By Bruce Laird

Last Thursday night's opening of "The Bacchae" at the Charles Playhouse introduced a stimulant blending of the contemporary and the traditional in the crowded Boston theatre scene. This adaptation of the Euripidean tragedy features the original version with minor abridgments, but the characterization and interpretations are done in a modern context. Thus Bacchus is portrayed as a cool, well-appointed playboy with mystical powers. Tiranteus, the seer becomes a crypto-priest; Pentheus assumes a young, forceful Kennedy image, while his attendants are garbed as police officers. The orchestra is, of course, a jazz trio.

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