

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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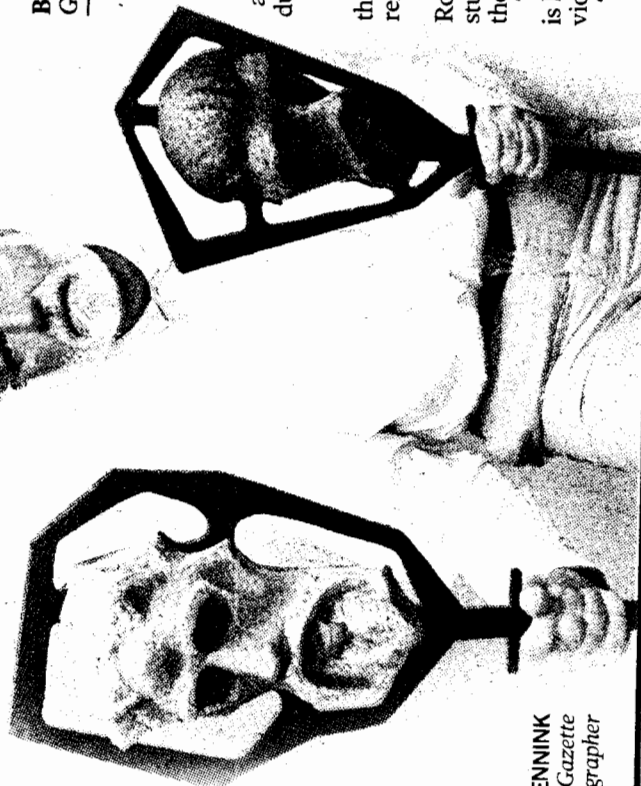
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In his Albany home, Bertrand Fay shows the masks he uses in performances.



INS PENNINK
Gazette
Photographer

Fay to perform 'Antigone' in one-man show

By **MICHAEL SANTA RITA**
Gazette Reporter

Ancient Greeks were attracted to the macabre.

The heroes of their myths and plays plucked their own eyes out, mated with the gods, committed incest and dragged their dead enemies in the dust behind their chariots.

Gory stuff. But for all their fascination with cruelty, the ancient Greeks are known today as a remarkably civilized people.

Bertrand Fay of Albany, a former Roman Catholic priest and devoted student of Greek tragedy, sees some of their tragedies as noble.

The playwright Sophocles, for example, is known for his restraint in the service of violent themes.

"That's the deal with Sophocles: It's

enormously dignified," Fay said in a recent interview.

Fay is scheduled to discuss Sophocles' "Antigone" next Thursday in a symposium on collaborative artistic productions, which will also feature sculptor Jim Lewis and choreographer Ellen Sinopoli. Both Fay and Sinopoli have used Lewis' works in recent projects.

Also at the symposium, Sinopoli's company will perform a work-in-progress, "From the mind/of a single long vine/one hundred opening lives."

Then on Friday, Oct. 5, Fay will perform "Antigone," using masks constructed by Lewis, in a one-man show at the Maureen Stapleton Theatre at Hudson Valley Community College.

In the play, Antigone defies Creon, king of Thebes, by burying her dead brother's body, which the king had ordered to be left on the field of battle because of his

treason. By the end of the tragedy, Antigone has hanged herself in prison. Creon's son Haemon has killed himself over her body. Creon's wife has also committed suicide, and the king has been reduced to a wailing wretch.

Formal dignity

Despite its macabre and ostentatious violence, the play retains a remarkable formal dignity.

One reason, Fay said, is that violence was never portrayed on the ancient Greek stage. Instead, it was reported by a messenger, or described by a chorus of actors who filled in a play's narrative gap for the audience.

