

The Villa Theater Lab Series

Critical Mass Performance Group presents

AFTER IPHIGENIA [a work-in-progress]

Friday, November 12, 2021; 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 13, 2021; 3:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, November 14, 2021; 3:00 p.m.

A conversation with the artists will follow the Saturday afternoon performance.

Getty Villa Museum, Auditorium

This performance is approximately sixty minutes, with no intermission. PLEASE silence all cellular telephones and other electronic devices. No unauthorized videotaping, audiotaping, or photography is permitted during the performance.

AFTER IPHIGENIA [work-in-progress]

Written & directed by Nancy Keystone

Original music by Randy Tico

Created in collaboration with Critical Mass Performance Group

ENSEMBLE

June Carryl*

Fran de Leon*

Russell Edge*

Lorne Green

Valerie Spencer*

PRODUCTION TEAM

Production Stage Manager: Alyssa Escalante*

Costume Designer: Lena Sands

Lighting Designer: Christine Ferriter

Sound Designer: Randy Tico

Scenic Designer: Nancy Keystone

Multi-Media Producer: Lindsay "L.J." Jenkins

Associate Producer: Turner Munch

Production Assistant: Rey Cordova

Workshop Stage Manager: Trixie Eunhae Hong

Hind mask created by Emma Eisenmann

Props: Cindy Lin

*Appearing through an Agreement between this theater, Critical Mass Performance Group, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

Director's Note

This is our very first development workshop in which we are exploring and adapting the Iphigenia plays of Euripides: *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and *Iphigenia in Tauris*. The central dilemma of both plays is that of sacrifice. *Iphigenia in Aulis* is the more well-known of the two plays. It was written between 408-406 BC, remaining unfinished at the time of Euripides' death. At Aulis, the Greek army has assembled under the Commander, Agamemnon. Their mission is to retrieve Helen, the wife of Menelaus (Agamemnon's brother), who has run off with the Trojan, Paris. The 1000 Greek ships are, unfortunately, stuck in the harbor with no wind. A prophet tells Agamemnon that he must sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia, in order to appease the goddess Artemis, who will then bring the wind to allow the ships to sail to Troy.

Iphigenia in Tauris, written earlier (414–412 BC) tells part of the story that comes chronologically later--perhaps 20 years after the events at Aulis, after the Trojan War, after the bloody episodes of the Oresteia (Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon for his sacrifice of their daughter; Orestes' murder of his mother Clytemnestra in revenge; and Orestes' trial against the Furies who are tormenting him as punishment for matricide.). In the "barbaric" land of Tauris, Iphigenia is alive, having been saved by Artemis at the moment of sacrifice. For all these years since Aulis, she has been serving as the High Priestess at Artemis' temple. It is here that Iphigenia is reunited with her brother, Orestes, after both siblings believe the other to be dead. This play was written shortly after Athens had experienced a plague.

Our residency here at the Getty Villa was postponed a year due to Covid-19. Since then, whatever we might have done has become largely irrelevant after the past 20 months of multiple pandemics. The Covid-19 virus, acute racism and racial violence, and climate change, have severely impacted most of the world, and traumatized and ravaged many, especially marginalized, communities in the United States. As we tentatively emerge from isolation, our explorations for this project begin where we are; we dig into these ancient plays in the context of our immediate personal and communal moment of calamity, loss, and transcendence.

These Greek plays are containers for the enduring human dilemmas, acquiring layer upon layer of meanings, resonances, and associations through the millennia. Our aim is less about retelling the story than using it to meditate on the themes and questions that arise: What is a sacrifice? What has been lost over the past months? Are our lives fated, or do we have free will? What are the Furies for us? How do we move forward?

This presentation represents a smattering of notions of what might be possible in the finished piece. We anticipate another two to three development workshops over the next 24 months, followed by a premiere of the final work. It has been an incredible gift to begin to incubate this project at the Getty Villa Theatre Lab, to have the time, space, and support to explore these plays, as well as access to the Villa's brilliant collection and wonderful scholars which have enriched our process and understanding of the material.

- Nancy Keystone

About Critical Mass Performance Group

Critical Mass Performance Group is a Los Angeles-based collaborative ensemble founded in 1985 by writer-director Nancy Keystone. Known for category-busting new works, exuberant theatricality, and electrifying collisions of ideas, CMPG was named 2013's Best Theatre Company by the *LA Weekly*. We believe that by sharing stories we can sow the seeds of empathy, in order to imagine and manifest a just, equitable, and peaceful future.

