

MERCURY'S FOOTPATH

By Ellen McLaughlin

Fall 2022

Who?

Producers: David Donnan and Maya McGrory

Director: Samantha White

Stage Manager: Piper Jackman

Preferred Contact Email: david.donnan@yale.edu & maya.mcgrory@yale.edu

What?

Written by playwright Ellen McLaughlin, MERCURY'S FOOTPATH is a hauntingly beautiful anti-war play following the relationship between Protesilaus, the first Greek to die in the Trojan War, and his wife, Laodamia. Ten years after his death Laodamia asks Mercury, God of Beginnings and Endings, to bring her husband back. The couple's story is poignantly interwoven with that of Teleteos, the last Greek to die in the war, and his wife, Kallisto. Exploring themes of loss and remembrance, the story is ultimately about the power of love across life and death.

When?

Date of First Rehearsal: September 14th

Current Tech Week Dates: October 30th - November 9th

Performance Dates: November 10th - November 12th

Overall Dates (First Rehearsal to Last Performance): September 14th - November 12th

Time Commitment

6 - 8 hours of rehearsal each week, until tech week where it will increase to 14 hours.

Content Warnings

There will be intimacy depicted in the show, including kissing and simulated foreplay for the roles of Laodamia and Protesilaus. All intimacy will be choreographed by a professional intimacy choreographer provided by Yale. Actors in these roles will have total agency over what they feel comfortable presenting on stage. There will be no nudity. Additional trigger warnings include: death, self-harm, suicide, war, and loss of a loved one.

Audition Expectations

Please bring a monologue to the audition, contemporary or classical - it does NOT have to be memorized. Ideally, actors will be familiar enough with their monologue that they know the arc of the monologue and can play around with the text or paraphrase in a pinch. If an actor does not have a monologue, we have suggested monologues from the play they can use. They can be found on the YCA page. The audition will be up to 20 minutes, with a small get-to-know, a monologue delivery and then a reworking. Our team is not looking for people to deliver the most amazing monologue ever. We are looking for folks with an open mind, imagination, and enthusiasm!

Audition Location(s)

The audition location will be provided prior to the audition via email with directions.

Ellen McLaughlin's *Mercury's Footpath*
Audition Packet EXTENDED Edition!

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About *Mercury's Footpath*

What is this play about?

Written by playwright Ellen McLaughlin, *Mercury's Footpath* is a hauntingly beautiful anti-war play following the relationship between Protesilaus, the first Greek to die in the Trojan War, and his wife, Laodamia. Ten years after his death Laodamia asks Mercury, God of Beginnings and Endings, to bring her husband back. Against his better judgment, Mercury agrees. And, the couple is briefly and beautifully united in the land of the living. However, Protesilaus must return to the underworld, and Laodamia ultimately decides to join him there, leaving behind her "mortal coil." The couple's story is poignantly interwoven with that of Telefteos, the last Greek to die in the war, and his wife, Kallisto. This play explores themes of loss and remembrance, while ultimately showcasing the eternity of love across life and death.

What makes this show and process special?

Mercury's Footpath is a new play by Ellen McLaughlin. We have the honor and privilege of working with Ellen throughout the rehearsal process. Ellen will be playing an advisory role in the rehearsals and performance, giving each of us a unique opportunity to work with a renowned playwright, first-hand. Her plays, like *The Trojan Women*, *The Persians* and *Oedipus*, have been produced by the Public Theater in NYC, Almeida Theater (London), The Oregon Shakespeare Festival and The National Actors' Theater, as well as acting, for example, originating the role of Angel in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*.

Mercury's Footpath is Samantha White's Theater and Performance Studies Senior Project in Directing and Dominic Sullivan's Theater and Performance Studies Senior Project in Acting. Originally, this play was to be directed by Professor Toni Dorfman, however, it is now being directed by Samantha, with Professor Dorfman playing an advisory role instead. This performance is not part of a production seminar.

Meet the Team

Director - Samantha White (she/they)

Samantha is a director, actor, and singer at Yale. In 2019, she directed her first show, *Well* by Lisa Kron. In 2021, she directed and facilitated the creation of a new devised play called *The Speed of Trust*. Last year, she toured with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and is excited to return to campus to direct Mercury's Footpath.



