

**NAXOS**
AudioBooks

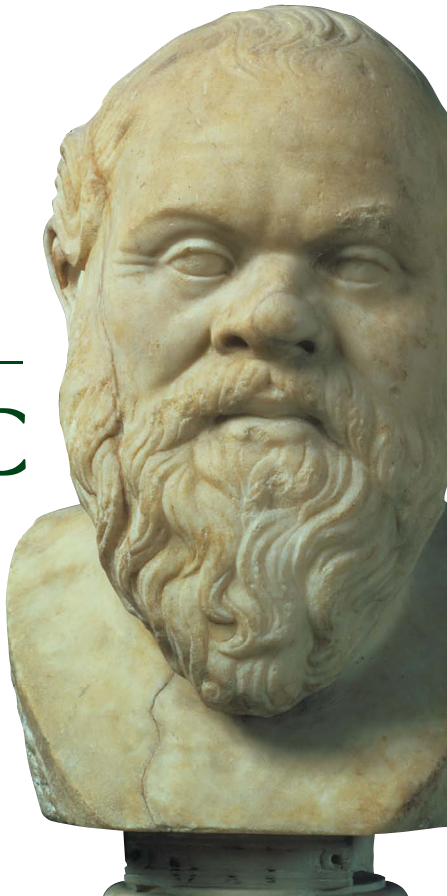
NON-
FICTION

PLATO
— THE —
REPUBLIC

Read by **Bruce Alexander**

*“...Spoken word is the
perfect medium to use for
Platonic dialogue.”*

THE INDEPENDENT



CD 1

Book 1

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | 'I went down to Piraeus yesterday with Glaucon' | 4:22 |
| 2 | 'With pleasure, Cephalus' | 3:53 |
| 3 | 'What would you say is the greatest benefit you have derived from your possession of great wealth?' | 2:19 |
| 4 | Polemarchus 'inherits the discussion' on the definition of justice | 3:09 |
| 5 | 'All right then. When people are unwell...' – the just man | 9:44 |
| 6 | Thrasymachus takes control of the argument | 5:16 |
| 7 | Thrasymachus: 'Some cities are tyrannies, some are democracies and others aristocracies' | 5:06 |
| 8 | Socrates: 'It's neither here nor there, Polemarchus,' I said | 8:18 |

Book 2

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 9 | Glaucon puts the argument for injustice | 3:57 |
| 10 | Glaucon: The legend of Gyges the Lydian | 7:15 |
| 11 | Socrates defends justice | 3:26 |
| 12 | Socrates: 'The origin of a city lies... in that we are not, any of us, self-sufficient' | 7:09 |
| 13 | Socrates: 'In which case, where exactly are justice and injustice to be found in it.' | 4:52 |
| 14 | The origin of war and the need for guardians – soldiers | 7:28 |

Total time on CD 1: 76:22

CD 2

Book 3

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Socrates: 'Which of these people are to rule, and which to be ruled?' | 6:03 |
| 2 | The full guardians and the auxiliaries, the defenders of the rulers' beliefs | 0:42 |
| 3 | The Phoenician story and the training of the auxiliaries | 9:21 |

Book 4

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 4 | The four elements of a city which is wholly good:
wisdom, courage, self-discipline and justice | 0:58 |
| 5 | Wisdom | 3:14 |
| 6 | Courage | 0:41 |
| 7 | Self-discipline | 5:19 |
| 8 | Justice | 3:11 |
| 9 | The role of the classes in society – the skilled worker or businessman;
the warriors; the guardian/rulers | 3:40 |
| 10 | The rational and the spirited | 6:04 |
| 11 | Socrates: 'Which is more profitable: just actions, good behaviour...' | 3:10 |

Book 5

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 12 | Adeimantus raises the question of the role of women in society | 9:40 |
| 13 | Socrates continues the discussion | 4:49 |
| 14 | The situation of children | 3:50 |
| 15 | Socrates: 'the greatest good... and the greatest evil...' | 5:30 |
| 16 | On campaign with the children | 5:54 |
| 17 | The treatment of the enemy – enslavement? | 4:38 |

