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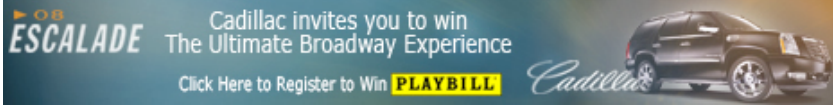
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Zimmerman's *Argonautika* Makes West Coast Debut at Berkeley Rep Nov. 2

By *Ernio Hernandez*
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The Argonauts in a scene from Mary Zimmerman's *Argonautika*.
photo by Richard Hein

Mary Zimmerman's *Argonautika*, which is based on the tale of Jason and the Argonauts, makes its West Coast premiere Nov. 2 at Berkeley Repertory Theatre.

Zimmerman (*Metamorphoses*, *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*) returns to the California stage to direct her latest work. The show will officially open Nov. 7 at the company's Roda Theatre for a run through Dec. 16.

Argonautika follows "Jason on his ancient quest for the Golden Fleece – an epic journey of love and fleece, hubris and honor, danger and adventure. Jason confronts giants, kings, sirens, nymphs, centaurs, sea monsters, and one treacherously heartsick sorceress," as show notes reveal.

The ensemble to set sail in *Argonautika* is Justin Blanchard (*Journey's End* as Hylas/Dymas, Allen Gilmore (Chicago premiere of *Argonautika*) as Pelias, Sofia Jean Gomez (*Mirror of the Invisible World* - Goodman Theatre) as Athena, Casey Jackson (*As You Like It* - Marin Shakespeare Co.) as Pollux, Chris Kipiniak (*Metamorphoses*) as Castor, Tessa Klein (Irish Repertory Theatre's *Philadelphia*,

Here I Come!) as Aphrodite, Ronete Levenson (*The Diary of Anne Frank*) as Andromeda/Eros, Atley Loughridge (world premiere of *Argonautika*) as Medea, Andy Murray (Berkeley Rep's *The Pillowman*) as Meleager, Søren Oliver (Berkeley Rep's *Galileo*) as Hercules, Jesse J. Perez (*Recent Tragic Events*) as Idmon, Christa Scott-Reed (*Honour*) as Hera, Paul Oakley Stovall (Berkeley Rep's *Journey to the West*) as Amyeus and Jake Suffian (*Take Me Out*) as Jason.

The Berkeley staging is a co-production with Princeton, NJ's McCarter Theatre Center and Washington, D.C.'s Shakespeare Theatre Company. *Argonautika* made its world premiere at Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago.

"The legend of Jason and the Golden Fleece is primarily a tale of adventure,

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so it provides unique challenges for a director with its battles and harpies and sailing ships," said Zimmerman in a statement. "And, yet, this is also a simple love story, which is how it pulled me in. It has profound things to say to all of us about what it means to be human - insights that have survived through the ages."

The Berkeley Rep design team features Daniel Ostling (sets), Ana Kuzmanic (costumes), John Culbert (lights), Andre Pluess and Ben Sussman (sound) with Michael Montenegro (puppets).

Berkeley Rep has previously presented the Zimmerman's *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, *Metamorphoses*, *Journey to the West* and *The Secret in the Wings*. Zimmerman earned a Tony Award in 2002 for *Metamorphoses*.

Tickets to *Argonautika* at Berkeley Rep's Roda Theatre, 2015 Addison Street in downtown Berkeley, are available by calling (510) 647-2949, toll-free at (888) 4-BRT Tix or online at berkeleyrep.org.



Mary Zimmerman's *Argonautika* makes its West Coast premiere.
photo by Richard Hein

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