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*Dramatic Publishing*

Based on the play by Euripides

# THE TROJAN WOMEN

Adapted by Tonya Hays

Original music by  
Buddy Dubourg and Tonya Hays

One-act drama with optional music

# THE TROJAN WOMEN

***Drama with optional music. Adapted by Tonya Hays. Original music by Buddy Dubourg and Tonya Hays. Based on the play by Euripides. Cast: 4m., 6w., Greek chorus and soldiers as desired. The Trojan Women is one of the most powerful dramas in all of literature. Widely considered the greatest anti-war play ever written, it remains both timeless and timely, a poignant meditation on the aftermath of battle. This version, ideal for one-act festivals, has won numerous awards. The play centers on Hecuba, the fallen queen of Troy, and her grief at the loss of her city and her family at the conclusion of the Trojan War. Her daughter, Cassandra, mourns the loss of her service as maiden priestess in the temple of Apollo and captivates the audience as the mysterious and frenzied priestess. She prophesies the future of Odysseus' long journey following the defeat of Troy and promises revenge in her hated marriage to Agamemnon. Andromache, Hecuba's daughter-in-law, offers a heart-rending scene as she shares with all the death of her son. Finally, the beautiful, but much detested, Helen of Troy begs her wronged husband, Menelaus, to spare her life. Through dance and (optional) original music, the Greek chorus mirrors the sorrow of the loss of Troy. The Trojan Women is a wonderful complement to the study of classic literature, mythology, history and theater. Area staging. Approximate running time: 40 minutes. Code: TH9.***

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# THE TROJAN WOMEN

By  
TONYA HAYS

Original music by  
BUDDY DUBOURG and TONYA HAYS

Based on the play by Euripides



**Dramatic Publishing**

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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Book by TONYA HAYS

Original music by BUDDY DUBOURG and TONYA HAYS

Based on the play by Euripides

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(THE TROJAN WOMEN)

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For my students  
who continue to inspire and challenge me.

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*The Trojan Women* was first performed by the WINGS Performing Arts high school ensemble, the Shooting Stars, Gulfport, Miss., as a touring production. The show was triple- and double-cast.

## CAST

Poseidon . . . . . Ricky Johnson, Kentrell Brazeal  
Athene . . . . . Hilary Herr, Arielle Barrientos, Molly Profitt  
Chorus . . Lucy Ridge, Abbye Donaldson, Sydney Dedeaux,  
Amanda Williams  
Hecuba . . . . . Stephanie Grammar, Ravin Floyd,  
Elizabeth Kerlin  
Cassandra . . . . . Katie Tully, Mallory Myers,  
Gabrielle Barrientos  
Andromache . . Kelsey Worch, Jennifer Quint, Aubrey Hays  
Talthybius . . . . . Jordan Lord, Jason Gillis  
Menelaus . . . . . Brandon Campbell, Stephen Mockler  
Helen of Troy . . . . . Andie Bradford, Adrienne McClellan,  
Andrea Nord  
Fire Dancer . . . . . Andrea Nord, Abbye Donaldson  
Soldiers . . . . . Chance Emmanuel, Ricky Johnson  
Musicians - Violin - . . . . . Robyn Norrell, Molly Profitt,  
Arielle Barrientos  
Flute - . . . . . Molly Profitt  
Cello - . . . . . Rebecca Olsson,  
Harp - . . . . . Aubrey Hays  
Percussion - . . . . . Brandon Campbell



## PRODUCTION STAFF AND CREW

Director . . . . . Tonya Hays  
Assistant Directors . . . . . Meredith Olsson, Bob Williams

Producers . . . . . Tanya Prater, Flo Williams  
Music Direction . . . . . Molly Profitt, Robyn Norell

Choreographer . . . . . Andrea Nord  
Acting Coaches . . . . . Bob Williams, Robert Williams  
Music Composition & Arrangement . . . . . Buddy Dubourg  
Set Design & Construction . . . . . Darrel Volesky,  
Bob Williams, Rick Hays, Peggy Bradford  
Props . . . . . Carla Sharrow, Bob Williams, Rebecca Johnson  
Costume Design . . . . . Katie Tully, Arielle Barrientos  
Costume Construction . . . . . Cast, Parents  
Make-up. . . . . Robert Williams, Mallory Myers,  
Tracie Barrientos

WINGS Outreach . . . . . Claudia Appel  
Cast Photographer . . . . . Tanya Prater

