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The Focused Research Program in
Medieval Theatre
University of California, Irvine

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Medieval Theatre Project

THE PLAY CALLED
CORPUS CHRISTI

DIRECTED BY: Robert Cohen, Drama Department
Edgar Schell, English Department



THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI

THE UCI MEDIEVAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

Robert Cohen, Director
Edgar Schell, Dramaturge

*Produced by the Focused Research
Program in Medieval Theatre*

Tues.-Sat. Oct. 24-28, 1985

Tues.-Sat. Oct. 1-5, 1985

Preview Entertainment Sweet and Savory 7:00 p.m.

Performance 8:00 p.m.

Fine Arts Village Theatre Stage
University of California, Irvine

Behold the Creation of the Fall of Angels, Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and their fall from grace. Witness the world's first murder; wonder at God's command for Abraham to take his own son's life; and experience the most tragic yet promising flood known to Man!

Professional artists, in collaboration with medieval theatre scholars, will create the exuberance and pageantry of early religious drama as it was performed by the townspeople in English villages of the Middle Ages. The plays, drawn from the York and Wakefield Cycle plays of the 14th and 15th centuries, are a theatrical celebration of Biblical history from the Church liturgy and its feasts. *The Plaie Called Corpus Christi* is the first in a series of three summer Medieval Theatre Festivals planned at UCI.

Tuesday-Thursday: All Seats \$5

Friday & Saturday: All Seats \$6

Tickets are now on sale at the Fine Arts Box Office, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday-Friday. Visa and MasterCard accepted. (714) 856-6616.



Los Angeles Times

Friday, September 27, 1985

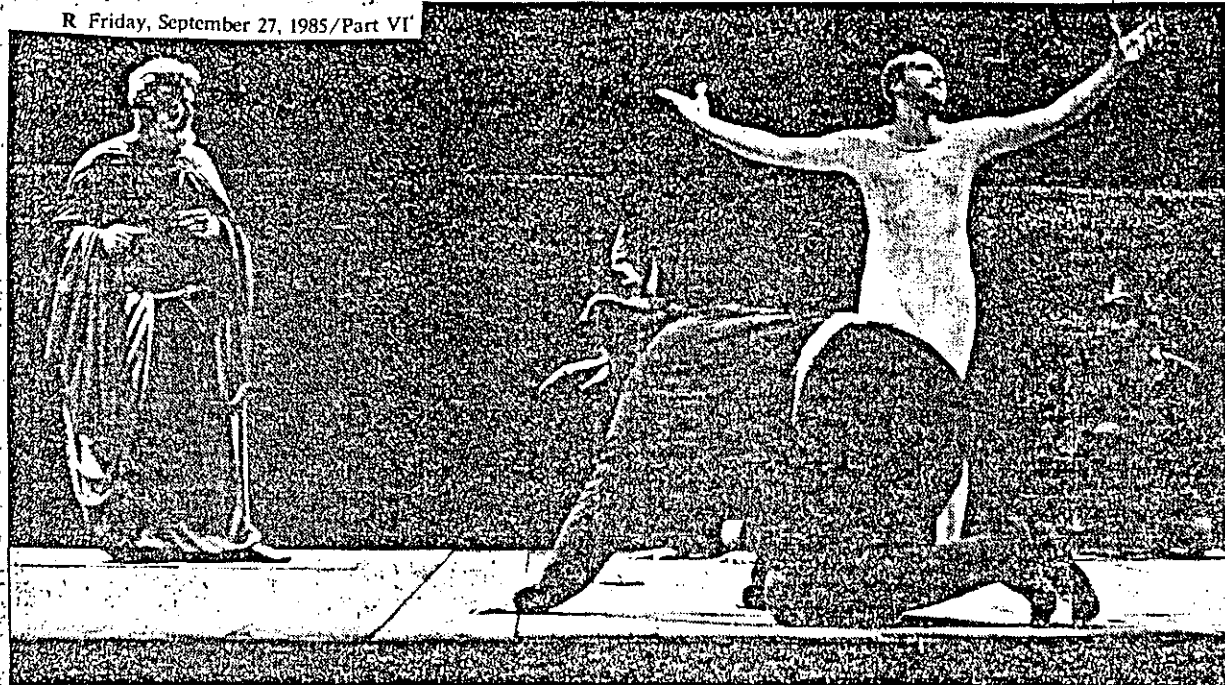


ORANGE COUNTY WEEKEND GUIDE

Theater: Medieval & Modern

The medieval theater festival continues at UC Irvine this weekend with "The Corpus Christi Plays," seven dramas drawn from the Old Testament and written anonymously between 1378 and 1576. The series of 20-minute pageants will be presented today, Saturday and Tuesday through Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Opening today at South Coast Repertory's Second Stage is Craig Lucas' "Blue Window," a play set in a Manhattan loft that reveals the fragile threads connecting the lives of seven characters. Directed by Norman Rene, "Blue Window" plays Monday through Saturday at 8:30 p.m., Sunday at 8 p.m. Matinees Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. Runs through Oct. 20 at 655 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa.



JONATHAN NGUROK / Los Angeles Times

Edgar Schell, left, as God and Ron Ricards, in white, as Adam in "The Plaie Called Corpus Christie" at UCI's Fine Arts Village Theatre.

HISTORY, MAGIC MIX IN MEDIEVAL EPIC AT UCI

By JOHN VOLAND

Imagine a world where there were no televisions, no radios, no playhouses, no films, no books to speak of—in short, where media was a word that applied only to painting.

Now imagine yourself plunked squarely in the midst of a town square packed with 5,000 people just as media-deprived as yourself, observing a spec-

lacie wherein angels fly singing in the heavens, devils leap cackling from smoky chasms, men and women of legend, re-enact their tragic tales and where earthquakes, burning bushes, flowering staves and disappearances happen as naturally as rain.

This is the kind of rough magic—prevalent in medieval times—that scholars and theater people at UC Irvine are striving to exert on modern audiences with "The Plaie Called Corpus Christie," a historical re-creation of the English pageant theater being presented through Oct. 5 at the Fine Arts Village Theatre on campus.

"Corpus Christie" is the first of a three-part presentation by the university's new Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater, which school officials plan to have completed by 1987—presenting one part a year, the sum of which will tell the complete story of Christian mankind, from the creation of the angels to Doomsday. "Corpus Christie" itself begins with the creation of the angels and concludes with the story of Abraham and Isaac, with stops along the way at the Garden of Eden and the tales of Noah and Cain and Abel.

This year's installment of the huge theatrical presentation is actually seven mini-plays, or "pageants," rather than one continuous

narrative. Much in the manner of "Tamara," an experimental theater piece now playing in Los Angeles, each section, or "station," in "Corpus Christie" has its own dramatic logic.

"There are actually several plot lines working at any given time," said Edgar Schell, who chairs UCI's department of English and comparative literature and serves as dramaturge for the production. "You can pay particular attention to one station and see it through to the end, or you can wander around from story to story."

Schell said that the original version of "Corpus Christie" was written around 1375 in Middle English, and continued to be performed in England for two centuries thereafter.

"The whole production would take between one and eight days, depending on how it was staged," Schell said. "This series of pageants represents the major popular dramatic form in England before the advent of the professional theater. As such, it foreshadows much of what we see in Shakespeare's time."

Robert Cohen, UCI's drama department chairman, agreed. "These are very familiar stories," he said. "These are the plays Shakespeare saw as a child, and he was no doubt influenced by them."

The then-spectacular special effects used by the traveling players—who used the resources of the towns they played in, for everything from props and costumes to actors—were what created a lasting impression on the Bard of Avon and the rest of the medieval audiences. Fifteenth- and 16th-Century designers and producers—and the towns that sponsored the shows—sought to outdo each other in dazzling the crowds.

One anonymous chronicler, recalling a French production in 1547, wrote that "the machines of the Paradise and of Hell were absolutely prodigious and could be taken by the populace for magic, for we saw Truth, the angels, and other characters descend from very high, sometimes visibly, sometimes invisibly, appearing suddenly."

Schell said that UCI's production would hew closely to the medieval letter and spirit, employing an

authentic stage designed from 16th-Century engravings and incorporating many of the period's stage effects.

"We'll have people fall from the towers on either end of the stage, we'll have Hell opening up and belching out fire and brimstone, and we'll have Adam and Eve rise created from the ground," said Schell. "It'll be spectacular, all right."

But both Cohen and Schell stressed that "Corpus Christie" is a valid dramatic form in its own right—without all the effects.

"The pageants are partly social satire, partly plain farce, and partly very serious drama, even tragedy," Schell said. "It's very emotionally engaging, even after all these years."

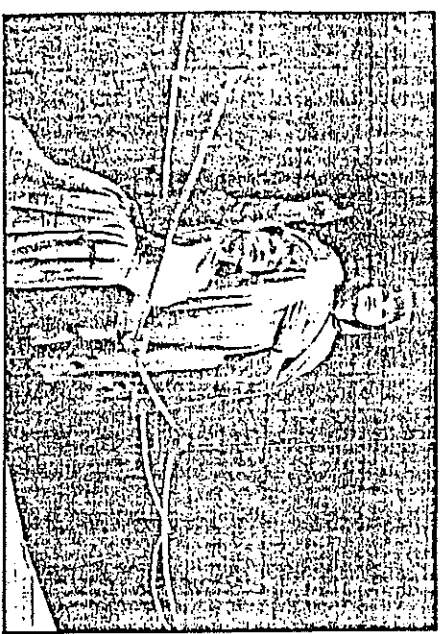
Performances of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christie" will be Tuesdays through Saturdays beginning at 8 p.m. For more information, call (714) 856-6616.

Arts & Leisure

A gem emerges from some dusty plays

UC Irvine's English and drama departments are presenting a medieval theater festival

By Thomas O'Connor
The Register



UCI's festival features Otto Coelmo as Noah and Meir Mansouri as his wife.

It's a tough role, but somebody's got to play God. Edgar Schell bears only slight resemblance to the traditional image of the deity, that of the old guy with flowing, snowy locks.

Schell more resembles a distinguished, middle-aged scholar — his real-life role at UC Irvine, where he chairs the English and Comparative Lit department. This week, though, Schell starts playing God — literally — when the Irvine campus launches what organizers

hope will evolve into a major, international festival devoted to theater of the Middle Ages.

The title of this week's offering might sound drier than three-day-old toast, and its source — five-century-old, anonymous English dramas based on stories from the Bible — hardly seems the stuff of theatrical allure in an age of "cats," style techno-wizardry.

Yet "The Platte Called Corpus Christi" (the spelling is properly medieval), which opens Tuesday for two weeks in UCI's Fine Arts Village Theatre, promises one of the year's most unconventional — and potentially rewarding — stage experiences in Southern California.

"I've been absolutely astonished to find how powerful these plays are," said Robert Cohen, UCI's drama chairman, as well as director of the production and — with Schell — the medieval festival's architect.

"I knew they were quaint and charming and kind of fun," Cohen said, "but I had no idea they'd prove as powerful as I think they will."

What Schell and 11 other performers are enacting at UCI are seven selections from some of the surviving cycles of "mystery" plays first performed in such English towns as York, Wakefield and Chester during the Middle Ages.

Please see FESTIVAL/8

FESTIVAL: UC Irvine's drama and English departments are dusting off some medieval plays

FROM K1

The mystery plays weren't who-dunnits, but religious dramas drawn from the "mysteries" of the Bible, stories most of us learned as toddlers: Lucifer's fall, Adam and Eve, Noah's ark, Abraham and Isaac, the birth and death of Christ.

