



EURIPIDES'

HELEN

The Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater
at the Getty Villa

Thursdays-Saturdays, September 6-29, 2012



View of the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater and the entrance of the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Villa

Tonight's performance is approximately ninety minutes long, without intermission.

As a courtesy to our neighbors, we ask that you keep noise to a minimum while enjoying the production. Please refrain from unnecessarily loud or prolonged applause, shouting, whistling, or any other intrusive conduct during the performance. While exiting the theater and the Getty Villa, please do so quietly.

The actors and stage managers employed in this production are members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

This theater operates under an agreement between the League of Resident Theatres and Actors' Equity Association.

Director Jon Lawrence Rivera is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers (SDC), an independent national labor union.



The Director is a member of the
**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

EURIPIDES'

HELEN

Adapted by Nick Salamone
Directed by Jon Lawrence Rivera
A new production by Playwrights' Arena

THE CAST

Helen, queen of Sparta / Rachel Sorsa

Menelaos, king of Sparta / Maxwell Caulfield

Theoclymenus, ruler of Pharos / Chil Kong

Theonoe, devotee of Artemis and sister of Theoclymenus / Natsuko Ohama

Hattie, slave to Theoclymenus and Theonoe / Carlease Burke

Lady, chorus / Melody Butiu

Cleo, chorus / Arsène DeLay

Cherry, chorus / Jayme Lake

Old Soldier, follower of Menelaos / Robert Almodovar

Teucer, younger brother of the Greek hero Ajax / Christopher Rivas

Musicians / Brent Crayon, E. A., and David O

Understudies / Anita Dashiell-Sparks, Robert Mammana,
and Leslie Stevens

THE COMPANY

Producer / Diane Levine

Composer and Musical Director / David O

Dramaturge / Mary Louise Hart

Casting Directors / Russell Boast and
Raul Staggs

Scenic Designer / John H. Binkley

Lighting Designer / R. Christopher Stokes

Sound Designer / Bob Blackburn

Costume Designer / Mylette Nora

Video Designer / Adam Flemming

Hair and Make-up Artist / Sarah Kathryn Chaney

Prop Master / Ken Takemoto

Dialect Coach / Luke Yankee

Fight Director / Edgar Landa

Associate Costume Designer / Byron Nora

Costume Assistants / Wendell Carmichael
and Taylor Moten

Wardrobe Crew / Ellen L. Sandor

First Assistant Director / Shaunessy Quinn

Second Assistant Director / Daniel Segura

Assistant to the Producer / Lorely Trinidad

Q-Lab Technician / Jennifer Hill

Production Stage Manager / Don Hill

Stage Manager / Jaclyn Kalkhurst

Production Assistants / Dean Hendricks,
Micheal Mason, and
Clare Wernet

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

Athens and Sparta had been at war for the worst part of two decades when Euripides wrote *Helen*. Three years before, Euripides penned perhaps the world's most devastating antiwar drama, *The Trojan Women*. At its core, *Helen* is an even more war-weary work than its famous predecessor. In *The Trojan Women*, Euripides presented his audience with the savage results of a war fought for the most venal of reasons. In *Helen*, he dares to assert that even the war's venal impetus was trumped up from the start—an illusion. Weapons of mass destruction, indeed! Yet the tone of *Helen*, with the theme of mistaken identity at its heart, is far from the tragedy of *The Trojan Women*. Our play is above all else a romance: a love story of the hopeless and desperate middle aged.

In attempting to adapt *Helen* for a contemporary American audience, my guiding principle was to honor the immediacy of Euripides' themes, thoughts, and devices. He has something direct and unfiltered to say to us in our age of political trumpery, stolen identity, and switcheroo culpabilities. I wanted our treatment of Euripides' play to speak to an American audience in 2012 as directly as he spoke to his fellow citizens 2,400 years ago, while keeping his structure and tone intact.

To accomplish this, Jon, David, and I set out to find contemporary analogues that would immediately resonate with a postmodern audience. Ancient Greek drama, of course, has its own time-honored forms, devices, and stock characters with which its audience would be immediately familiar. We looked to musical forms, storytelling devices, and characters from Hollywood's golden era and beyond to present a world that a twenty-first century American could recognize firsthand.

