



Port City Playhouse's First Production of Its 35th Season, *Medea*, Opens on September 14

Port City Playhouse, Alexandria's award-winning theatre company, is pleased to announce the opening of its 2012-13 season with *Medea*, the classical Greek tragedy by Euripides, translated by Robinson Jeffers. Performances are Friday-Saturday, September 14-15, 21-22 & 28-29, and Tuesday, September 25, at 8:00 PM. There will also be Saturday matinees on September 22 & 29 at 2:00 PM. Port City Playhouse performs at The Lab at Convergence, located at 1819 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria, Virginia 22302 – just east of I-395 at the Shirlington exit. General admission tickets are \$18 for adults, \$16 for seniors, military and students, and \$14 for groups of ten or more.

Medea is the ancient Greek tragedy based on the myth of Jason and Medea, with the timeless themes of passion, love and vengeance. This masterfully written tale of the barbarian sorceress Medea and the revenge she takes against the husband who betrays her was first performed in 431 BC and is widely considered to be one of the works of art that shaped Western culture. Director Rachel Hynes has assembled a talented cast, with Anissa Parekh as Medea; Michael Crowley as Jason; Mary Ayala Bush as the Nurse; Terry Gish as Creon; Cal Whitehurst as AEGeus; Bryant Centofanti as the Tutor; Jacqueline Youm as the Messenger; Rebecca Fischler, Krista Grimmert, Casey Leffue and Jenna Zhu as the Women of Corinth; and Leo Watkins and Alex Weinstein as the Sons.

Hynes discussed her concept of the play and why she was attracted to the challenge of directing it. "*Medea* was controversial, even for Greek audiences," Hynes said, "and the character remains controversial because of the tensions embodied in the play – between the individual and society, the foreigner and the citizen, reason and passion, justice and vengeance, the justifiable act and the unspeakable one, and man and nature."

"We explore these tensions through the pivotal device of the chorus, who vacillate from being impartial observers, to representatives of Greek society, to the embodiments of Medea's internal state," Hynes continued. "We aren't striving to provide the audience with answers, but invite them to explore some of these issues with us."

The company's 35th season will continue with three more top-quality productions: the community theatre premiere of *The Soul Collector* by Helen Hayes Award-winning playwright David Emerson Toney, the story of two African-American sanitation workers who unwittingly

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release spirits and demons when they bring items they've collected back to their cramped apartment in 1970s Cleveland; Michael Healey's poignant tale of friendship, memory and the loss of love, *The Drawer Boy*; and *Six Degrees of Separation* by New York Drama Critics Circle Award winner John Guare, an exploration of the existential premise that everyone in the world is connected to everyone else by a chain of no more than six acquaintances.

Since its founding in 1977, Port City Playhouse has regularly received awards from area theatre organizations for the artistic and technical excellence of its productions, earning the British Players prestigious 2005-06 Ruby Griffith Award for All Round Production Excellence for its production of *Hauptmann*. That record of excellence continues in the company's 35th season.

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