

'Becket' a Hit, Miss Affair in Long Beach

By HAL FISHER
Press-Herald Staff Writer
"Becket" by Jean Anouilh as presented by the Long Beach Community Players comes off as an evening of notable highs and unfortunate lows. This play is essentially a clash of wills between two complex historical figures, King Henry II of England and Thomas Becket.

The two men, who are close friends at the play's opening, become key figures in the conflict between church and state in early England when

King Henry appoints Becket head of the Catholic Church in England hoping to end the conflict only to have Becket state that he cannot serve the king and the church. The play carries the conflict through Becket's banishment to France and concludes with his return to England and his subsequent murder at the hands of Henry's barons.

Ed Cotter as King Henry II commands the stage in almost every appearance. His Henry is at turns crude, bawdy, ranting, and conniving—dropping to the depths of despair and rising to the heights of megalomania. One can never admire Henry, but it is possible at times to pity him. It is a notable performance.

IN CONTRAST, Dick Johnson as Becket never quite overcomes the problems inherent in the role of a man later to become a saint. As the more reasonable and civilized of the duo, he must bring a quiet power to Becket's personality to keep it from becoming bland. Johnson fares better in his earlier scenes as the king's companion than as the archbishop.

The women of "Becket" do well in their brief appearances—notably De Ann Cotter as Henry's nagging wife and

Audrey Share as the Queen Mother. Ellen Kenworthy is effective in her short scene as Becket's mistress.

One major fault of "Becket" is the lack of vigor in the staging of the action scenes. This becomes more than a minor fault during the climactic scene in which Becket is murdered. One feels that he is watching some people being jostled in a subway rather than witnessing a brutal murder.

PAT DEMPSEY gives a nice portrayal of the complete politician in his role as the King of France, but Steve Caruth seems too youthful as the Bishop of London.

Other members of the large cast are: Ed Christensen, Phillip Richards, Ron Jones, and Ken Miller as the Barons; Jim Goodrich as the young monk; Susanna Tomeko in a change of wigs as a French and Saxon Girl; Ira Berson and Bob Camp as the Pope and his aide; and Bob and Bill Cotter as King Henry's sons.

"Becket" was directed by James Brittain, and the effective and interesting set was designed by Charlotte Shuman. "Becket" is playing weekends at the Community Playhouse, 5021 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach.

Talented Teenagers Eye Band Competition

If you can blast a horn, drill teams and modern jazz dance groups.

The Battle of the Bands, sponsored by the County Department of Parks and Recreation, is now in its ninth year as one of the largest teenage musical competitions in the United States.

Final day for filing applications for tryouts is Jan. 15. For information call the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

To be eligible, musicians, vocalists and dancers must have reached their 13th birthday prior to Jan. 1 and not be over the age of 21 prior to June 1. The applicants also must be non-union and reside within Los Angeles County.

Auditions will be scheduled in February. Those who pass the initial musical tests will be scheduled to compete in a preliminary contest in March or April.

From the preliminary contests judges will select three finalists in each division. Those chosen will compete in the Hollywood Bowl, June 21. Division entrants will include dance bands, school dance bands, combos, vocal soloists, and vocal groups. In addition to this competition, other groups will be school

Exchange Stock

Vernitron Corp. today announced it has agreed to acquire OEI Computer Systems Corp., a computer service organization in Great Neck, N.Y., in exchange for some 40,000 shares of Vernitron stock.

Cabrillo Assets Hit New High

A year-end statement of condition for Cabrillo Savings and Loan Association shows assets increased in 1967 to a new high of \$22,197,881.

Net profit for the year was the highest ever recorded by Cabrillo—\$254,437 before a 10-cent per share cash dividend totaling \$52,090 was paid.

In a statement accompanying the report, Dr. Leslie V. Esposito, president and chairman of the board, pointed out the soundness of Cabrillo's growth, and called attention to the fact that the association's selective lending policy had developed a high-quality loan portfolio.

Cabrillo directors have voted to continue daily compounding of interest.

Art Group To Offer Classes

A series of art classes will begin next Monday under the sponsorship of the South Bay Art Association. Classes will be held at the association's gallery, 159 S. Harbor Drive, Redondo Beach.

Registration will be held Thursday from 2 to 5 p.m. and Friday from 7 to 8 p.m. Modest fees will be charged.

Classes in stitchery, basic drawing, and painting, in addition to special children's classes, are planned. Classes will be limited to 15 students.

Free Movies

Two movies, "Paddle to the Sea" and "A World is Born," will be shown Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in the children's room at the Torrance Library, 1345 Post Ave.



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