AJAX IN IRAQ

A Drama by
ELLEN MCLAUGHLIN

DEDICATED TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE US ARMY AND JACK NGUYEN, A UF STUDENT CURRENTLY SERVING HIS SECOND TOUR OF DUTY.
This is a play about the capacity for heroism by those who only wish to serve, and do not see themselves as heroes.

SOPOCLES’ AJAX:
In Sophocles’ famous retelling of the story the hero Ajax is enraged when the arms of the dead Achilles are awarded to Odysseus instead of to him. The goddess Athena drives him mad so that he goes to a flock of sheep and slaughters them, imagining them to be the Achaean leaders. When he comes to his senses, he is covered with blood, and realizes what he has done. His honor diminished, he decides to kill himself rather than live in shame.

GERTRUDE BELL
Gertrude Bell lived an extraordinary life. She is chiefly remembered for her pioneering assimilation of Arabic culture. Despite being a brilliant scholar, archaeologist, mountaineer and linguist, she also found time to be a leading figure for the suffragette movement. uniquely for her time, she mingled easily with Arab Princes, playing a formative role in the creation of the modern state of Iraq. Some have even called her the Mother of Iraq.

MORE ABOUT THE WAR
When soldiers go to basic training they meet a drill sergeant who seems to be their worst nightmare. When they graduate they leave with an emotional bond with their drill sergeant that they never forget. Ask any veteran the name of his drill sergeant and he will know it.

NY Times: March 9th, 2012: “The rate of sexual assaults on women serving in the military remains intolerably high. A 2006 study of female veterans estimated that between 23-33% of US service women have been assaulted. Too often victims are too afraid to come forward.”
GLOSSARY

**RPG'S** - Rocket Propelled Grenade; in other words, a rocket launcher. The noise a rocket makes typically sounds like a piece of sheet metal or paper being ripped.

**UNIT** - Another way of saying a "Company." A company usually consists of 2-4 platoons. A platoon consists of 2-4 squads, a squad consists of 2-4 teams, and a team is comprised of 3-4 soldiers. Overall, a company or unit has an average of 80-225 soldiers.

**SUNNI** - One of the two major factions of Islam, they make up about 80-90% of Muslims in the world. They differ in beliefs with Shiites, and in Iraq, they struggle for power in politics with the Shiites.

**SHIITES** - Second of the major factions of Islam. They make up about 10-20% of the Muslim population worldwide. In Iraq, they constitute the majority (about 65%) and struggle for power with the Sunnis.

**JA'FAR PASHA** - Prime Minister of Iraq in the 1920s. An important historical figure, he sided with T.E Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) at one point.

**SERGEANT** - An NCO, non-commissioned officer. In the military rank system, the NCO is supposed to be the person you go to if you have a problem or you need something. They are the leaders of the Joes and grunts. They are one of your own and they earned their rank by experience and hard work, and not necessarily because of a college degree.

**NVGS NOGS** - Night visions goggles. Night optical goggles. (NOG should actually be NOD, D for device.) In night vision, the vision is green, and 2 dimensional.

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Stacey Galloway, Zak Herring, Kate Glennon, Robin McGee, Todd Bedell, Tony Berry, Tiza Garland, Sarah White, Jack Nguyen, Elizabeth Adams, Officer Randolph Delapena of the UF Army ROTC program

THE COMPANY

**DAVIDA EVETTE TOLBERT (ATHENA)** is a 3rd-year MFA Acting candidate, who is honored to be a part of the UF SOTD, and is beyond ecstatic to be portraying the biggest diva of all time. She is grateful to Dr. Young for her first and last acting opportunities here. She’s been featured in: *Note to Self, Circle Mirror Transformation, Romeo and Juliet, Oedipus the King, You Can’t Take It With You, Agbedidi, Signs of Life, BHM Variety Show and Ajax in Iraq*. Davida humbly thanks God, her Mama, friends, family, mentors, professors and all of her “boos” for support.

