

# A play to catch the conscience of a King

The North Carolina Shakespeare Festival has returned to High Point for its nineteenth season. I attended their performance of Robert Bolt's drama, *A Man For All Seasons*, last Thursday. The play was first produced in 1961, but the sixteenth-century costumes, as well as the tragic political theme, made it the perfect complement to the Shakespeare plays that are being performed throughout mid-October. The play focused on Sir Thomas More's struggle to uphold his Catholic faith after Henry VIII broke with the Church in Rome. Graham Smith, in his eighth season with NCSF, played the noble More. A strong actor was needed to convince the audience that More would give up his career, his family, and finally his life because he would not

support the king; Smith was perfectly cast. He filled the role with honor and integrity and convinced the audience that More's convictions were steadfast.

Opposite Smith was Allan Hickle-Edwards as the evil Thomas Cromwell. Hickle-Edwards played a heartless, unethical lackey to the king who used deceit and trickery to finally convict More. Hickle-Edwards was truly a bad to the bone Cromwell. When one of More's allies told Cromwell that his scare tactics would never work on More, Hickle-Edwards responded by snuffing an open flame with his bare hand.

## Play Review Paige Layno

However, Cromwell's favor by the king was short-lived. He, too, loses his life by the hands of the capricious Henry.

One of the most interesting relationships in the play was between More and his ex-employee, the aptly-named Richard Rich, played by John Haggerty. When the play opened, More offered Rich a valuable bowl that had been an attempted bribe. Rich lustfully eyed the bowl, and More curiously asked what he would do with it. Rich unabashedly admitted that he would sell it and "buy some decent clothes." Rich left the More household to seek the first of his ill-gotten gains, and each time he reappeared on stage he was dressed finer than before. He joined Cromwell and lied about More in exchange for money and titles. He traded honor for riches and fine clothes. Meanwhile, each time More walked on stage, he would lose a little of his finery. He removed his Lord Chancellor's medal willingly but refused to compromise his morals. The men's values on worth showed their different ideas of morality. As the play progressed, More and his clothes got shabbier, but his beliefs held strong.

Other notable performers in this production were the Common Man, played by Lucius Houghton and the Duke of Norfolk, played by Mark Kincaid. Houghton offered most of the comic relief of this play with some one-on-one with the audience. Kincaid's massive size and booming voice commanded attention each time he stomped on stage. Even Cromwell shied when Norfolk addressed him. I'm looking forward to seeing Kincaid strut and fret his hour upon the stage as Macbeth in the tragedy of the Scottish Thane. By far, the best and, unfortunately, the shortest performance was by Andy Paterson as the jolly and rotund Henry VIII. Paterson's energy was boundless, and his elaborate costume as the Tudor monarch made him look as if he had stepped from the pages of an

English history book. He looked incredibly like the young, beardless Henry. His jovial manner was not to be misunderstood, however. His desire for More's support was apparent underneath his playful facade. The audience, as well as More, was aware that the king's wishes would be carried out, or a one-way ticket to the Tower would be issued.

The High Point Theater stage was mostly bare, and the company carried minimal props onto the stage when needed. There was a second level where upon a few scenes were acted. One that was especially effective was between More and Cardinal Wolsey, played by Mark Lazar. The stage was dark except for a candle between More and Wolsey as they sat at the cardinal's desk. More was given the chance to show his support for the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and for his break from the Church. The cardinal's red robe and the eerie light flickering created the feeling that More was being offered the chance to sell his soul. The lower level of the stage was set up like a chess board. The director, Imre Goldstein, felt "that the action of the play is most like a game of chess...for it ends not when you get the king, but when the king gets you, in this case Thomas More." To me, the action of the play *was* like a game of chess: it was long and drawn out. While I enjoyed the actors, the play was lengthy, almost three hours. However, the talented actors are sure to enchant audiences in "the two hours' traffic of our stage" when they perform *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Plus, these plays will offer the women of NCSF a chance to shine.

Two trips are being arranged by the ENG 355 and ENG 201 classes to take a pilgrimage to High Point and see *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: Tuesday, Oct. 3 (tickets are \$10.00) and Friday, Oct. 6 (tickets are \$12.00). Please call Dr. Walton at 8359 by Friday if you'd like to see what fools mortals can be and what wonders the liquor of a purple pansy in a lover's eyes can create!

## SGA Corner

- Order your Student/ Faculty Directory today! The directory includes on and off campus names, school addresses and phone numbers, birthdays and also faculty and staff campus phone numbers. This directory will be spiral-bound with a colored cover. To order your directory, send \$4 and your name and phone number to Amy Harper at 318 Heilman.
- The first edition of the SGA newsletter "Connections," will be out on September 22. Be sure to pick up your copy and meet your new SGA Executive Board.
- The first Open House of this semester will be held on September 23, from 1 to 5 p.m. Be sure to invite your friends!
- WINGS will be holding a meeting on Sept. 25, at 10 a.m. in 114 Harris. All members be sure to attend!
- An Ethical Leadership Reception will be held on Sept. 27, at 7 p.m. in Carswell Auditorium. Mark your calendar, invitations will be coming soon!
- Everyone is invited to join WINGS for an "End of the Summer Bash" on Sept. 29. Come out and join us in the courtyard for good food, volleyball and a great time. RSVP by Sept. 26, at 829-8353.
- Get ready to "Free Your Mind" at the Student Life Forum on Oct. 5. Bring concerns, suggestions, ideas and an open mind to the Chapel from 7 to 9 p.m. You can make a difference! Your agenda is our agenda!