Their playwrights are unknown, and only fragments of some survive, but over hundreds of years they plays were performed in increasingly elaborate annual festivals, usually around the late spring feast of Corpus Christi.

Till recently, mystery plays were pretty much the province of scholars like Schell (and the fellow academics he's convoking for a day-long symposium at UCI Saturday as part of the festival). Scattered campus productions — in the United States, Canada and England — tended to be arcane and deadily dull.

Eight years ago, Britain's plant National Theatre successfully launched an ongoing project to resuscitate some of the plays for modern audiences. "The Mysteries," an innovative, three-play dilution, set to a folk-rock score, has played to great success throughout Britain and is one of this year's sensations on the London stage.

THEATER PREVIEW

What a medieval theater festival: "The Platte Called Corpus Christi."

Where: UC Irvine, Fine Arts Village Theatre, Tuesday through Saturday, and Oct. 1-5, 8 p.m.
How much: \$5 weeknights, \$6 weekends.
Call: 656-6616.

Organizers of the UCI medieval festival hope to duplicate the popularity — though not the methods — of the British production. The three-year local project is underwritten by a \$35,000 grant from UCI's fund for Focused Research Programs.

"We're trying to present them in a way that opens them up for modern audiences, that emphasizes how modern they are," Schell said last week.

The words are mostly modern, thanks to a translation Cohen did from the original Middle English, with help from Schell and another UCI English professor, Stephen Barney.

all from the Old Testament, while New Testament stories of Christ's life will be produced next fall and in 1987. (Four of this year's seven mini-dramas are drawn from a cycle associated with the medieval town of York, while three are from a different cycle, believed to have been performed in the town of Wakefield.)

"There's some possibility that by the third year maybe we can do an all-day festival," said Cohen, who hopes to see their baby grow into a giant, internationally renowned celebration of life in the Middle Ages. "The entire cycle would take 17 or 18 hours to do, and a cast of 200," said Schell. "We're not ready for that, but we've talked about combining them into a sweeping look at the whole cycle."

"We hope to develop outside funding so we can have a permanent early-drama festival at Irvine, not restricted to just English, nor indeed to just medieval. Someone could profitably open up the whole field of drama before Shakespeare."

For now, the festive spirit will be promoted via medieval "sweets and savories," available at food booths outside the Fine Arts Village. "I'm fascinated with their sense of religion," said Cohen, who has run UCI's drama program since 1965. "The people who put these plays together were intensely religious without being particularly pious. Their relationship with God was much more direct, personal and unnumbered than ours."

"The characters are trying to find out what is the moral way to live in this world. They have to deal with temptation, poverty, deprivation, death, ignorance, violence — all the things we have to deal with as a society."

Seeing the mystery plays today is also, Cohen suggested, a chance to watch the English language being formed.

"Language is created both privately and publicly," he said. "It's not just through people conversing, but by public forums, too, of which theater is the most celebrated."

"In these plays we can see playwrights struggling with words, with rhymes and meter, trying to put ideas into words. You can see the writer at work, because it's all so fresh, dealing with the first murder, the first kiss on earth, the first betrayal, the creation of light itself."

"I think people will be surprised that the stories pack so much wallop, without a lot of the drama

'The Creator'
makes its way
back to Irvine

—page 19

the Ticket

film • music • fine arts

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Auditions/
screenings/
keep performers on their
toes. —page 21

'Christi': Faire game with medieval appeal

By Wendy Glassman
and Laurie Hertz

As you approach the theater, you are greeted by jugglers and strolling minstrels. There are booths with food, and a faire is going on. Then you notice that everyone is dressed in medieval garb. You have just arrived at *The*

Drama Preview

Plate Called Corpus Christi.

Once inside the theater, the first thing you notice is the medieval

bridge that spans the whole stage. The lights dim, and the ethereal sound of biblical chanting begins. God Himself begins to speak.

The Plate Called Corpus Christi, which runs Sept. 24-28 and Oct. 1-5 in the Fine Arts Village Theatre, is the first of a series of three medieval plays which will portray the span of humanity from Creation to Armageddon. This play takes the viewer through the first 25 chapters of Genesis, from the fall of Lucifer, to the stories of Adam and Eve, Noah and Abraham and Isaac. Future plays, occurring once a year for the fol-

lowing two years will portray the Nativity and Doomsday.

Directed by Drama Professor Robert Cohen and produced by English Department Chair Edgar Schell, *Corpus Christi* is a modern translation of the first theatrical interpretation of Bible literature. The Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater Studies, a UCI-based mix of experts from drama, art, history, humanities and musicology, is responsible for researching the show's background and, according to Schell, they stayed true to the original production except for the adaptation to modern language.

The plays were first performed in English villages in 1376 and were banished around 1575 for political reasons.

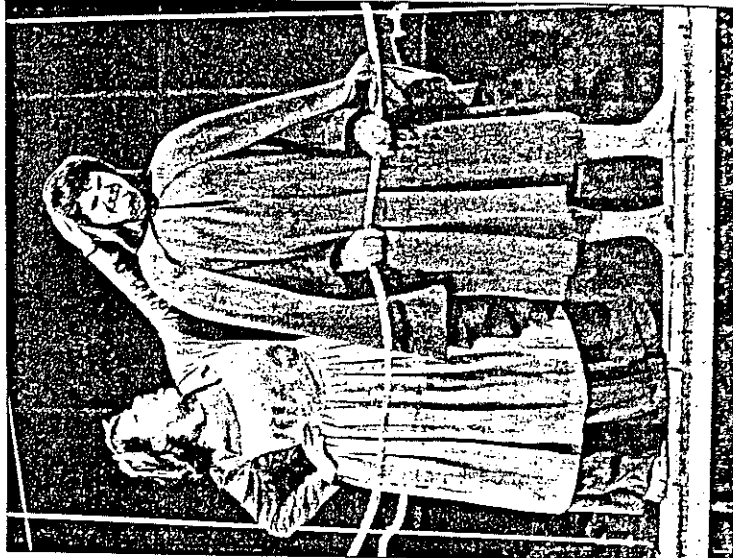
"These plays didn't die a natural death," Schell explained. "They were rigorously stamped out because they were survivors of the Roman Catholic Press."

Originally, they were done on wagons carted around town, stopping at different stations to perform. UCI's version allows the audience to sit on the stage, reducing the number of viewers and making the show a more personal experience, as it was for the peasants in the medieval villages.

The set is spectacular, with a bridge high above the stage and "Hell's Mouth" opening from the lower platform, making the scene a multi-level extravaganza.

"Even the effects are done mechanically, as they were originally, so we're not really cheating. We're not using any modern electric equipment," Schell said.

"The value of reading any early literature or seeing any early drama is a kind of freedom," he said. "And that is the illusion of the fashions of thought and behavior of our time being somehow natural and inevitable. One gains a different perspective by looking to other times and so one gains a kind of freedom from the



ON TOP OF THINGS—Drama students Otto Coehler and Mehr Mansuri as Mr. and Mrs. Noah in "The Plate Called Corpus Christi."

Schell said.

For those who want to delve deeper into the background of the play, a symposium is offered Saturday, Sept. 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Mesa Court's Silverado Room.

"The most distinguished people in the field [of medieval theater] will be there to speak about our play and about the considerations of doing medieval plays in general," Schell said. Professors from colleges all over the country will speak.

"The purpose of the symposium is to educate audiences about the nature of the plays and to give them some way to understand precisely what they're seeing."



HEAVENLY PRESENCE—Edgar Schell, chair of English at UCI and dramaturge for "Corpus Christi," plays God in the production presented by the Focused Research Program on Medieval Theatre.

Tickets are available at the Fine Arts box office.

Scholars dish up a feast of medieval theater

By Thomas O'Connor
The Register

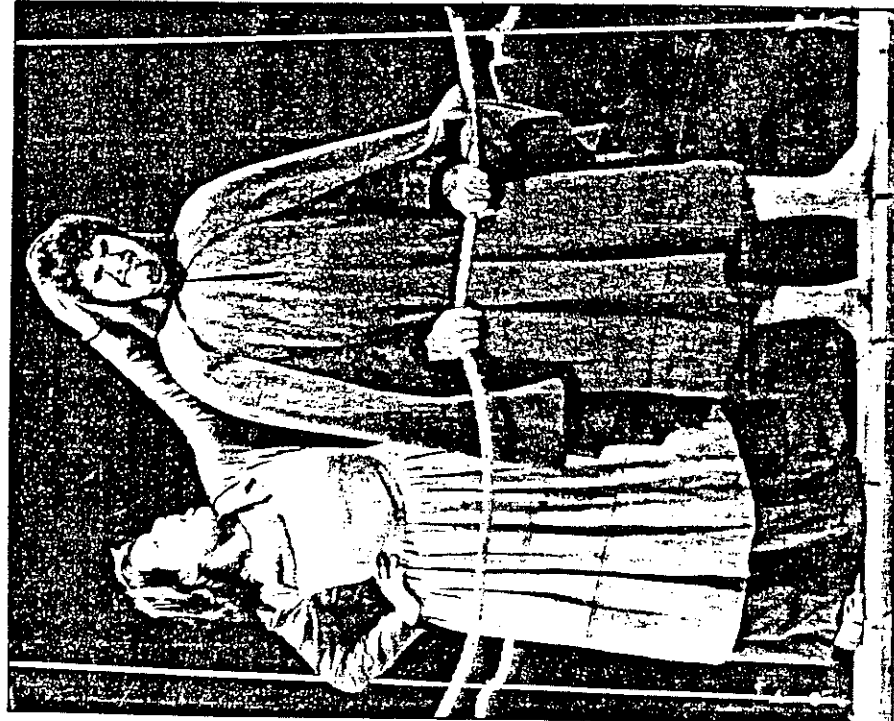
The dramatic sensation of the theater season in York, England, circa 1500 or thereabouts, arrived in Orange County this week, courtesy of the UC Irvine scholars who've drummed up a festival of theater from the Middle Ages.

UCI's lively production of "The Platte Called Corpus Christi" is neither as quaint as the medieval spelling might hint, nor more than passing arcane, although it's part of a very scholarly research project (the learned program articles even have footnotes).

The show is a cluster of biblical stories, drawn from some of the remarkably vibrant "mystery" plays that were performed during lavish religious festivals in England in the 14th to 16th centuries. The first of three productions planned over three years, this installment re-creates a clutch of oft-told tales from the Old Testament: the fall of Lucifer, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah's Ark, Abraham and his son Isaac.

It's not the familiarity that makes these stories surprisingly immediate to an audience accustomed to far more heated dramatic fare. These are not "religious" plays, in the devotional or inspirational sense, and they're blissfully free of the hokey, self-conscious portentousness that weighs down such overheated costume affairs as the Crystal Cathedral's pageants.

The anonymous writers who assembled these dramas treated the material with engaging freshness and directness. Don't expect any of the liturgical



Noah and his wife, portrayed by UCI drama students Otto Coehler and Mehr Mansuri, stand on a mobile bridge that serves as the ark.

density of such johnny-come-latelies as Shakespeare, or vaguely abstract notions of God. The original Middle English has been gently polished into a more modern rendering — by UCI drama chief Robert Cohen and English professors Edgar Schell and Stephen Barney — that retains the flavor and verse rhythms of the original.

Cohen has also directed, and, with designer Douglas-Scott Goheen, fashioned a fascinating setting: a long, narrow stage of

raw wood, with the audience seated very close on either side. Twin, carved towers rise at either end, linked by an ingenious, mobile bridge that serves God and his angels as "heaven," and later descends to become Noah's Ark.

