Didaskalia is an electronic journal dedicated to the study of all aspects of ancient Greek and Roman performance

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Didaskalia (διδασκαλία) is the term used since ancient times to describe the work a playwright did to teach his chorus and actors the play. The official records of the dramatic festivals in Athens were the διδασκαλίαι. *Didaskalia* now furthers the scholarship of the ancient performance.

Didaskalia is an English-language, online publication about the performance of Greek and Roman drama, dance, and music. We publish double blind, peer-reviewed scholarship on performance as well as reviews of the professional activity of artists and scholars who work on ancient drama.

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DIDASKALIA
VOLUME 15 (2019)
TABLE OF CONTENTS

15.01 **Review - Aristophanes in Motion: Onassis Cultural Center's *he irds*** 1
Fiona Harris Ramsby

15.02 **Review - Euripides' *restes* at Hellenikon Idyllion** 8
Richard Hutchins

15.03 **Review - *ntigone*: A First for the American Shakespeare Center** 1
C. Michael Stinson

15.0 **Review - Euripides, *erakles* by Barnard Columbia Ancient Drama** 1
Timothy . oore

15.05 **Review - Euripides' *Medea* at Randolph College** 28
A. C. Duncan

15.0 **Article - *e uba* A Film Record**
atrick an

15.0 **Review - Aeschylus *resteia* at Watts Theater** 5
arua awlinski

15.08 **Review - Sophocles' *ntigone* at Hartke Theater**
atricia . rai

15.0 **Review - Ellen McLauglin's *resteia* at Shakespeare Theater Company**
ocelyn , oore

15.1 **Review - Louis Alfaro's *Mo ada* at The Public Theater** 8
mily usino

Note

Didaskalia is an online journal. This print representation of Volume 15 is an inadequate approximation of the web publication at didaskalia.net, which includes sound, video, and live hyperlinks.

15.11 **Article - Re-Appropriating Phaedra: Euripides, Seneca, and Racine in Arava Sidirooulou's *Phaedra***
leonora olli

15.1 **Article - Robert Icke and the Gesher Theater's *resteia* 2018-19** 1 1
isa aurice

15.1 **Article: "Why We Build The Wall": Theatrical Space in *adesto n*** 8 115
laire atennacio

15.1 **Article - Behind the Schemes: UVM's Production of Euripides' *elen* (March 22-23, 2018)** 1
ohn , ranklin

15.15 **Review - Martha Graham Dance Company - Graham's Greeks** 158
ina apathanasopoulou

Orpheus (Reeve Carney) on his journey, Walter Kerr Theater. Copyright Matthew Murphy, 2019.

The ensemble on rotating circular risers, Walter Kerr Theater. Copyright Matthew Murphy, 2019.

t the be inninof hy e uild the all, urydice has just been lowered into adestown on the risers. s in the ondon production, the transition to adestown is created by a splittin apart of the set, combined with a chan e in li htin that emphasi es the artificiality of the constructed world onsta e. ades, who leads the son , stands at the front of the sta e before an old fashioned microphone, like a political leader at a rally. is wife ersephone accompanies him, expressionless. The actors who sin in response to ades are ran ed across the sta e set, all facin forward. n the ori inal ew ork Theater orkshop production in 1 , the chorus was interspersed amon the audience, contributin to the effect that everyone, actors and audience alike, chanted the answer, e build the wall to keep us free. t the err Theater, the arran ement is more anta onistic. The audience is confronted with the si ht of the ensemble, flattened in front of them as on a television screen. n this version, *Hadestown* makes a virtue out of the enforced distancin of the proscenium arch space. hereas the rounded seatin at ew ork Theater orkshop allowed for intimacy and complicity, the banks of seats at the err Theater force the audience into the all too familiar position of passive spectators watchin a political demonstration that they are powerless to stop.

Hades (Patrick Page) and Persephone (Amber Gray) during "Why We Build the Wall," Walter Kerr Theater. Copyright Matthew Murphy, 2019.

II. Staging American Democracy

s we have seen, the desi n team of adestown has chan ed the settin of hy e uild the all, movin pro ressively from an arran ement in the round that unites actors and audience to a frontal presentation desi ned to alienate and shock spectators by recallin current political media. The chan in venues of the show have had the effect of distancin the audience from the action onsta e. ome critics have seen the commercial and financial success of adestown as fundamentally at odds with its ori inal, anti capitalist messa e.[1]

What started as a quirky downtown production based on folk music has evolved, over the course of two years, into a sleek Broadway show, with ticket prices that range from $100 to $300.

“Why We Build the Wall” is the most overtly political song in the Hadestown songbook. Because the lyrics have remained unchanged since Anaïs Mitchell composed them in 2006, the manipulation of space has been an important tool in shaping audience reception of this song. For some members of the creative team, the realm of Hadestown represents America, and the wall around it exposes the uncomfortable compromises and double standards of American society. Here, the original cast from New York Theater Workshop discusses the symbolism of the wall, in an interview with Esther Cohen for Stage & Candor magazine:

> **Esther Cohen:** o if *Hadestown* is merica, what is our all nd who is the enemy
> **Chris Sullivan:** The wall is money and the fact that we have all been conditioned to seek money above all else. The choice becomes, do you pursue financial security or do you pursue spiritual happiness nd can they coexist believe heaven is ri ht in the middle, but that happens so rarely.
> **Jessie Shelton:** The idea of a class system is also key to the concept of the wall.
> **Shaina Taub:** nd fear. That s the common denominator of humanity, that we re all always scared. ut it s about how you channel that fear, and how leaders choose to manipulate that fear in order to unite people, either unitin them a ainst an enemy or unitin them for ood. eaders throu hout history, just like Trump, have athered people based on fear. They say, This is the enemy, and if this enemy is one, your fear will o away. o we must build a wall a ainst that enemy. [11]

ecause adestown played for audiences in anada and ondon before returnin to ew ork, the show may be viewed as a portrayal of merican democracy abroad. asked achel auck about her experience, as an merican artist, of workin on an merican show and mountin it before forei n audiences in anada and ondon. er answer shows that in her opinion, theater itself is patriotic, participatory, and fundamentally optimistic

> t feels thrillin There is a pervasive stereotype of merica and mericans in anada and urope at the moment, and it s not flatterin . nd so it s pretty reat to be standin there proudly with a bunch of mericans sayin , This is also merica. This is merican democracy, havin a hu e ar ument with itself. nd we are furious. am furious at this president and everythin he represents. o think merican theater is an important part of the protest, because when we protest we stand incredibly proudly and unflinchin ly in the face of what we disa ree with. e all stand very stron ly with the politics of the show.[1]

auck s rhetoric of open political discussion throu h drama may also strike us as extremely reek. reek drama was performed by and for its own citi ens. n many of the plays that have come down to us, both tra ic and comic, we can see thenian democracy en a ed in a knock down, dra out fi ht with its own institutions and values, includin the place of for profit theater in civic discussion. adestown believes that throu h art, merica may just be able to be saved by its own people.

NOTES

[1] dorno, T. . 1 5 . r erliche per. n *Klandfiguren* erlin , p. my translation .

urian, . 1 . The ate of rpheus on the peratic ta e Death and Transfi uration. *Syllecta Classica* 51 5.

oley, . . 1 . *Reimagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage* niversity of alifronia , p. 1.

i hteous abe ecords, 1 .

[5] na s itchell, hy e uild the all. www.huffpost.com, published 11 1 .

nterview, ctober 5, 18.

cyclorama is a lar e curtain, positioned at the back of the theater, onto which ima es can be projected.

[8] nterview, ctober 5, 18.

nterview, ctober 5, 18.

