

City Garage presents the World Premiere of

# **OedipusText: Los Angeles**

**by Charles A. Duncombe**

Directed by Frédérique Michel

Production Design by Charles A. Duncombe



August 15— September 23, 2003

# OedipusText: Los Angeles

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Directed by Frédérique Michel

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With additional text quoted from the opera  
*The Name of Oedipus: Song of the Forbidden Body*  
by Helene Cixous

## Cast

Maureen Byrnes ..... *Jocasta*  
Simon Burzynski ..... *Oedipus*  
Tina Fallon ..... *Internet Lady*  
David E. Frank ..... *Tiresias/Didi Montgomery*  
Eric Jung ..... *Lost Son/Chorus*  
Jason Piazza ..... *Lonely Man/Chorus*  
Jennifer Piehl ..... *Webcam Girl*  
Thomas Ramirez ..... *Shy Boy/Chorus*  
Paul M. Rubenstein ..... *Tom Howard*

## Production Staff

Set & Lighting Design ..... Charles A. Duncombe, Jr.  
Assistant Director ..... Mathew Gifford  
Costume Design ..... Teckla de Bistrovlnovska  
Light/Sound Operator ..... Maia Brewton  
Videography/Sound Engineer ..... Paul M. Rubenstein  
Publicity Photography ..... Rick Pickman

**Place & Time:**  
**Los Angeles, Tomorrow**

**The play runs approximately 90 minutes  
and is performed without intermission.**

City Garage is supported, in part, by grants from  
the Wells Fargo Foundation,  
Rocket Science Laboratories,  
the California Arts Council,  
the Los Angeles County Arts Commission,  
and the Santa Monica Arts Commission.

## ABOUT THE TEXT

This production is loosely based on an idea expressed in the avant-garde opera *The Name of Oedipus: Song of the Forbidden Body* by French author Helene Cixous. In this work there are three Jocastas and three Oedipus's. It is composed of extensive arias and choral pieces exploring the Oedipus myth from a radical feminist perspective. Cixous suggests a Jocasta who is well aware of her lover-son's identity but who is so in love and so unwilling to bow to convention that she refuses to give him up. She tries, without success, to protect him from the knowledge that she knows will make their love no longer possible. It's largely an argument that the Oedipus story represents a male cultural dominance that creates taboos and mythologies that deprive women of their natural power and sexuality. It challenges what is considered to be the "normal" relationship of the body to unconscious desire and presents Jocasta as "the mother who exults in orgasm." All of the Jocasta material used in this production is quoted from arias sung by the various Jocastas in Cixous's opera. The rest of the text, with the exception of a few dozen lines from two choral passages in the "The White Road" and "Being and Nothingness" scenes in the opera, has been written specifically for City Garage.

It is the latest in a series of experiments we've been trying here. The idea is to surround core material from one author by more extensive original material created for City Garage. You might describe it as "cross-textual dialogue." It's a way of encountering a text that deconstructs it, argues with it, experiments with it, adds to it, and ultimately presents in a method that expresses the ideas and interests that we've been exploring at City Garage for some time now. We have done it in our productions of Heiner Müller in *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore*, and in *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep*. This piece has been created in the same vein: taking the work of a prominent European avant-garde writer and encountering it in a way that would bring it into our immediate cultural landscape of contemporary Los Angeles.

The Oedipus myth, quite naturally, takes us into a dark and mysterious place in the human psyche. Why do we want what we want? This piece explores that fundamental confusion and does so within the language and modes of expression of our current culture: a time of increasing fragmentation and isolation, a time when the pornographic image has more power than the human body, a time when the computer speaks more loudly than the human voice. The city of this Oedipus is afflicted by the seduction of its own chatter. When he finally ventures forth to redeem both it and himself he finds himself shouting into a silence that defeats him. There is a new beast that reigns in the desert city, a beast that asks its own inexplicable riddles, the beast of self-absorption and self-consumption. This beast enforces its own new world order: the terrible loneliness of a so-called information age in which everything is said but nothing understood, where everything is obtainable, but nothing is desirable, and where the human hunger for love ultimately turns inward to feed only upon itself.

## CAST PROFILES

### Maureen Byrnes

*Jocasta*

Maureen has appeared in theatre all over the U.S. and Canada and throughout Europe. Her most notable performance was in *Oh, Calcutta!* on Broadway in which she danced a nude pas de deux. She previously appeared in *The Presidents*, *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep*, *The Gertrude Stein Project*, *The Girl In The Flammable Skirt*,

and *Katzelmacher* at City Garage and is happy to once again be working with Frederique Michel.

