



"HAMLET". Written by William Shakespeare. Adapted for the texture of the mid-twentieth century by Arthur McDonald. Produced by the Highland Players. Directed by Arthur McDonald. Cast:

Francisco . . . . .Jed Howell  
 Bernardo . . . . .Mike Quinn  
 Horatio . . . . .Louie Goodson  
 Marcellus . . . . .Gray Clark  
 The Ghost . . . . .Bob Lilly  
 Claudius . . . . .Barry Marshall  
 Voltimand . . . . .Mac Damron  
 Laertes . . . . .Winston Hensley  
 Polonius . . . . .Waverly Land  
 Hamlet . . . . .Dennis Richards  
 Gertrude . . . . .Mary Key  
 Ophelia . . . . .Mary B. Higgins  
 Ladies of the Court, Gail Craddock, Carol Fetter, Kathy Pooley  
 Reynaldo . . . . .Don Campbell  
 Rosencrantz . . . . .Rick Erismann  
 Guildenstern . . . . .Jeff Alheim  
 Player King . . . . .Pete Peery  
 Player Queen . . . . .Kathy Koch  
 Player Lucianus . . . . .Pat Ruffin  
 Player Musician . . . . .Craig Simmons

Fortinbras . . . . .Bob Lilly  
 Captain . . . . .Doug Colby  
 Gentleman . . . . .Doug Raynor  
 First Gravedigger . . . . .John Ogletree  
 Second Gravedigger . . . . .Jack Liggett  
 Priest . . . . .George Shaffer  
 Osric . . . . .Traywick Newton  
 Scenic design by Dub Narramore. Assistant to the director: Sally Carlson. Lighting designed by Joe Mitchell; executed by Lynn Cansler, Ron Wilkerson, Julia Wilson. Costuming: Sally Syphrit. Music by Lydia Johnson. Properties: Pat Pledger. Makeup by Phyllis Dieth. Rehearsal Assistant: Sharon White. Stage Manager:

Kaye Comer. House Manager: Sarah Bell. Poster design by Lynn Cansler. Fencing advisor: Dr. Leslie Bullock. Playing nightly in the Liberal Arts Auditorium through Saturday.

In a lifetime, this critic has attended exactly twenty-five plays -- including shows by national touring companies, professional stock troupes, high-school amateurs, the Highland Players, and one Broadway company. I firmly believe with all sincerity, and without pretending to force truth from an exaggeration, that the twenty-fifth play on the list is far and away the best, the most brilliant, the most stunning presentation of the whole lot. The twenty-fifth is Arthur McDonald's adaptation of "Hamlet".

There is no exaggeration at all here, nor any attempt at flattering the Players for the sake of being pleasant. They have truly outdone themselves, and at the same time have outdone plenty of others. In fact, the only factor preventing the production from being called professional is that nobody is getting paid for the priceless work.

It is largely this superb acting that has caused the show to cease being an aging script of three-hundred-sixty-odd years and to suddenly be reborn as a thrillingly alive performance. And heading the acting company is a young man who introduced himself inconspicuously by singing "Faster

## ... A Most Powerful Prince

Than Sound", etc., seven months ago; rose to costar as the cynical Cliff in "Look Back in Anger"; and now is declaring: "I'll catch the conscience of a king" in a way that catches the conscience of an audience, never lets go, and will be remembered for a long time to come.

The young man's name, if you haven't already heard, is Dennis Richards; Mr. Richards does not play Hamlet, but becomes Hamlet convincingly well. He opens the Prince's soul to the viewer and suddenly the play is no longer a simple study of a man but an exposition through that man of the workings of the mind, the value of life, and the meaning of death.

The power of the presentation is that, while the lines explore the emotions, the company's acting is pulling the audience into the play, demanding involvement, wrapping around a nerve and pulling relentlessly. This is total theater -- without a single actor leaving the stage to climb among the spectators.

Dub Narramore is responsible for the production design idea, an entirely black set consisting of a collection of irregularly shaped forms, both on the ground and in suspension, using a plastic fringe serving as a secondary curtain. The color scheme allows only black and emerald green in the costuming -- credit on the garments to Sally Syphrit -- with the one variation being the colorfully dressed group of traveling actors.

But it is Mr. McDonald who deserves the praise for giving "Hamlet" a new lease on life, through what the playbill calls his adaptation "for the texture of the mid-twentieth century." He has wisely specified no time period in his setting, so the action displayed is as young and new as each viewer's mind wishes to make it. Somehow, his characters not only speak, but also live, think and react. And suddenly we're back to the topic of actors.

All very well, for there is much to be commended in that area. There is, first of all, Mary B. Higgins, who, as Ophelia, turns in one of the finest performances that this campus stage is ever likely to witness. She is arresting on her first entrance and throughout the first act; but it is in the second act, after Hamlet has sharply withdrawn his love for her and then killed her father by mistake, when she loses her reason, that she proves herself an outstandingly capable actress. The unfortunate fact is that she is a senior, that now that we have seen the calibre of her talent she will no longer be around to channel it in the Players' direction.

The performances by supporting actors are also outstanding. Perhaps the most prominent is Louie Goodson, very strong and very frightened as he makes his debut in the role of Hamlet's close associate Horatio. One of the most striking character changes is found in Ophelia's brother Laertes, portrayed by Winston Hensley, another newcomer; Laertes is initially an easygoing, fraternal fellow, but as the plot progresses he takes on an air of weariness which gives way to outspoken bitterness at the news of the murder of his father by Hamlet.

