bpa *performance making*
BACHELOR OF PERFORMING ARTS



CREATIVE LEARNING PACK - GENERATOR 2026

The Bacchae

by Euripides, adapted and directed by Kyle Morrison

A teacher and audience resource written by the
Third Year Performance Making Company,
Bachelor of Performing Arts, Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts.
Flex Theatre, ECU City, 12 to 18 November 2026. Ages 15+.

ECU EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
WAAPA Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts

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THROUGHOUT THE PACK, LOOK OUT FOR THESE MARKS

Watch
video on the part's page

Discuss
a question for the room

Activity
something to do in the classroom or studio

Read
background and sources

Access
content, sensory and access information

The online resource

Each part of this pack has a version online at PerformanceMaking.com, with its video and downloads.

`performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026`

Schools

Bookings, the post-show Q&A and the latest details.

`performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-schools`

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BEFORE THE SHOW

00 A note for teachers

‘What happens to the children when the adults go out to party?’

THE COMPANY’S DRAMATURGICAL QUESTION. PART 3 TELLS HOW THEY ARRIVED AT IT.

Firstly, thank you for being a part of this new collaboration between the WAAPA Bachelor of Performing Arts and Western Australian secondary school drama programs. The Creative Learning Pack offers background on the play, behind-the-scenes insight into production and process, and a series of exercises for students to undertake both pre- and post-show, to enhance understanding and extend their theatrical experience.

The resources have been created by the student cast members in the production, under the support and guidance of WAAPA staff, as part of their audience engagement and interweaving cultures studies. Engage with whichever elements of this pack will support and suit your students, and we hope you enjoy our show.



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How to use this pack

The pack is in two halves.

Before the show (Parts 1 to 9) gives background on the play, the people who made this production and how it was made, with activities to run before your class sees it.

After the show (Parts 10 to 12) holds the post-show activities, a glossary and further viewing. Every part stands on its own: take the one you need.

School bookings, the post-show Q&A and the downloads are at **performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-schools**.

The whole pack can be downloaded from **performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026**.

Curriculum

These teaching resources and strategies address the following Western Australian Curriculum general capabilities:

- CRITICAL AND CREATIVE THINKING
- DIGITAL LITERACY
- ETHICAL UNDERSTANDING
- INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
- LITERACY
- NUMERACY
- PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CAPABILITY

Schools

Bookings, the post-show Q&A and the latest details for teachers.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-schools

Access

Age guidance, content and sensory information, the visual story and described performances.

performancemaking.com/access/bacchae-2026

LOOK OUT FOR THESE MARKS

- Watch: video online
- Discuss
- Activity
- Read
- Online: more on performancemaking.com

BEFORE THE SHOW

01 About the play

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, YEARS 10-12 | TIME: 15 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING

Introduction to the play

The Bacchae was written by the Ancient Greek tragedian Euripides, and first premiered at the City Dionysia festival in 405 BC. It is often thought of as Euripides' masterpiece, a work which finely demonstrates the conventions of classical Greek tragedy.

It explores several themes, looking closely at the balance between being guided by reason, as opposed to being guided by sensuality. As a play, it analyses the consistency, and conflict, between the laws of humans and the laws of the gods, showing us characters which swear to one extreme or another, and realise their mistakes too late.

The play has inspired many other works of art, both in drama, and beyond. It is a story which is almost 2500 years old. As a result, its influences are broad, and far-reaching.

Kyle Morrison's production of *The Bacchae*, performed in November 2026, posits a contemporary take on a classic. Through shifts in language and the addition of Shakespearean sonnets, Morrison achieves a version of the text that highlights certain themes, and puts forward a different dramatic message.

Synopsis

The Bacchae is the tale of **Dionysus**, the Greek god of wine, fertility and ecstasy, returning to Thebes to punish the young King Pentheus for denying his divinity. It begins with the god Dionysus (the son of Zeus and the Theban princess Semele) coming to his mother's city in the form of a mortal man to answer the slander that he is not a god. As he explains, his mother Semele's own sisters (Agave, Ino and Autonoe) said that she had taken a mortal lover and blamed Zeus, and that Zeus had struck her dead for the lie.

Now Dionysus has driven all the women of Thebes out of their houses in frenzy, and they are celebrating his rites on Mount Cithaeron. The aged Cadmus and the prophet and seer Tiresias prepare to join them, but Pentheus, Agave's son and the king of Thebes, reproaches the old men and orders his soldiers to hunt down the followers of the new god. Dionysus, disguised as a mortal, is arrested and shut up near the palace stables. The god frees himself with ease, shaking the palace with an earthquake and fire.

Meanwhile a herdsman reports that the women on the mountain are working miracles and, when attacked, tearing cattle apart with their bare hands. Pentheus gathers an army, but Dionysus persuades him instead to go and spy on the women himself, dressed as a female maenad and worshipper of Dionysus. Soon a second messenger returns to tell how Pentheus was discovered in his tree and torn to pieces by the women, led by his own mother, Agave.

Agave arrives proudly carrying his head, which she believes to be the head of a young lion. In our adaptation Tiresias brings her back to her senses (this was originally the role of Cadmus). Dionysus, now appearing in his divine form, justifies his vengeance, sends Agave and her sisters into exile, and foretells that Cadmus and Harmonia will be changed into serpents.



Members of the company in rehearsal · Photograph: Ethan Thomas

Watch the trailer

Online once the season opens, on the pack page.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-01-about-the-play



The Soldiers

Members of the Theban military: friends and protectors of Pentheus. They follow him to infiltrate the Bacchae, and fail to protect him from Agave.

Photograph: Ethan Thomas

BEFORE THE SHOW

02 Meet the company and creative team

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS | TIME: 10 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING

Five designers and directors made this production with the company. Each has an interview page online, added as the interviews are recorded.



DIRECTOR

Kyle Morrison

Morrison provides a unique insight and perspective for aspiring directors. He is the creative visionary of this version of *The Bacchae*, adapting and directing Euripides' text to provoke thought through a more contemporary lens.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-kyle-morrison



MUSIC AND SOUND COMPOSITION

David McEwan

McEwan has created the original score and sound design for this production. His engagement with the process provides insight into what working collaboratively with a director looks like from a sound design perspective.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-david-mcewan



LIGHTING DESIGN

Katharina Brieden

Brieden provides insight into the importance of lighting and how particular colours, shapes, textures and angles in lighting states can be used as storytelling devices.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-katharina-brieden



SET AND PROP DESIGN

Abigail Kruger

Kruger breaks down design processes and techniques used in the creation and consideration of the show's set design. She provides great insight for students interested in pursuing production and design roles.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-abigail-kruger



COSTUME AND MAKEUP DESIGN

Sofia Trimboli

Trimboli was interested in a range of textures for this production, marrying the old with the new and the idea of fabric decaying as the society crumbles around the central characters.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-sofia-trimboli

Interview pages

One page per creative: the interview as a captioned video, the transcript and a short bio. Kyle Morrison's is live first.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-kyle-morrison

The company

The Third Year Performance Making Company of the Bachelor of Performing Arts, WAAPA, class of 2026.

