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## 'Odyssey' gives audience real Angel Island journey

By Examiner Staff

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COURTESY PHOTOSacred scene: Beauties anoint Prince Telemachus (James Udom) in "The Odyssey on Angel Island"  
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We Players' "The Odyssey on Angel Island" is a fun and funky, all-day, interactive theatrical experience that takes its participants on their own personal journeys wonderfully reflective of

those experienced by characters in Homer's epic poem.

Freely adapted from the classic of Western literature by director Ava Roy (founder and artistic director of We Players, known for site-specific, participatory presentations of famous works), the 5½-hour outdoor performance art piece showcases a stellar cast of a dozen, playing 40-plus roles, as well as Angel Island State Park's magnificent natural and historical setting.

Visitors arrive to the island via ferry from The City or Tiburon and proceed to Ayala Cove — or for these performances, Ithaka, the kingdom of Odysseus, who has been missing for 20 years (and remains for the duration of the show).

An amusing but overlong prelude has the ensemble, playing feisty, jovial Ithaka residents, inviting the audience to dance or join a tug of war match.

Onsite however, are Odysseus' wife, Penelope (Libby Kelly), and son, Telemachus (James Udom), who must deal with unruly suitors (the audience becomes enlisted in these roles).

A course of action is decided: Telemachus goes on a search for his father.

For the next several hours — with a few diversions — the audience follows him on a series of stops, sometimes slightly confusing, along the way: Mount Olympus, the Cyclops den (the Cyclops never shows, however), the house of king of the winds Aelous, the shore where goddess Calypso and her nymphs hang out, and more.

Wonderfully, each state park location (many with architecturally distinctive old buildings) has U.S. historical significance, too.

At several crossroads, major adventurers may choose to take the most challenging of varied routes to the next location, while wanderers with less stamina take an easier path; maps are offered in a little bag with other rations at the beginning of the journey.

Along the way, actors ask visitors about gifts they can contribute to a possible battle; "magic" in the form of electronic devices was among the more popular items in the opening Mother's Day performance.

The trip is accompanied by a terrific ensemble of musicians, playing original songs in a varied

score (some lovely songs sound like 1970s pop-folk) by Charlie Gurke.

Among the standouts in the all-around versatile, clearly dedicated ensemble are Nathaniel Justiniano, Ross Travis, Caroline Parsons and Julie Douglas.

A similar dedication, and energy, are key, too, for theatergoers joining “The Odyssey on Angel Island.” For those who want to go on a great, lengthy hike in a gorgeous place and don’t mind a story that flows freely, this odyssey is a journey worth experiencing. Don’t forget to wear layers and bring snacks.

## The Odyssey on Angel Island

*Presented by We Players*

**Where:** Angel Island State Park, accessible via ferry from Tiburon or Pier 41, S.F.

**When:** 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays-Sundays (not including ferry travel time), plus Friday, May 25 and June 1; closes July 1

**Tickets:** \$40 to \$75

**Contact:** (415) 547-0189; [reservations@weplayers.org](mailto:reservations@weplayers.org)