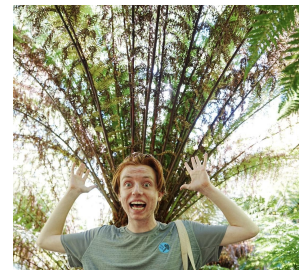
Actor - Dominic Sullivan (he/him)

Dominic, born in London, has performed in shows at Yale, in New York and the UK, playing Giorgio in Sondheim's *Passion*, Pirate King in OTYC's *Pirates of Penzance*, as well as playing a multitude (15) of characters in an off-West End production of *Phaedo*, at the Etcetera Theatre. He will be appearing off-Broadway shortly as Mr Colon in *The SS Cancelled*.



Producer - David Donnan (he/any)

David loves playing with theater and being a part of the Yale theater and improv communities (go Exit Players!). He is super excited to be involved with this already iconic production.



Producer - Maya McGrory (she/her)

Maya is a junior who has loved getting involved in all aspects of theater at Yale. When she is not involved with a show you can find her singing with her a cappella group or doing the NYT spelling bee. She is so thrilled to be co-producing this beautiful show with such an amazing team.



Stage Manager - Piper Jackman

Technical Director/Lighting Designer - Tom Delgado

Set/Props Designer - Chiara Hardy

Sound Designer - Marissa Blum

Costume Designer/Makeup Artist - Lila Hauptman

Dramaturg/Graphic Designer - William An

If you are interested in being part of the production team, we would love to have you! Roles that we are actively looking for:

- Assistant director
- Assistant producers
- Assistant stage managers
- Assistant costume designer
- Assistant set designer
- Assistant lighting designer
- Assistant sound designer

To get involved, please reach out to David Donnan and/or Maya McGrory (david.donnan@yale.edu & maya.mcgrory@yale.edu).

A Note from the Director on Auditions

Hello dear theatermaker!

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for this show. It is my sincere belief that everyone who comes into audition for this show will be sharing a precious gift with me and the rest of the production team. You are sharing your time and your artistic energy with us, and it is our highest goal for you to feel valued as a human being and as an artist in the audition room. We don't care if you've been in a million shows or if this is your first show. We believe you, yes YOU, have something meaningful to share with us, and we are so excited to bear witness to it. And in the process, we want you to feel relaxed and creative and have FUN! We're looking for folks with an active imagination and who just want to play around!

With all of this in mind, we want to let you know what to expect from our audition process. Each audition will be about 20 minutes long. Prior to the audition, the location of the room will be sent to you via email. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our producers David Donnan (david.donnan@yale.edu) or Maya McGrory (maya.mcgrory@yale.edu)

If possible, we would love for you to arrive 5-10 minutes before your audition time, so you can fill out a brief form for us. This form will help us get to know your basic info, like, what's your name? And more show specific info, like, what do you feel comfortable depicting on stage?

Once you've filled out the form we'll meet in the audition room! We'll take some time to introduce ourselves. We'll do a grounding exercise to settle some of the nerves, and we'll do a physical warm up to connect to our bodies. We will make sure these are things that your body can do!

Then we'll ask you to share a monologue with us. It can be contemporary or classical - it does NOT have to be memorized. If you would like help finding a monologue, our YCA page contains a few that you could use.

While we don't expect memorization, it would be helpful for us both for you to be familiar enough with your monologue that you understand the general arc of it. By that I mean, you've got the jist of what you're saying and thinking about as the character. We ask this because after you share your monologue, we'll work together and make some adjustments. And we don't want your head to explode trying to remember the words and thinking about the direction I just gave. (But if it does explode, don't worry! We'll try to get it to un-explode) We'll play around with it

just like we would do in a rehearsal setting. We're mostly looking for you to have an open mind and be enthusiastic!

After the first round of auditions, we will reach out to you by 5pm on Sunday, September 4th regarding whether we'd like to call you back. In your callbacks, we'll mimic a rehearsal. You will be given a scene to read and we'll spend time thinking about the character's emotions and physicality. If you do not feel comfortable reading the part assigned to you, please do let us know.

