

MEDEA



Freely adapted from the “Medea” of Euripides by Robinson Jeffers

Proposing: Celeste Cahn '15
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Production Workshop
Application for the Downstairs Space

NAME: Celeste Cahn
CLASS YEAR: 2015
PHONE NUMBER: 504-355-6092

If you cannot be reached by phone immediately after the meeting, would you prefer we:

CALL BACK or **LEAVE A VOICEMAIL**

TITLE OF PROJECT: Medea
AUTHOR (if applicable): Robinson Jeffers/Euripides

PROPOSAL BOARD BUDDY: Austin Draycott '15

SLOT PREFERENCE: 2nd

(*note: you are only proposing for one of the below seasons)

Fall: 1st slot is in late September, returns early from Summer Break

2nd slot is in mid-October

Winter: 1st slot is in early December, right before Reading Period

2nd slot is in early February, returns early from Winter Break

Break

3rd slot is in early March

Spring: 1st slot is in mid-April

2nd slot is over Commencement

IS THERE A SLOT YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO ACCEPT?

1st

REQUIRED STAFF (include name and year):

- Set Designer: Austin Draycott '15
- Lighting Designer: Grant Glovin '16
- Sound Designer: Lizzy Callas '15
- Costume Designer: Kate Telma '15

ADDITIONAL STAFF: Thom Finley '14 (Asst. Director), Jenny Gorelick '14 (SM), Marty Strauss '16 (production manager), Jared Rosa '14 (Props), Austin Draycott '15 (TD) Andrew Ganem '16 (asst. set design, asst. TD), Jake Kuhn '17 (asst. costumes)

MY APPROACH

On some level *Medea* must be looked at from the viewpoint of the individual characters. The primary perspective is Medea's. She is a woman scorned, in despair, and lusting for vengeance. But Medea is not an isolated individual and her tragedy is the result not just of her actions, but those of other characters and society at large. The other characters' perceptions, emotions, and logic all bear examination. They are not just foils for Medea. When working with the actors I will primarily work from the view point of their individual character arcs, principally focusing on their actions and reactions than overarching themes.

However, the play is rich in themes that will naturally come out in the performance. One of the themes that attracts me to *Medea* is Medea's foreigner status, which makes her vulnerable to Jason and all other native Corinthians. In order to emphasize Medea's particular burden as a woman, I think people downplay her particular burden as a geographical and cultural outsider. But this outsidership is integral to her victimization. The chorus of the Women of Corinth are not her allies. As she stands in front of them, they call her a "witch" and "stone with stones eyes" (Jeffers 122). She feels distant from them, she has a different value system and she makes fun of their "democracy" that treats her so poorly and with such suspicion. This contributes to Medea's feeling of loneliness and helplessness. I intend to highlight this outsidership through the use of costumes, and in my ideal production Medea would be a woman of color, because I think race is one of the ways outsider status manifests itself, especially in contemporary society. But there are other ways that otherness can manifest itself and so, I will keep my mind very open in the auditions.

And of course, Medea's gender certainly works against her. Medea as a woman is considered naturally inferior in her society. She is dependent on men in many ways, and as soon as Jason decides that he doesn't want her anymore, she is put at the mercy of an uncaring world in which she has no agency. Medea's independent and rebellious nature makes her a scapegoat for society as well, because she cannot be controlled through the normal means and therefore must be made into an enemy. Medea's vengeance is reflective of her desire to break free from the confines of her gender. To kill her children is to give up the burden of motherhood thrust upon her by a sexist society, which has forced her into bearing and caring for children. Clearly, her gender is significant to the plot as a whole, since were she a man, she would not need to exact vengeance in the particular manner that she does.

I have, am, and will consider various approaches to gender in this play. I considered making Jason into a woman to see how it changed Medea's status. I am no longer committed to this idea because I think there are other ways that I would like to explore gender in this play at the moment though I won't prohibit anyone from auditioning for any role. That said, I think it is extremely important that Medea be played by a woman, and that the chorus be played by women. As of now the character I am most interested in gender swapping is Aegeus: through this switch, our production can avoid the trope of "the man coming in to save the day" and instead showcase an alliance between two women.

Medea, in killing her children and bringing Jason to ruin, she considers herself not just an exactor vengeance, but also an enactor justice, which the state refuses to give her as a foreign woman. She says, "This is not always just, but we know that justice, at least

on earth, / Is a name, not a fact” (121). What does one do when justice is not being upheld? What justice can be done when it is those in power committing the crimes? How does one enact justice if the crime is not truly a governmental crime but a crime against the feelings of an individual? These are all questions that come to mind with Medea’s form of justice, a justice that operates solely on a sort of equality principle. Justice, from Medea’s perspective, will be upheld if both she and Jason are reduced to nothing; but she takes into account nothing else, and does not think of people outside of this circle of revenge.