We hope the handling of our cinema siren chorus and the musical styling of its odes, our demi-dei ex machina, our sassy supporting players, the sometimes-screwball bent of our stichomythic dialogue, and, of course, the perils of our leading lady and her hoodwinked shipwrecked spouse will allow you unfettered access to the old-school romance of this most modern of ancient dramatists.

—Nick Salamone

DRAMATURGE'S NOTE

“Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?”

—Christopher Marlowe, from *Doctor Faustus* [12.81-84], published between 1590 and 1604

Perhaps not.

The Homeric myth of Helen, legendary beauty and betrayer of home and husband, had been established by about 750 B.C., when she was immortalized as the cause of the Trojan War in the *Iliad*. The passionate encounter between Paris and Helen in Sparta followed by their flight to Troy and the ensuing ten-year battle of Greeks and Trojans established Helen's wanton reputation, forcefully expressed in Euripides' *The Trojan Women* of 415 B.C.

Yet only three years later, Euripides presented an alternate account of Helen's story and character. His eponymous play of 412 B.C. opens with the real Helen on the Egyptian island of Pharos rather than at Troy, where the gods had replaced her with a phantom twin. This version of Helen's story was well known and had been treated by the choral lyric poet Stesichoros in the sixth century B.C. Praised in antiquity for “sustaining on the lyre the weight of epic song,” Stesichoros's work has scarcely survived. Yet fragments of it are quoted in Plato, where Socrates relates an astounding tale of poetic calumny framing Stesichoros's final humanization of Helen. Initially he had presented Helen's behavior at Troy in such defamatory terms that he was struck blind (some say, by Helen, in retribution). Stesichoros then recanted, writing his famous *Palinode* (literally “counter song”):

“The story is not true / You did not board the well-benched ships / You did not reach the towers of Troy”

—Plato, from *Phaedrus* [243a], about 360 B.C.

In return, Stesichoros's sight was restored along with Helen's reputation as a human woman whose fate was rocked by the whims of the gods.

Ancient Greek artists typically represented Helen as Homer had described her. Stories of the Trojan War (Gallery 110) houses important episodes from her epic narrative: the Judgment of Paris, when Aphrodite promised Helen to the young prince, and Helen's reunion with Menelaus on the night Troy was sacked. When Menelaus confronted her with sword drawn in murderous intent, Aphrodite intervened to save the queen of Sparta by reminding her former husband of his wife's powerful erotic force. Awed, it is said, by the sight of Helen's breast, Menelaus dropped his sword and sailed home with her to Sparta.

—Mary Louise Hart, Associate Curator of Antiquities, the J. Paul Getty Museum

PLAYWRIGHTS' ARENA

Under the leadership of artistic director Jon Lawrence Rivera, Playwrights' Arena is dedicated to discovering, nurturing, and producing bold new works for the stage written exclusively by Los Angeles playwrights. It was founded in 1992 by Jon Lawrence Rivera and Steve Tyler. Playwrights' Arena develops new materials through several series of readings, workshops, and roundtable discussions. Local playwrights are encouraged to create original, adventurous, and daring materials to challenge the mind, touch the heart, and provoke the spirit.

Board of Directors

Rebecca Anderson, Brett Battles, Ted Israel Benito, Andrew Brettler, Andrea Cockrum, Antonia "Nanie" Enriquez, Jon Lawrence Rivera

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Associate Artists

Luis Alfaro, Boni B. Alvarez, Bob Blackburn, Velina Hasu Houston, Donald Jolly, Jaclyn Kalkhurst, Michael Premsrirat, Nick Salamone

More information about Playwrights' Arena can be found at www.playwrightsarena.org.

Twentieth-Anniversary Season

Founded in 1992, Playwrights' Arena has been celebrating its twentieth anniversary all yearlong with a series of readings, productions, and *Flash Theater L.A.* events. Tonight's presentation of *Helen*, adapted by Los Angeles playwright Nick Salamone, is the centerpiece of this twentieth season.

Earlier this year Playwrights' Arena also presented the critically acclaimed world-premiere production of *The Girl Most Likely To* by Michael Premsrirat at its permanent home at Los Angeles Theatre Center.

