

'Becket' slow but powerful

■ Two strong lead actors make the Lab! play a successful probe of ambition.

The Lab! Theatre's second production, Jean Anouilh's "Becket," deals with strong issues of love and duty. However, three hours is more than enough time for the plot to be mired in historical detail.

Despite the length of the play, the production is distinguished by the strength of its two leading men. The intense friendship between Becket and King Henry II and the eventual destruction it causes are the themes of "Becket."

Tally Sessions gives an amazing performance as Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Sessions' dramatic strength is a welcome surprise. His hyperactive comedic roles in "Kiss Me Kate" and "As You Like It" were no indication of the reality he creates in this serious and powerful role.

SCOTT WHITTIER

Theater Review
Lab! Theatre
Graham Memorial



Tally Sessions, as Becket in the Lab! Theatre's performance of "Becket," prays to God for guidance to fight off the temptation to become a martyr. "Becket" runs in the basement of Graham Memorial through Tuesday.

Mac Rogers brings incredible energy to the character of Henry, although at times the king's sudden mood swings are difficult to convey. It is refreshing to see Rogers play something other than the brooding intellectual, a role that has become familiar to him in plays like "Intifada" and "The Shadow Box." Rogers hasn't displayed this level of intensity since his first role as a freshman in "Holy Ghost."

The large ensemble cast fails to sup-

port the two leads. Aside from a few good performances, the horde of extras is marked by overacting. There are 18 people in this show and plenty is going on; there is no need to mug and smile and indicate every thought just because your character doesn't have any lines.

Jack Dillon, the director of "Becket," deserves both criticism and praise. There are just too many people in this cast. The extras are disjointed, the play is long and there is a slow-motion climax that fails to

be climactic. However, the casting of Sessions and Rogers in roles that are so different from their theatrical tendencies is a stroke of genius. Both actors have stretched their talents, resulting in exceptional performances.

If you love English history, have three hours to kill or want to see Mac and Tally do something really different and good, go see "Becket." There are three more shows, at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. today and at 5 p.m. Tuesday.

Olympic flame brightens fall Clef Hangers concert

■ The all-male a cappella group delivered laughs and harmonies Friday night.

As Dean Smith carried a replica of the Olympic torch into Memorial Hall on Friday night, the crowd knew they were in for a special event. The UNC basketball god was welcomed by roars, cheers and a standing ovation as he announced, "Let the games begin."

What was Smith doing out of the Dean Dome? He was introducing the Clef Hangers, who celebrated their 20th Annual Fall Concert with the spirit of the Olympics.

The Clefs released their boyish humor and playful theatrics in the skits they performed between songs, poking fun at the 1996 summer Olympic announcers, various Olympic events and mocking the always-sappy success stories featured in Olympic commentary. While these skits bordered on silly, they were well-done little asides that the audience undeniably enjoyed.

But what the Clefs did best was sing. The group went through a diverse list of 21 songs ranging from oldies to contemporary and popular tunes to funny improvisations. Each song was performed with powerful expressive voices in a variety of ranges: tenors, basses and baritones. For the first half the Clefs sang dressed in their traditional outfits of bow ties and vests adorned with buttons. After intermission they dressed in tailed tuxedos.

One of the most powerful moments was the group's memorial to former member Bradley Ross King, who died in a car accident this summer. The group sang "Go Rest on That High Mountain," lead by J.B. Baker. They gave an emotional rendition and powerful performance that received a standing ovation.

The Clefs opened with the '80s tune "Africa," a solid beginning to an entertaining evening. They were humorous and witty in nearly all of their songs. In "Happy Birthday," they put a clever spin on an everyday tune. In "Barbara Ann"

the Clefs added their own rendition of the Spanish dance craze, the Macarena, welcomed by roars of laughter from the audience.

When the Clefs did their improvised dance and amusing asides they put a twist on their clean cut, boy next door images and showed their individual charming personalities.

In "Gangsters Paradise," the group changed the song into a hysterical, playful number that mocked Duke and N.C. State University and called it "Tar Heel Paradise."

While I can't say that the Clefs should quit a cappella and switch to rapping anytime in the near future (I'm sure Coolio would agree with me), they definitely made an entertaining and clever try.

Still, the audience was filled with Clef groupies who adored their upbeat, playful songs such as "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Fresh," and they cheered in appreciation after every song.

The audience also loved their slow and more serious tunes, and I was impressed by the range of their voices on different selections.

