

Michael Parsons

CHORAL ODE

Stasimon 1

from Sophokles' Antigone

for unaccompanied chorus SATB

Duration: c. 6 minutes

SOPHOKLES: Antigone

Stasimon 1

Many things are wonderful, none more wonderful than man.
His is the power to cross the foaming sea, driven by the stormy south wind,
making a way through the overwhelming surges.
The eldest of the Gods, Earth, immortal and unwearied, he subdues,
turning the soil with the race of horses,
as the ploughs go back and forth from year to year.

And the tribe of light-hearted birds, and the races of savage beasts,
and those who live in the depths of the sea,
he captures in the meshes of woven nets,
man with his surpassing skill;
he masters with his inventions the wild-roaming mountain beast,
the horse with shaggy mane and the tireless mountain bull,
knowing how to lead them under the yoke.

And speech and wind-swift thought he has taught himself,
and the disposition for social life, how to make laws and organise cities,
and how to escape from the hostile arrows of rain and frost:
all-resourceful he is, lacking no power to meet whatever may arise:
only from Death shall he find no escape.

Unimagined skill and ingenuity he possesses,
which leads him sometimes to evil, at other times to good and noble ends.
When he fulfils the laws of the land and upholds the sworn justice of the gods,
his state prospers and flourishes;
but he who because of his insolence consorts with evil
brings loss and ruin to himself and his city.

ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ

στάσιμον πρῶτον

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει
τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν πόντου χειμερίῳ νότῳ
χωρεῖ, περιβρυχίοισιν
περῶν ὑπ' οἰδμασιν
θεῶν τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν
ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν ἀποτρύεται,
ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος,
ἰππέῳ γένοι πολεύων.

κουφονόων τε φύλον ὀρνίθων ἀμφιβαλῶν ἄγει
καὶ θηρῶν ἀγρίων ἔθνη πόντου τ' εἰναλίαν φύσιν
σπείραισι δικτυοκλώστοις,
περιφραδῆς ἀνήρ·
κρατεῖ δὲ μηχαναῖς ἀγραύλου
θηρὸς ὄρεσσιβάτα, λασιαύχενά θ'
ἵππον ὑπαξέμεν ἀμφίλοφον ζυγὸν
οὐρεῖόν τ' ἀκμήτα ταῦρον.

καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν
φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὄργας ἐδιδάξατο καὶ δυσαύλων
πάγων ἐναίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη,
παντοπόρος· ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται
τὸ μέλλον· Ἄϊδα μόνον φεύξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται

σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν
τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ'
ἐπ' ἔσθλόν ἔρπει
νόμους περαίνων· χθονὸς θεῶν τ' ἔνορκον δίκαν,
ὑψίπολις· ἀπολις, ὅτῳ τὸ μὴ καλὸν
ξύνεστι τόλμας χάριν.

Transliteration of Greek Text:

POLLA TA DEINA KOUDEN ANTHRŌPOU DEINOTERON PELEI
 TOUTO KAI POLIOU PERĀN PONTOU KHEIMERIŌ NOTŌ
 KHŌREI PERIBRUKHIOISIN
 PERŌN HUP' OIDMASIN.
 THEŌN TE TĀN HUPERTATĀN GĀN
 APHTHITON ĀKAMATĀN APOTRŪETAI
 ILLOMENŌN AROTRŌN ETOS EIS ETOS
 HIPPEIŌ GENEI POLEUŌN.

KOUPHONOŌN TE PHŪLON ORNĪTHŌN AMPHIBALŌN AGEI
 KAI THĒRŌN AGRĪŌN ETHNĒ PONTOU T' EINALIAN PHUSIN
 SPEIRAI SI DIKTUOKLŌSTOIS
 PERIPHRADĒS ANĒR:
 KRATEI DE MĒKHANAI S AGRAULOU
 THĒROS ORESSIBATĀ LASIAUKHENA TH'
 HIPPON HUPAXEMEN AMPHILOPHON ZUGON
 OUREION T'AKMĒTA TAURON.

KAI PHTHEGMA KAI ĀNEMOEN
 PHRONĒMA KAI ASTUNOMOUS ORGĀS EDIDAXATO KAI DUSAULŌN
 PAGŌN ENAITHREIA KAI DUSOMBRA PHEUGEIN BELĒ
 PANTOPOROS: APOROS EP' OUDEN ERKHETAI
 TO MELLON: HAIDĀ MONON PHEUXIN OUK EPAXETAI.

