

THE MET: HD LIVE IN SCHOOLS

2015–16 Educator Guide

STRAUSS

# Elektra



The Met  
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VENGEFUL, IMPLACABLE, PATHOLOGICAL—THE CHARACTER OF ELECTRA has gripped writers for nearly 2,500 years. This mesmerizing protagonist, with her notorious lust for revenge and morbid father fixation, has conjured representation in formats as diverse as Greek tragedy, Expressionist opera, contemporary theater and film, Marvel comics, and Jungian psychology. Richard Strauss’s *Elektra* is a searing masterpiece of early 20th-century theater that sets the title character on an inexorable path leading to a final cataclysm of violence, accompanied by a revolutionary score that is, in the words of one critic, “the color of blood.”

The Met’s new production, previously presented in Aix-en-Provence and Milan, is by the acclaimed director Patrice Chéreau, who died in 2013, before his *Elektra* could make it to the stage of the Met. Chéreau viewed this opera as a kind of counterpart to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, with both title characters destroyed by the same fantasy of vengeance. “As in the Shakespeare,” Chéreau explained when his staging premiered in Aix, “you can see the black wing of depression at work, with its exhausting alternation of wariness, fear, panic, and exultation.” Written early in Strauss’s operatic career, *Elektra* achieves a level of psychological depth rarely equaled in his later works. Its music perfectly embodies the unremitting cycle of violence called forth by the Greek tragedy and the internal devastation wrought by the pursuit of revenge.

This guide is intended to help your students appreciate the opera within the context of the early 20th-century artistic avant-garde and its expansion of musical language. By exploring the opera’s tightly woven plot and its treatment of Greek mythology and tragedy, students will gain an understanding of the opera’s seminal status as a work of radical innovation. The activities on the following pages are designed to provide context, deepen background knowledge, and enrich the overall experience of this *Live in HD* transmission. This guide will also align with key strands of the Common Core Standards.

## THE WORK: *ELEKTRA*

An opera in one act, sung in German

Music by Richard Strauss

Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, adapted from his play, itself based on the tragedy *Electra* by Sophocles

First performed January 25, 1909 at the Dresden Court Opera, Germany

## PRODUCTION

Esa-Pekka Salonen, Conductor

Patrice Chéreau, Production

Vincent Huguet, Stage Director

Richard Peduzzi, Set Designer

Caroline de Vivaise, Costume Designer

Dominique Bruguière, Lighting Designer

## STARRING

(In order of vocal appearance):

Nina Stemme

*ELEKTRA* (soprano)

Adrienne Pieczonka

*CHRYSOTHEMIS* (soprano)

Waltraud Meier

*KLYTÄMNESTRA* (mezzo-soprano)

Eric Owens

*OREST* (bass-baritone)

Burkhard Ulrich

*AEGISTH* (tenor)

Production a gift of Robert L. Turner

Co-production of the Metropolitan Opera, New York; Teatro alla Scala, Milan; the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence; the Finnish National Opera, Helsinki; the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin; and the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona



STEMME



PIECZONKA



MEIER



OWENS

This guide is divided into five sections.

- **THE SOURCE, THE STORY, WHO'S WHO IN *ELEKTRA*, AND A TIMELINE**
- **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:**  
Two activities designed to align with and support various Common Core Standard strands used in ELA, History/Social Studies, and Music curricula
- **PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES:**  
Two activities to be used during *The Met: Live in HD* transmission, highlighting specific aspects of this production
- **POST-SHOW DISCUSSION:** A wrap-up activity, integrating the *Live in HD* experience into the students' understanding of the performing arts and the humanities
- **STUDENT RESOURCE PAGES:**  
Classroom-ready worksheets supporting the activities in the guide

The activities in this guide will address several aspects of *Elektra*:

- The underlying dramatic structure of literary works and the opera's formal organization
- The musical representation of dramatically significant moments
- The musical techniques employed by Strauss to create internal cohesion and meaning
- Creative choices made by the artists of the Metropolitan Opera for this production
- The opera as a unified work of art, involving the efforts of composer, librettist, and Met artists

This guide is intended to cultivate students' interest in *Elektra*, whether or not they have any prior experience with opera. It includes activities for students with a wide range of musical backgrounds and seeks to encourage them to think about opera—and the performing arts as a whole—as a medium of both entertainment and creative expression.



**THE SOURCE: *ELECTRA* BY SOPHOCLES** The works of the ancient Greek dramatist Sophocles date from the fifth century BC and feature some of the iconic figures of Classical tragedy: Oedipus, Antigone, and Electra. His *Electra* play (ca. 410 BC) explores the domestic fallout after the murder of the mythological King Agamemnon—one of the heroes of the Trojan War and a major character in Homer’s *Iliad*—by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. Agamemnon’s bereaved daughter Electra and her plot for revenge appear in similar works by Sophocles’s near contemporaries Aeschylus and Euripides. In his version, Sophocles explores Electra’s character and motivation, questioning what kind of person would so relentlessly pursue the goal of her own mother’s death.

In 1903, the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal adapted Sophocles’s tragedy into a stage play for the director Max Reinhardt in Berlin. Strauss attended a performance, and within two years, he and Hofmannsthal were collaborating to create an opera based on the play. Hofmannsthal had made a number of changes to the ancient Greek source that re-cast the characters in the light of the burgeoning field of psychoanalysis and the writings of Sigmund Freud, and he also altered the ending. The *Electra* of Sophocles finishes the play in triumph, whereas Hofmannsthal and Strauss’s comes to a different, much darker end.

(Note: This guide uses the German spelling of the characters’ names, as they appear in the opera’s libretto.)

**MYCENAE, AN INTERIOR COURTYARD OF THE PALACE.** A group of maidservants to Klytämnestra, Queen of Mycenae, gossip by the well, wondering whether Klytämnestra’s daughter Elektra will appear to grieve over her father, Agamemnon, as is her daily ritual. Elektra enters and the maidservants mock her for her unkempt appearance and venomous attitude. Left alone, Elektra recalls Agamemnon’s brutal murder at the hands of Klytämnestra and her lover Aegisth, and she imagines her father returning as a shade to oversee his own violent revenge. Elektra foresees the bloody completion of her vengeance, crowned by her dancing triumphantly on Agamemnon’s grave.

Elektra’s younger sister, Chrysothemis, interrupts Elektra’s reflections to warn her that Klytämnestra and Aegisth are planning to lock her away in a tower. Chrysothemis pleads with Elektra to renounce the blood feud that prevents them from leading normal lives. Noises from the palace signal the imminent arrival of the queen, and Chrysothemis urges Elektra to avoid their mother. Instead, she awaits the confrontation with glee.

Klytämnestra arrives accompanied by her entourage and finds Elektra in a more agreeable mood than usual. The queen sends away her followers and approaches her daughter, asking her whether she knows of a remedy for bad dreams. Elektra draws

## VOICE TYPE

Since the early 19th century, singing voices have usually been classified in six basic types, three male and three female, according to their range:

### SOPRANO

the highest-pitched type of human voice, normally possessed only by women and boys

### MEZZO-SOPRANO

the female voice whose range lies between the soprano and the contralto (Italian “mezzo” = middle, medium)

### CONTRALTO

the lowest female voice, also called an alto

### COUNTERTENOR

a male singing voice whose vocal range is equivalent to that of a contralto, mezzo-soprano, or (less frequently) a soprano, usually through use of falsetto

### TENOR

the highest naturally occurring voice type in adult males

### BARITONE

the male voice lying below the tenor and above the bass

### BASS

the lowest male voice

her mother into describing her nightly torments, and Klytämnestra asks Elektra to identify which animal sacrifice would appease the gods and cause her dreams to end. Elektra exultingly delivers her fatal blow: it is Klytämnestra herself who needs to die. Elektra describes with morbid pleasure how the queen will be chased and killed in her own palace by Elektra’s brother, Orest.

Just then, Klytämnestra’s confidante runs to her mistress and whispers a message in her ear. The queen returns to the palace with savage pleasure without interacting further with Elektra. Chrysothemis enters to relay the terrible news that Orest is dead, as has just been announced by two foreign messengers. Elektra resolves to complete her revenge without the help of her brother and attempts to enlist Chrysothemis in her plan to murder Klytämnestra and Aegisth. Chrysothemis refuses and flees. Cursing her, Elektra decides to commit the murders on her own. She begins to dig wildly in the ground, looking for the axe used in Agamemnon’s murder, which she had secreted away and buried for this purpose.

Elektra becomes aware that she is being watched by one of the strangers who had come bearing the news of Orest’s death. Her obvious grieving for Orest prompts the stranger to ask her who she is. When she reveals that she is Elektra, kin to Agamemnon and Orest, the stranger reels in shock. It is only when the aged servants of the palace throw themselves at the stranger’s feet that Elektra realizes that he is in fact Orest, returned in disguise. Together, they mourn the ravages of body and mind caused by Elektra’s pursuit of revenge. Elektra and Orest are interrupted by his tutor, who comes to summon Orest to the palace: Klytämnestra is within unprotected, and the moment of vengeance has come.

