

Young Hamlet

*I pray thee
do not mock me,
fellow student.*

The People of Hamlet

Overshadowing many previous productions, the University Playhouse offered Shakespeare's great tragedy in February. Some of the players and mood that helped to make the production memorable are pictured here.

Photographed by JOHN CRANE

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* may have overshadowed every other event on the campus in February. Given three performances instead of the usual two allotted a major production, it was a smash hit. Watching first-nighters pour into Holmberg Hall, a drama professor remarked, "Good house tonight; Shakespeare really pulls them in." Scarcely a seat was empty.

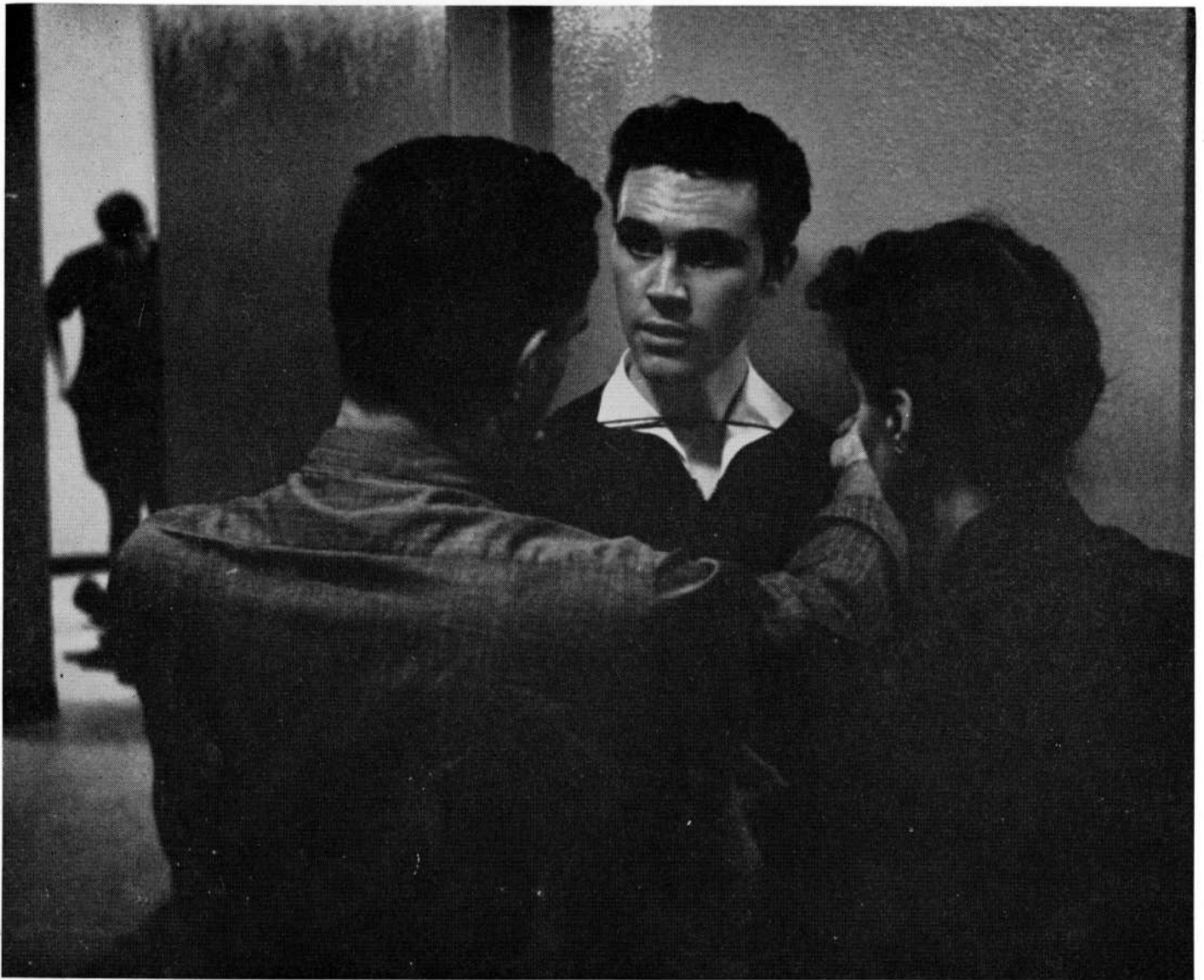
The Players' work deserved attention. Seldom has so much effort been concentrated on one student project. Whereas *Hamlet* was faced with eight deaths, the Players had to bring alive 39 characters. They triumphantly met the challenge—all 17 scenes of it—and the final product was as dazzling to the eye as to the mind.