The director's solutions to keeping the drama theatrically alive — and faithful to its medieval origins — are almost uniformly successful and often ingenious. Lucifer literally drops from heaven, while Adam and

REVIEW

What: "The Platte Called Corpus Christi" (a Medieval Theater Festival).

Where: Fine Arts Village Theatre, UC Irvine.

Continues: Tonight, Saturday and next Tuesday to Saturday, 8 p.m.

How much: \$5-\$6.
Call: 856-6616.

Eve's first, hesitant words are an exquisite moment of theater. There are even reliably old-fashioned barnyard-humor gags.

Some of Cohen's young cast are uneasy with the demands of making verse both clear and free-flowing, and Noah's Wife needs to tone down the slapsitck. But several performances are exceptionally

affecting (Ken Jensen's smiling, oily Satan and Ron Richards' heartfelt Abraham stand out).

It's a strong, 12-player ensemble, presided over by Schell's powerfully imperious performance as God.

Arrive early for a pre-show sip of spiced wine and such nibbles as bric tarts or artichokes stuffed with blueberry rice, on sale outside the theater while madrigal singers entertain.

REVIEW

Ancient plays superbly recreated at UC Irvine

By KATHLEEN CUMMINGS
Daily Pilot Correspondent

UC Irvine brings together professional actors and scholars of Medieval theater to re-create, in all its magnificent simplicity, the early religious plays, and succeeds brilliantly. "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi," which consists of five 20-minute plays, is presented by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater Studies, as part of the first continuing medieval theater festival in the United States.

For contemporary morality to appreciate the medieval spirit as expressed in these plays it must be kept in mind the human conditions that existed in the 13th and 14th century. In these times God revealed himself to man directly, making it less difficult to accept the awful things that happened to many be attributing them to the will of God. Man needed only to love and obey God and have faith, that whatever happened to him, the eventual outcome would be to his good.

The Old Testament stories of the fall of Lucifer, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, and Abraham and Isaac, had direct significance to the medieval lives of both the people who performed them and the audiences who enjoyed them. However, even in our skeptical age, these stories pluck deep chords of recognition. We know they are as much a part of our culture and collective consciousness as the "big bang" and evolution theories (and for many, take almost equivalent size leaps of faith to believe).

As the audience gathers on the stage, where we view the plays, we enter an atmosphere of magic. The huge, rough-hewn timber set, beautifully designed by Douglas-Scott Goheen, looms majestically through



Otto Coelho, Mehr Mansouri are Noah and wife in "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi" at UC Irvine.

a fog pierced by amber-pink light-beams and accompanied by vespereal voices. When God, performed with convincing eloquence by Professor Edgar Schell, emerges from the mist and speaks to the angels gathered on a swaying bridge above middle-earth, I happily cleared an empty space in front of my agnostic mind, and gave myself up to the spiritual glamor of it all.

Particularly outstanding in this production is the feeling one gets that the actors are really atuned to their characters, not simply doing an academic exercise that leaves little for the general audience to munch on. The costumes, designed by Chuck Goheen, are as authentic as one could imagine and beautifully varied in texture and style, greatly enhancing the overall effect.

There are many fine performances, but some which stand out are those of Schell, Otto Joseph Coelho III (particularly in his role of an ox) and Ron

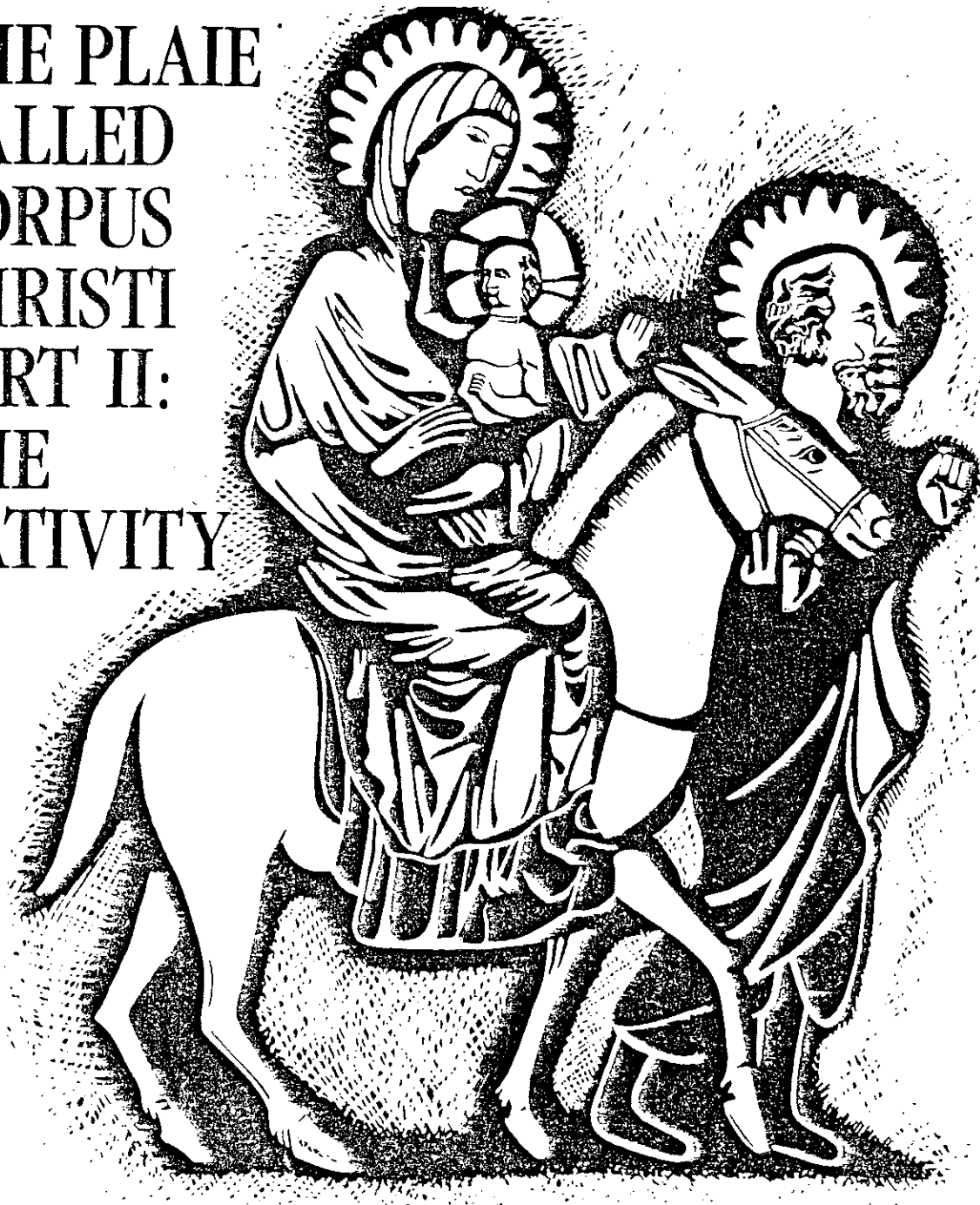
Richards' Abraham, and Gerard Babb and Ken Jensen. Other cast members include Matthew Sullivan, Gina Adams, Gerard Babb, Mary Workman, Paul Lovely, Mehr Mansuri, Patrick Miller and Karin Bennett.

The Middle English text was adapted by Robert Cohen, Stephen Barney and Edgar Schell. All deserve much credit for creating a luminous evening of excellent entertainment.

(It's ironic that a production with this degree of intricacy and precision would almost have to be sponsored by the institution promoting the very sin that got us into trouble in the first place: eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge.)

The play will continue at 8 p.m. tonight through Saturday and Tuesday through Saturday of next week. Tickets are \$5 Tuesday through Thursday and \$6 for Friday and Saturday. They are available at UCI box office, 856-6616.

THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI PART II: THE NATIVITY



UCI MEDIIEVAL THEATRE FESTIVAL 1986

The Annunciation / The Nativity
The Second Shepherd's Play
The Magi / The Flight Into Egypt
The Slaughter of the Innocents
The Death of Herod

Robert Cohen, Director
Edgar Schell, Dramaturge
Fine Arts Village Theatre
University of California, Irvine
Produced by
The Focused Research Program in
Medieval Theater Studies

Dates

Tuesday-Saturday, September 23-27,
1986
Tuesday-Saturday, September 30,
October 1-4, 1986

Time and Place

7:30 p.m. — Medieval refreshments,
with entertainment and a complimen-
tary glass of Lamb's Wool or wine

8:00 p.m. — Performance

Fine Arts Village Theatre
University of California, Irvine

Tickets

\$6 General; \$5 for UCI Faculty, Staff,
Senior Citizens, Other Students; \$5 for
UCI Students

Tickets will be on sale at the Fine Arts
Box Office beginning Monday, Septem-
ber 15. Box Office hours are 10 a.m. to 3
p.m. weekdays. Telephone credit card
purchases will be accepted by the Box
Office beginning September 15 (714)
856-6616. For general information call
(714) 856-4904 or 4259.



THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI

PART II: THE NATIVITY

THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI

PART II: THE NATIVITY

Text adapted from the Middle English by

Stephen Barrey, Robert Coher, Linda Georgianna and Edgar Schell

Produced by

The Focused Research Program in

Medieval Theatre

University of California, Irvine

Cast

The Annunciation (Wakefield)

| | | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| God | Edgar Schell | Zachary | James T. Donovan |
| Girl | Ron Hastings | Townpeople | Gina P. Adams, |
| Mary | Diane Robinson | Otto Coelfio, Patrick McGowan, | |
| Joseph | Steven Benson | Matthew W. Sullivan, Sr. | |
| Elizabeth | Carla G. Sublett | Angel | Sarah Anne Dacey |

The Nativity (York)

| | | | |
|--------|----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Joseph | Steven Benson | Animals | Gina P. Adams, |
| Mary | Diane Robinson | Otto Coelfio, Ron Hastings, | Patrick McGowan |

Second Shepherds Play (Wakefield)

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Coll | Matthew W. Sullivan, Sr. | Jill | Carla G. Sublett |
| Gib | Otto Coelfio | Angel | Sarah Anne Dacey |
| Daw | James T. Donovan | Mary | Diane Robinson |
| Mad | Patrick McGowan | Joseph | Steven Benson |
| | | Sheep | Ron Hastings |

The Offering of the Magi (Wakefield)

| | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Nunciatus | James T. Donovan | Mary | Diane Robinson |
| Herod | Ron Hastings | Angel | Sarah Anne Dacey |
| 1st King | Otto Coelfio | Dancer | Carla G. Sublett |
| 2nd King | Matthew W. Sullivan, Sr. | Animals | Gina P. Adams, |
| 3rd King | Patrick McGowan | Carla G. Sublett | |

The Flight Into Egypt (Wakefield)

| | | | |
|--------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Angel | Sarah Anne Dacey | Mary | Diane Robinson |
| Joseph | Steven Benson | Animals | Gina P. Adams, |
| | | Carla G. Sublett | |

Slaughter of the Innocents (Wakefield)

| | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Nunciatus | James T. Donovan | Counsellors | Steven Benson |
| Herod | Ron Hastings | Diane Robinson | |
| 1st Knight | Patrick McGowan | 1st Woman | Carla G. Sublett |
| 2nd Knight | Otto Coelfio | 2nd Woman | Sarah Anne Dacey |
| 3rd Knight | Matthew W. Sullivan, Sr. | 3rd Woman | Gina P. Adams |

Corpus Christi plays are actually collections of brief plays, as many as fifty-six in an early state of the York Plays, that seek to dramatize the whole history of mankind from the "Creation" to "Doomsday." The earliest record of a Corpus Christi performance comes in 1376 from the city of York and the latest in 1575 from the city of Chester. During those two hundred years the plays were regularly produced by civic governments in dozens of communities all over England. Written anonymously (the Wakefield Master, author of the "Second Shepherds Play," is one of the few identifiable playwrights) and performed by members of craft guilds, the Corpus Christi plays were the principal form of popular theater in the later middle ages.

