

## DAVID NOVAK: GREEK TO ME (Greek Myths for grades 4-12)

A solo spoken word performance 45-60 minutes in length, consisting of 4-5 stories. The program consists of original adaptations from stories in ancient Greek mythology. The program will include a small group of student volunteers in a version of Theseus & The Minotaur.



The collection of stories we now refer to as the Greek Myths were born of the spoken word and gained a lasting form with the invention of writing. Before they became the property of the literary tradition they were the product of the oral tradition. For thousands of years these stories lived on the breath of storytellers being composed afresh with each retelling. The culture of the spoken word is fleet-footed as Hermes and as protean as Proteus. This living chaos of many voices and localities begat the cosmos of the enduring Greek opus. Ever since they were captured in the written form, scholars and philosophers have examined them and sought to unravel their meaning. Unlike Theseus in the labyrinth, however, they were never able to follow the thread back through the mercurial era of the spoken word. In that time stories flew on the wings of the muse and migrated throughout the Mediterranean. From the seaports of Crete to the courts of Mycenae to the valley of Arcadia, the stories gathered in size and complexity. Rolling through all the local deities of the scattered Greek city-states they formed the larger pantheon of Olympian Gods and Goddesses and told of the coming together of many disparate peoples. Although their original purpose or ritual significance rests with their first tellers, they continue to offer new insights on the human condition.

I offer you my program of stories in the spirit of the storytelling art. These are the stories as I hear them, as I imagine them. I make no effort to be a cultural docent for you, to instruct you in the authentic Greek myth. Therefore I make no apology if my treatment of these stories strikes you as unorthodox or incorrect. Instead, I will try to enter these stories as I might enter a strange woods for the first time: with eyes and ears wide open and my own names for the things I find there. For this reason, this program is called Greek To Me. For I will tell these stories as I see them, or rather, as the muse informs me. (They are in their purest form, the property of the muses.) I invite you to listen with your own muse, and perhaps make your own journey into these distant narratives.

Although each performance will include my version of Theseus & The Minotaur, the rest of the program will consist of a changeable selection of stories such as the race of Atalanta and Hippomenes; Arion the Harpist and his adventure with the dolphins; the dangerous quest of Perseus; the heart-longing of Tithonus; the pride of Arachne; the all-consuming greed of Erysichthon; the folly of King Midas and others. I hope you find these tellings provocative and entertaining.

David Novak



### Technical Requirements:

Stand microphone. Stage minimum of 15' x 15'.  
Six volunteers to prep 30 minutes in advance.