

HOMER'S | COAT

An Iliad

International Press Packet



-----Abu Dhabi-----

[Review: Ferocious, 21st Century Retelling of Homer's Iliad starring Denis O'Hare at NYU Abu Dhabi](#)

The National, By: Rob Garratt, March 15 2017

War is eternal, the urge to create conflict a deep-seated human impulse – that's the depressing, sledgehammer take-home from *An Iliad*, a modern one-man retelling of Homer's epic poem currently running at The Arts Centre at NYU Abu Dhabi.



Actor Denis O'Hare during a dress rehearsal for *An Iliad* at The Arts Centre at NYU Abu Dhabi.
Courtesy NYU Abu Dhabi

War is eternal, the urge to create conflict a deep-seated human impulse – that's the depressing, sledgehammer take-home from *An Iliad*, a modern one-man retelling of Homer's epic poem currently running at The Arts Centre at NYU Abu Dhabi.

At the evening's emotional climax, our narrator spouts a list of dozens of conflicts, from ancient times right up to Aleppo. What slaps the psyche hardest is not just the length of the list, but how many of these wars you might never have heard of – and the fatigue inspired by merely hearing the names of the ones you have.

Star and co-writer Denis O'Hare's (True Blood) solo turn as our haggard, bewildered bard is a ferocious tour de force, the Tony winner stalking the Red Theatre's stark stage with an crusty charisma and commanding physicality. The Storyteller's purpose is never made clear – nor is the role of the acknowledged audience, the fourth wall distinctly broken by some early call and response. The opening ten minutes is a riot, O'Hare hamming it up with copious local geographic references and stock Arabic phrases – yalla, khalas, inshallah – like a stand-up comic setting up a punchline. He even pulls out a copy of The National, to bristles of audience amusement.

But the laughs quickly became fewer and further between, as the gears switch into a selective retelling of Homer's 2,700-year-old masterpiece, vigorously re-rendered in a mix of modern colloquialism and ancient verse. The tonal switch is set spinning into motion when an unannounced musician runs suddenly onto the stage. Picking up a double bass in the off-stage parados, Brian Ellingsen wrestles Mark Bennett's original music to life, these haunting melody lines and frenzied percussive attacks offering a dramatic sonic counterpoint to O'Hare's barrelling prose.

Co-written alongside director Lisa Peterson, the duo together known as Homer's Coat have authored a biting, 21st century emotional exposition of the source material, quoting stirring from Robert Fagels's muscular, musical translation without ever descending into scholarly reverence – this is, notably An Iliad, not The Iliad.

Throughout, O'Hare's performance is immutable wildfire – baying, bellowing, pointing, hurling – at turns giddy with bloodlust, frantic and furious, sorrowful and solemn. The tragedy always feel painfully present and contemporary, rather than arms-length and ancient. Tellingly, there is more than a hint of Donald Trump to be detected in his eyebrow-raising turns as Greek King Agamemnon – an egotistical megalomaniac sadly as believable today as he was nearly three millennia ago.

An Iliad repeats at The Arts Centre, NYU Abu Dhabi, Saadiyat Island on Wednesday, March 15 at 2pm and Thursday, March 16 at 8pm. Free tickets have been exhausted but standby may be available on the door. See www.nyuad-artscenter.org.

Updated: March 15, 2017 04:00 AM

-----Santiago-----

[“An Impressive Iliad with Only One Actor on Stage”](#)

Posted by: [Johnny Teperman](#)

BioBio Chile, January 9th, 2017



A special version of Homer's “La Iliada” (“An Iliad”) is the American contribution to the 2017 version of “Santiago a Mil”.

The actor Denis O'Hare took the stage at the CorpArtes Theater, to perform twice, with a remarkable interpretation of an impressive monologue, violent, lasting 1 hour 40 minutes.

"An exciting and total delivery of a single human being on stage (...) An incredibly powerful piece of theater ," The Guardian rightly pointed out.

In English and ancient Greek, with Spanish subtitles, O'Hare provides a huge performance.

