

Trilogue on Antigone—operatic essays, dress rehearsal, Stage 6, KHIO, June 2nd 2021, 16:00-18:30, Triolectics model (photo: S. J. Hutton)

Pauline Aase, Soprano.
Nina Alexandra Barretto, Soprano.
Aleksander Skovly, Baritone. Larissa Tereščenko, violin
Guoste Tamulynaite, piano.
Concept: Marte Royeng & Guoste Tamulynaite.
Music & libretto: Marte Royeng. Scenography & costumes: Guoste Tamulynaite

Composer, Martin Korsletten. Co-composer, Fredrik Storsveen. Libretto, Madelen Larsen, Fredrik Storsveen, Clara Nergårdh. Direction, Fredrik Storsveen Madelen Larsen, Alexandra Olsson, Martin Korsletten. Costume, Clara Nergårdh. Scenography, Clara Nergårdh, Madelen Larsen Fredrik Storsveen Alexandra Olsson, Makeup, Alexandra Olsson, Clara Nergårdh.

Hedda Lund, Soprano. Alexandra Olsson, Mezzo-Soprano. Øystein Dulsrud Klungnes, Baritone. Antigone: Madelen Larsen, Acting. Andrine Erdal – Cello. Jonas Evenstad – Perc. Sunniva Norberg, Viola. Tomas Laukvik Nannestad, Theorbo

When attending a dress rehearsal—with 3 ‘operatic essays’, each inspired by Sophocles’ play *Antigone*—I came “armed” with the *modern* invention of this play by Jean Anouilh. But through experiencing the 3, I was brought to reflect on the title: *Trilogue*, reverberating with Asger Jorn’s *Triolectics*.

These references place the 3 essays *between* modern *painting* (Asger Jorn) and modern *theatre* (Jean Anouilh and eventually Eugene Ionesco). As a composite piece, *Trilogue* brought me to think of repair/re-pair in *other* than binary terms, in the *foundation*: a projection space from 3 (not from 2).

Moving from the *trilogue* to *triolectics* (Jorn) an experimental projective space opens, affording an opportunity to span the *miasma* on local terms in the *original* play. In this way, *Trilogue* feature a potential of artistic research: proceeding by *re-pairing* with the [miasma](#). A *post-interpretive* repair.

Libretto: Frederikke Hooge, Thea Brix, Pinelopi Spanou and Benjamin Knutsen
Music: Benjamin Knutsen
Direction: Frederikke Hooge
Costume & Scenography: Lærke Bang Barfod.

Thea Brix, Soprano
Viktoria Jøner, Soprano. Simon Thorbjørnsen, Baritone. Frederikke Hooge, Acting. Åsmund Soldal, Percussion.

Photo: S.J. Hutton.

Triologue. In my store of references this word—trilogue—points to the Danish CoBrA painter Asger Jorn, who developed it extensively. He was one of several to have attempted leaving a reality that comes in pairs, for one that comes in 3s. His range went from *colours*, via *physics* to *politics*.

Then there is *Antigone*—the subject of this particular triologue—in a devised production involving *opera*, *costume* and *music* (from KHiO, Scenekunst Akademiet and NMH). An operatic commentary on Sophocles' play, from Greek antiquity, which was much a striking oddity in its own time.

Its particularity lies foremost in the spatiotemporal premises of the *location*. We are *not* in front of a facade as was the custom, but *behind* the scenes where the *action* takes place. Moreover, the narrative is *not* linear but moves sideways—or, crabwise—*Œdipus gone, sons dead, Creon takes over*.

Creon decrees that *one* brother is left to rot, the *other* to be given a proper funeral. Antigone rebels—on behalf of her desecrated *brother* and on behalf of *women*, whose right is to confer burial rites: she is condemned to death by starvation. Enters a prophet who states that this will provoke *miasma*.

Historically, miasma are connected to *plagues* and therefore interestingly link to the current pandemic. But also to the forces of destruction and chaos that are allowed free play in modern art. Before modernism these were exceptional, like *anomalies*: in music an example is [Heinrich Ignaz Biber](#).

In both cases—Sophocles and Biber—the miasma pierces in the *middle* (*crisis*) and then returns to the *temple*: as Creon changes his mind about his verdicts, decides to give Polyneikes proper funerals and exonerate Antigone: but it is *too late*, as Antigone has hanged herself in a cave.

Antigone's wish to *honour* the gods is disrupted by the course of *human ways*: by taking her own life, she follows in the footsteps of her *mother* Jocasta. The 3 opera works that make up the Triologue at KHiO, in each their own way, make their bids on this *between-space* of the miasma.

I am tempted to call these three pieces *essays*, on account of the tentative nature of *interlacing* personae and the broader questions about life, brought about *in* the miasma. The *first* focussing on the cosmic *triangle* of creation, sustaining and destruction. The *second* on *Antigone*. The *third* on *absurdity*.

The latter could be seen as the most *modern* one: since the references it prompted—in this viewer—was Ionesco's *absurd* theatre (*Exit the King*, in particular). The middle essay, devoted directly to Antigone, was more of a *character study* through the intermedium of *costume design/scenography*.

In that aspect, closer to contemporary directions in artistic research: *what do costumes do*, defining agency through costume, teasing out the characters to study them. In this play, Creon—for instance—is a *trickster*. The first essay played with the *divine* vantage point, and the *poor* human condition.