# THE TROJAN WOMEN

## CHARACTERS

- POSEIDON . . . . . god of the sea
- ATHENE . . . . . goddess of war, wisdom and the arts
- CHORUS (3-15). . . . . Trojan women
- HECUBA. . . . . fallen queen of Troy,  
mother of Hector and Paris
- CASSANDRA . . . . . daughter of Hecuba,  
virgin priestess of the temple of Athene
- ANDROMACHE . . . . . daughter-in-law of Hecuba,  
widow of Hector
- ASTYANAX. . . . . son of Andromache and Hector
- TALTHYBIUS. . . . . messenger of the Greek army
- MENELAUS . . . . . a Greek king, wronged husband of  
Helen of Troy
- HELEN OF TROY. . . . . lover of Paris
- SOLDIERS (2-3)

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

This one-act festival version of *The Trojan Women* was written to comply with the high school theater festival time constraints. It's running time is 35-40 min. The show toured schools and won numerous awards at the state regional festival and the state festival.

*The Trojan Women* took my students on a journey. The cast and crew were assigned areas to research which they presented in short reports at the beginning of rehearsals. Some of the topics included Music of Ancient Greece, the Greek Chorus, Life and Times of Euripides, Greek Myths, Dress of the Ancient Greeks, etc. Some of the information the students presented was incorporated in teacher packets that were distributed to the schools two weeks prior to the show coming in. The high school teachers were thrilled to have a classic Greek play presented. We were not able to fulfill all the requests for performances as the touring students could not miss additional school days to perform.

The festival cast had a larger chorus as actors not performing in the other roles joined the chorus. The seven actors in the chorus worked extensively on choreography and movement and were a powerful force in the play's performance.

Widely considered the greatest anti-war play ever written by Euripides, *The Trojan Women* remains both timeless and timely, a poignant meditation on the aftermath of battle. Cast members recognized the power of this play and used it as a vehicle to educate audience members about the atrocities in Darfur. Over \$1,000 was collected for Dollars for Darfur at schools and festival performances.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

### SET:

The set for this production represented the tents of Agamemnon. Greek theater often had three entrances with the central entrance reserved for the most important character. Three one-dimensional tents created out of burlap were created. Two free-standing skeletal soldiers stood on either side of the central tent. The tents were brought out by the chorus. They composed the body of a large primitive horse. A large primitive horse head was held separately. As the tents came apart to be set up the soldiers emerged carrying the skeletal soldiers. This was set up as the music played and Poseidon began his speech. The set was designed to be set up as the show began because this production was used as a festival piece which required setup and strike as part of the performance.

### GREEK CHORUS:

The Greek chorus represents the general populace of Troy. They offer background and summary information and assist the audience in following the performance. The chorus expands and comments on what the main characters say, such as their fears and secrets. The chorus serves to grieve with the main characters and advance the plot. They are the “Vox Humana” amid the storm and thunder of the gods.

The director is encouraged to experiment with the lines of the chorus. They can echo the words of the gods as well as

create gestures in unison. Lines can be alternated in the choral sections between actors, spoken in unison and/or chanted. The chorus is the magic of the play and can be used as a powerful visual element. They should move as one when possible. The chorus can create interesting visual elements on stage, positioned in lines, surrounding characters, etc. Suggestions are given in the script but the director is at liberty to engage the performers' imaginations and ideas in the rehearsal process.

The chorus can be as few as three and as many as fifteen. The original production had seven.

#### MUSIC:

Music was used to enhance the production. It was used to underscore certain speeches or chants. Suggestions for the use of music are given in the script. Instrumentation included two violins, a cello, drum, Celtic harp and flute. Piano can easily replace the harp. Scores for all music are available for rental. The Women of Troy Chant is to be done a cappella with "ahhs" being sung slowly with the notes as Hecuba grieves over the body of Astyanax. The use of music is optional and can be done with fewer instruments.

#### COSTUMES AND MAKE-UP:

Costumes were based on ancient Greek designs. There was little or no sewing involved. The chorus was dressed in black and gray. They wore make-up that suggested a mask

and all looked similar. The Greek soldiers wore pieces of armor and helmets along with knee-length tunics. They carried spears. Footwear consisted of sandals or bare feet. The Trojan War went on for ten years so the costumes appeared to be frayed, worn and dirty. Hecuba, Cassandra and Andromache wore costumes that suggested their nobility. All colors were muted. The use of color on the main characters made them stand out against the chorus. Helen's costume was more beautiful than the others. She wore jewelry as well.