The company devised the ensemble approach to this production and wrote this pack.

Movement director: Sam Fox
Acting coach: Teresa Jakovich
Voice coach: Julia Moody
DJ (2025 development): Lord of Dazastah (Darren Reutens)

BEFORE THE SHOW

03 Creating the work

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS | TIME: 10 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING



The company in the rehearsal room

The development process

The Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPA) Company 2026 has had quite a long journey with *The Bacchae*, commencing work in 2024 with a week-long classical text intensive led by our director, Kyle Morrison. The process introduced us to classical text analysis and performance. We developed our performance skills through Shakespearean speeches and soliloquies, while also reading a version of *The Bacchae* together for the first time.

This first encounter with the play opened conversations about the role of women within the text. As a predominantly female company, we became interested in how the **Maenads** (the chorus of Bacchic worshippers) could be explored as a collective, non-gendered group. This led to wider conversations about the relationship between our nation's youth and the adults that guide them; the responsibility our elders have, and what happens when adults fail to fulfil this role adequately. This became our central dramaturgical question:

This discussion continued in 2025, when the company returned to classical text with a more experimental approach, joined by Boorloo-based DJ, Lord of Dazastah (Darren Reutens). This was the first time we had pieces of Kyle's adapted text in the room, allowing us to see how the script could change through the rehearsal process. We began incorporating improvised music and soundscapes into scenes while experimenting with multiple actors sharing a single character. Kyle would instruct an actor to "glitch", allowing another performer to take over the role at any given time. This became an important foundation for the ensemble approach to our version of *The Bacchae*; rather than one actor being responsible for creating an entire character independently, we began exploring how a character could exist through the collective. Our movement director, Sam Fox, also joined us, and we began developing a movement style as a cohort. We used images and ideas from the text as starting points for physical exploration, allowing movement to become another way of responding to the story.

'What happens to the children when the adults go out to party?'

THE COMPANY'S CENTRAL DRAMATURGICAL QUESTION

Ask the room

What would you ask of a 2,400-year-old play before you agreed to make it? The company began with the role of women in the text, and ended with the adults.

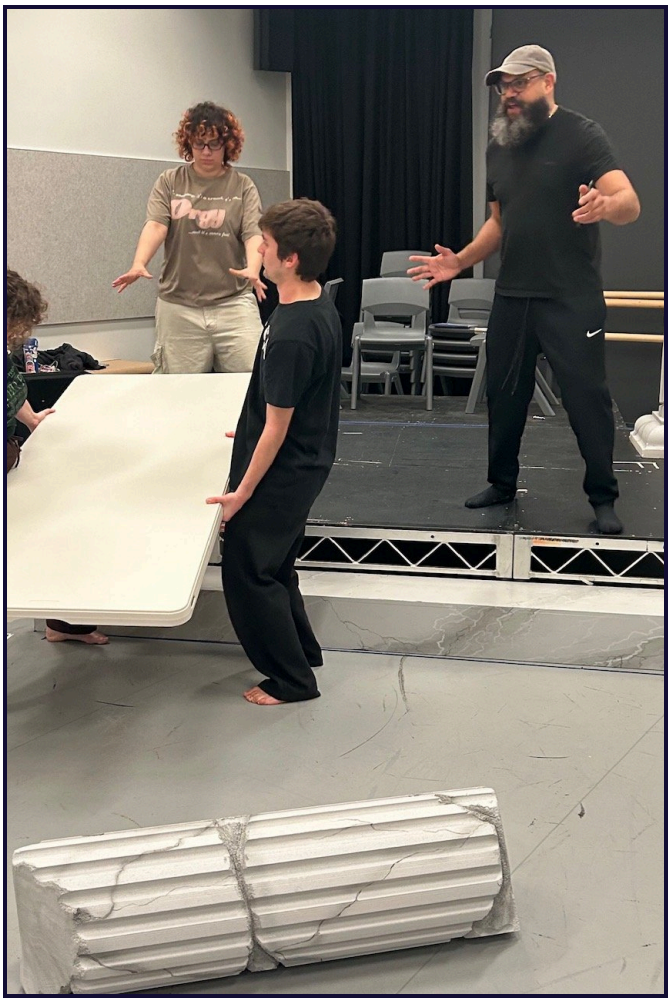
This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

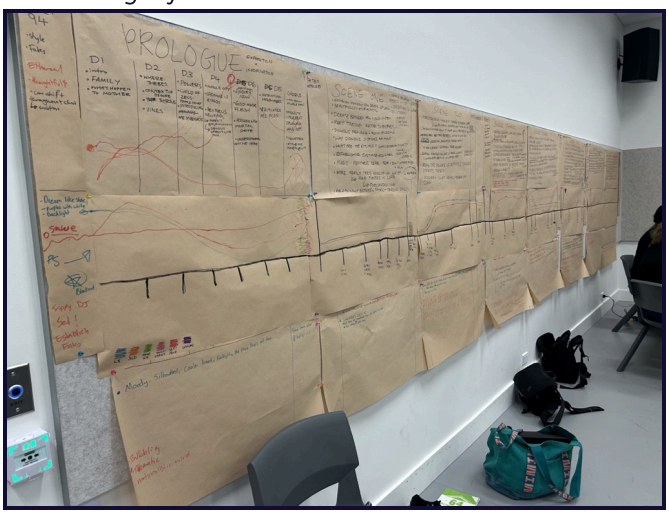
performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-03-creating-the-work

By 2026, the production became a major focus for the company and introduced us to our first formal WAAPA casting process. Students prepared monologues from the text and auditioned over two days, receiving redirection from Kyle and our acting teacher, Teresa Jakovich. Once the cast was announced, we entered a final development week with the entire company. However, the production continued to change. Shakespearean sonnets were introduced, casting decisions shifted, and actors repeatedly changed roles to find the right combination of performers. Some characters ultimately became shared between performers across alternating nights.

