

AGAMEMNON

Opera by

Nicole V. Gagné & David Avidor

Performed by: Robert Ashley

David Avidor

Vera Beren

Sussan Deyhim

Julius Eastman

Fred Frith

Nicole V. Gagné

John Giorno

Rudolph Grey

Shelley Hirsch

Arto Lindsay

Phil Minton

Charles K. Noyes

Pauline Oliveros

David Shea

Ned Sublette

Roger Turner

"Blue" Gene Tyranny



agamemnon-opera.bandcamp.com

AGAMEMNON

cast in order of appearance

Prologue

THYESTES.....Nicole V. Gagné
voice

David Avidor
tapes, Emax,
synthesizers

Act 1

CHORAL ODE 1.....John Giorno
voice

Rudolph Grey
electric guitar

CHORUS 1.....Susan Deyhim
voice

CLYTEMNESTRA.....Vera Beren
voice, guitar-zither

David Avidor
Emax, guitar, mandolin,
violin, cello

Nicole V. Gagné
cello, violin,
mandolin, guitar



Act 2

CHORAL ODE 2.....Fred Frith
voice, keyboards

CHORUS 2.....Pauline Oliveros
voice, accordion

HERALD.....Phil Minton
voice

Roger Turner
percussion

CLYTEMNESTRA.....Vera Beren
voice

David Avidor
E max, clarinet

Nicole V. Gagné
recorder



Act 3

CHORAL ODE 3....."Blue" Gene Tyranny
voice, electronics

CHORUS 3.....David Avidor
voice, tape

AGAMEMNON.....Julius Eastman
voice

Charles K. Noyes
percussion

CLYTEMNESTRA.....Vera Beren
voice

David Avidor
E_{max}, trumpet, French horn,
trombone, sousaphone

Nicole V. Gagné
sousaphone, trombone,
French horn, trumpet



Act 4

CHORAL ODE 4.....David Shea
voice, bullhorns

CLYTEMNESTRA.....Vera Beren
voice

David Avidor
E max, percussion

Nicole V. Gagné
percussion

CHORUS 4.....Robert Ashley
voice

CASSANDRA.....Shelley Hirsch
voice



Act 5

CHORUS 5.....Ned Sublette
voíce, radio

CLYTEMNESTRA.....Vera Beren
voíce

David Avidor
Emax, synthesizers,
tape

Nicole V. Gagné
voíce, found objects

AEGISTHUS.....Arto Lindsay
voíce, electric guitar,
percussion



Some Notes on AGAMEMNON

by Nicole V. Gagné

I. The Music

David Avidor and I created Agamemnon to be an opera specifically for disk rather than live performance. All the musicians were recorded individually, from December of 1986 through December '88. The vocalists were given only the text of their own character's lines and recorded their tracks without hearing the music of any other players. Two exceptions to this procedure are also the longest parts in the opera: the Herald, which Phil Minton and Roger Turner performed together, and Clytemnestra, who is always attended by two musicians of changing instrumentation. The only other departure is Thyestes, which is a live take, heard as played with no edits or overdubs (other than some backwards reverb at the beginning and end).

Of the 16 performers who joined David and me in Agamemnon, 14 worked as studio musicians in a series of free-ranging improvisations, knowing their tracks would be recut and combined with others. Two musicians, however, created what were in effect discrete independent songs: Fred Frith with Choral Ode 2 and "Blue" Gene Tyranny with Choral Ode 3. In both instances, they are the composers of those works, with myself as lyricist and David Avidor and myself as producers.



II. The Libretto

Not being literate in ancient Greek, I wrote the libretto of Agamemnon after studying numerous English translations of Aeschylus (principally those by Richard Lattimore, Tony Harrison, Herbert Weir Smyth & Hugh Lloyd-Jones, and Robert Fagles). The actual words being sung, however, are all taken from a late-16th-century text by the English poet John Studley: his translation of Seneca's play Agamemnon, which was written in Latin by the Roman tragedian and philosopher some time during the middle third of the 1st century C.E. -- about 500 years after Aeschylus's tragedy was first performed.

Although today neglected by both the stage and the academy, Senecan tragedy actually possesses considerable virtues and was wildly admired throughout the Renaissance, when Greek tragedy was still largely unknown. Seneca's lurid violence, bombastic rhetoric, and despairing tone spoke directly to the writers of Elizabethan tragedy, in the original Latin as well as in translation. Studley's Agamemnon appeared in 1581 along with nine other Senecan tragedies "faythfully englished" by various scholarly poets. (Aeschylus would remain unenglished until 1777.) For my libretto, I used Studley's text strictly as a lexicon of words from which I could re-create the characterizations, narrative structure, thematic arguments, and poetic imagery of Aeschylus's Agamemnon.



A further constraint was that the libretto's Clytemnestra had to be stitched together from the words spoken by Seneca/Studley's Clytemnestra; the libretto's Aegisthus, from that text's Aegisthus, and so on. A 72-line epilogue, "added to the Tragedy by the Translator," was treated as a pool of words available for any character. Within the libretto's individual lines, gaps between words separate the previously unrelated fragments of text.

