



PERSIANS

BY AESCHYLUS

The Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater
at the Getty Villa

Thursdays-Saturdays, September 4-27, 2014



View of the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater and the entrance of the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa.

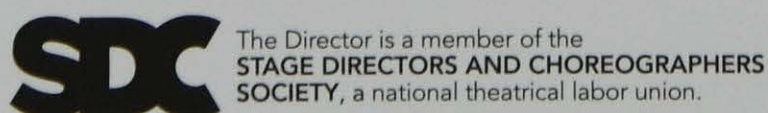
The performance is approximately ninety minutes long. There is no intermission.

As a courtesy to our neighbors, we ask that you keep noise to a minimum while enjoying the production. Please refrain from unnecessarily loud or prolonged applause, shouting, whistling, or any other intrusive conduct during the performance. While exiting the theater and the Getty Villa following the performance, please do so quietly.

This theater operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.

Director Anne Bogart is a member of SDC, the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, an independent national labor union.

This version of *Persians*, by Aeschylus, was translated, with an introduction and notes, by Aaron Poochigian from *Persians, Seven against Thebes, and Suppliants*, pp. 1-41. © 2011 Johns Hopkins University Press. This production was arranged with the permission of Johns Hopkins University Press.



The Designers at this Theatre
are Represented by
United Scenic Artists • Local USA 829
of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

PERSIANS

By Aeschylus

Directed by Anne Bogart

Created and Performed by SITI Company

Translated by Aaron Poochigian

THE ACTORS

Akiko Aizawa*

J. Ed Araiza*

Eric Berryman*

Will Bond*

Gian-Murray Gianino*

Leon Ingulsrud*

Ellen Lauren*

Emily Spalding*

Stephen Duff Webber*

THE CHARACTERS

Chorus of Persian
elders

Queen of Persia, widow
of Dareius and mother
of Xerxes

Persian Messenger

Ghost of King Dareius,
father of Xerxes

King Xerxes

THE COMPANY

Nephelie Andonyadis**

Costume Designer

Brian H Scott**

Set and Lighting
Designer

Darron L West**

Sound Designer

Victor Zupanc

Choral Consultant/
Composer

Ellen Mezzera*

Production Stage
Manager

Matthew Johns

Scenic and Lighting
Assistant

Sarah Krainin

Props Assistance

Claire Mannle

Production Assistant

Sara Radamacher

Assistant to Director

Cambria Chichi

Assistant to Costume
Designer

Bronwen Burton

Draper

Lalena Hutton

First Hand

Debbie Bradford

Costume Craftsperson

Ellen L. Sandor

Wardrobe Crew

Michelle Preston

Executive Director

Megan Wanlass

Special Projects Producer

* Member of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

** Member of the United Scenic Artists Union (USA).

ABOUT THE PLAY

When *Persians* won first place in 472 B.C. at the Athenian festival of Dionysos, Aeschylus was perhaps in his early fifties, a conservative master of plays integrating complex poetry, song, and dance. He was also an innovator; according to Aristotle, he introduced the second actor to tragic performance. In this opulent drama seen through the eyes of Persian courtiers, Aeschylus combined visual spectacle with powerful, lyrical storytelling. *Persians* is a challenge to translate and interpret because of its alien grandeur and despair. Yet it is well worth the effort to see the play through ancient eyes as well as our own.

This tragedy was admired in antiquity and selected as a model to be copied and recopied, but two accidents of history also give it special significance. Firstly, as the earliest play to survive, *Persians* takes us as far back as we can now reach to the origins of Greek theater. Singing takes up almost half the story and echoes archaic performances in honor of Dionysus before the first actor stepped from the chorus.

Secondly, *Persians* is the only historically based play (of the few known) to survive. Its focus is the Battle of Salamis, won by the Greeks against an overwhelming Persian naval force in 480 B.C., eight years before the play was produced. Aeschylus himself fought the Persians, and probably took part in this battle. While he glorified the victors, he also universalized the horrors and lessons of a specific war by presenting *Persians* alongside three mythological plays—each standing alone, or all perhaps linked thematically to a Persian threat.

