



BWW Reviews: A Heavy Week for SITI Company's TROJAN WOMEN

by [Alexandra Lonati](#) April 23 <http://www.broadwayworld.com/boston/article/BWW-Reviews-A-Heavy-Week-for-SITI-Companys-TROJAN-WOMEN-20130423#>



The [Siti Company](#), an ensemble based theatre company created by [Anne Bogart](#) and Tadashi Suzuki, is famous for its combination of Viewpoints and Suzuki, two very different acting trainings that focus on movement and gesture, and concentration and strength, respectively. This weekend, their production of *Trojan Women*, which utilized both acting techniques, came to ArtsEmerson, and audiences poured in after a very exhausting week here in the city.

Unfortunately, this show did not come at a great time for Boston. The piece is remarkably heavy, dealing with loss upon loss, illustrating a woman's world falling apart. This week, Boston needed something light and fun, and unfortunately this production did not fall into that category. That is not to criticize the [Siti Company](#), as they presented a show that was full of honesty and heartbreak. [Ellen Lauren](#), who played Hecuba, was beautifully destroyed on stage, and her devastation was so present and so moving. But the piece as a whole was overwhelming, and I left feeling deflated, wanting to move onto a different train of thought as soon as possible instead of spending more time in the *Trojan Women* mindset.

The show was very simple, with all the focus on the words and the emotions rather than spectacle, which was a beautiful choice for sure. The stage was barren, save for a few chairs and a massive pile of what appeared to be black pebbles, through which the actors waded. The specific use of color too, with all of the characters in stark white or other neutrals, colored lighting appropriate to the mood, and the all-encompassing blackness of the pebbles and the stage, enhanced the emotions, rather than focusing on the realism aspects of time and location. The simplicity was powerful, and a nice balance to the complexity of the language.

Performances were all strong, though none as commanding as [Ellen Lauren's](#), whose character was dragged through every negative emotion in the book. Other standouts were [Makela Spielman](#) as Andromache, a helpless mother willing to do anything to save her infant son, and Leon Ingulsrud as the Envoy, a soldier whose softness broke through his thorny exterior and illustrated compassion for those he was commanding. The use of Viewpoints and Suzuki resulted in very stylized performances, some of which were clearer than others. While some actors were very obviously acting in a stylized and specific manner that enhanced their characterization, others just seemed a bit off or disconnected, and I had to continuously remind myself that what I was seeing was the intended technique and not the skill of the actor.

The piece was very simple, emotional, and stylized. It was undoubtedly an experience. That being said, not a lot actually happened in the show. Everything was announced, rather than seen, which calls for a lot of blind faith from the audience. We were asked to simply believe the relationships with characters we never met and did not know, and to follow monologue upon monologue of history and geography, very little of which influenced the action directly. The play was very wordy and because so little actually occurred, it ran a bit slow. The imagery was so beautiful and the emotions were so strong and poignant, but the audience never saw why everything occurred. We were simply told. And this definitely was a case of seeing is believing.

Perhaps I would have been a bit more invested in the piece had it been a different week and I was more open to experiencing those heavy emotions. Or perhaps it was too language filled and action lacking to really hit home. Either way, it was an absolutely beautiful piece to watch, but I wish more had actually happened.

Adaptation by Jocelyn Clark; Directed by [Anne Bogart](#); Music Composed and Performed by [Christian Frederickson](#); Stage Managed by Emily Hayes; Lighting Design by [Brian Scott](#); Costume Design by [Melissa Trn](#); Production Managed by Megan Caplan; Associate Scenic Design by Sibly Wickensheimer; Design Consultations by James Scute; Sound Consultations by [Darron L. West](#); Assistant Directed by Marina McClure; Properties Coordinated by Sarah Krainin; SITI Executive Director [Megan Wanlass](#)