

10-4-1971

Larry Selka Speaks of His Experience with Theater as an Art

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Recommended Citation

"Larry Selka Speaks of His Experience with Theater as an Art" (1971). *News Releases*. 3811.
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DAYTON, Ohio, October 4, 1971 --- Larry Selka, Director of the University of Dayton's theater division and the UD Players, sees his academic division as a learning experience for the students and as a service to those in the community who believe in the theater as an art.

"It doesn't matter," he says, "whether they participate in local theater as a performer or a spectator, we should extend ourselves to them. In that way we can serve as a cohesive unit for our profession in the entire area.

Fortified by two new staff members, Mr. Selka sees his department expanding from an academic department for students and the normal yearly productions of the UD Players to a year-round effort through summer productions and workshops for adults, secondary and elementary school children.

"We should be able to say to these people, 'join us for the hard work and fun which theater can bring to you'", he reasons. "We aren't fully prepared to do this yet but we are pointing our efforts in this direction."

As a first step, the Performing & Visual Arts Department hired an associate director and a technical director for the Theater division. Michael Pedretti comes as associate director from Berry College, Mount Berry, Georgia, and a Selka working companion of many years, David Siegfried from Xavier University, assumes the technical director's position.

Siegfried has been active with Cincinnati's Playhouse in the Park, the Children's Theater, and Summer Opera. He has two degrees from Ohio State University and is working on a third at that University.

His approach to the technical side of the theater is "to bring a greater awareness to the aspects of visual production, such as lighting, setting and costumes, to support the work of the actors and to develop the director's overall concept...

"With these two men on our staff," says Selka, "we feel confident of an exciting professionalism in our 1971-72 UD Players season. We've tried to develop a versatile season with a modern classic, a classic, an innovative play, and a musical. We also will have our annual children's show.

"The Crucible" by Arthur Miller on October 14, 15 and 16 represents the modern classic and will open our season," Selka continued. "Little Murders" on November 18, 19 and 20 is a tongue-in-cheek spoof of modern society with the message that we are getting so used to violence we virtually ignore it.

"Moliere's 'Tartuffe' is our classic. It has stood the test of time. It is a sparkling tale of a 'holier than heaven' imposter and takes a playful punch at religious hypocrisy. This will be held February 3, 4 and 5."

The last play on the season ticket is the delightful "Three Penny Opera" by Brecht and Weille which had such a long run off Broadway, says Selka.

The final production, "Hansel and Gretel" by William Glenon, is May 15 through May 20 matinee performances. These children's shows have been an effort of the UD Players for years to bring elementary school children onto the UD campus for a couple hours of fun. More than 2700 children attended last May's seven performances.

"In the classroom area," Selka concludes, "we have been able to enlarge our course offerings through the addition of Pedretti and Siegfried. We now have stage design, stagecraft, makeup and lighting, in separate courses, part of our program."