*Cabaret Metamorphoses* was an experimental adaptation of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, combining circus, theater, poetry, and original live music. We wanted to use the physical vocabulary of circus to tell stories in ways that we couldn’t with traditional theater, and we felt that Ovid’s world, permeated with Gods, magic, and transformation, would be the perfect realm to explore the storytelling possibilities of circus. Circus can be spectacular, grotesque, beautiful, and frightening, reflecting the massive tonal range of Ovid’s epic poem. Our performers were clowns, mimes, acrobats, aerialists, dancers, contortionists, jugglers, actors, and gymnasts; all were capable of physical feats that most actors couldn’t even dream of. Our goal was to channel these skills towards storytelling, creating circus that was emotional, thoughtful, and challenging, rather than simply cool or impressive.

As dramaturg for *Cabaret Metamorphoses*, I began with researching Ovid’s life and the world he lived in, then reading eight different interesting translations of *Metamorphoses*. Translating Ovid is notoriously difficult because of his ambivalence, kaleidoscope of genres, and polyvocality; most translators pick up on only one of the many voices present in the original. Different translations also use different meters, which create very different dramatic effects on stage. By being familiar with many translations, I could use whichever translation was best suited in different parts of the script, creating a tapestry of translations that represented Ovid’s eclectic range of style and voice. I also helped to choose the stories we would use; there are over two hundred stories in *Metamorphoses*, but the director and I chose just eight, focusing on sexuality, gender, and sexualized violence, topics as relevant and troubling in our time as they were in Ovid’s. We hope that our blend of genre, style, and performance brought out Ovid’s unique ability to challenge, horrify, and delight his audiences.

- James Weisbach