

The crucifixion of Jesus...



Christ carries the cross...

## Passion Play Presents The Way Jesus Lived

Story By LIB STEWART

Bill and Helen McDaniel of Kings Mountain had tickets to the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany for over a year and are among 480,000 people, including a number from this area and North Carolina, who have witnessed the controversial drama which celebrates this summer its 346th anniversary.

From all over the world people have gone to the picturesque valley to experience what local citizens say is the most moving and powerful thing they have felt since becoming a Christian. The universal appeal of the play, which was first staged in 1634, had an impact on all ages who have seen it.

"The Passion Play was presented in the simple way Jesus lived on the earth. I thought they followed the Scriptures very closely. The Prologues and the Tableaux were excellent. I think the part of Judas was

overplayed. The scenes of the cross and the grave were good but the resurrection was not emphasized enough. Had it not been for the resurrection, we would not enjoy salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord today", said McDaniel.

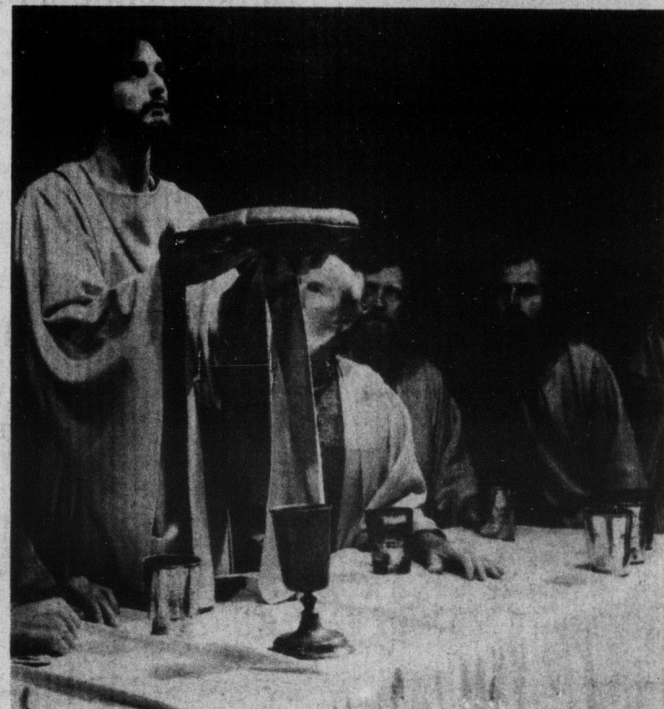
"Theologically it was nearest to the Bible of any production I have ever seen", said McDaniel, who said that those who expect a dominant overwhelming performance by "Christ" are disappointed. The character of Christ personifies humility and Jesus' disciples, especially John, are low-keyed.

The tableaux, music, and staging are expertly done, said McDaniel, by a cast of about two dozen speaking roles and 700-800 in mob scenes who are non professional. In contrast, every participant lives in the village and, according to the McDaniels and other local people who witnessed the drama this summer, the feelings run high as to who will get the roles of Jesus,

Mary and Judas. One villager told local citizens that for about nine months before the play opens people will scarcely speak to Judas who has a strong and leading role in the drama. Marse Grant, editor of "The Biblical Recorder", who led the tour group from North Carolina, said "I was not too happy about the prominence of "Judas" until I concluded that the lesson to be learned was that those who still reject Christ also betray Him".

The play is in German but McDaniel says that participants can follow the drama line by in the English text which is available for \$3, and the history of the text of the play shows continuous development over three centuries. The present text is a revision of the version made by the parish priest J. Alois

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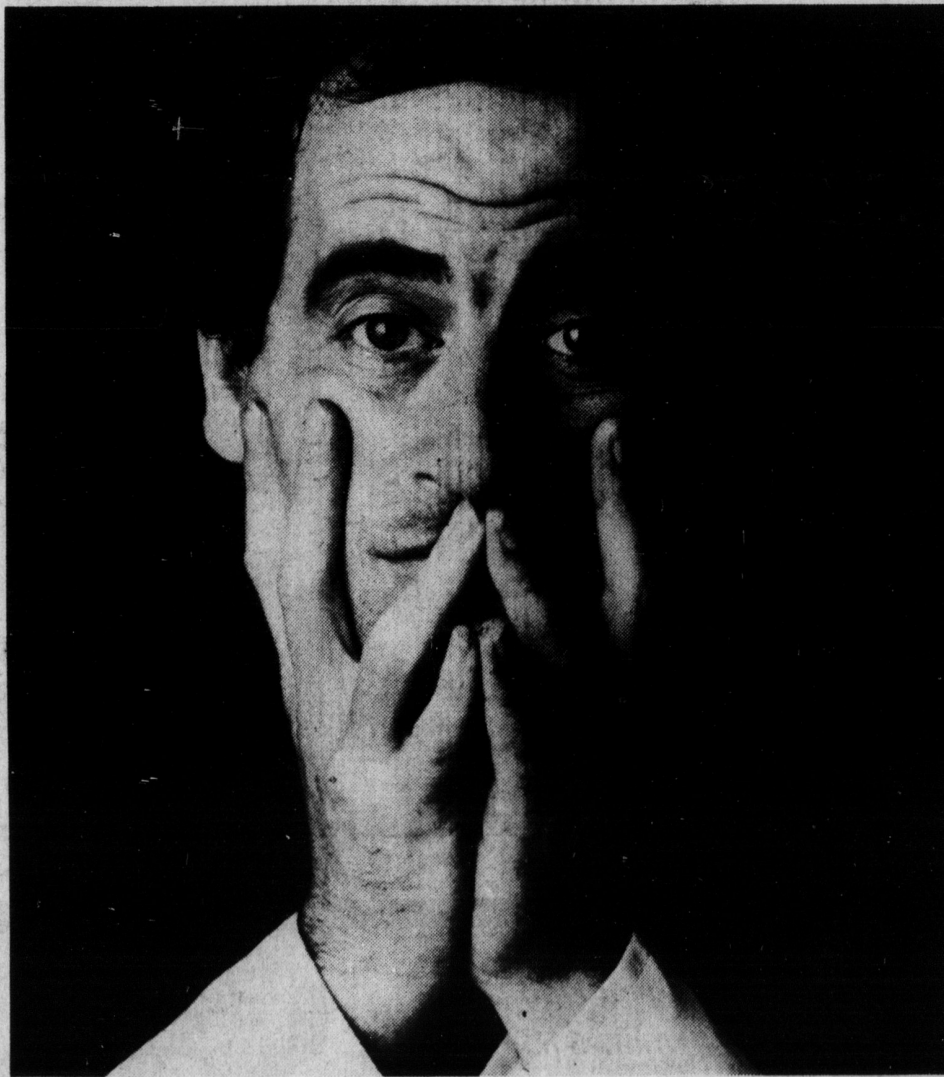
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