

TROJAN INCIDENT

BASED ON

TROJAN WOMEN

OF

EURIPIDES

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*Federal Theatre Project Records
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia*

TROJAN INCIDENT

Based on TROJAN WOMEN OF EURIPEDES

This adaptation is prepared for the use
of the Federal Theatre without the pay-
ment of royalty.

TROJAN INCIDENT

People in the Prologue

Odysseus

HENELAUS

Agamemnon

Thersites

People in the Play

A Singing Chorus

The members of this chorus are not individualized, but, taken together make an omniscient force.

Chorus of Trojan Women, strongly individualized as follows:

1st WOMAN, young, attractive, curious, and with perhaps a life ahead of her in spite of everything.

2nd WOMAN, young, well-born, afraid.

3rd WOMAN, middle-aged, powerful, a leader.

4th WOMAN, young, attractive, clinging to life.

5th WOMAN, decorous and afraid.

6th WOMAN, rather welcoming a change of masters.

The number of women may be increased according to the availability of dancers.

HECUBA, -----the dispossessed queen of Troy, a powerful matriarch, respected by all the women, and even by the Greeks.

Cassandra, daughter of Hecuba, a priestess of Apollo.

In this version she becomes, from the moment of her entrance, the leader of the dancing chorus.

Andromacha, the widow of Hector, daughter-in-law of Hecuba. She is strong, beautiful, and passionately devoted to the memory of her husband.

Astyanax, the small son of Hector and Andromacha.

Helen, wife of Menelaus, mistress of Paris, and the cause of the war. Her appearance should make this fact plausible.

Menelaus, King of Sparta, deserted husband of Helen. He appears in this play with the ostensible purpose of taking his wife back to Greece to punish her.

A herald of Menelaus,

Talthybius, herald of the Greeks.

Greek soldiers.

Production Notes for TROJAN INCIDENT

This production of Trojan Incident is to be thematic rather than archaeological. The theme is the cruelty and futility of war. The musician who composes the score, the designer who creates the setting, as well as the director and the actors should make everything contribute to this theme. The adaptation omits, for the most part, all classical references and allusions. Its metrical plan, however, in the chorus is based exactly on the original, and consequently the beat of music and of movement should follow this metrical arrangement.

The production calls for an orchestra, a singing chorus and a dancing chorus, as well as the principals. Greek plays as seen today play the chorus as the divertissements. This was not true of the Greeks nor is it true in this production. The chorus is the core of the play. The women of the chorus are Trojan women, captives of the Greeks. They have great protagonists - Hecuba, the mother; Andromacha, the wife; Helen, the femme fatale; Cassandra, the visionary. Each one of these characters is powerfully individualized. Hecuba is a dynamic driving force. It should be remembered that she was the mother of fifty sons and daughters and that she could outdo them all. She should not on any account be a sweet suffering old lady but rather a powerful matriarch. Andromacha, the wife, should also be

played strongly, with passionate devotion to one man, her husband. Helen, the mistress type, is sensuous, beautiful and exciting. She is enjoying the war and she enjoys her scene in the play. She knows, of course, that she can again recapture Menelaus. All of the women know this too and their hatred of Helen is one interesting counterpointing in the pointing of the play. Cassandra in this play is the voice of the future. She is the seeress, the prophetess, the person who, as the play progresses, discovers that "the only wisdom lies in staying out of war." Just as Helen carries in her the seed of the next war, Cassandra carries in her the beginning of the day when women may perhaps be strong enough to end war.

Like a great many inspired sane people she is called mad by the people in the play who never understand anything unless it is patterned on the past. The male forces of the play are the Greek soldiers. They appear in the prologue, in the play, and whether they are brought on in large numbers with Talthybius and Menelaus or whether they appear only in off-stage sounds we should be conscious throughout the play of this strong male force against which the captive women struggle in vain. The music should carry much of male strength and both Talthybius and Menelaus should be strongly played. In scenery and costume, the play should not look archeological. Actors and dancers will, of course, wish to study Greek sculpture and vase painting, much of which, especially the archaic, looks extremely modern. Scenery and costumes, however,

should both be first functional, affording the best possible space and envelopes for actors. Like the theme, itself, the production should appear timeless. There is no front curtain and when the audience enters the theatre they see the ravaged plains outside Troy, the wall at the back. Troy lies beyond this wall upstage.left. None of it need be seen, and none of it must be seen if it is to look like the usual stage battlements. Beyond the wall upstage right there is the sea, also not necessary to be seen except in the imagination of the audience. From downstage right the Greeks enter and from this side are the sounds of the soldiers and the sea and the Greek encampment. A sense of the sea and of ships should be inherent in the music as in the play. There are several levels on the stage, the upper one leading off to the left. This side of the wall contains the huts of the other captives. From this entrance the captive women appear. The play starts with an overture, and lights come up on the prologue.

TROJAN INCIDENT

PROLOGUE

The tent of Odysseus, late afternoon.

Odysseus sits at a camp table, examining a small model of a horse, rolling it back and fourth on its wheels, opening and shutting a door in its side. At the sound of voices at the door of his tent he rises and faces the incoming Agamemnon and Menelaus, brothers, leaders of the Greek Army.

They are arguing with one another as they enter.

Behind them enters Talthybius, the herald, and two guards.

MENELAUS

You should have taken Troy nine years ago.

AGAMEMNON

What more could I have done than I did?

MENELAUS

You could have fought the Trojans until you made them give me back my wife. Instead of that you have spent those nine years plundering the country until your men are soft, your discipline is gone --

ODYSSEUS

If we had come here to get your Helen for you, we could have had her without throwing one spear. The Trojans were willing enough to let her go.

