

# LOVE & LUST

by Amber-Leigh Golding

Is it love for the lady or her inheritance which fuels Valentine's desire? Seafaring brother Benjamin seems more in love with dories than dowries; perhaps if Miss Prue were only rigged with sails? But Prue has her own ideas, preferring Tattle to Ben by far. How unfortunate that Tattle appears more preoccupied with his own ballooned self-importance and to a lesser degree, Val's Angelica, to prove anything more than a vexation to the senile astrologer's backward daughter. Sharp tongued Scandal may yet capture the undistracted fancy of Mrs. Foresight, who, unlike her husband, has a pair of feet firmly on the ground. Is Mrs. Frail doomed to be stuck in a match with the one man she did not want? Is Sir Sampson, rather like a middle aged adolescent, too old for all that silliness with Angelica? Just how many tricks does sly and loaded Angelica have up her sleeve, anyways? Will Tattle come to terms with his lamentably mistaken marriage and, for that matter, will able servant Jeremy ever be matched with anybody?

Did you get that? Hopefully not, for it would compromise your enjoyment of William Congreve's charming farce, *Love for Love* being presented by the Dalhousie Theatre Department March 29 to April 2.

*Love for Love* hails from that period of English stage known as Restoration Theatre. Yet the play is much more than a quaint relic from England's literary past. Better known for its sparkling comedy than its dreary tragedies, *LOVE* is one of the finest examples from that period. Considering its wit and energy, it is hardly surprising that the play has endured, continuing to be popular with theatre professional and audiences alike.

Theatre scholars have frequently been unduly harsh about the art, or lack of the same, in Restoration Comedy. Invariably, they choose to compare it with the glories of the Elizabethan era that preceded it. Critics interpret playwrights like Congreve as individuals with immense literary gifts who, in effect, squandered those gifts in order to satisfy vulgar public taste.

Skeptics of this dramatist may be looking at Congreve's work from the wrong end. I don't think it was Congreve's or his fellow playwright's intention to equal or for that matter better the works of, say, a Shakespeare. Evidence would seem to suggest that, if anything they were rebelling against the Bard and the high-mindedness associated with that era.

One can detect in Congreve's play an almost burlesquing of the celebrated Shakespearean style.



Dalhousie theatre students behind the scenes.

This is apparent in the opening of *Love for Love*, where we find Valentine and his servant debating the practical applications of scholarly pursuits (chew the cud of understanding, etc). This functions as a perverse echo to the more idealized opening segment in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

True, the cast of this play shared elements with its contemporaries — characters that are more caricatures than real people — but even if they are somehow exaggerations of the real social

class at that time, they also prove much more interesting to watch.

*Love for Love* may concern itself with the romantic entanglements of a group of socially incestuous, upper class scuzz balls, but Congreve fused his stock story with considerable wit and style.

Some of the comic scenes are priceless. At the end of Act Two, Tattle's lessons on the art of love-making to young Miss Prue is particularly memorable as is Miss Prue's latter encounter with her

potential beau, Ben. They begin by chatting passively enough but the encounter soon grows hysterically hostile.

*Love for Love* is to be directed

by Simon Johnston. Amongst the large cast will be Alistair MacDonald, Eileen Pedde, Brenda Watkinson and Sanjay Talwar.

If the calibre of the theatre department's work this year is any judge, *Love for Love* should be an evening of theatre to remember.

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## Montreal's UZEB seductive

by S.S. Wilis

On Wednesday, March 15 UZEB demonstrated why they have developed a world-wide reputation and following. The Quebec-based trio seduced a crowd that had anxiously waited up to three hours for the show to begin with intense compositions and dynamic solos off their seventh album *Noisy Nights*. The group's style has been termed "Fusion" but this is not a sufficient description of their music. They maintain a core jazz element through all their pieces while being improvisational, innovative and inspiring. When they are finished they leave you waiting for them to reappear onstage to pick up exactly where they left off.

Michel Cusson's haunting use of guitar synthesizer replaced the keyboardists over a year ago and tightened the sound of the band. Alain Caron favoured his six string fretless bass Wednesday evening, and both Cusson and Caron awed the audience with the

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