Medea is principally a story of vengeance, and in the end we see the full effects of exacting revenge upon those who wrong you. Medea does not gain by her revenge, she too loses her children. She holds them up as symbols to the world of her triumph but also of her failure. Her obsession avenging herself against Jason leads her to forget her role as a mother, and kill the only two members left of her family who care about her. Jason is broken completely and utterly. Creon and his daughter are dead, leaving Corinth without a leader. And she simply escapes to Athens, a city that must accept her, though she is a murderer. Medea’s vengeance has individual and political repercussions.

Medea reveals the dark side of love. Love sweeps her off her feet and leads her into madness: she will do anything for Jason. This means she also loses everything when he leaves. A woman in love is foolish. She acts without regard for her own safety. Ultimately, *Medea* does not come out in favor of love, because for Medea love is a dangerous and treacherous thing, especially because she is a woman, and thus more exposed to harm in general – and certainly even more exposed because of the depths of

her love. Yet, had Medea had more love for her children than hatred for Jason, perhaps this would not have happened.

Finally, when dealing with any tragedy, especially Greek tragedy, the role of fate must be addressed. When Euripides wrote this play, it is probable that Medea's murder of her children would have been an inevitable crime, something the Gods had predetermined. This was her fate. However, in a modern context "I was fated to do this horrible thing" is not really acceptable reasoning. And so, Medea's motives for killing her children must be examined more closely. Pure revenge is an obvious motive. Love is a motive, as Medea believes she is saving her children from exile, but this falls apart when Creusa allows them to stay. Jealous love is a motive: she cannot bear to let anyone have them.

Finally, there is the idea that Medea cannot be saddled anymore with the yoke of motherhood and by extension womanhood. She behaves unnaturally towards her children because she no longer desires to be thought of as a natural woman who is subject to the laws and order of the world.

THE PLAY

Medea is the story of a woman betrayed, abandoned and alone in the world. Jason deserting her has thrown her into such anger and depression that she is driven to something like madness. She feels used. She feels unloved, unloved by the person she loves above all else, the person she sacrificed everything for. Before the play begins she has abandoned and betrayed her father, in order to help Jason obtain the Golden Fleece. She killed her own brother so that she could escape with Jason. After arriving in Iolcus, Medea conspired to have Pelias (the ruler) killed by his own daughters. And then upon

finally arriving at Corinth, Jason leaves Medea for Creusa, King Creon's daughter. Jason had hoped to keep Medea and their two sons safe in Corinth, but Creon will not allow this as Medea is a threat to his daughter and her children with Jason a threat to Creusa's future children with Jason.

This is where the play commences. Medea has been horribly scorned and the play opens with her lamenting in her house. She does not appear for eight pages, but she is the subject of all the conversation and we hear her voice. We see her children run onto stage unaware of their fate. When Medea finally enters she seems irrevocably broken, but also strong, vengeful and ironic in her grief. She swings back and forth between utter despair and complete fury. The women of Corinth grieve for her, but she does not accept their or anyone else's pity.

Creon comes to tell her of her exile, and also to humiliate her. In this scene we see that despite Medea's depressive and seemingly insane behavior, she is capable of acting in a calculated manner. She convinces Creon, with the help of the women of Corinth, that she needs the rest of the day in Corinth to prepare for exile. This scene epitomizes the two central struggles of this play the struggle between two genders and the struggle between the Greek and non-Greek, between native and foreign, or in the view of most of the play's characters, between the civilized and the barbarian. Medea is on the losing end of this battle, but she plots to come out at least equal if not on top. Her mind is set solely on vengeance; she does not consider life after revenge. Her nurse does, and makes plans for Aegeus of Athens, staying at Creon's house, to come and see Medea. Medea regains her sensibility just long enough to ask Aegeus for unconditional sanctuary in Athens. In this short-time frame, she determines exactly what she must do, and feigns subservience

and acceptance of her position. She makes a golden cloak and a golden crown to give to Creusa.

In the beginning of Act II Jason arrives, at first unwilling to accept the gifts, but is finally persuaded by Medea that he can use the gifts to convince Creusa (and therefore Creon) to embrace his sons and allow them to stay in Corinth. The scene between Medea and Jason is simultaneously intimate and distant. It shows their relationship and Jason's relationship to his children in an absolutely essential way. We must see that they once were in love and that Jason to some degree still loves her and still cares tremendously for his children.