MENELAUS

Then why did they not?

ODYSSEUS

Because we wanted war, not Helen. We wanted the Dardanelles, Menelaus. These straits have made Troy rich, and they are going to make us rich, too. When Helen sailed off with Paris she gave us just the incident that we needed. If you want to have her back, so much the better, but don't think we are taking all the trouble just for your sake.

MENELAUS

Your men came here to help me. You promised me -- you and Agamemnon and all the rest of the chiefs -- that the honor of Greece would be upheld. You have told me that, over and over.

AGAMEMNON

Whatever we promised you, our men are tired of the war. There's a certain Thersites making speeches to them. You ought to hear him, Menelaus. He doesn't believe a word we say about you and Helen, or the honor of Greece, or the duty of a soldier - not a word of it. He says we are cheating the men, making them fight a war that has nothing to do with them, just using them for our own profit.

ODYSSEUS

They will not listen to Thersites long when they see a hope of plundering this city.

AGAMEMNON

We have promised that to - them too often, Odysseus. They won't believe us.

ODYSSEUS

(Sitting, and wheeling forward the model of the horse)

This machine will hold twenty men.

AGAMEMNON

What is twenty men?

ODYSSEUS

Just enough to open the gates of Troy -- from the inside.

AGAMEMNON

What are you really planning?

ODYSSEUS

Just this Agamemnon.

The Trojans worship the horse. So they suppose that all the world worships the horse. This little model

ODYSSEUS (Cont'd)

represents a gigantic wooden engine already built, ready now, and hidden. It will hold just enough men to do our work for us.

We will sail away out of sight and the Trojans will pull this high-stepping horse of ours into their walls. Then

(With the gesture of a magician he says this)
we come back.

There is confused shouting outside. Agamemnon looks out the door of the tent and turns back to the other two.

AGAMEMNON

Right now the men are ready to mutiny. They have their man Thersites with them.

Shouts are heard of; "We demand to see the Generals." "They must listen to Thersites.", etc. Thersites, a common soldier, enters in excitement, and begins to speak at once, in a somewhat nervous haste.

THERSITES

Agamemnon, we have listened to you long enough, and we have had enough of your war. We have asked you before why we are fighting. Haven't you whole tents full of plunder already, and a whole harem of slave women? What more do you want? Must we bring you still more captives to hold for ransom? Or are you tired of your latest concubine and needing a fresh one?

THERSITES (Cont'd)

We have taken your orders long enough, General. We have been nine years away from home and we have wives there, and children. Thousands of us have died out here, for you, for you and your royal friends. Now we are going home, and if you want to stay out here and heap us more spells, you can do it alone.

You hear my men out there - ten thousand strong. Well, soon you will hear a sound that has not been heard here for nine years -- the rumble of ships going down the skids. And when you hear that you will know that we mean what we say.

(He starts for the door, but is stopped by Odysseus, who has been listening attentively to his speech.)

ODYSSEUS

You are right, friend. We have been talking of these things ourselves just now, Menelaus here, and Agamemnon and I. Don't you suppose we get homesick, too? Why, I have a boy waiting for me at home, just ten years old now. I have been dreaming of him these past months. Friend, these two men and I want to go home just as much as you do.

(Agamemnon and Menelaus exchange horrified glances at the suggestion)

THERSITES

Then make up your minds. We are going now.

ODYSSEUS

Yes, my friend.

(HE goes to the door of the tent, opens it, and addressess the crowd outside. Agamemnon and

ODYSSEUS (Cont'd)

(Menelaus listen with astonishment, and rise from time to time to protest, but Odysseus goes on with his speech.)

Men of Greece -- soldiers -- our god has deceived us. When we left Greece to come here, he let us believe that we would take Troy and come home safe again. Now we see that he was playing with us. Today his command is that we go back to Greece.

(Cheers from the crowd. Menelaus half rises)

MENE LAUS

You promised--

(Odysseus quiets him with a gesture.)

ODYSSEUS

Remember that we will be in disgrace. We have lost so many men already that --

VOICES

We have lost enough.

We are going home.

Let Odysseus speak.

ODYSSEUS

But - our god, would have it so - our god, who has razed many tall cities before our time, and will raze many more. We must do as he commands us.

(Cheers from the crowd. Agamemnon rises.)

AGAMEMNON

Traitor!--

ODYSSEUS

(To Agamemnon, in an undertone)

Wait.

ODYSSEUS

(Continues to the crowd)

Still, it will be a disgrace to us for ages to come --
that such a force of Europeans ran away from a handful
of Asiatics and left their work undone behind them.

VOICES

Home! Home!

ODYSSEUS

If our army were to lay out a banquet for itself, at
tables of ten men each, and each table were to choose
one Trojan to pour wine for it, there would not be
enough Trojans to go round. That's how we outnumber
the Trojans - ten to one, men, ten to one, and more.

VOICES

Enough!

We are going home!

We have listened to you before.

ODYSSEUS

But - the Trojans have allies.

They have persuaded all this part of Asia to help them.
So far we have not been able to cut off their reserves
of fresh men.

And now even the gods have gone over to fight on the
Trojan side.

Perhaps there is no use in going on with this siege.

VOICES

You are right for once.

Odysseus admits it.

It was time.

THE END OF THE PLAY
BY
HOMER
TRANSLATED BY
E. V. Rieu

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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We have been here nine years. The timbers of our ships are rotting and the cables are frayed. And our wives - -

VOICES

Our wives?
Our families!
Our homes!
Our children!

ODYSSEUS

Our wives and our children wait for us, and wait. As for what we came here to do, that has not been done. We came here on a mission of honor, men. We came here to defend the good name of the Greek home. If we quit now we will be deserting the cause of justice. Helen is still in Troy.