SOPHON TI TO MĒKHANOEN
 TEKHNĀS HUPER ELPID' EKHŌN TOTE MEN KAKON, ALLOT' EP' ESTHLON HERPEI:
 NOMOUS PERAINŌN KHTHONOS THEŌN T'ENORKON DIKĀN
 HUPSIPOLIS: APOLIS HOTŌ TO MĒ KALON
 XUNESTI TOLMĀS KHARIN.

Pronunciation:

Short vowels:

a as in man
 e as in men
 i as in sit
 o as in not
 u as in good

Long vowels:

ā as in father
 ē as in air (French è)
 ī as in see
 ō as in Ton (German)
 ū as in who

ou also as in who (not as a diphthong)

Diphthongs:

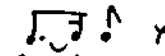
ai as in eye
 au as in how
 ei as in may
 oi as in boy
 eu as in euro (Italian)
 (not as in you)


Consonants:

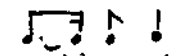
g always hard, as in get
 kh slightly aspirated k
 th unvoiced as in think
 r rolled (as in Italian)
 z dz as in adze
 (other consonants as in English)


Treatment of diphthongs:

The emphasis should generally be on the first vowel sound, except in a few cases where the rhythm is separately indicated (eg. bar 70, bars 97-98, bar 106). Otherwise (when the diphthong is written without a hyphen) the first vowel sound should be prolonged for about three-quarters of the note-length, followed by a rapid glide to the second sound on the last quarter:

eg. bar 2:  de-i-na

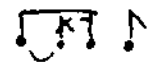
bar 4-5:  pe-le-i

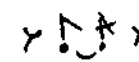
bar 14:  o-id-ma-sin

bar 43-44:  po-le-u-on

and similarly with all occurrences of the diphthongs ai, au, ei, oi, eu.

in the case of short note-values, the second sound may be treated as a grace-note immediately preceding the next syllable, or before a rest:

eg. bars 40-41:  e-is e-tos

bar 55:  ka-i

The Antigone of Sophokles was first performed in Athens in 441 BC. In the context of the drama this ode would have been sung by a unison male chorus of 15 voices, accompanied by the aulos, a shawm-like double reed instrument. The melodic line would have been based on one of the Greek modes, possibly pentatonic with microtonal inflections; however no trace of the original music has survived.

While this version is based rhythmically upon the metrical patterns of the Greek text, it is of course very far from bearing any resemblance to ancient Greek music. The ode is taken out of its dramatic context and treated as an independent poem, the significance of which is not limited by its historical circumstances. The angular and dissonant style of this setting reflects the idea that it can be transposed into an entirely different musical environment and still be found relevant today.

The word here translated as 'wonderful' (deinos), upon which interpretation of the poem depends, is ambivalent: it can express a range of meanings - strange, mysterious, formidable, uncanny, even terrifying. It disconcerts the listener, calling into question what appears to be most familiar. The poem describes the power of human intelligence as something miraculous and awe-inspiring, wonderful in its capacity to understand and control natural forces, but also potentially dangerous: knowledge and technical skill can be put to beneficial or to destructive use. What is the ethical status of scientific discovery, considered in relation to civil law and natural justice? Translated into modern political and scientific terms, the implications of this question are as acute as ever.

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$\text{♩} = 96$ *Risolto, con energia*

Soprani
Alti
Tenori
Bassi

Pol- la ta dei- na kou- den an- thro- pou dei- no- te- ron pe- sei tou- to kai po- li- ou pe- ran pon- tou khe- me- ri- o no- to kho- rei

Many things are wonderful, none more wonderful than man.

Across the foaming sea, driven by the stormy south wind he goes

10 15 **A**

pe- ri- brv- khi- oi- sin pe- ron hup' oid- ma- sin pe- ron pol- la ta dei- na kou- den an- thro- pou dei- no- te- ron pe- 3/8
pe- ron hup' oid- ma- sin pe- ron pol- la ta dei- na kou- den an- thro- pou dei- no- te- ron pe- 3/8
pe- ron hup' oid- ma- sin pe- ron pol- la ta dei- na kou- den an- thro- pou 3/8

making a way through the overwhelming surges.

Many things are wonderful, none more wonderful than man.

3 8 lei 6 tou- to kai po-li-ou pe-rân - pon- tou 7 khe- me-ri-ô no- tô khô- rei 5 pe-ri- bru-khi-oi- sin pe- 3 rôn hup' 5 oid- ma- sin 9 8

3 8 lei 6 tou- to kai po-li-ou pe-rân - pon- tou 7 khe- me-ri-ô no- tô khô- rei 5 pe-ri- bru-khi-oi- sin pe- 3 rôn hup' 5 oid- ma- sin 9 8

3 8 dei- 6 no- te- ron pe- lei tou- to kai po-li-ou pe- rân pon- tou khe- me-ri-ô no- tô khô- rei pe- 3 ri- bru-khi 5 oi- sin pe- 9 8

dei - no- te- ron pe- lei tou- to kai po-li-ou pe-rân pon- tou khe- me-ri-ô no- tô khô- rei pe- ri- bru-khi-oi- sin pe-

Across the foaming sea, driven by the stormy south wind he goes

making a way through the overwhelming surges.

