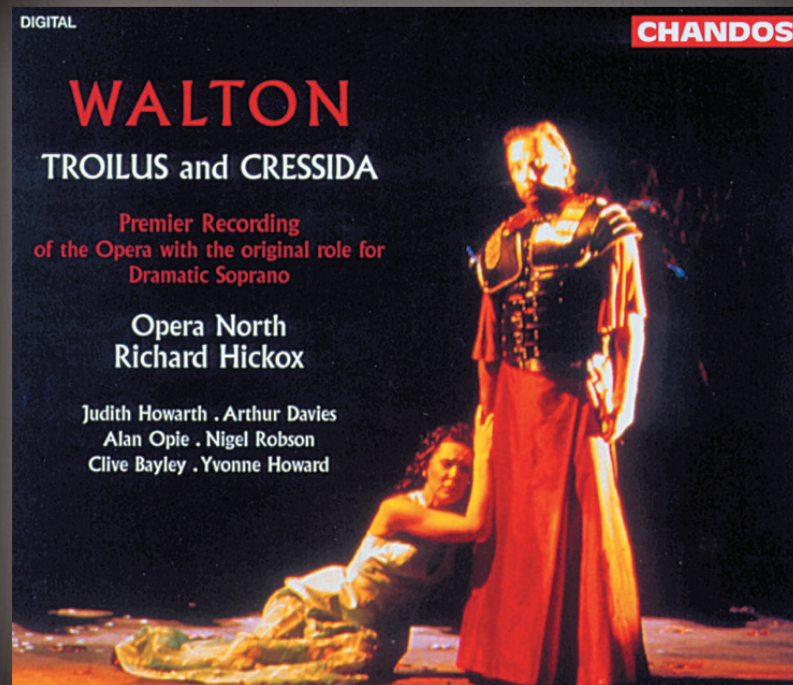


WALTON

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA



Judith Howarth soprano
Yvonne Howard mezzo-soprano
Arthur Davies tenor
Nigel Robson tenor
Alan Opie baritone

Clive Bayley bass
Chorus of Opera North
English Northern Philharmonia
Richard Hickox





Greg Barrett

Richard Hickox
(1948 – 2008)

Sir William Walton (1902 – 1983)

Troilus and Cressida

Opera in Three Acts

Libretto by Christopher Hassall (1912 – 1963)

Cressida , daughter of Calkas, a widow.....	Judith Howarth soprano
Evadne , Cressida's servant.....	Yvonne Howard mezzo-soprano
Troilus , Prince of Troy	Arthur Davies tenor
Pandarus , brother of Calkas.....	Nigel Robson tenor
Third Watchman	Brian Cookson tenor
Priest	Peter Bodenham tenor
Soldier	Keith Mills tenor
Diomedes , Prince of Argos	Alan Opie baritone
Antenor , Captain of Trojan Spears.....	James Thornton baritone
Calkas , High Priest of Troy	Clive Bayley bass
First Watchman	Bruce Budd bass
Second Watchman	Stephen Dowson bass
Horaste , a friend of Pandarus	David Owen-Lewis bass

Chorus of Opera North

Martin Fitzpatrick chorus master

English Northern Philharmonia

(Orchestra of Opera North)

David Greed leader

Richard Hickox

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

41:01

The Citadel of Troy, before the Temple of Pallas

1	Calkas, Priests and Priestesses, Worshippers: 'Virgin of Troas' –	6:36
2	Troilus: 'Back to your hovels, you scavenging dogs' –	2:27
3	Troilus: 'Is Cressida a slave...?' –	5:01
4	Cressida: 'Morning and evening I have felt your glance...' –	6:17
5	Pandarus: 'Forgive me...' –	2:17
6	Troilus: 'I haunt her beauty like a naked soul...' –	1:29
7	Calkas: 'Ask me no more!' –	2:00
8	Cressida: 'My father! Evadne, follow him!' –	0:38
9	Cressida: 'Slowly it all comes back' –	2:33
10	Cressida: 'Slowly it all comes back' –	3:46
11	Pandarus: 'Why, niece!... in tears?' –	1:59
12	Cressida: 'Sweet sir, there's something on your mind' –	2:26
13	Pandarus: 'Dear child, you need a little comfort'	3:28

Act II (beginning) 25:52

Scene 1

Evening of the following day. A room on the upper floor of Pandarus' house

14	Pandarus: 'Does talking put you off?' –	6:14
15	Cressida: 'How can I sleep?' –	2:13
16	Cressida: 'At the haunted end of the day...' –	2:58
17	Pandarus: 'Hush! Don't be alarmed!' –	4:06
18	Troilus: 'If one last doubt, one lurking fear remain' –	4:27
19	Cressida: 'New life, new love! I am reborn' –	4:22
20	Cressida: 'Now hold me close and let me lie there curled' –	1:30

21	Orchestral interlude. The Storm	3:01
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TT 70:08

COMPACT DISC TWO

Act II (conclusion) 16:23

Scene 2

Next morning

1	Cressida: 'From isle to isle chill waters whisper the hour' –	3:25
2	Pandarus: 'Who would go drumming about the town at <i>this</i> hour?' –	1:58
3	Diomedes: 'My name is Diomedes' –	5:16
4	Troilus: 'This thing shall be revok'd'	5:43

	Act III	46:28
	<i>The Greek encampment. Early evening. Ten weeks later</i>	
5	Watchman: 'All's well!' –	7:25
6	Cressida: 'No answering sign on the walls' –	5:43
7	Calkas: 'Cressid, daughter, why so heavy-hearted' –	2:25
8	Cressida: 'You gods, O deathless gods' –	2:04
9	Diomedes: 'Proud, wondrous Cressida, am I to live or die?' –	3:30
10	Cressida: 'Take it. Take all you ask of me' –	1:25
11	Evadne: 'So here's an end of it all' –	1:27
12	Troilus: 'Evadne!' –	2:32
13	Cressida: 'Troilus!' –	3:29
14	Troilus: 'What is this sudden alarm?' –	4:44
15	Sextet. Diomedes: 'Troy, false of heart, yet fair!' –	3:15
16	Diomedes: 'She has brought shame on Argos! I'll not endure it' –	3:33
17	Cressida: 'Diomedes!... Father!... Pandarus!... Evadne!... Troilus!' –	4:50
	TT 63:04	

Walton: Troilus and Cressida

The birth of an opera

In 1945 Mr Ralph Hawkes, a director of the publishing house of Boosey & Hawkes, persuaded the Arts Council to go shares with his firm in re-opening the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden. The theatre had been used during the war as a dance hall and no doubt would have been allowed to go on being put to this delectable, if somewhat undignified, use but for Boosey's acquiring a five-year lease with the specific intention of encouraging English opera and ballet. Constant Lambert, who was in charge of the revived Sadler's Wells Ballet, which was to move to Covent Garden, put forward his old friend William Walton to advise a committee on opera. Benjamin Britten had written *Peter Grimes*, so opera was very much in the air at the time.

William's committee wanted Covent Garden to become the permanent State Theatre for opera, ballet, drama, and films, with Sadler's Wells Theatre and the Old Vic as its satellites. The Treasury would match pound for pound the sums which would be provided by leading industrial concerns.

A proposal was made that was way ahead of its time:

All opera at Covent Garden was to be sung in English, with the exception of the international season. The repertoire should be as catholic as possible, and contemporary opera should not be allowed to suffer the neglect it had suffered in the past. Particular regard should be reserved for opera by our own composers, with the few already existing obtaining a permanent place in the repertoire as soon as possible...

The rarity of English opera was partly due to the conditions existing in the past – to find their works fobbed off with, at most, half a dozen performances was not exactly encouraging to composers. An 'advance on royalties' scheme was devised, 'to enable the composer to fulfil his destiny'.