Jason and the children take the gifts to Creusa, who, we are told by the chorus and Jason, accepts them after some persuasion. She loves the gifts and puts the cloak and crown on as soon as she can, but then she erupts into flames, apparently from the inside out. Creon jumps on her to save her and dies himself. Jason watches unable to save them. All of this happens off-stage and is simply described. Meanwhile Medea has called her children into the house. When Jason returns to Medea his children are already dead, and Medea stands in triumph as she looks at the utterly abandoned Jason.

THIS ADAPTATION

Medea has a long history. Euripides wrote it in 431 BCE and won third place at the City Dionysia festival. Since then there have been many adaptations and translations. I chose to work with the Robinson Jeffers 1947 adaptation.

The Robinson Jeffers translation, which is "freely adapted," wonderfully blends a classical text with a more contemporary style. It maintains a chorus, although it separates the women of Corinth into separate women. I would experiment with this building on the

idea of a Greek chorus. Jeffers was a poet and in his adaptation he gives the text a new poetry. I think it is a disservice to use a text that has been merely translated, because it is the sense and feeling of the text that must be legible, and not just the words. These plays were done in massive festivals for very large (male) audiences. They were not done for a small elite class, and this adaptation will be more accessible to a modern audience than a more linguistically faithful version, while maintaining the feel of a classical text through poetry and the heightened nature of the circumstances. The way that Jeffers divides the chorus into three women makes them more real, they become distinct characters.

Jeffers also emphasizes certain themes. He concentrates on Medea as a rebel figure, overthrowing the status quo. Creon is a bad king of Corinth, so is it really a tragedy when he dies? Medea is treated badly because she is a foreigner, but in a modern context we have sympathy for her because of this. This problem was very relevant at the time Jeffers wrote and remains so now. It also expresses a lot of the Imperialism inherent in *Medea*, Jason comes off as an imperialist when he talks about what a great service he did for her, to take her from her native land and bring her to civilized Greece. Jeffers is also more feminist in his take on *Medea* and allows Medea to comment more on her society's treatment of women. When Jeffers wrote his adaptation in the wake of WWII, the US was about to enter one of its most conservative decades. Women returned to their homes and there was great fear of foreign threats. As it happens, the year that this adaptation was first produced was also the year in which a Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, went to serve in Washington DC. It was a time paralleling today which makes this particular translation/adaptation especially relevant.

MESSAGE

Medea is a well-known story; most likely almost everyone who comes to see the play at Brown will have some familiarity with it. So how do I make this story fresh? What is the point in telling a story that people already know? My primary goal in telling this story is to have all the characters be extremely sympathetic. What is odd about this play is that everyone sympathizes with Medea, despite the fact that she kills her own children. People tend not to sympathize with Jason because they blame him for his children's death, since he scorned Medea. However, I wish to make it clear in the production (primarily through acting) that Jason too is a product of the world he lives in. He needed to marry the princess of Corinth because he could not live life with his two children as a poor man.

At the end of the show I do not want the audience to walk away with a clear idea of who was the good guy and who was the bad guy. They must question whether Jason is primarily responsible through wronging Medea, or if Medea just responded completely irrationally, or did this tragedy develop because Medea chose to abandon her family, the people who had raised her, for some guy? I want the audience to switch loyalty throughout the show. The viewing experience should be different for different audience members, but hopefully at some point in the middle of the show the audience will want Medea to take absolute vengeance on Jason. I want the audience to hate Jason at first; this will be accomplished through staging in which Jason will be in a world separate from and above Medea. In the end, when he is laid low and left completely alone, just as Medea was, the audience should not only empathize with his situation, but should also

feel complicit. They should realize that they wanted Medea to avenge herself on Jason, but that fervor for vengeance can lead to horrible things.

Though *Medea* is a tragedy, no tragedy is complete without some comedy. Let's face it, Medea's reaction to Jason leaving her, though emotionally real, is actionally absurd. No logical person would kill their children in order to revenge themselves on their lover. Yet, it happens, and most importantly we believe it. The first element that must be sought and revealed in *Medea* is the emotional sincerity. However, there should also be an element of irony about the piece, a certain comic effect that doesn't quite make complete sense to the audience. If the audience laughs at the characters, then they will feel even worse when the characters fall. I wish to provide the audience with an emotional arc, because if the entire play is "woe is me" no one will care. If they journey *with* these characters they will care. Although the story begins in a moment of extreme sadness, the audience's journey should mirror the characters and resemble a roller-coaster rather than a strict downward spiral. I also think that adding comedy to a piece makes people think more. As Horace Walpole said, "the world is a tragedy to those who feel, but a comedy to those who think." And what I really want to happen with this piece is for people to feel intensely while they watch it, but then leave the theatre thinking.

