

この街の月は大きいですね。僕、いつまでかに入りました。

鏡 汽 整 作
水 法 屋 飴 演出

役者
嶋田久作

大野さゆり

飴屋法水

丸尾末広

小川信郎

和田英亮

行谷あたる

武者小路実政

他

照明 星野義雄

音響 飴屋法水

衣裳 鳥羽治

野口和子

小道具 大月魅鶴

森實仁美

制作 牧野栄子

協力 川津英昭

株式会社 財美

ポスター画

丸尾末広

東京グランギニョール

MERCURY

★ a play by the TOKYO GRAND GUIGNOL
originally performed in 1984 at the Art Theater Shinjuku

A translation/recreation by Aaron Dylan Kearns
See afterword for further details.

- ACT 1 -

The room goes black with a click. There's the sound of a ticking clock.

The Public Image LTD song Four Enclosed Walls plays over the audio system. *1

The sounds of stomping fill the room. In synchronization with Martin Atkins' drumming, the sounds of feet against the ground match the claustrophobic primal percussion of the song. *3[A]

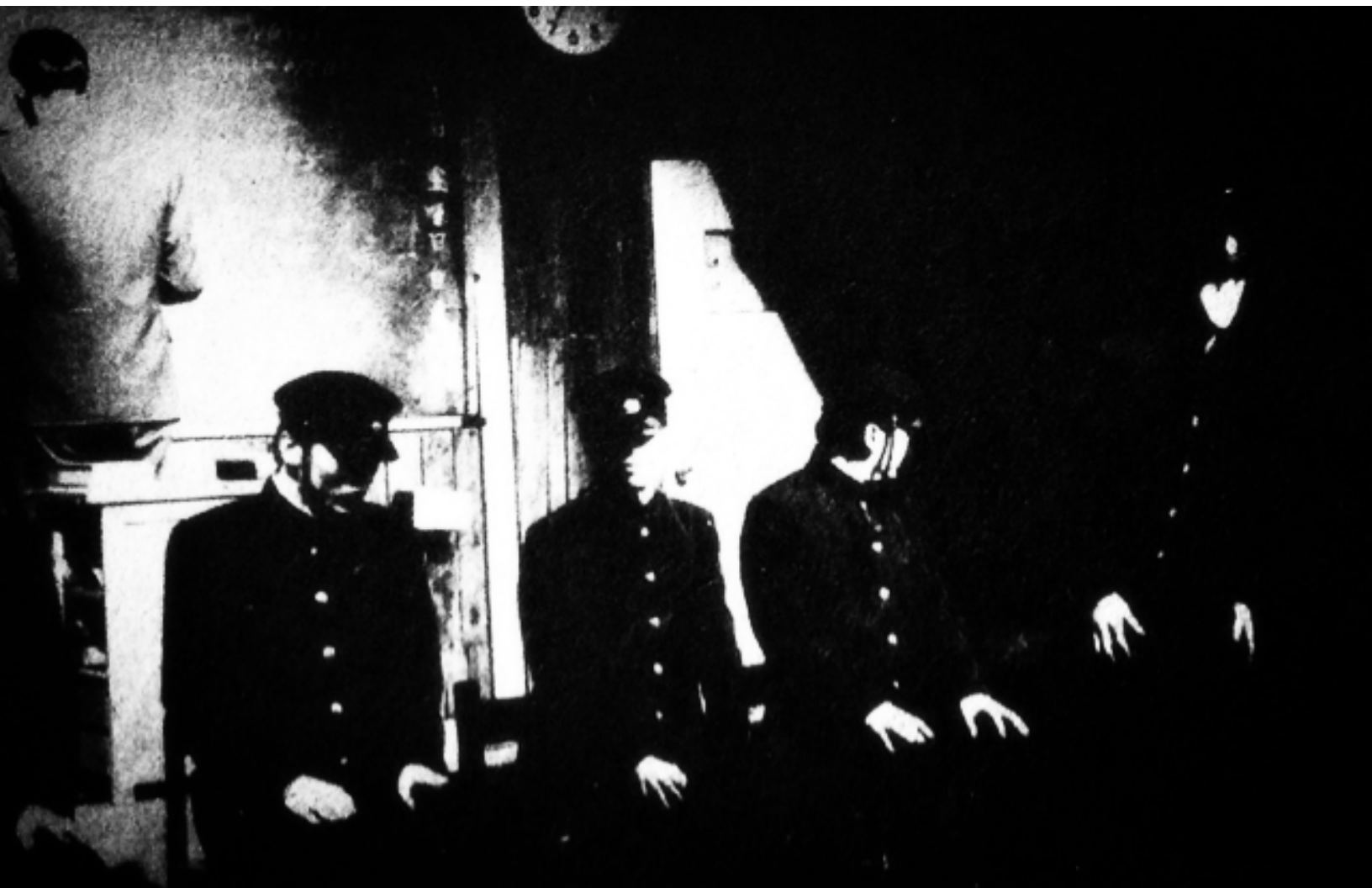
Stage lights are gradually turned on over the span of the song. A light on the ground is illuminated first, revealing the source of the stomping. Six students are lined up in chairs, facing the audience. They all stomp to the music while seated.

The students are wearing vintage militaristic school uniforms with black hats and matching button-ups.

They are all seated in a claustrophobic, distorted classroom. There's a window looking out on a night sky, a morbid statue depicting the anatomy of a skinless human sits in the corner of the room. A teacher is at the back of the students, facing away from them while he writes katakana on a blackboard.

The stomping stops, but the oppressive music continues. A student urgently stands up from his chair, still facing away from the teacher.

Student 1: Teacher! The writing doesn't feel right!



The teacher erases his notes and writes them over again on the blackboard. The student sits back down. Another student rises from his seat.

Student 2: Teacher!

Teacher: What?

The teacher is still writing on the blackboard.

Student 2: On my way to school this morning, I saw someone rape the corpse of a cat.

