

GALILEO'S CRIME

CHORUS 8: HORROR OF THE INQUISITION



The Inquisitor demanded a confession. It was vital. To burn Galileo at the stake would make him a hero—a martyr. But his humiliation at public trial would be a true setback for his views, as well as a stern warning to free thinkers everywhere.

If a confession was needed, a confession would be obtained. How?... The Instruments. At the bottom of those winding stairs, Galileo would meet his darkest fear—like Hell itself—a living nightmare: the rack—to tear him limb from limb; strappado—to hoist and dislocate his arms; the lash, hot pincers, thumbscrews, water torture, iron boots, the brazier and much much more. All designed to “convince” the accused—for his own benefit—that confession alone was the soul’s road to Salvation before God.

Perhaps at Galileo’s age, just the sight of what lay in store might be enough to break his spirit. So the Inquisitor hoped. Surely the old man could not expect to withstand this kind of physical torment and punishment. The choice would be his alone, of course. But one way or the other, the ending was no mystery. Duty would be done. Whatever the cost, the Church would be defended. And Galileo—champion of new ideas, symbol of courage, Reason and Truth—would be brought to his knees at last.