Although this process could feel chaotic, it became an important part of our training. Rather than actors settling into fixed ideas about their roles, the rehearsal room required adaptability, responsiveness and a willingness to experiment. The final production reflects the company's three-year development from classical text training towards an adventurous, ensemble-driven approach to Greek tragedy.



Kyle Morrison directing the messenger scene · Photograph: the company



The creative team's text analysis, week one of rehearsals



Building the opening image in rehearsal

BEFORE THE SHOW

04 The adaptation: elements, themes and symbols

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, YEARS 10-12 | TIME: 15 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING

How director Kyle Morrison has adapted and shifted this classic text.

1
The ensemble

Performers create many of the scenes together as an ensemble, physically and vocally, rather than working as separate individuals.

2
Shared roles

Quite often, more than one performer contributes to the same character. Roles that are traditionally played by one performer, such as Dionysus, are played by up to six performers at a time.

3
Text, movement and sound

This production focuses on movement, music and sound, and these elements drive the narrative in several moments. This is an interesting relationship between the text and the visual and audio elements of the production.

4
Adaptability

In this version of the play, performers appear to respond to one another in real time. A lot of the performance has been developed through experimentation rather than simply rehearsing fixed decisions; devising and collaboration, rather than director-led work.

Themes and symbols

Rave and party culture in Morrison's *The Bacchae*

Rave and party culture in Kyle Morrison's adaptation of *The Bacchae* explores the idea of time-transcending third spaces, substance use, and the repercussions of these activities on family, responsibility and community.

A central dramaturgical question of this production is: what happens to the children and community when the parents get taken away? And more so, what shifts when they are away under the influence?

Kyle delves into the idea of Dionysus' 'spell' being manifested by the concept of party and rave culture, parasitically infecting the parents and older populations of Thebes, the Maenads. This is exemplified in Scene Four, wherein the messengers relay what they saw at Mt Cithaeron, which parallels directly with the image of a bush doof and hallucinogenic illusion.



Members of the company · Photograph: Ethan Thomas

Production examples

- **Sound design:** electronic bass, blood rave, hyper-pop, grunge, Detroit and peak-time techno. This production heavily utilises sound, similar to that of a rave, to form atmosphere and aid emotional arc and storytelling.
- **Costume design:** the costumes replicate modern rave attire, which has returned to minimalistic, flowing, asymmetrical dress. It often includes some kind of headwear or scarf, and sandals or combat-type boots.
- **Agave's journey:** Agave's realisation that her actions are a product of her psychosis and being under the influence. Understanding our central dramaturgical question adds a new spin and perspective to the actions and consequences Agave has to face.

Discuss

Which of the four elements did you notice first? Where did a shared role change how you read a character?

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-04-the-adaptation

Gods, mortals and boodja

In this production of *The Bacchae*, Kyle explores, pulls apart and adds a new perspective on the separation between gods and mortals, asking the morally ambiguous question:

Kyle's retelling of *The Bacchae* strays from the original tale with the addition of new characters called **The Fates**: three spirits connected to Mother Boodja and the history of the land. They are three interweaving godlike souls that control the happenings, specifically sound and sometimes the movement of characters, on stage.

Throughout the play, The Fates speak sonnets by William Shakespeare, bringing another form of classic text into the mix. They are connected to the traditional wise seer in the play, Tiresias, but are not mortal. Kyle uses The Fates to represent Country, and their manipulation of sound and movement from a sound desk is a symbol of their inherent care and control of the land and its people. Essentially they sit above the Greek gods, and are all-seeing, all-knowing.

Order, irrationality and decay

Kyle Morrison establishes a certain status for each character, then allows the audience to observe each position crumble as the society does around them. As characters fall, so does their physicality on stage shift, and pieces of the set become scattered ruins, much like the many civilisations that have come before us.

Morrison uses the motif of collective movement to represent these different structures and their disintegration. For example, the soldiers are a group that control and protect, thus represented with stiff and powerful physicality. Whereas the Maenads (chorus of worshippers) are a flowing rough ensemble driven by impulse and pleasure, finding indirect softness and often erratic movement. Movement is a tool for symbol and motif.

Disguise and deception

Morrison has several actors playing one role at a time; this works as a motif of deception for the character of Dionysus. Not a feature of the original text, Morrison's choice amplifies Dionysus' duality, ability to disguise himself and his fascination with psychologically manipulating mortals.

'Who should we listen to?'

THE QUESTION THIS PRODUCTION ASKS

The Fates

They are not in Euripides. What does it do to the play that Country sits above the Greek gods, and speaks in Shakespeare's sonnets?



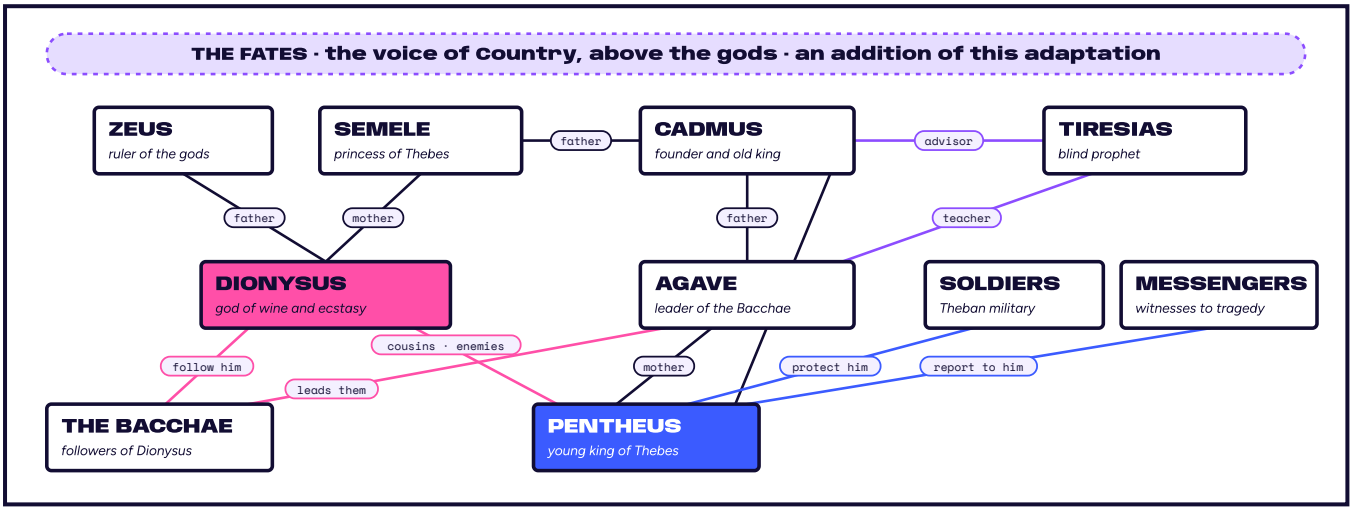
Members of the company · Photograph: Ethan Thomas

BEFORE THE SHOW

05 Characters: glossary and relationship map

FOR: STUDENTS, YEARS 10-12 | TIME: 10 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING

This resource supports students in understanding the characters and their relationships within *The Bacchae*. Each entry gives the character, who they are to the others, and what they do in the play. Add The Fates to the map yourself: where would you put them?