Teacher: Well, maybe I had a car accident last night. Now sit!

The student sits back down. Another one rises from his seat afterward.

Student 3: Teacher!

Teacher: What?

Student 3: I've had trouble sleeping at night. Whenever I'm in bed, my privates feel funny.

Teacher: It's likely the climate. Now sit!

The student sits back down. Another one stands from his seat.

Student 4: Teacher! My voice hasn't changed yet!

Teacher: It will eventually, now sit!

The student sits back down. Another one rises from his seat.

Student 5: Teacher! Three days ago, I saw someone rape a cat in a public street!

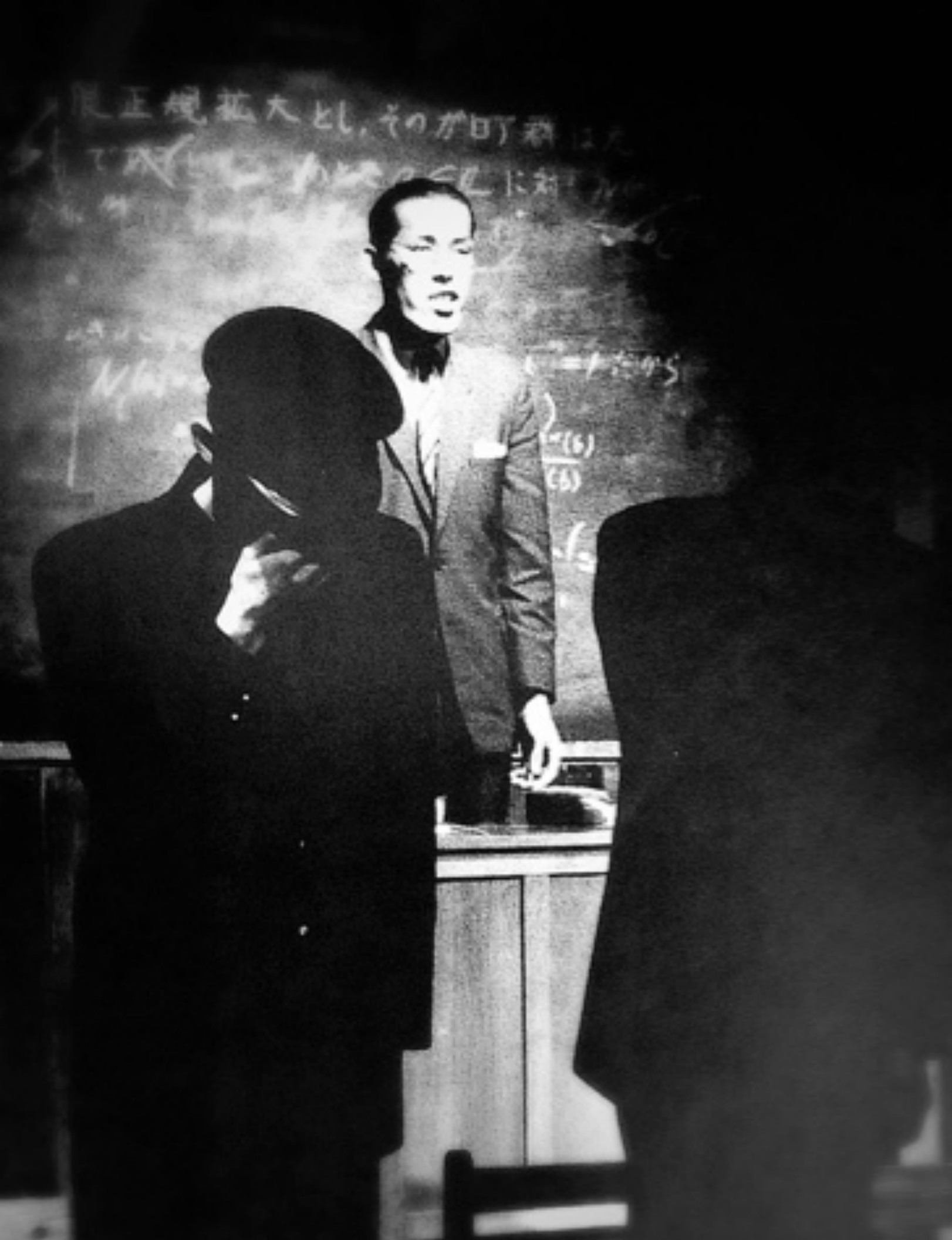
The teacher, irritated with his students, clears his throat at them.

Student 6: Teacher! There's a fire, the mountains are burning!

The teacher ignores this student. The student is still standing. Another student stands up at the same time.

Student 5: Teacher! Please do something!

The students are now all standing, speaking at the same time.



The room steadily becomes more and more chaotic, the music and voices of the students congeal into an overbearing auditory assault. They're all calling for the teacher, describing weird feelings and senses of discomfort. The students eventually shout simultaneously.

Students: Teacher, I feel sick!

The teacher slowly turns away from the blackboard to face his students.

Teacher: Go to the nurse's office.

The symbols and writing on the blackboard spring out, dancing in the air like abstract wire sculptures.

The students flee the classroom in a mob, pushing through the door out into the hallway, on their way to the nurse's office.

The teacher, now alone in the classroom, turns back to the blackboard and continues writing. Outside the window, a full moon rises in the night sky.

There's an unexpected knock at the door. The teacher turns again to face the doorway.

With an explosive gust of wind, the door swings open. A new student, Mikami, enters the room with the sounds of a windstorm.

Outside the window, a woman with an umbrella floats by the moon.

Mikami: Good evening. I'm Mikami, I'm a new transfer student.

Mikami points out the window to the moon outside.

Mikami: The moon here is incredible, it's so big. It's so much to take in at once.

Teacher: Is the moon here bigger than where you're from?