I believe the ultimate message of this play is that hatred doesn't really make anyone happy. Medea can wallow in her hatred, can even be momentarily triumphant in her hatred, but her revenge on Jason only leaves her more alone. And perhaps even more importantly, other people were affected by her actions, the people of Corinth are leaderless, and so the implications of Medea's actions for the political world within the

play are huge. Creon and Creusa are dead, and most importantly her young children are dead. No one is immune to hatred and it causes actions that will later be regretted.

Of course, even this assumption can be questioned depending on how Medea is played. Her ending is triumphant in a way: has her revenge made her happier than any other remedy could have?

WHY PW? WHY NOW?

Very simple, *Medea* is an awesome play. It has an amazing plot, great characters and a spectacular script. Euripides though he is from the fifth century BCE is an enduring figure in the history of theatre and playwriting. The themes in *Medea*—love, revenge, fate, motherhood, foreignness, womanhood, loneliness and otherness—are still relevant. There is no question in my mind that despite being an ancient Greek myth this story is timeless. It cannot be anything else because it deals with true, raw human emotion. So, truly the answer to the question of why now, is why not always?

Today's social and political landscape both enhance the relevance of *Medea*'s themes. As I mentioned earlier, this adaptation puts an emphasis on Medea's foreignness which relates to our modern immigration politics and how we treat those who are different from us. It is also a play tied completely to Medea's female identity. In an age when women, although being conceptually considered equals, are not being treated as such, in Washington and beyond, this aspect of the play gains additional relevance. It presents a strong (yes, some may even say hysterical woman) woman who calculates, plans, manipulates and triumphs over a man. Giving a woman this role to play here, at Brown and now, in 2013/2014 is important because even as we work towards more

strong female roles on stage, we are so often still stuck relying on the roles of ingénue and leading man. Perhaps Medea was once an ingénue, but she has realized the fault in her thinking by the time the play begins. An ingénue allows herself to be totally exposed without asking much in return, and that is exactly what happened to Medea, until she decides to take back her power. The only ingénue in this play never appears on stage, and she is mentioned most importantly in her death. Medea literally kills the ingénue. She kills the willing and submissive girl, and replaces her with a powerful, violent, unabashed and emotional woman. She is the kind of role that everyone longs to play, and for women these roles can be few and far between. In a world where most female characters can be categorized and put into their box, Medea doesn't fit into a stereotype. She is not the sexy woman. She is not the innocent woman. She is not even the villainous woman. She is Medea.

Another reason why Brown would benefit from putting on this play now is that an Ancient Greek play has not been done in my time here (and perhaps for a while before), and working on and seeing an ancient Greek play is a unique experience—one our community has not recently been able to enjoy.

As for why PW, I think that this play needs the Downspace. There is no place on campus that I can think of that could really give the feel of a Greek amphitheater. Most other places where plays can be done on campus are fairly small, and this play is not. It cannot be contained in a small space. In some ways it is intimate, which I wish to establish, but in many ways it is HUGE. And the Downspace allows for both of these possibilities. I hope to utilize the Downspace in both its intimate and epic capacity. I think too that PW has the means to reach a lot of people for both auditions and audiences,

and I firmly believe that this text deserves to be seen by many. I also think that more people than usual would come and audition for it, thus hopefully bringing other people into PW.

REHEARSAL PROCESS

The rehearsal process is the most important part of this project. If everyone loves the performances but hates the rehearsal and learns nothing, I have failed as a director. Obviously my specific rehearsal strategies will depend on a lot of factors, especially the slot that I get and the actors. Nonetheless, here is a brief outline of what I will be trying to accomplish in each week, with a chart describing the basic technical side of the process.

WEEK ONE

Before we start on the first read through, we will all meet or re-meet each other. This will of course start with just saying our names to everyone and then possibly playing some sort of name game. We will share roses and thorns at the beginning of every rehearsal, just to check in with one another. Then we will play a quick fast paced warm-up game like five things and a focus game like pass the clap. This minus the name game is what will start every rehearsal in the process, along with a vocal and physical warm-up. All actors will be welcomed and encouraged to come to the warm-up even on days when they are not called. Then we will start a read through of the play in its entirety. After this we will talk about major themes, and particular elements of the play that struck people. I will also share some of my ideas on the play with the actors at this time.

