

M i S h i n n a h P r o d u c t i o n s



JOCASTA is a 53 minute experimental film created by Elise Kermani in collaboration with visual artists, actors, dancers and musicians. It involves a cast of two actors, Marty New and Michael Potts, two dancers, Melli Hoppe and Vicky Shick, four musicians led by trombonist Kevin James and a technical crew led by cinematographer Alan McIntyre Smith and production designer Barbara Kilpatrick.

Inspired by Brian Swann and Peter Burian's English translation of Euripides' play *The Phoenician Women* (c. 410 B.C.), **JOCASTA** was filmed at the Great Stone Barn in New Lebanon, New York, during the summer of 2006, and was realized as a digital video with 5.1 surround sound in 2008.

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The story: In Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* Jocasta hangs herself shortly after finding out that Oedipus is both husband and son. In Euripides' play *The Phoenician Women*, Jocasta stays alive a little bit longer to try and reconcile her sons Eteokles and Polyneikes but stabs herself after they kill each other. But in Kermani's **JOCASTA**, Jocasta does not kill herself. She survives after her sons' mutual murders to perform a ritual sacrifice to save Thebes, and to satiate Ares' ancient fury of Kadmos' slaying of the dragon. Jocasta chooses the creative act of writing over the act of suicide. Her ritual act remembers that Body is Presence and that the origins of writing are sacred manifestations of Being. She reverses the taboo, and reestablishes the symbolic.



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JOCASTA takes its genesis from an ancient Greek play, but it displays a contemporary condition of exile and communicates how ancient wars resonate for modern America. **JOCASTA** reflects a historical mirror on the tenuous present in which we are living.

On one level, the film is structured as a 'play within the play'. With a voice-over, the actors Marty New (as Jocasta) and Michael Potts (as Oedipus) question their own character's motivations. The playwright, a modern Euripides (also portrayed by Potts), struggles to finish the play. The film shows the playwright in the midst of the creative act of writing and shows him finding an appropriate ending to the play that satisfies his own scholarship. The playwright decides that the traditional version of the Oedipus story must be reversed and that Oedipus, Jocasta and Antigone will be reunited in a dance. Eventually, the proscenium falls and the cast and crew are revealed for who they really are behind the scene: mothers, sisters, sons, friends.

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J O C A S T A *e s t i g a r e i n a i*

Written and Directed by	Elise Kermani
Director of Photography	Alan McIntyre Smith
Production Design	Barbara Kilpatrick
Executive Producer	Sirus Kermani
Associate Producers.....	Marty New, Jay Stern Kevin James, Barbara Kilpatrick
Post Production Supervisor.....	Jay Stern
Editor.....	Elise Kermani
Motion Graphics and Design.....	Julie Verardi
Sound Design.....	Elise Kermani

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CAST:

Jocasta.....Marty New

Oedipus/Polyneikes/
Eteokles, and Euripides.....Michael Potts

Antigone.....Melli Hoppe

Phoenician Chorus Leader.....Vicky Shick

Messenger/Musician.....Kevin James

Tutor.....Jack the Horse

Music composed by Elise Kermani with vocals by Marty New, trombone by Kevin James and solo improvisations by Tom Chiu (violin), Daniel Goode (clarinet).

Screenplay by Elise Kermani with excerpts from Euripides' "The Phoenician Women" translated by Peter Burian and Brian Swann.

Produced by MiShinnah Productions.



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Technical requirements:

Theater with 5.1 Surround Sound, or stereo audio playback system
Digital Video, and/or DVD playback and video projection screen
Jocasta is available for television broadcast, theatrical screenings and DVD distribution. More details upon request.

