING HIM.) You admire this people!

TRIBUNO - Must I die for that?

GALERIO - Not without being judged first: one does not condemn a Christian without a trial.

TRIBUNO - I protest!

They are not properly interrogated, nor are they judged in places of justice.

The law of Rome is not applied to them

as it is to ~~delinquents~~ *criminals*.

delicent = cruel
crucial = murder
assassin

GALERIO - Because a thief or even a ^{murderer} criminal
 compared to a Christian is more innocent!
 They attempted to burn the imperial palace
 and desecrate the temple of the goddess Juno!

TRIBUNO - That's a lie! Guilty is he
 who sends his slaves in the dark
 to undertake such misdeeds
 only to arise the Roman people against the Christians!

DIOCLECIANO - Can you prove it, Tribuno?

TRIBUNO - No, Sir.

is there anyone who can prove the actions
 of those who are so highly placed
 And if there were--I mean, with your permission--
 There is always somebody higher to cover their actions

GALERIO - He is insulting us, Diocleciano.

DIOCLECIANO LOOKS AT BOTH OF THEM, HESITANT, WISHING TO PROTECT
 THE TRIBUNE.

TRIBUNO - Neither lies, nor false accusations
 justify the violence of punishment:
 Would they be able to resist
 the power of your legions?
 ten thousand innocent people were massacred
 their only crime was their doctrine!
 To say Christians, then, is to say "criminals?"
 And now before you, I accuse Galerio
 of having had the temple of June burned

to blame the followers of Christ!

DIOCLECIANO - (AUTHORITARIAN, DRY.) Answer, Galerio.

GALERIO - Even if it were so

disobedience to your proclamations
is enough reason to be condemned.

Thus, you should pass stricter sentences
and judge him for what he has said here!

DIOCLECIANO - That's what Galerio requests.

Say it in a few words.

TRIBUNO - In a few words, lord, no more deaths,
no more persecutions, no more tortures!

You're persecuting innocence,

the innocent, and to life

justice, and dignity... Allow me

to press for mercy as I leave!

(AFTER SAYING IT, HE MAKES A MOTION TO LEAVE.)

GALERIO - Don't let him go! He reveals himself: he is a
Christian!

Guards, after him! (YELLING OUT.) Catch him before he
escapes!

(HE MOVES BACK TO GO AFTER TRIBUNO, DIOCLECIANO STOPS HIM:)

DIOCLECIANO - Wait: who shall I watch out for, in my palace?

GALERIO - (DEFIANT.) He who takes care of you!

THE ACTION FREEZES. BRIEF MUSIC. DARKNESS.

INTERMISSION

(PART TWO)

When the light comes on after the intermission, all the actors are on stage, arranging the Altarpiece for the episodes in which walls, will be shown, or arranging candles and paper flowers. The men, Chinchinero and ~~Alejandro~~^{and} Eduardo, work on the Altarpiece. Juliana is holding her basket to sell flowers and candles; Magdalena, always with her sunglasses on, is busy in a corner with a costume. In the center, or separate from the other groups, the three Mothers work on a sackcloth. Marta is arranging her rag pony, close to Magdalena.

SCENE VI

CHINCHINERO - (TO ALEJANDRO.) Did you know that the saint whom people worship here, was almost burned? They wanted to desecrate him. That was a hundred years ago, now.

ALEJANDRO - How did it happen?

CHINCHINERO - They say that some "perverse" young men, upset because of so much devotion stole the statue of Saint Sebastian from the church and . . . you know the "stanzas" ~~Juliana~~,
Juliana, say them.

JULIANA - (SHE GOES UP TO THE PLATFORM AND RECITES WITH GRACE)

Some wicked young men
stole it from the altar
they desperately look for, ~~look for~~,

without finding, the statue...
 And there, buried in the sand,
 a shepherd found it:
 in vain those people tried
 to burn it ^{on} ~~in~~ a spree:
 but the ancient wood was like stone
 and the statue didn't burn !

CHINCHINERO PUTS EMPHASIS BY BEATING HIS DRUM AND CYMBALS

ALEJANDRO - And so it happened that Saint Sebastian of Yumbel was buried, unburied...and a century ago, again they buried him in the sand and unburied him once more. It's strange: because in Rome, after his martyrdom, Saint Sebastian was secretly buried, but his followers found his remains and gave them ^a Christian burial.

JULIANA - And also the 19 leaders they arrested in Laya and in San Rosendo, were twice buried and unburied.

THE THREE MOTHERS TURN THEIR HEADS TOWARD THEM HEARING THIS WORDS.