The next day, we will start off again with the warm-ups and do a cast building exercise, such as contact improv or the like, and incorporating some of the work that I

learned in Clown and Creative Ensemble this past summer. It is of the utmost importance to me that the cast feels completely comfortable, and completely connected. Another great exercise I would like to incorporate is having the actors pair up, watch each other perform a solo dance, and then perform that same solo dance back to their partner, though this might come later in the week to make sure that people are comfortable enough to realize that this is not mocking someone. Depending on how long this takes, and I anticipate this kind of cast bonding could take the whole night, we may set aside a special portion for working just with the chorus women to establish a sense of being both one and three through movement and speech. And I will pay particular attention to getting these three women connected even when they are far from one another on stage. They will need to develop a vocabulary of movement that complements their words.

The next night we will move on to text work with all of the actors, figuring out how to work with the poetry of the text. After a brief intro about this with all the actors, and allowing each actor to do a speech/ line of theirs from the show for everyone while working through the poetry, we will start on a very rough blocking of the show so that the actors can get a feel for the entire show as it is in the space. This will be for discovering major moments in the show and working through particularly difficult parts for the actors. By Friday, we will hopefully have at least skimmed on the entire play, though not fully blocked any of them, and we will have a very rough design run. (Before which we will of course make sure that all the actors and designers know each other, just through simple introductions not through a game) This will be more for the designers to get a feel for the play than for them to see what the final product might look like.

WEEK TWO

In week two, since we took a day off, we will start on Sunday with a bonding exercise. Then we will release people who are not in our designated scene 1 of the show, and start going through the show in detail from the top. We will block as we go, and work through the scenes for text and relationships. If any of the actors are having individual problems we will work with them at the end of the night. Hopefully we will be doing about two scenes a night, or about 20 pages, though most likely this will not be feasible. At this point the actors will only be called for the scenes they are in, though, as I said, all will be encouraged to come to the warm-ups. On Thursday we will have our second design run, and hopefully the show will be relatively blocked, at least fully for Act I and the most of Act II at this point (possibly with the exception of the final moment, but there will be a rough idea of it). Before the run starts on Thursday, we will all get together, whether or not the entirety of the show is blocked to do another bonding exercise together. Depending on how long we decide we need for the run, we may even have time to work on what we have left of the show, but I'm not sure that I particularly want the actors to be under that sort of stress. On Friday we will either continue blocking the show, or if we have somehow finished go over rough pieces.

WEEK THREE

We will start on Sunday with the entire cast for another bonding or revisiting of a bonding exercise. Then we will either continue blocking or go back to scenes that need the most blocking work. On Monday night we will run the entire show after some scene work. The same will happen on Tuesday, and on Wednesday as well, but this will be a design run. On Thursday we will continue working the show, this night we will not run it

but will take the time to work on particularly problematic spots. On Friday we will run the show for the last time before tech.

WEEK FOUR

Wet tech will happen on Sunday, with a tech run of the show that night. Then for the rest of the week until Friday we will run the show every night. We will use the very beginning of rehearsal to work on parts that need work, and then actors who were working will go get into costume (the others hopefully will have already) at around 7 and start warm-ups at 7:30 and then have the dress-runs start at 8. After which we will do notes.

TECHNICAL CALENDAR

Week of October 20:

--Check in with designers to insure participation

February Slot: (Saturdays will be taken off, Sunday rehearsal will be during the day)

Week of Dec. 1-7: Auditions

Dec. 9: strike

Dec. 9-11: Read-through at some point

WINTER BREAK!!!!!!! (Memorize first act) (I might meet with whoever is cast as Medea prior to Winter Break)

January 13: In the space

January 13th-20th- Rehearsals 10am-2pm and 4pm-8pm.

