Order Number 9131632

"Les Choéphores" by Darius Milhaud: A study guide for conductors

Creamer, Paula Kathleen, D.M.A.

University of Washington, 1991

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300 N. Zeeb Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Les Choéphores by Darius Milhaud:

A Study Guide for Conductors

by

Paula Kathleen Creamer

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington

1991

Approved by _____
(Chairman of Supervisory Committee)

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Abstract

Les Choéphores by Darius Milhaud:

A Study Guide for Conductors

by Paula Kathleen Creamer

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Abraham Kaplan, Department of Music

This paper is intended to be a source of information about the choral-orchestral piece Les Choéphores by Darius Milhaud, (1892-1971). Written in 1915 when the composer was twenty-three years old, it is the second work in a group of three that uses text from the Oresteian trilogy by Aeschylus as translated from Greek into French by Paul Claudel.

There is a brief overview of Milhaud's early life, and how he came to meet Claudel, who was looking for a better way to convey the meaning of the more expressive parts of the three plays, perhaps by adding music. Circumstances of the composition of Les Choéphores are described and a summary of the plot of the trilogy is given. Similarities in the nature of the three writers, Aeschylus, Claudel and Milhaud, are explored by examining the uses of the word "lyric" to describe each man's output.

While he was composing Les Choéphores, Milhaud was also studying polytonal harmony. He experimented with these sounds in Les

Choéphores, and even subtitled the piece, "Harmonic Variations." The paper includes a description of the way polytonal simultaneities are used in it.

A chapter is included which is intended to help with the actual production of a performance of the piece. Three out of the seven movements are spoken instead of sung by the chorus, and these are accompanied by seventeen unpitched percussion instruments. The percussion instruments are described, probable misprints in published scores are noted, and other information pertinent to a production is included. It is hoped that this dissertation will make Les Choéphores by Darius Milhaud more accessible to conductors and that as a result, it will be performed more often.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Professors Larry Starr and Emilie Berendsen for their time and help in the final preparation of this manuscript, and Professor Abraham Kaplan for his years of encouragement, patience, and sound advice. In addition, I would like to thank Mrs. Georgette Hale for her help with correspondence and proofreading quotations in French, and the reference staff of the Carlsbad City Library, especially Renata Coates and Leila Dooley. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband, Lyle Stone, for his patience, my parents for their continued encouragement, and my son Brian, for sharing me with this paper for his whole life so far.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 1912, Darius Milhaud was still a student at the Paris Conservatory. In October of that year, when he was just twenty years old, he met Paul Claudel, whose writing and friendship would be significant in his life. By this time, Milhaud had already decided that composition and not the violin would be his métier. He had written many pieces, but had destroyed all except several groups of songs, a string quartet and a violin sonata.

The first words of Claudel's that Milhaud set to music were some prose poems from Connaissance de l'Est, a collection written in the 1890s while Claudel, a diplomat in the French foreign service, was on assignment in China. Milhaud did this before he met the writer. At their first meeting, Claudel asked him to consider the problem of music for his translations from Greek into French of the Oresteia, a trilogy of plays written by Aeschylus. Claudel was not looking for incidental music, but for music to make the meaning of Aeschylus' words clearer. Milhaud, for his part, disliked traditional incidental music anyway and wasn't looking to write any, but the problem of music for the Oresteia intrigued him. With this commonality of purpose, the two men began a collaboration on music for the plays of the Oresteia that would mature into a working relationship and friendship that would last forty-three years until Claudel's death in 1955.

Milhaud's Agamemnon is scored for men's chorus, soprano solo (Clytemnestra) and orchestra. It is relatively short in duration, perhaps ten

minutes, and the text used is only one dialogue, or *kommos*,[1] between the chorus and Clytemnestra, lines 1448-1577 of the play. This text, and Claudel's desire to clarify its meaning, was the subject of the initial discussions between Claudel and Milhaud when they met.

Les Choéphores, or The Libation Bearers, is the second play of Aeschylus' trilogy, and Milhaud set a larger portion of the text that Claudel translated. Milhaud's music requires a mixed chorus, a soprano and a baritone soloist to sing the roles of Electra and Orestes, a woman speaking soloist, a large orchestra and a percussion ensemble of seventeen instruments. When considered as a concert piece, it is an oratorio seven movements long with a performance time of about thirty minutes.

Les Euménides is the third play of the trilogy and Milhaud used Claudel's text to compose a work of operatic dimensions, although a concert performance is theoretically possible. The instrumental ensemble required is the same as for Les Choéphores, large orchestra and large percussion ensemble. There is a large choir needed as well, one that is capable of dividing into a double chorus, a triple chorus, a women's chorus, and a men's chorus. The soloists include two sopranos, two mezzo-sopranos, a contralto, and two baritones. There has been only one complete production of Les Euménides, in Berlin in June of 1964.

The middle piece of the three, Les Choéphores, was chosen for this study for several reasons. It is the middle-sized piece of the trilogy. In so

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[1] Scenes in Greek tragedy between the Chorus and another actor are called *kommoi* (sing. *kommos*).

being, its music is more complicated than Agamemnon and therefore offers more examples of Milhaud's compositional language at this early point in his career. By Milhaud's own admission[2], it is a systematic study of his approach to polytonal harmony. These harmonic materials were also used in Les Euménides, and so a study of them in this smaller form would be useful to the musician wishing to begin a study of Les Euménides. Les Choéphores may be the most practical choice for many conductors wishing to program one of the three pieces. It is a good length for a third or a half of a program and the forces required would be gathered for neither too brief nor too long a performance time to merit gathering them.

Les Choéphores is an adventure into unusual choral techniques. The unpitched movements offer a change of pace for an established chorus and a chance for the conductor to teach new skills. The movements requiring a percussion ensemble offer a challenge organizationally, but are not technically difficult for the percussionists themselves. This would allow a conductor who works in an academic setting to include more students in the final performance. It is also another way to study Les Euménides because the percussion ensemble and the choral speaking are found in that piece as well.

A third reason for choosing Les Choéphores for this study is that it is a good example of the collaboration between Darius Milhaud and Paul

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2 Darius Milhaud, Ma vie heureuse, (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1987), p. 59-60, and "Polytonalité et Atonalité" in Notes sur la musique, ed. Jeremy Drake, (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), p. 173-89.

Claudel. The Oresteia trilogy was their first project together and each gained professional trust in the other while they worked on it.

None of the three pieces has been performed very often. This study attempts to make Les Choéphores more accessible for the conductor considering whether or not to perform it. The paper will begin with a brief overview of the literature already available by and about Darius Milhaud and Paul Claudel, and about the work that has previously been done on Milhaud's Oresteia trilogy. Chapter Two contains biographical facts about the two men up until they worked on Les Choéphores together, has information about Claudel's translation, relates the circumstances of the composition of Les Choéphores, and tells the story of the plays and the history that precedes them. Chapter Three is a descriptive analysis of Les Choéphores which is designed to help a person new to the piece understand its structure and harmonic language more quickly and efficiently. Chapter Four contains information that may be useful to the conductor considering a performance of the piece.

It is hoped that by saving a conductor some research and organizational time with the information in this paper, it will be possible to budget the time to perform this piece. In programming any piece of music, a decision must be made weighing how much work a piece will take to perform, and how worthwhile it is to undertake that work. Is the music worth it? Each performer must make that decision about each piece of music that he chooses to study, and although we almost all agree about those pieces we honor as "classics", we have many disagreements about other pieces.

This writer, having studied Les Choéphores, has decided that it is definitely worth the time necessary. It is, however, an involved piece and would require an extensive investment of time to produce. Other persons must make their own decision, but with this paper, the time investment may slightly decrease, and therefore the chance of performing it increase. Similarly, once Les Choéphores is more familiar, the practicality of producing the other pieces of the trilogy may become greater.

Survey of Literature

Although there has been a fairly large amount of writing about Darius Milhaud and his compositions, much of the documentation of his earliest years as a composer is in his own writings. He wrote many articles for journals in France in the 1920s and 1930s. In a collection called Notes sur la musique[3], Jeremy Drake has collected those that most succinctly describe Milhaud's point of view on various musical and aesthetic questions. Included in this collection is a large part of Études, the collection of essays that Milhaud himself collected for publication in 1937.[4] Drake has also included an appendix in which he lists the writings of Milhaud. It is extensive, and the most complete available, but Drake himself admits that it is still incomplete. Milhaud wrote for newspapers and journals all across Europe and later on in the United States as well. But this bibliography remains the most comprehensive at the time of this writing.

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[3] Darius Milhaud, Notes sur la musique, ed. Jeremy Drake, (Paris: Flammarion, 1982).
[4] Darius Milhaud, Études, (Paris: Aveline, 1927).

Milhaud wrote an autobiography that was published in 1949 titled Notes sans musique.[5] It was published in the U.S. as Notes Without Music in 1953.[6] In it he describes the several meetings that began his collaboration with Paul Claudel. Since the autobiography was written more than thirty years after the events took place, the details of the events sometimes differ from accounts that he wrote earlier. For example, the essay "Ma collaboration avec Paul Claudel" published in Études is a more contemporary telling of his first meetings with Claudel than the section in Notes Without Music about the same subject. Milhaud revised and updated his autobiography in Ma vie heureuse.[7] Much of the text is the same as Notes sans musique but there are several new chapters and obvious revisions.

Several biographies of Milhaud describe his early years in Paris. There are books titled Darius Milhaud by Georges Beck, Jean Roy and Paul Collaer[8]. The most detailed of these is the study by Paul Collaer. Although his language is often flowery and descriptive, his treatment of Milhaud's early years is more thorough than the others, and the appendix which lists his works is as complete as possible. There is a discography as well. All

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5 Darius Milhaud, Notes sans musique, (Paris: Juilliard, 1949; reprint ed. 1963).

6 Darius Milhaud, Notes Without Music, ed. by Rollo H. Myers, trans. by Donald Evans, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo, 1970).

7 Darius Milhaud, Ma vie heureuse, (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1987).

8 Georges Beck, Darius Milhaud, (Paris: Heugel et Cie., 1949). Jean Roy, Darius Milhaud, (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1968). Paul Collaer, Darius Milhaud, (Paris: Editions Slatkine, 1982).

three of these books were written in French, but a translation of Collaer's book has recently become available.[9]

Studies of Milhaud's use of polytonality in his early works has been the subject of several dissertations.[10] His own writing, however, is clearest on his intentions in the essay "Polytonality et Atonality," which is one of those that have been gathered by Jeremy Drake in Notes sur la musique cited above.

Paul Claudel was a prolific writer, and the literature about him and his works is abundant. A section of his Théâtre[11] which is pertinent to this study describes his difficulty in translating Aeschylus' plays from Greek into French. There is also his correspondence with Milhaud[12], which encompasses an entire volume of his collected letters. One biography, Paul Claudel, The Man and the Mystic by Louis Chaigne[13], helped this writer to better understand Claudel's character.

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9 Ibid., trans. and ed. by Jane Hohfeld Galante, (San Francisco: San Francisco Press, Inc., 1988).

10 Fred Ball,Jr., "Milhaud's Development of Polytonal Techniques as Evidenced by the Orestes Trilogy and the Saudades do Brazil." (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Texas, 1955). Richard B.Bobbitt, "The Harmonic Idioms in the Works of 'Les Six'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1963). Dexter George Morrill, "Part I: Symphony No. 1, (original composition); Part II: Polytonality in the Early Music of Darius Milhaud." (D.M.A. dissertation Cornell University, 1971).

11 Paul Claudel, Théâtre. (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p.999-1000.

12 Paul Claudel, Cahiers Paul Claudel, Vol. 3: Correspondence Paul Claudel - Darius Milhaud, 1912-1953. Introduction and notes by Jacques Petit. (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).

13 Louis Chaigne, Paul Claudel, The Man and the Mystic, trans. Pierre de Fontnouvelle, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc. 1961).

When a study involving ancient Greek drama is undertaken, many readings of the play are necessary to understand its plot and the motivation of the characters. Several translations into English have been useful to me in that they have offered more than one reading of Aeschylus' intentions[14]. Claudel's translation is yet another window into Aeschylus' mind. The re-translation of Claudel's version into English shows that Claudel's is a more literal than poetic rendering of the original. William Matheson has written a study of Claudel's translation of Aeschylus that has also helped to clarify Claudel's approach.[15]

There have been doctoral studies about the unaccompanied choral music of Darius Milhaud[16], and about the choral music of Milhaud that uses biblical texts[17], but only one study has examined the pieces of the Oresteia trilogy in any depth at all. This, a dissertation by Ruth Zinar[18], explores the relationship of text to music in the three Oresteia pieces by Milhaud and in Oedipus Rex by Stravinsky by examining in a somewhat statistical way the

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14 Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, trans. Richard Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953). Aeschylus, The Oresteian Trilogy, trans. Philip Vellacott (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1959). Aeschylus, The House of Atreus, adapted from The Oresteia by John Lewin (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press in association with the Minnesota Theater Company, 1966).

15 William Howard Matheson, Claudel and Aeschylus: A Study of Claudel's Translation of "The Oresteia", (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, n.d.)(book published from a PhD diss. at the University of Michigan in 1962.)

16 Kenneth Dorsey Hodgson, "An Examination of the Unaccompanied Choral Works of Darius Milhaud," (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1979).

17 William Bradley Roberts, "Darius Milhaud and His Choral Works with Biblical Texts: A Conductor's Study."

18 Ruth E. Zinar, "Greek Tragedy in the Theatre Pieces of Stravinsky and Milhaud," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1968).

uses of various melodic motives to show emotions. As Dr. Zinar points out in her introductory chapter, this dissertation would be useful to the performer as background reading while he or she is involved in studying the piece for performance.

This present study approaches Les Choéphores analytically from a more harmonic standpoint than Dr. Zinar's paper. The reason for this is that the conductor must somehow teach his or her ears to make sense of the often thick texture of the orchestra part of the piece, and by descriptively organizing the vertical structure this writer has attempted to make that task easier for the performer. Another difference in this approach to Les Choéphores is that I have undertaken to study only Les Choéphores as representative of the trilogy of pieces, in order to clarify the harmonic and melodic vocabulary that Milhaud used in his early works. The harmonic language that he used in Les Choéphores is similar to the first and third pieces of the trilogy, and by looking at only one piece perhaps a closer study can be made of all three.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORY AND TEXT OF LES CHOÉPHORES

Milhaud's Early Years

Darius Milhaud was born in 1892 to a long-established Jewish family in Aix-en-Provence. He grew up in the same house, called "Bras d'Or", from which his father ran the family almond brokerage. He spent summers with his family and his grandmother Précile at an estate outside the town that had come to his family through his great-grandfather. The house was called "L'Enclos", and he often returned to it later in life to compose.

At the age of three, his parents discovered him picking out familiar melodies at the piano. The next year he began to play four-hand piano music with his father. The local music teacher, Leo Brughier, wanted to teach him, but doctors told his parents that since he was sickly, peace and quiet and no music would be best. So he didn't begin violin lessons until he was seven years old. When he was twelve, he began to play with his teacher's string quartet and he studied the Debussy string quartet with them in 1905.[1]

His parents were very supportive of his music study. His teacher, Léo Bruguier, gave him pieces to play instead of dry exercises, to encourage his musicianship rather than to make him a virtuoso. His mother helped him schedule his schoolwork to keep him from becoming overtired and to give him time to spend on his music. She even copied his repetitive

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[1] Darius Milhaud. Ma vie heureuse. (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1987), p. 18.

assignments, imitating his penmanship to allow him more study and practice time. In his book Ma vie heureuse, Milhaud admits that he had indulgent parents and that he was a spoiled child, but at the same time, his mother was quite firm about his schoolwork and his music. He writes that it is thanks to her that he acquired the discipline to work that served him for his whole life.[2] Friends and relatives encouraged his parents to send him to the Paris Conservatory, but his parents insisted that he wait until after he finished the *baccalauréat.* They did, however, take him to Paris during short vacations to take a few lessons with Alfred Brun at the Conservatoire, and Brun's severity made Milhaud realize how gentle his training previously had been.[3]

Early in his life Milhaud developed quite definite opinions about various pieces of music. He played the Debussy String Quartet with his teacher's quartet, and he liked it so much that he acquired the score of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande in 1905 and avidly studied it. Conversely, he found that he disliked grand opera so much that he made his parents leave a performance of Samson and Dalila by Saint-Saens. Milhaud says that they left "with good grace, considering how long they had been looking forward to hearing that opera."[4]

In the fall of 1905, Milhaud began to study harmony with Bruguier, and in 1909, when he was seventeen, he finally went to Paris to study at the Conservatory. There he studied composition with Widor, orchestration with

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[2] Ibid., p.22.
[3] Ibid., p.20
[4] Ibid., "...de bonne grâce, bien qu'ils se fussent réjouis longtemps à l'avance àl'idée d'entendre cet opéra..."

Paul Dukas, and harmony with Xavier Leroux. He didn't do well in harmony, because he had trouble following the traditional rules. In 1911 he brought Leroux a sonata for piano and violin which he had composed in Aix-en-Provence the preceding summer. Upon hearing the sonata, Leroux said, "What are you doing here [in harmony class]? You are trying to learn a conventional language when you already have one of your own. Drop the class! Quit!"[5] After that, Milhaud transferred to Gedalge's class in counterpoint, where he studied Bach chorales as counterpoint. Milhaud called them "exercises where the counterpoint blends with harmony and rejoins the realm of composition."[6]

While he was in Paris, Milhaud heard all sorts of concerts. He heard the first performance of Ravel's Gaspard de la Nuit at the Salon D'automne, and he went to concerts of works by Vincent D'Indy, Déodat de Séverac, and Charles Bordes at the Schola Cantorum. The Société musicale indépendante (SMI) was a series of concerts founded in 1910 by Charles Koechlin, Florent Schmitt, Roger Ducasse and others under the presidency of Gabriel Fauré. First performances of contemporary European pieces made up the majority of the programs and Milhaud attended them regularly, since many of the other concert series were too conservative to put such music on their programs. Two of his earliest pieces were heard first on SMI

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5 Ibid., p.32. "Qu'est-ce que vous faites ici? Vous essayez d'acquérir un langage conventionnel alors que vous en avez un à vous. Quittez la classe. Démissionez." Translations are the writer's unless otherwise noted.
6 Ibid. "...exercices où le contrepoint se mêle à l'harmonie et...rejoint le domaine de la composition."

programs. One of them was the First Sonata, op. 3, heard in the winter of 1913, and his First String Quartet, op. 5, performed a few months later.

Milhaud had always been unafraid to give his opinions of the music that he heard. There had been a dearth of live concerts that he could attend as a child and as he made up for it when he moved to Paris, he continued to have strong opinions. When Wagner's Ring cycle was produced in Paris, directed by Felix Weingartner, Milhaud was "bored to death."[7] He was also bored by Tristan and "sickened by the pretension and vulgarity" in Parsifal when it finally came to Paris.[8] Even in 1910 he thought Wagner had too much influence on the music that French composers were writing. He was only eighteen at the time, but this was a view that he held throughout his life, and that he often reiterated in print. When he went to the *Ballets russes* he enjoyed Diaghilev's productions immensely and thought Stravinsky to be the greatest composer of the twentieth century. He "loved" Ernest Bloch's opera Macbeth but could "barely sit through" Massenet's Werther. He watched a dress rehearsal of Ravel's L'heure espagnole and decided that Ravel's music wasn't as "deep" as Debussy's. He liked the operas Boris Goudonov by Moussorgsky and Pelléas et Mélisande by Debussy so much that he kept copies of those scores near his bedside. His favorite composers included Gounod, Verdi, Magnard, Koechlin, Schoenberg and Fauré.

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[7] Ibid., p. 27. "Je n'oublierai jamais ces quatre représentations: le public abîmé dans les profondeurs de la musique,...et moi qui m'ennuyais à périr..."
[8] Ibid., p. 28. "...cette oeuvre attendue avec tant d'impatience m'écoeura par sa prétension et sa vulgarité."

Later in his career, he wrote music and concert reviews for several Parisian publications. From 1920 to 1924, one of the places where his reviews appeared was Le Courrier musical. Much information about his early taste in music can be collected from these reviews. In Notes sur la musique, a collection of Milhaud's writings, Jeremy Drake, the editor, writes (and demonstrates with the essays of Milhaud's that he collected) that Milhaud's definite ideas in life, once written down and expounded, seldom changed. From this and the opinions that Milhaud offered during the actual years of 1909 to 1917, the years he was composing at least the first two parts of The Oresteia, we can deduct a great deal about his taste in music.

How Milhaud Met Claudel

While Milhaud was still at home in Aix-en-Provence, he had two dear friends. Léo Latil was a student at the local Catholic school and also studied with Milhaud's music teacher, Leo Bruguier. He wrote poetry and kept a journal and Milhaud expected that his friend would become a country priest. They shared writings and admired the same poets and they kept in touch when Darius went to Paris. Milhaud's other good friend from home was Armand Lunel, who was from the same ancient group of Provençal Jewish families, the Comtadins. Their friendship developed when Darius worked hard through the summer of 1908 to finish his *bachot* (*baccalauréat*) so that he could apply to the Paris Conservatory a year earlier than his eighteenth year, which was the age limit. They were then in the same class, both preparing to go to Paris to study. Lunel wanted to write and intended to go

to the *École normale*. When they passed their final year's exams, they left for Paris together.

Once settled in Paris, Lunel and Milhaud saw each other regularly. They went to art galleries together, and hunted for antique furniture. They traveled home for vacations and spent time with Léo Latil while they were in Aix-en-Provence. The three had a common friend, Céline Lagouarde, a photographer and pianist who lived in Aix. She in turn was acquainted with the poet Francis Jammes and showed his work to the three friends. Milhaud liked his poems and immediately began setting them to music. Later, in the winter of 1910, Léo wrote Darius to tell him of the appearance of a new Jammes poem, "La Brebis egarée." Milhaud wanted to set it to music and wrote Céline to see if she could obtain permission from Jammes for him. She did, and he began work on this as well. When he had completed the first act, he and Léo decided that they would like to visit Jammes, who lived in Orthez, Spain. They waited until Darius had finished the second act. Léo also had some poems of his own to show Jammes, and they decided to make the trip to Spain for sightseeing as well.[9] When they arrived in Orthez, and he was finally settled at a piano in the house of some cousins of Jammes, Milhaud, in his youthful enthusiasm, played the entire first act (eighty minutes long) without stopping. In his autobiography, he described his hosts' reactions as indulgent and understanding of a nineteen-year-old

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[9] The dates of this trip are not clearly indicated. It probably took place during the summer vacation of 1910. In Chapter Five of Ma vie heureuse Milhaud writes about the scenery in the Basque country and that Céline Lagouarde was spending her vacation there.

composer's energy. The trip ended amicably, and Milhaud was to see more of Francis Jammes when the poet visited Paris in the winter of 1913.

