Arts & Leisure

will tour in April

Passion play provides audience a total experience

by Kristin Susser

Christ never appears in the Gannon Theatre department's production of the passion play. That is not the only unusual aspect of "The Death of Jesus: A Dramatization of the Passion," to be performed in the new chapel on Sunday, March 28, at 3 p.m. Elements including reader's theatre, choral movement, Gregorian chant and narration are combined to make this passion play an hour's worth of "total experience" for the audience, said Anthony Miceli, play director and chairman of theatre and communication-arts department.

The play does not attempt to recreate the actual experience of the passion, but presents the event along with additional historical information. The actors do not wear period costumes, rather they wear black, or black and white clothing. Actors' lines and narration are from scripture, but commentary is drawn from other books such as The Passion and Death of Our Lord Jesus Christ by Archbishop Goudier. That Man Is You by Louis Evely and A Doctor at Calvary by Pierre Barbet, Miceli said.

The commentator's role is to fill in information "the congregation may not know and, more importantly, make the play more relevant for today," he said. For instance when Annas the priest is introduced, the commentator tells a little about his life up to the passion.

Jesus is in the play, although never seen, because the characters act as if he is in their midst. Miceli will be the voice of Jesus heard from behind the audience. He has done the voice of Jesus once before and directed the play four times.

The play was written about 12 years ago by Daniel Bredemann, a friend of Miceli's in the Jesuit seminary. "This is the only version I would consider doing. Recreating the actual situation would be difficult for me. This is the least hokey form of the passion play and it works," he said.

The play works because it allows additions such as the prayer said in the Garden. Scripture does not record a specific prayer so Bredemann used a fitting psalm as a prayer. When Christ asks, "Why have You forsaken Me"", the actors recite a psalm that includes those words, Miceli said.

Since the play has no sets or lighting it can be performed anywhere. Miceli said this is the first time he knows of that Gannon will take a play on tour outside of Erie. The only expense in performing will be the gas to travel. The company will perform in six churches during the first week of Easter break, in towns from Meadville to DuBois. The churches pay for gas and find places for the 12 actors to stay overnight.

Some of the actors have more than one part for greater efficiency. To produce a genuine passion play takes about 50 people. "This reader's theatre version allows actors to fluidly change parts. The audience is aware of who they are looking at because of the commentary," he said.

The play deals with the period of Christ's passion from Palm Sunday to Good Friday. The play does not include the Resurrection but still ends on an "up beat," he said. The commentator reminds the audience that the passion goes on every year, but the voice of Jesus tells the audience he is coming back.

Cast members include: Mary Bergell as the Commentator, Cindy Martin as the Narrator, Stan Tumlin as Herod, Rick Klein as Phillip, Rob Lewkowicz as Peter, Joel Natalie as John, Randy Murzynski as Judas, John Bebko as Thomas, Kurt Kulhanek as Annas, Tom Harshbarger as Pilate and Jim Deitch as Caiphas.

The play will be performed in Erie from Friday, March 26, to Tuesday, March 30, at 7:30 p.m. in St. Joseph, St. Patrick, Our Lady of Peace, St. Jude and St. James churches, respectively.

Prophecy musicians look to Erie audience for recording success



PROPHECY'S PHP — The group Prophecy plans to make their original music known to Erie audiences this summer, as they have already made themselves known to New York audiences.

by J.D. Hill

Three Gannon students are the core of one of Erie's hottest new bands. Prophecy. Students Dave Christenson (freshman management major) on bass, Brad Vargo (sophomore family physician major) on drums, and John Schaaf (history major) on keyboards, join Mark Szuchmanski on lead guitar to form the fast moving band with a powerful rock-new wave sound.

The band has enjoyed success playing in New York clubs like the Abbey Inn, the Top Hat Club and Carter's Yankee Rebel. They have performed at high school proms and dances from time to time. They hope to keep their future engagements close to Erie since they plan to release a single in July and will need local support for its success.

Prophecy features an impressive mixture of rock and new wave music including the tunes of the Kinks ("Lola," "All of the Day," "Destroyer") and the Tubes ("Talk to ya' Later," "Mr. Hate"). Rock selections include Beatle standards, and tunes by the Doors, the Who and Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Recently, the band wrote five, pop-rock songs, and will select a single to record from one of them. Vargo said, "Our originals range from a 'power pop' type of music to a new wave rock type. We feel that they can compete with anything that is out now."

The four joined in early 1979. They had all played in other bands, so in three years they were able to mature from an average high school band into a solid talent. Progressive Talents Management, Inc., of Erie recognized Prophecy's potential and assigned them an agent. The agent assists them with booking engagements and should get them a recording studio this summer.

In an effort to build their reputation in Erie, Prophecy appeared recently at Sherlock's Home and the Gannon Freshman-Sophomore dinner-dance. Possible future gigs include Doc's Tavern, Smugglers Wharf, Stubey's and the Speakeasy. The band appears monthly at the Abbey Inn.



Journal

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[illegible] my entire talented flutist [illegible] last chair, second violin — I was what you might call the glue that held together the inspirational virtuosity of the flutists in the Riverview High School Orchestra. Never in its finest moment, though, did it sound as good as the 18 young girls of the University Flute Choir concert last Sunday.

Only one adult was playing in the choir besides Holly Stackhouse, the director. The rest were high school students, the youngest only 13. They were professional looking, perhaps even more so in their bright, crisp dresses and straight, high heeled sandals. Their playing was professional as well. The director admitted that the music they played in the choir was above their heads, but that she was constantly amazed at how well they played it.

They played a variety of course fare, madrigals to etudes, from the delicate "Air from Suite D" to the dissonant "Frame." Stackhouse introduced many of the pieces with a bit of historical background or, in the case of "Frame," an editorial on being broad-minded. Her philosophy is that people enjoy a concert more if they know something about the music they are going to hear.

The flute choir seems to be a vehicle for learning as well as Stackhouse has in the smaller choir. The flute choir is a relatively new concept, 10 years old, that gives flute players an opportunity to play challenging orchestral music that they would not get to play in a marching band. Stackhouse explained that there is a need for a flute choir in Erie because the number of symphony orchestra flute chairs is limited to five.

The group has only been in residence at Gannon since last Fall. We provide the practice room and the Xeroxing, they provide more good music for Erie. This seems a more than fair exchange, and the type of exchange Gannon needs to pursue in order to build its cultural reputation. Part of the function of a university is to provide cultural enrichment for the community. Bravo for supporting the flute choir, let us not stop here.

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Events

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