

MSU Greek Theater Group proudly presents

# Euripides' ANDROMACHE

in English translation by Diane Arnon Svarlien  
with original choreography by Swagata Biswas



## CAST (in order of appearance)

THETIS, sea goddess, mother of Achilles

Tiffani Star Waters

CHORUS OF NEREIDS/GREEK WOMEN  
OF PHTHIA

GLAUKE

HALIE

GALATEA

Melanie Garzon

Alexandra Grasso

Rajula Joshi

GUARDIANS of the SHRINE

DYNAMENE

HYAKINTHOS

Mia Gurtman

Michael Cruz

ANDROMACHE, slave, former queen of Troy

ARETE, former servant to Andromache

HERMIONE, daughter of Helen & Menelaus

MENELAUS, father of Hermione

POULI, child of Andromache

PELEUS, old father of Achilles; old-time hero

Julia Rose Montalvo

Melanie Garzon

Gina McCrostie

Daniel Salazar

Carl Scheckel

Christopher Parker (Tues, Thurs)

Jan Verstraete (Fri)

Alexandra Grasso

Vin Verducci

Liam Lawless

Jan Verstraete (Tues, Thurs)

Christopher Parker (Fri)

Monika Szumski (Flute)

Vin Verducci (Percussion)

ALETHEIA, Hermione's Nurse

ORESTES, former betrothed of Hermione

THESEUS, Companion of Neoptolemus

ATTENDANT (silent)

MUSICIANS

*Director:* Jeri Fogel    *Assistant Director:* Carol Kotch    *Choreography:* Swagata Biswas,  
with additional choreography by Julia Montalvo, Melanie Garzon, and cast and crew  
*Stage Manager:* Robert Getz    *Producer:* Mary English

*Costume Design:* Damien Piñero

*Costume Consultant:* Andy Bravo

*Graphic Design:* Christl Stringer

*Set Construction and Painting:* Jean Alvares, Christl Stringer, Eden Tayar, Robert Dietze,  
Danielle Foreman, Emily Frank, Zackary Horan, MSU Theater Shop

*Set Crew:* Rupa Mitra, Rashidah Nelson, Daisha Sanders

*Sound Design:* Nick Mastalesz

*Sound Tech:* Rachel Polak

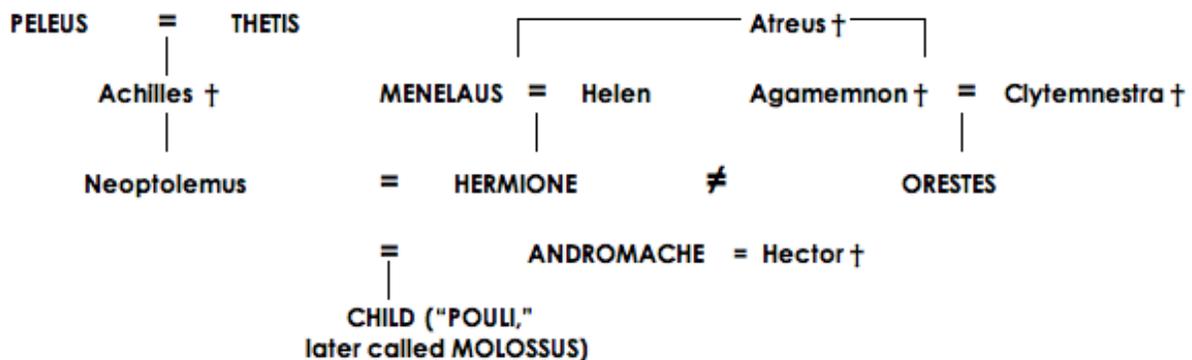
*Videographers:* Sam Mitchell, Drew Mullins

# ANDROMACHE

## by Euripides

### THE STORY

**Andromache is about the human aftermath, within both Greece and Troy, of the Trojan War.** Euripides (c. 480-406 BCE) was an extremely popular tragic poet who lived in Athens at the height of its radical democracy. This play was written and performed in the early years of the Peloponnesian War, probably between 430 and 424 BCE, about ten years before Euripides wrote the more famous *Trojan Women*.



