

# Island Theatre Guild and 'TARTUFFE'

A sure sign that Christmas is approaching in Charlottetown is the activity generated by the Island Theatre Guild (formerly the Charlottetown Amateur Theatre group), in preparing for their annual winter production.

This year it is the comedy TARTUFFE by Moliere, with David Bulger directing. TARTUFFE is the story of a ne'er-do-well, his machinations, and his subsequent come-uppance!

Director Bulger commented that apart from the fact the play is very amusing and well-written, it is also very relevant to the modern day. "Basically, it is about hypocrisy," he stated. "Tartuffe is a con-man who selects religious piety as his means to swindle people.

He poses as a gentleman who has fallen onto hard times through too much attention to religious matters, and too little attention on worldly matters

"He allows himself to be "discovered" by the naive

(and wealthy) Orgon, who takes him into the bosom of his family. Tartuffe proceeds to take possession of the family riches, the family daughter - and seduces the family wife! Finally, he puts Orgon into great jeopardy by coming into possession of The Family Secret!"

While Moliere was a 17th century playwright, Mr. Bulger has given his production a 19th century setting. The elegant set, designed by Jonni Turner, and the richly-coloured costumes from the Confederation Centre contribute to a presentation that is visually stunning.

Unlike the old proscenium-style stage, with conventional curtains, the play will be done on a "thrust" stage. "This means the stage projects out into the audience, and the action is viewed from three sides. While this takes up a good deal of floor space in the MacKenzie Building, it will provide a very intimate feeling for both audience and actors," said Mr.

Bulger. "It also provides a challenge to the director in moving the actors around the stage so that there are no blind spots."

Mr. Bulger, a professional actor and director, enthused over his cast of local amateur actors, which includes Barbara Weale, Martha Irving, Allan Billard and James Drake in the principal parts, with Erskine Smith as Tartuffe. He was also delighted at the calibre of the backstage staff, whom, he felt, could make or break a production. Anne Putnam is stage manager, Gordie Johnson technical director, and Pat Turnbull and Ann Gallant in charge of wardrobe.

"Presenting an amateur production calls for a great deal of ingenuity" commented Mr. Bulger. "While this group is fortunate to be sponsored by the Committee of the Confederation Centre, the budget, of necessity, is very small. The group has rallied around gathering

parasols and lorgnettes from closets, and side chairs and potted plants from their living rooms.

"We're also very grateful to the Confederation Centre, who have been most co-operative in providing the MacKenzie Building as rehearsal and performing space, and assistance with the costumes. Now, what we need are good audiences!"

The show will start Wednesday, November 30, and go through nightly to December 3. Tickets are on sale each evening from 5 to 8 p.m. in the MacKenzie Building, corner of Grafton and University in Charlottetown. Information can be obtained by telephoning 892-2464, Ext. 164, during those hours.

EDITOR: David Bulger taught Philosophy at St. Dunstan's University from 1967 to 1969. He was most recently teaching Humanities and Philosophy at Vanier College in Montreal, but has returned to the Island to pursue his professional acting career with CBC, Theatre New Brunswick et al.



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