VOICES

We have heard enough about Helen.
Helen, the bitch!
The chest!
The murderess!

MENE LAUS

I won't stand for this, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS

(To the crowd)

Perhaps we were wrong in our judgment of you. We thought your country's name would be enough to keep you here until you had won a real peace - a Greek peace - a peace with victory.

(Shouts of derision from the crowd)

You have been calling us hard names.

We know it, men, and we feel it.

But we are your representatives, and your welfare is our first concern.

If you are absolutely decided to give up now and go home--
Very well, launch the ships.

We will all sail home together.

(The crowd shouting, is heard rushing toward the ships. Agamemnon and Menelaus come forward angrily, both trying to speak at once)

AGAMEMNON

This is a fine way to stop a mutiny, Odysseus. You have granted them everything. Are we to go home penniless after these nine years? What did we assemble this army for in the first place? To listen to speeches from you?

MENELAUS

Do you expect me to leave Helen here with Paris, and go home to be laughed at?

ODYSSEUS

No.

You men forget our horse.

AGAMEMNON

That wooden thing? What of it now?

ODYSSEUS

Tomorrow night, at the first island where we stop, I have another speech to make.

ODYSSEUS (Cont'd)

The men will have calmed down after a day of rowing,
and we can give them reasons for coming back to Troy.
Remember - the horse will be inside the walls by then.

THERSITES

I might have known that your speech would be all a pack
of lies.

For the honor of Greece, Menelaus must have his wife again,
For the honor of Greek womanhood we must make war on a
peaceful city.

You refused to accept the woman when the Trojans offered
her to you of their own free will.

You refused to talk of peace.

You would rather do anything than hear a word of truth
from one of your own men -

Anything rather than tell the truth yourselves.

All we are to you is so many bodies to heap up to the
glory of Greece.

In the name of a whore that no decent man would allow
under his roof.

MENELAUS

(Furious)

He has talked enough.

THERSITES

We have pulled down cities at your orders. We have
murdered and plundered, we have died and rotted for
you. But your men will not always be blind.

ODYSSEUS

He has heard too much.

(HE turns to Talthybius)

Do it quietly, Talthybius.

(Talthybius unsheaths his sword)

Take him out ---

The back way, where the men won't see.

(The guards force Thersites out through the rear door. Talthybius follows. Odysseus walks to a corner of the tent, picks up his helmet which lies there, and carries it before him in his two hands. He holds it out over the table.)

Now - we draw for the women.

BLACKOUT

(The light comes up on the stage, revealing
Hecuba lying on the ground outside the wall
of Troy Other captive women are leaning
against the wall, prostrate on the ground, or
standing on the wall)

Music is under this scene throughout the
movement of Hecuba.

HECUBA (Rising, arms outflung as she looks
back to Troy)

HECUBA

Troy is captive.

Troy is down.

And we, women of Troy --

Mothers and daughters and wives of Troy --

Must sail in the ships of the Greeks.

My country is gone, my people, my husband.

O my heavy womb, were you for nothing?

(She walks away and looks over the sea)

You ships, you rowed fast,

And with horried squealing of flutes and pipes

You came to cast anchor in the bosom of Troy.

After Helen you came, after Menelaus' woman.

Ten years of war, that he could have his strumpet back

Helen, the royal whore.

She was the excuse.

In Helen's name the enemy gave us ten years of war.

In Helen's name they murdered Priam, father of fifty.

Made me his widow, and childless,

HECUBA (Cont'd)

Made you all orphans, or widows, or childless.

O wives of soldiers,

Our city is smoke.

And I, as a bird her brood, lead you in your lamentations,

Let us sing of Troy --

Not the song we sang once, nor the steps we used to dance--

But let us sing.

It is our last time.

CHORUS OF TROJAN WOMEN

(Unlike the members of the singing chorus, they are strongly individualized. They speak singly, interrupting each other.)

1st WOMAN

I am afraid.

HECUBA

Child, the Greeks unship their oars already.

2nd WOMAN

What will they do with us?

HECUBA

I can only guess.

3rd WOMAN

(To others still invisible)

Women of Troy, the ships are being launched.

2nd WOMAN

Troy, Troy, we shall see you no more.

(Two women, who have been looking off toward the sea, rush back to Hecuba)

4th & 5th WOMEN

What will they do?

Will they kill us?

HECUBA

They have their work to do.

5th WOMAN

(Coming from within)

I am afraid.

(Several women come in. One of them speaks)

6th WOMAN

Has any word come from the Greeks? Whose slave am
I to be?

7th WOMAN

Who will it be?

6th WOMAN

An Argive, or a Theban?

3rd WOMAN

Perhaps I shall stand at a loom in Athens --

4th WOMAN

Or spin thread in Sicily --

6th WOMAN

Or carry water in Ovrinth and grow old and ugly there --

Oh, why does this have to be?

HECUBA

You must try to be brave.

2nd WOMAN

O my child, you were alive this morning. I washed
your little body.

3rd WOMAN

Last night I dressed my little girls for the holiday--

1st WOMAN

I saw them kill my husband--

HECUBA

You will be some day where he is.

You will not always be a slave.

7th WOMAN

Let me not be in service to that Helen.

6th WOMAN

Let me never see her again.

4th WOMAN

She is a captive now herself, like us.

7th WOMAN

Not for long. Menelaus will be her captive.

6th WOMAN

She will do what she will with him --

SEVERAL WOMEN

As she did here --

As she did with Paris --

With Priam --

With the wits of all our men.

7th WOMAN

I would drown myself before I would serve her.

6th WOMAN

Nine years we had her with us.

