

THEATRE

Counter-culture at center stage

SEAN SMITH
Staff Reporter

Drugs, sex and hippies have arrived in one of the most famous and revolutionary Broadway originals.

Sam Houston State University's Department of Theatre and Musical Theatre will present "Hair" at the Erica Starr Theatre Wednesday.

The musical opens with a pre-show, where cast members immediately set the scene and tone for the production. The unorthodox style of cast interaction with audience members physically and with the constant trend of breaking the fourth wall proves that this musical is unlike any the theatre has performed this year.

The first act opens with the familiar 1960's classic "Aquarius" and the power of the casts' voices it immediately established. Visually, the scene is set with familiar images of anti-war and anti-government illustrations and staging.

The use of lighting and minute costume changes allows the setting to change without physically altering the staging in the theatre. A constant push and pull from comedic content to serious and intense interjections sets an exciting pace.

Audiences should be prepared

to view sensitive material that may include nudity and profane language.

The musical was written at a pivotal point in theatrical history. "Hair" was written coming out of the golden age of Broadway when people were watching productions like "Oklahoma!" and "The Sound of Music," according to department of theatre and musical theatre chair and professor and director, Penny Hasekoester.

The rock musical wraps up the theatre's production season. Hasekoester said the department chose this production to round out their busy year.

However, "Hair" would not follow the style of many musicals Hasekoester said it began the "rock musical" movement using a style similar to vaudeville.

Along with redefining what a musical is musically, "Hair" also pushes boundaries in its writing by commenting on socially fragile issues in the 1960s.

"[Hair] grew out of experimentation and it addresses all the issues of the time," Hasekoester said. "Drug use, the war which was the main thrust for this, people against the war, how families were affected, make love not war."

In preparation for the controversial topics covered in the production, Hasekoester said that the cast spent time discussing the historical themes like the draft of the Vietnam War they would



Sean Smith / The Houstonian

THE DRAFT. "Hair" is a tale of drugs, sex, and regular citizens against the Vietnam War draft. The Broadway original also pushes boundaries in its writing by commenting on socially fragile issues in the 1960s.

portray.
"Hair" will show Wednesday through Saturday night at 8:00 p.m. and a Saturday matinee at

2:00 p.m. Doors to the theatre open thirty minutes before the show.

Tickets range from \$10 - \$15

and are available for purchase at the theatre box office inside the Erica Starr Theatre.

CITY

Students express family issues through art