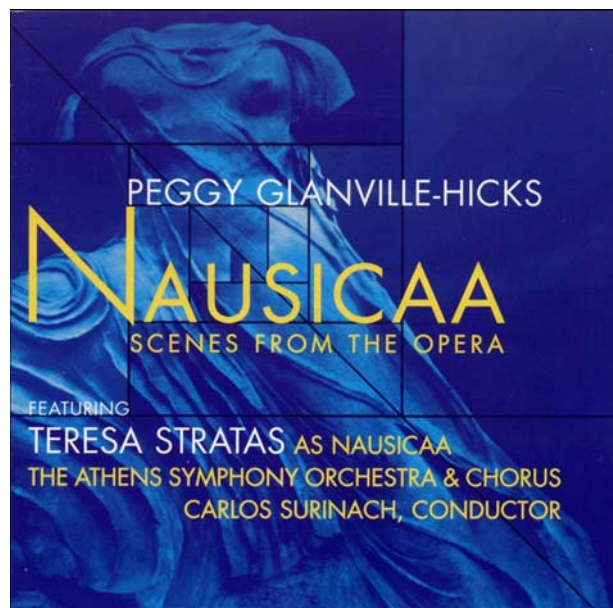


NWCR695

Nausicaa

Opera in Three Acts



1. Prologue	(4:30)
"Of all the Greek Heroes/Who laid waste to Troy"	
2. Act I, Scene 1	(3:10)
"I, your King Alcinous, call you together"	
3. Interlude I	(9:03)
"What do they mean these auguries?"	
4. Scene 3	(8:05)
"Lady of this coast, / you see before me"	
5. Act II, Scene 4	(4:34)
"Now Phemius, come out of your corner"	
6. Scene 5	(8:51)
"Stay,—stay where you are. Who are you?"	
7. Act III	(20:34)
Interlude III. The wedding by night, Scene 6, Finale.	

Opera in Three Acts, with Prologue and Interludes Libretto after the novel, Homer's Daughter by Robert Graves; Music by Peggy Glanville-Hicks; Scenes from the opera; In this recording, the solo roles are sung in English, and the choral episodes in Greek

Total playing time: 60:00

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Notes

Nausicaa

Opera in Three Acts, with Prologue and Interludes

Libretto after the novel, Homer's Daughter by Robert Graves
Music by Peggy Glanville-Hicks; Athens Symphony Orchestra & Chorus of Men and Women Conducted by Carlos Surinach; Directed and choreographed by John Butler;
Sets and costumes by Andreas Nomikos; From the 1961 Athens World Premiere Production

Cast

Nausicaa, Daughter of	
King Alcinous	Teresa Stratas, soprano
Aethon, A shipwrecked	
Cretan Nobleman	John Modenos, baritone
Phemius, The Court Minstrel	Edward Ruhl, tenor
Clytoneus, Young brother	
of Nausicaa George	Tsantikos, tenor
Queen Arete, Mother of	
Nausicaa Sofia	Steffan, contralto
King Alcinous, Father of	
Nausicaa	Spiro Malas, bass
Antinous, Nobleman-suitor	
for Nausicaa	Michalis Heliotis, tenor
Eurymachus, Another	
suitor	George Moutsios, tenor
Priest	Michalis Heliotis, tenor
Messenger	Vassilis Koundouris, baritone
Time: About the 7th Century, B.C.	

Place: The Palace of Drepanum, a Greek City State in Western Sicily

With the acclaimed production of her opera *Nausicaa* at the 1961 Athens Festival, Peggy Glanville-Hicks was placed firmly on the world stage as a composer for the theater. The opera had an American/Australian woman as composer, a text by an English writer living in Mallorca, and used a mixed cast of American-Greek soloists, a Greek chorus, an American director, a Greek designer, and a Spanish conductor.

It received three performances at the Festival and was a major success in the international press. Variety wrote: "A ten minute ovation greeted the world premiere of Peggy Glanville-Hicks new opera *Nausicaa* in the ancient Theatre of Herod Atticus at the Acropolis in the heart of Athens. The cast of 150 won eight curtain calls from the capacity crowd of 4,800 which overflowed into the aisles."

