

PANTHEATRE

A Summer of Discontent

Pantheatre's 2022 Summer Program

Dionysos in Counterpoint

Lecture 17/07/2022

Enrique Pardo

*Now is the summer of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York.*
Shakespeare, Richard III

Announcement

How can invoking a Greek divinity be made sense of, today? And especially such an ambivalent figure like Dionysos, at once redeemer and destroyer, and, further, said to be the god of theatre? I wish to turn a somewhat obstinate critical look at my own encounters (both theatrical and "in books") with Dionysos, centering on one of the most tragic events in my life: the death of Roy Hart in 1975.

EDITORIAL

Pantheatre's Summer of 2022 Program opens with a conference intended as a counterpoint to the tragic, pastoral, academic, and even scenic modes in which the god Dionysus is too often presented. I am with James Hillman when he said that the gods are psychopathic figurations and that it is dangerous to bring them too close to the human. It was in this sense, in my view, that Euripides used him, particularly in that terrifying (terrorist?) work of genius: *The Bacchae*.

My original intention was to focus on a tragic event, both catastrophic and foundational, that occurred in May 1975: the car accident that took the lives of Roy Hart, Dorothy Hart and Viviane Young. I wanted to reflect on it, precisely, as a Dionysiac / Dionysian occurrence, and even as an epiphany of the *diasparagmos* of the Dionysos of the 1960s and 1970s, its enthusiastic counterculture and revolutionary vehemence. The *diasparagmos*, it is the god "who receives the sacrifice as "Dismemberer of humans".

Fatality come to unsettle my intentions and revive, almost fifty years later, its tragic affect. It so happens that the only survivor of this terrible incident, Paul Silber, whose health had become fragile in recent years, was carried off by Covid a few days ago, on June 28. His death saddens and 'densifies' considerably my task which wanted to seek an echo of *Psyche's Task* in all these events as well as deepening the notion of counterpoint in our performance work.

Paul Silber and his wife, Clara Harris Silber, will be in my thoughts and sentiments. It was Paul who, around 1968, gave me my first 'singing lesson'. I will speak of it, especially in Dionysian terms.

This preamble should give some idea of the psychological and mythological dimensions that I would like to address, and it goes without saying that if I propose the figure of Dionysus to begin this *Summer in Counterpoint*, it is because he is one of the key figures in my use of this notion.

To invoke Dionysus is also to attract his inevitable vortexes, disorders and torments. I will try to proceed by thematic strata hoping to revisit them afterwards thanks to your comments and questions live and during the program - and also, during the reiterations of this conference in French and Spanish.

Malerargues, July 12, 2022