

Martin Halpern

Odysseus and Ajax: Chamber Opera in One Act

(See Program Notes for Cast and Setting)

(Lights come up slowly on the area before Ajax's tent. Early morning.)

Piano

Lento marcato ♩ = 48

1 *f* *ff* *mf* *p*

*(Odysseus enters downstage, sword in hand, looks around him cautiously, then slowly advances toward the tent.)**(A light comes up on the raised platform, where Athena stands watching him. Her voice stops Odysseus in his tracks.)*

Pno.

5 *ff* *mp* *ff* *f*

(Odysseus looks up and around but clearly can't see her.)

Athena

f

O - dys - se - us!

Odysseus

f

A - the - na?

Pno.

mp *f* *mp*

(He quickly sheathes his sword.)

Athena *mp* 3 *Be - yond and with - in you, son of La - er - tes.*

Odysseus 8 *Is it A - the - na's voice I hear?*

Pno. 10

Odysseus 12 *mf* *poco rit.* *Oh dea - rest of all the gods' voic - es to me!*

Pno. 12 *mf* *mp*

Athena 14 *♩ = 44* *I've been watch - ing you, slow - ly and cau - tious - ly, as is your way, ap -*

Pno. 14 *mf*

Athena

16

proach - ing the tent of - proud A - jax. What is it you seek?

Pno.

16

f *ff* *mf*

Odysseus

18

poco piu mosso ♩ = 48

Oh god - dess, a mon - strous thing has oc - curred! An act of sense - less car - nage!

Pno.

18

Odysseus

20

While we slept last night, some - one set up - on the ar - my's flock of

Pno.

20

Odysseus

8 sheep and goats and cat-tle, and slaugh-tered scores of them!

Pno.

ff

Odysseus

8 A guard, re-por-ting it this mor-ning, charged A-jax with the crime.

Pno.

mf *f*

Athena

8 Seek no fur-ther, son of La-er-tes.

Odysseus

8 I've come to learn if the charge is true.

Pno.

mp

piu mosso

28 $\bullet = 60$

Athena

The charge is true.

Odysseus

But why? Why would the va - liant A - jax

Pno.

30 rit.----- a tempo *mf*

Athena

Lis - ten, and I'll tell you.

Odysseus

do such a thing?

Pno.

32 *f*

Athena

For I have know - ledge that can set you right. It was you he thought he was pun - ish - ing.

Pno.

ff

Athena 34 *ff* And your com - man - ders, A - ga - memon and Men - e - la - us.

Odysseus Me?

Pno. 34 *mp*

Athena 36 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 56 *mf* Sure - ly you've. sensed that deep in his heart

Pno. 36 *legato*

Athena 38 re - sent - ment — has been smoul - der - ing since the day of A - chil - les' death.

Pno. 38 *f*

Odysseus

40
8

You mean, be - cause A - chil - les' ar - mor was a - war - ded to me.

Pno.

40

mf

Athena

42

Ra - ther than him who tru - ly de - served it.

Pno.

42

Athena

43

Great - est of war - ri - ors af - ter Ac - hil - les. At least in *his* mind.

Pno.

43

f

poco meno mosso ♩ = 48

♩ = ♩

Odysseus

45

8

Oth - ers thought diffe - ren - tly, for right or wrong.

Pno.

45

mp *mf*

Athena

47

Ap - tly and mod - est - ly put. But I have de - flec - ted A - jax - 's rage.

Pno.

47

f *f*

Athena

49

Be - fore his eyes I threw ob - ses - sive no - tions,

Pno.

49

ff

Athena 51 thoughts of in - sane joy, ma - king him fall on the help - less live - stock,

Pno. 51 *mf* *f*

Athena 53 and glee - ful - ly drench his sword in their blood.

Pno. 53 *ff*

Athena 54 *mf* And the lives of the sons of A - tre - us.

Odysseus 8 *ff* Then you have saved my life!

Pno. 54 *mf*

Athena

56

But lis - ten fur - ther. When A - jax grew tired of the slaugh - ter,

Pno.

f *ff* *mf*

Athena

58 *poco piu mosso* ♩ = 56

he hob - bled some beasts that were still a - live

Pno.

f

Athena

59

and dragged them here to his tent, where now he tor - ments and tor - tures them

Pno.

ff

61 *ff* *mf*

Athena

till rea - dy to strike the fi - nal blow. A - mong these beasts

Pno.

mf *ff* *mf*

63

Athena

is the one he thinks is you.

Odysseus

ff

Oh mon - strous! Tor - ture first, then death!

Pno.

f *ff*

(She calls down to the tent.)

66 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 52

Athena

But I will show you his mad - ness in plain view,

Pno.

mf *ff*

68 *piu mosso* = 60 *ff*

Athena
that you may learn from it. A - jax! Come out!

Pno. *mp* *ff*

70 *mf*

Athena
What do you fear? He is on - ly a man.

Odysseus *ff*
8 Oh no! Don't call him out! I beg you!

Pno. *mf*

72 *meno mosso* = 52

Athena
But is it not said

Odysseus *ff*
8 A man who hates me!

Pno. *ff* *mf*

Athena

74

that laughter at your en-e-my is the sweet-est laugh-ter there is?

Pno.

