



A most exciting evening of theatre was provided by the Drama Club of Richmond Hill High School when they presented Oedipus The King by Sophocles and Antigone by Jean Anouilh.

Both plays were a tribute to the direction of N. R. Clifton whose dedication to research and authenticity of costumes and properties, made this one of the most outstanding productions of the year.

Seen above in a scene from Antigone are (left to right) Creon (Chip Martin) and Antigone (Susan Duffy), both of whom gave excellent performances in demanding roles.

You're Courting Danger!

By B. DUNDEE

Most of the audience at Richmond Hill High School on April 9, 10 and 11 must have approached the drama club's presentation of Sophocles' "Oedipus The King" and Anouilh's "Antigone" with some trepidation. The understanding, staging and performance of two such challenging plays might be beyond the capabilities of a group so young. Could they transmit to the audience the universal relevance of a Greek tragedy, whether told in ancient terms or in the involuted wordiness of French drama? To the delighted surprise of the viewers, these teen-agers succeeded amazingly well.

Many of us know little of Greek tragedy. The programme filled gaps in knowledge of theme and staging. We were prepared to appreciate the

highly visual stylized performance. And we could recognize the conflicts stressed in these two plays written almost 2,500 years apart.

Both plays were visual delights. The sets, designed by Stephen Clark, beautifully spare though complex, made good use of line, form, symbolic shapes and lighting to provide variety and workability. Costumes, designed by Gloria Emms showed a rare sense of drama and of the total effect. Properties were right. There were a few moments when lighting, set and costume actors combined to form memorable pictures — a living Greek frieze.

No director is listed on the programme, but one suspects that Roy Clifton, listed as producer, shaped both plays, using most actors in complementary roles in both.

The ancient play, "Oedipus", gives us a chorus. The traditional masks were not used in this production, but chorus members give a similar effect. Initially static in impact, the chorus moved through beautifully clear dispassionate speech and precisely-executed movement to impart a real sense of awesome inevitability of external forces.

The priest (David Phillips) and Tiresias (a believably blind and old George Neal) are even more pointed evidence of this dreadfulness of fate. They also give the audience knowledge of events leading up to this moment in time. Since, in Greek drama, all action takes place off-stage, background and plot are given by reporters and messengers. Adrian Truss, William Thompson, Bradley Diddams and all the others impart a real sense of having seen the awful events they report.

The three main players, James Clark, Susan Duffy and Chip Martin as Oedipus, Jocasta and Creon — and William Thompson as the Shepherd, show the other side of the conflict — man's fight as an individual against fate. All do well, with an intelligent understanding of the thoughts they project. James Clark rounds out a real personality for Oedipus — headstrong, vital — that makes his actions psychologically inevitable. Therein lies the modern relevance.

Because Anouilh is not as good a playwright as Sophocles, "Antigone", though modern, is less forceful. It's too long to be a second play in an evening, too wordy and even in dialogue to escape some tedium. Compulsions toward behaviour with tragic results seem dreamlike. Here the conflict is that of individual morality, and each character is alone, faintly alienated.

It is the sparking of interaction between people that is the essence of drama. Here, that spark is momentary and doomed to failure — thus no real drama in Anouilh. This production recognizes that, and uses it (as in end and its use of multi-period costumes) and develops a cast of individuals, most of them well-drawn.

As a matter of fact, even the very small parts in these plays are performed with intensity and integrity.

In "Antigone", aside from the principals, special mention should be made of two actors. As the nurse, Jane de Arnot, achieves excellently the twenty years aging since "Oedipus". Figure, voice and hardest of all for adolescents — movements are all right. And, as Sergeant of the Guard, Adrian Truss is superb — low comic humor, total bodily mime and a fleeting glimpse of a lonely soul!

