

THEATRE ALIVE! Announces First Writing Commission

The Oresteia Peace Project

The Oresteia Trilogy for the Twenty-first Century

Theatre Alive!, a new umbrella organisation committed to education through the promotion of the work of new theatre practitioners, today announced its first commission. Writer and performance poet, Joseph Coelho has been engaged to create a new stage version of ***The Oresteia Trilogy*** by Aeschylus from the viewpoint of contemporary urban youth. The oldest surviving complete play cycle and central classic of the European theatre canon will be initially be adapted for a rehearsed reading to an invited audience at London's Drill Hall on June 30 and July 1 this year as the first stage of an ongoing cross-arts cultural project which will culminate in a fully staged music-theatre version in 2007.

Exploring a society riven by war, gripping onto the fragility of peace and witnessing the fracturing of civilised society, the drama is as resonant today as it was when it was first performed 2,500 years ago. The adaptation aims to challenge our perception of ourselves spiritually, ethically, sexually and socially, drawing upon the themes of fractured family, war and dissonance and concluding ultimately with peace and reconciliation.

The work is funded by Arts Council England, the national development agency for the arts, through its Grants for the arts programme for individuals and organisations and sponsored by Live Action Trust, The London Centre for Theatre Studies, The Drill Hall, Jenny MacDonald and private individuals.

The management team comprises Lyndall Goodman (Producer and Administrator), Andrew Visnevski (Artistic Director) and associate partner David Burns of Burning Issues PR (Marketing and Development).

Andrew Visnevski says

"The Oresteia is an account of the establishment of a civilised society in which conflict is solved by discourse, tolerance and the rule of law rather than being prolonged by need for revenge. Through this performance piece we seek to chart a path of learning from our joint cultural heritage and offer a fresh way of perceiving possibilities for social, cultural and racial co-existence. This commission is the first stage of The ORESTEIA Peace Project (with The Oresteia Trilogy as the creative starting point): a multi-media music-theatre/opera performance piece developed through arts collaboration and cultural fusion".

Joseph Coelho says

"Coming from a working class culturally diverse background (my mother is Anglo Indian and my father Jamaican) I have found many relevant themes in *The Oresteia* that will strike a chord with many people in my community and beyond. I have been brought up in a climate where family life is dissonant, and broken homes the norm. The problems afflicting the House of Atreus are not massively different from the problems afflicting any home: parents away from home, or non-existent, angst

directed at parents, children being metaphorically sacrificed for work, children growing up only to abandon their parents, family feuds passed down from one generation to the next. The House of Atreus is not an exception to the rule, it is essentially a normal household which has had its woes weighted to the extreme ends of the balance. When adapted to reflect the times and communities we live in, *The Oresteia* will have a deep and effective resonance with the lives and experience of many people today”.

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Notes to Editors

Theatre Alive!

Theatre Alive! was formed in 2004 by Andrew Visnevski, founder and former director of the acclaimed Cherub Company London. Theatre Alive! is committed to education through the promotion of the work of new theatre practitioners. Its aims are to promote a spirit of exchange between artists through collaboration with writers, theatre performers, composers and exponents of visual arts to seek innovative ways to reach, through the performing arts an habitually non-arts consuming public. The Oresteia Trilogy is its first creative undertaking.

www.theatrealive.org.uk

Joseph Coelho

Joseph has been a professional performance poet since 2002 & regularly performs his poetry through the poetry circuit and poetry organisation Apples and Snakes. He is currently completing the Apples and Snakes National tour 'Broken Words' featuring work based on Dickens's 'Great Expectations'. He also provides workshops in performance Poetry and drama in schools and youth Theatres, including a Musical/Performance Theatre Piece for the BBC and British Library as part of their 'Silk Roads Project'. His work featured as part of the International Writers' Exhibition at the Royal Festival Hall (6 original pieces inspired by the works of Anna Akhmatova) and published by the South Bank Centre. His poems have been published for the Clerkenwell Literature Festival 2004 and feature in an anthology to be published later this year by Macmillan.