

Shrew effectively tamed in BFA's last play

The Taming of the Shrew
Studio Theatre
 March 29 - April 7

review by Christina Starr

Well, it's that time of year again. The birds are out, the snow is melting, the sun is shining (exams are pending), and Studio Theatre is performing its annual Shakespeare production.

They have chosen just the right play for the season. *The Taming of the Shrew* is funny, bawdy, colourful, and pregnant with the fervour of love and match-making so complimentary to spring.

Kate is the shrew. According to her father's wishes, she must be wed before her younger sister, "sweet (disgustingly so) Bianca" is free to be claimed by one of her many suitors. Well, wed she is by the hot-blooded Petruchio, who tames her to be a loving, obedient wife.

The roles are for the most part strong, yet this production lacks some of the force of earlier ones by the same troupe.

It seems that Susan Henley is perhaps not so comfortable with the wild, undaunting, yet frustrated and suffering Kate, as she was with Lady Hurf of *Thieves Carnival* or Roxy of *Chicago*. This is most evident when, beginning at the end of Act IV after she and Petruchio have reached an understanding, her role becomes more playful, almost comic. Her talent then shines through, and her place on the stage cannot be doubted.

As well, this play is missing the eccentric or mad character which Todd Postlethwaite is such a master in portraying.



Scene from Studio Theatre's *Taming of the Shrew*

He has taken a minor role and nevertheless plays it well, yet it appears that there was not the room nor the lines in which to expand this character to the full extent of his abilities.

The surprise performer, I say surprise because he has until now been a relatively obscure 4th year BFA student, is Robert Wisden. His portrayal of Petruchio is unquestionably the strongest and most

convincing role in this production. Perhaps this is the part he's been waiting for - in any case it certainly does him credit. He is unhesitating and seems unrehearsed; the contrivances of the stage, the lines, the costumes and the makeup and lighting are dismissed in the immediacy of his character.

Tony Eyamie is, of course, a great compliment to Robert as his servant. Tony's

talent seems best channeled into the fool or buffooning servant, roles not easy to play however easy they appear, and here there is no disappointment.

Mark Bennet and David Barnet are impressive, both contributing life and variety to the performance. Mark Bennet does an especially good job as Gremio, a nice change after his not so strong role in *Thieves Carnival*.

But it is perhaps unfortunate that in competing with Todd Postlethwaite for character roles, Chris St. Pierre and Eric Kramer are left with the mediocre choices. It would not be quite so unfortunate if they did more than a mediocre job, yet I can't think of anything to commend these performances over other I've seen, nor comment on how the characters are significantly different. They do not take away from the performance, but neither do they add much to it.

Alyson Bachinsky is maybe in the same position, competing with Susan Henley. Although she did a marvelous job in *Thieves Carnival*, playing more or less opposite her, here she seems to have lost some of that quality as Kate's younger sister, Bianca, which is, I suppose, a less enticing role.

On the whole, the performance is sound. As with other performances by this same group, it's a good time for the audience. If not the best it could have been, it's a pretty good finish for the class of '84.

No room-service nor plot at this Hotel

Hotel New Hampshire

review by Gilbert Bouchard

I didn't read the novel. In fact this might be the only review of *Hotel New Hampshire* you're likely to read that won't compare the book and movie. (And come to think of it, you won't see any comparisons to the *World According to Garp* either, since I missed both the book and the movie.)

I liked *Hotel New Hampshire* on Friday night when I saw it, but now the movie doesn't seem to hold up well to intellectual scrutiny.

It's light. It moves quickly, but not smoothly since it's a series of anecdotes patched together, and it utilizes a cracker-jack cast to their full potential. But *Hotel* just doesn't have much of a story - not a single story line nor thread of plot running through it. Certainly a little more of the tradition unity of commercial cinema could be expected of *Hotel*.

And another of my bitches is that Irving goes overboard with the ludicrous. It almost seems as though he goes out of his way to stick in as many ludicrous characters in as many ludicrous situations as possible. *Hotel* is just about saturated with farting dogs, oversexed maids, live-in terrorists, women in bearsuits, suffed dogs, incest, and lots and lots of lurid sex.

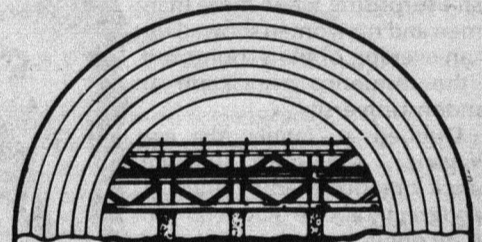
Hotel isn't so much the suspension of rational belief - it's an annihilation of it.

The movie also tends to oversimplify. Life is reduced to a series of platitudes ("Keep going past open windows", "everybody has a bear inside them," etc.) It might have been a little less irritating if they'd have concentrated on just one platitude.

Hotel tended to skitter about. The movie is a bit too sporadic, and jumps about from place to place. Characters are not developed, but rather exploited, milking whatever laughs can be milked from the all too often one-dimensional characters. For example, Irving seems to have tried to stick in as many stereotypes as possible (one homosexual, one old person, one hyperactive kid, one jock, on hooker, etc.)

The biggest draw for *Hotel* is the cast.

Beau Bridges is sort of forgettable as Father Berry but the Berry "children" make up. Jodie Foster is remarkable as Franny Berry, and Rob Lowe (as the incestuous brother John) probably has a long career ahead of him as something, maybe even an actor. But if you ask me Lowe probably will die of terminal cuteness within two or three years. And Nastassjas Kinski had greasy hair and a big bulky bear suit - all over. Need I say more?



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