Mikami: Where I lived, the moon was farther away. It was always very small. I transferred here because I lost something. I've lost my sister. I knew that there would be a city where the moon would be big, the moon there would have what I'm looking for.

Teacher: What happened to your sister?

Mikami takes off his hat and bows. His expression turns serious, and he addresses the audience.



Mikami: It happened three years ago, during a night where the moonlight made everything glisten. My sister would always drink tea while reading a book by the window in her room. She would usually read for hours upon hours, but that night, she could hardly even read for several minutes. She just looked out her window at the moon. It was like a glittering button made of gold, and it was bigger that night than any other night. I hadn't seen anything like it, it was just like the moon outside now. My sister told me that she would go out on a walk, but she never came back.

Teacher: What makes you think she'd be here? The moon told you so? I'm sorry to say, but you won't find her here.

Mikami: Why?

Teacher: No matter where you are, the moon will always be the same size.

The other students, returning from the nurse's office, fill up the classroom. They are all squirming in discomfort, sporting medical masks, eyepatches, various assortments of bandages and breathing tubes. They take their seats, with Mikami claiming the last open seat in the classroom.

The students turn their chairs so they can face the teacher and the blackboard. The teacher had drawn a human figure on the blackboard along with notes about the STD syphilis.

Teacher: Today's lesson will be about syphilis.



Student: But we already did syphilis last week.

Teacher (with a mocking tone): So you think you can learn everything in just one lesson, huh?

An unsettling class about STDs ensues, with the teacher occasionally calling up students to point out on the figure on the blackboard certain areas that would be affected by syphilis. The teacher at one point also brings out a medical textbook on the subject, having a student flip through the book for the class. The student expresses disgust from the contents of the book.

Mikami stays at his desk, bored with the lesson.
Teacher: ... Despite popular belief, syphilis isn't exclusively contractable just through premarital intercourse, it can also spread through masturbation. Masturbation is a sin, a sin that should never be practiced!

Mikami laughs, pulling a telescope out from his backpack to look out the window at the moon.

Student: But teacher, I heard elsewhere that masturbation isn't harmful.

Teacher: The Ministry of Education is wrong!

The teacher then proceeds to explain Jehovah's wrath against masturbation, connecting it with extensive descriptions about STDs and their symptoms.



One of the students, named Toba (played by Tatsuhide Takei), speaks up to the teacher about his grotesque, exaggerated descriptions.

Toba: But teacher, there isn't any disease with all these symptoms... Except for one, one that I had in middle school. It happened when I used to keep praying mantises. I had two of them, but they eventually combined. After that, I got really sick.

Teacher: That's because one ate the other.

Toba: No, they were very close friends.

Teacher: The females cannibalize the males when having sexual intercourse.

Toba: No, it doesn't matter anyway. I'm sure that they became one. And then I... I... I got sick after that. My stomach swelled up and strange bubbles came out of my anus. They were like parasitic lumps.

Teacher: It was likely an egg.

The student starts to panic.

Toba (panicking): I can't do this. I'm still sick. I used tweezers and a sewing needle to pop at the parasitic eggs that were coming from me. This small parasite, my pet mantis. My little mantis... Tweezers... Sickness... Sickness... I'm sick! I'm sick!

The teacher calls in the school nurse to take the student to the nurse's office. The school bell rings, marking the end of this bizarre lesson.

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

We return to see the after school activities of the group of students. Mikami isn't present. They are skimming through various mangas and magazines. Two of the students are huddled over a magazine about foreign films. They're arguing over which actress is better, Marlene Dietrich or Brooke Shields.



Rumors had spread about the school regarding the teacher, whose name is Kinbuchi (*). There are rumors about a woman hidden in his classroom, and her possible connection to the new transfer student.

One student asks the other if he plans to join the extracurricular activities after class. "Of course!" responds the other student.

The students' gossip is interrupted when the clock strikes 8, setting off an alarm. A whistle blows, and overwhelming percussive music infuses the atmosphere (**). The students stand, stomping their feet and shaking their fists in a manner that simulates to masturbation.

Students (in unison): Chinkajeong! Chinkajeong!

The school blackboard spins in its frame. A hobo (Chinkajeong) is bound up to the back of the board, eating from a lunchbox. When the blackboard stops spinning, it flips backward, the hobo facing out to the students in the classroom. He stops eating and laughs. He doesn't make any sound though, instead miming to his own voice from a prerecorded cassette tape.

Students (in unison): Hail Chinkajeong!

The Hobo: Hrmph, mph... Hah, yes, hail! Clutch your chests, grope your butts!

The hobo, mumbling and muttering his words in a deranged manner, gives a lecture on the life of beggars and the luxuries of homelessness. These are the aforementioned extracurricular activities, an exact inverse of the conformist lessons Kinbuchi would enforce.

The Hobo: Today's lesson is about the importance of jerking off, or onanism, as they said in the old testament.

One of the students speaks up, mentioning that their teacher called masturbation a sin.



The Hobo: That Kinbuchi is teaching you lies, be wary of that! Now unzip your pants! Stick your hand in! And charge!

The music intensifies with the hobo's command.

The students do exactly as the hobo orders, comically masturbating all at once. Their first motion is simultaneous but their intensities are far from uniform. The hobo indulges in his control over the students, floating throughout the room watching their processes up close. With the background music reaching a conclusion, the students all ejaculate at once, their discharge forming a pool that the hobo swims in, bathing in the bodily fluids of others.

The Hobo: There's a sign on the bathroom stall I live in, it says that it's out of order. I wrote that sign four years ago when I woke up to find myself there in the early winter. Ever since then, whenever I'd wake up I'd see weeds, fragments of onions and glistening beer bottles. They are dangling from the dumpster just outside the bathroom window. I piss to that sight every day. I hug the toilet's smooth skin. The red letters of that sign I painted, the debris of public bathroom toilets, the beer bottles and garbage. Wherever I am, I see that place whenever I close my eyes. That bathroom stall is imprinted within my eyelids, broken glass against my eyes. It never leaves me...

