

THYESTES' MONOLOGUE

FROM THE PLAY

AGAMEMNON

BY

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

MUSIC COMPOSED

BY

CHRISTOPHER C TEW

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Sent from the horror and torment of Tartarus,
Leaving the shadow-clad regions of Dis the Infernal,
I, Thyestes, fleeing the lower world incite the upper to flight,
And doubt which realm I hate the more.
Behold, the house of my father
and the scene of my brother's crime!
Here is the gateway to the realm of Pelops.
Here is the throne room for the crown of Pelasgia.
Here did the proud hands of mighty lords hold the scepter.
Here did the great men of worthy mind hold their council.
Here did we feast!
Oh, I would to turn back!
Is it not better to dwell among the saddened pools,
To gaze upon the Stygian hound,
His black maned necks bristling in anger.
Better to view the body on the swift-turning wheel;
Better to view the bird tearing flesh from the living;
Better to view the hard, endless rolling of the stone.
Better even to view my ancestor, Tantalus,
Who brought such ruin on our house.
But what part of my offense is he to bear?
Count all of those whom, from the beginning of time,
Minos, the Cretan judge, has condemned:
I, Thyestes, by my crimes and sins have triumphed over them all.
Yet one other has surpassed my efforts;
One other has devised a deed more heinous than all else,
My brother. He who did devise that impious banquet,
Who did conspire that Thyestes should his own sons consume!

And this ruin would not suffice for Fortuna,
But adding impiety to impiety,
Did cause me to seek the bed of my own daughter!
I did not fear to fulfill the prophecies, even though they were evil.
And that my vengeance might be passed through my lineage,
My daughter, as the Fates decreed, bore me one last son,
Worthy of his father.
Nature is turned backwards!
Father and grandfather, husband and father,
Son and grandson, yes, even day and night,
Have I confused with my cunning.
But at last the delayed fulfillment of this grim prophesy is at hand.
He, that king of kings, that leader of leaders,
He who was followed by a thousand ships in war to the Trojan shores,
He journeys homeward, to put his throat into his queen's clutches.
Now, now at last will this damned banquet hall
Flow with the blood of Atreus' son!
The trap is set! Treachery, slaughter, gore!
Feasts will soon be prepared!
The reason for your birth is nigh, Aegisthus.
What causes your grim appearance? Decency?
What causes your hand to tremble? Sympathy?
What causes self-questioning; what causes your indecision?
Look to your mother; it is proper!
What prolongs the summer's night to winter's length;
Why do the stars still shine above?
Must we longer delay, Phoebus?
Give back your light to the world!

Notes on pronunciation

Classical Latin -c- and -g- are always hard. Greek adaptations -th- and -ph- are pronounced with a slight aspiration after the initial sound, but they are pronounced hard, not as in English. Latin -r- is always rolled. Latin -s- is always soft, never like z. Latin -a- is always ah, never ay as in lay or ä as in cat. Latin -y- is from Greek and similar to the German ü.

In all these names except Atreus, where it is part of a blended vowel, the Latin ending -us has a short u sound, darker than u as in cup but not like oo as in moose.

Thyestes - Tü - ES - tehs, or Tih - ES - tays. Please not Thigh - ES - teez.

Tartarus - TAHR - tah - rus (u a little darker than an American schwa uh). Please not TAR - tuh - ruhs.

Dis - DEES. Please not Dice or Dis(may).

Pelops - PEH - lops.

Pelasia - Peh - LAHS - gee - ah. Please not Pee - LÄS - djee - a.

Stygian - an English construct, here contracted to STIH - djahn.

Tantalus - TAHN - tah - lus. Please not TÄN - tuh - luhs.

Minos - MEE - nos (short o as in for), or less correctly, MEE - nohs (long o as in go). Please not MEYE - nuhs.

Cretan - an English construct, KRAY - tahn would be consistent with the Latin adjective. Please not KREE - tuhn.

Fortuna - For - TOO - nah, the u is long. Please not For - TCHOO - nuh.

Atreus - AH - trehoos, (one syllable, vowels glided), rhymes with Zeus when properly pronounced, or less correctly, AH - troos. Please not AY - tree - uhs.

Aegisthus - Eye - GIS - tus, or Eye - GIST - hus. Please not Ee - DJIS - thuhs.

Phoebus - POY - bus, or POEH - bus with the vowels glided. Please not FEE - bus.

Notes on Performance

Several measures are marked "spalmato e sfocato - smeared," the Italian meaning smeared and blurred. Here the notation can be taken literally or as suggestive of the desired effect, more a dramatic glissando wail than carefully delineated notes. The effect should only occur with the notes under this marking - these passages begin and end with definite, exact pitches. Considering the text's descriptive references, movement and character creation might well be considered in concert performance. Where alternate (small) notes are given, the main (large) notes are of course preferred.