[1] or instance, https medium.com department of feminist conversations in conversation with hole and hadestown caa e 8b55 , published 11 1 .

[11] ta e andor, uly 1, 1 . ccessed at www.sta eandcandor.com.

[1] nterview, ctober 5, 18.

BEHIND THE SCHEMES[1]
UVM's Production of Euripides' *elen*

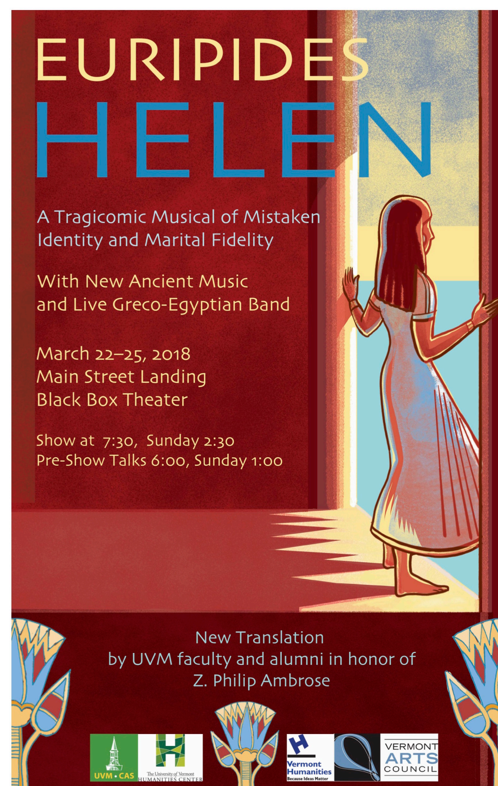
(March 22-25, 2018)

John C. Franklin

with contributions as noted by Aaron Robinson, Glynnis Fawkes, Rachel Cosgrove, and Alexis Kamitses

INTRODUCTION

For some years I had wanted to stage a Greek play as a χαριστήριον for Emeritus Professor Z. Philip Ambrose, whose time, strength, cash, and patience has supported classics in the Green Mountains since 1962. This seemed the right gesture given his long immersion in ancient drama, his formidable command of διδασκαλικά, and his devotion to musical performance.



Figure

The 'Ambrose Classical Play' (Figure 1) was also to be an outreach effort both within and beyond campus at a time when harsh austerity measures were being shouldered by UVM's humanities. The bean-counters have justified a 50% reduction of the classics faculty over the last three years by pointing to (comparatively) low enrollments in Greek and Latin, despite an array of larger classical-civilization service courses that

have traditionally 'paid for' our language seminars and graduate program. Since we were 'Fighting for the Future of Classics',we hoped to demonstrate that there was still strong public interest in the subject, and so every reason to maintain a healthy program as part of UVM's Land Grant mission—which for decades has also included a commitment to students from Maine, Connecticut and Rhode Island, who can study Greek and Latin at UVM at a reduced rate via the New England Board of Higher Education 'Tuition Break' program. Yet we also recognized the need to increase student retention into upper-level Greek and Latin (UVM has a one-year language requirement). I therefore hoped that the production would enhance the department's reputation among the student body as a fun and stimulating place to pass four years.

A final, more personal motivation was my desire to compose and perform more 'new ancient music', following earlier and less well-informed experiments with Aeschylus' Choephori at King's College London (1999), and Aristophanes' Clouds at the Edinburgh Fringe (2000) and American Academy in Rome (2001).

To magnify the production's overall public appeal, I wished to make it the centerpiece of a miniature City Dionysia, involving local wineries in pre-show social events that included contextual lectures to enhance audience appreciation of Greek drama and Euripides' play.

This paper will describe the various aesthetic and practical aspects of the adventure, both to document this specific production and to provide useful examples and cautions for others. I shall first discuss the several creative elements (translation, direction, costumes, scenery, and choreography) and logistical aspects of the production (venue, funding, casting, advertising and promotion, rehearsals and other preparation, wine-tasting and lectures). I shall then explain my approach to composing the 'new ancient music'; since this requires some arcane detail, it is best consigned to a separate section. A concluding note will reflect on the event's aftermath and the lessons learned.

I. DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

Choice of Play

I chose the Helen in part to exploit its Egyptian setting for music, choreography, and visual design. But its strong female protagonist and comedic potential were equal draws. I am among those convinced that the play, for all its adherence to the formal conventions of tragedy, was in 412 BCE a cutting-edge experiment in tone—perhaps what Cratinus described as Euripidaristophanization, but in any case the kind of thing that inspired New Comedy. And even if one insists on the play's 'basic seriousness',[2] there would still be a strong practical motivation for seeking as many laughs as possible. Most people, faced with the prospect of a Greek tragedy, anticipate an evening of weeping and wailing. Many will opt to do something else—anything—on their evening out. To counteract this aversion and draw people to the show, I billed our Helen as a Tragicomic Musical of Mistaken Identity and Marital Fidelity. The terminology may be anachronistic, but in the end our production persuaded me, more than ever, that Euripides wished his lighter elements to stand in constant tension with the more traditional ingredients of tragic pathos. He thereby conjured a colorful world that—as our director Aaron Robinson put it—is "funny, poignant, and sends a powerful message about what women can accomplish if only men would get out of their way." That the Helen featured a resourceful woman prevailing against male authority, coercion, and the force of tradition certainly made this play a timely and effective choice both for the student participants (largely

female, Figure 2) and an audience still stunned by recent social and political setbacks. Many spectators made this connection:

Figure

> I was fascinated to see that the main themes of the play do not change. Jealousy, love and friendship still exist and women are often put in dangerous situations through no fault of their own.[3]
>
> Great to know that such a play, about a strong woman, was actually written in patriarchal ancient Greece. Helen is not some demon of a fevered misogynist imagination, like say Medea—she's the superbly competent protagonist who extricates herself from her dilemma. Euripides must have been awesome. I'm grateful to your production for giving us that experience.
>
> Feminism is emphasized in the text and was well presented on stage. The characterization of the dim-witted Egyptian king (Figure 19) could be interpreted as a parody of the current US leadership, but this aspect of the play came across as a way of supporting the feminist theme, rather than as a political comment.

Language and Translation

Staging ancient drama in the original language is an admirable old university and college tradition—instructive for student participants, a rare occasion for the few spectators with knowledge of Greek, and at least evocative for the rest. But this was not the right choice for us. First, my own involvement with the Choephori at King's College London revealed that even senior academics really could not follow along very well without a text (or even detect some actors' resort to Greek-sounding gibberish).

After all, we train far more with our eyes than our ears. The provision of supertitles, therefore, is an essential courtesy, as is now done for instance at Columbia. Yet these are a constant distraction from immersion in the play's world. Since I wished to promote the classics as widely as possible, an English-language production was essential.

We performed our command of Greek rather by producing a new translation. This bolstered our production's claim to originality, and let us avoid the ruinous tedium of old, public-domain translations. This work was undertaken, starting twelve months in advance, by eighteen former and current students and colleagues of Phil Ambrose (and a few others who fell in along the way).[4] This collaborative approach had two great practical advantages.

First, the labor was distributed so that the script could be completed more quickly. I sent each participant a rough-and-ready base translation by Ambrose himself from the last time he had taught the play, along with the relevant sections of W. S. Allan's Cambridge text and commentary. They could use what they liked of Ambrose's original, but were otherwise given free rein. I did encourage the translators to bring out, wherever possible, Euripides' subtle and variegated humor. As the parts came in, I integrated them in a rather labyrinthine cut-and-paste operation—comparing every phrase to that of Ambrose, which I sometimes preferred when more harmonious with the emerging whole. Not infrequently I developed my own solutions for greater textual coherence (some had been lured onto the Rocks of Perseus). I maintained a master file documenting all individual contributions, down to the word, through color highlighting.[5]

Figure

A second virtue was that, since each translator was assigned a separate character or choral passage, every role and song enjoys a unique voice and color. Menelaos and the Doorkeeper, for instance, translated by Page Hudson and Angeline Chiu respectively, were looser and more flippant than other characters,with whom they present a startling contrast. This famous exchange is representative (451–64, see Full Video from 29:00):

Menelaos
No! I shall go in and you will obey me.