Céline Lagouarde also introduced Milhaud to the work of Paul Claudel. When Milhaud next saw her after she had obtained the permission for him to set "La Brebis egarée," she had interviewed Jammes and he had spoken of Claudel and his book of poetry Connaissance de l'Est. Céline had a copy and lent it to Milhaud, who wrote in Ma vie heureuse, "Each poem was truly a miniature drama, animated with a moving and subdued lyricism; I borrowed the book and began to set to music several of the poems of Connaissance; this prose of Claudel provided me with a vigorous and impassioned element."[10]

There is another and different account of Milhaud's first encounter with the work of Paul Claudel. In Études, a book of essays by Milhaud published in 1927, there is a chapter titled, "Ma collaboration avec Paul Claudel."[11] In it Milhaud writes that he heard of Claudel for the first time when he visited Francis Jammes in Orthez on the holiday with Léo Latil. Claudel was presented to him as "some sort of saint and bogeyman at the same time, unable to stand the odor of vanilla and wearing a chinese jacket and a consul general's hat."[12] But Jammes lent Milhaud Connaissance de

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10 Ibid., p. 33. "Chaque poème était un véritable petit drame animé d'un lyrisme contenu très émouvant; j'empruntai le livre et je commençai à mettre quelques-uns des poèmes de la Connaissance en musique; cette prose de Claudel m'apportait un élément robuste et passionné."

11 Darius Milhaud, Études, (Paris: Claude Aveline, 1927), p.27.

12 Ibid. p.28. "...il me le représentait à la fois comme un espèce de saint et de croquemitaine terrible, ne pouvant supporter l'odeur dela vanille, vêtu d'une robe chinoise et coiffé d'un chapeau de consul général."

l'Est to read on the train trip home and in this version of the story he writes, "I was immediately tempted to set some of these poems to music, poems which are by themselves each a small concentrated drama, with a haughty and powerful form, sustained by interior rhythm of a prose which holds you like a vise."[13] Of these two accounts, the second may be the more accurate, because it was published in 1927. The Céline Lagouarde story was first published in 1947 in Notes sans musique, Milhaud's original autobiography.

As he had promised in Orthez, Jammes wrote to Claudel about Milhaud.[14] Claudel, in turn, wrote to Milhaud a year later when he was in Paris, wanting to meet with him. This was in the fall of 1912.[15] The rapport between them, the poet and the composer, was immediate. Milhaud sang Les Poèmes de la Connaissance de l'Est for him. He had tried to find music that was as virile as possible for the poems. Indeed, when Claudel heard them he said, "How manly that is!"[16] He then started to speak to Milhaud about his translations of The Oresteia by Aeschylus. He had translated Agamemnon, the first of the three plays, while on assignment as a diplomat in Fuchow (Foutchéou), China, and he was working on the second, Les Choéphores. In Notes Without Music, Milhaud writes,

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13 Ibid. "Je fus immédiatement tenté de mettre en musique quelques-uns de ces poèmes qui sont à eux seuls un petit drame concentré d'une forme hautaine et puissante, soutenue par ce rythme intérieur d'une prose qui vous serre comme dans un étau."

14 Idem, Ma vie heureuse, p. 40.

15 Paul Claudel, Cahiers Paul Claudel, vol.3: Correspondance Paul Claudel-Darius Milhaud (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 25 and p. 268.

16 Darius Milhaud, Notes Without Music, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 43.

> "He talked of Les Choéphores, on which he was then engaged and concerning which he held very decided opinions about the kind of musical accompaniment required. He described scenes to me in which the text became so intensely lyrical that it called for musical expression; others in which only words could convey the fierce exaltation of the characters. I found his notions perfectly clear, and wholly consonant with what I wanted to do myself. What a happy day that was! It marked the first step not only in a faithful collaboration, but in a precious friendship too."[17]

After two years of studying violin at the Paris Conservatory, Milhaud finally realized that he wanted to be a composer full time. His parents expressed anxiety at his choice, but they supported his decision. So when he returned to Paris in the fall of 1911, it was as a composer. This was after his visit with Jammes, but the year before he met Claudel in person. He had already finished his First String Quartet the previous summer, and this was the year when his violin sonata and that string quartet were played at the SMI concerts.

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[17] Ibid., p. 44.

At their first meeting, Claudel gave Milhaud a copy of Agamemnon in his translation from Greek. After some intervening correspondence in March 1913 about permission for Milhaud to publish musical settings of poems from Connaissance de l'Est, Claudel wrote Milhaud on May 22, 1913 to thank him for reading the play. He was also pleased that Milhaud had considered the problem of how to write music for it, in his words, "...without it being a detriment to the declamation or the dramatic accent."[18] Their discussion of the appropriate style for music to accompany Claudel's Oresteia translations will be examined further below.

On June 6, 1913, Claudel wrote from Frankfurt and invited Milhaud to visit him in Hellerau, where one of his plays, L'Annonce faite à Marie, would be in rehearsal and production at the experimental theater there. After several delays in the scheduling, the production was set for September and October 1913, and Milhaud did visit Claudel in Hellerau. It was there that he wrote the music for Agamemnon in the fall of 1913. Claudel also gave him a copy of Protée, an adaptation of a lost Greek satyrical play that was thought to have been performed with the Oresteia trilogy in ancient Greece. In Hellerau, Milhaud wrote the first of three versions of his music for Protée.

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[18] Paul Claudel, Correspondance Claudel-Milhaud, p. 36. "... sans qu'elle nuise à la déclamation et à l'accent dramatique."

Les Choéphores--Dates of Composition

To establish the dates of composition for Milhaud's Les Choéphores, one follows Milhaud's activities and correspondence with Claudel beginning seven months later. In May 1914, Claudel wrote Milhaud to arrange a meeting with him in Paris to talk about Les Choéphores, and said that by the time of their meeting, June 25, 1914, he would have finished the translation. In August of 1914 war was declared, and Milhaud was rejected from military service on medical grounds. After spending part of the autumn in Aix-en-Provence, at L'Enclos, he went back to Paris to the Conservatory. All his friends were at the front and he wanted to do some war work, so he worked for a refugee center. There he was asked to put on a series of concerts to raise money for relief efforts. He met Debussy during this time, when Durand asked him to go to Debussy's house to ask him some questions about the Sonata for Flute, Harp and Viola. Milhaud said in Notes Without Music that by the time of this visit he had written Les Choéphores. He went to see his parents in the summer of 1915 and on the way back to Paris he visited Claudel at his father-in-law's house. On August 22, 1915, Claudel wrote Milhaud a letter which he began, "La musique des Choéphores déjà terminée! C'est superbe!"[19] In September of 1915 Milhaud's friend Léo Latil died at the front. Milhaud wrote and dedicated his Third String Quartet to him. Some time after this (early 1916), he requested a copy of the translation of Les Euménides that Claudel had just finished in order to begin

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[19] Claudel, Correspondance, p.46.

setting it to music. Then Claudel asked him to come to Brazil with him as his secretary and they left France at the end of December in 1916. So Milhaud must have written the music to Les Choéphores between June 25, 1914, when Claudel said he'd finished the translation and August 15, 1915, when Claudel wrote Milhaud to say that he was happy that the music was finished. Since the translations of Les Choéphores and Les Euménides were not published until 1920, Milhaud had copies of Claudel's unpublished manuscripts with which to work.

Paul Claudel

When Milhaud met Claudel, the poet was forty-four years old. He was born in 1868, in Villeneuve-sur-Fère, a small village in Champagne. He was the third child of a civil servant. Claudel often said that his ability as a bureaucrat was a talent that he'd inherited. As a child, he was quiet and contemplative, often going for long walks. He went to a succession of small town schools as his father was transferred around the country, but finally, when he was thirteen, his family settled in Paris so that he and his two talented sisters (one was a sculptor and the other a pianist) could attend schools that his father considered adequate. He finished his *baccalauréat* in June 1886, but the training he had received had shaken his Roman Catholic faith. Ever after, he blamed the headmaster of the *lycée* he had attended in Paris for the time he spent in doubt of his faith, moving toward despair.

On the evening of Christmas 1886, Claudel attended the vespers service at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. There he had a "conversion experience." From that time, the practice of Roman Catholicism was the

most important part of Paul Claudel's life.[20] He went on to give himself a second classical education. On his own, he read Shakespeare, the great French playwrights Corneille, Racine and Molière, and the Greek tragic authors. He especially read and studied Aeschylus and has written that this study helped him learn to write prose. It is not surprising that he went on to make a new translation of Aeschylus' Oresteia trilogy later in his life. While he was reeducating himself, he was also studying to enter the foreign service. When he first crossed paths with Milhaud, he was on an assignment for the French government in Frankfurt.

Claudel was assigned to a diplomatic mission in Rio de Janiero, Brazil, to begin in January 1917. Since Milhaud was ineligible for military service during the First World War because of his health, he was working for the propaganda ministry. Claudel requested that Milhaud be assigned to be his secretary in Brazil, and it was so arranged. They sailed for Rio on January 6, 1917. While he was in Brazil, Milhaud began work on Les Euménides, the third part of the Oresteia trilogy, and collaborated with Claudel on several other projects, including the ballet L'Homme et son désir (also called *un poème plastique*) . Their stay in Brazil was a productive time for both men. Claudel apparently discharged his diplomatic duties well and both men had time to explore the countryside and the culture and incorporate these into their respective artistic endeavors. They returned to Paris in early 1919. By this time, their collaboration, founded on mutual

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[20] A description in English of Claudel's conversion can be found in Louis Chaigne, Paul Claudel: The Man and the Mystic, translated by Pierre de Fontnouvelle, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1961), p. 46ff.

respect and similar aesthetic goals and values, had matured into a friendship that would remain strong through four decades and long periods of separation.

The Text of the Play

C. Day Lewis describes lyric poetry as the "...purest and simplest form of poetry. It expresses a single state of mind, a single mood, or it sets two simple moods against one another. It does not argue or preach. It has no irony or complexity of syntax. It is transparent."[21] All three of the artists with whom I am concerned here, Milhaud, Claudel, and Aeschylus, have had their work described as "lyrical."

Many sentences written in reference to the music of Darius Milhaud or to his temperament as a composer contain the adjective "lyric." In Notes sur la musique, Jeremy Drake wrote,

> "Milhaud était d'une famille de musiciens. Son père participait aux activités du milieu musical D'Aix et sa mère avait exercé sa voix de contralto à Paris. Elle était d'origine italienne (née Alatini) et il est tentant d'y voir, en partie au moins, une explication de l'aspect lyrique (my underline) instinctif et soutenu qui caractérise la musique de Milhaud."[22]

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[21] C. Day Lewis, The Lyric Impulse, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p.3.

[22] Jeremy Drake, ed., Darius Milhaud: Notes sur la Musique (Paris: Harmonique Flammarion, 1982), p.17. "Milhaud came from a family of musicians. His father participated in the musical life of Aix and his mother, a contralto, had sung in Paris. She was of Italian descent (born Alatini) and it is tempting to see this at least partly as an explanation of the instinctive and underlying lyric aspect which characterizes Milhaud's music."

Paul Collaer described people and life in Aix-en-Provence in an introductory chapter of his book Darius Milhaud. He wrote,"Le tempérament méditeranéen est avant tout lyrique."[23](my underline). He also wrote,

> "L'esprit lyrique est né de la somme d'expériences accumulées dans l'âme des poètes, musiciens, sculpteurs et dans la conscience des peuples...Les différents modes d'expression vocale--langage parlé, parlé-rythmé, chanté--constituent un ensemble homogène, nuancé et gradué selon l'intensité de l'impulsion dont l'expression est animée. Ils semblent correspondre à une nécessité psychologique généralement humaine. Leur graduation est observable parmi [plusieurs peuples différents...Il] existe en Océanie, chez les Indiens d'Amerique du Sud, chez les peuples de culture archaïque, dans les tragédies d'Eschyle et les réalisations de Claudel et Milhaud. Partout le chant lyrique (my underline) surgit sous la poussée du lyrisme verbal...Tout, dans le lyrisme pur, procède de la vie intérieure vers le dehors."[24]

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[23] Paul Collaer, Darius Milhaud, (Paris: Éditions Slatkine, 1982),p. 22. "The Mediterranean temperament is above all lyric." The quote continues, "Il chante par la couleur, la pierre ou le son, des thèmes éternels. Il est tragique, car le monde est conçu par lui à l'échelle humaine...C'est ainsi qu'un compositeur aixois trouve aujourd'hui l'accent juste, l'accent que l'on reconnaît comme un trait de famille, pour chanter l'Orestie d'Eschyle." ["It sings eternal themes with color, rock and sound. It is tragic, because the world is conceived by him on a human scale...It is in this manner that an Aixois composer can find the right accent, the one recognizable as a family trait, with which to sing The Oresteia by Aeschylus."]

[24] Ibid., pp.24-5. "The lyric spirit is born of the sum of the accumulated experiences in the souls of poets, musicians and sculptors and in the consciousness of peoples .... Different modes of vocal expression--spoken language, rhythmic speech, song--constitute a homogenous group, nuanced and graduated according to the intensity of the impulse by which the expression is animated. These seem to generally correspond to a human psychological necessity. Their gradation is observable among [several diverse peoples .... It] exists in Oceania, in the Indians of South America, in the people of archaic cultures and in the tragedies of Aeschylus and their

Collaer also writes that Milhaud was happiest in his home region of Provence because he found peace and inspiration in the landscape to satisfy his lyric temperament and love for order and clarity.[25] He says, "Milhaud est un poète lyrique qui s'exprime par la musique. Il est un homme chargé de montrer à ses frères le fond de leur âme, le fond qui leur est à tous commun."[26] Of all these citations about the lyricism of Milhaud, this last one speaks most clearly about what exactly this "lyrical spirit" is. Milhaud tries, according to Collaer, to "show people the depth of their souls, that which they all have in common," and it is this singleness of purpose which is lyricism.

Milhaud remarked upon the lyric writing style of Paul Claudel when he first read the book of poems Connaissance de l'Est.[27] Various parts of L'Orestie, the trilogy by Aeschylus, are similarly described. There is a dialogue between Clytemnestra and the Chorus in Agamemnon, the first play, which is described as lyrical in nature by Claudel in a letter to Milhaud, and it was the part of the play that Claudel thought needed some music to clarify the meaning.[28] This ultimately became the text of Milhaud's Agamemnon. Claudel said, "Il faut une 'musique' réduite purement à l'élément rythmique, par ex. à des coups de tambours et autres instruments

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realizations by Claudel and Milhaud. Everywhere, lyric song surges with the pushing of verbal lyricism .... All, in pure lyricism, comes from the interior life to the outside."

[25] Ibid. p.32, (a paraphrase, rather than another quote in French).

[26] Ibid. p.47. "Milhaud is a lyric poet who expresses himself through music. He is charged with the duty of showing his brothers the depths of their souls, that which they all have in common."

[27] Milhaud, Ma vie heureuse, p.33.

[28] Claudel, Correspondence Paul Claudel-Darius Milhaud, p.37.

de percussion ou des cris courts de trombones."[29] This comment may actually have suggested the speech choruses accompanied by percussion that comprise movements 4, 5, and 7 of Les Choéphores. Another lyrical *kommos,* this one in Les Choéphores, is mentioned by P. E. Easterling in The Cambridge History of Classical Literature:" ...but perhaps the most striking feature of all is lyrical, a great *kommos* in the centre of the play, when son and daughter join with the chorus of palace-slaves to pay respect to the dead Agamemnon within the earth and invoke his aid."[30]

It is remarkable, and convenient for this writer, that all these men have Les Choéphores in common, but the definition of "lyric" is elusive. What is lyric poetry? Is there such a thing as "lyric drama"? What quality in Milhaud's music causes writers to describe his melodies as "lyrical"? The most obvious reason is that those writers see his melodies as easily set with words to be sung. But there is another part of the definition of "lyrical" that fits Milhaud's music.

Traditionally, there are three kinds of poetry: epic, dramatic, and lyric. Robert Hillyer describes the epic as "a long sustained poem in one form of verse (in the classics, dactylic hexameter; in modern times blank verse)

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[29] Claudel, Correspondance, p.37. "A 'music' is necessary that is reduced purely to the rhythmic element, for example to drumbeats and other percussion, or short tones on trombones [or similar sounds.]

[30] P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, eds., The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, vol.1, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.287. This is coincidentally the text for the third movement of the Milhaud piece.

dealing with a series of heroic events, and centering around ... heroes."[31] Dramatic poetry is the poetry of theater, and it also is mostly blank verse in English. In the French classical drama of the seventeenth century Racine, Corneille, and Molière wrote plays in dramatic verse.

Lyric poetry is the largest category of all. It was originally meant to be poetry that was sung, but its definition has evolved. It still means a poem that can be accompanied by an instrument, but it also includes poems that are shorter forms. These usually focus on one subject, that of love, or something in nature, or a single thought or description.[32] I have quoted a definition of lyric poetry by C. Day Lewis at the beginning of this section, and it seems to me the most helpful. At least it helps to clarify what other writers are alluding to when they glibly call something lyrical.

Aeschylus' lines are described as lyrical by Easterling primarily because of their meter in the original Greek. There is evidence that when the chorus spoke in Greek drama, it chanted or sang, and it was accompanied by instruments. So when the chorus spoke, the meter of the poetry changed to a lyric meter. But when Aeschylus' lines are called lyrical by Claudel in a letter to Milhaud, it is because to him they seem to need to be set to music. He says, "...je sens que le dialogue de Clytemnestre et du choeur ne peut être simplement déclamé, sans que pour cela il devienne proprement de la musique. Ce n'est pas sans raison qu'Eschyle à ce moment a complètement

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[31] Robert Hillyer, In Pursuit of Poetry, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.,1960), p. 114.
[32] Ibid., p.116.

changé le rythme et a fait parler Clytemnestre en vers lyriques."[33] Milhaud says about the same passage of Agamemnon, "La langue d'Eschyle, par moments, dans certains choeurs et dans quelques dialogues, devient subitement d'une métrique, d'un lyrisme tellement plus marqué, que le soutien musical paraît s'imposer. C'est en partant de ce point de vue que Claudel envisagea par endroits une brusque intervention de la musique et qu'il me demanda de l'écrire."[34]

Claudel was originally attracted to Aeschylus as a subject for translation for several reasons. He had read the ancient Greek poets and tragedians as a student studying the classics. The works of Aeschylus were not fashionable in France among classics scholars, and the other ancient Greek playwrights Euripides and Sophocles, who came after Aeschylus, were more often read. Because of this, the translations of Aeschylus from Greek into French were older, less easily available, and not as well done as those of the other poets. William Matheson wrote, " ...it was .... [the] quality of Aeschylus--the first, the originator, the archetype, the seemingly autocthonous 'primitive', and at the same time, the cultivated, Bach-like

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[33] Claudel, Correspondence, p.37. "...I sense that the dialogue of Clytemnestra and the Chorus cannot be simply declaimed, without it coming directly from the music. It is not without reason that Aeschylus at this point completely changed the rhythm and caused Clytemnestra to speak in lyric verse."

[34] Darius Milhaud, Études, (Paris, Éditions Claude Aveline, 1927), p.29. "Sometimes Aeschylus' language, in certain choruses and dialogues, suddenly becomes of a meter or a lyricism so much more marked that musical accompaniment seems to impose itself. It is from this point of view that Claudel envisaged an unexpected intervention of music that he asked me to write."

synthesist of a now nearly vanished tradition--that magnetized Claudel."[35] Claudel was also struggling with Aeschylus' theme of crime and punishment, the Greek concept of talion, or retribution. He began his translation of Agamemnon in late 1892, and he, Claudel, says that he started it primarily to study Aeschylus' iamb. He was in China at the time and it was only after his return to France that he continued with the second play of the trilogy, Les Choéphores, and this time his reasons were more to finish another contemporary translation of the three plays than to study prosody.

What was Claudel doing when he undertook to translate Agamemnon to study the iamb? Meter in poetry is the rhythm of the words. In English, meter is primarily expressed as stressed and unstressed syllables. Various patterns of these stresses are described as different meters. In ancient Greek, these meters were quantitative. That is, lines of poetry were arranged in patterns of long and short syllables. The long syllables were twice as long as the short syllables. There were also stress accents, which, when the poetry was sung, as during lines by the chorus, either reinforced or mitigated the quantitative meter. The metric unit is the foot. Each foot contains a combination of long and short syllables which are repeated to form a line. The iamb, for example, is a foot of short-long. Other meters used in Greek drama are the trochee (l-s), the dactyl (l-s-s), the spondee (l-l), and the anapest (s-s-l).[36] The meters of various lines of Greek drama and

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35 William H. Matheson, Claudel and Aeschylus: A Study of Claudel's Translation of the "Oresteia", (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p.43.

36 Sir Paul Harvey, ed., The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p.268. The list of types of feet continues:

poetry are rarely composed of all the same feet, unlike the fairly consistent iambic pentameter (5 feet per line) of Shakespeare, and there are long treatises analyzing the meters of the Greek plays. The choruses of Greek drama are often in what The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature describes as "Lyric and Choric metres." It continues, "There is a broad distinction between those which are constructed uniformly from feet of the same type, and those which are built up from different types of feet. Among the former we have various kinds of lyric verse used in the choruses of Greek drama and elsewhere, based respectively on (1) the trochee, (2) the dactyl, (3) the paeon or cretic, and (4) the dochmius."[37] Aeschylus often used the trochaic meter in his lyrical choruses, and this is sometimes analyzed as iambic meter with an anacrusis. It is this metric construction of couplets that Claudel wanted to study when he said that the reason he was translating Agamemnon was to examine "the iamb." This iamb was to him the perfect compromise for dramatic verse between the extremes of the alexandrine and free verse (no meter, rhyme or line length restrictions at all).[38]

As a result of Claudel's search for the right dramatic verse form he evolved a couplet now called le verset claudélien. It is based, according to him, on his study of the verse of Aeschylus, and of the Psalms. Roughly, it is

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tribrach (s-s-s), the paeonic feet, cretic (l–s–l) and paeonic (l-s-s-s or s-s-s-l), bacchaic (s-l-l), choriamb (l-s-s-l), epitrite (l-s-l-l), and dochmaic (s-l-l-s-l).

[37] Ibid., p.270.

[38] Matheson, Claudel and Aeschylus, p.61. The alexandrine is a couplet of closed iambic hexameter, used in classical French poetry.

an unrhymed couplet of unspecified meter which can be spoken in one breath.