**HUMANS:** During the Trojan War, Achilles killed Andromache's husband Hector, and the Greeks threw Andromache's child from the towers of Troy to his death to prevent him from eventually growing up to take vengeance for his father and city. Andromache was given as slave to the much younger son of Achilles, Neoptolemus, as a prize for his help in winning the war. Additionally, Menelaus gives his daughter Hermione in marriage to Neoptolemus the triumphant hero – cancelling her previous betrothal to Orestes, son of Agamemnon. Years pass, and Andromache has a child with Neoptolemus, but Hermione has none. While Neoptolemus leaves on a trip to Delphi to try to make amends for a past insult he made to Apollo, Hermione plots revenge on Andromache and her child, and enlists her father Menelaus to help her to kill them both.

The plot fails, however, because the aged father of Achilles (and still king of Phthia), the hero Peleus, arrives just in time to thwart the plot, stopping Menelaus from killing both Trojan mother and "bastard" son. Menelaus leaves to return to Sparta; his daughter Hermione, now in despair and afraid her husband will kill her upon his return because of her treatment of Andromache and the child, attempts to kill herself at first – but Orestes, passing by the house, finds his former betrothed at home and in need of rescue; the two escape. Orestes lets us know that he has already set up a plot to kill Neoptolemus at Delphi.

**GODS:** The god Apollo, who commanded Orestes to kill his own mother, and who refused to forgive a contrite Neoptolemus, is portrayed as capricious, vengeful, and treacherous to humans. The goddess Thetis, mother of Achilles while once wife of the ancient hero Peleus, appears as a *dea ex machina* at the end of the play to console Peleus on the end of his family line, offer him immortality, and direct the future fate of Andromache and her child.

### TIME AND PLACE

*Phthia, home of Achilles (and his father Peleus), about 12 years after the fall of Troy*

## PROLOGOS

Clinging to the shrine of the sea-goddess Thetis, as a suppliant (and therefore safe from human attempts on her life, which would be extremely impious as long as she is at the shrine), Andromache tells her story. Her former servant, Arete, enters with the news that Andromache's child, whom she had hidden with a neighbor, has been found out by Hermione and her father Menelaus. Andromache sends Arete to carry a message to King Peleus. Alone again, she sings a song, in elegiac meter, about the sorrows she experienced in Troy. In our production, Thetis and her Nereids join Andromache in her song (*My Tears Fell in Streams*).

## PARODOS

The Greek women of the town of Phthia appear and sing (*You Are Nothing*); they are sympathetic to Andromache, but they advise her to give up, as it's impossible to fight the "Spartan rulers" (that is, Hermione, mistress of the household and daughter of Helen of Sparta and Menelaus).

## SCENE 2

Hermione comes to try to force Andromache to leave the shrine of Thetis; they argue, and ultimately Hermione reveals that she has "something to lure" Andromache from the sanctuary. The Chorus and Andromache sing a song telling the story of Paris' being "tricked by the words of" Aphrodite, who caused him to instigate the Trojan War by taking Helen away from her husband Menelaus – wouldn't it have been better to slaughter him at birth, as Cassandra had said at that time? (*Tricked by the Words of Cypris/Slaughter the Baby*).

## SCENE 3

Menelaus, Hermione's father, arrives having captured Andromache's child. He argues with her, finally persuading her to come down off the shrine (making herself vulnerable to being killed) by offering to set her child free if she will die in his place. Once she has stepped down, he reveals that he will kill them both. The Chorus meditates on the problems in having two wives (*One is Better Than Two*).

## SCENE 4

Andromache reappears, bound. She and her child (Pouli) have both been condemned to death; the Chorus and Pouli sing together with her, while Menelaus sings about his own sorrows (*Lament/Like a Spring in a Sunless Place*).

## SCENE 5

Old King Peleus enters to save the day; Menelaus, backing down, says he will return and speak with Neoptolemus about the situation. The Chorus sings a song of thanks to Peleus (*I Can Believe in You*).

## SCENE 6

Hermione's nurse, Aletheia, appears to tell the Chorus that Hermione has been trying to kill herself; before they can intervene, Hermione comes outside and sings a duet with the nurse (*I Wish I Could Be a Dark-Winged Bird*).

## SCENE 7

Orestes enters to save Hermione. The two escape, but not before Orestes lets the Chorus know that he had already set a plot to kill the absent Neoptolemus. The Chorus sings about the treachery of the gods Apollo and Poseidon, who built the towers of Troy with their own hands, yet saw fit to allow it to be overthrown, and its people murdered and enslaved, and also set Orestes to kill his own mother (*A Thousand Murderous Games*).