A whole cycle like the York Plays or the Wakefield Plays might require several hundred performers and take several days to enact. Our immediate goal is less ambitious. The Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater Studies, a group of scholars in the schools of Humanities and Fine Arts, is presenting selected groups of plays from the cycles that have survived. Last year we performed the Creation, next year we will do the Passion and Doomsday, and this year we present the Nativity. In time we hope to create a permanent festival of medieval drama. If you would like to join us, please contact Professor Edgar Schell in the Department of English and Comparative Literature.

Death of Herod (N. Town)

| | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Herod | Ron Hastings | Counsellors | Steven Benson, Diane Robin |
| Nuncius | James T. Donovan | Death | Edgar Sc |
| 1st Knight | Patrick McGowan | Devils | Gina P. Adams, Sara Anne Dacey, Carla G. Sublett |
| 2nd Knight | Otto Coelho | | |
| 3rd Knight | Matthew W. Sullivan, Sr. | | |

There will be one intermission.

Production Staff

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Director | Robert Cohen |
| Dramaturge | Edgar Schell |
| Music Director | Nancy Van Deusen |
| Setting Design by | Douglas-Scott Goheen |
| Costume Design by | Chuck Goheen |
| Lighting Design by | Michael Sundquist |
| Choreographer | Janice Gudde Plastino |
| Production Stage Manager | Drew Scott |
| Technical Direction | Keith Bangs |
| Assistant Stage Manager | Michael Eggers |
| Master Carpenter | David Sword |
| Costumer | Leslie Skir |
| Running Crew | Dan Cordova, Ross Elbling, Renos Gro. Katherine Murphy, Elizabeth Smith, Jennifer Wilcox |
| Electrics Crew | Linda Funsten, Craig Pierce, Janie Hobson |
| Box Office Manager | Sharon Silva |
| Publicity/Promotion | Scottie Hinkey, Gerard Babb |
| Catering by | "Essential" |
| Hostess Arrangements | Ann Tashjian |

Special thanks to Al Ackerman of Clayton Controls

September 23-27, 30
October 1-4, 1986
Fine Arts Village Theatre

REUNION/DVOR/GAMES

REVIEW

Medieval splendor in 'Nativity' at UCI

By KATHLEEN CUMMINGS

Daily Pilot Correspondent

Part II of the Biblical History of the World, entitled "The Nativity," unfolds in all its mystic splendor on the UC Irvine stage, produced by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater Studies.

This ambitious group of scholars presented last year's "The Plaic Called Corpus Christi: The Creation," which was a stunning success. Next year the third and final installment will be "The Passion."

Though based on the Bible, the plays are more than religious retellings, they are satirical as well as serious theatrical interpretations of Medieval life, according to Edgar Schell, chair of English and Comparative Literature, who serves as dramaturge for the production when he isn't playing God or the Grim Reaper in the plays. This is certainly the case with this production, which often deals satirically with the characters.

In their original productions these plays would last as long as a week, taking up the attention of an entire town during lavish religious festivals, says Schell. They represented the major popular dramatic form in England before the advent of professional theater.

Unlike other mythology, such as folk tales, which aim most to entertain, these plays were meant to celebrate and validate established beliefs about the creation of the universe and human development.

Director Robert Cohen, professor of drama, does a fine job on this show. He says that Shakespeare saw plays like these when he was a child and was certain to have been influenced by them. Although the language has been

modernized somewhat by Schell, Stephen Barney and Linda Georgianna, it still retains the lilt and ring of the Middle Ages.

Some may find it a demanding experience to appreciate a pre-rational world equivalent of the modern Broadway blockbuster, filled as we are with modern education, Western hustle-bustle, and attention spans honed on fast cars, guns and sex.

It is unlikely however that we'll have the chance to see something like this done with such a high degree of finesse, talent and energy. Only an institute of high learning could

produce it.

A festive mood is cast 30 minutes before the play starts as traveling minstrels sing in the patio around a delicious array of stuffed hens, fruit tarts, smoked salmon, breads and wines, which can be had for an immodest sum.

Then we are ushered into a vast room, washed in a mist of dim lit fog (lighting design by Michael Sundquist). We are seated on either side of a looming rectangular stage, designed by Douglas Scott Goheen. We can neither see the audience on the other side, nor the walls of the room. We could be on an English village green.

As in last year's production, Cohen has assembled a strong cast and each actor plays many parts, as well as provides the outstanding chorus under the direction of Nancy Van Deusen. The cast includes Schell, Ron Hastings, Diane Robinson, Steven Benson, Carla G. Sublett, James T. Donovan, Gina P. Adams, Otto Coelho, Patrick McGowan, Matthew W. Sullivan Sr. and Sara Anne Dacy.

Final performances will be given Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Village Theater. Call 856-6616 for ticket information.

Second medieval play installment high on quality

Names: *The Platte Called Corpus Christi, Part II: The Nativity*, part of the 1986 UCI Medieval Theatre Festival, starring Ron Hastings, Diane Robinson, Steven Benson and Edgar Schell; directed by Robert Cohen.
Place: UCI Fine Arts Village Theatre.
Dates: Continues through Oct. 4 with shows at 8 p.m. nightly; pre-show entertainment at 7:30.
Tickets: \$6, \$5 for students and senior citizens. Reservations: 856-6616.

By Michael Rydzynski
For the Irvine World News

A highly literate and reverential yet emotional production of a series of related medieval plays commemorating the birth of Christ opened last week at UC Irvine.

The Platte Called Corpus Christi, a three-year project produced by UCI's Focus-Research Program in Medieval Theatre and staged at the college's Fine Arts Village Theatre, is a cycle of more than 50 plays written anonymously some 500 to 600 years ago for festivals throughout England.

UCI's efforts are somewhat scaled down, mounting only seven of the plays making up this year's installment, *The Nativity*. But there apparently is no skipping in the quality. (Part I was produced last year, while Part III will be staged next fall.)

On the night this reviewer went, rain forced the cast to move into nearby Studio Theatre for the pre-show entertainment. The people there were regaled with tuneful Elizabethan madrigals and delicious Lambe s-wool (apparently to us 20th century

folks).

At the appointed time, the cast led the way to the main theater's backstage, which opened up to release a flood of misty purplish lights as if denoting a different time dimension. An elevated platform in the middle of the stage served as the actual stage with a retractable manger on one side and a high tower-like throne on the other.

In Review/ Theater

Seated on either side of the platform, the audience felt a heightened sense of immediacy with the players, undoubtedly helped by the actors' occasionally moving behind the audience to envelop them with Gregorian chants. Stage effects were clearly shown, as when the archangel Gabriel swooped down from Heaven on a visible and noisy wire.

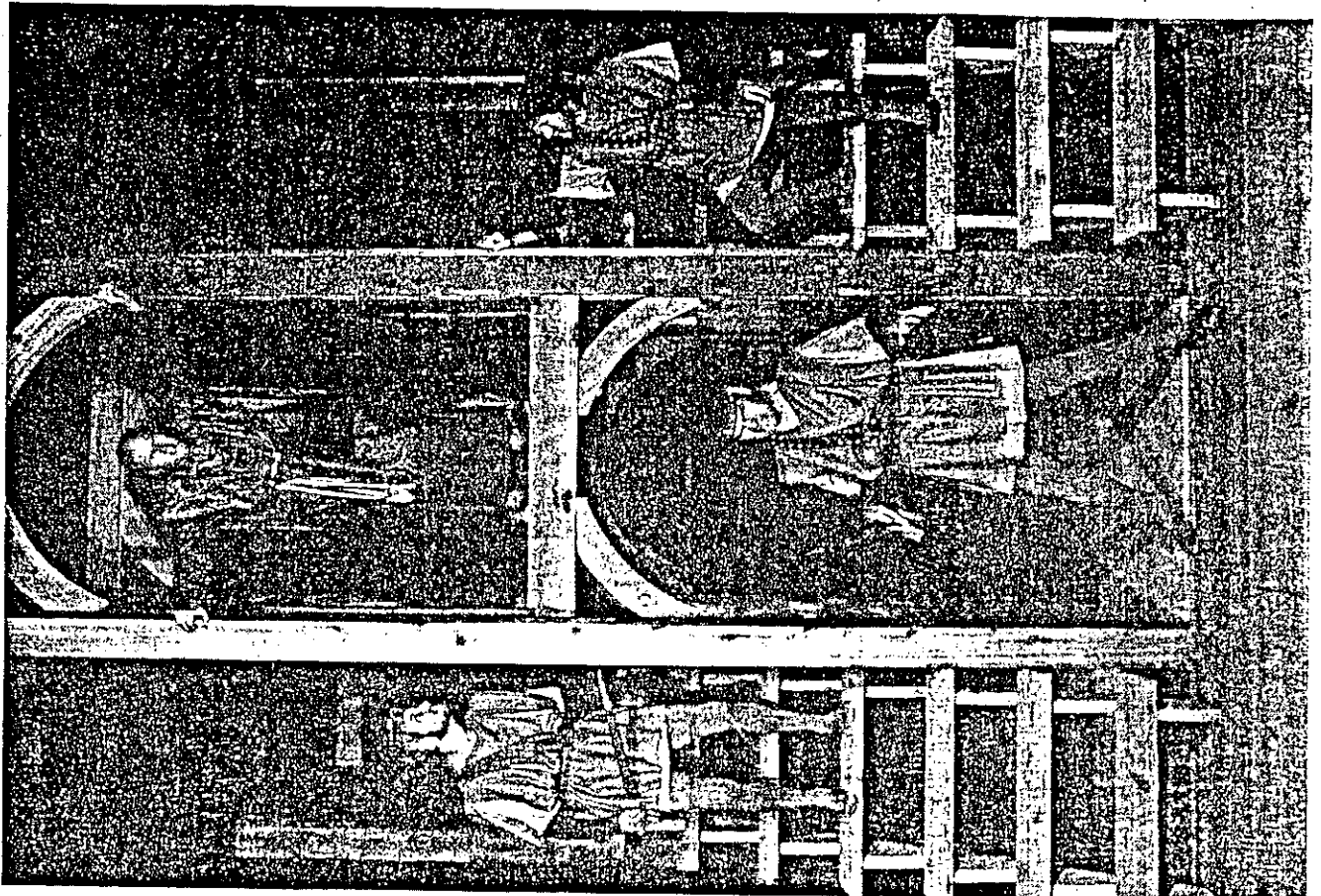
Yet all these atmospheric effects would be wasted if the acting and direction were full of holes. Fortunately, these areas even strengthened the technical aspects. Diane Robinson's portrayal of Mary is very human and believable, even if initially a little disconcerting to anyone brought up on the image of Mary accepting everything unemotionally. Here, Robinson faces the news she is to bear God's son with fear, then disbelief, then hysteria when she is made instantly pregnant (via in-

flatable balloon). But as she comes to grips with her situation, she amuses herself in different reclining and sitting positions. Yet one never doubts Mary's strong faith.

