

Local Composer Writes for Spring Theatre Production

Penn State Hazleton Campus Theatre announces its spring production, *Iphigenia* based on the original texts by Euripides, adapted by Dr. Stephen A. Schrum.

Original music is composed by Jeremy dePrisco and Stephen A. Schrum, with musical arrangements by Jeremy dePrisco.

Iphigenia is a music-theatre piece consisting of two ancient Greek tragedies by Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*.

Theatre Director Stephen A. Schrum has updated the plays to the twentieth century. The first act (*Iphigenia in Aulis*) is set in 1957. The Greek armies have gathered in Aulis Bay, and are waiting for the weather to clear before setting off to Troy, to attack that foreign

land and bring back Helen, the wife of one of the Greek generals, Menelaus.

However, a self-declared prophet says that the bad weather has been sent by the gods, and decrees that only the sacrifice of *Iphigenia*, the young daughter of another general, Agamemnon, will clear the weather and permit the army to go to war.

The second act (*Iphigenia in Tauris*) is set in 1970. As it turns out, *Iphigenia* had been rescued by a goddess at her sacrifice and was brought to Tauris,

which is ruled by a cult leader who believes in the ritual sacrifice of foreigners and invaders. One of the victims who is brought to the sacrificial altar is *Iphigenia's* brother, Orestes, and she has to think of a way to escape before he is killed.

The production has both singing and non-singing roles, and the script retains the structure of the original Greek plays while using twentieth century styles of music. It also includes modern language and situations; for example, General Agamemnon speaks to a reporter as if giving a press conference to deliver needed exposition to the audience, rather than simply speak to his servant, as in Euripides' texts.

Original music is being composed for the production by Schrum and Jeremy dePrisco, a singer/songwriter originally from Hazleton, who is also doing the arrangements. While some of the collaboration is occurring face to face or in phone calls and mailings, most of the collaborative process between the director and composer is occurring on the Internet, using email. For example, Schrum may suggest an image, and perhaps the instrumentation, for one of the songs, and send it to dePrisco in an email note. DePrisco then works on the idea and sends a

MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) file, that Schrum can listen to and comment on. Also notable about this collaboration is that dePrisco works on an IBM computer running Windows, while Schrum uses the Macintosh, but there is no problem with translating files.

Penn State Hazleton students (many of whom were actors in the recent production of *Black Snow* on cam-

Continued on page 23

Iphigenia To Play at PSU in April

Continued from page 14

pus) recently attended a reading of an earlier version of the script to help Schrum with the rewrite. In addition to being able to hear the play aloud, Schrum received several good suggestions from the readers for the improvement of the script.

"Theatre is all about collaboration, and this is a project I wouldn't have dreamed of doing without such collaboration," Schrum said.

Iphigenia is a part of Schrum's projected five play *Iphigenia Cycle*, that will eventually include the three plays of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* as the centerpiece, with these two plays as the framing plays. Due to time con-

straints, the adaptation of the *Oresteia* will follow later; however, Schrum has scripted a brief news show to follow intermission, to inform the audience about what happens in the 13 years between *Aulis* and *Tauris*.

A sneak preview of some of the songs from *Iphigenia* will be part of Jeremy dePrisco's performance at Village Pastimes Emporium in Drums on March 28 at 7 pm. The show itself will run April 1-4, at 8 pm in the Penn State Hazleton Commons.

Tickets are \$4 regular; \$2 Students and Seniors. Call 717-450-3054 for information and reservations, or email sas14@psu.edu or jjd166@psu.edu. Web pages: <http://www2.hn.psu.edu/Faculty/SSchrum/IPHY/IPHinfo.html>



Village Pastimes Emporium

Crafts, Needlework, Antiques & Art

Demonstration/Lecture 788-6613

"PYSANKY"-UKRAINIAN EASTER EGG DECORATING
\$5.00 per person March 15th • 2:30pm

IRISH MUSIC JAM
J. DePrisco, J. Evans & P. Riffon
Friday, March 20th • 7:00pm

FLEA MARKET
March 21st • 10:00-4:00pm
\$5 & \$10 Tables Available

POET'S CIRCLE
Saturday, March 28th
5:30-6:30pm

OPEN MIC NIGHT
Friday, March 27th
Starting at 7:00pm

COMPUTERS FOR WINDOWS
April 21 & 28 • 6:30-8:30pm
2 classes • \$35 Instructors Fee

Sneak Preview
"IPHIGENIA"
A Play Presented By Jeremy DePrisco
March 28th • 7pm



HOURS: Closed Mon-Wed •
Thurs, Fri, Sat 10-5 • Sun 12-5
Butler Drive, Drums, 1.5 miles west of Route 309