

Act I Part One

Full Score

May 27, 2019

ALICE SHIELDS

Criseyde

Opera in two acts
for 5 singers, ensemble of 3 singers,
& 14 solo instruments

Duration: 2 hours

Music and Libretto by Alice Shields

In Middle English, based on Geoffrey Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde"
and the medieval Italian of Giovanni Boccaccio's "Il Filostrato"

Modern English translation by Alice Shields

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SCORING

1 flute/piccolo
1 oboe
1 english horn
1 bassoon

1 horn
1 trumpet in Bb
1 trombone

1 harp
1 piano

1 violin I
1 violin II
1 viola
1 violoncello
1 contrabass

NOTE:

This is a transposed score: all transposing instruments are written as played.

Depending on acoustics, strings can be increased, e.g. to 10.8.6.5.4.

Piano: use the pedal lightly according to the nature of the textures.

Harp: harp sounds should always be allowed to ring as long as possible.

Conductor's score, vocal score and orchestral parts are available on hire.

CHARACTERS

3 PRINCIPAL ROLES

CRISEYDE	<i>Noble lady of Troy, a young widow.....</i>	<i>Soprano</i>
TROILUS	<i>Prince of Troy.....</i>	<i>Lyric Baritone</i>
PANDAR	<i>Uncle to Criseyde, subordinate of Troilus</i> <i>Also plays CALKAS, father of Criseyde</i>	<i>Basso Cantante</i>

2 SECONDARY ROLES

CASSANDRA	<i>An oracle, younger sister to Troilus.....</i>	<i>Mezzo-Soprano</i>
DIOMEDE	<i>A Greek Prince.....</i>	<i>Baritone</i>

ENSEMBLE

THREE LADIES	<i>Nieces and companions to Criseyde</i>	<i>Soprano & 2 Mezzo-Sopranos</i>
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ROLE COMPARISONS IN STANDARD REPERTORY

- The role of Criseyde is vocally similar to Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni*
- Pandar to Leporello in *Don Giovanni*
- Troilus to Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte* or Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*
- Cassandra to Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* or Carmen in *Carmen*
- Diomede to Papageno in *The Magic Flute* or Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*
- The Three Ladies to the Three Ladies in *The Magic Flute* or to Naiad, Dryad and Echo in *Ariadne auf Naxos*

CRISEYDE - List of Scenes

ACT ONE PART ONE

Scene 1 on the stage apron

Pandar Talks About Language and Love (Pandar, Troilus)
Troilus Falls in Love
Pandar Talks About Troilus

Scene 2 in Criseyde's parlor

(Criseyde, Ladies, Pandar)

Criseyde is Pressured to See Troilus, Submits to Power, and Gets Mad

Scene 3 in Criseyde's garden

No.1 **Criseyde Falls in Love**

(Pandar, Criseyde)

No.2 **Criseyde's Aria**

(Criseyde, Ladies)

No.3 **Criseyde's Dream**

(Cassandra/Criseyde/Ladies,
...Troilus/Pandar/Diomedes)

ACT ONE PART TWO

Scene 4 on the stage apron, then Troilus' bedroom

(Troilus, Pandar)

Troilus Talks About Women
Troilus Writes His Letter to Criseyde
Pandar Talks About Troilus

Scene 5 in Criseyde's garden

(Criseyde, Ladies, Pandar)

Criseyde is Told to Write Him Back, Submits to Force, and Gets Scared

Scene 6 in Troilus' bedroom

No.1 **Troilus Reads Her Letter**

(Pandar, Troilus)

No.2 **Engagement**

(Criseyde, Troilus, Pandar)

No.3 **Guilt**

(Pandar, Troilus)

Scene 7 in Criseyde's bedroom

Consummation - The Men Enter Her Bedroom

(Criseyde, Pandar, Troilus, Ladies)

-----INTERMISSION-----

ACT TWO

Scene 1 on the stage apron

Criseyde Talks About Herself
Her Exile Announced

(Criseyde, Pandar, Ladies)

Scene 2 in Criseyde's parlor

Double Death Scene

(Criseyde, Troilus)

