



Photos by Ashley Pogue/Special to the Almanac



Top: Hades (Andrew P. Quick) in his den with the three-headed Cerberus guarding the gates.

Left: Writer Noelle G.M. Gibbs and Kevin Gibbs, creators of "Persephone," work out details at a recent rehearsal.

Cover photo: Mike Chiaravalle shoots a video of an early rehearsal of "Persephone," turning the camera on various members of the cast and director Noelle G.M. Gibbs.

PERSEPHONE

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Gibbs says. "It begins with an Earth (that is) perfect, lush and abundant. And of Persephone having this idealized vision of where she lives.

"There were no seasons before the story (begins), and we talked a lot about the struggle all people have to go through when they leave home, and leave their parents. In that discovery, there's fear, abandonment, but ultimately you can choose either to make yourself a stronger person, or to not grow."

When Persephone is first abducted, she initially fights her captor, who as time goes on seems more and more like a goofy suitor, misunderstood by those in the world of the living. As Persephone's journey away from home and into a much more complex world progresses, "she becomes stronger, and

he becomes more compassionate," Ms. Gibbs says.

To emphasize the timelessness and universality of the story, Ms. Gibbs says, the production features costumes that suggest "any time, any place." The work is played out on both an elevated stage and a three-quarter thrust stage, which is where most of the underworld action takes place.

As one might expect on a trip to Hades, the cast includes the three-headed dog Cerberus, and a boat that navigates the River Styx.

Two decades of theater "Persephone" caps two decades of Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory's performances and theater arts education. With strong theater backgrounds, Ms. Goodman-Morris and her husband, Mark, hoped that by creating PVTC they could "open the doors

wide to the community" while also creating a place "where children could learn to become artists, develop skills and grow in self-esteem, and learn to become team, ensemble players."

And what of her own passion for theater? "I can't imagine doing anything else with my life," she says. "I have loved stories — hearing them, telling them, and being part of them, my whole life.

"I believe stories can bring us hope, stories can show us the way, and stories can transform."

Information

"Persephone" will be staged Thursday through Sunday, Nov. 7-23, in the Lane Family Theatre, 945 Portola Road in Portola Valley. Tickets start at \$10. An optional dinner-theater event in conjunction with the Parkside Grille is set for Saturday, Nov. 9. Go to pvtc-ca.org for tickets and more information, or call 851-8282, ext. 105.

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Preview Day November 9

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(grades 7-12)

Saturday, November 9, 2013

10:00 a.m. - Noon

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