#### PROPS:

POSEIDON – Trident. (A Greek mask was created for this and hung on the front. The masks for Poseidon and Athene were paper-mâché, built on a plastic form and designed to look like the masks of ancient Greece but were normal scale and size)

ATHENE – Shield, sword and headpiece (A mask was mounted on the front of the shield)

CASSANDRA – Ragged garlands and a torch (Torches were built on sticks and created with fabric)

ANDROMACHE – Swaddled doll for Astyanax

TALTHYBIUS – Shield of Hector, sword on costume

SOLDIERS – 2 spears and torch

# THE TROJAN WOMEN

SETTING: *Outside the walls of Troy near the tents of Agamemnon.*

AT RISE: *The stage is blank as a drumbeat is heard.*

*(MUSIC #1 UP - Opening War Theme. As the musicians play, the large Trojan horse composed of the tent pieces is taken apart to create the set for the play.*

*POSEIDON enters and stands downstage, speaking over the above action.)*

POSEIDON. From the depths of salt Aegean floods, I, Poseidon, come where the dancing Nereid twirl so gracefully. Goodwill towards this land of Troy has never left my heart. Now it is smoldering, overthrown by the Argive spear and in ruin. The Greeks framed a wooden horse to bear within its womb, hidden spears. The sacred groves are desolate and the temples of the gods run down with blood. And King Priam lies dead below the altar of Zeus, protector of the hearth. Gold and Trojan spoils are being sent to the ships of the Greeks. They wait for a fair wind to return them home after their ten long years of war where they can behold with joy their

wives and children. I am abandoning Troy and my altars that have been worsted by the goddess Hera and by Athene who joined forces to destroy Troy. Where there is the curse of desolation there is no will to honor the gods. I have heard the screams of captive maids as they by lot receive their masters. But all of the Trojan women who have not been allotted are in these tents.

*(CHORUS enters and stands behind the tents as HECUBA lies before the center tent.)*

They have been set apart for the foremost leaders of the army and with them Helen, rightly classed as prisoner.

*(HELEN enters the center tent and stands masked behind it.)*

And here is Hecuba lying in misery, unaware that her daughter Polyxena has been killed in a pitiable sacrifice at Achilles' tomb. Priam, her husband, and her sons are no more. As for her daughter, virgin Cassandra whom the God Apollo left mad,

*(CASSANDRA enters the stage R tent and stands behind it.)*

Agamemnon will abandon the wish of the god and bed her by force in an unlawful marriage. Farewell, O city prosperous once.

*(ATHENE enters from the opposite side.)*



ATHENE. May I address the mighty god whom Heaven reveres and who to my own sire is very nigh in blood, laying aside our former enmity?

POSEIDON. Thou mayst; for o'er the soul the ties of kin exert no feeble spell, great queen Athene.

ATHENE (*crosses to him*). I am come to seek thy mighty aid to make it one with mine.

POSEIDON. Why leapest thou from mood to mood?

ATHENE. Dost thou not know the insult done to me at my shrine?

CHORUS (*echoes*). Insult done.

POSEIDON. Surely in the hour that Ajax dragged off Cassandra by force.

ATHENE. And he was neither punished nor reprimanded by the Greeks.

POSEIDON. Yet 'twas by thy mighty aid they sacked Troy.

ATHENE. For which cause I would join with you and do them harm. When they are sailing home from Troy, Zeus will send his rain, fearful hail, inky tempests from the sky and the fire of his thunderbolts.

*(CHORUS and musicians can make sounds to create the sounds of a growing tempest as ATHENE describes it.)*

And if you will, make the sea roar with huge waves and whirlpools and fill the bay with corpses that the Greeks may learn to reverence my temples and respect all other gods.

POSEIDON (*raising his trident and stopping the storm noise*). It shall be so. Mount thou Olympus. Take thy father's fire bolts and watch for the time when the Greek

army is under full sail. A fool is he who sacks cities, temples and tombs, the holy places of the dead. He himself will meet the destruction he has wrought.