Orest enters the palace, and Elektra realizes that she has forgotten to give him the axe. From inside, Klytämnestra screams, and Elektra exults in her mother’s death. The maidservants are thrown into confusion, and when Aegisth is heard returning from the fields, they flee in fear before him. Only Elektra is left to light the way for Aegisth, and she ushers him into the palace with fawning delight. Soon Aegisth too screams for help and succumbs to the vengeance waiting for him within.

Chrysothemis enters to report on a battle within the palace between those loyal to Orest and Aegisth. Elektra exults in the final completion of her revenge and begins her triumphal dance. In an extreme state of ecstasy, she dances briefly in frenzied rapture before collapsing to the earth, dead.

## WHO'S WHO IN ELEKTRA

CHARACTER		PRONUNCIATION	VOICE TYPE	THE LOWDOWN
Elektra (Electra)	Daughter of the murdered King Agamemnon	eh-LEK-truh	Soprano	Implacable and possessed by an all-consuming desire for revenge, Elektra spends her days in fits of rage and mourning.
Chrysothemis	Elektra's sister	kroo-ZOE-teh-mees	Soprano	Unlike her sister, Chrysothemis longs for a normal life and to become a wife and mother.
Klytämnestra (Clytemnestra)	Elektra's mother, Agamemnon's wife and one of his assassins	KLOO-tame-NES-truh	Mezzo-soprano	Fearsome and powerful, she is haunted by nightmares; seeking relief, she performs sacrifices to pacify the gods.
Orest (Orestes)	Son of Agamemnon, exiled from a young age by Klytämnestra	oh-REHST	Baritone	Although long absent from his native land, he is a figure of fear for Klytämnestra and one of hope for Elektra.
Aegisth (Aegisthus)	Klytämnestra's lover; together, they murdered Agamemnon	ae-GHIST	Tenor	A secondary character in the opera, he appears only briefly before being murdered.

*Elektra* History

ca. 400 BC The Greek playwright Sophocles writes *Electra*, one of several plays by himself and his contemporaries Aeschylus and Euripides to explore the mythical character of Electra, who pursued revenge for the murder of her father, King Agamemnon, at the hands of her mother, Clytemnestra.

1900 While conducting in Paris, Strauss meets the young Austrian poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal, who is interested in collaborating to create a ballet. Strauss is impressed with Hofmannsthal's scenario, but is too busy with existing projects to work with him at the time.

1903 Hofmannsthal writes the play *Elektra*, a free adaptation of the tragedy by Sophocles. It is mounted by the director Max Reinhardt in Berlin, where Strauss attends a performance.

1905 Strauss's opera *Salome* premieres in Dresden. Its lurid subject matter and sultry atmosphere are matched by Strauss's shockingly inventive musical setting. The opera is soon performed at all of the major European opera houses to great critical acclaim. The composer Gustav Mahler calls it "emphatically a work of genius, very powerful, and decidedly one of the most important works of our day."

1906 Strauss and Hofmannsthal agree to work together to create an opera based on Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*. Following this first joint effort, they continue to collaborate on operatic projects until the poet's untimely death in 1929.



Richard Strauss

**"ELEKTRA" STUNS HEARERS.**  
 Tone Production Marks Strauss as a Genius and a Wizard.  
 Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERLIN, Jan. 30. — "Numbed," "stunned," "hypnotized," are some of the terms employed to describe the state of mind to which the first performance of Strauss's "Elektra" reduced the brilliant international audience in Dresden on Monday night.

"It was nearly a full minute," said an American critic present to the correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES, "before the house recovered its equilibrium sufficiently to enable it to burst into a spontaneous roat of cheers and applause. No theatre or opera audience in the world was ever called upon to weather such a strain upon its emotions as that ninety-five minutes of harrowing, thrilling operatic bedlam imposed upon the hearers."

**BERLIN HEARS "ELEKTRA."**  
 Performance of Cyclonic Strauss Opera Benumbs Audience at Royal Opera.  
 Special Cable to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERLIN, Feb. 15.—The first Berlin production of Richard Strauss's operatic endurance test "Elektra" took place before a bewildered and benumbed audience at the Royal Opera to-night. Such a riot of musical thunder was never before perpetrated within the walls of the Kaiser's theatre.

Although a volley of cheers and applause greeted the end of the performance, the teamwork of the soprano who plays Clytemnestra, and dramatic tenor who plays Agamemnon, was less fulsome.

Members fully interested in the ideas of cyclonic drama, the conductor, the composer, (Elektra), and the librettist, (Elektra), were fully interested in the ideas of cyclonic drama, the conductor, the composer, (Elektra), and the librettist, (Elektra).

**KING AND QUEEN AT "ELEKTRA" PREMIER**  
 Many Members of Royalty in London Audience at Strauss's Opera—A Popular Success.

**STRAUSS'S 'ELEKTRA' CREATES A FUROR**  
 Largest Audience at Metropolitan Cheers for 15 Minutes at End of Powerful Drama.

**RUSS KAPPEL TRIUMPHS**  
 Conductor Bodanzky and All the Artists Share in Honors of Intense Performance.

**ELEKTRA**, music drama in one act. Book in German by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, after the tragedy of Sophocles. Music by Richard Strauss. First performance at Metropolitan Opera House.

Clytemnestra.....Karin Branzell



**1909** *Elektra* receives its premiere on January 25 at the Court Opera in Dresden, and its success, enhanced by the public interest in its modern, emotionally fraught plot, is soon a worldwide phenomenon.

**1929** Hugo von Hofmannsthal suffers a fatal stroke and dies on July 15. Strauss is too distraught to attend the funeral, but he writes to Hofmannsthal's widow: "This genius, this great poet, this sensitive collaborator, this kind friend, this unique talent! No musician ever found such a helper and supporter. No one will ever replace him for me or the world of music!"

**1933** Although apolitical by nature, Strauss is compelled to accept an appointment by German Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels to the presidency of the Reichsmusikkammer, the official organization of the Third Reich that coordinated all facets of the music industry.

**1935** Strauss is forced to resign from the Reichsmusikkammer owing to his defiant insistence on working with the Jewish librettist Stefan Zweig.

**1948** Strauss composes his final works, later published as *Vier letzte Lieder* ("Four Last Songs"), for soprano and orchestra. Though he had written songs steadily throughout his long career, these late, luminous works, set to texts reflecting on the meaning of death, are among his finest compositions.

**1949** Strauss dies on September 8, having suffered from declining health for several years. At a memorial service in Munich, conductor Georg Solti leads the final trio from *Der Rosenkavalier*.



Alfred Roller's set design for *Elektra*'s Vienna premiere  
BILDARCHIV DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK, VIENNA



*English/Language Arts***IN PREPARATION**

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide, a copy of the synopsis, as well as the audio selections from *Elektra* available online or on the accompanying CD.

**CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS**

English/Language Arts, Literature, Theater/Drama, Philosophy, Music

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- To become familiar with the characters and conflicts of *Elektra*
- To explore dramatic structure and plot conventions
- To interpret characters' motivations and predict the outcome of their actions
- To prompt curiosity about the Met's production of *Elektra*

## Fate, Fault and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra*

Strauss's opera *Elektra* possesses a concise, tightly controlled plot, with its dramatic arc largely determined by the conventions of Greek tragedy. Over the course of the opera, there is little extraneous music or dialogue, with nearly every utterance of its characters propelling the action towards the opera's catastrophic finale. In this activity, students will consider some of the ways in which authors bring together elements of a narrative into a cohesive, satisfying whole. Students will:

- learn and become familiar with the literary concept of dramatic structure
- learn vocabulary associated with Greek drama
- discover some of Strauss's musical representations of the elements of dramatic structure in the opera
- apply their knowledge through storyboarding activities

**STEPS**

In this activity, students will have several opportunities to become familiar with the plot of *Elektra* and with the conventions of Greek tragedy. They will identify major themes, follow the development of the action, and hone their understanding of literary structure. They will read and listen to excerpts from the opera that demonstrate dramatic high points, and in groups they will interpret the opera's action and articulate the relation of various musical moments to dramatic structure. The lesson will close with an activity that encourages students to respond both analytically and creatively to their understanding of dramatic structure.

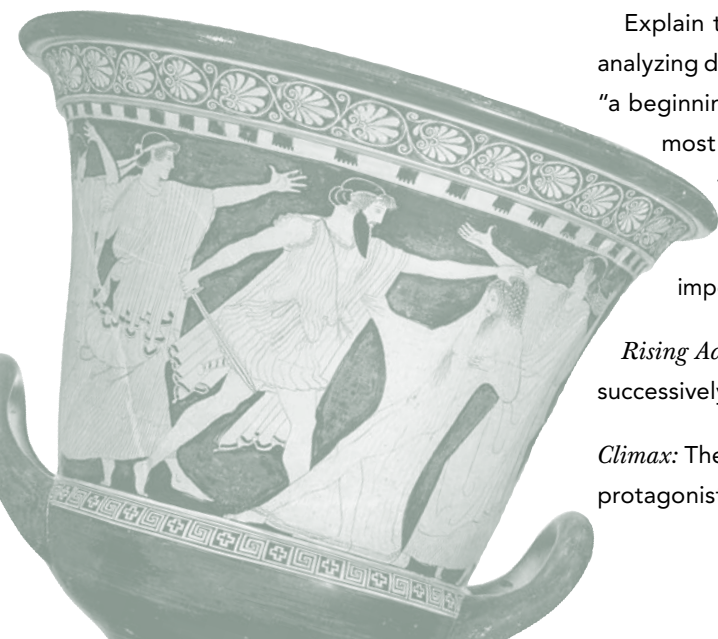
**STEP 1:** Introduce the concept of dramatic structure and explain that it refers to an underlying or guiding framework behind literary narratives, particularly stage dramas. Dramatic structure provides a way for authors to organize the action in their stories so that characters' actions build upon one another towards compelling high points and an ultimate resolution.