CHINCHINERO - Well, yes. First they buried them in the pine wood, where they shot them. Also ~~in~~ a spree, they say...Don't you know they found empty bottles of liquor in the same place? (The MOTHERS MAKE A MOTION AS IF ACCUSING THE BLOW, AND KEEP WORKING AGAIN.) It was in September, close to ~~the~~ Independence day, After a while, some dogs started digging there, so they ^d ~~have~~ to get the bodies out of the pine wood. At night, they threw them over the cementery wall, so, they were buried once again in Yumbel. (LEAVING WITH ALEJANDRO AND JULIANA) And there, they stayed..... for six

years. Without signs or crosses.

LIGHT OVER THE MOTHERS, WHO ARE SPEAKING CALMLY, AS THEY USUALLY DO WHILE THEY EMBROIDER THE SACKCLOTH. AFTER A SILENCE, THEY PICK UP THE LAST PHRASE.

MOTHER 1 - Six years. Without signs or crosses.

MOTHER 2 - Six years in which we had some hope.

MOTHER 3 - It was painful to find them in that state, but then we were able to give them a Christian burial.

MOTHER 2 - That was a comfort.

(BRIEF NOTES FROM A CELLO, OR DOUBLE BASS, FOR SEPARATION.)

(MARTA AND MAGDALENA BEHIND THEM LISTEN WITHOUT MOVING.)

MOTHER 3 - Many women have not found their relatives, and still have hope of finding them alive.

MOTHER 1 - "Alive they took them, alive we want them" is the motto in other countries.

MOTHER 2 - Other countries?

MOTHER 1 - People disappear in Argentina, Uruguay, Bolivia, Salvador, Guatemala, Colombia. . . and so many all over Latin America.

MOTHER 3 - They say that the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in Argentina, write their names in posters, and continue hoping to find them. . .

(BRIEF INCIDENTAL MUSIC.)

MOTHER 2 - I ask for justice because for six years we have lived in deceit believing that no one had died here.

MOTHER 3 - I am so straight, ~~that~~ I pray to God for the children of those who shot them... so that they do not ~~don't~~ have to

My mind is clear.

suffer for their parents' ~~evil~~ *fault*

MOTHER 2 - When I realized my husband wasn't coming, I looked for him at the (detention hall) Tenencia. There I found out that he was a leader and was fighting for the Union.

MOTHER 3 - I also went to the Police Station, but the second day he was no longer there. They had transferred him, they said, to the Army barracks, in Temuco. I went there. At the barracks, ~~quarters~~ they denied he was there: "See, m'am, his name is not on the list of those arrested." "Look closer, he has to be here," I said. "Come on, Lady, go..." the angry man told me. In any case, they bullied me, so that I had to leave.

MOTHER 2 - I went also to Temuco. And from there I went to Concepcion. I went to Talcahuano, I went everywhere.

MOTHER 3 - I presented ~~(all the legal documents. documents, I~~ did everything they advised me to do. Six years looking for him!

MOTHER 2 - Six years without knowing anything about them!

(MUSIC, THEY KEEP WORKING IN SILENCE.)

MOTHER 2 - I knew inside of me that he was dead because I saw him in my dreams. "Why are you looking for me so far away when I'm here," he would say. (PAUSE.) When they buried him I dreamt about him again: he would put his hand kindly on my face and ~~said, tell me~~ *say* "Take care of my children!" I woke up crying. And I yelled to him: "Here are all your children. . ."

MOTHER 3 - I didn't have any trouble recognizing him: "Watch calmly," the doctor told me: When I see his dentures! No, I didn't have any trouble recognizing him.

MOTHER 2 - I went to the courts, "~~I was in the courtroom~~" it was awful! The same ones who arrested them in front of us denied everything. Just like that, everything!

MOTHER 3 - In short, they were calm: they knew beforehand that they were going to be granted amnesty.

MOTHER 2 - But it was a consolation to finally hear the truth, there, publicly, in the Courts of Justice.

BRIEF MUSIC FOR SEPARATION. THE THREE MOTHERS LEAVE WITH THE SACKCLOTH, ACTOR 1, WHO IS GOING TO PLACE THE GOLDEN ANGEL FOR THE NEXT SCENE, ENTERS (THE IMPRISONMENT OF SEBASTIAN.) HE SIGNALS MAGDALENA WHO IS ABOUT ~~TO~~ LEAVE:

ACTOR 1 - Magdalena, can you help me with this? (HE POINTS TO THE ANGEL OR STRING WHERE HE MUST HANG IT TO LIFT IT.)

MAGDALENA - Yes, of course. (SHE HELPS ACTOR 1.)

ACTOR 1 - Do you have a problem with your vision? *eye sight?*

SILENCE. SHE LOOKS AT HIM HESITANTLY, FINALLY SHE ANSWERS WITH A FULL VOICE:

MAGDALENA - "Over there" they covered our heads with a thick hood, we were in the dark. (IN RESPONSE TO ACTOR 1'S STARE.) In prisoner's camp.

