

# She conquers

## Production captures comedy of Shakespeare

By JEFF SCHORR

A good time is had by both cast and audience in the Bonstelle Theater's "She Stoops to Conquer," which continues through this weekend at Wayne State University.

The engaging production, under the excellent direction of Robert Emmett McGill, is a parody of a Shakespearean comedy complete with puns, couplets and a Puckish character who steals the show.

William Akey plays the Puck-like role of Tony Lumpkin, who maneuvers the plot, takes pratfalls and performs tumbles worthy of a collegiate gymnast. Akey, who entertains with a wonderfully rubbery face capable of new expressions every few seconds, generally upsets the proper British social structure.

This upsetting of orderly things by free spirit Tony is the key to Oliver Goldsmith's popular romp set in 18th century England.

All that is missing from Akey's attire is an elfin hat. He thwarts his mother, Mrs. Harcastle (played by WSU veteran Sandra Prappas in a perfect, pompous, grand dame, matronly style), driving her to distraction and foiling all attempts to get him married.

His father, Squire Harcastle, is outstandingly portrayed by Gary Right-

tini. He is the butt of his son's joke, when Tony convinces two visiting suitors that his father is merely an innkeeper, not the lord of his own castle.

This mix-up is anchored around the other aspect of the play; the twin romances of daughter Kate Harcastle and her shy suitor (with ladies of noble birth, that is), Charles Marlow; and that of her friend Constance Neville and Marlow's friend and confidante, George Hastings.

The casting is excellent.

Amy Beth Beer plays the dignified Kate (as well as the more winsome Kate, according to Charles — when she "stoops" to housemaid attire and appears "easier"). Kate sets her cap for Charles and, amused by his stuttering and nervousness when he courts, changes her "cap" to that of a parlor-maid's. With the pressure off, Charles becomes more confident and amorous.

William Shanks portrays Marlow and Richard Schot handles his friend Hastings, who, unbeknownst to the plotting mother, is the true, but proper, suitor of Constance.

Kathryn Paraventi, as Constance, is well-suited to her role. She has the face of an angel and the devious mind of the clever manipulator, all quite clear to Tony. She parries and thrusts — even comes to blows — with Tony (neither is interested in the other) but they plot together. She promises love to Hastings if

he will be true: "Constance is the word," he promises with a straight face.

The players share Goldsmith's conspiratorial asides to the audience in this classic misunderstanding in the

game of romance.

If you like good script, good casting and good laughs, it is a good choice.

Performances at 8:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday plus a 2 p.m. matinee Sunday end the two-week run.



William Shanks and Amy Beth Beer star in "She Stoops to Conquer" which opened on Oct. 19.

WDRQ-FM (93) will sponsor a free pumpkin carving contest Oct. 27 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Tel-12 Mall.

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The transportation problem is confusing enough without your being confused about us.

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There's a lot riding on us.