Club Presents ‘Danton’

By CLINT GOODSON
Thresher Staff Writer

The Rice German Drama Club, under the direction of Dr. Douglas Milburn, will present a reading in German of Georg Buechner’s play, ‘Danton’s Tod,’ at 7:30 pm, April 28, in the Fondren Lecture Lounge.

The play, written in 1835, concerns the conflict between individual ethics and political expediency that French revolutionary Georg Danton experiences in 1794.

Danton, in opposing the bloodbath that is spoiling France, brings about his own downfall. During his trial he attempts to sway the mob to his support, but he fails because of the influence of the all-powerful Robespierre, who favors the continued use of the guillotine.

Fall To Death
Danton’s fall from grace means more than just his own death, however. Executed with him are his less idealistic friends, whose pleas that he flee France fall on deaf ears.

The fate of the women in these men’s lives provides one more perspective on the tragedy of civil strife.

Dr. Milburn has chosen to do an epic theater production of the play. By constantly reminding his audience they are watching drama, he hopes to objectify their response, and thus force rational understanding of Buechner’s message: “Nicht mizuhassen, mitzulieben bin ich da.” This translates roughly into “make love, not war.”

Novelties
The novelties of this production include the use of name folders for the actors; numerous photographic slides projected on a screen behind the stage; original, disturbing music and sound effects; and a chorus that chants in English between scenes.

During one short interlude the tape of the HUAC questioning of Communist playwright Bertolt Brecht will be played; at this investigation Brecht sacrificed principle to expediency, claiming that he was not a member of any Communist party. The contrast with Danton should be clear.

‘Danton’s Tod’ is no ordinary play; and this will be no ordinary production. With native German graduate students playing the lead roles, the show promises linguistic accuracy. It should, in any case, prove to be a spectacle.