"A palpable hit!" the composer gleefully informed her friends and colleagues, She later wrote:

"The idea of a Greco-American collaboration took shape, with soloists and directors coming from the U. S. to combine with the chorus and orchestra of Athens in a kind of Transatlantic Opera Company."

"I have acquired over the years a vast experience in casting performers, and have always had an instinct concerning singers' potential, even when as yet untested."

"I cast twenty-two year-old Teresa Stratas (known only for small spinto parts at the Met) in the taxing dramatic-lyric title role; I cast John Modenos (not yet the Milan Prize-winner) as baritone lead opposite her; I chose Sophia Steffai and Spiro Malas (not yet discovered by City Center) as King and Queen in a cast of six young Americans, all of Greek ancestry, thus overcoming the language problem inherent in the Athens

projects, and at the same time, extending the Greco-American character of the work itself to the performing roster also.”

Indeed, *Nausicaa* brought diva Teresa Stratas also to international prominence in her first created major role. CRI’s recording, made soon after the premiere performances and with the original cast, did much to make the work well-known to American audiences at the time. It became a collector’s item (for fans of Stratas as well as Glanville-Hicks) and happily is now available on the present disc.

Born in Melbourne, Australia on December 29, 1912, **Peggy Glanville-Hicks** studied composition with Fritz Hart at the Melba Conservatorium. In 1932, she went to London to study at the Royal College of Music with Ralph Vaughan Williams (from whom she acquired an abiding love of modal music). She continued her studies in Europe from 1936 to 1938 with Egon Wellesz in Vienna, himself a pupil of Schoenberg, whose principles she firmly rejected (one of the first composers to do so) and finally, in Paris with Nadia Boulanger.

In 1941, she settled in New York, where she was a lively and energetic presence on the contemporary music scene. She became an American citizen in 1948. A fervent organizer of concerts, publications, and recordings, she was involved with many of the contemporary music organizations of the day including the League of Composers and the Composers Forum, for which she served as director from 1950 to 1960. She produced a lively series of programs at the Metropolitan Museum as well as at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Along with fellow composers Paul Bowles, Arthur Berger, and Lou Harrison, she was a music critic for the *New York Herald-Tribune* from 1948 to 1958, under the leadership of the senior critic, composer Virgil Thomson.

In 1954 at a concert in the Museum of Modern Art, Leopold Stokowski premiered Glanville-Hick’s *Letters from Morocco*. These settings of evocative letters from her beloved friend Paul Bowles remain one of her most attractive works. Among her other vocal works are the *Choral Suite* (1937) which was premiered by the ISCM Festival in London in 1938 and *Thomsonianana* (1949), a setting of words taken from Thomson’s music reviews. She also wrote film scores, chamber works and orchestra works, including *Concerto Romantico* (1956) for violist Walter Trampler, and *Etruscan Concerto* (1954) for pianist Carlos Bussotti (which was recorded in the early 1990s by Keith Jarrett).

Besides *Nausicaa*, Glanville-Hicks composed three other operas and a number of ballet scores, all to choreography by John Butler. Her first major success in the theater was her second opera, *The Transposed Heads* (1953) which marked the emergence of her mature style, based on a fusion of Western and Eastern idioms, and was her first breakthrough to a larger public. With a libretto by the composer based on Thomas Mann’s short story of the same name, the work explored Hindu melodic patterns and dance rhythms. It was commissioned by the Louisville Orchestra (the first opera commission by the Orchestra), with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, and has twice been recorded. This was followed by the ballet *The Masque of the Wild Man* (1958) which premiered at Gian-Carlo Menotti’s first Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy in 1958 with choreography by Butler.

