

STRAUSS

CHANDOS

ELEKTRA

Irène Theorin soprano
Jennifer Holloway soprano
Tanja Ariane Baumgartner
mezzo-soprano
Nikolai Schukoff tenor
Iain Paterson bass-baritone

Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
and Choirs

EDWARD GARDNER





Fred Wallach Collection, The Royal College of Music / ArenaPAL

Richard Strauss, c. 1910

Richard Strauss (1864–1949)

ELEKTRA

Op. 58, TrV 223 (1906–08)

Tragedy in One Act

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929)

Meinen Freunden Natalie und Willy Levin gewidmet

Klytämnestra Tanja Ariane Baumgartner *mezzo-soprano*
 Elektra, her elder daughter Iréne Theorin *soprano*
 Chrysothemis, her younger daughter Jennifer Holloway *soprano*
 Ägisth (Aegisthus) Nikolai Schukoff *tenor*
 Orest (Orestes) Iain Paterson *bass-baritone*
 Der Pfleger des Orest (The Tutor of Orestes) Tilmann Rönnebeck *bass*
 Die Vertraute (The Confidante) Evgeniya Sotnikova *soprano*
 Die Schlepptägerin (The Trainbearer) Hedvig Haugerud *soprano*
 Ein junger Diener (A Young Servant) Ya-Chung Huang *tenor*
 Ein alter Diener (An Old Servant) Tilmann Rönnebeck *bass*
 Die Aufseherin (The Overseer) Madeleine Shaw *mezzo-soprano*
 Erste Magd (First Maid Servant) Claudia Huckle *contralto*
 Zweite Magd (Second Maid Servant) Emily Sierra *mezzo-soprano*
 Dritte Magd (Third Maid Servant) Marie-Luise Dreßen *mezzo-soprano*
 Vierte Magd (Fourth Maid Servant) Hedvig Haugerud *soprano*
 Fünfte Magd (Fifth Maid Servant) Evgeniya Sotnikova *soprano*
 Servants

Scene: Mycenae

Bergen Philharmonic Chorus
 Håkon Matti Skrede *chorus master*
Edvard Grieg Kor
 Håkon Matti Skrede *chorus master*
Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
 Alexander Kagan *leader*
 Edward Gardner

	COMPACT DISC ONE	Time	Page
1	First Maid Servant: 'Wo bleibt Elektra?'. Mäßig langsam – Schnell – with Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Maid Servants, and Overseer	6:20	44
2	Elektra: 'Allein! Weh, ganz allein'. Breit –	9:16	49
3	Chrysothemis: 'Elektra!'. Sehr schnell – with Elektra	2:30	53
4	Chrysothemis: 'Ich kann nicht sitzen und ins Dunkel starren'. (Etwas ruhiger werdend) – with Elektra Chrysothemis: 'Immer sitzen wir auf der Stange wie angehängte Vögel'. Etwas langsamer – with Elektra	6:15	55
5	Elektra: 'Es geht ein Lärm los'. Sehr schnell und hastig – with Chrysothemis	2:52	57
6	Klytemnestra: 'Was willst du? Seht doch, dort!'. [Tempo I] – Klytemnestra: 'Warum bin ich lebendigen Leibes wie ein wüstes Gefild'. Mäßig – with Elektra, Confidante, and Trainbearer	4:42	59
7	Klytemnestra: 'Ich will Nichts hören!'. Schnell und heftig –	4:49	61

		Time	Page
[8]	Klytemnestra: 'Ich habe keine guten Nächte'. Mäßig langsam – with Elektra Klytemnestra: 'Und doch kriecht zwischen Tag und Nacht'. Ziemlich langsam – with Elektra	6:01	63
[9]	Elektra: 'Wenn das rechte Blutopfer unter'm Beile fällt'. Sehr bewegt – with Klytemnestra	4:56	65
[10]	Elektra: 'Was bluten muß?'. Sehr schnell – Sehr schnell – with Klytemnestra	4:10	70

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	COMPACT DISC TWO	Time	Page
[1]	Chrysothemis: 'Orest! Orest – ist tot!'. Sehr schnell und leidenschaftlich – with Elektra	3:21	72
[2]	Young Servant: 'Platz da! Wer lungert so vor einer Tür?'. Lebhaft – with Old Servant	0:56	73

		Time	Page
3	Elektra: 'Nun muß es hier von uns geschehn'. Noch lebhafter – with Chrysothemis	2:06	74
4	Elektra: 'Wie stark du bist'. Sehr schnell – with Chrysothemis Elektra: 'Dir führt kein Weg hinaus, als der'. Sehr lebhaft – with Chrysothemis	4:51	77
5	Elektra: 'Nun denn, allein'. Äußerst schnell –	1:17	79
6	Elektra: 'Was willst du, fremder Mensch?'. [Äußerst schnell] – Elektra: 'Laß mich in Ruh!'. Langsam und feierlich – with Orestes	6:49	80
7	Orestes: 'Wer bist denn du?'. Allmählich etwas fließender im Zeitmaß – with Elektra	2:25	82
8	Elektra: 'Orest!'. Sehr schnell – Elektra: 'Es rührt sich Niemand'. Mäßig bewegt –	8:45	85
9	Elektra: 'Was schaust du ängstlich um dich?'. Ziemlich bewegt – with Orestes and Tutor of Orestes	3:42	86

	Time	Page
[10] Elektra: 'Ich habe ihm das Beil nicht geben können!'. Schnell und heftig – with Klytemnestra	1:38	89
[11] Chrysothemis: 'Es muß etwas geschehen sein'. Sehr schnell – with First, Second, Third, and Fourth Maid Servants	1:06	89
[12] Aegisthus: 'He, Lichter! Lichter!'. Mäßig – Aegisthus: 'Was ist das für ein unheimliches Weib?'. Schnell – Elektra: 'Darf ich nicht leuchten?'. Mäßig –	4:19	92
[13] Aegisthus: 'Helft! Mörder!'. Schnell – with Elektra	1:05	95
[14] Chrysothemis: 'Elektra! Schwester!'. [Schnell] – Chrysothemis: 'Es ist der Bruder drin im Haus!'. Sehr lebhaft – with Chorus and Elektra	3:27	95
[15] Elektra: 'Wir sind bei den Göttern, wir Vollbringenden'. Sehr bewegt und schwungvoll – with Chrysothemis	3:44	97
[16] Elektra: 'Schweig, und tanze!'. [Bereits sehr lebhaft] with Chrysothemis	2:19	99

TT 51:57



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Tanja Ariane Baumgartner



Chris Gloag Photography

Irène Theorin



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Jennifer Holloway



Courtesy of Nikolai Schukoff

Nikolai Schukoff

Strauss: Elektra

Before leaving for the Trojan War, Agamemnon was warned that a potential bloodbath awaited the Greeks. Accordingly, he prayed for good weather at sea and good omens on the land, and even followed the demands of Artemis that he sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia. Agamemnon and his troops won the war, yet a crippling grief enveloped his palace at Mycenae, where Iphigenia's mother, Klytemnästra, and her new lover, Ägisth, await the king's return. When Agamemnon finally comes home, Klytemnästra acts quickly by killing her husband in his bath. She thereby sets in train the retaliatory acts that dominate *Elektra*. For while Klytemnästra may have prudently sent her son, Orest, into exile, her daughter Elektra is far from compliant.

Mourning the loss of their father, Elektra and her sister, Chrysothemis, find themselves at odds with the palace staff, including the Maid Servants and their Overseer, who gossip feverishly as the drama begins. Elektra appears briefly but then darts 'like an animal back to its lair'. The servants mock and jeer at her; only the fifth, youngest maid defends Elektra, though she is beaten for her claims. Once the

staff have gone, Elektra reappears and invokes Agamemnon at the hour of his slaughter. Her words are cloaked in grief, though they also reveal a steely resolve to 'do homage', to drive the murderous pair to their graves. When Chrysothemis arrives, it is clear that Elektra's determination has put a great strain on the relationship of the sisters. Unlike Elektra, Chrysothemis is unwilling to capitulate to the dark mood of the palace. Instead, she craves a new life, complete with children, even while admitting that mortality would be preferable to their present living death, 'to live and not live'.

As Chrysothemis weeps, a commotion sounds from the palace. Their mother is approaching, complete with torchbearers, trainbearers, and confidantes, as cattle are whipped into action and, finally, Klytemnästra arrives in ghastly, bejewelled array. Initially distant and cautious, the Queen decides to dismiss her followers so that she can talk openly with Elektra. She tells her daughter that she has not been sleeping well, which elicits an ironic, barbed response. As Elektra imagines the accomplishment of her merciless

task, her mocking steadily increases, leaving Klytemnästra wracked with fear. But when the servants reemerge and whisper news to her, the Queen suddenly looks elated. Reports have reached the palace that Orest is dead, and one of the retainers demands a horse so that he can transmit the news to Ägisth.

Having failed to persuade Chrysothemis to assist in the killing of their mother, Elektra vows to work alone and begins digging for an axe reserved for the task. Unexpectedly, however, a stranger appears in the courtyard, a man who Elektra eventually realises is her long-lost brother. Following their ecstatic reunion, Orest declares that he knows exactly what is required and walks into the palace. Silence falls but we soon hear Klytemnästra's terrifying screams.

Ägisth returns, having learned of Orest's demise, and Elektra toys with him. When he enters the palace, he meets the same fate as his lover. Massed voices hail Orest's triumph as Elektra begins a victorious but deadly dance. Chrysothemis can only look on in horror as she calls out desperately for her brother. But no answer comes.

With his fourth opera, *Elektra*, Richard Strauss (1864–1949) inaugurated his

collaboration with the Viennese poet and playwright Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929). It would prove a deft but devastating synthesis of the ancient and the modern. The text was drawn from Sophocles's *Electra*, which Hofmannsthal had 'rewritten for the German stage'. Strauss first saw this adaptation in a production by Max Reinhardt, in Berlin. The performances offered a crucial meeting of minds and began a long association which eventually prompted composer, playwright, and director to create the Salzburger Festspiele, after the First World War. But a more immediate upshot was Strauss's operatic adaptation of Hofmannsthal's play, coming quick on the heels of the riotously successful *Salome*.

The composer originally feared that he might be repeating himself, a claim Hofmannsthal, keen to form an alliance, was quick to deny. Admittedly, both works were short, certainly when compared to most created in the German-speaking world in the aftermath of the death of Wagner. They were both in one act – what the conductor and later Strauss biographer Norman del Mar would term 'tone poems for the stage' – and both featured a towering title-role for a soprano. Most of all, however, they were rooted in the ancient world, albeit smeared in

the blood and decadence of the *fin de siècle*. In *Salomé*, Oscar Wilde – and Strauss in turn – had drawn on the glittering vocabulary and curlicues of the aesthetic movement. But *Elektra* was rather different, showing a marked shift towards the cerebral sphere of Hofmannsthal's Vienna and its Secessionist evocations of the Greco-Roman world, witnessed in Gustav Klimt's 1898 painting *Pallas Athena*, and the work of Sigmund Freud.

Alongside Sophocles's original, two texts in particular aided Hofmannsthal in the development of his adaptation of the play: Freud and his colleague Josef Breuer's 1895 *Studies on Hysteria*, a precursor to Freud's solo ventures into psychotherapy and its attendant philosophy; and the seminal 1890s book *Psyche: The Cult of Souls and the Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* by the German classicist, and friend of Nietzsche, Erwin Rohde. The depth of his research reflected the richness of the education which Hofmannsthal had received in Vienna, specifically at the city's Akademisches Gymnasium, founded in 1553. Its curriculum was the epitome of *Bildung*, the Germanic educational ideal that often summoned the ancient world. Classical history and languages were at its core, fostering broad interests and

even broader intellects among those who, so it was hoped, would become ideal members of society. Yet it also served to introduce a generation of writers and thinkers to the more violent tales of the Greeks and Romans.

Knowledge of such a literature, including the dramas of Sophocles, would certainly give rise to Freud's theories, not least those concerning Oedipus, who unknowingly kills his father, Laius, and marries his mother, Jocasta. First exploring these ideas in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, of 1899, Freud suggested that an Oedipal desire, 'our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father', was a universal phenomenon. Tied to the 'Phallic stage' of a boy's development, it nonetheless proved to be too exclusive a theory for Freud's student and collaborator Carl Jung. Instead, Jung proposed an analogous 'Electra complex' in his *Theory of Psychoanalysis* of 1913 – and which Freud, rather misogynistically, referred to as 'a feminine Oedipus attitude' – describing a girl's competition with her mother for the psychosexual possession of her father. These are the texts and theories that hover in the margins of Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*.

Divested of its original prologue and traditional chorus, through which Sophocles

told his audience that Orest was, despite all appearances, still alive and would, eventually, carry out the murders, Hofmannsthal's drama, and subsequent libretto, focussed almost entirely on the interactions of the principal characters. There is no obvious political or public sphere; instead, we enter a private, psychological world, the 'nutshell' of the family, as Hofmannsthal described it. Such was the opera's concentration, in fact, that there was even a suggestion that Orest and Ägisth might be cut to focus more exclusively on the women of Mycenae. Yet even in the completed version, something of that focus remains. Only after an hour of the work's 100-minute span does Orest enter the fray, with Ägisth a drollly trivial afterthought.

Working with Strauss on *Elektra*, Hofmannsthal fulfilled his dearly held wish to collaborate with the man who had become the most famous and, after *Salome*, the most infamous composer in Europe. The pair had first met in Berlin in 1899, after which Hofmannsthal soon proposed various projects. But it was the concision of his Sophocles adaptation and its propulsive tale of revenge that wowed Strauss. The composer may have been unsure about writing two tragedies back-to-back, and constantly pined

for the lighter touch of comedy – what would eventually become *Der Rosenkavalier* – yet the gamble paid off when Strauss completed the score on 22 September 1908 at his new villa in Garmisch.

Where *Salome* had slithered, *Elektra* brandished an axe. Gone is the glitter of Judea and Jochanaan's hymnic hopes. Instead, Strauss decided to turn to bullwhips, baleful Wagner tubas, and a simple but devastating central motif, spelling out 'Agamemnon', both as the curtain rises and as it falls. Yet, it was the psychological undercurrents made manifest through Strauss's polyphonic music that proved the work's masterstroke. What is implied in the text is elucidated by the orchestra, though never to the point of unsubtlety. In its pacing, *Elektra* likewise reveals a tenacity to match its anti-heroine's intent.

Dexterous but swift scene-setting quickly gives way to set pieces, not least the first encounter with Elektra. It offers a skilful adumbration of the entire opera, from the planning of revenge to its realisation. Emerging *de profundis*, she will eventually tower over the orchestra, her range spanning both the gravelly chatter of the maids and the peak of the dramatic soprano range. Like the symphonist and tone poet which he had

already proved himself to be, Strauss then gives us a clearly demarcated 'second subject' – even a separate movement – with the arrival of Chrysothemis. Unlike her sister, she chooses to waltz with optimism. Hers will be a life of joy, she hopes, though Strauss's choice of the Viennese dance is, perhaps, intended as mockery of her conventional, bourgeois faith. It likewise introduces an otherwise surprising vein of sensuality, even eroticism – here, thoughts of *Salome* are never far away – which takes on a queasier and, at times, more incestual note as the drama progresses. But first we must meet the villain of the piece.

The central confrontation between Klytemnästra and Elektra is the keystone of the structure; its introduction is cinema music *avant la lettre*, as Strauss's orchestral imagination runs riot. Presaging the horrors of *King Kong*, a score written by Strauss's godson, Max Steiner, Klytemnästra's march builds to a terrifying climax. Yet the person revealed after such an impressive display is a raddled, addled shadow of her former self. Here, Strauss proves at his most modern, abandoning traditional key structures and harmonies to mirror her loose grip on sanity as she describes the nightmares that haunt her sleep. Klytemnästra stands at the other end of the harmonic spectrum to the husband whom

she murdered, his idealised triad stamped all over the score. But the absence of the fusing power of tonality during the scene between Klytemnästra and Elektra only serves to make its subsequent return all the starker. Sadly, this, in turn, proves a Pyrrhic victory for Elektra when Klytemnästra returns to the palace, cackling at the news of the supposed death of Orest.

Much has been made of the violence and extremity of the musical language in *Elektra*, many citing the work as the peak of Strauss's creative powers. In its harmonic breadth, the score is certainly advanced, though, like the orchestra that Strauss employs, numbering 110 players, and including several rare instruments to boot, the music is always at the service of the drama. In that, Strauss is more like his hero, Mozart, who claimed to write arias to fit a singer 'as accurately as a well-made suit', than Schoenberg. Strauss is no polemicist; he is a pragmatist. For, unlike Schoenberg whose Second String Quartet and monodrama, *Erwartung*, are directly contemporaneous with *Elektra*, Strauss is not concerned with the 'emancipation of dissonance' or 'air from another planet'. Discordant music is a means to dramatic ends. After all, *Der Rosenkavalier*, for all its Mozartian garb and supposed step back from

the musical brink, can sound just as wild as *Elektra*, as when Baron Ochs's servants wreak havoc in Faninal's Stadtpalais during the opera's second act or when events unfold in the down-at-heel pub-cum-brothel of Act III. It is only by hearing those losses of tonal control that the subsequent resolution, triggered by the arrival of the Marschallin, can be confirmed. And so it is in the final stretches of *Elektra*, albeit of a very different hue.

At first, like the title character, we are left in the dark. The appearance of Orest is deliberately mysterious, as Wagner tubas evoke the ghosts of the *Ring*, as well as the mournful trombones of Mozart's Requiem. But these soon give way to a reunion scene like no other and for which Hofmannsthal provided new passages at Strauss's request, the work of a 'born librettist'. Rather than siblings, we might imagine that Elektra and Orest are long-lost lovers, such is the intensity of their music, both in Elektra's sudden outburst of realisation and in the lullaby soothings that follow. This should come as no surprise, of course, given Elektra's Sapphic suggestions in her false praise of Chrysothemis: 'chaste nights have made you strong'.¹ But now, unlike their younger sister,

¹ Dich haben die jungfräulichen Nächte stark gemacht.

Orest accepts his lethal task with enthusiasm, unleashing both screams of horror and shouts of praise, as well as preparing for Elektra's final dance and the opera's uncertain aftermath, the Furies already in pursuit.

When *Elektra* was first seen, at the Hofoper in Dresden on 25 January 1909, the audience was duly wowed. As Felix Adler, the correspondent for the *Neues Wiener Journal*, wrote after the première,

this musical winter's great sensation
is over. With breathless excitement,
the audience, which had flocked from
all over Europe [...] followed the new
musico-dramatic creation of the master
of *Salome* by applauding frantically and
tirelessly.²

But where Strauss's adaptation of Wilde had been an 'experiment', Adler saw *Elektra* as a 'speculation'.³ The critic may not have been entirely convinced of Strauss's melodic invention, calling it 'more broad than deep',

² Die große Sensation dieses Musikwinters ist vorüber. Mit atemloser Spannung ist das aus allen Gegenden und Zonen Europas zur Dresdener Richard-Strauß-Woche zusammengeströmte Publikum der neuen musikdramatischen Schöpfung des Meisters der "Salome" gefolgt, und indem man wie wahn sinnig applaudierte und unermüdetlich ...

³ "Salome" war ein Experiment, "Elektra" ist eine Spekulation.



