



Contact: David Severtson, dlsevertson@heronowtheatre.org, (612) 789-2087
heronowtheatre.org
facebook.com/heronowtheatre | twitter.com/HeroNowTheatre

Hero Now Theatre Begins Second Season with Modern
Adaptation and Staging of *The Oresteia*, by Aeschylus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saint Anthony, Minnesota, August 9, 2016 – Giant works of stone, wire, and wood evoke the ruins of Athens as Hero Now Theatre stages its first production of its second season this September and performs a classic of ancient Greek drama, *The Oresteia* by Aeschylus, in a modern adaptation by Minnesota poet and classicist Rob Hardy.

Hardy's adaptation of *The Oresteia*, which will be staged in an outdoor sculpture gallery in northeast Minneapolis, tells of Orestes's return from exile to revenge the murder of his father, Agamemnon the king, by his mother's hand. It is a tale of murder and revenge, but also about how ancient Athenians began to find their way toward a society based on law and justice.

Aeschylus lived in the 5th century (B.C.E.), and the three plays that make up his *Oresteia* won first prize when they were first performed. Hardy, who has taught Greek and Latin at Carleton College and in public schools, has condensed the plays into a compelling 2-hour drama that presents the core issues to modern audiences unfamiliar with the ancient

story. Hero Now Theatre's production will be the second time Hardy's adaptation has been brought to the stage.

And how the themes of this ancient story echo in our time! If a member of your family had been murdered, what course of action would you choose? What would you call "justice"? What about your obligations to survivors? What actions or decisions would restore moral order to the world? This play shows something of how ancient Greeks thought about these questions, but also how our thinking both mimics and differs from theirs.

Director Kristin Halsey is beginning to make a solid mark in the Twin Cities professional theatre world. Having spent several years directing non-professional productions, she is quickly becoming known for her bold choices, her clear vision for every play she takes on, and her social vision for the company she began with her husband, Peter Aitchison, and their colleague, David Severtson.

This production of *The Oresteia* will continue Hero Now's tradition of performing in venues that bring new experiences to audiences. They are called "found spaces." In its first season Hero Now pitched a tent on a snowy Minnesota field in January and performed *Terra Nova*, a play about an Antarctic expedition that reached the South Pole in 1912. The unique staging garnered coverage in several media outlets, including Fox 9 (KMSP), Minnesota Public Radio's Art Hounds, and the Minneapolis StarTribune's Web edition.

So, when Ms. Halsey and Mr. Aitchison stumbled upon Zoran Mojsilov's sculpture gallery in northeast Minneapolis during Art-a-Whirl weekend, they knew it would be the perfect spot to perform *The Oresteia*. Its large granite columns, many salvaged from old Minneapolis buildings, are reminiscent of ancient civilizations. Mixed into the collection are

a couple of Mojsilov's own sculptures, which are well known to Minneapolis residents (in particular anyone who has eaten at the Greek restaurant Gardens of Salonica).

Performances of *The Oresteia*, which are outdoors, are next to the old Grain Belt warehouse building in northeast Minneapolis and run September 9-11 and September 15-18. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. and tickets (\$25) are available through Hero Now Theatre's website (heronowtheatre.org), which has complete information about this production.

Hero Now Theatre's mission is to tell stories so compelling that you experience something new—an insight, self-understanding, an idea for change—that leads you to respond, to be a hero, now.

We believe that great theatre has a civic purpose: to encourage serious reflection on important issues. We engage audiences with stories about everyday people making extraordinary choices, with a unique atmosphere in nontraditional performance venues, and with thoughtful conversation before and after each performance.