Steven Benson's Joseph is full of pains of old age, whose anger at Mary's condition—he actually leaves her before an angel stops him—is understandable. When searching for a place for the night and again when required to flee to Egypt to escape King Herod's sword, Benson would moan and complain, but ultimately realize all this is to be done according to God's will and sets about his task.

In many ways the most amazing and forceful job is turned in by Ron Hastings, who essays King Herod with brutality and savageness. His frequent temper tantrums get to be a little too much after a while, but his interpretation of the part tells the audience that here, indeed, was an evil and dangerous man. It would have been more satisfying to have seen Hastings undergo a more realistic death scene rather than the stylized one enacted, but nonetheless his was a frightfully convincing depiction of Herod.

The remainder of the cast performed admirably. Worth noting, Edgar Schell, UCI's English chairman and the production's dramaturge, appeared in the first and final plays as God and Death, respectively—the two sides of essentially the same person, according to director Robert Cohen—and played both parts with stoic regality and somberness.



The Platte Called Corpus Christi: The Nativity is performed at UCI's Fine Arts Village Theatre.

'Christi' is early X-mas present

■ **The Plaie Called Corpus Christi (Part II: The Nativity)**

■ **Fine Arts Village Theatre**

■ **Sept. 30, Oct. 1-4**

■ **7:30 p.m.—medieval refreshments**
■ **8 p.m.—performance**

■ **\$6 general, \$5 students/faculty/staff**



By Wendy Doetkott, Staff writer

If it seems like Christmas comes sooner every year, you're right—and you need look no farther than the UCI stage.

The season's first offering, *The Plaie Called Corpus Christi*, is the second part of a selection of medieval "mystery plays" to be produced by the scholars of the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theatre (hence the subtitle, "Part II: The Nativity").

Though less spectacular than last year's "Creation" dramas, these seven plays want not for lack of Miltonic grandeur. In "The Nativity," mankind—not God—is the star. The Divine Master Plan is a backdrop now to the uniquely human struggles—and joys—of our earthly existence. And like mankind, these plays are very funny, very poignant.

We empathize with mild-mannered Joseph, played superbly by Steven Benson, when he finds his supposed virgin wife is pregnant. What man would not be enraged at her apparent infidelity, and what man could ever believe her story? We are inspired by Diane Robinson's courageous Mary, whose initial anger at her impossible condition soon melts into bliss.

We can even identify with the fretful, spoiled-rotton-little-King Herod (Ron Hastings) when he discovers there's someone else around who's getting more attention.

With God upstaged by mankind in "The Nativity," we get the debut of Death (English professor Edgar Schell) in the last drama. Death's appearance brings the humanity of the plays into sharp focus—we get a keen sense of our frailty as we realize our common destiny.

9/9/86

T H E A T E R



UCI will offer the second installment in its re-creation of the medieval mystery plays.

University of California, Irvine (856-4904 or 856-4259):

UCI's graduate drama program has, under director Robert Cohen, become one of the nation's most admired, and its productions often have plenty of professional polish.

The not-to-be-missed offering this year is both the first and, by several centuries, the oldest. Last

year, the first installment in UCI's three-year re-creation of the medieval mystery plays — performed under the title "The Plaie Called Corpus:Christi" — proved that ancient by no means equals arcane. Late this month, director Robert Cohen offers Part 2 of the Biblical cycle, "The Nativity," and it's a chance to clear the cobwebs on some surprisingly lively theater.

Granted the school's adventurous standards, UCI might have come up with a musical more novel than "A Chorus Line" (November), which is presently being dinner-theatered to death. But it will be fun to see if the cream of the UCI crop can handle the widely divergent challenges of Strindberg's surrealism ("The Ghost Sonata," in March) and giddy Feydeau farce (this particular one, in May, is called "Not By Bed Alone," but it's the style, not the content, that counts).

UCI'S RARE GLIMPSE INTO MIDDLE ENGLISH THEATER

10/4/86

Los Angeles Times

By CATHY DE MAYO

UC Irvine forcefully breathes new life into ancient stories in the second installment of its three-year cycle of medieval plays, "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi, Part II: The Nativity." There's one last chance to catch this glimpse of medieval life tonight at 8 in the UCI Fine Arts Village. (Information: (714) 856-6616).

The "mystery plays," as they were called, took Biblical stories out of the sanctuaries and into the

small villages of England to be presented in the vernacular of the day. The carefully adapted text by director Robert Cohen, dramatist Edgar Schell, Stephen Barney and Linda Georgianna compresses seven of these Middle English epics into two hours and 40 minutes. Which is not to say that "The Nativity" isn't tough-going at times; it turns out that 14th-Century playwrights can be as long-winded as modern ones, and while the rhymed language is eminently graceful, it is not always easy to follow.

But the major contribution of

Please see 'NATIVITY,' Page 2

ORANGE COUNTY



James T. Donovan plays Daw, one of the shepherds who visited the Christ Child in the manger, and Ron Hastings plays Daw's sheep in medieval play ending tonight at UCI Fine Arts Village Theatre.

a reminder that these people chosen for greatness by God were human, too. That relevance survives the travel through time in this thoughtful staging.

The time travel begins outside the theater, where the crowd is offered medieval food, drink and song before the cast leads everyone onto the dark, yawning space of the Fine Arts Village Theatre stage. A wooden platform rises center stage, bathed in eerily effective smoke, with the audience seated on either

side of the long, narrow playing space. The rough-hewn set looks authentically crude, but it actually conceals an array of modern gadgets, including platforms that rise and sink, footbridges that emerge from the floorboards and a pull-out manger.

The momentum only stumbles once, at the start of the shepherds' story, one of the few times the play's language becomes a real distraction. But the narrative recovers with an amusing subplot

'NATIVITY'

Continued from Page 1

"The Nativity" lies in its rare glimpse into the genealogy of the English-speaking theater. These plays, which ran their course between the 14th and 16th centuries, spring from a society poised on the edge of a cultural explosion and a cataclysmic challenge of church authority. Their anonymous playwrights forged a new relationship between liturgy, poetry and music, making the Bible come alive for the illiterate villagers that made up their audiences.

Director Cohen and his durable, talented cast make sure it comes alive for contemporary audiences, too, injecting a fresh sense of discovery on this well-traveled, occasionally arduous road to Bethlehem. The focus in both the text and the performances is firmly fixed on the humans' perceptions of all these unusual heavenly interventions; these characters are ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances. Diane Robinson's glowing Mary is just as surprised as her neighbors when the angel Gabriel appears at her door; Steven Benson's broadly drawn Joseph is less than thrilled when his virginal wife suddenly turns up pregnant, and Ron Hastings' ranting Herod is comical and evil by turns, pushed toward blind rage by an even blinder ambition.

Fallibilities abound, and while they let us laugh, they also serve as

about a missing sheep, the journey of the Magi and the flight into Egypt, ending with a bone-chilling, literal final image as Death comes to claim Herod and the jaws of hell open up to swallow his entire court. (Pageantry had its place in this early entertainment along with the human perspective, too.) Death then turns to remind the audience that he will pay us all a visit, sooner or later—conveniently leaving the door open for next year's chapter, the Passion and Doomsday.



Henry Dirocco
Shepherds have some fun in segment of "The
Nativity." Facing camera, Patrick McGowan,
Plaie Called Corpus Christi, Part II: The
left, as Mak and Mathew W. Sullivan Sr. as Coll.

HENRY DIROCCO

"LOS ANGELES TIMES"
OCT. 4, 1986

9/24/86

'The Nativity' carries on the old mystery-play tradition

By Jeff Rubio
Special to the Register

Life in the late Middle Ages teemed with spirituality. Martin Luther would eventually come along and challenge how one got closer to God, but no one ever questioned that God was everywhere, influencing everything.

No wonder the theater of the time was strictly devoted to representing man's relationship to God. "Mystery-plays," as they're referred to now, portrayed the great religious events of history, and were staged regularly by craft guilds and civic groups for mass audiences.

But these epic productions, which sometimes took several days and hundreds of actors, were not always gaunt affairs. Note the University of California, Irvine theater department's sometimes stunning, often funny second installment of its three-part English mystery-play cycle, "A Play Called Corpus Christi." (Part one played last year and part three will show next year.)

Director Robert Cohen and dramaturge Edgar Schell have adapted the original texts into the present offering of a play dealing with the nativity of Christ. They've updated it some for the sake of contemporary audiences and they've taken an irresistible, common-sense approach that captures the humanity of the characters without forsaking the ethereal element of the story.

For instance, the first episode of the evening, which deals with the angel Gabriel's visit to the Virgin Mary to announce she is to bear the son of God. How would a woman today feel if an angel suddenly showed up with similar news? This

girl, splendidly played by Diane Robinson, is hardly charmed by Ron Hastings' angel. Scared out of her wits is more like it.

Then, once she gets over the initial shock of entertaining such an uncommon visitor, she's still more than a little skepti-

cal about his message. When the angel points out that her belly has suddenly swelled, she starts to take him a bit more seriously. But what then of Joseph, her nice, dependable, carpenter beau who is suddenly told by Mary that he is to be a father — despite the fact they have never united in the flesh?

Cohen's staging and treatment of the material respects our cultural orientation the way the first directors had to respect that of their own audiences. Joseph's fears, for example, of being cuckolded by a younger man, as well as Mary's own attitude, play well to our more secular outlook.

This staging fully brings its characters to life. The shepherds in "Second Shepherds Play," one of the evening's offerings, is a good example. As we watch them, before the brilliant star lures them to Bethlehem, they're nothing more than carefree rustics thrown together by their

job and trying to make the best of it. When one of them (Patrick McGowan) is accused of stealing a lamb, the interaction becomes hilarious.

The set, designed by Douglas-Scott Goheen, reflects the crude and ethereal nature of the subject examined in these stories. The long, rectangular stage is elevated (with the audience sitting on either side) and features a spare, stylized wooden manger at one end and a wooden tower at the other. Actors fly through the incense-filled space overhead, supported by cables, and descend into the stage through exits hidden from the audience's view. Off-stage choruses chant evocative liturgical songs to punctuate the episodes.

Cohen has assembled a fine group of mostly student actors (God is played by Professor Schell). And from one end of the stage to the other, they are always in character, always acting, even when the focus of attention is 30 feet away. This is a big staging that cares about small details.

The final scene of the evening is a striking one. Herod has gathered his counsel and his soldiers for an orgiastic feast to celebrate the slaughter of the innocents. As they gorge themselves a hellish door suddenly opens and demons emerge to take the party to hotter premises. The red wash of light and the slow motion work well here, too.

Since this cycle takes a full three years to complete, these stagings would seem to rank as something of an event — *if* the quality is there as it certainly was in Part 2. This is an often powerful, multisensuai theater experience, and like the original mystery-plays, its enjoyment is not restricted to saints and scholars.

REVIEW

What: "The Play Called Corpus Christi: Part 2: The Nativity."

Where: Fine Arts Village Theatre, University of California, Irvine.

Continues: Tonight and Saturday, 8 p.m. (repeats Sept. 30-Oct. 4). Outdoor pre-show entertainment begins at 7:30 p.m.

How much: \$6 (35 seniors, students, UCI faculty and staff).

Call: 856-6616.

Suitability: All ages.

Entertainment/Arts



The Slaughter of the Innocents, will be among plays being re-enacted during UCI's Medieval Festival.

Medieval theater opening on UC Irvine stage

The pageantry and tragedy of English medieval theater returns to UC Irvine this month with the staging of the second production of the Corpus Christi plays.