The larger theme, not historically accurate, is the utter devastation of Persian civilization by the Athenians. The sorrow of the Persian courtiers, as they first fear and then confirm that all is lost, slowly escalates into an ancient ritual dirge. The dramatic gestures and cries of the chorus and Xerxes may seem excessive today, but to the play's first audience, public lament was a familiar expression of profound communal sorrow. Aeschylus effectively shows the stricken enemies' point of view, and thereby permits viewers to share in a collective grief that bridges time, culture, and place.

– Shelby Brown, dramaturge and education specialist

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Aeschylus's *Persians* dates from 472 B.C. and is considered to be the first extant play of western civilization. As a company, we are attracted to the play not only for its historical significance and remarkable embodiment of a Greek society imagining the grief and sorrow of their recently defeated enemy, the Persians, but also to the fact that the protagonist of the play may, in fact, be the chorus. According to Aristotle, tragedy, as we know it today, evolved from a popular performance tradition, a form of sacred choral singing and dancing called *dithyramb*. In approaching *Persians*, we are attempting to chart nothing less than the birth of drama, the proverbial big bang of the theater, from procession and ritual celebration to acts of fictional embodiment of events and relationships.

– Anne Bogart

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In this translation, I strove to preserve the musicality and rhythmic virtuosity of Aeschylus' original. In order to make clear their distinct qualities, I translated the spoken passages into blank verse and the sung passages into rhymed or off-rhymed verse. The most common dialogue meter is called iambic trimeter in Greek prosody. Aristotle describes its rhythm as very close to everyday speech, so the iambic pentameter of Shakespeare was the natural choice to bring it across into English. The formal elements which comprise a choral ode are stanzas called strophe, antistrophe, and epode (or, in Theodore Roethke's phrase, "the Turn, and Counter-turn and Stand"). The metrical pattern for each antistrophe is identical or nearly identical to its strophe. I resolved to preserve this metrical responsion by using the same scheme of meter and rhyme for each set and by distinguishing each set with a different scheme. Rhyme, it seemed, was necessary to indicate that the choral odes are not conversational speech but song. The resulting translation is a musical experience that modulates, as the original does, between spoken and sung lines of verse.

– Aaron Poochigian

SITI COMPANY

SITI Company was built on the bedrock of ensemble. Founded in 1992 by Tadashi Suzuki, Anne Bogart, and a group of like-minded artists, the company began as an agreement to redefine and revitalize contemporary theater in the United States through an emphasis on training and international cultural exchange. SITI Company believes that a group of artists working together over time can have a significant impact upon both contemporary theater and the world at large. Through performances, educational programs, and collaborations with other artists and thinkers, SITI Company will continue to challenge the status quo, train to achieve artistic excellence in every aspect of their work, and strive to foster an interaction of art, artists, audiences, and ideas to inspire the possibility for change, optimism, and hope.

In addition to Co-Artistic Directors Anne Bogart, Leon Ingulsrud, and Ellen Lauren, SITI Company is comprised of eight actors, four designers, and one playwright.

Members: Akiko Aizawa, J. Ed Araiza, Will Bond, Gian-Murray Gianino, Kelly Maurer, Charles L. Mee, Jr., Tom Nelis, Barney O'Hanlon, Neil Patel, James Schuette, Brian H Scott, Megan Wanlass, Stephen Duff Webber, and Darron L West

SITI Company Board of Directors: Anne Bogart, Gigi Bolt, Barbara Cummings, Rena Chelouche Fogel, Christopher L. Healy (Treasurer), Kim Ima (Secretary), Leon Ingulsrud, Kevin Kuhlke, Ellen Lauren, Thomas Mallon, Kelly Maurer, Charles L. Mee, Jr., Ruth Nightengale (Chair), Annie Pell, and Leonard Perfido

Emeritus Board: Nicole Borrelli Hearn, Matthew Bregman, Lynn and Ronald Cohen, Martha Coigney, Jim Cummings, Judy Guido, Daniel C. Smith, and Jaan Whitehead

SITI Company Staff & Interns: Michelle Preston, Executive Director; Vanessa Sparling, General Manager; Megan Hanley, Administrative Associate; Megan Wanlass, Special Projects Producer; Jeremy Pickard, Space Intern

