Andromache’s Recitativo, Aria and Subtext
for alto flute

as part of the thesis:
The Composition of New Music Inspired by Music Philosophy and Musical Theoretical Writings from Ancient Greece

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About the work:

The original piece called Andromache’s Recitativo, Aria and Subtext is a “song” for quarter-tone alto flute where the words are played rather than sung. This version is for Alto flute in which notes out of the range are changed appropriately. The recitativo follows the example of ancient Greek music using the text as a base for the notes and rhythm. The Aria moves away from direct use of speech-rhythm but still uses the number of syllables as a means of ordering the phrases. The text is then reflected by the music. The subtext is where the characters get to play out their “real” emotions. These are the thoughts of Andromache, Hermione and the goddess Thetis who are the main female characters of Euripides “Andromache”. Andromache and Hermione are the victims of society and war, frustrated and hoping for something better in life. Thetis is the cold goddess looking disdainfully at the situation.

The English translation of the text used is that of Philip Vellacott because his work shows the real universal emotional elements in all the characters. His translations also follow very closely to the original ancient Greek which I have written in the opening phrase to give an example. As much as possible, the flautist must try to be each character: to play the role as would an actor/actress on stage.

The actual notes follow the modal genera from ancient Greece, using quarter-tones and thirds of tones as well as semi-tones and whole tones which were all a part of music in approximately 5th-2nd century BC. The equivalent in cents (1/3 of a tone equalling 66.6 cents) has been included in the score if the flautist wishes to play in numeric value. Well tempered tuning otherwise is to be used with a quarter-tone equalling half the size of a semi-tone.

Glossary and notes:

-accidentals only affect the note they precede
-ancient Greek music genera are mentioned in brackets

w.t with diamond note head= whistle tone
d.s.=dark sound
h.s.=hollow sound
a.s.=airy sound
f.s.=full sound
fiz.=flutter tongue
ord.=end of flutter tonguing
x note= key slap
diamond note=sing note
/=/thick slash means to stomp one’s foot or feet while playing (a bit like a temper tantrum)

Numerical fingerings for the alto flute are given in brackets as tried and suggested by Carla Rees.
Andromache: Recitativo, Aria and Subtext
written for and with Carla Rees

Euripides

pitchbend

(h.s-d.s-h.s) (fingering for C3/4#=134 234C#)

Coreen Morsink

< f> pp
mp
mf

My home!

Amoríloç, Thebe, the lou-est ci-ty in all A-sia...

I left my home;

flessible

and with me came a gold-en hoard of treasures for my dow-ry.

Then we reached the

roy-al pa-

lace of Pri-

ama,

There I be-came He-c-tor's

wife, to bear him true sons. My name is Andro-

mache.


(B1/4#= 23 D#)

===stomp noisily

ppp

It was an en-vied name in those days; now there is no wo-

man

living whose life holds such bit-

ter-ness.

(D1/4#= 345 34D#)

(noisy trill)

I saw my hus-band He-c-tor killed by Ach-il-les' sword;

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And on the day the Greeks took Troy I saw my son Asty-a-nax thrown to death from the high but tile-

ments.

And I, the famous daughter of a noble house, was brought to Iolcas as a slave

a chosen prize from the spoils of Troy,

Awarded to the island prince N*op-tel-cmus for vaour,

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(Aria)

(fast but noisy with hints of lower pitches written C and E flat in sound)

(A underblown to make screechy sound)

(multiphonic trill = 1234 D, trill thumb)

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(D3/4# = 1234 23)

pitchbend
Subtext of Goddess Thetis
(soft chromatic, 1/3, 1/3, 1 5/6: 66.6+66.6+ 366.6=499.8cents)
(pitchbend down where arrows indicate)

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