Seneca and Aeschylus are playwrights of drastically different attitudes and methods, and their versions of the Agamemnon story vary greatly. My focus in writing the libretto was of course Aeschylus, but certain Senecan innovations proved irresistible – particularly his conception of Aegisthus as the spawn of Thyestes' incestuous coupling with his own daughter. The Prologue, however, is the libretto's only radical departure from Aeschylus. His Agamemnon begins with a monologue by the Watchman who awaits his master's return; the libretto adopts Seneca's opener, a tirade from the ghost of Thyestes, who is Agamemnon's uncle and his immediate link in a bloody chain of generational violence and revenge. Nevertheless, images and ideas peculiar to Aeschylus's Watchman are woven into Thyestes' song.



My libretto for Agamemnon was designed to make the opera reverberate through a superimposition of historical eras: the contemporary treatment of form; the language of Christian, Tudor England; the bleakness of the Roman courts of Caligula and Nero; the visionary passion of 5th-century B.C.E. Athens.

Nicole V. Gagné



booklet designed by
Fotis Tzanakis



Prologue

THYESTES

departing from the darkened dens which Ditis low doth keepe
heere | am sent out agayne from tartar dungeon deepe

heere on prynces heads they place the royall crowne
heere in throne aloft they lye
heere theyr courts theyr place of banquetting

nay better to haunt the lothsome lakes
where parched up with burning thirst amid the waves hee sits
and payes his paynefull punishment
the Gods feast hee defilde

how great a part belongs to mee and portion of his crime

this is the olde account | speake

when our detestable deedes were done
and wickednes had wearied us to late truce taken was

the starres are kinges and rule the roste
theyr whirling wheele doth racke us all



I gorgde my brest with my chyldren
the bowels of my babes devowred up

fortune enterprising greater guilt
mee doth deprave to file my daughters bawdy bed

my daughter driven by force of fates
doth breede younge bones and lades her wombe with sinfull
seede of myne
a father and grandsyre confusedly I am

in honour of thy natyve day Aegisthus they prepare
the sollemne feast with juncketing and daynty tothsome fare

Agamemnon ground captayne amonge the kinges
returnde hee is to yeelde his throate to his traytresse wyfe
with force of bloody blade shee shall bereve him of his lyfe



the glytering swerd the hewing ax and wounding weapons moe
with bloud for bloud new set abroche shall make the floore to
flow

with sturdy stroke and boystrous blow of pithy pollaxe geven
his beaten braynes are pasht abroad his cracked skull is reven

what shame abashe thee why doubt to smite
thy mother it beseeme

what now nights lynger longe
wee wayght for Phoebus



Act 1

CHORAL ODE 1

hee leaves for his battail
lyke lightning from fyery heaven
lyke the Furies sent downe by wrath of God
to smite those who defy sacred use and right

but the wynde forbyds his navies to passe

his priest tells him
uppon obtayning theyr request crav'de of theyr grace devine
the Gods shall graunt to thee thy passporte into Troy
offer up unto them as sacrificyse thy daughter

after crying all day
hee accepts to pull the paynful plow
without remorse
even though his neck is gald with the print of this yoke

let our fates bringe us to the good
hee declares

the priest unbarres the gate and opes the temple wide
so the clustring thronges can flock in
and see Kynge Agamemnons daughter
on stage ordeyned for her death



his owne child quaking with feare
looking rounde on every side with her tears new gushing

the Greekes them selves to griefe are movde
but do nothing
as hee fymely byndes her mouth
to protect him selfe
from her cries for revenge

and then braydes backe her hayre
drawing noked her neck
to taste the fatall knyfe

receiuing deadly stroke
shee yeeldes to him
a bubling flood from her goary throate

and thus the vyrgin dyed
her heade hanging on his speare as an offered gift
his savory sacrifice to move the wynde

which did move
guiding him on his road to Troy



ten yeares have passed
and they are fyghting there yet unto this howre

thee above the rest
whose powre abydes every where
how chaunt it
fortune God Jove

wee myndful are of thee and render thankefull prayse

thy lessons wee do record
and heere shall declare them plaine
that which constraynes us makes us wyse
learning is borne of payne

CHORUS 1

o worthy queene that beares the swíngíng sway
Clytemnestra borne of Ledas royall bloude
what is the newes
make playn to mee thy reason
for sacrificíng at the sacred alters