Explain that many literary critics and philosophers have developed systems for analyzing dramatic structure, from simple frameworks (Aristotle: a tragedy must have "a beginning, a middle, and an end") to much more detailed schemes. One of the most common analytical frameworks proposes a five-part structure, according to the scheme below.

*Exposition:* an opening portion of the play in which the audience learns important background information about the main characters and their histories

*Rising Action:* a series of conflicts, sometimes begun by an inciting event, that successively build towards a high point

*Climax:* The moment of highest tension; the turning point when the situation for the protagonist changes—for good or ill



*Falling Action:* Events that grow out of the reversal of fortune experienced in the climax

*Dénouement/Catastrophe:* The final resolution of conflicts leading to the close of the drama. In comedies, the protagonist is typically better off than at the play's start; in tragedies, the final catastrophe often includes the protagonist's death.

**STEP 2:** Write these five parts of dramatic structure on the chalkboard to help students organize their thoughts. In an open discussion, encourage students to think about their favorite movies or stories, or other examples of literature that they've studied in class. Can they distill the plots of their examples into the component stages of dramatic structure? Questions to guide the discussion may include:

- What is the state of things at the start of your story? Is there a backstory to the characters that the author reveals early on?
- What sorts of problems does the main character encounter? What are the things that ratchet up the tension for him or her?
- What's the turning point? What's the story's peak? What happens to change the protagonist's state of affairs?
- What are the events that grow out of this change? What directly leads to the conclusion of the story?
- How are matters finally resolved? How does the situation return to a state of stability?

You may need to fire students' imagination by starting off the discussion with a couple of popular examples from recent movies or fiction. You might bring up the example of the novel *Twilight*, which could be analyzed in the following way:

*Exposition:* Bella is a new student in school and several boys vie for her attention.

*Rising Action:* Edward saves Bella's life and she discovers that he is a vampire. Their relationship begins to develop.

*Climax:* A dangerous coven of vampires, led by James, moves to the area and decides to hunt Bella for sport.

*Falling Action:* Edward rescues Bella after she is trapped and extracts the vampire venom after James bites her wrist.

*Dénouement:* Edward and Bella return home and their relationship continues to grow. Edward's family has made powerful enemies, and Bella starts to want to become a vampire.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND ELEKTRA

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL9-12.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1c

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

**Tragedy (n.):**  
*A drama typically exploring serious events, often including the main character's downfall caused by personal faults and/or fate, and with an unhappy or disastrous ending.*

## The Surprising Etymology of Tragedy

It may not make immediate sense that the word tragedy originally meant “goat song”—derived from the ancient Greek *tragos* (“goat”) and *oide* (“ode” or “song”). To understand what this says about the nature of tragedy, we need to go all the way back to Greece in the seventh century BC, and the ancient rituals, or Dionysia, held in Athens in honor of Dionysus, the god of vegetation, wine, and fertility. The Dionysia were religious festivals associated with the harvest and vintage and which included ritual sacrifices and fertility celebrations, as well as wild dancing and singing by characters with their faces smeared by wine and wearing goatskins—in imitation of the satyrs, Dionysus’s attendants. These rustic episodes eventually acquired a greater degree of literary refinement and included the dramatic performance of poetry by choruses called *tragoidoi*. In time, they incorporated spoken portions with serious plots inspired by the Dionysia’s commemoration of death and the renewal of life. Long after these performances had left the immediate context of religious ritual, they continued to explore matters of solemn import to the culture: the causes of suffering, the nature of guilt, and the absence of justice.

**STEP 3:** Deepen students’ understanding of dramatic structure by introducing them to three terms from ancient Greek drama: peripeteia, anagnorisis, and catharsis. Definitions are provided below and on the reproducible handout found at the back of this guide.

*Anagnorisis* (uh-nag-NOR-uh-sis): the moment of recognition, self-discovery, or sudden awareness of one’s true situation

*Peripeteia* (per-ih-pih-TAY-uh): a sudden reversal of fortune, usually following anagnorisis

*Catharsis* (kah-THAR-sis): the emotional release felt by an audience after the fear and pity they experience while watching a tragedy.

On the handout, have students jot a few notes on how their chosen stories from Step 2 above may or may not include moments of anagnorisis, peripeteia, or catharsis.

**STEP 4:** Next, distribute the synopsis of *Elektra* and ask for volunteers to take turns reading it aloud. Before launching into the reading, ask students to keep in mind the five stages of dramatic structure and to listen to the synopsis analytically, keeping an eye out for how the plot’s actions correspond to the different dramatic stages.

Following the reading, ask students to summarize the main events of the opera. At this point, keep the discussion on the level of events and actions; students will analyze the dramatic structure later.

**STEP 5:** Now it's time to delve into the text and music of *Elektra*. Each of the following examples provides a snapshot of a character or moment in the opera that will give students further evidence as to how the actions in the opera knit together to form a cohesive, dramatic arc.

Play the musical selections one at a time, while students follow along to the text and translations provided on the handout. Students can note their observations on how the music reflects the events at hand and amplifies the dramatic situation. (You may want to play each selection twice—first for students to gain a general sense of the music and dramatic situation, and a second time to give them a chance to take notes.) After they've written down what they hear, ask them to share their observations with the class; you may want to list the characteristics they've noted on the chalkboard. Repeat for each of the five listening selections. A listening guide to the five tracks is provided for your reference below.

**Track 1:** In this selection, we hear Elektra lamenting her solitude and crying out to her dead father. She sings slowly and plaintively against a sustained, dissonant orchestral accompaniment. Notice that Elektra addresses her father directly—she continues to be fixated on him long after his death. As she calls upon him by name (*"Agamemnon! Agamemnon!"*), her music is based on the leitmotif associated with Agamemnon. (For more information on leitmotifs, see the *Ten Essential Musical Terms*.) In this section, what do your students hear in Elektra's voice?

**Track 2:** Against a steadily rising, frantic accompaniment, Klytämnestra begs for an end to her nightmares. This dissonant passage lands on a high point on *"Blut"* (blood), as Klytämnestra searches for the correct sacrifice to calm her torments. The music communicates that Klytämnestra has been driven to the breaking point but is yet powerful and capable of potent action. What do your students make of this? How do they view the character of Klytämnestra?

**Track 3:** After feigning cooperation and taunting Klytämnestra with hints, Elektra reveals her true attitude in this outburst of malice. She prophesies the reckoning her mother will soon face, her frantic chase through her own home, and her eventual murder. The orchestra underpins the text with violent, dissonant eruptions. As Elektra exults that it will be she who releases vengeance upon the household (*"Und ich! ich! ich! ich!"*), the music breaks through into a more consonant, victorious texture. How can students describe the narrative arc of this section? (Refer to the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* for a discussion of consonance and dissonance.)



**Track 4:** Following a queasy and disjointed orchestral introduction, Chrysothemis bursts onstage to report that Orest is dead. Immediately following her delivery of the news, the musical texture changes to a slithery, falling chromatic gesture, punctuated by quiet, more static sections in which Elektra denies the possibility that Orest is dead. The psychological states of the two sisters are contrasted directly in their music. The musical representation is tied directly to the central importance of Orest and his role in Elektra’s program of revenge. (Refer to the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* for a discussion of chromaticism.)

**Track 5:** In this longer example, we hear the dramatic progression by which both Orest and Elektra discover that they are in the presence of their sibling. Beginning with Orest, the music is exploratory, seeming to strive towards a greater lyricism and consonance, leading towards an expressive arrival at the moment of Orest’s discovery and his repeated pronouncement of Elektra’s name. Following an almost gentle orchestral interlude as an old palace servant recognizes Orest, Elektra’s similar discovery about Orest is given a treatment of even greater musical exultation, as she reaches into the top of her vocal range with her first pronouncement of “*Orest!*” Another ensuing orchestral interlude brings the music into a much more gentle and soothing attitude. Elektra’s repeated statements of “*Orest!*” approach the manner of a lullaby or dream. What do your students make of this? How would they describe this moment of dramatic discovery?

**STEP 6:** Divide students into groups of four or five and explain that their next job is to map out the dramatic structure of *Elektra*. Referring to the synopsis as well as the texts and translations studied in the previous step, students will discuss how to divide the opera into the five stages of Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, and Dénouement/Catastrophe. (It may be helpful to note that the dramatic moments explored in texts and translations provided may not correspond directly to stages of a dramatic structure.) Students will engage in collegial discussions and support their opinions with evidence from the written synopsis. Students may also



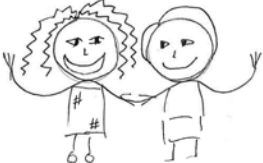




A wall of the ruins of Mycenae today  
PHOTO: JEAN HOUSEN

be able to identify moments of anagnorisis and peripeteia, or to describe the means of catharsis in the opera.