Friday, Jan. 17: Design Run

Thursday, Jan. 23: Design Run

Wednesday, Jan. 29: Design Run

Friday, Jan. 31: Paper tech

Saturday, Feb. 1: Dry Tech

Sunday, Feb. 2: Wet Tech and Tech Run

Feb. 3- 6: (6pm-11pm rehearsals) Dress runs

Feb.7-10: Performances

Feb. 10: Strike

March Slot:

Late in the Week of January 31st or Feb 3-7 week: Auditions

Feb 10: Rehearsal followed by STRIKE

Feb 11: In Space

Feb 14 VALENTINES DAY (how appropriate): 1st Design run

Feb 20: 2nd Design Run

Feb 26: 3rd Design Run

Feb 28: Paper Tech

Mar 1: Dry Tech

Mar 2: Wet Tech

Mar. 3-6: Dress runs 6-11

Mar 7-10: Performances

Mar 10: Strike

As a matter of slot preference, I am partial to February, because, this is a really big show and will take a lot of work text wise and emotionally. Plus Medea will have a lot of lines to memorize and it will be easiest if she can do this over Winter break.

ROLE AS A LEADER

My most basic function as a director is to see the play with the audience's eyes. I have to watch for cohesion, believability, etc. I have to make sure the story is being communicated. However, while I am seeing the play with the eyes of the audience, I have to see the actors and designers with the eyes of a collaborator. Even as I watch critically, I must watch as an equal, because the most important thing that I can do is respect everyone involved in the process. Everyone should feel that they are playing an essential role in the process and if anyone feels that they are not getting something they want to be getting out of the process, they need to feel free to talk to me and I will change what I am doing to help them. I think it is more important to ask actors questions than to give them answers. I would like to guide them to their own Medea or Jason or Nurse, not tell them who any one of those characters is. In this way I hope they can change my perception of the show as much as I hope I can help them change theirs. However, I understand that all actors don't work in the same way just as all designers don't and so all cannot be treated in the same way. Some people work better with very small, very intimate work, while some people are fine receiving their notes in a massive group. I won't be able to always treat everyone exactly how they prefer to be treated, but I hope that in some way throughout the process I will be able to accommodate everyone's individual needs.

As a director, I believe that I am both leading the project and being led by—leading the actors and being led by them. This starts with talking to designers, because while I have my own ideas it is also important that designers' ideas get expressed in the work as well. I see myself as melding together the different ideas, making all of the design fit together into one cohesive piece, but allowing everyone to own a piece of the

final production. The same thing goes for working in the room with actors. Even when I am in the casting room I hope that someone can come in and help me see a role in a different way than I could ever conceive of it.

Primarily I will approach this piece from a textual standpoint. The most important thing I can do as a director is tell the story of the piece, and to do this the actors need to understand every word that comes out of their mouths. But in order to make a cohesive piece there must be an extremely good connection between all the actors. Even though all the actors will basically never be on stage all at the same time I cannot imagine nor do I understand doing a play that doesn't have a basis in establishing a complete ensemble. The primary goal of each actor should be to affect the other person on stage and react to the other actors genuinely. As such they must be adept at responding to one another, and comfortable enough with each other to play. In order for this to happen I need to create a comfortable rehearsal space and help to create a cast bond outside of rehearsal, à la cast parties etc. The first play I did at PW completely changed my life at Brown. And it was largely because of how close I felt to everyone else in the rehearsal room. *Ordet* gave me a safe space to come to every day and just exist. And that's what I want to do for my cast and crew. I want them to feel like they are coming into the most comfortable and welcoming place. I want rehearsal to be an exciting place to go. And if I really do my job right even after rehearsals are over, everyone will still feel like when they are together they are going back to this safe space.

An essential element of this collaborative environment is creating a safe space for "failure." I hold very dearly the belief that failure is necessary to truly succeed. In order to have the best process we can, we cannot travel in a straight line. There need to be lows

in the process so that we can have amazing highs, and if an actor travels just from point A to point B without any detours then they haven't made any discoveries. I think that I must help them take these detours, until they become completely useless and more like wallowing than discovery, at which point it is my job to get them back on track, or if the detour succeeds incorporate it into the play. I must cushion their falls by letting them know that failure is okay. Up to and even including the nights of performance I want the actors to know that trying new things is good—not new things that might screw up the other actors of course, but new things that keep them discovering until strike, and hopefully leave them with questions after. In order for this to happen, it is my job to create a safe space and an environment that embraces trying different things even if that leads to so-called failure.

