

Theater arts now

By LEIGH-ELLEN CLARK
Senior Staff Writer

If you're looking for a way to stretch and strengthen your creative muscles, look to the theater arts program at Texas A&M.

"There's more money and tradition behind the football and OPAS, but we want to build a tradition of excellence here in theater arts," the new director of the theater arts section Dr. Roger Schultz said.

"We're bringing quality theatrical work here — not necessarily the box office hits," Schultz said. "We want to please the audience, but also to challenge them."

He said he plans to use public service announcements on radio and television to get the word out to the community.

He also wants more students to know about the program. The Aggie Players, production company for Texas A&M theater arts, he said, is the way onto the stage for any student at the University.

"Theater is open to any student here," Schultz said. On stage or behind stage, there is a need for well-delivered lines and helping hands.

"You can call me personally at 845-2526 or just drop by," he said. There are a lot of jobs available besides acting on the stage. There are opportunities in lighting, set and costume design, set construction, and other areas. It's hands-on, on-the-job training and no experience is needed to apply.

"We'll put you to work," Schultz smiled.

The benefits of working on a theater arts' production include making the most of those study breaks, and getting into a program which allows you to expand your creative abilities while working in the rarified atmosphere of live theater.

If theater was your niche in your high school or in your hometown there's no need to become a closet thespian. You don't have to substitute the textbook for the script and there is life outside of the chemistry lab — life on the stage.

"We have students from all kinds of majors that come in to work," Schultz said. "As a mat-

ter of fact, right now there's a chemistry major, a civil engineer, and an aerospace engineer on the cast of 'Liliom.'" So it's obvious that there are creative people on this campus — even in the practical majors.

"We encourage our drama students to take on a second major or use theater as their minor," Schultz said. "I've never known a community theater that didn't welcome with open arms someone with training."

"One in a hundred, literally, makes a living with theater. The idea that everyone makes it as a star just ain't true."

"The university has become a place of occupational training — that may well be the case in engineering or agriculture — but we train for life."

This training is available in several courses offered by the English department. The Technique of Acting and Technical Production are popular courses with non-majors.

"Many education majors take Children's Creative Drama and for English majors, the History of Theater is big," Schultz said. "The 290 class is a practicum class geared to non-majors. We have every level of experience come into that class. In there, they assist with the production of the plays."

But for the serious dramatist Schultz has some advice.

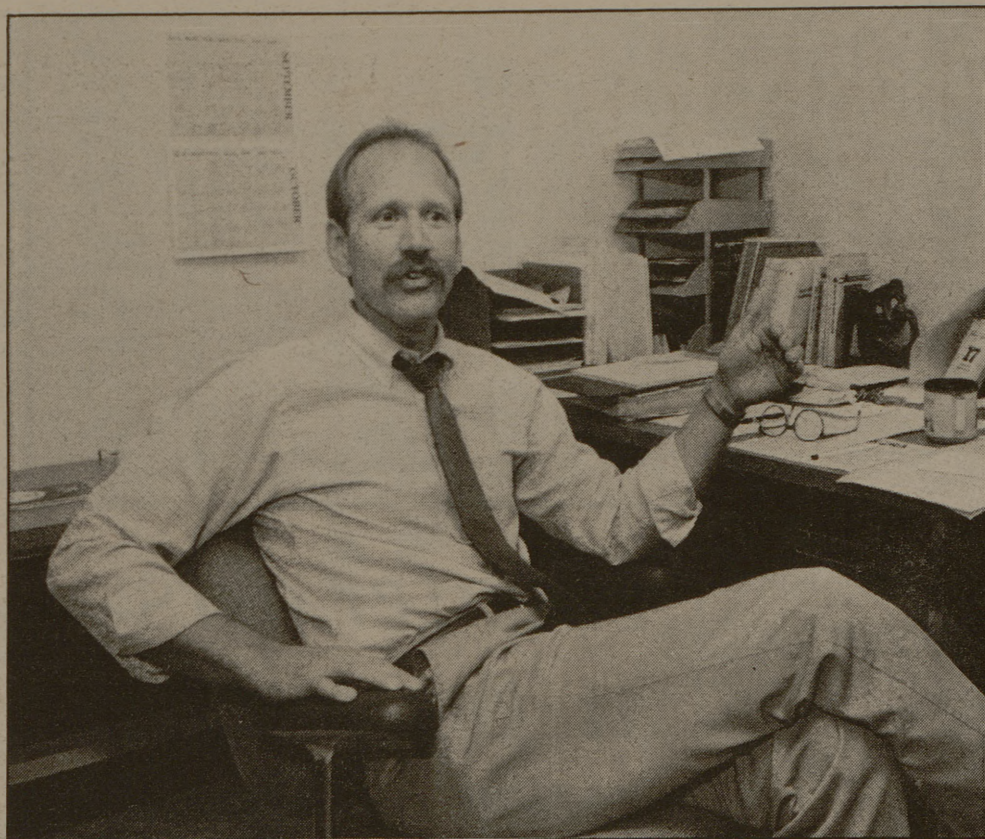
"The good student should go on and get a MFA (Master of Fine Arts degree) from some place like Stanford, Yale, Michigan or Ohio — get an internship and leave with an Equity Card," he said.

