

State and Local

Aggie Players' 'Medea' displays intense acting, stunning effects

By Karl Pallmeyer

Staff Writer

The Aggie Players production of the classic Greek tragedy "Medea" ended its four-day run Saturday. Fantastic acting and an interesting special effect greeted near-capacity crowds almost every night in Rudder Forum.

"Medea," one of Euripides' few existing plays, had its first performance in Athens in 431 B.C. and has been adapted and performed in various different forms ever since. Seneca adapted the play for Roman audiences around 40 A.D. and Pierre Corneille adapted the play for French and European audiences in 1635. Robinson Jeffers' adaptation of the play, which premiered on Broadway in 1947, is the version

Aggie Players presented.

Medea, wife of Jason and mother of his two sons, has been cast aside by her husband so that he can marry the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. Jason's new marriage will assure him greater wealth and position. When Creon comes to tell Medea and her children have been

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banned from Corinth, she begs for mercy and

receives a one-day reprieve from her sentence. Once Creon is gone, Medea vows to destroy Jason.

Jason loves his children and has convinced Creon to welcome them into his home. Medea can't

stand the thought of losing the only thing she has left to Jason and plans her revenge. She sends her children to present Creon's daughter with a golden robe that she has enchanted. When Creon's daughter puts on the garment, it is reported, she is engulfed in flames. Creon tries to save his daughter and also is killed.

The children come back to Medea and she kills them so that there is nothing left in Jason's life. She has her revenge.

The stage was small but proper lighting made it effective. In the center of the stage was a large door, with a snake on each of the stone pillars flanking the door.

Although the audience was expecting Medea to kill her children, almost everyone jumped

when they heard the loud thumps and screams after Medea took her children behind the door.

The big special effect came when Jason tried to discover his children's fate. The snakes on the pillars came to life and threatened to strike if Jason made a move toward the door or Medea. The audience reacted with amazement and amusement.

Reland Garrett, a junior theater arts major from Whitehouse, was a fantastic Medea.

Medea's nurse was well-played by Janice Jarutowicz, a senior theater arts major from Seguin.

Timothy McEvoy, a senior theater arts major from Plano, and Steven A. McCauley, a senior theater arts major from Red Oak, turned in fine performances as Jason and Creon.

Director says Special Olympics teaches skills

By Sandra Voelkel

Reporter

"Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," is the motto taught to many people through Special Olympics.

Anne McGowan, director of the Texas Special Olympics, says the Olympics are for those who are mentally retarded or socially deprived and who have low IQs and multiple handicaps.

"The purpose of the Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for success through physical activity in recreation and sports," she says.

McGowan says that through positive experiences, mentally retarded people can gain confidence, develop physical skills and improve their self-image, which helps them in the classroom and community.

The Special Olympics allow people to practice on organized teams and to develop skills, and then have an opportunity to show their skills to their parents and friends.

She says the rules are the same as in high school sports.

The games in the Olympics include basketball, soccer, gymnastics, softball, field events and aquatics.

A variety of people, including parents, teachers and students participate in coaching and preparing the participants for the games, McGowan says. Clubs and organizations contribute the most people to this aspect of the Olympics.

"The preparation of the Olympics is mandated by the state of Texas and a coach must go through training school," she says.

The training school, which lasts eight weeks, teaches the coaches teaching skills and first aid.

McGowan says the Olympics take place all over the United States and in 62 other countries.

McGowan says she enjoys seeing people get an opportunity to learn and use competitive skills.

"They develop courage as an athlete, receive joy when sharing with other athletes and coaches, and feel as though they are giving something back to their families and friends," she says.

McGowan says the participants can accomplish a great deal, but the special athletes accomplish it at different rates than gifted athletes.

"Many people that work with the disabled don't look at their ability," she says. "Instead, the people just look at their disability. People should help develop their greatest skills."

This year there are about 698 Special Olympics participants in Bryan-College Station and the surrounding area, McGowan says.

She says Special Olympics receives contributions from many people because it seems to be an event that people enjoy working with and supporting.