Doorkeeper
You're being a real pain! Soon you'll be forced to leave.

Menelaos
Ah, where is the army that won me great fame?

Doorkeeper
So it seems you're a big shot somewhere . . . but not here.

Menelaos
O destiny, you have brought me low, all undeserved.

Doorkeeper
Are you crying? You think someone should feel sorry for you?

Menelaos
I recall happiness from the dead past.

Doorkeeper
So beat it and go cry to your friends!

Menelaos
Whose estate is this? Who rules the great house?

Doorkeeper
This is the house of Proteus; the land is Egypt.

Menelaos
Egypt!? What cursed fortune sailed me here?

Doorkeeper
Why complain? What's the Nile's gleaming beauty ever done to you?

Menelaos
It's not the Nile's fault . . . just a sad soliloquy.

Doorkeeper
Plenty of people have problems. You're not the only one.

Since Helen's part was split between translators, her voice undergoes a noticeable shift as the action develops from dire abandonment through domestic recognition comedy and into climactic escape romance. Similar remarks could be made about all the characters: the effect is best observed from the Full Video available on Youtube.

The choral passages presented a particular challenge, since I wished to maintain precisely Euripides' original rhythms to serve as the basis for 'new ancient music' (see below). I originally intended to do all these myself; but by August 2017 a busy fall semester was looming and I had completed only the Parodos, Epiparodos, and Reunion Duet. I therefore turned the remaining songs over to others. Each of these translations was good in its own right, and was intended to match the ancient meter; but many interventions were needed to align it with my own understanding of the rhythm. Anyone minded to try the same approach is advised first to develop his or her own clear rhythmic understanding—including definite practical solutions for any corrupt or metrically ambiguous passages—and then record a careful recitation to which the translator may refer. This will save a lot of trouble. I recommend including a click track at the resolution of a single short, the ancient πρῶτος χρόνος (example here).

Our resulting translation is, I believe, more finely-textured than any previously available, with interesting tonal contrasts, and characters that leap to life. We will gladly make it available for productions elsewhere. Some representative audience comments:

> I loved the translation of the play, which took it out of former stilted classical speak. It was almost like the playfulness of the original was rediscovered by 21st-century explorers.
>
> I found it both interesting and a little jarring that the styles of translation were different—where one character felt very traditional in his/her dialogue but another would occasionally have casual contemporary turns of phrase. I wonder if there is more to explore in those contrasts.

Venue

UVM's Royall Tyler theater could not be secured for our production. The Theater Department has its own busy production schedule and was not enticed by our offer of collaboration (they did pay us the compliment of poaching our original director for one of their own shows). This confirmed my impression that ancient drama is generally regarded, even—or especially—by professionals, as a dry, dull affair unworthy of modern attention, and strengthened my resolve to prove the opposite. Coming down from gown to town was also symbolically important for a public-outreach event that besides relied primarily on community artists for direction and design. Fortunately, Burlington has a great and affordable arts center near the waterfront that is subsidized by the Main Street Landing Corporation (as part of its charter from the city). Facilities include a 39' by 54' Black Box Theater, with raked seating for 134 in a block perpendicular to the stage. Other attractive features included a full-size screen for projected scenery and images (see Visual Design), a suite of dressing rooms one floor below, a box office, and an adjacent foyer for the pre-show lecture and wine-tasting events that were planned.

Funding
I began fund-raising twelve months in advance with letters of support from Pauline LeVen (Yale) and Pavlos Sfyroeras (Middlebury). I was anxiously aware that any shortfall would have to be made up from my own pocket (I could hardly raid meager departmental reserves after a flop). Fortunately, the dimension of public outreach, along with the large number of people that would be involved—forty-five, not counting ushers, wine servers, etc.[6] —appealed to the Vermont Arts Council and Vermont Humanities Council. Together with grants from UVM's College of Arts and Sciences and the Humanities Center, I scraped together $9,500, enough to book the venue and offer modest honoraria for direction, choreography, costumes, other visual design, and musicians.

Deciding on the right price for tickets was tricky. I had been to a number of strong yet undersold productions in this space by the University Players, UVM's student drama club. Fearing a still lower turnout since we were a completely new 'company', I opted to lowball tickets at $10.00 for adults, $5.00 for students, and free to ages twelve and under. A student discount was also required by the terms of our Coor Programming grant from UVM's Humanities Center. Tickets were available both at the door and in advance through a website set up for this and other promotional purposes under the direction of Angeline Chiu, who also ran the box office (the website was discontinued afterwards). The four sold-out shows yielded $3,654.98 (an average of $6.82 per person) to supplement the grant money, along with $540.00 from sponsors who purchased space in the playbill. When all was said and done, we ended up with $1,087.03 towards a future production (Aristophanes Clouds, March 27–29, 2020).

Casting
Although we advertised our casting call (Figure 3) on every local and regional list, only one community actor auditioned; a second was later secured through word of mouth. Fortunately, Chiu had been vigorously herding our own classics students to the auditions. Many were reluctant, lacking any previous stage experience—acting, singing, or dance—and being already overloaded with coursework. I suppose most figured they would go to the audition, not get cast, and thus discharge their obligation. We needed them every one. Luckily our step-in director, Aaron Robinson, was then also our department's Administrative Assistant, and so already on friendly and trusting terms with all.

To help mobilize student participation and support for the production, we also offered two relevant courses. In Fall 2017 I ran a workshop on Ancient Greek Music that developed into a rehearsal group and the nucleus of the chorus.[7] Julia Irons, a first-year graduate student who went on to play Helen (Figure 4-5)—and is now helping produce Clouds—quickly stood out for a first-rate voice and memory; together at the University of Chicago we previewed the Reunion Duet and—with local students and professors after a single rehearsal—the Parodos.[8]

Figure 4

Figure

In the spring we offered a course called Ancient Drama. The topic had often been taught by Chiu, though always restricted to the Honors College or the first-year program. Her idea here was that anyone who wanted to be in the play had to take the class, which would require some form of participation on- or offstage. The first half of the semester would focus on the Helen itself, and then, once the production was complete, progress to a broader examination of genre. As it turned out, most would-be participants already had full course loads, and we had to grant many exceptions. Nevertheless, the curricular formula is attractive in principle.

Advertising and Promotion

Online promotion consisted primarily of the aforementioned website, which featured several photo updates of rehearsals, and two short video interviews (one with Glynnis Fawkes and Rachel Cosgrove on costumes, another on the music). Glynnis designed a poster (Figure 1) which students spread around campus and town, and provided artwork for the website. Kevin Coburn, who manages communications for UVM's College of Arts and Sciences, published a short online piece called 'Classics Department Presents a "New Ancient" Helen: Performance and score in honor of Z. Philip Ambrose'). Perhaps our single biggest boost, worth many hundreds of dollars in advertising space, was a generous two-page feature called 'Classics Rock: UVM Stages Euripides Classic with New Music', by Dan Bolles, music-writer for Seven Days, Burlington's most-read newspaper for cultural events. I also sent out several mass e-mails to as many of the UVM faculty as I could. This list had to be cobbled together manually: administrative policy prevented official e-mailing from on high.