7th WOMAN

She will be triumphant now.

2nd WOMAN

(To Hecuba)

Will any of us be slaves to Helen?

HECUBA

You will know all soon enough.

Soon the ships will be ready and the herald will come
for us.

They will send their man Talthybius,

The carrier of all their messages.

Any word too brutal for them to say they send by
Talthybius.

Here he comes.

(A trumpet sounds. Enter TALTHYBIUS with an
escort of guards.)

SEVERAL WOMEN

(To Hecuba)

What shall we do?

Help us!

Save us!

TALTHYBIUS

Hecuba, you know me.

(Hecuba comes forward and the women mass
themselves behind her)

I have come often to bring you messages.

HECUBA

(To the Women)

Women, this is what we have waited for.

TALTHYBIUS

Your lots have been drawn.

HECUBA

Where is it to be -- Thessaly, Ph^othia, Thebes?

TALTHYBIUS

Your lots are separate.

HECUBA

Where is it to be?

(Then bitterly)

What happy fate awaits us?

Will they let us live?

3rd WOMAN

What are your orders?

2nd WOMAN

What of me?

1st & 5th WOMEN

(According to their characters)

And me?

And me?

TALTHYBIUS

One at a time.

HECUBA

My daughter -- Cassandra -- priestess of Apollo --
Surely the Greeks fear god and will spare her.

TALTHYBIUS

The King himself drew her lot.

HECUBA

What! Menelaus? Will she be a slave to Helen?

TALTHYBIUS

No. Agamemnon himself, the King of Kings.

He chooses for his own bed.

HECUBA

Cassandra, priestess of Apollo, bride of a god!
My daughter, that I gave as a child to the god's service--
That has loved none but him ever --
Cassandra, in the bed of that brute!

The king is pleased with her.

HECUBA

Throw away your garlands, my daughter, drop the robes of your virginity.

What has your piety done for you?

Where was your gift of prophecy?

You never foresaw this.

TALTHYBIUS

Is it not a great thing that your daughter is chosen for the king?

HECUBA

Let be.

What else could I expect?

But I have another daughter still--

My youngest child -- where is she?

TALTHYBIUS

Is your youngest named Polyxena?

HECUBA

Yes. Who draws her?

TALTHYBIUS

(Evading the gaze)

Polyxena shall remain at the grave of Achilles.

HECUBA

Achilles killed the greatest of my sons.

And now my daughter is to tend the grass over his tomb?

What Greek custom is this?

TALTHYBIUS

Do not fear for your daughter. She is well.

(Quickly, apprehensively)

Is she alive?

TALTHYBIUS

She does not suffer.

(The women turn significantly toward Hecuba.

She understands the truth as they do, but
makes a sign to them)

HECUBA

What of Andromacha?

What of my son's widow?

Since Hector was killed and mangled,

Since she saw that all happen

She has not said a word.

She will care little what happens to her

But she has a son - Hector's son - mine as well as hers.

What of them?

TALTHYBIUS

The son of Achilles takes them.

HECUBA

Achilles again!

Have we not suffered enough from him, the murderer?

Must his son ravage us too?

Are you Greeks made of stone?

TALTHYBIUS

I only tell you what I know.

HECUBA

Tell me then of myself.

Whose slave am I to be, and where --

An old frame, a living corpse --

Too weak to carry water or make fires for the Greeks?
Will I be a gate-keeper, or a nurse for children --
I that once governed a people?

TALTHYBIUS

Your lot was the last drawn,
And Odysseus was the last to draw.

HECUBA

(With a gasp)

What would he do with me?
Or is he afraid that a younger woman would offend
his wife?
That is it --
The most villainous of the Greeks, and the loveliest
head among them.
But for Odysseus, Troy would still be standing.
Now he will share his plunder with his pious wife.
And I can think on what my life was once,
As I lie on his kitchen floor.
Go about your business, Greek,
And let me think in quiet of my new life.

TALTHYBIUS

I am losing time here.

(Turning to his men)

Bring out Cassandra. Bring her out, men.
I must take her to Agamemnon
These others can wait.

TALTHYBIUS (Cont'd)

(The men approach the hut, then start back
in surprise as they see smoke issue from
within)

What is that smoke?

Have the women set fire to the hut?

Are they trying to burn themselves up?

There's courage in these creatures.

Open up that door.

I don't want the blame of what might happen here.

HECUBA

(Stopping the soldiers)

They are burning nothing. These are torches.

My daughter, with her torches.

1st WOMAN

She is mad.

3rd WOMAN

She is no more mad than we.

5th WOMAN

We are all mad today.

7th WOMAN

I have seen her dance before.

8th WOMAN

She sees what we cannot see.

7th WOMAN

She talks with her god in her dancing.

Why does she carry the torches?

3rd WOMAN

She goes to Agamemnon's bed.

She thinks this is a wedding.

1st WOMAN

Her god is a cruel joker.

3rd WOMAN

He speaks with her.

