

3-21-1980

Alcestis

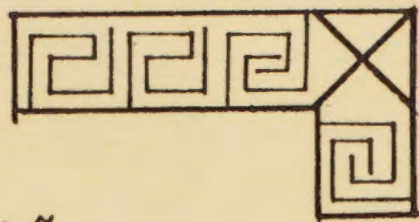
Euripides

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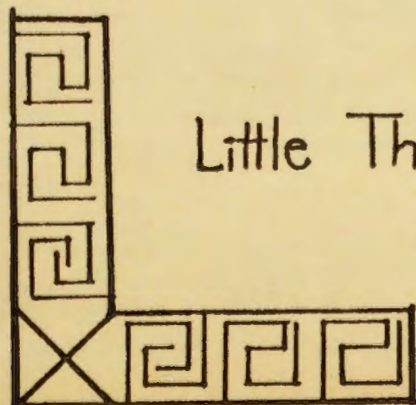
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Euripides



March
21-23 ; 28-30



Little Theatre Workshop
J.C.U.

1980

EURIPIDES 480-406 B.C.

For the people of ancient Greece, the theatre was a sacred rite, a source of wisdom, a showplace of the spirit. The Greeks went to the theatre as if it were a life-giving dynamo to recharge their spirits.

Euripides is called the first modern. Of the three titans of Greek drama -- Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides -- Euripides was the loner, the most probing, most compassionate, and, in a contemporary sense, the most psychological.

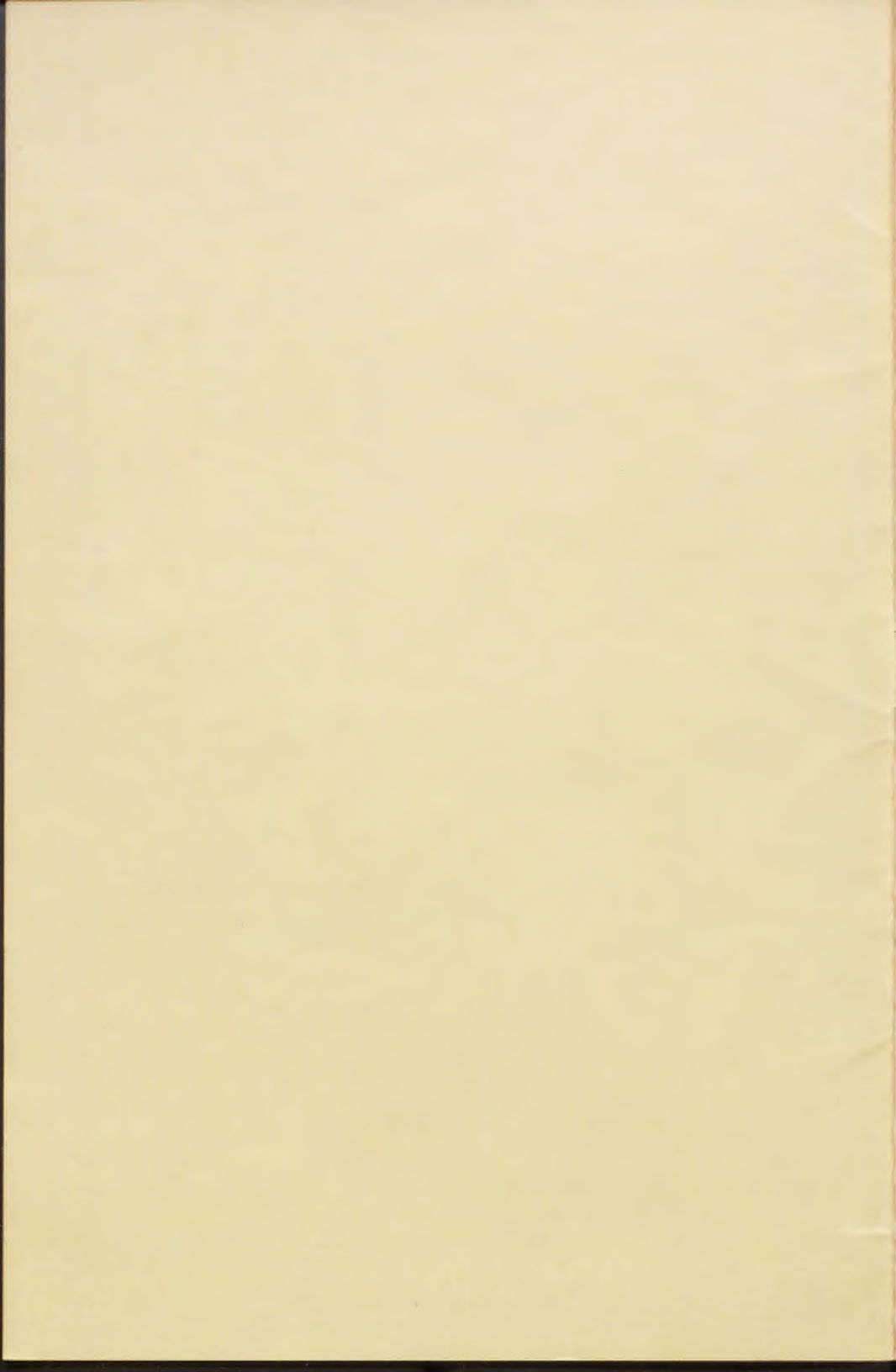
He wrote about 90 plays, of which, 19 have survived including the only extant satyr-play, THE CYCLOPS. At the tragic festivals, he won first prize 5 times, including one posthumous award for THE BACCHAE.