Mrs. Helen F. Lauterer designed all the new costumes for the play and kept a crew sewing for five weeks. Raymond Larson built a new Elizabethan stage practically like that of Shakespeare's day, and A. Laurence Mortensen designed a special lighting control panel to handle the stage's nine areas and action.

By final rehearsal actors were bone tired from countless run-throughs. (One man, Harold Hahn, played five separate roles.) Innumerable props had to be kept track of, including skulls loaned by a museum. Technicians silently scurried through the wings, clicking on a machine here, whispering into an intercom system there, listening for a vital cue, then suddenly leaping back to avoid being trampled in a mass stampede of actors running off the stage.

The heaviest load rested on Director Charles C. Suggs, who, taking no chances, rounded up 100 persons to work on *Hamlet*. He called in a Shakespearian authority for advice on his script, a director for the duel scene, another for the play-within-the-play, a voice coach for his hero, an original background music score, and a professional hairdresser to shape the actresses' tresses. He checked a thousand details while guiding his cast through the Bard's magnificent lines.

It was well worth it. *(Continued Overleaf)*



*And whatsoever else shall hap tonight, give it
an understanding, but no tongue.*

As Time for Opening Draws Near, Backstage Tension Battles the Players and Director

Backstage is a world of waiting, where people quietly chat or read or sit in tension or munch on a sandwich. They check their makeup, adjust costumes for the last time, look quickly into each other's faces and telepath a question: "Are you as nervous as I?" Or a reassurance: "Break a leg!" ("Good luck!")

Hamlet was like that. Waiting to go on, the actors rested, paced, talked.

"Hi, Ham," the Player Queen greeted Ron Thompson (*Hamlet*) as he, deep in thought, moved past her.

"I'm not supposed to sit down in this

costume," complained a Lady of the Court, "and my feet are killing me."

"Hey, Your Highness," called Gravedigger Robert Sheehan, "how's that audience?"

"Can't tell yet," answered another actor as he entered the dressing room. Perspiring, he lit a cigarette.

"Well, you guys just keep warming 'em up for four acts," said the Gravedigger, "and I'll knock 'em dead in the fifth." He glanced at the wall clock and impatiently added, "'Creeps this petty pace.'"

Ophelia (Marilyn Sue Garrett) cough-

ing, headed toward a water fountain, rustling in yellow satin and net.

"I know just enough Shakespeare to be real dangerous," cracked someone.

"You know," the Gravedigger told a friend, "I get out on that stage apron and see all those eyeballs shining up at me, and I get scared as heck. Take my advice and don't look at those eyeballs."

The King and Queen (Judge Springer and Ahli Ruth Cunningham) hurried off to the stage, Polonius (Arthur Bartow) and Horatio (Ronald Pitts) on their heels. They were hurrying to another world where an audience waited to judge, perhaps applaud them.

The pictures on this page were made backstage at the final rehearsal and on opening night. They are described in words from the play, taken from context.