CLYTEMNESTRA

Phoebus prelat is this day
this child from deepe of Lady Night

I bryng greater joy
than hopst thou for to heare

our men have tooke Pryams princelye towres

CHORUS 1

what dost thou say

CLYTEMNESTRA

the Greekes have conquered Troy
understande

CHORUS 1

a flood of joy streames from my vapourde eyes

CLYTEMNESTRA

our love is disclosd to all
through these sighs and teares



CHORUS 1

but why cause it be descryde
that they are returning home at last

CLYTEMNESTRA

a God did tel mee of this victory

CHORUS 1

did thou thy selfe
hear this in thy silent bed
see this in the darckenesse

CLYTEMNESTRA

no drowsie dreaming doting soule am I

CHORUS 1

subdue thy fond affections
doth desprat dotage guyde and rule thy mind

CLYTEMNESTRA

my mynde to fancy fond dath not gad and runne astray



CHORUS 1

when did this victory come to him so longe in warre

CLYTEMNESTRA

on this night
mother of the day I haied
Troy fell

CHORUS 1

no man coulde run so fast
over Asia land to tell thee this

CLYTEMNESTRA

I did learne of it from fyer

first from the flashing flames
yet blasing bryght through Troy

then from the high hylles uppon another shore
where a lawrell tree with spredding braunch doth shyne
eflamd
recording theyr calamityes



this glow kindled by my trusty wight
is more blasd abroad and further it is blowen
flaming fast to divers shores
where at every place a wayteth a man
who makste his owne fiery fervent heate
with al the speede hee can

winding a chayne of backe reflecting flames
which doth convay to mee
my husbands retourne from Troy

CHORUS 1

I will pray to the Gods with a glad hart
but first tel mee agayne
yet hath hee fyxt and set his foote back stepping home

CLYTEMNESTRA

Troy is orewhelm'd

the Greekes stil embrewd with gory bloud from the
slaughter great
are now after Trojan boties and at randon runne
feedyng on the countrey



but they have yet to come home againe at last

Troys people have cursed them
they must not also retayne the spoyles
from its divine aulters

let them forbear to defyle
els they wil have t'asswage the wrath of Gods and them
appease
wherby the Grekish navy might have passage free by seas

let us be free at last
from these broyles and agonies

CHORUS 1

the tydings of a message good unto mine eares is blowne
now I will celebrate and prayse God so deare
though dealing longe delay God is gracious



Act 2

CHORAL ODE 2

the staggring states of kynges readdy bee to reele

no day doth shine that they might say
to morrow shall wee rule as wee have done to day

what castell strongly buylt is not by fortune brought loe

downe payسد with theyr owne waight the massy things do
sinke

the ramperd walles of Troy made weake by wicked warre
are cleane overthrown and broke

that skyrmishe ceases
winding both peoples in the bonds of grieve

theyr teares fall in the dust
that was the bodies of theyr sonnes

and in theyr heartes they hale out to hell
the royall courte the sonnes of Tantalus and theyr broyles

lyghtning first lyghteth on the mounts that are most hy



whose necke is larded best his throate shall first be cut

those Erinnys ever more in proud and hauty houses sit

the thinges of midle sort and of a meane degree
endure above the rest and longest dayes do see

the man of meane estate most happy is of all

CHORUS 2

I see a lyght

is it rashnes rude and blynde to declare
that the slaughters so unpure had no powre to foyle him
that hee such scourings hath escapt
and returnes tryumphant victor of long assaulted Troy

a man comes who can say
if wee might all be glad agayne

till hee speakes I pray for the good
they who do not can reap theyr harts owne calamity



HERALD

thys my natyve soyle and the Gods
in humble sort wyth reverence devoutly worship |

now paye your vows unto the Gods
returned is agayne Prynce Agamemnon victor hee

for his people the light of heaven
for Troy the lepping lightning fyre
that teasty Jove did use to hurle provokt to swelling yre
with the lothsome actes of Priam and his stocke

that lightning downe did wryng them hard and wrapt them
in its flame
with the puissant force thereof
wee did burne away and broyle
the temples and the alters of the saincts that rule theyr skyes

Priam by handy stroake did take his fatall wound
after his sonnes gashed carkas was traynd about the field
and now the Troyans doe groveling bend
theyr weary neckes in heavy yokes that wil not slacke

funerall flames and obit rightes for coyne agayne was yeld
more then a dosen tymes over



CHORUS 2

hale take leasure good and stay

HERALD

I could dye happy
taking up my tombe heere
the coast where Pelops once did raygne

CHORUS 2

did affection for thy people
way so heavy on thee

HERALD

I am as it were a conquerd man escaping home
so greevous did I longe to return to thee

CHORUS 2

wee were in bondage eake of sighes and teares
longing for ten yeres with pensive hart and sorrow
for thee



HERALD

wee did grone alyke with this so monstrous ill

CHORUS 2

but wee were silent for feare as darke as hell

HERALD

suffering comes to al but the Gods

wee poor wretches who toyled agaynst that forte
wee layde for yeares uppon the naked shore of Troy
cold and shivering in the hory froth
till the day came when wee fell to part the spoyle
embathed al in Troyan bloude

may these outragious plagues
appease at length the wrath that downe from God is sent

but why should wee disposed be to mourn
the slayne layde in Troyan ground
they howle not at the ill that worketh theyr decay



wee are the quicke wee hop for joye
wee are home heavy with the goods by bloudshed woon
and with the great renoume
of beyng in his company of such a mighty fleete

all these beside the Troyans subdued wee have
all these wee blesse with burning sacrifice on this lucky
day

such are the tydingses | beare thee

CHORUS 2

now by this newes a thousand ships at once released
| was wronge to doubt her
thy counsayle | shall keepe and not complayne my case

go declare to her to Clytemnestra
this glad message which pacifys our mynde

CLYTEMNESTRA

most joyfull was | when | out scand
within the mantel blacke of night
the flames that declared to mee
the heavy wofull plight of Troy



some did say
art thou glad at this
it is a very folishnes of womankind

but to us it is an augur juste and keepes his promise due
my spouse returned is

let sacryfices light the homes all rounde
with garlands greene let every head rejoycing now be crounde