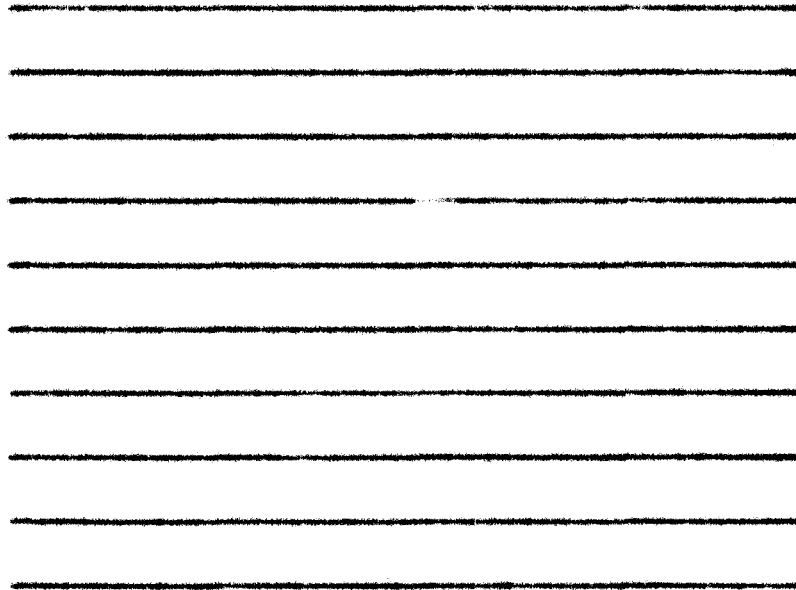
Only we cannot understand.

7th WOMAN

Hear what she says.

She has spoken the truth before this.

(Cassandra enters with a torch in each hand, dancing. The rhythmic scheme of the dance - song follows. Voices of the singing chorus sing the words.)



Lift high, virgin, the torch of fire

Give light to Hymen, Lord of the Bridal bed

O Hymen, Hymen Lord we praise you with dance and with flame

Behold, people, the flaming bride

Happy the man that weds her

Behold how the torch flames

For so every virgin does

The last thing of her virgin days

Hymen, Hymen, to Hymen

Hold higher the flame

Dance with the feet of joy, Dance till you shake the sky.

This is a holy deed today.

So sing, sing to the god of brides

Be-held, Apollo, this was your maid

Your handmaid that will wed today

Sing, all women of Troy today

Sing the man that is fated

To lie in her bed

HECUBA

This is no wedding for you, child.

Will someone take those torches from her?

CASSANDRA

Crown my head with victory, Mother, and send me
to be married --

Send me, and if I weaken, drive me.

By Apollo, I promise you that Agamemnon, king of
kings, will find me more fatal to him than Helen
was to Troy

(Music throughout)

I see him dead,

His family scattered and blotted out.

In the dead of night,

In a mountain torrent,

Our two naked bodies will be cast out for the
wild beasts to devour.

A pause, during which Cassandra grows
calmer.

You need not pity me, Mother,

Nor need you hate Agamemnon any more,

For his house will be lower than the ruins of
Troy

(The music stops and Cassandra continues.)

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

What have the Greeks won from wrecking our city?

Think: for one woman -- one pretty idea, they
died by the thousands.

Their ships landed here and at once their men
began to kill and be killed --

And for what?

No man had invaded their country or ruined their
houses.

Those Greeks that our men killed had no quarrel
with us.

They murdered because they were told to murder.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

And they died in another man's quarrel.
 To win plunder for a few men far too rich already.
 To the homes that waited for their return, to their
 wives and their children,
 Only their swords came home --
 Their rusty swords and a handful of ashes from the
 funeral fire.
 In Greece today women wonder why they brought us sons.
 In Greece, Mother, and in Troy, and in towns and
 villages far over the sea.
 Women will long be wondering.
 Must they always think of these things too late?
 A day will come when women will be stronger, and
 their voices heard,
 When men and women will know their world far better
 than now.
 When that time comes they must know themselves better too.
 Or these things will happen again forever.

3rd WOMAN

And we called her mad!

7th WOMAN

The world would be the better
 For more madness such as this.

TALTHYBIUS

(To his men)

The greatest king in the world wants this fury for his
 bed. We are better off as plain men, you and I.

TALTYBIUS (CONT'D)

I killed Thersites by Agamemnon's order

And by his order I will bring this priestess to him.

His plans are no concern of mine.

But I think we have heard words today that no king will
be able to silence.

(The Women, inflamed by Cassandra, have gathered
around her and at this point go into the choral
dance. The singing chorus and the orchestra
carry the words.)

This is the song of the Horse

Sing for Troy, O people --

Sing the song of the Horse that trampled the
walls of Troy --

The song of the monster reared before the gate

How we bridled and drew it toward us.

Brought the monster upon us, dark and tall and voiceless

With bridle of gold and belly of pine

An engine made like an image of beauty

An engine made to roll on Troy.

Then into our walls, up on the street,

TALTHYBEUS (CONT'D)

So easily rolled the beast,

So smooth the flank, so proud the eye,

So strongly, so easily, lightly he paced,

With bridle of gold and with flanks of pine,

That all the boys in all the town,

And all the girls took hands to dance,

And every soul in high Troy.

Whirled in a crazy blindness.

2nd VERSE

This is the song of the Horse

Sing for Troy, O people --

Sing the song of the Horse that trampled the walls of Troy.

Then half of the night we slept and dreamed of peace,

While the towering monster above us,

Tall and towering darkly, dark and tall and voiceless,

Waited and watched and stood while we slept.

Erect, and counted the sound of our breathing,

An engine made to roll on Troy,

And we were asleep, you and I.

So quick to believe that the war was done,

So slow to think, so blind to see,

So ready to sing and so easily won

With music and dancing and wine and sleep,

Within the blinded walls of Troy

The towering shape of death was still.

And every soul in high Troy

Slept in the arms of darkness.

3rd VERSE

But when the monster woke the night

Death poured from his side and filled the town .

And when the monster woke the night

And when the engine rose to strike

Then all the streets of Troy were red,

AND Troy was made a fountain flowing

With blood for the horse of Greece to drink,

And all the streets of Troy were wet,

The Horse - Blood to wash his jaws.

The Horse - Blood to shine his hooves.

The Horse - Blood to dye his mane.

The Horse - Baby's blood for him.