### **Simon Burzynski**

*Oedipus*

Simon was born in Poland and moved to the United States as a boy. He holds a B.A. in theatre from Central Washington University (Ellensburg, WA) and an M.F.A. in acting from UC Davis. Since moving to Los Angeles in the spring, Simon has been playing the parts of Spiderman and Daredevil at Universal Studios Hollywood. This is his first play with City Garage.

### **Tina Fallon**

*Internet Lady*

This is Tina's first production at City Garage. She received her B.A. in Theatre Arts from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. She has appeared as Molly in *The Mousetrap* and was lucky enough to twice play Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. In 1986 and 1989 she participated in the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

### **David E. Frank**

*Tiresias/Didi Montgomery*

David is originally from Muncie, Indiana, where he received his degree in Theatre Performance from Ball State University. In addition to his work at BSU, he also appeared with the Vagabond Players, the Third Age Theatre Company, and The Muncie Civic Theater. His credits at City Garage include *MedeaText: Los Angeles Despoiled Shore*, *Atrocities: Meetings With Monstrous Men*, *The Skriker*, *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep*, *The Gertrude Stein Project*, and *Katzelmacher*.

### **Eric Jung**

*Lost Son/Chorus*

Eric Jung was born in San Francisco, raised in Fremont, CA and studied acting for theatre & film in San Jose, at San Jose State University. This production is both his City Garage and his Southern California stage debut.

### **Jason Piazza**

*Lonely Man/Chorus*

Jason appeared onstage at City Garage in last year's *Cinema Stories: Ceremonies of Unendurable Bondage*. He has also served as the Light/Sound Operator for *Titus Tartar* and *Katzelmacher*.

### **Jennifer Piehl**

*Webcam Girl*

Jennifer hails from Atlanta, Georgia and has a theatre degree from SMU. She has been with the company since last fall and this is her second time on stage at City Garage, having previously appeared in *The Sweet Madness*.

### **Thomas Ramirez**

*Shy Boy/Chorus*

Thomas is originally from Long Island, New York. He studied in Manhattan for two years before making his transition to Los Angeles. This is his first appearance at City Garage.

### **Paul M. Rubenstein, General Manager**

*Tom Howard*

Paul most recently appeared at City Garage in *Titus Tartar*. He made his debut with the company as a part of the LA Weekly Theater Award-nominated ensemble from *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* and received a Backstage West Garlands Award Honorable Mention for his work in the US premiere of Ionesco's haunting valedictory, *Journeys Among The Dead*.

## **STAFF PROFILES**

### **Frederique Michel, Artistic Director**

*Director*

Frederique was born in Paris and studied theatre at the Conservatoire. She has directed more than eighty productions in the United States, including works by Strindberg, Rozewicz, Vinaver, Horowitz, Fornes and Barker. She received a *Dramalogue* award for her direction of *Dissident*, and has led the company as Artistic Director since its founding in 1987. Her 1998 production of *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* was nominated for four L.A. Weekly Theater Awards, including Best Director. She was nominated again for Best Director for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000).

### **Charles A. Duncombe, Managing Director**

*Playwright, Production Designer*

Charles is a writer, director and designer. He began his partnership with Frederique Michel in 1985 with her production of *Miss Julie*, and he has designed all of her work since then. He has won two *Dramalogue* awards for production design and in 1999 won the L.A. Weekly Theater Award for Best Lighting Design for *George Sand: An Erotic Odyssey in Seven Tableaux* (1998). He was nominated for two L.A. Weekly awards for *MedeaText: Los Angeles/Despoiled Shore* (2000): Best Adaptation, and Best Set. He was nominated again for two L.A. Weekly awards for *Frederick of Prussia/GeorgeW's Dream of Sleep* (2001): Best Adaptation, and Production Design.

### **Mathew Gifford**

*Assistant Director*

Born and raised in rural Minnesota, Mathew graduated from St. John's University (the one with the monks) with degrees in Economics & French. He then moved to Cannes, France where he became the first American to be selected to attend L'ERAC, a private, government-funded acting school. He spent several years acting in French in both the national and independent theatres of Paris. Mathew appeared here in *Cinema Stories: Ceremonies of Unendurable Bondage* and *Katzelmacher*.

### **Maia Brewton**

*Light/Sound Operator*

Though this year marks 21 blissful years in performance for Maia, this is her first time in the booth at City Garage. She has appeared onstage here in *The Girl In The Flammable Skirt*, *Titus Tartar*, *Cinema Stories: Ceremonies of Unendurable Bondage* and *Katzelmacher*.

**At City Garage, all casting is done strictly within the company.**

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[www.citygarage.org](http://www.citygarage.org)**

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