Other translations of Aeschylus from Greek into French that were available at the turn of the century were by Le Franc de Pompignan--1770, Alexis Pierron--1841, Paul Mesnard--1863, Leconte de Lisle--1872, and Paul Mazon--1904. Pierron was the standard of the time, reprinted every five years or so. According to Matheson, Claudel was vitriolic in his criticism of the Leconte de Lisle translation. The Mazon translation appeared six years after Claudel's Agamemnon(1896), and is very good, Matheson writes, but it is concerned more with clarity of ideas rather than literal translation. Claudel began his translation of the second play of the Oresteia in 1912. As he said, he translated Agamemnon to study the iamb. But he translated Les Choéphores and Les Euménides "...avec vue sur une représentation, peut-être possible par l'aide de la prosodie et de la musique de mon ami Darius Milhaud."[39]

When Milhaud's compositional process is examined, it is fairly clear that Milhaud did not decide to write an oratorio using a play by Aeschylus as his text, and then go out and choose Paul Claudel as his translator/librettist. Rather, Claudel had discovered a need for music as he translated Agamemnon while he was in China in the 1890's, and when he was introduced to Milhaud in 1912, this need for music that aided the translation but did not obscure it or change the form of the play was their first subject of

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39 Paul Claudel, L'Orestie d'Eschyle, (Paris: Gallimard, 1942), p. 233. "...with a view toward a production, perhaps possible with the help of the prosody and the music of my friend Darius Milhaud."

mutual concern. Thus, this forty-three year collaboration began because both men were looking for answers to similar problems when they met. When Claudel expressed his need for musical accompaniment to make the text more understandable he said that the poetry of Greek choral lyrics

> "...est d'un caractère difficile et peu accessible au public. Je crois que l'élément essentiel en est moins le sens que l'intonation, la violence ou la rémission, l'accélération ou l'élargissement du débit, et tous les éléments de rythme,--moins le sens des mots que le train de la pensée et l'expression des sentiments;--parfois seulement un soutien de batterie ou parfois la musique pour donner le déploiement nécessaire. Il n'est nullement nécessaire que le publique comprenne le sens de chaque phrase. Parfois un chuchotement mystérieux sera suffisant. Parfois les différentes parties du Choeur chevaucheront l'une sur l'autre."[40]

In 1930, Claudel examined the relationship of music to drama from the dramatist's viewpoint in an article in the Yale Review.[41] He immediately discarded both the use of an overture to an act and the inclusion of a set-piece in the middle of the action of a drama as useless and time-wasting.

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[40] Paul Claudel, Théâtre, J. Madaule, ed., 2 vols., (Paris: Gallimard, 1947-48),1:999-1000. "...is difficult in character and not easily accessible to the public. I think that the essential element is less the sense than the intonation, the violence or the calmness, the speeding up or slowing down of the delivery, and all the elements of the rhythm,--less the sense of the words than the train of thought and the expression of emotion,--sometimes only an underlay of percussion and sometimes music to give the necessary meaning. It is by no means necessary that the public understand the sense of each phrase. Sometimes only a mysterious rustling is necessary. Sometimes different parts of the Chorus should overlap in their text."

[41] Paul Claudel, "Modern Drama and Music" in The Essence of Opera, ed. Ulrich Weisstein (London: Collier-Macmillan,Ltd., 1964) p.319-29. Reprinted fro the Yale Review, 20 (1930).

But he urged the reader to recall those places during a play, or pantomine, or especially cinema, when some form of accompaniment is necessary. He used the Kabuki theater of Japan as an example. A drum is beaten in a steadily increasing tempo during scenes of heightening tension. This musical accompaniment doesn't interrupt the action, and it allows the spectator greater understanding of the scene. Since the Greek tragedies were originally performed with musical accompaniment, it was Claudel's belief that a modern translation and production required music as a means of understanding the plays as the original writer intended.

After Claudel's death in February, 1955, the poet St. John Perse wrote, "Il étendit à de plus larges bords la mesure française. Et fut, dans le lyrisme de son temps, L'Eschyle, après qui l'on ne vit croître de Sophocle, ni poindre d'Euripide."[42]

The Story of the Plays

Milhaud's Les Choéphores is made up of seven movements. Each one is a solo and choral setting of a part of the actual text of Aeschylus' play Les Choéphores. The movements are "Vocifération funèbre", "Libation", "Incantation", "Présages", "Exhortation", "La Justice et la Lumière", and "Conclusion". The place of these movements in the overall picture of Greek mythology follows.

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[42] quoted in Matheson, p. 39. Nouvelle Revue Française, nouvelle série, VI (September, 1955), p. 387. "He extended the bounds of French influence, and was, within the lyricism of his own time, the Aeschylus, after whom no one saw a Sophocles appear, nor even a bit of Euripides."

The story of the House of Atreus started well before the events of the trilogy that Aeschylus wrote. Atreus and Thyestes were brothers and both wanted to be the king of Mycenae. Atreus became king, because he was older. Thyestes was jealous and had an affair with Atreus' wife, Aerope. Some time later, Atreus, knowing this, invited Thyestes back to the kingdom, telling him that they would co-rule. But instead, Atreus killed Thyestes' children and served them to him in a so-called welcoming feast. When Thyestes found out, he cursed Atreus and all his heirs.

Agamemnon and Menelaus were sons of Atreus, and Aegisthus was a son of Thyestes that Atreus hadn't known about to kill. The sons of Atreus went to lead the Greeks against Troy, because Paris, the prince of Troy, had seduced and stolen Helen, who was Menelaus' wife. The first play of the trilogy opens as Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, is waiting for him to return from the Trojan War. He has been gone ten years, and in the meantime, she has taken Aegisthus as her lover, and together they have been ruling Argos, although not very well.

Aegisthus wants to kill Agamemnon to avenge his father's terrible feast, and to carry out the curse that Thyestes pronounced on Atreus' family, which includes Agamemnon. Clytemnestra wants to kill Agamemnon to avenge the death of her daughter, Iphigenia. Agamemnon had sacrificed Iphigenia when he needed a change of wind so the fleet could get to Troy. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus plot together and when Agamemnon arrives, they encourage him to walk inside on a piece of purple fabric as if it were a carpet. After some protestation (the material is very precious, and only gods

should walk on it), he takes off his shoes and goes into the palace, where he is murdered by Clytemnestra in his bath. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra cut off Agamemnon's hands and bury him without honors in an unmarked grave outside the city walls. Thus ends the first play.

At the opening of The Choéphores, or, as it is occasionally translated into English, The Libation Bearers, Electra and a group of women are bringing a libation, an offering of oils, to the grave of Agamemnon. Electra is one of three children of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. The others are Iphigenia, who was sacrificed in Aulis, and Orestes, a son whom Clytemnestra sent away to live in Phocis after Agamemnon left. Electra lives unhappily as a slave in her own house, and the women with her are also slaves, and sympathetic to her predicament. They are all at the grave at Clytemnestra's command. Having murdered her husband, she obviously didn't mourn him, and therefore never poured the customary ceremonial libations on his grave. But she recently had a nightmare wherein she gave birth to a child who was a serpent. When nursed, it drew blood as well as milk from her breast. She commanded that the libations be brought out of fear of the prophetic implications of the nightmare.

The first movement of Milhaud's setting of verses from Les Choéphores is the song of the Chorus as they bring the libations out to the grave from the palace. Electra then asks the Chorus for advice. She doesn't know how to pray as she offers the gifts. If she prays as her mother has instructed, it will be falsely pious and therefore blasphemous. She can also pray for vengeance on those who murdered Agamemnon, or she can just

silently and sorrowfully pour out the holy oil and remember his dishonored death. The chorus advises her to pray for vengeance, which they then do. This is the second movement of the Milhaud work, called "Libation."

After the libation is poured, Electra finds a lock of hair on the tomb. Close family members often cut their hair and placed it on the tomb as an offering, but Electra is puzzled because she knows the hair is not hers or her mother's. She suspects that it is Orestes', and he comes out from hiding to greet her. He proves his identity to her and tells her that he has been sent by Apollo to avenge his father's death. Electra, Orestes and the Chorus then begin a long formal lament and an invocation of the spirit of Agamemnon to ask for his aid in their task of revenge for his death. This invocation is the third movement of the piece, called "Incantation."

After this, Orestes asks Electra why she is here with libations and she tells him of their mother's dream. He identifies himself as the serpent-infant;"...the dream's meaning may be thus fulfilled in me."[43] They then plot the murder, planning to put Clytemnestra and Aegisthus off guard by having Orestes and Pylades, his companion, arrive at the palace gates as strangers seeking a place to stay for the night. Electra, Orestes and Pylades leave for the castle and the Chorus stays and chants of other times in history when family has killed family. In this speech, the Chorus fulfills its traditional role in Greek tragedy, that of commentator on the proceedings. Milhaud's fourth movement, "Présages," uses this long declamation as its text.

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[43]Aeschylus, The Oresteian Trilogy, trans. Philip Vellacott (New York: Penguin Books, 1959), p.123.

Orestes gains entrance to the palace and tells Clytemnestra that he is a messenger from Phocis (where Orestes had been in exile), and tells her that Orestes is dead. They all go in to have Aegisthus summoned. At this point the chorus prays to Zeus for help for Orestes that his mission might be successful. This is the fifth movement of Milhaud's Les Choéphores, and it is titled, "Exhortation."

Aegisthus then arrives without his bodyguard, having been told falsely by Orestes' former nurse that there is no danger. He declares his intention to find out if the messenger (Orestes) is telling the truth, and he goes back into the palace, where he is killed by Orestes. Clytemnestra comes out to see what the noise is about and Orestes meets her. He reveals his identity and tells her that he has killed Aegisthus and that now she will die as well. She pleads with him, using images of him at her breast as a baby to move him to mercy. But Orestes is not moved, and he and Pylades take her into the palace and Orestes kills her.

The Chorus then sings another commentary. It mourns for the two that were slain, and hopes that the whole kingdom will not be destroyed after what has just happened. Justice has been done, but a man has murdered his mother, and matricide was a very serious crime in ancient Greece. "La Justice et la Lumière" is the name of Milhaud's sixth movement, and its text is this speech by the Chorus.

The palace doors open and Orestes is standing over the dead body of his mother, holding the robe with sword-holes in it in which his father was trapped when he died. He speaks about his duty having been fulfilled and

announces that he will go to Delphi to Apollo's oracle to be cleansed. As he says this the Erinyes (also called Furies, or Euménides) appear to him. His mother had cursed him before she died, and these apparitions are the embodiment of this curse. These Erinyes represent the old order of justice, where killing a family member, especially a mother, is the most serious crime. Originally, when Apollo instructed Orestes to kill his mother to avenge his father's death, Apollo told Orestes that he would be barred from all temples and shrines, and that he would suffer from leprosy and be an outcast if he didn't do the deed. So Orestes, chased by the Erinyes, leaves for Apollo's shrine to ask for his help in getting rid of them.

In the seventh movement, the "Conclusion," the last lines of the play, the Chorus reiterates the three tragedies that have happened so far to the house of Atreus. These are the feast of Thyestes, the death of Agamemnon, and the unhappy fate of Orestes. The Chorus asks, "Où cessera la colère du Ciel? où ce terme que le calme y recommence?"[44] ("When will this harvest of hate be done / And the fury lie down and sleep?")[45]

In the third play of the trilogy, Orestes looks for repentance, peace, forgiveness and justice after he kills his mother. As the play begins, Orestes is in the shrine at Delphi, wanting help from Apollo. The Erinyes are sleeping, and for a moment, he is free of their tormenting. Apollo tells him to go to Athens to be judged by Athene and the citizens of that city. Orestes

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[44]Aeschylus, Les Choéphores, trans. into French by Paul Claudel, (Paris, Gallimard, n.d.), p.170.
[45]Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, trans. John Lewin, (Minneapolis, The University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p.78.

runs out while the Furies are still asleep. But the ghost of Clytemnestra appears and awakens them. They demand to know where Apollo has sent Orestes, and Apollo throws them out of the shrine. All head for Athens.

Some time passes, and Orestes arrives in Athens, having ritually cleansed himself and suffered for quite a while at the hands of the Erinyes. He pleads at Athena's shrine and she appears. She and the Erinyes argue about him and Apollo pleads for him at her court. The court of Aeropagus votes to a tie and Athena announces that she will break the tie in Orestes' favor and free him from the curse of the Erinyes. They threaten to bring terrible punishment down on the people of Athens, but Athena invites them to be protector goddesses of the city, and promises them their own shrine and respect from the populace for all time. They are changed from the terrible Furies to the benign Eumenides, and Orestes and all his descendants are freed from the curse which had been with his family for so long. This third play is the text upon which Milhaud based his opera Les Euménides.

CHAPTER THREE: THE STRUCTURE OF LES CHOÉPHORES

Of the seven movements in Les Choéphores, the first, third and sixth use a singing chorus with orchestral accompaniment. The second movement is for *a cappella* chorus. The fourth, fifth and seventh movements are scored for choral speaking and unpitched percussion instruments. There are soprano solos in the first, second, and third movements, baritone solo work in the third movement and spoken solo work for a woman's voice in the three spoken movements.

While he was working on Les Choéphores, Milhaud was undertaking a study of polytonality. He wrote about the origin of his interest in Ma vie heureuse[1] and also in the short essay Polytonalité et Atonalité.[2] It apparently began when he noticed that a certain J. S. Bach canon at the fifth[3] could be interpreted to be in two keys simultaneously, while still sounding quite tonal. He went on to note that his contemporaries Stravinsky and Koechlin used polytonality as well, but mostly in counterpoint and pedal points. He then made a systematic study of all the possible combinations of chords and their inversions obtained when two tonalities were superimposed. He also experimented with the possible combinations of major and minor modalities, and then went on to study all the permutations of three tonalities sounded simultaneously. Many of the sounds that he

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[1] Darius Milhaud, Ma vie heureuse, (Paris: Pierre Belfond, 1987), p. 59-60.
[2] Idem, "Polytonalité et Atonalité" in Notes sur la musique, ed. Jeremy Drake, (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), p. 173-89.
[3] J. S. Bach, Four Duets Edition Peters. No. 208, p. 40. quoted in Drake, p. 175.

studied pleased him and in Ma vie heureuse he wrote, "I constructed the music of Les Choéphores using this research and I added the subtitle 'Harmonic Variations' to the manuscript."[4]

Milhaud's claim that he used Les Choéphores as a study in polytonality is shown in a survey of the harmonic materials used in each of the movements that uses pitched singing and instruments. The vocal lines are primarily independent melodic lines with virtually no doubling in the orchestra. Milhaud intimates this when he goes on after the statement quoted above to say,

> "But the essential (part) of the music remains the general melodic line. Even as I studied chords with all twelve notes, I only used them to accompany a diatonic melody, remembering the advice of Gedalge, 'Make eight measures that one can sing without accompaniment.'"[5]

First movement: "Vociférations funèbres."

The first movement generally uses juxtapositions of two chords at a time. The text which is set encompasses three pairs of alternating strophes and antistrophes all followed by an epode. These divisions are based on the meter of the original Greek text. Each paired strophe and antistrophe was

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[4] Idem, Ma vie heureuse, P. 60. "Je construisis la musique des Choéphores en me servant de ces recherches et j'ajoutai le sous-titre de 'Variations harmoniques' sur mon manuscrit."

[5] Ibid., "Mais l'essentiel de la musique résidait dans la ligne mélodique générale. Même lorsque j'étudiais les accords de douze notes, je ne m'en servais que pour soutenir une mélodie diatonique, me souvenant du conseil de Gédalge: 'Faites donc huit mesures que l'on puisse chanter sans accompagnement.'

constructed of the same meter, with the epode being a summary final stanza of the section. As they are read in an English or a French translation, the divisions merely seem to be about the same length rather than metrically identical. In Milhaud's setting, they are musical divisions as well, setting apart new sections, with new musical ideas and orchestration, and as Milhaud says, each a different use of polytonality. The three pairs with the epode give us a natural division of the first movement into seven sections. These seven sections are summarized in Table 1 below.

The first section, mm.1-21, begins with a unison women's chorus singing a melody that will be heard often throughout the piece, accompanied by open fifths C and G in the orchestra. See example 1.[6]

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6 Darius Milhaud, Les Choéphores, (Paris: Heugel et Cie.,1926, 1947) p.1. This musical example and all subsequent examples are © 1947 Éditions Alphonse Leduc. Used by permission.

Table 1: Summary of first movement structure

SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	1-21	Open fifth C-G is important harmonically; polytonal chord progression which is the basis for the first movement is first heard in mm.10-13. See Ex. 2
2	22-43	B major and C# major triads are used simultaneously and alternately in the harmonic structure.
3	44-66	Texture is more contrapuntal; thirds are important. Tones from Bb/D and F#/A triad combinations dominate.
4	67-92	Harmony is based on A and Eb triads played together; three-triad polychords are used in the orchestration.
5	93-109	E/G# polytonal chords are the basis for the harmony.
6	110-120	Four triads at a time are heard. Two are G/F from the original progression. (Ex.2) Others vary, but also from ex. 2.
7	121-143	Harmony is based on F# major triad. Last notes include tones from both C major and F# major triads.

At m.10 a pattern of two-triad chords begins in the orchestra. All triads are major, and the three tones of each are played by the same timbre of instrument in each case. B major and C# major sound for two beats, followed by Bb and D. Measure 11 has A and Eb played together followed by Ab and E triads. In m.12 F major and G major are heard simultaneously,

and in m.13 a Gb chord ends the pattern. The chord progression is summarized in example 2.

The women sing a variation of their first melody at m.13, beginning at the fifth on G, and they are accompanied by an orchestral section in G that has occasional Gb triads added to recall the polytonal pattern so recently concluded. At m.17, the text of the section comes to an end, and the orchestra makes a transition to Antistrophe 1 using B and C# triads played simultaneously by horns and bassoons and then alternated.

This harmonic device continues in section two, which includes mm.22-43. The B-C# major triad alternation continues as the basis for accompaniment until m.28, when it is interrupted by the pattern of triads described above in example 2, which are then used until m.33. In m.33 the basis for the accompaniment returns to a B/C# major simultaneity. Through m.43, the accompaniment is truly bitonal, using both the B# and E# of the C# major scale and the B and E of the B major scale as well as the other scale tones that the two keys have in common.

Measures 44-66 comprise section three, wherein the text for Strophe 2 is set. Here the texture changes, both in the orchestra, where the accompaniment becomes more contrapuntal and uses fewer instruments, and in the voice, which is a single soprano. The harmony is still bitonal, but the triads are thirds apart rather than seconds. The pairs Bb/D and F#/A are used, although not as the vertical sonorities used earlier. The counterpoint in the orchestra uses the same rhythmic motive as the original melody in the voices at the beginning. See example 3.

At m.61 Bb/D accompanies the last line of text. In mm.63-66 double thirds in chromatic contrary motion are added, and they serve as a transition to the fourth section. See example 4.

The text from Antistrophe 2 is set in section four, mm.67-92 of the first movement. Its tone is more martial than the previous section, and this is emphasized by the change in choral texture. All the women sing in unison, except for the text, "Fortune is a god among mortals, and more than a god...,"[7] where they divide into three parts, and the men sing for the first time in the piece, accompanying the women on "Ah..." in four parts. The orchestration is thicker, and based on the bitonal simultaneity A/Eb. Two new rhythmic motives appear, and these will recur in the whole oratorio. See example 5.

At m.75 three simultaneously sounding triads appear for the first time in the piece, a further complexification of Milhaud's polytonal explorations. In mm.75-79 there appear in bassoons 3 and 4, the horns, and tuba consecutive sustained whole note triads on C#, D, Eb, E, and F. In the strings and women's parts (this is the three-part section for the women), the triads by measure are B, Bb, A, G#, and G. Put together, these last two sets of triads are the chord pattern first heard in mm.10-13. (See example 2.) Added to the A/Eb alternating triads in the upper winds, there are three triads

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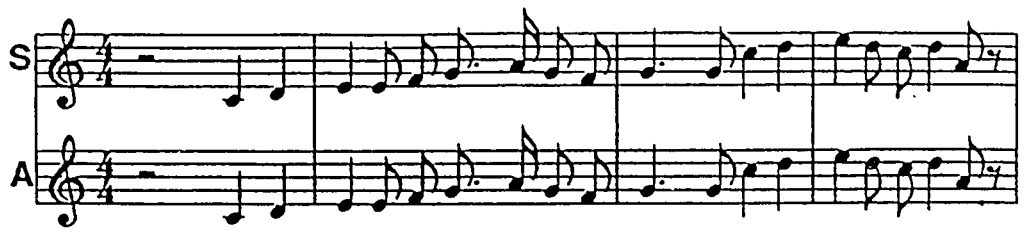
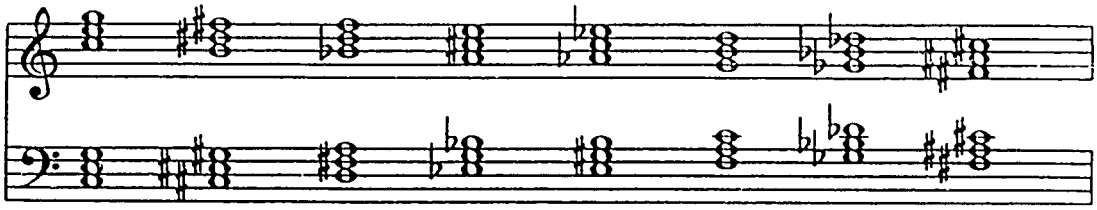
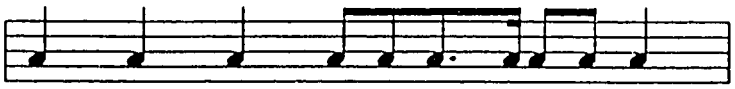
7 Paul Claudel, L'Orestie d'Eschyle, (Paris: Gallimard,n.d.), p.120. "La chance, c'est un dieu chez les mortels et plus que Dieu."



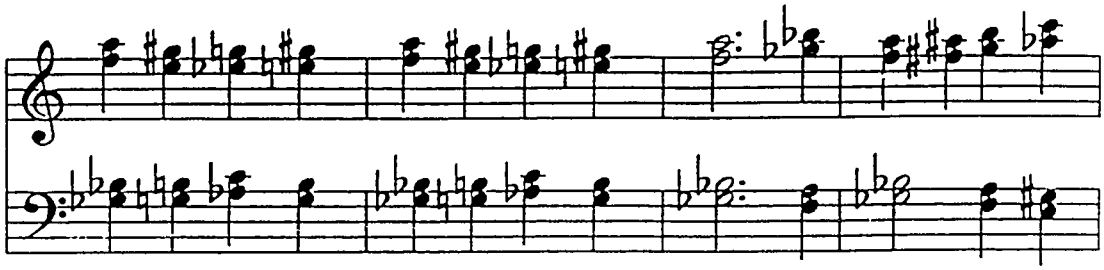
Example 1: Les Choéphores, First movement, mm.1-4, soprano and alto parts.



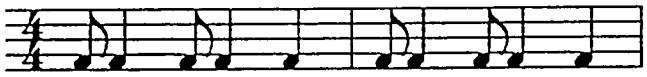
Example 2; First movement, mm. 10-13, chord progression.



Example 3: Rhythmic motive from initial theme, mm.1-10.



Example 4; First movement, mm.63-66, contrary motion doubled thirds in horns and violins.