74

ff *mf* *ff*

Odysseus

76

mf

I'd ra-ther he stayed in-side. If he were sane, I would ne-ver shrink from him.

Pno.

76

mp *mf* *f*

Athena

78

mf

Oh how like you, O-dys-se-us.

Odysseus

78

f

But mad-ness is an-o-ther mat-ter.

Pno.

78

mf

poco meno mosso ♩ = 48

Athena

80

f

The man of in - tel - lect, for whom in - san - i - ty is the worst af - flic - tion.

Pno.

80

f *mf*

Athena

82

mf

Take com - fort though. He will stand near you,

Pno.

82

Athena

84

but not see you.

Odysseus

84

f

How is that pos - si - ble?

Pno.

84

f

(She calls down to the tent again.)

86 **meno mosso** ♩ = 40

Athena

I — can dar - ken — the bright - est vi - sion. Ne - ver for - get that, son of La - er - tes.

Pno.

(Ajax draws back the doorflap of the tent and emerges, covered with blood and carrying a two-thonged whip. Odysseus draws back in horror.)

88 **piu mosso** ♩ = 52

Athena

A - jax! I call on you a - gain! Is this how you o - bey me?

Pno.

90 **meno mosso** ♩ = 44

Pno.

ff

piu mosso

92 *ff* $\bullet = 56$

Ajax

Hail, A - the - na! And wel - come! How well you've stood by me this day!

Pno.

mp *mf*

94

Ajax

I will deck you with tro-phies of gold from the spoils of this hun - ting, in

Pno.

96 *mf*

Athena

Ex - cel - lent. But tell me: did you dip your blade

Ajax

gra - ti tude!

Pno.

f

Athena ⁹⁸ well in the Greeks' blood?

Ajax ⁹⁸ I think I may boast as much.

Pno.

Athena ¹⁰⁰ In - clu - ding the blood of the gen - e - rals?

Ajax ¹⁰⁰ They won't slight A - jax a - gain!

Pno.

meno mosso $\text{♩} = 44$

Athena
102
Then Ag-a-mem-non and Men-e-la-us are dead?

Ajax
102
Dead and rot-ting.

Pno.
102

Athena
104
mf
And what of O-dys-se-us?

Ajax
104
Let them steal my ar-mor now! Ah!

Pno.
104
ff *mp* *mf*

piu mosso $\text{♩} = 52$

Ajax
106
He's in-side there, my swee-test pri-so-ner.

Pno.
106
f

108

Athena

What are you go - ing to do first?

108

Ajax

I don't in - tend for *him* to die so quick - ly.

108

Pno.

ff *f* *mp*

110

Ajax

I'll bind him fast to my tent pole, then crim - son his back with this whip

110

Pno.

f

112

Ajax

till he screams with pain,

112

Pno.

piu mosso

113 *meno mosso* ♩ = 42

Athena *f* ♩ = 56
Poor wretch! In pi-ty,

Ajax
then slow - ly, slow - ly kill him.

Pno. *ff* *mf*

Athena
don't mis - treat him so!

Ajax *f*
Have your way, god - dess, in

Pno.

Ajax
all things else, and wel - come. But that man's pun - ish - ment

Pno. *f*

119

Ajax

is my af - fair. So back to work now!

ff

Pno.

(Ajax re-enters the tent. Athena turns to a shaken Odysseus.)

121

Ajax

God - dess, stand al - ways my al - ly as you have to - day!

f *meno mosso* ♩ = 48

Pno.

mf *f*

124

Athena

Pno.

mf *mp*

piu mosso

126 *mf* $\bullet = 56$

Athena

Do you see, O - dys - se - us, how great the po - wer of change is.

Pno.

128

Athena

(Starts to indite himself, then thinks better of it.)
 Who was more full of fore - sight — than this man? Or a - bler to act with judg - ment?

Pno.

f *mf* *f*

130 *molto meno mosso* $\bullet = 36$

Athena

Well said.

Odysseus

mp

None that I know of. And yet,

Pno.

mp

132
8

Odysseus

I pi - ty — his wretch - ed - ness, and that ter - ri - ble yoke of blind - ness.

Pno.

mf

134
8

Odysseus

I think of him, yet al - so of my - self.

Pno.

mp

136
8

Odysseus

For I see the true state of all mor - tals.

Pno.

138
Odysseus

For - e - ver sub - ject to for - ces be - yond our un - der - stan - ding.

Pno. *mf*

140
Athena

piu mosso ♩ = 52

Think well on this,

Pno. *f* *mf*

142
Athena

and speak no tow - er - ing word, be - cause your mind is keen - er than o - thers',

Pno.

144

Athena

or your wealth deep - er foun - ded. One short day

Pno.

146

Athena

in - clines the ba - lance of hu - man for - tunes to sink or rise a - gain. -

Pno.

poco meno mosso = 48

148

Athena

Wis - dom for mor - tals be - gins in hu - mi - li - ty, and ends in com - pas - sion.

(The light on Athena fades quickly to black)

Pno.

mp

(Odysseus, sensing that she is gone, looks briefly toward the tent, then shakes himself and rushes off.)

Athena

151

Re-mem-ber that, -my fa-vo-rite, as the e-vents of this day un-fold.

Pno.

151

(Three Salaminian Sailors in service to Ajax enter and stand gazing mournfully at the tent)

mf *mp*

Pno.