Susan Duffy, now Antigone, and Chip Martin, again as Creon (not so well-aged as the nurse), sustain the long dialogue that is the meat of this play. The tedium that occurs here is mostly the fault of the

author, and a little in the direction. Susan's beauty allays any boredom, and these actors convey the thoughts with sympathy and intelligence. As Haemon, William Thompson almost achieves what Anouilh did not — vitality and true, caring passion.

This group and their school should be proud of their achievement. To any performers, "Oedipus the King" and "Antigone" are frightening challenges, remarkably met by these young people.

Phone Bomber Hits Three High Schools

Richmond Hill Police suspect that the person who telephoned a bomb threat to three Richmond Hill secondary schools last week was the same person who threatened MacKillop Public School, April 16.

Police said there were similarities in all four calls.

Bayview Secondary, Langstaff Secondary, and Richmond Hill High were all evacuated during noon hour, April 23, after school officials were told by an anonymous caller that bombs had been planted in the schools.

Classes resumed after a vain one hour search for explosives. MacKillop School closed for the afternoon the week previously after a caller with "something queer sounding in his voice" phoned in a bomb threat.

The call also was made during lunch hour.

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County Separate School Board Will Not Pay Grade 9 & 10 Fees

York County Roman Catholic Separate School Board has decided not to pay the gross tuition fee for students in grades 9 and 10 in Roman Catholic schools outside the county. The decision was reached at the board's meeting April 15.

In the past some of the former boards in the country have paid the gross fee, on which they then collected a provincial grant. In other cases the parents paid the Metro board the difference between the provincial grant and the cost of tuition.

The county board has received assurance from the Metro Separate School Board that it will not discriminate against applications from students in York County if that board elects not to pay the gross tuition fee.

The county board reluctantly reached its decision in view of the impossibility of finding a truly fair method of offering this support to all students in the county and the necessity of raising the mill rate in order to continue even the present selective method of support, it was reported.

This policy will be effective for the school year of 1969-70 beginning in September with the board continuing to meet the obligations of its constituent former boards until the end of this school year in June.

The county board will also continue to investigate the possibility of providing grades 9 and 10 education to the students of the county.

CONVERSATIONAL FRENCH
The board also decided to have Conversational French taught in all grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 under its jurisdiction during the school year beginning in September 1969. As soon as it is possible, instruction in French will be offered to pupils below grades 5.

At present some pupils below that grade level are receiving such instruction in county schools and this will be continued. In some schools instruction is given in all grades from kindergarten to grade 8, in others in grades 1 to 3 only, in others in grades 7 and 8 only, and in others in grades from 5 to 8, and in three schools no Conversational French is taught.

Superintendent Joseph Hodge reported that this policy is not cutting off anything that is in existence and in some cases is giving a little more by expanding instruction to grades 5-8. "This is all Metro is doing," he commented.

Assistant Superintendent John Zupanic reported that Metro has started a few classes in Conversational French in grade 1. He also pointed out that at present there is no prepared program for grades 2, 3 and 4. Where French is taught in these grades the teachers are making up their own programs.

He stated that six teachers of French are employed at present in the system and that another four or five will be needed. He said he has received applications from five teachers of French already.

KINDERGARTEN ADMISSIONS
The board also adopted a recommendation that the age of admission into kindergarten for 1969-70 will be five on or before December 31, 1969.

Trustees Dr. William LeCroix and Noreen Lee were deeply concerned about the child who is ready for kindergarten at an earlier age and won an agreement that the policy would be reviewed next year. Vice-Chairman John LeClaire, who presided in the absence of Chairman Eugene Jacobs, warned against turning kindergarten into a baby sitting service and Superintendent Hodge stated, "We have to stop some place. There isn't any other fair way of doing it."

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Come And Go Lunch -- Went!

The Come And Go Lunch held on April 23 by the UCW of Richmond Hill United Church was an outstanding success, with many taking advantage of a quick, but excellent meal in congenial surroundings.

Convened by Evelyn Ferguson, the lunch was catered by members of the UCW, several of whom, judging from the plates pictured above, must be feminine counterparts of the Galloping Gourmet!

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