

PEACE

ARISTOPHANES MEETS CULTURE CLASH

at the Getty Villa

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PERFORMANCE TRIO CULTURE CLASH MEETS ARISTOPHANES IN *PEACE* AT THE GETTY VILLA

Directed by Longtime Angeleno Bill Rauch, Aristophanes' Peace is the Getty Villa's Fourth Annual Outdoor Theater Production

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays,
Sept. 10 – Oct. 3, 2009, 8 p.m.

LOS ANGELES—This September, the Getty Villa is transformed into the Olympian Palace of Zeus for Aristophanes' *Peace*, the fourth annual outdoor theatrical production in the Villa's Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater. Directed by Bill Rauch, this free-wheeling adaptation of Aristophanes' bawdy utopian escapade features the comic anarchy of Culture Clash. Appearing alongside the three-man troupe are two luminaries of the Los Angeles' theater scene, comedic actors John Fleck and Amy Hill, with music by an onstage trio of singing musicians led by Mariachi Divas' Suzanne Garcia. *Peace* will be presented on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, September 10-October 3, 2009.

It has been said that Aristophanes recreated the life of ancient Athens more convincingly than any other writer. In 421 B.C., the 27-year-old highly acclaimed comic playwright launched a ribald and scathing theatrical assault on the entrenched military-industrial complex of Athens with *Peace*. The play was staged during the great festival of Dionysos just a few days before the ratification of the Peace of Nicias, a truce which promised to end the disastrous ten-year-old Peloponnesian War.

In Aristophanes' play, the brutish god War has imprisoned the goddess Peace on Mount Olympus and holds sway over all of Greece. Meanwhile, on Earth below, a band of rustic patriots hatch a plot to fly to the heavens, rescue the goddess, and restore Peace to the land.

Rarely performed, Culture Clash and co-author John Glore have freely adapted this ancient play for modern times. The production was commissioned by the Getty Museum for this one-month run. Comprising Culture Clash are Richard Montoya, Ric Salinas, and Herbert Siguenza. Founded in San Francisco in 1984, the trio is now based in Los Angeles, and

celebrates the 25th anniversary of their founding in 2009. *Peace* is just one part of their twenty-fifth anniversary season "Like Aristophanes, most of our work is based in social commentary and satire," explains Salinas. "We were especially drawn to *Peace* because we felt it was pertinent for our time and, as one of Aristophanes' rarely performed works, it gives us a chance to bring this play to the attention of a larger audience."

"Plus, this is one of Aristophanes' bawdiest plays, and that was something we just couldn't resist," adds Montoya. "I know it will be hard for audiences to believe this, but we actually had to tone him down a bit."

Peace is Culture Clash's second encounter with Aristophanes at the Getty Villa. In 2007, the group collaborated with playwright John Glore on a production of Aristophanes' *The Birds* for the Getty's Villa Theater Lab series. Glore continues his collaboration with Culture Clash for this production.

For *Peace*, Director Bill Rauch returns to Los Angeles from Oregon, where he now serves as artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

"There are very few opportunities that would tempt me to leave Ashland for any length of time," says Rauch. "Culture Clash is part of a long and honorable theatrical bridge that extends back to Aristophanes and the chance to work with them, along with John Glore, John Fleck, and Amy Hill in a spectacular outdoor setting makes this production a real homecoming gift for me."

Also joining the collaborative team at the Getty are longtime colleagues of Rauch, Christopher Acebo (set design), Shigeru Yaji (costumes), Geoff Korf (lighting), and Lynn Jeffries (puppets).

Peace is part of the Getty Villa's innovative theater program, which enhances the visitor's understanding of the ancient world. Live performances of classical drama offer insight into the social, cultural, and political realities of life in ancient Greece and Rome, while in the Museum's galleries, the connection between modern audiences and the stories underlying the tragedies and comedies on stage is deepened.

"Theater was an important part of life in the ancient world and through the Villa's theater program, it is one of our goals to communicate to audiences that Classical drama continues to resonate with contemporary playwrights and companies today," says Karol Wight, senior curator of antiquities for the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Our annual outdoor production each fall, combined with the more experimental Theater Lab presentations throughout the year, offers the public an opportunity to experience these timeless plays from a modern perspective."

Peace Performance Schedule

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, September 10–October 3, 2009.

All performances begin at 8 p.m. at the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater at the Getty Villa

Peace Tickets

Tickets are currently on sale: \$42; \$36 for students/seniors.

Tickets may be purchased by visiting www.getty.edu or calling (310) 440-7300.

Please note that this play contains humor not suitable for children.

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About Public Programs at the Getty Villa:

The Getty Villa offers a variety of public programs including theater, musical performances, film screenings, Family Festivals, lectures, and seminars. These events complement the J. Paul Getty Museum's permanent antiquities collection and changing exhibitions, as well as reflect the scholarly activities of the Getty Trust's four programs. The predominant focus of the Villa's public programming is on theater, rooted in Greek and Roman plays of antiquity. A major production is presented each fall in the outdoor Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater. The Villa Theater Lab, a series that acts as an incubator for the development of new approaches to the classical canon, is featured each winter and spring in the Auditorium.

About the Getty:

The J. Paul Getty Trust is an international cultural and philanthropic institution that focuses on the visual arts in all their dimensions, recognizing their capacity to inspire and strengthen humanistic values. The Getty serves both the general public and a wide range of professional communities in Los Angeles and throughout the world. Through the work of the four Getty programs—the Museum, Research Institute, Conservation Institute, and Foundation—the Getty aims to further knowledge and nurture critical seeing through the growth and presentation of its collections and by advancing the understanding and preservation of the world's artistic heritage. The Getty pursues this mission with the conviction that cultural awareness, creativity, and aesthetic enjoyment are essential to a vital and civil society.