

German Faculty Member Reviews Theater's 'Faust'

By William K. Pfeiler

Lincoln witnessed a cultural achievement of rare occurrence: the performance of Goeth's Faust, Part I, by the University Theatre. It is a very difficult play to stage. Even the German theaters refrained from tackling it when it first was published in 1808; and it took 21 years before a director had courage enough to bring about the world premiere. This was done in 1829 in Brunswick, Germany. Since then the play has had an impressive stage history. However, the difficulties and problems have remained as great as they were from the beginning, and here in the United States it was only the University Theater in Yale that preceded our own English version in this bold enterprise.

Play Was Success

Let it be said from the start that the play was an unqualified success if judged by standards of audience impressions, and if one takes into consideration, as one definitely should, the limitations that are imposed on a director, a cast, and an equipment crew in a University Theater.

Goethe's Faust can be interpreted in more than one way. Director Williams chose to follow Goethe's lead as given in the Prelude on the stage and present a spectacle that would give something to everyone. He gave strong emphasis to the sensual aspect of the tragedy without neglecting to bring forth the deep philosophic implications of Goethe's great work. The cast followed with a spirit of enthusiasm and dynamic devotion that made up generously for some lack of experience and professional assurance and polish.

Praises Wenstrand

The center of attention is, of course, Faust, the frustrated scholar and sensual-supersensual lover, the object of the "wager" between the Lord and the prince of evil. His role is ever threatened by the more colorful and waggish Mephisto who could—and would—steal every scene if wise self-discipline were not to restrain him from showing off. This ever-lurking danger in any Faust production was most happily avoided. Faust (Jack Wenstrand) and Mephistopheles (Dwight Smith) gave a balanced and surprisingly well-played-in performance that would have found approval even from a seasoned audience in Europe.

The forte of Wenstrand's Faust was the authenticity of his heart-rending despair, the profound desperation and the retention of a masterful pose in his dealing with

the devil. His monologues were spoken in an impressive fashion. His voice was utterly sincere, ingratiating and polished.

A perfect foil to him, the striving if erring man, was Dwight Smith's Mephisto who was thoroughly convincing as . . . evil incarnate. His was a handsomeness that suggested the fallen angel Lucifer. His lithe and twisting body underscored effectively the voice that ran the scale from dripping oily hypocrisy to cold satanic hatred. A devil of a fellow, indeed, and an actor of great potentialities.

Catherine Worcester's Gretchen was acted with charm and competence. It is hard to believe that this was her first greater role on the stage. She was one of the cast showing least the initial spell of stage fright that was noticeable in a goodly number of the performers at first. Innocence and slightly roguish coquetterie made her a creature for whom to fall Faust easily might be understood if not forgiven. She played her heart out in the scenes of utter despair and insanity, and by doing so won the heart of the audience who sighed in relief when the final majestic words of the Lord (Robert Pfeiler) pronounced her saved.

Roles Well Played

Sharon Fritzer as the man-crazy Martha and conniving neighbor lived fully up to the demand of her role in providing comic relief in giving even the devil the time of his life. She is a highly talented actress. Cedric Hartman gave a fine and refreshing presentation of the awestruck-naive freshman who was so deliciously led by the nose by Mephisto. Don Nichols as Valentine fought bravely and skilfully, and his curses justly made Gretchen wince.

A high point of the play was the witches' sabbath at Walpurgis night. Although some apprehensive eyebrows may have been raised at the bacchanal frankness of this carnal chaos, it definitely reflected Goethe's intentions who wanted to show in this scene the attempt of Mephisto to drown Faust in an ocean of sensuality in order to make him forget Gretchen and his obligations toward her.

The stage setting was intelligent and gave effective aid in sustaining the mood of the play. It combined rather successfully mere suggestive outline with more detailed props. The lighting effect was very good throughout, in parts even superb. The direction of the mass scenes was skilful and smooth.

If mention is made of a few points of disagreement with the play as performed, it is done so only from the point of view of constructive suggestions and in order to show how minor the criticisms are. The use of the loudspeaker might be questioned. It was disillusioning because the tonal qualities of this device were that of a loudspeaker and nothing else. The voice of the evil spirit to Gretchen was too loud, since it was to represent the voice of conscience from within Gretchen's breast, it must definitely not have the stentorian boom of a sports announcer. Too much opportunity was also given to the audience to admire the backs of the actors, and not all performers heeded at all times the paramount demand of the stage: talk so you will be clearly understood anywhere at any time in the audience, even in the most distant corners of the theater.

But these are points that can be remedied and are mostly traceable to the shortness of preparation and the scarcity of time that could be given by the cast who are all full-time students in the University. The consensus of all who saw the play is: the University can be proud of its theater. Your reviewer joins in this without any mental reservations.