*(MUSIC #2 UP - Hecuba's Theme as ATHENE and POSEIDON exit.)*

HECUBA. Lift thy head, unhappy lady, from the ground to the tune of the flute's ill-omened music. This is no longer Troy and I am no longer Troy's queen. What else but tears is my hapless lot, whose country, children and husband are all lost? The Greeks came over the purple sea in their quest for the hateful Helen, wife of Menelaus. Murderess is she of my husband, Priam, the cause of my wretched state. Here I sit in this ruin near the tents of Agamemnon to be led away from my house a poor slave woman. Oh hapless wives of the sons of Troy. *(HECUBA rises.)* Ah, poor maidens, come and weep, for our city is now but a ruin. And I as a mother bird shall begin the chanting cry so different from the dance in the days of Priam.

FIRST HALF OF CHORUS *(entering from the stage R tent and speaking as one)*. Hecuba, what mean thy words? A pang of terror shoots through the heart of each Trojan woman who mourns their slavish lot.

HECUBA. The Greek oarsmen are already moving towards their ships.

FIRST HALF OF CHORUS. What is their intent? Will they bear us in our sorrow away from our country?

HECUBA. I do not know. I assume it means our ruin.

SECOND HALF OF CHORUS *(entering from stage L tent)*. With trembling steps we leave the tents of Aga-

memnon to find out our fate. To whom are we to be given as slaves?

HECUBA. The time is near for our allotment. Whose slave shall I become in my old age—I who once held royal rank in Troy.

SECOND HALF OF CHORUS. Never let us serve Menelaus, husband of Helen, whose hateful hand laid waste to Troy.

FIRST HALF OF CHORUS. But mark, here comes a herald from the army of the Greeks.

*(TALTHYBIUS enters accompanied by two SOLDIERS.)*

TALTHYBIUS. Hecuba, thou knowst me from my many journeys as a messenger from the Greeks. I am Talthybius, no stranger to thee, lady. I have come to bring news.

HECUBA. Come to me, dear women. *(They draw near her.)* It is what I feared and have dreaded.

TALTHYBIUS. The lot has decided your fates. Each warrior took his prize. You have not all been allocated together.

HECUBA. Then tell me, whose prize is my hapless daughter Cassandra?

TALTHYBIUS. King Agamemnon hath chosen her for himself, to be his bride in a stealthy union.

HECUBA *(in shocked disbelief)*. What, the virgin priestess of Apollo who hath sworn a vow of celibacy—never to wed.

TALTHYBIUS. Love for the frenzied maid hath seized the king's heart. After all, it is a high honor to win a monarch's love.

HECUBA. And what of Polyxena my youngest child that was taken from me. Is she still alive?

TALTHYBIUS. She is minister at Achilles' tomb. Her fate is one that sets her free from trouble.

HECUBA (*shocked, whispering*). Dead...

CHORUS (*echoes softly interacting with one another*). Dead...

HECUBA. ...and what of the wife of my son, Hector, Andromache? Declare her fate.

TALTHYBIUS. She too was a chosen prize. Achilles' son did take her.

HECUBA. And I, whose hair is white with age, whose servant am I to be?

TALTHYBIUS. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, hath taken thee to be his slave.

HECUBA. Weep for me, Trojan women, for I am fallen slave to a treacherous foe and monster, a foul man of trickery who transforms men to hatred of what they once loved. I am victim who has met with the unhappiest lot of all.

CHORUS (*to HECUBA*). Thy fate thou knowest; (*to TALTHYBIUS as they cross to him*) but for us what master is our destiny?

TALTHYBIUS. Off, slaves!

(*CHORUS scatters, standing among the tents.*)

TALTHYBIUS (*cont'd*). With haste bring me Cassandra, that I may place her in our captain's hands and then deliver the rest to their new masters.

*(A SOLDIER exits into the stage R tent. Part of a flame is seen from behind the tent.)*

What is the blaze of torch within? Is it a fire of the women to burn the chamber because they must leave or do they set themselves aflame longing for death in their misery.

HECUBA. 'Tis not that they are setting themselves ablaze, but my mad child Cassandra comes rushing hither wildly.

*(MUSIC #3 UP - Cassandra's Theme as she enters wildly brandishing her torch and dancing around causing the CHORUS members to dodge it, kneeling out of the way in response.)*

CASSANDRA. Bring the light and show its flame. I make shrine of gods to glow with tapers bright! King of marriage blest is the bridegroom; blest am I to wed a princely lord. Dry thy tears, oh Mother, I honor you with this light. I give light to you, god of marriage. Come, mother mine, and join the dance. Link thy steps with mine, now here now there. Salute the bride on her wedding day. Holy is the dance. Come, ye maids, sing my marriage with the husband fated I am wed. Come, ye maids, and sing my marriage with the husband fated I must bed.