God did spare him all the peril of the broyle

but my husband wil tel it mee
when before the same I doe present stand

why blabbe this long adventure
goe fetch him out of hande

tel him how his lady spouse
lyke a savage wolfe mayntayned hath
the defence of this princely court
agaynst trayterous mallice

tel him how wel shee hath kept
her wedlocke vow that shee to him her husband sware
in lewd and wanton chamber trickes shee spent no idle day



shee did know no abusing lust
nor any mischief did shee conspyre
no more than shee coulde beate and worke yron

HERALD

it doth mee good to gase uppon his noble wyfe
who voyces her mynde so true

CHORUS 2

what shee meanes is playn to all who wil heare her
but what of our kinges brother
doth hee yet sayle on the seas or is hee come a land

HERALD

God graunt and geve us better newes then this that
thou dost crave

CHORUS 2

speake out and utter it
the hart with doubted damage greater grieve doth know



HERALD

Menela and his shippe were lost from view

CHORUS 2

what stormes of seas dispersed our captaynes
tel mee the Gods rage that hath our navy spent

HERALD

thou biddest mee to make report of heavy woful geare
of our shippes destroid by the spyteful wil of the
Furies

those hatefull hagges
with theyr toyle they helpe the wynd and weather
the force of fyre and rage of fighting seas

repayring fast from Troy
unto our shippes agayne wee came aboard
ech little hindraunce seemed to much to us in hasty plight
wee did tough our oers to guyde the way
which following on a thousand shippes did ryve



the evening first did burnish bright and paynt with starres
the sky

but amounting up a litle misty clowde
came belching out in yrksome lompe and Phoebus galland
beames

hee spewd uppon bestayning them
till even the lowring light of Mone was hid and blynd

more nights in one compacted
and then feareful stormes adowne did fall
one uppon another in stronger blasts
with lightning flames and floods tumulting so hye
a man would sure have thought the world did from his center
slyde

the shippes agaynst eche other knockt
wherby the other hee did breake and broken was himselfe
one side with other side was crackt helme was rent with helme
and shippe from shippe was taken cleane out of each others
sight



although God wot but yll for the others
our barke with hand Hee caught
and fortune did trace us a furrow through the floods
till the roring seas stayde theyr rage

when Phoebus golden beames began a freshe to render
lyght
the dolefull day discried all the damage done by nyght
the waters brim bespred about with
the timber and the broken planks of our scattred fleete
and the torne lims of our men

wee know not the fates of the other vessels
in the waters wyde turmoyld and straying farre

may all come to the good

if God wils to preserveth Menelas seede
then hee lives yet and shall come back agayne to us
from where ever his sayles did reculing flye

your wil was the truth to have
ful wel be sure that now yee have it all



Act 3

CHORAL ODE 3

couching backward downe agayne to her common course
the same shee did arest
to file his hostes spousall bed and to abuse his wyfe

hee did take his flight rapt up with her
but the brydale songe
for his darling deare
was a funerall dirge
for his people for Troy crussed by force of armes

in remembraunce of revenge the captayne generall
drove after them and theyr offence
a fyry shafte that had to smite home

a lyon babe from its mothers bosome wrast
a man reared it in his home in his clasped armes

that boystous wight
which never yet acquayntaunce had with its owne
was borne a noble impe of dame nature

some jolly worthy lusty bloude thou fosters evermore



and so its rawfed jawes imbrewde were with the mans bloud
at last

Troy the fertill tree that apples beares of golde
theyr prynce his honour budding forth with flowre
by fortune were hewed downe and sent to deadly doome

golde is the poysning teate whereof monsters grow
when tewde on by greedy mouching cramming jades

by the brethren twins
him who advaunces him selfe to shadowe the sunne
even the Gods were a number odde before hee was borne
and him with the heavy hande the fyst the clubbed brusing
battring batte

the noble gentlemen in honor shynig cleare
with mettall of yellow hew well loden pack away
to trace theyr homeward wayne downe
in darcknesse deepe to lye with the hounds of hell

the good is a lyght whose beams are bright
even for them in poverty shrinking close for colde
in a dungeon comfortlesse without the lyght of skye



the good is a chariot swyfte
that will not trot with slower pace or alter course

CHORUS 3

returning home agayne crounde
a signe of worthy victory
is Agamemnon now

thou that bestryds thy fathers steedes as hee before
hath done

how thy honour to expresse
what solemn games to celebrate

a man can make vowd oblations to the gods
yet hee destroyes and batters
a man can gan his self advance
counterfayting a mourning face with teares
sing sugred ditties eke
for the lusty pompe of royall courte

the shepherd who knoweth not
the peoples heart
is in a piteous plight



my hearts hate did hang over thy head
for the cause that wild thee heather wend

an army with headlong scouring course amayne to Troy
and so longe a tyme
our sonnes hewed downe for Helen

but now most lovingly with heart and hand
with these gyftes
I gratefie and welcome home my frend
my sire who skalde and shooke the tattred Troyan walles

take heede of what you shall heare
it shall teach thee
who can stande upryght
and who yet is savage
who yet is untamed and unbridled

