

The Touring Blues: J.A.S.O.N.- Myth, Murder & Mayhem in a Punk Rock World

Posted on [October 22, 2014](#) by [Noe Kamelamela](#)



— Photo credit: O.W.I. Facebook page

Edited to Add: The originally published article misspelled Mr. Rosenberg's last name. The spelling of Mr. Rosenberg's name is now correct. Our apologies, no disrespect was intended.

Presented by [The Office of War Information](#) (Bureau of Theatre)

Written by Pete Rosenberg

Directed by Hatem Adell

October 4-26, 2014

Club Bohemia

[Cantab Lounge](#)

Cambridge, MA

[OWI on Facebook](#)

Review by Noelani Kamelamela

(Cambridge, MA) The Office of War Information (Bureau of Theatre) plugs the classics into amps and rocks the Cantab Lounge this October. 300 BCE and the gritty 1970s combine to fill Club Bohemia with noise and fury.

If you experienced the punk rock world firsthand, you should remember the substance abuse, strong language, violence and gore portrayed onstage. (The gore is less than you'd expect from a Greek tragedy.) Young teenagers, particularly those in high school, might appreciate a re-telling of classics they have been forced to read. Adults friendly with the tales of Jason, the Argonauts and Medea should also be pleased by this remix.

Pete Riesenbergh recently wrote and workshopped *J.A.S.O.N.*, a play with music jammed live by the actors, who learned to play their instruments for the show. Language of the punk era, body and otherwise, is mixed with what has been passed on from the Greek in a cosmic and often comic game of telephone. The ensemble flits easily through the scenes, which are peppered with running gags and clever repetition. Jason's overly confident, brash bandmates chase fame, fortune and fun to grim ends, all without a single appearance from Jason.

His band members frequently repeat or misinterpret lines giving way to circular arguments, and these miscommunications serve to pause the action and establish important relationships. Slacker groupthink is as much a part of the decision making and movement in the piece as the details of the legends themselves. All actors did double duty and made the shifts between characters believable. Liz Adams had quite a juicy part as Medea, and she more than delivered, with scenes that are hard to watch as well as difficult to turn away from.

Timing and difficult ensemble work was necessary for the delivery of many of the jokes, and the laughs rolled over the audience frequently.

The space itself is the downstairs of the Cantab Lounge, Club Bohemia, is a venue typically used for local bands, and not theatre. Minimal lighting occasionally added ambiance to scenes. Few props appeared on the stage and most objects were reused. Costuming was simple and effective with a distressed and militant punk look (not Hot Topic). The audience was invited to leave graffiti on a set piece during the intermission.

The production feels Bostonian in nature, or at least of the recent past in Boston. The archetypes of a more contemporary era push themselves believably through scenarios appropriated from myth. Enough of each legend is presented plus real or invented additional mythos off the backs of our punk gods and goddesses of days gone by to satiate a story-hungry audience member.

O.W.I.'s inaugural season has started with a bang crash and will continue showcasing the past in February 2015 with the 17th century tragedy *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* by John Ford. In June 2015, the third installment of their season will be David Henry Hwang's *Yellow Face*, an exploration of racism towards Asians in America.

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