Now there's a corpse in every room.

A headless corpse and a widow for sale.

Slaves for the beds of the Greeks!

For sale! -- into the Greek beds.

(At this point Andromacha with her child,
Astyanax, is led out of the huts by the
soldiers.)

1st SOLDIER

Out of my way, women.

HECUBA

Andromacha!

ANDROMACHA

I and my son are driven like cattle to the Greek ships.

HECUBA

There is no measure nor number to my troubles.

ANDROMACHA

They have slaughtered Polyxena at the grave of Achilles.

HECUBA

My child!

That was the watching at the grave!

I saw her myself, and covered her body.

HECUBA

O, my child!

ANDROMACHA

She died as she died. Yet her lot is happier than mine, who live.

HECUBA

Life and death are not the same thing, my daughter.
Death is nothingness.
Life is hoping.

ANDROMACHA

It is better to be dead than to live as I must.
The dead have no pain.
They do not even know what has happened to them.
Consider me.
I loved a man -- I loved Hector -- Your son --
For his sake I was virtuous.
Because women are talked about when they go out,
I stayed at home.
Even at home I was careful what company I kept.
For my husband I kept a quiet tongue, an untroubled eye.
I studied what I could do for him,
And what to leave to him,
I loved Hector and tried to be perfect for him.
And what came of it?
The Greeks heard of it, and now I am to be the slave of
my husband's murderers.

ANDROMACHA (CONF'D)

(Some of the women surround Andromacha,
consoling her and whispering advice.

She draws away from them)

Listen. If I give in to my new husband, Hector
will know it.

Even if I remember Hector, my new master will beat me.

2nd WOMAN

I have heard that a single night in a man's bed will
sometimes change one's feelings.

ANDROMACHA

I have no use for a woman who can love two men.

Even a colt is faithful to his running-mate.

(She kneels, spreads her hands over the
ground. The child runs to Hecuba in
fear. The women, moved, draw aside
in groups.)

Hector -- My dear -- you were the only man for me.
Your mind, birth, position, courage, were all great.
You took me from my father's house and you were the
first man ever to come to my bed.

And now you are killed

And I am shipped as a slave to Greece.

(To HECUBA)

Now is not the lot of your Polyxena easier than mine?

HECUBA

I have never been on a ship,

But I have seen pictures, and heard sailors talk.

HECUBA (CONT'D)

I know that when a vessel is running in a heavy wind,
the crew works hard to save her --

One man at the helm,

One at the sheet,

But when a real storm drives her on,

Then they leave her course to chance

And she goes with the waves.

So I, full of trouble, have no answer for you.

CHORUS

(With appropriate movement)

A storm from the gods rolls over us.

(The child hides his head against HECUBA..

She looks at him and in a changed voice,
speaks)

HECUBA

My daughter, the death of Hector is past.

All your tears will not bring him back.

Turn to your new master.

Make him love you.

For here is your child, yours and Hector's.

Who knows?

Perhaps you may save him to be the salvation of Troy.

Perhaps sons of his sons may walk again in this place.

(Andromacha, moved by Hecuba's speech,
comes over to her son, and takes him by
the hand. Enter TALTHYBIUS)

TALTHYBIUS

Andromacha, wife of him that was once the greatest of
the Trojans.

I bring a message, not of my choosing.

TALTHYBIUS (CONT'D)

The Decree of the Greeks --

ANDROMACHA

What is it?

TALTHYBIUS

Declares that this child -- how can I tell you?

(The skirts of the women rustle in anticipation. The soldiers close in around Andromacha. Cassandra turns around on the wall and listens)

ANDROMACHA

Is he not to have the same master as I?

TALTHYBIUS

No Greek will ever be his master.

ANDROMACHA

Will they leave him here to be a remnant of Troy?

TALTHYBIUS

I know no easy way to tell you.

They condemn the boy to death.

(ANDROMACHA clings to the child aghast.

The women cry out. Cassandra on the wall makes a strange, prophetic gesture, and TALTHYBIUS continues.)

The son of the hero of Troy must not live.

He is to be thrown from the wall of the city.

(ANDROMACHA, leaving her child to Hecuba, flings herself upon TALTHYBIUS, beating her fists against his chest with all her strength. Music with this. -)

Let it be so, you cannot resist.

Endure it, you have no choice.

Look.

Your City is in ruins.

Your husband is killed.

You are a captive.

We are strong enough to hold one woman back.

(He takes her two hands, holds her
away from him and speaks to her
almost kindly.)

I don't want you to fight back.

Or do anything reckless.

Or call down curses on your captors,

If you make them angry, you will not even be allowed
to bury the boy.

ANDROMACHA

(Kneeling and taking the child in
her arms)

My darling -- your father's greatness was your death.

He saved others --

(She sobs)

1st WOMAN

Was it for this that she married Hector,

For this, to bear a child for the Greeks to kill?

ANDROMACHA

Cry, child.

Do you know what is in store for you?

Why do you cling so?

Your father cannot save you.

Hector will not come.

(SHE hands the Child over to
TALTHYBIUS, and turns away)

Take him, throw him from the wall.

Make a feast of his body.

(With a sudden gesture, she flings
her arms over her head, reels for-
ward and falls. The Women surround
her and are pushed aside by the sol-
diers. One of them picks up her uncon-
scious form, and carries her off)

TALTHYBIUS

(As he is about to lead the child away)

Perhaps this work had to be done, but it should have
been given to a harder man than me.

(HECUBA stands alone, withdrawn from the
scene, cold and hard. CASSANDRA leaps down
from the wall and leads the women in a dance
of women lost in a great void. The voices of
the singing chorus and the orchestra underlie
the dance.)

