



THE ORACLE

A review of Oedipus the King

By Catherine Power
A Level Classical
Civilisation

In February the Classics and Drama department at St Mary's put on a production of Oedipus the King by Sophocles. This was a fantastic performance of Oedipus from start to finish and the actors and musicians each portrayed their roles extremely well. The students had a great deal



of creative control over the production, from picking the music to choreographing the dances and they should be commended for how professional the feel of the play was.

The play asks many questions about fate and prophecies and whether we have control of our destiny or it is decided from the beginning of time.

The update to a modern

day setting, with suits and masks allowed the audience to find the play a little less complicated. The parallels with our own recent pandemic were not lost on the audience as the play starts with Oedipus trying to work out how to save his people from a plague. As he works to control the situation he has little idea that he himself is the source of the pollution.

Continued on page 3...



The design of the Colosseum

By Oliver Sugden, A level Classical Civilisation

The Colosseum was an engineering marvel with clever designs and features which makes it the most recognisable amphitheatre in existence. The Colosseum is built largely using hollow arches in a design which allows the weight to be spread evenly across the arch, making them strong supports for the higher layers. The arches consist of wedge-shaped blocks with a central key stone, held together by pins, in a semi-circular shape. Three layers of these arches were constructed, which due to their simple but effective design could be done quickly by many different teams of builders, eventually resulting in around 240 arches. The hollow gap in each arch lowered



the weight of the Colosseum and the force that the lower arches had to bear. It is testament to the incredible load bearing ability of these arches the Colosseum still stands today.

The colosseum would have mainly been used for gladiatorial games, consisting of fights between men, and against animals although more broadly was built as an entertainment venue. It had a large number of underground passages below the main arena, which were used to hold animals and gladiators before their fights. 80 vertical shafts connected this underground network to the main area some of these shafts even had large wooden platforms to move large animals up and down from the area. These shafts could be used as trapdoors which could be used to add or remove things such as scenery from the main arena. Prior to construction of the hypogeum (its underground area), the colosseum's floor was floodable in order to stage naval battles, however with its construction the colosseum lost this ability.

The spectators were well catered for with the colosseum being able to hold an estimated 80000 spectators. The colosseum even had a roof covering the seating to protect the spectators from the elements. It has also been found that people enjoyed food such as olives, fruit and nuts while at the colosseum. All of these features demonstrate what an experience a trip to the colosseum would have been for ancient romans, and make a very interesting visit for modern day tourists.

A look at Hades 2 (early-access 2023)

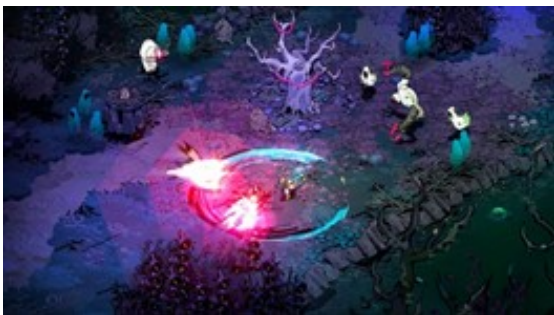
By Jonathan Hilton, A level Classical Civilisation

The 2022 Game Awards saw the reveal of the sequel to the 2018 single player dungeon crawler game “Hades”, in which you play as Zagreus, son of Hades and prince of the underworld trying to escape Hades to find his mother Persephone. The sequel will also be a rogue-like dungeon crawler, meaning you control the character from a higher point of view and go from room to room, fighting enemies and upgrading your power until you get to the end of the dungeon. Boss fights occur at the end of each area, and when you die you go right back to the start and try again. Similar to the first game, in the



second the player will play as Melinoë, Daughter of Zeus and Persephone, younger sister of Zagreus. In Greek mythology, Melinoë was a chthonic nymph or goddess associated with spirits, nightmares, madness and the moon. She is also commonly associated with Hecate who is also in the game, acting as a sort of mentor to Melinoë, seen in the trailer fighting her as a form of training. In this game,

other gods like Moros (doom), Nemesis (revenge) and Apollo, will help you along the way, improving your attacks with upgrades you can choose from. The main antagonist this time is Kronos, who has broken out of imprisonment and waged war on Olympus. This is certainly a game to look out for this year and I personally cannot wait to see how it can improve on the first game.