Relationship map · the BPA Company 2026

DIONYSUS

God of wine and pleasure

Divine son of Zeus and Semele; cousin of Pentheus.

- Returning to Thebes to seek revenge for his mother being outcast
- shapeshifting to infiltrate Pentheus's court
- tricking Pentheus into following him to Mt Cithaeron.

TIRESIAS

An old blind prophet and lore keeper

Teacher of Agave and Pentheus; prophet of the gods.

- Prophesying and warning Pentheus and Cadmus about the plans of Dionysus
- returning Agave to her unpossessed state
- collecting the body of Pentheus.

CADMUS

The old, retired king of Thebes

Grandfather of Pentheus; father of Agave and Semele.

- Joining the celebrations of Dionysus
- punished by Dionysus for the treatment of Semele.

PENTHEUS

The young king of Thebes

Son of Agave; grandson of Cadmus; cousin of Dionysus.

- Rejecting the worship of Dionysus
- trying to hunt down and destroy Dionysus
- dressing up as a Maenad to infiltrate the possessed citizens.

AGAVE

Leader of the Bacchanalians

Mother of Pentheus; daughter of Cadmus; sister of Semele; aunt of Dionysus.

- Possessed, she follows Dionysus
- mistaking her son for a lion and killing him
- outcast for her disbelief in Dionysus.

MESSENGERS

Working-class labourers and unpossessed citizens of Thebes

- Hiding to spy on the Bacchae
- returning to report to Pentheus what they saw.

SOLDIERS

Members of the Theban military

Friends and protectors of Pentheus.

- Following Pentheus to infiltrate the Bacchae
- failing to protect Pentheus from Agave.

CHORUS (BACCHANALIANS or MAENADS)

Followers of Dionysus roaming Mt Cithaeron, celebrating Dionysus

- Possessed by Dionysus to follow him to Mt Cithaeron
- celebrating and spreading the rites of Dionysus
- assisting Agave in the hunt of Pentheus.

THE FATES

The voice of Country and the weavers of fate

Not in the original text; an addition of this adaptation.

BEFORE THE SHOW

06 Form, style and convention

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, YEARS 11-12 | TIME: 20 MIN READING | NEEDS: NOTHING

Conventions of Greek theatre

The Greek pantheon

Greek theatre has strong ties with ancient religious celebrations, eventually developing into the Festival of Dionysus in Athens. All Ancient Greek tragedies were based on local myth, with different versions of the same story emerging across regions and traditions.

This is particularly prevalent in *The Bacchae*, in which Dionysus is referred to with several different names including Bacchus, Bromius, Evius, Dithyrambus, Iacchus, Xenos and Lysios. Many tragic playwrights, including Euripides, drew upon the Greek pantheon (made up of the twelve Olympian gods) to establish mythological narratives, allowing audiences to recognise familiar characters, stories and religious traditions. This familiarity expanded the philosophical impacts of the story beyond a singular narrative, using well-established myths to explore broader philosophical implications.

Monologue

A monologue is a long dramatic speech performed by a single person or character within a play. Monologues were commonly used within Greek tragedies to engage the audience's imagination and deepen their engagement with the dramatic world. These monologues, while serving to push the narrative forward, "exploit the audience's capacity to visualise and re-animate" dense imagery in their mind (Rehm, 2017, p. 71), allowing spectators to construct aspects of the action beyond what is physically presented on stage.

Chorus

Chorus is one of the less accessible conventions of Greek theatre, as its exact function and performance practice remain only partially understood. Images on ancient Greek vases, likely sold at the Festival of Dionysus as souvenirs, suggest that the chorus was made of 12 to 15 young men who sang and danced their way throughout the entirety of the play. They were not professional actors but were highly skilled and trained over the course of a year for their role in the Festival of Dionysus.

Throughout a traditional Greek tragedy, the chorus would sing songs and odes which punctuate the dramatic structure. These collaborative performances provide commentary on the action while raising larger questions about the cosmos or ethical questions. Ultimately, the chorus serves as a bridge between the theatrical performance and its audience, aiming to represent multiple ideas, voices, opinions and feelings, allowing for more complex self-discovery.

Chorus work in rehearsal

The company working with the elements of the play: blood, wine, milk, honey, bones. Original music by David McEwan.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-06-form-style-and-convention



Chorus work in rehearsal

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-06-form-style-and-convention

Dance and song

Dance and song are among the most obvious remnants of Greek tragedy's origin in religious celebration. These songs and dances were almost exclusively given to the chorus and were based on well-known fifth-century "cult hymns, epinician odes, wedding songs, funeral laments, and so on" (Rehm, 2017, p. 84). Importantly, song and dance were used in religious rituals to praise Dionysus, an obvious connection discussed throughout *The Bacchae*. Through these familiar forms of expression, song and dance elevated the emotional experience of fifth-century audiences, drawing upon shared cultural knowledge and religious traditions to deepen their engagement.

Verse

One of the key sources informing our modern understanding of Greek theatre is Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which he suggests that tragedies emerged from a performance tradition called **dithyramb**. These were rhythmic choral rituals performed to honour Dionysus. This connection to oral and musical tradition helps explain the prominence of poetry, rhythm and song in Greek tragedy, where language functions differently from naturalistic dialogue.

Beyond its cultural and artistic significance, verse had practical implications in ancient Greek theatres. In the large, open amphitheatres of ancient Greece, performers were required to transmit information to audiences at considerable distances. Verse provides a structure for the actor to give information in a clear, rhythmic way.

Masks

Masks are less commonly used in contemporary productions of Greek tragedies but were a necessary staple for most ancient performances. Masks were worn by all actors including the chorus and served several practical purposes. First, lead characters within a traditional Greek tragedy were typically played by about three actors; masks allowed one actor to play multiple characters with minimal confusion. Secondly, masks enhanced visibility of characterisation in large open-air spaces. The shapes and features of the mask interacted with light and shadow, helping generate specialised symbols of emotion, identity and dramatic tone. This visual clarity was particularly valuable in large open-air spaces, where audiences needed to recognise characters and interpret their responses to unfolding events from a distance.

