

Traveling Players

THE ODYSSEY

WELCOME!

We're so excited for you to audition! We can't wait to meet you – or see you again!

DO I NEED AN AUDITION SLOT?

Nope. You'll be in the audition room the whole time. That's your "audition slot"!

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE AUDITIONS

We know that actors can shine in different ways, so we organize our auditions to allow actors with different strengths to shine. You will read a few scenes (called "sides," since they are sides of the script), play improvisation games, and participate in ensemble-building activities. The audition is an opportunity for the director to get to know you and see how you work and play with other potential ensemble members. It is also an opportunity for you to get to know your potential castmates.

We have been told that our auditions are significantly more fun than the average audition. We plan to keep it that way!

AM I AUDITIONING FOR A ROLE IN THE PLAY?

No, you are auditioning to be a member of the Ensemble that will perform the play. If cast, you will participate in another round of auditions during the first weekend of rehearsals to assign roles.

I'M IN 6th GRADE – HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT PLAY I WILL BE IN?

6th grade is a swing year, which means you can be cast in either *The Odyssey* or *Atalanta*. You should audition for the play you are most interested in, and we will consider it your first choice when casting. Most actors are cast in their first choice; however, we occasionally cast actors in a different play if it will give them a better artistic challenge.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE AUDITIONS?

You could be accepted, declined, or called back. (A callback is when we ask you to audition again.) If you are called back, we will let you know what we would like you to work on before your next audition.

Decisions are emailed about a week after your audition, and you have a week to accept the offer to join us. Our goal is to give everyone we welcome this winter an incredible and rewarding challenge!

HOW DO I GET BETTER AT ACTING?

Practice! Every time you perform, you can get better – more comfortable in front of an audience, more specific character interpretation, more vocal projection, and more precise enunciation, etc.

Just for our 3rd – 6th graders, we are also offering a class in Acting & Improv this winter. You could take the class in addition to performing in the play, or you could take the class instead. There's no audition to join the class. If you are not accepted into this cast, we hope that you will take the Acting & Improv class – and that we'll see you in our next cast!

We're an educational theatre company. All we want is to see you flourish - on stage and off stage!

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ON AUDITION DAY:

Auditions, rehearsals, and performances are held at our [Studio in Tysons Corner Center](#).

Before arriving, please be sure to eat – no starving artists! Dress in clothing that allows you to move comfortably. Bring a water bottle. You will turn off your phone during the audition.

GOT ANY TIPS FOR ME?

You don't need to memorize anything for this audition, but you should take a little bit of time to read the sides and research the play. You certainly don't need to be an expert! Read the sides listed below and know the characters and plot. Then relax and have fun – you'll do great!

THE SIDES:

- Familiarize yourself with the scenes below.
- These scenes **do not need to be memorized**.
- You don't need to print out the sides either. We'll have copies for you.
- You'll read these scenes as part of your audition with other actors. You will have the opportunity to read multiple characters and scenes.
- Some helpful guidelines as you prepare:
 - Do I know who's speaking? Their age, gender, and personality? Are they a Greek god/goddess or a mortal? Or something else entirely?
 - Can I adjust my body and voice so that the audience can "get" the essence of each character that I read?
 - Do I have a sense of what each scene is about? Will it be clear to my audience?
 - What do the characters want in the scene? How do they try to get it? Do they get it?
 - Am I speaking loudly and clearly enough so my audience can understand me?
- Want to prepare even more? Research the myths and characters of the play a bit!

Questions? Just ask! Call us at 703-987-1712 or email us at outreach@travelingplayers.org.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHO GETS IN?

We accept actors into our programs who are a good fit for our ensembles and our community. We're interested in how you play with others – on stage and off – and with whom you play particularly well. Collaboration, dedication, kindness, joy, and imagination are the qualities that allow our ensembles and all our students to thrive.

Students who have been with Traveling Players before know the power of a strong, well-balanced ensemble. But how do you create a cohesive and effective ensemble? You need a mix of experiences and backgrounds – performers with different skill sets and growth opportunities — all of whom are eager to support and challenge each other to do their best work.

You will have your best audition if you relax, have fun, and connect with your fellow performers.

Break a leg! We can't wait to see you!

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Side 1 – Pallas Athena

The goddess Athena introduces the audience to the world of the play.

PALLAS ATHENA

I, Pallas Athena, speak of Odysseus
Whom the whole world knows
Because of his famous journey.

I tell the story of resplendent Penelope,
And of the many young suitors
Who demand that she marry.

I tell the story of wandering Odysseus
Whom father Zeus calls the cleverest man alive.

Ten years of war against the mighty Trojans
Nine years of wandering and captivity
Even to the point of despair
Until I, Pallas Athena, lead him home.
Home to Ithaca, to his wife Penelope,
to his son Telemachus
to wreak vengeance on the spoilers.

Even now, I go there myself disguised
As an old poet, singing my songs and begging food,
While Odysseus struggles in vain
To sail back to his home.

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Side 2 Penelope, Antinous

Penelope's husband Odysseus has been away for many years, Antinous believes that she should remarry (so that he can be king of Ithaca). Penelope hopes her husband is still alive.

ANTINOUS Then I shall speak prudently, and to fairest Penelope.

PENELOPE Speak, Antinous, I shall listen.

ANTINOUS As long as there was any hope that your husband would return, none of us could blame you for waiting. Daughter of Icarus, the time for waiting is over. Odysseus is gone forever. All the men in Argos will fill this house, for in beauty there is no one to match you.

PENELOPE Alas, all beauty that I had was destroyed when Odysseus embarked for Troy. Now I am alone, and my house is cursed with strangers.