The play brings us, through the voice of the actor to **“Armies at war, colossal battles; gods, warriors and kings: how to count, with just one actor on stage, one of the greatest epics in history? ”**

Director Lisa Peterson and actor Denis O'Hare - Tony Award winner and known for her work in series like True Blood and American Horror Story - bring us The Iliad, Homer's classic, and take it to the scene from a perspective contemporary

Relying on the force of language, O'Hare reconstructs through this soliloquy the violent

epic poem of gods, loves and battles that narrates the wrath of Achilles and the last years of the Trojan War.

An Iliad is not a literal recitation of Homer's texts, but an updated rereading that talks about the insurmountable human attraction to violence, destruction and chaos. The work - whose avant-garde commitment is accompanied by live music - was acclaimed by American critics and received multiple awards, including the Joseph Jefferson Award, an OBIE award and the Lucille Lortel Award.

Homer's Coat is an American creative collective founded by O'Hara and director Lisa Peterson. Together they write, develop and assemble pieces with which they seek to create performative, unique and original experiences, based on foundational works of the history of literature, such as La Iliada and The Bible, text that inspired them to create The Good Book, works in the one they are working on today. They have received some of the most relevant awards in the field of theater.

[Interview with the Director and Actor of the Play "An Iliad" in the Framework of Santiago a Mil](#)

Culturizarte, January 6th, 2017

An Iliad (An Iliad) Of Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare

| Based in the Iliad from **Homer** Direction **Lisa Peterson**



Armies at war, colossal battles; gods, warriors and kings: how to count, with just one

actor on stage, one of the greatest epics in history? Director Lisa Peterson and actor Denis O'Hare - Tony Award winner and known for her work in series such as *True Blood* and *American Horror Story* - dusted off *the Iliad*, Homer's classic, and put it on stage from a contemporary perspective. Relying on the force of language, O'Hare reconstructs through this soliloquy the violent epic poem of gods, loves and battles that narrates the wrath of Achilles and the last years of the Trojan War. *An Iliad* is not a literal recitation of Homer's texts, but an updated re-reading that talks about the insurmountable human attraction to violence, destruction and chaos. The work - whose avant-garde commitment is accompanied by live music - was acclaimed by American critics and received multiple awards, including the Joseph Jefferson Award, an OBIE award and the Lucille Lortel Award.

The **Homer's Coat** Company is an American creative collective founded^[1]_{SEP} by actor Denis O'Hare and theater director Lisa Peterson. Together they write, develop and assemble pieces with which they seek to create unique and original performance experiences from foundational works in the history of literature, such as *The Iliad* and the Bible, religious text that inspired them to create *The Good Book*, works in the They are working today. They have received some of the most relevant theater awards in cities such as Chicago, New York, San Diego and Seattle.

Culturizarte had the opportunity to interview director **Lisa Peterson** and the leading actor **Denis O'Hare**, who told us about the company, its interests and its work in "The Iliad"**Lisa Peterson** (California, 1961) is a long-term theatrical director who has staged classics of literature and theater, as well as unpublished pieces of some of the most interesting contemporary playwrights in the United States, such as

Donald Margulies, Tony Kushner, Beth Henley, Naomi Wallace and Caryl Churchill. He obtained his first great success in 1991 by adapting in the form of a musical the novel *The waves*, by Virginia Woolf. He has received multiple awards for his work, including the OBIE Award and the Lucille Lortel Award.

The director refers to what motivated her to direct this work: "I had the idea of adapting Homer's" Iliad "as a monologue in 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq. I was a girl during the Vietnam War, so I don't remember her. It was my first time in adulthood that I thought: "We are at war." That is what one should be talking about in the theater. We should be thinking and examining the reason we fight and what it means to be at war. "

How did the idea of working with Denis (O'Hare) come about?

I did a play with Denis in Chicago in 1988. We were both very young, but we got along very well. We became friends to this day. Then he became a great star. He says that I never hired him after that, but that's not true. Only he was very busy working. He won a



Tony Award on Broadway and became a very important actor. I knew he was a very political person. He also knew that he was a person with a lot of opinion. I contacted him and asked him if he wanted to collaborate in turning "The Iliad" into something modern.

What is the difference for you, from working on classics versus contemporary works?