The Plaie Called Corpus Christi: The Nativity, a production of UCI's Focused Research Program in Medieval Theatre Studies, will be presented at 8 p.m.

Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 23-27 and Sept. 30-Oct. 4, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Wandering minstrels and medieval refreshments will lend a festive atmosphere to the theater grounds a half-hour before each performance.

The Corpus Christi plays, sometimes called mystery or craft plays,

were produced between the 14th and 16th centuries in England. They present the biblical history of the world from Creation to Doomsday.

Anonymous panned, the plays became associated with the towns in which they originated. This year's scripts were adapted from the Towneley (performed in Wakefield)

and York plays.

In the original, productions could last more than a week as traveling players literally took over a town during lavish religious festivals, said Edgar Schell, UCI chairman of English and comparative literature, who serves as dramaturge for the produc-

See STAGE ... B-19

STAGE: UCI hosting Medieval productions

Continued from Page B-15

tion.

The series of short plays or pageants represented the major popular dramatic form in England before the advent of the professional theater, Schell said.

These plays, then, were what Shakespeare saw as a child and were certain to have influenced him, said director Robert Cohen, professor of drama at UCI.

The original Middle English dialect has been modernized somewhat but still retains the flavor and rhyme of the Middle Ages. Updating was done by Schell, English professor Stephen Barney and Linda Georgianna, associate professor of English.

Though based on the Bible, the plays are more than religious re-tellings—they are satirical as well as serious theatrical interpretations of medieval life, Schell said.

"The plays are not

preachy," Cohen added. "And (the players') personal religions are not part of this production. What is is the fundamental decency of the time that is in all of us."

Last year's production began with the Creation and ended with Abraham and Isaac. This year's follows the Annunciation through the death of Herod including the Nativity, the Second Shepherd's Play, the Magi and the Flight into Egypt.

Next year's final production will re-enact the Passion sequence. What follows could be an international tour where eight-hour, all-day performances would be staged, much like *Nicholas Nickleby*, Cohen said.

Tickets for the upcoming production are \$6, \$4 for UCI students and \$5 for other students and senior citizens. Further information is available by calling 856-6712 or 856-6718.

Medieval theater is latest addition to a longstanding campus tradition

By Michael Rydzynski, Staff writer

The UCI campus for some reason appears to be a favorite among medievalists who transform it into the English countryside of centuries past.

Perhaps it is the bucolic nature of Aldrich Park, the wide-open spaces of the west side of the campus or its uncrowded veneer on most weekends and holidays. But whatever the appeal, the clocks

are so rarely performed, and there are no stage directions or a stage history of them, so we've had to construct a means of putting them on, which was completely unknown to me. We had to reinvent medieval theatre, and that meant having to consider countless aspects and questions, such as: indoors or out, type of music and performance, audience placement, special effects and even refreshments served before each performance.

"Audience and critical response were overwhelming last year, and almost all the performances were sold out," Cohen said. "The people seemed surprised that they could be so amused and touched by supposedly musty old dramas."

In conjunction with the festival, there will be an all-day symposium on the plays Saturday, Sept. 27, held in the Heritage Room.

The symposium, featuring readings from papers and attended by drama scholars from all over the country, lasts from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is open to the public. For ticket and other information, call the English department at 856-6712.

ning through Saturday, Oct. 4 (excluding Sunday and Monday).

The pageantry, tragedy and comedy of English medieval theatre unfold in the festival's centerpiece, *The Pious Called Corpus Christi* (to use the proper medieval spelling), which takes place in the Fine Arts Village Theatre. This is a three-part cycle of anonymous, English "mystery" plays from the Middle Ages based on stories, or mysteries, from the Bible. This particular cycle was performed 300 to 500 years ago in elaborate annual festivals held around the late spring/early day of Corpus Christi ("Body of Christ").

This year's production subtitled, "Part Two: The Nativity," contains seven short dramas based on the New Testament: "The Annunciation," "The Nativity," "The Second Shepherd's Play," "The Gifts of the Magi," "The Flight into Egypt," "The Slaughter of the Innocents," and "The Death of Herod." Last year's production, also consisting of seven 20-minute plays, was based on the Old Testament.

Drama Preview

are successfully turned back several times during the year.

There is the annual Wayzgoose Renaissance Faire in April, and Madrigal Dinner, just after Thanksgiving, is another UCI tradition.

And now there's the UCI Medieval Theatre Festival, opening its second year this Tuesday and run-



Joseph (Steve Benson) cradles the Christ child as Mary (Diane Robinson) looks over in *The Pious Called Corpus Christi*—Part II, opening Sept. 23.

CHRISTI: 'Tremendously difficult'

Continued from page 29

"The plays are very human, funny, entertaining, violent, frightening, political—all connected by the single thread of human experience: The birth of a baby, love and marriage, oppression, dignity, redemption . . . and death. In fact, the presence of death and oppression in life is never far from the center of these plays."

The festival idea began in the UCI Library some years ago, when one day Cohen ran across Schell.

"Ed and I created Drama 40 [History of Drama] class, so we've had a good rapport with each other," Cohen related. "That day, he suggested our departments should get together on a project, and being that I had just finished writing on medieval drama, I brought up that topic." Cohen and Schell applied for and received a grant from UCI to produce the project under the auspices of the Focused Research Program in Medieval Studies, of which Schell is the director.

Cohen's initial production was "tremendously difficult" to stage, according to Cohen. "These plays

'Tis the season for UCI to continue its mystery play

The Register
(Santa Ana)

9/23

By Thomas O'Connor
The Register

At the final fade-out in our tale, a year ago, a celestial voice had suddenly, with just a split second to spare, stopped the father from knifing his own son, and a happy ending ensued.

This is September, time for new seasons of "Dallas," "Dynasty" and — considerably closer to home — the second installment in the English language's oldest continuing soap opera, the medieval mystery plays.

"The Plaie Called Corpus Christi," a lively stage re-creation of 16th-century biblical dramas, returns for the second of a three-part, three-year cycle, beginning tonight in the Fine Arts Village Theatre at the University of California, Irvine.

The plays are the centerpiece of an annual festival of medieval theater that UCI officials hope to see grow into a major celebration, both of theater and of scholarly research into medieval times.

Last year's inaugural dramatic offering flashed through familiar Old Testament stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel and others, up through Abraham and that close call when God asked him to sacrifice his son, Isaac.

This week and next, the cycle turns to Part 2, "The Nativity," focusing on the events before and just after the best-known of all stories, the birth of Christ.

"This one's funnier, actually, more down to earth," said Robert Cohen, the head of UCI's nationally regarded graduate drama program and director of the mystery-play cycle.

"It's funnier because there's more comedy in the human drama than when you just have God and the angels battling it out."

In Cohen's mounting of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi," the audience sits right on the theater's stage, on either side of a long, wooden minstage. The staging is as authentically medieval as contemporary research allows. Electric lighting is the only element 16th-century theater-goers could not have seen.

There's plenty of period music, too, performed by the cast of 12, all of whom slip in and out of a wide range of roles, from good guys and not-so-good guys to divine characters and even animals.

"We've built on the technology we established in last year's production," Cohen said. "We were really stabbing in the dark then. For instance, we had no idea whether or not drama students in Orange County could sing liturgical music. It's not easy. Well, they could, so this year we've broadened the musical repertoire."

Arcane language should not, however, prove a problem.

The plays are performed in a modern version assembled from old manuscripts by Cohen and two UCI colleagues, Edgar Schell and Stephen Barney. (Schell, chairman of UCI's English department, also appears in the dramas.)

The mystery (or "miracle") plays are among the oldest known English-language dramas, and were performed during the Middle Ages in elaborate, outdoor productions, usually around the late spring feast of Corpus Christi. Although religious in origin and purpose, they had a profound effect on the development of English theater, and one of the fascinations of watching them today, as Cohen noted, is how direct and modern they seem theatrically.

Of the cycles that have survived through the ages, some in fragments only, the best-known are those thought to have been performed in York, Wakefield and Chester. UCI's version draws on elements from each.

The UCI show actually begins before the official 8 p.m. curtain time. Cast members — who perform in everyday medieval garb — will entertain a half-hour before each performance outside the theater, where sweets and other nibbles will be on sale. A free glass of wine or "Lambe's Wool" will also be offered. (Cohen described the latter as foaming apple cider, prepared according to a 400-year-old recipe.)

Next year, same time, Cohen and his cohorts plan to return with Part 3, which will take on the darker tales of Christ's crucifixion and apocalyptic biblical visions of doomsday.

And by 1988, Cohen hopes to have ready a day-long epic amalgamating all three parts, which UCI players could tour, presumably to other campuses.

"A third long-range plan is to develop a permanent institute on early English drama," he said, "perhaps in conjunction with the Humanities Institute at UCI. We're only doing eight or nine hours (with the mystery plays), but there are maybe 200 or 300 hours' worth of English theater in the medieval period and the early Renaissance, just sitting on shelves right now."

THEATER PREVIEW

What: "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi. Part 2: The Nativity."

Where: Fine Arts Village Theatre, University of California, Irvine.

When: Tonight through Saturday, 8 p.m. (repeats Sept. 30-Oct. 4). Outdoor pre-show entertainment begins 7:30 p.m.

How much: \$6 (\$5 seniors, students, UCI faculty and staff).

Call: 856-6616.

Suitability: All ages.

THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI

The UCI Medieval Theatre Festival

The Creation
Adam and Eve
The Murder of Abel
Noah
Abraham and Isaac

Robert Cohen, Director
Edgar Schell, Dramaturge

Adapted from the York and
Wakefield Cycle Plays and
produced by the Focused Research
program in Medieval Theatre.

Fine Arts Village Theatre
UC Irvine

Tuesday-Saturday
September 24-28
October 1-5, 1985

Preshow Entertainment 7:00 p.m.

Performance 8:00 p.m.

Tickets: (714) 856-6616



ACTORS WANTED — PAID AND UNPAID

UCI MEDIEVAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

University of California, Irvine

Summer, 1985

Sponsored by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Drama
Edgar Schell and Robert Cohen, Directors

Public Auditions will be held at the Little Theatre, UC Irvine, on Monday and Tuesday evenings, April 1–2, 1985, for the first annual **Medieval Theatre Festival** which will be performed at UCI from September 23 to October 5, 1985.

Stipends of \$500 will be paid to five actors (four men, one woman) who will play multiple leading roles in the seven plays that will make up this first year's festival production. (At least three years of festival productions have already been planned and budgeted.)

A large number of volunteer (unpaid) actors are also required.

Actors seeking stipend roles are requested to prepare two contrasting verse speeches from either medieval or Elizabethan dramatic sources. Actors seeking volunteer roles may prepare any 10 lines, memorized or not, from medieval or Elizabethan dramatic sources. Early Shakespeare (Richard II, The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona) will be particularly satisfactory material for audition purposes.

Volunteers are also solicited for the choir, and for backstage responsibilities (costume construction, carpentry, make-up, publicity, etc.).

All auditionees will also be asked to sing a short song without accompaniment.

Festival rehearsals will begin August 13, and will be held on weekdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Evening rehearsals will begin in mid September.

For application forms, and an audition appointment, write to:

Robert Cohen
UCI Medieval Theatre Festival
School of Fine Arts
University of California
Irvine, CA 92717

Or call the Drama Office (714) 856-6614 Monday through Friday.

Application Deadline: Friday, March 22, 1985.

