The Minotaur

A play by Anna Ziegler

WORLD PREMIERE

September-October 2012

Synchronicity Theatre: Cast + Crew Research Packet

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SYN·CHRO·NIC·I·TY (definition) -- Noun /ˈsɪŋkrəˈnɪsət̬i/ The coincidental occurrence of events and especially psychic events (as similar thoughts in widely separated persons or a mental image of an unexpected event before it happens) that seem related but are not explained by conventional mechanisms of causality — used especially in the psychology of C. G. Jung
SECTION 1: SYNCHRONICITY THEATRE MISSION STATEMENT | CORE VALUES

Synchronicity activates communities toward social change through powerful, transformative theatrical experiences. Through collaboration, Synchronicity supports women artists, forges effective long-term community partnerships and develops new work. Core values:

- Providing high-quality theater and moving audiences into social action.
- Creating an intimate theater experience that bridges the distance between actors and audience.
- Fostering civic dialogue within the lives of our audiences.
- Being accessible and affordable/
- Building partnerships with other arts and community organizations.
- Remaining fiscally accountable, viable, and stable.
- Nurturing and building up Atlanta's artists.

SECTION 2: A NOTE FROM YOUR FRIENDLY DRAMATURG

Everybody:
I am thrilled, honored and excited to part of the Synchro and MINOTAUR family for this project. As your dramaturg, I’m here to answer all of your questions to the best of my ability. Hopefully, many are answered here, but please, never ever hesitate to ask me to dig deeper. Call me, email me, text me (contact info on cover page), and I will do my best to find the answers. Thank you in advance for all of your hard work. (If you’d like an emailed version of this packet, please just let me know.) Let the fun begin! ... Kathy

“Love is bigger than flesh. All the stories confirm that.”

THE PRIEST
SECTION 3: ABOUT THE PLAY

*The Minotaur* is a loose adaptation of the myth in which Theseus, with the help of Ariadne, kills the Minotaur and steals Ariadne away with him, off Crete, and into an uncertain future. Poetic, quirky and about the vagaries of storytelling, *The Minotaur* is set in a timeless present where Ariadne dreams of her wedding to Theseus being listed in The New York Times and a chorus consisting of a rabbi, priest and lawyer take on themes of love, loss, our primal selves and forgiveness.

*Synopsis:* [http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsZ/ziegler-anna.html](http://www.doollee.com/PlaywrightsZ/ziegler-anna.html)

A present-day version of a classic Greek myth, *The Minotaur* is a contemporary take on love, honor and human connection. With refreshing originality and wit, it explores how we break out of history in order to shape new stories for ourselves.

*The Minotaur* has been developed at the McCarter Theatre, where it was included in McCarter’s 2010 Lab Festival, in the AracaWorks Reading Series, in the hotINK Festival, and by the Flea Theater, New Georges, and the Fire Dept. It was nominated for the 2011 L. Arnold Weissberger Award.

*Source:* The playwright’s website. [http://annabziegler.net/?page_id=83](http://annabziegler.net/?page_id=83)

Set in a timeless present, a funny, whimsical, and poetic new play about love, loss, forgiveness, and the primal longings that connect us to and separate us from our animal selves. (The Fire Dept. reading featured Mario Cantone, Jill Clayburgh and Campbell Scott.)

*Source:* The Fire Dept. website. [http://www.thefireddept.org/minotaur.html](http://www.thefireddept.org/minotaur.html)
SECTION 4: GREEK MYTH | GREEK CHORUS

Myth has two main functions, the poet and scholar Robert Graves wrote in 1955. The first is to answer the sort of awkward questions that children ask, such as “Who made the world? How will it end? Who was the first man? Where do souls go after death?” The second function of myth is to justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs. In ancient Greece, stories about gods and goddesses and heroes and monsters were an important part of everyday life. They explained everything from religious rituals to the weather, and they gave meaning to the world people saw around them.