**STEP 7:** After agreeing on the dramatic structure of the opera, students will collaborate to develop a storyboard that captures their understanding of the structure. Distribute copies of the storyboard handout from the reproducible handouts at the back of this guide. After writing a brief description of the major events in each element of the dramatic structure, students will make visual depictions of those events. Students may decide among themselves how to divide the artistic responsibilities in this exercise—whether one individual among their members will be the group artist, or if each member will contribute one drawing, for instance. An example storyboard is provided below for your reference. (Please note that this is not meant to be a definitive answer; it is merely one interpretation among many other possible and defensible options.)

**FUN FACT:** Richard Strauss’s father was an accomplished musician: he held the post of principal French horn player in the Munich Court Orchestra. His musical tastes tended strongly toward the conservative, and he much preferred Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven over composers of his own generation. The conductor Hans Richter is supposed to have once said, “Strauss’s son may be happy that he doesn’t have his father in his own orchestra.”

<p><b>EXPOSITION</b></p> <p>Elektra spends her days mourning the murder of her father, Agamemnon</p> 	<p><b>RISING ACTION</b></p> <p>Believing her brother to be dead, Elektra tries unsuccessfully to enlist her sister Chrysothemis in her plan for revenge.</p> 
<p><b>CLIMAX</b></p>	
<p>Elektra learns that her brother Orest is alive and has returned to Mycenae to enact revenge upon their mother and her lover, Aegisth.</p> 	
<p><b>FALLING ACTION</b></p> <p>Orest kills Klytämnestra and Aegisth.</p> 	<p><b>DÉNOUEMENT/CATASTROPHE</b></p> <p>Elektra celebrates wildly for a brief moment before dying.</p> 

**FOLLOW-UP:** As a final wrap-up discussion, ask for volunteers from a couple of groups to explain their storyboards in front of the class and to share their visual depiction of *Elektra’s* dramatic structure. Ask students to pay particular attention to the storyboards that connect the different dramatic stages through interwoven plot strands. Do these make for the most concise and rational storyboards? Ask students to draw conclusions on what made for the most successful depictions of *Elektra’s* plot.

BACKGROUND: *The Curse of the House of Atreus*

The devastation that Elektra wreaks upon her household, while extreme in its own right, is only one example of the bloody history of her family, the House of Atreus. Greek mythology and literature include the histories of several dynasties—those based in Thebes, Crete, Athens, and Mycenae—whose inveterate moral failures called down retribution upon generation after generation. The curse of the House of Atreus began with **King Tantalus**, a mythological son of Zeus. He had attempted to test the gods' omniscience by offering them a gruesome feast—a dish made from the flesh of his own son, **Pelops**—to see whether they would recognize it. The gods denounced Tantalus's act as an atrocity. As punishment, they imprisoned him for all eternity, hungry and thirsty, in a pool of water beneath fruit-laden branches that forever elude his grasp. (The story of Tantalus provides the root of the English word tantalize.)

The gods restored the butchered Pelops to life, and he went on to ascend the throne of Arcadia, marry the former king's daughter, and sire many

γαμέμνων

Son of Zeus, Tantalus

has a son Pelops

Pelops & *Hippodamia*

have a son Thyestes

Thyestes & *Aerope*

have a daughter *Pelopia*

*Pelopia* & Thyestes

have a son Aegisthus.

Pelops & *Hippodamia*

have a son Atreus

Atreus & *Aerope*

have a son Menelaus

Menelaus marries *Helen*.

Atreus & *Aerope*

have a son Agamemnon

Agamemnon & *Clytemnestra*

have a daughter *Iphigenia*.

Agamemnon & *Clytemnestra*

have a daughter *Electra*.

Agamemnon & *Clytemnestra*

have a son Orestes.



The Mask of Agamemnon, a funeral mask in gold, ca. 1550–1500 BC, from Mycenae

children, both legitimate and illegitimate. The curse of his forbear was revisited upon his generation when his twin sons **Atreus** and **Thyestes** conspired with their mother to murder their half-brother Chrysippus, the favorite son of the king. Atreus and Thyestes then fled to Mycenae, where their spectacular rivalry included such barbaric acts as Thyestes's seduction of Atreus's wife, Atreus's revenge by butchering Thyestes's sons and feeding them to Thyestes, and Thyestes's rape of his own daughter, whom Atreus then took as a new wife. She gave birth to **Aegisthus**, who was raised by Atreus (although his natural father was Thyestes). When the grown Aegisthus discovered the circumstances of his birth, he slew Atreus and forced Atreus's sons, **Agamemnon** and **Menelaus**, into exile.

Agamemnon and Menelaus allied themselves with King Tyndareus of Sparta and married his daughters, **Clytemnestra** and **Helen**, respectively. With the military support of Sparta, Agamemnon returned to Mycenae. When Menelaus's wife Helen was abducted by Paris of Troy (the precipitating event of the Trojan War), Agamemnon assembled 100 ships to sail on his rival. But the fleet was forced to stay in the harbor by contrary winds sent by Artemis. To appease her, Agamemnon sacrificed his own daughter **Iphigenia** to the goddess. The winds lifted, and Agamemnon sailed to war. By the time Agamemnon returned to Mycenae ten years later, Clytemnestra had taken Aegisthus, Agamemnon's cousin and rival for the throne, as a lover. Together, they plotted Agamemnon's death in payment for Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia. The events of Strauss's opera *Elektra* begin after Agamemnon's murder, when Clytemnestra and Aegisthus have occupied the throne for some years.

In each succeeding generation, the House of Atreus was plagued by corruption, curses, betrayal, and the most heinous crime of all, the murder of family members. This cycle of never-ending, bloody retribution ultimately ended only with **Orestes**, who accepted the guilt of killing his mother and sought to make amends for his crime (and to be delivered from the torments of the Furies). According to Euripides, he was eventually acquitted at a formal trial of the gods, and the curse of the House of Atreus was finally broken.

**FUN FACT:** In 1898, the Metropolitan Opera offered Strauss the position of principal conductor, at twice the salary of a rival offer from the Royal Court Opera in Berlin. Strauss turned down the Met in favor of Berlin's more generous vacations and pensions. At the time, he wrote to his mother, "I shall still be able to graze in American pastures ten years from now, while at the moment it's more important to make myself still better known in Europe."

'Αγαμέ



## Unweaving a Tangled Web: Identifying Leitmotifs in *Elektra*

### Music

#### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the reproducible resources available at the back of this guide as well as the audio selections from *Elektra* available online or on the accompanying CD.

#### CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Music, Music Theory, Humanities, and Arts

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To introduce and/or reinforce knowledge of musical terminology and theory
- To hone careful listening skills by examining leitmotifs and their recurrence throughout *Elektra*
- To practice aural recognition and memory

In *Elektra*, Strauss creates a complex musical structure through the technique of leitmotifs, which he ingeniously weaves into a musical fabric of great symbolism. Some of the leitmotifs are dissonant and violent, expressing the trauma and emotional distress of Elektra and the things she has witnessed. Others sound lush and beautiful, and are associated with joyful moments, happy memories, or triumph. The following activity is designed to introduce students to a selection of *Elektra*'s leitmotifs and to become accustomed to Strauss's compositional techniques in creating a dense, allusive musical score.

In the following activity, students will:

- become familiar with the concept of leitmotifs
- explore the structural function of recurring thematic material
- listen to and analyze a selection of leitmotifs from *Elektra*

#### STEPS

Students will listen to and analyze a variety of leitmotifs, using newly-learned musical terminology to describe their musical attributes. After learning the identity of these leitmotifs, students will analyze a selection of scenes and identify which leitmotifs are present in each passage. The lesson concludes with a brief quiz in which students will be tested for their aural memory of *Elektra*'s leitmotifs.

**STEP 1:** Distribute copies of the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* found in this guide. Have your students review it as a pre-lesson assignment or at the beginning of the class. Note that several of the terms build upon one another, so it will be important that students have a firm understanding of tonality before moving on to bitonality; chords and dissonance before moving on to chromatic harmony; and so on.

As this activity explores the leitmotifs in *Elektra*, it will be particularly important that students understand the meaning of this term. A leitmotif is a recurring musical theme or motto that can represent a person, place, emotion, idea, object, or any other element in a musical work. A familiar example from film is the "shark theme" from the movie *Jaws*, which recurs whenever the shark appears—even if it's not visible on screen. Students might enjoy trying to think of other examples of leitmotifs from movies or television.

**STEP 2:** Distribute the *Unweaving a Tangled Web* reproducible handout found at the back of this guide. First, play **Tracks 6** through **14** and have students listen to the motifs without knowing what they stand for. Using the handout, students may record impressions and make notes of the musical elements that contribute to their understanding of each motif (i.e., high strings, incisive rhythms, chromatic scale, etc.). It may be necessary to play through each leitmotif several times. Students may also need to refer back to the *Ten Essential Musical Terms* for vocabulary to support their impressions. Either individually or in groups, have students brainstorm what they

think each leitmotif could mean or be associated with in the story. The track list below provides the correct identifications.