The character of Patroklos

By Mr Edwards
English Student Teacher

Patroklos is one of the more unusual heroes of Homer’s Iliad and has, to some degree, always been one of the more unsung heroes of the epic story when ranked against the greats like fast-footed Achilles, cunning Odysseus or Ajax the Great. However, while these other heroes were known for their great bravery or acts of glory, Patroklos was known for something rather different: his compassion for the Argives and loyalty to his companion, Achilles.

Although Patroklos does not win as much personal glory in battle as his fellow heroes, his fate and the fate of Ilium are intertwined. Little do the Greeks know that if Patroklos dies, Zeus will pave the way for their eventual victory over the Trojan forces. Patroklos will die in battle, killed by Hector. Hector will in turn be killed by Achilles. Achilles, mad with grief, will slaughter many before falling to Paris’s divinely-guided arrow. He is not as great a warrior as Achilles but his death is a devastating blow to the Greek forces, uniting them in their grief and spurring Achilles to re-join the war and avenge him.



The story of Patroklos is a tragic one, but it is deeply human and keenly felt even today, resonating with readers thousands of years after the compilation of the Iliad. It is little wonder that modern authors such as Madeline Miller are still taking up their pens and writing about the Greek heroes of old, shedding new light on their character and being!

A review of Oedipus the King continued.

The impressive acting from the cast led the audience feeling great pathos for Oedipus and Jocasta, played by Niall Martindale and Evie Clark.



As the play reaches its conclusion the character of Oedipus realises that he has polluted his city by unknowingly marrying his mother and

murdering his father. His adoption at only three days old had masked the truth from him.

Jocasta hangs herself in the final act as she cannot cope with the guilt of what she had unknowingly done to herself and her family. Oedipus's final act in stabbing out his own eyes captures the desperation of a character who cannot face the truth and pollution he brought

upon himself and everyone around him. Both Niall and Evie portrayed the pain and suffering of the doomed King and Queen with



consummate skill.

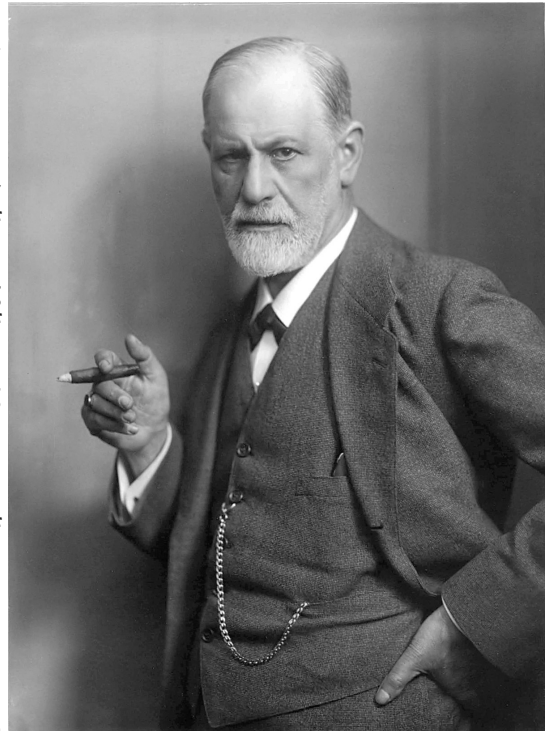
From the beautifully played music and amazing props and colour theme, to acting and elegant dancing all joined together to intrigue the audience and left many questions hanging over their head.



