

PERSPECTIVES

To Ban or not to Ban

Senseless moratorium threatens plays' futures



MANDY CATER
opinion editor

There for art thou, Romeo? This familiar query may take on an all-too-literal meaning if some of the Brits get their way. A local faction in England's Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) is on a mission to "preserve the integrity" of Shakespeare's works with a proposal that would ban any further adaptations. The group believes too-frequent revivals are ruining the original meanings of the texts. "Hawaii without the pineapple, like New York without the Statue of Liberty, like Texas without the big hair," says "Bard-lovers" are full of baloney. If the element of surprise was a problem, *Titanic* wouldn't be raking in a gajillion dollars at the box office — it's pretty safe to say most audiences know the boat sinks. As far as modern adaptations being detrimental, nothing

The bottom line is, people need to quit picking on Shakespeare already. First there's all the yammering about Shakespeare's sexuality. Sure, the guy wore earrings and tights, but so do a lot of guys. And does it really matter if a homosexual or heterosexual wrote Hamlet? No. It's still an amazingly complex, existential trip through the human psyche. And what if the sonnets were written to a man? It makes them no less moving.

Then there's the debate over who Shakespeare really is and who actually authored the body of work under that name. Yes, that is an intriguing question, but the world may never know.

But obviously somebody wanted the world to believe the pointy-nosed guy with the long hair and ruffled collars penned the plays, so why should that be the center of everyone's attention? It's like the Bible — it's not who wrote the chapters that counts, it's what the literature means to its readers.

Sir Peter Hall, RSC's first artistic director best summed up the current conflict when he said, "It's absolute rubbish."

Hall said measuring up to Shakespeare's immense demands is the real task upon which to focus.

Banning performances of the Bard's plays for a decade is not the answer — censorship rarely is. Any time a piece of literature can be presented to the populous or made accessible to common people, society benefits.

Taking away some of history's best-loved theatrical works will do no one any good.

Besides, the idea is economic repercussions of the moratorium ensure it will never be a reality.

"To try to institute a moratorium is impractical, especially with the reconstructed Globe Theater opening last year," Harner said.

For the record, though, if a moratorium must be enforced and fingers must be pointed, the plays should not be the victims. Shakespeare and the stage should not be made scapegoats.

A simple solution could be devised to alleviate the problem of "preserving prestige" — ban Branagh.

Mandy Cater is a senior psychology major.



CITY BEAT

1st annual north by northgate



Festival dispels A&M's cookie cutter image

It's challenging to describe this event to an outsider.

Seventy performers. Two nights. Seven venues on a narrow strip in a Texas college town.

No country-western bands.

Then again, any event that defines this community is hard to pin down. Considering the stereotypes most people attach to Texas A&M University, the decision to present such a diverse cross-section of musical talent at North By Northgate must have taken some guts.

This event goes beyond most commercial enterprises by finally confronting the misconception that Aggies are all boot-scootin' Wrangler-clad hicks — Aggies have a unique sense of musical taste. The range of genres chosen to appeal to this crowd proves the fallacy behind the old stereotype.

And concert-goers don't have to be indigenous to B-CS to appreciate the lineup. Austin isn't the only music scene NXNG is tapping into. Bands

from Los Angeles to Philadelphia will join local regulars, achieving an unprecedented fusion of acclaimed and unknown, mainstream and eclectic.

Mark McKenzie, a 103.9 disk jockey said, "Anyone who listens to music should be attracted to this. It reflects a broad spectrum of music, everything from the electronic sound to folk."

The festival will reach out to those who are usually neglected in the live-music scene, McKenzie said. By offering artists with followings from other areas, almost every musical base is covered.

"There is a diversity in the lineup, since bands from other areas are also playing," McKenzie said. "Some of these bands also have a strong following. Drill Team is on the verge of going national."

Ruthie Foster and Breedlove, who carry a loyal fan base in this area, are only a few of the standouts scheduled to perform.

The unique twist achieved by NXNG organizers lies in the festival's combination of large-appeal bands and local favorites. Being a college town, this area boasts a number of gifted musicians who are rarely given top billing. B-CS has a hidden music scene that rarely surfaces in such a publicized occasion.

McKenzie says the efforts of the organizers allows these obscure bands, "to come out of the cracks and

crevices of the music scene."

Widely-recognized groups like Huffamoose and Drill Team will appeal to the listeners that smaller bands struggle to attract. Karma Jet and Clandestine can finally enjoy an audience most performers take for granted.

A festival of this magnitude will afford ample exposure for the many unbilled bands struggling for publicity in this area. And music-lovers who rarely find a performance that satisfies a diverse palate will find a compelling reason to battle Northgate parking on a Friday night.

While indulging listeners with this medley of musicians, NXNG also introduces a dimension massive concerts fail to address.

By donating to charities, the Northgate Merchants Association shifts the focus from commercial gain to community outreach.

In its inaugural year, a portion of NXNG's proceeds will go to Junction Five-O-Five and the Brazos Food Bank, proving that profit isn't the organizers' primary motive.

Although many will compare it to South by Southwest, it isn't the size that defines the impact of the festival on this community — it's the sincerity.

Helen Clancy is a senior English major.



HELEN CLANCY
columnist



MAIL CALL

Ignoring poor movies does not equal racism

In response to Aaron Meier's March column: Meier's column accusing the Academy of racism was absolutely uncouth. First, the members of the Academy are just like most of us — they watch the same movies we did, and of us saw *Eve's Bayou* or even *Stand*, for that matter. Did *Eve's Bayou* ever even make it to the big screen? Second, regardless of the importance of the story behind *Amistad*, the movie was ill put together, a general disaster, considering

what Spielberg is capable of. While I do think Djimon Hounsou gave a better performance than anyone else in the movie, I do not think anyone in the Academy ignored it because of his ethnic background. It just wasn't a very memorable movie, so when nomination ballots went out, he was simply forgotten because of the lousy performances of everyone else surrounding the movie (black, white or green). So, please, Meier, get off your high horse and find a 'cause' that actually exists.

Deeann Schank Bleifeld

Research on cartoon nostalgia falls short

I am disappointed to see such a news-worthy article written incompletely. In the March 23 *Battalion* Chris Martin and Rhonda Reinhart submitted a well-thought out yet highly incomplete article on cartoons of the '80s. Many highly acclaimed cartoons were not included — especially a little cartoon titled "Transformers." How many of the cartoons listed

had a full-length feature film made, which is impossible to rent anymore because everyone steals the copies? I don't remember a Scooby-Doo movie, oh wait, I do remember an episode with the Three Stooges and another one with the Harlem Globetrotters. I don't suppose that is the same as a full-length movie though. And another point of correction, in the G.I. Joe section it was mentioned that Lady Jane was a lesbian. If so, then why was she after Flint all of the time?

Mark Breedlove
Class of '98

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