Contacts:

For the 53 minute radio play and audio CD contact: IshtarLab Recordings at IshtarLab@aol.com

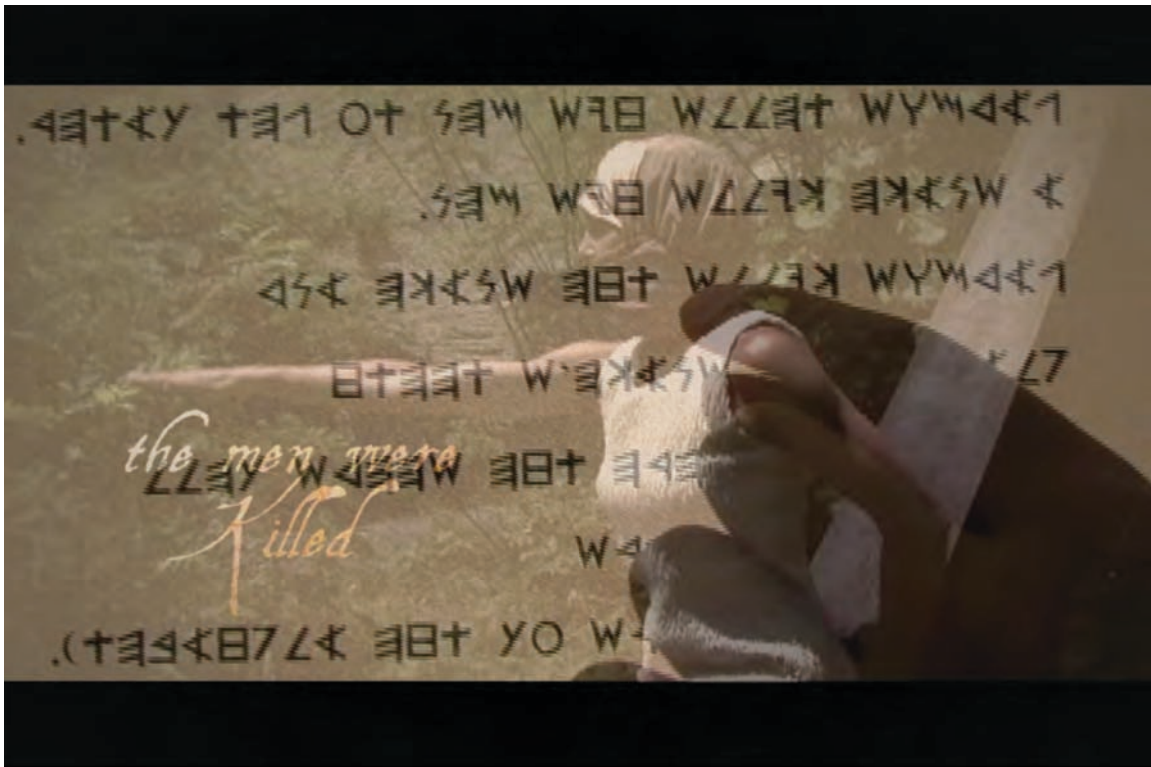
For the DVD and digital video screenings contact: MiShinnah Productions, LLC at MiShinnahLLC@aol.com

For all other information contact: Elise@elisekermani.com (212)988-5430

Website for the film including video trailer:
<http://www.elisekermani.com/jocasta.html>

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MiShinnah Productions



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JOCASTA Biographies



Elise Kermani - Writer, Director, Composer.

Independent multimedia and sound artist Elise Kermani has completed several large-scale productions as writer/director, sound designer and collaborator. She has presented her work nationally and internationally at venues such as The Kitchen, P.S. 122, The Roulette, DiverseWorks, The Cleveland Performance Art Festival, Los Angeles Contemporary Arts Exhibitions, Randolph St. Gallery, Texas Gallery, and festivals in Europe including the *Turning Sounds* in Warsaw, Poland, the *Fraunkulterfestival* in Regensburg, Germany and the *Hor-Fest* in Stainach, Austria. From 1996-2001 she was the executive producer of the *Electronic Arts Performance Series* at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and she has curated and produced several festivals including *SonicWorks* in Houston, and *The dice Project* in New York. Kermani has composed many scores for dance including the music for *Sacred Spaces* and *Memory House* for choreographer Melli Hoppe and *Plum House*, *Undoing* and *Repair* for choreographer Vicky Shick. In addition to writing scores for dance Kermani has also created several audio designs for visual artist Barbara Kilpatrick including *Exuberance* and *Venus Hum*, a DVD installation which was installed in March, 2006. In the 1990's she could be seen singing with the all women avant pop ensemble *Trousers*, and writing music for *riverrun Theater* an experimental production company directed by Marty New.



Barbara Kilpatrick - Production Design.