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The
Ghost
of
Thyestes

Lento misterioso $\text{♩} = 64$

Lento misterioso $\text{♩} = 64$

Piano

7 Allegro molto e furioso $\text{♩} = 136$

Sent from the hor - ror and tor - ment of

Allegro molto e furioso $\text{♩} = 136$

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

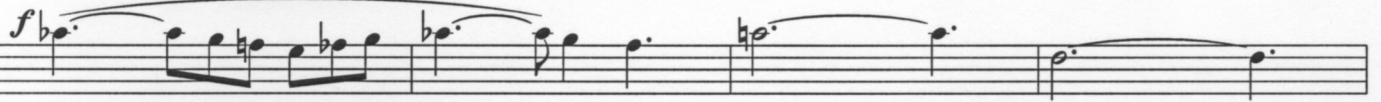
11 Tar - ta - rus,

15 *mf*

Leav - ing the sha - dow - clad re - gions of

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

19

f 

Dis _____ the In - fer _____ - nal,

mp

f

23

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

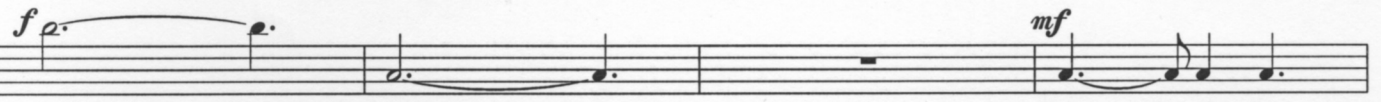
mf



I, _____ Thy -

mp

27

f 

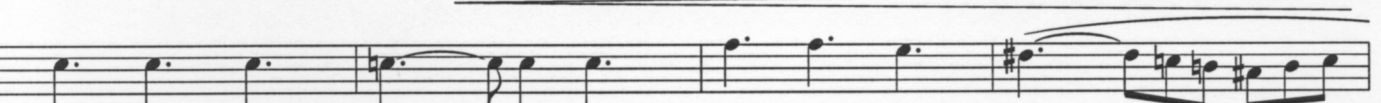
es _____ - tes, _____ Flee _____ - ing the

mf

f mp

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

31



low - er world in _____ - cite the up - per to flight,

35

f

mf

f

and doubt _____ which realm I

39

hate the more.

mf

mp

p

43

mf

Be - hold, _____ the

mp

p

mf

p

mf

p

47

house _____ of my fa - ther _____ and the scene _____ of my

51

f

bro - ther's crime!_____

55

mf

Here_____ is the gate - way_____ to the

mp

59

realm of Pe - lops._____

63

mf

Here_____ is the throne room_____ for the crown of Pe -

mp

67

las - gi - a. Here — did the

71

proud hands of migh - ty lords hold the scep - ter. —

75

Here — did the great men of wor - thy

79

mind hold their coun - cil. —

83

88

ff > > > *ff* *f*

Here did we feast! Oh, I

92

f *Poco ritard*

would to turn back! *Poco ritard*

A tempo subito *f* $\text{♩} = 136$

96

f *A tempo subito* $\text{♩} = 136$

Is it not bet - ter to dwell a - mong the

p *mf* *mp*

100

sad - dened pools, to gaze u - pon the Sty - gian

103

hound, his black maned necks

106

brist - ling in an - ger.

110

Bet - ter to view the bo - dy on the swift - turn - ing

114

mf

wheel; Bet - ter to view the bird tear - ing

118

f *spalmato e sfocato - smeared*

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

ff

flesh from the liv - ing;

122

mf

Bet - ter to view the

126

f

hard, end - less roll - ing of the stone.

Poco ritard

Accelerando al A tempo *mf*

view my an - ces - tor, Tan - ta - lus, _____

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

_____ who brought such ruin on our house. _____

144

p

But

Musical score for measures 144-147. The vocal line (bass clef) is mostly silent, with the word "But" appearing at the end. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) consists of intricate arpeggiated figures in both hands. A dynamic marking of *pp* is present in the final measure of the piano part.

148

f

what part of my of - fense _____ is he to bear?

Musical score for measures 148-152. The vocal line (bass clef) contains the lyrics: "what part of my of - fense _____ is he to bear?". The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a driving, rhythmic accompaniment. A dynamic marking of *f* is present in the final measure of the piano part.