(MARTA HAS ENTERED. SHE GOES TOWARD THE BASKET TO LOOK FOR THE RAG PONY, MAGDALENA GOES TOWARD HER AND WHILE TALKING SHE HELPS HER PUT IT ON.)

ACTOR 1 - Do you think a lot of those days?

MAGDALENA - I feel like I'm still in that darkness.

MARTA - The women in the Association told me you had a son.

MAGDALENA - Yes. I left him in Concepción with his grandparents. (THEY LOOK AT HER WITH AMAZEMENT.) My parents are Chilean.

MARTA - Magdalena, since you've been working with us, it's the first time you ~~allude to~~ ^{talk about} your imprisonment.

ACTOR 1 - (COMING CLOSER.) And it would do you good to talk, don't you think?

MAGDALENA - ~~To~~ talk. ^{about} (SHE STOPS IN HER GESTURE, PENSIVELY.)

ACTOR 1 - ~~About~~ The military coup in Argentina.

MAGDALENA - (AS IF IT DIDN'T CONCERN HER, ALMOST AN IMPERSONAL VOICE) March 1976. We noticed a very ~~evident~~ ^{obvious} change in values.

A total change. You always heard the slogans, on the radio, on the Television: "The security of the Nation. The nation's order, We are here, to save the ^{the} country from chaos, or foreign doctrines, The security of the Argentinian citizens..." Repeated until you are fed up. (PAUSE) ~~The media sound so innocent~~ ^{there was a sound of} in the media

I ^{thought} ~~thought~~ nothing would happen to us ' (PAUSE. SHE LOOKS AT THEM) ~~And~~ ^{And} you want to believe everything they say. Even though you are seeing ~~the~~ ^{and} crimes, the impunity... (SHE INTERRUPTS HERSELF BECAUSE JULIANA SHOWS UP, SHE HAS A BANNER.)

JULIANA- We're going to start. (TO MARTA) Fifth episode.

MAGDALENA LEAVES. ACTOR 1 FINISHES SETTING THE ANGEL ON THE ALTAR-PIECE. THE CHINCHINERO ENTERS. THE LIGHT FADES TO A SEMI

PENUMBRA, AND THIS TIME WE SEE HOW DIOCLECIANO AND SEBASTIAN
POSITION THEMSELVES ON THE PLATFORM. GAVOTA.

Episode 5 of the Altarpiece: "The imprisonment of Sebastian."

STRONG LIGHT, WITH DRAMATIC TONES ON THE ALTARPIECE: SEBASTIAN
WEARING A TUNIC, CHAINED, DIOCLECIANO WITHOUT HIS COURT DRESS,
THE ANGEL VISITS HIM.

WITH BRIEF CHOREOGRAPHY, JULIANA, MARTA WITH HER PONY,
CHINCHINERO MOVE. THE MUSIC STOPS, THEY BECOME STILL. JULIANA
RECITES THE TEN-LINE STANZAS:

JULIANA - Sebastian in chains
accused of treason
is taken to prison
and sentenced to death.
Diocleciano visits him
and begs him with fervor
to renounce his ~~beliefs~~ *beliefs*
to win his love
reminds to win his freedom:
"If they kill you, Sebastian
the suffering will be mine"

(JULIANA AND HER COMPANIONS LEAVE. THE CHARACTERS AT THE
ALTARPIECE COME TO LIFE.)

DIOCLECIANO The captain of my guard
of treason ~~have~~ *has* been accused.

SEBASTIAN To be a Christian is not
the biggest of all crimes?

To win his freedom

DIOCLECIANO --

You visit the dungeons
and encourage your brothers
to reject our gods

SEBASTIAN

Haven't you come to a ^udungeon
to ask me, to renounce (my god?) *nowe*

DIOCLECIANO

Suffering, in the dark
I approach you like a thief...

SEBASTIAN

You ordered my chains.

DIOCLECIANO

What does the Emperor want?

SEBASTIAN

To hear from your ^{hear}(lips) the truth.

DIOCLECIANO

What you heard is what it is.

SEBASTIAN

You were my favorite one,
I treat ^{ed} you like a son...

DIOCLECIANO

You knew I was a Christian
with duties to fulfill.

SEBASTIAN

The Captain of the Guard
should only serve his Emperor.

DIOCLECIANO

I don't serve he, who sends
my brothers to death.

SEBASTIAN

I bestowed upon you my favours
and the greatest one: my friendship!

DIOCLECIANO

(And for that) I am indebted to you. *Sin*

(BEGGING) You wouldn't offend your God
pretending to sacrifice ~~to sacrifice~~

to our Romans Gods. I beseech you, Sebastian
do it for me!

