

THE CIVIC THEATRE

MILLENNIUM SQUARE, LEEDS

ANTIGONE

By Jean Anouilh

ANTIGONE



Directed by Martin Key
Wed 4 Feb to Sat 7 Feb 2004
Tickets:- £7 & £6, Cons £6 & £5
Booking Office 0113 2145315



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Leeds Arts Centre would like to thank everyone who has helped with this production.

For Leeds Civic Theatre

Theatre Manager	Steven Cartwright
Assistant Manager	Vivien Simpson
Chief Technician & Lighting Technicians	Peter Waddicor
	Sandy Clark
	David Simpson
Box Office	Margaret Rook
	Sylvia Gooding

In accordance with the requirements of the Licensing sub-committee of Leeds City Council:

- (a) The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exits and entrance doors and such doors must at all times be kept open.
- (b) All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free from chairs or other obstructions.
- (c) Persons shall not be permitted to stand in any of the intersecting gangways, or stand in any other unseated space in the auditorium, unless standing in such space has been specially allowed by the Licensing Sub-Committee. A notice is exhibited in that part of the auditorium in which standing has been sanctioned.
- (d) The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before the commencement of each performance to show that it is in proper working order.

**The Running time of this production is under 2 hours;
there will be one interval of 15 minutes**

Antigone

By Jean Anouihl

The story of Antigone is the subject of the third of Sophocles' Theban Plays, which was written in the 5th Century BC. It followed 'Oedipus' and the 'Oedipus and Colonus' and continues the story following the death of Oedipus when Thebes was to be ruled by his two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, the brothers of Antigone and Ismene. They were to rule in turns by alternate years but following a quarrel, Polynices attacked the city while Eteocles continued to rule. Both were killed and Creon, their uncle, became ruler. He decreed that, at pain of death, the body of Polynices should be left unburied, to rot outside the city walls as a lesson to others who might consider insurrection.

In our play the story continues with Antigone, contrary to her uncle's command, determined to bury Polynices. She attempts to recruit her sister, Ismene, who is too frightened to become involved. Antigone is arrested by Creon's guards and brought before him. He desperately tries to conceal the act and to persuade Antigone to co-operate, to settle down and to marry Haemon, his son, to whom she is betrothed. Creon fails and is forced to send Antigone to her death in spite of Haemon's pleas that she should be spared.

Anouihl adapts the original play by Sophocles to explore the insoluble problem of 'noble and perverse idealism' versus 'necessary but brutish legalism' – 'the holy laws of Heaven versus the rules of every day life'. In his tragic world there are two sorts of human beings: idealists who die rather than compromise over their ideals and ordinary mortals who have come to terms with life and are therefore contemptible. His play was written in 1942 in Second World War France where dictators and storm troopers were a fact of every day life. Antigone and Creon are analogous with the French Resistance and the German occupiers, as the French, striving to save the soul of France, demonstrated their hopeless resistance to the Nazis.

This play is a tragedy. In the words of Anouihl's single Chorus, who provides a vital link between the action and the audience,

"In tragedy nothing is in doubt and everyone's destiny is known. That makes for tranquillity." However, as in all tragedy, we, the audience, are held in suspense until the final act is performed.

Director's Note

The first production of Anouilh's 'Antigone' was performed in occupied France and the relationship between Antigone and Creon and the French people and the German occupiers was obvious. The French identified with Antigone's resistance to Creon but the Germans failed to recognise this, thinking that Creon represented a convincing argument in favour of dictators. The play ran for months until the Nazis began to recognise that, the example set by Antigone was designed to encourage the saving of the soul of France.

I have decided to set the play in a fictitious totalitarian state in the same time period (early 1940s). The red drapes evoke the spirit of the Nazi regime. The sigma (Σ) logo seemed an obvious choice being the eighteenth letter of the Greek alphabet but also the mathematical symbol for summation, the finding of a total. Creon demands total and unrivalled control.