School of Fine Arts
University of California
Irvine, CA 92717

Contact: Scottie Hinkey
(714) 856-4259

September 12, 1986

UCI MEDIEVAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

The pageantry and tragedy of English medieval theater returns to UC Irvine this month with the staging of the second production of the Corpus Christi plays.

"The Plaie Called Corpus Christi: The Nativity," a production of UCI's Focused Research Program in Medieval Studies, will be presented at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 23-27 and Sept. 30-Oct. 4, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Wandering minstrels and medieval refreshments will lend a festive atmosphere to the theater grounds a half-hour before each performance.

The Corpus Christi plays, sometimes called mystery or craft plays, were produced between the 14th and 16th centuries in England. They present the Biblical history of the world from Creation to Doomsday.

Anonymously penned, the plays became associated with the towns in which they originated. This year's scripts were adapted from the Towneley (performed in Wakefield) and York plays.

In the original, productions could last more than a week as traveling players literally took over a town during lavish religious festivals, said Edgar Schell, chair of English and comparative literature, who serves as dramaturge for the production.

-more-

The series of short plays or pageants represented the major popular dramatic form in England before the advent of the professional theater, Schell said.

These plays, then, were what Shakespeare saw as a child and were certain to have influenced him, said director Robert Cohen, professor and chair of drama.

The original Middle English dialect has been modernized somewhat but still retains the flavor and rhyme of the Middle Ages. Updating was done by Schell, Stephen Barney, professor of English, and Linda Georgianna, associate professor of English.

Though based on the Bible, the plays are more than religious retellings--they are satirical as well as serious theatrical interpretations of medieval life, Schell said.

Last year's lively production began with the Creation and ended with Abraham and Issac. This year's follows the Annunciation through the death of Herod including the Nativity, the Second Shepherd's Play, the Magi and the Flight into Egypt.

Next year's final production will re-enact the Passion sequence.

Costumes are designed by Chuck Goheen, scenic design by Douglas-Scott Goheen, lighting design by Michael Sundquist, and choreography by Janice Gudde Plastino.

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UCI Medieval Theatre Festival
page 3

Tickets at \$6 for general admission, \$4 for UCI students and \$5 for other students, senior citizens, and UCI faculty, staff, and Alumni Association members are available at the UCI Fine Arts Box Office as of Sept. 15. Box office hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call (714) 856-6616 for credit card orders and information.

In conjunction with the production, a symposium on the Wakefield plays will be held Sept. 27 with drama scholars from across the country. Call the English department at (714) 856-6712 or 856-6718 for further information.

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**Focused Research Program
in Medieval Theatre
School of Fine Arts
University of California
Irvine, CA 92717**

August 16, 1986

Dear Friends:

Last year many of you attended the highly successful Medieval Theatre Festival at the University of California, Irvine. Due to its popularity, however, many of you were unable to get tickets. (70% of the performances played to sold out houses.) We are taking this opportunity to offer you, well in advance of the opening of the second spectacular season, the convenience of guaranteeing seats for one of the limited number of performances.

Once again, professional artists, in collaboration with medieval scholars, will create the exuberance and pageantry of early religious drama as it was performed by the townspeople in English villages of the Middle Ages.

Last year's plays explored ancient beginnings: the creation of the universe, the first words, the first kiss, the first murder, the flood, and the new beginning. This year's production, *THE PLAIN CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI, PART II: THE NATIVITY*, tells the story of the events surrounding the birth of Christ, and centers on more modern issues of civilization: tyranny, oppression, retribution, flight, holy war, and ultimate justice. Not just "Bible stories," these medieval plays have uncanny resonances of present day political life.

Beginning with the "Annunciation," included in this cycle of plays will be "Joseph's Troubles with Mary," "The Second Shepherd's Play," the play of the "Magi," the "Flight into Egypt," the "Slaughter of the Innocents," and the "Death of Herod."

Enclosed you will find an information sheet including selections from reviews from the local press of last year's production and all of the pertinent information of the performance schedule. Also, you will find a convenient order form to use for individual or group ticket purchases. Remember, return the form early to guarantee seating for one of the most unique and fascinating theatrical experiences in Southern California!

Sincerely,

Gerard Babb
Fine Arts Publicity
(714) 856-4259

THE PLAIE CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI
PART II: THE NATIVITY

Robert Cohen, Director
Edgar Schell, Dramaturg
Douglas-Scott Goheen, Scenic Design
Chuck Goheen, Costume Design
Michael Sundquist, Lighting Design

Produced by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theatre Studies
University of California, Irvine
September 23-27, 31, and October 1-4, 1986
Fine Arts Village Theatre

Ticket Prices: \$6.00, General Admission; \$5.00, Students

7:30 p.m. Medieval refreshments, with entertainment and a complimentary glass of Lambe's Wool or wine

8:00 p.m. Performance of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi: Part II,
"The Nativity"

The Annunciation
The Nativity
The Second Shepherd's Play
The Magi
The Flight into Egypt
The Slaughter of the Innocents
The Death of Herod

Reviews for the 1985 production of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi"

"The dramatic sensation of the theatre season in York, England, circa 1500 or thereabouts, arrived in Orange County this week...UCI's lively production of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi" is neither quaint as the medieval spelling might hint, nor more than passing arcane....The modern rendering...retains the flavor and the verse of the original....The director's solutions to keeping the drama theatrically alive--and faithful to its medieval origins--are almost uniformly successful and often ingenious. Lucifer literally drops from heaven, Adam and Eve's first hesitant words are an exquisite moment of theatre. There are even reliably old-fashioned barn-yard humor theatre....Several performances are exceptionally affecting. It's a strong, 12-player ensemble, presided over by (a) powerfully imperious performance as God."

Orange County Register, September 1985

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"UC Irvine brings together professional actors and scholars of Medieval theatre to recreate, in all its magnificent simplicity, the early religious plays, and succeeds brilliantly....As the audience gathers on the stage, where we view the plays, we enter an atmosphere of magic. The rough-hewn timber set...looms majestically through a fog pierced by amber-pink light beams and accompanied by vesperal voices. When God...emerges from the mist and speaks to the angels gathered on a swaying bridge above middle earth, I happily cleared an empty space in my agnostic mind, and gave myself up to the spiritual glamor of it all. Particularly outstanding in this production is the feeling one gets that the actors are really attuned to their characters, not simply doing an academic exercise. The costumes...are as authentic as one could imagine and deserve much credit for creating a luminous evening of excellent entertainment.

Daily Pilot, September, 1985

FINE ARTS BOX OFFICE INFORMATION (714) 856-6616

-----clip here-----

Medieval Theatre Festival
THE PLAY CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI, PART II:
THE NATIVITY

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| FOR OFFICE USE ONLY | |
| R | _____ |
| PO | _____ |
| Sent | _____ |
| Cashier | _____ |

Return this form to: Your Name _____

Medieval Theatre Festival Address _____

Fine Arts Box Office _____ zip _____

University of California Day Phone _____ Eve. _____

Irvine, CA 92717

Please send me _____ tickets for THE PLAY CALLED CORPUS CHRISTI, PART II: THE NATIVITY, for (date) _____

Number of General Admissions _____ @ \$6.00.....\$ _____

Number of Student Admissions _____ @ \$5.00.....\$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED.....\$ _____

Make checks payable to U. C. REGENTSOR....

Charge to your VISA or MasterCard:

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Print name as it appears on card _____

Authorized Signature _____

Focused Research Program in Medieval Studies

Saturday, September 27, 1986

Heritage Room in the University Center

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

- 9:00–9:30 Registration
- 9:30–10:45 ■ **“The Mastery of the Wakefield Annunciation”**
—Professor Míceál Vaughan, Department of English,
University of Washington
- 10:45–12:00 ■ **“Raging Herod and the Feast of Fools”**
—Professor V.A. Kolve, Department of English,
University of California, Los Angeles
- 12:00–1:30 Luncheon
- 1:30–3:00 ■ **“The Embodiment of Evil and the Incarnation
in the Wakefield Cycle”**
—Professor Martin Stevens, Dean, School of Liberal Studies,
Baruch College, CUNY

For information: 714/856-6712

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- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full Registration \$10.00 (Includes Luncheon) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Registration \$7.00 (Includes Luncheon) | <input type="checkbox"/> Symposium \$5.00 (Without Luncheon) |
|--|--|--|

NAME _____ PHONE () _____

INSTITUTION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

Please return registration form
before September 19, 1986

Make checks payable to UC Regents
Mail to: Medieval Drama Symposium
Department of English and Comparative Literature
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, CA 92717

We will confirm your reservation and enclose a map.

Irvine festival features medieval Corpus Christi plays

On a swaying bridge above middle-earth, God emerges from mist and speaks to gathered angels. Seated on one level of the stage below, the audience watches the

action in UC Irvine's Medieval Theater Festival. This month, in the second of the program's three seasons, visitors will see events surrounding the birth of Christ unfold on a three-tiered stage. (Last year's plays explored the creation of the universe, the first words, the first kiss, the first murder.)

These dramas reenact the Corpus Christi plays first performed in England between the 14th and 16th centuries at the annual summer feasts of Corpus Christi. Written to educate clergy and laymen in Christianity, the dramas are lively, playful, and theatrical.

Each play lasts 15 to 20 minutes; seven are performed each evening without pause. Beginning with the Annunciation and including *Joseph's Troubles About Mary, Magi, and Flight into Egypt*, this series ends with *Death of Herod*.

Arrive at 7:30 to meet the actors and enjoy sweets, savories, and cups of wine before taking your seat in a folding chair on the stage.

Shows begin at 8 P.M. September 23 through 27, September 30, and October 1 through 4 at the Fine Arts Village Theatre on the UCI campus. Admission is \$6.



JON DIDIER

Bathed in other-worldly light as he pauses on suspension bridge, God gazes at shepherd while audience watches from lower level of stage during Corpus Christi play

Beginning September 15, tickets will be available at the Fine Arts box office (open 10 to 3 weekdays); for tickets or information, call (714) 856-6616. □

School of Fine Arts
University of California
Irvine, CA 92717

Contact: Scottie Hinkey (714) 856-4259

Public auditions for the first annual Medieval Theatre Festival will be held at the University of California, Irvine, on Mon. and Tues., April 1-2. The auditions will take place in the Fine Arts Little Theatre from 7-10 p.m. Festival performances will be from Sept. 23 to Oct. 5.

Stipends of \$500 will be paid to five actors (four men and one woman) who will play multiple leading roles. The seven plays that will make up this first year's festival production are based on Old Testament stories and taken from the York and Wakefield Cycle plays. (At least three years of festival productions have already been planned and budgeted.)

Actors seeking stipend roles are requested to prepare two contrasting verse speeches from either medieval or Elizabethan dramatic sources. Actors seeking volunteer roles may prepare any 10 lines, memorized or not, from medieval or Elizabethan dramatic sources. Early Shakespeare (Richard II, Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona) will be particularly satisfactory material for audition purposes.

Volunteers are also solicited for the choir, and for backstage responsibilities (costume construction, carpentry, make-up, publicity, etc.)

All auditionees will also be asked to sing a short song without accompaniment. Festival rehearsals will begin Aug. 13, and will be held weekdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Evening rehearsals will begin in mid Sept.

Anyone wishing to audition should call the UCI Drama department before April 1 to secure an audition time slot. (714) 856-6614.

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University of California, Irvine

Communications Office
6th Floor Administration
Irvine, California 92717
(714) 856-6922

240-EB-85

CONTACT: Elaine Beno, (714) 856-7911

Sept. 12, 1985

Actors and scholars will re-create the exuberance and pageantry of early religious drama when UC Irvine stages the first continuing medieval theater festival in the United States.

