

"The Bacchae of Euripides" to be performed

November 17, 1977

A new version of "The Bacchae of Euripides," one of the most modern yet timeless plays of the ancient Greek theater, will be performed by the UCSD Theatre Ensemble for four consecutive nights beginning Wednesday, November 30, in the 11new" John Muir Theatre.

The theater is located in room 2250 of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building on the Muir Campus. Performances will begin at 8 p.m. and tickets are 99 cents at the door on the evenings of performance.

The new interpretive version of "The Bacchae" by Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka has many parallels to African myth and ritual. Soyinka's interpretation of the play was commissioned by the National Theatre at the Old Vic in London in the summer of 1973.

The author describes the legacy of Euripides as "enshrined today in many forms but most conspicuously in the pagan alliance of labor with the spring mysticism of May Day. "The Bacchae" is the rites of an extravagant banquet, a monstrous feast at which man reaffirms his indebtedness to earth, dedicates himself to the demands of continuity and invokes the energies of productivity.

"Reabsorbed within the communal psyche, he provokes the resources of nature; he is in turn replenished for the cyclic drain in his fragile individual potency."

Soyinka, Nigeria's foremost playwright and poet, was educated at the University of Ibadan and in England at the University of London and Leeds University. He is currently Overseas Fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge University.

Among his best known dramatic works are "The Swamp Dwellers," the acclaimed "Kongi's Harvest" and "The Road," which won first prize at the Dakar Festival of Negro Arts in 1966 and was staged at the Theatre Royal in Stratford, East London, during the 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival.

The John Muir Theatre production is under the direction of Dr. Floyd Gaffney, professor of drama at UC San Diego. Gaffney is an original member of the UC San Diego drama faculty and has directed at the Old Globe Theatre and the Southeast Community Theatre.

For more information contact: the UCSD Department of Drama, 452-3791 or the Public Information Office, 452-3120.

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