- Track 6 Agamemnon
- Track 7 Elektra's Hatred
- Track 8 Elektra
- Track 9 Elektra's Love for Orest
- Track 10 The Children of Agamemnon
- Track 11 The Axe
- Track 12 The Stranger
- Track 13 Orest's Mission
- Track 14 The Dance

**STEP 3:** In a free discussion, explore students' impressions of each leitmotif. What were the musical elements that contributed to their understanding of each? In the course of your discussion, you may reveal what the meanings are for each motif, provided in the answer key above. Discuss how the musical representation corresponds to the textual or thematic identification.

**STEP 4:** Explore the following scenes first by reviewing what is happening dramatically. Texts and translations are provided in the reproducible handouts. Then, while listening to the audio examples, work together as a class to identify the leitmotifs that are used within the scene. This portion of the activity allows for further discussion and investigation into why Strauss employed certain motifs at certain moments within the dramatic action of the opera.

A teacher's listening guide is provided for your reference below.

#### **TRACK 15: ELEKTRA'S MONOLOGUE**

Elektra relates the horrible trauma she has experienced, having witnessed the murder of her father and been maltreated by her mother, Klytämnestra. She dreams about the day her father's death will be avenged.

*This excerpt contains Elektra's Hatred motif, Elektra's motif, the Agamemnon motif, and the Children of Agamemnon motif.*

#### **COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND ELEKTRA**

This activity directly supports the following ELA-Literacy Common Core Strands:

##### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.2**

Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

##### **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5**

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.



# Ten Essential Musical Terms

The following list of terms provides basic vocabulary to help your students engage more deeply with the music of *Elektra*.

**Bitonality** The combination of two keys at the same time. Bitonality may be used for the duration of entire compositions or on a smaller scale in individual chords. An example of this latter type is the “Elektra chord,” which Strauss uses in the *Leitmotif* (see below) of the character of Elektra. It is comprised of the simultaneous soundings of E major and C-sharp major, re-spelled enharmonically: E, G-sharp/A-flat, B plus C-sharp/D-flat and E-sharp/F.



The Elektra chord can be heard in context at the very beginning of Track 1 of the musical examples. Composers sometimes use the dissonant clashes of bitonality to signify psychological turmoil, since bitonality by its nature contains harmonic impulses that are contrary to one another.

**Chord** A combination of notes sounded simultaneously, usually comprised of at least three different pitches. The triad, a type of chord built from a root pitch with two thirds arranged above it, is the basic building block of harmony. Chords are typically named according to the largest interval they span from their root. For instance, a seventh chord includes the note that is the distance of a seventh from its root.

**Chromatic Harmony** Over the course of the 19th century, composers increasingly experimented with ways to expand their harmonic language, introducing unresolved dissonances, distantly related chords, and harmonies that confuse the identification of the key. Collectively these practices belong to what is known as chromatic harmony—augmenting the norms of tonal harmony with notes, chords, and progressions that do not belong to a composition’s basic key. (See Chromaticism below.)

**Chromaticism** Chromatic notes are those that don’t belong to the prevailing harmony or scale of a musical composition (so named because in early music notation these notes were colored). Chromatic is the reverse of diatonic, which refers to notes of a scale or harmony derived exclusively from those available in its given key. Chromaticism can add drama and intensity to music by introducing notes or chords that are dissonant to the key and that call for resolution.

**Consonance** A sweet, harmonious sound without any tension requiring resolution. The most consonant intervals are the unison and octave, fifth, sixth and third. Consonance is the opposite of dissonance.

**Dissonance** Two or more notes that are perceived to be in discord or that “sound wrong” together. Dissonant intervals include the 2nd, 7th, and tritone. Dissonance feels unstable to the listener and calls for harmonic resolution. It is the opposite of consonance.

**Leitmotif** Literally “leading theme” in German, a leitmotif is a recurring musical motto that represents a person, place, emotion, idea, object, or any other element in a musical work. The use of leitmotifs helps to provide structural unity to a composition, and they may be combined together to form a dense and allusive web of thematic material. The idea originated in the mid-19th century and was developed into a compositional technique by Richard Wagner. Strauss uses leitmotifs to great effect in many of his works, including the operas *Salome* and *Elektra*.

**Orchestration** An aspect of composition, orchestration is the art of choosing which instruments should play each musical idea in a musical work. Successful orchestration requires that the instrument chosen is appropriate to the melody—that the musical line is within the instrument’s playable range and expressive capabilities. The art of orchestration also allows a composer to draw on and combine the disparate timbres of instruments to amplify melodic expression and create a wide range of musical color.

**Tonality** The prevailing system of organizing harmony in Western music from roughly 1600 to 1910. Within the tonal system, chords are predominantly based on the pitches in a key’s scale, and these chords are organized into a hierarchy of greater and lesser importance based on their distance from the tonic, or home pitch. On a larger scale, tonal compositions are written in a single key, which begins and closes a work, with more exploratory harmonic material in the middle.

**Wagnerism** Richard Wagner was a seminal figure in the history of opera whose music and ideas about music have been divisive both during his lifetime and now, over 130 years after his death. Wagner’s innovations to harmony, thematic treatment, and musical structure were enormously influential. The scope of his importance was such that his ideas spread beyond the musical world into the realms of visual artists, poets, philosophers, and novelists. Wagner was capable of inspiring both worshipful allegiance and vociferous dislike among his contemporaries. His followers are often called “Wagnerites,” and the movement inspired by his works “Wagnerism.”

### TRACK 16: ELEKTRA AND OREST MEET AS STRANGERS

In this scene, Orest has returned and encounters Elektra, but the two siblings do not recognize each other. However, the music reveals their relationship before the characters themselves make the discovery. The passage closes with a portion of the Children of Agamemnon motif.

*This excerpt contains the Stranger motif, Orest's Mission motif, and the Children of Agamemnon motif.*

### TRACK 17: ELEKTRA AND OREST REUNITED

In this scene, Elektra and Orest recognize each other and are reunited. The music amplifies this structurally important moment with two important motifs: the Love of Orestes and the Children of Agamemnon.

*This excerpt contains the Elektra's Love for Orest motif and the Children of Agamemnon motif.*

### TRACK 18: DANCING HERSELF TO DEATH

In this scene, Elektra has just learned that Orest has killed Klytämnestra and Aegisth, and she breaks into a triumphant dance that ultimately leads to her collapse and death.

*This excerpt contains the Dance motif, Elektra's Love for Orest, the Children of Agamemnon motif, and the Agamemnon motif.*

**FOLLOW-UP:** Test students' memory of the leitmotifs explored in the preceding activity. Have them turn to the quiz on the reproducible handout, and with their notes on the leitmotifs, play the tracks in the chart below. Students should notate which leitmotif they hear in each track. For a more difficult version, have students turn over their handouts and have them complete the quiz entirely by memory. The tracks in the quiz are taken from a variety of scenes throughout the opera and differ from the examples heard at the beginning of this activity. If students can successfully identify the leitmotifs in this exercise, they will be well equipped to track the leitmotifs' appearance throughout the performance of *Elektra* at the *Live in HD* transmission.

TRACK #	LEITMOTIF
1 Track 19	The Children of Agamemnon
2 Track 20	Elektra's Hatred
3 Track 21	Agamemnon
4 Track 22	Elektra
5 Track 23	The Axe



A Minoan labrys, or double axe, from the Archaeological Museum in Herakleion.  
PHOTO: WOLFGANG SAUBER

## A Guide to Leitmotifs in *Elektra*

Track 6: Agamemnon



Track 7: Elektra's Hatred



Track 8: Elektra



Track 9: Elektra's Love for Orest



### MUSICAL SNAPSHOT

**THE MULTIPLE MUSICAL PERSONALITIES OF ELEKTRA** The music of Strauss's *Elektra* is often described as comprising two polar opposites within one opera: violent, crashing dissonance (used to express Elektra's trauma and obsession), juxtaposed with music of lush beauty (expressing characters' love, future dreams, and joyful moments). Elektra herself is given music that falls into both categories. To hear the two vastly differing sides of Elektra, listen to the following examples. Texts and translations are provided in the reproducible handouts.

**Track 24:** Elektra recounts the murder of her father and her own ill-treatment by his murderers, Elektra's mother Klytämnestra and her lover, Aegisth.

**Track 25:** Elektra imagines a future life with Chrysothemis after the murder of their mother. She will devote herself to her sister and help prepare her for the arrival of a bridegroom.

Track 10: The Children of Agamemnon



Track 11: The Axe



Track 12: The Stranger



Track 13: Orest's Mission



Track 14: The Dance



**FUN FACT:** Strauss's first opera, *Guntram*, met with some success when he conducted the premiere in Weimar in 1894. But the first performance in his native city of Munich the year after was a dismal failure. Strauss took the rejection very personally. Years later, he placed a gravestone in the garden of his villa with the inscription, "Here rests the honorable and virtuous young man Guntram, who was horribly slain by the symphony orchestra of his own father."

## Supporting the Student Experience during *The Met: Live in HD* Transmission

### IN PREPARATION

For this activity, students will need the Performance Activity reproducible handouts found in the back of this guide.

### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND ELEKTRA

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1

Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

#### CSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.3

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Watching and listening to a performance is a unique experience that takes students beyond the printed page to an immersion in images, sound, interpretation, technology, drama, skill, and craft. Performance activities help students analyze different aspects of the experience and engage critically with the performance. They will consider the creative choices that have been made for the particular production they are watching and examine different aspects of the performance.

