

ClassicsFest 2024

Call out for a New Dramatic Monologue to be performed at the Lit & Phil between 7th – 9th March 2024.

For three days in March 2024 (Thursday 7th – Saturday 9th) and straddling International Women's Day, *ClassicsFest* at the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle, in collaboration with the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at Newcastle University, will present an exciting open access programme curated by Cinzia Hardy, including performances, presentations, talks and debates focussing on the universal theme of women and love in ancient Rome. This will be explored using *Heroides* (The Heroines) by the Roman poet Ovid (43 BC – AD 17) as inspiration. *Heroides* is a series of poems in the form of letters from female characters (from the work of Homer and others) to mythical heroes.

See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heroïdes>

Two thousand years ago, Ovid's project was to take these ancient stories, evolved from oral cultures across the Middle East and Mediterranean and seemingly known from childhood to every Roman, and to put their side-lined heroines centre stage with a series of imaginary letters. It's typical of Ovid – the wittiest, naughtiest, cleverest writer of his age – that he should spot the chance to express himself through these lesser-told aspects of well-known myths. Forget Theseus – let's hear from Ariadne. Never mind Ulysses' journey – what about Penelope? Ovid's letters sound very much like dramatic monologues in which one can hear the women's voices – which is why we are spotlighting four contemporary re-tellings of the letters in the form of dramatic monologues, by contemporary writers, performed by professional actresses and speaking to audiences of today. These are ancient stories, reinvented and retold for millennia. We present the next link in the chain of storytellers stretching back to the past, and on into the future.

Directed by Cinzia Hardy, we will present:

- *Ariadne: String* by Bryony Lavery
- *Hypsipyle: Knew I Should Have* by Natalie Haynes
- *Medea: The Gift* by Juliet Gilles Romero

The fourth dramatic monologue to be presented alongside the others will be chosen by a small adjudicating panel, following a call out for submissions. There is a fee of £750 (Society of authors recommended rate) for the winning script, which will be staged at the festival alongside the others.

The Lit & Phil will have non-exclusive use of the winning monologue and all rights will remain with the author.

Interested in submitting an entry? Please read on...

Eligibility

The only criterion is that you must be based in either Tyne & Wear, Northumberland or County Durham and be over the age of 18 years.

You don't have to have been published and you don't have to have written for the theatre before.

You should be available to attend one rehearsal of your dramatic monologue during the w/c 26th February 2024 (exact date to be mutually agreed) and be available to attend one post-show discussion on one evening during the festival. There is a £70 fee for taking part in the post-show discussion.

How to apply

Read Ovid's *Heroides* and choose one of the letters that appeals to you.

Please don't choose Ariadne to Theseus; Hypsipyle to Jason; or Medea to Jason, as these will already be represented.

The classics have always been freely retold, and your brief is to reinterpret, reflect on, or completely reimagine one of Ovid's *Heroides* through the medium of a new written dramatic monologue of between 1,000 and 2,000 words. You have license to take whatever approach feels most instinctive to you. You may wish to shift your story into the present day or follow the Ovidian argument; focus on the imagery or depart from Ovid into other treatments of the same myth.

Please complete the cover sheet provided and attach to your script. This will be separated from your script on submission. Your name should not appear on your script in order to ensure blind selection by the adjudicating panel.

- Submissions should be received either by email or by post **no later than 15th January 2024.**
- Scripts should be typed in point 12 with 1.5 line spacing.
- Email submissions should be in PDF format.

Please do get in touch if we can help with any access needs.

Please send your email submission to the Lit & Phil addressed to ClassicsFest@litandphil.org.uk and putting **ClassicsFest submission** in the title.

Postal submissions should be addressed to **ClassicsFest submission** and sent to the **Lit & Phil, 23 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1SE.**

Timescale

- Submissions can be made any time from **Monday 23rd October 2023** and all entries must be received by **15th January 2024**.
- The writer of the winning script will be contacted **no later than 12th February 2024** with rehearsals starting w/c 26th February.
- Up to 8 runners up will be invited to share a rehearsed reading of their scripts to the public, as part of the festival on Friday 8th March 2024 at the Lit & Phil (5.30 – 7pm).
- We will contact all applicants no later than 12th February 2024.

Adjudicating panel

Anke Walter, a specialist in Ovid, Senior Lecturer at Newcastle University, School of History, Classics and Archaeology.

Cinzia Hardy, a well-known North East based stage director and producer. She founded the award -winning performing arts company November Club, based in Morpeth, and was its artistic director until the end of 2020. She has worked with the Lit & Phil on many performance-based productions in the past, most notably *The Novocastrian Philosophers' Club* (2007) and *We Got Mittens Too!* (2008).

Dave Whetstone, former Culture Editor of The Journal, Newcastle and now working freelance and covering North East arts for *Cultured.North East* and other media.

The judges decisions are final, and we cannot enter into correspondence with unsuccessful applicants.

ClassicsFest is supported by Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland – Newcastle Culture Investment Fund; The David Family Foundation; Sir James Knott Trust; and Newcastle University.

ClassicsFest COVER SHEET – please attach this to the front of your script. It will be removed before being seen by the judges.

Full Name:

Address:

Email:

Mobile Number:

Please reply to these important questions:

1. Are you based in either Tyne & Wear, Northumberland or County Durham?
2. Which of Ovid's *Heroides* (Heroines) have you chosen?
3. Are you available to attend *ClassicsFest 2024*?