Form

The Bacchae belongs to a theatrical tradition that can be understood today as a 'presentational' form of theatre. This is because *The Bacchae* uses a specific set of conventions within the tragic genre that suggests no interest in creating an illusion of reality. Rather than serving purely as entertainment, Greek theatre (emerging from the Festival of Dionysus, the god of wine and theatre) was used as a sacred and civic ritual with direct implications on the day-to-day lives of the Athenian people.

Greek tragedies frequently deal with themes of immense philosophical, ethical and cosmological significance, often before large outdoor audiences with limited theatrical technology.

Consequently, Greek theatre developed a distinct set of conventions suited to these performance conditions, prioritising clarity, heightened expression and the communication of complex ideas in ways that differ from representational forms of theatre.

Euripides' *The Bacchae* uses direct address, chorus, verse, monologue, dance and masks, and strongly evokes the Greek pantheon throughout. In its time *The Bacchae* did something really special; rather than directly imposing political ideology or a particular understanding of the greater cosmic world, it demonstrates the dangers in suppressing or not tolerating difference (Stuttard, 2016).

Discuss

Which conventions did this production keep, change or drop: chorus, verse, masks, direct address? What did each choice do for a modern audience?



The opening prologue image, in rehearsal



Sources

Rehm (2017) and Stuttard (2016); full references in Part 11.

Style and techniques

Language and rhythm

Although *The Bacchae* is written in verse, Euripides adopts a less formalised and more conversational style than his contemporaries, Aeschylus and Sophocles. Euripides retains the metric (structured rhythm) verse while incorporating a more naturalistic quality into his dialogue (Stuttard, 2016). This approach helped establish a more immediate and personal connection with its audience. Given the themes and lessons of *The Bacchae* are inherently interpersonal, Euripides likely wanted audiences to be affected on a personal level, rather than encountering them solely as abstract philosophical questions.

Antithesis

Euripides relies heavily on antithesis (opposing ideas) throughout *The Bacchae* as a tool to further unsettle the audience. According to Stuttard, "The Greek mind was trained to think in polarities; to categorize, distinguish, and oppose" (Stuttard, 2016, p. 12). Euripides exploits this tendency by presenting characters, ideas and forces that resist clear categorisation, challenging the very frameworks through which audiences understand the world.

This is particularly prevalent in the characterisation of **Dionysus**:

Imagery

In *The Bacchae* Euripides spared no details when describing every moment of violence or bliss. The play's dense imagery serves multiple purposes and holds a strong relationship to Euripides' use of antithesis, particularly in his exploration of delusion, illusion and madness. Of particular interest, however, is the way Euripides approaches violence. Throughout the play, animals are torn apart and Pentheus is dismembered, with these acts all described in horrific detail. Yet the extended accounts delivered by the messengers and soldiers serve a purpose beyond simply conveying events that would have been difficult to stage physically.

Euripides engages the audience's imagination, using vivid and often disturbing descriptions to exploit the audience's capacity to visualise the action in their minds (Rehm, 2017). By requiring spectators to construct these acts of violence imaginatively, Euripides invites them to confront the brutality of the events more directly.

This imagery also contributes to the play's broader exploration of humanity's capacity for violence. *The Bacchae* suggests that violence cannot simply be eliminated through suppression, and ignoring its dangerous potential may allow it to emerge in more destructive and surprising ways.

References: Part 11.

'Youthful god, yet an immortal; male, yet effeminate; conceived in Thebes, yet worshipped abroad.'

STUTTARD, 2016, P. 12, ON DIONYSUS

Antithesis in the room

Find three opposites in one character and play each for thirty seconds. Which one does the production choose, and when?

BEFORE THE SHOW

07 Behind the scenes: production and design

FOR: STUDENTS, YEARS 10-12; PRODUCTION AND DESIGN STUDENTS

TIME: 10 MIN LOOKING

NEEDS: NOTHING



Sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysos and the Seasons, Roman, c. AD 260–270. The Met, 55.11.5 · Open Access (CC0)



Set designer Abigail Kruger's moodboard imagery · Moodboard: Abigail Kruger



The opening prologue image from our production, in rehearsal. The sarcophagus was its starting point

From a stone to a stage

Compare the sarcophagus and the rehearsal image. What has the company kept: the pile of bodies, the direction of looking, the centre? What has it changed?

Set design

Abigail Kruger breaks down the design process in her interview, online as it is recorded.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-abigail-kruger

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-07-behind-the-scenes



Costume

Sofia Trimboli's designs for the whole company: marrying the old with the new, and fabric decaying as the society crumbles. Rave attire returned to flowing, asymmetrical dress; headwear and scarves; sandals or combat boots.

Costume designs: Sofia Trimboli



Dionysus · Costume design: Sofia Trimboli



Agave · Costume design: Sofia Trimboli

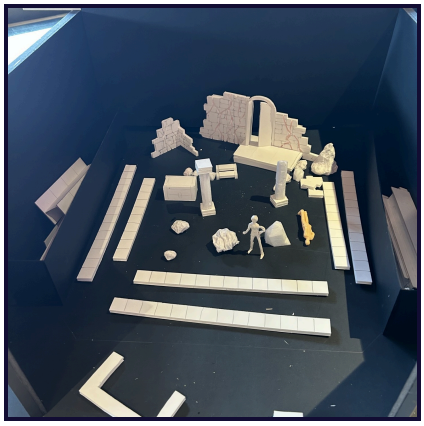


Pentheus · Costume design: Sofia Trimboli

Set design

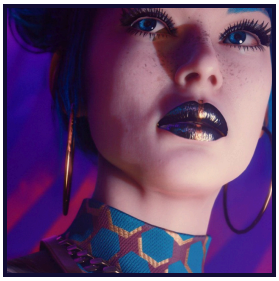


White-card model of the set · Set design: Abigail Kruger



The model from above · Set design: Abigail Kruger

Makeup and colour palette



1



2



3

Makeup references

Collected by Sofia Trimboli. Third-party images, not covered by the licence.

1. Cheri Nowlin, *Cyberpunk 2077* (CD Projekt Red), via Pinterest
2. sarahbeth.sfx, Instagram
3. 'Feeling Good', Nina Simone, Gastón López remix, Instagram reel

Model box

Build the set in white card from what you saw. What did the pieces become as the society fell?