The result is that audiences had to imagine the drama's most powerful scenes. It's this sense of dignity that Fay strives to

See MASKS, Page D

Subtlety drains all feeling from 'Hearts in Atlantis'

Slow Emotion



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and from Page D1

any business trips take from a boy who naturally sits closer to his dad. Ironically, the weak will eventually take out on male hate on the

in. l, the character treatment-drawn and most-ice. The standout is Yel-ho plays the boy y. Hopkins is fine as he sense of mystery is: arbal than organic. And part is also finally real-never get sucked into because Hicks' director William Goldman's y obstruct our involvement.

there, but then again, there, and to be kept ice for so long saps the energy, and in the process up what was in the our willing response. the attention to detail, f song is all over the ne tunes are from the others from the early se are minor pitfalls, ention them only to that they seem to mirror vic's off-kilter feel. s is so commanding a r that one is tempted verence to this rather amatic vehicle. You ay "Hearts in Atlantis" urch of a head and too heart. It holds us for a not long enough.



HANSPENNINK Gazette Photographer
Bertrand Fay shows off some of the mounted masks he will use when he performs his one-man "Antigone." Fay says he doesn't wear the masks but "I refer to them, speak from them."

Masks evoke ancient Greece

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maintain in his one-man performance of "Antigone."

Wearing a gray suit, he presents the 80-minute tale while moving between nine mounted masks on the stage.

"I don't put [the masks] over my face," Fay said. "I refer to them, speak from them."

The style is a throwback to an ancient custom. Greek actors always wore masks in their roles; they were essential to the process of telling their tale, Fay said. The mouthpieces were

enters, I simply move toward the mask, turn it toward the audience and speak from that character," he said.

Designed by Lewis, founder and partner of Icarus Furniture in Troy, the large masks are composed of layers of wood, best described as "wood col-lages." Fay and Lewis created them to evoke the characters and chorus of the play.

Fay's manipulation of his voice in relation to the masks is essential to the creation of each character. Acting without them is almost unthinkable. A charac-

Aeschylus to Sophocles and Euripides, examining a period in Mediterranean culture that served as the hothouse nurturing the flower of tragedy.

Most of Fay's work has been created in conjunction with Robert Blood, a Schenectady sculptor who made his masks from clay and wood chips. Blood, however, was unavailable for this production. So Fay turned to Lewis.

The resulting masks are less dense and forbidding than Blood's work, more cartoonlike and expressive.

Fanfare is scored for full orchestra

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pavement of a walkway next to the Tennessee River, something clicked.

"It seemed to me that rather than celebrating a moment of time, which is what many millennium events did, I'd prefer to celebrate the fact that one century was flowing into the next," she said.

While fanfares are often written for brass instruments alone, "Fanfare For a River" is for full orchestra.

"The piece consists of fanfare figures, mostly in the brass, and flowing, river-type string passages," the composer said. "There's also an exciting, forward-looking theme."

For an added dash of color, the orchestra's brass players will be stationed in the balcony and on the sides of the stage during the performance.

This will be the third performance of Tann's millennium fanfare. The second was during a July concert presented by the Hartwick Music Festival Orchestra.

This has been a productive year for Tann, a native of Wales and professor of music at Union College.

She was a composer-in-residence with the Louisville Symphony in March when the orchestra performed her composition "The Open Fields." That work was commissioned by the Schenectady Symphony Orchestra in 1989.

afternoon Halloween concert, also at Proctor's.

The subscription concerts, on Oct. 3, Nov. 7, March 6 and April 10, will begin at 7:30 p.m. The Halloween concert on Oct. 27 will start at 4 p.m.

Tickets for subscription concerts are \$20; \$10 for high school and college students. The orchestra's Family Plan for subscription concerts allows students to attend free when accompanied by an adult paying full price. Adult subscriptions are \$70 for four concerts, with student subscriptions \$35.

Halloween Concert tickets are \$15; \$5 for children, with children under 5 admitted free.

To receive a season brochure and ticket order form, call 372-2500.