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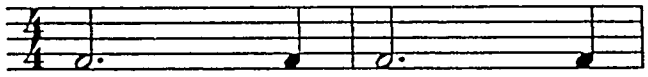
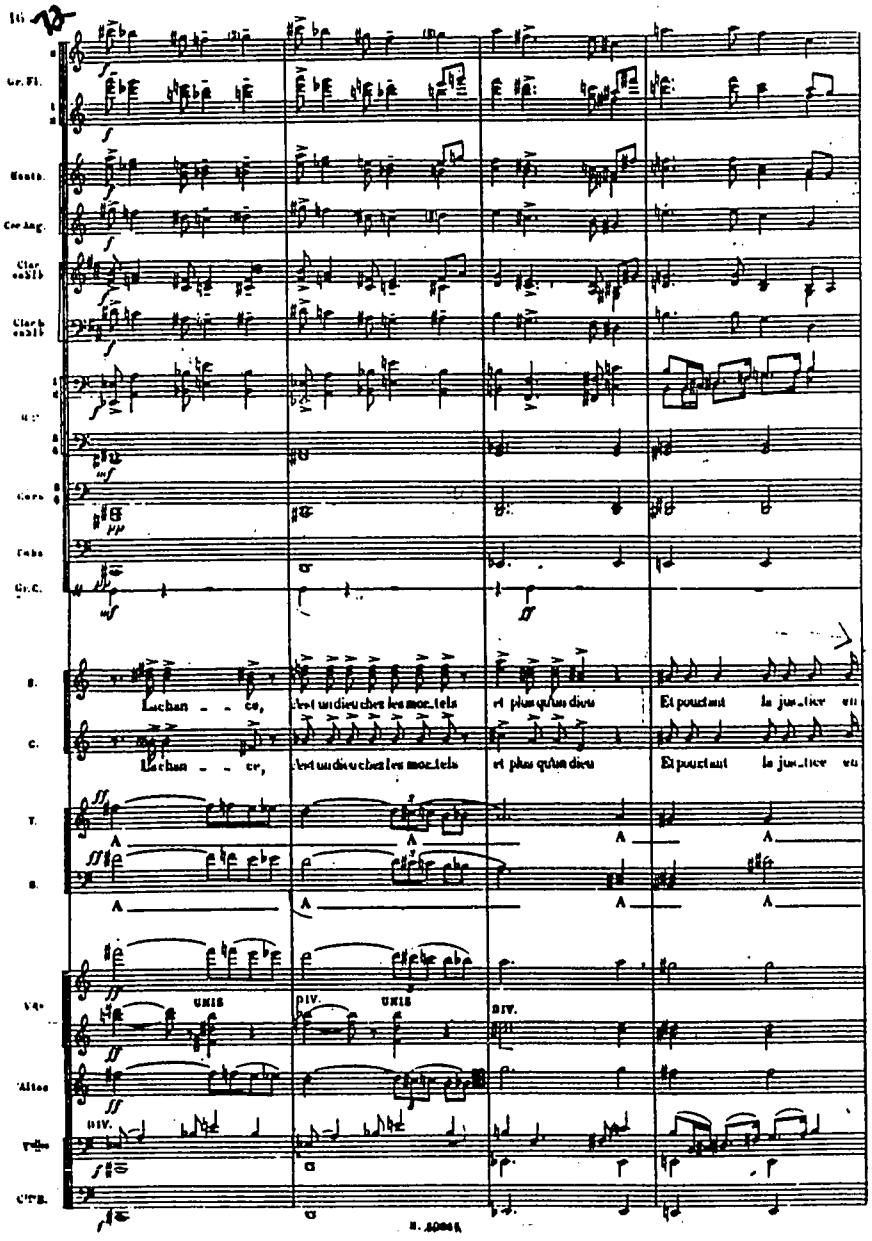


Example 5: Rhythmic motives, section four, first movement.

sounding simultaneously in three different rhythms in this section. Places with this degree of complexity will recur in the oratorio. But when it does happen, this complexity signifies two things. First, the words here must be important, at least in Milhaud's perception. Second, one feels compelled to ask the cynical but valid question, "Will all this be heard?" I believe that in this place it can be heard, because the several rhythms are separated acoustically by the orchestration. See example 6, mm.72-75 of the first movement.

The text for Strophe 3 is much shorter than the preceding parts and is sung by a solo contralto in mm.93-109. The tempo is marked "moins animé" (less motion), and the contralto is accompanied with wordless singing by the other three parts. Some winds and the harp alternate E/G# and G#/E triad simultaneities. These chords form the harmonic basis for this section.

At this point five sections have been described and a pattern for their harmonic basis has emerged. The original progression of polytonal double triads described in the first section as accompaniment to mm.10-12 (C, B/C#, Bb/D, A/Eb, Ab/E, G/F, Gb) is seven chords long. (Once again, see example 2 above.) Similarly, the first movement of Les Choéphores is divided into seven sections. Each of the first five sections has used one of these two triad simultaneities as a central unit in the harmonic underlay of the orchestra. The use of this progression continues consistently in the last two sections of the movement.



Example 6: First movement, mm. 72-76, orchestral texture

Measures 110-120 comprise the sixth section. In this section there are measures where four triads at a time are heard. Predictably, two of these simultaneous triads are G and F, the sixth polytonal chord in the original progression. Also, for mm.114-118, flutes and clarinets play figures based on triads B, Bb, A, G#, and G. Bassoons play figures based on triads Db(C#), D, Eb, E, and F. Once again, when heard together, these triads become the middle five chords of the organizing progression of this movement. These two sets of bitonal chords, the G/F in the strings and the combinations in the winds, give us the four triads simultaneously. In m.119 and 120, as transition to the last section, all instruments are playing notes from the F/G chord to reiterate the harmonic foundation for this section.

The Epode is harmonically based on an F# triad, the last chord of the organizing progression. It is sung by a single soprano, and the dynamics are soft. All of the orchestra except the brass play one or more notes from the F# triad for the first eight measures of this section. The brass play polychords, one to a measure, of the original progression. They begin in m.122 with a C triad and end in m.128 on an F# triad. At m.128, the strings take over the changing role and the brass join the rest of the orchestra on an F# triad. The strings then play the original progression backward beginning in m.128. Throughout this section the note values used are generally larger than in preceding sections, giving the end of this movement a built-in *ritard,* such as is often seen, for example, in Handel choruses. The rhythmic motive used is the  found earlier in this piece. The progression in the strings comes to an end on a C triad in m.134, and until the end of the movement at

m.143, as the orchestral texture thins, the remaining instruments play notes from F# or C triads.

Second movement: "Libation"

The second movement is *a cappella*. The chorus sings wordlessly in six parts throughout and there is a soprano solo who sings with text. The movement is sixty-seven measures long and is in unchanging 3/4 time at a moderate tempo.

The polychords in this movement are composed of two triads, one sung by the men's parts and one sung by the women's parts. The solo note is always in the women's triad. The two triads are either both major and a tritone apart, or one major and one minor and a half step or whole step apart except for the cadential measures. The harmonic rhythm is slow, with variations in the harmony being caused by the switching of the two triads back and forth between the men and women. The chords change on the downbeats, and the rest of each measure may have some passing tones.

The movement is roughly divided into six sections delineated by the specific polychords used. See Table 2 for a summary of these divisions.

Table 2: Summary of second movement structure

SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS- harmony used
1	1-9	Made up of two phrases, each using G/C#, C#/G and C/F#.
2	10-22	Polychords are e flat minor/F major and the reverse--F major/e flat minor.
3	23-31	Bb/E and E/Bb
4	31-41	G/C#, F#/C polychords used, with C/F on the cadence followed by octave F#'s.
5	42-53	E/Bb and Bb/E
6	54-67	G/C#, F#/C, with C/F at the cadence, followed by octave F#'s. Note: similar to section four.

Eight measures in section three, mm.23-31, are the climax of the movement and when the soprano sings the high Bb in m.27 the harmonic underlay thins to a Bb/bm polychord. This seems more consonant and open because although it has two pairs of pitches which are a halfstep apart, the third pair is a unison. In the paired major triads which are a tritone apart, there are also two pairs of halfstep intervals, but the third pair is a tritone, making the general texture of the rest of the movement thicker and more dissonant sounding than this section.

Melodically, there are two motives which help to give this movement its characteristic sound. The most obvious occurs for the first time in m.23. The soprano sings "Descendez" on a descending chromatic line. See example 7.

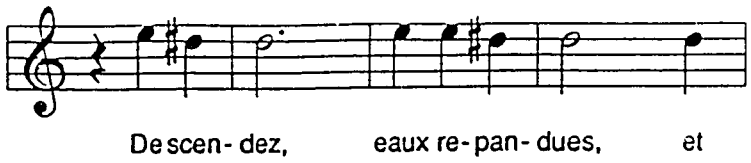
This is copied and echoed in the women's parts and inverted in the men's parts. As the piece continues, the women go on to mirror other

melodic fragments of the solo, but the men's parts keep coming back to the descending chromatic pitches in groups of threes. In fact, these motives make up most of the passing tones in the fifth section, which is harmonized by only one polychord and its inversion. The other motive heard several times is a downward C major triad in either the soloist's or the women's part. It is used cadentially and occurs in mm.4-5, 8-9, 33-35, and 56-58. See example 8a-d.

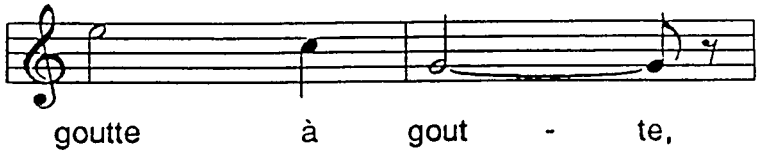
Third movement: "Incantation"

The third movement is the longest of the seven movements of Les Choéphores. It is 341 measures long, and takes about fourteen minutes to perform. This is almost half of the total performance time of the whole piece. It uses the full orchestra, a soprano soloist as Electra, a baritone soloist as Orestes, and the women of the chorus. The chorus sings in unison and alternates verses of text with each of the soloists. There are no duets or trios except at the end. The vocal lines are rarely doubled in the orchestra.

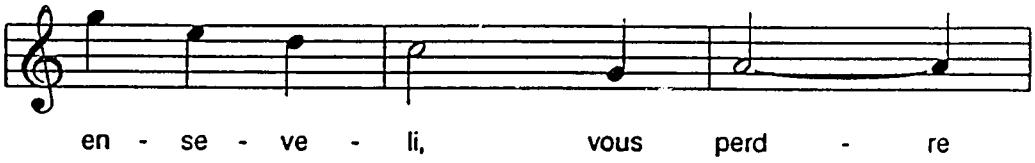
For purposes of study and analysis I have divided the movement into twenty-two sections based on verses of text. I define a verse here as a group of lines with one idea sung by one singer or group of singers. The orchestral accompaniment also changes with each verse. The second half repeats much of the material from the first half, enough to divide this movement into two similar halves. Material from the first half that is used in the second half is always transposed by a tritone. General musical characteristics of this long movement are summarized in Table 3 below.



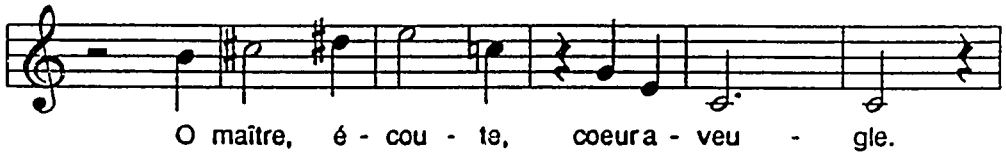
Example 7: Measures 23-26, second movement, soprano solo.



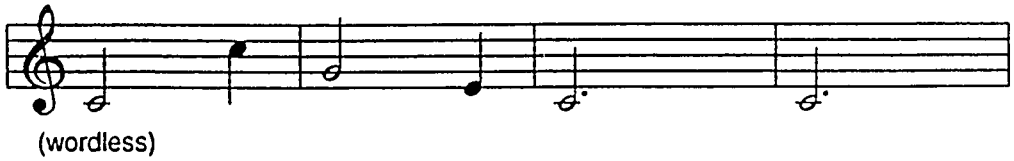
Example 8a: Second movement, mm.4-5, soprano solo.



Example 8b: Second movement, mm.8-9. soprano solo.



Example 8c: Second movement, mm. 33-35, soprano solo.



Example 8d: Second movement, mm.56-58, chorus alto.

Table 3: Summary of third movement structure

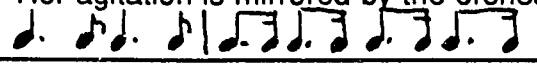
SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	1-19	Two second inversion triads  rhythmic cell is introduced. Chorus sings appeal for help to Agamemnon.
2	20-37	Orestes. Three separate rhythmic motives. See examples 11, 12a and 12b.
3	38-52	Chorus. Orchestral rhythm is homophonic. See example 13. Harmony is 8-note chords whose tones are related by fifths.
4	53-68	Electra sings a melody using a limited pitch class set. Harp uses a similar set. eb min./Ab maj. polychords in strings.
5	69-80	Chorus. Alberti-style accompaniment in strings. Polychord progression from first movement in double reeds.
6	80-96	Orestes. Homophonic orchestration, similar polychords to section 5. Same rhythm as section 3. See example 13.
7	97-110	Chorus. Orchestra reflects celebrative mood with off-the-beat rhythm in strings.
8	111-122	Electra. Countermelody in strings, accompaniment in winds.
9	123-147	Chorus and Orestes. Descending chromatic line in flute which repeats and varies in other instruments.
10	148-158	Chorus. Pictorialism on the words "billowing hatred," using a canon at short intervals.
11	159-172	Electra. Her agitation is mirrored by the orchestral rhythm 

Table 3, continued: Summary of third movement structure

12	173-183	Chorus. Similar to section 1, transposed a tritone.
13	183-201	Orestes. Similar to section 2, transposed a tritone. Some instruments exchanged.
14	202-211	Chorus. Similar to section 3, transposed a tritone. Some instruments exchanged.
15	212-224	Electra. Similar to section 4. Also uses a limited pitch class set, although a different one.
16	225-234	Chorus. Total rhythm halved, (to ). Similar to section 5, with rhythmic variation.
17	235-249	Electra and Orestes sing together. Rhythm in orchestra is similar to section 6.
18	250-258	Chorus. } accompaniment is parallel to
19	259-275	Electra. } section 7, transposed a tritone.
20	275-293	Chorus advises Orestes and Electra. Tritone transposition of section 9. Oboe replaces flute and other changes in instrumentation occur.
21	294-309	Same short canon as section 10, transposed a tritone.
22	310-end	Coda. All parts sing. Several rhythmic and melodic motives from section 1 recur. See example 9.

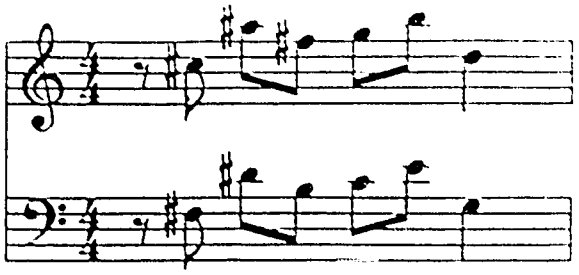
In this movement Orestes and Electra with the chorus are calling on the gods to approve of and aid in their quest to avenge their father's death. They also appeal to their father to help them from his place in the underworld. Section one, mm.1-19, opens with a summary of this appeal by the chorus. Two motives for the movement are introduced. Two second

inversion triads a halfstep apart played melodically and used as orchestral punctuation occur in mm. 1, 4, 7, and 14-16, and as part of the sung melody in m.16. This first motive recurs as a signature for the movement. See example 9.

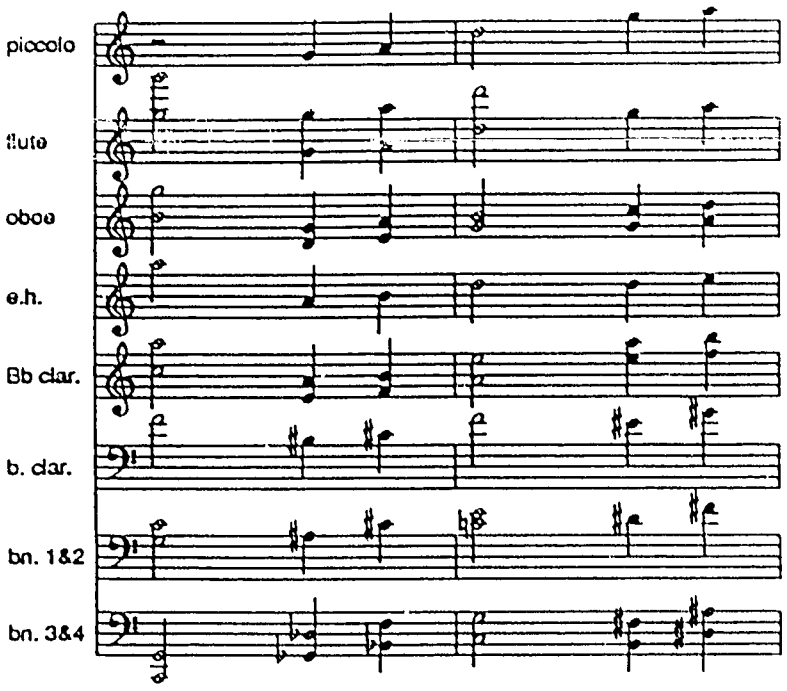
The other motive is a rhythmic cell of two quarter notes followed by a half note heard in polychords in the orchestra. As in the previous movements, the polychords generally consist of triads here as well. See example 10.

The second section, mm.20-37, is sung by Orestes. The orchestral texture is divided into two parts. The first, ending at m.30, has three separate rhythmic motives happening simultaneously. One is the repeated D's in the English horn part. See example 11. The second is the ostinato figure in the strings on the tones of a C triad, and the third is a countermelody to Orestes' line in the low strings and clarinets. See musical examples 12a and 12b. The first two are heard as a cloud of sound over which the melody and countermelody sing out.

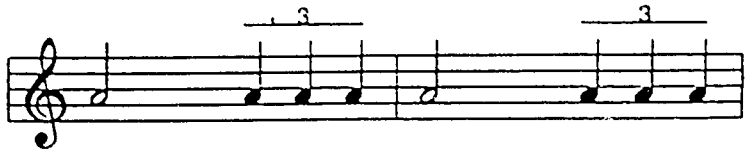
The third section of this movement is mm.38-52. The Chorus sings an independent melody while the accompaniment is quiet homophonic polychords around it. The triads are B, F#, Db, and Ab. The countermelody that is heard is the highest note of each chord, and its rhythm is distinctive and recurs in the movement. See example 13.



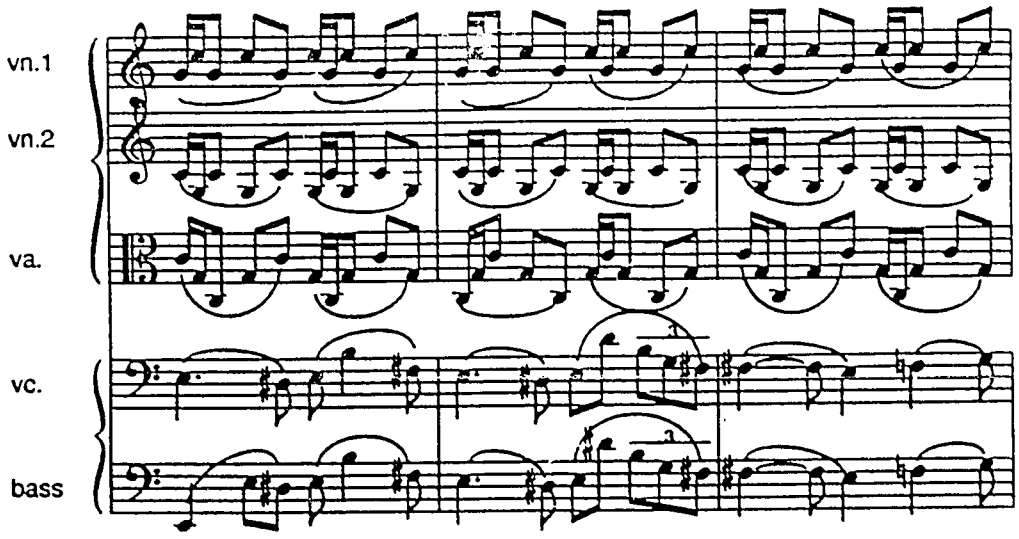
Example 9: Third movement, m.1, trumpets and trombones.



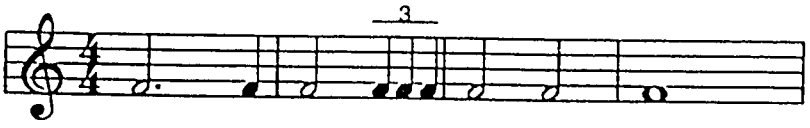
Example 10: Third movement, mm.2-3, woodwinds.



Example 11: Third movement, mm.20-21, English horn in F.



Example 12a(vns. and va.) and 12 b('cello and bass): Third movement, mm. 20-22, strings.



Example 13: Third movement, mm.38-41, orchestral rhythm.

The Chorus advises Orestes that his prayer to his father for a signal is futile, but that he should continue with his plan for vengeance. Measures 48-52 repeat the pitches of mm.38-42 with different instruments.

Section four, mm.53-68, is sung by Electra. She begs for her father to hear them, and is devastated by his inattendance to their pleas. The melody that she sings uses only five pitches and these are always in the same order, like a chant, but with a much wider range. See example 14.

The orchestra plays held ebmin/Ab polychords in the strings, descending chromatic scales in woodwinds, the rhythmic motive from mm.38-42 (see example 13) in all sections at different times; and the pitches of the vocalist are repeated as an ostinato in the harp with Db, Ab, and Eb added. The section has a thick texture, but the vocal line is so unusual that there is little trouble with the balance.

Section five, mm.69-81, is a hopeful reassurance by the Chorus, and the orchestration reflects this. There is a polychordal alberti-style accompaniment in the strings with punctuation in brass and woodwinds using the first inversion motive from example 9 in mm.73-75 and 77-78. The polychord progression from the first movement (example 2 of this chapter) appears in the double reeds in mm.76-80. The texture is thick, but fairly quiet, and the major sixths from the beginning of this third movement impart the uplifting tone to this section.

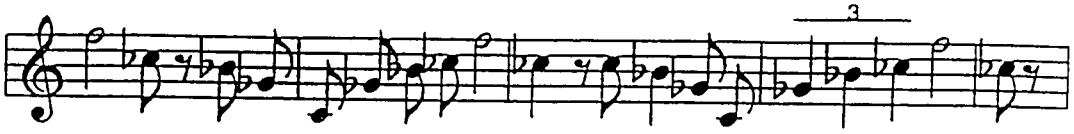
In section six, mm.80-96, Orestes laments that his father didn't die on the battlefield while fighting Troy. The accompanying orchestration is

homophonic, and in mm. 90-96 it uses the rhythm from mm.38-40, example 13. The polychords heard in mm.82-89 are the same as in the previous alberti-like section. The overall sound of the polychords is similar to other sections, and since the rhythm is the same, the accompaniment sounds familiar. This will recur as the movement continues.