Greek Mythology: Sources

In Greek mythology, there is no single original text like the Christian Bible or the Hindu Vedas that introduces all of the myths’ characters and stories. Instead, the earliest Greek myths were part of an oral tradition that began in the Bronze Age, and their plots and themes unfolded gradually in the written literature of the archaic and classical periods. The poet Homer’s 8th-century BC epics the Iliad and the Odyssey, for example, tell the story of the (mythical) Trojan War as a divine conflict as well as a human one. They do not, however, bother to introduce the gods and goddesses who are their main characters, since readers and listeners would already have been familiar with them.

Greek Mythology: Past and Present

The characters, stories, themes and lessons of Greek mythology have shaped art and literature for thousands of years. They appear in Renaissance paintings such as Botticelli’s Birth of Venus and Raphael’s Triumph of Galatea and writings like Dante’s Inferno; Romantic poetry and libretti; and scores of more recent novels, plays and films.

Source: The History Channel | http://www.history.com/topics/greek-mythology

The function of the Greek chorus:

In classical Greek theater, there were three elements to any theatrical production: actors, spectators and the chorus. The chorus is the oldest element of any Greek performance, and comes from the Greek word meaning "dance." A Greek chorus would often dance and sing during a performance, and ranged in number from 15 to 50 men. It served a number of functions for audiences when used in tragedies.

1. Song and Dance

Greek drama was a form that evolved out of song and dance, so a chorus would often incorporate song and dance into the events of the play. The chorus would have two important songs in a tragedy: a "parados," or entrance song, and the "stasima," or choral song used to propel the narrative.

2. Provide Background Information

A chorus would often provide audience members with background information that applied to the events onstage. Such information would help audience members understand the performance. The chorus would do this through song and dance or by speaking their lines in unison.

3. Act as a Character

Often, the chorus represented an anonymous crowd that symbolized the people who lived within the play's settings, such as the Theban citizens in "Oedipus Rex."
4. Act as the Audience

One of the most important functions of a Greek chorus was to act as the ideal spectator; that is, to act how the playwright had hoped the audience would respond. It was to act as an emotional bridge, connecting the actors to the spectators, and functioned onstage as if the audience was actually a part of the action, questioning the characters' motives and otherwise commenting about the events onstage.

Source: http://www.ehow.com/info_8657563_function-chorus-greek-drama.html

A Greek chorus originally consisted of 50 members, which were later reduced to 12 by Sophocles, then increased to 15 members by Euripides in tragedies. There were 24 members in comedies, and it performs using several techniques, including singing, dancing, narrating and acting. In Aeschylus’ “Agamemnon,” the chorus comprises the elderly men of Argos; in Euripides’ “The Bacchae,” they are a group of eastern bacchants, and in Sophocles’ “Electra,” the chorus is made up of the women of Argos. The Greek chorus usually communicated in song form, but sometimes spoke their lines in unison. The chorus had to work in unison to help explain the play as there were only one to three actors onstage who were already playing several parts each. As the Greek theaters were so large, the chorus' actions had to be exaggerated and their voices clear so that everyone could see and hear them. To do this, they used techniques such as synchronization, echo, ripple, physical theater and the use of masks to aid them. A Greek chorus also served as the ancient equivalent for a curtain, as their parodos (entering procession) signified the beginnings of a play and their exodos (exit procession) served as the curtains closing. Modern plays, especially Broadway musicals and grand operas, sometimes incorporate a contemporary version of the chorus, although they serve a different purpose: “The singing chorus is used frequently to interpret the mental and emotional reactions of the principal characters, after the manner of a Greek chorus.” -- Rodgers and Hammerstein.


“A story can shape the course of the next thousand years.”

THE RABBI
A·e·geus [EE-joos]  
To hear it: http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Aegeus

Aeth·ra [EETH-ruh]  
Noun. Greek Mythology. The mother of Theseus. (Could not find pronunciation to listen to).

A·rach·ne [uh-RAK-nee] Noun. From Greek myth. A maiden changed into a spider for having presumptuously challenged Athena to a weaving contest. From Greek arakhnē spider.  
To hear it: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/arachne?s=t