

Ray Pinter has a problem. In sixty minutes, his brain is going to explode.

>July 2011
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The Trojan Women

nytheatre.com review

[Martin Denton](#) · July 7, 2011

Wide Eyed Productions is currently presenting Euripides's *The Trojan Women* at the Kraine. The story of this play sits between the great adventure epics of Greek mythology: it takes place at the very end of the Trojan War (indeed, the sacked city is being burned to the ground while the action unfolds); the return of the conquerors to their homelands in Greece is just ahead (and will be chronicled in the fiery stories of the fall of the House of Atreus and the *Odyssey*, tracing Odysseus's treacherous ten-year journey).



Pictured: Will Reid and Amy Lee Pearsall in a scene from The Trojan Women (photo © Wide Eyed Productions)

This play contains little action, though. It's mostly a lamentation for the destruction that the women of Troy have borne witness to, and for the suffering and tragedy that they are about to be subjected to. The chorus is a group of ordinary women, but the main characters are members of the Trojan royal family: Cassandra, the young princess, doomed by the god Apollo to see the future but never to have her prophesies believed; Andromache, widow of the Trojan hero Hector, now slave to Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, who killed her husband; and Hecuba, the now-deposed queen, about to be taken by the Greek hero Odysseus as one of his spoils of war. During the play, we learn the fates of

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these women and of other sorrows they are made to bear. We also meet Helen, she of the face that launched a thousand ships (and caused the whole conflagration in the first place), as she is brought to a kind of judgment by her cuckolded husband Menelaus and her bitter mother-in-law, Queen Hecuba. And we hear from two of the gods watching over—and frequently interfering in—the affairs of the Trojans and Greeks, namely Poseidon and Athena.

Wide Eyed's artistic director Kristin Skye Hoffmann guides a production here that reveals this work (written some 2,500 years ago) to be at once ancient and timeless. The presence of the gods in the play keeps the mortals at a remove from responsibility for their actions and destinies. But the suffering—blame gods or kings or ourselves, as you will—is sadly, gravely eternal. And the relative powerlessness of women at the hands of male rulers and conquerors rings all too true, still, in the 21st century.

Hoffmann bridges the millennia with a set (by Alfred Schatz) that resembles a modern-day refugee camp, and with a costume design (by Olivia Warner and Jaco Connelly) that puts the women in robes at the beginning of the play, only to have them emerge from them in contemporary garb. I wished Hoffmann had selected a more accessible translation than the one employed here, which is by Gilbert Murray; though it's been adapted by Jerrod Bogard, it still felt every bit of its 106 years old.

Hoffmann provides striking stage pictures throughout, abetted by Dante Olivia Smith's smoky, ambient lighting and Trevor Dallier's sound. Her use of the Kraine's center aisle brings the play into the audience frequently.

Amy Lee Pearsall anchors the play with a strong performance as Hecuba. Pearsall's command of her body is remarkable, and she's as exciting to watch in repose, listening to the various others on stage, as she is when she rises to respond. The ensemble is comprised of ten other actresses and three actors, including the excellent Justin Ness, who plays Poseidon and, memorably, a sadder but wiser King Menelaus.

For me, this rendition of *The Trojan Women* was most interesting for showing audiences an important relic of our common past, one that sometimes—but not always—bridges the centuries since its creation to feel potent and relevant to theatergoers of today.

Opened: July 7, 2011

Closes: July 23, 2011

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Synopsis: Wide Eyed Productions presents a revival of the famous play by Euripides.

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Venue: [Kraine Theatre](#)

Running Time: 1 hour, 25 minutes; no intermission

Prices: \$18.00

Students: \$15.00

Seniors: \$15.00

Ticketing Info

[Online Ticketing](#)

Box Office/Info: 212-868-4444

Tickets On Sale Thru: July 23, 2011

Performance Schedule:

Thu at 7:00pm

Fri at 7:00pm

Sat at 7:00pm

also Jul 17 at 2pm

Artists Involved

Cast: Amy Lee Pearsall, Savannah Clement, Anthony Dogaj, Elizabeth Dogaj, Molly Gilman, Jael Golad, Suzanne Hepker, Melissa Johnson, Lisa Mamazza, Judy Merrick, Justin Ness, Kirsta Peterson, William Reid, Rachel Riendeau

Author: Euripides

Lyrics By: Kristin Skye Hoffmann

Translated By: Gilbert Murray

Costumes: Olivia Warner and Jaco Connelly

Lighting: Dante Olivia Smith

Sets: Alfred Schatz

Sound: Trevor Dallier

Stage Manager: Lesley Stone

Producer: Wide Eyed Productions

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