154

molto piu mosso ♩ = 96

ff

Pno.

157

meno mosso ♩ = 60

p *mp*

Sailor I

160

mf

A-jax our lord and lead-er, when you are for - tu-nate we too feel glad-ness.

Pno.

160

mf

163 *f*

Sailor II

But when the fu - ry of gods and Greeks be - sets you, we shrink in fear

Pno.

165 *meno mosso* ♩ = 52

Sailor II

for you and for our - selves.

Pno.

167 *mf*

Sailor III

Oh ne - ver, no - ble son of Te - la - mon, of your own heart's promp - ting

Pno.

Sailor III

169

8

would you have slaugh - tered that flock of in - no - cent beasts!

Pno.

169

169

Sailor III

170

8

Yet fren - zy comes when the gods will it to come.

Sailor II

170

8

Yet fren - zy comes when the gods will it to come.

Sailor I

170

8

Yet fren - zy comes when the gods will it to come.

Pno.

170

172 *ff*

Sailor III
8 And now, ru - in threa - tens us

172 *ff*

Sailor II
And now, ru - in threa - tens us

172 *ff*

Sailor I
And now, ru - in threa - tens us

Pno.

174

Sailor III
8 as all your en - e - mies — e - xult

174

Sailor II
as all your en - e - mies — e - xult

174

Sailor I
as all your en - e - mies — e - xult

Pno.

mf *ff*

(Ajax's wife Tecmessa emerges from the tent.)

176 rit. -----

Sailor III 19
8 in blasts of spite-filled laugh-ter!

Sailor II 19
in blasts of spite-filled laugh-ter!

Sailor I 19
in blasts of spite-filled laugh-ter!

Pno. 19
f *ff* *mf*

178 $\text{♩} = 44$ *mf*

Tecmessa 19
Mar-ri-ners who serve— my hus-band, know that the ter - ri-ble fit that was on him

Pno. 19
mf

piu mosso

180 $\bullet = 60$

Tecmessa
has at last a - ba - ted!

Sailor III
8 *ff*
Ah! - - - Wel - come - news, Tec - mes - sa! - - -

Sailor II
180 *ff*
Ah! - - - Wel - come - news, Tec - mes - sa! - - -

Sailor I
180 *ff*
Ah! - - - Wel - come - news, Tec - mes - sa! - - -

Pno.
180 *f* *mp*

182 *mp* $\bullet = \bullet$ *mf*

Tecmessa
Both wel - come and un - wel - come. For as the light - ning flash

Pno.
182

meno mosso

184

Tecmessa

and leap of the storm wind in - side him gave way to calm and clear - ness of mind,

$\bullet = 52$

Pno.

f

186

Tecmessa

an - guish as great as his for - mer fren - zy mas - tered him, and he sits there now,

Pno.

188

Tecmessa

mo - tion - less a - mid the wreck of corp - ses, re - fu - sing food and drink,

Pno.

mf *f*

(Ajax rushes out of the tent and falls to his knees before them.)

Tecmessa

and beg-ging for you, his loy - al fol-low-ers, to put an end to his cursed ex - is - tence.

Pno.

mf *ff* *mf* *ff*

(Tecmessa tries *ff* lift him up.)

{He roughly pushes her off}

Sailor III

Ne ver! - - - Ne-ver could we - - - lay hands on our mas - ter! - -

Sailor II

Ne ver! - - - Ne-ver could we - - - lay hands on our mas - ter! - -

Sailor I

Ne ver! - - - Ne-ver could we - - - lay hands on our mas - ter! - -

Pno.

ff *f*

195

ff

Ajax

I or - der you! Do it now, and quick - ly!

Pno.

ff

197 *mf* *piu mosso* ♩ = 66

Tecnessa
A - jax my lord, I beg you..!—

197 *ff*

Ajax
A way! - You are no- use - to me now! - -

Pno. *mf* *ff* *mp*

199 *mf* *meno mosso* ♩ = 56

Sailor II
Please sir, take back that or - der, and let us serve you dif - ferent - ly.

Pno. *f*

201 *f* *meno mosso* ♩ = 48

Sailor III
Be tem - per - ate. Hope that things

Sailor I
Don't seek a cure worse than the dis - ease.

Pno. *mf*

(Tecmessa kneels before him and pleads.)

203

Ajax *f*

You're grow - ing te - di - ous, all of you!

Sailor III

203

8 may change for the bet - ter.

Pno.

203 *f*

205

Ajax *ff* *meno mosso* ♩ = 44

Can't you see how the gods — de - spise me? What have I to hope for but death?

Pno.

205 *mf* *f*

207

Tecmessa *mp*

A jax my lord, - -

Pno.

207 *mp*

209

Tecmessa

lis - ten to me. If you should leave us,

Pno.

211

Tecmessa

what would be - come of me, and of our child Eu - ry - sa - ches,

Pno.

(Ajax looks up at her weakly)

213

Tecmessa

who in - no - cent - ly sleeps with - in? Would not one of your en - e - mies

Pno.

mf

Tecmessa

215

drag us off to be his bond-slaves? And these, your loy - al fol - low - ers, would not

Pno.

215

f *mp* *mf*

Tecmessa

217

they suf - fer the same dark fate?

