



## U6 Aural > Word Setting

### EXTRACT

Prologue *from* Oedipus Rex

Igor Stravinsky (1927)

To what extent is Stravinsky's setting informed by the text?

<http://naxosmusiclibrary.com/catalogue/item.asp?cid=8.557499>

#### *Class notes*

- Minor key (B-flat minor) – reflects the distressing nature of the text
- Use of Latin – “a medium that is not dead, merely turned to stone”
  - ‘Monumentalised’ – unadulterated, timeless, ritualistic? Neoclassical influence
- “Kaedit nos pestis” – octaves, unison – large crowd calling out
- Rapid, high ascending scale in the flute (b.1) – represents screaming
- “Pestis” – plague – accented throughout the work
- Before Fig. 1, “peste moritur” – leap of descending major 7th – represents the falling to one’s death
- Between Figs. 2 & 4 – heavy repetition (D-flats) – representing repeated pleadings, desperation for salvation
- Before Fig.4 – ascending chromatic line in first horn – has the effect of increasing intensity, climaxing in homophonic, stabbing octaves
- Fig. 8 – bass descending chromatic portamenti – sobbing effect; again, falling into death
- Fig. 11 – chant, *p secco* – broken cries for help
- Fig. 16 – Oedipus’ highly florid, ornamental melodic line represents his pomposity
- Fig. 16 – the marking of *dolce legato* - gives the effect of Oedipus consoling his people
- Fig. 25 – “Vale, Creo!” – homophonic, G major chord (first time)
- Major key – a glimmer of hope; or a triumphant royal fanfare for Creo
- Fig. 26 – “audimus” – we are listening – *diminuendo* (so Creo can be heard)