

# **Andromache's Recitativo, Aria and Subtext**

for quarter-tone 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:

Andromache's Recitativo, Aria and Subtext is a "song" for quarter-tone alto flute where the words are played rather than sung. 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 genera have been 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 flz.=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)

# Andromache's Recitativo, Aria and Subtext for Quarter-tone Alto Flute

Euripides

3

Coreen Morsink

## Recitativo

written for and with Carla Rees

♩ = 69 (h.s-d.s-h.s) *flessibile*

*f* *pp* *mp* *mf* *p* *mp* *f*

My home! Thebe, the lov-li-est ci-ty in all A-sia. I left my home; and with me came a gold-en hoard of treasures  
 Ασιατίδος γῆς χῆμα, Θηβαία πόλις,

7 a tempo

*p* *mp* *pp* *mf* *p*

for my dow-ry. Then we reached the roy al pa-lace of Pri-am;

12

*p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mf* *pp* *f*

There I be-came Hec-tor's wife, to bear him true sons. My name is Andro-mache.

15

*ppp* *p* *f* *mf* *mp*

It was an en-vied name in those days; now there is no wo-man liv-ing whose life holds such

20

*p* *pp* *p* *mf* *f*

bit-ter-ness. I saw my hus-band Hec-tor killed by Ach-il-les' sword;

27

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

And on the day the Greeks took Troy I saw my son A-sy-a-nax thrown to death from the high bat-tle-ments.

30

*f* *ff* *mf* *ff* *f* *mp* *p* *pp* *p*

And I, the fa-mous daugh-ter of a no-ble house, was brought to Hel-las as a slave a cho-sen prize

35

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

from the spoils of Troy, a-ward-ed to the is-land prince Ne-op-tol-e-mus for va-lour.

## Aria

(fast but noisy with hints of lower pitches written C and Eflat in sound)  
(A underblown to make screechy sound)

(A-E tremolo-awkward unusual sound) (w.t. fluctuate pitch)

(flz.)

(ord.) (flz.) (ord.) key slap

ugly as possible

The musical score for 'Aria' consists of eight staves of music. The notation includes various time signatures (8/8, 12/8, 10/8, 13/8, 5/8, 4/8) and complex rhythmic patterns with many beamed notes and rests. Dynamic markings such as *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *ff*, and *ppp* are used throughout. Performance instructions are written above the notes, including '(fast but noisy with hints of lower pitches written C and Eflat in sound)', '(A underblown to make screechy sound)', '(A-E tremolo-awkward unusual sound)', '(w.t. fluctuate pitch)', '(flz.)', '(ord.)', 'key slap', and 'ugly as possible'. Some measures contain unusual time signatures like 5:4, 6:4, 7:4, 3:5, 7:6, 8:6, and 9:6. The score ends with a final measure in 3/8 time.

68 
  
*pp* *f* *p* *fff*

### Subtext of Andromache

(hemiotic chromatic 3/8, 3/8, 1 1/4  
75+75+350 cents)

71 
  
*f* *ff* *f* *p*

(like you're spitting  
at someone)

77 
  
*f* *ff* *p* *f* *ff* *p* *pp* *ff*

84 
  
*p* *pp* *f* *pp*

91 
  
*p* *f* *ffff*

aggressive sound  
(flz.)

(ord.)  
(T) (T)

### Subtext of Hermione

(soft diatonic: 1/2, 3/4, 1 1/4: 100+150+250 cents)

97 
  
*p* *pp* *p* *mp* *pp* *ppp* *mp*

102 
  
*p* *pp* *ppp* *p* *f*

107 
  
*p* *pp* *f* *fff*

very agitated

(soft chromatic,  $1/3, 1/3, 1 \frac{5}{6}$ :  $66.6+66.6+ 366.6=499.8\text{cents}$ )

114  $\text{♩} = 58$

*p* *mf* *pp* *f*

120

*mp* *fff* *mf* *p* *ppp*

(flz.) (ord.)

(w.t. fluctuate pitches)