(Ajax continues to look at her for a moment, then at the Sailors, then slowly crosses back into the tent.)

Pno.

217

f

Tecmessa

219

Think on this, A - jax! Think on this, — my lord,

Pno.

219

mp *mf*

221

Tecmessa

and do not be our be - tray - er!

Pno.

f

223

Sailor I

Go in, Tec - mes - sa!

Pno.

mf *mp* *f* *mf*

(Tecmessa nods and follows Ajax into the tent, drawing the doorflap closed.)

226

Sailor III

And try to set him —

Sailor II

Keep him from har - ming him - self!

Sailor I

Keep watch on him!

Pno.

mf

piu mosso ♩ = 60

f *mp*

(The Sailors turn downstage and position themselves for a choral ode.)

Sailor III

229
8

— on a gent - ler course!

Pno.

229

mf *mp* *p*

Sailor III

232
8

Oh

Pno.

232

mp *mf*

Sailor III

235
8

splen - did Sa - la - mis, is - land of my birth,

Pno.

235

Sailor III *f*
 when shall I see you a - gain? Time has grown old since

Pno. *mf*

Sailor III
 first I en - dured this wret - ched bi - vouac on the a - li - en plains of Troy,

Pno. *f*

Sailor III
 lo - sing count of the lapse of months, fee - ling the slow a - bra - sion in my bones.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

meno mosso $\text{♩} = 44$

f

243

Sailor II

Who - e - ver it was that first re - vealed

Pno.

243

243

245

Sailor II

to Greek and Tro - jan their com - mon scourge, de - tes - ted arms and war,

Pno.

245

245

f

247

Sailor II

I curse him! For he has de - nied me my share

Pno.

247

247

ff

mp

mp

3

249

Sailor II

in the sweet com - pan - ion - ship of gar - land and cup and song.

Pno.

251 *rit.* ----- ♩ = 36 *mf*

Sailor I

And me he has de-nied

Pno.

253

Sailor I

the flute's soft me - lo - dy, and a plea - sant bed in the night.

Pno.

255 *f* *ff*

Sailor I

And love, love he has de-nied me, as here I lan-guish,

Pno.

255 *f* *mf*

257

Sailor I

my locks damp from the dew which is all my trea-sure in Troy.

Pno.

257 *f*

259 *poco piu mosso* ♩ = 40 *f*

Sailor III

And -

Sailor II

And he,

Sailor I

And he,

Pno.

259

261

Sailor III *8* he, — va - lo - rous A - jax, who shiel - ded us once from ev - ery fly - ing shaft,

261

Sailor II — va - lo - rous A - jax, who shiel - ded us once from ev - ery fly - ing shaft,

261

Sailor I — va - lo - rous A - jax, who shiel - ded us once from ev - ery fly - ing shaft,

261

Pno. *f* *mf* *f*

264

Sailor III *8* has turned his eyes a - way to face his own fierce de - mon.

264

Sailor II has turned his eyes a - way to face his own fierce de - mon.

264

Sailor I has turned his eyes a - way to face his own fierce de - mon.

264

Pno. *mf* *mp*

(Behind them, the doorflap of the tent is slowly drawn open by Tecmessa, and Ajax emerges, all the blood washed off him and wearing fresh clothes. His sword is in its sheath. One by one, the Sailors turn and stare with amazement at the change. Tecmessa closes the doorflap, and stands beside Ajax, motioning for the Sailors to kneel.)

266

Sailor III

What chance have I now of rea- ching Sa - la - mis

Sailor II

What chance have I now of rea- ching Sa - la - mis

Sailor I

What chance have I now of rea- ching Sa - la - mis

(The Sailors kneel. Tecmessa crosses to them and also kneels. All watch and listen in rapt silence as Ajax addresses them with calm dignity.)

Pno.

268

Sailor III

and gree- ting a - cross the wa - ter the hills of ho - ly A - thens?

Sailor II

and gree- ting a - cross the wa - ter the hills of ho - ly A - thens?

Sailor I

and gree- ting a - cross the wa - ter the hills of ho - ly A - thens?

Pno.

f

270

piu mosso ♩ = 56

Pno.

mp

Pno.

273

Ajax

mp

Strange - ly, - - -

Pno.

276

Ajax

- the long and count-less drift of time brings all things forth - - - from dark-ness in - to light, - - -

Pno.

278

281

Ajax

— then co-vers them — once more. No-thing so mar - ve-lous

rit. ----- ♩ = 52

Pno.

mf *f* *mf* *mp*

283

Ajax

that man can say ————— it sure - ly will not be.

Pno.

285

Ajax

My mood,

Pno.

287

Ajax

which just be - fore was strong and ri - gid, no dipped sword more so,

Pno.

mf *f*

289

Ajax

now has lost its edge; and pi - ty touch - es me

Pno.

mp

291

Ajax

for wife and child, and you, my friends, be - reft a - mong my en - e - mies.

Pno.

f

293 *poco piu mosso* ♩ = 56 *mp*

Ajax

So now _____

Pno.

296

Ajax

— I'm go - ing _____ to he ba - thing place _____ and mea - dows _____ by the sea,

Pno.

298 *mf* *f*

Ajax

to cleanse my stains, _____ in hope the god - dess' - s wrath

Pno.