SITI Company Consultants: Ellen Pearre Cason, Accountant; Chris Healy and Thomas Mallon, Attorneys; Al Foote, Web Programmer

CONTACT AND CONNECT

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SITI Extended Ensemble [SEE]: www.siti.groupsite.com

Exclusive Worldwide Tour Representation:

Rena Shagan Associates
www.shaganarts.com

THE ACTORS



Akiko Aizawa has been a member of SITl Company since 1997. Previous performances with SITl include *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*, *Antigone*, *Steel Hammer*, *A Rite*, *Café Variations*, *Radio Macbeth*, and *bobrauschenbergamerica*. She has also performed at the following venues: BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), Humana Festival, Public Theater, Joyce Theater, Guggenheim Museum, Park Avenue Armory, American Repertory Theater, ArtsEmerson, Carolina Performing Arts, Wexner Center, and LA Opera.



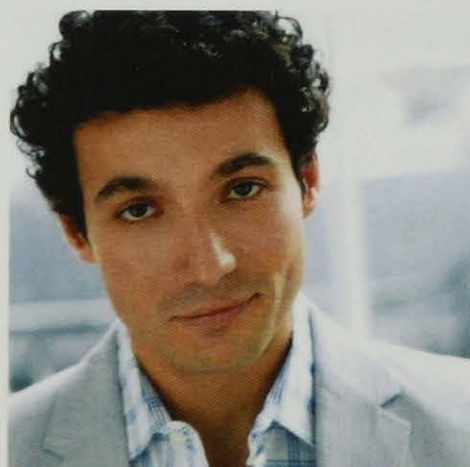
J. Ed Araiza is a writer, director, and performer. SITl credits include *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*, *Under Construction*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *systems/layers*, *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Culture of Desire*, *The Medium*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *War of the Worlds-the Radio Play*, and *Radio Macbeth*. He has written seven original plays directed in Iceland, Canada, India, Colombia, and is the head of the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television's Graduate Acting program.



Eric Berryman was most recently seen in SITl Company's production of *Steel Hammer* (Humana Festival). Other credits include *The Amen Corner* (Guthrie Theater), *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (Kennedy Center), *I Wish You Love* (Hartford Stage/Penumbra Theatre/Kennedy Center), *Fly* (Ford's Theatre), *Red*, *Topdog/Underdog*, and *A Raisin in the Sun* (Everyman Theatre, company member). His bachelor of fine arts degree is from Carnegie Mellon University.



Will Bond is a founding member of SITI. Recent tours include *A Rite* with Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance, *BOB*, *Radio MacBeth*, and *Antigone*. Original works include *I'll Crane For You* by Deborah Hay and *Option Delete* with Marianne Kim. He received a 2013 EMPAC Dance MOVIES commission for his film *Lost & Found* with Brian Scott. He has toured with Tadashi Suzuki's *Dionysus* and Bob Wilson's *Persephone*. He teaches at Skidmore College.



Gian-Murray Gianino is a member of SITI Company and played Odysseus at the Getty Villa in SITI's production of *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*. New York credits include BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), 2econd Stage Theatre, Signature Theatre, Public Theater, and Soho Rep. Regional credits include, most recently, *Steel Hammer* at the Humana Festival. Television credits include *White Collar*, *Law & Order*, *Law & Order: SVU*, and *All My Children*. He has performed and taught all over the globe.



Leon Ingulsrud is a co-artistic director and founding member of SITI Company. He has appeared in SITI productions of *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *Who Do You Think You Are*, *Radio Macbeth*, *Under Construction*, *Antigone*, *American Document*, *War of the Worlds—the Radio Play*, *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*, *Café Variations*, *Continuous Replay*, and *A Rite*. Previous to SITI he was a member of the Suzuki Company of Toga, and currently appears on AMC's *Hell on Wheels*.



Ellen Lauren is a co-artistic director and founding member of SITI Company. Select credits include *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*, associate artist with the Suzuki Company of Toga, under the direction of Tadashi Suzuki since 1993, and a faculty member at the Juilliard School of Drama since 1995. Lauren received a Theater Communications Group Fox Fellowship for Distinguished Achievement in 2008.