Barbara Kilpatrick is a visual artist whose recent work has related to dance and performance, where her sculpture functions as set, costume and installation. Her photographs and sculpture have been presented as solo exhibitions at Dance Theater Workshop, St Mark's Church, The Kitchen, and most recently in Northampton, Reading and Kutztown, Pennsylvania, as artist in residence in The New Arts Program. Her work has also been included in group shows in museums and galleries, including the Trisha Brown Dance Company benefit exhibition at the Pace Gallery. Her photographs have been published in The New York Times, Dance Magazine, Village Voice, and Time Out New York. She has worked with a number of choreographers through the New York region, and received, with Vicky Shick, a New York Dance and Performance Award (Bessie) for their body of collaborative work. Their work together has been seen at Dance Theater Workshop, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, The Kitchen,

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(Kilpatrick, bio cont.) Danspace at St. Mark's Church, the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Project, P.S. 122, and Movement Research at Judson Church. Her work with sound designer/composer Elise Kermani includes the AVA Project (2002), the Aleph Project (2002), Undoing (2003), Repair (2005) and Venus Hum: an imaginary performance (2006).



Melli Hoppe - Choreographer, Antigone. Melli Hoppe is the Artistic Director of Susurrus, an Indianapolis based experimental performance group. Melli has lead Susurrus in numerous site-specific productions, including: *Sacred Spaces*, which was selected as the top dance performance of 1997 by the Indianapolis Star, and most recently, *Waterways*, presented on the canal in downtown Indianapolis in October 2005. Melli is

currently teaching site-specific theatre and stage movement at Butler University where she directed *Shades of Sam* (five short plays by Samuel Beckett), Yeats's *The Dreaming of the Bones*, which toured Ireland in 2003, *Memory House*, *In the Garden* and *Unreal City*, original site-specific performances, and Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds*. Most recently, Melli was the choreographer for Butler Theatre's production of *Tamer Tamed*, Butler University Lyric Theatre's production of *Company*, *Dido and Aeneas*, and *Trouble in Tahiti*, Indiana University Theatre's production of *Euripides' Bacchae*, and Indiana Repertory Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



Michael Potts - Oedipus, Polyneikes, Eteokles, Scholar. Recently, Michael appeared in *Grey Gardens*, which opened on Broadway with critical acclaim. He also appeared as Lennon on Broadway. Other theater credits include: *Oedipus* and *Highway Ulysses*, *The Persians*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Hostage*, *Cup of Coffee*, *Loves Labours Lost*, *Arms and the Man*, *Mud River Stone* and *the Rivals*, *Overtime*, *Rent*, *The American Play* (Obie Award), *Randy Newmans' FAUST*, and *St. Joan of the Stockyards*. His TV credits include: The recurring role of 'Brother Mouzone' on HBO's *The Wire*, *Queens Supreme*, *Oz*, *Law and Order*, *NYPD Blue*, Ken Burn's *Thomas Jefferson*

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(Potts, bio cont.) *and The West*. His film credits include: *Conspiracy Theory*, *The Peacemaker*, *Diggers*, *Stonewall*, *Hackers*, and *George: A True Story*. He has also starred with Rosemary Harris in the BBC radio play *Hotel Cristobal*. Michael is a graduate of the Yale School of Drama.

Marty New - Jocasta, Vocalist. Marty New appeared as the young Rose



Kennedy in the television episodic *The Kennedys*. On stage she created and acted in the one woman show *Wild Nights Burning Desire*, and *Women In History*. Her favorite roles include Rosalind in *As You Like It*, Juliet in *R & J*, Isabella in *Measure for Measure* and The Countess in *Lulu*. She has been working as a professional acting coach for the last fourteen years. She trained and received her MFA in Acting at the Yale

School of Drama. She has privately coached actors for theater, film and television, and has also worked as a production coach and a media consultant for businesses. Most recently, she taught advanced acting at the University of San Diego, and previously at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts (CAP 21, Stella Adler and Stonestreet studios). She has directed and adapted *Philoctetes* and several off-Broadway and college productions, and is in the process of completing two documentaries on *Master Teachers of American Theater* (the first on her own acting teacher Earle Gister, and the second on Ming Cho Lee, the head of design at the Yale School of Drama). Marty also dramaturgs for productions, most recently for the Pilobolus Dance Company's *Star Cross'd*.