The hobo's mouth gapes open and he throws back his head with another unnatural, distorted prerecorded cackle that echoes throughout the room.

Hearing footsteps from the hallway approaching the classroom, the hobo hides behind the teacher's desk. Mikami enters the room.

Mikami searches through the classroom, rummaging through the drawers on the teacher's desk before doing a thorough inspection of the room itself. The hobo has seemingly vanished from the area. As he does this, the setting steadily morphs as the sounds of wintry winds and the voices and footsteps of invisible crowds surround Mikami on all sides. Music envelopes this surrounding soundscape.

When Mikami is just about to give up, his sister appears before him. She's facing away, looking to the black void beyond the stage.

Mikami: Sister!

He runs up to his sister. She doesn't seem to notice him.

Mikami: It's me, your brother!

His sister never turns to look to him. She's completely unresponsive.

Mikami: Don't you remember me? You went away along with the winter snow to become its bride. They said that you were a dead cat. Where were you all that time? We can go back home now. Let's go home together.

His sister still won't respond.

Mikami: ... Sister?

Mikami starts to become worried.

Mikami: Sister?

Worry turns into desperation.

Mikami: Why aren't you speaking?

His sister melancholically whistles through her teeth the theme to the 1956 French drama film Des Gens Sans Importance. *2

Mikami looks down to see that one of the buttons on his uniform is missing.

Mikami: It has to be around here somewhere. I just arrived here not too long ago.

Mikami gets on the floor and crawls, desperately searching for the lone button. In the midst of searching, he looks back up to where his sister had been to find that she isn't there anymore. Just like that, she was gone again.

The melody of Des Gens Sans Importance faintly echoes in the background while the sound of wintery winds and passing crowds in open streets fills the stage again. Realizing he had lost his sister again, Mikami falls to the ground and cries, but his cries along with the melody are overwhelmed by the sounds of the crowd's chattering.

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

We return to the class to see the teacher preparing a lesson on the Turkish language. He notices that Mikami is looking out the window again with his telescope.

Teacher: What's this! What do you think you're doing?

Mikami: I'm looking out over the prefecture. Everything in this telescope is upside down. The forest's trees are growing from the sky, and the cars and civilians of the city are trying not to fall from heaven.

Teacher: What lens is in that telescope?

Mikami: It's just the glass from a window. It was a window so beautiful that I broke a shard from it and installed it to my telescope.

Teacher: Glass can't just invert the image like that.

Mikami: Yes. I'm lying about that. This glass is the best though.



Teacher: Well then, what are you really looking at then?
With this finest glass of yours?

Mikami: Something far. Something that's very close yet far
away. Where we are, it's the farthest point of the Earth,
practically the end of the world. It looks like... my back!
Sitting right here, it's my back. I can see myself in the
distance. (pause) This is the hand that I use to find what
I've lost. If I wear a plain pair of glasses, like yours,
and look upside down between my legs, I will find the
things I haven't seen before.

Mikami: I'm looking for my sister that way.

Mikami suddenly calls out to the teacher in an urgent tone.

Mikami: Teacher! Teacher!

Mikami smirks at his teacher.

Mikami: I'm bored.

Teacher: Oh, shut up!

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

End of Act 1.

- ACT 2 -

The stage is pitch black, an anguished voice is rambling while groaning in pain.

Toba (in a dazed state): Ah... oh god... god... ugh... ahhh... stop it... I'm your little brother, hahahaha... I'll never do it again, I promise... I'm not a girl... metamorphosing... stop! Stop!

The lights switch on to reveal a significant change in the setting. The classroom had been repurposed to what seems to be the nurse's office. The anatomical figure is still there, but there is now also a medicine cabinet lined with various glass bottles, a bed operating table, and a surgical light. Toba is stretched out over the bed, the teacher and the nurse (***) are setting up the pipe stand for a cloth screen. *3[B]



The remaining students are seated again. A bizarre surgical lesson is about to ensue, the students seated to watch the operation on one of their own peers.

The teacher and the nurse are both sporting green surgical uniforms. They put on gas masks and rubber gloves in anticipation.

The nurse passively hands a scalpel to the teacher. This causes the teacher to break out in a disjointed, violent dance. The nurse pulls out the cloth screen over the bed. The two hide behind the walling cloth, the nurse casually walking to the bed while the teacher flails and jerks with the scalpel, making stabbing motions to the air. (****)



Throughout the surgery, the teacher is frantically jumping in and out from behind the concealing cloth screen.

The teacher's silhouette in the screen makes an extreme slicing motion, a jet of blood splatters against the cloth screen.

The cloth screen pulls back suddenly to reveal Toba's stomach had been completely sliced open, his organs draped over the bed frame. A strange limbless creature is writhing in Toba's organs.

Teacher: You see this! This alien is your sexuality! These are your urges! We have to remove it, now!

Toba had also become an alien. His head has morphed into what most closely resembles a fleshy crocodile skull while he writhes and convulses violently in the bed frame.

Teacher: Cut the anesthesia!

The nurse cuts the line of anesthesia from Toba, causing him to faint from the shock and physical pain.

Teacher: See how he's fainted? You can't have wet dreams in the sleep of death!

After further prodding at the tumorous alien, the teacher kills it by opening a bottle of medicine and pouring it over the open wound. While the chemical itself is a reddish hue, it turns the organs that it makes contact with a shade of metallic blue.





Teacher: See how this medicine is a strange shade of red? You have to handle it carefully.

The teacher and the nurse watch in interest as the student's body slowly turns more mechanical looking on the inside.

Teacher: If it gets on one of your hands, you have to give it three days to dry off before you can touch anything with that hand again.

The teacher looks to the nurse.

Teacher: Have you ever wondered why this medicine, which is green and red, seems to turn any organic matter that it touches this distinct shade of metal?

Emptying the bottle, the teacher hands it over to the nurse to read its label.