With the changing situation many composers felt stimulated into trying their luck in what is one of the most difficult genres of their art. William was often commissioned to write new music. This pleased him, for, however modest the sum of money, it gave him a sense of security, as he could never estimate how much his royalty income would come to. In the case of his own

first opera, the stimulus came from the BBC which wished to commission him to compose an opera for broadcasting. The BBC, through Stanford Robinson, also suggested Christopher Hassall as a possible librettist. Christopher was a poet and dramatist in his own right, experienced in the commercial theatre, and he also possessed that priceless virtue of inexhaustible patience. But he had to learn his craft as he went along, for there was no tradition of libretto writing in Britain.

While the librettist is his composer's literary limb, in the last analysis a composer is his own dramatist.

How does one write an opera?

According to William, common or garden persistence is high among the necessary qualifications for writing an opera; as the old saying goes: 'It's dogged as does it.'

William's very dear friend Alice Wimborne was an admirer of Christopher who possessed many gifts, as author of successful biographies, as an actor with a most beautiful speaking voice, and as lyricist to Ivor Novello. Alice helped William to choose the treatment prepared by Christopher on the *Troilus and Cressida* story from among many other subjects proposed. On 15 June 1947 she wrote to Christopher:

the story or plot must be easy and clear
and flowing and scenic, Troilus and
Cressida has got that. And it's got, as we
agreed, the Manon lady which William
seems obviously to prefer to the Juliets!

She equally kept Christopher from despairing of William's seeming reluctance to make up his mind, by explaining how engrossed with writing his Quartet he was, and that it would not do at all to push him into a decision. In another letter she expressed hope that

One day the ball will bounce against
an electric wire as was the case with
Belshazzar and Scapino.

By Christmas 1947 Christopher was able to send the typed plot of his *Troilus and Cressida* to Rugby where William was staying with Alice. The search for an operatic story had lasted several months, and altogether he had sketched out eight likely subjects that for one reason or another had been laid aside.

From Boccaccio to the present day

Boccaccio stresses Cressida's infidelity, describing her as 'a fickle, capricious young woman with numerous lovers'. Chaucer puts her back into the mediaeval period, a figure caught among the subtle plots of chivalrous love, and he defends and idealises her. The indebtedness of William's opera to Chaucer, however, does not go so deep as it might

be thought, as Christopher used none of his text except for Chaucer's own invention of Pandarus, the proverbial schemer. In fact, he lifted the plot out of the Middle Ages and remade it into an image of ancient Troy as perceived by a twentieth-century mind's eye. As for Shakespeare, the appearance of Troilus within the Greek encampment at a time of truce is the one recognisable hallmark.

In William's opera, Cressida is the victim of intrigue and deception, yielding to Diomedes solely through weakness and fear when she believes herself forgotten and abandoned by Troilus. Chaucer emphasised the ruling passion of his heroine: it is fear – fear of loneliness, of old age, of death, of love – and from this fear springs a pitiable longing for protection.

When I met William, more than three years after Christopher had first started to offer him libretti, he still had not started on his opera. Larry Olivier's *Hamlet* was the cause of many delays and, after Alice died in May 1948, William was seriously sick. The libretto remained a continuous problem – he called it a shambles! – so in 1949, when we first settled in Ischia, William had first to unravel these difficulties. They were gradually solved after endless correspondence between Ischia and Hampstead over the next five years.

The libretto of the first act was the most difficult to fashion to William's needs as all the characters and the story must be presented and explained, information must be planted when ears are less than ever likely to catch the words and this information must be dramatically arresting. Inevitably this took time.

Instead William started writing the second act, which he composed in about three months. The middle act of a three-act opera invariably contains the most involved psychological workings of the drama; the first act sets up the reasons for the dilemma, and the last will bring the dénouement, but it is in the second act that the portals of the soul are opened for us to observe the workings of the 'terror and tragedy' to come.

Words, words, words! Time and again William just could not come to terms with them. Even Ernest Newman, a writer and famous music critic, was of the opinion that there were far too many words in the opera for singing. When William got into a temper he believed Ivor Novello had taken possession of Christopher's soul as Christopher could not distinguish between a trite line and an inspired one. As Ischia then had no telephones to private houses, alterations had to be reviewed by letter, and poor William would agonise until the requested new

version arrived, hoping that Christopher had finally interpreted correctly his suggestions.

On 7 September 1954, at the end of five years of intensive work on *Troilus and Cressida*, William wrote a letter to Christopher, saying that he expected to send off the last sheets by the end of the week. The manuscript bears the simple dedication, 'to my wife', and is dated 13 September.

© Lady Walton

At the time of his untimely death at the age of sixty in November 2008, **Richard Hickox** CBE, one of the most gifted and versatile British conductors of his generation, was Music Director of Opera Australia, having served as Principal Conductor of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales from 2000 until 2006 when he became Conductor Emeritus. He founded the City of London Sinfonia, of which he was Music Director, in 1971. He was also Associate Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of the Northern Sinfonia, and co-founder of Collegium Musicum 90.

He regularly conducted the major orchestras in the UK and appeared many times at the BBC Proms and at the Aldeburgh, Bath, and Cheltenham festivals, among others. With the London Symphony Orchestra

at the Barbican Centre he conducted a number of semi-staged operas, including *Billy Budd*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, and *Salome*. With the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra he gave the first ever complete cycle of Vaughan Williams's symphonies in London. In the course of an ongoing relationship with the Philharmonia Orchestra he conducted Elgar, Walton, and Britten festivals at the South Bank and a semi-staged performance of *Gloriana* at the Aldeburgh Festival.

Apart from his activities at the Sydney Opera House, he enjoyed recent engagements with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, English National Opera, Vienna State Opera, and Washington Opera, among others. He guest conducted such world-renowned orchestras as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic.

His phenomenal success in the recording studio resulted in more than 280 recordings, including most recently cycles of orchestral works by Sir Lennox and Michael Berkeley and Frank Bridge with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the symphonies by Vaughan Williams with the London Symphony Orchestra, and a series of operas by Britten with the City of London Sinfonia. He received a Grammy (for *Peter Grimes*) and five *Gramophone* Awards. Richard

Hickox was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Jubilee Honours List in 2002, and was the recipient of many other awards, including two Music Awards of the Royal Philharmonic

Society, the first ever Sir Charles Groves Award, the *Evening Standard* Opera Award, and the Award of the Association of British Orchestras.



Nigel Luckhurst

At the recording sessions

Troilus and Cressida

COMPACT DISC ONE

Act I

*The Citadel of Troy, before the Temple of Pallas
A wide flight of steps leading to a row of columns
supporting the architrave. Behind it runs a low
rampart visible only on the right; it is broken by
a gate leading from the citadel to the main city.
To right of centre stands a small wayside altar.
When the curtain rises, the people are discovered
praying.*

Calkas, Priests and Priestesses, Worshippers

1 Virgin of Troas,
whiter than snow new fallen,
taste our libation.
Shake off thy slumber,
stretch out thine arm
or we perish.
Pallas awake! Pallas awake!

*(A number of citizens, who take no part in the
ritual, enter and stand by.)*

Bystanders

Pallas is dead. Our children starve. And look,
the last of our honey pour'd on senseless altars!
A ten-year siege! And still they trust in God.
They squander our food.
Our children starve.
Drag them away!

Worshippers and Bystanders

Pallas awake!
We are accurs'd.
We starve, we thirst.

*(The doors of the temple open and Calkas comes
forward.)*

Calkas

Trojans, for shame! Are ye wild beasts, or men?

The crowd

We are accurs'd.
We starve, we thirst.

Calkas

Have you lost heart?

The crowd

We are accurs'd.
We starve, we thirst.

Calkas

Ten long years have dragg'd like rusty links of
iron, eating you thro' to the bone.
But why should I pity you?
In your own hands lies your deliverance.
– The oracle of Delphi has spoken!

The crowd

Delphi, mouth of the oracle!
How shall we crush them? How prevail?
What man or god so intrepidly set sail?

Calkas

Go, parley with the Greeks!

The crowd

Parley? Was this the oracle?
Have we endured ten years
only to cringe like rats.
Was this fetch'd at a brave man's peril out of
Delphi?