Glanville-Hicks moved to Greece in 1959 and lived in a home on the slopes of the Acropolis. For two years prior to the premiere of *Nausicaa*, she devoted herself to intensive research of the scales and metrics of Greek demotic music. Her years of reviewing concerts had cleared her perceptions about her

own music which soon revealed a reduced importance to harmony. Indian classical music and Greek demotic music (at the suggestion of Béla Bartók) were vigorously studied and synthesized into a style of her own. In *Nausicaa* there is a solid base of Greek folk music, where the rhythm is strongly inherent in the melodic line, and harmony is “demoted” as a building device. This was in the face of the growing fashionable avant garde of the day. Herself a direct product of atonalism (Schoenberg/Wellesz) and neo-classicism (Stravinsky/Boulanger), she increasingly took her line of departure from the English modalism of Vaughan Williams, but with the overlay of the Indian system of raga/tala (melody/rhythm).

Following the success of *Nausicaa*, Glanville-Hicks was commissioned by the San Francisco Opera with support from the Ford Foundation for a new opera, *Sappho*, as a vehicle for Maria Callas to a text by Lawrence Durrell, based on his one act play of the same name. It was completed in 1963 yet remains unperformed.

It was in 1967 while in New York for the premiere of her ballet *A Season in Hell*, again with choreography by Butler, that Glanville-Hicks suddenly lost her sight. She was diagnosed as having a brain tumor, and quickly underwent surgery for its removal. Told at the height of her powers that she had only a short time to live, she retreated to her Greek home. Though she out-lived the prophecies and her eyesight partially returned, she never composed again.

In 1975, Glanville-Hicks returned to Australia, settling in Sydney where she directed the Asian Music Studies Program at the new Australian Music Centre. In 1977 in Australia, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom decorated the composer with the Silver Medal and in 1987, the University of Sydney awarded her an honorary doctorate in music. Peggy Glanville-Hicks died in Sydney on June 25, 1990, leaving her estate as a Trust to provide a residence for composers.

Throughout her life, Glanville-Hicks refused to allow herself to be designated as a “woman composer” (and was not always generous with other composers of her gender)—and always maintained that women composers were immediately disadvantaged if they called for special treatment. She was strong-willed, even “bossy,” but her witty and trenchant conversation was both illuminating and entertaining.

She was mistress of the one-liner, and her reviews and other articles reveal a gifted writer. She devoted a great deal of her energies to the promotion of other composers, contributing most of the entries on American composers for the Fifth Edition of the Grove’s *International Dictionary of Music*. All of her diverse activities supported her view of herself as a professional musician and a responsible artist.

Her music displays a powerful and memorable profile; it is lean, shapely, and often very beautiful. With the new romanticism in vogue once again, her music is being favorably reassessed.

She was a composer always ahead of her time

—© 1995 James Murdoch

A note on the libretto and the music

The libretto for *Nausicaa* was planned and the text started in the summer of 1956, when I spent several months on the island of Mallorca working with Robert Graves. The text was completed in New York during the fall of 1957, and revised during the following summers as the writing of the music progressed and the form of the work took final shape.

The music was begun after some two years of research on Greek folk music in New York and Washington, supplemented by a six-month sojourn in the Aegean and in Athens, where I had access to archives at the Academy of Athens, the Institut Français, and other sources.

The influence of this research will be felt throughout the score, and even more than the actual folk material will be found its modes and meters.

I have drawn on musical idioms from regions as diverse as Epirus, the Peloponessus, Crete, and Dodecanese—as those versed in Greek folklore will recognize...

Rural singers and performers in Greece today still improvise in the ancient modes and meters, and a given melody may be two or two thousand years old. Their prevailing model structure is so singular and so basic that any “taint” from contact with the Western diatonic tradition becomes apparent instantly.

From analysis of the Greek folk idiom it is clear that the genre belongs to a common ancient classic type that persists in remnants through the Middle and Far East, the most comprehensive study-laboratory for which is to be found today in India, where the system handed down in unbroken tradition is still in use.

Though the Greeks use mode and meter common to Yugoslavia, Turkey, Persia, or India, their use of these abstract entities has a flavor peculiarly its own, peculiarly Greek and evocative of the Greek temperament and of the light that floods the Grecian sea—and landscape. It is this flavor, together with the considerations of musical malleability for extended development that has guided my choice and use of material.

—Peggy Glanville-Hicks, 1963

Synopsis

The story of *Nausicaa*, arranged from the novel *Homer's Daughter* by British author Robert Graves might be termed “variations of a theme by Homer” – for many creative liberties have been taken with the original *Odyssey* story line.