Figure

Figure

Direction

Aaron Robinson was an alumnus of UVM's theater program who had been working in school and community theater, as actor and director, for over a decade since graduation. He was luckily on hand to pick up our production after we lost our scheduled director. Aaron also ended up taking on the parts of Menelaos' attendant and Pollux when actors fell short (Figure 6–7). He had had a particular interest in Greek drama when studying theater history at UVM. On reading through our new translation he readily recognized what many scholars feel are jokes, and began envisioning a simple but effective stage set for the space available. This was made even smaller by our desire to project backdrop scenery painted by Glynnis (Figure 8) and images illustrating the choral odes (see further below). Since projection was from the front, there was considerable risk of actors casting shadows on the screen. Aaron's efficient solution was to mark off the danger zone with a short fence, decorated with a thicket of Egyptian-style papyrus and lotus blossoms representing the banks of the Nile. The only other set was a solid wooden bench that could serve as altar or tomb and be a focus for blocking and choreography. Both were built by Jacques Bailly (also known as the Scripps National Spelling Bee pronouncer) and painted by Glynnis (with help from Helen, our daughter). The stage was thus spare yet luminously colorful against the all-embracing black (Figure 9).

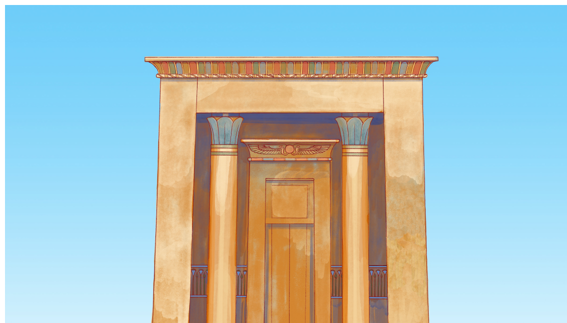


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Figure

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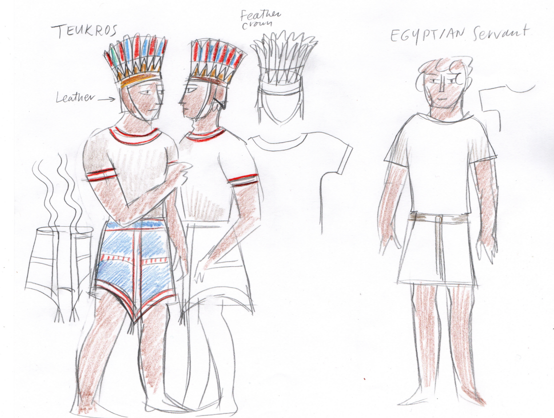
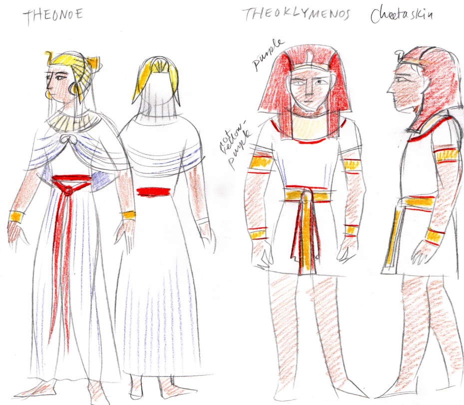


Figure

Aaron asked for a free interpretive hand, and I did my best not to interfere. I did give him a copy of Toph Marshall's *Structure and Performance of Euripides' Helen* (Cambridge, 2014), a valuable resource for many aspects of production. But Aaron's ideas grew mainly from direct engagement with Euripides himself; his choices, developed largely in *agendo*, are best seen from the video recording of the show itself. He offered the following note for the playbill:

> I played around with the concept of "What is Truth?" prior to casting the show, but in those early rehearsals . . . I realized I had it all wrong. Truth doesn't matter in this world. The Trojan War was built on a lie; even the beauty contest that favored Aphrodite which spawned the war was built on a lie. What does matter? The women. Helen is a smart, savvy heroine who uses every tool at her disposal to survive for seventeen years, and then with the help of the seer Theonoe (Figure 18)—the only person in the Egyptian palace she deems wise enough to help her—she plots a grand escape with her long-lost husband. The actors (female and male) help bring that to life . . . to show that women are indeed the mistresses of their own fortunes.



Figure

Figure

Figure 4

Figure

Visual Design

From the beginning, Glynnis Fawkes and I had envisioned, for costume and scenery, a colorful and cartoonish fusion of Egyptian Art Deco with actual elements of ancient Egyptian, Mycenaean, and Minoan artwork and dress. Glynnis is herself a cartoonist, but also has over twenty years' experience as an archaeological illustrator and artist at excavations in Syria, Turkey, Israel, Cyprus and Greece. Her initial costume sketches (Figures 10–12) were refined and brought to life by Rachel Cosgrove and her student production team,[9] who spent long evenings and weekends over hot irons and sewing machines at Generator, Burlington's community maker space (Figure 13). Altogether the ensemble presented a most colorful spectacle (Figure 2). As Glynnis and Rachel wrote for the program:

> The challenge was to realize a vision of the ancient world with what materials were available—and within a small budget. The chitons (belted dresses) for the chorus (Figure 14) and orchestra (Figure 15) are inspired by Athenian vase painting. Such Greek clothes would have been made of wool; while ours are cotton for practical purposes, cotton was known and used in Egypt. Our colors were chosen to evoke available ancient dyes, including madder red, yellow/gold, blue, brown, black, and (for the wealthy) murex/Tyrian purple. Many vases show that male and female clothing alike could be elaborately decorated with woven or embroidered patterns. Glynnis therefore hand-cut and stenciled designs onto trims for the necklines and hems (Figure 16). Helen's dresses (Figures 5, 17) are inspired by Minoan art, especially the wall paintings from Santorini, preserved by the famous seventeenth-century BC volcanic eruption. We were not troubled by this chronological discrepancy, which in fact suits the Helen itself—a fifth-century BC telling of a story set in earlier mythical times. The far-off Egyptian setting will also have seemed practically mythical to much of the original audience. Teukros (Figure 5) is dressed as one of the 'Sea Peoples' who swept the Eastern Mediterranean in the early twelfth century BC, and who are represented on the mortuary Temple of Ramses III. The costumes of Theonoe (Figure 18), Theoklymenos (Figure 19), and their Servants (Figure 20) are directly inspired by Egyptian wall paintings.

Figure

Figure

Figure

Figure

We also wished, for the choral odes, to project a series of dignified and colorful drawings to complement and illuminate the complex imagery of the text (Figure 21–23). Choral lyrics are elaborate and allusive; they go by quickly and are gone. Even in English we knew that much would escape an audience generally unfamiliar with mythological details and Greek choral poetics. The projections would therefore serve as a visual commentary, helping supply some of the mental imagery and cultural knowledge of an Athenian audience—a modern analog for the ancient convention known as 'choral projection'.[10] A natural synchronization of image, music, and dance emerged from the poet's tendency to organize his thought in the odes' individual cola. The combination of music, dance, lowered lights, and looming images transported the audience through vivid choral dreamlands, and created a powerful aesthetic contrast with the acted scenes; these they clearly demarcated, while equally renewing audience attention.