300 *rit.* -----

Ajax

may pass from me.

Pno.

302 *a tempo* *mf*

Ajax

And when I've found a place that's quite de - ser - ted,

Pno.

mf

303 *f*

Ajax

I'll dig in the ground, and hide this sword of mine,

Pno.

f

304 *ff* *rit.* $\bullet = 48$

Ajax

most hate - ful of wea - pons, out of sight.

Pno.

304 *ff* *mp*

306 *mf*

Ajax

From now on, this will be my rule: ac - cept what must be.

Pno.

306 *mf*

309

Ajax

bow — be - fore the sons of A - tre - us. I must give way, —

Pno.

309 *f* *mf*

311

Ajax

— as all dread strengths give way, in turn and de - fe - rence.

Pno.

313

Ajax

mf
Win - ter's hard - packed snow

Pno.

f

315

Ajax

cedes to the fruit - ful sum - mer; stub - born night at last re - moves,

Pno.

mp *mf*

Ajax

317

— for days white steeds to shine;

Pno.

Ajax

319

(Tecmessa and the Sailors jump to their feet.)

the dread blast of the gale slac - kens, and gives peace to the soun - ding sea;

Pno.

mp

Ajax

321

and sleep, strong jai - ler, in time yields up his cap - tive.

Pno.

324 *mf* *f*

Ajax

Shall not I learn place and wis-dom? Shall not I, wret-ched though I am,

Pno.

326 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 44 *f*

Tecnessa

Oh

Ajax

find peace in this, and find my sal - va - tion?

Pno.

ff

piu mosso ♩ = 56

328

Tecmessa
bless - ed words! How all the gods must re-joice in this!

328

Sailor III
8
ff
Blest - a - wa - ken - ing! - - How all the gods must re-joice in - this! -

328

Sailor II
ff
Blest - a - wa - ken - ing! - - How all the gods must re-joice in - this! -

328

Sailor I
ff
Blest - a - wa - ken - ing! - - How all the gods must re-joice in - this! -

328

Pno.
f *mf*

331

Ajax
(He turns and slowly exits.) *mf* (Tecmessa and the Sailors watch until he is out of sight.)
Now as I go where I must go,

331

Pno.
mp

331

333

Ajax

to do as I must do, let you, dear wife, and you,

Pno.

335

Ajax

dea-rest of friends, re-main here, pray-ing those gods to grant ful-fil-ment

poco meno mosso ♩ = 52 *f*

(He starts to dance joyfully.)

Pno.

mf

337

Ajax

of my soul's de-sire.

poco meno mosso ♩ = 48

Pno.

mp

(He also starts to dance.)

piu mosso $\bullet = 60$ *ff*

Sailor III

340

8

I shud - der and thrill with joy!

Pno.

340

p *f*

Sailor III

342

8

I leap and take wings!

(He joins in the dance.)

I am bent u - pon dan - cing!

Pno.

342

Sailor II

344

ff

The har - sher gods have lif - ted the siege of grief from our eyes!

Pno.

344

(As she too joins in the dance, Odysseus enters hurriedly.)

346 **meno mosso** ♩ = 52

Sailor II
I e - xult with hope re - newed!

Sailor I
A jax for - gets - his pain - -

Pno.

348 **poco meno mosso** ♩ = 48

Tecmessa
And with ho - ly rites and ob - ser - vance,

Sailor I
and a - gain his thought is re - ve - rent!

Pno.

348 *(They abruptly stop dancing and turn to him)*

350

Tecmessa
he goes to heal him - self, and be - come a - gain

Pno.

352 *accel.*

Tecmessa
our strong and gen - tle mas - ter.

Pno.

354 *ff* *♩ = 56*

Odysseus
Friends! I must speak to A - jax!

Pno.

356 *mp* *f*

Tecmessa
You O - dys - se - us? Here?

Odysseus
I have an ur - gent mes - sage for him!

Pno.

358

Tecmessa

An ur - gent mes - sage? From whom?

Odysseus

The pro - phet Cal - chas.

Sailor III

358

Cal chas?

Sailor II

358

Cal chas?

Sailor I

358

Cal chas?

Pno.

358

360

Tecmessa

What is it? Tell me, and I'll tell A - jax!

Odysseus

360

He has re - vealed -

Pno.

360

mf

Odysseus

362

8

that on - ly for this one day will the wrath of the gods con - ti - nue.

Pno.

362

362

Odysseus

364

8

But on - ly if A - jax stays in his tent

Sailor III

364

8

ff

A com - fort - ing pro - phe - cy!

Sailor II

364

8

ff

A com - fort - ing pro - phe - cy!

Sailor I

364

8

ff

A com - fort - ing pro - phe - cy!

Pno.

364

364

366

Tecmessa *mf* But what does that mean?

Odysseus *ff* will he sur - vive this day.

Pno. *ff* *mf*

368 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 52

Tecmessa Why will he not sur-vive?

Odysseus *mf* Cal chas does not - ex - plain his pro - phe - eies. -

Pno. *mp* *mf*

370

Odysseus But I have ne-ver known him to miss the mark.

Pno. *mp* *mf* *f*

372 *f*

Tecmessa No. He has gone to the shore to cleanse him-self.

Odysseus 8 Is A-jax in-side?