B

$\text{♩} = 72$ più Largamente

Animato (preciso)

9 8 pe- rôn 5 the- ôn te 6 tân hu- per- ta- 5 tân Gân aph- thi- ton a- ka- ma 7- tân a- po- 6 trü- e- tai 4 il- lo- me- nôn 6 16

9 8 pe- rôn 5 the- ôn te 6 tân hu- per- ta- 5 tân Gân aph- thi- ton a- ka- ma 7- tân a- po- 6 trü- e- tai 4 il- lo- me- nôn 6 16

9 8 rôn hup' oid- ma- sin 5 the- ôn te 6 tân hu- per- ta- 5 tân Gân aph- thi- ton a- ka- ma- tân 6 a- po- trü- e- tai 4 tai il- lo- me- 6 16

- rôn hup' oid- ma- sin the- ôn te tân hu- per- ta- tân Gân aph- thi- ton a- ka- ma- tân a- po- trü- e- tai il- lo- me-

And the eldest of the gods, Earth,

immortal, unwearied, he subdues

(Largamente)

6 16 a- ro- trôn e- tos eis e- 5 tos 3 4 hip- pei- ô ge- nei po- lev- 2 4 ôn 3 4

6 16 a- ro- trôn e- tos eis e- 5 tos 3 4 f hip- pei- 2 4 hip- pei- 3 4 ô ge- nei po- lev- ôn

6 16 nôn a- ro- trôn e- tos 5 eis e- tos 3 4 hip- pei- ô ge- nei po- lev- ôn 3 4

- nôn a- ro- trôn e- tos eis e- tos hip- pei- ô ge- nei po- lev- ôn

as the ploughs go back and forth from year to year

with the race of horses, turning the soll.

C

$\text{♩} = 72$ più leggieramente

48 50 55

5 kou- -pho-no- 6 -ōn te phū- lon 5 or- nī - 2 -thōn am- phi- ba- 3 lōn a- gei kai thē- rōn a- gri- 5 ōn eth- nē

kou- pho-no- 6 -ōn te phū- 5 -lon or- 2 -nī - thōn am- phi- 3 -ba-lōn a-gei kai thē- 5 -rōn a-

kou- pho-no 6 -ōn te phū- 5 -lon or- 2 -nī - thōn am- phi- 3 ba-lōn a-gei kai thē- 5 -rōn a-

kou- pho-no- ōn te phū- lon or- nī - thōn am- phi- ba-lōn a-gei kai thē -rōn a-

And the tribe of light-hearted birds

surrounding them, he captures,

58 60 65

pon- tou 3 t' ein - a- li- an phu. 2 sin 5 spei- rai- si 3 di- ktu- o- 6 klō- stois pe- 3 ri- phra- 4 dēs a- 5 nēr

- gri-ōn eth- nē 3 spei- -rai- 2 -si di- ktu- 5 - o- klō- stois 3 pe- ri- 6 -phra-dēs a- nēr, 3 pe- ri- 4 -phra-dēs 5 a- nēr

- gri-ōn eth- nē 3 spei- -rai- 2 -si di- ktu- 5 - o- klō- stois 3 pe- ri- 6 -phra-dēs a- nēr, 3 pe- ri- 4 -phra-dēs 5 a- nēr

- gri-ōn eth- nē spei- -rai- -si di- ktu- - o- klō- stois pe- ri- -phra-dēs a- nēr, pe- ri- -phra-dēs a- nēr

and the races of wild beasts,

and those who live in the depths of the sea,

he snares in the meshes of woven nets,

man with surpassing skill.

D

$\text{♩} = 72$ Largamente

Animato (preciso)

68 *f* kra-
tei de
7 16 mē-kha-na-is a-
5 8 grau-
lou
4 8 thē-ros or-es-si-ba-tā
la-si-
6 16 au-khe-na th'
4 8 hip-pon hu-pax-e-men
am-phi-lo-
9 16

75

He masters with his inventions
the mountain-roaming beast
and the horse with shaggy mane

77

f Largamente

80

9 16 -phon zu-gon
3 4 ou-rei-on t'ak-mē-ta tau-
2 4 ron
3 4
9 16 -phon zu-gon
3 4 ou-rei-
2 4 on t'ak-mē-ta tau-ron.
9 16 am-phi-lo-phon zu-gon
3 4 ou-rei-on t'ak-mē-ta tau-ron
2 4 tau-ron
3 4
am-phi-lo-phon zu-gon
ou-rei-on t'ak-mē-ta tau-ron

to lead them under the yoke,
and the tireless mountain bull.