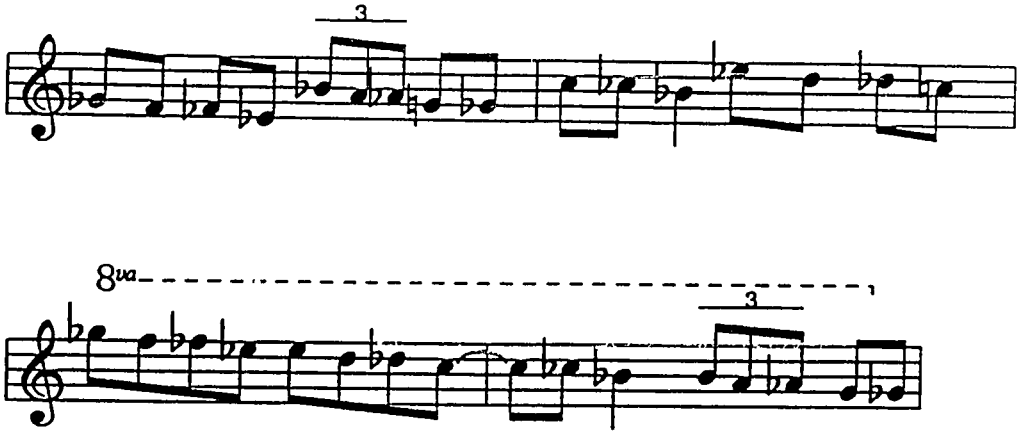
The Chorus continues with Orestes' thoughts in section seven, mm.97-110. They sing of the welcome that Agamemnon would have received in the underworld if he had indeed died on the battlefield at Troy. The music, primarily its rhythm, reflects the celebration that would have taken place. The strings play on the second half of each beat while the winds and brass play a melody on the beats. This oompah effect results in a lighter tone for the section. The chords used for the onbeat melody are always different from the offbeat string chords, and the intervals in the two parts always include major sevenths or minor ninths.

Section eight includes mm.111-122. Electra sings that she would rather that her father's murderers had fallen at Troy. Here the winds play on the offbeats and a countermelody to Electra's melody is heard in the strings. The scoring is thick and the tone is ominous.

In section nine, mm.123-147, the Chorus and Orestes both sing. The Chorus first encourages Orestes and Electra in their project of revenge and tells them that already their prayers are being heard. The prominent feature of the orchestration is a descending chromatic line in the flute which is heard almost alone for four measures. Then strings join in the chromatic line and in m.131 they take it over along with the horn. Through the section two



Example 14: Third movement, mm.53-57, Electra's melody.



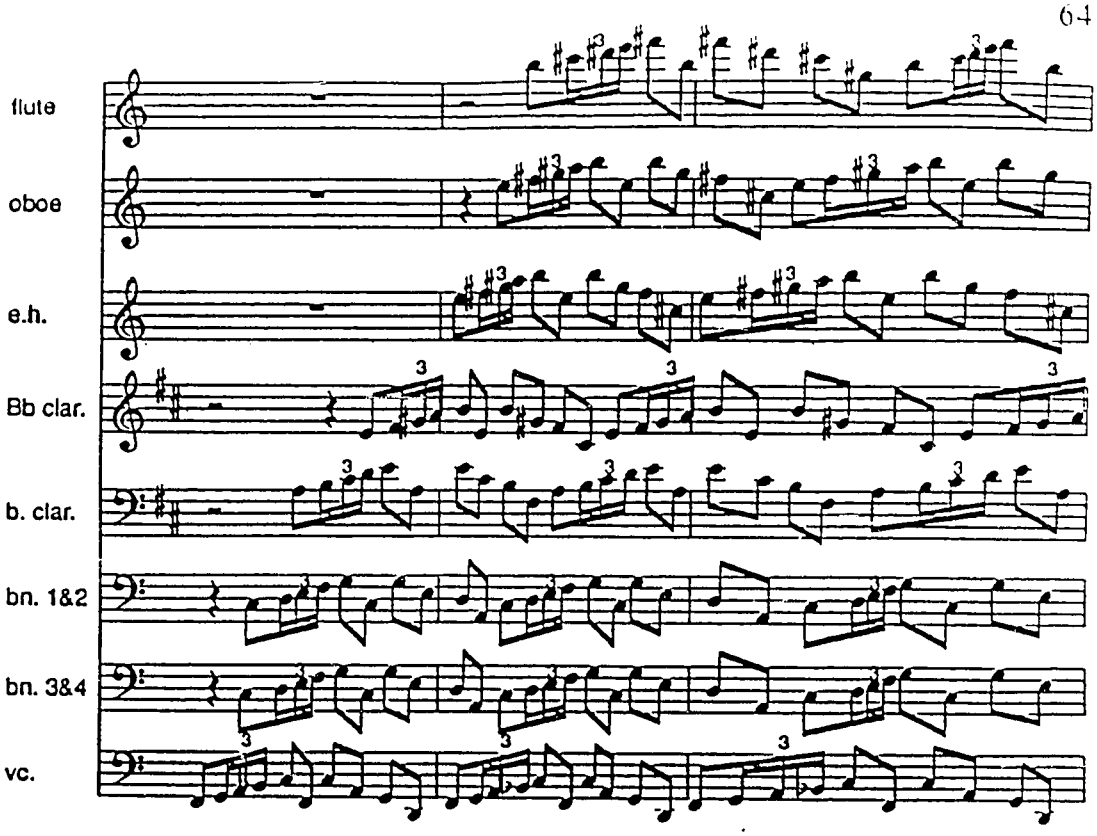
Examples 15a and 15b: Third movement, mm.123-124 and mm.128-129.

measures,123-124 (see example 15a), are repeated in mm.125-127, varied in mm.128-129 (see example 15b), and the variation is repeated in mm.130-131.

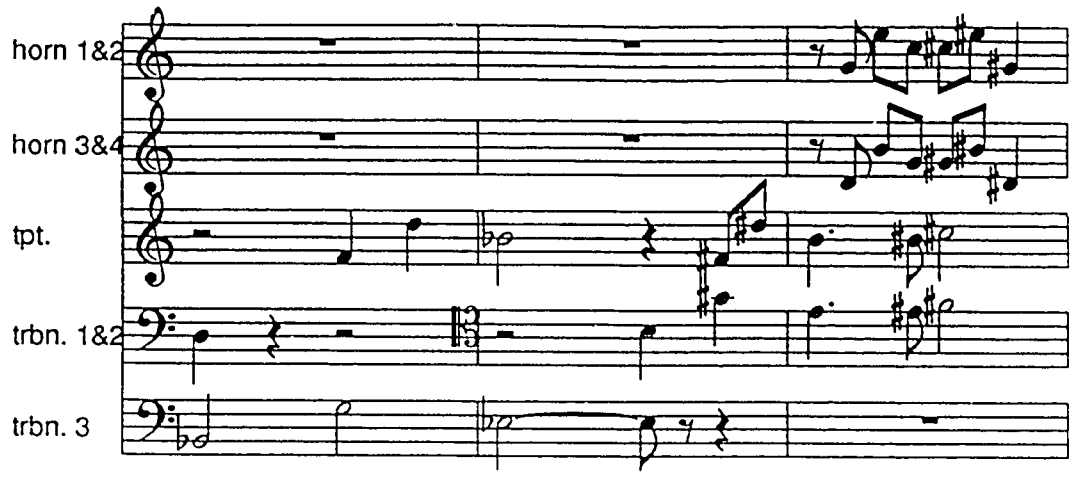
A similar pattern is heard in mm.140-143 as Orestes sings. At m.145 the orchestra plays a transition to the next section. The texture here is completely different. The three measures comprise an eight-note scale of eight chords. The composition of the scale is C,D,E,F#,G,Ab,B. Each chord is therefore a different inversion of the one preceding it using these same pitches. This pattern is heard again in mm.291-293.

Section ten begins with a nine-note chord scored in open fifths. Milhaud's committment to this piece as a polytonal harmonic study is once again proven in this section. The Chorus is singing of how they will celebrate over the bodies of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Then they sing, "How shall I conceal my hatred? It billows out like a sail ...." There is pictorialism in the music to illustrate this "billowing". From m.148 to m.153 one four-beat phrase is repeated in canon seven times on successive beats at successive intervals of a fifth. See example 16. The section ends and the next one begins with a chord that uses the aggregate (all twelve pitches) in intervals of fifths.

In section eleven, Electra begins to become more agitated. As she calls on Zeus, she sings in widening intervals and faster rhythm, and the orchestra accompanies her with two chords that alternate in increasing speed. The section ends and the next one begins with six repetitions of the opening motive of the movement in mm.171-173. See example 17.



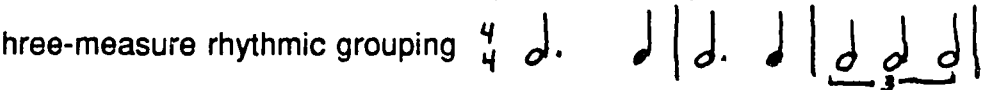
Example 16: Third movement, mm.149-151, 'cello and woodwind entrances.



Example 17: Third movement, mm.171-173, brass.

Throughout section twelve, mm.173-183, the Chorus reminds us of the law of justice, blood for blood, and that the Furies (Erinyes) are already at work. The orchestral accompaniment contains reminders as well. The tempo is marked to be as at the beginning, and m.173 is a tritone transposition of m.1 with some changes in orchestration.

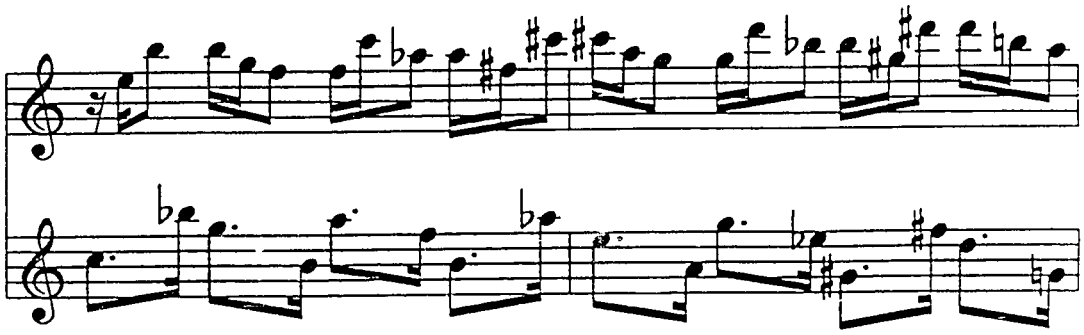
Sections thirteen, mm.183-201, and fourteen, mm.202-211, continue the recapitulation of the beginning in the orchestra a tritone away, and are similar to sections two and three. See Table 3 above for comparisons.

Electra takes over in m.212, reiterating her estrangement with her mother. She sings a melody that uses another limited pitch class set (01567[0]) as she did in section four, mm.53-68. There are some similarities in the orchestration, which continue the parallel structure of the second half of this movement, but it is not the near repetition of the previous two sections. The three-measure rhythmic grouping  found in section four is also found here, but it is pervasive in the piece and is a unifying rhythmic motive. Until this point it has also been found in mm.34, 48, 59, 62, 90, and 202. Further in the piece it is found in mm.243-250.

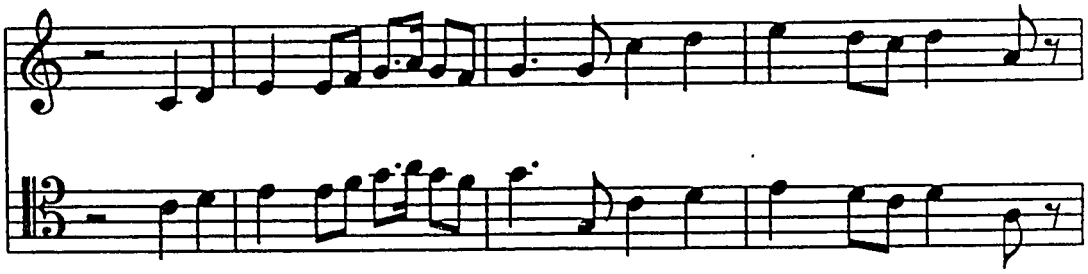
In section sixteen, mm.225-234, the Chorus is Electra's advocate as she rails against the ban on funeral rites for her dead father. The orchestral accompaniment is thicker here, and this is implemented by the winds and the strings. Together, their respective lines result in a total rhythm of sixteenth notes in mm.227 and mm.229-232. See example 18.

Also, for the first time in the piece, the vocal line is doubled in the orchestra, in this instance by the trumpet. The harmonic devices used in this section relate it to the rest of the movement. M.225 has a full G# dominant ninth chord and m.233 has a C# dominant ninth. These are characteristic sounds of this movement because a dominant 9th chord has two complete triads, a major and a minor. The most familiar harmonic sound of the oratorio is a complete major ninth chord because it is made of two major triads a fifth apart, which is the bitonal sound most often heard. Another recurring harmonic device used in this section is that of exchanging triads and arpeggios between instruments. This is found in mm.227 and 228. The B and E arpeggios in the violins in m.227 switch to the low strings at the end of m.228. The Ab and Eb arpeggios in the low strings for m.227 occur in the violins in m.228, third beat. At the end of section sixteen the theme from the beginning of the first movement recurs. See example 19.

The second and third trumpets and the trombones play it as a countermelody to the vocal line being doubled in the first trumpet. This island of familiarity has a much more unifying effect in this long movement than it might have in a more repetitive form. It reminds us that we are still in the same piece and gives a clue to the meaning of the text here, which is somewhat obscure. The text at the beginning of the first movement refers to the procession to Agamemnon's grave by the libation bearers (the Chorus) who are bringing oils to annoint it at the command of Clytemnestra, who feels guilty at the lack of funeral rites. In this section of the third movement the Chorus sings again of that lack.



Example 18: Third movement, mm.229-230, piccolo, flutes, violins, and violas.



Example 19: Third movement, mm.231-234, trumpet and trombone.

Electra and Orestes continue the lament in section seventeen. The emotional impact of this section, mm.235-249, is heightened by the dialogue nature of the two soloists' parts. Until now in this movement each section has been performed by a single soloist or the Chorus, and each soloist has always been followed by commentary from the Chorus. Here, Orestes and Electra directly alternate parts as they become more agitated on the subject of avenging their father's death. In fact, it is at this point that Orestes, who was away when the murder was committed, realizes that Clytemnestra has had Agamemnon buried without rites, a grave omission in their culture. He sings, "What? Without any honor? O father! Shall I not avenge this infamy? Yes, by all the gods. Yes, with my own hands."[8] Since the text is most important here, and its placement and the change of pattern in the performance is so startling, the orchestration is less important.

Section eighteen encompasses mm.250-258 and section nineteen is mm.259-275. The accompaniment is parallel to mm.97-108 in section seven, with the same rhythm, orchestration, and harmony, but here again transposed a tritone. These two sections are divided because the Chorus sings section eighteen and Electra sings section nineteen, but musically they belong together. The transposed repetition of section seven stops at m.262, but some similarities in rhythm continue. The Chorus sings about the atrocities committed on Agamemnon's body and Electra answers by asking if they know what she has been through. There is a certain element of

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[8] Ibid., Third movement, mm.240-247. "Quoi, sans aucun honneur? O père! Et on ne lui feras payer cette infâmie? Oui, de par tous les dieux! Oui et de mes propres mains."

whining in her text here, like that of the spurned dog to which she likens herself.

The Chorus takes on its traditional role in Greek drama in section twenty, mm.275-293, and advises Orestes and especially Electra, after her recent outburst of self-pity, to save their strength and anger for the coming battle for vengeance. The orchestral accompaniment is another tritone transposition of earlier material in mm.123-135, section nine, where the Chorus is also giving advice.

Mm.286-291 are a short dialogue/duet between Orestes and the Chorus, and only the second time that two parts sing together in counterpoint in the entire movement. Tritone relationships have been frequent in this movement and in this rare contrapuntal place, the primary intervals are tritones. Orestes is singing a Db when the Chorus enters on a G in m.288. In the original play by Claudel, the line that the Chorus sings is said by Electra.[9] This makes more sense in context, and helps in understanding the text. The orchestration is a variation and condensation of the material found in mm.135-144, which is the parallel spot found earlier in section nine. The similarity between the two parts resumes between m.291 and m.145. The scale used in m.145 is C,D,E,F#,G,Ab,B. Here, it is Gb,Ab,Bb,C,Db,D,F, a tritone away. Each chord has seven notes as well, of the same set as above, each in a different inversion.

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[9] The line is, "Et moi pleurant j'ajoute ma voix à la sienne." ["And I, weeping, add my voice to his."] In the Claudel play, the last word is "la tienne," meaning "yours."

In section twenty-one, mm.294-309, all three parts sing. This is the last reiteration of their invocation before the ending. It is a plea for justice and help from the gods by the two principals, and for the Chorus, it is a cry of terror at the violence that they see coming. The parallel orchestration continues from the first half, using the same short canon. Example 20a shows the first occurrence of the canon in the 'cello and woodwinds in mm.149-151 and example 20b shows the second occurrence in the double reeds in mm.295-300.

Section 22 is the last section of the movement. The texture of the orchestra is declamatory, the dynamics are loud. The brass play whole-note open fifth chords on each downbeat and over the six measures these pitches outline the opening and signature motive of the movement. At each repetition of the motive the note values halve. See example 21.

The voices enter at m.319 following a quick scale in the winds. All parts sing the entire coda in unison. Their message is that the malady of the house must be remedied from within, "by blood and by steel,"[10] and not by strangers. This last text is sung with the signature motive of the movement.

This motive is heard often in the last section. The brass play it in mm.321, 324-326, and in mm.335-338, as a cadence, after the voices have ended. The strings and winds play it in m.334 as the singers hold their final note. It is played in parallel fifths, beginning on B and F# in m.321 and elsewhere on F# and C#. This motive also began on these same pitches, F#

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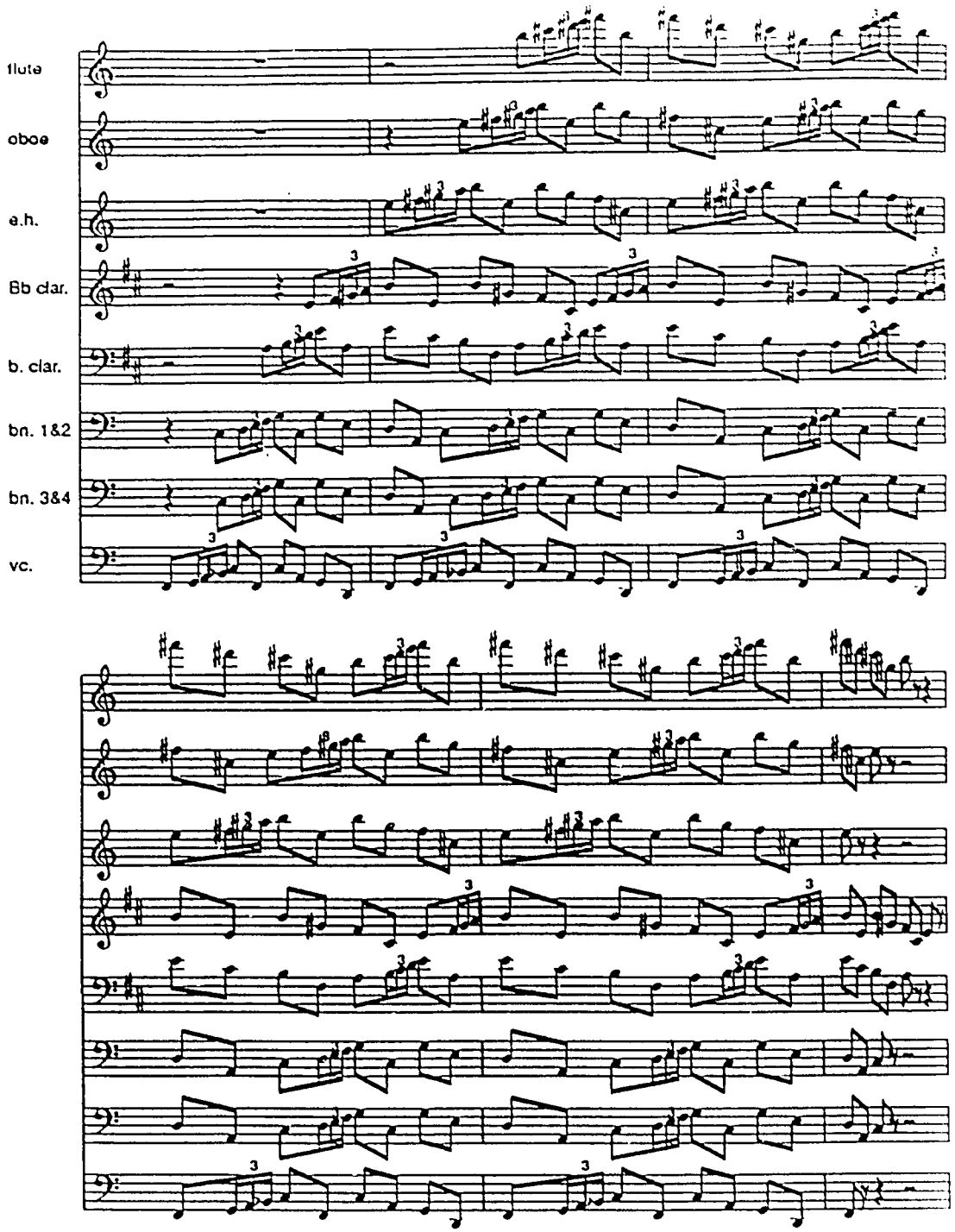
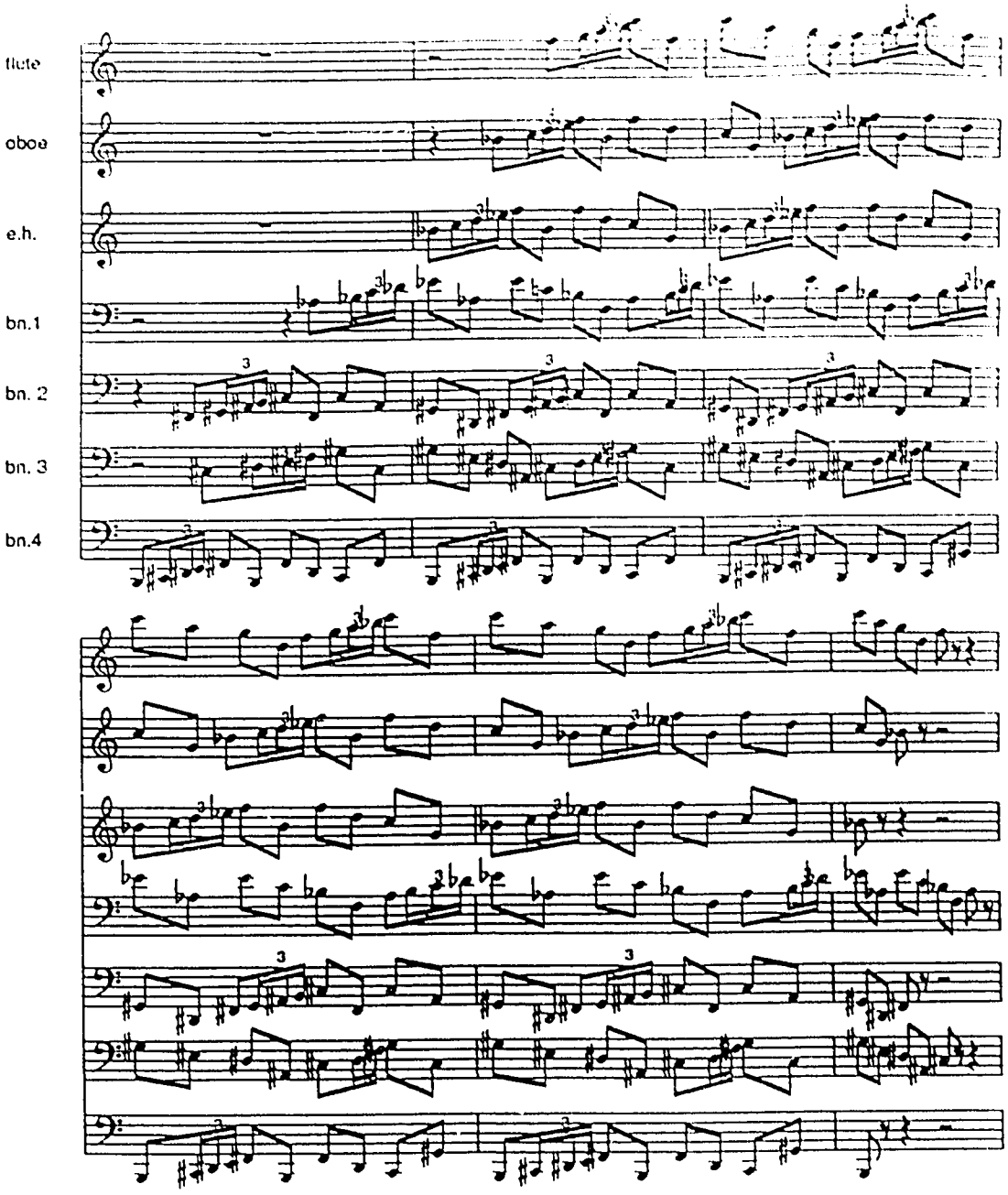
[10] Milhaud, Les Choéphores, third movement, mm.333-334, p. 99.



