

Entertainment & Art

Youth Theater Unlimited Shines in Antigone

By Arturo Lindsay

If Antigone's author, the ancient Greek Sophocles, was in the audience at the Hartford State Company's Old Place on Feb. 27, I'm sure he would have joined the rest of us in a standing ovation for Youth Theater Unlimited's performance of his play "Antigone."

While this presentation may have differed greatly from its first performance in 421 B.C., the actors did not lose the meaning of the play.

Much of the credit for this group's performance is owed to the talent and dedication of Clay Stevenson, the director. Stevenson's enthusiasm and rapport with his actors is easily shown when he talks about them.

Stevenson says, "They make me young. They challenge me and I challenge them."

The director goes on to say that his actors trust him and they are willing to try what he asks them.

To give his actors understanding of the political issues in this Greek Classic,

Stevenson quotes Martin Luther King, Jr. He uses either the collective or individual experiences of his actors to help them understand the meaning of their lines or scenes.

And it works. All the actors seemed to understand their characters and the contradictions in their characters' lives.

The show opened with a well choreographed fight scene that was virtually a dance between army of Etocles who is played by Luis Robles, and the army of Polgines who is played by Gregory Thomas.

Equally well choreographed was the Chorus, a group of 18 that moved well as a mass, yet maintained individual idiosyncrasies in their walk, their voices, and their reactions to the events being played out.

Denise Collins gave a splendid performance as a defiant Antigone who buries her brother despite



the King's orders and her sister's pleas.

Bill Yousman is very powerful as Creon, King of Thebes. Creon struggles with Antigone's disobedience of his orders, his son's love for Antigone, and his own status as a leader.

Wayne Pretlow is a convincing Tiresias, the blind prophet who tells of more impending doom, and Willie Perez is great as the messenger who tells us of the horrors that have occurred.

While all the actors demonstrated good stage presence, diction, projection, and articulation, they all could use some help with their gestures. At times, it seemed like they did not know what to do

with their hands.

The costume and make up for the Chorus was superb, while the set was simple and very functional with the exception of the door. As actors exited through the door, they were forced to turn around to close it.

This blew many a great exit.

Toward the end of this play, I noticed a row of teenagers intently watching each movement on the stage. They were literally sitting on the edge of their seats. I thought to myself, "How beautiful it is to see young people involved with the theater."

Thank you Youth theater Unlimited. Thank you Clay Stevenson. I expect to see more of you.