Scene 3 in Criseyde's garden

Criseyde is Handed Over to the Greeks

(Criseyde, Troilus, Diomedes, Ladies)

Scene 4 on the plain

Troilus and Criseyde Lament

(Troilus, Criseyde)

Scene 5 in Troilus' garden

Troilus' Dream

(Cassandra,Ladies,Troilus,Pandar,Diomedes)

Scene 6 in the Greek camp

Tent Scene - The Men Enter Her Tent, and Criseyde Rebels

(Criseyde,Calkas,Diomedes,Troilus,Ladies)

Scene 7 Finale

No.1 **Troilus' Death Aria**

(Troilus)

No.2 **Criseyde's Farewell**

(Criseyde, Cassandra, Ladies)

CRISEYDE: Space-age meets Medieval, in a World of Shadows

Within the story of an intense love affair, the opera *Criseyde* focuses on the imbalance of power between the sexes, and the historical position of women as commanded and controlled by male relatives. While being used by her family as a sexual trophy, a prize for political gain, Criseyde struggles for survival, self-respect and love.

The setting can morph between the 14th century, the present and the future. Singers' costumes can be medieval bodices, gloves and armor, in space-age metallic and transparent materials. Multimedia technology can be used to project the shadows of onstage cage-like structures with which the singers interact.

Scene locations: the stage apron; in Criseyde's parlor, bedroom and garden; in Troilus' bedroom; in Pandar's bedroom; and in a tent in the Greek camp.

SYNOPSIS

Act I Part I

Pandar arranges to have his boss Prince Troilus view his beautiful young widowed niece Criseyde. Troilus is smitten. Pandar, who controls her estate, tells Criseyde he will kill himself if she doesn't let Troilus communicate with her. After vehemently objecting, she submits. Pandar arranges for Criseyde to glimpse Troilus. She is smitten. She considers whether to accept him as a lover and concludes there is no danger. She dreams about Troilus, and the psychic Cassandra describes her dream of love to the rest of the cast.

Act I Part II

Troilus burns with desire for Criseyde. At Pandar's suggestion, he writes her a letter. Pandar takes her the letter, and forces her to write Troilus back. On returning with her letter, Pandar finds Troilus about to kill himself. They struggle, and Pandar wrenches the knife away from him. Troilus collapses, weeping. He says his father the king will not let him marry Criseyde because she is not of royal blood. He is torn between intense desire for her, and his fears for her reputation if he consummates the affair. Pandar tricks Criseyde into coming to his bedroom to visit Troilus, who, she is told, is sick. She promises to love Troilus always, as long as her honor is protected. Pandar tells the couple to meet him in secret at his house. There, deeply in love, they fall into each other's arms, as Pandar perversely watches them make love.

Act II

Parliament announces they will give Criseyde to the Greeks in exchange for Prince Antenor, who is being held hostage. Criseyde's father Calkas, a traitor who has gone over to the Greeks, has arranged this. Criseyde is taken by the Greek Prince Diomedes to Calkas' tent in the Greek camp, where she is threatened by rape and cannot escape. She fights back against them, and just as she is about to be overwhelmed, Troilus bursts into the tent. A swordfight ensues, with Troilus killing Diomedes, Calkas mortally wounding Troilus, and Criseyde killing Calkas. Troilus sings of his love to Criseyde, and expires. Criseyde, left alone with the Three Ladies, bids farewell to the audience, hoping that her story may be useful to other women.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE IN THE OPERA

The primary language in the opera is Middle English, adapted from Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde" in order to tell Criseyde's story from a woman's standpoint.

Other lines are in medieval Italian, adapted from Boccaccio's "Il Filostrato."

Over the centuries since Chaucer, the character of Criseyde has been much maligned by writers, including Shakespeare, because of how Chaucer portrayed her. Chaucer rarely describes his character Criseyde's thoughts or inner life, and when he does, he subtly surrounds this female character with intimations of base or weak motivations, in contrast to the great quantity of passionate and deep thoughts and exquisite sensitivities and virtuous actions he attributes to his male character Troilus.