CHORUS *(reaching out to her from their kneeling positions)*. Royal mistress, hold the frantic maiden lest she rush into enemy hands.

HECUBA. Ah, my child! How little did I dream of such a marriage for thee? Give up the torch to me. You should

not carry it in your frenzy. Take in this torch, (*HECUBA takes the torch from CASSANDRA and hands it to a SOLDIER who removes it from the stage*) and for her wedding madrigals weep your tears instead.

CASSANDRA. Mother, see the victorious wedding garland on my head. Rejoice in my marriage to a king for my union shall be more disastrous than Helen's. Yes, for I shall kill Agamemnon and I shall destroy his house in revenge for my brothers and father. I shall bring down the house of Atreus. The Greeks in their hunt for Helen lost countless men—because of one woman, one love affair. They died unshrouded in a foreign land. As for the Trojans, they died in their native land. They were laid to rest by duteous hands. And as for thy son, my brother Hector; he is dead and gone but leaves his reputation as the bravest of the brave. If the Greeks had stayed home, who would have known of his courage? And as for Paris too—he married Zeus' daughter. If he had not, who would have talked of Helen? All died nobly, Mother, and crowned this city with glory. Do not pity my fate, for this marriage will destroy those whom thou and I most hate.

TALTHYBIUS. If Apollo had not driven you mad you would not be sending my generals with such ominous predictions forth on their way. No, you would pay for these utterances. But King Agamemnon, son of Atreus, has yielded to a passion for you, mad maid. Though I am a poor man I would never have sought to bed you, woman. Follow me to the ships to grace the wedding of our chief. (*To HECUBA.*) And you will come later to be brought to Odysseus.

CASSANDRA. What a clever fellow, this menial. All men unite in hating the servants of kings and governments. You say my mother shall come to the halls of Odysseus. Apollo says she will die here. Odysseus has no knowledge of the suffering in store for him. His ten years at Troy shall seem as gold as compared to the next ten before he comes to his country alone. He shall encounter the savage Cyclops,

*(Members of the CHORUS choose selected words from CASSANDRA's speech beginning with "Cyclops" and whisper them ominously throughout.)*

and Circe that turns men to swine. He will meet with shipwreck on the salt sea and long for lotus and the sacred cattle of the sun. He shall descend to Hades alive and when he finally arrives at his home he will encounter a thousand troubles. Lead on! Let me marry my bridegroom in the house of Hades. And you will be buried in the dead of night, who thinkest so proudly on thy fortune. As for me (*CHORUS ceases whispering*) they will fling my naked corpse into the rocky chasm in the wintry waters for wild beasts to feed on me, hard by my husband's tomb, me the handmaid of Apollo. (*She begins taking off some of the priestess garb, bones, etc., she is wearing and giving it to members of the CHORUS.*) Farewell, ye garlands of the god most dear to me. I tear you from my body while I am still pure—that the winds may carry them to thee. Where is the ship? Lose not time in watching for a favoring breeze as doomed thou art to carry from this land one of the three avenging Furies.

CHORUS (*echoes loudly*). Furies!

CASSANDRA. Farewell, Mother, do not shed a tear, yet a little while I shall join my father and my brother. Victory shall crown my head amongst the dead when I have overthrown our destroyers, the house of Atreus.

(*Exit TALTHYBIUS, SOLDIERS and CASSANDRA as HECUBA collapses in grief.*)

FIRST HALF OF CHORUS TO SECOND HALF. Attendants of Hecuba, help her unto her feet.

(*CHORUS members go to HECUBA.*)

HECUBA. Leave me! (*The CHORUS steps back from HECUBA.*) My troubles, my past claim this lowly posture. I was of royal blood and married into a royal house. I was the mother of a race of gallant sons. No Trojan mother, nor Greek or barbarian could boast of such sons. I saw my husband, Priam, butchered on his own hearth and my city captured. My daughters I have raised to marry noble bridegrooms—have been snatched away. Last of all to crown my miserable life, I shall come to Greece a slave to watch their gate, to bake their bread, me, Hector's mother, and on the ground instead of royal bed, lay down my shrunken limbs with tattered rags about my wasted frame. None of my sons and daughters may come to lift up their mother. Why then raise me up? What hope is left?

(*MUSIC #4 UP - Trojan Requiem as CHORUS members circle HECUBA and chant.*)