



SHAUN MOTT

**THE COST OF WAR** *Antigone* parallels classic tragedy and modern politics.

## Antigone takes a new stand

Kathleen Weiss gives Sophocles' tragedy a modern political adaptation

### theatrepreview

#### Antigone

Runs 29 November–8 December  
Directed by Kathleen Weiss  
Starring Ava Jane Markus, Kirsten Rasmussen, Elena Porter, Jenny McKillop, Cole Humeny, and Richard Lee  
Timms Centre

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN  
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Perhaps you've come across the sentiment recently of how we now live in such a dangerous world, but as far back in time as ancient Greece, writers like Sophocles were exploring war's devastating effects.

Studio Theatre's latest production is Kathleen Weiss adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The Greek tragedy begins in Thebes as a violent civil war caused by two brothers ends. Both die, but Eteocles is declared a martyr while Polynices is seen as a traitor. Creon, the new leader of Thebes, refuses to bury Polynices and makes it illegal to do so. His sister Antigone, however, is determined to give her brother a proper burial.

"Antigone is certainly your local activist—somebody who's not afraid to protest and spray-paint the brick walls with a message, even if she gets in trouble for it," comments Ava Markus, who plays Antigone's law-abiding sister, Ismene. Just because she's law-abiding, however, doesn't mean that Ismene is full of apathy.

"My character represents somebody

who has the ambition to stand up for herself and state what she wants, but isn't necessarily feeling that she has the support to do it," Markus notes.

While Weiss' adaptation stays true to the original story, various changes have been made to make it more accessible to today's audiences. Different translations of *Antigone* were read, and certain parts from each were pieced together for the new version. Meanwhile, the multi-voiced Chorus was eliminated, with the task of narration placed on the shoulders of one character called The Journalist.

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AVA MARKUS  
ISMENE

Additionally, Weiss created a parallel between Creon and George Bush by taking parts from Bush's speeches and inserting them into Creon's lines. But Markus thinks that Creon would be more like a corporate CEO in today's society.

"I guess I would compare Creon to somebody who has to deal with all the crap," she explains. "He's stressed

out. He's not always thinking clearly, so he constantly has to rely on his power, and his power is to enforce laws, state how things are going to work, and ensure that people follow his rules."

While it may be easier to place sole blame on the Creons of today for starting wars, *Antigone* goes beyond and critiques the role of individuals in helping war to continue. Markus admits that she herself has become more conscious of a problem that seems so far away from home.

"Working on this play has brought to my awareness how, in today's society, we can continue life while people fight far away, and we have nothing to do with it. We're not exposed to it or hurt by it. I'm hoping that this play can remind people that there is war happening right now, and just because we're not in it doesn't mean we can forget it."

While some audiences may run from a Greek tragedy, a genre that's often mistakenly considered to be as difficult as Shakespearean drama, it appears there's really no reason to cringe.

"This [version] is adapted in a way that it's very easy to understand, and if you're not getting the text, there are images to help the story along. We're having images of death that aren't realistic. They're emotions of death. [The audience] can expect to see heightened interactions between people," Markus says.

"And also—it's funny. *Antigone* is a tragedy, but there are some hilarious moments. There are moments where we give the audience a chance to laugh, breathe, and smile."

## Fans, technology, alcohol keeping Art of Dying alive on tour

### musicpreview

#### Art of Dying

With *Live on Arrival and Portal*  
Thursday, 29 November at 8pm  
Starlite Room

VANESSA HORNE  
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Art of Dying may be one of the busiest rock groups currently in the business. They've generated pockets of fans everywhere they go, and have been touring non-stop since the release of their self-titled album in late October. But despite their fast pace, they still manage to keep an intimate relationship with their fans.

At each show, vocalist Jonny Hetherington talks about meeting and chatting with fans, and they use their blog to comment and converse with fans to develop that relationship. For their recent tour with Seether in the UK, Hetherington saw these symbiotic relations reach an all time high.

"Going over to England, our first festival over there was called Download," he explains, "That was a crazy event, headlined by Tool, Metallica, and Guns 'n' Roses—we really didn't know what to expect when we went over there.

"We ended up playing for, like, 5000 people; it was crazy. It was just

unbelievable for us to have [such a] warm response from people that we've never met before. It totally makes every second of it worth it, to meet those people and feel the vibe and get their energy."

That fan-based energy, combined with alcohol and a hunger for their work, is what will keep the band going as they continue along their western Canadian tour, Hetherington says.

"The show's the most important part of the whole thing; I really crave that moment in time when you're playing, and everything just seems like to stop like a car accident.

"Everything seems to slow down; you're lost in a song and the energy from the crowd. And there's this circle of energy going around, and to me, that's the total high of the tour."

Art of Dying is also taking advantage of this technological age to promote their music even further. Currently, they're hosting a contest for fans to make the video for their single, *Completely*, which has yielded some diverse results.

"I have been shocked by a few of them, about how amazingly personal and deep they are," Hetherington notes. "I think we're in a new age when it comes to video: it's really cool to be able to have ten or 15 videos sourced out by people who are fans of the music and to have that all available for people to



watch. I don't know if we've ever lived in a time where that's ever been available before, and it's just really amazing."

Despite their grassroots following, however, when the average Canadian music fan hears about a fresh rock group, their decision on the band often comes down to, "Do they sound like Nickelback?" While

Art of Dying has adopted a harder rock sound since moving from their electronic influence—when the band was known as Sunlikestar—Hetherington doesn't think that automatically deserves comparisons to Nickelback.

"We're both in the rock genre, but I think it's very, very different, and if you dig into the lyrics and the music

of our album, I think you see that right away. Musical expression is how we set ourselves apart, [but] it's cool to hear everyone's interpretations of what you do."

So, is Art of Dying just another band to add to the "Theory of a Nickelfault" genre? Maybe. Ask Hetherington about it an upcoming show—he would love to meet you.