Figure

Figure

Figure

Figure

VIDEO: Third Stasimon

Choreography

Our choreographer was Alexis Kamitses, a dance instructor at Bellows Free Academy and an active freelance choreographer with knowledge of both Greek folk steps and Egyptian-style belly dance (among other idioms). I loaned her G. Prudhommeau's *La Danse Grecque Antique* (Paris, 1965) and a work on ancient Egyptian dance (both with abundant illustrations) as possible sourcebooks, along with Marshall's book. Choreographic design and training a chorus with little or no previous dance experience were a laborious affair. Ancient rhythms are complex and often non-recurring, with each ode a unique confection of long and short rhythms. This required phrase-by-phrase composition, with equally intensive rehearsals. Alexis later reflected:

> My creative process has always been driven by a combination of elements, but music almost always plays a central role in shaping the movement. I have spent a lot of time studying dance forms such as West African and Bellydance, in which the musicians and dancers work in direct relationship with each other. Working with these ancient rhythms proved a bit more of a challenge; with constantly shifting time signatures, the dance movements were focused on highlighted accents, and finding the stillnesses, and occasional grooves, within the compositions. The repeating, almost geometrical structure of the dances was derived directly from the structure of the music itself, a collaboration that worked especially well for beginner dancers. When working with musicals, since you are layering in live music, choreography, and singing all together—those components don't always have a lot of time to marinate together. It is important to root the dance movements within the lyrical content so the dancers can find the movement phrasing within their vocal phrasing. It makes it more manageable since this is not your typical "and 5.6.7.8." type of music. The movement vocabulary itself was shaped by the lyrical content of the songs, Greek traditional dance, ancient Greek tableau images, and various Middle Eastern dance influences. For example, dancing with veils is common in some styles of Bellydance, and they found their way into the choreography as "laundry," done with a flourish by Helen's ladies in waiting (Figures 24a–b).

VIDEO: Rehearsal

VIDEO: Parodos performance

VIDEO: Third Stasimon performance

Figure 4

Figure

Preparation

We had an unusually short time to pull the play together. Auditions took place the second week of January, just after winter break (Figure 3). The late-March production dates that we had chosen to coincide with the City Dionysia fell immediately after UVM's Spring Break. This meant that we would go into production week after a ten-day hiatus in rehearsal—a nerve-wracking situation, though at least students would be well-rested. Aaron accordingly developed a dense production schedule to have us more or less ready before vacation. There were rehearsals almost every day, though of course not everyone was needed every time (aside from the director); these had to be in the evening, not to interfere with classes. The chorus had its own parallel schedule, alternating between music and dance. Rehearsals were conducted in several on-campus spaces, including an old auditorium with proscenium stage but hideous ambient noise, along with various generic classrooms (Figure 25). Aaron had to cobble these together using UVM's Byzantine room-scheduling system. The student actors were generally noble about not letting me see how much stress they were under. Inevitably, their academic performance was affected, and this put some strain on collegial relations. For future reference I strongly recommend that all participants treat their involvement as the equivalent of a full-time class; ideally everyone should be enrolled in a three-credit course for just that reason.

Figure

While rehearsals were under way, students from Chiu's Ancient Drama undertook, among other jobs, a campaign of local sponsorship and advertising. One particularly energetic student, Samantha Lavertue, was eventually credited as Associate Producer along with Chiu, and also played the part of Theonoe (Figure 18). She secured the participation of several local wineries and a meadery, and the donation of production supplies.11

The Event

Some years back Tanner Lake had suggested putting on a City Dionysia in Burlington. Following this up, I scheduled our performances (March 22–25, 2018) to coincide more or less with Athens' main festival for dramatic performances. Since one could not expect theater-goers to recognize this connection automatically, I envisioned the play as the centerpiece of a mini-festival involving wine-tastings by local producers; these in turn would be a prelude to pre-show contextual lectures to help modern audiences appreciate the unfamiliar conventions of ancient drama and the themes of Euripides' *Helen*. Jamie Levis and Jeff Davis, part of the Greco-Egyptian Band (Figure 15), played some of their Syrian and Turkish repertoire during these tastings. Besides helping draw people to the show, the libations created an appropriately receptive mood to enhance people's sense of a shared civic experience.

The contextual lectures were well-attended and often singled out, in our post-show survey, as a vital contribution to the overall success of the event.[12] These talks were filmed by student volunteers and are available on the department's YouTube channel. The topics were as follows:

Thursday, arch rom a s to iches, escue, and econciliation, . hilip mbrose, meritus rofessor, V . s mbrose was the honorand of the overall production, this was the kick off lecture, introduced by obert od ers and arbara aylor od ers and attended by many friends and former collea ues. mbrose discussed the thematic and chronolo ical relationship between elen and other uripidean rescue romances.

riday, arch Dionysos, ine, and ncient reek Drama, enneth othwell, rofessor, niversity of assachusetts, oston. This topic was at our request, to inform audiences about the ori inal performance context and the connection with Dionysus cult. This tied the wine tastin s into the lar er event.

aturday, arch ncient reek Views of ypt, Dr. rian alsh, enior ecturer, V . This talk surveyed the early history of the reek presence in ypt, as well as the representation of ypt in the broader reek ima ination. t let the audience appreciate the limits and opportunities uripides faced in the play s settin , and acknowled ed in advance some of the ancient orientalism involved.

unday, arch 5 elen The ace that aunched a Thousand tories, n eline hiu, ssociate rofessor, V . This talk illuminated uripides white washed elen for spectators unfamiliar with the tesichorean variant. t helped them understand the de ree of novelty, or at least unorthodoxy, faced by the ori inal audience.

There was a thirty minute sometimes smaller interval between lecture and curtains. The audience could stay in the wine tastin space and keep chattin , or find their seats and study the playbill.

II. 'New Ancient Music'

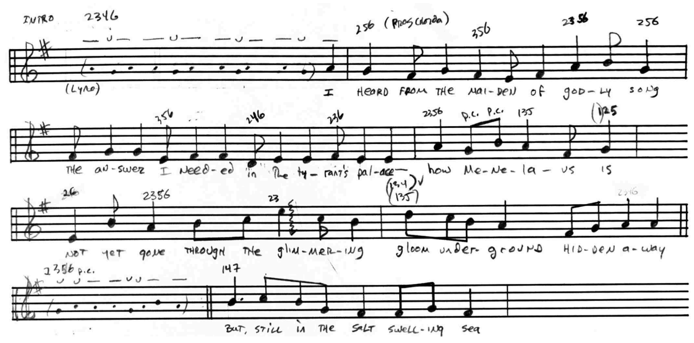
any modern productions are dra ed down by choruses declaimin in monotonous unison. This dreary effect, thou h readily spoofable i hty phrodite , does nothin to li hten tra edy s loomy reputation. et it is entirely at odds with the ori inal reek choruses, which danced and san their way throu h intricate odes in ma nificent costumes for a strikin kinetic and synesthetic spectacle. wished to translate this element as far as possible. horeo raphy and costume have already been described. The music itself would marry accurate interpretation of meter with ori inal melodies based upon the ancient principle of accent composition and harmonic material drawn from ancient theoretical sources and the few survivin scores. The result would be both philolo ical curation and ori inal composition. The oal was to produce somethin that would be musically reco ni able to the reeks themselves all the son s can be readily performed in the ori inal lan ua e . now personally avoid the term reconstruction ,

which seems to claim more than it really delivers, and can mislead an audience to one s own advanta e. usical impression or recomposition is an acceptable substitute, or simply new ancient music .