Teacher: I'll let you in on a little secret. Here.

The nurse carefully inspects the bottle's label.

Nurse: Lowers irritation with an inhibitory bacterial growth effect... Molecular formula: C₂₀ Carbon, H₈ Hydrogen, O₆ Oxygen, Na₂ Sodium, Hg...

The nurse's face suddenly lights up with shock, alarmed with the last chemical in the mixture.

Nurse: No! Teacher, we shouldn't be doing this! Not to our students!

Teacher: That's right, Hg mercury!

Teacher: It's a disgusting word. Mar Kyu Lo (*****). It's nasal yet verbal at the same time. Its pronunciation has all the necessary consonants. It's an idyllic word.

The teacher opens another bottle and starts to pour it over what's left of the wound.

The teacher takes off his gas mask and wipes his face with a cloth, satisfied with the results of the experiment.

Teacher: And with organs that shine like metal, your body will always have value to it. Even after death!

When messing around with the shining robotic innards, the teacher accidentally spills some of the mercury on his hand.

Teacher: Shit. Guess that starts my three days.

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

The school bell rings again.

We return to see the students lined up in the nurse's office. They're waiting for their usual routine examinations.

The students are all standing in a corner of the room, staring at Toba in awe. Toba is fully suited again, but now completely motionless. The students first try to silently gesture and communicate to Toba before the discussion turns inward.

Student 1: Has Toba been acting odd lately, or is it just me?

Student 2: No, he is weird!

One of the students walks up to Toba and hits him several times. Toba doesn't react, standing still and unresponsive to the world around him.

Student 3: He's been robotic, his movements are jerky and unnatural. When he goes up the steps now, he makes clicking noises!

Student 2: Clicking and clanking.

Student 4: It's like he has thumbtacks at the bottom of his shoes wherever he goes...

The teacher and the nurse enter the room. The regular student examinations commence. They do the standard operations, checking the student's weights, heights, tongues, etc.

Partway through their procedures, the teacher notices a slight callus on the nurse's finger, a callus that would've formed from extensive drawing.

Teacher (Sternly): I've heard certain rumors going around about you lately... That you've been drawing in the operating room on work hours! That you were drawing erotic grotesque nonsense no less!

Nurse: Me? Drawing erotic grotesque nonsense? Why... why I've never!

The nurse flees, jumping offstage.

The teacher shifts his attention to the medical records of his students, flipping through their papers.

Teacher: I wonder what got into him.

Running past the teacher and the students, the nurse cheekily flashes his lab coat to the audience, revealing four of his mangas in the pockets inside the coat. He's wearing a Midori: Shoujo Tsubaki T-shirt beneath it. With this brief moment of self-promotion, the nurse leaves the stage again.

The teacher rounds up the students to hear their confessions and medical concerns. One student is paranoid that whenever he goes to school his mother sneaks into his room to inspect all his belongings. Another student is fearful that his voice will never change. One is experiencing delusions about the mountainsides of Japan burning in a forest fire.



Teacher: Maybe we should consider mercury treatment. We tried it with Toba, and look at how he is now!

The teacher turns to Toba, who's been disconnected from everyone the whole time.

Teacher: Well, Toba, how have you been feeling? (pause)
Have you had any perverse dreams lately?

Toba: No. I almost never dream anymore.

Teacher: As you can see, we have fully eradicated Toba's sexual degeneracy! 20% of his bloodstream is now mercury. With the cleansed blood going into his brain, his brain has been purified and he can only think clean thoughts now. The one true path to enlightenment is to have your bloodstream completely replaced with mercury.

Student 1: Teacher! I want to have my blood cleansed too!

Student 2: Me too!

The students flood out of the room en masse, excited about this new mercury treatment. Mikami is the only one left in the room aside from the teacher.

Mikami: Teacher, why haven't I had my checkup yet?

Teacher: Because I already know your condition. You are the one who needs to be cleansed the most. You've been saying a lot of interesting things with these delusions about your so-called sister, I've been curious about what you were peeking at through that telescope of yours lately. How would what you're spying on help you find your sister? (pause) I've also done some of my own research. You know what I've found? There's been no citizen in this city who matches the descriptions you've had of your sister.

Mikami: I know that. But it's possible she could've come here with another man. She said things about a teacher, a teacher who worked at this school...

Teacher: That wouldn't be me, I've only taught here for the past three years.

Mikami: But that was just when she ran away from home.
Three years ago..

The teacher scowls at Mikami.

Mikami: Just kidding! Just kidding... I would personally pass
on the mercury treatment, I'm afraid it won't be as
effective for me.

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

We return to the medical room. It's late at night, long
after school hours. The lights are down low. The anatomical
figure of the human body opens like an iron maiden. The
hobo crawls out of the human gateway. Confident that no
one's around, the hobo's mouth gapes open and his unnatural
prerecorded laugh echoes through the room.

The hobo then proceeds to flirtatiously strip off his own
skin, treating it like clothing in a striptease. Collecting
gauze bandages soaked in ethanol, he applies them directly
to his exposed flesh. Lifting the anatomical model he
crawled out of, he carries it over and lays it out on the
surgical bed. He then proceeds to make love with the
grotesque figure.

The hobo is distracted from his sexual encounter when he
hears something at the far end of the room. Someone has
entered. Alarmed, he hides behind the bed. Mikami is
searching through the room vigorously for any evidence.
With a lantern, he opens the drawers in each cabinet,
emptying out their contents. He then shifts his attention
to the teacher's lab coat, closely inspecting each pocket.



At that moment, the hobo peeks back out from behind the bed frame.

Hobo: Hey, you! What do you think you're doing!

Mikami turns around in alarm, lighting the hobo and his morbid inanimate lover with his lamp.

Hobo: You have no business being in here right now, this is where I cleanse myself! I have to be quick, the teacher will be back in just 20 minutes! (pause) Listen, let's keep this a secret, just between you and me. I'll give you a little something in return...

