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The Falcon's "Oedipus The King, Mama!" a hilarious "must see" Elvis parody

August 26, 2009 by [Karen](#)

Filed under [Arts & Culture](#), [Featured](#), [My Daily Find](#), [Theater](#), [spotlight](#)

[4 Comments](#)



BY PAULINE ADAMEK

Are You Lonesome Tonight? Need a Little Less Conversation, A Little More Action? If so, the Troubadour Theater Company is currently performing a twisted tragedy at the [Falcon Theatre](#) that might satisfy you.

Oedipus The King, Mama! is a musical with maternal issues brought to you by those wacky clowns, the Troubadour Theater Company. Their new show is a mash up of Sophocles' classic Athenian tragedy Oedipus The King with the rockabilly music of the King of Rock n Roll, the one, the only – Elvis Presley. When Sophocles goes to Graceland, all hell breaks loose.



'Young Elvis' (James Snyder) and his adoring fans in the Troubadour Theater Company's *Oedipus the King, Mama!* at the Falcon Theatre. Photo by Chelsea Sutton

Side note for the uninitiated: the Troubadour Theater Company is a free-wheeling, no holds barred, Commedia dell'arte-flavored, slapstick-driven ensemble of local actors, musicians and comedians that has been performing for audiences throughout Southern California and beyond since 1995. Their lively, laughter-infused, loose adaptations (some of the original text can still be heard) of classic plays and films, as well as their original productions and hilarious sketch material, make this company a unique and exciting experience for theater-goers of any age. Actually, this particular production, given its focus on incest and oversized mammary glands, is definitely not for kids.

The show begins with what appears to be a staged reading of the text, as a handful of cast members, including Company Artistic Director Matt Walker, take to the stage in simple black attire with music stands and their scripts of the five act play. Yawn! Happily, this rather lengthy prologue turns out to be a fake. The curtain rises to reveal a simple set with plenty of room for big dance numbers. Kicking off the play are most of the 14-strong, toga-clad cast, accompanied by the four band members, giving us a lively rendition of "A Little Less Conversation," complete with gorgeous harmonies. Matt Walker (who also wrote and directed the ensemble piece) stars as Oedipus, crowned with a giant pompadour wig and bedecked in a sparkly white Vegas lounge suit. As Elvis/Oedipus, the lanky Walker also affects a hilarious jerky gait throughout the show.



'Oedipus' (Matt Walker), 'Jocasta' (Beth Kennedy) and 'Creon' (Rick Batalla) in the Troubadour Theater Company's *Oedipus the King, Mama!* at the Falcon Theatre. Photo by Chelsea Sutton.

The pared-down story goes something like this: Oedipus needs to restore peace in the Valley of Thebes, so he consults the prophet Tiresias (Mike Sulprizio). But a previous Delphic Oracle leaves him All Shook Up at the news that a Burning Love will make it so that he Can't Help Falling In Love with his Mama, Jocasta (Beth Kennedy). *Suspicious Minds* are convinced that he's *The Devil in Disguise* and not a *Teddy Bear*. Eventually, Oedipus the *Hound Dog* is caught between a *Jailhouse Rock* and a hard place...

Oedipus' brother-in-law Creon is a jive-talkin', stogie-smoking, emerald green-garbed gangster-type, brilliantly played by Rick Batalla. In fact, the characters all persist in calling him "Crayon," hence witty puns, such as "Crayon poses no threat – he's non-toxic," abound.

Playing one of the Greek chorus members, the fabulous songbird Lisa Valenzuela (one of the troupe's founding members) dazzles us with a growly, honky-tonk version of the Elvis hit "Trouble." Here Oedipus outwits the riddling Sphinx in a scene that spoofs the popular TV show "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

About halfway through this one-act play, the comedic genius Beth Kennedy makes her grand entrance as Jocasta, complete with massive fake boobs (at one point she exhibits her dual cleavage), proving that the notion of "cougar" is not a modern one. The sight of Jocasta teetering on stripper-high wedge heels, clad in a red velvet gown slit to her hip and swamped by

masses of crazy black hair has to be seen to be believed. Later, the outrageous sight gag that follows her demise had the audience falling out of their chairs with raucous laughter.

Infusing every moment they can with campy, exaggerated acting and clever pop-culture references in the re-written lyrics, the troupe astounds us with their flawlessly executed ad-libbing and in-jokes. We have a hunky young version of Elvis, played by James Snyder, and of course even “fat” Elvis makes a stoned appearance in glitzy flared trousers and shirt opened to his belly button, spilling prescription pills all over the place.

The expanded cast of 14 includes new members who bring their terpsichorian talent to the troupe, from interpretive dance to ballet and tap – even jitterbug moves! Also the Troubies’ gifted new choreographer, Ameenah Kaplan, brings an exciting level of stunning (and sometimes goofy) dance routines and even a cool fight sequence.

They also find a moment for a marvelous tribute to the late Michael Jackson in their bonus curtain call (from the King of Rock and Roll to the King of Pop.)

Oedipus has a *Burning Love* and *Can’t Help Falling in Love* with his Mama. So *Don’t Be Cruel* and make sure to catch this musical parody by the Troubies.

Many of you probably missed this show when it first premiered at the Getty Villa in April. Tickets are selling fast, so *Oedipus the King, Mama!* is almost sold out. Also, keep in mind that the Troubadour’s forthcoming production, *Frosty the Snow Manilow*, is playing at the Falcon during December, until mid January, 2010.

I urge you to consider becoming a Troubadour or Falcon Theatre subscriber. The perks are well-worth it.

THE FALCON THEATRE is located at 4252 Riverside Drive, in Burbank. Box office and bookings – (818) 955 8101 Runs through Sunday, Sep. 27, 2009 (4pm show) **PERFORMANCES:** Wed.-Sat. at 8pm, Sundays at 4pm **TICKET PRICES:** Weekdays (Wed/Thurs) \$32.50 – \$35.00 Weekends (Fri/Sat/Sun) \$37.50 – \$40.00. www.falcontheatre.com

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Pauline Adamek is a Hollywood-based film, theater, and food critic who writes for *FilmInk Australia*, the *Los Angeles Daily News* and the *Sun Community Newspapers*, as well as various websites under the “nom du net” Max Million. Contact her at www.paulineadamek.com

Tags: [Burbank theater](#), [Falcon Theatre](#), [Oedipus the King Mama](#), [Pauline Adamek](#), [theater in San Fernando Valley](#), [Toluca Lake theater](#), [Troubadour Theatre Company](#)



Comments

4 Responses to “The Falcon’s “Oedipus The King, Mama!” a hilarious “must see” Elvis parody”

1.  [Jackie Houchin](#) says:
[August 26, 2009 at 7:51 am](#)

Oh, wow! I want to see it, I want to see it!!! The Falcon does great work (and the seats are very comfortable and perfect in any spot for viewing the stage). Thanks, Pauline for telling me about this wonderful production.

[Reply](#)



2. [Nancy Mehagian](#) says:
[August 26, 2009 at 8:14 am](#)

With a review that entertaining I can only imagine what the production was like. Now I'll have to see it for myself and I can't wait.

[Reply](#)



3. [grannyapple](#) says:
[August 26, 2009 at 9:27 am](#)

Can't wait to see the Troubies in their latest laugh! they are so talented, and I love the Falcon!

[Reply](#)



4. [Pauline](#) says:
[August 28, 2009 at 11:02 am](#)

Thanks for the generous comments, everyone. I cannot rave enough about this fantastic show!

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