

Scene 11

The Viking Saga part 1, 'at the beginning of the first millennium AD'

as the darkness recedes, the Viking ship slowly rises from the water; (the Native Americans are safely clustered at the top of their serpent mound) the only sound is the beating of the gong-heart...up film. as the *knarr* rises, we see it against a background of a Viking settlement, moored to a dock, the ocean sloshing about—back and forth, back and forth—slowly, and steadily beneath the thick wooden abstract hull. the rocky outline of the Greenland coast lays in silence...what light there is appears vague. the set is only a trace, an impression, an indication—an abstraction—as darkness recedes, the Viking ship rises and takes shape, and the scene becomes frozen in place, along with its characters, who are framed by the film, like a TV screen, or a painting, colored by very specific lighting, appearing much like early American canvasses depicting landscapes of the country and the people inhabiting them...eventually the scene becomes animate. first, only Karlsefni moves—perhaps an eyebrow, a nostril, as the rest of him remains frozen; by *churning*...the other leads begin to move, and by *touched turned*...the entire Viking crew has come alive. the Vikings however, always seem trapped within the frame of their painting, calling into question the relationships they have amongst themselves.

Description

Thorfinn Karlsefni, recitativo.
the gong reverberates through
this speech. the mist lifts and the
darkness recedes. this section
appears as a silhouette, a sepia
tone from our past. Karlsefni
and the other lead vocalists are
dressed as Vikings. Karlsefni is
cloaked in a long burgundy
colored robe. he stands on a
raised platform at the center of
the *knarr*, slightly higher than
Gudrid who is in white. she is
situated at the aft. Freydis is
wrapped about the prow, which
remains leaning against the
railing of the *knarr*. the three
leads are separated. their
individuality is accented. the
crew remain in the background.
possible use of masks?

Text

Long
Long
Long
into the white cold
cold dark nite
into the sea stained
salt air vapor
into the chilled swirling
curdy troughs
swift
our lateen rigged knarr strode nigh;
hung hard with ice flakes
with hail scur blistered
with washed waves white against it
the ocean against our keel
thrust
churning, churning, churning
restlessly churning
weaving rings, white, round.
the blue fluted ice-ridden
sea stiff crust white foam
drove
full round our prow.
yea, in that cold cold darkness
though lost we seemed,
chimeric fingers
crest our prow
straked full round,
south by west, our fate...

[the crew] consists of six members, and much like a Greek or a Shakespearean chorus, this crew likewise enjoys theatrical hi-jinx. their behavior is often esoteric and idiosyncratic.

Thorfinn Karlsefni continues. we begin to sense a strange, intense sexual quality underlying the Viking's relationship to their prow. Freydis is still attached.

Karlsefni in a virtual whisper. the crew whispers (echo-like) underneath Karlsefni, talking about the bloody places and accomplishments often associated with the Vikings, as they begin to slowly, with great effort, raise the prow with Freydis attached. her loosely fitting *ice shirt* unfurls as the prow is first raised, then placed in its position at the fore of the *knarr*. the heartbeat can be heard pulsing every once in a while.

end chorale accompaniment.

[Gudrid, mezzo-soprano sings] [the crew] accompany Gudrid, a refrain underneath her vocalization. all vocals are accompanied by the liquid sea-like sounds of an accordion. Gudrid sings around Karlsefni's

[touched, turned, touched, turned
on, spew-driven, on, on to the nite
long, long, on, on, on to our fate
...with a special sense of hisstory
hard sculled we the rough places plaine
far, far into the nite,
crawled, crawled...crawled we,
salt sea borne (hold final note)]

turning long its dragoun face to break the wind
our prow thru hiemal hoarfrost traversed its way.
chimeric fingers wrapped our prow
fingers mystic crest full round
fingers mystic crowned our prow.
not'f the eye, ya see, but of the spirit, like the wind
a magic of the past, full round, guided our way.

close yr eyes
you still can hear
names breathing
from the past
feel within, within
the ancient voices
voices on the white landscape
the voices in our silence
echoing silence—
a force mysterious, passionate
dark within the blood it burns
embedded within every move
in every movement, every hand
twisted with a thousand lives
a thousand souls they doth wrap
their power gathered hath given us
the strength to move—

and so, we have raised this image of oak
this twisted round wizened piece
[in this prow we hath raised
in this prow brought to sea] (repeat under the
following lines, merging with "into the sea...")
an image to descry our soul.
placed up this prow
and brought to the fore, the past

lines, while [Freydis, from her perch on the prow, sing-speaks] these same lines (sotto voce) as counterpoint.

[the crew], accompanied by music.

{echo-like}. a single voice from the crew accompanied by the other choral members, and music through the end of section. through this section the film fades...to **Black**.

placed front, front full crest
this prow, our past.
from our soul, to the fore
forward then...

to the sea, to the sea,
[into the sea (repeat).....]

draf {draf, draf, draf}
draf {draf, draf, draf}
draf {draf, draf, draf}

the prow
forward...striden forward
to the sea,
to the sea,
plow we forward
straken, straken, straken,
forward
strid...en forward
to the sea,
to the sea,
take this prow
to the sea
to see...
into the sea
to see...
into the sea
to the shining see.....]

this section is performed by three or four members of [the crew] from within the rigging of the ship. it is a simple design: a ship mast, full rigging, prominent prow. it is an abstract design. the prow though is very sexual. the ship is more structure than material — exposed, rather than covered. music underlies this entire section. the prow of the ship also serves as the mystery tree, Yggdrassil, the great ash tree, the tree of the world, which reaches its roots deep into the earth, into the dreadful, dark, Midgaard.

[sails set	salt sea borne	forward bend
th'knarr	steer t'the sea	t'the stern
t'the stern	south by west	windward be
a stem a stierran	forward bend	stierran stern
sea t'standen sea	th'prow	t'th'wind
t'th'wind	searchen	skjerry strands
a searchen	beaten	stem afore
stem afore	stierran	stem t'breast
stem t'stern	the ship	a stem
a descent	a strain	not a branch
stem afore	stem afore	a strain
a strain	builds	a strain
builds	a strain	th'wind
a strain	upon a sea	stern to prow
th'ship	timber	a stem
timber	a stem	timber
t'stand	for prow	a symbol
for prow	unnerstand	for prow
a symbol	thi'stem	a symbol
for culture	th'vikings	stithy formed
this prow	formed th'prow	f'orward th'prow
f'orward th'prow	upon the sea	upon the sea
upon the sea	upon the sea	the sea
the sea	upon a sea...]	

—Scene II began as a painting. so it ends, all characters frozen. the lighting, like paint, colors each character and the portion of the set they inhabit, as if they are part of a canvas. the music of this section leads...