SEBASTIAN

Many who have done so
their freedom have won.
For that they curse their weakness
and they never find peace.
Stop persecuting them!

DIOCLECIANO

Sebastian, your perseverance is vain:
Galerio will rise up in arms.

SEBASTIAN

Aren't you the August ^{the} and "Master"?

DIOCLECIANO

Does ~~the~~ ^a Cesar ^{have} ~~rule~~ ^{power} more than you? *have*

Peace is what your people want,
you don't give them life
planting death on the fields!

Not in hate, but in love
will you find true peace:

In your decrees command:
"Yes to life, NO to death!"

DIOCLECIANO

(ANGRY) Our law is our law,
I don't know a better one!
To the courage of its legions
owes Rome its grandeur,
not to peace, but to war
and to its code of honor!

SEBASTIAN

There's a man who didn't need a sword
so that the crowds
could hail him as their lord:
He came to show the way
to our salvation

DIOCLECIANO

If you refer to your Master
-the one they call Jesus Christ-
he was not saved
from being crucified.

SEBASTIAN

His word is still alive,
his word gives us light:
his followers preach
virtue, hope and justic.

DIOCLECIANO

(TIRED) What could I do with you?

SEBASTIAN

(IRONIC) Make me die on the cross
and thus, save the Empire!

DIOCLECIANO

Oh, you, stubborn, you are making fun of me!

SEBASTIAN

Didn't you send your archers
to take away my life?

DIOCLECIANO

If they hurt you with their arrows
the pain will be mine
Sebastian, I have no reason
to order your death!

SEBASTIAN

Because of my beliefs, I know,
you will take my life away,
but you, the executioner, ignore
why you are sending me to death!

DIOCLECIANO

(HURT) For calling me that name
consider your self lost!

SEBASTIAN

What is lost on earth
is gained in heaven
my God looks after me

He who speaks through my mouth
has greater poer than you

DIOCLECIANO

You have signed your sentence!
I challange that powerfull God
to save you from martyrdom and death!
Get him, my bowmen, *archers*
my guards, come!
Give death to the Captain!

DARKNESS

When the light comes back on, there can be brief music for separation,
and we see Magdalena, wearing her sunglasses, where we saw her before,
sitting still on a bench. She will give her testimony with an impersonal
voice.

S C E N E V I I

MAGDALENA - They arrested me in Buenos Aires, on April 1977. I was
two months pregnant. On the same day they arrested my husband,
in the street. They took me out of my house with violence and
threw me on the floor of the car. They took me to a prisoner ^{'s} camp.
They were always screaming *at* me. They forced *me* to run in all direc-
tions, blinfolded, making me crash against the walls, or against
other prisoners who were lying on the floor. For five days
they kept me tied to my husband: every single one of those days
they applied electrical shocks all over our bodies. (PAUSE) I
don't know how many times I was harassed...raped..." (1)

(1) Fragments taken from the written testimony of an argentine woman.

BREEF MUSIC OF SEPARATION.

Now the story of the martyrdom of the saint will start to develop while the light over the Altarpiece shows Juliana reciting, alternating with Magdalena's testimony. At the altarpiece two mothers hang the sackcloth that illustrates the ten-line stanzas: "To a tree is tied."

JULIANA

Mooved, and in pain,
 Diocleciano gives the order:
 "Tie him to a tree
 he who once, was my Guard of Honor

MUIS BEATS.

MAGDALENA A year later they transferred my husband. To transfer was a synonym for death. It meant being led to a well of lime ^{to be} ~~and discharge a burst of shot at him thath would make him~~ ^{aid be made to} fall inside. They transferred him along with 16 other prisoners who are still on the list of the arrested-disappeared."

MUSIC BEATS. The second curtain falls (embroidered sackcloth wich represents naive painting of the seven archers with their bows.)

JULIANA

And the emperor orders
 the seven fiercest archers
 to take without mercy
 Sebastian's life away

MUSIC BEATS

MAGDALENA - Shortly after my release, my son was born. Soon I'll have to explain ^{to} him that his father was kidnapped in his own country, his own native land: his only crime was to fight for justice. For a better way of life.

MUSIC BEATS

JULIANA Instead of seven wounds
seven stars in the saint
were lighted...

(In the central arch, in Sebastian ^{is} image, seven lights like stars are seen.)

MUSIC BEATS

MAGDALENA - "When you enter a clandestine jail, you find yourself deprived of all your defenses. It means to be flung to the bottom of an abyss. But to suffer the agony of waiting for death and torture, day after day, is less hard IF WE KNOW WITH CERTAINTY WHICH ARE OUR IDEALS AND OUR HOPES."

THE MOTHERS APPROACHE MAGDALENA, WHO HAS JUST TAKEN OFF HER SUN-GLASSES, THEY GIVE HER A VAIL, LIKE THE ONE THEY ARE EARING, AND LEAVE WITH HER.