372 *mf mp mp f*

Pno.

374 *f*

Odysseus 8 Oh foo-lish, foo-lish act! *(Tecmessa and the Sailors ruff off)*

374 *ff*

Sailor II We'll

374 *ff*

Sailor I But we can look for him!

374 *ff*

Pno. *(Odysseus watches them go, then soliloquizes.)*

376 *ff* Yes!

Tecnessa

376 *ff* We'll find him, and bring him back!

Sailor III

376 search the shore, up and down!

Sailor II

Pno.

378 Hur - ry, friends! To the shore as fast as we can!

Tecnessa

378

Pno.

379 *mp* *p* rit: - - - - -

Pno.

Odysseus *mf*

381 $\bullet = 52$

I wish you well, friends, but fear the worst. "One short day," she said,

Pno. *mp* *mf*

Odysseus

384

"One short day in - clines - the - ba - lance - of - hu - man - for - tunes - -

Pno.

Odysseus *mf*

386

to sink or rise a - gain." But just as the man swol - len with pride

Pno. *mf* *mp*

Odysseus

388

8

may think his for-tune can-not change for the worse, so the man mired in des-pair

Pno.

388

mf

f

Odysseus

390

8

may think his for-tune can-not change for the bet-ter. Both, in op-po-site ways,

Pno.

390

mp

mf

(He exits, as lights fade to black.)

Odysseus

392

8

af-front the im-mor-tal gods. And that, I fear,

Pno.

392

mp

(During this interlude, the set is changed to a place on the shore, barren except for a single clump of bushes upstage.)

Odysseus ³⁹⁴
8 was the mean - ing of Cal - chas - 's pro - phe - cy.

Pno. ³⁹⁴

Odysseus ³⁹⁶
8 *mp* Well, I will go and see. And what I can do,

Pno. ³⁹⁶

Odysseus ³⁹⁸
8 *molto rit.* I will do. $\bullet = 48$

Pno. ³⁹⁸ *f* *mp*

(Lights come up slowly on the scene at the shore.)

Pno.

Measures 400-401. Treble clef: melodic line with slurs and accidentals. Bass clef: accompaniment with slurs and dynamics.

(Ajax enters, sword in hand, and crosses behind the clump of bushes, where he carefully plants the handle of the sword in the ground, tamps down the earth around it, and stands testing the edge of the upraised blade.)

Pno.

Measures 402-404. Treble clef: melodic line with slurs and a triplet in measure 404. Bass clef: accompaniment with slurs and dynamics. *mf* dynamic marking.

Pno.

Measures 405-406. Treble clef: melodic line with slurs and a triplet in measure 405. Bass clef: accompaniment with slurs and dynamics. *f* dynamic marking. *rit.* marking above the staff.

Pno.

Measures 407-408. Treble clef: melodic line with slurs and dynamics. Bass clef: accompaniment with slurs and dynamics. *a tempo* marking above the staff. *f* dynamic marking.

Pno.

Measures 408-409. Treble clef: melodic line with slurs and dynamics. Bass clef: accompaniment with slurs and dynamics. *mp* dynamic marking.

410 *molto rit.* -----

Pno.

410 *ff*

412 $\bullet = 44$ *f*

Ajax

There!

Pno.

412 *f*

415 *poco piu mosso* $\bullet = 48$

Ajax

Firm in the ground and the blade well shar-pened. I have put them off the scent

Pno.

415 *mp* 3

415 *mp* 3

417

Ajax

with my com - for - ting words, and now can do what I *must* do,

Pno.

f

mf

419

Ajax

a - lone, _____ as is fit - ting, with none to pre - vent or dis - suade me.

Pno.

f

421

Ajax

Oh strong god of death, at - tend me now.

Pno.

ff

423

Ajax

We shall con - verse here - af - ter in the world be - low.

Pno.

mp

425

Ajax

But you, sweet gleam of day-light, you I greet for the last time.

Pno.

425

427

Ajax

(With his back to the audience, he impales himself on the blade and collapses behind the bushes.)

And you, my hal-owed home in Sa - la - mis,

Pno.

427

(The Squires enter, looking frantically around them.)

mf

429

Ajax

and my fa-ther's hearth, fare - well! To you I give my last li-ving word.

Pno.

429

f *mp*

(As they exit, Tecmessa enters.)

431

Ajax

The rest I keep, to speak a-mong the dead.

Pno.

mf *f* *ff*

433

Pno.

(Crossing behind the bushes, she sees Ajax's body and screams.)

(The Sailors quickly re-enter.)

fff *mf*

435

Sailor II

piu mosso ♩ = 66 *ff*

We

435

Sailor I

ff

(As she kneels over the body, the Sailors rush over to her.)

Still no sign of him!

435

Pno.

ff

438 *ff* poco meno mosso ♩ = 60

Sailor III
Let's try *that* way!

Sailor II
must look fur - ther!

Pno.

441 *ff*

Tecmessa
(Scream)

Pno.

443 meno mosso ♩ = 52

Tecmessa

Sailor III
ff No ooo! No - ooo!

Sailor II
ff What is it, Tec - mes - sa?

Sailor I
ff What is it, Tec - mes - sa?

Pno.

poco meno mosso $\text{♩} = 48$

445 *ff* >

Sailor III Oh hor - ri - ble!

