



A scene from Moliere's *The Imaginary Invalid*, now playing at Studio Theatre.

Invalid cast shines at Studio

The Imaginary Invalid
Studio Theatre (Corbett Hall)
through November 12

review by Alexandra Parr

Doctors beware! Moliere was out to get the medical profession when he created *The Imaginary Invalid*, and director Charles Werner Moore has indeed made sure that the fun still lives in its current production at the Studio Theatre here at the University of Alberta. The comedy comes not only from the script, however; it is the incredible talent of this year's B.F.A. Drama students which truly makes the performance come alive. If you are familiar with Moliere at all you know his stuff is somewhat wordy (a polite euphemism — it's a LONG play), but I was so caught up in the story I never really noticed.

The main character of Argan is played to perfection by Declan O'Reilly, who literally *becomes* a peevisish old man who enjoys being bedridden when he's really not the least bit ill. The part has some interesting history: Moliere himself was playing that role, when he began choking violently and nearly died in the bed on stage. This year's performance does NOT

involve that incident, although I'm told it is sometimes included for effect.

The third year students who make up the cast are an extremely gifted group. An obvious standout is Annette Loisel in the role of Toinette, Argan's personal servant and confidante. Her frequent and humorous asides to the audience, and her blatant disrespect for her master are key elements of this bedroom farce. Another excellent performance is that of James MacDonald as Thomas Dierestus: his portrayal of the incredibly nerdy medical student who seeks the hand of Argan's daughter Angelique has to be seen to be appreciated, but suffice it to say he has the audience rolling in the aisles upon his entrance.

Costume designer Cheryl Shalagan and set designer Stephen Wade are also to be highly commended for creating an atmosphere that transports the audience back in time very effectively. The final scene in the play is not only extremely funny, it also creates a ridiculous "carnival" which is unexpected and really makes you smile. It is obvious that the cast is having a ball performing *The Imaginary Invalid*: this is so well transmitted to the audience that you can't help but have a thoroughly enjoyable time as well.

Deathtrap revisited a hit

Deathtrap
Walterdale Theatre
until November 12

review by Grant Winton

I still don't know how they did the first murder scene. Actor Ted Kozma has a chain wrapped around his neck, is lifted out of his chair by it and has blood spurting everywhere. The skill and planning that went into this segment is typical of the care that went into *Deathtrap*, the latest production at the Walterdale Theatre.

The play is brilliantly written, full of twists and turns in the plot, with several shocking sections and a generally comedic atmosphere. Director Richard Winnick made the right choice when he decided to keep the play light. With all the murder and suspense involved, this play could have been very grim and serious. But instead, it manages to keep the audience giggling throughout.

Most of the laughs are due to the chattering of psychic Helga Ten Dorp, brilliantly portrayed by Elizabeth Greenwood. Her walk and accent alone are enough to get you chuckling, but when she talks, be prepared to fall out of your chair.

The play is about an aging playwright Sydney Bruhl (Jim Watt), who has not had a big hit in 18 years. When a former student of Bruhl's sends him the perfect play ("This play is so good even a gifted director couldn't hurt it!"), Bruhl decides to kill the student and release the play as his own. To give away any more of the plot would reveal too much so I'll stop here.

Unfortunately, Watt's acting has a certain air of unreality to it that distracts the audience from the action. This is more than compensated for, however, by the excellent performances of Greenwood and Kozma, as Clifford, the young playwright.

The production crew deserves a lot of credit for a job well done. The set is excellent, featuring a wide array of weapons, from handcuffs to crossbows, and the lighting is brilliant, since most of the lighting appears to come from three table lamps on stage.

All in all, *Deathtrap* is well worth seeing. Incidentally, the play has been made into a movie starring Michael Caine and Christopher Reeve. The stage version is more intimate, bringing you closer to the action and so is worth seeing even if you have seen the movie.



Deathtrap: Sidney Bruhl (Jim Watt) strangles Clifford Anderson (Ted Kozma).

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