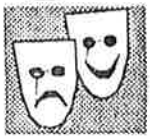
Tales of wanderer all sound like Greek at J. Paul Getty

By KARLA TIPTON
Staff Writer

Theater review



The courtyard garden resounded with the words of the tale. Reflections sparkled from the pools against the columns. The five bards stood on their platforms relating in turn a story familiar to all, told in a haunting new way.

"The Wanderings of Odysseus" is the first presentation of ancient drama at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu. Produced in conjunction with the Center Theatre Group and the Mark Taper Forum, the four-hour performance continues today, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 6 and 10-11.

Stories of the Greek wanderer Odysseus, perhaps better known by his Roman name of Ulysses, are here woven together in Oliver Taplin's new translation of Homer's "The Odyssey." These tales are well known to us already – those of the Trojan Horse, of Odysseus' triumph over the giant one-eyed Cyclops, of his escape from the song of the Sirens and his years spent with the goddesses Circe and Calypso.

In this spellbinding presentation, Odysseus – his crew all dead and his raft broken by the vengeful sea god Poseidon – washes up in the country of Scheria, the land of the Phaeacians. It is here in the palace of the king and queen that Odysseus, now separated 20 years from his wife and child, relates his tragic story.

The three-man, two-woman cast (Tony Amendola, Josh Clark, Baibre Dowling, Page Leong and Andrew Robinson) carry us easily through the performance and Odysseus' trials, convincingly portraying gods, goddesses and mortals.

The setting also contributes to the audience's sense of being somewhere other than Southern California, for it is performed in the inner peristyle garden of the museum, itself a re-creation of an ancient Roman country house. The effect is completed with a box dinner of Greek pastry, stuffed grape leaves, lemon chicken and fresh vegetables.

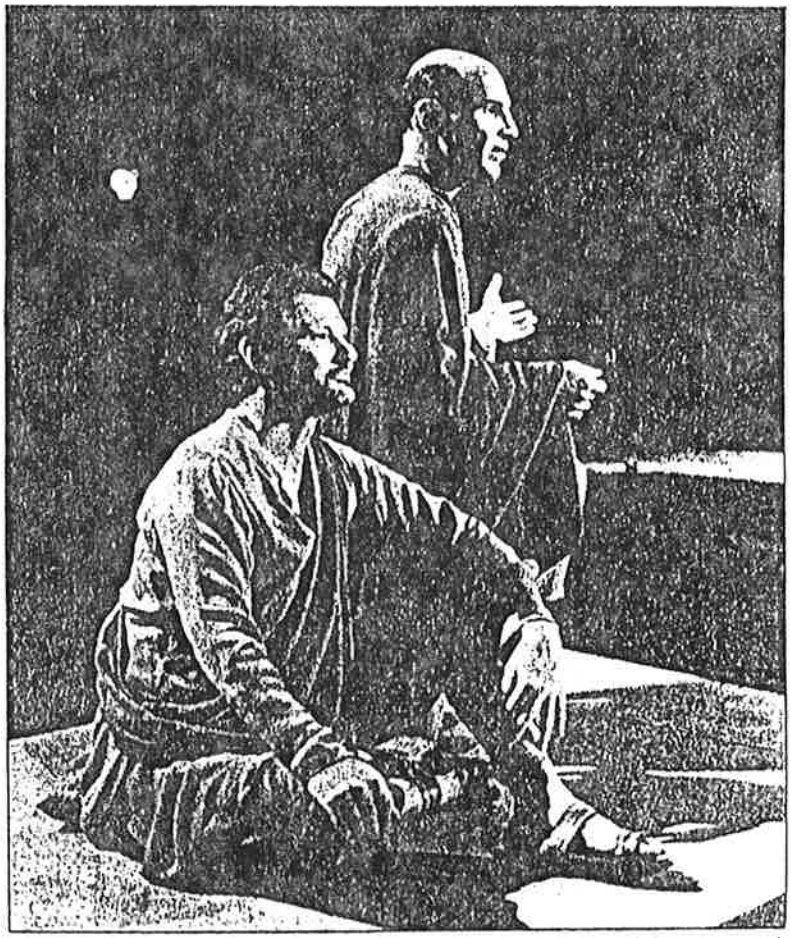
'Wanderings of Odysseus'

Tales of the Greek wanderer presented by five bards in both performance and storytelling.

WHERE: J. Paul Getty Museum, 17985 Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu.

WHEN: Today through Sunday, Oct. 6 and 10-11. All performances begin at 6 p.m.

ADMISSION: Tickets are $20, available through Ticketmaster and the Mark Taper Forum box office, (213) 972-7392.



THE WANDERER – Performers Andrew Robinson and Michael Santo help tell "The Wanderings of Odysseus."

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