

City Garage presents

Agamemnon **by Charles L. Mee**

Part I of City Garage's *Three by Mee* Season

Directed by Frédérique Michel
Production Design by Charles A. Duncombe



June 9—August 6, 2006

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Cast

Ed Baccari	<i>Thucydides</i>
Justin Davanzo	<i>Aegisthus</i>
Troy Dunn	<i>Agamemnon</i>
David E. Frank	.....	<i>Herodotus</i>
Maximiliano Molina	.....	<i>The Messenger</i>
Bo Roberts	.....	<i>Hesiod</i>
Ben Shields	.....	<i>Homer</i>
Marie-Françoise Theodore	.....	<i>Clytemnestra</i>
Ilana Turner	.....	<i>Cassandra</i>

Production Staff

Set and Lighting Design	.....	Charles A. Duncombe
Assistant Directors	.....	Martha Duncan, Jeff Atik
Light/Sound Operator	.....	Mark Woods
Costume Design	.....	Josephine Poinsoit

Place

Mycenae, Greece

Time

After the Trojan War

The play runs approximately 70 minutes and is performed without intermission.

City Garage is supported, in part, by grants from

The Wells Fargo Foundation,
Rocket Science Laboratories,

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission,
and The Santa Monica Arts Commission.

Special thanks to Dan Butts and his crew
for original set construction.

ABOUT THE TEXT

Once, on this familiar spot of ground/walked other men and women/as actual as we are today/thinking their own thoughts/feeling their own passions/nor gone as utterly as we ourselves/shall be.

Everything that exists/destroys itself...The joy of life that comes into the world/to give itself/and be annihilated/Everything/living and dead/mortally wounded.

—Agamemnon, Charles L. Mee

It is one of the oldest stories in literature: Agamemnon, with his brother Menelaus and an army of Greeks, sails to Troy to destroy the city and take back his brother's wife, Helen. It is a story of love, lust, revenge, of outraged honor, of supposed heroism. It has been the inspiration for centuries of art, sculpture, and painting; it has been turned into endless lines of poetry, both good and bad; made into countless plays, also good and bad; and into plenty of movies, mostly bad. It has been retold endlessly. Why? Surely, a single illicit romance and one man's wounded ego shouldn't be enough to launch a thousand ships, motivate armies of men to hack each other to bits, destroy a civilization, and waste an entire generation of youth—let alone stuff the world's libraries with scholarship. But history tells us it is so. Wars have been fought and continue to be fought for the most senseless reasons imaginable; for insults, real and imagined, for the zeal of Presidents, for the religious passions of those who insist all must believe as they believe. Homer, in Mee's play, voices the familiar lament: "These wars/declared by old men/who send their young to die." It would be a banality were it not so painfully true. The old keep massacring their own young for reasons that seemed good at the time, but as years, or centuries pass, become increasingly mysterious. And we tell stories about this mystery, trying to understand ourselves.

The play begins with this idea of history, the birth of history, of literature, of telling stories. Four voices guide us: Homer, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Hesiod. They, like we, are literally trapped in history, unable to escape what has gone before, and what will happen again, over and over. And so they tell the first story of literature again, the story of Agamemnon, who, in order to appease the superstitions of his soldiers, murders his daughter Iphigenia, and triggers all the death and destruction that follows, including his own murder by his wife, Clytemnestra. They, like us, know there is something terrible and relentless at this story's core: an awful recognition that this waste is part of us, part of our way of being, that "when men go to war/they invade their own homes first/They murder what's best in them." What is the source of our misery, they ask, "our current woes?" A misguided war? A failed leadership? But what war is not misguided, and what leadership not flawed? Prisoners of history, they and we watch, recite the same story in its infinitely unique yet pointless variations, and wonder why we matter, or question whether we matter at all. They, like we, increasingly desperate, attempt to find a place in the cosmos, a cosmos we know to be indifferent to our existence. Our only comfort, as Mee says at the play's end, is our own ability to record, to understand. Our solace is the human heart, our ability to feel—and to remember.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuck Mee has written *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Wintertime*, *Belle Epoque*, *Vienna: Lusthaus*, *Snow in June*, *A Perfect Wedding*, *Limonade tous les Jours*, and a number of other plays in addition to his work inspired by Greek plays: *Big Love*, *True Love*, *Orestes 2.0*, *Trojan Women A Love Story* and others. His plays have been performed at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, American Repertory Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, the Public Theatre, Lincoln Center, the Humana Festival, Steppenwolf, and other places in the United States as well as in Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Vienna, Istanbul and elsewhere. His complete works are available on the internet at www.charlesmee.org. His work is made possible by the support of Jeanne Donovan Fisher and Richard B. Fisher.

