

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

Carey Perloff, Artistic Director

PRESENTS

WORDS ^{on} PLAYS

INSIGHT INTO THE PLAY, THE PLAYWRIGHT, AND THE PRODUCTION

Phèdre

BY JEAN RACINE

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY

TIMBERLAKE WERTENBAKER

DIRECTED BY CAREY PERLOFF

AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How does the formality of Racine's language interplay with the passions of his characters?
2. There are many unseen forces in *Phèdre*—the gods, a complicated political landscape, and a strict social etiquette. How does this production illustrate these forces at work?
3. How does the use of contemporary music in this production affect or inform your theatrical experience?
4. Do you sympathize with Phèdre's plight? Why or why not?
5. Who is ultimately to blame for Hippolytus's death?
6. Phèdre's final lines are, "Death at last withdraws the light from my eyes / and returns the day I soiled to purity." What does she mean? Does any good come from her death?

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