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Evgeniya Sotnikova

yet he could not help but admit that it was 'always gripping and capable of escalation';⁴ there could be 'no doubt that the musical world has a new sensation'.⁵

Shortly thereafter, the blood spatters of Strauss's score began to spread, to Vienna itself and then to London – the Band of the Grenadier Guards even played passages from the opera at Buckingham Palace, much to the dismay of George V. Largely unhindered by the concerns of censors that had dogged *Salome*, owing to its Biblical setting and characters, Strauss's second, even more brutal, tragedy was able to gain a foothold much more quickly. Theatrical morality has since shifted, of course, the veil-swirling perfumes

⁴ In dieser Hinsicht vermag der Komponist in der "Elektra" überhaupt nicht mehr zu bluffen. Daß man aber darauf durch die "Salome" vorbereitet ist, erleichtert andererseits wesentlich das Kapiere der auf diese Art gewaltsam komplizierten Musik. Man hält sich bei solchen "Kleinigkeiten" nicht länger auf und richtet lieber sein Augenmerk aufs Große, auf die eminent symphonische Struktur und die bei Strauß stets wiederkehrende schwungvolle melodische Linie. Man weiß, Straußens melodische Erfindung geht mehr in die Breite als in die Tiefe, sie ist zumeist billig und originell, aber immer packend und steigerungsfähig. In der "Elektra" ist sogar mehr davon als in "Salome".

⁵ Kein Zweifel, die musikalische Welt hat eine neue Sensation.

and purple prose of *Salome* proving more popular than murder scenes at Mycenae. Yet few encountering *Elektra* afresh – such as the current author, whose first live opera experience, at the age of eleven, was this deeply disturbing score – could be in any doubt of the determination and terrors contained within.

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Through her compelling portrayals of roles such as Fricka (*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*), her sensational Kundry (*Parsifal*), her powerful Klytämnestra (*Elektra*) and Nurse (*Die Frau ohne Schatten*), and her spectacular Ortrud (*Lohengrin*), **Tanja Ariane Baumgartner** has earned a place among the foremost dramatic mezzo-sopranos on the stages of the world's most prestigious opera houses and festivals. She began the 2025 / 26 season singing Herodias, in concert performances of *Salome*, with the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln in Bucharest and Cologne. She then appeared at San Francisco Opera as Kundry, conducted by Eun Sun Kim. As Herodias, she returned to Lyric Opera of Chicago and will present herself as Ortrud, in a new production of *Lohengrin* (directed by Johannes Erath, conducted by Joana Mallwitz), at Festspielhaus Baden-Baden. In the concert

repertoire, she will be heard in *Das Lied von der Erde* under Zubin Mehta at Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, in Mahler's Symphony No. 3 at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, and as Brangäne, in concert performances of *Tristan und Isolde*, with Radio France under Jaap van Zweden in Montpellier. Highlights of recent seasons include performances as Ortrud, Fricka, Brangäne, and the Nurse at Wiener Staatsoper, Mrs Quickly (*Falstaff*), Countess Geschwitz (*Lulu*), Charlotte (Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*), and Mother (Dallapiccola's *Il prigioniero*) at the Salzburger Festspiele, Lisa (Weinberg's *The Passenger*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, Brangäne and Leonore, in the world première of Detlev Glanert's *Die Jüdin von Toledo*, at Semperoper Dresden, Kundry at Grand Théâtre de Genève and at the Spring Festival in Tokyo, and Venus (*Tannhäuser*) in Hamburg, in Dmitri Tcherniakov's new production, as well as at Opernhaus Zürich. From 2009 to 2020, Tanja Ariane Baumgartner was a member of the ensemble at Oper Frankfurt.

Particularly associated with German dramatic repertoire, the celebrated dramatic soprano **Iréne Theorin** has garnered huge acclaim for her intense musicality, engaging performances, and vocal flexibility. Since graduating from

the Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium and Operaakademiet, in Copenhagen, she has performed at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, The Metropolitan Opera, New York, The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin, Wiener Staatsoper, Salzburger Festspiele, Bayerische Staatsoper, Opéra national de Paris, Semperoper Dresden, and Bayreuther Festspiele. In January 2026 she returned to Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, as Brangäne in a new production of *Tristan und Isolde*. During the 2024/25 season she sang her signature role, Strauss's Elektra, at Hamburgische Staatsoper and Staatsoper Berlin before making her role début as Kundry (*Parsifal*) in Hamburg. The previous season she appeared twice at Staatsoper Stuttgart, as The Dyer's Wife (David Hermann's new production of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*) and Elektra, both under Cornelius Meister. She also returned to Müpa, Budapest, to sing Brünnhilde (*Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*), gave concert performances of *Elektra* with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, sang Strauss's *Vier letzte Lieder* at the Auditorium of the Diputación de Alicante, took part in the Victoria de los Ángeles Centenary Gala Concert at Gran Teatre del Liceu, and made a long-awaited return to Opéra national de Paris, as Turandot.

With Gran Teatre del Liceu and Bryn Terfel, Irène Theorin made her much acclaimed début as Judith (*Bluebeard's Castle*) in a concert performance at Opéra de Paris, and joined Lise Davidsen and Waltraud Meier under Josep Pons for a spectacular 175th anniversary concert at the Gran Teatre del Liceu, featuring music by Wagner and Strauss. She has sung Brünnhilde at the Bayreuther Festspiele, Ortrud (*Lobengrin*) at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Berlin, and Opera Vlaanderen, the *Ring* cycle under Daniel Barenboim at Staatsoper Berlin, Elektra at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, in Valencia, Brünnhilde (*Die Walküre*) at Kungliga Operan, Stockholm, and Teatro di San Carlo, Naples, the title role of *La Gioconda* at Gran Teatre del Liceu, and Turandot in new productions at Teatro Real, Madrid, Gran Teatre del Liceu, and New National Theatre, Tokyo. On the concert platform, she has sung *Die Walküre* with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra under Eva Ollikainen, at Bayreuth during the reduced 2021 season, and with the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks under Sir Simon Rattle, Mahler's Symphony No. 8 with the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra under Mikko Franck, *Götterdämmerung* at Oper Leipzig, Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* at Den Norske

Opera, Oslo, under Edward Gardner, the Liebestod (*Tristan und Isolde*) with the Orchestre philharmonique de Monte-Carlo under Marek Janowski, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder* with the Orchestre de l'Opéra national de Paris under Philippe Jordan, and recitals, in Barcelona, at Gran Teatre del Liceu and Fundació Victoria de los Ángeles. Several of her performances have been captured and released on commercial DVD. Among many distinctions, Irène Theorin was made a Knight of the Order of the Dannebrog by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

In recent years, the American **Jennifer Holloway** has established herself internationally as one of the leading sopranos in the lyric-dramatic repertoire, solidifying her position with her Bayreuth début as Sieglinde (*Die Walküre*). She began the 2025 / 26 season with Salome, one of her most successful roles to date, in concert performances of Strauss's opera with the WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln, in Cologne and Bucharest. She then appeared as Donna Elvira (*Don Giovanni*) at Teatro Carlo Felice, in Genoa, before taking on the role of Elsa, in a new production of *Lobengrin* (directed by Damiano Michieletto and conducted by Michele Mariotti), at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma. She made her role

début as Vanessa in concert performances of Barber's opera of the same name, performing for the first time with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She is expected to appear as Kundry (*Parsifal*) at Wiener Staatsoper and as Chrysothemis at Staatsoper Hamburg. The Bayreuther Festspiele has engaged her as Adriano, in the first production of *Rienzi* in the history of the festival. Among highlights of recent seasons Jennifer Holloway can point to her role début as Kundry at Oper Frankfurt, her house début at Opernhaus Zürich as Beethoven's Leonore (*Fidelio*), Salome at Wiener Staatsoper, Staatsoper Berlin, and Deutsche Oper Berlin, Chrysothemis, Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*), and her role débuts as Sieglinde, Senta (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Leonore (*Fidelio*), and Ellen Orford (*Peter Grimes*) at Staatsoper Hamburg, Senta also at Semperoper Dresden, Cassandre (*Les Troyens*) and Senta at Bayerische Staatsoper, Sieglinde in concert with the Orchestre de Paris under Jaap van Zweden and at Wiener Konzerthaus under Joana Mallwitz, the title role in César Franck's *Hulda* in Paris, Nunciata (Saint-Saëns's *L'Ancêtre*) in Monte Carlo, Grete in a new production of Schreker's *Der ferne Klang* at Oper Frankfurt, her role début as Elsa at Oper Leipzig, the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) at Teatro Colón, in Buenos Aires,

and Cassandre and Salome at Semperoper Dresden.

The Austrian tenor **Nikolai Schukoff** captivates audiences with his charismatic stage presence, vocal intensity, and wide stylistic range, particularly in the German, French, and Slavic repertoire. In the 2025 / 26 season, he will appear as Walter (Weinberg's *The Passenger*) at De Nationale Opera (formerly De Nederlandse Opera), in Amsterdam, in a new production by Tobias Kratzer. In one of his signature roles, Herodes (*Salome*), he will also make guest appearances at San Francisco Opera and with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco, in South America. He will appear as Pollione, in a semi-concertante production of *Norma*, at Opéra-Théâtre de Metz. In the concert hall, his engagements will include appearances with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra and at the Müpa (formerly Palace of Arts), in Budapest. Stepping in at short notice for Plácido Domingo, he celebrated his international breakthrough, at Bayerische Staatsoper, in Munich, as Parsifal, a role that took him to major venues in Toulouse, Helsinki, Barcelona, and Amsterdam in the years that followed. Further milestones have included singing Siegmund (*Die Walküre*)

under Zubin Mehta in Valencia, Don José (*Carmen*) at The Metropolitan Opera, in New York, and roles such as Erik (*Der fliegende Holländer*), Florestan (*Fidelio*), Lohengrin, Max (*Der Freischütz*), Pedro (*Tiefland*), Eléazar (*La Juive*), and Jim Mahoney (*Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) in productions throughout Europe and South America. Nikolai Schukoff counts as highlights of recent seasons his performances as Jim Mahoney in Aix-en-Provence and at Deutsche Oper Berlin, his return to The Metropolitan Opera in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Walter at Teatro Real, Madrid, Tristan at Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse (now Opéra national du Capitole), Bacchus (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and Parsifal at Gran Teatre del Liceu, in Barcelona, Drum Major (*Wozzeck*) in Toulouse, Siegmund (*Die Walküre*) at Opéra de Marseille, Herodes in Berlin and Helsinki, Florestan at Teatro Nacional de São Carlos, in Lisbon, Agrippa / Mephisto (*The Fiery Angel*) and Milio Dufresne (Leoncavallo's *Zazà*) at Theater an der Wien, Otello (stage début) in St Étienne, and *Oedipus Rex* in concert in Madrid.

Since completing his vocal studies at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama

(now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) with Neilson Taylor, the British bass-baritone **Iain Paterson** has become one of the most distinguished Wagner interpreters of his generation. In the 2025 / 26 season, he returned to Opéra national de Paris as Wotan, completing the Ring cycle with *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*. He will also appear as Orest (*Elektra*) at Bayerische Staatsoper and once again as Wotan / Wanderer, in *Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*, at Deutsche Oper Berlin. Further concert appearances will take him to Radio France, among others. His repertoire includes central roles such as Wotan / Wanderer, the Flying Dutchman, Kurwenal (*Tristan und Isolde*), Amfortas (*Parsifal*), Jochanaan (*Salome*), Orest, Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*), and the Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*). He is a regular guest at major venues such as Wiener Staatsoper, Bayerische Staatsoper, The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Staatsoper Berlin, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Opéra national de Paris, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Houston Grand Opera, and English National Opera, where he has developed numerous roles in his core repertoire. He also demonstrated his artistic versatility through his interpretation of Leontes, in the world première of Ryan Wigglesworth's *The Winter's Tale*. He has

appeared several times at the Bayreuther Festspiele, most recently as Kurwenal under Christian Thielemann and as Wotan (*Das Rheingold*) under Marek Janowski. In concert, he has sung Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Edinburgh International Festival. Iain Paterson works regularly with conductors such as Daniel Barenboim, Christian Thielemann, Sir Antonio Pappano, Sir Simon Rattle, Andris Nelsons, Edward Gardner, and Vasily Petrenko.

Born in Magdeburg, Germany, the bass **Tilmann Rönnebeck** began his musical education with composition lessons and later studied singing with Reiner Goldberg at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler, in Berlin. He later received important artistic guidance for his further vocal training from Franz Crass and Kurt Moll. While still a student, he took part in the Berlin première of *Comedian Harmonists* at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm, for which he received the B.Z. Kulturpreis. Numerous concert tours in Germany and abroad as well as various CD

and TV productions followed. During his first production at Staatstheater Cottbus, in 2002, he sang important professional roles and was awarded the Max-Grünebaum-Preis as best young singer. He celebrated great successes as Pimen (*Boris Godunov*), Wotan (*Das Rheingold*), and Filippo II (*Don Carlo*). This was followed by a permanent engagement at Komische Oper Berlin, where he performed roles such as Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Rocco (*Fidelio*), and the title role in *Don Pasquale*. Since the 2010 / 11 season, he has been a permanent ensemble member at Semperoper Dresden where he has appeared on stage as Sarastro (*Die Zauberflöte*), Seneca (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Landgraf Hermann (*Tannhäuser*), and King Arkel (*Pelléas et Mélisande*), among others. In June 2020 he sang Filippo II alongside Anna Netrebko in a concert performance of *Don Carlo* at the Semperoper. In the course of his career, he has sung under such great conductors as Christian Thielemann, Franz Welser-Möst, Peter Schneider, and Myung-whun Chung and worked with renowned directors including Peter Konwitschny, Hans Neuenfels, Keith Warner, and Romeo Castellucci. Numerous guest appearances in Germany and abroad have taken Tilmann Rönnebeck to Bayerische



Morten Andenas

Hedvig Haugerud



Ya-Chung Huang



Madeleine Shaw



Claudia Huckle

Gerard Collart Photography



Mary Goldau

Emily Sierra

Staatsoper, in Munich, the Salzburger Festspiele, and Teatro La Fenice, in Venice, among others.

Born in Kurgan, Russia, **Evgeniya Sotnikova** studied at the Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatory, in St Petersburg. After early successes in competition, she made her début as Lolanta in St Petersburg and soon appeared as Tatyana (*Eugene Onegin*) at the Novaya Opera, in Moscow. Winning the prize of the Oscar und Vera Ritter Stiftung, in Dresden, brought her to Bayerische Staatsoper, first to its Opera Studio, later as a member of the ensemble. Since then, the soprano has performed on international stages such as Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Trier Ruhrtriennale, and Stadttheater Klagenfurt, as well as houses in New York, Tallinn, Malmö, Copenhagen, Bern, and Vienna. Her repertoire ranges from Mozart's Despina (*Così fan tutte*) and Ilia (*Idomeneo*) to the Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Leïla (*Les Pêcheurs de perles*), Sœur Constance (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and Jemmy (*Guillaume Tell*), a role that won her the Prize of the 2014 Münchner Opernfestspiele. Recent highlights of her career include her début at Wiener Staatsoper as Aksinya (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*) and the



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Marie-Luise Dreßen



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Håkon Matti Skrede

world première of Bernhard Lang's *Das Ende der Schöpfung*, at Staatstheater Augsburg. At Bayerische Staatsoper she has appeared in new productions of Janáček's *From the House of the Dead* and Weinberg's *The Passenger*, among others. In the 2023 / 24 season she was heard as Juliet (Tchaikovsky's *Overtures*), Yvette (*The Passenger*), and Fifth Maid Servant (*Elektra*). A current highlight is her interpretation of Europa (Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae*). In the concert hall, Evgeniya Sotnikova has performed Stravinsky's *Les Noces* in Zürich and Rome and appeared in venues such as the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Tiroler Landestheater Innsbruck, and Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, Moscow. She regularly collaborates with conductors such as Vladimir Jurowski, Kent Nagano, Andris Nelsons, Kirill Petrenko, and Simone Young, and with directors including Heiner Goebbels, Martin Kušej, Árpád Schilling, and Peter Stein.

Having emerged from the tutelage of Susanna Eken, the Norwegian soprano **Hedvig Haugerud** has distinguished herself in the early stage of her career for her exceptional vocal colour, power, and personality. She graduated from Norges musikkhøgskole (Norwegian Academy of Music), then enrolled at the Conservatoire national

supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris and Operaakademiet, in Copenhagen, studying with Anne Sophie von Otter, Bo Skovhus, Soile Isokoski, and Randi Stene, and working with conductors such as Michael Schönwandt, Richard Farnes, Giancarlo Andretta, and Robert Houssart. She was awarded a study grant by the Dobloug Foundation and received the 2019 Skagen Talent Award, and among many other achievements won second prize at the 2023 Paris Opera Competition, was the Press Jury's Winner at the 2024 Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition, in Helsinki, and won First Prize at the 2024 Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition. During the 2025 / 26 season she has sung Ortlinde (*Die Walküre*) with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Daniel Harding, Chrysothemis (*Elektra*) in concert with Opéra-Théâtre de Metz, and *Vier letzte Lieder* with Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester (Danish National Philharmonic Orchestra), and she will make her début at the New National Theatre, Tokyo as Chrysothemis conducted by Kazushi Ōno and perform Mahler's Symphony No. 2 with Aalborg Symfoniorkester. She recently made her début at Opéra-Théâtre de Metz in the title role of

Salome, and also sang Fourth Maid Servant (*Elektra*) with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra under Edward Gardner, Fifth Maid Servant (*Elektra*) at Den Norske Opera & Ballett under Petr Popelka, and The Overseer (*Elektra*), directed by Dmitri Tcherniakov and conducted by Thomas Søndergård, at Den Kongelige Opera, Copenhagen, where she had previously sung Annina (*La traviata*), directed by David Radok, and Lady with a Hat Box (Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*). Hedvig Haugerud also made her début in Sweden in the role of Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), sang songs by Grieg on a tour of Spain with the Bergen Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and made her recital début at the Bregenzer Festspiele in 2025.

The Taiwanese tenor **Ya-Chung Huang** is rapidly establishing himself among today's foremost *Spieltenore*, praised for deeply characterful portrayals – particularly as Mime (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) – in which critics highlight his vocally potent, theatrically compelling work, informed by both grotesque precision and emotional nuance. He began his career as a member of the ensemble at Deutsche Oper Berlin (2018 – 24), where he honed a versatile repertoire covering roles such as Mime, David (*Die Meistersinger von*

Nürnberg), Jaquino (*Fidelio*), Monostatos (*Die Zauberflöte*), Pong (*Turandot*), Goro (*Madama Butterfly*), and the Schoolmaster (*The Cunning Little Vixen*). In the 2024 / 25 season, his engagements spanned multiple prestigious houses. He returned to Theater an der Wien as Arbace and Gran Sacerdote (*Idomeneo*), Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich as Goro and Merkur (*Die Liebe der Danae*), and De Nationale Opera as Shuysky (*Boris Godunov*), and made his débuts at Den Norske Opera, Oslo as the Schoolmaster and Den Kongelige Opera, Copenhagen as David – not to mention his reprising Mime at the Bayreuther Festspiele. Among his recent achievements Ya-Chung Huang can count his début at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden as Goro, role début as Torquemada (*L'Heure espagnole*) at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, and roles at the Salzburger Festspiele and Deutsche Oper Berlin, notably Chairman Mao (*Nixon in China*) and Mime.