She says the people involved find that many other people are hesitant to work with the mentally retarded, she says. However, after working with them once, the people usually return.

"A person may give only a portion of a day, but in return they will receive more love from the athlete than that person could imagine," McGowan says.

"We wanted to offer our inmates who had not finished high school an opportunity to get an education," Huddleston says.

Jail inmates get chance to study in BISD program

By James Florez

Reporter

Brazos County Jail inmates have the opportunity to study for the Graduate Equivalency Diploma exam because of a new program sponsored by the Bryan Independent School District's Community Education Program.

The GED program was initiated by the Region Six Education Service Center in Huntsville, through which the program receives funding.

Community Education Director Larry Cox says the program is being conducted on a trial basis.

"We hope to come up with some hard statistics to see what kind of gains we have made," Cox says.

Bonnie Webb, who oversees the program for the center, says the program was started to fulfill a need.

"One of our goals in adult education," Webb says, "is to go where we see a need for further adult education, and jail is certainly one of those places."

Webb says this program, which began Jan. 17, replaces one that ended about three years ago.

"We had a program called Rap-Sessions that we weren't too happy with," Webb says. "When I contacted the jail late last year about starting a new, more organized program, they were very receptive."

Webb says the program was then turned over to the education program, which now coordinates it.

Lt. Ron Huddleston, assistant jail administrator, says the program serves a twofold purpose for the county.

"We wanted to offer our inmates who had not finished high school an opportunity to get an education," Huddleston says.

"But, also, the more programs we

offer the inmates, the more commodities we get free from the Texas Department on Human Resources," he says. "We are helping our people and at the same time we are also helping our budget by getting some of these free commodities."

Dayton Phillips, the program's instructor, says the program is designed to help students master basic skills for the GED exam.

"Also, the skills are important in today's job market," Phillips says. "You've got to have language and math skills if you work in anything other than a minimum-wage job."

Phillips gives students diagnostic tests to help him determine their education levels.

"It's a self-study type deal," Phillips says. "I give them a workbook which explains the problems and gives examples. I come in for four hours each week to help them through the hard spots and keep them moving."

"However motivated they are is how fast they progress. I don't push them, and I don't hold them back."

A 49-year-old inmate who asked not to be identified is the program's star pupil. She is expected to graduate and take the equivalency exam in March.

"Nobody is prouder of me than me," says the woman, who has spent much of her life working as a waitress. "I quit school when I was 16 because I thought I was smart enough. Was I wrong."

She hopes a GED will lead to a better job, but says she's getting close to retirement age.

Phillips says while it is too early to tell, he believes the program will be a success.

"A basic measure of success," Phillips says, "would be to have one person pass the GED exam."

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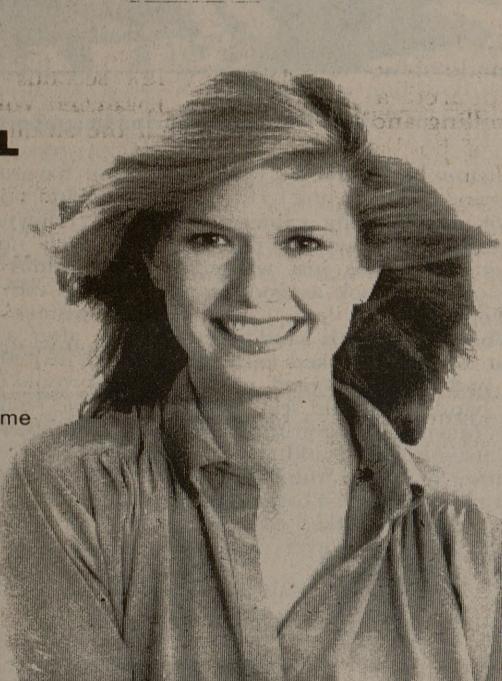
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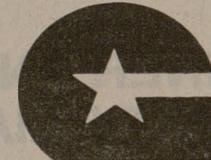
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