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# Ian L. Finley's *The Greeks* Explores the Oedipus Trilogy on June 9-25 at CAM Raleigh

by [DUSTIN K. BRITT+](#) • JUNE 11, 2017

BURNING COAL THEATRE COMPANY AND CAM RALEIGH PRESENT

# THE GREEKS

OEDIPUS • OEDIPUS AT COLONUS • ANTIGONE

ADAPTED BY IAN FINLEY FROM THE PLAYS OF SOPHOCLES  
 DIRECTED BY ALEX TOBEY



**TICKETS**  
 \$10 PER PLAY OR  
 \$25 FOR ALL THREE

The production is designed for all 3 plays to be seen on one day. If you wish to see them separately, please call us at 919.834.4001

NOTE: Food and drink will be served during the second play.

**featuring**  
 jonathan able  
 ben apple  
 ellie barone  
 mark filiaci  
 george jack  
 jess jones  
 chloe oliver  
 freyja sindemark  
 sean wellington

409 W MARTIN ST, RALEIGH, NC

Performance Schedule:  
 June 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24: Oedipus (7 pm), Oedipus at Colonus (8:10 pm), antigone (9:20 pm)  
 June 18, 25: Oedipus (2 pm), Oedipus at Colonus (3:10 pm), antigone (4:20 pm)

**ONLY 50 TICKETS WILL BE SOLD FOR EACH PERFORMANCE**

note: the plays will be performed in this order:  
 OEDIPUS, OEDIPUS AT COLONUS, ANTIGONE

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You might already know how **Oedipus Rex** is going to end. If you do not, but you know what the **Freud's "Oedipus complex"** is, you can likely predict the play's climactic realization.

In the mid-Fifth Century BCE, **Sophocles** — arguably the most celebrated Greek tragedian in history — wrote a trilogy collectively known as the **Theban Plays**. The saga relays the ancient myth of a new king, **Oedipus**, searching for his father's killers and finding out more than he bargained for (*Oedipus Rex*), the fallen king's tragic death and mysterious burial (**Oedipus at Colonos**), and catastrophe that befalls his four children (**Antigone**).

Though Sophocles wrote these stories out of order, local playwright **Ian L. Finley** has chosen to adapt them into one, chronological piece: **The Greeks**, which is being co-produced by **Burning Coal Theatre Company** and **CAM Raleigh**. Director **Alex Tobey** co-adapted Part Two, *Oedipus at Colonos*, with Finley. He has chosen downtown Raleigh's CAM (Contemporary Art Museum) as his Thebes. Each play runs 50 minutes, with a 10-minute intermission between plays, during which the audience is relocated.

Part One, in the expansive main CAM gallery, casts the audience as press-conference attendees, hearing an address by King Oedipus, played by **Sean Wellington**, whose portrayal is powerful, but fluctuates mostly between "angry" and "really angry." He is interrupted by conversations with **Jocasta**, played competently by relative newcomer **Freyja Sindemark** and the blind prophet **Teiresias**, played with dry wit by **George Jack**.

Part Two inexplicably relocates the audience to a banquet area before characters pick up the story, weaving through rectangular tables filled with snacking patrons. Oedipus is joined by daughter **Antigone**, played by a committed and fearless **Ellie Barone**, who fends off self-centered brother **Polynices**, played expertly by **Benjamin Apple** and peacemaking sister **Ismene** — a sympathetic and relatable **Chloe Apple**. Unfortunately, I saw very little of Oedipus himself, since he was seated several tables away. George Jack returned to provide some much-needed joy to the scene as **Theseus**.

My interest finally became fully engaged during Part Three, which brings the crowd downstairs into a cavernous, shadowy gallery lit by floodlights and flashlights. This location perfectly captures the secretive tone of *Antigone* and gives the audience its closest view of the cast, save Sophocles' perfectly catastrophic ending, which my half of the audience could not see.

Part Three is the most emotionally impacting, thanks to Ellie Barone's impassioned, though sometimes overwrought tête-à-têtes with the remains of her crumbling family. Like Barone, Chloe Apple does her best work in *Antigone*, as does Benjamin Apple — now playing Antigone's selfless young lover **Haemon**. **Mark Filiaci**, who found little authenticity in Parts One and Two, is now a believably malevolent **King Creon**.