## SCENE 8

Peleus returns to find Hermione, his daughter-in-law, gone off with Orestes; more importantly, he hears from the Chorus that Orestes has plotted to kill Neoptolemus. But before he can send help, a messenger, a companion of his son (Theseus, in our production) returns with the news that his grandson is dead.

## EXODOS

The goddess Thetis appears from the sky; she sets forth the future for both Peleus himself and his (and her) family line. She orders Peleus to bury Neoptolemus without undue mourning, and to wait for her and her 50 Nereids, "a chorus to carry you," to bring him to the Isle of the Blest, where his son Achilles also "lives". The well-known Euripidean choral ending insists that *The Gods Find a Way (to Do What They Want)*.

## CAST and CREW

**Alexandra Grasso (Aletheia, Nereid - Halie, Chorus)** is a first year MSU student from Mays Landing, NJ, going into Jazz Studies. "I wanted to participate in this play when I thought I wanted to act for a living, and this was an easy opportunity for me to get experience. Even though I know I'm a musician, I've always loved musicals, and being in them, which is also why I participated in this play. From this experience, I hope to gain acting experience and a strong bond with my awesome cast mates. I've always loved Greek mythology, from when I was a sophomore in high school. I thought it would be interesting to participate in history. Greek plays contain many lessons, and from this play in particular, I think that this play teaches us how people can fall and rise in their situations."

**Andy Bravo (Wardrobe Coordinator)** is a recent graduate of Montclair State University with degrees in both Costume Design and Art History. Previous design credits include *The Threepenny Opera*, *Antigone*, *Falsettos* (MSU), *Arabian Nights* (County College of Morris) and *The Marriage of Figaro* (Next Stage Ensemble at The Shakespeare Theater of New Jersey). She is a freelance costumer and has worked for Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More*, Princeton University's Lewis Center for the Arts as well as in costume restoration and exhibit curation for the Morris Museum and in Florence, Italy.

**Carl Scheckel (Pouli, Andromache's child)** is honored to have his third opportunity to perform with Montclair State students in Andromache. In addition to playing Teiresias' attendant in *Antigone* two years ago, he has also performed as Tommy, Peter and the Newsboy in *Miracle on 34th Street* at *The Players* in Manhattan, and as Harold in *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. Carl is in the third grade at Hillside Elementary School. "I thought it would be fun to be part of this play since this is my third time in an ancient Greek play at Montclair State University. I always wonder what's going to happen in the plays. What I can learn from a Greek play is how ancient Greek people used to live. Acting with students from Montclair State, I hope to get better at acting in plays. People feel the same way now that they did in ancient Greece, so when I play my character, I feel the same way he could have felt."

**Carol Kotch (Assistant Director, Cast Mom)** teaches in the Classics and General Humanities Department at MSU. She is thrilled to again be working with a group of students who are amazingly talented in all aspects of the production, but more importantly, all are supportive and encouraging to each other. These attributes have made her participation a joy. Thank you all. And break a leg!

**Christl Stringer (Graphic Design/Painting, Shield, Waves and Pillars)** is a sophomore Theatre Studies major with a minor in film.

**Christopher Parker (Peleus/Attendant):** Christopher Parker, from Highland Park, NJ, teaches in Classics, holds an MFA (Columbia) and an Ed.D, in Pedagogy/Philosophy (MSU). A poet and playwright, Chris's latest short play will run at Luna Stage, May 10. Scheduled to teach Creative Thinking Fall '16 (CArts, MSU), one of Chris' acting goals is to play a Star Trek Vulcan.

**Daisha Sanders (Set Crew):** "I'm 22 years old and I'm a Junior at Montclair State University with a major in Child Advocacy and Policy and a minor in Jewish American Studies and Social Work. I transferred from Kean University to be a part of the Red Hawk Nation! After graduating I plan on getting my licensure in Social Work, where I will help provide children and families with a better tomorrow! After becoming acquainted with my career I will strive to open up a non-profit organization for less privileged children in order to give them equal opportunities to succeed."

**Damien Brennan Piñero (Costume Designer)** is currently a double major in classics and religious studies with double minors in archaeology and myth studies at Montclair State. As an 8 year old child, Damien had started to be coached by his grandmother on sewing after he had shown an interest on the trade. He later on went to learn about anime and larping during his middle and high school years. The subject of making the costumes of these characters come to life has been one of his passions since then. Damien started to make costumes, with his grandmother's help, during his sophomore year of high school. Since then, he has made multiple costumes for himself as well as relatives and friends. Most recently, he had tried his hand at period costumes. Damien fell in love with the research and detailing that comes with period costume making and has since wanted to make his focus on such. *Andromache* is his first theatrical experience. He found this as an opportunity to incorporate two of his passions, the classics and costume making, to his experiences.

