A Giant

1 Samuel 17: 19-23a, 8-10, 24-50

David

Speaker One  
 Goliath Men of Israel Saul

Semi-circle of tribal percussionists. (all others)

(Much of this play is played in offstage focus with actors very close to one another. SPEAKER ONE observes DAVID as he loads his cart.)

SPEAKER ONE

A Giant. From I Samuel 17. Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

DAVID

And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him;

(David pivots, adjusting his focus off stage, visualizing the battle; as SPEAKER ONE tableaus a warrior behind David.)

DAVID (continued)

and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

SPEAKER ONE

For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array,

SPEAKER ONE/DAVID

army against army.

DAVID

And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage,

(DAVID pivots facing, entering the battle field.)

and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. And as he talked with them,

(SPEAKER ONE pulls DAVID down to safety.)

SPEAKER ONE/DAVID

behold,

(SPEAKER ONE becomes GOLIATH, as he rises from the battlefield, standing on the stools placed side by side.)

GOLIATH

there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

DAVID

And David heard. And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

(SPEAKER ONE steps off stools becoming MEN OF ISRAEL.)

MEN OF ISRAEL

And the men of Israel said,

(MAN 1 over right shoulder.)

Have ye seen this man that is come up?

(MAN 2 over left shoulder)

surely to defy Israel is he come up:

(Man3 right side, interacting with tribal percussionists)

and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter,

(crosses left)

and make his father's house free in Israel.

DAVID

And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

MAN 3

And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

(crossing behind DAVID becoming ELIAB focusing over right shoulder)

ELIAB

And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab’s anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

DAVID

And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause? And he turned from him toward another,

(simple pivot left, as ELIAB crosses left behind DAVID becoming MAN 3)

and spake after the same manner:

MAN 3

and the people answered him again after the former manner. And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul:

(SPEAKER ONE crosses behind DAVID, becoming Saul.)

SAUL

and he sent for him.

(SAUL sits on stools as DAVID kneels.)

DAVID

And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

SAUL

And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

DAVID

And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.

SAUL

And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

(SAUL crosses right and picks up helmet, crosses left and receives mail. DAVID stands as armour is placed upon him, adding great weight.)

SAUL

And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

DAVID

And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

(SAUL exits.)

DAVID (continued)

And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

GOLIATH

(standing on stools)

And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him. And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

DAVID

Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands. And it came to pass,

GOLIATH

when the Philistine arose,

DAVID

and came, and drew nigh to meet David,

GOLIATH

that David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

DAVID

And David put his hand in his bag,

GOLIATH

and took thence a stone,

DAVID

and slang it,

GOLIATH

and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

(GOLIATH tumbles off stool. No longer off stage focus. Falls to the floor in front of DAVID, bowed to him.)

DAVID

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

(The entire line up of percussionists have turned upstage to become soldiers of Israel, chasing opposing army. They raise their swords with a battle cry as DAVID raises his sword to decapitate GOLIATH. Freeze.)

If desired, the play can conclude with Psalm 146, arranged for eight voices, with as much reference as possible to the characters and images of the preceding stories.)

1

#### Psalm 146

(Singer begins singing a chorus like, “Reign Jesus Reign.”)

2

Praise ye the LORD.

ALL

Praise the LORD, O my soul.

3

While I live will I praise the LORD:

4

I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

5

Put not your trust in princes,

ALL

nor in mortals, in whom there is no help.

6 and 2

When their breath leaves, they return to earth;

4

in that very day their thoughts perish.

1

Happy are those who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the LORD their God:

7

Which made heaven,

5

and earth,

6

the sea,

ALL

and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:

(Singer stops.)

8

Which executeth judgment for the oppressed:

5

which giveth food to the hungry.

4

The LORD looseth the prisoners:

1

The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind:

7

the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down:

2

the LORD loveth the righteous:

3

The LORD preserveth the strangers;

6

he relieveth the fatherless and widow:

ALL

but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

The LORD shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.

8

Praise ye the LORD.