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New Tradition

Katie Shaw

Andrews University

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A New Tradition

During the 2003–2004 school year, Andrews University began a new tradition on campus. After months of preparation, memorizing lines, garnering support from businesses in the surrounding communities, and getting more and more excited about the potential for witnessing, the first annual Easter Passion Play debuted on Sabbath, Apr. 19.

The play's participants were amazed by the community's response to the event. Over 2,500 tickets had been reserved ahead of time, and nearly 700 VIP tickets had been distributed, but the university did not expect the crowd of about 1,800 that showed up for the last performance, open to those without tickets. In all, an estimated 5,000 people showed up to experience this interactive, real-life version of the Passion Week events.

Planning for this year's play has been under way for several months, and because of the large volume of attendees that Andrews expects this year, the play has been adapted to run for two days instead of one. Individuals, families, and church and school groups are encouraged to reserve tickets early and plan to attend this free event.

Ron Whitehead, director of the seminary's Center for Youth Evangelism and the Easter Passion Play faculty sponsor, is excited about the second year of this endeavor. "We see this as our Easter gift to the community," he said. As head of Pathfinder camporees, Whitehead has facilitated several passion plays in the past. "We seek to make this experience as real as it can be."

Nearly 450 youth are currently preparing and practicing to be guides, beggars, angry mobs, disciples, and government officials. The outdoor scenes will include an authentic Middle Eastern marketplace, the betrayal in Gethsemane, Pilate's judgment, and the crucifixion. A sound-and-light show in the Johnson Gymnasium will end the play with Jesus' resurrection. Six students and one staff member have been cast in the role of Jesus. Kareem Shaw of Florida and David Oakley of Berrien Springs were both cast in this role



David Oakley portrays Jesus during the crucifixion.

last year and will return this year along with John Hood and Jason Calvert of Berrien Springs; Jay Oetman of Michigan; Rodrigo Correa of New York; and Tarun Kapoor of New Delhi, India. "Because we are fortunate enough to be blessed with an international student body, we are able to present a diverse representation of Christ," Whitehead said.



He is risen!

Performances on Sabbath, Apr. 10, will begin at 3:00 p.m. and continue every 30 minutes until 7:00 p.m. Sunday, Apr. 11, performances will begin at 10:30 a.m. and continue every 30 minutes until 6:00 p.m. Free tickets can be obtained now by calling (800) YOUTH2U or (269) 471-8380; faxing (269) 471-8355; or e-mailing passionplay@andrews.edu. Include your name and the number of tickets you will need. The play will only be cancelled due to weather if

there is lightening; otherwise, bring your umbrella, just in case, and enjoy the performance.

The Easter Passion Play is sponsored by the Center for Youth Evangelism, the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Pioneer Memorial Church, the Lake Union Conference, the Adventist Book Center, WAUS 90.7-FM, and WFRN 104.7-FM.

For information about and pictures of last year's play, log on to <http://passionplay.andrews.edu>.

Katie Shaw, news writer