ANTINOUS Madam, your husband has been gone for nineteen years. Some wave has washed him into the sea. He is either dead or lost forever. Therefore, you must pick the best, most generous of your suitors, marry him and go live in his house. Then Telemachus can enjoy his natural inheritance. It is the custom fair Penelope.

PENELOPE The custom? None of you observe the custom! Surely it is the oldest of customs for suitors to entertain the lady, bring her gifts, not carouse at her expense.

ANTINOUS You speak true. That is our custom, but we shall not leave your palace until you agree to choose a husband.

PENELOPE I see. Very well, you have driven me to this moment. Antinous, we may both observe the custom. If all the suitors will bring their traditional matrimonial gifts to the palace, I shall select one to be my husband. Will you accept my choice?

ANTINOUS I will!

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Side 3 – Old Man, Hylax, Perites, Eurylochus, Peremides, Odysseus

Odysseus and his sailors come upon Ithaca, after having been gone for 11 years.

HYLAX Land ahead! Ithaca!

PERITES Rocky Ithaca! We're home! We're home!

HYLAX I'll wake Odysseus.

EURYLOCHUS No, don't wake him yet. It will be at least an hour before we reach shore.

HYLAX I can't wait.

EURYLOCHUS Then start bringing our cargo on deck.

PERITES Well, this is the biggest pouch.

He has the large bag of wind King Aeolous gave them

PEREMIDES Wherever we go they always gave him costly treasures, but they never gave anything to us. We ought to have a share in all these treasures.

HYLAX If we want any of this, we had better take it for ourselves – and now!

They all open the sack, which begins to tremble and make an increasingly loud humming sound until it whirls all of them about, wakes ODYSSEUS and they are in a terrible storm, all clinging to the mast which almost blows over. Eventually the storm subsides.

ODYSSEUS Hear my words men. We are fortunate to escape from those winds, but they have blown us I-know-not-where. We are lost. I cannot even tell which is east and which is west.

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Side 4 – Circe, Peremides, Hylax

While exploring the island, Peremides and Hylax come upon the enchantress Circe.

CIRCE Sweetly, sweet, let darkness come,
Sad night sings in hollow tones,
Rest is near and sorrow gone.
Lay thy swords upon the earth,
Voyager, whose weeping wakes
The forest with thy human tale.

PEREMIDES Have mercy upon us, goddess or woman, whichever you are.

CIRCE Strangers you are welcome to the Island of Aea.

HYLAX Thank you, lovely lady. We are Greeks searching our way home to Ithaca. And I ask, who are you?

CIRCE I am the goddess, Circe. My father is the Sun who lights the earth, and my mother is Perse, Daughter of the Ocean. You are welcome, refresh yourselves from your journey with this honey-wine in its golden bowl.

*As they drink the wine, the men are magically transformed into pigs.
When CIRCE touches them, they drop to all fours – the transformation complete.*

HYLAX Hmmm. What a splendid taste. Oink, oink.

PEREMIDES (*Giggling and drifting into oinks*) This is delicious. Hylax, your nose. It's beginning to look just like an oink– I mean a pig!

HYLAX Well, oink yourself, you old oink, oink, oink, oink.

CIRCE And now, sailors, my powerful drug steals away your memory of home in Ithaca. You are pigs! You grunt like pigs, but your minds are human. You eat like pigs, some acorns, eat acorns. Come piggies, follow me...

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Side 5 – Odysseus, Hermes

Odysseus meets the god Hermes.

ODYSSEUS Ha! Who are you!

HERMES Wouldn't you like to know!

ODYSSEUS Watch your tongue, man. I do not like your insolence either. I have killed men for less.

HERMES To kill me you would have to catch me. To catch me, you'd have to run to Mount Olympus and back as fast as this!

*HERMES makes as though he leaps into space at incredible speed;
ODYSSEUS' eyes follow this imagined journey with amazement.
Finally, HERMES taps him on the shoulder.*

HERMES Hello, there. I'm back.

ODYSSEUS I know who you are. You must be Hermes.

HERMES (*Simultaneously with him*) Hermes! Son of Zeus and his messenger on earth to you silly mortals.

ODYSSEUS I heard you were something of a trickster.

HERMES Ah, well, you need a master trickster, Odysseus, Circe will turn you into a pig, too.

ODYSSEUS Please do, Hermes. Help me rescue my men.

HERMES That is the reason Pallas Athena asked me to come to you. Well, all right with this. Take this flower-herb, called Moly, with its white flower and black root. It is the antidote to the drug Circe will give you. Come closer, even the leaves in the forest have Circe's ears. Now, do what I have told you and no harm will come to you.

ODYSSEUS Hermes, guardian of the wayfarer, I thank you.

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Side 6 – Odysseus, Anticlea

Odysseus meets his dead mother, Anticlea, while traveling in the Underworld.

ANTICLEA Nobel son... Odysseus, my boy...

ODYSSEUS Who is it that calls my name?

ANTICLEA I am your mother, Anticlea. Give me but one drink that I may speak with you.

ODYSSEUS Alas, dear mother! Here, drink one sip and tell me what has brought you to this place.

ANTICLEA My son, it was no disease that brought me to this place of darkness. It was my longing for you to return from Troy that brought my life to an end.

ODYSSEUS We are now reunited. Let me embrace you once more. Why do you avoid me? May I not hold you in my arms once more?

ANTICLEA You can't. I am only a spirit now. It is the fate of mankind. I have no flesh, no bones. You must fly from this black place. It is no place for you, the living. Go back...go back... go back to the lighted world.

She exits.

ODYSSEUS I cannot go until I see Teiresias. Oh, mother, please return. What a terrible place this is. Lord Hades, I beseech you send the blind prophet Teiresias, that I may speak with him.