Orestes’ Chamber
for soprano, oboe, guitar, re-strung guitar
prepared piano and percussion

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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PhD in Music
2013
Instrumentation:
Soprano
Oboe
One Player: Re-strung Guitar (according to directions below) and regularly strung and tuned Guitar
Prepared Piano
Percussion:
Glockenspiel, Xylophone, Kymbala
Tambourine, Frame Drum

Performance Notes:
Accidentals remain for entire measures.

Note on Entrance of Performers:
Instrumentalists should make a fair amount of noise as they walk on stage and prepare themselves to play (blowing air in oboe, trying out the piano pedals, tuning etc.) and should talk in a gossipy way about Electra and her brother Orestes.

“Quote” has been written over various phrases indicating the motive is quoted from my own reconstruction of the Orestes Papyrus.

Re-tuning of one Guitar:
For movements 1-3 a restrung guitar is required. String I is a regular high E string. String II should be a high E string, String III is a B string, String IV a B string, String V a G string and String VI a regular low E string. Movement 4 is played on the regularly strung and tuned guitar. Each movement has more specific tuning of each string as follows and as described with notation on the following page:

First Movement:
I=E string: E
II=E string: E 1/4#
III=B string: B
IV=B string: B flat
V=G string: G
VI=low E string: low E

Second Movement:
I=E string: E
II=E string: E
III=B string: B
IV=B string: A
V=G string: G
VI=low E string: low E

Third Movement:
I=E string: E 1/4#
II=E string: E
III=B string: B
IV=B string: A 1/4#
V=G string: G
VI=low E string: low E

Fourth Movement:
Regular strings and tuning of second guitar.

Prepared Piano
First Movement: Place blu-tak on the left string of f” to create an E 1/4 sharp which can be plucked.
Second Movement: Remove blu-tak.
Third Movement: Follow instructions in score at appropriate times to add blu-tak.

Frame Drum: notes with stem down are a darker louder “Dum” sound and stems up are a lighter “tak” sound as in Arabic folk music. The rhythm pattern in the second movement is base on the ‘wazn la-‘avis’ which stresses the second beat rather than the first.
Tuning for Re-strung guitar

First Movement
String I: E string String II: E string String III: B string String IV: B string String V: G string String VI: Low E string

Second Movement: Restringing of guitar same as first movement, notes to be tuned as following:

Third Movement: Restringing of guitar same as the first movement, notes to be tuned as following:

Fourth Movement: Regular stringing and tuning of second guitar (to be played by the same guitarist)
### First Movement

**Electra:** Quieter, softer, friends! Make your voice as thin as the breath of a reed pipe.  
σίγα, σίγα, λεπτόν ἰχνὸς
αρβύλας τίθετε μὴ κτυπείτ.
hush...hush...
μη μη
σύριγγος ὅπως πνοά λεπτοῦ δόνακος
ω φίλα, φώνει μοι
hush... hush...

**Ancient Greek translation to English**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>σίγα, σίγα, λεπτόν ἰχνὸς</td>
<td>Quieter, softer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>αρβύλας τίθετε μὴ κτυπείτ.</td>
<td>Make no noise, no sound</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**POHLMAN, EGERT and WEST, M.L. 2001. Documents of Ancient Greek Music**

English Translation by Philip Vellacott

### Second Movement

**Electra:** Do you see? He stirs under the cloak. It was you who broke his sleep, with your thoughtless shouting. Can't you leave us alone? Get away from the house quickly and stop making a noise.

**Ancient Greek translation to English**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>κατολοφύρομαι, κατολοφύρομαι</td>
<td>I mourn, I groan, I grieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μάτερος αίμα σας</td>
<td>The greatest happiness is not permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ο σ’αναβακεύει</td>
<td>In the world of men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ο μέγας όλβος ου μόνιμος εμβροτοίς</td>
<td>But the storms of God rise against it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ανά δε λαίφος ως τις ακάτου θοάς</td>
<td>Like a light sailing-ship they shatter it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>τινάξας δαίμωων κατέκλυσεν</td>
<td>Terrors and disasters roll around it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>δεινώων πόνωων ως πόντου ου λάβροισιν</td>
<td>Till crashing waves close over death</td>
</tr>
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| τινάξας ως τις ακάτου θοάς | (a reworking of the English translations by M.L.West and Philip Vellacott followed by repetition of parts of the above texts)

**Opening English Translation by Philip Vellacott**

I mourn, I groan, I grieve.  
The greatest happiness is not permanent  
In the world of men;  
But the storms of God rise against it,  
Like a light sailing-ship they shatter it,  
Terrors and disasters roll around it,  
Till crashing waves close over death.

### Third Movement

κατολοφύρομαι, κατολοφύρομαι  
μάτερος αίμα σας  
ο σ’αναβακεύει  
ο μέγας όλβος ου μόνιμος εμβροτοίς  
ανά δε λαίφος ως τις ακάτου θοάς  
tινάξας δαίμωων κατέκλυσεν  
dεινώων πόνωων ως πόντου ου λάβροισιν  
eν κύμασιν  
as the seas, as the seas  
in waves, crashing waves, doom waves  
til crashing waves,  
til crashing waves of the sea  
(a reworking of the English translations by M.L.West and Philip Vellacott followed by repetition of parts of the above texts)

**Fourth Movement

Now, everyone, a noise! Raise a din, stamp and shout  
I am Apollo, Leto's son who speaks to you...depart on your way, and to holiest Peace  

**English Translation by Philip Vellacott**

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**Bibliography**


Spoken by Electra before start of music:
Quieter, softer, friends! Make your voice as thin as the breath of a reed pipe.
Pianist to remove blu-tak from the strings as silently as possible.
Second Movement

Spoken by Electra: Do you see? He stirs under the cloak.

To be played with as little pedal as possible.
(continue singing on a soft 'a' vowel)
(Octave leaps to be sung as in bel canto exercises)
Spoken: It was you who broke his sleep, with your thoughtless shouting. Can’t you leave us alone? Get away from the house quickly and stop making a noise.
Third Movement

See explanation on p.2 for guitar tuning:

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as the seas,
in waves, crushing waves, doom waves

played

til crushing waves, til crush-ing
waves, of the sea

played

con rubato
αι - βροις ο-λξη-μηιν - οι - σων - ει νυκ-μα - σων

spoken freely: I grieve
Fourth Movement

Spoken all together as chorus:
Now, everyone, a noise! Raise a din, stamp and shout

\( \text{Kym.} \quad \text{Kymbala (played by 7 sticks)} \)

\( \text{Ob.} \quad \text{(open B major triad)} \)

\( \text{Ogr.} \quad \text{(Regular shaggy, and slanging)} \)

\( \text{Xyl.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Dr.} \quad \text{to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Pno.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Kym.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Ob.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

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\( \text{Xyl.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Dr.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)

\( \text{Pno.} \quad \text{f to create E quarter sharp} \)
I am Apollo, Leto's son who speaks to you...depart on your way, and to holiest peace.
sung continuing with 'a' vowel, glissandi to sound like 'sighing'
exercised falling to an undefined pitch chosen by singer

tambourine until end