



Victoria Diaz

A feast for the eyes but performances are weak

Performances of "The Doctor in Spite of Himself" presented by the Schoolcraft College Theatre Department, continue at 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday (dinner theater) and 7 p.m. Sunday on campus in Livonia. For ticket information, call 591-6400, Ext. 265.

The Schoolcraft College Theatre production of Moliere's rollicking, ribald "The Doctor in Spite of Himself" has colorful, nicely detailed costumes by Lisa A. Smith, imaginative makeup by Michael Rembaez, sets that work well and scene changes that enliven the pace of the play.

It's delightful to look at. Too bad it's slowed down considerably by a

number of less-than-commendable performances.

Directed by James Hartman, the 17th-century French comedy features Sganarelle, a country bumpkin who, because of a case of confused identity, is forced to pretend he's a doctor who can cure a certain rich man's daughter of a curious ailment. The rich man's daughter, however, is also faking it — pretending to be afflicted, simply because she does not want to marry the man her father has chosen for her. Too beautiful Lucinde, instead, has her heart set on the handsome Leandre, who whisks her away from her father's house (with the help of the scheming Sganarelle) by also pretending to be something he is not.

AS THE BUMBLING, blustery Sganarelle, Daniel A. Jaroslaw turns in an able performance. Mainly because he appears to be enjoying himself so much, he's a treat to watch.

Other good performances are given by Robert Hamblin in the role of the befuddled father, Geronte; Cynthia L. Long playing the fetching, rosy-cheeked nurse, Jacqueline; and Linda Buerger Bodnar as Sganarelle's loud-mouthed, crafty wife, Martine. In a very brief role as the liping Marie, Lisa Greenwell makes her mark.

Other players in the 11-member cast, however, seem uncomfortable or mechanical in their roles, exhibiting only the slightest glimmers of fun or excitement now and then. Moliere's energetic, bawdy comedy simply cries out for spontaneous, romping performances. When they're not forthcoming, unfortunately, much of the heart of the play is missing, too.

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia-based freelancer, who specializes in arts and entertainment articles in the metro area.



'Absent Friends'

(Above) Carl Schurr and Jane Lowry appear in a scene from the Meadow Brook Theatre production of "Absent Friends," continuing through Sunday on the Oakland University campus in Rochester Hills. (Right) Richard Easley also is in the cast.



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