The British mezzo-soprano **Madeleine Shaw** is regarded as one of her generation's most gifted voices. Following postgraduate study at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), Glasgow, she earned a place at the National Opera Studio, London. A former

member of the English National Opera Young Singers Programme (2006–09), she performed Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*), Beggar Woman (*Death in Venice*), Second Lady (*The Magic Flute*), Maddalena (*Rigoletto*), Forester's Wife (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), and works by Kurt Weill and Samuel Barber at venues including The Young Vic. Her début at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden followed in 2010 as Forester's Wife / Owl (*The Cunning Little Vixen*). Madeleine Shaw has enjoyed a career that extends across leading opera houses and include débuts at Komische Oper Berlin, in *The Nose*, and Opéra national de Paris, in *Elektra*, and performances at Welsh National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, The Royal Opera, English National Opera, and Longborough Festival Opera.

Praised by the magazine *BBC Music* as a 'marvel in Mahler', the Anglo-German contralto **Claudia Huckle** was a Grand Final Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the first female recipient of the Birgit Nilsson Prize of Operalia for singing Wagner. She has since appeared with opera companies and orchestras across Europe and the USA and was a member of the ensemble at Oper Leipzig

for four seasons. On stage, her roles have included The Omniscient Seashell (*Die ägyptische Helena*) at Teatro alla Scala, Milan, Suzuki (*Madama Butterfly*) at the Bregenzer Festspiele, Opernhaus Zürich, and with Glyndebourne on Tour, Erda (*Das Rheingold* and *Siegfried*) at the Bregenzer Festspiele, Oper Leipzig, Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Opera North, First Norn and Floßhilde (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*) at Teatro Real, Madrid, Floßhilde at Opéra de Paris, Lucretia (*The Rape of Lucretia*) and Hippolyta (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Glyndebourne on Tour and at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, respectively, Third Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), First Norn, and Schwertleite (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*), and Mérope (*Oedipe*) at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Meg Page (*Falstaff*) at Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, the Innkeeper (*Boris Godunov*) at Bayerische Staatsoper, Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*) at Garsington Opera and Oper Leipzig, Marfa (*Khovanshchina*) at Birmingham Opera Company, and Galatea (*Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*) at the London Handel Festival. In concert, Claudia Huckle has given notable appearances in Delius's *A Mass of Life* with both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder, *Das Lied*



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Edward Gardner



von der Erde with the Stuttgarter Ballett, First Norn (*Götterdämmerung*) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski, Rossini's *Stabat Mater* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and *Sea Pictures* with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder, Mahler's Symphony No. 2 at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and with the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, both under Myung-whun Chung, Third Lady at the Edinburgh International Festival, Haydn's *Paukenmesse* at Maggio Musicale Fiorentino under Zubin Mehta, Mozart's Requiem and Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at the BBC Proms, and *Messiah* with the Freiburger Barockorchester under Trevor Pinnock.

Lauded for her 'marked lyricism... rare quality of timbre, [and] suave voice', the Cuban-American mezzo-soprano **Emily Sierra** is currently a member of the ensemble of Bayerische Staatsoper, in Munich. She began her European career in the company's Opera Studio, having been awarded the Opera Foundation Scholarship for the 2021 / 22 season. Roles during the 2025 / 26 season include Stéphano (*Roméo et Juliette*) at Semperoper Dresden, as well as Siebel (*Faust*), Third Maid Servant (*Elektra*), Adalgisa (*Norma*), Mercédès (*Carmen*), Tisbe

(*La Cenerentola*), and Second Woodnymph (*Rusalka*) at Bayerische Staatsoper. Among highlights of the 2024 / 25 season were the roles of Idamante (*Idomeneo*) in concert at Theater an der Wien, Adalgisa at Opéra de Toulon, and Hänsel (*Hänsel und Gretel*), Second Lady (*Die Zauberflöte*), Alkmene (*Die Liebe der Danae*), Varvara (*Kát'a Kabanová*), and Dorabella (*Così fan tutte*) at Bayerische Staatsoper. In the 2023 / 24 season her roles included Idamante, Tisbe, Clotilde (*Norma*), La Ciesca (*Gianni Schicchi*), Third Maid Servant, and Fyodor (*Boris Godunov*), as well as the main-stage US debut as Stéphano at The Dallas Opera. She completed her first year at the Opera Studio of Bayerische Staatsoper in 2022, having notably performed Dryad (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Nanni (Haydn's *L'infedeltà delusa*), Hécube (*Les Troyens*), Kate Pinkerton (*Madama Butterfly*), and Annina (*La traviata*). During her second year, the 2022 / 23 season, she performed roles including Hänsel, Second Maid Servant (*Elektra*), A Singer (*Manon Lescaut*), Sœur Mathilde (*Dialogues des Carmélites*), and Chambermaid of the Bolkonskys (*War and Peace*), a staging which was awarded Best New Production 2023. An alumna of The Juilliard School and the Royal College of Music, Emily Sierra was

a finalist in the 2022 Operalia (The World Opera Competition) and a Grand Finals Winner in the 2021 Metropolitan Opera Eric and Dominique Laffont Competition, at which she received the Noreen Zimmerman Award. In the summer of 2021, she joined the Vocal Residency of the Académie du Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, also giving performances in Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz in conjunction with the summer programme of the 2021 Internationale Meistersinger Akademie.

The mezzo-soprano **Marie-Luise Dreßen** has performed at major opera houses such as Semperoper Dresden, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real, in Madrid, Opéra de Paris, and Teatro di San Carlo, in Naples. She works with renowned conductors, among them Ivor Bolton, Semyon Bychkov, Dan Ettinger, Edward Gardner, Alan Gilbert, Philippe Jordan, Cornelius Meister, Kent Nagano, Donald Runnicles, and Christian Thielemann. Her repertoire includes central roles, including Octavian (*Der Rosenkavalier*), the Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Hänsel, Cenerentola, and numerous Wagner roles. During the 2025 / 26 season, she will once again tour Europe with Kent Nagano, the Dresdner Festspielorchester, and Concerto Köln and make her début as Second Norn

(*Götterdämmerung*), with performances at the Lucerne Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, in Paris, among others. She will also make her début with the Thomanerchor and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Thomaskantor Andreas Reize and can be seen at Oper Leipzig in roles including Prince Orlofsky (*Die Fledermaus*). Her most recent successes include appearances as Octavian at Tiroler Landestheater and the Composer at Landestheater Niederbayern. In 2024, she toured Europe with Kent Nagano in a historically informed performance of *Die Walküre* and made her début at the Philharmonie de Paris. Marie-Luise Dreßen has worked with orchestras such as the Gewandhausorchester, Orquesta Sinfónica de Radio Televisión Española, and Orchestre national d'Île-de-France, in Paris, and has performed several times at the Lucerne Festival and Kissinger Sommer.

Although formally founded in 1919, the **Bergen Philharmonic Choir** has roots going back to 1765 when the Music Society Harmonien was established for the purpose of organising orchestral concerts. The Choir flourished during the tenure of Edvard Grieg as Music Director, his choral works still

holding a special place in its repertoire. In the past decade, under its current director, Håkon Matti Skrede, it has reached a new summit of excellence, appearing regularly with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in standard symphonic repertoire, from Mozart to Britten, while also championing more unusual repertoire and contemporary works. Highlights of its recent calendar include performances of Britten's *Peter Grimes* and *War Requiem*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, Arne Nordheim's *Wirklicher Wald*, Wagner's *Parsifal*, Berlioz's *Grande Messe des morts*, Delius's *A Mass of Life*, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, and Mahler's Symphony No. 8, some of these in collaboration with other local choirs. Many discs have received excellent reviews both near and afar, the recording of the *Glagolitic Mass* even earning a Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance. The Delius recording received the Norwegian Spellemannsprisen, and in 2021 the recording of *Peter Grimes* won *Gramophone* awards for Recording of the Year as well as Opera Recording of the Year.

Edvard Grieg Kor is the leading professional choir of Western Norway, composed of eight permanent singers in the *a cappella* ensemble, Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble, together with

eight to twenty-four regular guest singers. Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor for three years, from 2022 to 2024. In addition to maintaining a busy performing schedule as an accomplished chamber choir, EGK also serves as the professional core of the chorus of Bergen Nasjonale Opera and of the symphonic choir of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. In recent years, it has achieved recognition both nationally and internationally through its performances with both the Opera and the Orchestra. It has won prestigious *Gramophone* awards, including Recording of the Year with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2023 it made its BBC Proms debut with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Led by the two professional choirs Edvard Grieg Vokalensemble and Edvard Grieg Kor, Stiftelsen Edvard Grieg Korene (The Edvard Grieg Choral Foundation) is one of Norway's largest choral enterprises. The foundation operates seven children's choirs which total more than 200 singers aged six to twenty-six; these participate in weekly rehearsals and a full performance schedule throughout the school year, which gives young singers valuable opportunities to perform alongside professional singers, musicians, and conductors at the highest professional level.

Håkon Matti Skrede trained as a violinist and singer at Griegakademiet, in Bergen, Norway. As a singer he has appeared as a soloist in numerous sacred works and taken part in several operatic productions. As a chorister and student choirmaster of the Drakensberg Boys Choir, in South Africa, he decided to develop his skills as a choral conductor. He founded the Edvard Grieg Kor in 2002, Edvard Grieg Guttekor in 2008, Edvard Grieg Jentekor in 2010, and Edvard Grieg Ungdomskor in 2013. He is currently chorus master for Bergen Nasjonale Opera and the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, and conductor of Collegium Musicum. He has conducted a number of operas with children and young performers, as well as many large-scale sacred works for chorus and orchestra. In 2017 Håkon Matti Skrede received a Grammy nomination for Best Choral Performance for the recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*, with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and choirs. The same year Bergen Council awarded him its cultural prize, and in 2018 he received the prize Alle kan synge for his work with children. His recording of *Peter Grimes*, also with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra and choirs, won two 2021 *Gramophone* Awards, for Recording of the Year and Opera Recording of the Year.

One of the world's oldest orchestras, the **Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra**, a Norwegian National Orchestra, dates back to 1765. Edvard Grieg had a close relationship with the Orchestra, serving as its artistic director from 1880 to 1882. Edward Gardner was Chief Conductor from 2015 to August 2024 and is now Honorary Conductor. He has taken the Orchestra on multiple international tours. These have included appearances at the Concertgebouw, in Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie, in Hamburg, Konzerthaus Berlin, Edinburgh International Festival, Southbank Centre, and BBC Proms. Previous international tours have included performances at the Wiener Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Carnegie Hall, in New York, and Philharmonie Berlin. Sir Mark Elder is the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor, and Jan Willem de Vriend holds the position of Artistic Partner.

In 2015 the Orchestra established its free streaming platform, Bergenphilive, which offers a great and extensive selection of live streams and works. The Bergen Philharmonic Youth Orchestra was established the same year.

The Orchestra has an active recording schedule, at the moment releasing four CDs every year. Critics worldwide applaud its energetic playing style and full-bodied string

sound. Recording projects include Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie*, ballets by Stravinsky, the symphonies, ballet suites, and concertos by Prokofiev, and the complete orchestral music of Edvard Grieg. Enjoying long-standing artistic partnerships with some of the finest musicians in the world, the Orchestra has recorded with Leif Ove Andsnes, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, James Ehnes, Mari Eriksmoen, Gerald Finley, Alban Gerhardt, Vadim Gluzman, Stephen Hough, Sara Jakubiak, Freddy Kempf, Truls Mørk, Steven Osborne, Lawrence Power, and Stuart Skelton, among others.

The Orchestra has recorded Tchaikovsky's ballets and critically acclaimed series of works by Johan Halvorsen and Johan Svendsen with Neeme Järvi, orchestral works by Rimsky-Korsakov with Dmitri Kitayenko, and music by Berlioz, Delius, Elgar, Sibelius, and Vaughan Williams with Sir Andrew Davis.

The first collaboration on disc between Edward Gardner and the Orchestra was a recording of orchestral realisations by Luciano Berio. Among subsequent recordings with Edward Gardner are a critically acclaimed series devoted to orchestral works by Janáček, including a Grammy-nominated recording of his *Glagolitic Mass*, Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, orchestral songs by Sibelius with Gerald Finley as soloist,

a disc of orchestral works by Bartók, the Piano Concerto and incidental music from *Peer Gynt* by Grieg, the *Grande Messe des morts* by Berlioz, Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* with John Relyea and Michelle DeYoung, Brahms's Symphonies, Schoenberg's *Pelleas und Melisande* and *Erwartung* with Sara Jakubiak, Britten's *Peter Grimes* with, among others, Stuart Skelton and Erin Wall, tone poems and other works by Sibelius with Lise Davidsen, orchestral songs by Britten and Canteloube with Mari Eriksmoen, and MANMADE with the saxophonist Marius Neset. The latest releases on Chandos are discs in a series of recordings of works by Carl Nielsen that include his Violin Concerto with James Ehnes, Flute Concerto with Adam Walker, and Clarinet Concerto with Alessandro Carbonare, as well as recordings of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*, with Johanna Wallroth and Brian Mulligan, and Strauss's *Salome*, with Malin Byström. The Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra received a nomination for Orchestra of the Year at the *Gramophone* Awards 2020 and won that title at the Awards in 2025. In 2021, *Peter Grimes* won the Orchestra two *Gramophone* Classical Music Awards: Opera Recording of the Year and Recording of the Year.
www.harmonien.no / www.bergenphilive.no



Edward Gardner OBE is Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director of Den Norske Opera & Ballett. He additionally serves as Honorary Conductor of the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra, following his tenure as Chief Conductor. In demand as a guest conductor, he has most recently worked with the Cleveland Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Wiener Symphoniker, and Staatskapelle Berlin. He has also enjoyed return engagements with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, and Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala di Milano. He has continued his longstanding collaborations with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, where he was Principal Guest Conductor from 2010 to 2016, and BBC Symphony Orchestra, whom he has conducted at both the First and the Last Night of the BBC Proms.

Music Director of English National Opera for eight years (2007 – 15), Edward Gardner built a strong relationship with The Metropolitan Opera, New York, where he has conducted productions of *La Damnation*

de Faust, Carmen, Don Giovanni, Der Rosenkavalier, and Werther. In London, he has made appearances at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden: in 2019 in a new production of *Kát'a Kabanová*, and in the following season conducting *Werther*. In the 2024 / 25 season, he conducted the world première of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*. During the 2021 / 22 season, he made his début with Bayerische Staatsoper, in a new production of *Peter Grimes*, and returned in the 2022 / 23 season at short notice to conduct Verdi's *Otello*. Elsewhere, he has conducted at Teatro alla Scala, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, and Opéra national de Paris. A passionate supporter of young talent, he founded the Hallé Youth Orchestra, in 2002, and regularly conducts the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. He has a close relationship with The Juilliard School, and with the Royal Academy of Music which appointed him its inaugural Sir Charles Mackerras Conducting Chair in 2014.

Born in Gloucester, in 1974, Edward Gardner was educated at Cambridge and the Royal Academy of Music. He went on to become Assistant Conductor of The Hallé and Music Director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera. Among many accolades, he

was named Conductor of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2008, won an Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement

in Opera in 2009, and received an OBE for Services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2012.



Elektra

CD 1

Einziger Akt

Der innere Hof, begrenzt von der Rückseite des Palastes und niedrigen Gebäuden, in denen die Diener wohnen. Dienerinnen am Ziebrunnen, links vorne. Aufseherinnen unter ihnen.

(Vorhang auf.)

Erste Magd *(ibr Wassergefäß aufhebend)*
1 Wo bleibt Elektra?

Zweite Magd

Ist doch ihre Stunde,
die Stunde, wo sie um den Vater heult,
daß alle Wände schallen.

*(Elektra kommt aus der schon dunkelnden Hausflur gelaufen. Alle drehen sich nach ihr um.)
(Elektra springt zurück wie ein Tier in seinen Schlupfwinkel, den einen Arm vor dem Gesicht.)*

Erste Magd

Habt ihr geschn, wie sie uns ansah?

Zweite Magd

Giftig, wie eine wilde Katze.

Dritte Magd

Neulich lag sie da und stöhnte ...

Elektra

COMPACT DISC ONE

Single Act

The inner courtyard, bounded by the back of the palace, and low buildings in which the servants live. Maid servants at the draw-well at the front of the stage to the left. Overseers are among them.

(Curtain up)

First Maid Servant *(lifting her pitcher)*
Where is Elektra?

Second Maid Servant

But it is the hour for her,
the hour when she howls for her father,
so that all the walls re-echo.

*(Elektra comes running out of the house which is already growing dark. All turn to look at her.)
(Elektra darts like an animal back to its lair, one arm held before her face.)*

First Maid Servant

Did you see what looks she gave us?

Second Maid Servant

Poisonous, like a wild cat's.

Third Maid Servant

Not long ago she lay there groaning...

Erste Magd

Immer, wenn die Sonne tief steht, liegt sie und stöhnt.

Dritte Magd

Da gingen wir zu zweit und kamen ihr zu nah –

Erste Magd

sie hält's nicht aus, wenn man sie ansieht.

Dritte Magd

Ja, wir kamen ihr zu nah: Da pfauchte sie wie eine Katze uns an. "Fort, Fliegen!" schrie sie, "fort!"

Vierte Magd

"Schmeißfliegen, fort!"

Dritte Magd

"Sitzt nicht auf meinen Wunden!"
und schlug nach uns mit einem Strohwisch.

Vierte Magd

"Schmeißfliegen, fort!"

Dritte Magd

"Ihr sollt das Süße nicht abweiden von der Qual.
Ihr sollt nicht schmatzen nach meiner Krämpfe
Schaum."

First Maid Servant

Always when the sun is sinking, she lies and groans.

Third Maid Servant

Then we went, we two, and approached her too closely –

First Maid Servant

it maddens her when anyone watches her.

Third Maid Servant

Yes, we approached her too closely: then she spat at us just like a cat. 'Hence, foul flies!', she cried, 'hence!'

Fourth Maid Servant

'Foul horse-flies, hence!'

Third Maid Servant

'Do not feed on my wounds!'
and she struck at us with wisps of straw.

Fourth Maid Servant

'Foul horse-flies, hence!'

Third Maid Servant

'Do not suck the sweetness from my pain.
Do not smack your lips at the exertions of my
writhing agony.'

Vierte Magd

“Geht ab, verkriecht euch,” schrie sie uns nach:
“Eßt Fettes, und eßt Süßes, und geht zu Bett mit
euren Männern,” schrie sie, und die, –

Dritte Magd

Ich war nicht faul ...

Vierte Magd

die gab ihr Antwort!

Dritte Magd

“Ja, wenn du hungrig bist,” gab ich zur Antwort,
“so ißt du auch!”
Da sprang sie auf und schoß gräßliche Blicke,
reckte ihre Finger wie Krallen gegen uns und
schrie:
“Ich füttere mir einen Geier auf im Leib!”

Zweite Magd

Und du?

Dritte Magd

“Drum hockst du immerfort,” gab ich zurück,
“wo Aasgeruch dich hält, und scharrst nach einer
alten Leiche.”

Zweite Magd

Und was sagte sie da?

Dritte Magd

Sie heulte nur und warf sich in ihren Winkel.

Fourth Maid Servant

‘Go away, back to whence you came’, she cried
after us:
‘Eat carrion, and eat sweetmeats, and go away to
bed with your men’, she cried, and she, –

Third Maid Servant

I was not slow...

Fourth Maid Servant

she gave her answer!

Third Maid Servant

‘Yes, when hunger calls’, I gave in answer, ‘you
will eat, too!’
Then she leaped up and shot back gruesome
glances, stretched out her fingers, like crooked
claws at us, and cried:
‘I feed a vulture in my womb!’

Second Maid Servant

And you?