EXPERIENCE/ RESUME

At Brown:

Directing:

Nudity in Theatre 2013, PW upspace, **Director**

Last of Kin, dir. Henry Chaisson, **rehearsal coordinator**

Happy Endings in the UpSpace, PW upspace, **coordinator**

Various directing and third eyeing in TA23 and TA116

Acting:

A Streetcar Named Desire, Sock and Buskin, **Eunice**

Romeo and Juliet, Production Workshop, **Prince/ Ensemble**

Equus, Production Workshop, **Dora**

Ordet, Production Workshop, **Pastor**

Twelfth Night, Shakespeare on the Green, **Captain/ Lady-in-waiting**

The Reality Effect, Dir. Zachary Rufa, **Husband**

The Roaring Girl, Shakespeare on the Green, **Mary Fitzallard**

The Tempest Shakespeare on the Green, **Gonzalo**

Other:

Sock and Buskin Board Member

A Streetcar Named Desire, Sock and Buskin, **Dramaturge**

Sink, Production Workshop, **Asst. Sound Design**
El Sueno, Production Workshop, **Video Publicity**
Straight White Men, Sock and Buskin, **Dramaturgical team**
Next to Normal, Musical Forum, **Asst. costumes**
The Golem or Get these Nazi's out of my Wedding, Production Workshop, **Stage Manager**

Classes:

The Apprentice Program: Clown with Jane Nichols and Creative Ensemble with Ken Prestinzi

TA23: Acting

TA116: Style and Performance

TA1400: Advanced Performance

Outside of Brown:

Directing:

Hamlet, Shakespeare Festival at Tulane, **Asst. Director**

A Midsummer Night's Dream, Shakespeare Festival at Tulane, **Assistant Director/
Faculty**

Intimate Apparel, NOCCA, **Cast B director**

Various Acting experience

Training:

New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts (NOCCA) Level II and III with Janet Shea, Silius Cooper and Jason Kirkpatrick

Theatre Performance Intensive with the Shakespeare School at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario taught by Edward Daranyi- Summer 2010

BADA- British American Dramatic Academy, Midsummer Conservatory Program with Simon Dormandy, Eunice Roberts, Jessica Higgs, Marcelle Davis, Norman Ayrton, and Christopher Cook- Summer 2009

DESIGN

SET

The set will be minimalist. It will take place most likely in a three-quarter thrust taking up the length of the downspace, oriented like the set of *The Visit*, but with one more side.

If this is the case there will be 3-5 pillars in varying heights and states of ruin. Most if not all of these will hopefully be movable by the actors so they can create different spaces on stage. Jason will also have his own plane above Medea's so that he is almost untouchable

by her, however, this will be thrown off when Medea triumphs in the end and the staging of the last moment when she reveals the bodies of her children will definitely show an extreme change in stage picture. The set should have the feel of a Greek amphitheater, and so it may be done in the round with the audience higher up than they usually are for shows and the actors at ground level, but with some way that the actors can get higher than the audience. I like the Greek amphitheater feel for *Medea*, not just because this is an ancient Greek play, but the amphitheater design places the audience above the performance, giving them the godlike perspective of seeming to orchestrate the action. It gives the spectators an uncomfortable feeling of looking down on the actors, as though the characters' woes are petty. The play is anything but petty.

COSTUMES

The costumes will be relatively minimalist like the set. The color scheme will be darker and cooler in general, with exceptions for certain reds and golds. Most important in the costumes is that Medea looks different from everyone else in the show, she must seem foreign. They will definitely be inspired by ancient Greek clothes, with possibly a few more modern elements. The three chorus women will all have a very similar costume, and will have one costume piece that they can easily put on to pretend to be the children.

LIGHTS

The lights will be relatively stark for most of the show, and though they will not be naturalistic, for most of the show they will be fairly simple and generally on the colder side of the spectrum. The big exception to this is the last moment when Medea reveals her murdered children, the lights here should completely change from the rest of the

show. There may be evidence in the previous lights of the moment to come, but it should be the sort of thing where you only notice it after the fact.

SOUND

A major theme in the sound design of this show will be the idea of Greek vs. “barbarian.” The Greek being represented by both traditional Greek instruments and a sort of more structured feel in the sound and underscore, the sound will be sharp and purposeful, evoking vivid images. While Medea and her people as “the other” will be represented by a style of sound and music that is less known to our ears. Medea herself, represents the conflict between these two and will at times embody both of them. However, the sound will not overwhelm and will be tied to the under laying atmospheric sound cues, these will be utilized to deliver the difference between the Greek and the foreign. However, there will be several points at which the sound will shoot out of this subtle atmospheric underlay. When the horrific events of the play, like Creusa’s death are described, an ominous sound, like the still crackling fire will play under it. But while the telling of Medea’s actions will be underscored, Medea’s actual presence on stage especially just before and after her most horrific actions will be comparatively quiet, no sound effects will contribute to her actions.

PROPS

Props will be minimal but necessary. Primarily the gold cloak and golden crown are required, but it is possible that the children will have props to connate their childhood, and possibly props will be involved with the reveal of the dead bodies.

