

third world bunfight presents

medEia

DESIGNED & DIRECTED BY BRETT BAILEY

The 2005 production on the Spier Estate was elected best South African production of the decade by the MAIL & GUARDIAN, 2010 and received a gold medal for best realized production at the 2007 Prague Quadrennial for Performance Design



BY OSCAR VAN WOENSEL (DOOD PAARD) IN COLLABORATION WITH
KUNO BAKKER AND MANJA TOPPER (1998)

TEXT DIRECTOR: LARA BYE

WITH FANISWA YISA as MEDEA

THE PLOT:

Across Africa armed, violent gangs of men move through remote villages looking for booty, sex and adventure. Jason and his band – the Argonauts – come to the African village of Colchis to seize the treasured Golden Fleece. Medea is the daughter of the king there, and the High Priestess of the Fleece. She yearns for something more than her sterile, isolated life. Jason represents love, excitement and the light of civilisation. She hands the Fleece over to him and flees with him, burning bridges in her wake. The couple settles in urban Corinth and raise two sons. But there is no place for outsiders in this land of promise, and Medea is ostracised. When Jason marries the king of Corinth's daughter Medea sinks into depression with darkest repercussions...

**"... medEia is Brett Bailey's anarchic masterpiece. It fulfils his ongoing quest for authentically theatricised African performance."
(A. Sichel, THE STAR, 2005)**

THE DRAMA:

In a foreign city a group of immigrant Africans gathers to dramatise Medea's tale of transcendence over the powers that marginalise and silence them; to enact a harrowing dramatic ritual as a protest against the adversity of their situation.

**"Bailey's most coherent and therefore best production to date."
(MAIL & GUARDIAN, 2005)**

THE PLAY:

Oscar van Woensel's beautiful, fragmented script is written in verse without punctuation, character-allocation or stage directions: a stream of dramatic consciousness studded with the lyrics of pop songs: a text both liberating and highly challenging. I have pruned the original text to suit the ritualistic staging that I have given to the piece. The plays of Dood Paard tour regularly in Europe.

This production roots the classical Greek tragedy of Medea firmly in the post-colonial present, reanimating the drama with a deep spirituality and with topical themes of immigration, displacement and xenophobia.

Inspiration for my theatrical interpretation of **medEia** comes from Haiti where I spent several months in 2004. Where slaves from dozens of African countries evolved the vivid and eclectic religion of Vodou from fragments of diverse African beliefs and the imagery of Catholicism, piecing together a unique system that would order their fractured society.

South African text director Lara Bye brings her nuanced understanding of drama, textual interpretation and character-work to the production.

Faniswa Yisa (Medea) is an extraordinary, subtle, multi-award winning performer. Along with Jason (still to be cast), a talented chorus of 8 performers and musicians brings the performing company to 10.

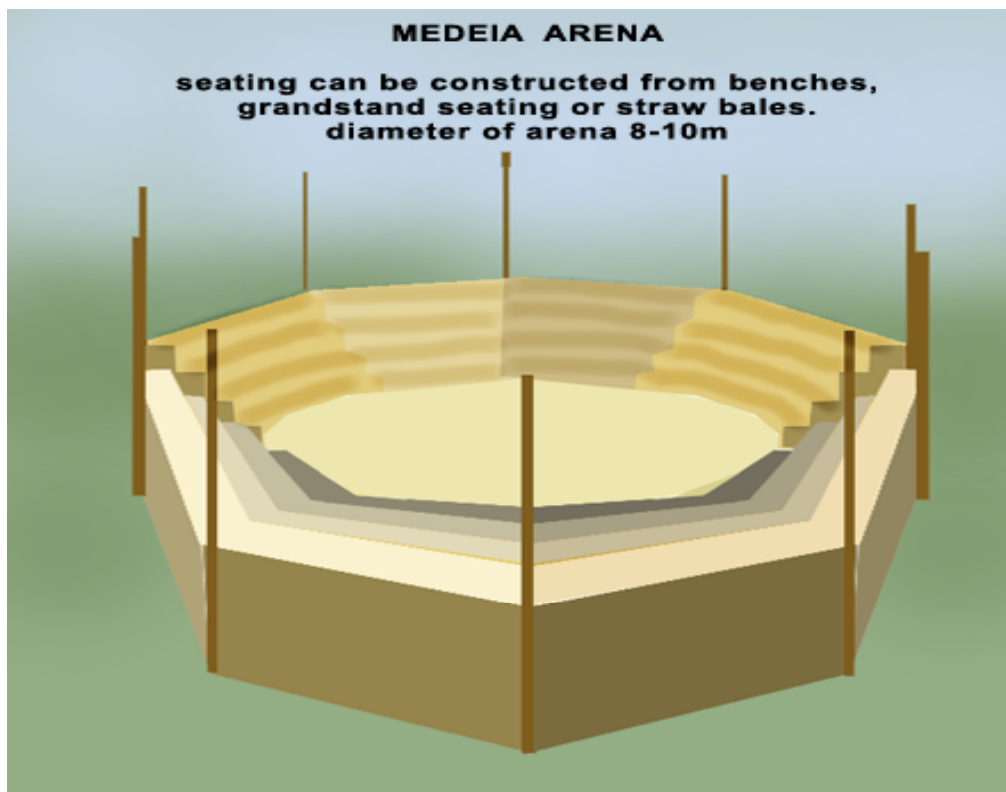
The duration of the performance is around 2 hours.

“In medEia Bailey breaks down conventions, and blurs borders between art forms, as he creates explosively vibrant storytelling fuelled by corrosive choreography.”
(A. Sichel, THE STAR, 2005)

THE SET:

In 2005 I made **medEia** as a site-specific, promenade performance. Requiring a large cast, a limited audience and a hard-to-find location, I have decided to rework the piece to suit the economic climate and an international tour.

The play will be staged in the round, with an arena of around 8-10m in diameter. This should be erected in an industrial space (indoors or outdoors), or in a natural environment. It will require ‘grandstand’ seating to be erected to hold up to 300 people.



medEia TOUR 2012:

We are in negotiations to present **medEia** at several international festivals in 2012. These will be announced as soon as they are confirmed.

"An exhilarating theatrical experience" ***(THE CAPE TIMES, 2005)***

Brett Bailey