Example 20a: Third movement, mm.149-154, 'cello and woodwinds.



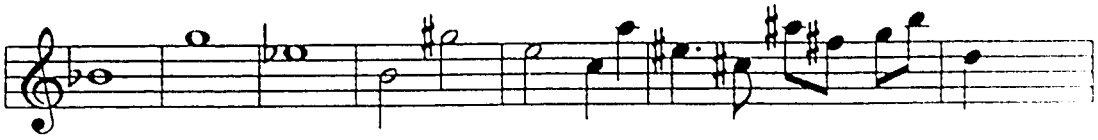
Example 20b: Third movement, mm. 295-300, double reeds.

and C#, in m.1 of this movement, and its return at the end helps to unify this very long piece. Milhaud has continued his exploration of polytonal materials throughout this movement, mostly experimenting with tritone relationships and chords stacked in open fifths. The signature motive as used is an outgrowth of this study. It has open fifths and its melodic interval content is two triads a half step apart. When the motive begins on simultaneous F# and C#, the four horizontal triads heard are F#, B, G, and C. See example 22.

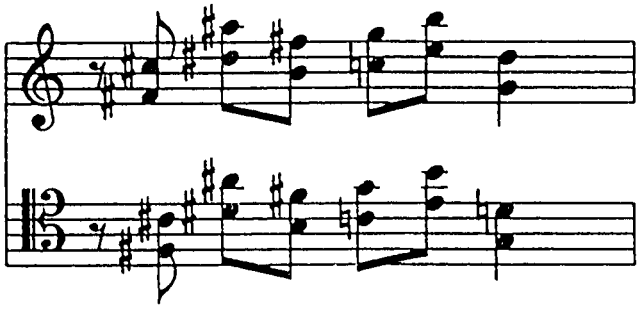
The C triad seems to be the home tonality of the movement, and without a dominant-tonic relationship around, F# as its tritone is perhaps the second most important triad in the movement. There are G major triads, though, and with a low C in the contrabass to keep the C as home note, the winds and strings end on a bitonal C major and G major chord.

Fourth movement: "Présages"

The fourth movement differs markedly from the third. It is spoken, rather than sung, and accompanied only by percussion instruments. It is much shorter, and takes only three minutes to perform. The soloist is a woman, designated as "Une Choéphore," One Libation Bearer, and the mixed chorus accompanies her text with wordless chanting except for mm.23-30, where they use words. There are sixty-four measures in the movement, and this writer has divided it into seven sections for purposes of analysis and study. See Table 4.



Example 21: Third movement, mm.313-318, composite of trumpets 1 and 2.



Example 22: Third movement, m.324, trumpets and trombones.

Table 4: Summary of fourth movement structure

SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	1-7	Omens from nature--uses mostly cymbal, tam-tam and bass drum.
2	8-15	Clytemnestra's passion for Aegisthus--tam-tam, bass drum, *tambourin provençal* and tenor drum.
3	16-21	Story of Althea } other crimes by women
4	22-31	Story of Scylla } against their families are are compared to
5	31-41	Crime of Lemnos } Clytemnestra's crime, (the murder of her husband, Agamemnon.)
6	42-47	Transition to coda. Speaker alone for mm.44-66.
7	48-64	The end is similar to the beginning. The speaker uses metaphors for Justice and Destiny.

Since there are no pitches in this movement, there is no harmony or melody to analyze. The meter is 4/4 throughout and the tempo remains relatively steady. The text and texture are therefore the most important characteristics to consider.

The first section includes mm.1-7, and it is delineated by the subject matter of the text. The Libation Bearer begins this movement called "Présages", or "Omens" by speaking of omens from nature in general. She chants of "terrors from the earth," "arms of the sea filled with things that disgust," and "winds like sick souls."[11] The rhythm of her part follows the

[11] Ibid., fourth movement pp. 101-102.

natural speaking rhythm of the text in French and the Chorus's part highlights the images she calls forth.

The texture of the section is determined in great part by the orchestration. Although the movement is scored for fifteen percussion instruments, most of this section is accompanied by only three of them, cymbal, tam–tam, and a bass drum. Sleigh bells, another bass drum, and triangle punctuate occasionally, and at the "breath of wind" passage in the chorus, a softly trilled tambourine adds to the image.

The second section includes mm.8-15. The tam–tam and bass drum continue to provide the underlying rhythm. The texture of this section is thickened with two other drums playing throughout. The crossrhythms of these four instruments provide a constant total rhythm that includes eighths, triplet eighths, and sixteenths. As these instruments slowly crescendo through the section, they provide a supportive accompaniment to the increasing passion of the soloist's text, which refers to the pathological nature of Clytemnestra's lust for Aegisthus. Her passion for him was so great that she abandoned the ties of marriage and killed her husband. This was unthinkable within the moral structure of that society. The chorus acts as a percussion instrument in this section, adding to the punctuation provided by the other incidental instruments.

The next three sections are defined by their texts. These are three examples of other heinous crimes by women against their families. In mm.16-21 we are reminded of Althea, the wife of Oeneus, who was told by the fates that her seven day old son, whose father was really the god Ares,

would live only as long as a burning brand in the fire. She snatched it out, doused it with water, and hid it away. Later, after the Calydonian boar hunt, this son, Meleager, killed two of his uncles, who were Althea's brothers, and at the instructions of the Furies, she burned the brand to avenge their deaths and killed her son.

The section from mm.22-31 retells the story of Scylla. This is not the Scylla of Scylla and Charybdis, but the Scylla who was the daughter of Nisus. From the other side of the city walls, she fell in love with Minos, the king of Crete, whose army was laying siege to Nisa, her father's kingdom. She crept into her father's bedroom at night and cut off the special purple lock of his hair that made him invincible and stole the keys to the city gates. She took these things to Minos and offered him her love. He slept with her and then later conquered Nisa. He left her behind when he returned to Crete because he so loathed the crime of patricide.

The third crime recalled by the Choéphore is considered by her to be the worst crime against family because it is a crime against marriage. She calls it "the crime of Lemnos" and says that it is the "first in infamy."[12] The women of Lemnos rose up and killed all their husbands so that there were no men left on the island. Most of the text of this section, mm.31-41, speaks of the horror of this crime, rather than the actual deed. This is because it is the same crime which Clytemnestra has committed.

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[12] Ibid., p. 111.

The orchestration of each of these three sections is also different. In section three, the story of Althea, the cymbal and bass drum alternate full measure rolls while the chorus provides the rhythmic impetus.

In section four, the whip and tambourine provide the underlying rhythmic movement while the tenor drum and the cymbal play extended rolls. This is the place where the chorus uses words, probably to emphasize the seriousness of the next two crimes. The rest of the orchestra doubles their rhythm on "Scylla!" and "Minos tua." Until m.28 all the words that the chorus uses are chanted homophonically. Here, however, the Choéphore interjects an epithet, her opinion of Scylla. She says, "La chienne!" and the chorus repeats it eleven times in the next six beats. When she says, "Hermes le (sic) prend," ("Hermes take her"), she is asking for Scylla's death, since one of Hermes' jobs was to be messenger of the underworld. But since her request is in the present tense, she is probably also asking for Clytemnestra's death.

Here is one of the places that conductors look for where there are clues in the treatment of the text that tell us what the composer thought was important. We know that the reason for any part of this play to be set to music was to better serve a modern translation by Claudel of Aeschylus' intentions. We also know that a soloist and chorus chanting in rhythm with the accompaniment of percussion was unusual and probably unique at that time. The use of text for the chorus in place of syllables at this point, and most significantly, its eleven-fold repetition, is therefore a marker for a truly

important place in the play. The last word that the chorus chants is "Hermès," as if they were calling to him.

There is a big crescendo in the orchestra as the Choéphore winds up her story about the crime of Lemnos. This ends with sudden silence as she and the chorus shout "Le crime de Lemnos!" This place, by its isolation, is also one of the most important places in the piece. The listener easily hears and remembers the text.

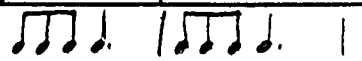
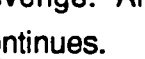
The sixth section is short, and it is a coda for the preceding three parts, and the seventh section is a recapitulation of the beginning of this movement. But since the text at the end is not the same as at the beginning, the Choéphore speaks in different rhythms. This last paragraph of hers is a metaphor. If Justice is the sword that will avenge Agamemnon's death, then Destiny is the anvil on which it is forged and the furies are waiting to avenge the crimes on the house of Atreus. The loudest place, the climax, is where the Choéphore speaks of the Furies, who encourage retribution against those who commit crimes against their families. The movement ends as the percussion and the whistling of the men die away.

Fifth movement: "Exhortation"

Like the fourth movement, the fifth movement is spoken. Once again, there is a solo speaker, Une Choéphore, and a chorus. The orchestra is also fifteen unpitched percussion instruments, but there are some differences in instrumentation. These will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. This movement is divided into six sections by the strophe

and antistrophe divisions of the text. The subtitle, "Exhortation", aptly describes the overall tone of the Choéphore as she urges Orestes to do his duty, which is to avenge the murder of his father. Table 5 summarizes these divisions.

Table 5: Summary of fifth movement structure

SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	1-24	Two bass drums and tambourin provençal maintain rhythm. Choéphore counts the rewards for Zeus if he will help Orestes.
2	25-38	Snare drum adds to the instruments above. Chorus doesn't speak. Orestes compared to a colt whom Zeus will help to win a race.
3	39-65	Tambour voilé replaces bass drums. The speaker asks minor household gods for help.
4	65-87	Bass drum returns to  rhythm. The speaker asks Hermes for a fair wind.
5	88-103	"Pleureuses!" breaks the rhythm of the Choéphore's chant. She anticipates the joy of having the revenge accomplished.
6	104-138	The Choéphore "exhorts" Orestes to do his duty to complete the deed of revenge. All instruments play.  rhythm continues.

There are 138 measures in the "Exhortation" movement. Its performance time is about two and a half minutes. The meter is 6/8 and is marked *animé*. The tempo is steady and the soloist must speak quite quickly in several places. She begins by calling on Zeus for help in the project of revenge. In the third movement Electra and Orestes prayed to and implored

Zeus. In this movement, the speaker seems to be trying to stir up his anger and his desire for justice.

For most of the first section, mm.1-24, only three instruments play. Both bass drums and the *tambourin provençal* provide an underlying rhythm that keeps the tempo galloping along. The triangle, cymbal and tam-tam are each struck once as the Choéphore counts the rewards that will be reaped by Zeus if he helps Orestes.

In the second section, called Antistrophe 1 and comprising mm.25-38, the Choéphore speaks of Orestes as a colt that Zeus must help to win a race. The snare drum adds to the instruments with the galloping rhythm set up in the first section and the triangle and cymbal punctuate it. The chorus is silent.

The third section is Strophe 2 and takes mm.39-65. The bass drum stops playing and the *tambour voilé* replaces it with the same rhythm. The chorus rejoins on syllables only, and the Choéphore turns her exhortations to the various minor household gods and asks them for help for Orestes also.

Antistrophe 2 is section four, mm.65-87. The Choéphore asks Hermes, the messenger of the gods, to send a fair wind for action and to light that which is hidden. The orchestration is much less here, and at mm.86-87, five instruments play a new rhythm that will underlay the next section. See example 23. It is an appropriate lead-in to the dramatic beginning of Strophe 3 by the Choéphore.

Before now I have not discussed the actual rhythmic content of the chanting of the soloist in these spoken movements because until this point one rule-of-thumb applies almost exclusively. This is that the rhythm of the Choéphore's speech closely follows the natural rhythm of the words. This seems to be an extension of the often speech-like rhythms found in the sung movements, but here the chanting is governed much more strongly by spoken accents. The origin of this style for Milhaud may have come from his extensive study of Debussy's opera Pelléas et Mélisande, which is unique in the operatic repertoire of that era in the way that the text was set to music. In it sung rhythms followed those used when speaking the same text.

An exception to this rhythmic rule comes at the beginning of section five. The Choéphore begins Strophe 3 with a long cry of "Pleureuses!"[13] and then she continues speaking as she did before. In this section she anticipates the joy with which the Libation Bearers, the women of the chorus, will greet the news of the revenge having been accomplished. The chorus speaks on "Ha-a!" in the same rhythm as most of the instruments, in an aural image of weeping. When the chorus is silent, the two pairs of castanets play the (see m.92) rhythm that introduced the section. See examples 23 and 24.

The wind machine begins again at m.96 and aids the crescendo into the sixth and last section, which begins at m.104.

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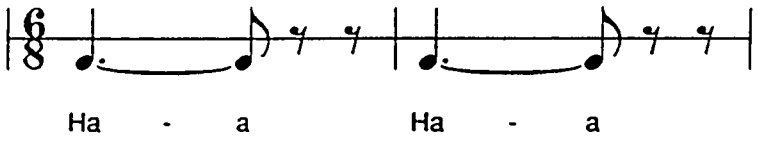
[13] Ibid., p. 127. "Weeping women!"

Example 23: Fifth movement, mm.86-87.



Example 24: Fifth movement, mm.90-91, chorus part.

In this last section the Choéphore makes a final exhortation to Orestes to "Have courage, do your duty,"[14] meaning he should kill his mother. The chorus speaks the important text with her, saying "Fais ton devoir!" (Do your duty!) in two places. The Choéphore says, "If she (Clytemnestra) cries 'My son!', you respond, 'My father!'" The chorus shouts "Mon fils!" and "Mon père!" along with the soloist, and this last cry is another exception to the rhythmic rule-of-thumb suggested above. The word "Père" is elongated as "Pleureuses!" was earlier. Orestes is encouraged to "Do the guiltless crime with the courage of a Perseus." (Perseus was a heroic youth in Greek mythology who, since he had no other wealth to give, offered to bring the king of the land where he was raised the head of Medusa as a wedding gift. The reference to him is made here probably because his "murder" of Medusa was not a crime that incurred guilt. He was also young and courageous like Orestes.)

During the last section all of the instruments that are designated for the fifth movement except the rattle play at once. The rattle joins occasionally and for a final *tutti* in the last four measures. Though the solo voice speaks in crossrhythms of duplets against the 6/8 meter of the piece, the percussion of the orchestra only plays rhythms of eighth notes or larger in this last section and each instrument plays the same rhythmic pattern throughout except for the last four measures. This repetitiveness provides an emphasis for the insisting encouragement of Orestes by the Choéphore.

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[14] Ibid., p. 131.

At this point in the play by Aeschylus, Orestes goes and kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. Since by dramatic convention no bloodshed takes place on stage in Greek drama, the murders are not seen. After a dialogue with Clytemnestra, Orestes exits with her, and the text of the Chorus that follows this exit is the text of the next movement.

Sixth movement:"La Justice et la Lumière"

The sixth movement of Milhaud's Les Choéphores once again uses pitched singing and the full orchestra for accompaniment. It is a fitting return to melodic music as a celebration of an act of justice. There are four major divisions of this movement, approximately equal in length, and each has a verse and a refrain. The first two refrains are alike, and the third and fourth refrains are similar to each other. See Table 6 for a brief summary of the movement's structure.

Table 6: Summary of sixth movement structure

SECTION	MEASURES	CHARACTERISTICS
1	1-41	Verse is mm.1-30. Chords using the aggregate are heard for the first time. First two verses are a celebration of the arrival of Justice, who is personified in several ways throughout the text. Refrain is mm.31-41.
2	42-71	Verse is mm.42-59. No aggregate chords. Orchestration is more contrapuntal. More about Justice. Refrain is mm.60-71. Same as refrain 1, with more doubling in the orchestra.
3	72-102	Verse is mm.72-93. Mythological references to Apollo; also called "la lumière." Refrain is mm.94-102. C major descending arpeggio. "Appear, light, come to me" (text of refrain).
4	103-146	Verse is mm.103-133. The house of Atrides is freed. Aggregate chords in mm.116-123. See Table 9. Refrain is mm.134-146. Same as section 3 with augmentation of melody for the cadence.

The first section includes mm.1-41 and the verse takes the first thirty measures. The women sing in unison until the men join in m.18. The melody is reminiscent of the opening tune of the first movement and the orchestra does not double it. This is consistent with the other orchestrated movements in Les Choéphores. Although it begins on D, C seems to be the

home tone, with the three flats Bb, Eb, and Ab for the first nine measures imparting a more modal sound than at the beginning of the first movement. A similar motive repeats in mm.10-13 beginning on F#. A Dorian sound results from the F#,G#,C#, and D# used in these measures. The tempo is quick and the meter remains in three until the first refrain.

At the beginning the orchestra accompanies with loud ringing[15] chords played one and later two to a measure. Until m.18, each of these chords includes the aggregate. Milhaud returns to his exploration of polytonality in this movement and takes up experimenting with all twelve notes played at once. The manner in which he arranges the aggregate among the instruments merits discussion. The pitches are grouped in four trichords with set type (0,2,7)Tn.[16] They are (Eb,F,Bb)-hereinafter called Set 1, (C,D,G)-Set 2, (A,B,E)-Set 3, and (F#,G#,C#)-Set 4. The instruments of the orchestra are also divided into four groups by register. These are, from low to high:

1) 'cellos, basses, and bassoons

2) clarinets, bass clarinet, trombones and timpani

3) oboes, English horn, and trumpets

4) violins and flutes.

The violas are divided between the groups with the other strings. Pitch

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[15] Near the string parts in the orchestral score, Milhaud writes,"attaquez ff et laisser tomber le son jusqu'au *." (Attack fortissimo and let ring until the *.) The * appears in m.13, where the pattern of chords changes.

[16] For a useful discussion of vocabulary used in this paper to describe non-triadic simultaneities, see John Rahn, Basic Atonal Theory, (New York: Longman, 1980), especially pp.74–79.

Class Sets 1 and 2 alternate back and forth for the first nine measures between the two lowest groups of instruments, and Pitch Class Sets 3 and 4 alternate for the first nine measures between the two higher groups of instruments. In mm.10-13 pc sets 3 and 4 alternate in the two lower groups of instruments and pc sets 1 and 2 alternate in the two higher groups of the orchestra. Mm. 14-18 use the same trichords and the same instrumentation, but each measure is differently arranged. See Table 7 for a summary.

Table 7: Arrangement of aggregate chords in mm.1-17, sixth movement.

Instruments have these pitch classes[17] in the measure numbers noted.

Instrument	mm.1-9 alternating	mm.10-13 chords	m.14	m.15	m.16	m17[18]
violin one viola flutes	Sets 4 and 3	Sets 1 and 2	1 & 4	3 & 4	3	3
oboes English horn trumpets	Sets 3 and 4	Sets 2 and 1	2 & 3	4 & 3	4	4
clarinets bass clarinet trombones timpani	Sets 2 and 1	Sets 3 and 4	3 & 2	1 & 2	1	1
one viola violoncellos string basses bassoons	Sets 1 and 2	Sets 4 and 3	4 & 1	2 & 1	2	2

[17] Set 1 is Eb, F, B; set 2 is C,D,G; set 3 is A,B,E; and set 4 is F#,G#,C#.
[18] In measure 17, the pitches are arranged in open fifths.

It is satisfying to note this tidy arrangement of materials but one must ask why it exists and if it makes any difference in the way the section is heard. It is this writer's opinion that Milhaud was exploring the ways that chords of the aggregate could be used in accompanying a chorus. The most difficult problem in orchestration would be to avoid overwhelming the chorus with the almost inevitable thickness of texture that these chords would provide. Another problem encountered if only the aggregate is to be used is that of avoiding monotonous repetition of the same sound.

Three characteristics of this arrangement of pitches have solved these problems. Firstly, this pc set may have been chosen because of its versatility. It can be arranged in a close position or as open fifths. Like the augmented triad it can form four mutually exclusive trichords that played together use all twelve pitches only once. Most importantly, minor seconds which blur the overall sound of a chord with resultant tones don't occur in similar instruments since each group of instruments is given only one of these trichords. (Refer to Table 7 above.) Secondly, the choice of instruments for each group is by register rather than by timbre. This is what prevents the occurrence of minor second simultaneities. Lastly, a listener quickly finds order in repetition, and the alternation of only two arrangements of the four trichords at a time allows easier focus. The longest period of repetition happens at the beginning (nine measures). This gives the listener time to assimilate the pattern before it changes at m.10. The second pattern only lasts four measures and each of the measures after that are different. But at m.10, we hear what seems to be a change of "key" or tonal focus. This is in large part due to the shift in tonal emphasis of the melody in the chorus,

but it is reinforced by the orchestra by the change in instrumentation for the different trichords.

One instrument remains outside the orderly marching of the aggregate chords. Until m.18 the horns play a line with the same rhythm as the orchestra, but it is melodic in organization and not related to the pattern discussed above. It is meant to be heard, because Milhaud asks this naturally loudest instrument to play fff (the rest are at ff), and to overblow. This single addition to the aggregate experiment also prevents the accompaniment from becoming monotonous.

In mm.18-21 the orchestra plays two different chords with seven pitches each. These chords have only the pitches C and E in common. The chords alternate and the dotted rhythm in m.21 combined with the culmination of the four-measure crescendo produces a fanfare to introduce the next line of verse in m.23 after silence in m.22.