445 *ff*

Sailor II Fell on his own sword!

445

Pno. *Odysseus enters quickly and bows short on seeing them.*

poco meno mosso $\text{♩} = 44$

447 *mp*

Sailor I He said he would dig in the ground - -

447 *mp*

Pno.

449 *mf*

Sailor II And so he has done.

449

Sailor I and bu - ry that sword.

449 *f* *mf*

Pno.

Sailor III *mf*

451

8

But not for the rea - son we thought.

Pno.

Odysseus *mf*

453

8

poco piu mosso = 48

Ah! I can see in your fa - ces

Pno.

ff *mf*

Odysseus

455

8

the truth of Cal - chas - 's pro - phe - cy.

Sailor II *f*

455

If on - ly you'd told us soo - ner!

Pno.

f *mf*

457 *f*
 Odysseus I came as fast as I could, o - ver the pro - tests of A - ga - mem - non

457
 Sailor II

457 *f*
 Pno.

459
 Odysseus and o - thers who hate your mas - ter.

459 *f*
 Sailor I Well let them gloat now.

459
 Pno.

461
 Sailor I He is dead by his own hand.

461
 Pno.

(Odysseus crosses to Tecmessa and looks down at her.)

462 *mp*

Odysseus

A las. - - A - las. - - - - -

462 *f*

Sailor III

Ah, hea - vy day!

462 *mp* *mf*

Pno.

464

Sailor III

Hea - vy, hea - vy day! For him, for Tec - mes - sa,

464 *f*

Sailor II

Hea vy, -hea - vy day! - - - For him, - - for Tec - mes - sa, -

464 *f*

Sailor I

Heav vy, hea - vy day! - - - For him, - - for Tec - mes - sa, -

464 *f*

Pno.

(She looks up at him weakly.)

466 *piu mosso* ♩ = 72

Sailor III
and for us!

Sailor II
and for us!

Sailor I
and for us!

Pno.
466 *mf*

468 *mf*

Odysseus
8 Tec mes - sa, I ask you to trust me.

Pno.
468 *mp*

471

Odysseus
8 I share in your grief, and pledge to pro - tect you from all who would harm you.

Pno.
471

474 *meno mosso* ♩ = 52

mp 3 3

Tecmessa
Do you mean that, O - dys - se - us?

f 3

Odysseus
And to you, faith - ful ma - ri - ners,

474 *f* *p* *f* *mf*

Pno.

poco meno mosso ♩ = 48

476 *f*

Tecmessa
Then may the gods re - ward you!

476 *f*

Odysseus
to you I pledge the same.

476 *f*

Sailor III
Then may the gods - re - ward - you! - - -

476 *f*

Sailor II
Then may the gods - re - ward - you! - - -

476 *f*

Sailor I
Then may the gods - re - ward - you! - - -

476 *f* *mp*

Pno.

Odysseus *mf*

And now we must act to - ge - ther to see that A - jax is bu - ried

Pno. *mf* *mp* *mf*

Odysseus *f* *mf*

with all the hon - ors due to him. Come, ma - ri - ners,

Pno. *f*

Odysseus

take up the bo - dy and bear it to where A - chil - les was laid in the ground.

Pno. (As the Sailors start to lift up Ajax's body, Agamemnon enters.)

(The Sailors let go of the body. Tecmessa rises.)

Odysseus

484 *f*

The two shall rest side by side, as is fit-ting.

Pno.

484 *mp* *mf*

Sailor III

486 *mf* *piu mosso* ♩ = 60

In this, as in all else, we o-bey you, no-ble son of La-er-tes.

Sailor II

486 *mf*

In this, as in all else, we o-bey you, no-ble son of La-er-tes.

Sailor I

486 *mf*

In this, as in all else, we o-bey you, no-ble son of La-er-tes.

Pno.

486 *f*

Agamemnon

488 *meno mosso* ♩ = 52 *ff*

Stop! Leave that bod-y where it is!

Pno.

488 *ff* *f*

491 *f*

Odysseus

A ga - mem - non? - - - -You've - fol - lowed me?_ - - - -

Agamemnon

f

To see what mis - chief - you're - up to. -

Pno.

493 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 48 *mf*

Odysseus

No mis - chief, my lord. I on - ly wish to hon - or

Pno.

f *mp*

495

Odysseus

a man I've ad mi - red.

Agamemnon

ff

Ad - mi - red?!

Pno.

f

497

Agamemnon

A man who would have mur - dered you, my - self, and my bro - ther,

Pno.

497

mf

497

499

Odysseus

rit. ----- ♩ = 44

mf

It is true;

Agamemnon

had not some god in - ter - vened?

Pno.

499

f *mf* *f* *mp*

499

501

Odysseus

he was pos - sessed by rage. But now he can do us no harm.

Pno.

501

mf

501

503

Odysseus

So why af - lict him fur - ther?

Agamemnon

ff

Are you, too, - pos - sessed?

Pno.

503

f

503

505

Agamemnon

I have gi - ven — an or - der! As pun - ish - ment — for his crime

Pno.

505

mf

505

507

Agamemnon

and an ex - am - ple — to all the ar - my his corpse shall be left on this beach

Pno.

507

f

ff

507

509 *ff*
 Tecmessa
 No!