Ode 11 (Lines 799-859)

So murder is ever alive with hate for Troy.

Always a nation of soldiers trained to hate us.

The very same that destroyed us before

Are come to do their work again

War, ever war on the people.

2nd VERSE

The town that Apollo has loved is down again

Town that Apollo has loved is down in ashes.

The very same that are killing us now.

Will come to do their work again.

War, ever war on the people.

3rd VERSE

In vain for us once the gods have visited Troy with their
favor.

Cheated with speeches of love.

They love themselves, just themselves.

Them that they choose they keep with them.

Troy they leave burning and sacked and wasted.

Gods have betrayed us again.

Our sacrifice consumed our flesh and

Our men and our children have joined our Gods.

4th VERSE

The love of these save us not, the love of a god for
a mortal

Changes and fades and betrays

They had their way when they would

Played with our sons and called it love.

Now they leave Troy to be burned and wasted.

Here is the husband avenged.

The man that thousands died to please and

The husband of Helen, the scourge of Troy

AN ATTENDANT OF MENELAUS

(Announcing during the music)

The lord of you all, Menelaus!

 *At this moment in the music

(Last stanza)

(Enter MENELAUS, accompanied by
 armed guard)

 MENELAUS

In there, men, and drag her out by her blood-red hair.

(Two soldiers enter the house swaggering.

Menelaus turns to the woman.)

Now you will see the cause of your troubles in person
 This is the day that I gave the best years of my life
 to see.

HECUBA

If you expect to kill her, Menelaus,

Don't look at her.

I know her,

So do you.

So does everyone that has suffered from knowing her.

WOMEN

We know her. We don't need to look at her now.

(The two soldiers emerge, swaggering no
 more. Helen walks proudly between them,
 and they do not touch her)

HELEN

Menelaus, are you trying to frighten me?

Here I am,

Dragged out by your henchmen.

I know you hate me,

What are you going to do?

MENELAUS

You know that you have wronged me.

For that the army condemns you to death.

HELEN

May I say one word for myself?

SINGING CHORUS

Don't listen to her!

Don't listen to her!

Don't listen to her!

MENELAUS

I did not come here to argue with you.

HECUBA

Give her a trial, Menelaus,

And let me answer her.

You know nothing of how she was with us.

What I have to say will leave her no defense.

MENELAUS

For your sake she may speak -- not for hers.

I am charged with adultery.

I am charged with leaving you, my husband, in Sparta.

And coming here to live with Paris - her son Paris.

(Indicating Hecuba)

For this you have burned Troy.

Enslaved these women.

And killed their husbands.

(She pauses for this to take effect)

Why don't you blame this woman

(Pointing to Hecuba)

for bearing Paris

In the first place,

For letting him grow up in the second place?

(The Women of the Chorus, indignant, go to Hecuba. Helen turns to Menelaus)

Why don't you blame yourself?

Where were you when Paris came to visit us?

Didn't you go off to Crete and leave me with him?

(Helen's voice changes; she becomes that Aphrodite of whom she now speaks)

Why don't you blame the goddess of love?

She promised me to Paris.

She came with Paris to Sparta,

Everything we did was her work.

If I die, I die innocent.

No one can stand against Aphrodite.

(The women are moved in spite of themselves)

SINGING CHORUS

Aphrodite!

Aphrodite!

Aphrodite!

HELEN

Menelaus, you must believe me.

When Paris died, and Aphrodite left me alone again,
I tried to come back to you.

(MENECLAUS turns away from her and she
follows him)

You may ask any man he was on guard on the walls
How often he had to stop me from letting myself down
at the end of a rope.

Can't we let the past alone, Menelaus?
Can't we just be a plain man and woman?
These things were the doings of the gods -
We can't help ourselves.

SINGING CHORUS

Fine words! Fine words!
Help us, Hecuba.
Speak for your people
Speak for your country.

HECUBA

You heard her blame the gods.
I knew she would.
Menelaus, my Son Paris was a handsome young man,
When she saw him, and fell to lusting after him,
She excused herself by calling it Aphrodite.
Any slut can do that.

(She turns to Helen)

You noticed how richly Paris was dressed, and you wanted
to sail with him,
Greece was too poor for you;

HECUBA (CONT'D)

You thought that if you could only get to Troy,
you could cover your body with gold.

Menelaus' house was too little for you, wasn't it?

(HELEN turns to MENELAUS to protest)

What resistance did you make to this so-called goddess?

Your brother was alive then.

Did he know about you and Paris?

Did anyone in Sparta?

When you came here I know what happened.

Your people came after you.

There was a war.

Do you know yet what a war is?

I do.

I knew then.

I begged you to go back to your husband.

and let us have peace.

I said, "My daughter, let me help you.

HECUBA (CONT'D)

I can see you through to the Greek camp."

Would you listen to me?

Who ever saw you making any plans to escape?

When the Greeks were winning, you praised Menelaus,
just to make my son jealous.

When the Trojans had the least little success,
you could not even remember your
husband's name.

(SHE turns to Menelaus)

Menelaus, your killing this woman could not bring
back my husband.

Or my sons.

Or help these daughters of mine.

But Helen carries the seeds of war in her.

In her mouth she carries them, and in her eyes,
And on her back.

Wherever Helen goes there will be men to want her,
And to clothe her, and beautify her at the expense
of nations --

To make of her the rich man's plaything that she
demands to be.

If she has her way with you she will go home loaded
with Trojan plunder,

But she will never be satisfied.

(A pause)

Why do we waste our breath on Helen?

You came here to punish her.

All your people helped you.

You have made a shambles of my city.

And your own men have had enough of killing and being killed.

At least, finish what you came to do.