Farcical Freud

By Niall Martindale, A level Classical Civilisation

A name in history engraved so firmly, has tarnished the larger scale of mythology. Defacing the name of a man so unknowing in his actions has been the cause of such affliction which would leave Sophocles most



displeased. Upon turning to the average non-classicist, I have recently found a certain recoil and stigma around the name that is Oedipus. Sigmund Freud, the notorious founder of psychoanalysis, worshipped by many, famously crafted his Oedipus complex: that every offspring holds a desire for sexual involvement with the parent of the opposite sex and a concomitant sense of rivalry with the parent of the same sex. The lazy link which our friend Sigmund has drawn comes from the Ancient mythological and foundational knowledge around Oedipus. That he, a king, and ancient hero unknowingly strikes his father to death surrounding a road-rage incident, and has multiple children unknowingly with his mother, after she cast him away from her city when he was a new-born. Due to Sophocles' trilogy, we even feel quite a heavy degree of sympathy for his character. Sophocles illustrates the image of a democratic, man of the people, his very downfall and exile due to principle, and leading by example. As a result, then, of these model attributes then a rage is sparked inside me when I tell a distant family member that I will be playing Oedipus, and have to watch another grimace materialize on their face. As such I now hold Sigmund Freud completely and utterly responsible for corroding the reputation of a figure so honourable, and that I can only hope to bring justice to. The worst part of course being that Freud himself is more famous than Sophocles' play (wrongly), and a great mythological leader now has the reputation of a man who lusts over his mother, and wants to kill his father. The construct that is the Oedipus complex is highly problematic to today's society, but most importantly me at the occasional family Sunday roast.

How music was used in Ancient Greeks' lives

By Catherine Power, A level Classical Civilisation

Music was used in multiple ways in the Ancient Greeks lives as music was seen as particularly important for the Greeks and Romans as they used it in everyday life for example in religious festivals, marriages, funeral rites, banquet gatherings, and theatre. According to Greek mythology, music, instruments and singing are attributed to divine origin, and the art of music was gift of the gods to men. The word Music comes from the Muses, the daughters of Zeus amplifying the important of Music to the Greeks.



Apollo is the famous god of music often depicted with his lyre, the lyre to the ancient Greeks symbolized wisdom and moderation, which would have been played by being strummed like a guitar, rather than being plucked with the fingers as with a harp. A pick called a plectrum was held in one hand while the other hand silenced any unwanted strings. This is important to the Greeks as it was part of Greek education. Even mythical figures enjoyed the benefits of a musical education; for example, Achilles was taught to play the lyre by the Centaur Cheiron this would have been seen as inspiration for the ancient Greeks encouraging them to want to learn how to play the Lyre.

Music was entailed into the Greek myths such as Orpheus. Accounts state that Apollo gave Orpheus a golden lyre and taught him to play, while the Muses taught Orpheus to sing making him one of the most talented musicians. This is seen when Orpheus's singing and playing was so beautiful that animals and even trees and rocks moved about him in dance causing them to be charmed as Orpheus expresses himself. Orpheus's talent is so beautiful that it changes people's mood, actions, and ideas.

Music was also linked to poetry in the case of monodic singing, as well as choral performance allowing the poems to have a rhythm allowing them to be easily remembered and able to be retold. A s poetry is represented in the Homeric poems shows very strong links with singing and music as seen in Homers famous Iliad and Odyssey. Therefore music can be seen as very important to the Ancient Greeks as it is used in day to day life and for religious purpose.



Ancient sports and how they were carried through the ages

By Shay Macken, A level Classical Civilisation



Many sports that were played in ancient times have survived to this day, like javelin throwing. However, other sports have undergone significant changes to reduce their brutality and risk

of injury, such as boxing, which no longer permits lethal blows. Additionally, some sports, such as gladiatorial contests featuring humans fighting against animals, have been eliminated altogether due to concerns over animal welfare. While such practices were once widely accepted, they are now viewed as barbaric.

Today, Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) has taken the place of some of the more violent forms of combat sports. In ancient Greece, boxing matches lacked weight classes and rounds, allowing fighters to continue pummeling their opponents even after they were knocked down, resulting in numerous injuries. Modern boxing has made significant strides in improving fighter safety, with the introduction of padded gloves and mouth guards.

Overall, it is clear that sports have come a long way since ancient times. The introduction of protective gear and rules designed to minimize harm to athletes has made sports safer and more enjoyable for all involved.