

WSKG-TV broadcasts performance Feb. 11 of CU theater's *Antigone*

By Franklin Crawford

Antigone goes prime time: WSKG-TV will broadcast a full-length performance of the Cornell Department of Theatre, Film and Dance's fall 2003 production of Sophocles' *Antigone* Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 9 p.m., locally on Time Warner Cable Channel 6.

The video, soon to be available on DVD as well as VHS, was produced, taped and edited by Education Television Center staff at Cornell Information Technologies, under the direction of Daniel Booth, television services manager. The entire project, including the DVD and VHS, received support from the Cornell Provost's Office, the Department of Classics, the Society for the Humanities at Cornell, the John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines and the dean's office in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Antigone, one of the three plays written by Sophocles about the ill-fated family of Oedipus, was required reading for Cornell's New Student Reading Project in 2003. The Cornell production is an adaptation written and directed by David Feldshuh, professor of theatre, film and dance and artistic director of the Schwartz Center for the Performing Arts. Feldshuh, who studied 11 translations prior to writing this adaptation, consulted on the Greek with Jeffrey Rusten, Cornell professor of classics. WSKG-TV's Feb. 11 broadcast also features a 10-minute segment of "the making of *Antigone*" -- a work-in-progress (soon to be a separate program included with the DVD and VHS) that documents Cornell's *Antigone* production through interviews and footage from rehearsals.

"What's exciting about this presentation is that the resources invested allowed Dan not simply to film a stage play, but rather to create a presentation that captures the excitement and spontaneity of the original production in a completely different medium," Feldshuh said. "Dan has created a whole new animal with its own visual vocabulary. It is my hope that the theatrical excitement of the production and the fact that the text is poetic and, at the same time, dramatic and easy to speak and understand will allow a wide audience to appreciate this extraordinary play, a play that is profoundly resonant today."

The video is, in fact, a seamless blend of two separate performances of the play: One show was filmed before a live audience and the other was shot during a dress rehearsal, "where we would be less intrusive with the cameras," said Booth. A total of eight different camera positions are employed, he said. And creating a full-length production of two stagings demanded hours of painstaking edits back at the studio.

"It certainly had its special challenges, [but] we've filmed bigger productions with as many cameras, and it's always great to work with theater people," said Booth, who collaborated with Feldshuh in the early 1990s on a national and international award-winning video titled "Susceptible to Kindness," based on *Miss Evers' Boys* (1989), Feldshuh's Pulitzer Prize-nominated play.

Actors in *Antigone* performed with masks created by Norm Johnson, associate professor of acting and movement at Ithaca College. The 10-member Greek chorus in the production sing music composed by Cornell alumnus Andrew Waggoner, DMA '86. The Cornell production featured both Equity actors -- Cornell resident professional teaching associates (RPTAs) -- and Cornell students. *Antigone* was played by undergraduate Colista Turner, supported by fellow students Lori Parquet as Ismene, Tony Hogrebe as Haemon and Rachel Williamson as Eurydice.

RPTA cast members included Laurence Drozd as Creon, Godfrey Simmons as Tiresias and Sarah K. Chalmers as the Choral Leader. Designers Kent Goetz (set), Richard MacPike (costumes), Ed Intemann (lights) and Warren Cross (sound) created a post-apocalyptic ambiance complete with extraordinary auditory and visual effects that come through clearly on the DVD.

For more information about the broadcast or the DVD, contact Booth at 255-1552 or Glen Palmer, accounts and production services coordinator at CIT, at 255-8162.

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