The company's innovative *Flash Theater L.A.* series (a hybrid of flash mob, site-specific work, and street theater) will be performed this season in twenty different locations throughout Los Angeles. These free performances were commissioned from twenty of the region's finest playwrights including Luis Alfaro, Boni B. Alvarez, Alison De La Cruz, Evelina Fernandez, Tony Foster, Jose Cruz Gonzalez, Velina Hasu Houston, Tom Jacobson, Donald Jolly, Michael Kearns, Lucy J. Kim, Annette Lee, Jennifer Maisel, Leon Martell, Laurel Ollstein, Henry Ong, Michael Premsrirat, Janine Salinas, Gene Franklin Smith, and Bernardo Solano.

Each *Flash Theater L.A.* performance occurs only once. Details of each upcoming event can be found on Twitter (@FlashTheaterLA) or at www.facebook.com/flashtheaterLA.

THE CAST



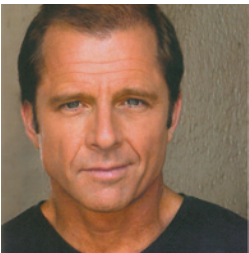
Robert Almodovar (Old Soldier) has appeared in *Blood Wedding* at the Odyssey Theatre; *Oedipus el Rey* at the Theatre @ Boston Court; *Ruby, Tragically Rotund* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center; and *Dogeaters* at the Kirk Douglas Theatre. National and international appearances include *Senior Discretion Himself* at Arena Stage, and *Honk!* and *Into the Woods* at the Singapore Repertory Theatre.



Carlease Burke (Hattie) is thrilled to be a part of this adaptation of *Helen*. Her television credits include *Shameless*, *Switched at Birth*, and *Touch*. Burke was nominated for an NAACP Theatre Award for her role as Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Theatre @ Boston Court.



Melody Butiu (Lady) was in the inaugural production of *Hippolytos* at the Barbara and Lawrence Fleishman Theater at the Getty Villa and in Playwrights' Arena's productions of *Calligraphy* and *Street Stories*. She has performed at East West Players, the Geffen Playhouse, South Coast Repertory, and many other stages across the country. Butiu's television credits include *True Blood*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Harry's Law*, and *Modern Family*.



Maxwell Caulfield (Menelaos) had a 1980 Los Angeles debut in *Hitting Town* (Zephyr Theatre) with wife-to-be Juliet Mills. He has also appeared in *Journey's End* (Cast Theatre), Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* and *Loot* (Mark Taper Forum), *Sleuth* (Ahmanson Theatre) opposite Stacy Keach, *Popcorn* (El Portal Theatre), and *He Hunts* (Geffen Playhouse). Caulfield has performed at the New York Shakespeare Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, on Broadway (*An Inspector Calls*), and in the West End (*Chicago*).



Arsène DeLay (Cleo) comes from New Orleans to join the *Helen* cast. Her recent stage credits include *Songs and Dances of Imaginary Lands*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and *Death and the King's Horseman* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival). Her film and television credits include *Nine Lives Live: A Musical Adaptation*, and HBO's *Treme*. She holds a bachelor of arts from Marquette University and a master of arts from California Institute of the Arts.



Chil Kong (Theoclymenus) has been all across the country and now calls both Los Angeles and New York home. Notable performances include *Making Tracks*, *Closer than Ever*, and *China Dolls*, among others. His film and television credits include *Crossing Over*, *West 32nd Street*, and, most recently, *Too Big to Fail* (HBO).



Jayme Lake (Cherry) is absolutely thrilled and honored to be a part of this incredible team. Her credits include *Footloose*, *Hillary Agonistes*, *The All Night Strut!*, and *Songs for a New World*, among others. On television, Lake has appeared in *1000 Ways to Die*.



Natsuko Ohama (Theonoe) is a director, writer, Drama Desk Award-nominated actress, and teacher who is head of voice for the master of fine arts acting program at the University of Southern California's School of Dramatic Arts. She is also a recipient of Playwrights' Arena's Outstanding Contribution to the Los Angeles Theatre Community Award.



Christopher Rivas (Teucer) is an actor and poet born and raised in New York City. He is grateful to return to the Getty Villa, most recently with the Rogue Artists on the production of *Songs of Bilitis*. A graduate of California Institute of the Arts, Rivas feels blessed to do what he loves daily: share his art.