Three Dancing Classes Remain

Know how to dance? If you don't, you still have three chances to learn at the Union Dance committee's dancing classes.

Classes are held Tuesdays in the Union ballroom at 7:30 p. m. Remaining lessons are scheduled for Nov. 8, 22 and 29. There will be no lesson Nov. 15.

Under Miss Donna McCandless' instruction, approximately 300 elementary students have attended the previous three lessons. Classes for advanced dancers may be held this winter.

ISA to Hold Membership Convocation

ISA will hold its first all-membership convocation Monday at 7:30 p. m. in the Union ballroom.

One of the main purposes of the convocation is to explain to students the Independent Students Association regional convention which will convene on this campus Nov. 11 and 12. The convention will be at-

tended by approximately 12 member schools of the Western conference. The meetings will discuss problems of the different schools and propose plans for the national convention to be held in the spring.

Another feature of the convocation Monday will be the organization of wards for independents not living in organized houses. The wards will be set up with 20 members in each one.

The remainder of the Monday night program will be occupied by a Student Council report from ISA representative Ben Wali; an explanation of AUF; and a campus YWCA speaker.

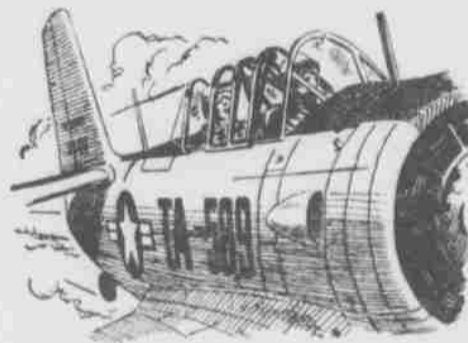
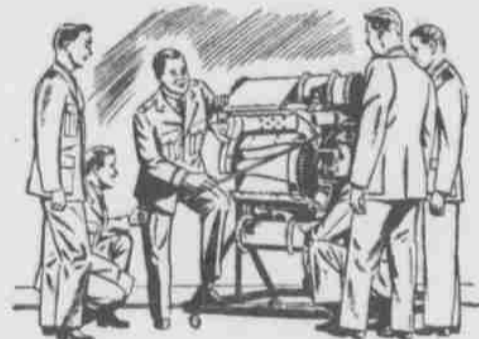


Learn how YOU can become an Officer in the U. S. Air Force

AN AIR FORCE INTERVIEWING TEAM WILL BE HERE TO GIVE YOU FULL DETAILS

Date: Nov. 7-8-9-10
Time: 8:00 to 5:00
Place: Student Union

Here's your opportunity to qualify for Aviation Cadet training. To be eligible, you must be single, between the ages of 20 and 26½, with at least two years of college and with high physical and moral qualifications.



Find out about the academic, military and flying training you'll get as an Aviation Cadet—either for pilot or navigator. If qualified, your papers will be processed so you can begin training after you finish college.

Learn about the important career opportunities open to you as an officer . . . after you have won your wings as pilot or navigator . . . and received a commission as second lieutenant in the Air Force!



...NON-FLYING CAREERS, TOO!

Never before in peacetime has there been such an opportunity for college-trained men and women to obtain commissions in the U. S. Air Force. If you are interested in a non-flying career in aviation, ask for information about Officer Candidate School.

U. S. AIR FORCE

ONLY THE BEST CAN BE AVIATION CADETS

HE IS COMING SOON



AUF . . .

(Continued from Page 1.) houses will emphasize the three-fold scope of the year's drive: on campus, in the city, and throughout the world.

Other organized residences will hear speakers Tuesday night when Sue Pryor and her assistants contact their houses. Both Greek and barb houses will win "We Sacrificed" signs if their house makes a 100% contribution. The signs will be large enough to hang outside the house in full view of the campus.

Honorary groups will also hear speakers at their meetings, under plans drawn up by Betty Green, division head. Activities have received letters on the three beneficiary agencies of the drive, the WSSF, the Chest and the DP program. Mary Sidner is in charge of activities solicitations.

Huskerville Trips.

Cars will travel to Huskerville on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights to contact student residents there. Literature on the drive has been mailed to the Huskerville section under the direction of John Mills.

Letters containing blank checks were mailed to all faculty members during the past weeks by division head, Nancy Button. Aid to faculty members is included in the World Student Service Fund organization.

Contributions by students-at-large can be made throughout AUF Week at booths in Social Sciences, Love Library, Andrews, and the Union. The booths will be designed and decorated under the supervision of Jackie Hoss, while Mendell Archard is in charge of independent students' solicitations. Records of the AUF song and a melody from Pakistan will be played at the Union booth. The WSSF portion of the contributions through AUF will go to the University of Sind, Karachi, Pakistan, to build a student hostel for refugee students.