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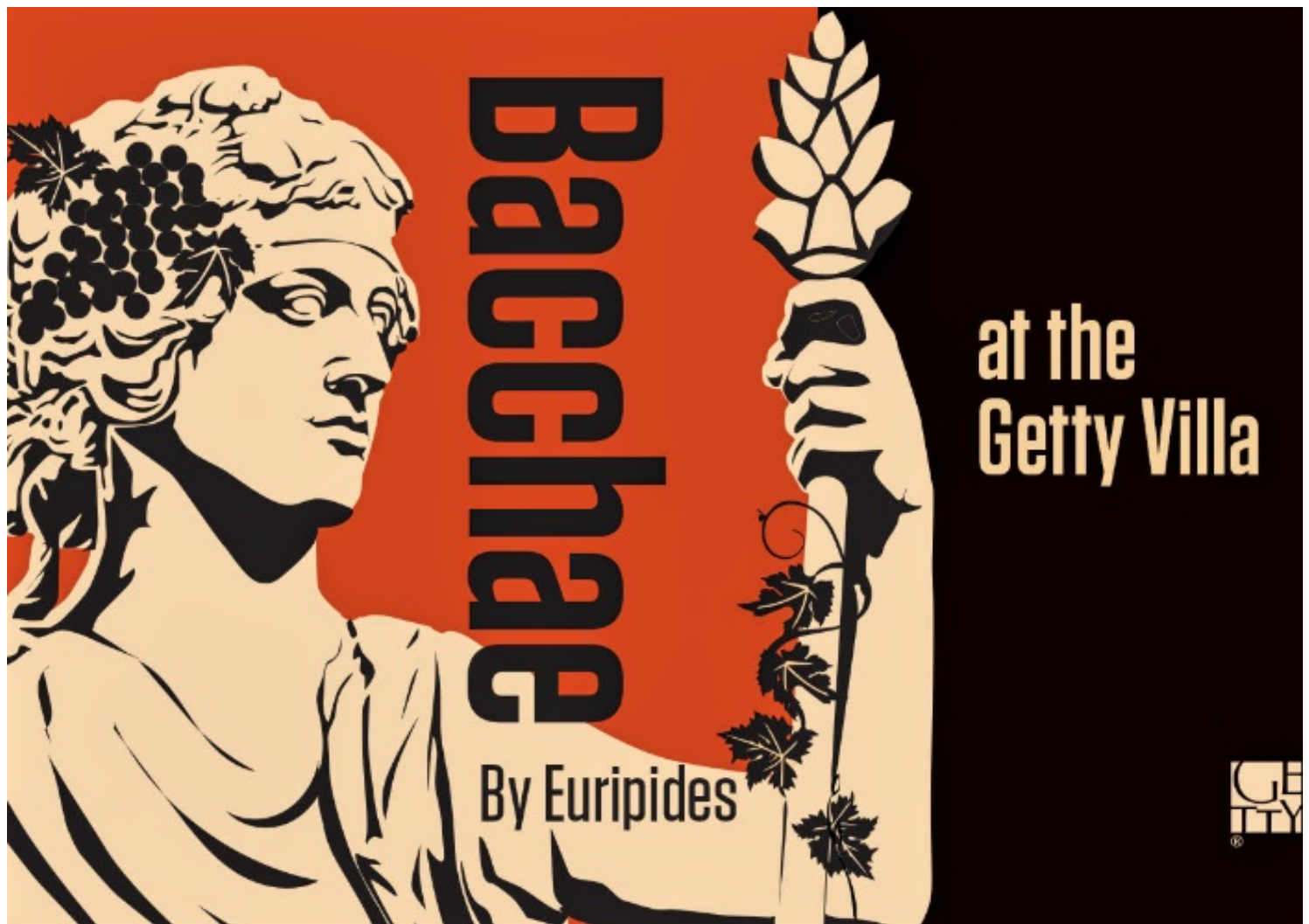### live ~ laugh ~ love

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Headline Article

Getty Villa Presents BACCHAE BY EURIPIDES

11 months ago • by Contributor

Classic and modern at the same time, this 2,500 year old play is packed with striking scenes, frenzied emotion, and choral songs of great power and beauty. **Bacchae** endures as one of **Euripides'** greatest surviving works. Seated in the outdoor theater, facing the beautiful **Getty Villa**, I couldn't help but feel connected to Euripides's audience. The spirit of ancient Greece hovered over the stage as SITI Company began the performance.

Dionysus, the god of wine, ritual madness, fertility, and theater, arrives in disguise at his birthplace in Greece. As revenge for a personal slight, he begins to spread his cult among the people of Thebes. His adversary King Pentheus, fearing the ensuing disorder, imprisons him to suppress his influence. This misguided attempt to thwart divine will leads to catastrophe for Pentheus and his entire family.

Eric Berryman (Pentheus) and Ellen Lauren (Dionysus) Photo by Craig Schwartz

SITI Company fulfilled and surpassed my expectations with an exciting performance that used gender-bending characters, mainly the role of Dionysus, which Ellen Lauren played with intensity, combining terrifying emotions with a fluidity of movement. She embodied the god of wine, theater and transformation exceptionally well. Ms Lauren is SITI Company's co-artistic director. Another excellent performance was given by Akiko Aizawa in the role of Agave (Pentheus's mother). Ms Aizawa hails from Japan and spoke her memorable soliloquy in Japanese. The Getty kindly issued a translation in the program, so the audience could follow along, although I could feel the core emotions and deep despair of her character by the sheer power of her acting.

Directed by **Anne Bogart** and Co-produced by **SITI Company**
For the thirteenth annual outdoor theatrical production, New York based SITI Company, one of America's leading theater ensembles, returns to the Getty Villa for the third time. The company's co-artistic director, Anne Bogart, says "We are thrilled to be invited back to the Getty Villa to perform Euripides' Bacchae. More than any other play in Western civilization,

Bacchae is probably the one that most directly addresses the art of theater. Dionysus, one of the central characters in the play, is not only the god of divine ecstasy, fertility, wine and harvest, but he also presides over the theater."

The director of the **J. Paul Getty Museum**, Timothy Potts, is also delighted to welcome back Ms. Bogart and SITI Company for this year's outdoor theater production. "In ancient Greece, theater was a fundamental component of religious and social life, and as our program at the Villa demonstrates, classical drama still

Director Anne Bogart – Photo credit: Craig Schwartz

connects strongly with contemporary playwrights, actors and audiences."

SITI Company delighted and challenged Getty Villa audiences in 2011 with Trojan Women and in 2014 with Persians. In 2018, Dionysus "the god of letting go," will remind us to respect our human wildness, otherwise we may fall prey to the tyranny of excessive order or the chaos of collective passion. With a new translation by poet and scholar, **Aaron Poochigian**, Euripides challenges the audience with these universal and timeless truths.

The annual outdoor theater production at the Getty Villa, Bacchae premiers on September 6 2018 and runs through September 29.

For tickets, please visit **getty.edu** or call 310-440-7300.

Performances Thursdays–Saturdays September 6–September 29, 2018, 8:00 p.m. At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Villa, the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater. This production is not recommended for persons under 12 years of age. All performances have a running time of approximately 100 minutes with no intermission.

Written by Kimberly Mack

#Anne Bogart #Bacchae #Euripides #Getty Villa #J. Paul Getty Museum #Kimberly Mack #SITI Company #theatre #Timothy Potts