For mm.24-28 the aggregate chords are heard again, played this time by three soloists from each string section. One contrabass doubles the bottom 'cello and the celeste doubles the six violins. The trichords remain the same. Their arrangement is summarized in Table 8. Mm.29 and 30 also contain chords with all twelve pitches, played in the winds, but Milhaud didn't use the trichord arrangement here. With the flutes and oboes playing five pitches separated by thirds and the clarinets and horns playing pitches separated by fourths, the simultaneity that results sounds less focused and functions well as a transition to the refrain.

Table 8: Aggregate chords, mm.24-28

	m. 24	m. 25	m. 26	m. 27 &28
violin 1	Set 3, see note 17.	Set 4	Set 2	Set 1
violin 2	Set 4	Set 3	Set 1	Set 2
viola	Set 1	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4
'cello	Set 2	Set 1	Set 4	Set 3

The text of this first section contains several mythological references. The first is a reminder of the vengeance that was exacted by the Greeks on the city of Troy: "Justice came to Priam and his sons."[19] According to Hugh Lloyd–Jones, one of the translators of The Libation Bearers into English, comparison of the Trojan war with the punishment of the house of Atreus is found several times in Greek literature.[20] The next line says that the "double lion, the twin Ares" visited the house of Agamemnon. The double lion is a twofold reference. The double lion is the symbol of the house of Agamemnon, and it also refers along with "the twin Ares" to Orestes and Pylades who have come to avenge Agamemnon's death. Claudel's translation from Greek uses *"le lion double"* in this place, but another translation into English by Philip Vellacott, refers to this line as "the twofold

19 Milhaud, Les Choéphores, p.137.
20 Aeschylus, The Libation Bearers, trans. Hugh Lloyd–Jones (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p.63n.

beast" which may note the illicit relationship between Aegisthus and Clytemnestra.[21]

Later in this short section the phrase "fugitive from Pythos" again means Orestes. Pythos is another name for Delphi, and the oracle at Delphi is the mouthpiece of Apollo, the god who encouraged Orestes throughout this ordeal of revenge which is told in the entire trilogy of plays. Clarification of the mythological references in this movement shows more clearly that the purpose of the movement is celebration. The Chorus becomes more effusive in its images to show exaltation at the death of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus.

The first refrain includes mm.31-41. Its mood is jubilant and somewhat martial. This is illustrated by several musical aspects. The meter, which has been an unchanging three, now changes seven times in eleven measures, although the quarter note continues to get one beat. The harmony is much simpler, with simultaneities of not more than five notes. These are mostly arranged as bitonal chords containing two triads with a common tone. With the exception of one *tutti* chord, the orchestration is strings, trumpet, horns and timpani. With more orchestral doubling, the texture is much cleaner. Until now there has been very little doubling of the chorus by the orchestra in this piece. In this section there is a closer relationship between the melodic material of the chorus and that of the orchestra. The two main elements of the vocal melody both include a perfect

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21 Aeschylus, The Orestean Trilogy, trans. Philip Vellacott (New York: Viking Penguin, Inc., 1959, p.138.

fourth (see example 25), and the men's parts are doubled by the violins. For the orchestra, perfect fourths also occur in parts which are not the same as the chorus. The rhythmic motive of the text "l'olololoho"[22] as introduced by the women in mm.32, 36 and 37 (again see example 25) becomes an integral part of the orchestration in the next verse before the refrain is repeated.

The second verse, mm.42-59, is the same length as the first in text and in musical length. The melodic content of the women's parts is similar, but the orchestration is completely different. There is no doubling by the orchestra of the vocal line and no chords of the aggregate in the orchestration. The style of the accompaniment is contrapuntal and the meter remains an unchanging three. The rhythmic motive from m.32 of the refrain is pervasive and its continued presence reminds the listener of the jubilant nature of this movement. The text celebrates the victory of Dike, the Goddess of Justice, over her enemies.

The refrain is repeated in mm.60-71. The text is the same as the first one, and so are the pitches of the orchestration for eight measures. Mm.32-39 match mm.60-67. In the second refrain, however, the instrumentation is *tutti*, and the dynamics are marked *fortissimo* instead of *forte*. The texture is still very clean in spite of the added instruments because of the extensive doubling. The last three measures of the second refrain serve as a transition to the next verse of the movement.

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[22] Milhaud, Les Choéphores, p.142.

The third verse is mm.72-92. Only the women sing, and their unison tune is actually a countermelody to the main tune in the flutes, oboes and violins, which is reminiscent of the original vocal line in the other verses. See example 26.

There also is an imitative entrance of this motive in m.73 by the tuba, string bass, and bassoon. The clarinets and middle strings play two sets of broken chords in contrary motion. The two chords could be named E# half-diminished(E#,G#,B,D#) and A minor 7th(A,C,E,G). Each instrument plays five notes before changing direction, so that in the established meter of three, the turnaround of the arpeggio happens in different places. The pattern continues for eight measures, mm.72-79, but the instruments trade chords after four measures. The switching of notes, the crossrhythms of the arpeggios and the eight different alternating pitches played piannissimo create a thick and stormy wind-like effect that ably illustrates the text of the moment. The singers are describing Loxias the Parnassian (Apollo) and the cavern where he dwells,[23] because he is the one who has sent Justice in the form of Orestes to slay the criminals Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. The first half of this movement has references to various personifications of Justice and the second half contains several references to Apollo. The "lumière" of the title may also be a reference to Apollo because he is the god of the sun. In the measures from 80-87, while the Chorus repeats that no one can escape punishment when they have committed the heinous

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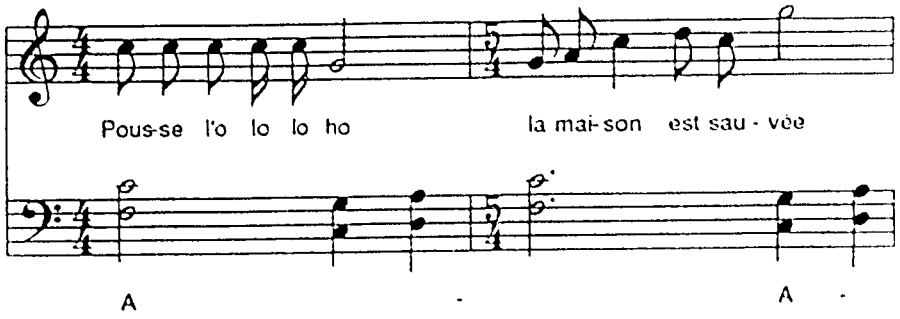
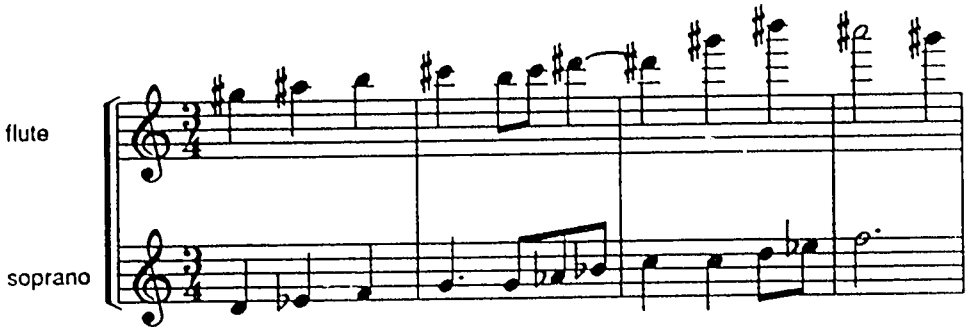
[23] Loxias the Parnassian is another personification of the god Apollo, who has been Orestes' guide and will continue to be his champion all through the story told by the trilogy of plays.



Example 25: Sixth movement, mm. 32-33, chorus parts.



Example 26: Sixth movement, mm.72-75, flute, and mm.2-5 women.

crimes that Clytemnestra has, the orchestra foreshadows the quietly triumphant descending arpeggios of the two final refrains with broken chords in the winds alternating A# minor and G# minor. The first violin and string bass play a long irregular scale in contrary motion that leads to a homophonic bitonal C/F chord in m.93, which leads to the third refrain.

The third refrain takes mm.94-102 and it is entirely different from the first two. It projects a mood of quiet exultation with pianissimo C/F bitonal chords in strings and winds accompanying the chorus. The women sing a descending arpeggio from G on a C major triad with the text "Appear, light...." and the men accompany without text singing tones from C and F chords in melodic second inversion order, the same as was heard in the third movement as the opening motive. The clarinet and viola reiterate the eight-note motive of the women in F# major and C major in measures that follow. Here again is the continued pairing of two major triads a tritone apart, which has been part of the harmonic vocabulary of the whole piece.

The fourth verse comprises mm.103-133. For the first eight measures almost the entire orchestra plays the main motive of the movement in two pairs of parallel fifths. The winds play beginning on F# and C# and the strings play beginning on C and G. Compare these measures with the opening motive that the women sing, example 26. The women of the Chorus sing a countermelody as they extol the new freedom of the people of the kingdom now that Clytemnestra and Aegisthus are dead. At m.111 the orchestra accompanies with fragments of the first two refrains. From m.116-123 the women sing their original melody and they are doubled by the horns

and harp. In this instance, all are singing or playing beginning on C. During these measures the rest of the orchestra plays chords which are arrangements of the aggregate. The twelve pitches are grouped in the same way as at the beginning of this movement, in four groups of three separated instrumentally by register. The trichords contain the same pitches and therefore are the same set type as before:(0,2,7)Tn. Table 9 shows how these pitches are arranged. This table is set up using the same principles as Table 7 above. The final accompanying chord which begins the transition to the fourth refrain in m.128 is another chord of the aggregate which is a registral inversion of the first aggregate chord in m.116. This is an appropriate musical comment on the text, "Everything puts on a new face."[24]

Table 9: Aggregate chords, mm.116-123

Instrument	mm.116,118,120	mm.117,119,121	m.122	m.123
violin one viola flutes trumpet in C	Set 3 A,B,E	Set 4	Set 1	Set 2
oboes English horn	Set 4 F#,C#,G#	Set 3	Set 2	Set 1
clarinets bass clarinet	Set 1 Eb,F,Bb	Set 2	Set 3	Set 4
one viola violoncellos string basses trombones tuba	Set 2 C,D,G	Set 1	Set 4	Set 3

24 Milhaud, Les Choéphores, p.159. "Tout prend un visage nouveau."

The fourth refrain and last section of the movement really begins with the next simultaneity in the orchestra at m.131. It is composed of only three pitches, C, G, and F. These summarize the harmonic orientation of the final refrain, which is also the coda. The women sing "Appear, light, come to me,"[25] on a C major triad as they did in the third refrain while the 'cellos repeat four measures of the original tune of the women for this movement in C in mm.134–137 and in F in mm.138–142. The flutes repeat the C major triad motive of the refrain and, at the very end, the 'cellos play it on an F triad. The sixth movement ends with a simultaneity held over from the strings, bassoons and clarinets that includes the pitches of C major and F major triads. The final emotional effect is one of peacefulness after the terrible deed is finally done and celebrated.

Seventh movement: "Conclusion"

To set the text of the seventh and last movement Milhaud returns to the use of unpitched voices and percussion. This short coda to the whole piece is only twenty-six measures long and takes a minute to perform. It is a summary of the terrible story of the Atrides family. One speaker, a Choéphore from the Chorus, reiterates the tale: first, the massacre of the children of Thyestes that takes place before the events of this trilogy of plays; second, the murder of Agamemnon; and third, the savior, Orestes. She asks if he is the savior or the destroyer, and the piece ends on a contemplative

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25 Ibid., p.160, "Parais, lumière, te voici."

note as she, with the accompaniment of the Chorus, asks, "Where shall heaven's anger cease? Where?"[26]

The somber tone of this last movement is supported by the quiet and repetitive accompaniment of the percussion instruments. Thirteen unpitched instruments are written into the orchestration and all but two play the same pattern throughout. The exceptions are the hammer and one bass drum, which are played only when the chorus reinforces the cries of "First", "Second", and "Third" of the soloist. The tone of the movement as a whole foreshadows the plot of the third play of this trilogy, which was told earlier in this paper.

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[26] Ibid., p.167. "Où cessera la colère du ciel? Où?"

CHAPTER FOUR: PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF PERFORMANCE

The concert premiere of Les Choéphores took place in Paris at the Concerts Delgrange on June 15,1919. Felix Delgrange directed the performance and the prominent singer Jane Bathori sang the soprano solo, performed the solo speaking part, and rehearsed the chorus. The performance requires seventeen percussion instruments and the budget was very tight for instrumentalists, so the percussion parts were performed by such friends of Milhaud as Jean Cocteau, Georges Auric, Lucien Daudet, Francis Poulenc, and Arthur Honegger.[1]

Since its premiere, Les Choéphores has not been performed very much. The possible reasons for this will be discussed below. A few productions are documented in Milhaud's autobiography and in the biography of him by Paul Collaer. Collaer wrote of a performance in 1927 produced by Louis de Vocht with his Caecilia Chorale and the Orchestre de la Société des Nouveaux Concerts d'Anvers.[2] The Finale of Les Euménides was also on the program and the concert was performed in Brussels and Paris as well as Anvers.[3] The first staged performance was in Brussels at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in 1935. Milhaud was able to attend that

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[1] Darius Milhaud, Ma vie heureuse, (Paris: Belfond, 1987), p.85.
[2] Paul Collaer, Darius Milhaud, (Paris: Éditions Slatkine, 1982), p. 168.
[3] These facts are also noted on the title page of the vocal-piano score of Les Choéphores published by Heugel et Cie. in Paris. According to this source, the performance in 1919 recorded as the premiere in Collaer was only fragments, and the first complete concert performance was this one in 1927.

performance. The entire trilogy of the Oresteia was presented by the Deutsche Oper of Berlin in June, 1964.

The American premiere of Les Choéphores took place in New York City on November 16, 1950 at Carnegie Hall, with Dimitri Mitropoulos conducting. It was on a program paired with L'heure espagnole by Maurice Ravel. Mme. Madeleine Milhaud performed the solo speaking part, Mack Harrell sang Orestes, Eileen Farrell sang the part of Electra and the Westminster Choir performed the choral parts.[4]

Theodore Presser distributes the pieces by Milhaud that are published by Heugel, including the three pieces of the Oresteia trilogy. Since Presser began representing the catalog, the performances of Les Choéphores for which materials were rented from them have been the following:

1975-Oakland Symphony

1978-Eastman School of Music

1980-Portland State University, movements 4 and 5 only

1981-Kent Hatteberg

1982-Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1983-University of Akron

1985-Portland State University[5]

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[4] "Two Operas Offered by Philharmonic," New York Times, 17 November 1950, p.38.

[5] From a telephone conversation on July 3,1990 with Maria Iannacone, rental department manager at Theodore Presser.

The details of other performances of Les Choéphores might be found in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, or in the archives of Heugel and its agents through the years, but a complete listing of all performances is not this writer's intent. The evidence presented by Presser's list of rentals for the United States in the last fifteen years is sufficient to state that the piece is rarely performed.

There are several possible reasons for this. The most important is the need for seventeen unpitched percussion instruments as designated in the score, and enough players to perform the piece as orchestrated. A discussion of these unusual movements is undertaken below. Another reason is the choral requirements. A potential producer of Les Choéphores will probably have a mixed chorus at hand. There is very little singing for the men in this piece, and quite a lot for women. When considering the amount of rehearsal time available to most choruses, budgeting enough time for rehearsing the women would be difficult. A third reason is the subject matter of this oratorio and the rest of the trilogy. The story is about murder and vengeance and justice, and in order to understand any of the text, a listener should understand the story and history associated with the piece, which is not an easy task with all those gods and goddesses and Furies running around. Since choral-orchestral performances often require substantial budgets and this one especially so, the nature of the audience must be considered when programming is planned. A last reason why there have been relatively few performances of Les Choéphores is the answer to a difficult question. As with all music, the conductor must decide if this piece,

with its complexities, is worth the effort of production. This writer thinks that it is.

Once a conductor has decided to take on the task of producing Les Choéphores, there are practical problems to be solved. What follows now is information that may facilitate this complex undertaking.

As stated above, the entire Oresteia trilogy of pieces by Milhaud is published by Heugel in Paris. Currently the agent for Heugel in the United States is Theodore Presser, Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, 19010. Vocal-piano scores of all three pieces are available for purchase, but they are very expensive. In 1986, the vocal-piano score for Agamemnon was $18.75, Les Choéphores cost about $56.00 and Les Euménides cost $84.60. There is a study score of Les Choéphores available for purchase as well, which cost $71.75 at that time. If study scores of Agamemnon and Les Euménides are not available for purchase, the full scores may be examined at the Milhaud archive at Mills College in Oakland, California. They may be neither borrowed from there nor reproduced. At the time of this writing, materials for performance, that is, choral parts, orchestra parts and a full score may be rented from Theodore Presser. Les Choéphores is not listed as a dramatic work in their catalogue, so the fee structure for rental is by performance only and not based on the size of the theater or ticket prices, as it would be for an opera. Added to the basic rental fee are charges for extra string parts and for choral scores.

The chorus needed for a performance of Les Choéphores ought to be bigger than a chamber chorus in order to be in balance with the

orchestra, though every conductor's idea of how large is large enough is different. There are, however, some bits of information about the various movements that will make planning for a chorus easier.

As outlined in a previous chapter, the first movement has seven sections that are approximately equal in size. Two of them are for solo soprano (with a range of middle C to G# above the staff). The women of the chorus sing in the other five, in unison, two parts and three parts. The men sing in three sections, dividing into four parts only for three measures and three parts for three measures. A contralto solo with a range including G below the staff to C above middle C sings one section twelve measures long. The parts for the soloists in the first two movements are indicated to be from the chorus, but they are challenging and require soloistic voices for adequate balancing with the orchestra. The soprano from the first movement may also sing the second movement solo[6], or a different soprano may be assigned. The second movement is *a cappella*, and so only requires a voice that can balance a wordless chorus and sing a high Bb several times. The chorus for the second movement is in six parts, divided SSATBB. It sings wordlessly, accompanying the soloist.

The third movement is very long, taking about fifteen minutes, or half the total time for the whole piece. Only the women sing, mostly in unison, and, as is indicated in the score, the tessitura is largely for sopranos. There may be altos who will want to take on the challenge of this movement as

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6 Apparently Mme. Gabrielle Gills did both movements in the 1927 performance conducted by the composer. This is indicated on the title page of the vocal-piano score.

well. The sopranos of the chorus are singing for about half the total time of the movement, with the soprano singing the part of Electra and the baritone singing the part of Orestes fairly equally sharing the other half. Electra could be sung by a mezzo-soprano, since she must negotiate a B below middle C and a G above the staff. Orestes must be a baritone who can sing E's often, F's occasionally, and a G above middle C at the end of the movement.

The fourth, fifth, and seventh movements are spoken, with percussion accompaniment. The solo speaker for these movements will probably be different from the solo singers because she will not have to match any pitches. She will have to read rhythms with facility and pronounce French easily. The more easily she reads French, the easier will be her job of interpreting the rhythms written, for they conform most of the time to the rhythm of the language. Both men and women are in the speaking chorus.

The sixth movement uses the SATB chorus. The women sing in unison throughout except for three measures. Once again it will be somewhat high in tessitura for altos. The men sing mostly in unison. There are occasional divided parts.

There is one remarkable difference between the task for the men of the chorus and that of the women. Except for a few words spoken in the nonpitched movements, the men never sing any text. In contrast, the women's text moves quickly and is coupled with challenging melodic lines. Therefore, the rehearsal time required for women and men will be very different. If the women are American English-speaking, and unused to pronouncing French, the task of preparing them will be even longer. Also,

the men's parts are marked as being from the orchestra. In a dramatic production of Les Choéphores, therefore, the women would be on stage and the men would perform from the orchestra.

Since the rehearsal times required are so different, a logical way to reduce the women's time needed to prepare would be to consider performing the piece in English, if the choir to be involved is English-speaking. This writer believes that Les Choéphores should be performed in French. The musical imperative that a vocal composition should be performed in the language in which it was written is not the only reason. It is also because Milhaud wrote the music of the trilogy to help Claudel's translation of Aeschylus from Greek into French become truer to the original. There are many English translations of the Oresteia trilogy, and several other French translations which were mentioned earlier in this paper, but this one is unique in that the translator believed that music was necessary to the correct interpretation of some parts of the text. When Claudel met Milhaud, he was struggling with something that seemed to be missing from his translation of Agamemnon, and in the earliest meetings of the two men, the need for music was considered.

If one were still determined to perform the piece in English the task of preparing a score would be monumental. It would be necessary to come up with a relatively valid translation of Claudel's translation, and a large part of the rhythms of the entire piece would need to be rewritten, because much of the rhythmic complexity of the melodic lines originates in the language used.

This is why I said above that the solo speaker's task would be so much easier if she were facile at pronouncing French text.

The orchestra required for the movements which are pitched is large, but there are no unusual instruments needed. Of the three flutes, one must double on piccolo. The score also calls for two oboes and English horn, two Bb clarinets and bass clarinet, four bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones and tuba, strings, harp, celesta, timpani, cymbals and a bass drum. This is a big orchestra, but a conventional one.

In contrast, movements four, five, and seven are not at all conventional. They are scored for combinations of seventeen unpitched percussion instruments. Descriptions of each instrument follow, named first as it is in the score with the numbers of the movements in which it is played, and then translated and defined, if necessary.

Cymbal 4,5,7-Since there are directions in each movement concerning what sort of material the stick for hitting the cymbal should be made of, the cymbal is probably a suspended one and not a set of crash cymbals.

Grelots 4-sleigh bells, also called jingles[7].

Triangle 4,5,7.

Castagnettes de fer 4,5,7-metal castanets.

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[7] James Blades, Percussion Instruments and Their History, rev. ed. (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984), p.479.

Castagnettes de bois 4,6,7-wooden castanets.

Crécelle 5,7-rattle.

Fouet 4,5,7-whip. This is not a real whip, but rather the percussionist's substitute for one. It is usually some arrangement of two moderate-sized boards on a hinge that are slapped together for the characteristic crack.

Tambour de basque 4,5,7-tambourine.

Tambourin provençal 4,5,7-It is a drum that is longer than it is wide, and is sometimes referred to as a tabor.

Caisse roulante 4,5,7-tenor drum.

Caisse claire 4,5,7-a regular 5" snare drum, not the larger marching snare drum, or field drum.

Tambour voilé 4,5-Literally, this means "veiled drum." An acquaintance who is a percussionist has told me that he believes it to be a muffled side drum.[8] James Blades also describes the *tambour voilé* in the section pertaining to side drums.[9] Side drums in the modern symphony orchestra are five to eight inches in depth and about fourteen inches in diameter. They are played with sticks and have snares. For a muffled side

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[8] Pat Pfiffner, a percussionist in San Diego, California has been most helpful with my questions that relate to percussion instruments in general and how many people are needed to play these movements in particular.
[9] Blades, p. 369-74.

drum the snares are loosened and the drum is muffled with a piece of cloth on the vellum.