Calkas
Children, there lies your way.
Perish, be quite forgotten, or obey.
Not yet, not yet, the ravening brands of plunder!
Go, still unconquered, parley with the Greeks.

Antenor
Never! I too, Antenor, Captain of Spears,
command you answer me straight out.
Has this message truly been sent by the oracle
of Delphi?

Calkas (*in confusion, obviously lying*)
I am your priest.

Antenor
Show us the messenger!

The crowd
Show us the messenger!

Antenor
He cannot answer. This is a trick.
He's in the pay of the Greeks.
He forges oracles to cheat us.
Ask him his price for telling us these tales of
Delphi.

*(The crowd begins to approach menacingly up
the steps. Calkas recoils into the temple.)*

The crowd
Seize him... he would betray us...
sell us for gold... barter our children...
sell us for slaves!

*(Troilus has entered, struggled through the
crowd, and now with drawn sword, he rounds on
the people.)*

Troilus
Back to your hovels, you scavenging dogs.
You desecrate God's doorstep.

Antenor
Calkas would sell us to the Greeks!

The crowd
Calkas would sell us to the Greeks!

Troilus
Are you his judge, Antenor?

Antenor
He proclaims false oracles!

The crowd
Yes, false oracles!

Troilus
This is no place of judgement.

(The crowd, overawed, begins to disperse.)

The crowd
What does this mean? Was it indeed the oracle?
The buzzards fly low.
Let us look from the walls.

*(Troilus comes down the temple steps to pacify
Antenor.)*

Troilus
Fortune go with you on your foray.
You are bravely attended.

(Antenor waves his escort away.)

Antenor

I tell you, Troilus,
we live in a time of treachery and danger.

Troilus

Antenor, friend. We cannot part like this.
Calkas was always faithful and wise.
Yet I shall watch him.

(Antenor is suspicious of his friend's motives.)

Antenor *(tauntingly)*

I have seen you, Troilus, haunting this temple.
What draws you here? Is it – perchance – the girl
who keeps the candles burning? Can it be
that lovely novice, the mysterious
Cressida?

(Troilus is taken aback. Antenor goes off.)

Troilus

3 Is Cressida a slave
that she must trim those guttering candles?
Dim, passionless, remote, insulting flames
pois'd in the sickly air,
pale heads that should bow down
yet barely even flicker as she passes!
Here on my heart's red altar burns
the true flame of her kindling,
here where I serve no strict and joyless Pallas,
but radiant Aphrodite,
Goddess of Love.

Child of the wine-dark wave
Mantled in beauty,
Spirit of mortal love,
Tall Aphrodite;
Thou whose warm footprints fill

With flowers of Spring,
Walk our dry desert ways.
Thy fruitful pleasures bring.
Girdled with foam, on the swell
In majesty riding,
Cradled in sea-blown shell
Come shoreward gliding.
Here, gentle Love, find welcome and dwell,
In my heart abiding.
Queen of the wine-dark wave,
Alone I invoke thee.
How can the anguish of love
Fail to awake thee?
Have pity and grant her to me,
O answer my plea,
Give me my Cressida.

*(The doors open. Two priests come out and stand
on either side of the door. Cressida appears in the
doorway, pauses, and moves across to the altar.)*

Troilus

O Cressida!
Are there not flowers enough in the field
to wither in the temple's gloom?
Why must you squander here your lovelier
bloom?
You do not belong to the dark,
O fairest Cressida.

Cressida

4 Morning and evening I have felt your glance
follow me out of sight, here at the temple.
Morning and evening you have watch'd me pass,
a lighted taper in my hand
for kindling the altar fires... I'm afraid!

Troilus

You are frighten'd by dreams like a child.
Can spring break early in one heart alone?
Ah, no, for we live in a world of our own
and winter is dying.

Cressida

You offer me life and love.
Both have I tasted. Both were bitter.
My husband by the Greeks cut down in battle;
my father by the Trojans made an outcast.
What friend, what hope have I but Pallas,
what hope but Pallas
on whose broad shield that covers me
the spears of the world fall blunted?
I walk alone among the jasmine bowers,
and keep her ivory shrine festoon'd with flowers.
I ask no more of the sun than still to bring
fresh beauties for her altar in the spring:
for mortal death her life shall be my cure,
her love my peace. Her love and life endure.

Troilus

I bring you life that withers like a rose,
But while it blooms the glory overflows;
Life that the gods might envy, could they see,
Lost in their desert – Immortality.
Yes, they would throw their deathless age away
To die like men, so they might live as they,
Kiss as we kiss, and triumph for a day.

Cressida

Two solitudes
have hail'd each other and gone by.
Life offers nothing more save what is bought
with anguish.
(She turns and goes up the steps.)

We must not meet again.
The gods are frowning.

*(She enters the temple, followed by the priests,
who close the doors.)*

Troilus

Stay, Cressida. Our names, our lives
belong together. Only our hands
are strangers, for our hearts long since
were destin'd for this moment.

*(Before the end of this monologue, the litter of
Pandarus, borne by four men who hold the rods,
is carried on from right and set down. It is an
ornate and silk-curtained conveyance befitting
its luxurious owner. The curtains are drawn
aside, and the occupant, always on the watch
for an intrigue, is seen to be greatly interested
in Troilus' condition. Pandarus is in his middle
fifties, a connoisseur, dressed to perfection, his
hair meticulously oiled; his manner incorrigibly
genial, tinged with an old-world courtesy that
degenerates on occasion into flamboyance. He
waits to see if Troilus will declare himself any
further.)*

Pandarus

5 Forgive me...

(He steps from the litter.)

Troilus

Pandarus!

Pandarus

Passing through the city,
taking the air, as is my custom,
here, on the citadel, where evening breezes, mild,

salubrious, blow freshly, what do I hear
– plain chance, believe me – but my Prince, my
friend,
easing his load in accents dulcet and honey'd!
quite out of character, if – without offence –
I may say so.
Surely, dear Prince, the quaintest of
battle-cries.

Troilus

I was not thinking of the war.

Pandarus

My friend, my Prince, are you ill?

Troilus

I'm distracted, tormented, by love.

Pandarus

Of course.

Troilus

You knew?

Pandarus

'Tis not unknown to persons in the know.
I have come here this evening, Troilus,
hoping to speak with my favourite,
so devoted niece, the lady Cressida.

Troilus

O Pandarus!

Pandarus

Come now, dear Prince,
unload your labouring heart, I beg you.

Troilus

6 I haunt her beauty like a naked soul
shut out, in exile from the body!
She is rack'd with misgivings.

Pandarus

Leave the wooing of Cressida to me, dear friend.
I've a genius for this game.
It has never fail'd me yet.

Troilus

No, Pandarus... and yet
to you she may uncover her thoughts.

Pandarus

True. Very true. The stubbornest of women
pour forth their innermost secrets to me.
Go now, but soon return.
I shall be waiting with the golden key
to all your intimate wishes.

Troilus

Good friend, I put my trust in you.

(He makes for the archway at left.)

Pandarus

Come quickly back.

Troilus

Oh, love is loath to wait!

*(Troilus goes off hurriedly, leaving Pandarus
aglow with happy anticipation. He makes for the
temple doors, in search of Cressida, then halts
on hearing the temple bell. The doors open, and
Calkas comes out. He carries a staff and wears*

the long cloak of a traveller. Cressida and Evadne appear on either side him. Pandarus retreats into the shadow of a column and listens.)

Calkas
[7] Ask me no more!

Cressida
Your eyes are burning, father.
Where will you sleep? Your home is here, with me.

Evadne
Your suffering city needs you.

Cressida
Yes, it needs you.

Evadne
What is her sword
without a guiding hand and spirit?

Cressida
How can you suddenly desert us,
leave us alone among the starving wolves?

Calkas
Leave, oh leave me!

Cressida
Your secret, still unspoken,
burns to the quick.

Evadne
Oh stay with us!

Cressida
Oh stay with us! Do not risk the hills alone.

Calkas
The gods compel me. The gods compel us all!
(*He makes to go... he looks back.*)
Ah, my daughter,
you must not see me go, nor hear
my heart cry out. Enough.