Third Maid Servant

‘Therefore you for ever crawl’, I answered back,
‘where carrion stench attracts you, and dig
around for an ancient carcase.’

Second Maid Servant

And what did she say then?

Third Maid Servant

She only howled and flung herself into her corner.

Erste Magd

Daß die Königin solch einen Dämon frei in
Haus und Hof sein Wesen treiben läßt.

Zweite Magd

Das eigne Kind!

Erste Magd

Wär' sie mein Kind, ich hielte, ich – bei Gott! –
sie unter Schloß und Riegel!

Vierte Magd

Sind sie dir nicht hart genug mit ihr? Setzt man
ihr nicht den Napf mit Essen zu den Hunden?
Hast du den Herrn nie sie schlagen sehn?

Fünfte Magd (*ganz jung, mit zitternder, erregter
Stimme*)

Ich will vor ihr mich niederwerfen und die Füße
ihr küssen.
Ist sie nicht ein Königskind und duldet solche
Schmach! Ich will die Füße ihr salben und mit
meinem Haar sie trocknen.

Die Aufseherin (*stößt sie*)

Hinein mit dir!

Fünfte Magd

Es gibt nichts auf der Welt, das königlicher ist
als sie. Sie liegt in Lumpen auf der Schwelle, aber
Niemand, Niemand ist hier im Haus, der ihren
Blick aushält!

First Maid Servant

That the Queen should allow such a demon to
work her menace freely through both house
and court.

Second Maid Servant

Her own child!

First Maid Servant

Were she my child, I'd keep her, I – by Heav'n! –
under lock and key!

Fourth Maid Servant

Do you not think they treat her harshly enough?
Do they not set her platter full of offal among
the dogs?
Have you not seen the master beat her?

Fifth Maid Servant (*quite young, with trembling,
agitated voice*)

I shall do obeisance before her, and cover her feet
with kisses.
Is she not a child of kings, yet suffers such shame!
I shall anoint her feet, and wipe them dry with
my hair.

The Overseer (*pushes her back*)

Go inside!

Fifth Maid Servant

There is nothing in the world, more regal than
she. She lies in tatters on the threshold, yet no
one, no one is here in this house, who does not
quail before her glance!

Die Aufseherin (*stößt sie in die offene niedrige Tür links vorne*)
Hincin!

Fünfte Magd (*in die Tür geklemmt*)
Ihr alle seid nicht wert, die Luft zu atmen, die sie atmet! O, könnt' ich euch alle, euch, erhängt am Halse, in einer Scheuer Dunkel hängen sehn um dessen willen, was ihr an Elektra getan.

Die Aufseherin (*schlägt die Tür zu*)
Hört ihr das? Wir, an Elektra, die ihren Napf von unserm Tische stieß, als man mit uns sie essen hieß, die ausspie vor uns und Hündinnen uns nannte.

Erste Magd
"Was?" sie sagte: "Keinen Hund kann man erniedern, wozu man uns hat abgerichtet: Daß wir mit Wasser und mit immer frischem Wasser das ewige Blut des Mordes von der Diele abspülen –"

Dritte Magd
"und die Schmach," so sagte sie, "die Schmach, die sich bei Tag und Nacht erneut, in Winkel fegen."

Erste Magd
"Unser Leib," so schreit sie, "starrt von dem Unrat, dem wir dienstbar sind."

The Overseer (*pushes her through the open door at the front of the stage to the left*)
Inside!

Fifth Maid Servant (*caught in the doorway*)
You are all unworthy, to breathe the same air that she breathes! Oh, could I but see you all, you, hung by the neck and dead in some dark dungeon, fit punishment for all the evil that you have wrought to Elektra.

The Overseer (*shuts the door firmly*)
Do you hear that? We, to Elektra, who tossed her platter from our table, when we bade her eat with us, who spat before us, and called us curs and mongrels.

First Maid Servant
'What?' she said: 'No mongrel cur can anyone so lower, as one has subjected us to degradation: that we must wash with water, ever more fresh water, the everlasting bloody stain of murder from these floors –'

Third Maid Servant
'and the shame,' so she went on, 'sweep the shame that daily, nightly, is renewed, back into dark corners.'

First Maid Servant
'Our body', so she cries, 'reeks with the foulness that we must serve.'

(Die Mägde tragen die Gefäße ins Haus links.)

Die Aufseherin *(die ihnen die Tür aufgemacht hat)*

Und wenn sie uns mit unsern Kindern sieht, so schreit sie: "Nichts kann so verflucht sein, nichts, als Kinder, die wir hündisch auf der Treppe im Blute glitschernd, hier in diesem Hause empfangen und geboren haben." Sagt sie das oder nicht?

Erste, Zweite, Dritte und Vierte Magd *(im Abgehen)*

Ja, ja!

Die Aufseherin

Sagt sie das oder nicht?

Erste, Zweite, Dritte und Vierte Magd *(alle schon drinnen)*

Ja, ja.

Fünfte Magd *(innen)*

Sie schlagen mich.

(Die Aufseherin geht hinein. Die Tür fällt zu.)

(Elektra tritt aus dem Hause.)

Elektra

2 Allein!

Weh, ganz allein.

Der Vater fort, hinabgescheucht in seine kalten Klüfte ...

(The maids carry the vessels into the house on the left.)

The Overseer *(who has opened the door for them)*

And when she sees us with our babes, then she cries: 'Nothing can be so accursed, nothing, as children whom we, here in this palace, slipping on steps tainted with bloodshed, like dogs have conceived and born.' Does she say this or not?

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Maid Servants *(as they go in)*

Yes, yes!

The Overseer

Does she say this or not?

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Maid Servants *(all now within)*

Yes, yes.

Fifth Maid Servant *(within)*

They beat me.

(The Overseer goes in. The door closes.)

(Elektra steps out of the house.)

Elektra

Alone!

Woe, quite alone.

My father gone, despatched to his tomb's chill darkness...





(gegen den Boden)

Agamemnon! Agamemnon! Wo bist du, Vater?
Hast du nicht die Kraft, dein Angesicht herauf
zu mir zu schleppen?

Es ist die Stunde, unsre Stunde ist's, die Stunde,
wo sie dich geschlachtet haben, dein Weib
und der mit ihr in einem Bette, in deinem
königlichen Bette schläft.

Sie schlugen dich im Bade tot, dein Blut rann
über deine Augen, und das Bad dampfte von
deinem Blut, da nahm er dich, der Feige, bei den
Schultern, zerrte dich hinaus aus dem Gemach,
den Kopf voraus, die Beine schleifend hinterher:
Dein Auge, das starre, öffne, sah herein ins Haus.
So kommst du wieder, setzest Fuß vor Fuß und
stehst auf einmal da, die beiden Augen weit
offen, und ein königlicher Reif von Purpur ist
um deine Stirn, der speist sich aus des Hauptes
offner Wunde.

Agamemnon!

Vater!

Ich will dich sehn, laß mich heute nicht allein!

Nur so wie gestern, wie ein Schatten, dort im
Mauerwinkel zeig dich deinem Kind!

Vater! Agamemnon, dein Tag wird kommen.

Von den Sternen stürzt alle Zeit herab, so wird
das Blut aus hundert Kehlen stürzen auf dein
Grab! So wie aus umgeworfnen Krügen wird's
aus den gebundenen Mördern fließen, und in
einem Schwall, in einem geschwollenen Bach
wird ihres Lebens Leben aus ihnen stürzen –

(facing the ground)

Agamemnon! Agamemnon! Where are you,
Father?

Do you not have the strength to haul your
countenance up here to me?

The hour has arrived, the hour belongs to us, the
hour, when they slaughtered you, your wife, and
he who sleeps with her, sharing one bed, your
royal bed.

They struck you dead in the bath, your blood
poured over your eyes, and the bath steamed
from your blood; then he seized you, the craven
one, by the shoulders, dragged you out of the
hall, your head first, your legs trailing behind:
your eye, distended, open, glared back into the
house. So you will return, planting one foot,
then the other, and stands there suddenly, both
eyes wide open, and a royal crimson band rings
your brow, and feeds itself on your head's open
wound.

Agamemnon!

Father!

Let me see you, leave me not alone today! But
just as yesterday, like a shadow, there in the
wall's recesses, show yourself to your child!

Father! Agamemnon, your day will arrive. As
eternity rains down from the stars, so will the
life-blood of a hundred throats pour down on
your tomb! And as from overturned vessels, it
will stream out of the fettered murderers, and
in one wave, one swollen torrent their very
life-blood will spew from them –

(mit feierlichem Pathos)

und wir schlachten dir die Rosse, die im Hause sind, wir treiben sie vor dem Grab zusammen, und sie ahnen den Tod und wichern in die Todesluft und sterben. Und wir schlachten dir die Hunde, die dir die Füße leckten, die mit dir gejagt, denen du die Bissen hinwarfst, darum muß ihr Blut hinab, um dir zu Dienst zu sein, und wir, wir, dein Blut, dein Sohn Orest und deine Töchter, wir drei, wenn Alles dies vollbracht und Purpurgezelte aufgerichtet sind vom Dunst des Blutes, den die Sonne nach sich zieht, dann tanzen wir, dein Blut, rings um dein Grab:

(in begeistertem Pathos)

und über Leichen hin werd' ich das Knie hochheben Schritt für Schritt, und die mich werden so tanzen sehn, ja, die meinen Schatten von weitem nur so werden tanzen sehn, die werden sagen: Einem großen König wird hier ein großes Prunkfest angestellt von seinem Fleisch und Blut, und glücklich ist, wer Kinder hat, die um sein hohes Grab so königliche Siegestänze tanzen!

Agamemnon! Agamemnon!

Chrysothemis *(die jüngere Schwester, steht in der Haustür)*

3 Elektra!

(Elektra fährt zusammen und starrt zuerst, wie aus einem Traum erwachend, auf Chrysothemis.)

(with solemn pathos)

and we shall slay for you the chargers that are housed here, we drive them all together before the tomb, and they will know it is death, and neigh in the death-laden air, and die. And we shall slaughter for you the hounds that once licked your feet, that went hunting with you, to which you flung morsels; therefore their blood must be spilt, to do homage to you; and we, we, the descendants of your blood, your son Orestes and your daughters, we three, when all these things are done, and tents of purple have been raised from the steam of blood, which the sun draws to itself, then we shall dance, your own blood, around your tomb:

(in ecstatic pathos)

and over piles of corpses I shall lift my knee, step after step, and all those who will see me dance so, yes, all those who from afar will see my shadow dance, they will say: for a great King all of his flesh and blood here hold high festival and solemn revel, and blessed be he who has children who round his great tomb will dance such royal dances of Victory!

Agamemnon! Agamemnon!

Chrysothemis *(the younger sister, stands at the door of the house)*

Elektra!

(Elektra starts and at first gazes, as though waking from a dream, at Chrysothemis.)

Elektra

Ah, das Gesicht!

Chrysothemis (*steht an die Tür gedrückt*)
Ist mein Gesicht dir so verhaßt?

Elektra

Was willst du? Rede, sprich, ergieße dich, dann
geh und laß mich!

(Chrysothemis hebt, wie abwehrend, die Hände.)

Elektra

Was hebst du die Hände? So hob der Vater
seine beiden Hände, da fuhr das Beil hinab und
spaltete sein Fleisch.
Was willst du?
Tochter meiner Mutter, Tochter Klytämnestras?

Chrysothemis

Sie haben etwas Fürchterliches vor.

Elektra

Die beiden Weiber?

Chrysothemis

Wer?

Elektra

Ah, the face!

Chrysothemis (*stands pressed against the door*)
Does my face arouse in you so much hate?

Elektra

What do you want? Talk, speak, pour out your
soul, then go and leave me!

*(Chrysothemis lifts her hands, as if to defend
herself.)*

Elektra

Why do you lift your hands? Just so did our
father lift up both his hands, then the axe
plunged and sliced his flesh in twain.
What do you want?
Daughter of my mother, daughter of
Klytemnestra?

Chrysothemis

They have some dreadful deed in mind.

Elektra

That pair of women?

Chrysothemis

Who?

Elektra

Nun, meine Mutter und jenes andre Weib, die Memme, ei, Ägisth, der tapfre Meuchelmörder, er, der Heldentaten nur im Bett vollführt. Was haben sie denn vor?

Chrysothemis

Sie werfen dich in einen Turm, wo du von Sonn' und Mond das Licht nicht sehen wirst.

(Elektra lacht.)

Chrysothemis

Sie tun's, ich weiß es, ich hab's gehört.

Elektra

Wie hast denn du es hören können?

Chrysothemis

An der Tür, Elektra.

Elektra

Mach keine Türen auf in diesem Haus! Gepreßter Atem, pfui! und Röcheln von Erwürgten, nichts andres gibt's in diesen Mauern, mach keine Türen auf! Schleich nicht herum, sitz an der Tür wie ich und wünsch den Tod und das Gericht herbei auf sie und ihn.

Chrysothemis

⁴ Ich kann nicht sitzen und ins Dunkel starren, wie du. Ich hab's wie Feuer in der Brust, es treibt mich immerfort herum im Haus; in keiner Kammer

Elektra

Oh, my mother and that other woman, the coward, yes, Aegisthus, the intrepid assassin, he, who only commits deeds of valour in bed. What is it they mean to do?

Chrysothemis

They will throw you in a tower, where you will not see the light of either sun or moon.

(Elektra laughs.)

Chrysothemis

They will do it, I know it, I have heard it.

Elektra

How then have you come to hear it?

Chrysothemis

At the door, Elektra.

Elektra

Open no doors in this house! Hoarse cries, pah! and last groans of the dying, nothing else is heard within these walls, open no doors! Do not creep about, sit by the door, as I do, and wish that death and judgement fall upon her and him.

Chrysothemis

I cannot sit here and peer into the darkness, as you. I have as though a fire in my breast, it drives me ever to roam through the house; in no hall

leidet's mich, ich muß von einer Schwelle auf die andre, ach! treppauf, treppab, mir ist, als rief' es mich, und komm ich hin, so stiert ein leeres Zimmer mich an.
Ich habe solche Angst, mir zittern die Knie bei Tag und Nacht, mir ist die Kehle wie zugeschnürt, ich kann nicht einmal weinen, wie Stein ist alles! Schwester, hab Erbarmen!

Elektra
Mit wem?

Chrysothemis
Du bist es, die mit Eisenklammern mich an den Boden schmiedet. Wärest nicht du, sie ließen uns hinaus.
Wär nicht dein Haß, dein schlafloses, unbändiges Gemüt, vor dem sie zittern, ah, so ließen sie uns ja heraus aus diesem Kerker, Schwester! Ich will heraus! Ich will nicht jede Nacht bis an den Tod hier schlafen! Eh' ich sterbe, will ich auch leben! Kinder will ich haben, bevor mein Leib verwelkt, und wär' s ein Bauer, dem sie mich geben, Kinder will ich ihm gebären und mit meinem Leib sie wärmen in kalten Nächten, wenn der Sturm die Hütte zusammenschüttelt!
Hörst du mich an? Sprich zu mir, Schwester!

Elektra
Armes Geschöpf!

Chrysothemis (*stets äußerst erregt*)
Hab Mitleid mit dir selber und mit mir! Wem

or chamber do I find rest, I must pass from one threshold to the next, ah! up stairs, down stairs, it is as if something calls to me, and when I reach it, only an empty room stares at me.
I am filled with such fear, my knees quake day and night, my throat feels as though strangled by a rope, I cannot even weep, all things are like stone! Sister, have pity!

Elektra
On whom?

Chrysothemis
It is you who keep me chained to the ground with iron fetters. Were it not for you they would have set us free.
Were it not for your hate, your sleepless, unyielding attitude, before which they tremble, ah, then they would surely have let us out of this dungeon, Sister! I must out of here! I will not sleep here every night until I die! Before I die, I also want to live! I want to have children before my body wilts, and were it a peasant that I were given to wed, I will bear him children and hold them warm in my bosom through cold nights, when the tempest rattles the hut to breaking point!
Do you hear me? Speak to me, sister!

Elektra
Poor creature!

Chrysothemis (*still in wild frenzy*)
Have pity on yourself and on me! Who profits

frommt denn solche Qual? Der Vater, der ist tot. Der Bruder kommt nicht heim. Immer sitzen wir auf der Stange wie angehängte Vögel, wenden links und rechts den Kopf – und Niemand kommt – kein Bruder – kein Bote von dem Bruder, nicht der Bote von einem Boten.
Nichts – Mit Messern gräbt Tag um Tag in dein und mein Gesicht sein Mal, und draußen geht die Sonne auf und ab, und Frauen, die ich schlank gekannt hab', sind schwer von Segen, müh' n sich zum Brunnen, heben kaum die Eimer, und auf einmal sind sie entbunden ihrer Last, kommen zum Brunnen wieder – und aus ihnen selber quillt süßer Trank, – und säugend hängt ein Leben an ihnen, und die Kinder werden groß.
Nein, ich bin ein Weib und will ein Weiberschicksal.
Viel lieber tot als leben und nicht leben.

(Sie bricht in heftiges Weinen aus.)

Elektra

Was heulst du?
Fort, hinein! Dort ist dein Platz!
Es geht ein Lärm los.

(höhnisch)

Stellen sie vielleicht für dich die Hochzeit an?
Ich hör sie laufen. Das ganze Haus ist auf. Sie kreißen, oder sie morden! Wenn es an Leichen mangelt, drauf zu schlagen, müssen sie doch morden!

by such pain? Our father, he is dead. Our brother will not come home. For ever and always we sit on a perch, like captive birds, turning the head first this way then that – and no one comes – no brother – no herald from our brother, not even a herald's herald.
Nothing – with knives time carves its furrows day after day in your face and mine, and outside, the sun rises and sets; and women whom I knew slim bear blessed burdens; they toil their way to the well, scarcely lift their pitchers, in the fullness of time, are delivered of their burdens, and come once more to the well – and from them in turn springs sweet liquid, – and sucking a little life holds them fast, and the children thrive and grow.
No, I am a woman, and want a woman's lot. Far better dead, than to live and not live.

(She bursts into passionate weeping.)

Elektra

Why do you howl?
Hence, within! There is your place!
A noise is breaking out.

(mockingly)

Are they perhaps arranging the wedding feast for you?
I hear them run. The whole house is up and about. They deliver babies or they murder. When there is a lack of corpses which they can beat, then surely they must murder!

Chrysothemis

Geh fort, verkriech dich! daß sie dich nicht sieht.
Stell dich ihr heut' nicht in den Weg: Sie schickt
Tod aus jedem Blick. Sie hat geträumt.

*(Der Lärm von vielen Kommenden drinnen,
allmählich näher.)*

Geh fort von hier. Sie kommen durch die Gänge.
Sie kommen hier vorbei. Sie hat geträumt.
Sie hat geträumt, ich weiß nicht, was, ich hab' es
von den Mägden gehört:
Sie sagen, daß sie von Orest, von Orest geträumt
hat, daß sie geschrien hat aus ihrem Schlaf, wie
einer schreit, den man erwürgt.

*(Fackeln und Gestalten erfüllen den Gang links
von der Tür.)*

Chrysothemis

Sie kommen schon, sie treibt die Mägde alle mit
Fackeln vor sich her. Sie schleppen Tiere und
Opfermesser. Schwester, wenn sie zittert, ist sie
am schrecklichsten.

(dringend)

Geh ihr nur heut, nur diese Stunde geh aus
ihrem Weg!

Elektra

Ich habe eine Lust, mit meiner Mutter zu reden,
wie noch nie!