Each Performance Activity incorporates a reproducible sheet. Students should bring this activity sheet to the *Live in HD* transmission and fill it out during intermission and/or after the final curtain. The activities direct attention to details of the production that might otherwise go unnoticed.

For the *Live in HD* transmission of *Elektra*, the first activity, *Archetypes and Adaptations*, prompts students to consider the director's interpretive vision in his staging and the set and costume design. Any opera based on an ancient text will include some amount of artistic freedom in the portrayal of that far-removed culture. The goal of this activity is to encourage students to think deeply about *Elektra*'s characters and themes and to evaluate how they stand up to changes in the story's time period, location, and context.

The second, basic activity sheet is called *My Highs & Lows*. It is meant to be collected, opera by opera, over the course of the season. This sheet serves to guide students toward a consistent set of objective observations, as well as to help them articulate their own opinions. It is designed to enrich the students' understanding of the art form as a whole. The ratings system encourages students to express their critique: use these ratings to spark discussions that require careful, critical thinking.

The Performance Activity reproducible handouts can be found in the back of this guide. On the next page, you'll find an activity created specifically for follow-up after the *Live in HD* transmission.

### And Then What? Reflecting on the Cycle of Tragedy

Students will enjoy starting the class with an open discussion of the Met performance. What did they like? What didn't they? Did anything surprise them? What would they like to see or hear again? What would they have done differently? The discussion offers an opportunity to apply the notes on students' *My Highs & Lows* sheet, as well as their thoughts about the visual design of the Met production—in short, to see themselves as *Elektra* experts.

As students explored in the English/Language Arts classroom activity *Fate, Fault and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in Elektra*, the plot of *Elektra* is a powerhouse of dramatic structure. There is little extraneous action that does not propel the story towards the final catastrophe. Now that students have seen the opera in its entirety, ask them to reflect on the ending. Some of the questions you might want them to consider are the following:

- What happens to Elektra at the close? Strauss's stage directions make it clear that she collapses and dies. What does she do and what happens to her in this production's interpretation? What is her emotional state?
- Should Elektra have reacted differently to the completion of her mission? What does her reaction say about her psychological state throughout the opera?
- What happens to Orest at the close? Can students postulate what his future will be? What is his emotional state?
- What is left for Chrysothemis?
- Has the successful avenging of Agamemnon's murder left his descendants better or worse off than they were before?

It may be helpful to provide students with a brief history of Elektra's family and their inclination towards violence, included in this guide in the background section *The Curse of the House of Atreus*. Knowing more about the succession of crimes and atrocities that members of her family enacted upon each other may change students' opinions of the rightness or wrongness of her pursuit of vengeance.

Elektra's revenge directly results in the devastation of her family line. Students may enjoy drawing parallels between the crimes of the House of Atreus and contemporary examples of the cycle of violence. What are the consequences of using violence as a means of justice? What are the differences between a judicial system that imparts punishments and an individual who does so?

Finally, ask students to think about the interpretation of this production and how it comments on the notions of revenge and justice. Is the ending of the opera cathartic?

#### IN PREPARATION

This activity requires no preparation other than attendance at the *Live in HD* transmission of *Elektra*.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To review and synthesize students' understanding of *Elektra*
- To think critically about how staging affects audience interpretation
- To discuss students' overall experience of watching *Elektra*
- To examine the opera's characters within their larger histories in Greek mythology

#### COMMON CORE STANDARDS AND ELEKTRA

##### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

##### CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-12.1d

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.



Excerpts taken from the  
Metropolitan Opera broadcast of  
December 26, 2009

**ELEKTRA**

Susan Bullock

**CHRYSTHEMIS**

Deborah Voigt

**KLYTÄMNESTRA**

Felicity Palmer

**OREST**

Evgeny Nikitin

**AEGISTH**

Wolfgang Schmidt

Conducted by  
Fabio Luisi

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra  
and Chorus

- 1 Elektra. Elektra's soliloquy
- 2 Klytämnestra. Klytämnestra searches for a cure to her nightmares
- 3 Elektra. Elektra proposes a solution
- 4 Chrysothemis and Elektra. Elektra learns of Orest's death
- 5 Orest and Elektra. Orest reveals his true identity to Elektra
- 6 Leitmotif: Agamemnon
- 7 Leitmotif: Elektra's Hatred
- 8 Leitmotif: Elektra
- 9 Leitmotif: Elektra's Love for Orest
- 10 Leitmotif: The Children of Agamemnon
- 11 Leitmotif: The Axe
- 12 Leitmotif: The Stranger
- 13 Leitmotif: Orest's Mission
- 14 Leitmotif: The Dance
- 15 Elektra's Monologue
- 16 Elektra and Orest Meet as Strangers
- 17 Elektra and Orest Reunited
- 18 Dancing Herself to Death
- 19 Quiz: The Children of Agamemnon
- 20 Quiz: Elektra's Hatred
- 21 Quiz: Agamemnon
- 22 Quiz: Elektra
- 23 Quiz: The Axe
- 24 Elektra recounts the murder of her father
- 25 Elektra speaks lovingly to her sister

ELEKTRA

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

### Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra*

Most Greek tragedy follows a standard, arc-like structure, and also includes a few classic high points and plot conventions. The ancient Greeks used specialized vocabulary to describe these moments—anagnorisis, peripeteia, and catharsis. Definitions are provided below.

Use this handout to record your thoughts on how your chosen story may or may not include moments that correspond to these concepts from Greek tragedy.

*Anagnorisis* (uh-nag-NOR-uh-sis)

The moment of recognition, self-discovery, or sudden awareness of one’s true situation

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*Peripeteia* (per-ih-pih-TAY-uh)

A sudden reversal of fortune, usually following anagnorisis

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*Catharsis* (kah-THAR-sis)

The release felt by an audience after the fear and pity they experience while watching a tragedy

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**ELEKTRA**

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

**TRACK 1**

**ELEKTRA:** Allein! Weh, ganz allein! Der Vater fort,  
hinabgescheucht in seine kalte Klüfte...  
(*speaking to the ground*) Agamemnon! Agamemnon!  
Wo bist du, Vater? hast du nicht die Kraft,  
dein Angesicht herauf zu mir zu schleppen?

Alone! Alas, all alone. Father has gone,  
shovelled away into his cold grave...  
Agamemnon! Agamemnon!  
Where are you, father? Do you not have  
the strength to drag yourself to me?

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**TRACK 2**

**KLYTÄMNESTRA:** Diese Träume müssen  
ein Ende haben. Wer sie immer schickt,  
ein jeder Dämon läßt von uns, sobald  
das rechte Blut geflossen ist.

There must be an end  
to these dreams. No matter who sends them,  
every demon will leave us alone, as soon as  
the correct blood has flowed.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

TRACK 3

*ELEKTRA: (springing out of the darkness at Klytämnestra, and as she comes closer, growing more and more terrible)*

Was bluten muß? Dein eigenes Genick,  
wenn dich der Jäger abgefangen hat!  
Ich hör' ihn durch die Zimmer gehn, ich hör' ihn  
den Vorhang vor dem Bette heben: wer schlachtet  
ein Opfertier im Schlaf? Er jagt dich auf,  
schreiend entfliehst du, aber er ist hinterdrein:  
er treibt dich durch das Haus! Willst du nach rechts,  
da steht das Bett! Nach links, da schäumt das Bad  
wie Blut! Das Dunkel und die Fackeln werfen  
schwarzrote Todesnetze über dich –

*(Klytämnestra, speechless with terror, tries to go into the house, but Elektra holds her by her robe. Klytämnestra backs up against the wall. She is wide-eyed, and her stick falls from her trembling hands.)*

Hinab die Treppen durch Gewölbe hin,  
Gewölbe und Gewölbe geht die Jagd—  
Und ich! ich! ich! ich! die ihn dir geschickt,  
ich steh da und seh dich endlich sterben!  
Dann träumst du nicht mehr, dann brauche ich  
nicht mehr zu träumen, und wer dann noch lebt,  
der jauchzt und kann sich seines Lebens freuen!  
*(They stand eye to eye, Elektra in wild intoxication, Klytämnestra gasping in horror.)*

What blood must flow? Blood from your own neck  
when the hunter has caught you!  
I hear him going through the rooms, I hear him  
lifting the canopy from the bed; who slaughters  
the victim in its sleep? He rouses you,  
you flee screaming, but he is at your heels,  
he drives you through the house! If you would go to the right,  
there stands the bed. To the left is the bath,  
foaming with blood! The darkness and the torches throw  
grim red nets of death over you...

Down the steps and through the vaults,  
through vault after vault goes the chase,  
and I, I, I, I who sent him to you,  
I stand there and see you die at last!  
Then you will dream no more, then I  
need dream no more, and they who still live  
can exult and rejoice in life!

ELEKTRA

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

TRACK 4

CHRYSOTHEMIS: (*rushing in through the gate, howling like a wounded animal*) Orest! Orest ist tot!

ELEKTRA: (*dismisses her, as if she were mad*) Sei still!

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Orest ist tot! (*Elektra's lips move.*) Ich kam hinaus, da wußten sie's schon! Alle standen herum und alle wußten es schon, nur wir nicht.

