

## **SYNOPSIS OF *SYCORAX: CYBER QUEEN OF QAMARA***

(a full-length one act; ninety-five minutes)

**TIME:** The present and early years of the sixteenth century

**PLACE:** A cave on the island of Qamara, and two homes in the city of Algiers.

**CHARACTERS:** (An minimum ensemble of five women and three men)

ANCIENT SYCORAX, an Algerian sorceress, age five hundred

SYCORAX, the youthful avatar of Sycorax, age sixteen to thirty-six

AMIRAH KHALED, Sycorax's avatar mother, age forty

RACHID KHALED, Sycorax's avatar brother, age nineteen

KARIM ZIYAD, Sycorax's avatar husband, age fifty

RIMA ZIYAD, Karim's avatar daughter, age sixteen

RANAH ZIYAD, Karim's avatar daughter, age eighteen

FATIMA ZIYAD, Karim's avatar daughter, age twenty-two

CALIBAN, Sycorax's avatar son, age twenty

ARIEL, Sycorax's seductive avatar sprite, age twenty

PROSPERO, an avatar magician and former Duke of Milan, age fifty

MIRANDA, Prospero's avatar daughter, age sixteen

MAYA, an avatar hen

MIMI, an avatar goat

FAROUK, an avatar dog

FARAH, an avatar cat

MULLAH ONE, MULLAH TWO, MULLAH THREE

### **PLOT SYNOPSIS:**

In Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, the sorceress Sycorax, mother of Caliban and mistress of Ariel, was reported by Prospero to be deceased. But Sycorax is alive, having waited five hundred years for the ideal technology to reveal the truth of her story to the widest possible audience: the World Wide Web of the Internet. As a young girl in Algiers, Sycorax's talents are revealed by spinning platters and floating scarves; later she carves small animals that are brought to vivid life through secret supplications to the pagan god, Setebos. Through the kindness of her scholarly brother, Sycorax learns to read and write, but as a Muslim woman, she is forced to endure marriage to a man already wedded to three wives. Although Sycorax employs her powers to oust invading Turkish pirates, a tribunal of mullahs judge her guilty of witchcraft, heresy, and treason. Since the Quran forbids the execution of pregnant women, Sycorax is exiled to Qamara where she conjures a menagerie of creatures that help transform the barren isle to a paradise of fertile fields. Although Sycorax longs for a daughter, she gives birth to a son, Caliban, whom she learns to cherish. Years pass in blissful harmony until Caliban becomes restless for companionship and Sycorax carves a young man from a tree, naming him Ariel. Thanks to the intercession of Setebos, Ariel is born with wings and the talent to sing, dance, and conjure storms that thwart ships from landing on their shores. Ariel is also a dashing seducer and soon both mother and son are enthralled by his charms. Eventually Ariel spies a boat drifting towards Qamara containing Prospero, his daughter, Miranda, and stacks of books that Sycorax longs to read. She allows the boat to land, but after eavesdropping on Ariel and Caliban plotting to escape, she unwittingly conspires to sabotage her future and that of her beloved son.

