

# Modern day Greek tragedy visits CSUH

## American premiere of Antigone shines at University Theatre

By Stephanie Wright  
A & E Editor

Beautiful language, powerful acting and wonderful surreal sets are the stars of the CSUH production of the play *Antigone* or *The Nostalgia of Tragedy*.

Written by famous Greek author and playwright Maria Lampadaridou-Pothou during the Greek dictatorship in 1967, the play is a modern interpretation of Sophocles' ancient tale, *Antigone*.

Taking place in the city of Thebes, the story revolves around Antigone, a nondescript young girl blessed with neither beauty nor greatness, who desires to achieve both by staging her own tragic, beautiful death.

The problem is that modern times have numbed the people around her, making them incapable of realizing the ultimate sacrifice that Antigone is about to make: Her life.

The opening scene is haunting. Antigone, played by Justine Anabo, and her sister Ismene, played by Angela Cachuela, walk towards one another from platforms on either side of the stage. With long pieces of linen draped over their heads, their faces cannot be seen as they alternately chant, "Our brother has returned from the war... Ask him to come in... But he doesn't want to come in. He is smeared with blood. He will soil the house." The sisters continue chanting until they come

father is and why she desires a beautiful death like him.

"I am Antigone. Daughter of Oedipus, who by adverse oracle stained, his father slew. And his mother's bed... He died blind. In the old streets of Athens. He begged for bread and human compassion. But died beautiful. Ready. Without a chance of being saved. And now, my turn has come. I am young. Until yesterday I still played with marbles and dolls. I am thin and ugly. I know it. And it is for this reason that they call me stubborn and witless. But I must be beautiful today."

With her resonant voice, intense emotions and expressive body language, Anabo gives an incredible, captivating performance as Antigone.

Angela Cachuela plays the pretty, vain and rather fluttery Ismene with alternating lightness and dramatic intensity. She adds depth to what is first perceived as a shallow character and shows that even Ismene is capable of caring and admiring someone other than herself.

The most sensual scene in this production is between Antigone and her lover Haemon played by Robert Knight. Professing her love to him, Antigone says, "Now I can hold your hands, I can breathe your body. Oh, how warm your breath is!... Clasp me, then, in your arms. Very, very firmly. What are you waiting for? Tear off my dress. Soon I must go. Soon I will no longer be your tender,



Photo by Lance Nishihira,  
courtesy of University Advancement

Leo Rodriguez, Johnny Tardibuono and Angela Cachuela star in *Antigone*.

60's, plays stiff, conservative Haemon with believable, sensitive style. Although his role is relatively small, his wonderful acting ability makes his performance memorable.

The most powerful and disturbing scene is when Creon, lord of the city, played by Leo Rodriguez, addresses the citizens. He is out of touch with the struggles of the im-

should be punished," Creon says, "Tomorrow everybody will believe in Creon's power and scared, they will raise their arms to the Gods! And life will roll on, as if nothing had happened. As if those barkings had meant nothing."

But the townspeople protest his proclamation as they shout, "Unfair!, Unfair!"

Johnny Tardibuono gives a commanding and moving performance as the spirit of Polynieces, Antigone and Ismene's brother.

An intense, thought-provoking play, *Antigone* demands total attention and concentration throughout its entire performance. Director Edgardo de la Cruz brings to life Lampadaridou-Pothou's words with