BUDGET

| Aspect of Show | Amount of \$ | Why? |
|----------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Costumes | 200 | Finding Grecian inspired outfits and possibly some accessories to distinguish characters |
| Set | 430 | Wood, paint, etc. The set will not definitely cost a ton of money, but it is nice to have. |
| Lights | 20 | Gels possibly |
| Sound | 0 | |
| Props | 50 | Gold cloak, gold crown, some other things for children |
| Printing | 50 | Scripts. Sides, extra posters/ programs |
| TOTAL | 750 | |

CAST BREAKDOWN

I am trying to keep the play down to a cast of seven or eight. Some roles will be double cast, firstly because I don't want to cast two people as the children who then have two lines each, and whose main function in the play is to stand there and be bloodied, other parts I wish to double cast largely for the purpose of creating a tight ensemble.

F

M

M/F

Medea

Jason

Aegeus/tutor/snake

Nurse

Creon/ snake guarding door (maybe)

1st woman`

2nd woman/ child

3rd woman/ child

There are a couple of alternative double castings and the genders are flexible, though as I said it is important that Medea be played by a woman because this story is intrinsically tied to her gender, and also roles like this for women are far fewer than roles like this for men. In some way or form, it would be great if every actor was on stage during the last scene, because intrinsic to Medea's reveal of her murdered children is that the world sees. It is a public action.

IMPORTANT QUOTES

Here are some quotes that particularly struck me while I was reading the play, so I thought I would share them with you:

*She turns her face toward the Earth, remembering her father's house and her native land, which she abandoned
For the love of this man: who now despises her. (114)*

It is easier to stand in battle three times, in the front line, in the stabbing fury, than to bear one child. (131)

I carried you/ out of the dirt and superstition of Asiatic Colchis into the rational/ Sunlight of Greece and the marble music of Greek temples (139)

As to those acts of service you so loudly boast—whom do I thank for them? I thank divine Venus, the goddess/ Who makes girls fall in love. You did them because you had to do them; Venus compelled you; I Enjoyed her favor. A man dares things, you know; he makes his adventure/ In the cold eye of death; if the gods care for him/ They appoint and instrument to save him; if not he dies. You were that instrument. (139-140)

Annihilation. The word is pure music: annihilation. To annihilate the past--/ Is not possible: but its fruit in the present--/ Can be nipped off. (142)

Not justice; vengeance./ You have suffered evil, you wish to inflict evil...I have heard evil/ Answering evil as thunder answers the lightning./ A great waster voice in the hollow sky,/ and all that they say is death. (170)

You are not suffering. / You saw it you did not feel it. Speak plainly. (178)

SOME ADDITIONAL INSPIRATIONS

Here are some songs that make me think of Medea. They primarily have similar themes, but there are musical elements in all three that reflect the story arc of the show.

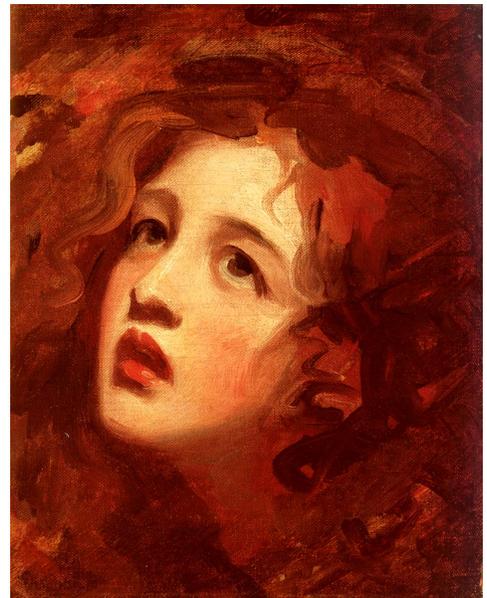
A Good Man is Hard to Find: written by Eddie Green and originally performed by Bessie Smith, but I listen to the version by the New Orleans Moonshiners.

Endangered Species- Diana Ross

Mad about the Boy- Dinah Washington

And these are some visual inspirations:

The Battle of Anghiari by Rubens



Portrait Study of Emma Hamilton as Miranda by George Romney



Lady Hamilton as Miranda by George Romney

THANK YOU SO MUCH! I HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE PLAY AND THE PROPOSAL. WHATEVER HAPPENS...

**MUCH LOVE,
CELESTE**

PS. SEE YOU SATURDAY!