For a director it is very different. I think that when directing a classic, the director has to be muscular. You are free but you also have to make important decisions. It is like doing a sport. When I direct a new play, I think I have to be much more coordinated with the playwright, it is more important that

the writer's vision be expressed on stage. Not that I have to be more gentle, but somehow I am listening and moving more carefully as director of new works.

Denis O'Hare (Kansas, 1962) is a theater, film and television actor, winner of a Tony Award for Richard Greenberg's acclaimed *Take Me Out* (2002), about homophobia and machismo in the world of sports. He has worked on the *True Blood* and *American Horror Story* series - for which he was nominated for an Emmy - and in films such as *Milk* (2008), by Gus Van Sant, and *Dallas Buyers Club* (2013), a film that competed for the Oscar. As a theater actor, he has participated in both Broadway and off-Broadway circuit pieces.

Why would the Chilean public be interested in seeing this work?

Because I'm very handsome (laughs). Because it is a very important story. It is not only about the war between the Trojans and the Greeks, but it is the history of the people. There is always war and there is always violence too. It is not simply a story about war or violence. Because men and women, people live violence, It is better to talk than fight. But right now, in the world there are many places at war. It never works, it's always the same, it always fails. The people who die are always men, women and children, and soldiers. But much more at this time, terrorism affects women and children.

Lisa said you are interested in politics. What do you think of what's going on in politics



**in the United States, about Trump's triumph?
What do you think about it? How does this
manifest in the theater?**

For a while we lost the motivation to do the work, because Obama is someone I agree with, and I felt that the world was going in the right direction. He seems to be an intelligent man, who seeks solutions, is inclusive, so we don't ride it so much in the United States. We mounted it in Egypt, in Australia, in those places, but in the United States I didn't feel like doing it anymore. Now, with Trump, we have stepped back. Not only is he a violent person, but he is a liar, and the people around him are racist, they are anti-immigrants, anti-gays and lesbians. Suddenly everything got so violent for us. For us this

work is about the protest against the tendency to use violence of any kind to achieve your goals. That is why this work has to be done more now. So it is very good that he has chosen.

Why were you interested in being in this project?

I was interested because we are very friends with Lisa and I love working with her and wanted to work with her again. She asked me: Have you ever read "The Iliad"? I said no, that I had read "The Odyssey" and I love classical literature, and the idea of sitting with someone intelligent and reading it, I found it an attractive idea. Our current work is about the bible, so we read the bible together all the time. We made a new work about the fall of Rome, so we are reading a lot of Roman literature. I love to spend my time doing that. I think it's great, because there is nothing new in the world, everything is repetition, so why not go back and read classical literature and see what solutions there are.

What are your next projects in Cinema or on TV?

I had a busy year. I finished "American Horror Story." Then I made a movie with Chloe Sevigny, about Lizzy Borden, a serial killer. There was also Kristen Stewart in that movie. It was a great cast, we filmed in Savannah. Then I filmed a movie with Evan Rachel Wood of Westworld, where I played her strange father. We filmed in Montreal. When I return in January I will film my film, one that I wrote and starred in. It's about my family, my younger sister committed suicide in 2010, so it's about a family that has to go clean her apartment. He has to find out where he was living, clean his apartment, take

out all his clothes and then try to find out why he did it. It's called "The parting glass" and it's about an old Irish song called that name. Very nice song. After that I will make another movie that I can't talk about. I will also be in the NBC series "This is Us". I made two chapters in that series and I think I'll do one more.

Direction **Lisa Peterson** Dramaturgy **Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare - based on Homer's Iliad, translated by Robert Fagles** Performer **Denis O'Hare** Bassist **Brian Elingsen** Stage design **Rachel Hauck** Costume design **Marina Draghici** Lighting design **Scott Zeilinski** Composer / Designer Sound **Mark Bennett** Produce **Mara Isaacs** Production Manager **Davison Scandrett Stage** Production Manager **Lucy Kennedy** Audio Supervisor **Chales Coes** Stage Production Manager **Stacey Boggs** Associate Producer **Bryan Hunt** Produces **Homer's Coat, in association with Octopus Theatricals. An Iliad** was developed at the **New York Theater Workshop Usual Suspects** Program, Off-Broadway (2012). It was also produced by **Seattle Repertory Theater, McCarter Theater Center** and **Princeton, NJ** .