**Daniel Salazar (Menelaus):** "I chose to participate in *Andromache* not only to continue my love affair with theater and the classics but to challenge myself with a serious role, as opposed to the comedic ones I've played before. I think that much like Shakespeare, classical plays help to illustrate many universal values."

**Eden Tayar (Painting, Shrine)** is a BFA Theatre Production and Design major, focusing in costumes and scenery. She has previously designed costumes for *99 Ways*, and *Episodes*, by Christian Von Howard, as well as *#revolution*, directed by Mikhael Tara Garver, here at MSU. Her other credits include *TWAMAPIHOL*, Visconti Productions and *42<sup>nd</sup> St.* at the BergenPAC.

**Gina McCrostie (Hermione)** is a senior English major with a minor in Myth Studies. Past credits include *Annie* and Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, as well as Pentheus in last year's production of Euripides' *Bacchae*. She wishes to extend her sincere thanks to the fantastic cast, crew and director for their faith and patience this semester. May the Muses carry us through!

**Jan Verstraete (Peleus/Attendant):** "Since I teach the Trojan War and Greek civilization in general, I was delighted to have the chance to participate in Greek theater as a living tradition. That is why I decided to take a role in this play, written by a Greek playwright from the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century about the Trojan War seven centuries earlier."

**Jeri Fogel (Director; Music)** teaches in the Classics and General Humanities Department at MSU. "I'm delighted to be involved for the third year in an amphitheater production at Montclair of a Greek play, put together by this incredibly eclectic and wonderful group of people from all over campus. I dedicate my work in this production to my mother, Flora A. McQueen, who never ceases to inspire and teach me."

**Julia Rose Montalvo (Andromache)** is a first year MSU student, from Rutherford, NJ, majoring in Communications and Media Arts. "I first heard about this play from Professor Carol Kotch when I was taking her Troy and the Trojan War Class and decided to audition. I've always loved theater and have done it all throughout high school and wanted to continue in college. I hope to gain new friends, and new knowledge of Greek mythology from this production. You can learn a lot about respect, ancient culture, and about loyalty from Greek plays."

**Margaret Sanchez alias Elisabeth Saenz (Costume Team):** "Born and raised in Jersey City, NJ and living in Newark, NJ since 2011, I am the epitome of strategically spontaneous. I sew as a side hobby that became integral to my life along with the visual and performing arts. This new world had been exposed to me that way since my own studies as a child and ever blossoming from my first experiences going to Japanese Anime Conventions and Comic book Conventions at the ripe age of 14. Currently a medical assistant, I plan to venture back to the collegiate level of learning to start anew and finally finish my degree in Art History. Only time will tell. 8D "

**Melanie Garzon (Arete, Nereid – Glauke, Chorus)** is a senior from Garfield, NJ, majoring in English. "I decided to participate in the play because all I do is go to class and immediately rush home to take care of my three boys. I wanted to do something for myself and be a part of something on campus. Also, I'm a Classics minor so I have always been interested in all things concerning the ancient Greeks."

**Mia Gurtman (Guardian of the Shrine of Thetis – Dynamene)** is a 3rd grader and goes to Hillside school. She was in last year's play, *Bacchae*. She loves to sing, draw and eat candies. She enjoys being in the play again this year, and hopes to have lots of fun acting and dancing on stage.

**Michael Cruz (Guardian of the Shrine of Thetis - Hyakinthos)** is a second grader from Montclair, NJ. "I want to participate in the play because I am interested in it. I would like to see what the play is going to be like."

**Monika Szumski (Flutist)** is a junior at MSU and a Music major; she plays many different kinds of flutes, and is training now on the *shakuhachi* traditional Japanese end-blown flute. She has just completed her Junior Recital; we are lucky to perform with her.

**Nick Mastalesz (Sound Design)** is a senior graduating from the Television/Digital Media program with a concentration in Sound Design at Montclair State University. He has designed and engineered the audio for a multitude of shows including productions of *Avenue Q*, *Les Miserables*, and *The 39 Steps*. Nick is excited to be a part of this production of *Andromache* and wishes the best to the cast and crew. He would like to thank the General Humanities Department for the opportunity to sound design for production in the amphitheater.

