

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIBRETTO OF ...(*IPHIGENIA*)

esperanza spalding

(All Rights Reserved)

Excerpt from Act II

the stage-set for each sacrifice-cycle is disassembled.

...each cycle is a distinct layer of the set...

(perhaps the backdrop from each of re-enacted painting scenes?)

As USHER disassembles each layer of the set, the orchestra members depart, instrument by instrument, leaving only the Quartet playing.

m. 18 first layer of set carried off, revealing the CORPSE of IPHIGENIA

IPHIGENIA looks to CLEANING LADY, CLEANING LADY shakes her head choreographically...

USHER gets to disassembling another layer of set

m. 43 a layer of set is removed, and a second CORPSE of IPHIGENIA revealed

m. 63 another layer of the set disassembled

m. 66 another CORPSE of IPHIGENIA is revealed

m. 78 another CORPSE of IPHIGENIA revealed

each corpse wears a dress IPHIGENIA wore in one of the previous cycles. They are bloodied and tattered. this group of beings becomes our CHORUS later.

*m. 85 stage is stripped down to the first set/backdrop we started with
this gets dismantled*

m. 95 another CORPSE of IPHIGENIA is revealed

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIBRETTO OF ...(*IPHIGENIA*)

the last set pieces are removed

m. 119 IPHIGENIA's mind cracks as she witnesses what she is witnessing

by m. 123 walls of the stage are removed revealing the true surroundings to be a flimsy, scorched and desolate stage floating/hurling through an infinite celestial void.

Three of the revealed IPHIGENIAS rise and gather near USHER and IPHIGENIA. Two remain where they were revealed. Visibly stirred into awakensness/aliveness, but cracked to the depths of grief beyond repair...face buried in hands, head shaking continuously, or perhaps in fetal position. They sing their notes from here, with a tone of deep grief...

(m. 123 add fermata to end of measure)

Quartet tacit... from here through m. 274, all music if produced ONLY by CHORUS of IPHs voices

(?* USHER's voice is a supra voice, altered electronically, layered, splayed, multi-faceted... *?*)*

USHER (*rainbows flit around her*)
you see where we really are

CHORUS of IPHIGENIAS (IPHs)
the where we are

IPHIGENIA
where?

USHER
within a mind dreaming you to re-story tell again again bear and kill the Iphigenia

CHORUS of IPHS
the the Iphigenia

IPHIGENIA
what? the? the? what?

USHER

every eden touched is turned to clay the soil is clay the sex is clay the dream is
clay longing to iridesce the dust,
a you is born

CHORUS of IPHS

the Iphigenia
the real where we are

IPHIGENIA

where?

CHORUS of IPHS

dust

USHER

the clay is longing for
aching for you
to un-tense

CHORUS of IPHS

senses iridescent
lost forgot
our fruited origin
singing beneath the

(clench*)

**all make sound and gestural equivalent of an anal clench of death-grip
intensity.*

USHER

in the war for an anointed place
in the infinite void of forlorn

nipple of
home

USHER

part the lips
of his clenched myth

CHORUS OF IPHS

Iphigenia

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIBRETTO OF ...(*IPHIGENIA*)

USHER

mighty disorientin
wakin up in your own myth

before and after you die

and finding out, you don't exist
not yet... not yet

you were born
from out their out their minds
to sing us
from out their out their minds
re-mind about the lost grammar of life

sewn through the 'magnations of these men

after they tilled the story sterile
all clay consonants
too fired, too hard to make no sense

dependin on your blood
for flow

to make any kind of 'happen' happen

a myth happen
a wind happen
movin' fast enough
to hold itself together

knowin' it aint nothin without...

CHORUS OF IPHS

the Iphigenia
Ahh ahh

Excerpt from Act III

IPHIGENIA

Then set the eye of duty in thy heart

ESPERANZA SPALDING

SOLDIERS (*thoroughly pacified, applaud and sigh-sing*)

Ahhhh

AGAMEMNON

O that thy voice were near to cheer alway

IPHIGENIA

Within thy heart my voice shall ever ring

Inspiring thee to great and noble deeds.

USHER moves toward stage.

CHORUS of IPHIGENIAS shake their heads....

