



Press Release

World Premiere Play *Caeneus and Poseidon* in Redwood City Explores Gender Identity

Caeneus and Poseidon, by Bay Area playwright Bridgette Dutta Portman, is a world premiere play in verse about a transgender hero from Greek mythology. A creative blend of the old and the new, it combines classical style and structure with contemporary themes and subject matter to create a unique theatrical experience.

Caeneus, a youth from ancient Thessaly, begins his life as Caenis, assigned female at birth. After the sea-god Poseidon grants his wish for a new body, Caenis – now Caeneus – feels compelled to hide his former identity from all but his closest friend, Hippodamia, as he seeks the acceptance of his kinsmen and community. But as he and Hippodamia begin a relationship that challenges their society's strict social order, and as a vengeful Poseidon works behind the scenes to bring about Caeneus' downfall, the young man must find the strength to openly embrace his identity and his past. *Caeneus and Poseidon*, originally commissioned and written for the 2012 San Francisco Olympians Festival, explores the consequences for an individual who transgresses the bounds of socially-defined gender roles in a strongly patriarchal society and is ultimately a story of triumph over adversity. This production is funded in part by a Theatre Bay Area CA\$H grant and a grant from the Arch and Bruce Brown Foundation, a New York-based nonprofit that provides funding for arts projects inspired by LGBTQ figures in history.

Playwright Portman pitched the show as part of Dragon Theatre's 2nd Stages Series. Portman, along with co-producers Wm. Deidrick Razo and Patrick Moyroud and director Amy Crumpacker, believes it has the potential to engage audiences in an innovative way and promote a positive message about social justice, acceptance and empowerment.

"I was fascinated by the myth of Caeneus because it's a lesser-known story that features a different kind of hero from what we typically see in Greek mythology," says Portman. "While the play is set in the ancient world, I intend for audiences to come away thinking about gender norms in our own society, and the way in which people are still stigmatized for defying expectations about how women and men 'ought' to look and behave. The play is primarily about the social consequences for a person born with a gender identity that does not match his assigned sex at birth, but it is also about the way in which all people face consequences for challenging socially-delineated gender roles."

Portman, who has long been interested in Greek mythology, is a prolific local playwright who has had more than twenty of her short plays produced in the Bay Area, across the country and overseas. Her

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full-length comedy *La Fee Verte* was produced by Acadiana Repertory Theatre in Lafayette, Louisiana, in February 2016. She completed the 2015 Theatre Bay Area ATLAS program for playwrights and was a finalist for the TITAN award. She is currently president of the Playwrights' Center of San Francisco and was co-producer of the organization's award-winning anthology *Sheherazade's Last Tales* in December 2015. She has a particular affinity for writing plays in verse, and has twice been named a winner of Red Bull Theater's annual new short play competition for plays containing heightened language and classical themes.

Co-producer Patrick Moyroud is a film and television producer whose works have appeared on PBS, Discovery Channel and in Europe. Mr. Moyroud is a graduate of Brandeis University and the UCLA School of Film and Television. His television programs have won Emmy awards, and his film work, including three feature films, have been award winners at many film festivals, including Sundance. He is familiar with many different genres and subjects, from documentaries to short subjects and long-form narrative.

Co-producer and Assistant Director Wm. Diedrick Razo helped produce the last season at Anton's Well Theater Company and its last production, *What Rhymes with America*. A graduate of 2013 ATLAS for Directors, he also directed and produced *3 Guys in Drag Selling Their Stuff* at the Garage with SAFEhouse for the Arts. While on the Board of Theatre Rhinoceros, Rick helped to bring to the stage Kate Bornstein's *Hidden: A Gender*, starring Bornstein and Justin Bond.

Director Amy Crumpacker, AEA and SAG/AFTRA member, is a San Francisco based theatre artist who acts, directs, writes and teaches. Ms. Crumpacker has directed at the SF Fringe, 3rd Street Playhouse, Not Your Grammy's Theater, Playwrights' Center of SF, Wily West, the Fringe of Marin, 3rd ST Playhouse, the Afro-centric Celebration Arts theater in Sacramento, and has assisted directors at CalShakes, Shakespeare Santa Cruz and Fair Oaks Theater Festival.

Featuring: Nicky Martinez (Caeneus), Michael Wayne Rice (Poseidon), Sharon Shao (Hippodamia), Daniel Joyce (Pirithous), Scott Kravitz (Elatus), Alexander Ortiz (Latreus), Elena Ruggiero (Nereid), Regina Kohl (Nereid), Mylissa Malley (Nereid)

Designers & Production Team: Jonathan Covey (sound designer), Amy Crumpacker (director, properties designer), David Donovan (set designer), Lindsey Eifert (costume designer), Ashley Taylor Frampton (production manager), Meredith Hagedorn (executive producer), Leanna Keyes (lighting designer), Max Koknar (manager), Polina Litvak (stage manager), Charles McKeithan (technical director), Patrick Moyroud (co-producer), Alexander Ortiz (assistant stage manager), Bridgette Dutta Portman (playwright, co-producer), Scott Ragle (photographer), Ashley Kea Ramos (graphic artist), Wm. Diedrick Razo (co-producer, assistant director), Roman Rimer (script consultant), Sydney Schwindt (fight choreographer), Kazimir Valtchez (script consultant).



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WHEN:

March 10 – April 2, 2017

Thursdays – Saturdays, 8pm, Sundays, 2pm

Pay What You Will Preview, Thursday, March 9 at 8pm

Opening Night Friday, March 10

Talk-back with Director and Cast Sunday, March 19

SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL EVENTS:*Greek Mythology Night*

On Saturday, March 11, it's all about mythology! Sample Greek appetizers and come dressed up as your favorite mythological character (Greek or otherwise) for a chance to win a prize in our costume contest. Then join us pre-show for a talk by Bay Area playwright and director Stuart Bousel, founder of the San Francisco Olympians Festival, about the mythology behind the characters of *Caeneus and Poseidon*. Playwright Bridgette Dutta Portman will also discuss how the play both borrows from and departs from the original myth. Show up at 7 pm for the costume contest; talk begins at 7:30.

Gender Identity Panel

Join us following the matinee performance on Sunday, March 26, for a panel discussion on gender identity and what it means to be transgender, genderfluid or nonbinary in today's society. Speakers include actor Nicky Martinez, actor and radio host Roman Rimer, actor and model Carmin Anna Cole, and Trans Lifeline co-founder Greta Martela. Twenty percent of box office proceeds from this performance will be donated to Trans Lifeline, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping transgender people in crisis (<https://www.translifeline.org>).

WHERE:

The Dragon Theatre in downtown Redwood City

2120 Broadway Street at the intersection of Broadway and Theatre Way

HOW MUCH:

\$35 general admission

\$27 students and seniors

Limited number of \$15 rush on Thurs/Fri after opening week (cash only for walk-ups at the door)

Pay what you will preview on Thurs, March 9th – no reservation, just walk up and pay cash at the door.

\$175 for the VIP box (seats 4 people and includes champagne and chocolates.)

TIX & MORE INFO: <http://dragonproductions.net> or <http://www.poseidonplay.com>

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PHOTOS: Multiple photos and resolutions available online at

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jkasyan/sets/72157680025302956> All photos taken by Scott Ragle.

Actor attributions listed with each photo.

For photos, interviews, videos, press tickets, etc. contact:

Kimberly Wadycki, Managing Director

650.493.2006 X 5, or kim@dragonproductions.net (preferred)

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