



**THE WAR
IS OVER.
HER STORY
IS NOT.**

NEWTON THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

HELEN

BY EURIPIDES

TRANSLATED BY DIANE ARNSON SVARLIEN

THE THEATER STEPS AT NEWTON CITY HALL

JULY 18TH – 21ST AT 7:30 PM

**THIS PRODUCTION IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE
NEWTON CULTURAL COUNCIL, A LOCAL AGENCY WHICH IS SUPPORTED
BY THE MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL, A STATE AGENCY.**



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ABOUT NTC

Founded in 2013, NTC is a theater company based in Newton whose mission is to create excellent works of art in new ways by using talent from around the Greater Boston area. Our productions, performed in and around Newton, include original stagings of contemporary and classical literature, new plays and devised pieces. Our goal is to promote community through artistic expression. Eager to partner with other local non-profit organizations, we choose meaningful material that fosters civically-engaged audiences. We strive to promote accessibility; at least one production every year is free of charge.

For more information about NTC and our upcoming performances, check out our website and join our mailing list at

NewtonTheatreCompany.com



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CAST

Helen: Mary Potts Dennis
Menelaus: Sarah Brooke Vanaman
Teucer: Veronica Aviles
Old Woman: Dani Johnson
Servant/Castor: Meg Downes-Berry
Theonoe/Theoclymenus: Elliott Purcell*
Polydeuces: Anna Stenberg
Chorus: Quinn Etchie and Naomi Lee

*Denotes member of the Actors Equity Association

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Melissa Bernstein
Stage Manager: Anna Stenberg
Assistant Stage Manager: Natalie Ottaviano
Sound Designer: Bernie Bernstein
Lighting Designer: Dave Beckman

NTC STAFF

Melissa Bernstein, Artistic Director and Board President
Paul Walsh, Board Director
Courtney Cole, Board Director

Abby Lass, Marketing Director

SPECIAL THANKS

Paula Gannon
Lori Lass
Leslie Held
South Stage
Theatre Ink

WHO'S WHO

Mary Potts Dennis (Helen) is thrilled to be back at NTC for this delightful production. Mary holds a degree in Theater Arts from Emerson College in Boston and has played leading roles in many Boston area productions. Many thanks to Peter for his perpetual support.

Sarah Brooke Vanaman (Menelaus) is psyched for her third show with NTC! Past credits: *Women* (Jo), *Mansfield Park* (Mary Crawford) [NTC], *As Bees in Honey Drown* (Ilya), *Nickel and Dimed* (Holly) [N], *Electra* (Electra) [South Stage]. Education: Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She is so grateful to the NTC family for welcoming her back so warmly.

Veronica Aviles (Teucer) is happy to be back for her second production with NTC. Previously, she played Fanny Price in NTC's *Mansfield Park* and participates in her high school's theater program, playing Sandy in *Grease* and Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. She hopes to pursue Theatre and Humanities as a double major when she begins university next year.

Dani Johnson (Old Woman) is excited to return to NTC for her fourth production. Her work with NTC marks a long-awaited return to the stage. Early credits: *Twelfth Night*, *Footloose*, *The Who's Tommy*, and *The Crucible*, among others. Dani teaches high school English in Newton.

Meg Downes-Berry (Servant/Castor) is thrilled to return to NTC. She would like to thank her husband, Dan, for warm dinners after late rehearsals and her younger brother, Joe, for being the first Downes-Berry to perform with NTC.

Elliott Purcell* (Theonoe/Theoclymenus) is delighted to return to NTC. Recent credits: *The Curious Incident...*, *Hand to God* (Elliot Norton Nomination Outstanding Actor) [SpeakEasy Stage Company]; *Romeo and Juliet* [Commonwealth Shakespeare Company]; *The Weird* [Off the Grid]. Education: Boston College.

Anna Stenberg (Polydeuces) is excited (and nervous) to be making her formal onstage debut. When not conquering stage fright, Anna is a seasoned Stage Manager. Past stage management credits: *A Delicate Balance*, *The Crucible*, *Agamemnon*, and *Ethan Frome*. Thanks to her friends, family, and cast for their patience, support, and unflinching good humor.

Quinn Etchie (Chorus) is excited to be back performing with NTC. Her earlier performances include *Ethan Frome* (Mattie), *Iphigenia at Aulis* (Chorus), and *Women* (Amy). Additionally, as Youth Services Director for the City of Newton, she has been honored to work collaboratively with Newton's students of color to create *The Monologue Project: Voices of Color*.

Naomi Li (Chorus) is delighted to return to NTC for the second time. Recent credits: Portia in *Julius Caesar*, Reverend Hightower in *Bat Boy the Musical*, and Chorus in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. She is a rising sophomore in Boston University's Acting BFA Class of 2022. Naomi appreciates all the support she's received from her family, friends, and mentors. Enjoy the show!

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Helen of Troy.

The face that launched a thousand ships.

Although Homer portrays Helen sympathetically in the *Iliad*, all other characters in that epic tale of the Trojan War vilify her. As they do in Greek tragedy after Greek tragedy. No one has a kind word to say about Helen. Even her sister, Clytemnestra, blames Helen for the destruction of her family.

Helen is a woman who may or may not have had agency in her decision to join Paris in Troy— a domestic decision used as an excuse for the Greeks to launch a war. Helen's right to choose what she does as an individual woman becomes everybody's business.

And into the mix of all these stories about the Trojan War— its beginnings, its aftermath— all the stories Newton Theatre Company continues to tell on the grand steps of Newton City Hall - into this mix comes Euripides' *Helen*.

A little produced play, *Helen* poses the question: What if Helen never went to Troy? What, then, was the point of the senseless destruction of Troy and the thousands of Greek and Trojan deaths?

The party-line reason to invade Troy was the abduction of Helen. Not a good reason to begin with, but now we are left with no reason at all. Once again, Euripides reaches across thousands of years to preach to us today about the insanity of war. And by so doing, he manages to give Helen her much deserved happily ever after.

—Melissa Bernstein, Director

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that’s what theatre is all about.”

— Chita Rivera



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innovative and thought-provoking shows.

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