Dizzy Miss Lizzie’s Roadside Revue

presents

The Oresteia

Music & Lyrics by Debra Buonaccorsi and Steve McWilliams

Book by Debra Buonaccorsi, based on Aeschylus’ *The Oresteia*

**TIME:** The present. Dizzy Miss Lizzie’s Roadside Revue presents the piece in the present time but take the viewers to an undefined time, maybe ancient Greece, right after the Trojan War.

**PLACE:** The story tellers are in their current place but transport the viewers to a place that could be ancient Greece but also a roadside carnival attraction.

**CHARACTERS:**

THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES: A carnival barker, a salesman. He handles all of the exposition and drives the show forward. Charming, an entertainer.

The players are sometimes a specific character and sometimes just players in the troupe, watching, commenting on and assisting with the telling of the story.

CLYTEMNESTRA: A queen of Mycenae, wife of Agamemnon, sister of Helen of Troy, mother of Iphigenia, Electra and Orestes. Adulterous, vengeful, embittered; murders her husband and Cassandra.

IPHIGENIA: Daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon, Murdered by her father as a sacrifice to please the gods. Trusting, innocent and tragic.

AGAMEMNON: A king of Mycenae, husband of Clytemnestra, father of Iphigenia, Electra and Orestes, commander of the Greek forces in the Trojan War. Arrogant, proud, willing to win at any cost.

CASSANDRA: A Trojan priestess of Apollo. A tragic figure, cursed with the gift of prophecy but never to be believed. Brought back to Greece as a trophy of war by Agamemnon, murdered by Clytemnestra.

ELECTRA: Daughter of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. Plots her mother’s murder with brother Orestes. Vengeful, entitled and bitter.

ORESTES: Son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon. Living in exile at the outset of the play, returns home to avenge the death of his father. Murders his mother. Emotional and conflicted.

THE LIBATION BEARERS: A chorus. Common folk, zealous devotees to Electra.

THE FURIES: Goddesses of vengeance. Brutal and unforgiving.

ALECTO: Unceasing anger

TISIPHONE: Avenger of murder

MEGAERA: Holder of grudges.

ATHENA: Goddess of wisdom and reason, daughter of Zeus. Saves Orestes’ life and convinces the Furies to end their campaign of vengeance and find compromise.

ZEUS: King of the gods.

**SCENE BREAKDOWN**

PROGLOGUE

SCENE 1: A Brief History of the House of Atreus

SCENE 2: Clytemnestra

 VENGEANCE

 IPHIGENIA’S BALLET & TIGHTROPE ACT

SCENE 3: Agamemnon’s Homecoming

 AGAMEMNON

 CASSANDRA’S BALLET & HALL OF MIRRORS

 Clytemnestra: Knife Thrower

SCENE 4: Electra & Orestes

 THE LIBATION BEARERS

 Orestes Magic Trick

 HOEDOWN!

SCENE 5: The Furies

 DON’T BE AN ASSHOLE

 ORESTES SONG

SCENE 6: Deus Ex Machina

 ATHENA- FINALE

**SCRIPT EXCERPT: SCENE 4**

*At the end of Clytemnestra’s reprise, the Libation Bearers quietly come forward, playing acoustic guitar, maybe banjo, softly strumming and humming in harmony. Orestes and Electra step forward. Electra sits on the stool stage left, bookended by the Libation Bearers. Orestes sits stage right. Electra and Orestes are not in the same place. Electra is home in Mycenae and Orestes is in exile. They speak simultaneously, overlapping at times. The Libation Bearers underscore the scene with rhythmic and percussive repetition of words and syllables spoken by Electra, sometimes with quiet singing and guitar.*

ORESTES AND ELECTRA

Those are my parents.

ORESTES

Lovely,

ELECTRA

Wonderful,

BOTH

Aren’t they?

ELECTRA

Terrific role models, wouldn’t you say? For a prostituting, mass murdering,

ORESTES

Serial killing, genocidal,

ELECTRA

Obsessive-compulsive lunatic.

ORESTES

It’s kind of funny really.

ELECTRA

It just happens to you. You’re conceived,

ORESTES

You’re born,

ELECTRA

You land somewhere. You have no say, no control.

ORESTES

But you can’t change history and you can’t pick your parents or family.

BOTH

You should have seen the rest of my relatives.

ORESTES

My grandfather, Atreus, was feuding with his brother Thyestes.

