

Two Reviews Of Edward II

I BY STEVIE DANIELS

The performance of Bertolt Brecht's "Edward II" has been met with comments such as "it was too discontinuous" or "it was on the brink of comedy" or "the language was inappropriate." These are criticisms on one hand but on the other hand are accurate statements about Brecht's intentions.

Soon after "Edward II" was written, Brecht became interested in comedy and wrote several short farces, which explains some of the tendency towards humor in this play. Brecht always rejected the "closed" form of classical plays and used the "open" form of chronicle plays which had freedom of movement, discontinuity, and changes of scene which allowed Brecht to capture historical drama and "epic" character. Part of his intention was to "de-heroize" royalty which at that time had become questionable. Recall Edward's comment just at the brink of war, "Is this the life of royalty?"

One of the ways he accomplished this was by the revelation of moral chaos in Edward's times—of betrayal, perjury and double-dealing. The response of the Archbishop of Winchester to Mortimer's question of where the church stood in relation to the king reveals the church's partnership in double-dealing. "The Church was with whom God was." "And with whom was God?" "With him who was victorious, Mortimer."

The language of the play is intentionally crude and has a stumbling, disjointed effect to reflect the havoc of the times. Gaveston's comments were often disjointed such as "Keep from living until the end of time."

Danny Mizell as Edward II was a most effective force in his original execution of Brecht's intentions. His ability to continue the contradiction between being royalty and being deroyalized was a major strength in the total performance. His royalty was built by the devotion of Queen Anne and Spencer while the effect of Gaveston and Mortimer was to ultimately undermine his royal aspects.

Gaveston's character was ironic and performed to the utmost by Clark Einbinder through body movement, facial expression and tone of voice. While the loved one of Edward which gave him importance and strength he was also haughty, scared and weak. Edward's relationship to Gaveston was an expression of beauty and affection but it was perverted and distorted by the public's reaction to it which was to call Gaveston,

the king's whore.

The king's deep love for Gaveston revealed his own confusion about what his position meant. Mizell portrayed the king's struggle between self and kingdom and his fluctuations back and forth through expressions, and a tremendously moving voice which evoked both compassion and hatred from the audience for Edward. Edward's confusion leads to the whole court's confusion during the war. Mortimer suggests that even Gaveston might have been saved if Edward had been less confusing and less drastic in action.

Mortimer, played by Bill Peterson served as a provoking agent for the king, drawing him into rhetorical contests and battles of wit even concerning life and death. Mortimer was a man who could not feel and remained lost in his studies and detachment from reality. At certain tense moments when Mortimer realized that his verbal wit was not going to save him he became tense, and distracted with nervous shakes of his head like a rat in a corner. Peterson's portrayal of arrogance and sly rhetoric heightened tension throughout the drama. The audience was convinced that even seeming moments of emotion were never really felt by Mortimer.

Queen Anne, played by Aurelia Huff was much more natural and believable character as the "she-wolf" returned to London to destroy Edward. Her dog-like devotion to Edward, which he detested, in the early part of the play seemed false and shallow contrasted to the intensity of Edward's attraction to Gaveston. Anne's lapse into drunkenness and coupling with Mortimer revealed her corruptness and inability to find order in the havoc of her life and country. Even young Edward III sees that she feels nothing for his father's death and banishes her from England.

Kent, Steve Chasson, Bishop of Coventry, Ken McCauley, Lancaster, Kevin Corrigan, Rice ap Howell, Dave Smith, James, Calhoun Chappell and the soldiers, Bob Blumenstein, Jeff Brigg, Casey Dorenbusch, Danny Haley, Walter Kuentzel and Tom Stuart were all significant parts of the rising and falling tensions of the drama. The betrayal of Edward by Baldock was a very well-executed scene and the discussion between Edward and the Bishop of Con-

ventry about his abdication was also significant. In this scene the king has realized he has been reduced to "a sharp shadow" by his loss of power. He relates his misfortunes and struggles to conflicts with the natural elements and calls upon the sun to sustain him. He sees that all is vanity while at the same time Mortimer is confusing the court in London and Anne laughs at the emptiness of the world.

