

AGAMEMNON at the Getty Villa

DATE: September 3, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRAGEDY STRIKES THE HOUSE OF ATREUS IN AESCHYLUS' *AGAMEMNON*, THE GETTY VILLA'S THIRD CLASSICAL OUTDOOR PRODUCTION

**Directed by Stephen Wadsworth, From a Translation by Robert Fagles,
Featuring Tyne Daly as Clytemnaestra and Delroy Lindo as Agamemnon**

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, September 4–27, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

LOS ANGELES—The Getty Villa's stage transforms into the cursed House of Atreus this September with *Agamemnon*, the third annual outdoor theatrical production in the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman Theater. Helmed by acclaimed director Stephen Wadsworth from a riveting translation by Robert Fagles, this open-air staging of Aeschylus' domestic drama features a stellar cast led by Tony and Emmy Award-winner Tyne Daly and Drama Desk Award-nominee Delroy Lindo. *Agamemnon* will be presented on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, September 4–27, 2008.

First performed in 5th century B.C. as part of the annual dramatic competition during Athens' Festival of Dionysus, *Agamemnon* is the first play of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* cycle and arguably the earliest dramatic masterpiece of Western culture. Not only did the *Oresteia* win first place at the festival, but it also proved incredibly popular and returned the subsequent year, making it the first revival in the history of Western theater. This popularity undoubtedly owed much to Aeschylus' theatrical innovations—his characters bypassed the chorus and instead spoke directly to one another—and to the unprecedented and horrifying intensity of the character of Clytemnaestra.

In this reenactment of the ancient Greek tragedy, Delroy Lindo (*Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, *The Cider House Rules*, *Kidnapped*) plays King Agamemnon of Mycenae, a leader so determined to lay siege to Troy that he betrays his family and sacrifices his own daughter to the gods—all in order to secure favorable winds for his fleet. Tyne Daly (*Gypsy*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Judging Amy*) plays Clytemnaestra, the betrayed wife of Agamemnon, whose rage towards

-more-



her husband ferments for a decade as he fights in the Trojan War. The play begins with the victorious king returning home to Argos, only to face the wrath of his adulterous queen. As the drama unfolds, a returning soldier bears witness to unthinkable carnage, a city questions the wisdom of a decade-long war, and a family turns the violence of war in on itself.

Daly and Lindo head up a talented cast that includes Kathryn Dora Brown (Iphigeneia), Frank Corrado (Chorus Leader), Burton Curtis (Watchman), Mark Deakins (Herald), Francesca Faridany (Cassandra), Nicholas Hormann (Chorus Leader), Bellina Logan (Electra), Timothy V. Murphy (Aegisthus), and Michael Winters (Chorus Leader).

Director Stephen Wadsworth has staged his witty, passionate, visually evocative reimaginings of plays and operas by Molière, Wagner, Handel, Mozart, Shaw, Wilde, Coward, and other great artists for audiences worldwide. For this production of *Agamemnon*, Wadsworth worked closely over a period of years with the late Robert Fagles on a uniquely sophisticated and stageworthy adaptation of the play, first at Berkeley Rep in 2001 and later for a staged reading at the Getty Villa as part of the Villa Theater Lab's 2006 season. The end result is a text that retains both the complexity of Aeschylus' poetic imagery and extends his language towards a contemporary American audience.

Renowned translator Robert Fagles, who passed away earlier this year, devoted a long and distinguished career to exploring and unlocking the works of Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Homer for English-speaking readers and audiences. His translations of the classics were not only acclaimed by critics and scholars, but became best sellers that captured the wider public imagination. At the time of his final illness, Professor Fagles was very much looking forward to the Getty Villa premiere of this distinctive adaptation of the Aeschylus text, and the Getty is now honored to present this inspired collaboration between one of the nation's visionary scholars and its most literate stage directors.

"Bob Fagles, the great translator and poet of this version of *Agamemnon*, described Aeschylus' language in this play to me as 'a landscape through which the characters must struggle in their hunger for resolution and truth,'" says Wadsworth. "I worked with Bob on the *Oresteia* for several years, and he continued to search for the truth of the plays as we took it to the stage in Berkeley in 2001, always interested in adapting his text with me so that it might suit the actors at hand and find its mark. We miss him and salute him with this investiture of the ever-changing *Agamemnon*."

Agamemnon will also feature new music composed by Bruno Louchouart and performed by T.J. Troy and Rob Elston; costumes designed by Rachel Myers; sets designed by Thomas Lynch and Torry Bend; and lighting designed by Stephen Bennett.

Agamemnon will be presented on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, September 4–27, 2008, at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$38 (\$32 students/seniors). To purchase tickets and for additional information, the public can call 310-440-7300 or visit www.getty.edu.

#

MEDIA CONTACT:

Mike Winder
Getty Communications
310-440-6471
mwinder@getty.edu

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.