All the music before, during and after this production is taken from Paul McCartney's symphonic Poem, 'Standing Stones'. The chosen tracks reflect and develop the drama and the significant use of choral music reminds us of the traditional Greek chorus of Sophocles' plays. In this work McCartney reflects on his poem which explores the origins of man and how early man (Celtic) might have wondered about the mystery of human existence. Throughout History, wherever we look, what ever our experience, whether we can articulate it or not, the conflict between pragmatism and idealism is surely one of the most significant actors in the mystery of human existence. It may be looked upon as being the defining factor, which separates humans and the animals from which we evolved. As Creon says as he defends his pragmatic approach to government, "Animals are good, simple, tough. They move in droves, nudging one another onwards, all travelling the same road. Some of them keel over; but the rest go on; and no matter how many may fall by the wayside, there are always those few left which go on bringing their young into the world, travelling the road with the same obstinate will, unchanged from those who went before." Antigone replies, "Animals, eh, Creon! What a king you would be if only men were animals!"

Martin Key

Note of Interest

During the rehearsal period I received a telephone call from a long-standing member of the Leeds Arts Centre, and one time professional actor, George Barker. I want to share the contents of that call with you at tonight's performance.

George commenced the call, without introduction, with the following complete quotation –

“Elders, the gods have righted once again, our storm tossed ship of state, now safe in port. You by special summons I convened as my most trusted counsellors; first because I knew you loyal toetc. etc”

He had learnt (and still remembers after 60 years) this opening speech as understudy for the part of Creon in Sophocles' play as performed by the staff of the British Embassy and members of the British Army in Baghdad in 1943. In addition George played the Messenger. He was working at the Head Quarters of the Field Security Wing, Intelligence Corps in Baghdad. It was his debut as a straight actor and performed at the Al Rashid Theatre before a largely Iraqi audience which included the Iraqi Royal Family, including the Boy King and his Mother in the Royal Box. George reflected sadly on how the Boy King and most others of the Royal Family were put to death some years later. In addition, George played Paris in 'Romeo and Juliet' which was probably the first experience of live Shakespeare the people of Baghdad had.

Thank you George.

Cast

(In order of which they speak)

Chorus	Scott Ashby
Antigone	Naomi Rothwell
Nurse	Elaine Blair
Ismene	Sophia Hatfield
Haemon	Greg Hughes
Creon	Peter Sandles
First Guard (Jonas)	Jack Williams
Second Guard (Corporal)	Malcolm Padwell
Third Guard	Martin Cusworth
Messenger	David Wheatley
Page	Chris O'Connor
Eurydice	Mary Nelson

Production Team

Director	Martin Key
Production Manager	Rich Francis
Set Design	Martin Key
Set Construction	Rich Francis and LAC Team
Costumes	Gerry Armitage
Wardrobe support	Maggie Rhodes and LAC Team
Stage Manager	Martyn Drake
Ass Stage Manager and Props	Edwin Barraclough
Properties preparation	Doreen Parker
Prompt and Ass. to Director	Deborah Hodgson
Sound recording	Jim Marshall
Sound Operator	David Mallinson
Lighting Design	Martin Key
Lighting Technician	Peter Waddicor
Follow Spot	Laurie Ball
Front of House Manager	Amy Glover
Box Office	Members of LAC
Photography	Rich Francis
Poster Design/ Programme Cover	Martin Key

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SEC, Consulting Engineers of Wakefield, wish The Leeds Arts Centre all the best for their production of Antigone. For further details contact Steve Entwistle on 01924 828858.

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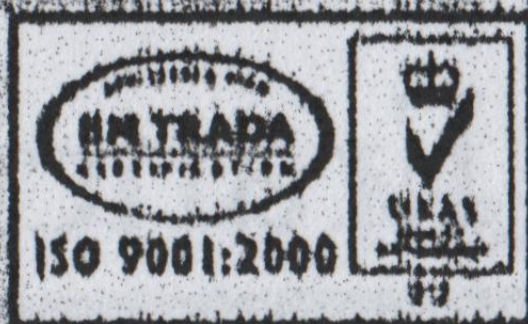
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