Episode 6 of the Altarpiece

(This time without transition go directly to the last Roman Episode. The characters, Dioclesiano and Sebastian are already on stage (at the scene?), on the Altarpiece (where the sackclothes remain hung.) Diocleciano is wearing his purple robe and his tiara, Sebastian is covered with a tunic or cape with a hood, like the monk habits. The scene takes place on the palace stairwell. Sebastian will be sittted at the edge of the platform and Diocleciano enters and goes up to the Altarpiece. (Magdalena's exit is simultaneous with the action:)

JULIANA - (WHO HAS REMAINED ON THE ALTARPIECE, DESCENDS TO RECITE TEN-LINE STANZAS:)

And lying on that orchard
they left him badly wounded
with seven arrows
and considering him dead
the 7 archers left.
Two saintly Christian women arrive
and heal his wounds
Sebastian comes back to life!
What he has promised, he doesn't forget:
to plead for his Christian brothers.

(JULIANA LEAVES.)

DIOCLECIANO - (WHEN SEBASTIAN RAISES HIS HOOD.) Sebastian. . .

I ordered your death!

SEBASTIAN - And you challenged my God to preserve my life.

DIOCLECIANO - What witchcraft did you perform? With your preaching you turned my archers into cowards! They will pay for their disobedience.

SEBASTIAN - They carried out your orders: Look at my scars.
(HE OPENES HIS CAPE SOMEWHAT.)

DIOCLECIANO - For all the gods??? Who was able to cure ~~in such~~ *a way* incurable wounds? *in such a way?*

SEBASTIAN - Two saintly women who found me in the orchard.
Don't blame your archers, they left me ~~for dead.~~ *thinking I was*
dead.

DIOCLECIANO - If he has so much power as to save you from death, why doesn't he turn me into a mere slave, or into a pious ^{all} Christian, and thus save you so much work?

SEBASTIAN - You'll see the light only if you want to see it:
free is the will of man.

DIOCLECIANO - Not yours: you came to me "sent" . . . by your God.

SEBASTIAN - I am his servant, but I freely chose whom I wanted to serve. Faith in his beliefs doesn't enslave ~~man~~ man. You too, Diocleciano, are free to order that Christians die, or **LIVE!**

DIOCLECIANO - (HE TURNS HIS BACK.) Enough! I don't want to hear anymore. (PAUSE.) Why do you continue to torment me? Why did you come to the palace?

SEBASTIAN - To plead for my brothers! And to save you, Diocleciano.

DIOCLECIANO - Why?

SEBASTIAN - Because I gave you my love, Sir.

DIOCLECIANO -(HURT) And I, because of the love I gave you, and you gave me, Sebastian, must I sign your death sentence twice? (THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN SILENCE) Will your God save you once more?

SEBASTIAN - I will not have the occasion to talk ^{to} you again. (PAUSE)
Grant your forgiveness, I pray you, Diocleciano. We have had enough of this unjust persecution. Or...your end will be unbearable.

DIOCLECIANO - (REACTS IRONIC) Do you know how to predict the future? can you read the stars, like the fortunetellers who roam the palace? (HE SMILES) What do you see in the days to come?

SEBASTIAN - (SERIOUS) Grief, and sorrow. Your Cesar Galerio will betray you.

DIOCLECIANO - He will be my successor. Why stain himself with my blood?

SEBASTIAN - He will spill ~~your~~ ^{that is yours} blood, but it will not flow from your body.

DIOCLECIANO - From my lineage? ^{then?} (SEBASTIAN ASSENTS) I don't believe in your predictions!

SEBASTIAN - Before dying, you will see collapsing what you ^{built} constructed with love and effort.

DIOCLECIANO - (INCREDULOUS) My beloved city of Nicomedia?

SEBASTIAN - The Empire.

DIOCLECIANO - You are lying! All my deeds will remain in the memory of men. They will recognize my merits and sing my glory.

SEBASTIAN - They'll curse your name for persecuting Christians.

DIOCLECIANO - None of them will be left on earth to curse my name!

SEBASTIAN (AS THOUGH ILLUMINATED, LOOKING IN FRONT OF HIMSELF) There will be thousands and thousands...I can see them coming out of the darkness of jails and catacombs, vacillating, pale like a ghostly army. I see them gathering strength, singing their hymns, *believing* reconstructing their temples, taking the Gospel to all corners on earth..

(THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET IS HEARD)

DIOCLECIANO - Flee, Sebastian! Galerio approaches. *Go into* Enter the palace and I will arrange *for* your escape!

SEBASTIAN - If I do, you will say: he was a coward, he didn't have the courage to stand up to his convictions. If I die, perhaps you will remember my word. Perhaps the seed will bear fruit.