ELECTRA

And just to mess with him, grandfather Atreus killed Uncle Thyestes’s children,

ORESTES

Then good ol’ gramps filleted up those juicy little babies, grilled ‘em and fed ‘em to his brother, their father, Thyestes.

ELECTRA

They never reconciled.

ORESTES

It’s my cross to bear.

ELECTRA

Now, I’m basically

BOTH

All alone.

ELECTRA

Sure, I’ve still got a mother. But for one reason or another, we aren’t very close.

ORESTES:

Maybe it’s because I was sent into exile when I was 8 years old.

ELECTRA

It could be because she’s fornicating with my dad’s cousin.

ORESTES

I guess I was lucky to be sent away, raised by strangers, living like a servant in their house.

ELECTRA

It could be because she’s a murdering, whoring, lying evil bitch.

ORESTES

That was loads of fun.

ELECTRA

Or maybe I just couldn’t live up to the expectations of my saintly martyred sister Iphigenia.

ORESTES

I do still have a sister.

ELECTRA

I do still have a brother. Somewhere out there.

ORESTES

Back at home. Electra…

ELECTRA

Orestes…

ORESTES

Wonder what she’s like.

ELECTRA

Wonder what he’s like.

ORESTES

Maybe she’s kind, loving, gentle.

ELECTRA

Hope he’s not a pussy.

ORESTES

Maybe she and I could run away together. Start a new life.

ELECTRA

It’s his job now, Orestes… He’s got to get back here and take care of business. Set things right.

ORESTES

Live out the rest of our lives in peace. Forget where we came from.

ELECTRA

Kill that whoring bitch we call mother. Take back what is rightfully ours.

ORESTES

Be a normal family.

ELECTRA

Make her pay for what she did to father. Blood for blood…. I’d kill her if I could. But that just wouldn’t be right. It’s not my job- it would be unseemly for a woman to do such a thing. But where is he? Sent away in exile.

ORESTES

I feel so helpless.

ELECTRA

I feel so powerless.

ORESTES

Only the gods know what it right

.

ELECTRA

Only the gods know where he is. Only the gods can bring him home- give him the strength to do what must be done.

ORESTES

I’ll pray for an answer.

ELECTRA

I’ll put my faith in the gods.

ORESTES

One day, I’ll find peace.

ELECTRA

One day, I’ll find justice.

*(Electra sings, slowly and prayerfully)*

OH GODS,

OUR PRAYERS ARE SO SIMPLE, SO CLEAN AND SO PURE

SO LONG HAVE WE WAITED

IN ANGUISH AND PAIN

WE’VE SUFFERED SUCH OUTRAGE

SUCH GLUTTONY AND GREED

GRANT US THIS PEACE

IN OUR TIME OF NEED

(the tempo picks up, fast, energetic bluegrass style)

ELECTRA and LIBATION BEARERS

OH GODS,

OUR PRAYERS ARE SO SIMPLE, SO CLEAN AND SO PURE

SO LONG HAVE WE WAITED

IN ANGUISH AND PAIN

WE’VE SUFFERED SUCH OUTRAGE

SUCH GLUTTONY AND GREED

GRANT US THIS PEACE

IN OUR TIME OF NEED

JUSTICE WILL REIGN

RIGHT WILL BE RESTORED

ALL AT THE DEATH OF THAT VILE WHORE

OH GODS,

WE’RE SISTERS IN PAIN

UNBURDEN OUR HEARTS

WE WILL REMAIN TRUE AND CHASTE

WE PROUDLY BEAR

THE YOKE OF INJUSTICE

TRADE EVIL FOR EVIL

BRING PEACE TO THE JUST

JUSTICE WILL REIGN

RIGHT WILL BE RESTORED

ALL AT THE DEATH OF THAT VILE WHORE

THE WELL OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

IS POLLUTED WITH GREED

THE AIR IS TAINTED

THIS HOUSE IS IMPURE

THEIR HEARTS ARE TWISTED

THEY HAVE BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS

BURN, BURN, BURN THE EVIL AWAY

OH GODS

BRING US AN AVENGER

A JUST EXECUTIONER

AT HIS HAND THE DEFILED WILL BE SLAIN

OH, SAVIOR OF VENGEANCE,

STRIKE HARD WITH YOUR FURY

SAVE THOSE WHO ARE LOYAL

SLAY THOSE WHO ARE NOT

JUSTICE WILL REIGN

RIGHT WILL BE RESTORED

ALL AT THE DEATH OF THAT VILE WHORE