Rachel Sorsa (Helen) is an award-winning actress and singer. Her stage credits include Del Shores's *Yellow* (L.A. Drama Critics Circle and LA Weekly Awards), *Twentieth Century* (off Broadway), and *Searching for Eden*. She is in the upcoming Shores film, *Blues for Willadean*, with Octavia Spencer. Sorsa received her bachelor of arts in theater from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, a master of arts in theater from Michigan State University, and is currently working on her doctoral dissertation in theater history and criticism at the University of Texas at Austin.



Anita Dashiell-Sparks (Understudy) has appeared on Broadway in *Night Must Fall* and *The Sunshine Boys*. Her off-Broadway and regional credits include *I Stand before You Naked*, *Spunk*, *Blues from an Alabama Sky*, *House of Bernada Alba*. In Los Angeles, Dashiell-Sparks has worked on the world premieres of *Laws of Sympathy* and *SICK*. Television and film credits include *Lincoln Heights*, *Huff*, *Friends*, *The West Wing*, and *The Division*. Dashiell-Sparks is an assistant professor of theater practice at University of Southern California's School of Dramatic Arts.



Robert Mammana (Understudy) has appeared on Broadway and on tour in *Les Misérables* and *Show Boat*. His regional credits include *Cloudlands* (South Coast Repertory), *Man of La Mancha* (Reprise Theatre Company), and *Beast on the Moon* (Alliance Theatre). Mammana has won an LA Weekly Award and has been nominated for three Ovation Awards and an L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award. His television credits include *The Office*, *CSI: NY*, *Dexter*, *Heroes*, *Prison Break*, *The Unit*, *Numbers*, and *The O.C.*



Leslie Stevens (Understudy) recently appeared as Veronica in *God of Carnage* at the International City Theatre. Her Broadway credits include *La Cage Aux Folles* (original cast) and *Victor/Victoria* (with Julie Andrews). In Los Angeles, she has been in shows at the Pasadena Playhouse, the Geffen Playhouse, Reprise Theatre Company, and the Mark Taper Forum. Stevens is an alumna of Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and the Shakespeare Lab at the Public Theater. Television credits include *Private Practice*, *True Blood*, and *Criminal Minds*.

Brent Crayon (Musician) has had the privilege to work with Stephen Schwartz, Daisy Prince, John Bucchino, and Richard Maltby, Jr. His favorite productions include the West Coast premieres of *Songs for a New World* and *tick, tick...BOOM!* and world premieres of Stephen Schwartz's *Snapshots* and John Bucchino's *It's Only Life*.

E. A. (Emiliano Almeida) (Musician) is a professional musician who is a drummer, percussionist, composer, producer, re-mixer, and DJ. He has achieved extraordinary success internationally as a recording artist and live performer.

Playwrights' Arena and the Getty Villa wish to thank the following organizations and individuals for their invaluable contributions to the creation of *Helen*:

Peri Gilpin; Andrew Brettler; Jessica Burdock; Blaire Chandler; Claire Trevor School of Arts at the University of California, Irvine; Carl Crudup; Fritz Davis at Digital Theatre Technologies; Duncan Edwards; Grove Scenery; Johnny Heller; Deidre Henry; Kinetic Lighting; L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center; Dana Lee; Ginny Myers Lee; Tracey A. Leigh; Fran de Leon; Gillian Lindig; Dave Manning; John Michalski; John Nielsen; Ramon de Ocampo; Natalya Oliver; Victoria Ortiz; Joanna Perrin; Marina Re; Gita Reddy; Carla Renata; Cherene Snow; Minerva Vier; and Suzy Fay and the Lark Play Development Center.

THE COMPANY

Nick Salamone (Playwright) is the author of ten full-length produced plays: *Another House on Mercy Street*, *All Souls' Day*, *Riffs and Credos*, *Moscow*, *Red Hat and Tales*, *Whale Watchers*, *Hillary Agonistes*, *Gulls*, *Sea Change*, and *The Sonneteer*. Salamone received the 2007 Playwrights' Arena Award for outstanding contribution to the Los Angeles theater community, two Beverly Press Maddy Awards for excellence in writing, an LA Weekly Award for adaptation, and three Garland Awards for Excellence in Southland Theater (one for adaptation and two for musical score). He was nominated for two LA Weekly Awards for playwriting and an Ovation Award for book and lyrics. His most recent work, *The Sonneteer*, was listed by the *Los Angeles Times*, *LA STAGE Times*, and *Entertainment Today* as among the best new plays of 2011. For the production *Moscow*, Salamone received the Fringe First Award for new writing as well as the audience favorite award at the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival. He is an alumnus of Nautilus Music Theater workshop and graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Tufts University with a bachelor of arts in English and drama.