Let someone get something out of this horrible business.

MENELAUS

You are telling me nothing.

I know my wife.

(MENELAUS turns to Helen with elaborate severity)

Come along. You shall know how it feels to be stoned to death.

HELEN

(Falling on her knees and clasping his legs)

Menelaus! You can't do this to me.

HECUBA

Remember your own men, that she murdered.

MENELAUS

(To his attendants)

Take her to the ship.

HECUBA

If you sail in the same boat with her --

MENELAUS

What are you afraid of?

HECUBA

There is no chance to save you, Menelaus.

(His-men have led off Helen. MENELAUS looks steadily at Hecuba)

CASSANDRA

You are past saving, Menelaus,
 So are your people, so long as they are willing
 to do your dirty work for you.
 Talk of Helen all you like.
 One thing she said was right --
 Where were you when she sailed away with Paris?
 What did you care?
 A good excuse, that's all that Helen was.
 If your ships are too heavy to get you home
 It won't be our women that weigh them down.
 You found gold in Troy, didn't you ----
 Gold, and new ideas?
 Ships pass by Troy - up and down through the Dardanelles.
 Your sons and their sons will be here watching them.
 These ruins will be a fort some day.
 People will be dragged here from a world bigger than
 you ever dreamed of.
 To die and rot here as you men did,
 without knowing why!

HELEN

(Offstage)

Menelaus!

(MENELAUS turns and goes out. Hecuba turns to
 the chorus)

HECUBA

I am old, and you will be like me.
 There is nothing we can do to save ourselves.

HECUBA (CONT'D)

But she sons that you will bear to the Greeks --

Will they be wiser than we were?

Will they be wiser than their fathers?

Sing, women.

(Then, as she indicates the audience)

They may hear you.

Sing, women,

(Then, as she indicates the audience)

They may hear you.

CHORUS

There goes man to the next great war

There's the king with his concubine

There's the whore with her soldier man

There goes war like a dream of love

War is pleased with his work today,

War, how long till we know you?

2nd VERSE

There goes war on a soft white arm

War looks clean to the man she loves

Troy's aflame for the sacrifice

Flaming high for the sacrifice

War is pleased with his work today

War, how long till we know you?

3rd VERSE

O my love

You lie cold and quiet and sightless.

Unburied, unwashed and I am alone,

A ship

Will carry me far from all I know,

Away from you

Far from you -- far from home -- far from you -- far from home.

Now I can hear in the street

Children that whimper and cry

"Mother, O Mother, O stay

O where are you now, where are you?"

4th VERSE

Sink the ship

The ship, gods, the ship and the cargo.

Oh let me be drowned and never be slave.

And now

Let quivering lightning strike the mast

And tear the hull

Tear the hull--tear the hull--tear the hull--tear the hull.

Only my ghost, let it sing

Chests of us all, let them cry

Sons of our sons, may they hear us.

O when will they know, when hear us?

TALTYBIUS

(HE enters, carrying the mangled body of little Astyanax, lying in the shield of Hector. He is followed by soldiers bearing lighted torches. It is getting dark. (The women silently surround Hecuba bowing their heads)

Hecuba, this is all that I have for you.

They have taken Andromache

She sent the child to you, for you to bury.

She sends you this shield, too, that Hector used to carry into battle.

Where she is going she does not want to see it.

She says she will remember her man well enough.

(HE lays the child's body at Hecuba's feet and looks at it)

One thing I was able to do for you.

I crossed the stream on the way.

You see the boy has been washed.

Now I leave him with you.

When I have dug a grave for him I will come back.

This is all against my orders.

Don't keep me waiting.

(He makes a sign to his men who follow him and with him take up positions along the top of the wall. Their backs are turned to the women and they are looking down on Troy.)

(HE goes out and Hecuba sits with the child in her lap. As she arranges the body in the shield she talks, partly to it, partly to herself)

HECUBA

The Greeks were afraid of this poor child --
 Afraid that there might be a town here again,
 A city,
 A people at peace --

(Talthybius makes a gesture. The first soldier flings his torch down on Troy. Flames rise)

Your poor head ----
 You used to say that you would visit my grave when
 you were a man,
 And keep me from being lonely there,---
 What shall we write on your headstone,
 "The Greeks murdered this child, because they were
 afraid of him?--

(Talthybius makes another gesture. The second soldier flings his torch. Flames arise)

You lie in this shield as though it were made for
 you, child ---

(Another soldier flings his torches. The sky is reddening now.

The chorus forms about Hecuba, preparing to escort the body to the grave. She makes the last motions of arranging the corpse.

HECUBA (CONT'D)

I cannot close these wounds.

You will be with your father soon.

He can do better than I.

(A woman lifts the shield. Each woman of the Chorus as she passes the shield drops an ornament, a wreath, or some treasure. The soldiers are motionless against the sky darkening over what was Troy. Hecuba speaks, out over the audience)

Perhaps these things may be remembered.

CASSANDRA

Those things must be remembered.

(She leads the women in a procession at the end of which she lifts the shield with the body of Astyanax and holds it before her)

HECUBA

If ever men learn to know war when they meet it,
we shall not have died in vain.

TALTHYBIUS

(From the wall)

Are you ready, women?

(Cassandra, holding the shield with the body before her, leads the recessional. The women follow her, and the soldiers follow the women, Talthybius remains motionless)

HECUBA

(Straight to the audience)

Are YOU Ready?

SINGING CHORUS

(Echoing her words to the audience)

Are you ready?

Are you ready?

Are ~~you~~ ready?

Are you ready to understand?

(HECUBA follows the last of the women.

TALTHYBIUS follows her.

The scene dissolves, with the music,
in darkness.⊙