Total time on CD 2: 76:54

CD 3

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | A model of justice and a model of injustice | 3:21 |
| 2 | Socrates: 'There is no end to suffering... unless either philosophers become kings... or kings... become philosophers' | 3:47 |

Book 6

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 3 | The training of the rulers | 2:13 |
| 4 | Glaucon: 'Yes', he said. 'It is a good idea to find that out' | 2:55 |
| 5 | Socrates: '...the most important branch of study is the form or character of the good' | 4:52 |
| 6 | The faculty of sight | 3:09 |
| 7 | Socrates: 'This is what you must take me to mean by the child of the good' | 4:35 |
| 8 | The ruler of what can be understood and the ruler of what can be seen | 7:07 |

Book 7

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 9 | The metaphor of the community in the cave | 9:03 |
| 10 | Returning to everyday life after the contemplation of the divine | 3:50 |
| 11 | 'In which case, Glaucon, you should bear in mind' | 4:04 |

Book 8

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 12 | The agreed characteristics of the city | 1:22 |
| 13 | The four regimes of rule: The Cretan or Spartan (honour-loving – timocracy), oligarchy, democracy, tyranny | 4:02 |
| 14 | Timocracy or timarchy | 7:27 |
| 15 | I imagine the next regime... Oligarchy | 7:06 |

Total time on CD 3: 69:02

CD 4

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | Democracy | 5:15 |
| 2 | '...that leaves us with the task of describing... tyranny' | 8:20 |
| 3 | Socrates: 'What prompts the change from champion to tyrant?' | 9:41 |

Book 9

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | The verdict: 'The best... is the one who is most kingly, the one who is king over himself | 1:26 |
| 5 | A second proof – the three parts of the soul: pleasure, desire, rule | 3:36 |
| 6 | 'Here are three men...' | 3:39 |
| 7 | Glaucon: 'Explain, please, why pleasure is a shadow-picture' | 3:12 |
| 8 | Socrates: 'Do you know what sort of thing these pleasures and pains are then' | 6:19 |

Book 10

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 9 | Socrates: 'A great prize is at stake, Glaucon...for being good rather than bad' | 3:48 |
| 10 | The tale of Er, the son of Armenius | 5:04 |
| 11 | A new journey to the light – and eight whorls | 4:11 |
| 12 | '...when they arrived they had to go immediately before Lachesis' | 2:21 |
| 13 | Choice: the middle way | 4:35 |
| 14 | 'This choice of lives among the various souls...' | 4:08 |
| 15 | Socrates: 'Practise justice with wisdom' | 1:18 |

Total time on CD 4: 67:01

Total time on CDs 1–4: 4:49:19

Plato

THE REPUBLIC

PLATO AND SOCRATES

Plato was an Athenian aristocrat, born around 429BC, and in the normal course of events he might have expected to play a prominent part in Athenian political life. However, he grew up as Athens was losing the long Peloponnesian War against the Spartans – a defeat which provoked a civil war in which democrats were victorious, and aristocrats were largely discredited. Having also seen his friend and mentor Socrates put to death by the newly restored democracy, Plato for the most part avoided politics, and spent his time in philosophical enquiry. He founded one of the first schools of philosophy – the Academy – in Athens.

Socrates was born in 469BC, and put to death in 399BC. Sentencing him to death was, as he pointed out to the jury, a stupid thing to do. 'For just a small gain in time you will now have the reputation and responsibility ... of having put to

death Socrates, that wise man. They will say I am wise, the people who want to blame you, even though I am not. If you had waited a little, you could have had what you wanted without lifting a finger.'

It is a problem to know exactly what Socrates believed. He wrote nothing himself, and our picture of him comes almost in its entirety from Plato, who makes Socrates the mouthpiece for his most important views. So when the Socrates of a Platonic dialogue says something, we have no cast-iron way of knowing whether this is what the real-life Socrates believed, or whether it is an opinion of Plato's, attributed to Socrates as a mark of respect.