CAST PROFILES

Ed Baccari

Thucydides

Ed recently played Fred C. Dobbs in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* at the Sierra Madre playhouse. He also appeared Vincent Van Goh on the

television show *Medium*. Theatre credits include *The Zoo Story*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Hello and Good Bye*, and *Hedda Gabler*. Film credits include *Jake Lead*, *Arresting Gena*, *Lake Watch*, and many others.

Justin Davanzo

Aegisthus

Justin is pleased to be a member of City Garage, where he was previously seen in *The Dumbwaiter* by Harold Pinter, *The Jungle of Cities* by Bertolt Brecht, *The Dispute* by Marivaux, *La Leçon* by Eugene Ionesco, and *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream* by Kathy Acker. Most recently he appeared in Heiner Müller's *The Battle: ABC*, which won the Best Ensemble award at this year's LA Weekly Theatre Awards.

Troy Dunn

Agamemnon

Troy was most recently seen as Giri in *Artuo Ui* for the Classical Theatre Lab. He hails from the Midwest and spent most of his professional career in Milwaukee working with the MRT, Theatre X, and Chamber Theatre to name a few. Notable roles include Ariel in *The Tempest*, John Oleana, Lord Goring in *An Ideal Husband*, Benedict in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Barnum in *Barnum*, and Don Quixote Man of *La Mancha*.

David E. Frank

Herodotus

David is originally from Muncie, Indiana, where he received his degree in Theatre Performance from Ball State University. In addition to his work at BSU, he also appeared with the Vagabond Players, the Third Age Theatre Company, and The Muncie Civic Theater. His credits at City Garage include *MedeaText: Los Angeles Despoiled Shore*, *Atrocities: Meetings With Monstrous Men*, *The Skriker*, *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep*, *The Gertrude Stein Project*, *Katzelmacher*, *OedipusText: Los Angeles*, *La Leçon*, *Don Quixote: Which Was a Dream*, and *The Battle: ABC*, which won the Best Ensemble award at this year's LA Weekly Theatre Awards.

Maximiliano Molina

The Messenger

Maximiliano is happy to have found City Garage and experience his first show here. A graduate of Cal Poly Pomona and the Actors Studio Drama School in New York, he is glad to be back in California. He has been affiliated with companies like the Zoo District here in L.A., Campos Santos in San Francisco, and founding member of MMM... Comedy in New York.

Bo Roberts

Hesiod

Bo has previously performed at City Garage in *Blood On A Cat's Neck*; *The Universal Wolf*; *Wantons, Rogues and Libertines*; *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux*; *Journey's Among the Dead*; *Pre-Paradise*, *Sorry Now*; *Manage Blanc*; *The Fetishist*; *Katzelmacher*; *The Empire Builders*; *Patriot Act: A Reality Show*; and *The Battle: ABC*, which won the Best Ensemble award at this year's LA Weekly Theatre Awards.