Chaucer translated much of his Troilus and Criseyde almost word for word from Boccaccio's "Il Filostrato" ("He Who Is Prostrated by Love"), but he chose to leave out of his own story many actions and speeches that make Boccaccio's Criseyde a much stronger personality.

To resurrect Criseyde's strength and intelligence, I have inserted some of Boccaccio's medieval Italian lines back into the opera.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

Middle English Vowels

An important difference between the pronunciation of medieval and modern English is in the vowel sounds. A change in vowel pronunciation occurred after Chaucer and before Shakespeare. In Chaucer's time, vowels were pronounced as in modern Continental European languages such as French or Italian. After that, in English, the pronunciation of vowels moved towards the front of the mouth. So a common word, such as Modern English "lady," in Chaucer's time was pronounced "lah-dy," farther back in the mouth.

Chaucer's letter "a" is pronounced *ah* as in modern English "alone"
"e" is pronounced *ay* as in "say"
"i" or "y" is pronounced *ee* as in "Gee!"
"o" is pronounced as in "no"
"u" is pronounced *oo* as in "who"

Sometimes long e's occur at the ends of words, as in *beaute* (*bay-oh-tay*, i.e., "beauty"). Many words in Chaucer have a pronounced final e, as in *knowe*, *fewe*, etc. Pronounce this e like the a in *sofa*.

Middle English Consonants

In general, pronounce every consonant letter, such as the *k* and *gh* and *t* in "knyght,"

Please note: I am available to performers of the opera for coaching in the pronunciation of the Middle English text.

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Score

CRISEYDE

Act One Scene 1

on the stage apron

Pandar Talks About Language and Love

ALICE SHIELDS

Flute
Oboe
English Horn
Bassoon
Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Harp
Piano

Tempo: ♩ = 80

Flute: *sfz*, *p*, *mp*

Oboe: *sfz*, *p*, *pp*

English Horn: *sfz*, *p*, *pp*

Bassoon: *pp*

Horn in F: *mp*, *f*

Trumpet in B♭: *mp*, *f*

Trombone: *mp*, *f*

Harp: *f*, *ff*

Piano: *f*

Harp Chords:
 D C B
 E F G A#

Entering from the DSR wing, Pandar walks to the Solioquy Chair DSR. He sits, turns on the light above him, smiles, and speaks the audience: Cassandra in her cage is dimly visible USL.

TROIILUS
PANDAR
First LADY
Second LADY
Third LADY

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

Tempo: ♩ = 80

Violin I: *pp*, *glissando*

Violin II: *pp*, *glissando*

Viola: *pp*, *glissando*

Violoncello: *pp*, *glissando*

Contrabass: *p*, *>*

2.

ACT ONE sc.1 *Pandar Talks about Language and Love*

4

Fl.

Ob.

E. Hn.

Bsn.

Hn.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Hp.

Pno.

TROIUS

PANDAR

First LADY

Second LADY

Third LADY

4

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

mf

p

pp

sfz

mf

f

mf

f

mf

f

glissando

f

f

f

f

f

f

7 $\bullet = 90$

Fl.

Ob.

E. Hn.

Bsn.

Hn.

B \flat Tpt.

Tbn.

Hp.

Pno.

TROILUS

PANDAR

First LADY

Second LADY

Third LADY

7 $\bullet = 90$

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Cb.

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

8^{vb}

ACT ONE sc.1 *Pandar Talks about Language and Love*

4.

10 A

Fl. *mf* *p* *mf*

Ob. *mp* *p* *mp*

E. Hn. *p* *p* *p*

Bsn. *pp* *pp* *pp*

Hn. *pp* *pp* *mp*

B♭ Tpt. *pp* *pp* *mp*

Tbn. *pp* *pp* *mp*

Hp. *f* *f*

Pno. *f loco* *mf*

*quasi recitativo,
matter-of-factly:*

TROILUS

PANDAR *mp*

Ye kno - - - we ek that in fourme of speche, is
 You know _____ well that in form, _____ speech has

First LADY

Second LADY

Third LADY

10 A

Vln. I *p* *pp*

Vln. II *p* *pp*

Vla. *p* *pp*

Vc. *p* *pp*

Cb. *f* *f*