153

Musical score for measures 153-157. The vocal line (bass clef) is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) is highly active, with a dynamic marking of *ff* in the first measure and *p* in the fourth measure.

158

Musical score for measures 158-162. The vocal line (bass clef) is mostly silent. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) continues with a rhythmic accompaniment.

161

8^{va} *f* *p* *f* *p*

164 *mp*

Count all of those whom, from the be -

8^{va} *p*

167 *mf*

gin - ning of time, Mi - nos, the

8^{va} *mp*

170 *f*

Cre - tan judge, has con - demned:

8^{va} *mf*

173

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

ff

4

f

I, Thy - es - tes,

176

f

- by my crimes and sins have

mf

179

tri - umphed o - ver them all.

182

f

mf

186

mf

Yet one o-ther has sur-passed my ef-forts;

Yet one o-ther has sur-passed my ef-forts;

f *mp*

191

with increasing vehemence p poco a poco cresc. al 220

One o-ther has de-vised a deed more

One o-ther has de-vised a deed more

p *poco a poco cresc. al 220 ma sempre sotto voce*
simile sempre

194

hei-nous than all else, my bro-ther.

hei-nous than all else, my bro-ther.

197

He who did de- vise that im-pi-ous

He who did de- vise that im-pi-ous

200

poco a poco cresc. al 220

ban - quet, who did con - spire that Thy - es - tes should his

*poco a poco cresc. al 220
ma sempre sotto voce*

204

spalmato e sfocato - smeared.....

own sons con - sume!

207

But this

210

ruin would not suf - fice for For - tu - na,

213

poco a poco cresc. al 220

but ad-ding im - pi - e - ty to im - pi - e - ty, did

poco a poco cresc. al 220, ma sempre sotto voce

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

216

cause me to seek the bed of my own Ah!

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

219

daugh - ter!

sobbing *ff*

ff *p*

222

Parlando — Sprechstimme
mp

I did not fear to ful - fill the pro-phet-cies, - e-ven though they were

p

228

mp

Cantando mf

e - vil. And that my might be passed through my ven - geance li - ne - age, my

233

daugh - ter, as the Fates de - creed,

236

mp *Parlando - Sprechstimme*

mf *Cantando e enfático*

Meno mosso ♩ = 120

Meno mosso ♩ = 120

bore me one last son, wor - thy of his fa - ther.

239

Allegro molto ♩ = 136

f *Drammatico*

Allegro molto ♩ = 136

Na - ture is turned back - wards!

242

mf Cantando modo ordinario

Fa - ther and grand - fa - ther, hus - band and fa

246

spalmato e sfocato - smeared

ther,

250

mf

Son and grand - son, yes, e - ven day and

254

night have I con - fused with my

258

cun - ning.

262

265

mf

But at last

mp

269

Parlando—Sprechstimme

Cantando

the de - layed ful - fill - ment of this grim pro - phe - sy is at

272

spalmato e sfocato
- smeared

f

hand.

He,

that

king

of

276

kings,

that

lea - der

of

lea

- ders,

280

he who was

fol - lowed by

a thou - sand ships

in

war to the

284

Tro - jan shores,

He jour - neys

home - ward,

288

mf

to put his throat in - to his

292

queen's clu - tches.

296

mf

Now, now at last will this damned ban - quet hall flow with the

300

ff

blood of A - treus' son!

304

ff

The trap is

308

f

ff

set! Treach - er - y, slaugh - ter, gore!

cresc. ma sempre sotto voce

312

Feasts will soon be pre - pared!

ff

316

Poco ritard

Poco ritard

321

A tempo
mp

mf

The rea - son for your birth is nigh, Ae - gis - - thus. What

A tempo

pp

p

mf

325

f

mf

cau - - ses your grim ap - pear - ance? De - cen - cy?

mp

mf

mf

p

329

mf

What cau - - ses your hand to trem - ble?

mp

mf

333

mf

f

Sym - pa - thy? What cau - - ses self - ques - tion - ing;

mf

p

mp

mf

p

mf

337 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ *mf* *f*

what cau - ses your in - de - ci - sion?

341 *mf* *f*

Look to your mo - ther; _____ it is

345 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

pro - per!

349 *Poco ritard* $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

Poco ritard

353 *Molto ritard* *A tempo* *mf*

Molto ritard *A tempo*

What pro - longs the

357 *f* *mf*

sum - mer's night to win - ter's length; why do the

361 *f* *mf* *spalmato e sfocato - smeared*

stars still shine a - bove? Must we lon - ger de -

365 *f* *f* *mp*

lay, Phoebus? Give back your light to the

369

ff spalmato e sfocato - smeared

world!

mf

373

ff

377

mp

f