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## TM Reviews

# *Oedipus The King, Mama!*

Reviewed By: [Jonas Schwartz](#) · Aug 24, 2009 · Los Angeles

The Troubadours have once again spit on propriety with [Oedipus The King, Mama!](#), now at the Falcon Theatre, which reimagines the famed Greek tragedy as an Elvis Presley musical. Led by the witty Matt Walker, who can pick up a failed joke and slap it silly better than even Johnny Carson, *Oedipus* could be the troupe's funniest show yet.



Matt Walker and Beth Kennedy in *Oedipus the King, Mama!*  
(© Chelsea Sutton)

To determine the plot of Sophocles' original play from this production is next to impossible, but what can be determined here is that King Oedipus of Thebes attempts to solve the mystery of his predecessor's murder. Oddly, Oedipus has not only taken former King Laius' throne, but also his marital bed - yet he's determined to solve the crime. As he gets closer to the truth, he discovers ugly revelations about his own past.

From this horrific tale, the Troubadours have relied on their patented brand of absurdity to milk laugh after laugh -- even if some of the jokes are so black and cruel that you'll be ashamed for cackling. An asphyxiated sex doll in particular will send even the most secure audience member into therapy.

In many a show, one is hard pressed to find a single person who can sing, dance and act with finesse, yet this cast is brimming with triple threats. James Snyder, who starred in the title role of Broadway's *Cry Baby*, exudes sexuality and self-effacing humor as "Young Elvis", while Walker, as the mature Oedipus, masters Elvis' intonation and exaggerates his swagger to comment on Oedipus' swollen foot. Rick Batalla, as the scapegoat Creon (brilliantly costumed by Sharon McGunigle), hilariously suckles his big green cigar like Groucho Marx with penis envy.

Beth Kennedy steals the show as an Appalachian white trash version of Queen Jocasta.

The best of the improvisational artists, she deliciously interacts with the audience, including taunting a theater critic in the last row, revealing his notes to the cast. James Michael Lambert is inspired as Oedipus after all has been revealed, and the rest of the troupe, acting as the Greek chorus, are just as dynamic, as they take turns in the spotlight to joke, dance or sing Elvis' best numbers.

The score steals some of Elvis' most renowned songs, utilizing the original lyrics to comment on the story or rewriting them to suit their vile needs. Songs like "Suspicious Minds," "Are You Lonesome Tonight" and "Jailhouse Rock" may have been sullied in the name of laughter, but even the King's fans won't be able to resist laughing.

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