Mizell as Edward develops throughout the play becoming more and more involved with the character of Edward just as Edward himself is learning about himself in relation to his kingdom and the people in his life. It's as if while Edward, the character is losing a role and learning self, Mizell, the actor is gaining a new definition of self and steps out of self. As Edward lost all persons, status and things which defined his royalty (with which his self had been caught up) he began to understand himself and his world. As he attempted to discuss his knowledge it appeared only as madness to his protectors. Even at the end when Edward has been dragged through the countryside "like a calf" and soaked in the dung of the city, there is a sense portrayed by Mizell that Edward was unique or "royal" while Anne, the clergy (excepting Bishop of Conventry), Mortimer, and others were base and selfless.

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II BY KATHY LUNSFORD AND COLLEEN RAGAN

Edward II by Bertolt Brecht, based on a play by Christopher Marlowe, is a study in the behavior of men who are masters of their own fate. The play was presented for the public March 14th through March 17th.

The play centers around King Edward and the abdication of the throne as well as his relationships with his wife, Queen Anne and Gaveston. This drama had a rather slow beginning with the actors not working as a cohesive unit. As the play progressed, it achieved a certain amount of unity with the actors becoming more involved in their characters.

Danny Mizell, as King Edward II, was too eloquent in his execution of the role. Yet it is also to be understood that a certain amount of this was necessary in this type of character.

Clark Einbinder provided a

touch of comic relief even though at times he came on as a bit too much.

Queen Anne, portrayed by Aurelia Huff, was the most dynamic performer in the play, despite her natural accent that tended to get in the way of her performance. Her performance added a sense of realism that otherwise would not have been evident despite the authenticity of the story.

Bill Peterson, as Mortimer, executed his role very well.

Although the scenery was virtually non-existent and the lighting was glaring, the costumes were excellent. The design of the costumes were definite representatives of the era.

Overall, the play was not quite up to expectations. It is possible that the roles called for more experienced acting.

Concrete Poetry

BY LEE VAN ZANDT

Now showing in the Foyer of the Library is "The World of Jonathan Williams" part of the Black Mountain Festival. This exhibit will be up until the 21st of April. Featured in this exhibit are silkscreens of various words and word orders which seem rather odd at first if you don't know what they are (as I didn't). These works are what poets call Concrete poetry, which is a way of making visual designs out of letters and words, depicting an image. The most effective of these is a green or white silkscreen with the words "Clipped Green" on it, the top and bottom of the words cut off. Concrete poetry "aims in general at the ideogrammatic the area between conventional

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poetry and visual art. This form of poetry is something to look at rather than to read, while it still employs the use of metaphors, images, speech and sounds.

So, now that you know what these things in the library are, go by and see how this art can do what poems traditionally have done; using language in delightful ways that reveal meanings.

Recitals

In competition to all the festivities of Bacchanalia Friday night, there was still another cultural event, the Jr. recital of Harcourt Waller III. Harcourt opened his performance with Preludes and Fugues (nos. 5 and 15) by Bach then played Presto, Large Emistro, also by Bach. Following the Bach came a Minuet and Trio along with a Rondo by Beethoven. All of the pieces that Harcourt played came across very musically and successfully. After a short intermission, Harcourt continued and finished with two pieces of Chopin, an Impromptu and Ballade.

David Evans, tenor and member of the music faculty at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, will appear in recital Monday, April 15, at 8 p.m. in the gallery of the Vardell Music Building. Piano accompanist will be Bill McNair, a junior majoring in piano performance.

Evans' program will consist of solo songs and opera arias drawn from a variety of works spanning the Baroque to contemporary period.

Evans' recital will be followed by a reception for those attending.

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