In "An Iliad", a Single Actor Provides a Great Stage Act

By: Pedro Labra

El Mercurio, January 9th, 2017

If, "An Iliad" - coming from the New York Off Broadway - stands as the second exceptional contribution of Santiago to Mil 2017 in the few days that has elapsed, it is, no doubt, because it is a superb proposal based on a material extraordinary. But above all, because it involves us in a great, overwhelming, inescapable experience, being basically just a one-person show; Sign of the virtuosity of its creation and execution.

This past January, the festival presented on the same stage a Greek version of the extensive epic poem attributed to Homer, a three-millenary founding monument of the Greco-Roman culture and literature of the West, which displayed in more than three hours the 15,700 verses, with 15 actors multiplying in dozens of characters, humans and gods, or a result as solemn as excessive and tiring. Released in 2012, or earlier than that, this is the first effort ever tried to stage that colossal text, and confirms that in the representative arts less often yield much more.

Contrary to what can be expected, here it is not an exercise in oral narration, but in chemically pure theater, which from the classical epic creates a powerful monodrama that resonates with great force. Nor does it intend to adhere faithfully to the original text: it proposes a rewriting of this, which recounts the last 50 days of the war sustained by Troy and Greece for 10 years. It is not "The Iliad" (of the ion, as the Greeks called Troy), but "An Iliad", the one elaborated in a rigorous workshop by the director Lisa Peterson, and its actor, Denis O'Hare, preferring or stopping in some of the many adventures, or bypassing other passages and characters. It also removes the saga so that it is shared today, scoring it with ironic details, digressions and very current

references, even local ones; there is a fragment said in Spanish, and when the places where the hosts and Greek ships are stationed are listed, among others, the names of Peñaflores or Castro.

In a magical turn, he installs us in front of Homer himself, looking somewhat disheveled and carrying a suitcase of transhumant traveler, who comes to tell us what he has repeated for centuries. As a modern rhapsodist - who is a poet and, at the same time, a preacher, a chronicler and who preserves the memory of the past -, he reminds us again of the history of the mother of all wars. It evokes the heroism, loyalty and honor that is given on the battlefield, but especially the blind and tumultuous fury that causes pain, death and horror. "Do you come? Do you understand what I am saying?" Repeat, seeking to explain why Humanity always falls into the same. Man is moved by irrationality, instinctive drive towards violence and chaos, likes to kill and destroy, he concludes. He adds: "Every time I tell this, I get excited that it will be the last one." And it doesn't happen like that.

The unavoidable vehemence with which O'Hare exposes his speech impresses a lot, squandering for 100 minutes an acting energy that seems superhuman. The variety of resources available allows you to articulate jocular moments. touching, majestic, exalted, even wild. Most of the time he is supported by a notable bassist who, with his instrument, generates atmospheric music, marks the various types and produces a suggestive noise. Likewise, the active pattern of light movements is key.

Santiago a Thousand: Performing Arts that Investigate Origins and Pain

By: Agustin Letelier

El Mercurio Columnists, January 15, 2017

Santiago had a good start this year with the replacement of "Mau Mapuche ceremony" on the Caupolicán terrace of Santa Lucia Hill. Magnificent play, dance, and music that elevates Mapuche expressions to the category of great art. The relationship with their ancestors, with the land, with the rivers, with the forests; What it means for them to leave their land and live in the cities is presented in a vehement speech, full of strength and enhanced with a dance of careful movements. Towards the end, with the characteristic rhythm of their dances, they invite the public to join and the ceremony becomes a rite of participation. Lemi Ponifasio, an artist from Samoa based in New Zealand, has studied Maori, Polynesian culture and has worked for months with the Mapuche communities. He has observed that there is a clear relationship between all native peoples. Special merit from Santiago to Mil is to have scheduled presentations of the work in cities of the Araucanía; The experience of seeing their music, their dance or their cultural conceptions interpreted at this high level by Mapuche artists, will allow them to better appreciate their own value.