DIOCLECIANO - (HE PRESSES HIM) Go, Sebastian, I want to save you!

SEBASTIAN - And who will save those who die because of your edicts?

DIOCLECIANO - (HEARING ANOTHER TRUMPET SOUND) Please, go...Only you matter, Sebastian: I consider you my son!

SEBASTIAN - You say "only my son matters", and you are not ashamed. To those you so unjustly persecute, the sons of everyone, all the sons matter!

HE TURNS HIDING HIS FACE, WHEN GALERIO ENTERS.

GALERIO - Hail, Diocleciano. Who dare *bother* you at the stairwell of your palace?

DIOCLECIANO - (HIDIN HIS FEAR) A fortunerteller, who reads the future.

GALERIO - And what has he predicted?

DIOCLECIANO - (HESITATES) (WITH ANDA AGRESSIVE TONE) That my Cesar
Galerio will spill the blood of my lineage.

GALERIO - I see! And what lies do you have for me? Speak!

SEBASTAIN UNCOVERS HIMSELF, GALERIO LOOKS AT HIM SURPRISED.

SEBASTIAN - You will fall victim of a misfortune that will make you
curse life for your sufferings. Then you wil sign the
peace with the Crhistian, hoping that their God will
cure you.

GALERIO - You are going to die cursing life for your sufferings,
treacherous Captain! (TO DIOCLECIANO) You order his
death!

DIOCLECIANO - My archers pierced his body, but the wounds healed!

GALERIO - Christian and sorcerer...(SHOUTING) To the stake! Burn
him! Your god could save you from the fire...you ' ll
be mutilated, and beheaded! Let's see if your god can
put together what I have separated! Your remains
will be discarded in the Roman sewer. No one will ever find
you, to pay you^y homage as a martyr. Arrest him! I
condemn you, Sebastian, to eternal oblivion!

BRIEF MUSIC UNDERLINES HIS WORDS, WHILE JULIANA ANTERS WITH THE
BANNER OF SEBASTIAN (HIS IMAGE PAINTED). THEY LEAVE.

S C E N E V I I I

THE THREE MOTHERS, WHOM MAGDALENA JOINS, (Mother 4) WEARING BLACK TRANSPARENT VEILS OVER THEIR FACES, ACT NOW LIKE A POPULAR CHORUS, WHILE JULIANA ON THE PLATFORM CONTINUES RECITING THE TEN-LINE STANZAS WHICH PUT AN END TO THE STORY OF SAINT SEBASTIAN IN ROME:

JULIANA And Galerio, angry,
 takes out his sword, and orders:
 "Behead him, and throw his remains
 in the filthy sewer!"

MOTHER How strange, (it ~~se~~ seems to happen over and over again.

MOTHER 3 - Always the same.

MOTHER 4 - How can men do that to other men? Always the same thing.

MOTHER 2 -The flesh adhered to their clothes

MOTHER 3 - Their bones tied with wire

MOTHER 1 In an oven, deep, full of lime

MOTHER 2 In a clandestine land

MOTHER 4 In the scum, where those who had a name, lost it.

MOTHER 3 In a well.

MOTHER 1 - Going back centuries, you will find men torturing men and
 hiding their remains

CHORUS (WHO HAS BEEN REPEATING SOME SENTENCES) How strange: it ~~s~~ seem to
 happen over and over again...(MUSIC BEATS)

JULIANA (WITH A BANNER) They condemn Sebastian
 and the order was fulfilled:
 Surrounded by light
 bleeding from his thousand wounds
 with the sign of the cross
 the saint gave up life!

MUSIC BEATS

MOTHER 2 - It is hard for a mother to have a son disappear

MOTHER 1 - It's even harder to find this missing son and learn how
 he lost his life.

MOTHER 3 Better not to have found him.

MOTHER 1 (MOVING SOME MORE EVIDENT) No! Nothing is better now! Every-
 thing is worse: to know or not to know about a missing son,
 to find him dead, and to see the state in which they left him.

MOTHER 1 BEND IN HER GRIEF, THE RECITE AS IF IN A CANON:

MOTHERS 2,3 and 4: He had his feet ...his hands...his throat...
 his feet, his feet, his hand, his throat, his throat, his
 vital organs, his feet, his hands...mutilated, mutilated,
 mutilated...

MOTHER 1 - Beheaded!!!

A BRIEF EXPLOSION IN STAGE DESIGNING SOUND.

SILENCE

JULIANA They carried his sacred remains
 up to a hidden drainage
 believing that, buried there,
 they would be left in oblivion.

MOTHER 4 - We can not forget!

CHORUS - We must not forget!

MOTHER 4 - Because the horrors, with the passing of time, could seem less horrible.

