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Measure for Measure measures up

BY PATRICK SHAUNESSY

From Feb. 8-13, the King's Theatrical Society performed Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Using a very simple backdrop, the company acted out this complex and enigmatic comedy with style and dignity.

Measure for Measure is definitely one of Shakespeare's more unusual plays. It is the clever tale of a Duke who leaves his city of Vienna in the hands of the 'virtuous' Angelo — a moral test of sorts. The Duke only pretends to leave. Disguised as a monk, he is able to walk among his court unnoticed and observe the manner in which Angelo handles his new power.

Angelo rules Vienna with an iron fist and imposes unreasonable laws upon his people. He imprisons a young man, Claudio, for conceiving a child out of wedlock, condemning him to death. However, when Claudio's sister — a nun — comes to plead for the life of her brother, Angelo offers to pardon Claudio if she sleeps with him.

The Duke manages to discover this and through his cunning is able to set everything right, ensuring that justice is brought to those who deserve it. He saves Claudio from death, preserves Isabella's chastity and exposes Angelo's treachery. It is indeed an

intelligent comedy, commenting on the morality of society and the corruption that occurs when power is placed in the wrong hands.

The play itself was rather long, running about three hours. However, there really is no way to shorten *Measure for Measure* effectively since the plot as a whole relies on the minute details in each scene. Any company endeavouring to perform *Measure for Measure* is therefore in for the long haul.

The KTS handled the play well. By keeping the scenery and costumes simple, the audience was able to concentrate more on the story — which in this case was intricate.

At times some actors were over-emotional, which took away from the integrity and credibility of their characters. However on the whole it was well done.

Special mention should go to a few actors who gave outstanding performances: Andrew Kasprzak as the Duke, Caleb Yong as Angelo, Colin Lake as Lucio, and Ian Langlois as Pompey.

Congratulations to the company as a whole and to the director Kate Cayley for putting on a most enjoyable rendition of *Measure for Measure*. If you have a chance to see the KTS perform, they are usually very entertaining, and they provide an excellent chance to see students on stage.

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