Chrysothemis

Ich will's nicht hören!

Chrysothemis

Go away, find yourself a hiding place! lest she
see you. Do not cross her path today: death darts
from each of her glances. She has dreamed.

*(the noise within of many people approaching,
drawing ever nearer)*

Go away from here. They come through the
passages. They will pass by here. She has dreamed.
She has dreamed, I know not what, I heard it
from the maid servants:

They say that she has dreamed about Orestes,
about Orestes, that she shrieked in her sleep, as
one shrieks who is being strangled.

*(Torches and people fill the passage to the left of
the door.)*

Chrysothemis

They are already coming; she drives the maid
servants with torches all before her. They drag
animals and sacrificial knives. Sister, when she
trembles, she is at her most terrible.

(urging her)

Stay away from her today, just this hour do not
cross her path!

Elektra

I have a desire to speak with my mother, as never
before!

Chrysothemis

I will not hear it!

*(Chrysothemis stürzt ab durch die Hoftür.)
(An den grell erleuchteten Fenstern klirrt und
schlürfi ein hastiger Zug vorüber: Es ist ein
Zerren, ein Schleppen von Tieren, ein gedämpftes
Keifen, ein schnell ersticktes Aufschreien, das
Niedersausen einer Peitsche, ein Aufraffen, ein
Weitertaumeln.)*

*(In dem breiten Fenster erscheint Klytämnestra.
Ihr fables, gedunsenes Gesicht, in dem grellen
Licht der Fackeln, erscheint noch bleicher über
dem scharlachroten Gewand. Sie stützt sich auf
eine Vertraute, die dunkelviolet gekleidet ist,
und auf einen elfenbeinern, mit Edelsteinen
geschmückten Stab. Eine gelbe Gestalt, mit
zurückgekämmtem schwarzem Haar, einer
Egypterin ähmlich, mit glattem Gesicht, einer
aufgerichteten Schlange gleichend, trägt ihr die
Schleppe. Die Königin ist über und über bedeckt
mit Edelsteinen und Talismanen. Die Arme sind
voll von Reifen, ihre Finger starren von Ringen.
Die Lider ihrer Augen scheinen übermäßig groß,
und es scheint ihr eine furchtbare Anstrengung zu
kosten, sie offen zu halten.)*

(Elektra richtet sich hoch auf.)

Klytämnestra *(öffnet jäh die Augen, zitternd vor
Zorn tritt sie ans Fenster und zeigt mit dem Stock
auf Elektra)*

6 Was willst du? Seht doch, dort! So seht doch das!
Wie es sich aufbäumt mit geblähem Hals und
nach mir züngelt! Und das laß ich frei in meinem

*(Chrysothemis rushes off through the gate of the
courtyard.)*

*(A hurried procession rushes and staggers past
the luridly lighted windows: it is a wrenching, a
dragging of animals, a muffled scolding, a quickly
choked shouting, the hissing of a whip in the air, a
rallying of men and beasts, a staggering onwards.)*

*(In the broad window Klytemnestra appears.
Her sallow, bloated face, in the lurid glare of
the torches, appears still paler above her scarlet
robe. She supports herself on a Confidante, who
is dressed in dark violet garments, and on a
begemmed ivory staff. A jaundiced figure, with
black hair combed back, like an Egyptian woman,
with smooth face, resembling a rearing snake,
carries the train of her robe. The Queen is covered
everywhere with gems and talismans. Her arms
are full of armlets, her fingers bristle with rings.
The lids of her eyes appear larger than is natural,
and it seems to cost her a frightful effort to keep
them from falling.)*

(Elektra straightens herself to her full height.)

Klytemnestra *(opens her eyes abruptly; trembling
with anger, she steps up to the window and points
her staff at Elektra)*

What do you want? Look, look there! Well,
look at that! How it rears up with its neck
outstretched, and with a darting tongue at me!

Hause laufen!
(*schwer atmend*)
Wenn sie mich mit ihren Blicken töten könnte!
O Götter, warum liegt ihr so auf mir? Warum
verwüestet ihr mich so?
Warum muß meine Kraft in mir gelähmt sein?
Warum bin ich lebendigen Leibes wie ein wüstes
Gefild und diese Nessel wächst aus mir heraus,
und ich hab' nicht die Kraft zu jäten!
Warum geschieht mir das, ihr ew'gen Götter?

Elektra (*ruhig*)
Die Götter! Bist doch selber eine Göttin, bist,
was sie sind!

Klytämnestra (*zu ihren Begleiterinnen*)
Habt ihr gehört? Habt ihr verstanden, was sie
redet?

Die Vertraute
Daß auch du vom Stamm der Götter bist.

Die Schlepprägerin (*zischend*)
Sie meint es tückisch.

(*Klytämnestras schwere Augenlider fallen zu.*)

Klytämnestra (*weich*)
Das klingt mir so bekannt. Und nur als hätt'
ich's vergessen, lang und lang. Sie kennt mich
gut. Doch weiß man nie, was sie im Schilde
führt.

And that I leave free to roam about my palace!
(*breathing heavily*)
When with her glances she could strike me dead!
O gods, why do you oppress me so? Why do you
ravage me so?
Why must the strength in me be palsied? Why
am I, still living, like an untilled wasteland and
this nettle issues from me,
and I have not the strength to uproot it!
Why do such things afflict me, you everlasting
gods?

Elektra (*calmly*)
The gods! Yet you are yourself a goddess, you are
what they are!

Klytemnestra (*to her attendants*)
Have you heard? Have you understood what
she speaks?

The Confidante
That you too are of the race of gods.

The Trainbearer (*hissing*)
She speaks treacherously.

(*Klytemnestra's heavy eyelids droop.*)

Klytemnestra (*gently*)
That sounds to me so familiar. And only as
though I had forgotten it, long, long ago. She
knows me well. But one never knows what she
is up to.

(Die Vertraute und die Schleppträgerin flüstern miteinander.)

Elektra (*nähert sich langsam*
Klytämnestra)

Du bist nicht mehr du selber. Das Gewürm
hängt immerfort um dich.
Was sie ins Ohr dir zischen, trennt dein Denken
fort und fort entzwei, so gehst du hin im
Tumel, immer bist du, als wie im Traum.

Klytämnestra

Ich will hinunter. Laßt, laßt, ich will mit ihr
reden.

*(Sie geht vom Fenster weg und erscheint mit ihren
Begleiterinnen in der Tür.)
(von der Türschwelle aus)
(etwas weicher)*

Sie ist heute nicht widerlich. Sie redet wie ein
Arzt.

Die Vertraute (*flüsternd*)

Sie redet nicht, wie sie's meint.

Die Schleppträgerin

Ein jedes Wort ist Falschheit.

Klytämnestra (*auffahrend*)

7

Ich will Nichts hören!

Was aus euch heraus kommt, ist nur der Atem
des Ägisth.

Und wenn ich nachts euch wecke, redet ihr nicht
jede etwas andres?

(The Confidante and the Trainbearer whisper to each other.)

Elektra (*slowly approaches nearer to*
Klytemnestra)

You are no longer yourself. The reptile clings
always about you.
What they hiss into your ear splits your thoughts
again and again into pieces; so you ever go in a
daze, you always walk as in a dream.

Klytemnestra

I will descend. Leave me, leave me, I wish to
speak with her.

*(She leaves the window and appears with her
attendants in the doorway.)
(speaking from the threshold)
(more gently)*

Today she is not hostile. She speaks like a doctor.

The Confidante (*whispering*)

She does not speak what she means.

The Trainbearer

Every single word is a falsehood.

Klytemnestra (*starting up*)

I will hear nothing!

What comes out of your mouths is merely the
echoing breath of Aegisthus.

And when I wake you at night, does not each
one of you give different counsel?

Schreist nicht du, daß meine Augenlider
angeschwollen und meine Leber krank ist.
Und winselst nicht du in's and're Ohr, daß
du Dämonen gesehen hast mit langen spitzen
Schnäbeln, die mir das Blut aussaugen?
Zeigst du nicht die Spuren mir an meinem
Fleisch, und folg' ich dir nicht und schlachte,
schlachte, schlachte Opfer um Opfer?
Zerrt ihr mich mit euren Reden und Gegenreden
nicht zu Tod? Ich will nicht mehr hören: Das ist
wahr, und das ist Lüge.
(dumpf)
Was die Wahrheit ist, das bringt kein Mensch
heraus.
Wenn sie zu mir redet,
(immer schwer atmend)
was mich zu hören freut, so will ich horchen, auf
was sie redet.
Wenn einer etwas Angenehmes sagt,
(heftig)
und wär' es meine Tochter, wär es die da, –
will ich von meiner Seele alle Hüllen abstreifen
und das Fächeln sanfter Luft, von wo es kommen
mag, einlassen, wie die Kranken tun, wenn sie
der kühlen Luft, am Teiche sitzend, abends ihre
Beulen und all ihr Eiterndes der kühlen Luft
preisgeben, abends ...
und nichts andres denken, als Lindrung zu
schaffen.
Laßt mich allein mit ihr!

*(Ungeduldig weist sie mit dem Stock die
Vertraute und die Schleppträgerin ins Haus.*

Do you not shout that my eyelids are swollen
and my liver is diseased?
And do you not whine into the other ear that
you have seen demons with long sharp snouts
that suck the blood from me?
Do you not show their traces on my flesh, do I
not give heed, and slaughter, slaughter, slaughter
victim after victim?
Do you not tear me to death with your claims
and counter-claims? I will hear no more: this is
truth and that is falsehood.
(in a hollow voice)
What the truth is, no man can determine.
If she should speak to me,
(still breathing heavily)
that which it will gladden me to hear, then I will
hearken to what she says.
If anyone tell me something pleasing,
(violently)
and though it be my daughter, the one who
stands there, –
then I will bare my soul of all concealment, and
admit the caresses of gentle air, from whichever
direction it come, as the sick do, when in the
balmy air, sitting by the pond, at nightfall they
expose their boils and festering sores to balmy
airs, at nightfall...
and think of nothing save respite from pain.
Leave me alone with her!

*(Impatiently she makes a gesture with her staff,
bidding the Confidante and the Trainbearer go*

Diese verschwinden zögernd in der Tür. Auch die Fackeln verschwinden, und nur aus dem Innern des Hauses fällt ein schwacher Schein durch den Flur auf den Hof und streift hie und da die Gestalten der beiden Frauen.)

(Klytämnestra kommt herab.)

Klytämnestra (*leise*)

8 Ich habe keine guten Nächte.
Weißt du kein Mittel gegen Träume?

Elektra (*näher rückend*)

Träumst du, Mutter?

Klytämnestra

Wer älter wird, der träumt.
Allein, es läßt sich vertreiben. Es gibt Bräuche. Es muß für Alles richtige Bräuche geben.
Darum bin ich so behängt mit Steinen, denn es wohnt in jedem ganz sicher eine Kraft. Man muß nur wissen, wie man sie nützen kann. Wenn du nur wolltest, du könntest etwas sagen, das mir nützt.

Elektra

Ich, Mutter, ich?

Klytämnestra (*ausbrechend*)

Ja, du? Denn du bist klug. In deinem Kopf ist alles stark. Du könntest vieles sagen, was mir nützt. Wenn auch ein Wort nichts weiter ist!
Was ist denn ein Hauch! Und doch kriecht

into the house. They disappear after lingering at the door. The torches, too, disappear, and only from within does a feeble ray of light shine on to the courtyard and here and there illumine the figures of the two women.)

(Klytemnestra descends.)

Klytemnestra (*softly*)

I have no good nights.
Do you not know a remedy against dreams?

Elektra (*approaching*)

Do you dream, Mother?

Klytemnestra

He who grows older, he dreams.
Yet, dreams can be banished. There are rites. There must be fitting rites for all things.
For that reason I am so laden with precious stones, for in each one there surely dwells a power. One must only know how to make use of it. If you only were so inclined, you could say something that would be of use to me.

Elektra

I, Mother, I?

Klytemnestra (*in a vehement outburst*)

Yes, you? For you are wise. In your head everything is strong. You could say many things to me that would be of use to me.
Even if a word can be no more than that!

zwischen Tag und Nacht, wenn ich mit offenen Augen lieg', ein Erwas hin über mich. Es ist kein Wort, es ist kein Schmerz, es drückt mich nicht, es würgt mich nicht, Nichts ist es, nicht einmal ein Alp, und dennoch, es ist so fürchterlich, daß meine Seele sich wünscht, erhängt zu sein, und jedes Glied in mir schreit nach dem Tod, und dabei leb' ich und bin nicht einmal krank: Du siehst mich doch: Sch' ich wie eine Kranke? Kann man denn vergehn, lebend, wie ein faules Aas? Kann man zerfallen, wenn man gar nicht krank ist? Zerfallen wachen Sinnes, wie ein Kleid, zerfressen von den Motten? Und dann schlaf' ich und träume, träume, daß sich mir das Mark in den Knochen löst, und taumle wieder auf, und nicht der zehnte Teil der Wasseruhr ist abgelaufen, und was unter'm Vorhang herein grinst, ist noch nicht der fahle Morgen, nein, immer noch die Fackel vor der Tür, die gräßlich zuckt, wie ein Lebendiges und meinen Schlaf belauert. Diese Träume müssen ein Ende ... haben ... Wer sie immer schickt, ein jeder Dämon läßt von uns, sobald das rechte Blut geflossen ist.

Elektra

Ein jeder!

Klytämnestra (*wild*)

Und müßt' ich jedes Tier, das kriecht und fliegt, zur Ader lassen und im Dampf des Blutes aufsteh'n und schlafen gehn, wie die Völker des letzten Thule im blutroten Nebel: Ich will nicht länger träumen.

What then is a breath! And yet, between day and night, when I lie with eyes open, some Thing comes creeping over me. It is no word, it is no pain, it does not weigh on me, it does not choke me, it is Nothing, not even a nightmare, yet for all that, it is so frightening that my soul wishes for the hangman's rope, and my every limb cries out for death, and still, I live, and am not even sick: look, you can see me: do I appear sick? Can one perish, then, still living, like rotten carrion? Can one crumble to pieces, when one in no way is sick? Fall to pieces while fully awake, like a garment devoured by moths? And then I sleep and dream, dream, that the marrow in my bones dissolves itself, and I stagger up again, and not by a tenth has the water clock trickled down, and what grins from under the curtain is not yet the fallow morning, no, still only the torch before the door, that flickers horribly, just like a living thing that stalks me in my sleep. These dreams must have... an end... Whoever sends them, each and every demon leaves us, as soon as the right blood has flowed.

Elektra

Each and every one!

Klytemnestra (*wildly*)

And must I open the vein of every animal that crawls and flies, and rise in the steam of blood and go to sleep, like the people of distant Thule in blood-red mists: I will no longer dream.

9 Elektra
 Wenn das rechte Blutopfer unter'm Beile fällt,
 dann träumst du nicht länger!

Klytämnestra (*sehr hastig*)
 Also wüßtest du, mit welchem geweihten Tier? –

Elektra (*geheimnißvoll lächelnd*)
 Mit einem ungeweihten.

Klytämnestra
 Das drin gebunden liegt?

Elektra
 Nein, es läuft frei.

Klytämnestra
 Und was für Bräuche?

Elektra
 Wunderbare Bräuche, und sehr genau zu üben.

Klytämnestra (*heftig*)
 Rede doch!

Elektra
 Kannst du mich nicht erraten?

Klytämnestra
 Nein, darum frag' ich.
 (*Elektra gleichsam feierlich beschwörend*)
 Den Namen sag' des Opfertiers!

Elektra
 When the right blood victim falls beneath the
 axe, then you will no longer dream!

Klytemnestra (*very hastily*)
 Then you know with what consecrated animal? –

Elektra (*smiling mysteriously*)
 With one not consecrated.

Klytemnestra
 That within lies fettered?

Elektra
 No, it roams free.

Klytemnestra
 And what sort of rites?

Elektra
 Most wondrous rites, and to be observed most
 closely.

Klytemnestra (*vehemently*)
 Then Tell me!

Elektra
 Can you not guess my meaning?

Klytemnestra
 No, that is why I ask.
 (*as if solemnly adjuring Elektra*)
 Say the name of the sacrificial animal!

Elektra
Ein Weib!

Klytämnestra (*hastig*)
Von meinen Dienerinnen eine sag, ein Kind,
ein jungfräuliches Weib? ein Weib, das schon
erkannt vom Manne?

Elektra (*ruhig*)
Ja, erkannt, das ist's.

Klytämnestra (*dringend*)
Und wie das Opfer? und welche Stunde? Und
wo?

Elektra (*ruhig*)
An jedem Ort, zu jeder Stunde des Tags und
der Nacht.

Klytämnestra
Die Bräuche sag! Wie brächt' ich's dar? Ich
selber muß –

Elektra
Nein, diesmal gehst du nicht auf die Jagd mit
Netz und mit Beil.

Klytämnestra
Wer denn? Wer brächt' es dar?

Elektra
Ein Mann.

Elektra
A woman!

Klytemnestra (*eagerly*)
Say, is it one of my maid servants, a child, a pure
unwed maiden? a woman, whom a man has
already known?

Elektra (*calmly*)
Yes, known by a man, that is it.

Klytemnestra (*with growing eagerness*)
And how the sacrifice? and at what hour? And
where?

Elektra (*calmly*)
At any place, at any moment of day or of night.

Klytemnestra
Disclose the rites! How do I bring about the
sacrifice? I myself must –

Elektra
No, this time you will not go hunting with net
and axe.

Klytemnestra
Who then? Who will bring about the sacrifice?

Elektra
A man.

Klytämnestra
Ägisth?

Elektra (*lacht*)
Ich sagte doch, ein Mann.

Klytämnestra
Wer? gib mir Antwort. Vom Hause jemand?
oder muß ein Fremder herbei?

Elektra (*zu Boden stierend, wie abwesend*)
Ja, ja, ein Fremder, aber freilich ist er vom Haus'.

Klytämnestra
Gib mir nicht Rätsel auf. Elektra, hör' mich an.
Ich freue mich, daß ich dich heut' einmal nicht
störrisch finde ...

Elektra (*leise*)
Läßt du den Bruder nicht nach Hause, Mutter?

Klytämnestra
Von ihm zu reden hab' ich dir verboten.

Elektra
So hast du Furcht vor ihm?

Klytämnestra
Wer sagt das?

Klytemnestra
Aegisthus?

Elektra (*laughing*)
But did I not say a man?

Klytemnestra
Who? answer me. Someone of this house? or
must a stranger aid us?

Elektra (*staring at the ground as if absent*)
Yes, yes, a stranger, but nonetheless he is of this
house.

Klytemnestra
Do not deliver me riddles. Elektra, listen to me.
It pleases me that today for once I do not find
you stubborn...

Elektra (*softly*)
Will you not allow my brother back home,
Mother?

Klytemnestra
I have forbidden you to speak of him.

Elektra
Then you are afraid of him?

Klytemnestra
Who says that?

Elektra
Mutter, du zitterst ja!

Klytämnestra
Wer fürchtet sich vor einem Schwachsinnigen.

Elektra
Wie?

Klytämnestra
Es heißt, er stammelt, liegt im Hofe bei den Hunden und weiß nicht Mensch und Tier zu unterscheiden.

Elektra
Das Kind war ganz gesund.

Klytämnestra
Es heißt, sie gaben ihm schlechte Wohnung und Tiere des Hofes zur Gesellschaft.

Elektra
Ah!