Marie-Françoise Theodore

Clytemnestra

Originally from Chicago and newly arrived from St. Paul MN, Marie-Françoise is proud to be making her Los Angeles theatre debut at City Garage. In Minnesota, Marie-Françoise has performed lead roles at the Guthrie Theatre (*Darker Face of the Earth*), and Penumbra Theatre (*Blues for an Alabama Sky*, *Two Trains Running*). In Chicago, Marie-Françoise appeared on the stages of Steppenwolf Theatre Co, Chicago Theatre Co and the Court Theatre (Iphigenia in *Aulis and Tauris*). She holds an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Columbia College Chicago.

Ben Shields

Homer

Ben appeared most recently in *All Steps Necessary* at 2100 Square Feet with Inkwell Theater Co. He has also performed with the Odyssey Theatre, Knightsbridge L.A. and Pasadena, Open Fist Theatre Co., and, in Chicago, the Royal George Theatre, Apple Tree, Shakespeare Repertory, Next

Theatre, Circle Theater, American Theatre Co. and Organic Theater. Ben is a graduate of Northwestern University.

Ilana Turner

Cassandra

Ilana is pleased to be performing at City Garage once again, where she has previously appeared in *The Skriker*, *MedeaText: Los Angeles Despoiled Shore*, and *Girl in the Flammable Skirt*. She also teaches theatre to youth with Bluepalm, and has written original work such as her one-person show *I have Consumed This Life*, and *Telling it Like it Is* co-created with at-risk teens.

STAFF PROFILES

Frederique Michel, Artistic Director

Director

Frederique was born in Paris and studied theatre at the Conservatoire. She has directed more than eighty productions in the United States, including works by Strindberg, Rozewicz, Vinaver, Horowitz, Fornes and Barker. She received a *Dramalogue* award for her direction of *Dissident*, and has led the company as Artistic Director since its founding in 1987. Her 1998 production of *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* was nominated for four *L.A. Weekly* Theater Awards, including Best Director. She was nominated again for Best Director for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000). In 2005 she won the LA Weekly Award for Best Direction (one act) for *La Leçon*. This year her production of *The Battle: ABC* was nominated for Best Direction and received the LA Weekly Award for Best Ensemble.

Charles A. Duncombe, Managing Director

Production Designer

Charles is a writer, director and designer. He began his partnership with Frederique Michel in 1985 with her production of *Miss Julie*, and he has designed all of her work since then. He has won two *Dramalogue* awards for production design and in 1999 won the *L.A. Weekly* Theater Award for Best Lighting Design for *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* (1998). He was nominated for two *L.A. Weekly* awards for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000): Best Adaptation, and Best Set. He was nominated again for two *L.A. Weekly* awards for *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep* (2001): Best Adaptation, and Production Design. In 2004 his play *Patriot Act: A Reality Show* was selected from nearly 300 entries from six nations as the winner of the the Mario Fratti-Fred Newman Anti-Corruption Playwriting Award. *Patriot Act* is currently running in Buffalo, New York. It has been translated into Italian and will receive its European premiere at the Teatro Globi Distratti in Rome.

Mark Woods

Light/Sound Operator

From the cornfields of southwest Ohio, Mark graduated from Ohio State University with a B.A. in English Literature. Since attending the University of Miami (FL) M.F.A. Motion Picture Screenwriting Program, Mark has written two feature-length scripts and performed in theatre and film in Chicago and Los Angeles. He is very happy to be a new member at City Garage and is excited to be cast in the upcoming production of *The Bacchae*.

Martha Duncan

Assistant Director

This is Martha's second time assisting Frederique, having worked with her on the City Garage production of *Titus Tartar*. Martha is very active on stage in the South Bay area, having recently appeared in two productions at The Long Beach Playhouse.

Jeff Atik

Assistant Director

Jeff Atik is delighted to join the company of City Garage. He is a former company member of Milan's Teatro i. As an actor, Jeff has appeared in *The Bedstand*, *The Affidavit* and *Sailor's Girl* (Sundance 2005). He co-wrote and starred in *Panopticon*, a multimedia performance featuring Victoria Jordanova and the California E.A.R. Project presented at LACMA.

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