Schedule

Oct. 3: "Schenectady's Favorite Artists." Michael Emery, violin; Corine Salon, soprano; John Lopez, tenor; Arthur DeLuxe, baritone. Tann, "Fanfare for a River"; Bruch, Violin Concerto No. 1; Bizet, excerpts from "Carmen" and "The Pearl Fishers," 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 27: Halloween Concert. Mussorgsky, "A Night on Bald Mountain"; Liszt, The "Mephisto"; Waltz; Dvorak, "The Mid-day Witch"; McBride, "Pumpkin-Eaters Little Fugue"; Gounod, "Funeral March of the Marionettes"; Webber, "Phantom of the Opera"; Offenbach, the "Can-Can" from "Orpheus in the Underworld," 4 p.m.

Nov. 7: "The Classics."

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The style is a throwback to an ancient custom. Greek actors always wore masks in their roles; they were essential to the process of telling their tale, Fay said. The mouthpieces were also formed as miniature megaphones, enabling the actors to project their voices to large crowds in an amphitheater.

In Fay's production, when the audience first enters the theater, all they see on stage are the masks, mounted on steel poles and facing away from the audience.

"When a character, as it were,

enters, I simply move toward the mask, turn it toward the audience and speak from that character," he said.

Designed by Lewis, founder and partner of Icarus Furniture in Troy, the large masks are composed of layers of wood, best described as "wood collages." Fay and Lewis created them to evoke the characters and chorus of the play.

Fay's manipulation of his voice in relation to the masks is essential to the creation of each character. Acting without them is almost unthinkable. A character, he said, reveals itself through its mask.

"You go through some things with them. You go through their life, you go through their agony on the stage with them, and there's a kind of sacred bond that exists between them," he said. "And they keep revealing themselves to you."

By the time a performance is finished, he said, each mask has changed for the audience.

Student of tragedy

Fay, 68, a former professor of comparative religion at The College of Saint Rose in Albany, has been studying and performing Greek tragedy in one-man shows in the Capital Region for 10 years.

He has worked through the canon of Greek tragedians from

Aeschylus to Sophocles and Euripides, examining a period in Mediterranean culture that served as the hothouse nurturing the flower of tragedy.

Most of Fay's work has been created in conjunction with Robert Blood, a Schenectady sculptor who made his masks from clay and wood chips. Blood, however, was unavailable for this production. So Fay turned to Lewis.

The resulting masks are less dense and forbidding than Blood's work, more cartoonlike and expressive.

For each character, Fay has created a stylized set of gestures. "There's a whole body language that goes along with each character," he said.

His vocal and physical interpretations of the roles are designed to get to what he sees as its heart: a battle of the sexes.

"The principal issues are gender issues," he said, describing the clash between Creon and Antigone. "He's not allowing women to grieve — specifically, this woman."

Through the clash of wills, gender roles are exchanged, and by play's end Antigone has taken on a hero's role.

"You have the masculinization of women, not in a cartoonish or grotesque way, and the feminization of men," he said.

Through the prism of ancient Greek culture, Creon's wail is the ultimate effeminate act.

"He expresses himself in a woman's way because it's the only thing left for him to do," Fay said.

For his audience, Fay is determined to re-create as best he can the phantasmagoria of light, mask, fable and imagination that captivated the ancient Greeks.

The question remains, though, how much of the experience of the play is in the mask and how much in the viewer?

"Does it make any difference? You need to have something happen and there are energies here, and this happened," Fay said.

"It's like: Which came first the chicken or the egg? The old Zen answer: the chicken is the egg. You are the mask; the mask is you," he said.

"Why are you bothering to pay attention to it in the first place? You've not rejected it, and something has happened."

Bertrand Fay's "Antigone" will be performed at 8 p.m. Friday, Oct. 5, at the Maureen Stapleton Theatre at the Hudson Valley Community College. Tickets are \$5.

A symposium with the Ellen Sinopoli Dance Company, Jim Lewis, and Bertrand Fay about the connections between Lewis art and performance art will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday. The

fanfare. The second a July concert p Hartwick Musi chestra.

This has been year for Tann, a and professor of College.

She was a co-dence with the phony in March chestra per composition "Th That work was by the Schenect Orchestra in 198

On July 28, th pool Philharmoni the premiere of Grey Tide and concert in Cardi

That commiss inspired by a poet R.S. Thoma aries."

Thomas died the work was wr to him, Tann said

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