Also of excellence in interpretation, but in a somewhat inverse sense, it is "An Illiad". If Lemi Ponifasio raised to great art what we normally see as simple expressions of the

Mapuche people, what Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare do is to bring the great epic that is "The Illiada" to language and everyday situations. His purpose is to make us see the horror of wars. There is the heroism of Achilles and Hector, but also the hatred and violence that dominates them. The actor becomes a Homer today whose job is to canter, and indeed in some moments he does, the adventures of the long siege of Troy that lasted nine years. A long war because a good boy but not interesting Paris took the beautiful Helena and the Greeks come to retrieve it. How many times have the Trojans thought that it would be better to return it, and the Greeks why fight for it, but honor and hatred arise with wars, all absurd.

The story shows us the brutality and unstoppable violence that invades even that good man and demigod that is Achilles when he kills Hector. But there is a moment of humanity, King Priam, father of Hector, already eighty years old, goes alone with an old driver of his wagon full of treasures, to ask Achilles to deliver Hector's body to bury him, and Achilles, who begins to get angry in the conversation, manages to dominate himself, puts the body in Priam's wagon himself and agrees 11 days of truce to carry out the funeral honors. That night everyone had beautiful dreams. Then other facts follow, but this current Homer does not want to tell them, everyone knows: the Trojan horse trap that worked well, the destruction of the city, Queen Hecuba and her daughters turned into slaves ... better finish with Good act of the truce and burial of Hector. A stage with minimal elements, the deep sound of the cello amplifies from one of the boxes, and especially the great performance of Denis O'Hara make this show unforgettable. The quality of the performance is well captured and appreciated, but its impact must be greater for those who have United States English as their mother tongue because the main thing is their ways of speaking.

-----Shanghai-----

One Man's Journey to a World of Violence

By: Zhou Yubin, Li Kexin

Shine, August 17th, 2019



Denis O'Hare in "An Iliad"

When American actor Denis O'Hare stood on stage at Great Theatre of China last week, he was facing the double challenge of a 100-minute solo performance and an audience who were not native English speakers.

The story he was telling was an epic one. "An Iliad," based on ancient Greek poet Homer's "Iliad," is a modern-day version of the classic. Created by Tony Award winner O'Hare and acclaimed director Lisa Peterson, the drama is drafted around the stories of Achilles and Hector, two major heroes in the "Iliad."

Premiered in 2012, the play has toured the world in cities such as Seattle, Perth, Wellington and Cairo. The play has a simple setting: an empty theater and O'Hare, a lone figure on stage who is a storyteller — possibly Homer, possibly one of the many bards who followed in Homer's footsteps.

The story, which has been told again and again for thousands of years, now has a more contemporary meaning.

"I was looking for plays about war in 2003, 2004 and 2005, around the time the United States was invading Iraq. For Americans, it is easy to not think about it or just not be aware of it," Peterson said.

The play's creators looked into how the "Iliad" was originally told and found out that it was a solo piece from the very beginning, with maybe a little string instrument accompaniment.

“The research that I did made me interested in this idea of the traveling storyteller. And the idea that Homer was more than just one person. Homer was many, many people, over many hundreds even like a thousand years of telling the story over and over again,” said Peterson.

Set during the Trojan War, Homer’s poem tells of the battles and events during the weeks in the final year of the conflict. But it also mentions many of the Greek legends in the siege, earlier events, and events prophesied for the future. Its standard modern accepted version runs to 15,693 lines and would be a three or four-day job if someone planned to tell it from beginning to end.

How to edit and condense such an epic story into an acceptable play for today’s audiences was the biggest challenge Peterson and O’Hare faced when they began to create “An Iliad” together.

The fate of the Greek warrior Achilles and Hector, the greatest fighter for Troy, takes center stage in the play. “If you follow the trajectory of how the book begins and ends, it begins with Achilles. He is the main figure in many ways for the Greeks and it ends with Hector, his death,” said O’Hare. “When do they clash? What do they represent? How are they representative of a Greek and a Trojan? And what’s funny about Hector and Achilles is that neither Hector nor Achilles has a real reason to be fighting.”