Meter and Rhythm

ortunately, the ori inal rhythms are preserved quite faithfully by the poetic text itself the playwri ht was also responsible for the music . reek meter was based upon a quite strict relationship between lon and short syllables, with one lon equivalent to two shorts these are conventionally represented as quarter and ei hth notes. ach ode was a unique rhythmic composition often very complex built up from a mixture of traditional and novel metrical elements. ncient sources do speak of some protraction of lon syllables, and melismatic flourishes were evidently an occasional feature of the so called ew usic of late fifth century thens, of which uripides himself was a somewhat moderate exponent. ut these were exceptions to the eneral rule, as is shown by amon other thin s the relative scarcity, in the survivin musical documents, of the special si ns that mark such departures the so called triseme, tetraseme, etc. .

hile reek metrical principles are enerally well understood, some interpretive ambi uities nevertheless remain. reative determinations are often necessary. n omnipresent issue is the len th of pauses between musical phrases. These handled by patchin in rhythms that occurred elsewhere in the composition. or example, noticed that the first phrase of the piparodos could be interpreted as a series of three cretics u if the first syllable were treated as a pick up therefore provided the sin ers with an introductory vamp of cretics so that the melody could roll out smoothly once the chorus reached their sta e position see from 1 1 in the full video . imilarly, the first colon ends with an ionic u u this su ested a connectin phrase of four further ionics before the next colon see i ure . uch choices are of course arbitrary. ut some choice must be made. This approach at least makes use of co nate material, and was presumably how the ancient composers proceeded themselves enerally speakin .



Figure

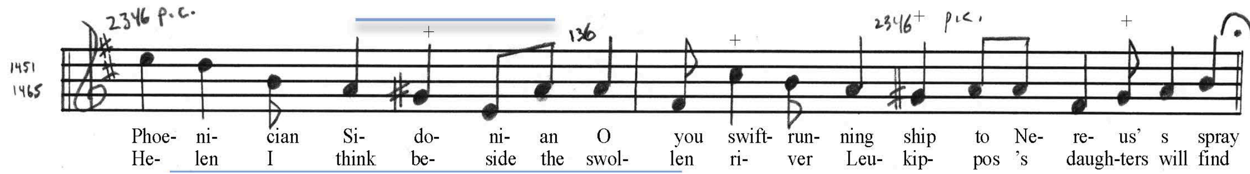
nother problem recurred especially in the econd and Third tasima. hat should we do when a lon short sequence in the strophe responds to a lon lon in the antistrophe, or vice versa re arded many of these as examples of what the fourth century music theorist ristoxenus called . These, we are told, are intermediate between lon and short syllables they are irrational in that they cannot be measured by the smallest metrical unit the or first time , equivalent to a short syllable . Treatin them as dotted ei hth notes is theoretically justified and introduces a lively additional layer of syncopation on top of the shiftin patterns of lon and short. ines 1 15 1 1 b and 1 1 of the econd tasimon, for example, all end with a choriamb u u this su ests a rhythmic refrain throu hout the lar er phrase. The first halves of these lines consist lar ely of lon syllables, but with two anomalous responsions of short and lon in the first and fourth lines. f one renders the first four positions of all as dotted ei hth notes, a coherent and very interestin rhythm emer es i ure 8 . This made me suspect that other sequences of lon syllables mi ht conceal such estures adopted the same interpretation sparin ly when it seemed to improve rhythmic interest see score for the Third tasimon for further examples .

Figure

Figure

Metrical Translations

n fittin a translation to these ancient rhythms, accented syllables will normally fall on a lon position in the reek but not all lon s can have such n lish stresses too few to o around . ncient vocables e. . , proper names, and proper adjectives e. . should remain in their ori inal positions wherever possible, with the rest of the translation built around them. imilarly, ancient phrases should be kept within the ori inal colometry even at the expense of convoluted n lish syntax. These measures ensure that some of the ori inal sound desi n is preserved, and that any mimetic correspondence between diction and colometry is maintained compare i ure a and b . Translation under such restrictions is often challen in , but one finds interestin opportunities that would not otherwise occur. The whole process leads to a much better understandin of the ori inal rhythm that supervenes over the disconnected elements that make up a modern metrical analysis.



Figure

318 COMMENTARY 1451

1451–77 first strophe and antistrophe

Φοίνισσα Σιδωνιὰς ὦ ἦ που κόρας ἂν ποταμοῦ	1451 1465	chor dim
ταχεῖα κώπα, ῥοθίοισι Νηρέως παρ' οἶδμα Λευκιππίδας ἢ πρὸ ναοῦ	1452 1466	chor dim bacchius
εἰρέσία φίλα, Παλλάδος ἂν λάβοι,	1453 1467	dodrans A
χόραγὲ τῶν καλλιχόρων χρόνωι ξυνελθοῦσα χοροῖς	1454 1468	chor dim
δελφίνων, ὅταν αὐ- ἢ κώμοις Ὑακίν-	1455 1469	sp chor
ρᾶν πέλαγος ἀνήνεμον ἦι, θου νύχιον ἐς εὐφροσύναν,	1456 1470	chor dim
γλαυκὰ δὲ Πόντου θυγάτηρ ὃν ἐξαμιλλασάμενος	1457 1471	chor dim
Γαλάνεια τάδ' εἴπηι· τροχὸν ἀτέρμονα δίσκου	1458 1472	pherecratean

Figure

Melodies

uripides own tunes are lost, with the famous exceptions of the *Orestes* fra ment and a few notes of the *Iphigeneia in Aulis*. ut we know from several do en other fra ments that it was customary for melody to follow the contours of the words pitch accents reek was a tonal lan ua e accordin to a few simple and observable rules see e. . . . est, *Ancient Greek Music* xford, 1 , p1 . lthou h none of the documents that exhibit such accent melody predates the ellenistic period, it is probable that the practice was indeed traditional. n the other hand, the survivin bit of uripides, alon with several somewhat later fra ments, indicates that accents were often i nored in strophic compositions of later drama, if not before. t may be, however, that this freedom was due to the enhanced desire for musical mimesis that characteri ed the ew usic, and that earlier strophic son , and perhaps even other uripidean compositions, did indeed adhere to the principles of accent melody. nna onser is currently investi atin this problem, usin statistical methods, in a olumbia dissertation. n any case, accent melody is one of the few definite parameters we can recover for ancient reek music, and followed the principles very carefully.

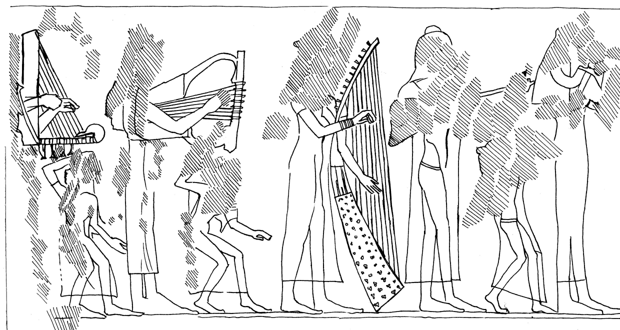
Figure

Figure

or the strophic son s arodos and three tasima , it was necessary to devise melodies that would not conflict with the prosody of either strophe or antistrophe. be an by printin out llan s metrical schemes enlar ed by onto 11 x 1 paper , and then combined the accents of strophe and antistrophe by writin the latter over the former wherever they differed i ure b, detail from the Third tasimon . n doin so observed many places where the two accent patterns did indeed seem quite compatible had noticed the same with hoephori . The procedure yielded a master accent contour to follow when composin . did sometimes allow strophe and antistrophe to diver e for the sake of effective variation, as in the openin lines of the arodos.

or specific pitches used various ancient scales and scale se ments that are documented in survivin theoretical writin s and musical fra ments. also pursued the modulation between harmonic structures that probably characteri ed uripides own style. ne of my main inspirations here was the aian by thenaios, a choral composition performed at Delphi in 1 and inscribed on the side of the thenian treasury there. This invaluable document be ins in an archai in style characteri ed by the so called trichordal enharmonic that was typical of traditional double pipe libation music, as documented by a fra ment of ristoxenus 8 . t oes on to a section of dense chromaticism typical of ellenistic art music, but ori inatin in the later fifth century. This second section, especially, lets us observe the principles of modulatory tetrachordal composition, whereby different scale de rees become temporary foci for the construction of the surroundin pitch systems which ancient theorists cate ori ed as enharmonic, chromatic, and diatonic see analysis of the Third tasimon .

