Syracuse Stage presents new translation of ‘Medea’ in online reading

SYRACUSE, NY – Syracuse Stage celebrates a new translation of a classic Greek tragedy as the “Cold Read Festival of New Plays” moves online to present a reading of Euripides’ “Medea.” The new translation, published in 2019 by the University of California Press, is by Syracuse resident and nationally acclaimed poet Charles Martin. Martin was originally scheduled to be the “Write Here” featured author of the third annual “Cold Read Festival,” which was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A link to the reading will be available free of charge at www.Syracuse Stage.org, June 5 – 7.

“Although we’ve had to cancel our planned ‘Cold Read Festival,’ our pivot to presenting the work on a virtual online platform keeps the ‘Cold Read’ promise alive,” said Robert Hupp, artistic director. “I’m particularly pleased to premiere Charles Martin’s adaptation of the work. Charles is a local poet of national scope and accomplishment. In these remarkable times, it seems fitting to turn to remarkable theater for insight and inspiration.”

Hupp further noted that this reading of “Medea” marks “Syracuse Stage's first foray into the world of Greek tragedy.”

Euripides’ “Medea” dates from 431 BCE and is grounded in the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece. Having saved Jason’s life and assisted him in his quest for legendary fleece, Medea returns with him to Corinth where they have two sons. However, Jason abandons Medea and the children and announces his intention to marry the daughter of King Creon. The action of the play concerns Medea’s plotting and
executing revenge on Jason. Layered with complexity, “Medea” is considered to be the most sophisticated of the extent Greek tragedies in its treatment of gender and injustice endured by women.

“As a festival and as an entity, ‘Cold Read’ is about introducing our audiences to new plays. For me, it’s exciting to present a nearly 2,500-year-old drama as a new play,” said Kyle Bass, associate artistic director who also serves as the Festival’s curator. “With his fleet and resonant new adaption, poet Charles Martin has made Euripides’ ‘Medea’ fresh and compelling. It speaks convincingly to our now.”

With a cast of nine professional actors, many of them local, and under the direction of April Sweeney, “Medea” will be formatted like a Zoom performance. Sweeney is chair of the theater department at Colgate University. “Euripides’ ancient play ‘Medea,’ a beautifully sinewy translation by Charles Martin, asks us to (re)consider a series of questions that at the heart revolve around issues of injustice: who is deserving of rights in a society, who is valued and matters and at what cost?” she explained.

Ricky Pak, an associate professor in the Syracuse University Department of Drama, is serving as technical consultant. Pak said the addition of audio and visual effects to the reading will enhance the performance for viewers.

Martin, a Syracuse resident for 15 years, is a poet, critic and translator. Among his many awards and accolades are multiple Pushcart Prizes, the Bess Hokin Award, the Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Merrill Ingram Foundation. He said he believes the play resonates with the contemporary world.

“There are so many aspects of ‘Medea’ that appeal to a modern audience,” he said. “The character of Medea is wonderfully realized. She is a woman who has been abandoned by her husband (along with their children) and she is a stateless person, a political refugee. She has every claim on our sympathies, and yet the whole plot of the play is the refinement of her revenge on the spouse who betrayed her, Jason. She is anything but a victim. Our sympathies are given quite a workout.”

Although “Medea” will be available free of charge, Syracuse Stage asks for help to continue its mission to tell stories that engage, entertain and inspire as the theater is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those who would like to donate can do so at https://syracusestage.org/donatenow.php.

“Medea”
By Euripides
Translated by Charles Martin
Directed by April Sweeney
Curated by Kyle Bass
Technical Consultant: Ricky Pak
Stage Manager: Audrey Flynn
June 5 – 7, 2020 at SyracuseStage.org

Cast
Matt Chiorini* .......................................................... Jason
Binaifer Dabu .......................................................... Chorus 2
Robert Garland .......................................................... Tutor/Messenger
Gillian Glasco* .......................................................... Medea
Lilli Komurek .......................................................... Chorus 3
Madeleine Lambert* ............................................. Lead Chorus
Larry John Meyers* ................................................ Creon
*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers’ Unions: Actors’ Equity Association, American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, SAG-AFTRA and through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the Artists to appear on this program.

ABOUT SYRACUSE STAGE
Founded in 1974, Syracuse Stage is the non-profit, professional theatre company in residence at Syracuse University. It is nationally recognized for creating stimulating theatrical work that engages Central New York and significantly contributes to the artistic life of Syracuse University, where it is a vital partner in achieving the educational mission of the University’s Department of Drama. Syracuse Stage’s mission is to tell stories that engage, entertain and inspire people to see life beyond their own experience. Each season 70,000 patrons enjoy an adventurous mix of new plays, and bold interpretations of classics and musicals, featuring the finest theatre artists. In addition, Stage maintains a vital educational outreach program that annually serves more than 15,000 students from 14 counties. Syracuse Stage is a constituent of the Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre, and a member of the Arts and Cultural Leadership Alliance (ACLA), the University Hill Corporation and the East Genesee Regent Association. Syracuse Stage is a member of The League of Resident Theatres (LORT), the largest professional theatre association in the country.

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Syracuse Stage  I  Artistic Director: Robert M. Hupp  I  Managing Director: Jill A. Anderson