

KU theater retells Greek tragedy from mom's point of view

By Mindie Paget, Journal-World Arts Editor

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Lots of people know the strange, tragic tale of Oedipus.

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The ill-fated King of Thebes unknowingly murders his father and marries his mother, who bears two of his children.

Ouch. You can imagine how painful the realization must have been for everyone involved.

But when the celebrated Greek playwright Sophocles put the story to paper, he told it from Oedipus' viewpoint. His lust. His happiness. His realization. His downfall.

A few millennia later, Belgian writer Michele Fabien re-envisioned the ancient play from the perspective of Jocasta, the equally tragic wife and mother of Oedipus, who, unable to endure the situation, kills herself.

Fabien's one-woman show was translated from French to English by Richard Miller, then readapted as an ensemble piece for five actors by Kansas University playwriting professor Paul Stephen Lim, who's directing an English Alternative Theatre production of the show.

"The play is about female desire," says Lim, EAT artistic director. "What Michele Fabien has done is to allow us to hear and see everything that takes place offstage in the

original Theban play by Sophocles.

"First we see the physical attraction between the older woman and the younger man, and then we find out how they are really related."

Appearing in the play are Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka, KU associate professor of women's studies and theater and film; KU graduate student Dianne Yeahquo Reyner; KU alumni Jan Chapman and Aron Carlson; and Lawrence resident Joe Gipp.

Assisting Lim are KU students Eric Avery as choreographer and Zacory Boatright as stage manager. Scenic and lighting design is by Lee Saylor; costumes are by Kaye Miller; and masks are by Craig and Zann Jacobrown from The Maskery in Indianola, Wash.



The cast of "Jocasta," clockwise from top, Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka, Aron Carlson, Jan Chapman, Dianne Yeahquo

Although the language of the play is poetic, Lim says, the circumstances being depicted are erotic and sensitive, intended for more mature audiences.

'Jocasta'

Presented by English Alternative Theatre

When: 8 p.m. Thursday-Saturday and 2:30 p.m. Sunday

Where: Lawrence Arts Center, 940 N.H.

Tickets: Adults, \$10; students, \$6; seniors, \$8

Ticket information: 843-2787

Reyner and Joe Gipp, will perform this week at the Lawrence Arts Center, 940 N.H. Special to the Journal-World

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