



Playmakers revive Shakespeare

Mack Harrell

'The Tempest' fun but not magic

Many experts believe William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to be the most dreamlike and magical of his works. Tuesday night's Playmakers' rendition of the play, while being energetic enough to make the play enjoyable, lacked the mystical aura necessary to make *The Tempest* a complete artistic success.

Tommy Rezzuto, drama professor at UNC and director of the production, earlier this week expressed a preoccupation with presenting a Shakespeare that people can easily enjoy. This sentiment is certainly irreproachable and probably self-evident.

But an overindulgence in enjoyment-gimmickry may interrupt the flow of any carefully constructed scene. The intervention of The Shapes at several junctures in the play seemed merely pretentious. Instead of presenting wispy ethereal nymphs drifting in and out of the action, director Rezzuto chose to portray The Shapes as cooing, munchkin-like figures in gaudy wigs. While fitting in with the color and energy of the entire production, The Shapes tended to distract more from the flow of the play than add to its comedy.

Contributing successfully to the play's unity, Warren Hansen acted well and

projected clearly as the magician Prospero. But the best performance of the evening was rendered by Hal Erickson as Antonio, the usurping Duke of Milan. Erickson's dark, mustachioed figure lent just enough evil to a solidly spoken and acted characterization of Prospero's conniving brother.

Adequate renderings of Alonso, Gonzalo and Sebastian were given by Kenny Morris, Richard Ussery and Gregory Hurst, respectively.

In spite of a good exhibition of stage movement, Ann Hard's voice was uncomfortably shrill at times and detracted from her attempts to make Ariel's vital, supernatural character interesting.

Margot Conigan showed flashes of insight

into the character of Miranda, Prospero's naive daughter, but was particularly overdramatic in the first act.

Director Rezzuto's handling of the raucous subplot was the highlight of the evening. Richard Ravits, James Hutton and Michael Rogers gave heartily funny performances as Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo, although Roger's dandified cockney accent came on a bit too strong. In shockingly appropriate costume, Caliban sent chills running up and down my spine as he stalked the stage like a demonically possessed Lon Chaney.

The vigor with which these three highly believable characters guzzled their wine and aspired to higher fortune created a

satisfyingly humorous relief to the heaviness of the main plot.

But the play's primary defect was not to be found in any particular individual performance. Rather, it was a lack of attention to atmosphere and mood. More touches like Prospero's final mystical gesticulation might have served to further the magical nature of the whole world of the play.

While offering a pleasant diversion from mid-semester slump and academic worries, Tuesday evening's Playmakers' production of *The Tempest* came up short in attempting to portray the wonder and amazement that Shakespeare injected into the poetry of the original 1611 manuscript.

Russian artistry glowing

by Richard Farmer
Feature Writer

The unusual group of directors who sprang up in Russia shortly after the Revolution had one thing in common. They were all very young.

At the age of 22, Sergei Eisenstein was known as "Old Man." Because of this, it is surprising that most of them are now dead. With the recent death of Grigori Kozintsev, Abram Room is perhaps the only one left.

Room never achieved the renown outside Russia that Eisenstein, Pudovkin or Dovzhenko did. The main reason for this is probably the limited international circulation of his undisputed masterpiece,

Bed and Sofa. Dealing with such topics as adultery, abortion and a *menage a trois*, and also showing that Russia did not have enough houses, the film was an embarrassment to the Soviets who banned its export for many years.

Then, starting with the 30's, Room, like most Soviet directors, became cramped by Stalin's concepts of what constituted acceptable cinema style.

In 1972, after many years of retirement, and at the age of 78, Room made a film, *Belated Flowers*, based on a story written by Chekhov at the age of 22. It is a story of frustrated love written when Chekhov was still a great romantic, but still filled with his gentle almost-irony.

After an initial success in Russia, the film was exported to the United States and gathered glowing reviews for its New York opening.

The film had a good run in New York, but curiously, it got no more bookings and

practically vanished from sight.

Now, *Belated Flowers* will surface again this weekend at the Alternative Cinema. Shows will be at 2, 7, and 9:30 Saturday in Carroll Hall. Hopefully, the catastrophic 35mm projection will have the kinks ironed out.

On Sunday, the Chaplin series will present Chaplin's first feature, *The Kid*, and an extraordinary film it is. It is his most fearlessly sentimental film. There is none of the understated delicacy of emotion here, but a full, rich, overflowing feeling that works marvelously well. Set this feeling with the brilliant comedy and you have an unbeatable combination. In addition, Jackie Coogan gives what is absolutely the best performance ever given by a child actor. This film will be shown with *The Idle Class*, in which Chaplin plays two roles, and which is very funny. Showings will be at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30 in Carroll Hall. For goodness sake, be there.

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