

Shakespeare's genius remembered

English Shakespearean troupe to visit A&M in February

By **SONDRA PICKARD**
Staff Writer

William Shakespeare and theater are alive and well at Texas A&M this spring as the Aggie Players host a semester-long calendar of events highlighted by a week's residence and performances by members of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

The five members of England's prestigious acting company, visiting A&M Feb. 17-21, will present performances of Shakespeare's "Measure For Measure" Feb. 19 and 22 and "An Evening of Samuel Beckett" Feb. 20. Both will be performed at 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

Often called a "dark" or "problem" comedy, "Measure For Measure" is described as a beautiful combination of rowdy humor, sexual deceit and human understanding.

It has been called "... a play as full of genius as it is of wisdom." All 19 roles will be performed by the five actors.

In "An Evening of Samuel Beckett," the works of Nobel Prize winner Samuel Beckett are brought to life. The object of the evening's entertainment is to reacquaint the audience with Beckett's distinctive language, his ear, his sense of timing and the range of what could be called his theatrical music.

Beckett has been described by the New York Times as "... a playwright novelist and Nobel Laureate — a beacon of our age," and as "... a comedian of chaos who can't resist a joke."

Also included in the company's residency is "Words, Words, Words: Hamlet and the Actor," a free one-man show performed by company member Paul Whitworth, which explores an actor's preparation for Shakespeare's most challenging role, "Hamlet."

Whitworth will give two performances of this production, one Feb. 18 and the other Feb. 21 at 8 p.m. in 102 Zachry. The Feb. 18 performance will include a dinner and workshops and the reservation deadline is Feb. 14. Seating will be limited, so those interested are urged to call the Arts Council of Brazos Valley at 268-ARTS.

The RSC residency is sponsored by the Alliance for Creative Theatre, Education and Research, a 10-year-old program that has brought British and American actors into contact with

American university students on over 130 campuses.

Founded in 1960, the Royal Shakespeare Company has gained an international reputation for theatrical excellence in its stagings of Shakespeare, Pinter, the Greek tragedians, a variety of Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists, and many contemporary British dramatists.

The five members of the RSC performing at A&M are Lisa Harrow, Julian Curry, Stephen Jenn, Joseph Marcell and Whitworth.

In addition to the public performances, the company will conduct over 30 workshops in a variety of humanities disciplines on campus and in local schools, giving students the opportunity to learn first-hand from the individual actors.



All are invited to attend the workshops, but participation will be limited to those enrolled in the classes. A detailed schedule of the workshops can be obtained in the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts.

Dr. Bonnie Yarbrough, executive director of the Arts Council of Brazos Valley, studied with the RSC at the Folger Institute in Washington about six years ago.

Although the company actors are noted for their performance ability, Yarbrough said their teaching talent is just as highly renowned.

"They're all method actors, essentially the best in the world," Yarbrough said. "They're meticulous about their work. They're historians,

lecturers, actors, singers and dancers. They have a wide range of skills they bring into their work so that when they perform Shakespeare, they're prepared much differently than most actors."

Yarbrough says education is the key emphasis of the RSC.

"They're actually trying to communicate with

people out there what it is they go through to do a performance — what it means to be Hamlet on stage and why is it so challenging — rather than just reading the play," she said. "It's quite different from any theater experience I think our community has ever seen."

Largely responsible for bringing the spirit of Shakespeare to A&M this semester is Dr. Roger Schultz, A&M director of theatre and associate professor of speech communications and theatre arts. He says A&M is the only school in the southwest to host the RSC this year.

The primary sponsors of the Spring Semester of Shakespeare are the Aggie Players of Texas A&M, and to add to the performances of the RSC, the players will perform "A Cry of Players" Feb. 26, 27, 28 and March 1.

The play is described as "a charming and eloquent biography of William Shakespeare."

Also, "Twelfth Night," described by John Masefield as "the most perfect comedy in the English language," will be performed April 18, 19, 24, 25 and 26.

Both plays will be in Rudder Forum at 8 p.m.

On Sunday nights throughout the semester, a number of Shakespeare's films will be shown at 7 p.m. in Kleberg Center for no charge. "Hamlet" will be shown Sunday, and the remainder of the films include, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Macbeth," "Romeo and Juliet" and "As You Like It."

On Wednesday nights, A&M scholars will be lecturing on various aspects of Shakespeare's works. Professors from the departments of English, history, modern languages and speech communication and theatre arts will be represented.

The next lecture, "The Royal Shakespeare Company: Who Are They and Why are They?" will be given by Dr. Michael Greenwald, associate professor of speech communication and theatre arts, Feb. 12 at 8 p.m. in 114 Blocker Building.

Tickets for all productions can be obtained at the Rudder Box Office. Students and senior citizens will receive a discount. More information on dates, times or locations of any of the productions, films or lectures can be acquired by calling the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts.

Prof editing international Shakespeare bibliography

By **MARY ANN HARVEY**
Staff Writer

No other literary figure at any time, writing in any language, in any country has attracted as much attention as William Shakespeare, a distinguished professor of English at Texas A&M says.

Dr. Harrison T. Messerole says this is why he has become chief bibliographer and editor of the World Shakespeare Annotated Bibliography.

Although he has been collecting publications since 1975, this area of research is new to A&M.

Messerole came to the University in July after teaching at Penn State University for 28 years. It was there that Messerole and his associate, Priscilla Letterman, began collecting publications on Shakespeare.

Each year Messerole collects some 3,500 to 3,600 records of books, magazine articles, dissertations, video tapes, movie productions and any other published material on or related to Shakespeare.

Messerole says there is an international interest in the famous playwright. And even though several countries have collected bibliographies on Shakespeare, Messerole says his is the only international publication. Other countries only publish a bibliography of their own works relating to Shakespeare.

"We throw out a great big net

"We throw out a great big net worldwide and haul it (records of works related to Shakespeare) in."

— Dr. Harrison T. Messerole, distinguished professor of English at Texas A&M.

worldwide and haul it in," Messerole says.

Messerole can read six languages, but has collected publications in about 65 languages.

Because of this, he relies on the help of faculty and friends who are able to read different languages.

"About one-half of our collection comes from around the world and the other half we generate ourselves," Messerole says. "We're also very much dependent upon and grateful for the Sterling C. Evans Library. It is our laboratory."

However, the library can't get everything published. For that reason, Messerole relies on the help of an international committee of about 40 scholars around the world.

"These people undertake to look at the publications in their countries and pick up the relevant materials, record them and send them on to

us," Messerole says. "We then edit them, process them into our computer system and then publish them."

The computer file is an important tool in Messerole's organization of data. Letterman, Messerole's associate, works mainly with the computer, recording publications and processing bibliographic information. There is a hard copy library of publications in Messerole's office, but the computer's collection is a more complete source of information.

Messerole says he uses standard bibliographical data when collecting information on publications.

"Then we write what is best called an abstract of it which can be anywhere from 30 to 300 words, de-

"Sometimes we have to spend two or three minutes on a piece and sometimes two or three weeks."

— Dr. Harrison T. Messerole.

pending upon the intricacy of it," Messerole says. "Sometimes we have to spend two or three minutes on a piece and sometimes two or three weeks."

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