"The Plaie Called Corpus Christi," presented by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theater Studies, will be held at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 24-28, and Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 1-5, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Forty-five minutes prior to the nightly shows, the campus will host a small outdoor festival with food, music, jugglers and other entertainment reminiscent of medieval times in English villages.

Members of the audience will be seated on the stage near actors who will perform on a large rough-hewn set flanked by 15-foot towers, the castles of God and Satan.

The play actually is a collection of seven pageants, each approximately 20 minutes long. The stories to be presented are taken from the Old Testament. They include the creation of the universe, the fall of man, the expulsion from the Garden of Eden, the murder of Abel and the stories of Noah, Abraham and Isaac.

Written anonymously between 1378 and 1576, the medieval scripts are known collectively as the "Corpus Christi Plays."

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MEDIEVAL THEATER

Page 2

Many of the dramas, part of a series of medieval festivals to be staged at UCI during the next two years, haven't been performed since the Middle Ages, and rarely has a production of this scope been attempted.

The play is the centerpiece of the medieval studies program headed by Dr. Edgar Schell, chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature. The production involves actors and scholars from the schools of humanities and fine arts. Schell acts as dramaturge and plays the part of God.

Though the dramas are six centuries old, UCI scholars think they have all the elements that appeal to audiences--comedy, pathos, suspense and spectacular theatrical effects.

"The time is ripe for the rebirth of medieval plays," said Dr. Robert Cohen, chair of the Department of Drama and director of the production. "They represent the roots of Western drama and the first expression of English drama."

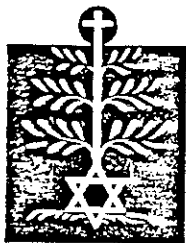
In order to achieve productions fairly close to the originals, scholars researched medieval staging methods, costume design and the medieval interpretation of the biblical stories.

The dialogue has been modernized, however, since the pageants were first written in Middle English.

Tickets for the performances are \$5 on Tuesday through Thursday and \$6 on Friday and Saturday. They are available at UCI box offices, ((714) 856-6616).

The focused research program also will sponsor a symposium on medieval drama from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 28, in the Silverado Room of Mesa Court. Registration fee is \$10, which includes lunch. Call the Department of English and Comparative Literature at (714) 856-6718 or 856-6712 for more information.

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Focused Research Program
in Medieval Theatre
School of Fine Arts
University of California
Irvine, CA 92717

August 19, 1985

Dear Friends:

Something new and exciting is happening at UC Irvine's School of Fine Arts, and we would like you to be a part of the fun!

September will see the first in a series of three Medieval Theatre Festivals produced by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theatre. Ten performances of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi" are planned in which a group of professional artists will recreate the pomp and pageantry, the language and lyrics, the music and magic of this early form of drama.

You will behold the Creation of the World and the Fall of Angels, closely examine the Fall of Man, witness the world's first murder, wonder at God's command for Abraham to take his own son's life, and experience the most tragic yet promising flood known to man.

The Medieval Theatre Festival is a specially funded project intended to recreate the plays produced on the Feast of Corpus Christi at York, Wakefield, and other English towns during the 14th through 16th centuries. These pageant plays, considered to be the parents of theatre as we know it today, are presented in a new, scholarly adaptation.

Performances of "The Plaie Called Corpus Christi" have been scheduled for Tue.-Sat., Sept. 24-28, and Oct. 1-5, at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Village Theatre at the University of California, Irvine.

Individual ticket prices on Tue., Wed., and Thur. evenings are \$5; Fri. and Sat. evenings are set at \$6.

We would like, however, to invite your group of ten or more to purchase tickets at \$4 (Tue.-Thur.) and \$5 (Fri. and Sat.) Call our Fine Arts Box Office at (714) 856-6616 for more information about group reservations. Tickets are very limited for each performance, so call now to insure seating. We feel that this will make a great activity for your group and are very eager to hear from you. Won't you join us?

Best wishes for a full and fruitful academic year. Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Scottie Hinkey
Scottie Hinkey
Public Relations
(714) 856-4259



SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
IRVINE, CALIFORNIA 92717

February 26, 1985

Dear Colleague:

I hope you will wish to circulate or post the enclosed audition announcement of the UCI Medieval Theatre Summer Festival.

The Festival, which is jointly sponsored by the School of Fine Arts and Humanities, is open to public participation at all levels. The plays we are doing are from the York and Wakefield cycles: The Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah, and Abraham and Isaac. In the coming years we will be doing the Nativity and Doomsday plays. We hope to attract a substantial community following, as well as an international audience of medievalists and theatre scholars.

Perhaps you will call this announcement to the special attention of colleagues and most serious acting students. Four units of University Extension credit will be available, if desired, to all participants for the payment of a nominal processing fee.

I should note that the festival will not be able to provide any housing or hospitality; therefore we anticipate the participants will already be located, or be able to locate, in the Southern California area for the rehearsal and performance period.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Cohen".

Robert Cohen
Chair, Drama

Enclosure

UCLA Items

University of California, Irvine
Volume 16, Number 1
Sept. 23-Oct. 6, 1985

Joshua Logan, Medieval Festival Highlight Fall Events

A sentimental trip down Broadway's memory lane with Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Joshua Logan will be among the highlights of the fall performing arts schedule at UCI.

Songs from Broadway shows and anecdotes about Hollywood make up the 90-minute program called "Joshua Logan's Musical Moments." It features Logan; his wife, Nedda Harrigan Logan; and Broadway performers.

Logan is co-author of "South Pacific," "Mister Roberts," "Fanny" and "Wish You Were Here." He directed hits including "Annie Get Your Gun" and "Picnic."

The show is scheduled for Friday, Oct. 11, at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Other programs on the fall calendar include a medieval theater festival, two opera productions, ethnic music, the show "Chicago" and talks by singer Helen Reddy and journalist Donald Woods.

The medieval theater festival will feature the first major production of a group of medieval dramas. "The Platte Called Corpus Christi" will be staged at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 24-28, and Tuesday through Saturday,

Oct. 1-5, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Reddy will give her first lecture on a university campus at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 16, in Science Lecture Hall. Her talk, "I Am Woman," carries on the theme that earned her a Grammy award and eventually became an anthem for the feminist movement.

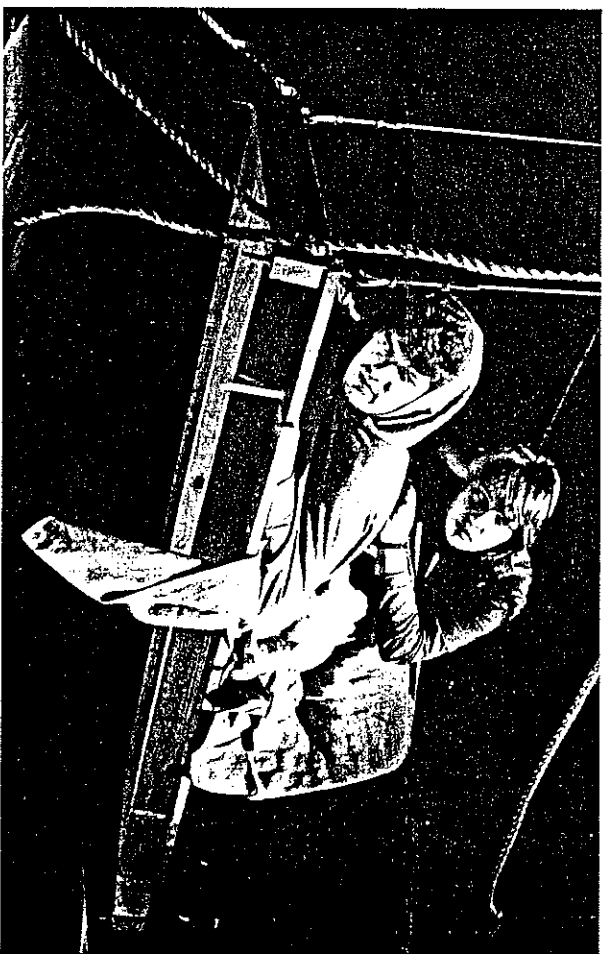
Journalist Donald Woods will speak on "Apartheid and the Continuing Tragedy of South Africa" at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20, in Science Lecture Hall.

Woods is author of "Biko," a biography of slain black South African leader Steve Biko. A special adviser to the 49-nation Commonwealth Secretariat in London, Woods is known for his editorial attacks on apartheid.

The School of Fine Arts will present "Chicago," at 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, Nov. 13-16, and Tuesday through Saturday, Nov. 19-23, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre. The Bob Fosse musical is an exhilarating saga set in the 1920s.

Opera aficionados can see two productions at UCI this fall. Both performances are set for 8 p.m. in the Village Theatre.

(continued on page 3)



Mehr Mansouri, as Noah's wife, and Otto Coeltho, playing Noah, rehearse a scene from "The Platte Called Corpus Christi," to be presented by the Focused Research Program in Medieval Theatre Studies. The production will be staged at 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 24-28, and Tuesday through Saturday, Oct. 1-5, in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Fall Events

(continued from page 1)

The first, "Orpheus in the Underworld," will be performed by San Francisco Pocket Opera on Wednesday, Oct. 9. Opera a la Carte, one of the leading Gilbert and Sullivan companies, will stage "The Mikado" on Saturday, Oct. 12.

UCI will host a series of ethnic music concerts throughout the quarter, including performances by Scottish, Indian and Irish folk groups.

A look at the dreams, discoveries and advances of distinguished faculty continues with the "Search for Knowledge: A Personal Journey" lecture series. The talks are held in an informal setting so that speakers and guests can participate in a lively exchange of ideas. The lectures begin at 7:30 p.m. at the University Club.

The first speaker is Hoda Anton-Guirgis, director of the Cancer Surveillance Program of Orange County and professor

medicine. Her talk will be held Thursday, Oct. 10.

Tony DeLap, professor of studio art, will be the featured Search for Knowledge speaker on Thursday, Nov. 14. DeLap's work ranges from sculpture to paintings and prints. It is exhibited in many private collections and museums, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Tickets for most events may be purchased from two ticket offices on the campus. The Fine Arts Box Office, located in Fine Arts Village, is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays. Tickets may be purchased with Visa or MasterCard in person or by telephone except on the day of performance. Call 856-6616.

The ASUCI Campus Ticket Office, located in University Center, is open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. This box office accepts cash and checks only. Call 856-5549.

Tickets also may be purchased from any Ticketron outlet or by telephone from Teletron, 634-1300.

UCItems/Sept. 23, 1985 3



Edgar Schell, chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, portrays God in UCI's "The Plaine Called Corpus Christi."

ORANGE COUNTY WEEKEND GUIDE

Theater: Medieval & Modern

The medieval theater festival continues at UC Irvine this weekend with "The Corpus Christi Plays," seven dramas drawn from the Old Testament and written anonymously between 1378 and 1576. The series of 20-minute pageants will be presented today, Saturday and Tuesday through Thursday at 8 p.m. in the Fine Arts Village Theatre.

Opening today at South Coast Repertory's Second Stage is Craig Lucas' "Blue Window," a play set in a Manhattan loft that reveals the fragile threads connecting the lives of seven characters. Directed by Norman Rene, "Blue Window" plays Monday through Saturday at 8:30 p.m., Sunday at 8 p.m. Matinees Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. Runs through Oct. 20 at 655 Town Center Drive, Costa Mesa.