Meno mosso

84 $\text{E} \quad \text{♩} = 56$ *mf*

84 *mf* $\frac{2}{4}$ kai $\frac{3}{4}$ phtheg-ma kai a-ne-mo-en $\frac{2}{4}$ *f sostenuto* phro-nē-ma kai as-tu-no-mous or-gas e-di-da-xa-to

85 *mf* $\frac{2}{4}$ kai $\frac{3}{4}$ phtheg-ma kai a-ne-mo-en $\frac{2}{4}$ *f sostenuto* phro-nē-ma kai as-tu-no-mous or-gas phro-nē-ma kai as-tu-no-mous or-gas

86 *mf* $\frac{2}{4}$ kai $\frac{3}{4}$ phtheg-ma kai a-ne-mo-en $\frac{2}{4}$ *f sostenuto* phro-nē-ma kai as-tu-no-mous or-gas e-di-da-xa-to

87 *f sostenuto* kai phtheg-ma kai a-ne-mo-en phro-nē-ma kai as-tu-no-mous or-gas e-di-da-xa-to kai dus-au-lōn

And speech and wind-swift thought and social organisation he has taught himself

94 *mf* $\text{♩} = 96$ *Animato* *mp* 100

94 *mf* $\frac{5}{8}$ pa-gōn en-aith- $\frac{6}{16}$ rei-a kai dus- $\frac{7}{8}$ om-bra phe-ū-ge-in be-lē $\frac{9}{16}$ pan-to-po-ras, a-po-ras ep' ou-den er-khe- $\frac{6}{16}$ ta-i to $\frac{9}{16}$ mel-lon

95 *mf* $\frac{5}{8}$ pa-gōn en-aith- $\frac{6}{16}$ rei-a kai dus- $\frac{7}{8}$ om-bra phe-ū-ge-in be-lē $\frac{9}{16}$ pan-to-po-ras, a-po-ras ep' ou-den er-khe- $\frac{6}{16}$ ta-i to $\frac{9}{16}$ mel-lon

96 *mf* $\frac{5}{8}$ pa-gōn en-aith- $\frac{6}{16}$ rei-a kai dus- $\frac{7}{8}$ om-bra phe-ū-ge-in be-lē $\frac{9}{16}$ pan-to-po-ras, a-po-ras ep' ou-den er-khe-ta - $\frac{6}{16}$ a-i to $\frac{9}{16}$ mel-lon

97 *mf* pa-gōn en-aith- rei-a kai dus- om-bra phe-ū-ge-in be-lē pan-to-po-ras, a-po-ras ep' ou-den er-khe-ta - a-i to mel-lon

and how to escape the hostile arrows of frost and rain all-resourceful, lacking no power to meet what is to come,

103 $\text{♩} = 56$ *Sostenuto* *mf* 105

103 *mf* $\frac{7}{8}$ Hai-dā mo-non pheu-xin $\frac{6}{8}$ ouk e-pa-xe- $\frac{7}{8}$ ta-i

104 *mf* $\frac{7}{8}$ Hai-dā mo-non pheu-xin $\frac{6}{8}$ ouk e-pa-xe- $\frac{7}{8}$ ta-i

105 *mf* $\frac{7}{8}$ Hai-dā mo-non pheu-xin $\frac{6}{8}$ ouk e-pa-xe- $\frac{7}{8}$ ta-i

Hai-dā mo-non pheu-xin ouk e-pa-xe-ta-i

from Death alone escape he shall not find.

107 F $\text{♩} = 56$ *mp* *mf* 110 *mp* 115

so-phon ti to mē-kha-no-en tekhnās hu-per el-pid'e-khōn e-khōn tote men ka-ron al-lot'ep'esth-lon

Ingenuity and skill

beyond hope possessing

sometimes to evil, at other times to good

117 120 *f sostenuto* 125

her-pei no-mous pe-rai-nōn ktho-nos no-mous pe-rai-nōn ktho-nos the-ōn t'ēn-or-kon di-kān

he comes.

Fulfilling the laws of the earth

and the sworn justice of the gods

129 $\text{♩} = 96$ *Animato* *mf* *subito* *P* $\text{♩} = 56$ (*sostenuto*) *mp*

di-kān hu-psi-po-lis a-po-lis to mē-ka-lon xun-es-ti tol-mās ka-rin.

he is high-cited;

citiless

to whom evil

is companion

because of his insolence.