The team’s biggest regret was that they weren’t able to keep a lot of the female characters in the play. “I say that’s ok. Because the problem we are talking about is a male problem. This is about rage and what rage is. And it is the testosterone,” Peterson laughed. The whole story is about humanity’s unshakeable attraction to violence, destruction and chaos, which hasn’t changed since the Trojan War.

“The story is about war, but it’s really about anger-addicted people,” said Peterson, “I mean Achilles, it has rage in him and he uses it to be a great warrior.” He loses everything in the war and that turns him into a final stroke of rage, in which he kills Hector, who is only trying to protect his city and his people.

“But the turning point and the climax of the story is that when Hector’s father, the king of Troy, comes to get his body, Achilles has an angry moment, and he lets it go, and he triumphs over his own rage,” said Peterson, “In a contemporary way, I think it’s really about looking inward, looking at ourselves. As an American, the reason we did this, and the reason we love touring it, is it’s meant to be a kind of self-analysis about American aggression.”

O’Hare put on an incredibly powerful and compelling performance in this Obie Award-winning adaptation as the storyteller. When he counted the invisible Greek warships, it was as if he was present at the scene and when he described the battles between the

Greek and Trojan heroes, the audience could feel the tension and the heart-wrenching tragedy. One of the highlights was when O'Hare counted an extremely long list of the wars in human history, which represents the human nature of endless conflicts.



Denis O'Hare in "An Iliad"

Based on the English translation by Robert Fagles, the play is physically demanding and O'Hare's performances in Shanghai on August 8, 10 and 11 were done with the help of around 1,140 slides of Chinese subtitles.

He learned some Mandarin to create a connection with his Chinese audience. The audience responded with an understanding smile when O'Hare named a few Chinese provinces and cities such as Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Qingdao. Those are the places the warriors "come from," a modern twist he always makes when touring around the world.

"It's about a spirit of letting the audience be present," said O'Hare.

The most difficult section of the seven-chapter play is chapter four, according to O'Hare, when the storyteller describes the story and battles of Patroclus, a close friend of Achilles.

"It's the section that ends up with me up on a table screaming. And it's where the poet himself gets infected with rage and he loses control. Technically it just takes all of my breath and my ability. And on more than one occasion, I've actually got dizzy. Feel like I don't have enough air in me to keep going. I have to be careful," he said. "However, now that I've done it for so long, it no longer terrifies me."

Many of the Chinese in the audience knew O'Hare from his TV appearances such as King Russell Edgington in "True Blood" and Judge Abernathy in "The Good Wife." The actor has also appeared numerous times on Broadway in pieces such as "Inherit The Wind," "Sweet Charity" (Drama Desk Award), "Assassins" (Tony nomination) and "Take Me Out"

(Tony, Drama Desk awards).

"For any actor, acting in the theater is the most challenging, the most consuming and the most rewarding. It uses most aspects of your ability," said O'Hare about a difference between theater and TV, "I find that oftentimes TV and film actors cannot go to theater. They don't have the ability or the training, whereas theater actors can usually figure out how to navigate theater and TV. They are different, but they can figure it out because we have training. And if you're a trained person, I think you want to be doing the thing that is the most use of your abilities."

O'Hare and Peterson are founding members of Homer's Coat — a creative theater collective that explores foundational literature.

-----France-----

An Olympic Iliad!

CRITICAL - At the Théâtre du Rond-Point, Denis O'Hare single-handedly plays all the characters in Homer's masterpiece. Ruffling.

Le Figaro, January 17, 2020

By Nathalie Simon

Denis O'Hare has great ambitions and shares them with passion. The 57-year-old American comedian embodies Homer under the aegis of the gods of Olympus whom he tries not to offend. Inspired by muses, for an hour and forty, he tells in his own way, in Greek, English and French, seated, lying or standing, *The Iliad* revives the famous epic with almost nothing. A chair, table, glass and bottle on a shelf cluttered with spotlights. Drawing on his experience and undeniable talent.

