

## **LEE BREUER CREATES CONTEMPORARY PRODUCTION OF AESCHYLUS TRAGEDY «CHOEPHORAE» FOR PATRAS, GREECE**

The city of Patras, Greece, Cultural Capital of Europe 2006 has commissioned the American avant garde director Lee Breuer to create a bold new stage adaptation of the ancient tragedy, *Choephorae* or 'The Libation Bearers' for premiere in Patras on Friday, May 19. *Choephorae* is the second part of *The Oresteia*, Aeschylus' ancient Greek dramatic trilogy which chronicles the murder of Agamemnon by his wife in revenge for the sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia, Clytemnestra's killing by her son Orestes, and Orestes' resulting trial and acquittal. The play is being produced by Micocci Productions, LLC of New York City in association with PrimeArt S.A. in Athens and the experimental American theater company, Mabou Mines.

*Choephorae* will represent an entirely new direction in choral performance – the culmination of Lee Breuer's 30-year, three-pronged (acting, singing and dancing) research in the form. He will create a production with an all-female cast performing both male and female roles, that defines tragedy by a synthesis of ancient and contemporary performing techniques...retracing the 'dramatic form' back into its pre-history as epic narrative chant and song – back choral presentations sacred to Dionysus, as well as forward to post modernism.

"What could tragedy have been before the emergence of Thespis when it was still 'Dithyrambic'? Could it be, if not recreated, at least imagined?" asks Lee Breuer, the conceiver and director of this extraordinary production. Breuer's *Choephorae* takes us both forward and backward using the cutting edge technology of the American avant-garde and the choreographic and musical performance modality of the choral odes. *Choephorae* is being created in a style Breuer refers to as "Performance Poetry," a concept of staging using choreography, music, a conceptual approach to design, studio sound technology, and an epic/lyric approach to acting that makes the performance a 'poem come to life.' The *Choephorae* as the consummate lyric tragedy is the perfect work for such an approach. Like a great jigsaw puzzle, in it the theatrical forms of cultures become a picture of the world's true emotional languages.

The production will involve a combined Greek and American cast, with international musicians accompanying. An initial creative period (workshop) is planned in Cambridge, Massachusetts, hosted by the American Repertory Theatre Training Institute at Harvard University and by Radcliffe College where Mr. Breuer is a visiting fellow. A six weeks rehearsal period will take place in Athens during April-May 2006. Future performances of the completed work are in discussion for international touring after the Patras opening.

Lee Breuer is best known as an adapter and director of classics: the Pulitzer- and Tony-nominated *The Gospel at Colonus* starring Morgan Freeman, the Best Production Obie Award-winning *Peter and Wendy* and most recently, the double Obie-awarded *Mabou Mines DollHouse* currently on international tour. He has directed 12 Obie Award-winning performances and has himself been awarded Obies for Best Play (writing) and Best Production (twice), Directing (twice) and Lifelong Achievement. His own writing includes "Sister Suzie Cinema (The Collected Poems and Performances 1978-1986)" published by TCG New York, and "La Divina Caricatura" published by Green Integer Press as well as original lyrics for productions such as *The Warrior Ant*, *Sister Suzie Cinema* and *Shaggy Dog Animation*. Breuer has been awarded playwriting grants and fellowships from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Guggenheim Foundation and others. He is guest faculty at Yale University School of Drama and is a Senior Specialist with the international Fulbright Program.