The characters of Penelope and Nausicaa become merged into one. Odysseus becomes Aethon—a shipwrecked Cretan nobleman, the incident of Penelope's fifty lovers with the shooting contest in the courtyard becomes the challenge for Nausicaa's hand. A charming secondary plot is woven around Robert Graves's idea that the *Odyssey* was not written by Homer at all, but by a woman—the Princess Nausicaa being that authoress. Her story reveals how and why she came to write it.

Act I follows a brief Prologue, wherein Nausicaa disputes with the Minstrel Phemius the old bardic interpretation of Penelope's role in the *Odyssey*. Scene 1 shows Alcinous, King of Drepanum, bidding farewell to his Queen Arete, to his daughter Nausicaa, to his young son Clytoneus, and to his courtiers. He is going in search of his elder Laodamus, who has mysteriously disappeared. Bidding all to be faithful to their appointed duties in his absence, the King proclaims the terms under which suitors for Nausicaa's hand will be considered: “The decision must rest with the princess herself.”

The Interlude preceding Scene 2 finds Nausicaa and her mother expressing their fears that the missing Laodamus is dead, and in Scene 2 Nausicaa reveals these fears to Clytoneus. As he laughs at his sister for her “woman's fears” they overhear Antinous, Eurymachus, and two other noblemen in the courtyard below, whose stealthy conversation reveals a plot afoot to overthrow the Palace. Her worst fears confirmed, Nausicaa calls upon Athene for aid.

Scene 3 ends the first act with the traditional Homeric episode of Odysseus appearing from the sea. Nausicaa's handmaidens are washing clothes at a spring by the shore when the shipwrecked Aethon appears, claiming sanctuary. Nausicaa, hearing his story, sees in him Athene's answer to her prayer, and agrees to hide him in the palace disguised as a beggar.

Act II develops the conspiracy. Scene 4 shows the suitors for Nausicaa's hand established in the palace courtyard while the

Minstrel Phemius entertains them. Nausicaa and Clytoneus entreat them to depart but Aethon in his beggar's disguise is insulted by the drunken suitors, and Clytoneus in desperation first warns the suitors of a day of reckoning then resolves to seek help from a banished brother, Halius, who lives at a nearby city. As he departs, Nausicaa reveals to him Aethon's identity as a hidden ally.

The Interlude that prefaces Scene 5 finds Nausicaa reproaching Phemius for entertaining her father's enemies. There follows Scene 5, wherein Aethon declares his love for Nausicaa. The Queen comes upon them and Aethon's identity is revealed to her. Now Clytoneus returns, not with an army headed by his brother but with fifty arrows as token of aid. But Nausicaa reads into the gift of arrows a sign of Athene's plan. “There must be a wedding contest,” she declares, “he who can shoot the Great Bow of Hercules which hangs in the palace shall claim my hand in marriage.”

Aethon is confident that he will win, but the Queen fears that by unlucky chance, one of the insurgent suitors might prove victorious and she orders consultation of the auguries. A bull is slain and Phemius, reading the signs from head and entrails, makes the oracular pronouncement, “A wedding by night will save the day.” Aethon and Nausicaa must wed that very night, so that whatever the outcome of the contest, the situation is saved.

Act III: The brief Interlude III with its “wedding by night” ritual serves as a prelude to the final act; and Scene 6 opens with the contest which Aethon wins. The consternation of the suitors turns to terror as he then shoots them down one by one on the palace steps. Phemius, too, is about to share the fate of the conspirators when Nausicaa interposes, warning that the life of a Minstrel—a Son of Homer—is sacred.

The King returns, and learning of Nausicaa's endurance in his absence, asks what boon she would claim as reward. She then demands that in return for his life, the Minstrel Phemius shall sing in future her version of the Penelope story, portraying her as a faithful and valiant wife in her Lord's absence. Phemius accepts the terms reluctantly, and the opera concludes with general rejoicing.

Production Notes

Digital mastering: Joseph R. Dalton and Charles Harbutt, engineer at Sony Classical Productions, NYC.

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