Agamemnon
 to feed the hun - gry sea - birds! And you,

509 *ff*
 Sailor III
 No!

509 *ff*
 Sailor II
 No!

509 *ff*
 Sailor I
 No!

509 *ff* *f* *ff*
 Pno.

511
 Agamemnon
 his co - horts in crime,

511
 Pno.

Agamemnon

512

you shall now be gi-ven as bond-slaves_____ to some loy - al Greek.

Pno.

512

512

Tecmessa

514

No! O - dys - se-us, help us!

Odysseus

8

mf

My lord,

Sailor III

514

8

No! O - dys - se-us, help us!

Sailor II

514

No! O - dys - se-us, help us!

Sailor I

514

No! O - dys - se-us, help us!

Pno.

514

mp

514

516
8

Odysseus
may I speak to you — as a friend?

Agamemnon
f
No friend would op - pose me in this.

Pno.
516
f
mp

518
8

Odysseus
Then as a sup - pli - ant, be - sea - ching you - to re - con - sid - er.

Pno.
518

520
8

Odysseus
As I look on fal - len A - jax, and on these, his strick - en sur - vi - vors,

Pno.
520
mf

522

Odysseus

I know that one day I could be where they are,

Pno.

524

Odysseus

and my needs like their needs.

Agamemnon

So it's real-ly your-self you're thin-king of!

Pno.

piu mosso ♩ = 52

f

526

Odysseus

Whom else could I think of?

Agamemnon

Then your mo-tive in this

Pno.

meno mosso ♩ = 44 *mf*

piu mosso ♩ = 52

mp

f

mf

528 *rit.* ----- $\bullet = 48$ *mp*

Odysseus I free - ly con - fess it.

Agamemnon is bald self - in - terest.

Pno. *mp*

530 and there - fore ask that you be the gen - e - rous one. In yiel - ding to me,

530

Pno.

(Agamemnon looks down at Ajax's body for a moment, then at Tecmessa and the Sailors, then back at Odysseus.)

533 *f*

Tecmessa

Oh yield! Yield, A - ga - mem - non!

Odysseus

8 you win the mo - ral vic - to - ry.

533 *f*

Sailor III

Oh yield! Yield, A - ga - mem - non!

533 *f*

Sailor II

Oh yield! Yield, A - ga - mem - non!

533 *f*

Sailor I

Oh yield! Yield, A - ga - mem - non!

533 *f*

Pno.

535 *mp* rit.

Pno.

537 $\bullet = 44$

Agamemnon *mf*

It is no small mat - ter for a com - man - der to take back an or - der.

Pno. *mf* *f*

539

Agamemnon *f*

(He starts to exit, but Odysseus stops him.)

But let you pledge Full loy - al - ty in all things yet to come,

Pno. *mf*

542

Odysseus *mf*

You have my pledge:

Agamemnon *(Agamemnon abruptly exits.)*

and I will do so, this once, for your sake.

542 *(Not turning back; grudgingly)*

Pno. *mp* *mf*

544

Odysseus *ff*
Full loy - al - ty in all things yet to come.

Agamemnon *ff*
Good!

Pno. *f*

547 *piu mosso* ♩. = 52

Odysseus *mf*
8 (Odysseus crosses quickly to the Sailors.) And his sur - vi - vors?

Agamemnon
Then do as you'd like with his bo - dy.

Pno. *mf* *f* *mf* *f*

(He and one Sailor lift Ajax's legs and the other two lift him under their arms, they lay the body across their shoulders. Tecmessa kneels before Odysseus and kisses his hand.)

549 *mp* *mf* *mf*
Odysseus Thank you, no - ble son of A - tre - us.

Agamemnon
And them as well.

Pno. *mp* *mf*

(Lights come up on the raised platform where Athena appears.)

(Odysseus and the others look up
toward the voice.)

piu mosso ♩ = 56

551 *f*

Tecmessa
Thank you! Tru - ly no - ble son of La - er - tes!

551 *f*

Sailor III
Thank you! Tru - ly no - ble son of La - tes!

551 *f*

Sailor II
Thank you! Tru - ly no - ble son of La - er - tes!

551 *f*

Sailor I
Thank you! Tru - ly no - ble son of La - er - tes!

551 *f*

553 **poco piu mosso** ♩ = 60

Odysseus
Come. I will help you car - ry the bo - dy.

553 *mf* *f* *ff* *mf* *f*

Pno.

555 **meno mosso** ♩ = 42

Pno.

mp *mf* *ff* *f*

557 *f* *piu mosso* ♩ = 56

Athena

O - dys - - se - us! - - - Who - e - ver - fails - - to rec - og - nize - -

Pno.

mp *mf*

(As Athena looks down on them with an approving smile,
Odysseus lifts Tecmessa to her feet.. She turns and leads
the four men bearing Ajax's body off in a solemn procession.)

559

Athena

the wis - dom and vir - tue in all you've done this day

Pno.

ff

559 (Lightx fade slowly to black.)

561 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 52 *poco meno mosso* ♩ = 48

Athena

is a great fool. - - - - -

Odysseus

Such words as these, migh - ty A - the - na,

Pno.

mp *mf*

563
Odysseus *8* are all that an - y man could wish for.

Pno. *mp*

Pno. *mf*

Pno. *mp* *p*