**KATIE PANKOW (A.J.)** is a third-year MFA Acting candidate. Previous UF credits include *A Piece of My Heart, You Can’t Take It With You, Oedipus, Romeo and Juliet, and The Grapes of Wrath*. To the SOTD faculty: thanks for all your help, guidance and support, and for making me fall in love with this craft over and over. Much love to Mom, Dad, Nate and Beef, and to my extended theatre family (you know who you are—thanks for keeping me sane). For our soldiers, past and present—I cannot express how thankful I am for your sacrifice and commitment to this country and to your brothers and sisters in arms.

**TOM FOLEY (AJAX)** is a first-year MFA acting student with the SOTD. He is very excited to be taking part in a work that honors the commitment and sacrifices of American soldiers serving in combat. He served for 4 years in the US Army as a Combat Medical Specialist with the First Infantry Division and it was his great pleasure to scream abuse at the cast as they learned to march and do pushups in preparation for the show.

**AMANDA SCHLACHTER (GERTRUDE BELL, TECMESSA)** is a First-Year MFA Acting Candidate. She has worked with such companies as Orlando Shakespeare Theatre, Mad Cow, Asolo Rep, The Source Theatre and American Academy of Dramatic Arts. Amanda is so grateful for the opportunity to train here at The University of Florida! Go Gators www.amandaschlachter.com

**MATT MERCURIO (ODYSSEUS, THERAPIST, NOG 3, LARRY’S FRIEND, GREEK CHORUS)** A bone marrow transplant can save the lives of people battling leukemia, lymphoma, and other blood cancers. For some patients it’s the only option in continuing the fight against those diseases. Check out bethematch.org. Becoming a member of the registry is fast and easy. For Christina, who inspires me with her strength every day.

**SEAN CANCELLIERI (CAPTAIN, TEUCER, NOG 1, GREEK CHORUS)** is a first-year MFA candidate from Las Vegas. He graduated from UNLV with a Bachelors degree in Theatre Studies. He is thrilled to begin his work here at The University of Florida. His recent credits include *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum, and Taming of the Shrew*.

**THADDEUS WALKER (SERGEANT, MAN IN THE DARK 1, GREEK CHORUS)** would like to thank his family for all their support, and Dr. Young for this wonderful opportunity. Previous UF credits: *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (Nick U’s), *She Stoops to Conquer* (Thomas/Valet) Florida Players: *Othello* (Montano) *The Children’s Hour* (Dr. Cardin) Enjoy the show!
**THE PRODUCTION TEAM**

**DR. DAVID YOUNG (DIRECTOR)** has been Graduate Research Professor in the School of Theatre and Dance at the University of Florida since 1993. He was, for 15 years, the Producing Director of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, a national education program whose network includes 450 colleges and universities. He has directed over 100 productions throughout the United States and internationally, including Amadeus, Company, Six Characters in Search of an Author, The Last Days of Judas Iscariot, Private Lives, Vincent in Brixton, Crumbs from the Table of Joy, How I Learned to Drive, The Clean House and Circle Mirror Transformation, and An Inspector Calls.

**OLUCHI NWOKOCHA (SICKLES, JUDY, MODERN CHORUS B, GREEK CHORUS)** is a 1st-year MFA Acting candidate from Tulsa Oklahoma. Javon is a graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma and holds an Associate of Arts degree from Northeastern Oklahoma A & M. Some of his favorite roles include Det. Tulposki from Pillowman, Jim in Big River, and Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night.

**SUNNY SMITH (PATIENT, MODERN CHORUS E, GREEK CHORUS)** is an MFA Acting candidate in her UF acting debut. Regional credits: Miss Electricity (LaJolla Playhouse), King O’the Moon, Wit, Dracula, Julius Caesar, Hansel & Gretel (North Coast Rep), Into the Woods, Heidi Chronicles (New Village Arts), Frozen (ION Theatre), HMS Pinafore, Daughter of the Regiment (San Diego Lyric Opera). Thanks, Dr. Young!