An audition information session will be held Tuesday, Aug 30th at 1:30pm to 2:30pm. This information session will be held in the main courtyard of Benjamin Franklin College. This is a great opportunity to meet with us and learn more about the show! Ask any questions and just get to know us :) If it rains, we'll meet in the Benjamin Franklin common room instead!

If you are not cast in the show, we would still love to have you on the creative team. It would be a great opportunity to improve and learn theatrical skills and work with a professional playwright to help sculpt your own ideas in theater.

With kindness,
Samantha White
Director

Audition Timeline

Audition Information Session

Tuesday, Aug 30th - 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Auditions

Tuesday, Aug 30th - 7pm - 9pm

Wednesday, Aug 31st - 7pm - 9pm

Thursday, Sept 1st - 7pm - 9pm

Friday, Sept 2nd - 7pm - 9pm

Saturday, Sept 3rd - Noon - 5pm

Callbacks

Tuesday, Sept 6th - 7pm - 9pm

Wednesday, Sept 7th - 7pm - 9pm

Casting Day

Sunday, Sept 11th - Noon

Please use this link to sign-up for auditions and information session:

<https://collegearts.yale.edu/events/shows-screenings/mercurys-footpath>

Characters

Protesilaus (already cast)

Hero of the Trojan War– 30s-40s, lead character, any race, script uses he/him pronouns

Telefteos

Foot soldier of the Trojan War–30s-40s, supporting character, any race, script uses he/him pronouns

Mercury

God of the Crossroads, Beginnings and Endings– Immortal, lead character, any race, any pronouns

Laodamia

Wife of Protesilaus– 30s-40s, lead character, any race, script uses she/her pronouns

Kallisto

Wife of Telefteos– 30s-40s, supporting character, any race, script uses she/her pronouns

Note on casting and accessibility:

We encourage actors of any race, ethnicity, ability, and gender to audition. We aim to build a diverse cast and creative team. On our audition form, there will be space for you to inform us what gender(s) you feel comfortable playing, as well anything else you would like us to know about your gender experience.

If you have specific access needs for auditioning, please don't hesitate to email our director Samantha (samantha.white@yale.edu) so that we can make the audition room as comfortable and accessible as possible! We are more than happy to work with you to figure out how to remove barriers to your auditioning. This includes but is not limited to:

- Chatting about how we can help reduce the stress and anxiety of auditioning
- Submitting a video tape if you are sick or physically unable to go to auditions

- Making sure the building of auditions is accessible to you (ensuring elevators or first floor access, etc)
- Working with you if memorization or cold readings can create barriers

A Note Regarding Rehearsal and Values

What is the time commitment for this show?

Actors should expect 6-8 hours of rehearsal each week starting Sept. 14th until tech week. Tech week begins October 30th. Actors should expect a maximum of 4 hours of rehearsal each night until opening night which is November 10th. This is an upper bound. We will do everything we can to make tech week as smooth and non-disruptive as possible! We recognize that all cast and crew members are

- ~ First and foremost human beings who require sleep and nourishment.
- ~ Secondly, Yale students who have classes and assignments they need time to do
- ~ And then somewhere down the line actors and production team members who want to create beautiful theater together

Are there any content or trigger warnings I should be aware of?

Yes. There will be intimacy depicted in the show, including kissing and simulated foreplay for the roles of Laodamia and Protesilaus. All intimacy will be choreographed by a professional intimacy choreographer provided by Yale. Actors in these roles will have total agency over what they feel comfortable presenting on stage.

Kallisto and Telefteos discuss and imagine intimate moments separately, but no touch happens on stage. There will be no nudity for any character.

Additional trigger warnings include: death, self-harm, suicide, war, and loss of a loved one. The role of Laodamia specifically includes depictions of self-harm and suicide.

What will rehearsals look like?

All rehearsals will begin with a check-in and/or activity aimed at cultivating the wellbeing of all of the participants in the rehearsal room. Then we will begin the actual rehearsing (text work, blocking, character development, etc). In rehearsals we will pay special attention to how actors can connect with their character through physicality in addition to the emotional and psychological life of the character. We will be exploring different acting techniques including but not limited to the work of Jerzy Grotowski, Meisner, and Mary Overlie's Viewpoints. Absolutely no experience in the work of these practitioners is necessary!