The hobo lays out his inventory. Some of it includes cat teeth, fly wings that are painted silver, bay claws. Mikami isn't interested though.

Hobo: Shit, uh, okay then... uh... ah! How about one of these?

He slips out a set of polaroids and holds them between his toes like playing cards.

Hobo: 1000 yen per pic! (*****)

Mikami: No way!

Hobo: Come on...

Mikami: Fine...

Mikami points out one of the photos at random and they trade it for a 1000 yen bill. Mikami holds the picture over the faint flame in his lamp, just expecting regular porn. His eyes widen when fully deciphers the details. There's something sinister about this photo.

★ ★ ★ **Fade to black** ★ ★ ★

The teacher is at his desk, cleaning off a set of scalpels. With each scalpel he polishes, he places it in a bag of surgical tools. With the tools all eventually gathered neatly together, he zips up the bag and pockets it in his lab coat, which is still on the coat rack.

The door swings open with a violent gust of wind, Mikami dramatically entering the room in a manner similar to his introduction in act one.

The teacher glances away from his coat to Mikami.

Teacher: Mikami? Classes are over for the day, you should be going home with the rest of the students. (pause) Wait, how did you get past the gate?

Mikami: The lock was broken. I'm sorry to take up your time, but I have to tell you something.

Teacher: Why can't you just shut up! I just finished sorting out the medicine cabinets and straightening the bed. And it's so nice and cool in here right now.

Mikami: The cold might be nice for you, but my sister is freezing wherever you're keeping her.

Teacher: You and your sister. Listen, if I could do anything to help your search, I would. But I can't! I don't even know what she looks like.

Mikami: Just a month after she had vanished, I was looking through her belongings. I found a photo album and an address book. The photos were all torn out, and most of the address book's pages were missing too. All that was left was a set of 9 addresses and names that were written with a 4B pencil. I was able to clear nearly all of them, with just one left for investigation. The address led to this school, and the name was yours!

The teacher scoffs.

Teacher: You've clearly watched one too many detective films. Well, if you're so confident that you know everything, then so be it. I'm just stating what I know. And I know that I haven't seen any woman in years.

Mikami approaches the teacher and forces the photo he bought from the hobo into the teacher's face. Mikami's voice tenses while showing the teacher the picture.

Mikami: Isn't this a photo of you with my sister? Doesn't it look a lot like you, laughing with my sister in your arms? (*****)

The teacher doesn't respond.

Mikami: It is! That's because it is! There you are, and there she is!

Teacher: Well well, the second button on your uniform is missing. That's quite unusual since you're not a slacker.

Mikami: What does a stupid button have to do with anything!

Suddenly, the intensity in Mikami's eyes fades away. He lowers the hand with the photo while staring off into the distance.

Mikami: She took that button with her when she ran away. I have to get it back from her...

Teacher: You and your buttons. You sound crazy, maybe you were the one who killed your sister.

Mikami freezes. Tearing off all the buttons from his uniform, he collects them in his right hand and glares down at them. He raises his hand up, holding the buttons up to the sky. He drops one button to a light clinking sound, and a bottle in the medicine rack nearby falls. The bottle shatters, trickles of glass echoing across the floor. He drops another button, and another bottle in the rack falls.

This bottle shatters in the same way. Dropping each button in his hand, another corresponding bottle in the rack falls. With the last button however, all the remaining bottles fall at once and the cabinet collapses. Glass shards fill the room.

Behind the rack, a rotting wooden horse is revealed. Mikami's sister is bound to the horse by vinyl medical tubing. Electric wires jutting from the horse are jabbed into her skin with broken shards of glass. Blood flowing from the wooden horse pools around the floor. A church bell bellows in the distance.

Mikami (in a hypnotic state): It was a moonlit night, a golden button had set over the shore. I didn't pay any mind to it. What could I use a button for...

Mikami attacks the teacher, frantically grabbing at him. The two struggle violently, intense music filling the stage. Mikami grabs at the shards of glass around them and attempts to stab the teacher. The struggle continues. Eventually reaching the coat rack, the teacher grabs the scalpel from his lab coat. Finally able to overpower him, the teacher stabs Mikami in the stomach. The room goes silent. Mucusy slime trickles to the ground from Mikami's open wound.

Mikami trembles, backing away from the teacher in fear while throwing random objects in the room at him.

Mikami: It hurts. It hurts... Stop it... Stop it...

Mikami has fallen. The teacher stabs Mikami again when he stands back up. The teacher slams Mikami's body against the ground, calling him a maggot. Clutching at his chest, Mikami rips his shirt open, fully realizing the extent of his wounds. His ribs are gaping open like the wings of a butterfly. After some further struggling, Mikami dies.