"It's best to stick with it," Schultz said, "if an actor can look intelligently at art he can sustain a character."

"A lot of times, a person will head for one coast or the other without the right kind of education and be woefully lacking in background — well, you've seen the air heads on television."

Currently, there are 30 theater majors in the theater arts program. A full-time faculty of four teaches the classes and directs the Aggie Players' productions.

Scholarships are available



Dr. Roger Schultz

through the Stokes Foundation in Fort Worth. The foundation gives money to numerous causes and six scholarships come to the A&M theater arts program.

The productions are funded by the Memorial Student Center Book Store Funds, legislative funds, box office proceeds and sponsors and contributors.

"It's still a shoestring budget," Schultz said.

"Before one actor ever steps on stage, even before one stick of lumber is up, about \$10,000 goes out," he said. "There're storage costs, complex fees, and vehicle rental and royalty costs — but most of the money goes back to the University to pay for the theater."

The 1984 theater season brings romance, revolution, morality and madness to the stage.

The Aggie Players will open with "Liliom" by Ferenc Molnar. This romance was the inspiration to the American musical "Carousel." Liliom, is a young man from Budapest who

charms the hearts of many servant girls. Finally, he falls for Julie, who will become his wife. When he learns that fatherhood is in the future, he participates in a robbery to gain more money. He dies and is sentenced to years in the purifying fires with the promise that he can return to earth to do one good deed.

"Tango" by Slawomir Mrozek is the metaphorical story of revolution in Poland. A Bohemian family represents the state in the metaphor. Eddie, a young man that has been accepted by the family, represents an invader and Arthur, the son, plans to purge the family of Eddie. His coup d'etat ends in his own downfall.

"Some people may not like this play — but as children we don't always like our medicine," Schultz said.

An adaptation of the Greek play, "Antigone" by Jean Anouilh is next to bring thought to the stage. The two sons of Oedipus are killed in a civil war that they began in Thebes. The adaptation of the tale parallels

occupied Paris in World War II. "It's a successful retelling of the Greek myth," Schultz said.

Finally, Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman's "You Can't Take it With You," ends the season with laughter. It's the Sycamore family, a little bit mad in a delightful way. And the Kirby family, a little bit suspicious of the Sycamores. It's a romance between Tony Kirby and Alice Sycamore that brings all kinds of chaos to the Kirby parents and draws Tony into the Sycamore madness. All of this, plus a printing press set up in the parlor and the manufacturing of firecrackers on the side just to keep things exciting.

Schultz had been at the University of Houston at Clear Lake City since 1982 as an associate professor and chairman of the theater program. He was assistant professor of theater with tenure at the University of Minnesota in Duluth from 1970-1982. During that time, he was a graduate teaching assistant from 1977-1980 at the University of California in Santa Barbara.