The non strophic son s the yric Dialo ue between elen and horus i ure , the piparodos, and the eunion Duet i ure 1 were handled in the same way. hil mbrose composed an initial melody for the yric Dialo ue, which somewhat modified for better lyre accompaniment. The varied application of ancient principle a ain provided welcome constraints. f course, one must still sort throu h endless possibilities in hopes of makin ood musical choices. nd sometimes smu led in more familiar elements accordin to my own tastes. This was especially true of my lyre parts. The ancient use of heterophony is now enerally reco ni ed, althou h its exact nature is still up for dispute. included occasional triads, seventh and ninth chords alon with clusters and other consistent with ancient theory. n my view this is a useful form of translation it helps deliver a satisfyin and reco ni ably musical effect to the audience an while still honorin what positive evidence we do possess. documented these accompaniments by a system of fin er numberin chord chan es in the scores i ure a .



Figure

The 'Greco-Egyptian Band'

hile ancient drama was normally accompanied by the double pipe, did not then have an or player available we are workin to remedy this for *Clouds* . The Department did, however, possess a replica of an ancient , desi ned by the aforementioned Tanner ake and constructed by luthier ohn utterfield. akin a virtue of necessity, decided to use a trio of lyre, framedrum and flute lute, a combination that nicely evokes ensembles current in ate ron e e ypt and anaan i ure . composed most of the music to the , learnin in the process to play it after my own fashion, or on a small, two octave lap harp when had to be on yprus for part of the summer . orkin out the that would best fit these melodies was probably the most eye openin aspect of this experimental archeolo y.

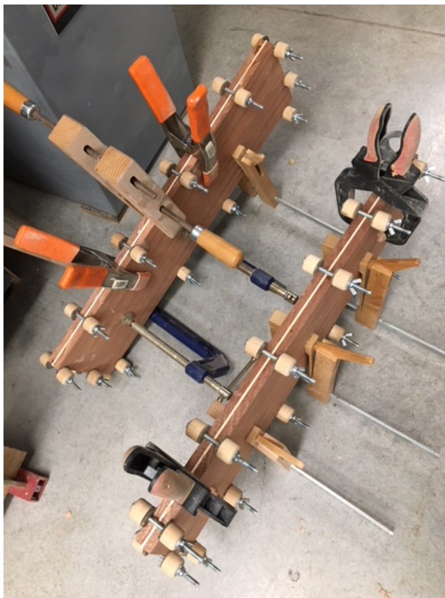
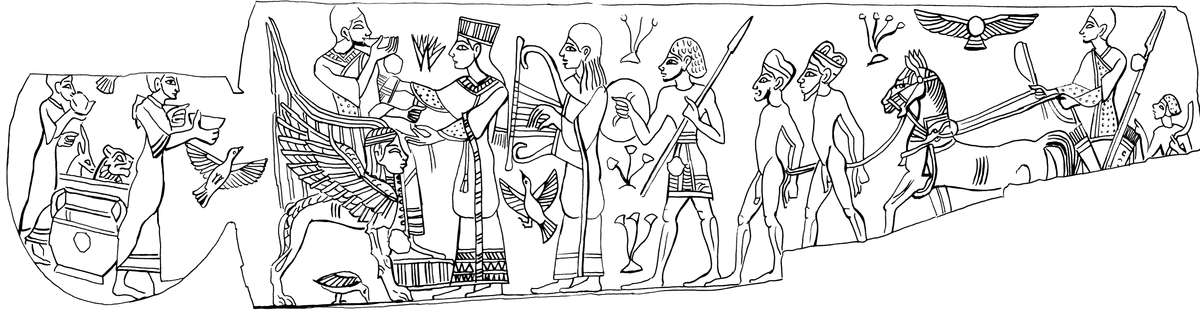


Figure 4

Figure

Figure



Figure

soon reali ed, however, that our would not serve for the actual production. t was too quiet its ut strin s too labile and would need to chan e tunin s between son s, which could not be done without the serious distraction of leavin sta e. therefore commissioned a local uitar maker, reston ea, to make an electric kinnaru i ure 5 . This was a kind of lyre current in ate ron e e and later yria, anaan, and ypt. y instrument closely reproduces the lines of a fourteenth century ivory plaque from e iddo i ure . ith this could be as loud as needed, but retune easily between son s the strin s can be plucked almost silently without amplification, while still feedin an electronic tuner . The instrument itself debuted alon with the choral costumes at a preview performance at the enter for ellenic tudies as part of lynnis s show there called andscapes of yth and emory in ebruary 18. To make this happen, the chorus pulled a hair raisin drive to ashin ton D and back in 8 hours.

The trio was completed by amie evis and eff Davis i ure 15 , who had both been part of the local Turkish band okum Davis had additionally played for years with the yrian ensemble rup nwar. or our show, evis played a variety of framedrums Davis was on ney yptian flute and sa Turkish lute . They took immediately to the music and reatly stren thened its impact.

horal Trainin

t was remarkable how readily the chorus was able to learn what are, after all, very complex rhythms. ad written the scores out with modern time si natures, which would have been continually shiftin , think it would have been much harder. s it was, the sin ers simply followed the strin s of quarter and ei hth notes lon s and shorts , so that each phrase was learned as an or anic unit as indeed it must have been in antiquity. To facilitate this, recorded a demo of each son with me sin in , and posted them to ouTube. The sin ers success in learnin the music so easily presents a remarkable contrast to teachin meter in the classroom, where the obscure terminolo y and conventions invariably confound even the best students. ur chorus showed that complex ancient choral rhythms are not only perfectly learnable, they make reat musical sense.

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CONCLUSIONS

With all the effort that went into this production, we were as much delighted as astonished that all four shows sold out. Professor Bill Mierse (Art History) described the production as the biggest humanities outreach event in his thirty years. Unfortunately, it was seen by no administrator from the College of Arts and Sciences (one Associate Dean did come down to the final performance, only to be turned away). UVM's then-provost did catch our final show, responding to a somewhat provocative invitation, and tweeted his congratulations afterwards; a month later the CAS faculty passed a no-confidence resolution in the controversial chief academic officer, who eventually stepped down (vel sim.).

By the terms of our grant from the Vermont Arts Council we were required to administer an exit survey to assess how well we had achieved our goals. This was included in the playbill and was available through the website. We received fifty-two responses, roughly 10%. The feedback has proven a great blessing for developing the next production, both as a guide for what will please and as support for new funding applications.[13] Apart from a lonely vindex, audience reaction was uniformly positive and enthusiastic about a future production. One spectator astutely noted that regular stagings would fill a gap in local theater programming.[14] The pre-show lectures were generally appreciated as useful enhancements (see above). Our emphasis on the comic and other light-hearted elements was rewarded with much laughter in places, and this tone—which I regard as faithful to Euripides—evidently took many viewers by surprise.[15] The sensory combination of music, costume, choreography, and images also proved as effective as I had hoped.16 That the chorus always enjoyed as much applause as Helen herself was a sign that we succeeded in restoring this element to the central place it enjoyed in the Greeks' own view (as is seen from the term χορηγία). The great majority expressed preference for a setting that evoked the ancient world, rather than a modernizing transposition.[17] In my view, such stagings are obsolete and counter-productive now that the classics have become so generally unfamiliar. The ancient world presents all the alterity one could desire, while themes of universal human interest guarantee plenty of catharsis.[18] Let the ancient playwrights speak for themselves.19 And classicists, with their specialized knowledge, can make up here for what they lack in professional theatrical training. A particularly gratifying and encouraging comment came from a former theater student:

> think everyone did a reat job with the production. had never heard or come across this play and was a theater major . t s almost like a wish fulfillment of elen and enalaus, so it s kind of tra ic just in its existence because we know the real story. really hope to see more productions from the lassics Department because am always interested in how the plays would have been ori inally.

n terms of community outreach, therefore, the production was a distinct success. t also led to invitations to lecture and perform with varyin numbers of chorus members at Dartmouth, olumbia, the niversity of ashin ton, the oston and Vir inia useums of ine rt, the niversit de li tudi di eru ia, and several institutional receptions at the infamous 18 ociety for lassical tudies meetin in oston, includin niversity of llinois at rbana hampai n ashin ton niversity and oston niversity. These were excitin and hori on expandin opportunities for our under raduates, and reat professional networkin for our raduate students.