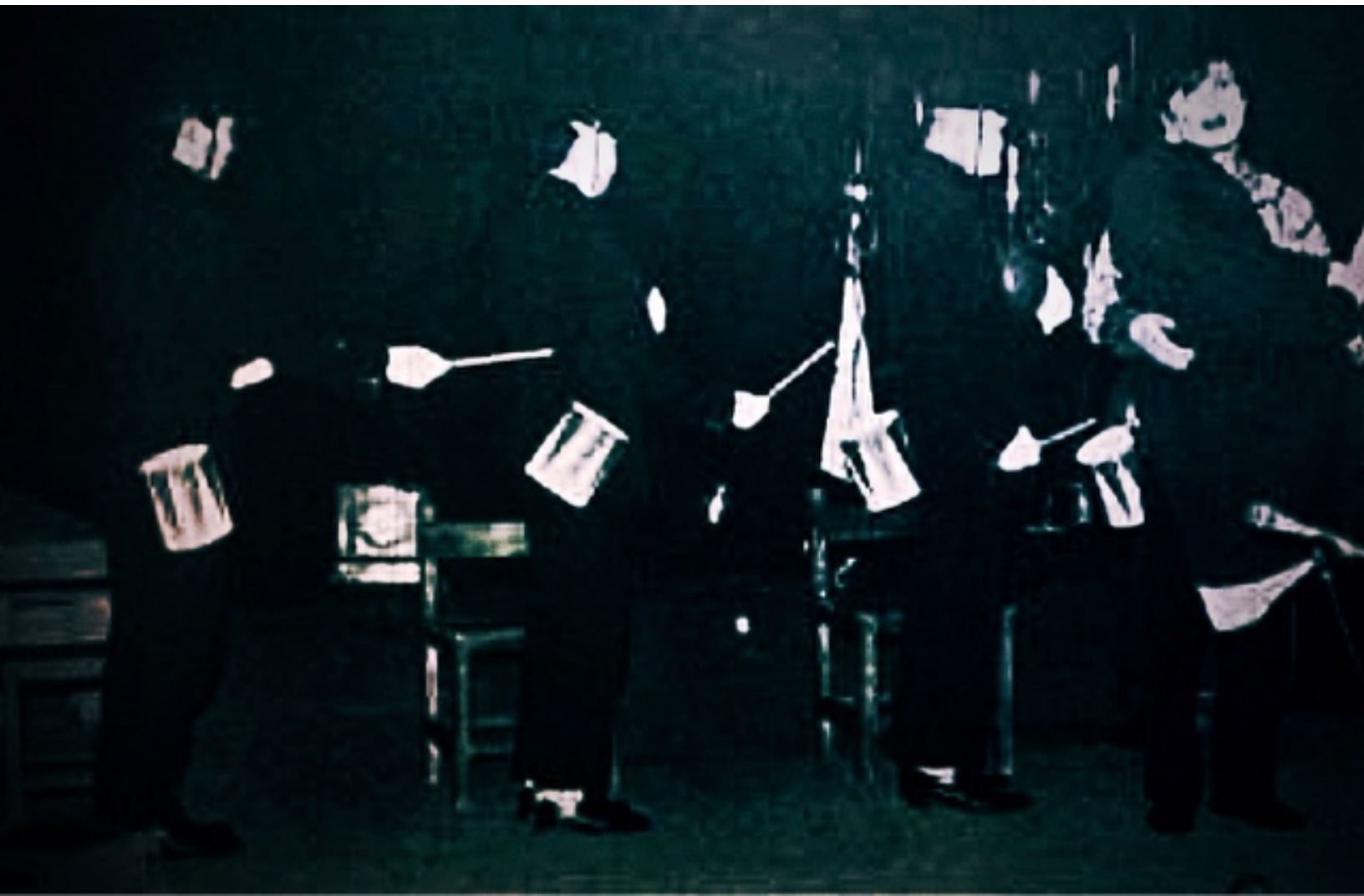
The teacher spits out blood against the curtain at the surgical table.

Teacher: Unclean! Unclean blood!

The students march back into the room. They don't seem to notice Mikami's corpse. They are seen carrying small toy marching drums, a vinyl tube links them all together in a line with mercury flowing collectively between their bodies.

Student 1: February 2X - 1985, Namegaya, 62% Mercury!

Student 2: Haruomi Nakajima, 74% Mercury!



Student 3: Kennosuke Yaguruma, 67% Mercury!

Student 4: Tatsuhide Takei, 98% Mercury!

The students seat themselves so that they face the teacher.

Student: What now?

Teacher: Breathe in...

The students collectively breathe in.

Teacher: Breathe out...

The students breathe out.

Teacher: And wait...

Student: For how long?

Teacher: Until you are all completely filled with mercury,
when it purifies you.

Student: Where?

Teacher: Here.

The teacher gestures for the students to check their circulation.

With slow deep breaths, the students collectively check their pulses in synchronicity. They place their hands over their hearts, press their fingers into their wrists, and check the veins in their temples. They try to find any immediate changes in their bodies. The teacher stoically looks ahead, unmoving. In the distance, a large moon sets over the horizon.

- END



Translator's footnotes:

Known songs used in the play:

Four Enclosed Walls, from Public Image LTD's Flowers Of Romance.

- This was the third studio album to be released by the UK post-punk band Public Image LTD. Easily one of the more experimental albums to ever be released under a major record label. I'm not sure how they even got it through really. While P.I.L.'s two prior albums were more down the line of post-punk and dark reggae, Flowers Of Romance made a sharp shift tonally when the bassist, Jah Wobble, was let off from the band. Around that time, they had hired Martin Atkins to do drumming. The album is essentially a Martin Atkins LP, with most of the songs being experimental audio collages with Atkins' drum playing as the base instrument. It's a very alien, intense sounding album. The tone is set immediately with the song Four Enclosed Walls, with a booming primal drum section that accompanies the sound of a ticking clock, the vocals in it more closely resembling chanting. It was no doubt an influential album for the eventual sound of industrial music, with acts like Swans and Einstürzende Neubauten picking up where this album left off.

Générique from the soundtrack to Henri Verneuil's Des Gens Sans Importance.

- I wasn't aware of the existence of this film until I started working on this translation. Apparently, in Japan the film went by the title Headlights. I'm not sure if this has any relevance to the use of the song. It is a pretty melancholic sounding melody, which suits the tone of the scene it was used in.

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(*) When researching names, I noticed that Kinbuchi was possibly the name of a sort of style of Japanese lucky cat statues.

(**) This also pertains to my later question regarding the music of the play, but in the original text, the music during this scene is roughly translated as "intense beat music". I'm not sure what this would pertain to exactly, so I picked out industrial percussion as a rough guess in regards to the play's prior usage of Four Enclosed Walls.

(***) The nurse is performed here by famous ero guro author Suehiro Maruo.

(****) When broadcast live on the TV program Youth Performance special, this certain section of the play was accompanied with an instrumental track of unknown origin. The description sites it as the song Return of the Bodysnatchers (Exterminated Mix) by F.O.E., but the two songs barely show any resemblance.