MOTHER 2 - We could get used to the gesture of taking in our hands pieces of a jaw and saying: "Yes, it is my son, he was nice and generous."

MOTHER 3 - Or when seeing a skull with holes coming out of the earth, murmur: "My husband never hurt anybody."

MOTHER 2 - Or when we recognize in a rag, something we knitted for our husband ²with our hands ^{by}next ¹to the fire, while the bread was baking, wi'll say: "He was peaceful, he always fulfilled his duties..."

MOTHER 1 - (SHE TAKES OFF HER VEIL AND PLACES HERSELF ALREADY IN AN EXTREME BEFORE SPEAKING) My son, with your death, I lost my life! No one should allow what has happened to fall into silence, to fall into oblivion...

SILENCE

JULIANA

They have hidden the saint's remains
but such effort was in vain :
of his ^{secret} clandestine burial

as a christian woman had informed

CHORUS AND JULIANA

Now all the pilgrims know
where Sebastian lies!

NOW, THE MOTHERS, FOLLOWING JULIANA, WITH THE BANNER, MOVE ABOUT IN

A CIRCLE, MOTHER 1 REMAINS IN HER PLACE, TAKING TURNS THEY WILL SAY THEIR SPEECHES:

MOTHERS AND JULIANA - We ~~don't~~ want ^{neither} revenge, ^{nor oblivion} but ~~neither~~ oblivion

- Don't call them "the nineteen from Yumbel"
- The fourteen from Lonquene

- They can't be only a number. . . only an amount ^{figure}

- Behind the ^{figure} amount all that fits is the name and there's no room for the man

- And for the grief of those who loved them
- We want to feel them present
- Call him by the name with which we said hello every day
- Talk about what he looked like, what he said
- Talk about his sorrows,
- his hopes. . .

MOTHER 1 - Son, since I came back to life, there is not a single day that I don't feel your presence and hear your voice.

JULIANA -

"What a sad celebration

Had Diocleciano, ^{persecutor of the Christians,}

persecuter of the Christians.

Sebastian predicted it!

He said in his old age:

"my empire collapsed
and my glory was extinguished,"
and while saying it, he would cry.
"Oh, Sebastian, he clamored,
only you gave me love!

MUSIC BEATS, LIGHT ON MOTHER 1:

MOTHER 1 - Son, where did they take you? What did they do with you? (PAUSE.) "It's dark, mother; I open and I close my eyes and it's dark. My hands are tied, my body is bent and I feel cold." (PAUSE) Son, we will never stop looking for you, even though they always give us the same answers: the ~~process~~ ^{trial} is extremely slow, see pages so and so, come to morrow, we have to check up, he ~~is~~ ^{has} not ^{been} arrested, we don't know about him, nothing can be done, ...The Habeas Corpus doesn't save anyone from torture! (PAUSE)

"Mother, think that a river doesn't end, you will continue to believe in what is worth, and to ~~construct~~ ^{build} with your hands a future if I can leave you dignity forever! " (PAUSE) Son, they ~~to~~ tear you ~~in~~ pieces, denying you life, without granting ~~either~~ your ^{either} death. And the judges will write, calmly : "add to the file, studied, proceed, file it...forget about it! Because for some people, what's important are only the fulfilled request...let the legal recourses run out slowly...life runs out much earlier!

(PAUSE) Mother, I feel like dying at every moment, my victory is ~~now~~ ^{that of} other than keep ^{my} silence, fainting, the ~~second~~ ^{moment} I can rest, the fixed idea of not speaking, and telling you that I haven't changed, After all, our blood is limited, our heart gets tired, and there is this lack of air ^a, ~~lost~~ of thirst, and more hunger...But do not let

them, woman, kill your soul! (1)

INCIDENTAL MUSIC.

THE OTHER MOTHERS AND THE ACTORS, CHINCHINERO AND JULIANA MOVE ABOUT AND MOTHER 1 JOINS THEM, IN A PROCESSION. ALEJANDRO AND MARTA OFFER THEM SOME CANDLES INSIDE RED PAPER CARNATIONS WHICH LOOK LIKE SMALL CHINESE LANTERNS AND THEY ALSO GIVE THEM A PIECE OF PAPER WITH THE NAMES OF THE 19 LEADERS FOUND IN THE CEMETERY OF YUMBEL AND WHICH THEY WILL SAY LATER.

MOTHER 2 - Don't allow us, Sebastian, to forget those who are absent.

VOICES - Do not ^{ll} allow it.

MOTHER 3- Life is so hard, and we are so prone to forgetfulness.

MOTHER 4 - If we forget the past, we'll be condemned to repeat it!

VOICES - Don't allow it, Sebastian.

MOTHER 1 - Thus, when we remember them, we'll say, never more!

VOICES - Never more. . . never more. . .

