

# Actors of Dionysus

by Megan Rogers

**A**ctors of Dionysus (aod) is a charity and theatre company with 26 years of experience of creating radical adaptations of Ancient Greek drama and new writing productions inspired by myth. Since 1993 we have toured over 50 productions nationally and internationally, performed to over 750,000 people and become the UK's leading interpreters in this field.

## What we do

Our main charitable purpose is to advance public education in the arts with particular, but not exclusive, reference to the art of theatre and Greek classical drama. Our passion is to ensure that this intrinsic part of our dramatic heritage remains alive and accessible to modern audiences, in theatres, in schools and beyond, and we do this by touring ambitious, bold and contemporary productions of Greek drama and offering excellent outreach and education opportunities for students and young people.

The examination body AQA has listed aod as a company whose work should be seen by students.

## Who we seek to help

aodEducation seeks to engage and inspire young people in Ancient Greek drama and myth through fun and practical

experiences created to enhance their understanding of the Classics. We hold a strong track record in this area and our nationwide outreach programme consists of tailor-made drama and classics workshops, performance lectures, pre-show talks with leading Classicists and post-show discussions with cast and crew, all of which allow us to deliver key resources and share our extensive knowledge of this area. We offer a host of educational publications including DVDs and audio-CDs which are available for purchase at our online shop.

In 2018 we launched a free workshop campaign which was kindly supported by The Classical Association and The Four Acre Trust. The initiative is to offer state secondary school and college students in disadvantaged areas free workshops, to make the underlying problems caused by educational funding cuts less impactful to those affected. To date we have given away 30 workshops in the areas of London and East Sussex, benefitting approximately 500 students between the ages of 11-18 and beyond, and we plan to continue running the project, subject to funding.



Figure 1. | Education officer Mark Katz at Withington Girls' School.



**Figure 2. | Education officer Mark Katz working with students in London.**

In January 2019 we launched a free online resource page on our website, designed to provide free teaching and learning support for those without ready access to our workshops and productions. We currently offer an array of *Antigone* resources, and plan to add *Medea* and *Lysistrata* content in the near future. This project is kindly supported by the Jowett Copyright Foundation.

## Workshops

*“I could not recommend this workshop enough. Mark was enthusiastic and full of energy, motivating the students, while simultaneously scaffolding his approach to different students who needed varying degrees of care and support... all of our students were gushing afterwards at how much they had learnt and how much they had enjoyed it.”*

Sophie Bartlett, Southam College  
Our workshops are particularly beneficial for those who are studying ancient texts at GCSE or A Level, although we tailor-make them to suit all manner of ages and abilities. We run workshops throughout the year and across the UK, and this year our engagement team has travelled to Manchester, Scotland, Lancashire and Birmingham, amongst other great places.

We work with students on most classic texts and cover particular areas such as the Greek chorus, conventions of Greek staging and the tragic hero. The emphasis is on exploration and identification of key characteristics of Ancient Greek drama in an informative, hands-on and engaging environment. Physical, vocal and choral exercises provide students with the technical tools to play with and inform the text.

## Classics Days

We introduced curated Classics Days in 2019, to offer larger or multiple-age groups the opportunity to dig deeper into Greek drama over a longer period of time. Classics Days usually run for the whole day and are suitable for Drama, Classics, History or English students. They involve both academic and practical exploration of Ancient Greek drama, and we work with multiple Greek plays. Two or three members of our engagement team lead the event, each bringing a different area of expertise and teaching style with them, to give students a fuller understanding of the context and conventions of Greek drama.

Classics Days may involve a dynamic PowerPoint presentation, an imaginative performance lecture, discussion groups, practical workshops and short performances/performed readings from **aod**.

We strive to keep the Classics alive through our work, and offer resources which we hope will inspire the next generation of theatre makers and Classicists in the wonders of Ancient Greek drama, in turn promoting and advancing its study, for years to come.

*“I was fortunate enough to see your production of Medea live in 2013, it actually was one of the reasons I chose to study Classics at university as it was such a great production.”*

Saskia Reed, Classical Literature and Civilisation student

To book a workshop or Classics Day for your school, college or university, contact Education Officer Mark at

**Actors of Dionysus**  
**mark@actorsofdionysus.com**