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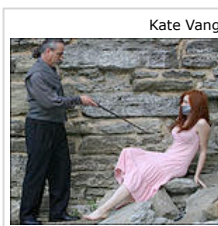
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### Spotlight: Agamemnon

Liz Neerland deftly directs Nimbus's staging of the Aeschylus tragedy

**Quinton Skinner**

Published on June 20, 2007



Kate Vang

Among the many artistic virtues of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* is that it might make Western literature's first case against long-distance relationships. The action opens with a cloaked watchman (**Jeffrey Mosser**) staring bitterly, arms folded, as he awaits the king's return home after a decade spent fighting the Trojan War. This night, a light in the distance signals that the wait is over. The chorus stirs, as **Mitchell Frazier**, **Robert C. Hammel**, and **Jerome R. Marzullo** growl and pontificate like three old guys bullshitting on a stoop. Something is amiss, though—an impression that's cemented by the arrival of queen Clytemnestra. **Katherine Kupiecki** carries herself with regal cool, her arms at her side, her

dictation precise and forceful. But the queen gives herself away when the king's herald (Mosser again) launches into a rant about her fidelity that ends with her proclaiming, "I have been faithful in every way." (Mosser earns one of the biggest laughs of the night when, after Kupiecki exits, he deadpans, "That was odd.") Soon *Agamemnon* (**Gabriele Angieri**) himself appears in an overcoat and salt-and-pepper hair (along with hysterical concubine and seer Cassandra, played by Nicole Joy Brunsvold). Blood is duly shed, and the oily Aegisthus (**Nicholas Leeman**) emerges to gloat over Agamemnon's corpse, and the fact that he'd been heartily cuckolding him during the war against *Troy*. (Ladies: This probably isn't the show for the returning *Iraq* vet in your life.) Part of the reason this show works so well is **Liz Neerland's** direction, which focuses on text and casts the action in an indeterminate era. The characters spend a good deal of time debating the morality and justification of Aegisthus's action. But in this adaptation they also adopt a contemporary tone in matters of the heart and heavier issues such as waging wars for the profit of others. A sequel of sorts is coming this fall, rounding out Nimbus's staging of the Oresteia trilogy in two shows (this production throws in the first scenes of *The Libation Bearers*); can't wait to see how badly it all turns out.

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