

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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(B.F-9C)9C

Taming the shrew:

Production brings out elements that would delight common folk

Performances of the Actors Alliance Theatre Company production of "The Taming of the Shrew" by William Shakespeare continue at 8:30 p.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 6:30 p.m. Sundays through May 12 at Lyceum International in Southfield. For ticket information, call 642-1326.

Director Jeff Nahon brings out the lusty, rollicking energy of "Taming of the Shrew" in the Actors Alliance Theatre Company's production of Shakespeare's comedy.

Nahon puts "Shrew" squarely where Shakespeare intended it — as a play to please the rowdy common folk and not just the more thoughtful upper classes. His direction of the fine Actors Alliance production clearly favors the robust preferences of ordinary people over intellectuals and would have set the earthy folk in the pits at the old Globe Theatre of Shakespeare's time to stamping their feet and roaring approval at the double entendre and the gymnastic energy of the cast.

NAHON'S CASTING is inspired. Players represent the laughable gamut of humanity with tasteful precision. The round Jonathan Round comes off well as the overwrought father of two daughters, demure sweetie Bianca, played excellently by Nicole Hakim, and "the shrew" of the title, a holy terror named Kate that Annette DePetrus plays superbly.

Bianca refuses to allow Bianca to marry until her older daughter, the formidable Kate, is married off. Luckily Petruchio (Glen Allen Pruett) arrives in town and Bianca's other suitors convince him to woo Kate. Petruchio is a swashbuckling devil busy for Kate's ample dowry and equals the task of taming her to get it. With a leer in his eye and the astuteness of a grass-roots



Cathie Breidenbach

psychologist, Petruchio sets to the task.

TO THE DELIGHTED consternation of his friends and his father-in-law, he succeeds in making Kate bow to his authority.

Kate is no woman to be tamed by words alone, though they be those of Shakespeare the master, and the Actors Alliance production is no parade of words, but a veritable gymnastics event with abundant pratfalls, somersaults, and slinging of rebellious women over the shoulder cave-man style. The physicalness of the acting is a pleasure that is only occasionally overdone. Modern players relish arguing how Shakespeare intended us to interpret Kate's capitulation. There's the feminist version which says Kate is a tough survivor in a masculine world and she shrewdly learns to use the obedience to get what she wants. The traditional (do I hear chauvinist?) view maintains that Kate comes to accept the wisdom that the husband must be master over his household just as the sovereign must rule the realm or the captain command his ship if there is to be peace and prosperity.

JUST HOW much tongue in cheek is in Kate's "Lord and Master" speech in Act V becomes a personal question in "Taming of the Shrew."

No question that there's plenty of robust tongue-in-cheek in the abundant puns in Shakespeare's comedy and in Jeff Nahon's clever casting. In Shakespeare's time women's parts were played by young men. Nahon, in an intriguing reversal of this tradition, casts a woman, capable Irene Schwyer, in the male role of Petruchio's agile young servant, Grumio.

Nahon builds well on Shakespeare's balance of characters. Lucentio, a spacey, love-struck young aristocrat played by David Radford, needs the practical smarts of his servant, Tranio, to pull off an identity switch and woo Bianca. Wayne David Parker is a light-hearted and lightfooted pleasure as Lucentio's quick, agile servant, Tranio. Lucentio's other servant, the big loud, Blondello, well played by Charles A. Greenla, rounds out the characterizations.

JOHN MICHAEL Manfredi plays Hortensio who woe and weds a wealthy widow (Jeanne Taylor) when he sees he cannot have Bianca. Other apt players are Rick Hudson, Robert Harte and Gerald Hart Hoy as the winnyy tailor, Jim Ozinga as the insolent Vincentio and Ron Samuel as Bianca's unrequited suitor, Grumio, hold no grudges and join the lusty toasts and merriment at the closing wedding feast.

PLAYERS represent the laughable gamut of humanity with masterly precision.



Annette DePetrus is Katherine and Glen Allen Pruett is Petruchio in "The Taming of the Shrew" at the Actors Alliance Theatre Company.

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