Dear Incoming YSD Actors:

In the Spring semester we will be spending time with the Greeks in the lab with the directors which Walton and I will teach. The acting class will come in two waves and split the semester. This is an advantage in that it will allow more time spent on the presentations and will be a drawback in that it allows less time of immersion in this material. For the actors please read at least six of these works listed below and be sure to cover something from each of the three major dramatists. You will be in a deep pool of ideas and huge emotion. No worries. It will be about learning to swim. Think about situation. Define it as specifically as possible. Think about the events immediately before the scene. The obstacle(s) for the character in the scene which lead to the compression of desire and language. Maximize the desire and the obstacle. If you have time and haven’t read Homer’s The Iliad entering it will enrich your experience of the class. In reviewing the material select a monologue to work with for the first class and also make note of scenes you might want to take on for the second part of the class. You may select cross-gender casting for any of the material. For those of you who want to make the time I would suggest reading The Iliad It is an unbelievable journey and Homer is the backbone of the greek civilization from which these plays were born. Fagles, Lattimore, Fitzgerald or Mitchell are all good translations. This is optional but a great opportunity for investigation.

Actors will be require to bring that monologue of your choice to work on for the first session - whether this be in January or March. Please commit the text of your choice to memorization for the first class. You won't perform it the first week but we will use it as sound. Don’t work on interpreting the scene as yet just get the text in your head and body and live with the character and situation after you have made your selection. The second assignment in each section will be the assigned or chosen scene.

**THE PLAYS**

By Sophocles
- Oedipus
- Antigone
- Ajax
- Women of Trachis
- Electra

By Aeschylus
- The Oresteia
- The Persians

By Euripides
- Alcestis
- Medea
- Hippolytus

Helen
- The Trojan Women
- Iphigenia in Aulis
- Electra
- The Bacchae
Where there are Oxford translations in the New Translation Series with classicists and poets collaborating edited by William Arrowsmith I would go there first. (These are generally those with black shiney covers in single play form but lately they are coming out in anthologies which are much less expensive but not as shiney). As default translations use the University of Chicago series edited by Grene and Lattimore. There are also some wonderful translations by Anne Carson and Ted Hughes and others to look at. Every translation is another world and it’s very important that actors you find text which makes the situation and your mouth very alive. Read the introductions to the plays as a primer for your investigations.

You can proceed with the reading as the semester moves along as you will get more out of each other’s work if you have some familiarity with the situations and the text from which your colleagues are working.

I look forward to meeting you all and welcome to YSD!

Robert Woodruff