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Curse of Oedipus, The

Total Rating: *****Opened:** June 21, 2014**Ended:** August 10, 2014**Country:** USA**State:** California**City:** Los Angeles**Company/Producers:**

The Antaeus Company

Theater Type: Regional**Theater:** Antaeus Theater**Theater Address:** 5112 Lankershim Boulevard**Phone:** 818-506-1983**Website:** antaeus.org**Running Time:** 2 hrs, 30 min**Genre:** Drama**Author:**

Kenneth Cavander

Director: Casey Stangl**Review:**

First produced at the Williamstown Theater Festival in a two-evening version entitled "The Legend of Oedipus" and then workshopped in an abbreviated version at the Getty Villa in L.A., *The Curse of Oedipus* has now been sculpted into a 2 1/2-hour-long performance piece by the Antaeus Company.

Working from a script by Kenneth Cavander which is derived from plays by Sophocles and Euripides (plus sundry other classical sources), director Casey Stangl pulls out all the stops in an attempt to make this smorgasbord of a play work. Forty-five actors are involved in the production (there are two separate casts), Francois-Pierre Couture has designed a smokily atmospheric, mock-Greco set, and E.B. Brooks has had a free hand with the tunics and sandals (though, for some reason, several members of the ensemble go around barefoot; perhaps the budget ran out). Also contributing in a big way is percussionist Geno Monteiro, who punctuates just about every important speech with bangs on a snare drum.

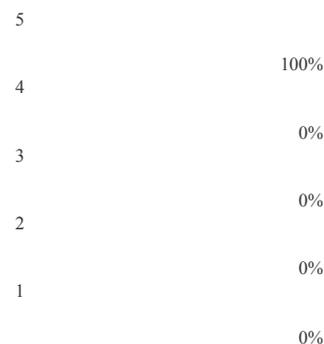
The Curse of Oedipus is a fiendishly ambitious work, one that seeks to investigate numerous themes: a family's struggle for political power, the conflict between mortals and Gods (and also between the Gods themselves), a community's battle to free itself from a mysterious evil force, and more, much more. At the heart of the drama is Oedipus (Terrell Tilford), a man who is trying to make sense of his tortured life. What he eventually learns is that he will never be fully human until he sheds himself of all pride and selfishness and devotes himself to improving the lot of his fellow men.

Stangl has directed her cast to speak in declamatory fashion; that style combined with the insistent drumming makes, over the long haul, for a certain monotony. But that is more than balanced by the play's power and poetry, and by its skillful use of ritual and myth. There are also ferocious and hair-raising moments, especially when Dionysus (Stoney Westmoreland) unleashes an earthquake by way of punishing the mortals for their rebellious behavior. All in all, this production by an Equity-waiver company is an impressive achievement.

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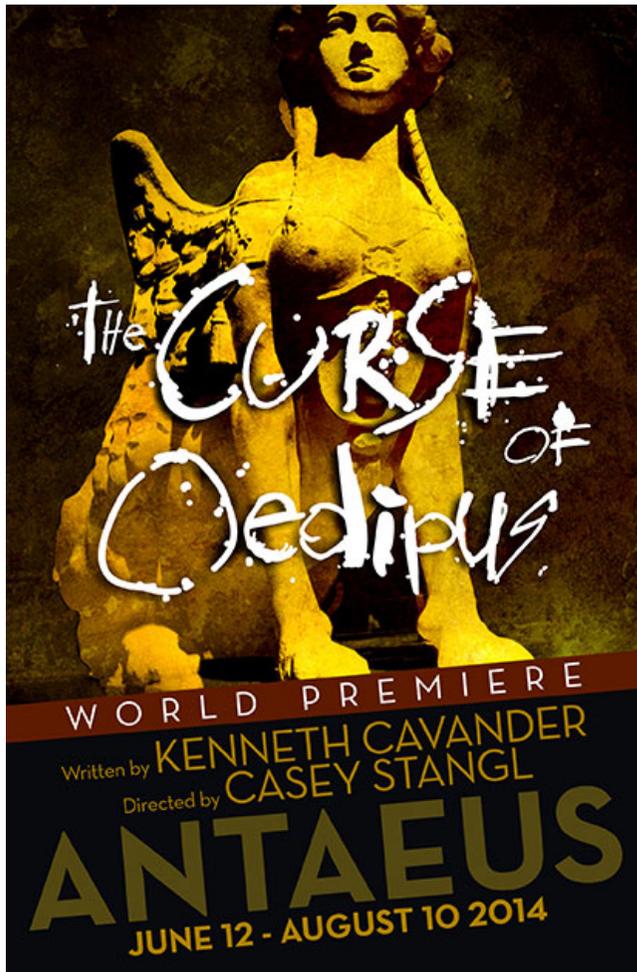
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The cast of Antaeus Company's "The Curse of Oedipus"

Photo by facetphotography.com

Technical:

Set/Light: Francois-Pierre Couture; Costumes: E.B. Brooks; Sound: Jeff Gardner; Props: Adam Myer; Production Stage Mgrs: Lara E. Nall & Kristin Weber.

Critic: Willard Manus

Date Reviewed: June 2014

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