AGAMEMNON
my deare loved lande and God
I gratefie

Gods courte ruled for our cause
bringing mee good successe in the revenge I exacted



ten yeares winding the lightnings flame about them

God tooke no thought of how they prayed in theyr misery
but forst ilfavourde Troy to reele and stagger

and a nimble beast sent it sprawling to the grounde

there is a pryce for those that wage
blacke cloudes over a dying people and theyr deade land
and for us the booty woon by warre

but this I know full well
a mans prosperity will cause
rusty rancours in peoples heartes

no men were with mee in this worke none
I had but one frend who did not fade
does hee yet live or is hee deade
I know not

this day will I undertake with all diligence
to hew out and burn away
whatever heere is cancred or misshapen



but now let us to th'alters worship gyve
the Gods tooke mee out to conquer Troy
and did bring mee backe to my native soyle

CLYTEMNESTRA

the remnaunt left of shamefastnes in mee
tyme hath worne away
in this publyque place I wil declare to all
how love as captive holdeth mee to my husband

hee and I this warre did plunge alike in payne

all the whyle hee was at Troy
I was layde in torments
a frantique raging wight

from every message I did heare every cryme
which the enemy could commit with desprat hand

agayne and agayne I was told
how lyfe thy lymmes hath left

even dreaming
I saw death gnawing thy guttes and gall away
I saw thy brest rent with hellish holes



there is no plague lyke unto this grieffe

to cure the same I turned to fire and swoard
they did the place of salve supply

driven to utter pinch and furthest shift of all
in threatning fits I did try many tymes
to geve up the ghost
but prevented was by the earnest suite of others

doe not seeke about for thy sonne hee is gon

the people have skittish waiward wits
they are fierce in wrath
agaynst a fighter who is staggeryng

this longe warre did threat in thy affayres
therfore Orest his fatherlyke in face
was forst to flye the land
but our boy is some place safe

from thee I have no secrets

ten yeares have I bene desolate and led a widowes life
with howling crying wringing hands with sobs with sighes
and teares



that weeping when it should it cannot now come out of mee

so shall I entertayne a new my husband as his wyfe

I hale this up ryght man

whose majesty doth thundring scepters shake

painted out in pompe of prayse his fame the sky doth beate

enduring many sturdy stormes with mighty toyle and payne

to day hee styll enjoys his health enhauncte in glory great

hee is the king of kinges

the sandy shore to men in theyr beaten barge

the vytall delygth of beyng freed from fatall destiny

I say what is deservde by him

though I offend some

the fault they wil it pardon graunt

in remembraunce of how I in woe hath lived longe

step downe to us victor over Troy

but doe not set thy foote

on the dampishe myry mud of our land

gyrls unfold



my maydes spread our sacred traynes
the fittest shift for thee
the best path to thy home
to the tryumph thou so longe wished to attayne
that it did become a dream past hoping for

fortune hath favored his successe and bryngs him to this day
the Gods our native destnies deale for ever
sharpe execution of theyr law | stubbornly crave

AGAMEMNON

my wyfes welcome is like the warre
it tooke to longe a tyme

honour mee as a man not as a God
I am no prynce of Asia to be worshipped

these gorgious gyftes layde on the ground
I cannot stryd on them without feare

CLYTEMNESTRA

it be but a tryfle small



AGAMEMNON

I will not yeelde on this

CLYTEMNESTRA

a great man what neede hee feare
a doubtful lot or how his lucke befall

AGAMEMNON

that is so

CLYTEMNESTRA

would Pryam trudge on these sheetes

AGAMEMNON

that barbarous prynce hee might do it

CLYTEMNESTRA

why faynt with feble feare
at the prating of others



AGAMEMNON

there is strength in what the people say

CLYTEMNESTRA

the grudging mynd shews the wayt
with which thy majesty is consydered

AGAMEMNON

why contend with mee

CLYTEMNESTRA

the victor if hee gently doth release his captives care
why may not | his lady spouse have hope as wel to fare

