Anouilh's 'Antigone' Turns To Gold

BY STEVE THORPE

Thresher Amusements Editor

David Dannenbaum must have something akin to the Midas Touch. Every play he directs somehow turns to gold in front of an audience and in spots is truly brilliant.

Take, for instance, “The Taming of the Shrew” or “A Raisin in the Sun”—or maybe “Antigone” by Jean Anouilh.

Yesterday “Antigone” opened at Channing Hall in the First Unitarian Church and once again the Channing Players proved that amateurs can produce good drama in Houston.

It’s Not Greek

Yes, the play is the old story—Antigone, daughter of Oedipus, defies her uncle, King Creon, and buries her slain brother. For this she is put to death. Because of her death, Haemon, Creon’s son, and later Eurydice, Creon’s wife, commit suicide.

Yes, the plot is an old one—but the name and the plot are more than likely the only resemblance this play bears to the ancient Greek. Gone is the Greek chorus—Anouilh uses a narrator who calls himself “the chorus.” Gone, too, is the stylized blocking and the traditional manner of dialogue.

Screaming Life

Anouilh weaves the story of Antigone into a gripping modern drama in a starkly modern situation and the Dannenbaum touch brings the magnificent Anouilh dialogue to screaming life.

Oh, no, Anouilh’s Antigone is a real woman and Creon is a real tyrant and there can be no mistaking Joe Rider’s multi-level set for the ancient Greek stage.

Orchids and Laurels

Throwing orchids is always fun, so here we go—laurels to Antigone (Barbara Lasater) for a performance that was truly spellbinding—also to her sister Ismene (Jo Anne Brigance) for that tremendous charge of emotional vacillation that her role required. To Antigone’s Nurse (Rhona Wilber) and the first guard (Luke Leonard) for memorable characters in a play full of good ones.

The cast is uniformly good but, sadly, with a weak link in Creon (Basil Thomas). It is indeed unfortunate that Creon was so good and yet so distracting at the same time, for while he was a competent actor, he could have been brilliant were it not for a dactylic monotone that crept into his voice.

But whenever he lowered his voice, or had cause to raise it to the fever pitch Anouilh demands, he did show his mettle and was truly the character he had to be. Perhaps these flashes will occur more frequently during the run, because he could be good.

So go; go by all means. Now through Saturday. It’s cheap (75c for students); it’s fun; it’s at 5210 Fannin (Box office: JA 6-1571); it’s something you won’t want to forget. When Dannenbaum touched “Antigone” she turned to fourteen carat.

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(Continued from Page 1) university of the quality of Rice.”

Controversial Speakers

Controversial speakers, however, “would be, whenever possible, people directly involved with the controversy under discussion.” But, the statement continues, “speakers who are controversial in their own right would be avoided unless they be authorities on the subject in question.”

The Forum Committee consists of King as Chairman, Ken Kennedy, Vice-Chairman and Patti Lewis, Secretary. Members are Hank Coleman, Brad Marrs, Mark Montgomery, Kent Morrison, Quentin Crommelin, and Carol Starr. Dr. Louis Galambos of the History Department is the faculty advisor.