(Calkas tears himself away from the women and goes through the gateway. Cressida runs after him a few steps.)

Cressida
[8] My father! Evadne, follow him!

Priests
O virgin daughter.

(Pandarus moves out of the shadows.)

Pandarus (aside)
He'll ruin us all!
I'll follow him, too!

(Pandarus slips away. Cressida is alone.)

Cressida
[9] Slowly it all comes back
– out of my childhood.
I was alone with the night around me.
The flickering firelight ruff'd my hair.
I watch'd on roof and wall the curious shadow
play;
Watch'd how the moving smoulder form'd and
reform'd
the same familiar shadow, shaped like a man,
– my father!
Again he was there, again, yet again,
a towering, wavering shade!

Then always the same departure,
drastic as earthquake.
Now, only now, can I clearly read that omen.
He has deserted me – deserted us – and Troy.

10 Slowly it all comes back
– out of my childhood.
Sometimes a different shape was forming.
No, not my father,
this was a warrior.
I knew him by the shadow of his spear
and ponderous shield uplifted.
He never turn'd from me. He stayed
blurred by disfiguring smoulder.
Now, only now, do I know that this was Troilus!
O Troilus, they will not let me love you.
Robb'd of their prey, on me, on Cressid, child
of Troy's most hated man, the vengeance of
the gods,
their vengeance would destroy us.
No, you must never, never love me.
They would destroy us,
the gods, they would destroy us.
Have no fear.
My heart shall not betray you.
Your golden words are all forgotten.
You may go free.

(Evadne runs in from the back.)

Evadne
My lady! I could not find him.

Cressida
He must have fled to the Greeks.

Evadne
Fled to the Greeks!

(Pandarus has just entered, wringing his hands.)

Pandarus *(aside)*
Nothing but Troilus' patronage
can save us now!
O Aphrodite, touch my poor tongue with fire!
(He approaches Cressida with studied geniality.)
11 Why, niece!... in tears?

Cressida
Oh, I am lost –

Pandarus
– and found! If lost, then *quickly* found.
Now, have no fear.

Cressida
I saw him go... distracted... my father!
The Greeks will kill him.

(Pandarus shrugs.)

Evadne
His name is slandered, cursed in the streets.

Cressida
He has fled from Troy.

Evadne
Who would protect us now?

Cressida
Who would protect us now?

Pandarus
The House of Priam is a shield to cover you.

Cressida

Evadne, let's go. He is talking in riddles.

(They start to go, but Pandarus holds Cressida back.)

Pandarus

No, stay, hear me out.

Cressida *(to Evadne)*

Go, you leave him to me.

(Evadne goes.)

Pandarus

Now follow me close.

Take each in turn, the sons of Priam.

First, brave Hector. But why waste time on him?

He's married. Then Paris? – there's grace enough, although, mind you, not *manly* grace – or why does poor Helen go yawning from room to room? As for the rest, class them together as superior scum – with one exception – a man to rouse Apollo's envy.

Cressida *(meekly)*

12 Sweet sir, there's something on your mind. Oh why, and for what, do you exert yourself, good uncle?

(Pandarus loses patience.)

Pandarus

By Pallas and the Dog of Hades!

Must I shout 'Troilus' from the house tops and weave his name on banners for the wind?

(Troilus enters; at the same time a group of soldiers enters from the opposite side, followed by citizens from all sides.)

Pandarus *(aside)*

Too soon, too soon by half an hour!

First Soldier

Prince Troilus!

Pandarus

What new distraction now?

Troilus

Soldier, what news?

Pandarus

What news?

Soldiers

We were surprised, surrounded, ten of us slain, Antenor made captive!

Citizens, Troilus, Cressida, Pandarus, Soldiers

Antenor made captive!

Troilus

Go, soldier, to the King.

Say this from me: Antenor is a warrior without his match in the field. We must exchange captive for captive, buy Antenor back. Whatever the price, we must at once redeem him. Or shall we with brute force snatch back our champion?

Citizens and Soldiers

Take him by force!

(Troilus mounts the temple steps.)

Troilus

Calkas himself, no lesser man,
shall bless our rescuing swords.

Chorus

Calkas! Calkas!

(The temple doors open. A priest comes to the top step. Pandarus retreats to one side with Cressida.)

Troilus

Call forth the High Priest.

Priest

Prince Troilus, I cannot.

Troilus

Entreat him speak with us.

Priest

He is not here.

Troilus

Send to his house.

Priest

His house stands empty.

Chorus

Go, drag him forth.
You shelter him in hiding.

(Troilus runs up the steps. At the top he turns, raises his hand, and addresses the populace.)

Troilus

Search thro' the streets, the highways and
byways. Scour the whole city!

(The people and the soldiers disperse to right and left. Troilus, suspicious of the priest, brushes past him. The priest follows him into the temple and the doors close. Pandarus, leading Cressida by the hand, moves to the centre.)

Pandarus

¹⁸ Dear child, you need a little comfort.
Tomorrow, at sundown, call at my house;
a delicate supper; quails, figs, wine,
a friend or two. Will you come?
(Cressida smiles assent.)
Good sensible child! Then I shall count on you.
(aside)
All may be rescued yet.
(He stops Cressida from going.)
Amazing youth, our Troilus,
determin'd to fetch back Antenor.
He'll never succeed, but what dash, what
courage!
Some trifling token
delivered by me could do no possible harm.
'Tis only civil.
(Cressida hesitates.)
This rescue work is hazardous and bloody.
Your crimson scarf, for instance,
would comfort him in battle.

(Cressida takes off her scarf.)

Cressida

Troilus and Cressida...
The sound of our names together
is the sound of a rushing wind.
Unknown is the love, and deeper than the sea,
that can withstand the gods.

(She hands over the scarf and goes off quickly, leaving Pandarus well satisfied. The temple doors open. Troilus comes out; he thinks he is alone.)

Troilus

Calkas a branded traitor!
My Cressida's father!

(Pandarus comes forward.)

Pandarus

Sweet friend, dear Prince, the lady Cressida
bids me deliver this token
of her esteem and affection.

(He gives Troilus the scarf. He bows, retreats a few paces and watches, highly satisfied.)

Troilus

Goddess of mortal love,
Tall Aphrodite,
Glory and thanks be to thee,
Perfect in beauty.
In thy name shall I triumph.

Act II

Scene I

Evening of the following day. A room on the upper floor of Pandarus' house

There is a door on the left at the back. On the right at the back an alcove containing a bed is curtained off from the main room. Half within an alcove and half revealed at centre back, a broad window space opening onto a balcony overlooks the roofs of Troy. The space is shut by the drawing in of slotted shutters.

Restless and preoccupied, Pandarus is walking

between two tables of players. Cressida and Horaste at one, Evadne and one of the ladies at the other. He seems as if about to say something – thinks better of it, goes to the window, steps onto the balcony – comes back – hesitates again...

Pandarus

14 Does talking put you off?

Cressida

No, no, kind uncle. Chatter away as you please.
It does not disturb us at all.

Horaste

Your move, dear lady.
There's nothing much you can do.

Cressida

I'm trapped; but I'll play for time.

Pandarus

It's clouding over...
Mount Ida's gone!

Cressida

And I thought I'd been so careful,
so extremely careful.
Try that...
(She moves a piece.)
...and see what happens.

Pandarus

No sort of an evening to be out in.
The sky seems very nasty.
(aside)
Thank the gods!
It is just what I want!

Horaste
Check!

Cressida
Oh dear! What can I do now!

(Pandarus goes over to a slave in attendance at the doorway.)

Pandarus *(aside)*
Slave! Go summon Prince Troilus.
Go quickly. Hurry! Hurry!

Cressida
What can I do now?

Horaste
Check!

Cressida
What again?

Horaste
But of course, dear lady.

Cressida
Oh, yes. I see.

Pandarus
Poor sentinels, exposed on the outer wall!
They will get drench'd.

Horaste
Mate!

Cressida
I never noticed. How clever you are!
– A difficult game.