AGAMEMNON

this victory is it so deare to thee

CLYTEMNESTRA

o yeld to mee
doe it of thyne owne free wil



AGAMEMNON

let us graunt what is so wisht for
and may no mischiefe come of it

from that huge spoyle wee plucked up this flowre of Troy
heere shee submits her selfe to beare the yoake

sirs take her downe and be good to her
the Gods savegarde is gyven victors who are milde

now bending our will for thee
wee shall goe into the royall courte our home

CLYTEMNESTRA

by fomy floods by the seas wee dwel
and they beat from banke to banke with surges hye
how ever much wee take from them

wee have tossed in theyr silver streames
all wee owne
and this noble courte never is without

all is boyled and brewed and dyed therin



I would have under troden these sacred traynes
had I an oracle to mee sware
that it would bryng thee backe agayne

from the seede to the tree with shading braunch
when what wee longe for comes how ever late
it is good

hee is retourned to us lyke the lyght of day
and goest about lyke God that doth direct the fates
above the starry skye

and God all ways doth mee leade that way I meane to take



Act 4

CHORAL ODE 4

affright rusht in
in swallowes shape
in to an olde mans thratling throate

bloude on the floore
comes backe no more

CLYTEMNESTRA

Cassandra go to
prepare thy selfe with my maydes
kindlest thou the sparkes at the altars

destiny deales gently with thee
more modest should thou be

captives geven out among the vulgar sorte
a stepdame have whose wrath wil worke theyr woe

divelish are
the wicked and ungracious stocke that winnest spoyles
above theyr hopes



wee who beare the swaye heere
longe have ruld with majesty
from the Gods wee do fetch our noble ligne
and so are by fath conjoynd fast
that thou shalt receyve thy due

CHORUS 4

chylde
fast clogde in snares
in the sacred ropes of fortune

CLYTEMNESTRA

| speake out to her
but shee stands not wetting what to do
is shee so savage that shee dost faynt to talke

why dost thou loyter so
do as | say

CHORUS 4

come downe



CLYTEMNESTRA

deale | cannot with delay nor linger any more

an heyferd lilly whight a wayteth at myne aulter
the pype in sacryfice melodiously doth sounde
celebrating a delyght greater than any wee did
hope for

gyrl come apart with mee now

hale her on that shee may followe that way my spouse
is gon

CHORUS 4

goe with the lady doe as shee urges

CLYTEMNESTRA

shee is wounded in her wits
snatcht from the losed rout of Troy
stil with her mynd beseging round



hereafter shall I tame her
shee must be kept with bridle at my will
wherby the more shee strives with corage cranke
the more shee teares and rents her ungracious
saucy face

thy selfe dost thou haylefellowe with us esteeme
a manly stomacke stout thou hast with swelling
hawty hart
subdued with sorrow learne thou shall to play
a womans part

CHORUS 4

pity pearst our heart
to see her in holy day attyre face as pale as ashes

come let us ease her

CASSANDRA

Apollo

CHORUS 4

come downe from there



CASSANDRA

Apollo Apollo hast pulde mee down

CHORUS 4

wretched soul all thy sorrowes deepe
are unknowne to Phoebus face
bewayle this lot not to him

CASSANDRA

feare this house this family

CHORUS 4

shee smels the bloud the pathe of mischiefe

CASSANDRA

the father feasted on his mangled chyldren

the man with trembling hand with axe

CHORUS 4

wee know her last renoume prophet



CASSANDRA

this despret dame her naked weapons
whose crowne shee cracke

CHORUS 4

blab it not heere
wee feede our broode in a tottring nest

mumbling words in gabling mouth
shee shroudes our brayne in a dusty cloude

CASSANDRA

within a revell rexe is kept as sore as ever was
I see the same and am thereat

weare rather thys aray
the conqueror with purple hangings all adorne
this hostile weede thy loving lady wrought
the lyon entangled in the net strugling in vayne

the bullockes necke at sacrifice
shee the priest heaves her hand the pollaxe



CHORUS 4

her privy whispering
tyckling in our ear secret thoughts that brooke
much sorrow

CASSANDRA

hee hath the stroke
dispatcht it is not quite chopt of the head
it hangeth by a litle crop

myne owne distresse to moorne
my throate to bath the blade

CHORUS 4

the spryte of God shee serves in furious rage

thou myghtest well lament this sore decay this grieve
accurst
lyke recording Ilys

CASSANDRA

father follow thee I woulde
unto my countrey men of Troy in lowest hell



I do delight to sayle with them
it doth mee good

CHORUS 4

shee utters out what a chylde can know

CASSANDRA

I see the wery man his burning thyrst forgot
hee mourneth for the funerall that shall ensue

CHORUS 4

in our teares there is no measure to refrayne
those misereyes all measure passe

CASSANDRA

the sqally sisters
evermore deale theyr bloody strokes theyr old
privy grudges
theyr siege shall never stop

CHORUS 4

a shamefull brutishe fact franckly calde



vyrgin bewayling piteously
till the God layde handes upon her

CASSANDRA

| did sacrifice my virginity to Apollo
but chyldren | did refuse
now | play the prophet colde
these tidings | tell mad mumbling to thee
to thee berapt of sence

my prophesying spright burning myne eyes
Thyestes day
the foode hee tasted the gubs of bloude gnawed guts

beware | say of kynges
that country clowne Aegisthus hee this stocke shall
overthrowe