"You see?", He sometimes asks to the public. The latter indeed "sees". The Trojan War in its bloody horror. The seat of the Greeks in front of the city, the clash between Achilles and Hector. The killing of Patroclus, the first friend, the actor's favorite. The dismay of Andromache, the wife of the second. Or the prayer of Priam to recover the remains of his son killed by Achilles.

Imaginary dialogue with its director, Lisa Peterson, Denis O'Hare takes shortcuts with the original poem, talks a lot more than he sings like a storyteller of old times. He cut and omitted many episodes and sums up Odyssey of Ulysses in a few concise sentences. "I know you know ..." He simplifies this large-scale fresco translated by Frédéric Mugler, but also makes it more accessible. All fire all flame, Homeric, to him alone, the actor embodies a handful of characters, an entire army. He establishes an imaginary dialogue between Achilles and Hector with his hands as props. "And if they had said that to each other ..." Yes, but they did not tell each other and the war took place, causing hundreds of deaths.

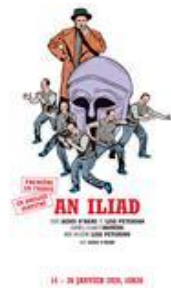
Through *An Iliad*, the actor who has performed all over the world, talks about men's violence-of their madness. Listed the conflicts in the world with a clear tone of voice and an accelerated flow. Great art!

Homer is "desperate" by human nature, rightly believes Denis O'Hare, who took his pilgrim's staff to spread the word.

The Irish-American is no stranger. He has performed a dozen plays, received a Tony Awards for his performance in a supporting role in the theater (*Take Me Out* by Richard Greenberg), appeared in several series including *New York, Criminal Investigation* and *CSI* and forty movies. He is currently playing in *Swallow*, a thriller by Carlo Mirabella-Davis which won an award at the last American Film Festival in Deauville.

An Iliad, at the Théâtre du Rond-Point (Paris 8th), until January 26.

Théâtre du
Rond-Point



An Iliad

Theatreonline.com

The immense actor **Denis O'Hare**, a leading Broadway figure and star of American series, gives in Paris his version of the first great poem of humanity: *The Iliad* of **Homer**. In 1h40, he brings to life a host of mythological characters. It is epic, tragic, funny, exciting. Unheard of luck! *In English subtitled.*

A staggering humor performer

But what did the gods do with us? In the back of the stage, a cluster of projectors, a forest of cables and other theater accessories. But the plateau is bare. A chair, a table, and the man fidgets alone under his felt hat. Poet and actor, in his worn-out gabardine and his old adventurer's trousers, he will live and revive the tricks and intrigues of the original war: the besieged city of Troy, Hector, Priam, the soldiers of Agamemnon, the bravery of 'Achilles and the beauty of Helena. All the characters in *The Iliad* come to life and fire with their voice and their body. He is Homer himself, from the Trojan War to the present day, who embarks on the adventure to tackle all contemporary conflicts from his mythological account.

Flagship figure of Broadway and Off Broadway, crowned with awards for his performances in musicals, star of American series, including *New York judicial police*, *CSI*, *True Blood*, *Brothers and Sisters* or *American Horror Story*, actor Denis O'Hare has received the prestigious Tony Award and Drama Desk Award. A staggering performer of humor, here he takes charge of the greatest epic in the history of literature. With his director and accomplice Lisa Peterson, he adapts her, embodies her, burns her. Armed with a suitcase, a bottle, a true, immediate speaking, he

explores the depths of murderous instincts without leaving a sparkling causticity. In surtitled English, in music hall pursuits and captivating music, *An Iliad* deploys the barbarities of men in their madness and their strange beauty.

