

## **Bodies in Motion: Contemporary Approaches to Choral Performance**

A Panel Sponsored by the Committee on Ancient and Modern Performance  
Organized by M. Hopman (Northwestern University) and F. Schironi ( University  
of Michigan )

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### **Call for Papers**

The classical chorus' combination of text, music, and dancing is a rare phenomenon in the history of Western theater. The experience was indeed short-lived: choral parts separated the scenes but were not integral to the action in the late comedies of Aristophanes and in Menander; papyri containing choral lyrics prove that anthologies of dramatic choral odes were circulating in the Roman period; choruses sang but did not dance in Roman pantomimes; and with a few exceptions, modern Western theater has dispensed with the chorus altogether. The development of opera in the seventeenth century, followed by the rise of the ballet in the late eighteenth century, led to an institutionalized division between the performing arts. As a result, the Greek chorus often was perceived as an embarrassment in nineteenth and twentieth-century productions of ancient plays.

More recently, however, several productions have offered powerful and highly corporeal interpretations of Greek choruses, often inspired by non-Western dancing traditions. Richard Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* (1968), Ariane Mnouchkine's *Les Atrides* (1990-1992), Katie Mitchell's *Oresteia* (2000), Włodzimierz Staniewski's *Elektra* (2002) and *Iphigenia at Aulis* (2007), and Anne Bogart's *Antigone* (2009) are but a few examples of productions that have used the Greek chorus to offer a new form of theater emphasizing collective movement, redefining theatrical space, and questioning the relation between spectators and performers.

Turning our focus to the present moment, we invite panelists to describe and discuss contemporary productions of Greek drama (tragedy and comedy) that emphasize the physicality/corporeality of the chorus. Topics that may be addressed include, but are certainly not limited to, the following: How is collective movement used in the production? Are the choral moves inspired by a particular performative tradition or technique? Do the movements of the chorus respond to specific cues in the Greek text or its translation(s)? Does the chorus contribute to a particular meaning (artistic, political, social, economic) of the dramatic performance as a whole? Can this contemporary rendering of the chorus help us revisit the original ancient performance with fresh eyes?

Please submit abstracts by e-mail attachment by **February 8, 2012** to Judith Hallett, [jeph@umd.edu](mailto:jeph@umd.edu) .

Abstracts should be only one page in length and must not include the author's name. In accordance with APA regulations, all abstracts will be reviewed anonymously. Please follow the APA guidelines for formatting abstracts, available on-line at:

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