

September 23, 2010

**Department of Dramatic Arts 2010/2011 Season**



# Phèdre

Written by Jean Racine  
Translated by Ted Hughes  
Directed by Virginia Reh  
Designed by David Vivian  
Feb. 17, 18, 19, 2011

## ***Phèdre***

Written by Jean Racine - Translated by Ted Hughes  
Directed by Virginia Reh - Designed by David Vivian  
February 17, 18, 19, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

**Student Matinee: Friday, February 18, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.**

### **The Play**

Jean Racine's (1639-1699) ***Phèdre*** is considered his masterpiece. In it, he explores the myths of Phaedra, Hippolytus and Theseus. The aging hero Theseus cannot resist another daring adventure: to help a friend abduct the wife of the lord of the underworld. He leaves his second wife (Phèdre) in the care of Hippolytus (his son from his first marriage). When news arrives that King Theseus is dead, Phèdre reveals her passion for her stepson Hippolytus, triggering unstoppable tragic consequences.

***Phèdre*** was Racine's last classical (pagan) play for public theatre. As in all his myth-based plays, Racine is more interested in individual characters and moral struggle than the agency of the Greek/Roman gods. As the playwright was wrestling with his own religious beliefs, the struggle here is more intense and most personal. He wrote only two more plays, which were based on the Old Testament and written for a girls' school.

### **Artistic Direction**

This production employs British poet Ted Hughes' dynamic 1998 translation of *Phèdre*. The language is contemporary, and at the same time poetic. It is very accessible to North American audiences. Hughes captures and clarifies the central images and raw passion of Racine.

This production explores the recurring theme of the labyrinth and the monster which lurks within it. Each character who confronts the monster at the centre of the labyrinth discovers it to be him/herself.

### **Curriculum Ties**

The play affords the opportunity to study different versions of the Greek myths and to explore their meanings. How and why are the myths and the Greek plays that used them continually re-examined in succeeding eras, in theatre, art, and literature? Racine's play has as its sources Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Seneca's *Phèdre*.

Themes: Passion and suppression, loyalty and treachery, tragedy and the fatal flaw, order and chaos.

Relevant to: English, French, Drama, Poetry, Society and Culture, Religion.

### **Student Matinee Booking**

The student matinee for *Phèdre* is Friday, February 18, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. in the Sean O'Sullivan Theatre. Tickets for the student matinee are \$10 for each student and teacher. To book your school, please telephone the Centre for the Arts Box Office, 905-688-5550 ext. 3257, long distance toll free 1-866-617-3257, and reserve your group tickets.

The deadline for reservation by telephone is Monday, February 14, 2011 for *Phèdre*.

### **School Outreach**

*Phèdre: A Primer* contains background information and research articles that provide critical information for use in the classroom. *Phèdre: A Primer* will be available online at the end of December and can be viewed on our website: [www.brocku.ca/humanities/departments-and-centres/dramatic-arts](http://www.brocku.ca/humanities/departments-and-centres/dramatic-arts)

Sincerely,

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