Jon Lawrence Rivera (Director) is a five-time Ovation Award nominee and the founding artistic director of Playwrights' Arena. His productions have garnered over a hundred local and international awards. His past collaborations with Nick Salamone include *The Sonneteer* (2011 *Los Angeles Times* best play), *Sea Change* (2009 LA Weekly Award), *Hillary Agonistes* (2007 New York International Fringe Festival Award), and *Red Hat and Tales*. Recent directing credits include *The Girl Most Likely To* by Michael Premsrirat, *Unmerciful Good Fortune* by Edwin Sanchez, *bonded* by Donald Jolly, *Blood Wedding* by Federico Garcia Lorca, *Calligraphy* by Velina Hasu Houston, *Road to Saigon* at East West Players, *Jacques Brel* at the Colony Theatre Company, and *Oedipus el Rey* by Luis Alfaro at the Getty Villa Theater Lab and at the Theatre @ Boston Court. Other works include *The Last Five Years* by Jason Robert Brown; *Miss Saigon* by Schönberg/Boublil; *Ruby*, *Tragically Rotund* by Boni B. Alvarez; *Laws of Sympathy* by Oliver Mayer; *The Joy Luck Club* by Susan Kim; *The Third from the Left* by Jean Colonomos; and *Dogeaters* by Jessica Hagedorn.

Diane Levine (Producer) has produced films, theater, radio, and television commercials. She programmed film series for museums and universities throughout the country and has lectured at schools, conferences, the San Francisco Art Institute, and San Quentin State Prison. Levine's theater credits include political dramas, contemporary comedies, musicals, classics, and work with Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in Los Angeles public schools. Levine is on the board of the Center for the Art of Performance at the University of California, Los Angeles.

David O (Composer and Musical Director) is an award-winning music-theater artist based in Los Angeles. He is returning to the Getty Villa after composing music for its inaugural 2006 production, *Hippolytos*. O's work includes the critically acclaimed choral piece *A Map of Los Angeles* and many compositions for the theater.

John H. Binkley (Scenic Designer) has designed *Dogeaters* (Kirk Douglas Theatre), *Oedipus el Rey* (Theatre @ Boston Court), *bonded* (Playwrights' Arena), *Road to Saigon* (East West Players), *Elegies* (Cannon Theatre), and *Happy End* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles). He has also designed *Beachwood Drive* at the Theatre Confrontations Festival in Lublin, Poland, and *Shim Ch'ong* at the National Theater of Korea in Seoul.

R. Christopher Stokes (Lighting Designer) is the lead lighting designer for *Flash Theater L.A.* He earned his master of fine arts in lighting design at California Institute of the Arts and his bachelor of arts in theater from Bucknell University. Stokes worked as an assistant on the television show *Smash* and the Broadway production *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*.

Bob Blackburn (Sound Designer) recently designed *The Closeness of the Horizon*, *The Girl Most Likely To*, *Cages*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Day Drinkers*, *Blood Wedding*, *bonded*, *The Sonneteer*, *Unmerciful Good Fortune*, and *Calligraphy*. Blackburn is an associate artist with Playwrights' Arena and has designed over ninety shows. He is a four-time Ovation Award nominee and won in 1998 for *Request Concert* and in 2002 for *Street Stories*.

Myllette Nora (Costume Designer) has won an NAACP Theatre Award for best costume and is listed in the honors edition of the Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women. Nora's work can be seen nightly on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*. She is the inspiration for Synthia St. James's painting *Ensemble*.

Adam Flemming (Video Designer) has collaborated with South Coast Repertory, Long Beach Opera, the Pasadena Playhouse, East West Players, Deaf West Theatre, the Theatre @ Boston Court, among others, and has had productions in New York City, San Francisco, Miami, Austin, Edinburgh, and Guadalajara. He is an artistic associate with Son of Semele Ensemble and holds a master of fine arts in design from California Institute of the Arts.