Emily Spalding recently completed SITI Company's inaugural conservatory program. She graduated from Skidmore College with a degree in theater, and trained at the Moscow Art Theatre School and Shakespeare & Company. Her recent credits include *In Dream* (Hollywood Fringe Festival), *On Air Off* (New York Fringe Festival), and *Boy's Life* (Noho Stages). Ms. Spalding's television credits include *Hubworld* (HubNetwork), and a Ptch commercial on the web for DreamWorks Animation Studio.



Stephen Duff Webber has toured and taught for 20 years with SITI Company. His New York credits include *A Rite*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *War of the Worlds* (BAM), *Death and the Ploughman* (CSC), *Culture of Desire* (NYTW), *Trojan Women 2.0* (En Garde Arts), *Radio Macbeth* (The Public), *Freshwater* (Women's Project), *The Golden Dragon* (PlayCo), *American Document* (Joyce), *Antigone* (NYLA), and *Radio Play* (Joe's Pub). His regional credits include the San Jose Repertory, Magic Theatre, Portland Stage, Court Theatre, American Repertory Theater, and Actors Theatre of Louisville, among others.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Anne Bogart (Director) is a co-artistic director of SITI Company, which she founded with Tadashi Suzuki. She is a professor at Columbia University where she runs the Graduate Directing Program. Her works with SITI include *Steel Hammer*, *A Rite*, *Café Variations*, *Trojan Women (after Euripides)*, *American Document*, *Antigone*, *Under Construction*, *Freshwater*, *Death and the Ploughman*, *La Dispute*, *Score*, *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Room*, *Small Lives/Big Dreams*, *The Medium*, Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* and *Private Lives*, August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, and Charles Mee's *Orestes*. She is the author of five books: *A Director Prepares*; *The Viewpoints Book*; *And Then, You Act*; *Conversations with Anne*; and *What's the Story*.

Aaron Poochigian (Translator) earned a Ph.D in Classics from the University of Minnesota in 2006. His book of Sappho translations, *Stung With Love*, was published by Penguin Classics in 2009, and he was awarded a 2010-2011 Grant in Translation by the National Endowment for the Arts. His first book of original poetry, *The Cosmic Purr*, was published in 2012. His work has appeared in *Financial Times*, *Poems Out Loud*, and *Poetry*.

Nephelie Andonyadis (Costume Designer) has designed for theaters around the country including Oregon Shakespeare Festival, South Coast Repertory, Center Theatre Group, Great Lakes Theater Festival, Guthrie Lab, Court Theatre, Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, and Berkshire Theatre Festival. She is a member of Cornerstone Theater Company's ensemble, a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, recipient of the TCG/NEA Design Fellowship and a professor of theatre arts at the University of Redlands.

Ellen Mezzera (Production Stage Manager) has previously worked with SITI Company in *Steel Hammer* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). She has contributed to productions in New York including *Annie* (Palace Theatre), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Encores!), *Macbeth*, *A Man's A Man* (Classic Stage Company), Shen Wei Dance Arts (Park Avenue Armory), as well as international tours. Ms. Mezzera's television credits include *The Sound of Music Live!* (NBC Universal) and the 2013 Tony Awards. She holds a master of fine arts degree from Columbia University.

Michelle Preston (Executive Director) holds a master of fine arts degree in arts administration from Brooklyn College and a bachelor of fine arts in dance performance from Northern Illinois University. She is an active member of the Brooklyn College Arts Management alumni group, the New York chapter of Women in Development, and the Emerging Leaders of New York Arts.

Brian H Scott (Set & Lighting Designer) has designed lighting for *Steel Hammer*, *Antigone* (Set and Light), *Cafe Variations*, *Trojan Women*, *American Document* with the Martha Graham Company, *Under Construction*, *Who Do You Think You Are*, *Hotel Cassiopeia*, *Death and the Ploughman*, and *bobrauschenbergamerica* (Henry Hewes Design Award 2004). He is also the resident lighting designer of Rude Mechanicals.

Megan Wanlass (Special Projects Producer) was SITl Company's former executive director, helping to create over 35 productions, which premiered in or toured to 88 cities, 32 states, and 19 countries. She earned an arts administration certificate from New York University, participated in the Executive Program for Non-Profit Leaders at Stanford University Business School, and the National Arts Strategies Executive Leadership Program.