ELEKTRA: (*flatly*) Niemand weiß es.

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Alle wissen's!

ELEKTRA: Niemand kann's wissen: denn es ist nicht wahr. (*In despair, Chrysothemis throws herself to the ground. Elektra pulls her back up.*) Es ist nicht wahr! Es ist nicht wahr! Ich sag' dir doch, es ist nicht wahr!

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Orest! Orest is dead!

ELEKTRA: Be quiet!

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Orest is dead! I came out and they already knew. They were all standing around and they all knew; only we didn't.

ELEKTRA: No one knows.

CHRYSOTHEMIS: They all know!

ELEKTRA: No one can know because it is not true.

It is not true, it is not true, I tell you; it is not true!



A newspaper account of the Berlin premiere emphasizes the score's power to shock.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

TRACK 5

OREST: Wer bist denn du?

Who are you then?

ELEKTRA: Was kümmert's  
dich, wer ich bin?

What does it matter  
to you, who I am?

OREST: Du mußt verwandtes Blut zu denen sein,  
die starben, Agamemnon und Orest.

You must be of the same blood as the two  
who died, Agamemnon and Orest.

ELEKTRA: Verwandt? ich bin dies Blut! ich bin das hündisch  
vergossene Blut des Königs Agamemnon!  
Elektra heiß' ich.

Of the same blood? I am that blood! I am the shamefully  
outpoured blood of King Agamemnon!  
Elektra is my name.

OREST: Nein!

No!

ELEKTRA: Er leugnet's ab.  
Er bläst auf mich und nimmt mir meinen Namen.

He denies it!  
He disdains me and takes away my name.

OREST: Elektra!

Elektra!

ELEKTRA: Weil ich nicht Vater hab'...

Because I have no father...

OREST: Elektra!

Elektra!

ELEKTRA: ...noch Bruder, bin ich der Spott der Buben!

...nor brother, I am a laughing stock for boys!

OREST: Elektra! Elektra!  
So seh' ich sie? ich seh' sie wirklich? du?  
So haben sie dich darben lassen oder—  
sie haben dich geschlagen?

Elektra! Elektra!  
Is it you I see? Is it really you?  
Have they let you starve,  
or have they beaten you?

ELEKTRA: Laß mein Kleid, wühl nicht mit deinem Blick daran.

Never mind my dress, do not stare at it so.

OREST: Was haben sie gemacht mit deinen Nächten?  
Furchtbar sind deine Augen.

What horrors have they filled your nights with?  
Your eyes look terrible.

ELEKTRA: Laß mich!

Let me be!

OREST: Hohl sind deine Wangen!

Your cheeks are hollow!

ELEKTRA: Geh' ins Haus,  
drin hab ich eine Schwester, die bewahrt sich  
für Freudenfeste auf!

Go into the house.  
I have a sister there, who is saving herself up  
for festivities!

OREST: Elektra, hör' mich!

Elektra, listen to me!

ELEKTRA: Ich will nicht wissen, wer du bist.  
Ich will niemand sehn.

I do not want to know who you are.  
I do not want to see anybody.

OREST: Hör mich an, ich hab' nicht Zeit.  
Hör zu: Orestes lebt! (*Elektra turns round quickly.*)  
Wenn du dich regst, verrätst du ihn.

Listen to me, I have no time.  
Listen: Orest is alive!  
If you move you will betray him.

ELEKTRA: So ist er frei? wo ist er?

Is he free then? Where is he?

OREST: Er ist unversehrt  
wie ich.

He is safe and sound  
like me.

ELEKTRA

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

ELEKTRA: So rett' ihn doch, bevor sie ihn erwürgen.

OREST: Bei meines Vaters Leichnam! dazu kam ich her!

ELEKTRA: *(arrested by his tone)* Wer bist denn du?

*(Silently, the grim old servant rushes in from the courtyard, followed by three other servants. He throws himself down in front of Orest and kisses his feet, while the others kiss his hands and the hem of his robe.)*

*(barely controlling herself)* Wer bist du denn? Ich fürchte mich.

OREST: *(gently)* Die Hunde auf dem Hof erkennen mich, und meine Schwester nicht?

ELEKTRA: *(crying out)* Orest!  
*(quietly, her voice trembling)* Orest! Orest! Orest!

Then rescue him, before they kill him.

By my father's body! That is why I came here!

Who are you then?

Who are you then? I am frightened.

The dogs in the yard recognize me, but my sister does not?

Orest!  
Orest! Orest! Orest!

**ELEKTRA**

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Fate, Fault, and Catharsis: A Close Look at Dramatic Structure in *Elektra* (CONT'D)

<b>EXPOSITION</b>	<b>RISING ACTION</b>
<b>CLIMAX</b>	
<b>FALLING ACTION</b>	<b>DÉNOUEMENT/CATASTROPHE</b>



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Unweaving a Tangled Web: Identifying Leitmotifs in *Elektra*

### TRACK 15: ELEKTRA'S MONOLOGUE

**ELEKTRA:** Allein! Weh, ganz allein! Der Vater fort,  
hinabgescheucht in seine kalten Klüfte...

*(speaking to the ground)* Agamemnon! Agamemnon!

Wo bist du, Vater? hast du nicht die Kraft,  
dein Angesicht herauf zu mir zu schleppen?

Es ist die Stunde, unsre Stunde ist's,  
die Stunde, wo sie dich geschlachtet haben,  
dein Weib und der mit ihr in einem Bette,  
in deinem königlichen Bette schläft.

Sie schlugen dich im Bade tot, dein Blut  
rann über deine Augen, und das Bad  
dampfte von deinem Blut. Da nahm er dich,  
der Feige, bei den Schultern, zerrte dich  
hinaus aus dem Gemach, den Kopf voraus,  
die Beine schleifend hinterher: dein Auge,  
das starre, offne, sah herein ins Haus.

So kommst du wieder, setzest Fuß vor Fuß,  
und stehst auf einmal da, die beiden Augen  
weit offen, und ein königlicher Reif  
von Purpur ist um deine Stirn, der speist sich  
aus des Hauptes offner Wunde.

Agamemnon! Vater!

Ich will dich sehn, laß mich heute nicht allein!

Nur so wie gestern, wie ein Schatten dort  
im Mauerwinkel zeig dich deinem Kind!

Vater! Agamemnon! Dein Tag wird kommen.

Alone! Alas, all alone. Father has gone,  
shovelled away into his cold grave...

Agamemnon! Agamemnon!

Where are you, father? Do you not have  
the strength to drag yourself to me?

It is the hour, it is our hour,  
the hour when they slaughtered you,  
Your wife and the man who sleeps with her  
in one bed, in your royal bed.

They butchered you in the bath, the blood  
ran over your eyes and the bath  
steamed with your blood. Then the coward  
took you by the shoulders, dragged you  
out of the chamber, head first,  
with your legs trailing behind. Your eyes,  
wide-open, stared back into the house.

So will you come again, setting foot before foot,  
and suddenly you'll be standing there, with both eyes  
wide open, and a royal crown  
of purple round your forehead, fed by  
the open wound in your head.

Agamemnon! Father!

I want to see you, don't leave me alone today!

Show yourself to your child, if only as you did yesterday, as a  
shadow in the angle of the wall!

Father! Agamemnon! Your day will come.



Alfred Roller's set design for *Elektra*'s Vienna premiere

BILDARCHIV DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN NATIONALBIBLIOTHEK, VIENNA

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Unweaving a Tangled Web: Identifying Leitmotifs in *Elektra* (CONTINUED)

TRACK 16: ELEKTRA AND OREST MEET AS STRANGERS

**ELEKTRA:** Was willst du, fremder Mensch?  
was treibst du dich zur dunkeln Stunde hier herum,  
belauerst, was andre tun!  
Ich hab' hier ein Geschäft. Was kümmert's dich?  
Laß mich in Ruh'.

**OREST:** Ich muß hier warten.

**ELEKTRA:** Warten?

**OREST:** Doch du bist hier aus dem Haus?  
bist eine von den Mägden dieses Hauses?

**ELEKTRA:** Ja, ich diene hier im Haus.  
Du aber hast hier nichts zu schaffen.  
Freu' dich und geh'.

**OREST:** Ich sagte dir, ich muß hier warten,  
bis sie mich rufen.

**ELEKTRA:** Die da drinnen?  
Du lügst. Weiß ich doch gut, der Herr ist nicht zu Haus'.  
Und sie, was sollte sie mit dir?

**OREST:** Ich und noch einer,  
der mit mir ist, wir haben einen Auftrag  
an die Frau. (*Elektra remains silent*)  
Wir sind an sie geschickt,  
weil wir bezeugen können, daß ihr Sohn  
Orest gestorben ist vor unsern Augen.  
Denn ihn erschlugen seine eignen Pferde.  
Ich war so alt wie er und sein Gefährte  
bei Tag und Nacht.

**ELEKTRA:** Muß ich dich  
noch sehn? schleppst du dich hierher  
in meinen traurigen Winkel,  
Herold des Unglücks! Kannst du nicht die Botschaft  
austrompeten dort, wo sie sich freu'n!  
Dein Aug' da starrt mich an und sein's ist Gallert.  
Dein Mund geht auf und zu und seiner ist  
mit Erde vollgepfropft.  
Du lebst und er, der besser war als du  
und edler tausendmal, und tausendmal so wichtig,  
daß er lebte, er ist hin.