BEFORE THE SHOW

08 Before you see it

FOR: DRAMA TEACHERS, YEARS 10-12 | TIME: 2 × 60 MIN | NEEDS: OPEN FLOOR; A TIMER

Interrogating the work: what to look out for

Questions and creative prompts to offer your students prior to seeing the show:

1. Look out for the traditional Greek theatre conventions in this production. What has Morrison decided to change or omit completely (chorus, verse and so on)? Why do you think directors do this? How is it helpful to our understanding as a modern audience?
2. How did the actors' use of movement, sound and imagery help you make sense of the play? Can you name a few specific moments where this was noticeable or helpful?
3. Consider how the playwright Euripides intended to use form and style for a specific audience outcome. How is this outcome different to Morrison's vision as a director and adapter? How do you think a modern audience would respond to this adaptation of *The Bacchae*?
4. How did the adapted text and language features communicate ideas and represent people and events? What does this mean in a contemporary context? Is there a large difference between this production and the original?

The Bacchae in two minutes: synopsis activity

TEACHERS this is a fun synopsis activity that not only provides the students with an understanding of the narrative prior to seeing the show, but helps translate the archaic text of this play into a more familiar language.

ACTIVITY break the class up into groups of three or six. Using the script below, the students must come up with a fun way to present this modern retelling of *The Bacchae* to the rest of their class. They can do this digitally or orally in class as a performance: for instance, a series of social media posts, a podcast, or simply a short performance in front of the class in their chosen setting, with their chosen characters, movement and voice. Each student can take on one or two paragraphs to perform, so they are working together as an ensemble.

Give the groups 10 to 15 minutes to prepare, then present in front of the class. The repetition of the story will assist learning. Be sure to debrief at the end of the activity.



The company with the script in rehearsal · Photograph: the company

Schools

Bookings, the post-show Q&A and the latest details for teachers.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-schools

Two activities

The two-minute synopsis (groups of three or six, 10 to 15 minutes) and the themed tableau play (groups of four or five, about 20 minutes). Both work without having seen the show.

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-08-before-you-see-it

MODERN BACCHAE SCRIPT

*...Ok, so, **The Bacchae** is all about this guy **Dionysus**. His mum is **Semele**, a royal, and his dad is **Zeus**, who's like the biggest god ever. So, therefore Dionysus is also a god, except heaps of people don't agree. His aunts don't think so, Zeus' wife doesn't (awkward), it's a whole thing.*

*So, Zeus' wife kills Semele and everyone thinks Dionysus is also dead, but he's actually on this world tour getting all these people to follow him. It's been a few years, and he's back in his hometown **Thebes** with the revenge plot of the century. He's gotten his aunts to go insane in the mountains, along with all the adults in Thebes.*

***Pentheus**, who's Dionysus' cousin and the king, is freaking out because everyone's worshipping Dionysus. Pentheus' grandad and this wise blind seer, **Tiresias**, are both like "Bro, just worship him, he seems cool and if you don't he'll probably kill you". And Pentheus is like "Shut up grandad, I'm king now."*

So, Dionysus disguises themself as a human and does all these pranks on Pentheus: like he escapes jail, he makes him think his palace is burning down, he turns into a bull, and Pentheus is furious. And then Dionysus goes, "Hey, just kidding, let's hang out. If you want, I can take you to the mountain to see all this god stuff and get everyone back." and Pentheus is like "Finally bro, that sounds awesome, let's do that" and it looks like they're becoming friends.

*Except they're not, at all, because Dionysus leads Pentheus to the mountain and gets all his followers, including **Agave**, his mum, to rip him into pieces. But Agave thinks she's killed a lion, not her son. Dionysus is evil like that. And then Agave comes back to Thebes super happy with Pentheus's head like "Look at this sick lion I killed!" and everyone's like "This is so awkward, that's lowkey your son."*

And BOOM, she snaps out of it all and realises that Dionysus has ruined everything. In comes Dionysus, basically just rubbing it all in, like "none of you believed I was a god, so I came and ruined all of your lives." And everyone has to leave Thebes because of Dionysus' revenge tour. The end....

Themed tableau play

TEACHER this activity allows students to have an embodied understanding of the themes, character arcs and scenes within the show. They will be able to articulate their decision-making and analytical response to the given topics and gain skills in collaborating with a short turnaround.

ACTIVITY split the students into groups of four or five, and have them find their own space within the room. Partners can be used for a smaller group if need be. Each group must come up with their own group name to encourage camaraderie.

Begin by working with simple shapes and images from the show, listed below. The teacher calls out the images or objects, and the students work together to build that image with their bodies; every student must be involved in the image. They will only have **ten seconds** to do so, and they must use character, expression, levels, gesture and so on. Be sure to count down; the time pressure helps.

IMAGES AND OBJECTS

- A LARGE GREEK STATUE
- A PILLAR CRUMBLING TO THE GROUND
- A BLEEDING HEAD CHOPPED OFF
- A GOBLET OF WINE
- DANCING WORSHIPPERS
- DIONYSUS (A GOD WITH MANY PERSONALITIES)

Then the teacher calls out a theme from the show (list below). The groups now have one minute to form a tableau that represents, symbolises or responds to that theme. Perhaps cover two different themes, or give each group a different theme from the list.

THEMES

- DECAY
- DECEPTION AND DISGUISE
- ORDER VS CHAOS
- GODS VS MORTALS
- LOSS
- RAVE AND YOUTH PARTY CULTURE
- MOTHERHOOD
- GENDER IDENTITY
- CLASS SYSTEMS
- BODY AUTONOMY
- INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION AND TRAUMA
- YOUTHFUL ARROGANCE
- RITUAL

SHOW AND DISCUSS now is a carousel-style showing. Have all the students duck down in their groups and go around the space having them pop up, one group at a time, to present their frozen image. Each group must say their theme out loud in unison, then one member from each group must explain their image and how it represents their theme.

NOTE the students haven't seen the show, so this activity gets them thinking about the issues and themes prior to entering the theatre. The activity is less about 'getting it right' and more about encouraging students to analyse the themes with embodiment. Repeat with as many different themes as students are engaging in.

DEBRIEF be sure to finish this activity with a short discussion allowing students to reflect on the images and themes.

BEFORE THE SHOW

09 Access

Recommended for ages 15 and over.

The Bacchae is recommended for ages **15 and over**. The production includes references to and depictions of substance use, violence and dismemberment, and a character's psychosis, with loud electronic music and theatrical haze. The full content and sensory information is kept up to date on the production's Access Guide, so that a correction is made once:

What the Access Guide holds

Running time; which performances are audio described and have a tactile tour; the visual story (getting here, the room, the show scene by scene, what I can do), as pages and as a PDF and audio version; content and sensory information in full; how to book and who to contact.