Agamemnon graunde captayne
not knowing the dreadful destinies
entrapped by traytrous trayne

her goary handes her currish fange
cruell conqueresse whore



they both accorde unto the kynde whereof they doe
proceede

Helens syster right shee is and hee Thyestes sonne

CHORUS 4

Thyestes wee know

flesh and bloude for food the fathers maw to fill

but after that

the lyght slyps away

CASSANDRA

you shall see the gasshed corpes of Agamemnon

CHORUS 4

shut up

peace chylde no

God could never brynge to passe the ruín of our natyve
countrey



CASSANDRA

no praying to the heavenly ghostes
these subtle foes doe not pray they slaughter

CHORUS 4

they chiefly ought to worship God whose hearts with
griefe be dull

CASSANDRA

burning inspyred with spryte

the lyonesse will stryke mee dead

off with these sacred robes

why ghost inspyre

none of thyne | am releasse me

Apollo your spyte is worne unto the stumpes

what countrey have | left

where is my syre all my sisters



the sacred tombes and altar stones
our bloud they swincke and swill

Orestes shall come revenge and restore
the fits of fury on them shall light

freedome draweth ny
death gives a courage unto mee

CHORUS 4

sad and solemn as a bull that deadly wounde doth take

CASSANDRA

the deadly wounde I pray shee stryke and leavell right

my feare by this affliction is cleane abated all

CHORUS 4

who dare to death himself betake
is a prynces peare and lyke the Gods



CASSANDRA

this stinking slaughter house spouting bloude

CHORUS 4

poore chylde that huge and fatall gyft
heavenly hands erected have and framde

CASSANDRA

on with mee into the pallace | yeelde my throate
mourning my death and Agamemnons

avengement worthy | crave prickes of fury fresh

CHORUS 4

lamenting these calamyties wee have not time and space

CASSANDRA

doubtfull standeth still the day

even myseries are nothing



CHORUS 4

to mortall man fortune gives but brytle fading joy

hee who late a conqueror tryumphed over Troy
now by destenie stoutly overcome and pulled downe

bloud for bloud and death by turnes the after age
shall see



Act 5

CHORUS 5

and they that of his victory and comming home were glad
to sodayne mourning chaunge their myrth with heavinesse
bestad

CLYTEMNESTRA

I am not ashamed herewithal
at speaking words that were not true
in working mischiefe men do take the rediest way they fynde

longe I did my husbandes death conspyre
and to day by sleight and subtil guyle
entangled hath I this man refusing cleane to be confound

my gashing sword stucke him
thrust through his ribbes
it did sucke the sappy marrow out immixed with his bloud
and this juice it conveyed every where
like the sacred raygne
launching from his gory syde
stayning every thing
in a darke wave that I stil taste of



his death is not sawst with soppes of sorrow
I doe rejoyce

in his lyfetye hee did temper poyson strong
which to day hee did feede on him selfe

CHORUS 5

this heavy sight
this noble hearte deprived of his life

and her with her rough and churlishe looks

CLYTEMNESTRA

I will not waver with feare
like some weak harted woman

I stroke him downe

prages mee or curse mee
it all is the same

one law doth rule
I did keepe it



and that is that

CHORUS 5

thou hast committed sinfully a great and grievous guilt
goe purge thy hardned hands the which thy husbände blood
have spilt

scud out of my sight

CLYTEMNESTRA

now nurtures lore neglected is all ryght doth clean decay

after what sorte dost thou
declare mee an outcast banisht woman

as yet forget I not my daughter
and that infamy whose blemish staynes his blood

yet never did makest thou him
in such reproachfulness to wade
nothing dismayde thee at Aulis Ile
to check what hee durst do



as at a wedding alter syde th'unpitifull parent stoode
and for the sacred virgins love
hee retourned death
slaughtered my child
snapped her head of with his sword

could not that offence suffice for exile
give mee to understande
what man is hee
that should not pay his paynes and suffer death

if thou can so enstruct mee
my kingdome therfore | cast of
now wil | rove at large

if not | shall teach thee
how to a queene thy taunting to forbear

CHORUS 5

her spotted weede with sprinkles
signe of slaughter
beare recorde of her deede
as yet they be not dry



CLYTEMNESTRA

some man els I have
him that of my perills all dost suffer part with mee
and in my realme wil also rule with egall dignity

Aegisthus who lights the blase in my private simple bower

my husband eflamd with Troyan prophets love
retourned a prysoners spouse and Pryams sonne in law

but that trull of prynces bed did meete her death
like as the swan with a songe inspyred by Phoebus grace
divine

see his breathless corse tossed uppon hers
encreasyng leaudnes still
his boyling brest doth smoke
with wound but newly stroke
and freshly still hee fedes his lust least
his chamber chast should want a stewes

CHORUS 5

my death when I shall take I shall be pleased well to dye



hee that of thousand captaynes was graunde captayne
generall
come to as great calamity as Troy it selfe did fall

CLYTEMNESTRA

Troy is become
a wyde gaping hole
with dreadfull sounds and stinking smels
yet Helen is wed to Menela agayne

now after death why dost thou seeke

with these paynes wee ryght our selves

CHORUS 5

o bussard blynde you doe delight in your brutish guise

the Furies hale them on

in this house of the Tantalus bloude

CLYTEMNESTRA

Tantalus hee hath made this stock a bloody raunsome pay



the author of this wicked pedagrew
hee burns now with thyrst of hell
yet the graundsires payneful pangues
can not the childrens wrath asswage

with a lewde unlucky hand
hee did beginne the rusty rancours the cankred hate
which never purged is