Edgar Landa (Fight Director) has created violence and mayhem for theaters large and small across the region. His work has appeared at South Coast Repertory, the Mark Taper Forum, Shakespeare Orange County, Circle X Theater Company, the Theatre @ Boston Court, Playwrights' Arena, and many others. Landa is on the theater faculty at the University of Southern California's School of Theatre, as well as being an alum.

Shaunessy Quinn (First Assistant Director) is an associate member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers. He currently directs for Found Space Theatre, *Flash Theater L.A.*, and Imaginese Productions. He was recently an assistant director on *Deathtrap* at the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center. Quinn does freelance casting through Rich King Casting and cofounded the theater blog BlankTheAudience.com. Quinn received his bachelor of fine arts in theatre directing from Millikin University.

Daniel Segura (Second Assistant Director) is a native Angeleno who has visited the Getty Villa since he was a babe. Segura is elated to work on his first production at the Getty Museum. As a theater major at the University of California, Berkeley, he began writing, directing, and producing theater and is currently building his burgeoning performing-arts career.

Don Hill (Production Stage Manager) has served as production manager and stage manager for over one hundred productions in the Los Angeles area. He has worked at the Geffen Playhouse, the Mark Taper Forum, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Currently he is the head of the graduate program in stage management at the University of California, Irvine.

Jaclyn Kalkhurst (Stage Manager) received her bachelor of fine arts in stage management at the University of Southern California and is an Actors' Equity Association stage manager. Her recent productions in Los Angeles include *Calligraphy* and *The Girl Most Likely To* with Playwrights' Arena, *Wrinkles* with East West Players, and *The Romance of Magno Rubio* at [Inside] the Ford.

PERFORMANCE AT THE GETTY VILLA

The Getty Villa's public programming enhances the experience of the ancient world by offering a diverse schedule of events anchored by an innovative theater program. Live performances of classical drama offer insight into the social, cultural, and political realities of life in ancient Greece and Rome; the J. Paul Getty Museum's permanent collection of antiquities, alongside its changing exhibitions, strengthens the connection between modern audiences and the stories enacted in the tragedies and comedies onstage.

Classical dramatists explored basic, human stories that often parallel our contemporary experiences. Ancient plays are ever powerful and resonant, continuing to inspire reinterpretation. The Villa Theater Lab series, presented throughout the year in the Auditorium, fosters inventive and experimental approaches to ancient stories. The Auditorium's technology enables directors, designers, musicians, playwrights, and actors freely to incorporate advanced stage, sound, and visual elements into productions developed in residence at the Villa.

Each September, a major production is commissioned and presented in the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater, an outdoor performance space based on ancient prototypes. In recent years, the outdoor classical theater has been the setting for Euripides' *Hippolytos*, Plautus's *Tug of War*, the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, Aristophanes' *Peace* (via Culture Clash), Sophocles' *Elektra*, and SITI Company's original adaptation of *Trojan Women*. These performances have become a much-anticipated end-of-summer tradition for Museum audiences, and plans are already well underway for a new version of *Prometheus Bound* in 2013.

The Villa's public programming also includes play readings, film screenings, Family Festivals, and other events. To view our seasonal calendar of events, visit the Museum's website at www.getty.edu, or subscribe online to the monthly e-Getty newsletter to receive free programming highlights by e-mail.

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RELATED LECTURE

Beautiful Evil: The Challenge of Helen of Troy

Ruby Blondell, professor of classics, University of Washington

Beginning with the first woman, Pandora (created by Zeus as a “beautiful evil”), the ancient Greeks believed that female beauty was intrinsically linked to bad character. Therefore Helen of Troy—the most beautiful woman of her day—was, by her very nature, also viewed as the most destructive.

Classicist Ruby Blondell explains the magnitude of the task that Euripides set for himself in approaching the figure of Helen. Blondell discusses how Euripides defied the cultural preconceptions of his time to present the portrait of a Helen who is a paradigm not only of beauty, but also of female virtue.

Saturday, September 15, 2:00 p.m.

Getty Villa, Auditorium

Free; a ticket is required.

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at the Getty Villa**

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