Darron L West (Sound Designer) is a Tony and OBIE award-winning sound designer whose work for theater and dance has been heard in over 500 productions nationally and internationally, on Broadway and off. He has received recognition for sound design from the Bay Area Theater Critics Circle, the Lucille Lortel Awards, and AUDELCO. He is a two-time Henry Hewes Design Award winner, and recipient of the 2012 Princess Grace Award Statue.

Victor Zupanc (Choral Consultant/Composer) has composed for 300 plays at venues including the La Jolla Playhouse, the Guthrie Theater, the Acting Company, BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music), the Kennedy Center, and Berkeley Repertory Theatre. He has composed pieces for choirs, orchestras, feature films, documentaries, and NPR Radio, receiving numerous awards. He has been the resident music director/composer at the Tony Award-winning Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis since 1989.

SPECIAL
THANKS

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Adam Phalen
University of Redlands, Theatre Arts Department

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AND LAWRENCE
FLEISCHMAN
THEATER STAFF

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PERFORMANCE AT THE GETTY VILLA

The Getty Villa's public programming enhances the experience of the ancient world by offering a diverse schedule of events anchored by an innovative theater program. Live performances of classical drama offer insight into the social, cultural, and political realities of life in ancient Greece and Rome. The J. Paul Getty Museum's permanent collection of antiquities, alongside its changing exhibitions, strengthens the connection between modern audiences and the stories enacted in the tragedies and comedies onstage.

Classical dramatists explored basic human stories that often parallel our contemporary experiences. Ancient plays are ever powerful and resonant, continuing to inspire reinterpretation. The Villa Theater Lab series, presented throughout the year in the Auditorium, fosters experimental and modern approaches to ancient stories, enabling directors, designers, musicians, playwrights, and actors to freely incorporate advanced stage, sound, and visual elements into productions developed in residence 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. In recent years, the outdoor classical theater has been the setting for Euripides' *Hippolytos*, Plautus's *Tug of War*, the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, Aristophanes' *Peace* (via Culture Clash), Sophokles' *Elektra*, SITl Company's original adaptation of *Trojan Women* (after Euripides), the Playwrights' Arena production of *Helen*, and Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* by CalArts Center for New Performance in association with Trans Arts. These performances have become a much-anticipated end-of-summer tradition for Museum audiences, and plans are already well underway for a new version of *Medea* in 2015 titled *Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles* by Luis Alfaro.

The Villa's public programming also includes performances of music and dance, film screenings, and family festivals. To view our seasonal calendar of events, visit the Getty's website at www.getty.edu, or subscribe online to the *This Month at the Getty* newsletter to receive free programming highlights by email.

RELATED LECTURE

Performing Persia: Cultural Exchange and Visual Power in Aeschylus's *Persians*

Centered on the Battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., Aeschylus's play tells of Greek victory over the Persians and the impact on an imagined Persian court. Rebecca Kennedy of Denison University examines the complex historical and dramatic context of this Greek tragedy, considering its potential reception by a diverse ancient audience. Free; a ticket is required. Call (310) 440-7300 or get tickets online at www.getty.edu

Saturday, September 13, 2014, 2:00 p.m.

Getty Villa: Auditorium

NEXT YEAR AT THE GETTY VILLA

Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles

A new adaptation by Luis Alfaro

Based on Euripides's *Medea*

Directed by Jessica Kubzansky

Produced by The Theatre @ Boston Court

Opening September 10, 2015

From MacArthur Fellow and critically acclaimed author of *Electricidad* and *Oedipus el Rey*, *Mojada* is a breathtaking reimagining of Euripides's *Medea* transported to East Los Angeles. In an epic journey of border crossings, Medea, a seamstress with extraordinary skill, runs from a past of betrayals. With husband Jason and their son in tow, our storied heroine's struggle to adapt takes a disastrous turn when old and new worlds meet in the City of Angels. Alfaro's gripping contemporary take on the ancient Greek myth tackles the complexities of family, tradition, culture, and the explosive moment when they all collide.



**The J. Paul Getty Museum
at the Getty Villa**

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