I especially liked Greg Poarch's deep, projecting voice on "Faithfully." Songs such as "Someone Else's Star," featuring junior Jerod Kirby, and "Ave Maria" demonstrated the group's depth and versatility.

For the finale, the Clefs recognized the 50 Clef alumni in the audience and invited them on stage to perform, singing "In Close Harmony," which was written by Tristan Bishop and arranged by Brannon Wiles, both 1991 UNC graduates.

The group sang the alma mater, joined by the audience, and ended with "A Parting Blessing," and received yet another standing ovation. The unity of the Clef Hangers on stage was a touching way to end a great performance.

Before I had seen firsthand the fervor of the audience, I was not aware that the Clef Hangers were such a phenomenon. I had never attended one of their concerts, nor was I familiar with their history.

However, at the end of their sold-out performance I understood their appeal and was truly taken with their humor — and of course with their wonderful voices.

Classical guitarist gives masterful, diverse performance

In desperate outside kick situations in football, the defense often inserts what is known as their "hands team," comprised of wide receivers and defensive backs with nimble hands and quick reflexes.

Were he 20 or so years younger and perhaps a little heavier, Christopher Parkening could well be on the football field instead of the concert stage; his performance Saturday evening confirmed his status as one of the world's pre-eminent classical guitarists.

BRENT SIMON

Concert Review
Christopher Parkening
Memorial Hall, UNC

Joined by the all-female Colorado Quartet, the 48-year-old Parkening displayed his enormous musical skills in a two-hour concert, the first performance in the 1996-97 Carolina Union Performing Arts Series. Physically appearing like a cross between Bill Pullman and Jimmy Johnson, Parkening exhibited a wide timbral range, carefully and deliberately coaxing sound after amazing sound from his instrument.

Whether on solos or with the strong cello accompaniment of Diane Chaplin, Parkening held the audience's attention with his rapidly moving fingers, carrying them through a playlist that often called

for alternating slow and fast rhythms. At absolutely no point in the evening did anyone bellow, "Play some Skynyrd!"

The performance was also a musical journey of sorts, spanning music written in the late 1500s, to Antonio Vivaldi's three-movement "Concerto in D Major," to a modern-day composition written by Andrew York especially for Parkening. While Parkening's mastery was clearly the focal point of the evening, members of the Quartet also had the chance to flex their solo talents on Alberto Ginastera's compact, discordantly Hitchcockian "Quartet Number 2."

Using a beautiful José Ramirez guitar, Parkening returned from the intermis-

sion with several consecutive strong pieces. He played two highly emotive, Spanish blues-flavored numbers by Brazilian composer Heitor Villa Lobos and laid into the fast-paced Middle Eastern rhythms of Carlo Domeniconi's "Koyunbaba" with a passion that clearly reflected his love of the music.

There's a base thrill in watching Christopher Parkening play — it's fabulous to see someone who is quite obviously the best in his field. But it's also interesting to view the music through his body language, to watch as he elucidates meaning and emotion from each composition. And his boyish charm and finely sculptured hair don't hurt either.

ADVERTISEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

NIKE STUDENT REP

NIKE will be here next week to find the next UNC NIKE student rep. It could be you . . . if you love sports and have unlimited energy and creativity. Interested? Send something to

SPORTS.PAGE@NIKE.COM

that sets you apart.

LSAT **GMAT**

GRE **MCAT**

Classes for December Exams Begin Soon!

LSAT.....Oct. 28
GMAT.....Nov. 26

EARLY BIRD MCAT begins November 3rd!
Space is limited!

For More Information Call 493-5000 or 1-800-KAP-TEST

KAPLAN

UNC-Chapel Hill

SUPERTECH
of the year **AWARD**

Entrants must be full-time employees (40 hours per week)

Entrants will be judged on:

- hard work
- creativity
- enthusiasm
- teamwork
- humor
- utilization of glassware

GREAT PRIZES

first prize
\$500 American Express gift certificate

\$500 Dealer credit for glassware for your lab from the new KIMBLE/KONTES catalog, KK-148

second prize
\$250 American Express gift certificate

third prize
\$100 American Express gift certificate

Winners to be announced and prizes awarded at a FREE luncheon for all eligible participants on 12/17/96.

SPONSORED BY

KIMBLE KONTES
Your most complete source for quality laboratory glassware

entry forms must be submitted by 11/15/96

see your department office for details