

GREEK TO ME!

By Squire Fridell

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STORY OF THE PLAY

If you think ancient Greek theatre can be summarized in one word, "boring," think again. *Greek to Me!* provides an energetic, engaging look at how theatre developed, from the first actor to speak aloud to the idea of using scenery. That segues into a variety of scenes from the great plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. The easy-to-present scenes show how ancient Greek plays, both tragic and comedic, became classics because they were insightful and truly entertaining. *Greek to Me!* has suggestions for lighting, slides, and music to immerse your audience into the theatre of 2,000 years ago. Written for a widely flexible cast of junior or senior high actors, it utilizes simple costumes.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASTING IS MOST FLEXIBLE. The show can be produced with as few as a dozen cast members or as many as your facility will allow. The original production used a cast of over 50 actors. For the sake of simplicity, where multiple actors and/or narrators are required in any scene, they will be listed 1-10 and, obviously, can be adjusted to the needs of each production.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Your production can be altered to your cast, facilities and requirements. The basic set consists of three parallel black 8x8 flats on stage, flat to the audience. Two are USR and USL respectively; one is CS with the top-center cut out and scrimmed for rear projection. In the original (and subsequent) productions, rear slide projection was most effectively used with two elevated side-by-side carousel projectors (50mm lenses) and a rented or borrowed dissolve unit. Effective, professional color images can be easily created by simply taking 35mm slides of photos and drawings that you find in books and magazines. Many photos are copyright protected however, so be sure to obtain permission or ascertain they are in the public domain.

SOUND

Sound for this show is an important consideration. A professionally recorded CD with all sound sequences and effects is available from the publisher at www.histage.com. If you wish to create your own, sound effects include: "Empty" sound; "zip" sound; windstorm; thunder; gentle water flowing; reverb scream; calming wind; Greek music; cymbal crash; percussion "rim" shot; lighter Greek music; birds in flight; something falling followed by crash; crow squawk.

LIGHTING

Can be used in its simplest form or can be quite elaborate. Careful attention should be paid so that stage lights do not wash out any rear projection.

COSTUMES

They are simple and effective. Dyed sheets can be used to make upper torso tunics and full-length togas. Sashes and belts can be used to delineate playwrights, chorus members, nobility, etc.

PROPS

Garlands for playwrights
Mask of Dionysos
Masks
"Applause" signs, one in Greek and one in English
Half masks for Chorus
Bloody dagger
Scepter
Elaborate birds masks
Rustic tools, lumber and building materials for Birds
Long scroll for Poet
Book for Prophet
Tape measure, paper and pencil for Real Estate Persons
Business card for Lawyer
Papers for Tax Collector
Tined fork for Neptune
Dirty cloak for Barbarian god
"Chicken Hawk" puppet, platter of sandwich makings
for Pisthetaerus
"Crow" puppet, fork, pepper grinder, pickle jar for Euelpides
Egg for Bird

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

| | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Chaos | KAY-awss |
| Ouranos | YOU-rah-nohss |
| Gaia | GUY-yuh |
| Cronos | KROW-nohss |
| Zeus | ZOOss |
| Semele | SEH-meh-lay |
| Hera | HEH-rah |
| Dionysos | Die-oh-NEE-sus |
| Dithyramb | DITH-a-ram |
| Acropolis | A-KROP-oh-liiss |
| Dionysia | Die-oh-NEE-see-ah |
| Thespis | THESS-piss |
| Aeschylus | EH-skill-uhss |
| Tragoidia | Trah-GOI-dee-ah |
| Oresteia | Oh-ress-TIE-yah |
| Agamamnon | Ag-uh-MEM-non |
| Eumenides | You-MEN-eh-deez |
| Atreus | AA-tree-uhs |
| Clytemnestra | Klie-tem-NESS-trah |
| Electra | Eh-LECK-trah |
| Orestes | Oh-REHS-tiss |
| Furies | FHUR-eez |
| Sophocles | SOPH-uh-kleez |
| Argos | AHR-goss |
| Argive | AHR-gie-v |
| Oedipus | EHD-eh-puhss |
| Antigone | Ann-TIG-oh-knee |
| Ismene | Iz-MEH-knee |
| Jocasta | Joe-KAHS-tah |
| Creon | KREE-ohn |
| Eteocles | Eh-TEY-oh-kleez |
| Polyneices | Pah-ley-KNEE-sehs |
| Haemon | HAY-mon |
| Eurpides | You-RIP-eh-deez |
| Bacchae | BAHK-eye |
| Medea | Meh-DEE-ah |
| Pelias | Peh-LIE-ahs |
| Aristophanes | Air-iss-TOPH-an-eez |
| Komoidia | Kah-MOY-dee-ah |
| Kratinos | Krah-TEE-noss |
| Lysistrata | Less-iss-TRAH-dah |
| Euelpides | You-ELP-ih-deez |
| Pisthetaerus | Piz-the-TEAR-uss |
| Epop | EE-pops |