AGAMEMNON

My Iphigenia, my dearest hope

IPHIGENIA

Weep not, thou best of fathers

I am not like other women,
serene to live in thy house

No

I am

consecrated for a nation's work

SOLDIERS *sing simultaneously*

Iphigenia

Iphigenia

USHER at the lip of the stage

IPHIGENIA

I am the instrument to knit all Greece

To knit all Greece

and lift my country to supremest bounds.

Let Iphigenia die that Greece may live

AGAMEMNON

Daughter inspired, I wed thee unto Greece

IPHIGENIA

O new born joy!

O Greece regenerate!

O men of Hellas, (*sung to the hieratic melody, transposed to fit these chords*)

That I may breathe to you,

The hope and courage which exult my should.

**music goes back to m. 910*

SOLDIERS

SOME:

Aye

Aye

OTHERS:

Aye we rise

AGAMEMNON (*above the CHORUS of IPHs...*)

O that thy voice were near to cheer alway

IPHIGENIA

Investigates this wig of hers on the altar, fingers her own hair...trying to make sense of what's going on...

Doesn't sing her line, but everyone else's action does what it did before without her...

AGAMEMNON (*holding his head as if it is about to explode*)

My Iphigenia, my dearest hope

CHORUS of IPHIGENIAS sound becomes overwhelmingly intense

IPHIGENIA nauseous, shaking her head

IPHIGENIA:

no.

no.

(USHER leaves theater...)

IPHIGENIA vomits a gush of water (like the water USHER splashed on IPH's face during ACT I).

CHORUS of IPHIGENIA's erupt-birth out of facade of the stage. -i.e. - they simultaneously explode out-of and into the men's mind...breaking open the chrysalis of this myth.

EXCERPTS FROM THE LIBRETTO OF ...(*IPHIGENIA*)

IPHIGENIA squats over the burst water beneath her, fishes out the letter “I”, and slicks the letter across her chest.

Upon slicking it on her chest, the “I” becomes a portal, a chest-length slit. Through the slit/portal, we see the vast immensity Usher revealed to us in Act II -an “I” shaped window to infinite reality.

Simultaneously, the walls of the stage become fully translucent - what appeared firm is revealed to be gossamer. Through the see-through walls, the immensity of reality becomes visible -cosmos and earth- vast, real, constant.

The egg-like headpieces that all the men have been wearing up to this point, crack open, and crumble off. Their actual heads are revealed, wet and slick like a newborn’s.

MENELAOS and two of his men, each hold on to their heads so tight that their egg head-pieces cannot crack off.

One by one, the men who have cracked out of the egg-head-piece come to *IPHIGENIA*. She truly looks at them, eye to eye. Each man bows their head, leans their head into *IPHIGENIA*’s chest, and plunges through/into the portal slit made by the “I” on her chest.

We next see each man beyond the stage walls, born and walking into the vast reality, toward the horizon ...

As they approach and depart, head first through her infinity portal, each man musically improvises with *Iphigenia* and the Quartet (an be very very simple...whatever feels real and mutual in the moment)

MENELAOS remains a constant presence during all this -in the center...staring blankly, like a person in shock, on verge of losing their mind...just swaying...swaying...witnessing what is happening around him, not reacting...his arms limp at his side...in his right hand he holds his axe firm.

Once every man has left - except *MENELAOS* and his TWO LOYALS - *IPHIGENIA* turns back toward *MENELAOS*. *MENELAOS* is still swaying...swaying...gripping his Axe closer to him.

IPHIGENIA listens, and sings to his sway, (like a mother to a tantruming child)...*MENELAOS* stills, and softens as he listens...

As *IPHIGENIA* sings her mutuality/mother-song, his TWO LOYAL soldiers “see” that the walls of their world are see-through... they see the vastness on the

other side, and cower at the immensity. The TWO LOYALS wimper and cry, like toddlers abandoned outdoors in a thunder storm.

Hearing them wimper, MENELAOS firms up...firms his grip on his axe.

MENELAOS swings his axe at Iphigenia's neck.

(black out). the sound of his axe landing in a tree.

IPHIGENIA appears on the other side of the translucent walls...shaking her head choreographically, she walks with the others into and toward infinite reality.

We hear the next axe strike fall...then another...and another... as, hieratic theme is heard again, sung by MENELAOS alone.

On stage, MENELAOS revealed chopping at a tree trunk. The cowering TWO LOYAL men find their strength again, and join him...chopping and singing.

Iphigenia et al continue to expand toward horizon.