A commonly held view is that the short early dialogues give us an accurate picture of the historical Socrates, that the late dialogues are mostly Plato, and that the middle dialogues (of which **The Republic** is one) mark the point at which

Plato's ideas begin to diverge from those of Socrates, as he begins to see more and more of the problems and complexities inherent in the views held by Socrates.

We can be fairly sure, however, that the real-life Socrates was an innovator in at least two ways. He was one of the first, if not the first, to maintain that a good man will never do harm to anyone – not even to his enemies. And he more or less invented the technique of argument by agreed steps from agreed premises, most argument up to that time having consisted in the adversarial expression of conflicting views. Both these innovations are well exemplified in **The Republic**.

THE REPUBLIC

In **The Republic** Socrates is asked the question 'What is justice?' And in order to answer it, he draws a long and detailed analogy between the individual and the city. If we can see what makes a just city, he says, we may find it easier to see what makes a just individual. Such an answer immediately leads him into the realms of political theory and ethics,

with extended digressions into artistic and literary criticism, and the theory and practice of education. But there is more to **The Republic** than this. Since a city can only be just when it is ruled by those whose principal concern is wisdom and knowledge, Plato is necessarily drawn also into questions about the nature of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of reality (metaphysics).

So **The Republic** compels our attention because it lays the foundation for the whole division of Western European philosophy (by Aristotle, a generation after Plato) into the categories of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and political theory. It does this without technical jargon, in clear simple language, using everyday examples and metaphors drawn from farming and seafaring, or from the making of shoes, weapons, musical instruments and music.

That is one reason why **The Republic** is better suited to being read aloud than any other work of Western philosophy. Another reason is that the arguments are for the most part cumulative, and not sequential. Plato does not repeat himself,

but arguments produced in one place both rely on and support arguments used in another place. So if there is something you don't follow in Book 2, or if your attention wanders in Book 3, this won't stop you understanding and enjoying Book 4. The same arguments won't be used, but similar arguments will, and from those you can generally reconstruct whatever it was you missed the first time.

A third – and the most powerful – reason lies in the power of the images Plato brings before us: of human life as imprisonment in a cave, watching a sequence of shadow-pictures on the wall opposite; of democracy as an unending squabble aboard a ship at sea over who is to take the tiller; of souls after death, choosing the lives into which they will be reborn. Plato in his youth was a poet, and although in **The Republic** he declares war on poets, he can never rid himself of the poetry which pervades his own perception and portrayal of everything he sees.

THIS TRANSLATION

There have been many translations of **The Republic** into English in the last 150 years – nearly all of them very good, in the sense that they give an accurate rendering of the meaning of Plato's Greek. They tend, however, to have two drawbacks. The first is that they stick closely to the structure of the Greek sentences, which is more complex than the structure of English sentences. This is helpful if you are reading the Greek as well, but if you are not reading the Greek, you cannot help being reminded that what you are reading is a translation. Secondly, most translators, aware that this is the most influential of all works of Western philosophy, find it hard to avoid sounding portentous and reverential. This new translation by Tom Griffith never loses sight of the fact that **The Republic** is a conversation, and that what the speakers are doing is trying to invent philosophy using everyday language.

Tom Griffith is a scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge. He was, for some years, head of classics at Marlborough College, and is now the general editor

of Wordsworth Editions' Classics of World Literature series. In addition to **The Republic**, he has translated Plato's **Euthyphro**, **Apology**, **Crito**, **Phaedo**, **Symposium** and **Phaedrus**. His translation of **The Republic** is published by Cambridge University Press.

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Bruce Alexander is best known as Superintendent Mullett in *A Touch of Frost* and has appeared in many other television shows such as *Berkeley Square*, *Casualty* and *Peak Practice*. He has also played major roles in the theatre, notably with the RSC. He is a director of ACTER which annually tours Shakespeare to US campuses. He has featured in the Naxos AudioBooks recordings of *Macbeth* and *Oedipus*, and also reads *The Trial and the Death of Socrates*.

Credits

Translated and abridged by Tom Griffith. Produced by Nicolas Soames
Post-production: Sarah Butcher and Simon Weir, CRC
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