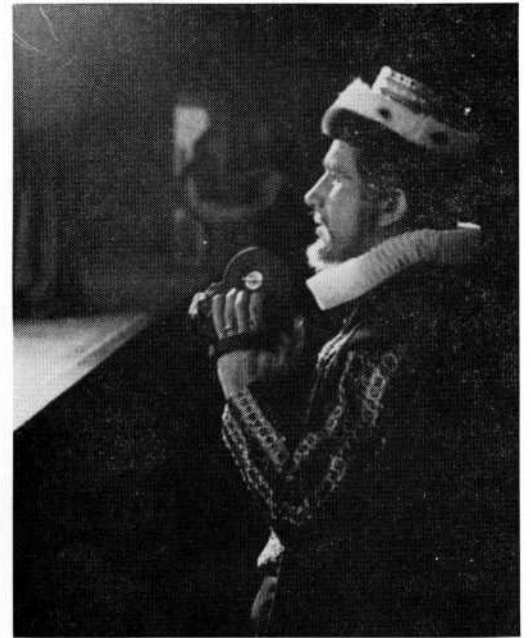


*The hour
is almost come
when I... must
render up
myself.*

PEOPLE OF HAMLET
continued

Denmark's Queen
and Horatio

The Villain King



*Give o'er the play.
Give me some light . . .
Lights, lights, lights!*

*I shall in all my best
obey you, madam.*

The Tragic Ophelia
and Her Father, Polonius



*We'll teach you to drink deep
ere you depart.*



*There with fantastic
garlands did she come . . .*



*From top to toe?
My lord, from head to foot.*

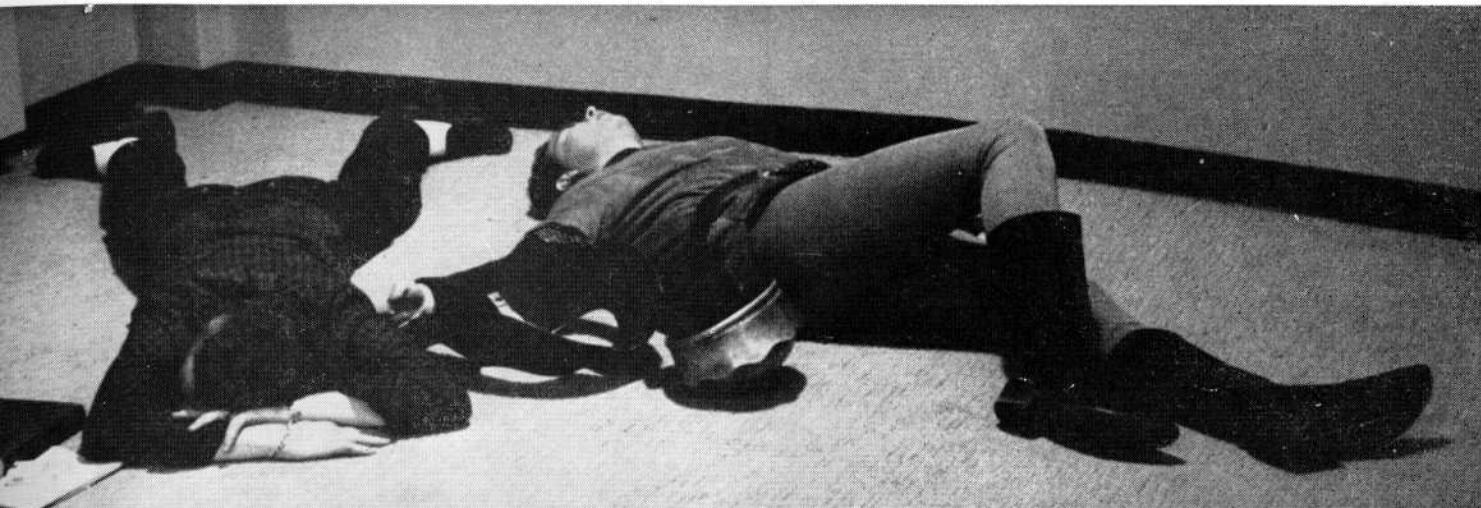
PEOPLE OF HAMLET
continued

The Queen
of Court Players



*... As if increase of appetite had grown
by what it had fed on.*

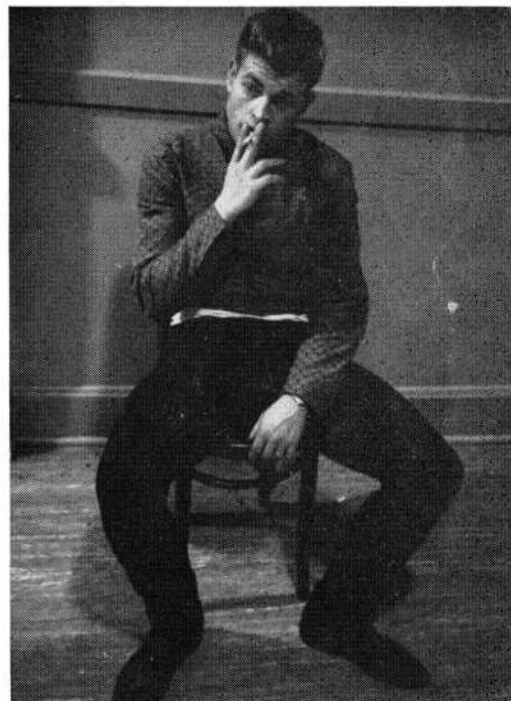




*Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt, thaw,
and resolve itself into a dew!*