Horaste
Always, dear lady,
too ready to make futile compromises.
You must be one or the other,
defence or attack.

Pandarus
We're in for a storm. Ah, here it comes!
(Thunder behind the scene.)
The first enormous drops,
big as Egyptian shillings!

Cressida
We must go home.

(There is a general break-up of the party.)

Evadne
Yes, it is late, dear lady. We ought to go.

Pandarus
No, no, come fill up the bowls!

Horaste
Come fill up the bowls.

Pandarus
Ladies, the night is young.

Horaste
Ladies, the night is young.

Pandarus
You'll get thoroughly drenched!

Horaste
You'll get thoroughly drenched!

Cressida
We must go home.

Evadne
We ought to go.

Pandarus
You're very, very foolish.

Cressida
Dear uncle, no! We must go home!

Pandarus
You must not go.

Horaste
Oh, please don't leave us.

Pandarus
You must not go.
You're very, very foolish.
The night is spoiling for a cloudburst.
Who knows but hail may follow!
You stay with me.

(A roll of thunder is heard.)

Cressida
Perhaps we should stay.

Evadne
Yes, very well, my lady, if you say.

Pandarus
That settles it, then, and wisely, too.
Now, draw back those curtains, and discover
a bed
soft as the limbs of Psyche.

Cressida
You are so kind.

Evadne
Too kind.

Pandarus
A trifle!
I promise you shall sleep like empresses in
embroider'd satin.

Cressida
Then it's time we retir'd to rest.

Pandarus
As you wish, dear niece.

Horaste *(He takes Cressida's hand.)*
I much enjoyed our game.

Cressida
So did I.

Horaste
Good night.

(He leaves.)

Evadne *(to Cressida)*
Good night,
(to Pandarus)
good night.

(Pandarus makes for the door and turns as he is about to close it.)

Cressida *(to Evadne and Pandarus)*
Good night.

Pandarus
Good night,
– and sweet dreams.

(Three slave women of the household enter. Cressida goes to the alcove and sits on the end of the bed.)

Cressida
¹⁵ How can I sleep?
(She rises, restless.)
All thro' that stupid game
the table swam before me.
I could think of nothing, nothing but Troilus.
Must I again endure this wild unrest?
Some jealous god is watching me;
I feel his frowns upon me.
Gone are my dreams of careless freedom,
peace without ecstasy,
peace without harrowing pain.
I'm helpless, betrayed.
Oh, bewitch'd was the hour I prayed
never to love again.

¹⁶ At the haunted end of the day
your voice, dear love, your voice alone I hear.
Thro' the silent hours of the day
I see your face, a phantom, hovering near.
How can I sleep when love is waking?
What is the dark when dawn is breaking?
Troilus, why does your name enchant me?
Call off these visions that ravish and haunt me!

At the spellbound end of the day
Love rules alone, and counts the spoils of war.
I surrender, bear me away,
Troilus, friend and foe,
Troilus, my conqueror.

(Pandarus enters, leaving the door ajar.)

Pandarus
¹⁷ Hush! Don't be alarmed!
By marvellous accident, by rare
coincidence; by chance...
(aside)
...and yet *not* by chance,
who should come battling here, to my house,
thro' the storm – now who?
Try to answer me, child.

Cressida
At this late hour what does it matter?
What does it matter?
Oh, could it be my father?

Pandarus
Calkas? No, no.
Guess again. It is Troilus.

Cressida
Troilus! What brings him late at night?

Pandarus
He is in anguish, bitter anguish, on the brink,
the dizziest brink.

Cressida *(in alarm)*
Is he wounded?

Pandarus
Pierced to the quick.

Cressida
Ah, no!

Pandarus
On desire's hot grid he roasts alive.

Cressida
Ah, no! I cannot believe you!

(Troilus bursts into the room.)

Troilus
Enough of this scandalous nonsense!

Cressida
Troilus!

(Pandarus subsides into a chair at right.)

Troilus
Cressida, forgive me.
I must break in or stifle.
I heard him, every word,
nothing but stupid gossip.
(He rounds on Pandarus.)
Chattering magpie!
You know quite well you planned it.

(Pandarus is quite unruffled.)

Pandarus
Why make such a fuss?
Calm down. I will explain.
(He gets up and takes each by the arm.)
I've always said

there's nothing like a little friendly cunning
for bringing young lovers together.
This being so,
to provoke the present situation
I made it all up, every word, every single word;
and it proved quite unduly successful.

Cressida *(crossing to the couch and sitting)*
Fools, both of you, making the night a mad house!

Troilus
You must believe him.
For once he is telling the truth.

(Cressida weeps. Troilus removes his cloak and sword.)

Pandarus *(aside)*
Oh, this is going finely,
if not in all particulars,
according to plan.
(Troilus kneels beside Cressida.)
He seems to have reached the kneeling stage.
I will fetch him a cushion.

(He goes to find a cushion.)

Troilus
If one last doubt, one lurking fear remain,
banish it, Cressida. Have faith in me.
Now nothing stands between us,
nothing but your fears!
I cannot fight with shadows.
Show me these lurking terrors,
fetch out these tyrants,
and I'll destroy them.
Here is your refuge,
close to my body, close to the fire in my heart,

the flame that sears the flesh and sets the
 spirit free,
 that pain which is no pain but only ecstasy.
 O my belov'd, my life, my own,
 dearest one let me adore.
 The world may chatter and rage;
 be deaf to its harsh alarms;
 fear nothing more.
 Then Cressid, Cressid, when the past has died,
 live again at my side,
 come alive in my arms!

(They embrace.)

Cressida
 19 New life, new love! I am reborn.
 The past has died with all its pain.
 Love! In my heart the yellow leaves
 are slowly turning green again.

Troilus
 Kind are the gods
 or our joys have silenced Olympus.

Cressida
 Their threats are over.

Troilus
 They have pass'd us by...

Cressida
 ...far away on their shining journey...

Troilus
 ...they frown no longer.

Cressida
 Kind are the gods –

Troilus
 Why, no, we have scaled their mountain...

Cressida
 ...and the snows are singing.

Troilus
 The world has rekindled her fires...

Cressida
 ...and the flow'rs are springing.

Both
 Kind are the gods,
 but one above all, proud Aphrodite.
 She is here, she is here,
 in our blood, in the air that shimmers around us.
 Aphrodite!
 At her command the stars in their courses are
 halted,
 she holds the morning at bay,
 the fiery horses chafe at their harness
 and the chariot no longer approaches.
 The darkness trembles, waiting, waiting!
 Aphrodite!
 They have heard thy stern voice commanding.
 Thou shalt feast and rejoice
 and be glad with us.
 Thou hast answered our prayer.

*(Pandarus enters with a cushion under his arm.
 He stays by the door, enraptured by the turn of
 events. He now quietly snuffs the three-branch
 candles nearest the door and, still with the
 cushion under his arm, tiptoes gingerly from
 the door.)*

Cressida
[20] Now hold me close and let me lie there curled.
Dearest, my love, surround me, hold me fast.

Troilus
I close my arms, and so shut out the world.

Both
There howls the wind, but here the storm is
pass'd.
There howls the wind, but we are safe at last.

*(A flash of lightening is seen through the shutters
and the gauze descends.)*

[21] Orchestral interlude. The Storm

COMPACT DISC TWO

Scene 2
*The stage gradually fills with light revealing that
the shutters have been closed. Cressida comes
out of the alcove and throws open the shutters.
Troilus is in the shadows, leaning against the
partition.*

Cressida
[1] From isle to isle chill waters whisper the hour,
catching the crimson of a sky on fire.
Oh must I wake to find this glory gone?
Be still, my heart. If this be sleep, sleep on.

(Troilus comes to her side.)

Troilus
If this be sleep, sleep on.

*(In the far distance drums are heard, gradually
getting nearer. Pandarus enters excitedly.)*

Pandarus
[2] Who would go drumming about the town at
this hour?
(He goes to the verandah and comes back.)
By Pallas, they're Greeks! Greek soldiers!
They've halted in the yard.
But why here, here at my house?
Maybe 'tis news of Calkas.