(*****) Derived from the Japanese pronunciation of mercury, which is mercuro.

(*****) Approximately 9.17 USD.

(*****) This line originally starts with a quote I couldn't quite decipher the meaning of, the line being "まだシラを切るつもりですか?". The literal machine translation reads as "Are you going to cut the Shira?". It could be a takeoff of the phrase "cut the shit", but I'm not sure.

In addition regarding the students: The lines the group of students say collectively were never specified by character. The students in the text source are written as a collective, with no line being attributed to a specific student outside of Toba and Mikami's dialogue.

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Sources:

- Japanese text:

Keikoto Endless Art on Blogspot

https://keikotoendlessart.blogspot.com/2015/08/blog-post_18.html

- Visual/audio aides

*1 - Four Enclosed Walls - Public Image LTD (from The Flowers Of Romance)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sD19IaJQSJI>

*2 - Des Gens Sans Importance (Générique) - Joseph Kosma

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jPs1TAklLo

*3 The Tokyo Grand Guignol performing Mercury live on Youth Performance Special, hosted by Kazuo Tokumitsu of Nippon TV

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9mwxdCXMdc>

*3[A] Opening of act 1 is from 0:44 to 1:49

*3[B] Opening of act 2 is partially performed from 1:49 to 3:43

Regarding the televised performance on Youth Performance Special:

Note that with the opening of act two, there are some deviations from the original screenplay. For one, Maruo (playing the nurse) is the only one wearing a surgical coat while the teacher is still in his usual suit and tie. Neither of the two are in gas masks or rubber gloves. The dialogue has likely been altered to suit the short runtime, and the mercury solvent isn't applied to Toba's surgical wound. Most notably though, Norizimu Ameya (performing as the hobo) emerges from Toba's wound and attacks the teacher after the alien (the fleshy looking hand puppet that's seen flailing just a bit earlier) retreats back into the wound. Despite being one of the more recognizable images associated with the play and the Tokyo Grand Guignol overall, there's no instance in the original performance of Mercury from 1984 where this specifically happens.

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Afterword:

I believe that in Mercury, the writer used a variant of Bataillian metaphors for certain objects and characters in the story. Like how in Story Of The Eye Bataille likens the eyeball with a moon, an egg, and the testicle, in this play the moon is likened with the buttons of a Japanese school uniform, and the ambiguous fate of Mikami's sister is likened with the cruelty enacted on a dying cat. The likenesses with the moon are especially powerful, setting a very distinct image around the climax of the play. This callback to Bataille is also fitting given how the later guro art of the 1980s would arguably adopt Bataille's concept of the limit-experience, with erotic grotesque nonsense being seen as a literal description of the three defining extremities that could break the rational psyche to enter an enlightened state of madness. Violence, sexual arousal, and lunacy.

I wish it was known better who exactly wrote the play. It was most likely Norimizu Ameya, who was the founder and lead director of the Tokyo Grand Guignol. I can't find a source that exactly confirms it though, or if there were any coauthors as well.

The numerous references made to Mercury throughout the play are perhaps intended to recall the Minamata disease, or its second outbreak that occurred in Niigata Prefecture in 1965. The teacher in the play is depicted as violent and unhinged, with his obsessions with using mercury to "purify" people possibly being an implication that he kills people by poisoning them as a form of cleansing life. In the original text source however, the texture of mercury was also described as being metallic. Outside of its influences in ero guro, the Tokyo Grand Guignol also had a clear influence in Japanese cyberpunk, with direct aesthetic linkings to the films of Shinya Tsukamoto and Shozin Fukui, with Fukui's Rubber's Lover featuring Norimizu Ameya as one of the lead actors and the film's plot about sound being used as a weapon resembling Ameya's ideologies about how sound should be used in the Tokyo Grand Guignol's plays. Mercury in the play also has a mechanical connotation to it as the liquid that turns flesh into metal, rendering the students so that they're living machines a la Tetsuo: The Iron Man. They are already explicitly conditioned by the teacher to carry out actions in synchronization, so their purification with mercury could be a last step of eradicating their humanity in turning them into connecting gears for an authoritarian capitalist system.

One thing I also wish was known better was the exact tracklist of songs that were used in Mercury. While the music used in two of their other plays (Litchi Light Club and Galatia Teito Monogatari) was extensively documented online, the info on music used in Mercury is scarce. The synopsis I used as a reference mentions a third song that was used in the last section with the students checking their vitals, what that song was is never specified though. The use of music in the plays is crucial given Ameya's focus on sound dynamics, with soundscapes being a significant drive of the play's tonal progression and narrative. The songs he would select for plays like Litchi were notably dramatic and expressive in contrast, with a constant back and forth between synthetic soundscapes by artists like Ryuichi Sakamoto, Hosono and Mark Mothersbaugh to explosive industrial percussion with songs by SPK and Test Dept. Litchi specifically opens on the doom-riddled SPK song Culturecide, which was their last hurrah to industrial music before the confusing shift in becoming a new wave pop group. In writing this transcript, I tried my best to give descriptions of what some of the soundscapes might've been.

Thank you for reading my transcript. I'm hoping that you found this to be informative and entertaining.

- Aaron Dylan Kearns

Version 1.0 - May 6th, 2021

演劇情報

東京グラン・ギニョール11月公演「マ
ーキュロ」

十九世紀末パリ、
モンマルトルにあ
った芝居小屋、グ
ラン・ギニョール
座の精神を活かし、
グロテスクとアラ
ベスクの交錯する
ビジュアルな変愛
劇を目指します。

ラヴクラフト嶋田、

Y、飴屋法水他、今回ポスターを手がけた丸
尾末広氏が出演！

11月15日(木)／18日(日)／アート・シアタ
ー新宿／開場18時 開演19時／前売・チケッ

トぴあ(03) ー1300

円 電話予約・東京グラン・ギニョール(0

ー1300円 当日・

1500円