In 2016 CMPG premiered our latest work, *Ameryka*, which was honored with awards for Production of the Year and Best Ensemble by Stage Raw, nominated for seven Ovation Awards, including Best New Play, Production, and Ensemble, and nominated for Best Ensemble by LA Drama Critics Circle. *Ameryka* was restaged in 2018 at the Kirk Douglas Theatre as part of Center Theatre Group's Block Party. *Alcestis* (2013) was developed at the Getty Villa Theatre Lab and premiered at Boston Court Pasadena. Named one of 10 Best Plays by *LA Weekly*, the production won three Best Adaptation Awards from the LA Drama Critics Circle, the *LA Weekly*, and Arts In LA, and was nominated for best direction, sound/score, production design, and choreography. *Apollo* (2005/2009), an epic trilogy exploring the US space program, its relationship with Nazi rocket scientists, and the surprising intersection with the Civil Rights Movement, premiered Parts 1 & 2 at the Kirk Douglas Theatre in 2005, won a Garland Award for Best New Play, and was named in the Top 10 Plays by *LA Alternative Press*. Part 3 premiered with the full trilogy at Portland Center Stage (Oregon) in 2009. *The Akhmatova Project* (2000), a movement-theatre piece inspired by the life and work of Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, was named one of the 10 Best Productions by the *LA Times*, received four *LA Weekly* Award nominations including Best Production, and won for Best Choreography.

Other CMPG productions: *Bad Medicine* (2014), commissioned by Heretick Theatre Lab, live-streamed with the Noir Project; *Parataxes From the Near Side of the Heart* (2015), commissioned by Stage Raw Digital Play Festival/Polish Edition; *Bread* (2017 & 2011), site specific interactive performance-salon commissioned by Cornerstone Theater Company; *365 Days/365 Plays #47* by Suzan-Lori Parks (2007), a site specific production performed at AngelsGate Cultural Center; an adaptation of *Antigone* (2001) premiered at Portland Center Stage; *Sun Song & Stories Of The Sun* (1990 & 1991) community-based, multi-media festival performances, performed in association with the Santa Barbara Summer Solstice Celebration; Shakespeare's *Measure For Measure* (1991), named one of 10 Best Productions by *LA Reader*, performed in alternative spaces; Aphra Behn's *The Rover*; Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1988), a site-specific work, performed at Joseppi's Bar, Santa Barbara; and Brecht's *Baal* (1985), the inciting incident for CMPG.

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Thank you to everyone who contributed their thoughts and perspectives on this unique era, by participating in our interviews and surveys!

VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO: The fantastic staff at the Getty Villa, Ariel Bookman, Sean Cawelti, Paula Donnelly, Karen Kiefaber, Israel López, John Pennington/Pennington Dance Group & ARC Pasadena, Mark Seldis, Dana Stevens, Ralph Flores, Anna Woo, Laurel Kishi, Michael Schlitt, Alexa Rose, and The Teenies.

CMPG acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva/Kizh peoples as the traditional land caretakers of the unceded territory currently named Los Angeles, where we gratefully reside. We pay our respects to their elders past, present, and emerging, and we acknowledge the violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us there today. See the website, [Mapping Indigenous L.A.](#), an invaluable resource for the layered stories and histories of Indigenous Los Angeles, and [Native Land Map](#) for more information.

Upcoming Getty Villa Theater Presentations

- **LIZASTRATA ONLINE!** (November 1–28, 2021)
Tickets for the in-person production of *LIZASTRATA* sold out almost immediately, but here's your chance to see what the critics raved about! *LIZASTRATA ONLINE!* brings the Troubadour Theater Company to you. In this hilarious, musical retelling of one of history's greatest theatrical offerings, Lizastrata takes on the establishment, storms the Acropolis, and holds the treasury hostage until the long-warring men of Athens and Sparta commit to declaring peace. [Reserve your free ticket.](#)
- **HOMERIC HYMNS ONLINE** (working title) (March, 2022)
Four Larks return to the Getty Villa to distill their exuberant folk music and theatrical spectacle into a series of digital shorts inspired by the Homeric Hymns, a collection of ancient Greek praise poetry. This series of seven songs and accompanying visual poems will be released episodically following the workshop.

PERFORMANCE AT THE GETTY VILLA

The Getty Villa's public programs are designed to amplify and enhance the Museum visitor's insight into the people and cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world. Throughout the year, the Villa presents an engaging spectrum of events, anchored by its innovative theater program.

The Villa Theater Lab series fosters the work of artists employing creative, often experimental approaches to the performance of ancient stories. The Villa Auditorium's range of technologies have enabled teams of both newly emerging and long distinguished artists—directors, designers, musicians, playwrights, and actors—to freely incorporate advanced stage, sound, and visual elements into productions developed in residence here at the Villa.

Each September a major production is commissioned and presented in the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater, an outdoor performance space based on ancient prototypes. Past collaborators include Round House Theatre, SITI Company, Court Theatre, Troubadour Theater Company, and the Theatre @ Boston Court. Next year's collaboration will be with *Oedipus Tyrannos* with Tony Award-winning company Deaf West Theatre.

From autumn through spring, the Villa's public programming also includes music and film screenings. To receive information about Getty Museum exhibitions, performances, and lecture events, please visit getty.edu/360.

THE VILLA THEATER LAB SERIES STAFF

Performing Programs Head	Laurel Kishi
Sr. Project Specialist	Ralph Flores
Sr. Public Programs Coordinator	Anna Woo
Audiovisual Specialists	Ron Bunney, Chris Jeong, & Marvin Jones
Getty Villa Events	Heather Leisy & Aaron Lee Harvey



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