An Iliad L'iliade Theatre Rond Point

By: Phillippe Chavernac

Critiques Théâtre Paris, January 16, 2020

A first in France with **An Iliad**, after *L'Iliade* of Homère, at the Rond-Point theater. Denis O'Hare and Lisa Peterson have adapted the Greek epic to our contemporary world. Everyone knows, more or less, the Trojan War. Achilles, to take revenge for the death of Patroclus, kills Hector and drives the Trojans back to their city. (Homer calls Achaeans all the Greeks participating in the Trojan War). Fighting, assault, murder, trickery (the famous Trojan Horse), pity, hero...without forgetting the appearance of the (beautiful) Helen on the ramparts...Impossible to sum up this masterpiece of Greek literature. On the bare, black set (with some theatrical props), Denis O'Hare appears in Homère and he left for almost two hours of a current adaptation of *L'Iliade*. Why (always and always) do we make war? That could be the problem with this piece. It's in English (but also a bit in French), it's stripping, we're caught up in history, we don't see the time passing, well done artist! And we reflect on war, on all wars and human madness...to see quickly!

An Iliad, by Denis O'Hare and Lisa Peterson after Homère, directed by Lisa Peterson, at the Théâtre du Rond-Point

By: Emmanuelle Saulnier-Cassia

Un Fauteuil pour L'Orchestre, January 21, 2020



Created in 2010 in the United States, **An Iliad** is presented for the first time in France, in the large hall of the Rond-Point theater. As the use of the indefinite article "an" / "une" rather than the definite article "the" / "la" indicates at the outset, it is an adaptation of Homer's Iliad (published in English by Overlook Duckworth, without the few

arrangements in French offered to the Parisian public) that Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Hare offer. A very personal adaptation and having the firm desire to make the epic understandable to a contemporary audience, not necessarily familiar with either the oldest epic poem or mythology. In fact, reducing the 24 songs from 15,000 verses to 7 short "parts", the show is ideally inter-generational, addressing all types of scholars and all ages. Everyone can find their account, apart from the purists of ancient texts who may find material to reject which is certainly a popularization, but interesting on the aesthetic and dramaturgical levels.

Many contemporary authors and directors have competed in inventiveness to represent war or wars. There are those that are described with realism within the limits quickly imposed by a set (unlike a cinema screen), those that are suggested by allegories, by poetic accounts, by videos, by screams, by blood ...

The poet of ***An Iliad*** himself presents the difficulty: *"I want to show you what this famous battlefield looks like. I have a photograph from another war"*. The reply is tasty, mixing anachronism with the spirit. He shows us his empty hand as if an image were stuck to it, surveying the entire width of the stage for the benefit of all the spectators. What does the representation matter! Indeed all wars are alike, whatever their times, their places (a large number of which, real or fictitious, are listed for several minutes of the penultimate scene), their methods ...

The decor of ***An Iliad*** is very simple. A coat rack, a table, a chair and a suitcase, spotlights in the background, and a lot of light effects on the stage alternating the showers targeted on the actor, the shadows cast on the wall at court - to personify the giant Agamemnon - and the often bluish flashes to better accompany the soundtrack which can be violent to contextualize the strong moments of the Iliad, which are mainly its fights, the din giving way for example to the sound of a solo cello while the muses are called for help.

The actor dressed in simple pants and what looks like a light mesh rib accompanied by a small belt, goes from chants in ancient Greek, to vociferations in English (the main language of the show with French surtitles) and jokes in French to better challenge the public regularly and especially to make them laugh as often as possible by proposing popular allegories or winks (for example the figure of Mbappé to refer to popular heroes), using a modern pictorial vocabulary (Patroclus describes like a *"killing machine"*), even vulgar or trivial (*"It was hot"*) which alternate with original verses from Homer's epic (translated by Robert Fagles).

Denis O'Hare, who is both a star on Broadway and in many American series, provides an impressive single on stage. Because that's the other particularity of this show: telling the story of the Trojan War by presenting some of its many heroes and key scenes, through a single voice, a single body.

A challenge that the actor takes up in a remarkable way occupying the entire space of the stage for an hour and forty during which the spectator does not see pass, shuddering at the altercation between Agamemnon and Achilles, easily imagining the bloody collective battles described by the menu, trembling before the " *duel* " between Patroclus and Hector, Achilles' fierceness on Hector, exasperated by the lasciviousness of Helene calling herself a "*bitch*", and finally regretting that the "*poet* " who had opened the the show returns, puts on his coat and hat to close it, before setting off again like a Jew wandering elsewhere, telling the same story, singing the same songs and perpetuating the memory.

"You see?".