Klytämnestra (*mit gesenkten Augenlidern*)
Ich schickte viel Gold und wieder Gold, sie sollten ihn gut halten wie ein Königskind.

Elektra
Du lügst! Du schicktest Gold, damit sie ihn erwürgen.

Elektra
But, Mother, you tremble!

Klytemnestra
Who is fearful before one so weak-minded?

Elektra
How so?

Klytemnestra
It is said that he stammers, lives in the courtyard among the dogs, and does not know man from beast.

Elektra
The child was in full health.

Klytemnestra
It is said, they gave him miserable lodgings, and courtyard animals for company.

Elektra
Ah!

Klytemnestra (*with lowered eyelids*)
I sent much gold, and still more gold, that they treat him well as fits a son of kings.

Elektra
You lie! You sent gold, that they strangle him.

Klytämnestra
Wer sagt dir das?

Elektra
Ich seh' s an deinen Augen. Allein an deinem
Zittern seh' ich auch, daß er noch lebt, daß du
bei Tag und Nacht an nichts denkst als an ihn.
Daß dir das Herz verdorrt vor Grauen, weil du
weißt: Er kommt.

Klytämnestra
Was kümmert mich, wer außer Haus ist. Ich lebe
hier und bin die Herrin. Diener hab' ich genug,
die Tore zu bewachen, und wenn ich will: laß
ich bei Tag und Nacht vor meiner Kammer drei
Bewaffnete mit offenen Augen sitzen. Und aus
dir bring' ich so oder so das rechte Wort schon
an den Tag. Du hast dich schon verraten, daß du
das rechte Opfer weißt und auch die Bräuche,
die mir nützen. Sagst du's nicht im Freien, wirst
du's an der Kette sagen. Sagst du's nicht satt,
so sagst du's hungernd. Träume sind etwas, das
man los wird. Wer dran leidet und nicht das
Mittel findet, sich zu heilen, ist nur ein Narr.
Ich finde mir heraus, wer bluten muß, damit ich
wieder schlafe.

Klytemnestra
Who tells you that?

Elektra
I see it in your eyes. Simply in your trembling
I also see that he still lives, that day and night
you think of nothing except him. That within,
your heart withers with terror, for you know:
he comes.

Klytemnestra
Why should he trouble me, who is not within
this house? I live here and am the mistress. Of
servants I have enough, to guard the gates, and if
I so wish: by night and day I order three armed
men to sit before my chamber with watchful eyes.
And from you, I shall, by whatever device proves
necessary, bring true words into the light of day.
You have already betrayed yourself, by revealing
that you know the right sacrificial animal, and
also the rites that will serve me. Will you not say
it freely, then you will say it in chains. Will you
not say it when sated, then you will say it from
hunger. Dreams are things that can be banished.
Whoever suffers from such and cannot find the
means that will heal him, is only a fool. I shall
discover for myself whose blood must be made to
flow, so that I may sleep once more.

Elektra (*mit einem Sprung aus dem Dunkel auf Klytämnestra zu, immer näher an ihr, immer furchtbarer anwachsend*)

¹⁰ Was bluten muß?

Dein eigenes Genick, wenn dich der Jäger abgefangen hat.

Ich hör' ihn durch die Zimmer gehn, ich hör' ihn den Vorhang von dem Bette heben: Wer schlachtet ein Opfertier im Schlaf!

Er jagt dich auf, schreiend entfliehst du. Aber er, er ist hinterdrein, er treibt dich durch das Haus! willst du nach rechts, da steht das Bett! nach links, da schäumt das Bad wie Blut, das Dunkel und die Fackeln werfen schwarze rote Todesnetze über dich.

(Klytämnestra von sprachlosem Grauen geschüttelt)

Hinab die Treppen durch Gewölbe hin, Gewölbe und Gewölbe geht die Jagd –

Und ich, ich, ich, ich, die ihn dir geschickt, ich steh' da und seh' dich endlich sterben. Dann träumst du nicht mehr, dann brauche ich nicht mehr zu träumen, und wer dann noch lebt, der jauchzt und kann sich seines Lebens freuen!

(Sie stehen an einander, Elektra in wilder Trunkenheit, Klytämnestra, gräßlich atmend vor Angst, Aug' in Aug'.)

(In diesen Augenblick erbellt sich der Hausflur. Die Vertraute kommt hergelaufen.)

Elektra (*leaps out of the dark at Klytemnestra, coming ever nearer to her, growing ever more threatening*)

Whose blood must flow?

It will flow from your own neck, when the huntsman has caught up with you.

I hear him walk through the chambers, I hear him lifting the curtain from your bed: Who slaughters a sacrificial animal in its sleep!

He chases you up, screaming you flee. But he, he is at your heels, he drives you through the house! if you turn right, there stands the bed! turn left, there foams the bath blood red, the darkness and the torches cast black-red nets of death over you.

(Klytemnestra shaken by speechless terror)

Down the stairways, on through vaulted halls, vault upon vault, the wild chase goes –

And I, I, I, I, I, who sent him to you, I stand there, and at last I see you die. Then you will dream no longer, then I shall have no more need of dreaming, and all who still shall live shall rejoice, gladdened to the very core of their being.

(They stand facing each other, eye to eye, Elektra in wild intoxication, Klytemnestra gasping for air in fear.)

(At this moment the interior of the palace is lighted up. The Confidante comes running.)

(Sie flüstert Klytämnestra etwas ins Ohr. Diese scheint erst nicht recht zu verstehen. Allmählich kommt sie zu sich. Sie winkt: "Lichter!" Es laufen Dienerinnen mit Fackeln heraus und stellen sich hinter Klytämnestra.)

(Klytämnestra winkt: "Mehr Lichter!")

(Nun verändern sich ihre Züge allmählich und die Spannung weicht einem bösen Triumph. Es kommen immer mehr Dienerinnen heraus, stellen sich hinter Klytämnestra, so daß der Hof voll von Licht wird und rotgelber Schein um die Mauern flutet. Klytämnestra läßt sich die Botschaft abermals zuflüstern und verliert dabei Elektra keinen Augenblick aus dem Auge.)

(Ganz bis an den Hals sich sättigend mit wilder Freude, streckt Klytämnestra die beiden Hände drohend gegen Elektra.)

*(Dann hebt ihr die Vertraute den Stock auf, und auf beide sich stützend, eilig, gierig, an den Stufen ihr Gewand aufraffend, läuft sie ins Haus.)
(Die Dienerinnen mit den Lichtern wie gejagt hinter ihr drein.)*

Elektra

Was sagen sie ihr denn? Sie freut sich ja! Mein Kopf! Mir fällt nichts ein. Worüber freut sich das Weib?

(She whispers something into Klytemnestra's ear. Klytemnestra seems at first not to understand. Gradually she grasps the meaning of it all. She commands: 'Lights!' Maid servants come running from the palace with torches and range themselves behind Klytemnestra.)

(Klytemnestra commands: 'More lights!')

(Now her features gradually change and the tension yields to a look of evil triumph. Still more maid servants come out and range themselves behind Klytemnestra, so that the courtyard is flooded with light and a reddish yellow glare eddies round the walls. Klytemnestra allows the message to be whispered to her again, and does not, the while, for an instant take her eyes off Elektra.)

(Glutted with wild joy, Klytemnestra raises both her hands threateningly towards Elektra.)

*(Then the Confidante lifts her staff from the ground and, leaning on both, Klytemnestra hurries eagerly into the palace, gathering up her robe on the stairs.)
(The maid servants, carrying the torches, rush after her, as if pursued.)*

Elektra

What are they saying to her, then? She seems glad! My head! I have no thoughts. What moves that woman to rejoice?

CD 2

(Chrysothemis kommt laufend zur Hoftür herein, laut heulend wie ein verwundetes Tier.)

Chrysothemis *(schreiend)*
1 Orest! Orest – ist tot!

Elektra *(winkt ihr ab, wie von Sinnen)*
Sei still!

Chrysothemis
Orest ist tot.

(Elektra bewegt die Lippen.)

Chrysothemis
Ich kam hinaus, da wußten sie's schon! Alle standen herum und Alle wußten es schon, nur wir nicht.

Elektra *(dumpf)*
Niemand weiß es.

Chrysothemis
Alle wissen's!

Elektra
Niemand kann's wissen, denn es ist nicht wahr.

(Chrysothemis wirft sich verzweifelt auf den Boden.)

COMPACT DISC TWO

(Chrysothemis enters running, through the gate of the courtyard, howling loudly like a wounded beast.)

Chrysothemis *(sbricking)*
Orestes! Orestes – is dead!

Elektra *(wards her off with a gesture, as if demented)*
Be still!

Chrysothemis
Orestes is dead.

(Elektra moves her lips.)

Chrysothemis
I came outside, everybody then already knew it! All stood around, and everyone knew it already, only we did not.

Elektra *(in a hollow voice)*
No one knows it.

Chrysothemis
Everyone knows it!

Elektra
No one can know it, for it is not true.

(Chrysothemis flings herself in despair on the ground.)

Elektra (*Chrysothemis emporreißend*)

Es ist nicht wahr!

Es ist nicht wahr, ich sag' dir doch – Es ist nicht wahr!

Chrysothemis

Die Fremden standen an der Wand, die Fremden, die hergeschickt sind, es zu melden: zwei, ein Alter und ein Junger. Allen hatten sie's schon erzählt, im Kreise standen Alle um sie herum und Alle,
(*mit Anstrengung*)
Alle, wußten es schon.

Elektra (*mit höchster Kraft*)

Es ist nicht wahr!

Chrysothemis

An uns denkt Niemand. Tot, Elektra, tot! Gestorben in der Fremde! Tot! Gestorben dort in fremdem Land. Von seinen Pferden erschlagen und geschleift.

(*sinkt vor der Schwelle des Hauses an Elektras Seite in wilder Verzweiflung hin*)

Ein junger Diener (*kommt eilig aus dem Haus, stolpert über die vor der Schwelle Liegende hinweg*)

2 Platz da! Wer lungert so vor einer Tür? Ah! konnt' mir's denken! Heda, Stallung! he!

Elektra (*dragging up Chrysothemis*)

It is not true!

It is not true, I am telling you – It is not true!

Chrysothemis

The strangers stood by the wall, the strangers who were sent here to report it: two, one older and one younger. They had already told everyone, everyone stood around them, and they all,
(*with great effort*)
all knew it already.

Elektra (*with utmost strength*)

It is not true!

Chrysothemis

No one thinks of us. Dead, Elektra, dead! Dead in a foreign land! Dead! Dear there in a foreign land! Struck by his horses and dragged to his death.

(*By Elektra's side before the threshold of the house she sinks to the ground in wild despair.*)

A Young Servant (*hurrying from the house, stumbles over the person lying by the threshold*)

Make room! Who loiters so before a door? Ah! could have thought as much! Quick, a horse! quick!

Ein alter Diener (*finsteren Gesichts, zeigt sich an der Hoftür*)

Was soll's im Stall?

Ein junger Diener

Gesattelt soll werden, und so rasch als möglich! Hörst du? Ein Gaul, ein Maultier oder meinetwegen auch eine Kuh, nur rasch!

Ein alter Diener

Für wen?

Ein junger Diener

Für den, der dir's befiehlt. Da glotzt er! Rasch, für mich! Sofort, für mich! Trab, trab! Weil ich hinaus muß auf's Feld, den Herren holen, weil ich ihm Botschaft zu bringen habe, große Botschaft, wichtig genug, um eine eurer Mähren zu Tod –
(*im Abgehen*)
zu reiten.

(*Auch der Alte verschwindet.*)

Elektra (*vor sich hin, leise und sehr energisch*)

3 Nun muß es hier von uns geschehn.

Chrysothemis (*verwundert fragend*)

Elektra?

Elektra (*alles in fliegender Hast*)

Wir, wir beide müssen's tun.

An Old Servant (*of sombre mien, appears at the gate of the courtyard*)

Who needs a horse?

A Young Servant

It must be saddled, and as quickly as possible! Do you hear? A horse, a mule, or, for all I care, a cow, but quickly!

An Old Servant

For whom?

A Young Servant

For him who commands it of you. Look, he only gapes at me! Quickly, for me! Right away, for me! Trot, trot! Because I must out in the field, and bring the Master home, for I have tidings to bring him, weighty tidings, weighty enough to ride one of your mares –
(*as he departs*)
to death.

(*The Old Servant, too, disappears.*)

Elektra (*to herself softly, but with determination*)

Now it must be done here, by us.

Chrysothemis (*puzzled, questioning*)

Elektra?

Elektra (*in frenzied haste*)

We, the two of us must do it.

Chrysothemis
Was, Elektra?

Elektra (*leise*)
Am besten heut', am besten diese Nacht.

Chrysothemis
Was, Schwester?

Elektra
Was? Das Werk, das nun auf uns gefallen ist,
(*sehr schmerzlich*)
weil er nicht kommen kann.

Chrysothemis (*angstvoll steigend*)
Was für ein Werk?

Elektra
Nun müssen du und ich hingehn und das Weib
und ihren Mann erschlagen.

Chrysothemis (*leise, schauernd*)
Schwester, sprichst du von der Mutter?

Elektra (*wild*)
Von ihr und auch von ihm. Ganz ohne Zögern
muß es geschehn. Schweig still. Zu sprechen ist
nichts. Nichts gibt es zu bedenken, als nur, wie?
wie wir es tun.

Chrysothemis
Ich?

Chrysothemis
What, Elektra?

Elektra (*softly*)
It were best today, it were best tonight.

Chrysothemis
What, sister?

Elektra
What? The deed that now has fallen to us,
(*very sadly*)
as he cannot come.

Chrysothemis (*in growing fear*)
What sort of deed?

Elektra
Now you and I must go forth and slay the
woman and her husband.

Chrysothemis (*softly, shuddering*)
Sister, are you talking about our mother?

Elektra (*wildly*)
About her and also about him. It must happen
without the slightest hesitation. Keep silent.
There is no need to talk. There is nothing to
consider, except this, how? how shall we do it?

Chrysothemis
I?

Elektra
Ja, du und ich. Wer sonst?

Chrysothemis (*entsetzt*)
Wir? Wir beide sollen hingehn? Wir, wir zwei
mit unsern beiden Händen?

Elektra
Dafür laß du mich nur sorgen.
(*geheimnisvoll*)
Das Beil –
(*stärker*)
das Beil, womit der Vater ...

Chrysothemis
Du, Entsetzliche, du hast es?

Elektra
Für den Bruder bewahrt' ich es. Nun müssen wir
es schwingen.

Chrysothemis
Du? Diese Arme den Ägisth erschlagen?

Elektra (*wild*)
Erst sie, dann ihn, erst ihn, dann sie, gleichviel.

Chrysothemis
Ich fürchte mich.

Elektra
Es schläft Niemand in ihrem Vorgemach.

Elektra
Yes, you and I. Who else?

Chrysothemis (*horrified*)
We? The two of us are to do it? We, the two of
us, with our bare hands?

Elektra
You just let me take care of that.
(*mysteriously*)
The axe –
(*more loudly*)
the axe, with which our father...

Chrysothemis
You, terrible one, you have it?

Elektra
I kept it for our brother. Now we must wield it.

Chrysothemis
You? These arms slay Aegisthus?

Elektra (*wildly*)
First her, then him, first him, then her, it is all
the same.

Chrysothemis
I am afraid.

Elektra
No one sleeps in their antechamber.

Chrysothemis
Im Schlaf sie morden!

Elektra
Wer schläft ist ein gebundnes Opfer. Schließen
sie nicht zusamm', könnt' ich's allein
vollbringen. So aber mußt du mit.

Chrysothemis (*abwehrend*)
Elektra!

Elektra
Du! Du! Denn du bist stark!
(*dicht bei Chrysothemis*)

4 Wie stark du bist. Dich haben die jungfräulichen
Nächte stark gemacht. Überall ist so viel Kraft in
dir. Sehnen hast du wie ein Füllen. Schlank sind
deine Füße. Wie schlank und biegsam – leicht
umschling ich sie – deine Hüften sind.
Du windest dich durch jeden Spalt, du hebst
dich durch's Fenster! Laß mich deine Arme
fühlen, wie kühl und stark sie sind! Wie du mich
abwehrst,ühl' ich, was das für Arme sind!

Chrysothemis
Laß mich!

Elektra
Nein, ich halte dich. Mit meinen traurigen,
verdorrten Armen umschling ich deinen Leib,
wie du dich sträubst, ziehst du den Knoten
nur noch fester, ranken will ich mich rings um

Chrysothemis
To murder them in their sleep!

Elektra
He who sleeps is a fettered victim. Were they
not sleeping together, I could have carried out
the task alone. But now you must come with me.

Chrysothemis (*defensively*)
Elektra!

Elektra
You! You! For you are strong!
(*standing close to Chrysothemis*)

How strong you are. Chaste nights have made
you strong. There is so much strength in every
part of you. You have sinews like a filly. Your feet
are slender. How slender and supple – my arms
enfold them easily – your hips are.
You wind your way through every crevice, you
can pull yourself through the casement! Let me
feel your arms, how cool and strong they are!
The way you fend me off, I feel what sort of arms
they are!

Chrysothemis
Leave me!

Elektra
No, I hold you. With my sorrowful, withered
arms I wrap myself about your body, the more
fiercely you struggle, you simply pull the knot
tighter, I will encircle you like the tendrils of a

dich, versenken meine Wurzeln in dich und mit
meinem Willen dir impfen das Blut.

Chrysothemis
Laß mich!

*(Sie flüchtet ein paar Schritte. Elektra wild ibr
nach, faßt sie am Gewand.)*

Elektra
Nein, ich laß dich nicht.

Chrysothemis
Elektra, hör' mich! Du bist so klug, hilf uns aus
diesem Haus. Hilf uns in's Freie!
Elektra, hilf uns, hilf uns in's Freie ...

Elektra
Von jetzt an will ich deine Schwester sein, so wie
ich niemals deine Schwester war! Getreu will
ich mit dir in deiner Kammer sitzen und warten
auf den Bräutigam. Für ihn will ich dich salben,
und ins duftige Bad sollst du mir tauchen wie der
junge Schwan und deinen Kopf an meiner Brust
verbergen, bevor er dich, die durch den Schleier
glüht, wie eine Fackel, in das Hochzeitsbett mit
starken Armen zieht.

Chrysothemis *(schließt die Augen)*
Nicht, Schwester, nicht. Sprich nicht ein solches
Wort in diesem Haus.

(Chrysothemis will reden.)

vine, sink my roots into you, and with my will
make your blood burn.

Chrysothemis
Leave me!

*(She flees a few steps. Elektra hurries wildly after
her and seizes her robe.)*

Elektra
No, I will not leave you.

Chrysothemis
Elektra, listen to me! You are so wise, help us
to escape this house. Help us to reach freedom!
Elektra, help us, help us to our freedom...

Elektra
From now on I will be your sister, as I never was
your sister before! I shall sit faithfully with you
in your chamber and await the bridegroom. For
him I shall anoint you, and in the fragrant bath
you shall submerge me like the young swan and
shelter your head in my bosom, before with his
strong arms he takes you, glowing beneath the
veil, like a torch, to the nuptial bed.

Chrysothemis *(closing her eyes)*
Don't, sister, don't. Do not speak such words in
this house.

(Chrysothemis strives to speak.)

Elektra (*hält ihr den Mund zu*)
Dir führt kein Weg hinaus, als der. Ich laß'
dich nicht, eh' du mir Mund auf Mund es
zugeschworen, daß du es tun wirst.