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ACT I

Scene 1: HOMAGE TO THE GODS

(AT RISE: Rear projection SLIDE is black. From out of the dark silence, a pre-recorded "EMPTY" sound fills the theatre. A pre-recorded GREEK NARRATOR begins, followed by a pre-recorded ENGLISH TRANSLATION.)

GREEK NARRATOR: *(Voice Over.)*

eks arkees
en too kronoo
pro tu kronu
prootista
kaos egeneto

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: *(VO.)* In the beginning of time... before there was a universe...there was Chaos.

(SLIDE fades into a blue color. Stereo "ZIP" sound travels from one side of house to the other.)

CHAOS: *(VO.)* I am Chaos. God of All that Exists. I am God of the Infinite. God of Boundlessness. The God of Power.

(Stereo "ZIP" sound travels from one side of house to the other, and back again. Back to "EMPTY" sound.)

GREEK NARRATOR: *(VO.)*

kaj ek tutu tu pantoon toon ontoon teu
ek tutu tu teu tu apejru
egenonto oy te oy uranos kaj gaja

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: *(VO.)* And from that God of All That Exists, that great God of the Infinite, came the gods Ouranos and Gaia.

(SLIDE dissolves to solar system.)

OURANOS: *(Male VO.)* I am the Sky. I am the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. I am Ouranos, God of all Heavenly Bodies. *(SLIDE dissolves to distant earth.)*

GAIA: *(Female VO.)* And I am Gaia, fertile source of all living things. *(SLIDE dissolves to closer earth.)* I am the Earth ...Mother Earth. I gave birth to the forests and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the oceans and the deserts. I am Gaia.

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GREEK NARRATOR: (VO.)

kai epejta gaja
uranoo oneetejsa
kronon eteke

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: (VO.) And from the union of the Gods of the Earth and the Sky, Gaia and Ouranos, came the god Cronos. *(SLIDE dissolves to red flames.)*

GREEK NARRATOR: (VO.)

kaj ek kronu...

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: (VO.) And from Cronos...

GREEK NARRATOR: (VO.)

egeneto omegistos zos

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: (VO.) Came the Almighty...Zeus.

(The SOUND of windstorm. SLIDE dissolves to a star burst.)

ZEUS: (VO.) I am the King of All the Gods. *(Sound of WINDSTORM grows in intensity.)* I have the power of the gods before me. I am the God of Rain...and Lightning...and Thunder. *(A crack of THUNDER.)* I have power of life and of death. *(Double THUNDER hits.)* I am King of All the Gods.

(SLIDE dissolves to black. The SOUND changes from storm to gentle water flowing.)

GREEK NARRATOR: (VO.)

kai ek dijios panta ta zooa egeneto
kai zos gynajka egameese broton
teen basilejan semeleen *(A beat.)*
kaj okseetee megalee o dijios pros
semeleen filotees

(SLIDE dissolves to pleasant rising sun.)

ENGLISH TRANSLATION: (VO.) And Zeus created life. And took as his wife a mortal woman, the Princess Semele. *(A beat.)* And the love of Zeus and Semele flourished.

(SLIDE dissolves to bird in flight.)

End of Freeview

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