Ian Finley's contemporary dialogue clarifies some of Sophocles' more unclear allusions while maintaining its own poetry. Modern references to social media do not feel forced, but flow smoothly with the dialogue. *Antigone* is Sophocles' best storytelling and Part Three of *The Greeks* reflects that — it is by far the best writing and acting of this production and was worth the wait through the more tedious Parts One and Two.

Ian Finley keeps Sophocles' **Greek chorus**, played with energy, wit, and honesty by **Jonathan Able** and **Jess Jones**. But these updated masters of ceremonies do not explain plot — they explain its connections to greater themes of Greek drama. Finley's explanations in Part One are often didactic and distracting; but the commentary becomes less preachy, less frequent, and more necessary in Parts Two and Three.

**Cassidy Nolde's** contemporary costumes reflect social class and support the chronology; and **Matthew Adelson** and **Ainex Carmona** keep things creatively lit with specially installed elements, though a few unlucky patrons are often blinded by a light or two. Production stage manager **Michelle Wood** and her trio of ninja-like assistants (**Dylan Bailey**, **Abigaile Bates**, and **Cody Clark**) have much to take care of during this performance and manage to do so without disrupting.

In the end, Ian Finley's writing feels more like a novel than a play. The choral commentary is reminiscent of the

metafiction of novelist **Dave Eggers**, whose self-aware interruptions work perfectly in book form but would be redundant if we were already in the room with the action.

*The Greeks* is certainly an intriguing and intelligent adaptation with some affecting performances. I recommend it for literature nerds, fans of Greek tragedy, and those interested in site-specific theater — a growing trend in Triangle theater.

**SECOND OPINION:** *June 7th Durham, NC Indy Week* review by **Byron Woods**: <https://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/the-greeks/Event?oid=6597945>.

***Burning Coal Theatre Company*** and ***CAM Raleigh*** present **THE GREEKS: *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone***, the world premiere of Ian L. Finley's adaptation of three plays by Sophocles, with the assistance of director **Alex Tobey** on ***Oedipus at Colonus***, with ***Oedipus Rex*** starting at 7 p.m. June 16 and 17, 2 p.m. June 18, 7 p.m. June 23 and 24, and 2 p.m. June 25; ***Oedipus at Colonus*** starting at 8:10 p.m. June 16 and 17, 3:10 p.m. June 18, 8:10 p.m. June 23 and 24, and 3:10 p.m. June 25; and ***Antigone*** starting at 9:20 p.m. June 16 and 17, 4:20 p.m. June 18, 9:20 p.m. June 23 and 24, and 4:20 p.m. June 25 at CAM Raleigh, 409 W. Martin St., Raleigh, North Carolina 27603.

**TICKETS:** \$10 per play or \$25 to see all three plays on the same day, except \$5 Student Rush Tickets, if any are available at curtain time.

**BOX OFFICE:** 919-834-4001.

**SHOW:** <http://burningcoal.org/second-stage-shows/> and <https://www.facebook.com/events/462637454074360/>.

**PRESENTERS:**

***Burning Coal Theatre Company:*** <http://www.burningcoal.org/>, <https://www.facebook.com/Burning.Coal.Theatre>, and <https://twitter.com/burningcoaltc>.

***CAM Raleigh:*** <http://camraleigh.org/>, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Raleigh-NC/CAM-Contemporary-Art-Museum/45588322424>, and <http://twitter.com/CAMraleigh>.

**VENUE/DIRECTIONS:** <http://camraleigh.org/visit/>.

**NOTE:** Food and drink will be served during *Oedipus at Colonus*.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

***Dustin K. Britt***, a Triangle native, is an actor, director, and member of the board of directors of ***Arts Access, Inc.***, which makes the arts accessible to people with disabilities. He holds an M.A.Ed. in Special Education from ***East Carolina University*** and teaches locally. Click [here](#) to read his reviews for ***Triangle Review*** and ***Triangle Arts and Entertainment***. You can find him on Facebook as ***Dustin K. Britt*** and via his movie blog ***Hold the Popcorn***.