

[Skip to Content](#)

[Cal Poly](#)

[News](#)

Search Cal Poly News

Go

California Polytechnic State University

Oct. 24, 2003

Contact: Peter Wilt
(805) 756-7111

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Theatre Season Opens Nov. 13 With Staging of Euripides' 'Phedre'

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- The emotions of love and hate, loyalty and guilt are explored in "Phedre," the opening production of Cal Poly's Theatre and Dance Department 2003-2004 season at 8 p.m. Nov. 13. Considered a masterpiece of world theater, "Phedre" will also play Nov. 14-15 and Nov. 20-22 in the Cal Poly Theatre. All shows will be at 8 p.m.

Based on a play by ancient Greek playwright Euripides, the story centers on Phedre, second wife of Theseus, King of Athens, who falls madly and obsessively in love with her handsome virginal stepson, Hippolytus. When Hippolytus rejects her advances, Phedre allows her servant to accuse him of rape, and his father then banishes him.

The most widely produced version of the play was written by French playwright Racine in 1677. Cal Poly is using a 1998 English adaptation by England's former poet laureate, Ted Hughes. "The poetry in the Hughes version is astonishing and piercing," said Al Schnupp, director of the Cal Poly production. "I think it is one of the best scripts I have ever read."

The play will be performed on a set that represents the three time periods in which the playwright and translators lived. The cast will be dressed as royalty: women in gowns and jewels and the men in tails and carrying swords.

Two local, highly seasoned actors are playing the leading roles. Los Osos resident Erma Stauffer, who also is a lecturer in the Cal Poly Theatre and Dance Department, will play Phedre. She has performed professionally on the East and West coasts. Stauffer has had leading roles in the department's productions of "The Visit" and "Hecuba." She also directed "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "House of Blue Leaves," and last season's acclaimed "Eleemosynary."

Dave Edwards, director of Cal Poly's University Union and a Morro Bay resident, will play Phedre's husband, Theseus. He has appeared in such films as "Hoosiers," "A League of Their Own," and "Eddie." He also has considerable stage experience on both the college and community level. Edwards was last seen at Cal Poly in "Buried Child."

Matt Gilfillan, a senior business administration major from Rocklin, is cast as Hippolytus. He was last seen in Cal Poly's 2001 production of "The Miser."

Andrew Halberstadt, a social sciences junior from Anaheim, will play Theramene, a friend and counselor to Hippolytus. Sarah Claspell, who is majoring in both theatre and business, will play Oenone, Phedre's nurse and retainer. She hails from Gilroy.

Zaira Dynia Valdovinos, a senior theatre major from Orcutt, will appear as Aricia, the granddaughter of a former King of Athens.

Additional cast members include Marni Brewster, a sophomore theatre major from Arroyo Grande, and Jessica Cramer, an English and theatre senior from Turlock.

Schnupp also directed the world premiere of "A Wrinkle in Time," which played last November at Cal Poly.

Theatre and Dance Department scenic designer Tim Dugan has designed the set and lighting for the production. Kathy Dugan, a lecturer in the department, is designing the costumes. Howard Gee is the production technical director. Jennifer Hannegan, a senior theatre major from San Luis Obispo, is the stage manager and assistant lighting designer.

Tickets to the play are \$8 to \$10 and can be bought at the Performing Arts Ticket Office, 756-2787, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. Tickets may also be online at www.paclso.org.

-30-

[CP Home](#) • [CP Find It](#) [Get Adobe Reader](#) • [Microsoft Viewers](#)

[Events](#) • [Recent Releases](#) • [Cal Poly Magazine](#) •

[Cal Poly Update E-newsletter](#) • [Contact Public Affairs](#) • [Alumni](#) • [Giving](#) • [Athletics](#)

Cal Poly Public Affairs

California Polytechnic State University

San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

805.756.7266

polynews@calpoly.edu