Cressida
News of my father!

(Troilus gathers up his cloak and sword.)

Pandarus
Stay, Troilus. You must not go. No, not now,
I beg you, both for my sake and for Cressida's.
Oblige me, both of you.
Leave everything to me. All will be well.
(Troilus and Cressida retire into the alcove.)
And note every word. Note, too, my smooth
address
when I conduct a parley.

*(The door opens abruptly. Diomedes enters with
his escort.)*

Diomedes
[3] My name is Diomedes,
Prince of Calydon and Argos,
commander of Greeks.
You, sir, I take it, are Pandarus,
brother of Calkas, late high priest of Troy.
(Pandarus bows.)

Your brother is a man of wisdom.
(*Pandarus smiles and bows again.*)
Calkas has done us much good service,
worth more than our empty thanks.

Pandarus
I cannot thank him for you.

Diomedes
He says he will be satisfied
with one gift only, one alone,
and that not ours to give.

Pandarus
I'm not a rich man. What's his price?

Diomedes (*amused*)
His daughter.
They tell me her name is Cressida.

Pandarus
Come, sir, you cannot fool me.
What's your business?

Diomedes
I bring good news for Troilus.

Pandarus
Good news? What news for Troilus?

Diomedes
He failed in battle to redeem Antenor,
a soldier by you Trojans highly prized,
although in Greek report as yet unnoticed.
Foiled in his first attempt, your stubborn Prince
wisely resorted to a safer method.
He left it to our warring kings to strike
a bargain, hoping by treaty to fetch back

his friend and comrade in arms. My mission
here is an exchange of prisoners.

Pandarus
You bring Antenor home! Antenor back!
What joy for Troilus!

Diomedes
As luck would have it,
both sides in this affair are well content.
It is concluded, and our price is paltry.

(*Pandarus has edged towards the alcove.*)

Pandarus
What payment now?

Diomedes
The girl, your Cressida.
The girl buys back your soldier Antenor.

Pandarus (*contemptuously*)
Exchange a warrior captain for a woman!
Great Agamemnon would never consent,
no, nor indeed would King Priam.
My brother shall not have her. She stays in Troy.

(*Diomedes has put out his hand. A soldier gives him the seals.*)

Diomedes
It is agreed already, past revoking.
Witness the royal seals of Troy and of Greece.

(*Diomedes shows Pandarus the seals.*)

Pandarus
You barter human lives like cattle!

Diomedes

Fetch her here.

Pandarus

This never was her house.

Diomedes

Come now, why are you hiding her?
She'll suffer no harm.

What's one more woman in the camp of the
Greeks?

*(He looks around the room, then sees Pandarus
glance at the alcove.)*

I know she's here!

*(He goes to the alcove... and jerks the curtain
aside. Cressida is alone, sitting at the foot of the
bed. She slowly rises to her feet.)*

Impregnable Troy!

Are these your fabled riches?

Pandarus *(despairingly)*

Oh, I'm no use, no use.

(defiantly to Diomedes)

Oh, you are Greek! And hard as the stones you
tread on!

(Cressida sinks into Pandarus' arms.)

Diomedes

She will be thankful soon enough
to have escaped this rat-trap of a town.
See her made ready.

(He makes for the door.)

My hour of truce is passing.

*(He goes out with his escort. Troilus comes in
from the balcony alongside the alcove.)*

Troilus

4 This thing shall be revok'd,
this vile compact dissolv'd,
and quickly, too.

Cressida

O Troilus!

You must not let me go.
I cannot bear to lose you!

Troilus

But, Cressid, how can we resist?
These kings have bargain'd over our heads.
This treaty bears their royal seals.
We cannot fight both gods and men.
We cannot, dare not disobey.

Cressida

Sudden misgivings chill me. I know not why.
I dare not say good bye.

Troilus

Watch out at sunset, stand at the palisade,
at the Argive end of the camp.
I'll corrupt the sentries, night after night
picking my careful way thro' the drowsy tents.
Our constant meetings will bring us comfort.

Cressida

Swear you will send me word.

Troilus

Swear you'll be true to me.

Cressida

I swear it.

Troilus

I swear it.

Both

We were alone,
and then we were alone together.
We were alive together.
O gentle heart, would we again were drifting
far from this world of waking,
lull'd by the peace of your arms,
borne on the ocean swell of deep
slow-breathing sleep.

(There is a knock at the door. Pandarus enters followed by Evadne.)

Pandarus

Come, my children. They're waiting.

Evadne

Your cloak, dear lady.

(Troilus produces the red scarf.)

Troilus

This token that you gave me, wear again.
Cherish this crimson for our sake
and by this sign be still my Cressida.

Cressida

I am yours forever.

(She takes the scarf. They embrace. Two spearmen enter and stand on either side of the door. Cressida goes out, followed by Evadne and the soldiers. Pandarus slumps into a chair. Troilus flings himself onto the bed.)

Act III

The Greek encampment. Early evening. Ten weeks later

Part of the tent of Calcas juts from the wings at right. Across the back runs a section of the dyke built to protect the camp from the sea. Beyond the dyke the prows of three ships are seen against the sky. At left a brazier for use of the sentries. The top of the dyke is approached by steps at the down-stage end where it abuts toward the audience, and by a wide ramp at centre back. There is a small watch tower at left.

Watchman *(behind the scene)*

5 All's well!

(A sentry enters up-stage right, walks to the watch tower, mounts the steps, and the sentry on the platform comes down as the relieving soldier takes up position with his back to the stage.)

Watchman *(further off)*

All's well!

(Cressida appears at the entrance of the tent.)

Watchman *(still further off)*

All's well!

(Evadne enters and Cressida runs toward her.)

Cressida

Is there no word, no message yet from Troilus?
(Evadne shakes her head.)
Ten weeks, Evadne. Ten silent weeks.
Love cannot feed on air.

Evadne
Ten weeks, ten long weeks and never a word.

Cressida
Go back, go back again to the palisade,
just once again, one more hour.

Evadne
No use, no use.

Cressida
Mix with the frontier guard.
Keep watch for his messenger.
Go quickly, quickly. He may be turning back.

Evadne
Night after night the same. No use, I tell you.
You torture yourself for nothing. Young men's
eyes
were made to wander. They are all alike.

Cressida
He would never forget me, never.
You do not know him.

Evadne
If Troilus still loves you, what comfort then?
He is a Prince of Troy.
Your father's a branded traitor! You might as well
weep to embrace the moon as weep for your
Troilus.
Now Diomedes is a handsome fellow,
and patient, too, for a man. Trick yourself out
in whatever the moment may offer and be thankful.

(Evadne moves on toward the tent.)

Cressida
I never asked for your counsel. Go and do as I
bid you.

(Evadne turns back.)

Evadne
If only the gods would give me the courage to
act for the best, I would meet your Trojan
intruder, yes, I would seize his message and
destroy it.

Cressida
And I would have you strangled, slave that you
are!

(She throws her down, then relents.)
– O Evadne, we are old and trusted friends.
I have no one but you. Do not desert me now.
Do as I ask, this once, and go, go quickly,
for the last time, the very last time.
Bring me a message from my Troilus.
(Evadne returns to her errand.)
(despairingly)

Troilus!
[6] No answering sign on the walls,
no longed-for step in the night;
only the watchman's cry
and a wind in the long grass blowing.
O tranquil goddess, Queen of the Dead,
pale Persephone,
awake, hear me, gaze round thy colourless hills.
Is there a young man, lonely,
lying apart, just fallen asleep?
Oh rouse him, tenderly rouse him.
Is he grey-eyed, and newly come
with his sad wound from Troy?
Oh speak to him. Say to him –
'Is thy name Troilus?'

No sound from the shadowy deep,
no sign from the quick or the dead;
only the watchman's cry...

Watchmen (*behind the scene*)
All's well!

Cressida
...and a wind in the long grass blowing.

