

About Women's Lib

Moliere Play Pertinent To Today

By TIM RICHARD
To the schoolboy of some years ago, Moliere was another one of those famous names who got a chapter or so in the lit. book and was unlikely to be read again. But times change, and Moliere is making a comeback.

PHOENIX is offering "The School for Wives," a work which barely gets two lines in this observer's encyclopedia. That's because my encyclopedia was written prior to the Women's Lib movement. The bad part of "School for

Wives" is that there's little stage action. The good part is that it's offered in a prize-winning translation by Richard Wilbur, and the Wesleyan University professor's couplets are uniformly crisp and lively.

Most Moliere plays have a middle-aged gentleman as the central character, and this time it's Arnolphe (played by Moliere himself in the 1660s), a thoroughly middle-class bachelor who has made a 20-year study of others' marriages and their wives' adulteries.

Determined to have the perfect wife and to escape cuckoldry, Arnolphe played well by Brian Bedford, despite a half-don't stumbles over the lines of a very long part) has raised a supposed orphan named Agnes. He intends to marry her.

"SCHOOL FOR WIVES" by Moliere. Phoenix Theatre performing at the University of Michigan Professional Theatre Program. Lydia Mendelsohn Theatre, Ann Arbor, until Feb. 7. English verse translation by Richard Wilbur. Directed by Stephen Porter.

THE CAST

Arnolphe..... Brian Bedford
Agnes..... Joan Van Ark
Horace..... David Dukes
Crispide..... Paul Ballantine
Gordon Gould..... Orono
Alain..... James Green
Georgette..... Peggy Pope
Notary..... George Panico
Enrique..... Mario Siano

AGNES (Joan Van Ark) speaks loudly and often with a disarming innocence and lust for life. Miss Van Ark's

pouts and eye-rollings are as hilarious as any of the lines.

Agnes sees Horace (David Dukes), who is handsome, naturally; well-born, naturally; broke, of course; impetuous, certainly; charming, as usual; a heartbreaker, necessarily. Horace makes Agnes' juices flow, and the juices inspire her to connive ways to see her admirer despite her convent upbringing.

"Love... makes the artless maiden clever." The plot comes full circle when Horace boasts of his approaching conquest to Arnolphe, not realizing that his dear, money-lending friend is the very man he is cuckold-ing.

WHAT MAKES it so contemporary is the preaching

old Arnolphe does about the role of wives. If you go, try to spot the braless women's lib types in the audience before the play starts. You'll hear them hiss vigorously when Arnolphe declares that the husband must be "master, chief and lord." Interaction with the audience always improves a play 100 per cent in my book.

Indeed, in the scene where Arnolphe makes Agnes read aloud certain "Maxims for Wives" about how they should use no makeup and dress plainly in public and never attend parties, the pretty suburban housewife sitting next to me could be heard to mumble a pair of four-letter words indicating an advanced state of disbelief.

Guy Marks Lofy's Star

A zany comic, Guy Marks, is now playing at Lofy's Pavilion Room, Ann Arbor Rd., Plymouth.

Marks, who has appeared frequently on major television shows, is noted for his ability to observe and re-enact peoples' mannerisms, superstitions and reactions. Marks is followed at the

Pavilion Room by singer Edie Adams. She appears from Feb. 12 to 20.

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