Euripides was not popular during his lifetime, but he became increasingly popular after his death. The fact that 19 of his plays have survived is evidence of this.

He was considered by the Greek conservatives to be a skeptic, a radical, a doubter of certain supposed eternal values and an experimenter in dramatic form and themes.

For 50 years Euripides wrote what he wanted making no concessions to the popular acclaim and oblivious to the jibes of the comic poets. He was concerned with the dramatic and tragic treatment of sex and passion and the psychological aspects of characters -- their human responses to love, revenge and the immemorial conflict between reason and passion. It is a mark of his genius that the psychological conflicts in his tragedies are presented poetically rather than clinically.

Around 408 B.C., Euripides left Athens for the court of King Archelaus of Macedonia. He had become disillusioned with his countrymen -- despairing of the loss of Athenian integrity during the latter stages



ALCESTIS 438 B.C.

ALCESTIS is the earliest play of Euripides we have. It replaced the satyr-play in the tetralogy that won the first prize. Although on the whole the play is tragic in tone, it is lightened by the slightly drunken role of Heracles, and by the happy resolution of the plot.

A popular folk-tale was the original source for the legend upon which Euripides wrote his play.

The physician Asklepios, son of Apollo, was killed by Zeus for his arrogance in restoring the dead to life. Apollo, in revenge, killed the Cyclopes, Zeus' armorers. He was accordingly banished to Earth and placed in the service of Admetos, son of Pheres, King of Pherae in Thessaly. Admetos had been warned by an oracle of his impending death; but Apollo, in return for his master's generous hospitality, tricked the Fates into agreeing that Admetos might live out his normal life span if a person could be found who would consent to die in his stead. His father, mother, friends and kin refused. Alcestis, his wife, offered to do so.

The significance of the play lies in the study of self-sacrifice and its implications. There is nothing but praise for Alcestis. But the play raises the human problem -- what happens to the person who accepts the benefits of a sacrifice made by a loved one? As the play advances, a sharper and sharper light is focused on Admetos. At the end of the play, he sees the extent of his own cowardice.

of the Peloponnesian War -- feelings he implicitly expressed in THE TROJAN WOMEN. He died in Macedonia in 406 B.C.

No sooner was he dead than the whole Hellenic world claimed him. He who had written:

*Unto the eagle all Heaven is free; to the
noble heart the whole wide world is home*

became the poet of the fourth century. When his friends wrote his epitaph, "Euripides all Hellas for his monument hath won," they were stating a fact.

By the time of his death, he had advanced tragedy through his intense dramaturgy to a point reached only by Shakespeare two thousand years later, and he had developed the problem play to a degree attained only by Ibsen and his successors after the lapse of some twenty-three centuries.

King Archelaus refused to surrender his body to Athens, which suddenly awoke to the fact that it had lost a great man. Euripides is, in short, the classic example of the misunderstood artist.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

PROLOGUE: *Apollo and Death*

PARODOS: *Chorus enters*

SCENE I: *Maidservant and Chorus*

ODE I: *Chorus*

SCENE II: *Alcestis and Admetos*

ODE II: *Chorus*

SCENE III: *Heracles and Admetos*

ODE III: *Chorus*

SCENE IV: *Admetos and Pheres*

Maidservant and Heracles

KOMMOS: *Admetos and Chorus*

ODE IV: *Chorus*

EXODOS: *Heracles, Admetos and Alcestis*

Chorus Exits

ALCESTIS is produced by special arrangement with
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

Translated by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald.

THE CHARACTERS

APOLLO	<i>Paul J. Downey</i>
DEATH	<i>Myron Terlecky</i>
CHORUS OF PHERAE WOMEN	<i>Mary Kay Fratoe Diane Donovan Lisa Scott</i>
MAIDSERVANT	<i>Beth Ann Boehnlein</i>
ALCESTIS	<i>Rita Price</i>
ADMETOS	<i>John Znidarsic</i>
HERACLES (Hercules).	<i>Scott Heran</i>
PHERES	<i>Alex Guerrieri, Jr.</i>
MANSERVANT	<i>Bob Daily</i>

SCENE

Pherae, before the palace of Admetos,
King of Thessaly.

500 B.C.

The day Alcestis is to die.

Scott Heran (HERACLES) is a Senior majoring in Communications. Scott enjoys wrestling, racketball and most other sports. This is Scott's first appearance on the LTS stage.

Rita Price (ALCESTIS) is a Communications major and a Junior. Rita assistant directed last semester's productions of "Mirror Meetings" and "The Encounter." Rita is a member of Theta Kappa sorority and Communications Club.

Lisa Scott (CHORUS 2) is a Freshman majoring in Business. Lisa is a graduate of nearby Regina High School where she played Nerissa Brady in "Murder Takes the Veil" last year. She enjoys singing, dancing and traveling.

Myron Terlecky (DEATH) is a Junior Communications major from Youngstown. Myron appeared in "South Pacific" here and last semester in "The Encounter." Myron is a feature writer for The Carroll News.

John Znidarsic (ADMETOS) is a Freshman Communications major. John is a recent graduate of St. Ignatius High School where he appeared in "Where's Charley?", "Damn Yankees", and "How to Succeed in Business...". John studies voice and dance.