(*Calkas comes out of the pavilion. He lays his hand on Cressida's shoulder.*)

Calkas

7 Cressid, daughter, why so heavy-hearted,
always dejected, nursing a nameless sorrow?
I have seen you standing alone at the stockade,
gazing at Troy, watching the sun go down
below the world, like your last hope.
These twilight wanderings are frowned on.
The whole camp is alive with gossip.
(*She breaks away from him.*)
I fetched you out of Troy to be my solace in exile,
but day after day your heart is turn'd against me.
My own child drags me down.
She doubles my burden.
She has become a stranger.
Listen to me.
The omens clamour their warning.
Troy, our fair City, is doomed.
But Diomedes can save you and your father.
Let him be our remedy.
Give him your love.
(*Cressida shrinks back. He seizes her wrist.*)
Ungrateful, stubborn, senseless!
No, you shall hear me out.
(*He forces her down.*)

Tonight Prince Diomedes comes for your final
answer.

He will not come again.

Let him find you grown more willing.

By all the gods, child, who are you to say yea
or nay?

Be glad of him, welcome him,
study to please him or we perish.

(*He goes off up the ramp.*)

Cressida

8 You gods, O deathless gods,
what have I done to deserve your harsh
displeasure?
I'm alone, defenceless.
What strength have I but love,
love deep as death, but weak against the world?
If I choose the path that promises joy,
must I be cheated, punish'd?
Shall it be love? Shall it be Diomedes?
O Diomedes, your eyes are like coals at the forge,
blown white hot.
Steadily gazing down out of the dark, they
desire me and I tremble.
Forsaken by Troilus, threaten'd by my father,
tempted by the gods!
All goad me on one headlong way.
Have my own eyes betray'd me?
My whole life crumbles.
Troilus!

(*Diomedes enters. She turns and sees him.*)

Cressida

Diomedes!

(*He walks down the ramp.*)

Diomedes
[9] Proud, wondrous Cressida, am I to live or die?
I claim your promis'd answer.

Cressida
I am your prisoner. How can I choose?

Diomedes (*approaching*)
I could command.

Cressida
Yes, you can command
but can you command my heart?

Diomedes
Have I not waited, always another day,
living on the hope, the hope that you gave me?
All else that is mine is as nothing.

Cressida (*smiling, leading him on*)
Once you are home I'll be forgotten
or only as a slave remembered.

Diomedes
I know some Trojan lingers in your thoughts.

Cressida
He was no more than a friend.
I think of him no longer.

Diomedes
Then give me a token, warm from your body,
to show I may return.

(*He touches her scarf. She shrinks back.*)

Cressida
I give you my word.
What need of tokens?

Diomedes
Then grant me this emblem of continuing hope,
and till tomorrow I'll entreat no kinder answer.

Cressida
My scarf? Why, 'tis nothing.
Wear this ring for me.
Come, give me your hand. 'Tis yours.

Diomedes
No, no, my beloved. Nothing but this!
I'll bind it blazing round my helmet.
Then if your Trojan see where it flames in the
field
he'll cut him a path thro' the spears and I shall
know him.
O brightest of all the trophies out of Troy,
Victory's crown, my goddess, and my joy,
I am your refuge, your strong friend in need,
your prince, your slave to command,
your Diomedes.

(*He has dropped to his knees. Evadne enters and
Cressida watches her pass into the tent, shaking
her head as though to say 'no news'.*)

Cressida (*aside*)
No more, my heart. Have done with waiting.
(*She catches hold of her scarf, and with a quick,
almost savage gesture, pulls it free and thrusts it
into his hands.*)
[10] Take it.
Take all you ask of me, and let it be forever.

Diomedes
O Cressida, let it be forever!

Cressida

Let it be forever!

Diomedes

This night I shall proclaim it.
Never another day
shall dawn on your shame and slavery.
Go now. Make ready.
Put on your best array.
Come forth a Queen,
and nevermore be seen
in base captivity.

(They embrace, Evadne has come unseen from the tent. Diomedes goes off centre. Cressida goes into the tent, Evadne produces a letter from Troilus. She walks over to the brazier.)

Evadne

11 So here's an end of it all.
New life begins, and with high promise.
Now once again I can safely burn my secret
– more vows and tears from Troilus!
(She thrusts the scroll into the brazier.)
Another doting message, burn'd like the rest,
the seal unbroken!
The last frail link with Troy is ashes!
Oh cruel cunning to deceive her!
And yet it is mercy. She will live to thank me.

(It grows darker.)

Watchmen *(behind the scene)*

All's well!

(She squats by the brazier, warming her hands. Troilus and Pandarus enter from left.)

Troilus

12 Evadne!

Pandarus

Evadne!

Evadne

Troilus!

Pandarus

Ssh... quietly. Where is she now?

Troilus

Tell her I'm here – tell her I've come for her.

Evadne

Immortal gods, this is the maddest folly.

Pandarus

They've declared a truce – we've only one hour.

Troilus

My message warn'd her to be ready.
You too, Evadne. You are going to Troy.

Pandarus

Come, where's your smiling welcome? Are we
not here,
risking our lives, just as we promised?

Evadne

Lord Pandarus – for our safety – take him away.
He will ruin us all. This will destroy us.

Troilus

Go, I command you!

(Evadne moves toward the partition.)

Pandarus

That woman - she is not to be trusted.
Her looks are sly and cunning.
We must go back.
We stand in peril.

(Cressida comes from the tent.)

Cressida

Evadne, do not leave me.
I'm afraid.

(Evadne stands between her and the two others, screening them from view.)

Evadne *(in dismay)*
O my lady!

(Troilus takes an impulsive step forward but is restrained by Pandarus.)

Pandarus

No, wait. Observe her a while and listen.

Cressida

Will he like me thus, hair loose and flowing?
Do the gold leaves match the gold of my girdle?
Will I please him thus?
Evadne, why are you so silent?

Evadne

No more, I beg you. Go back into the tent.

Cressida

You should be proud of me.
Why are you weeping?

Troilus *(calling)*

Cressida.

Cressida *(suddenly tense)*

The voice of Troilus...
(She sees him.)
Troilus!

(Troilus and Pandarus hurry forward.)

Pandarus

Dear Cressid, I rejoice to find you ready.
(to Cressida and Evadne)
Go, put on your
cloaks and to horse and homeward!

Cressida

O Troilus, why did you forget me?
No word, despite your promise!

Troilus

Time and again have I bribed the sentries,
sent message after message.
They have played me false.
Sooner would leafless boughs lose hope of the
spring
than I forget you.
I never closed my eyes, but thro' the dark
I saw you, and heard your step returning.
I never touch'd a flow'r, but it became your
cheek
and suddenly I was yearning.
Time has not passed,
and there is no more pain.
The night that was ours
and this, they alone remain.
We did but dream the solitude between.
(Cressida is strangely still and silent.)
And now, dear love, have courage.
I have at last prevail'd upon my father.
This very hour, Trojan and Greek
will bargain for your ransom.

Cressida (*breaking down-stage of him*)
My ransom!
What breathless joy catches my heart!
– But ah, too late, it comes too late.
I'm beyond all ransom now.
(*Troilus and Pandarus exchange glances.*)
Go back, forget me. I am bought and sold.
I'll stay and weep, and Troy may keep her gold.

(*Trumpets are heard behind the scene. Troilus runs up the ramp.*)

Troilus (*from the top of the ramp*)
14 What is this sudden alarm?
These trumpets, why are they sounding?

(*The trumpets are heard closer.*)

Chorus (*off-stage*)
Hail, Cressida!
Bride of Calydon and Argos!

Troilus (*coming down*)
These voices – what are they calling?

(*Soldiers and camp followers start the ceremonial entrance from the right.*)

Cressida (*moving over to Troilus*)
It is too late, I say. Too late!
Be gone, I implore you. Leave me to my fate.

Pandarus
Troilus, come away.
I fear some evil.
The Greeks will take us.

Cressida
Be gone, I implore you. Leave me to my fate.