**EMILY GREEN (NOG 2, MODERN CHORUS D, GREEK CHORUS)** is a 2nd-year MFA Acting candidate. Previous UF credits: A Piece of My Heart (Sissy), Measure for Measure (Mistress Overdone), Roberto Zucco (Mother). Much love and thanks to Dr. Young, the cast and crew, and, of course, BAM!: The Experiment.
BEN HAWKINS (SOUND DESIGNER) is a 3rd-year BFA candidate in lighting design. He has enjoyed working on productions at UF such as Chicago (Assistant Lighting Designer) as well as lighting MFA one acts and BFA dance showcase earlier this year in the spring. He greatly enjoys fulfilling the role of technical supervisor at P.K. Yonge Supply lighting and sound support for many productions. Thanks to all those who support me.

CHARLECIA JOY PAUL (PROPERTIES/ASST. SCENIC DESIGNER) is a BFA scene design major. She's had the honor of being props mistress for Florida Players Spring New Works Festival and Jeffrey. She also volunteers at the Actor’s Warehouse and looks forward to continuing working with Florida Players and The School of Theater and Dance.

ANGELA C. ROSARIO (STAGE MANAGER) 3rd-year BA. Other SM credits: STNJ’s Jr. & Sr. Shakespeare Corps productions of The Tempest and Beowulf, Florida Players’ production of The Children’s Hour. Angela would like to thank her parents for their never-ending support, Sarah White & Topher for always offering advice, and Kenny & Erin for keeping her sane.

ELLEN MCLAUGHLIN (PLAYWRIGHT) Her plays have received numerous national and international productions at theaters such as Actor’s Theater of Louisville, Mark Taper Forum, and The Public Theater in NYC. Acting Credits: Best known for having originated the part of the Angel in Tony Kushner’s ANGELS IN AMERICA – appearing in every US production from the earliest workshops through its Broadway run. Instructor: Playwriting at Yale School of Drama, Princeton University, among others.

FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT ABOUT THE PLAY

Past and present collide in Ellen Mclaughlin’s mash-up of Sophocles’ classic tragedy Ajax with the modern-day war in Iraq. The play follows the parallel narratives of Ajax, an ancient Greek military hero, and A.J., a modern female American soldier, both undone by the betrayal of a commanding officer. Athena, goddess of war, coolly presides over the whole affair. Inspired by material collected from interviews with Iraq war veterans and their families, Ajax in Iraq explores the timeless struggle soldiers face in trying to make sense of war.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Army Advisor/Marching Choreographer
Drill Sergeant
Vocal Coach
Alexander Technique coach
Associate Lighting Designer
Assistant Lighting Designer
Assistant Scenic Designer
Sound Board Operator
Light Board Operator
Spotlight Operators
Projection Operator
Scenic Crew

Technical Director
Master Carpenter
Scenic Advisor
Scenic Studio Assistants

Costume Advisor
Costume Studio Manager
Asst. Costume Studio Manager
Drapers/Costume Studio Assistants
Crafts People/Costume Studio Assistants

Lighting Advisor
Master Electrician
Light Shop Assistants

Director of Operations
Poster Designer
Wardrobe Head
Dressers

Tom Foley
Matt Mercucio
Russell Schultz
Kathy Sarra
Patricia Coleman
Zack Titterington
Charlecia Joy Paul
Charlie Malcolm
Kristi Hess
Tyrone Johnson, Alli Baldwin
Candice Alvarrao
Haidee Cano, Nazeeh Tarsha, Alison Gensmer
Zak Herring
Tony Berry
Mihai Ciupe
Jaime Scott Frank,
MacKenzie Ottes
Anne Tully, Jason Wright
Robin McGee
Stacey Galloway
Kate Glennon
Tracy Ford & Erica Bascom
Janae Lafleur, Becki Stafford
& Lee Alexander Martin
Stan Kaye
Todd Bedell
Ryan Bible, Timothy A. Reed,
Patricia Coleman,
Dan Hopper,
Topher Stumreiter,
Julia LaVault
Sarah White
Joseph Urick
Zackery Ryan
Dean Thomas,
Ross Moegerly, Amber Ospincs,
Madison Cherry,
Veronica Salgueiro
The Kennedy Center
THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aim of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival. Those productions invited to the regional festival will be considered for national awards of distinguished achievement, to be presented at the national KCACTF festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC in the spring of 2012.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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