The production's intramural impact is somewhat more difficult to gauge, although overall I would say that we achieved most of our on-campus goals as well. On the one hand, the administration was not persuaded to reverse its policy of not replacing retirements (we have had two recently). Indeed, the very next year the beloved and hardworking Brian Walsh, who had contributed one of the lectures, was subjected to an opportunistic contract termination. Walsh represented 25% of our remaining teaching capacity, and caused the Classics Department to become the poster child for union protest and a student campaign to "save the liberal arts at UVM".

Figure

Figure

n the other hand, many of our collea ues seem to have reco ni ed the achievement. enn arson, supervisor of the ab ab in the n ineerin olle e, become an ally, enlistin her students to help with some experimental mask makin that did not make it into the show. enn also mounted an exhibition about the production for V s lemin useum, called ehind the chemes hen elen of Troy came to V i ure . This included a public lecture i ure 8 in which lynnis, reston, and talked about our various contributions. e have also received two internal fundin awards towards our next production, alon with a substantial rant from the oeb lassical ibrary oundation kindly supported by elene oley, olumbia, and avlos fyroeras, iddlebury . ill ierse V and Tim oore ashin ton niversity are backin other applications to the Vermont umanities and rts ouncils. ur outube videos of the show, and our wearin of costumes to visitin student days, has helped recruit a few new classics majors. number of current juniors and seniors, who saw the production in their first or second year, are now keen to participate in our upcomin louds. will put my heart and soul into it , said senior atie ichael. ophomore achel ickes, who saw the show as a hi h school senior, is now learnin the an instrument made by obin owell and will be in the band one way or another. t is this student enthusiasm, mainly, that has persuaded me to undertake a follow up production.

NOTES

[1]I borrow my title from Jenn Karson's installation at the Fleming Museum: see **Conclusions** below.

[2]Podlecki, A. J., "The Basic Seriousness of Euripides' Helen", TAPA 101 (1970), 401–418.

[3]These and the following quotations of audience members come from exit surveys: see further below.

[4]The translators were: Helen, first half: Joanna Oh/Carl Mehrman • Helen, second half: Becky Sahlin • Teukros: Alden Smith (with Hannah Rogers, Jamie Wheeler and Cindy Liu) • Chorus Leader: Erik Kenyon • Menelaos: Page Hudson • Old Woman Doorkeeper: Angeline Chiu • Servant of Menelaos: Tyler Mayo • Theonoe: Barbara Saylor-Rodgers • Theoklymenos: Brian Walsh • Egyptian Messenger: Andrew Siebengartner • Kastor/Dioskouroi: Jacques Bailly • Parodos, Epiparodos, Reunion Duet: Franklin • Lyric dialogue (330–385): Ambrose • First Stasimon: James Aglio/Franklin • Second Stasimon: Mark Usher/Franklin • Third Stasimon: Ken Rothwell/Franklin • *pumice omnia aequata*: Franklin.

[5]Alden Smith enlisted several of his own students at Baylor; these individual elements could not be so distinguished.

[6]For the full cast and other contributors, please see playbill.

[7]This original group was Francie Merrill, Alice Ochterski, Tessie Sakai, Holly Micklas, Katie Livingston, Julia Irons, and Tenny Gregorian; Katie went on to play the Chorus Leader; Tenny the messenger.

[8]This was part of the conference *Music in Performance: Perspectives on Ancient Greek Tragedy and Performance* (October 27, 2017). I thank Jordan Johansen for her invitation.

[9]Zoe Anszperger, Claire Wilcox, and Eileen Parks.

[10]Henrichs, A., 'Why Should I Dance? Choral Self-Referentiality in Greek Tragedy', *Arion* 3/1 (1994–1995), 56–111; 'Dancing in Athens, Dancing on Delos: Some Patterns of Choral Projection in Euripides', *Philol.* 140 (1996), 48–62; etc.

[11]For credits, please see playbill.

[12]E.g.: The pre-performance lectures were most informative and needed to fully appreciate the play • Pre-performance lectures are a good way to make them more accessible to modern audiences. • The pre-play lecture (Saturday night) helped add insight about the themes and setting. • Having an introductory lecture is very helpful.

[13]Pro tip: Be sure to ask how people learned about the production, to guide advertisement and promotion the next time!

[14]They would be an excellent counterpoint to Vermont Shakespeare productions and the contemporary shows of Vermont Theater and Lyric organizations.

[15]E.g. It was funnier than I expected. • I enjoyed the comedic elements and thought they were important in making the play accessible. • Loved the light-hearted interpretation so the audience could laugh itself to enlightenment • Interpretation is always to some extent subjective, but this production of the Helen drew sensibly on the comic and serious aspects of this play. • Most of all the play for me was an affirmation of wit in the face of Fate's badly dealt hand.

[16]E.g.: The Greek chorus should be commended on mastering the most dialogue, music, and movements. That was incredible. • I thoroughly enjoyed the setting for this production. It masterfully evoked the ancient time. The music, set and costumes were magnificent. • I really liked what was done with the projector screen and the artwork during the times that the chorus sung. • The chorus was much more involved than I expected. Singing and acting were great. Music and costumes excellent. • Helen was extremely well done! Costumes, music, acting - all spot on! Bravo!! • I enjoy the music and the instrumentation, the use of material in the dances and the costuming, as well as the simplicity of the props and set. • The costumes were really cool • A stunning performance, through and through. • I thought the approach to the chorus was brilliant, the integration of the traditional chorus role with tasteful choreography was so pleasing and innovative. • Hearing the music and experiencing the more traditional is an educational experience few have had. • I found the attempt at original staging to be really fascinating and interesting.

[17]E.g.: I much prefer evocation of original settings. Part of the interest is in learning what cultures were like in the past. • In general, I prefer the staging that evokes the original. The artistic backdrops used in Helen were most effective in that they provided visual appeal without the blatant imposition of modernity. • Many movies and books have already adapted these plays into a modern setting. Seeing the more historically accurate portrayal is much more interesting. • Don't try to modernize it; that goes for Shakespeare too. Reworking ancient drama with modern settings and costumes just looks weird and distracts from the story. • E.g.: In my experience, most modernized versions of ancient or old dramas feel clumsy and awkward unless there are major alterations to the script. • It needs no "dressing up" to make it engaging to a modern audience. • Prefer original setting as modernization can lay a diffusing light on the original. • Also, it's nice to have an experience not watered-down by huge, fancy, over-the-top production. • I think it's up to the audience to place itself in ancient Greece; it's not the business of the theatrical production to show how it's relevant to the modern world.

[18]E.g.: Humanity doesn't change, and thus the themes stay applicable to modern day problems. • I was fascinated to see that the main themes of the play do not change.

[19]You did a splendid job, without 'talking down' to the audience or being either overly timid or overly pushy with interpretive interventions.

[20]I would like to thank Amy Cohen here for all her patient and generous advice, and Holly Micklas for taking on the project.