Tam-tam 4,5,7-A tam-tam is not a gong. The tam-tam is a bronze disc with a shallow rim. The gong has a deep rim. The tam-tam, although "tuned" in the manufacturing process, is not pitched, while gongs have definite pitches. Milhaud calls for a tam-tam in Les Choéphores.

Grosses caisses 4,5,7-Bass drums. Two bass drums are required in all three percussion movements of Les Choéphores. In all three movements, one is played with a drumstick and the other with a timpani stick with the head covered in hide.

Coups de marteau sur une planche 4,7-Hammer strokes on a plank. James Blades includes this indication in the section of his book called "Exotics."[10] It describes itself.

Machine à vent 5 only-Wind machine. This instrument is also described in James Blades' "Exotics" chapter.[11] Another name for it is the aeoliphone, and two different contraptions, each described by Blades, may serve the function of providing the correct sound.

The next question to address when planning a performance of Les Choéphores that includes the percussion movements is the numbers of players needed to perform the movements. Ideally, with an unlimited budget, one would want to hire one player for each instrument, since at

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[10] Ibid., p. 397.
[11] Ibid., p.394-5.

times in each movement, all the instruments called for in that movement are played at the same time. This means that one would need fifteen percussionists. In the fourth movement, however, only m.42 uses everyone. There also might be some doubling possible with several combinations of instruments. One person might play both the triangle and the sleigh bells. One of the castanet players may also be able to play the cymbal part, with the exception of mm.24, 25, and 28, where they play together, and between two players it might be possible to cover the two bass drum and the tam-tam parts. These doublings would bring the number of players necessary for the fourth movement to eleven, and there are only ten measures where more than ten instruments play.

The fifth movement also calls for fifteen instruments. The rattle replaces the sleigh bells and the wind machine replaces the hammer on a plank. M.88 and mm.105-139 (the end) are the only places where more than nine instruments are scored at once. This movement might be possible with the eleven players from the fourth movement, but the amount of time during which four players are managing two instruments at once is greater. Whether or not this will be practical to attempt depends once again on the abilities of the players.

The seventh movement requires thirteen instruments. At least twelve are playing all twenty-six measures, so doubling will be harder here. Doubling may be possible pairing the whip with the tambourine and the wooden castanets or cymbal with the hammer on a plank.

One way to fulfill the need for so many percussionists may be to use other instrumentalists on the simpler parts during the percussion movements. As mentioned above, this was done for the premier concert when Milhaud's friends played percussion. They are famous names now, but none of them is known historically as a percussionist. Most of the parts are straightforward and many other instrumentalists might manage them fairly well. I did not make definite committments about the numbers of players necessary above because the abilities of individual percussionists may significantly change how many are needed. If other players were used, there might be enough of these "doublers" to allow as many "percussionists" as there are instruments scored in the piece. It may be cheaper to pay a few willing wind and string players a doubling fee than to find eleven or even fifteen professional percussionists. Different productions will find individual solutions to this problem.

Except for a few unusual instructions in the percussion sections of the piece, the score is notated very clearly, using standard orchestral terms. The instructions in the three unpitched movements are easily translated with a French dictionary.

There are two misprints which must be noted. Both were noticed by this writer because they are inconsistent musically, and are likely places for a printing mistake as well. The first is in the vocal-piano score on p.102 in the sixth movement. In the second system, first measure (m.25), the third note from the bottom in the left hand of the second piano part should be an Eb instead of a Db. The chord sounding here contains the aggregate in four

groups of three notes. Other chords occurring before this with the same voicing have Eb where the Db is. See mm. 14 and 15 earlier in the same movement. The second misprint is in the small orchestral study score on p.44 in the third movement. In the first measure on the page (m.62), the notated C in the solo vocal part should be Cb both times that it occurs in the measure, although only one flat sign is necessary at the beginning of the measure. This misprint is acceptable as such because the solo part utilizes a limited pitch class set for the entire section. Cb is part of that set, C natural is not.

The scheduling of the final rehearsals for any choral/orchestral production is daunting in the best of situations. Producing Les Choéphores is further complicated by the two separate instrumental ensembles necessary. As stated above the women will need more time than the men of the chorus in the earlier stages of rehearsal. Perhaps there will be time for a rehearsal with the speaker and the chorus before they get together with the percussion. The singing soloists will have their coaching time, and one rehearsal that may not be necessary is the traditional piano rehearsal with the soloists and chorus. The whole ensemble only sings tutti at the end of the third movement, and this is in unison. At other times the chorus and soloists sing sequentially in the same movement, but not together. Since the orchestra rarely doubles the chorus it will be necessary to have an accompanist who can give the chorus an idea of what is ahead for them. It would be ideal to have two pianists for some final piano rehearsals with the chorus and with the soloists because the vocal piano score is a four hand reduction, and there are a lot of notes surrounding their singing parts.

The conductor will need to schedule separate percussion ensemble rehearsals from orchestral rehearsals because there are large parts for both ensembles and one rehearsal period will easily be used on half of the oratorio. When both groups are finally together on one stage the percussionists will not need a different arrangement than usual for their instruments. Although the section will occupy a larger space, I have been advised that they can still be grouped at the back of the orchestra on the left as the conductor faces the ensemble.

As with any choral-orchestral production this piece would benefit from at least two full dress rehearsals. With separate ensemble rehearsals one can efficiently put together movements 1,2,3, and 6 at one time and movements 4,5, and 7 at another and only put it all together once before the performance. But both the conductor and the other performers will benefit from more than one sequential run-through, and those singers and players who have parts throughout the work will need to see how much energy is needed to perform the whole thing.

A full concert production of Les Choéphores might be beyond the resources of a particular ensemble, but there are various ways that parts of this piece could be presented. One of the reasons why it has been so seldom performed is because of the complexity of a complete production. There have been performances of only the nonpitched movements, and this alternative offers a new experience to the chorus, allows use of percussion resources that might be available, and perhaps allows for interdisciplinary

collaboration with a drama department or a foreign language department for the speaking soloist.

If a concert performance is well within the capabilities of the performing institution a more ambitious project might be attempted. Claudel and Milhaud originally intended that the music be a further translation of Aeschylus' intentions. Ideally, a dramatic production of the entire play in Claudel's translation with an orchestra and the men of the chorus in the pit accompanying the women of the chorus and the soloists on stage would fully reproduce their artistic vision. The piece then assumes operatic proportions, like Les Euménides, the third play of the trilogy. The music of Agamemnon, the first play of the three, is much less complicated and musically demanding. A staged production of Agamemnon would be considerably easier than either of the other two plays, and a dramatic production of the entire trilogy would need considerable resources, but be the best possible presentation. As stated above, this has been done once, in Berlin in 1964. Perhaps it can happen again. Claudel sought out Milhaud and collaborated with him in order to interpret Aeschylus' text more accurately. Greek drama was accompanied by music, although not much is known about what kind and how much music. These pieces, of which Les Choéphores is the middlemost example in complexity, offer an ideal combination of text and music. The text needed the music to be a true translation from Greek, and the music was written expressly for helping the understanding of the text. The artists began the project with that purpose in mind.

For this writer Les Choéphores has held up under scrutiny. There is always something new to discover about it musically. It is a marvelous window into Milhaud's mind as a young man and suggests several opportunities for future study of his work. Later pieces may show an evolution of his polychordal harmonic language from that which is first encountered in Les Choéphores. I have seen that there are many similar devices in Les Euménides, but are they more highly developed? Do they have an even closer relationship to the text? Milhaud called Les Choéphores "Harmonic Variations" and he piled many different ideas into each movement. Are any of those ideas developed in his mature compositional language?

I began this study in order to learn more about the era in which the pieces were written. Early twentieth century French composers were turning away from Wagner as their aesthetic model and looking for a new leader. Jean Cocteau was one spokesman for contemporary artistic thought and many young composers admired Erik Satie. Although Darius Milhaud is considered part of that circle, in composition he always went his own way. His musical language is unique, and while it is connected to that time, it deserves further study within his own body of work.

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APPENDIX

DOCUMENTATION ON PREPARATION OF RECITALS

These recitals were presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting at the University of Washington. Both concerts were held at the First United Methodist Church of Seattle, 811 Fifth Avenue, where I was the choir director from September 1982 until June 1984.

The chorus that sang these concerts was the Sanctuary Choir of that church, augmented on each occasion by three or four friends of mine. The choir normally consisted of fifteen sopranos, fifteen altos, six tenors and six basses, unauditioned and of varying talent and training. As a group they were enthusiastic, adventurous, and hardworking. Each of the sections had a paid soloist who also acted as section leader. The members of this quartet were invaluable to me because their skills allowed me a wider range of music from which to choose repertoire.

The chorus rehearsed two hours once a week. During the period that we prepared the Bach Cantata and the Mozart Mass we also continued to rehearse and provide music for two worship services on Sunday mornings. I usually spent the second half of each rehearsal working on the recital music.

The orchestras for each concert were hired for the occasion. For the first recital, players were mostly non-student professionals, union members hired on a contract basis by the church.

Recital 1

May 1, 1983, 2:00p.m. The Sanctuary Choir
First United Methodist Church, 811 Fifth Avenue, Seattle.

Cantata 76: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God J.S.Bach

Concerto for Organ and Orchestra, No.13 in F Major,
"The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" G.F.Handel

Mass in C Major, K.317, "The Coronation" W.A.Mozart

Cantata 76, "The Heavens Declare the Glory of God," is a two part piece, first performed by Bach on June 6, 1723 at the Thomaskirche. This was the Second Sunday after the Trinity, and the second week for Bach at his new position as Director of Music for the city of Leipzig. This cantata is considered to be the second cantata in the cycle written for the church years 1723-1724, the beginning of his most prolific years of cantata writing. In the actual service the first part was performed between the Gospel and the sermon and the second part was heard after the sermon.

Although the Mozart mass is longer in duration and has more choral work than the Bach cantata, the latter presented a greater challenge to my choir. There are two reasons for this. The first is that this cantata has a remarkably thick contrapuntal texture. Thick counterpoint is characteristic of the music of J.S.Bach and this first movement is an excellent (and somewhat daunting) example. The movement opens with twelve measures of instrumental introduction in five voice counterpoint. The bass solo voice enters with the melody of the first text and in m.20 the chorus joins, with the sopranos repeating the initial melody. Until m.56 the first chorus proceeds

as a chorale prelude, with the orchestra doubling the choral parts and instrumental interludes between each line of the verse.

The second reason why this cantata was hard to learn is the four voice fugue in the second half of the first movement. There is a long subject introduced first by each of the soloists. The rest of the choir joins and each part is doubled in the orchestra. The trumpet provides a fifth contrapuntal voice and part of the time the continuo line is different from the choral bass line. With six independent voices producing a steady total rhythm of sixteenth notes, the texture is even more complicated than the first section of the movement. The homophonic nature of the text of the first section helped my chorus through the difficulties with the melismatic lines, but the thickness of the texture throughout made it difficult for them to hear themselves. We worked on these problems in several ways. We spoke the text in rhythm after they had spent some time with the notes. We sang the notes on "ta" to lighten the texture and take away the complexity of text. We sang the text and pitches together slowly. Our final goal was to sing with as much rhythmic accuracy as possible through the long melismas of sixteenth notes. Many members of the choir found it difficult to sing these runs accurately.

The solo movements in this cantata are rhythmically complex. I rehearsed separately at least twice with each member of the quartet to allow us each to be comfortable with the arias and recitatives. The pitches of the first tenor recitative were especially difficult to learn. The balance only required special attention in the bass aria, which includes a trumpet obbligato. My bass soloist was strong enough and the trumpet player

technically able to make any adjustments that we considered to be necessary.

In summary, a better performance of this particular cantata might have been given if my choir had been smaller, or at least better balanced, and auditioned. It was, however, an excellent learning experience for them. It challenged the professional quartet, and taught me lessons in coaching, rehearsing baroque counterpoint and fugues, and in choosing appropriate music for the chorus that is available.

Opportunities to perform organ concertos seldom occur because of the combination of forces that are required. When the church agreed to hire an orchestra for this concert, George Fiore, the excellent organist at First Church, and I decided that a concerto should be part of the program. He suggested the Handel concerto known as "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" because it went well musically with the Bach and Mozart pieces already planned. The orchestration fell within the requirements for the other works as well.

The Organ Concerto in F known as "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale" is numbered in some places as No.13, since it is neither part of Opus 4 nor Opus 7, the two sets of six. In other naming systems it is known as No.1 of the second set, also called Opus 6 by early publishers. HWV 295, as it is now catalogued, was most likely the concerto played at the first performance of Israel in Egypt on April 4, 1739.

Handel played organ concertos during the intermissions of his oratorio performances. This concerto was placed on our program between the other two pieces with that tradition in mind. There were no rehearsal problems related to learning the music because all the performers were professionals and were well prepared. There were, however, two items to be addressed in rehearsals. One was the establishment of probable tempi, always subject to some variation in performance, and the other was the agreement between soloist and orchestra on articulation and ornamentation. Since Mr. Fiore and I had agreed on these issues before the rehearsal, he would play what we had decided and the concertmaster would interpret it if anyone in the group needed clarification.

For me the principal challenge was to start everyone together, particularly at the beginning of the second movement. A *tutti* eighth note pickup into an *allegro* in common time required that I display the length of the third beat without making it a motivating entrance cue. After two or three repetitions the orchestra and I understood each other and I had practiced an invaluable technical lesson that I had only theoretically understood before this opportunity.

The performance of this concerto went quite well and was especially enjoyed by members of the congregation who admired Mr. Fiore's work. He and I capitalized on this support and programmed another Handel concerto the following December for performance between two halves of a Messiah concert.

The Mozart Coronation Mass, K.317 was written in March 1779 and is traditionally believed to have been composed for the crowning of an image of the Virgin Mary in a church near Salzburg. The works list in Grove's Dictionary records the first performance in March 1780, according to a note on the manuscript of the work,

This mass was the centerpiece of the choir's spring effort. It was easier for them to learn than the Bach because it had the familiar form of the five movement mass, and because the texture was generally homophonic. There were fewer solo entrances for individual voice parts, but extra work in rehearsal was required in those places that did have contrapuntal lines. One example of this occurred at the "Qui sedes ad dexteram" five measures before letter F in the Gloria movement. The tenors required repeated rehearsal of this entrance, and they barely retained it for the performance. When they missed the entrance, the subsequent entrances in the other parts were shaky as well. The challenge of this eight measure phrase was increased by the independence of the orchestral lines which gave very little help to the choir in that section. Other places with independent entrances by different sections of the choir needed extra rehearsal as well. In the Credo, the "Et vitam venturi saeculi" is such a place, but here the orchestra doubled the chorus, and the entrance didn't seem as risky for the singers.

One conducting problem that needed specific attention was the transition to each of the Hosannas. The first is preceded by a fermata which ends the very slow Sanctus. The entrance by the orchestra is on the downbeat, so the third beat of the previous measure needed to be shown as

an entrance. But this is such a short time that the orchestra came in raggedly. Because of this I repeated the second beat of the previous measure without emphasis after the fermata to show the orchestra the length of the new beat and gave a preparation on the third. This extra time allowed the orchestra to be with me. The second Hosanna follows the end of the Benedictus without a break. The Benedictus is in 4/8 time, conducted in four. I told the orchestra that the new quarter note would be the same length as the old sixteenth note and when I reached the double bar my beat doubled in speed. Although the orchestra needed advance warning to do this transition with me, it went smoothly in rehearsal and in performance.

This Mozart Mass was an appropriate selection for the choir. It challenged them without discouraging them. The soloists were equal to the work provided for them. The contrast between the Bach and the Mozart gave the chorus an opportunity to compare works of the two masters and varied our rehearsals sufficiently to keep choir members interested and vocally alert. If I were to repeat this concert opportunity, I might do a different Bach cantata, but in general, I was pleased with the outcome.

Recital 2

May 20, 1984, 2:00 p.m. The Sanctuary Choir
First United Methodist Church, 811 Fifth Avenue, Seattle

Elijah by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

My church choir also performed in this recital. During this year there were about forty members and for this concert four friends of mine joined them. The balance was still uneven, with the men's sections much smaller than the women's sections.

The chorus had plenty of rehearsal time for this concert, because we programmed it a year ahead. The rehearsals were the same as for the first recital, once a week for two hours. We usually spent the last forty-five minutes on Elijah. We did some work before Christmas, but did most of the learning after the new year.

The soloists were once again my regular paid quartet. They were challenged by the opportunity and were paid a small honorarium to recognize the extra time they had given. Our baritone at the time, Charles Pailthorp, was deservedly paid somewhat more for his fine work as Elijah.

I contracted the orchestra myself, recruiting players mostly from the School of Music at the University of Washington. I planned three combined chorus and orchestra rehearsals. The players were paid by the First United Methodist Church, who fully supported this project from its inception. Six months before the performance I presented them with a tentative budget, to which they fully agreed. The members of that church have my gratitude forever.

Mendelssohn first decided to write a second sacred oratorio in the summer of 1842. He had apparently written to his librettist, Schubring, in 1838 about the story of Elijah and over the following years some discussion

had taken place about the form of the piece. In the end, the collaborators avoided the narrative form; there is no Evangelist or character who fulfills a similar role. Mendelssohn also wanted his text to only come from the Bible, and as a result the story does not have a smoothly flowing plot, but instead consists of several scenes from Elijah's life and other groupings of texts from different places in Scripture that represent what Elijah stood for.

Elijah was finally written because Mendelssohn was asked by the manager of the prestigious Birmingham Festival in England to write a large oratorio for presentation there. The first performance took place there on August 26, 1846.

The choral parts of Elijah were well within the capabilities of my church choir. There were, however, several places which required special attention for reasons of balance or contrapuntal complexity. One place which required special attention was No.7, "For He shall give his angels charge over thee." It has eight choral parts, with the men and women divided antiphonally for the first thirty-two measures. Since my chorus had twelve men and thirty women, the balance needed careful attention, especially by women with strong voices. Later in the movement the chorus divides into SATB I and SATB II. Here it was important for us to have evenness between the two choruses and my task was to diplomatically make sure that there were strong singers in each SATB chorus.

In No.9, "Blessed are the men who fear Him," two challenges required attention. The first is the nature of the opening melodic line, with a descending minor sixth from F for the sopranos to sing pianissimo. This is a

vocal problem that is usually solved with varying degrees of success by asking the sopranos to sing the second note, an A, louder in order to even it out with the naturally louder F. The conductor can then encourage them to sing both notes as quietly as possible by helping them to get a good breath for the entrance with an appropriate gesture of preparation. The tenors have a similar entrance in m.7. The alto and bass entrances later on have the same melodic line, but are not in extreme ranges for either part, and so are easier to sing. The second challenge for the chorus is the motive for the second theme. The sopranos, altos, and basses each must sing "Through darkness riseth light" on a rising arpeggio through a tenth. It is difficult for each part to keep an even tone through this line, which is exposed because of the contrapuntal nature of the movement. We worked on this by asking each part to think about the whole line as they took a breath, so that they were prepared for the higher notes that came later.

In the Baal scene, Nos. 10-13, the chorus needed to remember their cues. The dialogue passed quickly, and entrances like the one at letter A in No.10 lost effectiveness if they were ragged. Extra repetitions were required during orchestra rehearsals as well as in the earlier piano rehearsals. This was necessary in all the places which required dialogue between the chorus and a soloist.

There is a tremendous amount of work for a choir in a work such as this, and merely the volume of notes to be learned is a challenge for any chorus. It was important for the chorus to convey the mood of a particular movement in order to keep the loosely organized plot moving, and those

sections which required quick changes of dynamics and tempo were the hardest to master. One example of this is in No.34, "Behold, God the Lord passed by," a pivotal movement describing the arrival of the Lord not in a windstorm, an earthquake, or a fire, but in a "still small voice." The tenth measure calls for a *subito pianissimo* with a very quick tempo after a *forte* fermata in m.9, and the twenty measures after that include two molto crescendo/diminuendos to portray the windstorm portion of the text. We needed to come back to sections like this one weekly ensure retention.

This oratorio included all kinds of ensembles to be conducted. There is orchestra alone, *a cappella* chorus, vocal recitatives and solos, and *tutti* passages. There were technical problems to be worked out on almost every page. A representative few of them are noted here.

The scene between Elijah and the widow, No.8, has sudden changes in dynamics and tempi, fermatas, and two soloists to be made into a coherent telling of the story. In this movement I needed to be most conscientiously thinking ahead. It was my particular fortune to have very well prepared soloists, and a technically able orchestra made up mostly of friends. I had also realized before the combined rehearsals that this movement would need extra time and thought, and so its outcome was successful, but not without considerable extra effort.

I memorized the recitatives throughout the oratorio and was glad that I had. There are too many other variables to be considered in performance and there is no time and no reason to consult the score. In the end, the score that I used was not in front of me for notes and entrances, but more for

the reminders about tempo and mood that I had written to myself while studying.

The solo movement No.26, "It is enough" contained some representative conducting problems. A bass solo and a legato 'cello obbligato are accompanied by the rest of the strings with detached notes on the first, third and sixth eighth notes of each measure. The challenge was to mark the beat precisely enough for the other strings while maintaining a legato look for the bass and 'celli. Later in the movement, the tempo changes to a quick two when Elijah gets angry. This can be accomplished by accelerating in the last measures of the section in three until the previous quarter note equals the new half note. The return to the old tempo is less simple. At the *adagio*, the orchestra must be cut off while Elijah sings the first measure, and the 'celli must be prepared for the second measure and conducted through it. A downbeat is given for the third measure of the adagio and the bass soloist is allowed to sing his second "It is enough" on his own, but the orchestra must be prepared for the entrance on the next measure, which is a return to the beginning theme and accompaniment. The technical problems that were addressed for this movement are examples of those found in many sections of the oratorio.

With the chorus well prepared and an orchestra of friends, the three final rehearsals were hard work, but also tremendous fun. There were places in several movements where the brass repeatedly had to be asked to play more softly to balance the chorus. I promised them that if they did, that I would give them an opportunity to play out when it was appropriate. Later in

the rehearsal I encouraged them to do this during a runthrough of No.20, the finale of the first part. After they nearly blew me off the podium in retaliation for my earlier requests for quiet, we agreed on a happy medium, and the balance in the concert turned out fairly well.

There were no major disasters during the performance and only a few minor glitches. None of these marred the overall success of the project. The chorus members were proud of their accomplishment, soloists had another role learned and orchestra members earned some money and experience. I learned a great deal about the different aspects of mounting such a large project. This recital helped me to synthesize many of the different bits that I had learned in the preceding years of study and I was fortunate to be able to spend so much energy on such a rewarding piece as Elijah.

VITA

Paula Kathleen Creamer

Born: July 1, 1950, Syracuse New York

Secondary education: Westlake High School, Thornwood, New York, 1968.

Degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry,
Mount Holyoke College,
South Hadley, Massachusetts,
May, 1972.

Master of Music in Choral Music,
University of Southern California,
Los Angeles, California,
June, 1976.

Doctor of Musical Arts in Choral Conducting,
University of Washington,
Seattle, Washington,
June, 1991.