(*Troilus and Pandarus retreat into the shadows at down-stage left. Cressida stands alone at centre. Diomedes's escort enters. Diomedes and Calkas are the last to enter. Diomedes takes up his position on the ramp in the centre, wearing the crimson favour on his helmet which he carries. Evadne, almost distraught, appears at the tent opening.*)

Diomedes (*from the edge of the parapet*)
From these cold ashes rise, my Cressida.
Your people clamour to salute you.

Chorus (*on stage*)
Hail, Cressida!
Bride of Calydon and Argos, we salute thee.

Troilus (*to Pandarus, incredulous*)
What is that crimson token?

Diomedes
How comes it, Troilus,
you wander about our camp at will?

Troilus (*aloud to Diomedes*)
What is that crimson token?

Pandarus
Prince Diomedes, in time of truce
Trojan and Greek are friends.
We come to ransom Cressida.

Troilus (*coming forward*)
That blood-red token! Answer me, Diomedes.

Diomedes

When you and your kin
have made a banquet for the kites
Cressida shall reign in Argos.

Troilus

Never!

Diomedes

She gave me her troth.
This crimson bears me witness.

Troilus

Plundering Greek, she had nothing to give.
And by that same red witness she is mine,
body and spirit, and I am hers forever.

(Diomedes has come down the steps.)

Diomedes

Speak, Cressid. Speak! Denounce him.
Say that he lies.
Then, sacred truce or no, he dies.

Chorus

She falters. She cannot speak.

Diomedes

Speak, Cressid. Speak! Denounce him!

Chorus

Speak, Cressid. Speak! Denounce him!

*(She faces her moment of decision, walks over
to Troilus, kneels, and clings to him, back to the
audience. Troilus gazes out to front.)*

Chorus

False Cressida! False!

Sextet

Diomedes

15 Troy, false of heart, yet fair!
City of lust and lying!
Who goes to market there
Will be false measure buying.
Shall Argos bear away
The fruits of that tainted earth?
Deep in her flaunted rose
The fatal canker grows;
Her vows are nothing worth
And all her smiles betray.

Troilus

Oh burning eyes, look there!
What shameful banner flying!
True hearts are now as rare
As fabl'd love undying.
Woman at wanton play
With discord fills the earth.
Her kindness comes and goes
With ev'ry wind that blows.
Each man must weigh her worth,
Condemn, or forfeit pay.

Cressida (to Troilus)

Sweet love, I long to share
Your load of heavy sighing,
Sorrow to kindred care,
Fond heart to heart replying.
What can I do or say?
Our joys were doom'd at birth.
Oh surely my suffering shows
The fount of love still flows
Deep as the springs of the earth,
Clear as our bridal day.

Pandarus

Why toil we to prepare
A balm for mortal sighing?
To ease the world's despair
Was never worth the trying.
His towers soon decay
Who builds for love or mirth.
One thing man loves and knows
– The exchange of warrior blows;
Thus beauty suffers dearth
And crumbles into clay.

Calkas

Ah, Troy, would I were there
Tho' all her hopes be dying
To mount the temple stair,
My faithless deeds denying.
But how can lips unsay
The words foredoom'd at birth?
Fate urg'd me when I chose
To parley with my foes.
Destiny rules the earth,
And dire need points the way.

Evadne (to Calkas)

Master, I swear, I swear,
His doting words and lying
Were burn'd in the brazier there
Till Cressid's hopes were dying.
Now let our patron slay
This Trojan, fell him to earth.
Once he be dead, suppose
A change of heart! Who knows
But wrath will turn to mirth
And Greece bear all away!

Chorus

False Cressida!
False of heart, yet fair!

(Diomedes moves up-stage, gives his helmet to an attendant and slowly returns with the scarf.)

Diomedes

She has brought shame on Argos!
(With a sudden gesture Diomedes brandishes the crimson favour and spurns it to the ground.)
She has brought shame on Argos!
I'll not endure it.

Troilus *(drawing his sword)*
On guard, I say, on guard!

Pandarus and Calkas

Put up your sword!

Chorus

Stand away!

Troilus

On guard, I say, on guard!

(Diomedes begins to go but is halted on the steps. Troilus throws himself upon Diomedes, who is forced to his knees. As Troilus steps back, he is stabbed by Calkas. Troilus drops his sword and breaks down-stage. Cressida runs to support him.)

Chorus

Calkas!

Cressida

Troilus, you must not die for me.
I never dreamed that we would meet again.

Troilus

We meet on fatal ground. And I am slain.

(Troilus is led off, supported on either side.)

Diomedes

He shall be given back to Troy, back to his father.
Would I had never seen such valour
squandered in a cause so base.

(Cressida attempts to follow, but is prevented by Diomedes. She falls to her knees and gathers up the scarf. Pandarus kneels at her side, at a loss to know how to comfort her.)

Calkas, get hence to Troy, and go in fetters.
Greece can prevail without Troy's traitors.
Doubtless they have swift means there
to curb your mischief –
(He mounts the steps, turns and points at Cressida.)

As for that whore, and her comely graces,
she shall remain with us. She has her uses.

(Diomedes turns about and goes off along the ramp with his escort. The crowd begins to disperse.)

Calkas and Pandarus

Tyrant of Calydon, is this just payment?
That man is accurs'd to whom the Greeks are
grateful!

(Calkas, Pandarus, and Evadne are led off at left.)

Cressida (distracted)

17 Diomedes!... Father!... Pandarus!... Evadne!...
Troilus!

(She sees the sword of Troilus lying where it fell and picks it up.)

At last a message! A token out of Troy,
serene in its naked brightness.
Here shines his honour.

This much of Troilus shall still be mine.

(She winds the scarf round the sword and clasps it to her breast.)

Turn, Troilus, turn, on that cold river's brim
Beyond the sun's far setting.
Look back from the silent stream
Of sleep and long forgetting.

Turn and consider me and all that was ours;
You shall no desert see

But pale unwithering flowers.
Oh never with scorn, nor with hate,
Shall Death receive me.

He will purge all blemish away,
And you, even you, of all men under his sway,
May yet forgive me.

(She seems to hear approaching footsteps, looks off-stage right, and recoils, walking backwards up the ramp. She stands on the edge of the parapet and pulls the sword free of the scarf.)
Open the gates. We are riding together into Troy.
And by this sign I am still your Cressida.

(She stabs herself.)

End of the Opera

Christopher Hassall (1912–1963)
Libretto printed courtesy of
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The premature death of Richard Hickox on 23 November 2008, at the age of just sixty, deprived the musical world of one of its greatest conductors. The depth and breadth of his musical achievements were astonishing, not least in his remarkable work on behalf of British composers. An inspiring figure, and a guiding light to his friends and colleagues, he had a generosity of spirit and a wonderful quality of empathy for others.

For someone of his musical achievements, he was never arrogant, never pompous. Indeed there was a degree of humility about Richard that was as endearing as it was unexpected. He was light-hearted and, above all, incredibly enthusiastic about those causes which he held dear. His determination to make things happen for these passions was astonishing – without this energy and focus his achievements could not have been as great as they were. He was able to take others with him on his crusades, and all in the pursuit of great music.

Richard was a completely rounded musician with a patience, kindness, and charisma that endeared him to players and singers alike. His enthusiasm bred its own energy and this, in turn, inspired performers. He was superb at marshalling

large forces. He cared about the development of the artists with whom he worked and they repaid this loyalty by giving of their best for him.

An unassuming man who was always a delight to meet, Richard was a tireless musical explorer who was able to create a wonderful sense of spirituality, which lifted performances to become special, memorable events. For these reasons, Richard was loved as well as respected.

The Richard Hickox Legacy is a celebration of the enormously fruitful, long-standing collaboration between Richard Hickox and Chandos, which reached more than 280 recordings. This large discography will remain a testament to his musical energy and exceptional gifts for years to come. The series of re-issues now underway captures all aspects of his art. It demonstrates his commitment to an extraordinarily wide range of music, both vocal and orchestral, from the past three centuries. Through these recordings we can continue to marvel at the consistently high level of his interpretations whilst wondering what more he might have achieved had he lived longer.

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Opera in Three Acts

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