Chrysothemis (*windet sich los*)
Laß mich!

Elektra (*faßt sie wieder*)
Schwör', du kommst heut Nacht, wenn alles still
ist, an den Fuß der Treppe!

Chrysothemis
Laß mich!

Chrysothemis
Ich kann nicht!

(*in's Haustor entspringend*)

Elektra
Sei verflucht!
(*mit wilder Entschlossenheit*)
5 Nun denn, allein.

(*Sie fängt an der Wand des Hauses, seitwärts
der Türschwelle, eifrig zu graben an, lautlos, wie
ein Tier.*)

(*Elektra hält mit Graben inne, sieht sich um,
gräbt wieder.*)

(*Elektra sieht sich von Neuem um und lauscht.*)

Elektra (*closes her mouth*)
No path leads you away, as this one does. I shall
not leave you until, lips to lips, you have sworn
to me, that you will do it.

Chrysothemis (*frees herself*)
Leave me!

Elektra (*seizes her once more*)
Swear, tonight you will come, when all is quiet,
to the foot of the stairs!

Chrysothemis
Leave me!

Chrysothemis
I cannot!

(*rushing through the door into the house*)

Elektra
Be accurst!
(*with wild determination*)
Well then, alone.

(*She begins to dig by the wall of the house, at the
side of the threshold, eagerly, without a sound, like
an animal.*)

(*Elektra pauses in her digging, looks round,
and continues.*)

(*Elektra looks round again and listens.*)

(Elektra gräbt weiter.)

(Orest steht in der Hoftür, von der letzten Helle sich schwarz abhebend.)

(Orest tritt herein.)

(Elektra blickt auf ihn, er dreht sich langsam um, so daß sein Blick auf sie fällt: Elektra fährt heftig auf.)

Elektra *(zitternd)*

6 Was willst du, fremder Mensch? Was treibst du dich zur dunklen Stunde hier herum, belauerst, was andre tun! Ich hab' hier ein Geschäft. Was kümmert's dich! Laß mich in Ruh!

Orest

Ich muß hier warten.

Elektra

Warten?

Orest

Doch du bist hier aus dem Haus? bist eine von den Mägden dieses Hauses?

Elektra

Ja, ich diene hier im Haus. Du aber hast hier nichts zu schaffen. Freu dich und geh!

Orest

Ich sagte dir: Ich muß hier warten, bis sie mich rufen.

(Elektra digs again.)

(Orestes stands by the gate of the courtyard, in black relief against the last rays of the sun.)

(Orestes enters.)

(Elektra looks up at him, he turns slowly, so that his eyes come to rest on her: Elektra starts up violently.)

Elektra *(trembling)*

What do you want, stranger? Why do you roam here in the gloaming to and fro, observing what others do? I have a task to do here. What is it to you? Leave me in peace!

Orestes

I must wait here.

Elektra

Wait?

Orestes

But you live here in the house? you are one of the maid servants of this house?

Elektra

Yes, I serve in this house. But you have nothing to do here. Be pleased and go!

Orestes

I told you: here I must wait, until they call me.

Elektra

Die da drinnen? Du lügst. Weiß ich doch gut,
der Herr ist nicht zu Haus'. Und sie, was sollte
sie mit dir?

Orest

Ich und noch einer, der mit mir ist, wir haben
einen Auftrag an die Frau. Wir sind an sie
geschickt, weil wir bezeugen können, daß ihr
Sohn Orest gestorben ist vor unsren Augen,
denn ihn erschlugen seine eignen Pferde.
Ich war so alt wie er und sein Gefährte bei Tag
und Nacht.

Elektra

Muß ich dich noch sehn? Schleppest du dich
hierher, in meinen traurigen Winkel, Herold
des Unglücks! Kannst du nicht die Botschaft
austrompeten dort, wo sie sich freu'n! Dein
Aug' da starrt mich an, und seins ist Gallert.
Dein Mund geht auf und zu, und seiner ist
mit Erde vollgepfropft. Du lebst, und er, der
besser war als du, und edler tausendmal, und
tausendmal so wichtig, daß er lebte, er ist hin!

Orest (*ruhig*)

Laß den Orest! Er freute sich zu sehr an seinem
Leben. Die Götter droben vertragen nicht den
allzu hellen Laut der Lust. So mußte er denn
sterben.

Elektra

Those within? You lie. I know well enough that
the Master is not at home. And she, what would
she want from you?

Orestes

I and one other, who is with me, we have a task
to bring before the Mistress. We have been sent
to her because we can give witness that her son
Orestes died before our eyes, for his own horses
threw him.
I was as old as he and his companion by day and
night.

Elektra

Must I still see you? Do you drag yourself here,
to my mournful corner, herald of misfortune!
Can you not trumpet forth your tidings there
where they rejoice! Your eye keeps staring at me,
and his is mouldering. Your mouth opens and
shuts, and his is stuffed full of earth. You live,
and he, who was better than you, and a thousand
times nobler, and a thousand times more
important, that he should live, he is gone!

Orestes (*calmly*)

Leave Orestes in peace! He exulted too much in
his own life. The gods above could not tolerate
so bright a note of pleasure. So therefore, he
had to die.

Elektra

Doch ich! Doch ich!

Da liegen, und zu wissen, daß das Kind nie wieder kommt, nie wieder kommt. Daß das Kind da drunten in den Klüften des Grausens lungert, daß die da drinnen leben und sich freuen, daß dies Gezücht in seiner Höhle lebt und ißt und trinkt und schläft und ich hier droben, wie nicht das Tier des Waldes einsam und gräßlich lebt, ich hier droben allein!

Orest

7 Wer bist denn du?

Elektra

Was kümmert's dich, wer ich bin?

Orest

Du mußt verwandtes Blut zu denen sein, die starben, Agamemnon und Orest.

Elektra

Verwandt? Ich bin dies Blut! Ich bin das hündisch vergossene Blut des Königs Agamemnon! Elektra heiß' ich.

Orest

Nein!

Elektra

Er leugnet's ab. Er bläst auf mich und nimmt mir meinen Namen.

Elektra

But I! But I!

To lie there, and to know that the child will never return, will never return. That the child lingers down there in the canyons of horror, that those within live and rejoice, that this brood lives in his lair, and eats and drinks and sleeps, and I here above, as not even the beast in the forest lives in abandonment and horror, I here above alone!

Orestes

Who are you then?

Elektra

What is it to you who I am?

Orestes

You must be kindred blood of those who died, Agamemnon and Orestes?

Elektra

Kindred? I am that blood! I am the foully spilt blood of King Agamemnon! Elektra is my name!

Orestes

No!

Elektra

He denies it. He dismisses me and denies me my name.

Orest
Elektra!

Elektra
Weil ich nicht Vater hab',

Orest
Elektra!

Elektra
noch Bruder, bin ich der Spott der Buben!

Orest
Elektra! Elektra! So seh' ich sie? Ich seh' sie
wirklich, du? So haben sie dich darben lassen,
oder – sie haben dich geschlagen?

Elektra
Laß mein Kleid! Wühl nicht mit deinem Blick
daran.

Orest
Was haben sie gemacht mit deinen Nächten!
Furchtbar sind deine Augen,

Elektra
Laß mich!

Orest
hohl sind deine Wangen!

Elektra
Geh in's Haus, drin hab' ich eine Schwester, die
bewahrt sich für Freudenfeste auf!

Orestes
Elektra!

Elektra
Because I have no father,

Orestes
Elektra!

Elektra
nor brother, I am the sport of minions!

Orestes
Elektra! Elektra! So I see her? I truly see her,
you? So they let you suffer want, or – they have
beaten you?

Elektra
Leave my robe! Do not let your eyes dig into it.

Orestes
What have they made of your nights? Your eyes
are frightening,

Elektra
Leave me!

Orestes
hollow are your cheeks!

Elektra
Go into the house, inside I have a sister, she
preserves herself for festivals of joy!

Orest
Elektra, hör mich!

Elektra
Ich will nicht wissen, wer du bist, ich will
Niemand sehn.

Orest
Hör mich an, ich hab' nicht Zeit. Hör zu:
(leise)
Orestes lebt!

(Elektra wirft sich herum.)

Orest
Wenn du dich regst, verrätst du ihn.

Elektra
So ist er frei? Wo ist er?

Orest
Er ist unversehrt wie ich.

Elektra
So rett' ihn doch, bevor sie ihn erwürgen.

Orest
Bei meines Vaters Leichnam, dazu kam ich her!

Elektra *(von seinem Ton getroffen)*
Wer bist denn du?

Orestes
Elektra, hear me!

Elektra
I do not want to know who you are, I will see
no one.

Orestes
Listen to me, I do not have much time. Listen:
(softly)
Orestes lives!

(Elektra flings herself around.)

Orestes
If you so much as stir, you will betray him.

Elektra
Is he then free? Where is he?

Orestes
He is unharmed as I am.

Elektra
Then save him before they smother him.

Orestes
By my father's body, to that end I came here!

Elektra *(struck by his tone)*
Who are you then?

(Der alte finstere Diener stürzt, gefolgt von drei andern Dienern, aus dem Hof lautlos herein, wirft sich vor Orest nieder, küßt seine Füße, die andern Orests Hände und den Saum seines Gewandes.)

Elektra (*kaum ihrer mächtig*)
Wer bist du denn? Ich fürchte mich.

Orest (*sanft*)
Die Hunde auf dem Hof erkennen mich, und meine Schwester nicht?

Elektra (*aufschreiend*)
Orest!

Elektra (*ganz leise, bebend*)
Orest! Orest! Orest!
Es rührt sich Niemand.
O laß deine Augen mich schn, Traumbild, mir geschenktes Traumbild, schöner als alle Träume. Hehres, unbegreifliches, erhabenes Gesicht, o bleib bei mir! Lös' nicht in Luft dich auf, vergeh mir nicht, vergeh mir nicht, es sei denn, daß ich jetzt gleich sterben muß und du dich anzeigst und mich holen kommst: Dann sterb' ich seliger als ich gelebt.
Orest! Orest! Orest!
(Orest neigt sich zu Elektra, sie zu umarmen.)
(heftig)
Nein, du sollst mich nicht umarmen!
Tritt weg!
Ich schäme mich vor dir. Ich weiß nicht, wie du mich ansiehst. Ich bin nur mehr der Leichnam deiner Schwester, mein armes Kind. Ich weiß:

(The old gloomy servant rushes in silently from the courtyard, followed by three other servants, prostrates himself before Orestes, and kisses his feet, the others his hands and the hem of his garment.)

Elektra (*almost beside herself*)
Who are you then? I am frightened.

Orestes (*gently*)
The hounds in the courtyard recognise me, and my sister not?

Elektra (*crying out suddenly*)
Orestes!

Elektra (*very softly, trembling*)
Orestes! Orestes! Orestes!
No one is stirring
O let your eyes dwell on me, dream vision, the dream vision granted me, more beautiful than any dream. Honourable, incomprehensible, sublime countenance, O stay with me! Do not dissolve yourself into air, do not vanish, do not vanish, unless it be that I now must die and you appear to carry me forth: then I die more blessed than I lived.
Orestes! Orestes! Orestes!
(Orestes bends down to Elektra, to embrace her.)
(vehemently)
No, you shall not embrace me!
Step away!
I am ashamed before you. I do not know how you see me. Now I resemble more the corpse of your sister, my poor child. I know:

(leise)

Es schaudert dich vor mir, und war doch eines
Königs Tochter. Ich glaube, ich war schön:
Wenn ich die Lampe ausblies vor meinem
Spiegel, fühlt ich es mit keuschem Schauer. Ich
fühlt' es, wie der dünne Strahl des Mondes in
meines Körpers weißer Nacktheit badete so wie
in einem Weiher.

Und mein Haar war solches Haar, vor dem
die Männer zittern, dies Haar, versträhnt,
beschmutzt, erniedrigt. Verstehst du's, Bruder?
Ich habe Alles, was ich war, hingeben müssen.
Meine Scham hab' ich geopfert, die Scham,
die süßer als Alles ist, die Scham, die wie der
Silberdunst, der milchige des Mondes, um jedes
Weib herum ist und das Gräßliche von ihr und
ihrer Seele weghält. Verstehst du's, Bruder!

9 Was schaust du ängstlich um dich? Sprich zu mir!
Sprich doch! Du zitterst ja am ganzen Leib?

Orest

Laß zittern diesen Leib. Er ahnt, welchen Weg
ich ihn führe.

Elektra

Du wirst es tun? Allein? Du armes Kind?

Orest

Die diese Tat mir auferlegt,

(softly)

you shudder at the sight of me, and yet I was
once daughter of a king. I believe I was beautiful:
when I extinguished the lamp in front of my
mirror, I felt it with a chaste thrill. I felt how the
slender ray of moonlight bathed in my body's
white nakedness, as in a pond.

And my hair was such hair as makes men
tremble, this hair, stained, besmirched,
humiliated. Do you understand me, brother?
I have had to part with all that I was. I have
sacrificed my shame, the shame that is sweeter
than everything, the shame which drapes every
woman like the silvery fumes, the milk-like sheen
of moonlight, wards off the detestable from
her body and her soul. Do you understand me,
brother?

Why do you look anxiously about you? Speak
to me! Speak then! Every limb of your body is
quaking, isn't it?

Orestes

Let this body quake. It anticipates the path on
which I must lead it.

Elektra

You will do it? Alone? You poor child?

Orestes

Those who placed the burden of this deed on me,

Elektra
Du wirst es tun!

Orest
die Götter, werden da sein, mir zu helfen.

Elektra
Der ist selig, der tun darf!

Orest
Ich will es tun, ich will es eilig tun!

Elektra
Die Tat ist wie ein Bette, auf dem die Seele
ausruht,

Orest
Ich werde es tun!

Elektra
wie ein Bett von Balsam, drauf die Seele ruhen
kann, die eine Wunde ist, ein Brand, ein Eiter,
eine Flamme!

Orest
Ich werde es tun!

Elektra (*sehr schwungvoll*)
Der ist selig, der seine Tat zu tun kommt,
selig der, der ihn ersehnt, selig, der ihn erschaut!

Elektra
You will do it!

Orestes
the gods, will be present to help me.

Elektra
He is blessed, who may act!

Orestes
I shall do it, I shall do it presently!

Elektra
The deed is like a bed, on which the soul reposes,

Orestes
I shall do it!

Elektra
like a bed of balm, on which the soul can find
repose, which is a wound, a fire, a pus-filled sore,
a flame!

Orestes
I shall do it!

Elektra (*with great energy*)
He is blessed, who arrives at accomplishing his
deed, blessed he who longs for him, blessed who
sees him!

Selig, wer ihn erkennt, selig, wer ihn berührt.
Selig, wer ihm das Beil aus der Erde gräbt, selig,
wer ihm die Fackel hält, selig, selig, wer ihm
öffnet die Tür.

*(Der Pfleger Orest's steht in der Hoftür, ein
starker Greis mit blitzenden Augen.)*

Der Pfleger des Orest (*hastig auf sie
zu*)

Seid ihr von Sinnen, daß ihr euren Mund nicht
bändigt, wo ein Hauch, ein Laut, ein Nichts uns
und das Werk verderben kann.

(zu Orest, in fliegender Eile)

Sie wartet drinnen. Ihre Mägde suchen nach dir.
Es ist kein Mann im Haus. Orest!

*(Orest reckt sich auf, seinen Schauer
bezwingend.)*

*(Die Tür des Hauses erhellt sich.)
(Es erscheint eine Dienerin mit einer
Fackel, hinter ihr die Vertraute. Elektra ist
zurückgesprungen, steht im Dunkel.)
(Die Dienerin befestigt die Fackel an einem
eisernen Ring im Türpfosten.)*

*(Die Vertraute verneigt sich gegen die beiden
Fremden, winkt, ihr hinein zu folgen, Orest und
der Pfleger gehen hinein. Orest schließt einen
Augenblick, schwindelnd, die Augen. Der Pfleger
ist dicht hinter ihm, sie tauschen einen schnellen
Blick, die Tür schließt sich hinter ihnen.)*

Blessed who recognises him, blessed who touches
him. Blessed who seizes the axe from the ground
for him, blessed who holds aloft the torch for him,
blessed, blessed who opens the door for him!

*(The Tutor of Orestes stands in the doorway, a hale
old man with fiery eyes.)*

The Tutor of Orestes (*running hastily up to
them*)

Have you lost your senses, that you do not curb
your tongues, when a breath, a sound, a nothing
can undo us and our work.

(to Orestes, in headlong haste)

They wait within. Her maid servants are
searching for you. There is no man in the
house. Orestes!

*(Orestes draws himself up, conquering his
shuddering.)*

*(The door of the house lights up.)
(A maid servant appears with a torch, behind her
the Confidante. Elektra has leapt back and stands
in the shadows.)
(The maid servant fastens the torch to an iron ring
in the doorpost.)*

*(The Confidante bows to the two strangers, makes
a sign to them to follow, Orestes and the Tutor
go within. Orestes closes his eyes for a moment, as
though giddy. The Tutor is close behind him, they
exchange a rapid glance, the door closes behind
them.)*

(Elektra allein, in entsetzlicher Spannung. Sie läuft auf einem Strich vor der Tür hin und her, mit gesenktem Kopf, wie das gefangene Tier im Käfig.)

Elektra *(steht plötzlich still)*
10 Ich habe ihm das Beil nicht geben können!
Sie sind gegangen und ich habe ihm das Beil
nicht geben können.
Es sind keine Götter im Himmel!

(Abermals ein furchtbares Warten.)

*(Von ferne tönt drinnen, gellend, der Schrei
Klytämnestra's.)*

Elektra *(schreit auf wie ein Dämon)*
Triff noch einmal!

(Von drinnen ein zweiter Schrei.)

*(Elektra steht in der Tür, mit dem Rücken an die
Tür gepreßt.)
(Aus dem Wohngebäude links kommen
Chrysothemis und eine Schar Dienerinnen
heraus.)*

Chrysothemis
11 Es muß etwas geschehen sein.

Erste Magd
Sie schreit so aus dem Schlaf.

*(Elektra alone in horrible excitement. She runs a
straight line to and fro in front of the door, with
bowed head, like a captive beast in a cage.)*

Elektra *(pauses suddenly)*
I was not able to give him the axe!
They have gone and I was not able to give him
the axe.
There are no gods in heaven!

(once again a fearful period of waiting)

*(From afar within resounds the shrill scream of
Klytemnestra.)*

Elektra *(crying aloud like one possessed)*
Strike yet again!

(from within a second cry)

*(Elektra stands in the doorway with her back
pressed against the door.)
(Out of the house of residences to the left come
Chrysothemis and a troop of maid servants.)*

Chrysothemis
Something must have happened.

First Maid Servant
She cries like that in her sleep.

Zweite Magd
Es müssen Männer drin sein.

Dritte Magd
Alle Türen sind verriegelt.

Zweite Magd
Ich habe Männer gehen hören.

Vierte Magd
Es sind Mörder! Es sind Mörder im Haus!

Erste Magd (*schreit auf*)
Oh!

**Zweite und Dritte Magd, sechs andere
Dienerinnen**
Was ist?

Erste Magd
Seht ihr denn nicht, dort in der Tür steht einer!

Chrysothemis
Das ist Elektra!

**Erste, Zweite, Dritte und Vierte
Magd**
Elektra!

Chrysothemis
Das ist ja Elektra!

Second Maid Servant
There must be men within.

Third Maid Servant
All the doors are locked.

Second Maid Servant
I heard the footsteps of men.