(1) Mother 1's monologue is based on part of poem that Jos Manuel Parada, assassinated,--one of the three professionals who appeared beheaded March, 1985--, wrote as a result of the arrest and disappearance of his wife's father, Fernando Ortiz, in 1976.

(The procession can descend into the theater and return to the stage, preceded by Juliana who is carrying a banner and they all name the dead, in a single voice, and in unison they say the litany, carrying the paper in one hand and the candle inside a carnation in the other:)

ONE - Juan Acuña

CHORUS Pray for him

ONE - Luis Araneda

CHORUS We entrust him to you, Sebastian

ONE - Manuel Becerra

CHORUS Look after him, Saint Doncel

ONE - Rubén Campos, Dagoberto Garfias

CHORUS Pray for their souls

ONE - Juan Jara, Fernando Grandon

CHORUS Take ~~them~~ our love *to them*

ONE - Jorge Lamaña, Heraldo Muñoz, Federico Riquelme

CHORUS We entrust them to you, Sebastian

ONE - Oscar Sanhueza, Luis Ulloa, Raúl Urrea

CHORUS Take care of them in the Holy Kingdom

ONE - Juan Villarroel, Jorge Zorrilla, Eduardo
Gutiérrez

CHORUS Look after them, Saint Doncel

ONE - Mario Jara, Alfonso Macaya, Wilson Muñoz

CHORUS Take ~~them~~ our love *to them*

JULIANA - From your sanctuary in Yumbel, protect us so that we
can construct a free country, where justice reigns!

MOTHER 2 and 3 - Give us that hope, miraculous Saint!

(A POLKA BEAT EXPLODES, IT CAN BE THE ACTOR WHO ACTOR PLAYING A STREET HURDY-GURDY, AND WHOM CHINCHINERO ACCOMPANIES.)

JULIANA - Today is the celebration of Saint Sebastian!

EVERYBODY - We congratulate the saint!

CHINCHINERO - The pilgrims are here!

(Unexpectedly, a popular performance forms in the square with the passing of a couple (actors) wearing cute masks and dancing the polka, and then some [cueca] steps, crossing the stage; or else someone handling popular puppets; an actor in stilts may enter, use paper dolls which represent Diocleciano and Sebastian, the vendor with his cart, etc.)

The Mothers have taken off their veil and put the candles down, they join the pilgrims' celebration.

CHORUS - Here we are, at Yumbel,
we come to pay homage to you,
our beloved Sabastian,
with a carnation and a verse

SEVERAL PEOPLE - Long live the Saint! Don't forget your
pilgrims!

(SOME ARE CARRYING FLAGS WITH THE SAINT COLORS, RED AND YELLOW, AND AFTER A FEW TURNS THE CHINCHINERO GIVES, PLAYING THE DRUM AND CYMBALS, JULIANA GETS UP ON THE PLATFORM AND ANNOUNCES:)

JULIANA - Attention! (DRUMROLL) Today, January 20, the feast of our patron Saint Sebastian, the actors have just performed for you the play that tells his life and martyrdom, called. . .

(DRUMROLL AND SOUND OF CYMBALS.)

EVERYBODY - Altarpiece of Yumbel!

MUSIC FOR THE FINAL SONG (MARCH) IN SINGLE FILE, FACING THE AUDIENCE:

Today they ^{be} invoke you in Yumbel
 your sanctuary is now famous
 throngs of pilgrims
 pay you pious homage.

First in Rome, and later,
 the dancer and the singer
 say happily and with fervor:

Between heaven and earth
 injustice is ~~men martyrdom~~ ^{a scourge}
 and the remedy is LOVE!

*be fork
a scourge?*

THEY REPEAT, MOVING ABOUT:

Between heaven and earth
 injustice is ~~our fate~~ ^{a scourge}
 and the remedy, is LOVE!

THE END

ALTERPIECE OF YUMBEL

Isidora Aguirre

Santiago de Chile, 1985-86

(RETABLO DE YUMBEL)

Translated by Teresa Cajiao Salas

and Margarita Vargas, Buffalo 1988, USA.

SCENE 8

The 4 Mothers and Magdalena (as Mother 5) enter wearing black transparent veils over their faces. Juliana recites the stanzas:

JULIANA And Galerious, in anger,
Takes out his sword, and orders:
"Behead him! and throw his remains
in the Roman (filthy) sewer!"

MOTHER 1

How strange... it happens over and over again.

MOTHER 3

Always the same!

MOTHER 4

How can men do this to other men?

MOTHER 1

...Over and over again.

MOTHER 2

The flesh adhering to their clothes...

MOTHER 3

Their bones tied with wire...

MOTHER 2

In an oven, deep, full of lime...

MOTHER 4

In a well...

MOTHER 5

In a clandestine land, where he, who had a name,
loses it.