

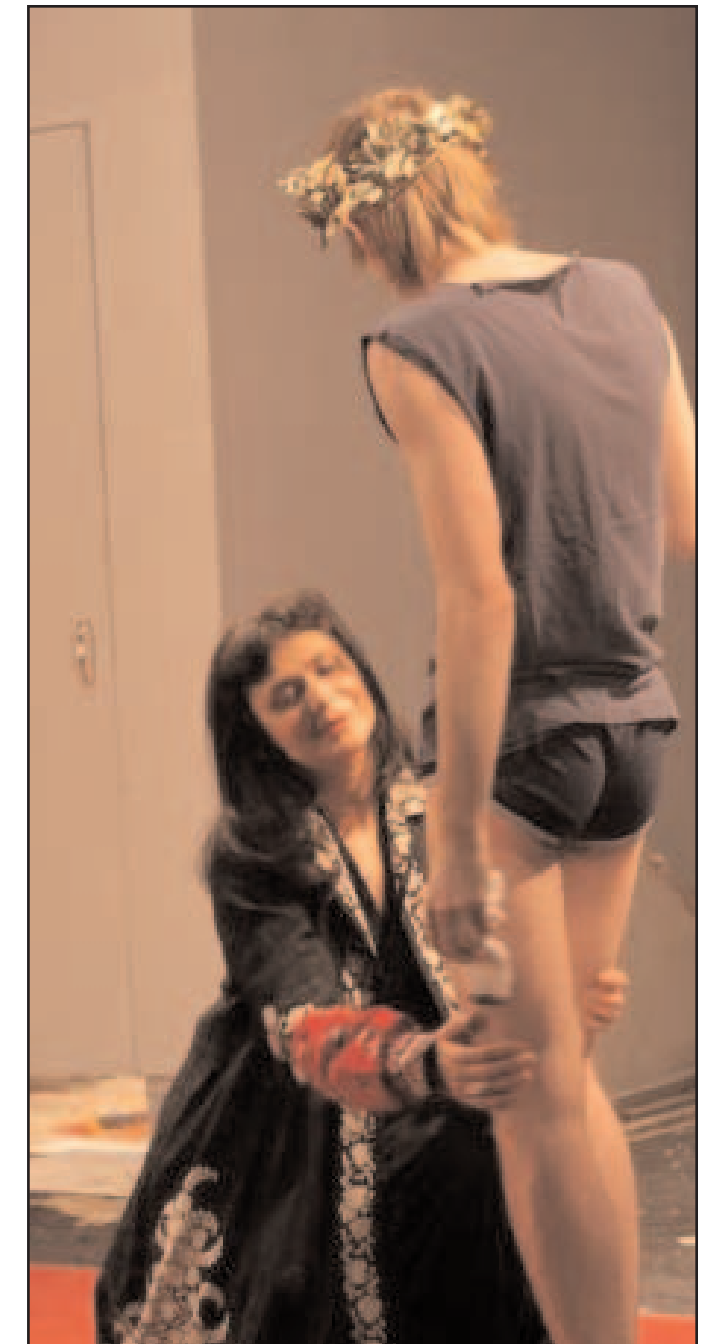
La MaMa ETC Presents the International Theater of New York / Actors without Borders

THE MEDEA

adapted and directed by JAY SCHEIB after the writings of SENECA EURIPIDES MUELLER GRILL-PARZER stage design by MICHAEL BYRNES, video by LEAH GELPE, costumes by OANA BOTEZ-BAN, lighting by LUCRECIA BRICENO, dramaturgy by PETER CAMPBELL; assistant director SHIRA MILIKOWSKY; camera operated by JENNIFER BRUNO, production manager Mercedes Murphy, with original score and arrangements performed by MARGARETH KAMMERER

Performed by Dima Dubson, Oleg Dubson, Dan Illian,* Margareth Kammerer, Jennifer Lim,* Aimee McCormick, and Zishan Ugurlu*

Premiere: January 13 at LaMaMa ETC in New York with subsequent performances in April of 2005 in Istanbul and at the International Festival of Contemporary Theater in Adana Turkey



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ON PLAYING MEDEA IN REVERSE

from the program notes of the LaMaMa ETC production, Winter 2005, New York City

What we reveal by reversing the story—by running it in reverse—is the chain reaction that leads to a string of murders. Medea slaughters her two sons, her brother, a king and his daughter—and others. 'The Medea' is a story about remembering promises and loving forever, a story of passionate ambition and irreversible decisions. We reverse them. The murky details of these decisions interest me. They are all the more horrific by our fore-knowledge of their outcome. I take my cue from the detective story. We experience the presence of the end already in the beginning—but we read it anyway. We all know how Medea ends. We barely remember how it starts. The text of the play (it's language), is a collision of classical verse and fragmented prose. I have used Heiner Müller's apocalyptic triptych: 'Despoiled Shore, Medeamaterial and Landscape with Argonauts' as a frame for a rewritten version of the texts of Euripides, Seneca, and Grillparzer—with nods to the films of Passolini, Carl Dreyer's unfinished manuscript, Lars Von Trier's Nordic experiment, and Cherubini's opera.

We have sought Naturalism on the stage. Real objects and real behaviour. Real smells and real coffee. Cheap TV tech-

nology and a stripped-bare dramatic structure. The performance shifts from music theater to home-movies to a hybrid-kind-of-dance-theater. Margareth Kammerer performs her own adaptations of well-known Italian love songs, original compositions based on texts from Heiner Müller, as well as selections from Cherubini's 18th century "Médée" (Medea).

Michael Byrne's design re-envisioned a classical Greek Skene in the shape of an oversize fitting-room at the rear of an abandoned retail space—mirrors and television monitors. For the Greeks it was behind the closed doors of the Skene that the unspeakable violence took place. For Seneca, the violence was central and ostensibly on-stage. We split the distance and try to make it feel like America—partially seen, partially screened. Leah Gelpe's video design involves positioning cameras inside of our Skene such that some parts of the play are made as if on a miniature sound stage, with scenes being projected live, run backwards, and frozen in time. We characterize the role of the camera in terms of DEVOLUTION / NOT EVOLUTION. This catch-phrase was to become the organizing principle for the entire play—a potentially fitting description of our times. We start with the murders and work our way back, back to the good times. Back to when we must have been dancing. Back to the days of milk and honey. Back to when things must have been really great.

—Jay Scheib, New York City, January 2005