For schools

If a student in your group needs audio description, a tactile tour, a quiet space or anything else, tell the box office when you book, or write to the address on the Access Guide.



The Bacchae Access Guide

Content and sensory information in full, the visual story as pages, PDF and audio, which performances are audio described and have a tactile tour, and how to book.

performancemaking.com/access/bacchae-2026



Tell the box office

If a student in your group needs audio description, a tactile tour, a quiet space or anything else, say so when you book.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-schools



After the show

Parts 10 to 12: three post-show activities, a glossary with further viewing, and the colophon.

Members of the company · Photograph: Ethan Thomas

AFTER THE SHOW

10 After you've seen it

FOR: DRAMA TEACHERS, YEARS 10-12 | TIME: 2 × 60 MIN

NEEDS: OPEN FLOOR; A SPEAKER; PENS AND PAPER; TWO CHAIRS

Order vs rave mania: Pentheus vs Dionysus

TEACHER this activity aims to assist students' understanding of the movement quality and conventions of the Greek chorus and the Bacchae; it also serves as a physical warm-up to prepare the students for an active class.

ACTIVITY (use upbeat music to support this activity):

1. The teacher picks one student to act as Dionysus; 'Dionysus' begins in the centre of the space. And one student to represent Pentheus. These two main characters stand on opposite sides of the room facing each other to begin. All the other students scatter around, finding space.
2. **Dionysus** begins to move around the room as if they were dancing at a party. **Pentheus** begins to move as if they are 'marching' or rigidly keeping order.
3. If Dionysus approaches you, you begin to dance as if you were at the party as well, being affected by their movement. If Pentheus approaches you, you begin to follow order, march and be rigid.
4. Students must allow Dionysus' or Pentheus' movement to influence how they move, almost copying rhythm, movements and gesture. That is, if Dionysus or Pentheus gets close to another student, that student becomes 'infected' by the rave or the order.
5. The goal of the two main characters is to infect as many people as possible with their movement, to enlist them to their team, so eventually everyone is moving in two large 'flocks', doing 'flocking' movement work in two teams working against each other.

Teachers can prompt each group with different movement and gesture ideas throughout to avoid getting stuck in a pattern. When the exercise reaches a natural ending, ask them to find a final pose as their team.

DEBRIEF be sure to finish with a debrief discussion.

1. How did it feel to become infected by Dionysus or Pentheus? Did it happen quickly or slowly for you?
2. What sort of movement were you focusing on?
3. What sort of feelings arose from the movement you were copying?
4. How did it feel to move as one collective group; was it difficult?

NOTE remind students throughout that they don't have to copy their leaders exactly; rather, the leader's movement is stimulus that can be adopted and expressed individually.

Three activities

A movement warm-up (order vs rave), a collective poem, and a job interview with a character. About an hour each.

Before you start

What did your students remember first from the show: an image, a sound, a line? Start there.

This part online

With the video, the downloads and the links, on PerformanceMaking.com.

`performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-10-after-you-have-seen-it`

Interpreting theme and symbol: poetry slam

DISCUSSION begin with a short class discussion using the prompts below.

1. The Fates were controlling the music in this production, a significant part of rave and party culture. How do you think their presence and control shaped, or attempted to resist, the inevitability of this tragic story?
2. This production focuses on rave and party culture. How was this represented in Kyle Morrison's production? What moments stand out in your mind? How did the design enhance or support this? Do you remember any of the language used? (Technology, AI, money, grind culture, red pill and the manosphere?)
3. Looking at the resources at the end of this pack, how have other directors presented this classic text? What setting, design and issues have they focused on to bring this text into the 21st century?

Activity: poem collective

1. Working individually, give students five to ten minutes to write a stream of consciousness about the euphoria depicted by the Soldiers, Maenads and Agave when they were most convincingly under Dionysus' spell.
2. Now have the class come back together and form into groups of five or six. Using their creative writing notes, they must first share what they have written and then work together to form **one collective poem**. One by one, each student will offer an idea, reading a line from their free-write. Responding to this, another student will contribute a line from their free-write that they think connects or follows on from this. Eventually they will form a larger work that replicates the larger picture of the initial question.
3. Students can shuffle the lines once they have all contributions, depending on what story they want the poem to tell.

SHARE AND REFLECT one member from each group presents their poem to the class. The teacher can then offer this reflective prompt:

"What are the creative benefits of collaboration, using multiple minds and artists to create one singular piece of art?"



Three prompts first

The Fates and the music; rave culture in the production; how other directors have staged the text (Part 11).

'What are the creative benefits of collaboration, using multiple minds and artists to create one singular piece of art?'

THE REFLECTIVE PROMPT

An interview with the character

TEACHER this concept explores a constructive and entertaining take on embodying classical characters within a modern-day setting: a job interview. Students will each be allocated a role from the cast list in this pack and answer personalised questions as if they are in an interview, embodying their character. Learning intentions vary, from building performer confidence in young creatives to creating a space where learning classical texts is explored in an immersive, approachable and interactive setting.

ACTIVITY the aim of the game is to gain the trust of the individual interviewing you and be accepted into 'Thebes Corporation' (a fictional company inspired by the geographical location of the play). This is done through committing to your character, being confident with the questions asked and not hesitating; as we say in the theatre, you must *"yes, and..."*.

Steps:

- Students get into pairs and find a space in the room.
- Pairs choose, or are allocated, a character from the list below.
- They cast themselves as either the character or the interviewer.

CHARACTER LIST

DIONYSUS	TIRESIAS	CADMUS	PENTHEUS	AGAVE
God of wine and pleasure	*An old blind prophet and lore keeper*	*The old, retired king of Thebes*	*The young king of Thebes*	*Leader of the Bacchanalians*
Divine son of Zeus and Semele; cousin of Pentheus.	Teacher of Agave and Pentheus; prophet of the gods.	Grandfather of Pentheus; father of Agave and Semele.	Son of Agave; grandson of Cadmus; cousin of Dionysus.	Mother of Pentheus; daughter of Cadmus; sister of Semele; aunt of Dionysus.

Begin by having the pairs talk about the character being interviewed: what do they remember from the play, who are they, what character traits do they have, what did they do in the play?

Students can begin with questions such as:

- Why do you care about Thebes? What do you think needs to change in Thebes?
- How would you be a good leader, and what would you do to change this society?
- What kind of person are you, and what qualities would you bring to this job?
- List some of the things you have already done (thinking of the story of the play).

Once these are answered, encourage the interviewer to improvise some questions to find out more about the character.

