



Stanford stages stunning 'Electra'  
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# An excellent 'Electra' staged at Stanford

How many times can a heart break? In Sophocles' "Electra," the answer is many times, because Electra is obsessed with her childhood memory of the murder of her father. She carries that memory into adulthood, seething for revenge.

Stanford Summer Theater has mounted an exciting and thoughtful production of this Greek classic. MacArthur award-winner Anne Carson's contemporary translation creates a modern-feeling, moment-to-moment story.



JOHN  
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"Electra" looks at the relationship between justice and healing. What does it take to heal from an obsession for revenge, when one has been done a huge injustice? Who gets to define what justice is?

"Electra" also asks us to look at how we hang on to our griefs, and how we let them go. When is it right to do one, and when is it right to do the other? The play examines the gray area between being right, and egomaniacal self-justification.

Although the production sags about two-thirds of the way through, with all of the talkiness around big and important ideas, director Rush Rehm's casting and acting are excellent, and overall it's an exciting show.

In a powerful opening tableau, young Electra (Davia Schendel) silently celebrates



Courtesy of Stanford Summer Theater

In Stanford Summer Theater's production of Sophocles' "Electra" are Valentina Conde as Electra, surrounded by the chorus, from left: Florentina Mocanu, Katharine Hawthorne, Deanna Tan, Liz Stark and

## 'ELECTRA'

**UPSHOT:** ★★★★★

**WHAT:** Sophocles' "Electra"

**PRESENTED BY:** Stanford Summer Theater

**WHERE:** Memorial Auditorium, Stanford University

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays; 2 p.m. Aug. 9

careful, aware that he might be in over his head.

Peter Callender is excellent as the emotional and intensely focused old tutor, reminding now-adult Orestes that the moment of revenge has arrived, and that it is Orestes' duty to kill his mother.

A group of six women wonderfully play the all-important chorus. They are the collective conscience and personality of the local community, engaging with Electra and others on the merits of the story's various issues.

This is a rich staging. Choreographer Aleta Hayes gives the chorus simple but lovely movement to open up community feelings, choices and reactions.

Erik Flatmo's striking blood-red palace steps sit next to an arbor of slender blood-red leafless tree trunks, suggesting a dead world. Connie Strayer's graceful and elegant costumes focus the characters' single-mindedness. Michael Ramsaur's lovely lighting dapples the stage.