As Hamlet's uncle, the ruling King Claudius of Denmark, Barry Marshall is a most despicable viper. His portrait of a demonic sovereign is surprisingly complete for his somewhat limited appearances. Comic relief is achieved skillfully at the hands of Waverly Land, playing Polonius, and Traywick Newton, as the effeminate Osric. And the list of fine performers goes on and on, including virtually the entire cast.

Considering every facet of the production, this reviewer has but a single reservation. The music, or noise, or whatever, which is employed during the brief lulls between scenes, is generally effective to some ex-

tent, but some is carried much too far and tends to become obnoxious. One particular sound, a rhythm tapped out on a triangle, used during the performance of the traveling actors, is all but maddening when it stops. But this one problem is hardly enough to mar the brilliance of the entire production.

There are still, inevitably, some who will stoutly claim that this column is a gross exaggeration of the good points of the current show. Again I assure all that this is far from the case -- I defy, in fact, those doubters to attend a performance and, considering the evidence carefully, not change their minds.

So here we are at the end of another year, both for the newspaper and for the Highland Players. Artistically, it has been an excellent season for the Players, and presumably it has been a profitable one. This critic, in keeping with a tradition he began last year, again presents his selections of "bests" from the past four plays -- pointing out that no one but himself made these choices, and therefore no one else is to blame.

It might be added that some of these selections were far from easy to make; to wit, the choice of actor and supporting actor each presented several possibilities, each excellent, and it was no easy task deciding between them. And in the category of actresses, the two selected were both so perfect (and in such completely unlike roles) that I eventually gave up trying to choose one or the other, and listed them both.

Without further introduction, here is this critic's list for the past year's achievements:

Best Play (criterion is quality of production, rather than the book of the play): "HAMLET", directed by Arthur McDonald.

Best Actor, primary role: DENNIS RICHARDS in "Hamlet".

Best Actress, primary role: MARY B. HIGGINS in "Hamlet", and SUSAN MOWREY in "High Spirits".

Best Actor, featured or supporting: LOUIE GOODSON in "Hamlet".

Best Actress, featured or supporting: DAWN TAYLOR in "Look Back in Anger".

Best Production Design: JEFF ALHEIM for "Arms and the Man".

Most Promising Debuts: CYNTHIA SWEET in "Look Back in Anger", BILL JOHNS in "Arms and the Man", and WINSTON HENSLEY in "Hamlet".

And that's it for the season. Here's to another successful one next year, with congratulations to all involved with making the past year memorable.

## Board of Visitors To Pay Weekend Visit

Dr. Donald J. Hart, president-elect of St. Andrews, and Wallace B. Edgerton, deputy chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, will be guest speakers here this weekend at the third annual meeting of the college's Board of Visitors.

Dr. Hart, who will take office July 1, will address the group at a Friday night banquet at the Country Club of North Carolina.

Mr. Edgerton will speak at a luncheon Saturday at the Student Center. He assumed his present post in 1966. He served as administrative assistant to Senator Harrison A. Williams from 1959 until 1963 when he established a private consulting service for associations and communities seeking policy guidance on federal programs in community development and education.

John F. Watlington, president of Wachovia Bank and Trust Co. and vice chairman of the Visitors, will preside over the program Saturday morning at the Liberal Arts building which will include general sessions and three interest-group discussions on student life, the Basic Science program, and the program for physically handicapped students.

Included in entertainment for the wives of Visitors will be a coffee hour at the home of Mrs. Halbert Jones whose husband is vice-chairman of the Board of Trustees. Wives also will examine the role of the theatrical costumer through the showing of costumes used in various productions by the Highland Players.

The Board of Visitors is made leaders, primarily from North Carolina, enlisted to aid in the development of understanding and support for St. Andrews.



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THE PHELGMSH COLLECTION will appear next Thursday night at the poetry readings. The group will perform their recently created "Sylvetree and Doris at the Movies". From top to bottom: Todd Davis, Chuck White, John Lawson, and Ames Arnold.

## Festival

(Continued from Page 1)

tic. Those who attend will hear such manifestos as "Erection", "Wolf at the Door", both vocals, and "Captain Maribeau" an instrumental featuring Larry Hammond on the organ.

Davis created the words for the music, which was scored by Lawson and arranged by White.

That night there will be a reception following the readings for the student art show. It features sculpture, pen and ink drawings and painting.

Saturday and Sunday are the dates set for the presentation of three twentieth century plays, directed and acted by students.

"Aria de Capa" written by Edna St. Vincent Millay, is directed by Kathy Pooley. The cast includes Carol Fetter, Joe Mitchell, Pat Ruffin, Ron Wilkerson and Evan Davis.

Sally Syphrit is directing a one act by the English playwright, Harold Pinter, entitled "A Slight Ache". Doug Colby and Phyllis Deith handle the acting chores, assisted by one back-up actor.

Dudley, formerly David Wagner, will direct "The Dairy of Adam and Eve," a play based on the writings of Mark Twain.

Pianist Philip Clarke will round out the festival with an evening of contemporary music. His wife will accompany on the violin and they will feature the music of Bartok, Schoenberg and Prokofieff.

With the Clarkes' finale, so goes the Contemporary Arts Festival for 1969, a combination of student and faculty creativity; and the work of professional writers, musicians, and directors.

This collection of events can prove fulfilling and exciting, even for the Laurinburg and St. Andrews busy.

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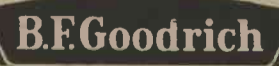
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