SHOW AND DEBRIEF you can have two or three pairs present their interviews (one or two questions) to the class. Props like two chairs and an interviewer's jacket or microphone can help set the scene. Then be sure to debrief what they have learnt and recalled about the characters.

AFTER THE SHOW

11 Glossary and further viewing

FOR: TEACHERS AND STUDENTS | TIME: 10 MIN | NEEDS: AN INTERNET CONNECTION FOR THE LINKS

Autonoe: a daughter of Cadmus, and mother of Actaeon. An aunt of Pentheus.

Bacchanalians / Bacchae: followers of Dionysus.

Bacchic rites: rituals, often of an intoxicated and liberated nature, performed in honour of Dionysus, or Bacchus.

Barbarian: a word of Greek origin which literally means someone who is not from Greece; a foreigner.

Cadmus: the founder and previous king of Thebes, and father of Semele, Agave, Autonoe and Ino. Cadmus abdicates the throne and gives power to his grandson Pentheus before the events of the play. He is also the mortal grandfather of Dionysus.

Cithaeron: the name of a mountain range to the south of Thebes.

Dionysus / Bacchus: the ancient Greek god of wine, a son of Semele (the daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia) and Zeus. Dionysus leads his followers, the Bacchae, to Thebes in the events of the play.

Hera: the goddess of family and marriage; the divine partner of Zeus. Hera's outrage at Zeus' infidelity claims Semele as its victim.

Ino: a daughter of Cadmus, and aunt of Pentheus. In Greek myth, Ino later becomes a queen of the region of Boeotia, and has two children. She is also the subject of another of Euripides' plays, *Ino*, which has not survived in full.

Maenads: a gendered term referring to a woman who follows Bacchus. The word is of Greek origin and is derived from the Greek word for 'madness'.

Malka man: Malka is a mythical figure in Bibbulmun dreaming who broke lore and killed and ate the children of his community after his banishment for being greedy and never contributing.

Olympus: the divine domain of the ancient Greek gods, classically believed to have been located on the summit of Mount Olympus in Greece.

Semele: a princess of Thebes, the child of Harmonia and Cadmus, and the mother of Dionysus. Semele dies some time before the events of the play. She was killed by witnessing Zeus' true form, which Hera tricked her into convincing Zeus to show.

Steward: someone given administrative responsibilities over a particular event, place or thing.

Thebes: a city in central Greece, founded by Cadmus and his retainers, the Spartoi. Cadmus gained their allegiance after creating them by sowing in the earth the teeth of a huge serpent he slew on the ground where Thebes would one day be built.

Thyrsus (pl. thyrsoi): a staff used in ritual worship of Dionysus.

Tiresias: a blind seer and advisor of Cadmus. Tiresias has the gift of prophecy.

Zeus: the divine ruler of the ancient Greek pantheon of deities.

Further viewing: other productions of *The Bacchae*

Looking at how other directors have presented this classic text: what setting, design and issues have they focused on to bring it into the 21st century? (Part 10, prompt 3.)

Plot summary

The Bacchae, brief plot summary (video) · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lOPOw6MWDZM

SITI Company (directed by Anne Bogart)

Production video · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tiX8nwBoYCQ

Review, The Williams Record · https://williamsrecord.com/191385/arts/siti-companys-the-bacchae-gives-an-ancient-greek-classic-a-modern-spin/

National Theatre, London

Official trailer · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yP-sxiMfSCk

Choreography · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0UN4L417rA

The Greek chorus · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlXi8LfKv-0

30-second synopsis from the cast · https://www.youtube.com/shorts/JG__HCmVMRI

Company of Wolves

Trailer · https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWAe_4FBS_s

Website · https://companyofwolves.org/projects/the-bacchae

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Live links

Every link in this part is live on the pack page, with anything added since this PDF was made.

performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026-11-glossary-and-further-viewing

Cited in Part 6

Rehm on monologue, dance and song; Stuttard on form, antithesis and the Greek mind.

The Bacchae · Creative Learning Pack · v1.0 · October 2026

Written by the Third Year Performance Making Company, Bachelor of Performing Arts (Performance Making), WAAPA, 2026, as part of their audience engagement and interweaving cultures studies.

Compiled and edited by Teresa Jakovich.

Curated for PerformanceMaking.com by Jeremy Neideck.

Authorship: collective creation.

Cultural material (The Fates, Mother Boodja, the Malka man entry) is published as approved by Kyle Morrison.

The production

The Bacchae by Euripides, adapted and directed by Kyle Morrison. Music and sound: David McEwan. Lighting: Katharina Brieden. Set and props: Abigail Kruger. Costume and makeup: Sofia Trimboli. Movement: Sam Fox. Associate producer, dramaturg and script supervisor: Teresa Jakovich. Voice coach: Julia Moody. Performed by the Third Year Performance Making Company; designed and produced by Production and Design students, with the assistance of Arts and Cultural Management students. Flex Theatre, ECU City, 12 to 18 November 2026.

Credits

- Ensemble photographs (cover, Parts 1, 2 and 4): Ethan Thomas. Headshots of the creative team: supplied by their subjects. Rehearsal photographs: the company. Relationship map: the company.
- Costume designs: Sofia Trimboli. Set model and moodboard: Abigail Kruger.
- Makeup references (Part 7) are third-party images collected by the costume designer and are not covered by the licence: Cheri Nowlin, Cyberpunk 2077 (CD Projekt Red), via Pinterest; sarahbeth.sfx, Instagram; 'Feeling Good', Nina Simone, Gastón López remix, Instagram reel.
- *Sarcophagus with the Triumph of Dionysos and the Seasons*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.11.5: Open Access (CC0).
- Rehearsal video: the company; original music by David McEwan.
- Quotations from Rehm (2017) and Stuttard (2016) are cited in Part 6 and referenced in Part 11.

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Authorship note: Individual sections of this pack were researched, developed, and written by the Third Year Performance Making Company. The pack was compiled and edited by Teresa Jakovich, with the online resources curated and developed by Jeremy Neideck. Claude (Anthropic) assisted with the design and layout of this document, and contributed to the copy-editing of the text, drafting captions, and the colophon.

How to cite: The BPA Company 2026. (2026). *The Bacchae: Creative Learning Pack* (v1.0). WAAPA @ Edith Cowan University. **performancemaking.com/learning/bacchae-2026**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We would like to acknowledge the sovereign owners of the boodja (Country) that we work, live and play on: the Whadjuk Noongar People. The land we stand on has nurtured song, dance, and storytelling traditions long before us, and will continue to long after us.

About PerformanceMaking.com

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