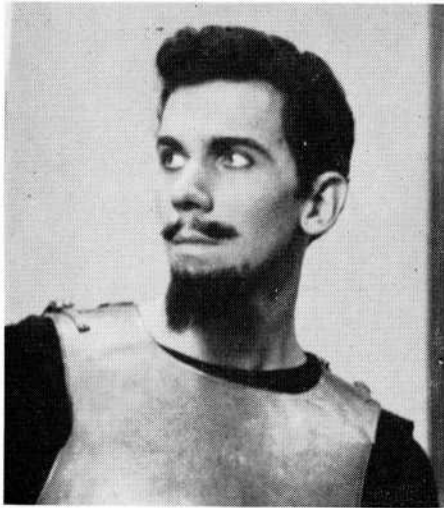
Soldiers
of the Court



*Would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul.*

*For this relief
much thanks.*

PEOPLE OF HAMLET
continued

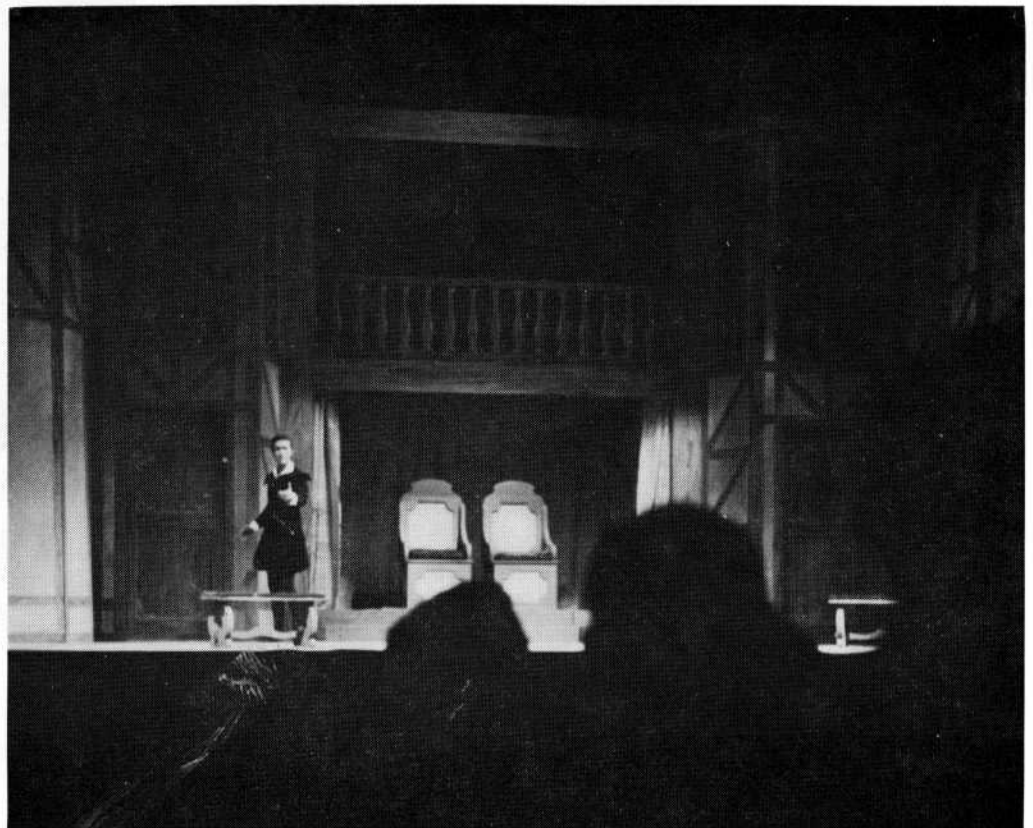


Prince of Norway
First Gravedigger

*You tremble and look
pale. Is not this
something more
than fantasy?*



The Audience



*The play's
the thing . . .*