**OREST:** (*calmly*) Laß den Orest. Er freute sich zu sehr  
an seinem Leben. Die Götter droben  
vertragen nicht den allzu hellen Laut  
der Lust. So mußte er denn sterben.

What do you want, stranger? Why are you  
wandering around here as darkness falls,  
watching what others are doing?  
I have business here. What is it to do with you?  
Leave me in peace.

I must wait here.

Wait?

You must be a member of the household.  
Are you one of the maids from the house?

Yes, I serve in this house.  
But this is nothing that concerns you.  
Be glad and go along.

I told you, I must wait here,  
until they call me.

The people inside?  
You are lying. I know very well that the master is not at home.  
And that woman, what has she to do with you?

I and another man  
who is with me have a message  
for the lady.  
We have been sent to her  
because we can attest that her son  
Orest died before our eyes.  
He was killed by his own horses.  
I was the same age as he, and was his companion  
day and night.

Must I  
see you? Must you come creeping  
into my sad corner,  
you herald of misfortune? Can't you blare your message out  
inside, where it will please them?  
Your eyes stare at me; his are decaying away.  
Your mouth opens and shuts; his is  
stopped up with earth.  
You are alive and he, who was better than you,  
a thousand times more noble, and whose life  
was a thousand times more important, he is dead.

Let Orest be. He enjoyed  
life too much. The gods above  
do not tolerate such noisy  
merriment. So he had to die.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Unweaving a Tangled Web: Identifying Leitmotifs in *Elektra* (CONTINUED)

ELEKTRA: Doch ich! da liegen und  
zu wissen, daß das Kind nie wieder kommt,  
nie wieder kommt,  
daß das Kind da drunten in den Klüften  
des Grausens lungert, daß die da drinnen  
leben und sich freuen...

But what of me? Me! I lie there and  
know that the boy will never come again,  
never again,  
that the child lives down below  
in the abyss of horror, and those above here  
are alive and enjoying themselves...

TRACK 17: ELEKTRA AND OREST REUNITED

ELEKTRA: Orest! Orest! Orest!  
Es rührt sich niemand!  
O laß deine Augen mich sehn, Traumbild,  
mir geschenktes Traumbild,  
schöner als alle Träume!  
Hehres, unbegreifliches, erhabenes Gesicht,  
o bleib' bei mir! Lös dich  
in Luft nicht auf, vergeh' mir nicht,  
es sei denn, daß ich jetzt gleich  
sterben muß und du dich anzeigst  
und mich holen kommst: dann sterb' ich  
seliger, als ich gelebt! Orest! Orest! Orest!  
*(Orest leans over to embrace her.)*  
Nein, du sollst mich nicht umarmen!

Orest! Orest! Orest!  
No one is stirring!  
Oh let me gaze at you, a vision in a dream,  
a vision given to me,  
fairer than any dream!  
noble, ineffable, sublime features,  
Oh, stay by me! Do not melt  
into air, do not vanish from my sight,  
unless I now must die,  
and you have shown yourself to me  
to come and join you. Then I will die  
happier than I have lived! Orest! Orest! Orest!

No, you must not embrace me!

TRACK 18: DANCING HERSELF TO DEATH

*(Elektra steps down from the threshold, her head thrown back like a maenad. She jerks her knees up, flings her arms around in some unknown dance, as she comes forward.)*

*Chrysothemis appears at the door: behind her are torches, people jostling and men and women's faces.)*

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Elektra!

ELEKTRA: *(stopping and staring at her)* Schweig, und tanze.  
Alle müssen herbei! hier schließt euch an! Ich trage die  
Last des Glückes, und ich tanze vor euch her.  
Wer glücklich ist wie wir, dem ziemt nur eins:  
schweigen und tanzen!

*(She does a few more triumphant steps with the utmost effort, then collapses. Chrysothemis runs to her. Elektra lies rigid. Chrysothemis runs to the palace door and beats on it.)*

CHRYSOTHEMIS: Orest! Orest!

Elektra!

Be silent, and dance.  
Join me, all of you! Close your ranks! I bear the  
burden of joy, and I lead you in the dance.  
There is only one thing right for those as happy as we are:  
to be silent and dance!

Orest! Orest!

**ELEKTRA**

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CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Unweaving a Tangled Web: Identifying Leitmotifs in *Elektra* (CONTINUED)

**LEITMOTIF QUIZ**

After listening to each audio excerpt, identify the leitmotif that you hear.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

- Agamemnon
- Elektra's Hatred
- Elektra
- Elektra's Love for Orest
- The Children of Agamemnon
- The Axe
- The Stranger
- Orest's Mission
- The Dance

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## Musical Snapshots: The Multiple Musical Personalities of Elektra

### TRACK 24

**ELEKTRA:** Es ist die Stunde, unsre Stunde ist's,  
die Stunde, wo sie dich geschlachtet haben,  
dein Weib und der mit ihr in einem Bette,  
in deinem königlichen Bette schläft.  
Sie schlugen dich im Bade tot, dein Blut  
rann über deine Augen, und das Bad  
dampfte von deinem Blut. Da nahm er dich,  
der Feige, bei den Schultern, zerrte dich  
hinaus aus dem Gemach, den Kopf voraus,  
die Beine schleifend hinterher: dein Auge,  
das starre, offne, sah herein ins Haus.  
So kommst du wieder, setzest Fuß vor Fuß,  
und stehst auf einmal da, die beiden Augen  
weit offen, und ein königlicher Reif  
von Purpur ist um deine Stirn, der speist sich  
aus des Hauptes offner Wunde.  
Agamemnon! Vater!

It is the hour, it is our hour,  
the hour when they slaughtered you,  
Your wife and the man who sleeps with her  
in one bed, in your royal bed.  
They butchered you in the bath, the blood  
ran over your eyes and the bath  
steamed with your blood. Then the coward  
took you by the shoulders, dragged you  
out of the chamber, head first,  
with your legs trailing behind. Your eyes,  
wide-open, stared back into the house.  
So will you come again, setting foot before foot,  
and suddenly you'll be standing there, with both eyes  
wide open, and a royal crown  
of purple round your forehead, fed by  
the open wound in your head.  
Agamemnon! Father!

### TRACK 25

**ELEKTRA:** Von jetzt an will ich deine Schwester sein,  
so wie ich niemals deine Schwester war!  
Getreu will ich mit dir in deiner Kammer sitzen  
und warten auf den Bräutigam.  
Für ihn will ich dich salben und ins duftige Bad  
sollst du mir tauchen wie der junge Schwan  
und deinen Kopf an meiner Brust verbergen,  
bevor er dich, die durch die Schleier glüht  
wie eine Fackel, in das Hochzeitsbett  
mit starken Armen zieht.

From now on I will be your sister,  
as I have never been before!  
I will sit faithfully by you in your room  
and wait for the bridegroom.  
For him I will anoint you, and into the perfumed bath  
you will plunge like a young swan  
and you will rest your head on my breast,  
and then you will shine through your veil  
like a torch, as he leads you to the marriage bed  
with his strong arms.

## At the Met: *Archetypes and Adaptations*

In creating his production, director Patrice Chéreau and his designers, Richard Peduzzi and Caroline de Vivaise, developed their own distinctive interpretation of ancient Mycenae. Where and when do you think this production is set? Take notes on what you see, and then reflect on what the designers' interpretive choices say about the opera's themes.

Set

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What does this say about the story's themes?

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What Elektra wears

---

What Klytämnestra wears

---

What Orest wears

---

Who are the women at the start of the opera?

---

How are the characters in the story related?

---

Can you draw any conclusions about where and when this story takes place?

What does this interpretation of *Elektra* imply about human nature? Do you agree?

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# *Elektra: My Highs & Lows*

APRIL 30, 2016

CONDUCTED BY ESA-PEKKA SALONEN

REVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

<b>THE STARS</b>	<b>STAR POWER</b>	<b>MY COMMENTS</b>
NINA STEMME AS ELEKTRA	*****	
ADRIANNE PIECZONKA AS CHRYSOTHEMIS	*****	
WALTRAUD MEIER AS KLYTÄMNESTRA	*****	
ERIC OWENS AS OREST	*****	
BURKHARD ULRICH AS AEGISTH	*****	

<b>THE SHOW, SCENE BY SCENE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>MUSIC</b>	<b>SET DESIGN/STAGING</b>
MEMBERS OF THE HOUSEHOLD GOSSIP MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ELEKTRA FINDS HERSELF ALONE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
CHRYSOTHEMIS AND ELEKTRA ARGUE ABOUT THEIR FUTURE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
KLYTÄMNESTRA ARRIVES AND DESCRIBES HER NIGHTMARES MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ELEKTRA REVEALS THE REQUIRED SACRIFICE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ELEKTRA LEARNS OF OREST'S DEATH MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ELEKTRA TRIES TO ENLIST CHRYSOTHEMIS MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
OREST AND ELEKTRA RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
THE DEATHS OF KLYTÄMNESTRA AND AEGISTH MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5
ELEKTRA'S TRIUMPHAL DANCE MY OPINION OF THIS SCENE:	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5