CHORUS 5

wyddow
thy husband is bereved quight of breath his lyfe is donne

but what heere is not Gods will

CLYTEMNESTRA

all this is the sonnes of Tantalus and theyr grudge

one might not move theyr sprights

in law to theyr mynds I did not spare my husband



CHORUS 5

Agamemnons death is on thy heade

but the children doe complayne from Thyestes paunch
the fathers guilt hath caused the force of furious foes

the chariot horse with raynes clogde and overquelled
this geare out stretched ready lies in every coast
and is spread the seas uppon

CLYTEMNESTRA

I did but returne the self same trade a new
paying il with yll

his fate deservde is by guiltles bloud of our daughter

now in hell hee seekes about for his defence
but his conscience doth pricke and bringes him
to the shame that stills his lips

CHORUS 5

fortune hales on a rayne of bloude
and with unmeasureable might



our house is topsy turvey tost our kingdomes doe decay
our ruthfull realmes to ruín ronne our stock is cast away

suffer mee take parte of sacrifice with thee
graunt mee my dome by means of death to passe unto my
grave

all plunge of perills past hee is and at a quiet stay
hee is escape and gone

who shall celebrate his funerall with dirge and solemne songe

CLYTEMNESTRA

there wil be no teares to night
no woefull waylings hard in any place about

wee shall passe him to deadly grave
but no cause of mourning have wee
the people wil not mone theyr prynces death

at the blackest streame of Sticks
hee shall stand with dolor beyng prest agaynst her

our child who did take his deadly stroake
shee wil holdeth him



CHORUS 5

heere is wrath for wrath ech opprest with egall grieve
which aunswere were sufficient to please a parent just

they who sowe death
shall reap death
that is Gods fact

what person can be free of this bloude wrath

CLYTEMNESTRA

by blood wee win the waveryng windes
with this sacryfice wee wrap our selves out of this woe

it is the best to chuse that chaunce and follow on that way

may the lowring Gods unto us
now favourable make them selves

the furious force that makes such rigour raygne
let it thrive no more heere in
let this be
the last cryme that ever in this princely court was sowed



AEGISTHUS

o daye of joy

the cruel Gods the judges
long agoe decreed this triumphant victory and conquest

Agamemnon sent to hell
proud Atreus sonne his destenie clong about him

Atreus who put in exile my father
and when Thiest returnd
hee was haled out to the great preparation of suffring

my father stomacke stoute with sonnes
in greatest greefe cursed this house

now from farre out beyond this land I am returnd
to wrap this hawty king in hiddeous holde of death

CHORUS 5

the breeder of this broyle come belching out new bathde
in bloude



AEGISTHUS

olde men

the subtil science of the law you doe not understand
yron boults and chaynes the counsell of payne
wil make you wyse

CHORUS 5

Aegist engroceth castels got by fornication
hee who both is to his sister sonne and brother

AEGISTHUS

thyne elvish prating stay

I am of Phoebus borne I do not shame

those wordes so cranke in misery will haunt you

CHORUS 5

what Agamemnon new is this whom shee hast got of late
with a doubtfull blade in his shivering hand



AEGISTHUS

through being clapt in prison strong
and suffring famyne faynt
truculent men are compeld to yeelde

CHORUS 5

the Furies shall move her sonne to bloude

Orestes now be boulde

you are the onely helpe wee have

AEGISTHUS

to fyre and sword appeale
lay hands sirs on this rabblement of wretches

CHORUS 5

swerd and buckler very well this hand shall doe the deede

AEGISTHUS

on sword

this strong hearted sire feares not death



CHORUS 5

death you preach and death you shall receive

CLYTEMNESTRA

Aegist my love no

doe not move us all to desprat moode agayn

consyder these calamityes wee have reapt
and eake the cares to come

neede wee to worke more woe uppon the world to day

let us returne now to our homes
all of us

wee did but what wee had to do
weary and batred downe as wee are
under these hard destinies
please God they are stayde at last

go home every one



AEGISTHUS

those malicious men geuen to scorne
picke a quarrel with theyr king

CHORUS 5

| will not take this bloudy tyrauntes hand

AEGISTHUS

yet hast thou not layde thy lips
no pardon wil there be in my jurisdiction

CHORUS 5

delight and rampe about
with the honor of the crowne whose brute abroad doth
growe
whilst you can

but in thy roaring noyse make hast thy selfe to save



AEGISTHUS

thou easest feare by fickle hope

you sal pay puft up men

CHORUS 5

Orest on you shall also light revenge his fathers
death

deprive with swerd th'adulterour and mother both of
breath

this poore Orest such kinde of theft is piety in deede

CLYTEMNESTRA

rough and thundring threats all wynd and ayre

forget them dearest

now that wee rule throughout Micoena land
we shall keepe a meane therin and set it ryght