Kevin James - Messenger/Music Coordinator.



Composer Kevin James' has received awards and grants from the American Composer's Forum, Jerome Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and many others. His piece *Horobi No Naka Kara* was commissioned by the Young People's Chorus of NYC for their performance at the World Choral Music Symposium in Kyoto Japan last summer. Mr. James was awarded the Meet The Composer/New

Residencies Program in 1999 which included the commission of *Portraits*, a 95-minute multimedia "opera-lingua" on the theme of homelessness. He continues his work with this community through the creation of the

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(James, bio cont.) Portraits Project Mentorship Program, where children living in homeless shelters and highly underserved communities are given the opportunity on an ongoing basis to learn instruments from top New York musicians. Mr. James' music has been performed by the Sirius String Quartet, Meridian Arts Ensemble, Quintet of the Americas, Trio Akkobasso, First Avenue, Glen Velez and Handance and many other acclaimed ensembles throughout the U.S. and Europe. For Jocasta, James is joined by fellow trombonists Chris McIntyre, Mike Selzer, and Steve Swell.



Vicky Shick - Chorus Leader, Guest Dancer. Vicky Shick has been involved in the NYC dance community since the late 70's as a performer, choreographer and teacher. She was a member of the Trisha Brown Company for six years and has also danced with many other NY based choreographers including Wendy Perron, Stephen Petronio, Susan Rethorst, Sara Rudner and Sally Silvers. For more than a decade she has

collaborated with visual artist, Barbara Kilpatrick and for the past five years their work has become a three-way collaboration with performer/composer, Elise Kermani. She has received a "Bessie" Award for performance and another one for sustained creative achievement with Barbara Kilpatrick. In New York she teaches for the Trisha Brown Company, Movement Research and Hunter College. Vicky is a 2006 grant recipient from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

Alan McIntyre Smith - Director of Photography

Alan McIntyre Smith is a New York based cinematographer who worked his way up through production and gaffing on more than fifty feature films, shot throughout America, South Africa and India. He teaches Cinematography in the Film Conservatory at Purchase College, State University of New York and also works as a freelance photographer, showing work in galleries in Newport, Asbury Park, and New York. He approaches shooting from a background in painting, inspired by the lighting of Caravaggio, Vermeer, and David. He is most interested in the collaborative nature of filmmaking and enjoys the challenges each project brings.

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Jay Stern - Post Production Supervisor. Jay Stern has directed and produced more than 20 theater productions, from classical theater to world premieres, and more than 30 short films. Stern's short films have screened across the U.S. and Canada and have won awards at the Montreal Film Festival and the National Educational Media Network. He is a founder and producer of the First Sundays Short Comedy Film Festival, which has screened monthly since April, 2002 (www.firstsundays.com). Stern also is a founding member of Quicksilver Radio Theater Company, whose award-winning radio dramas have been syndicated internationally. Stern is a Ph.D. candidate at the European Graduate School where he has studied with Jacques Derrida, Peter Greenaway, Claude Lanzmann, Volker Schlöndorff, Agnes Varda, John Waters, Krzysztof Zanussi, and Siegfried Zielinski. He completed his first feature, *The Changeling*, in 2006.

Julie Verardi - Motion Graphics and Design

Judith B. Bass, Esq. - Production Attorney

BACKGROUND ON THE LOCATION

The Shaker Museum and Library of Chatham, NY, current owners of the Great Stone Barn, granted permission to film *Jocasta* from June through August of 2006. The Great Stone Barn is one of six U.S. locations on the World Monuments Fund Watch list of 100 endangered architectural sites. It was the largest storage dairy barn in America, and is a significant reminder of the Shakers' agricultural prowess. It was designed and built in 1859 by the Shaker Brothers, measures 196 x 50 feet, and towers over four stories high. In 1972, the Great Stone Barn burned, destroying all the timber framed structure, roof and windows. Exposure to the weather had deteriorated the stonework. The filming of *Jocasta* took place at the barn before its reconstruction - its decaying condition an apt reminder of the great cultural institutions which have been destroyed and abandoned by war.

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J O C A S T A *e s t i g a r e i n a i*

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