**Rajula Joshi (Nereid – Galatea, Chorus)** works in the Montclair State University Sprague Library on campus.

**Rupa Mitra (Set Crew):** "I am a freshman who is a communications and media arts major. Throughout high school, I found a love working for theatre. Most of my experience is working backstage, however performing onstage is another interest of mine. I want to continue to learn working offstage and performing onstage throughout the rest of my college career."

**Swagata Biswas (Choreographer)** is a dancer, singer, actress based in New York City. She is a professionally trained Kathak (North Indian Classical) dancer and received her diploma in Kathak

from East West School of Dance. She has also received advanced Kathak training with gurus Pt. Birju Maharaj and Smt. Maya Rao. Swagata's dance repertoire also includes Bollywood, Hip Hop, Salsa, Mambo, and Middle Eastern Dance. She has performed all over the U.S. and Canada featuring her own choreographed pieces and was a guest choreographer for in the 2010 dance production of *Journeys of the Shimmy* by Groovefit. Swagata is also a professionally trained Indian Classical singer and is a graduate of the Indian Music Center. She received her acting training from The Barrow Group and has worked on shows such as Aziz Ansari's *Master of None* and *The Rachael Ray Show*.

**Tiffani Star Waters (Thetis):** "This will be my third play at MSU and I am very excited. I am a senior and major in humanities with a minor in film. I look forward to graduating next month. I thank the staff for giving a person with a physical disability a chance. Much love."

**Vin Verducci (Orestes; Percussion)** is a first year MSU student, from East Hanover, NJ, majoring in Business with a concentration in IT Management. "I decided to participate in this play because I have been involved in theater ever since high school and I wanted to continue with theater. I also thought it would be cool to participate in an outdoor production for once. I would like to thank the cast, crew and director for making this experience happen."

**Poster/flyer graphics by Jeri Fogel.**

**Filming and editing of DVD by Drew Mullins and Sam Mitchell.**

**T-shirts by USATees in Brooklyn, NY.**

**Technical Support in the Amphitheater by Chris Ollo of Kasser Theater.**

**Thanks to Ryan Graves and Kasser Theater for their help and the loan of their high-performance speakers.**

# SPECIAL THANKS

Anita Welling †

Jean Alvares  
Classics & General Humanities Department  
Silvina Palacio  
Flora Andrea McQueen  
Cindy L. Meneghin  
Gina Eide  
Erika Bleiberg  
Adam Anik  
Brianna Velez  
Prudence Jones, FB Ninja  
Ron Janoff  
Kasser Theater  
Jill Dombrowski  
Ryan Graves  
Patricia Piroh  
Jennifer Spiegel Goldberg  
Karen Mingo-Campbell

Ellen Bakalian  
Andriy Fomin  
Joseph Gibaldi  
Debra Chatr Aryamontri  
Silvina Palacio  
Mary English  
Lorenzo Smerillo  
Jan Verstraete  
Chris Parker  
Joanna Madloch

Patricia Salzman  
Elizabeth Korn  
Ellen Bakalian  
Deborah Aryamontri  
Aditya Adarkar  
Kristen Bryfogle  
Justina Gregory  
Beth and William Scheckel  
Yoko Takebayashi  
Vickie Larson  
Elizabeth Renda  
Rihana Shah  
Stacie Raucci & John Jacobs, CAAS

AJ Wash  
Reid Sound  
John Benson at USA Tees  
Segun Ige

Randy Mugleston  
Debra Bergsma Otte  
Ben Merrick  
Jackie Young  
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Beatrice Capote  
Lori Katterhenry  
Cyndi Kumor  
Michael Allen  
Gregory J. Dlugos  
Joe Kim

Judith L. Evans  
Sam LaScala  
Andy Bravo  
Barry Centanni  
Phillip Clifford  
Elizabeth Brown  
David Sanders  
Scott O'Brien  
Sam Mitchell and Drew Mullins  
Rachel D'Amato  
Peter Davis  
Chris Ollo  
Dr. Robert Cart

Jermaine Jeffries (Facilities/Maintenance)  
The Dickson Hall Custodial Staff  
Fred Stolarski  
Debbie Saivetz  
Karen Mingo-Campbell  
Mary Kate Coleman

The Barrow Group  
Robert Serrell  
Members of the Barrow Group Scene Study I  
class with Lee Brock, Fall 2015  
Charlie Baker  
Swagata Biswas  
Andru Silviu  
Diane Arnsion Svarlien  
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