Fourth Maid Servant
There are murderers! There are murderers
within!

First Maid Servant (*sbrieking*)
Oh!

**Second and Third Maid Servants, six other
maid Servants**
What is it?

First Maid Servant
Do you then not see, there in the door stands
one!

Chrysothemis
That is Elektra!

**First, Second, Third, and Fourth Maid
Servants**
Elektra!

Chrysothemis
Yes, that is Elektra!

Erste, Zweite, Dritte und Vierte

Magd

Elektra!

Chrysothemis

Elektra, warum sprichst du denn nicht?

Erste und Zweite Magd

Warum spricht sie denn nicht?

Vierte Magd (*allein*)

Ich will hinaus, Männer holen.

(*läuft rechts hinaus*)

Chrysothemis

Mach uns doch die Tür auf, Elektra!

Sechs Dienerinnen

Elektra, laß uns in's Haus!

Chrysothemis

Elektra!

Vierte Magd (*zurückkommend*)

Zurück!

Ägisth! Zurück in unsre Kammern, schnell!

Ägisth kommt durch den Hof.

Sechs Dienerinnen

Ägisth!

Vierte Magd

Wenn er uns findet,

First, Second, Third, and Fourth Maid

Servants

Elektra!

Chrysothemis

Elektra, why do you not speak?

First and Second Maid Servants

Why ever does she not speak?

Fourth Maid Servant (*alone*)

I will go and get men to help.

(*runs out to the right*)

Chrysothemis

Open the door for us, Elektra, will you!

Six maid Servants

Elektra, let us into the house!

Chrysothemis

Elektra!

Fourth Maid Servant (*returning*)

Back!

Aegisthus! Back to our rooms, quick! Aegisthus

comes through the court.

Six maid Servants

Aegisthus!

Fourth Maid Servant

If he should find us,

Erste, Zweite und Dritte Magd
Ägisth!

Vierte Magd
und wenn im Hause was geschehen ist, läßt er
uns töten!

Chrysothemis
Zurück!

Alle
Zurück! Zurück!

(Sie verschwinden im Hause links.)

(Ägisth tritt rechts durch die Hoftür auf.)

12 Ägisth *(an der Tür stehend bleibend)*
He, Lichter! Lichter! Ist Niemand da, zu
leuchten? Rührt sich keiner von allen diesen
Schuffen? Kann das Volk keine Zucht annehmen!

*(Elektra nimmt die Fackel von dem Ring, läuft
hinunter, ihm entgegen, und verneigt sich vor ihm.)*

Ägisth *(erschrickt vor der wirren Gestalt im
zuckenden Licht, weicht zurück)*
Was ist das für ein unheimliches Weib? Ich hab'
verboten, daß ein unbekanntes Gesicht mir in
die Nähe kommt!

First, Second, and Third Maid Servants
Aegisthus!

Fourth Maid Servant
and if anything has happened within, he will
have us killed!

Chrysothemis
Back!

All
Back! Back!

(They disappear into the house to the left.)

*(Aegisthus appears at the door of the court on the
right.)*

Aegisthus *(remains standing in the doorway)*
Ho, lights! Lights! Is no one there to light
me? Will none of these slothful drudges stir?
Can these people not rouse themselves to do
anything?

*(Elektra takes the torch from the ring, runs below
towards him, and curtsies low before him.)*

Aegisthus *(starts at the sight of the wild figure in
the flickering light, and retreats)*
What kind of unearthly woman is that? I have
forbidden that an unknown face should come
near me!

(Erkennt sie.)
(zornig)

Was, du? Wer heißt dich, mir entgegentreten?

Elektra

Darf ich nicht leuchten?

Ägisth

Nun, dich geht die Neuigkeit ja doch vor allen an. Wo find' ich die fremden Männer, die das von Orest uns melden?

Elektra

Drinnen. Eine liebe Wirtin fanden sie vor, und sie ergetzen sich mit ihr.

Ägisth

Und melden also wirklich, daß er gestorben ist, und melden so, daß nicht zu zweifeln ist?

Elektra

O Herr! Sie melden's nicht mit Worten bloß, nein, mit leibhaftigen Zeichen, an denen auch kein Zweifel möglich ist.

Ägisth

Was hast du in der Stimme? Und was ist in dich gefahren, daß du nach dem Mund mir redest? Was taumelst du so hin und her mit deinem Licht!

(recognises her)
(angrily)

What, you? Who bade you to approach me?

Elektra

May I not light your way?

Aegisthus

Well, I suppose the news concerns you above all. Where do I find the foreign men who have news to tell us of Orestes?

Elektra

Within. There they found a lovely hostess, and they entertain themselves with her.

Aegisthus

And they report indeed that he is dead, and report, too, that there is no doubt about it?

Elektra

My lord! They report it not only with words, no, with proof in the flesh, about which there can be no doubt either.

Aegisthus

What is the matter with your voice? And what has got into you, that you echo every word I speak? Why do you stagger so back and forth with your light!

Elektra

Es ist nichts anderes, als daß ich endlich klug ward und zu denen mich halte, die die Stärkeren sind. Erlaubst du, daß ich voran dir leuchte?

Ägisth (*etwas zaudernd*)

Bis zur Tür.

(*Indem sie ihn, wie in einem unheimlichen Tanz, umkreist, sich plötzlich tief bückend.*)

Was tanzest du? Gib Obacht!

Elektra

Hier! die Stufen, daß du nicht fällst.

Ägisth (*an der Haustür*)

Warum ist hier kein Licht? Wer sind die dort?

Elektra

Die sind's, die in Person dir aufzuwarten wünschen, Herr. Und ich, die so oft durch freche, unbescheidne Näh' dich störte, will nun endlich lernen, mich im rechten Augenblick zurückzuziehn.

(*Ägisth geht in's Haus.*)

(*Stille.*)

(*Lärm drinnen.*)

Elektra

It is nothing other than that I have at last become wise and keep to those who are the stronger. Will you allow that I walk before you to light the way?

Aegisthus (*somewhat hesitantly*)

Up to the door.

(*She circles him as if in an uncanny dance, suddenly bowing low.*)

What are you dancing? Watch out!

Elektra

Watch here! the stairs, that you don't stumble.

Aegisthus (*at the door of the house*)

Why is there no light here? Who are those over there?

Elektra

Those are the ones who wish to serve you in person, my lord. And I, who so often disturbed you with my shameless, immodest presence, will now at last learn to withdraw at the proper moment.

(*Aegisthus enters the house.*)

(*silence*)

(*then a noise within*)

13 **Ägisth** (*schreiend*)
Helf! Mörder!
(*Erscheint an einem kleinen Fenster, reißt den Vorhang weg.*)
Helft dem Herren! Mörder; Mörder! Sie morden mich!
Hört mich niemand? Hört mich niemand?

(*Er wird weggezerrt.*)

Elektra (*reckt sich auf*)
Agamemnon hört dich!

(*Noch einmal erscheint Ägisths Gesicht am Fenster.*)

Ägisth
Weh mir!

(*Er wird fortgerissen.*)

(*Elektra steht, furchtbar atmend, gegen das Haus gekehrt.*)

(*Die Frauen kommen von links herausgelaufen, Chrysothemis unter ihnen. Wie besinnungslos laufen sie gegen die Hoftür, dort machen sie plötzlich Halt, wenden sich.*)

Chrysothemis
14 Elektra! Schwester! Komm mit uns! O komm mit uns! Es ist der Bruder drin im Haus! Es ist Orest, der es getan hat!

Aegisthus (*shouting*)
Help! Murder!
(*appears at a small window, tears back the curtain*)
Help your master! Murderer; murderer! They are murdering me!
Does no one hear me? Does no one hear me?

(*He is dragged away.*)

Elektra (*straightens herself*)
Agamemnon hears you!

(*Once more the face of Aegisthus appears at the window.*)

Aegisthus
Woe is me!

(*He is dragged away.*)

(*Elektra stands with terribly laboured breathing, turned towards the house.*)

(*The women come running out of the house to the left, Chrysothemis among them. As though bereft of their senses they run to the gate of the courtyard; there they suddenly halt and turn.*)

Chrysothemis
Elektra! Sister! Come with us! Oh, come with us! It is our brother who is there within! It is Orestes who has done it!

Stimmen hinter der Scene im Hause

Orest! Orest! Orest!

(Getümmel im Hause, Stimmengewirr, aus dem sich ab und zu die Rufe des Chors: "Orest" bestimmter abheben.)

Chrysothemis

Kommt! Er steht im Vorsaal, alle sind um ihn, und küssen seine Füße,

(Das Kampfgetöse, der tödliche Kampf zwischen den zu Orest haltenden Sklaven und den Angehörigen des Ägisth, hat sich allmählich in die inneren Höfe gezogen, mit denen die Hoftür rechts kommuniziert.)

alle, die Ägisth von Herzen haßten, haben sich geworfen auf die andern, überall, in allen Höfen liegen Tote, alle, die leben, sind mit Blut bespritzt und haben selbst Wunden, und doch strahlen alle, alle umarmen sich und jauchzen.

(Draußen wachsender Lärm, der sich jedoch, wenn Elektra beginnt, mehr und mehr nach den äußeren Höfen rechts und im Hintergrunde verzogen hat. Die Frauen sind hinausgelaufen. Chrysothemis allein, von draußen fällt Licht herein.)

Tausend Fackeln sind angezündet. Hörst du nicht?

So hörst du denn nicht?

Elektra *(auf der Schwelle kauernnd) (etwas breit)*

Ob ich nicht höre?

Ob ich die Musik nicht höre? Sie kommt doch

Voices offstage inside the house

Orestes! Orestes! Orestes!

(Noise in the house, confused voices, from among which now and then the cries of the chorus, 'Orestes', emerge more distinctly.)

Chrysothemis

Come! He stands in the vestibule, all crowd round him and kiss his feet,

(The noise of battle, the mortal combat between the slaves who are faithful to Orestes and the retinue of Aegisthus has gradually retreated towards the inner courts, with which the door to the right communicates.)

all those who heartily hated Aegisthus have flung themselves upon the others, everywhere, in every court corpses lie about, all those who live are splattered with blood and are themselves wounded, and yet, all exult, all embrace one another and shout with joy.

(Without a growing noise, which, however, when Elektra begins, retreats more and more to the outer courts to the right and to the background. The women have run out. Chrysothemis remains, alone, from without light falls into the room.)

A thousand torches have been lit. Do you not hear?

Can you not hear it then?

Elektra *(crouching on the threshold) (somewhat broadly)*

If I cannot hear?

If I cannot hear the music? But it comes from

aus mir. Die Tausende, die Fackeln tragen, und deren Tritte, deren uferlose Myriaden Tritte überall die Erde dumpf dröhnen machen, alle warten auf mich: Ich weiß doch, daß sie alle warten, weil ich den Reigen führen muß – und ich kann nicht, der Ozean, der ungeheure, der zwanzigfache Ozean begräbt mir jedes Glied mit seiner Wucht, ich kann mich nicht heben!

Chrysothemis (*fast schreiend vor Erregung*)
Hörst du denn nicht? Sie tragen ihn, sie tragen ihn auf ihren Händen!

Elektra (*springt auf*) (*vor sich hin, ohne auf Chrysothemis zu achten*)
[15] Wir sind bei den Göttern, wir Vollbringenden.
(*begeistert*)
Sie fahren dahin wie die Schärfe des Schwerts durch uns, die Götter,

Chrysothemis
Allen sind die Gesichter verwandelt. Allen schimmern die Augen und die alten Wangen vor Tränen. Alle weinen. Hörst du's nicht?

Elektra
aber ihre Herrlichkeit ist nicht zu viel für uns!
Ich habe Finsternis gesät und ernte Lust über Lust.

Chrysothemis
Gut sind die Götter, gut!

me. The thousands, who carry torches and whose footsteps, whose innumerable myriad footsteps make the earth thunder sullenly, all are waiting for me: but I know that they all are waiting for me, because I am she who must lead the round dance – and I cannot, the ocean, the measureless, the twentyfold vastness of the ocean buries my every limb with its force, I cannot raise myself up!

Chrysothemis (*almost shrieking with excitement*)
Can you not hear it then? They carry him, they carry him aloft with their hands!

Elektra (*leaps up*) (*to herself without heeding Chrysothemis*)
We are with the gods, we who accomplish things.
(*thrilled*)
They charge ahead through us like the sharp edges of the sword, the gods do,

Chrysothemis
Everyone's face is transformed. Everyone's eyes and aged cheeks are running with tears. Everyone is weeping. Do you not hear it?

Elektra
but their glory is not too great for us! I sowed the seeds of darkness and harvested joy upon joy.

Chrysothemis
Good are the gods, good!

Elektra
Ich war ein schwarzer Leichnam unter
Lebenden,

Chrysothemis
Es fängt ein Leben für dich und mich und alle
Menschen an.

Elektra
und diese Stunde bin ich das Feuer des Lebens,
und meine Flamme verbrennt die Finsternis
der Welt.

Chrysothemis
Die überschwänglich guten Götter sind's, die
das gegeben haben.

Elektra
Mein Gesicht muß weißer sein als das
weißglüh'nde Gesicht des Monds.

Chrysothemis
Wer hat uns je geliebt?

Elektra
Wenn einer auf mich sieht, muß er den Tod
empfangen oder muß vergehn vor Lust.

Chrysothemis
Wer hat uns je geliebt?

Elektra
Seht ihr denn mein Gesicht? Seht ihr das Licht,
das von mir ausgeht?

Elektra
I was a blackened corpse among living beings,

Chrysothemis
A life begins for you and me and all mankind.

Elektra
and in this hour I am the fire of life, and my
flame consumes the gloom of the world.

Chrysothemis
It is the gods, the immeasurably benevolent gods
who have given us that.

Elektra
My face must be whiter than the glowing
whiteness of the face of the moon.

Chrysothemis
Who ever did love us?

Elektra
When someone looks at me, he must suffer
death or must perish from joy.

Chrysothemis
Who ever did love us?

Elektra
Do you then see my face? Do you see the light
that emanates from me?

Chrysothemis

Nun ist der Bruder da, und Liebe fließt über uns
wie Öl und Myrrhen. Liebe ist Alles, wer kann
leben ohne Liebe?

Elektra

Ai!

(feurig)

Liebe tötet, aber keiner fährt dahin und hat die
Liebe nicht gekannt!

Chrysothemis

Elektra, ich muß bei meinem Bruder stehn!

(Sie läuft hinaus.)

*(Elektra schreitet von der Schwelle herunter. Sie
hat den Kopf zurückgeworfen wie eine Mänade.
Sie wirft die Kniee, sie reckt die Arme aus: Es
ist ein namenloser Tanz, in welchem sie nach
vorwärts schreitet.)*

Chrysothemis *(erscheint wieder an der Tür,
hinter ihr Fackeln, Gedräng, Gesichter von
Männern und Frauen)*

Elektra!

Elektra *(bleibt stehen, sieht starr auf sie hin)*

¹⁶ Schweig, und tanze!

Alle müssen herbei! Hier schließt euch an! Ich
trage die Last des Glückes, und ich tanze vor
euch her. Wer glücklich ist, wie wir, dem ziemt
nur eins: Schweigen und tanzen ...

Chrysothemis

Now our brother is here, and love pours over us
like oil and myrrh. Love is everything, who can
live without love!

Elektra

Ah!

(fiery)

Love brings death, but none departs this world
who has not known love!

Chrysothemis

Elektra, I must stand alongside my brother!

(She runs out.)

*(Elektra descends from the threshold. She has flung
back her head like a Maenad. She flings her knees
about and stretches her arms out: it is a nameless
dance in which she steps forward.)*

Chrysothemis *(appears again at the door, behind
her torches, crowds, faces of men and women)*

Elektra!

Elektra *(remains motionless, gazing fixedly at her)*

Be silent, and dance!

All must join me! Take your place here! I carry
the burden of joy, and I shall lead the dance
before you. For him who is happy as we are, only
one thing will do: silence and dancing..

(Sie tut noch einige Schritte des angespanntesten Triumphes ... Elektra stürzt zusammen. Chrysothemis zu ihr. Elektra liegt starr.)

Chrysothemis (*läuft an die Tür des Hauses, schlägt daran*)
Orest! Orest!

(Stille)

(Vorhang)

Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874 – 1929)

(She takes a few more steps of the tensest triumph... Elektra collapses. Chrysothemis to her side. Elektra lies motionless.)

Chrysothemis (*runs to the door of the house and batters it*)
Orestes! Orestes!

(silence)

(Curtain)

Translation: Chandos Records Ltd

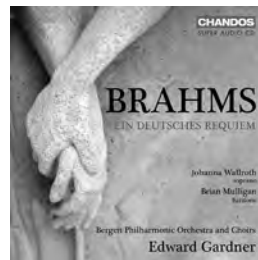


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Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Mr Trond Mohn for his generous support.

Many thanks also to the Assistant Conductor, Christian Blex, for his many contributions to the making of this recording

All concert photos by Tarjei Svenson Hummelsund, courtesy of Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

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Co-producer Ingunn Korsgård Hagen, Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra

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Chandos mix mastering Ralph Couzens

A & R administrator Karen Marchlik

Recording venue Grieghallen, Bergen, Norway; 13 and 15 December 2023 (live)

Front cover Engraving by Gouil & Co., Paris, after painting of Electra (1878) by Félix-Joseph Barrias (1822 – 1907), now in a private collection / duncan1890 / iStock / Getty Images

Back cover Photograph of Edward Gardner by Tarjei Svenson Hummelsund

Design and typesetting Cass Cassidy

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

Publishers Adolph Fürstner, Berlin

UPC 0095115537527

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Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex CO2 8HX, England

Country of origin UK

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SOLOISTS / BPC / EGK / BPO / GARDNER

CHSA 5375(2)

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Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)

ELEKTRA

Op. 58, TrV 223 (1906–08)

Tragedy in One Act

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874 – 1929)

Klytämnestra Tanja Ariane Baumgartner *mezzo-soprano*
 Elektra, her elder daughter Irène Theorin *soprano*
 Chrysothemis, her younger daughter Jennifer Holloway *soprano*
 Ägisth (Aegisthus) Nikolai Schukoff *tenor*
 Orest (Orestes) Iain Paterson *bass-baritone*
 Der Pfleger des Orest (The Tutor of Orestes) Tilmann Rönnebeck *bass*
 Die Vertraute (The Confidante) Evgeniya Sotnikova *soprano*
 Die Schlepptägerin (The Trainbearer) Hedvig Haugerud *soprano*
 Ein junger Diener (A Young Servant) Ya-Chung Huang *tenor*
 Ein alter Diener (An Old Servant) Tilmann Rönnebeck *bass*
 Die Aufseherin (The Overseer) Madeleine Shaw *mezzo-soprano*
 Erste Magd (First Maid Servant) Claudia Huckle *contralto*
 Zweite Magd (Second Maid Servant) Emily Sierra *mezzo-soprano*
 Dritte Magd (Third Maid Servant) Marie-Luise Dreßen *mezzo-soprano*
 Vierte Magd (Fourth Maid Servant) Hedvig Haugerud *soprano*
 Fünfte Magd (Fifth Maid Servant) Evgeniya Sotnikova *soprano*
 Servants

COMPACT DISC ONE
TT 51:55COMPACT DISC TWO
TT 51:57

Bergen Philharmonic Chorus
 Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master
 Edvard Grieg Kor
 Håkon Matti Skrede chorus master
 Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra
 Alexander Kagan leader
 Edward Gardner



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STRAUSS: ELEKTRA

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