

'Volpone' adaptation incorporates gender switching, tricks

Oct 27
2011



SETH SCHROEDER | DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Julie Zielinski, a junior theatre arts major, and Alexis Evans, a senior communication studies major, perform Sunday during dress rehearsal for "Volpone" in the Mainstage Theater of the Doudna Fine Arts Center.

By **Samantha McDaniel**
Activities Editor

Gender switching, tricks and deception were all themes incorporated into the opening night of "Volpone."

The Department of Theatre Arts presented "Volpone" by Ben Jonson Wednesday.

The play was an adaptation from the 1606 production by Jonson.

In the adaptation, the cast switched the genders of the characters, setting and time.

The play is set in present day Venice, Fla., instead of its original setting of Venice, Italy.

Volpone, a man in the original play, is conniving and greedy while plotting to trick many people out of their money.

However, in Eastern's adaptation,

Volpone is played as a woman.

Volpone deceives many of the other characters into believing that she is on her deathbed and is looking for someone to make her heir.

The characters go as far as tricking Corbaccia, an older woman, into writing Volpone as her heir instead of Corbaccia's daughter, Bonaria.

Presents are brought to influence Volpone's decision while her assistant Mosca plots each one against the other.

Volpone in disguise also falls for the husband of Corvina, one of the pursuers of her heir, and sends Mosca to trick Corvina into giving Volpone her husband.

Believing it would make her the heir; Corvina bullies her husband into staying with Volpone, even

though he refused.

Christopher Mitchell, the director of "Volpone" and an associate professor of Theatre Arts, said this adaptation of the play excluded a subplot that he believed would be comical to the audience, but could not present it in the play because of time constraints.

"I think the main plot is pretty funny and has a very satisfying ark to it," Mitchell said. "I don't think the audience is missing anything."

Mitchell said he believed the changed genders added more comedy to the play.

"They (the audience) seem to really be getting a kick out of it," Mitchell said. "I noticed on certain lines where the genders play differently, they (the cast) were getting laughs or raised eyebrows."

VOLPONE, page 5

VOLPONE, from page 1

He said the switch in roles was getting noticed.

"That is what good theater is supposed to do," Mitchell said. "It's supposed to provoke the audience, get them to think, and get an emotion out of them. I think we did our job."

Brittany William, a freshman family and consumer sciences major who attended the play, said you could tell the women were originally men.

"(Corvina) was so mean, you can tell she was originally a guy," William said. "It's more powerful from a woman."

Mitchell said he thought the

opening night went well.

"The energy is amazing and the chemistry is very good," Mitchell said. "We couldn't have had a better cast."

The play will take place at 7:30 p.m. today, Friday, Saturday, and at 2 p.m. Sunday in the Theatre of the Doudna Fine Arts Center.

Tickets cost \$5 for Eastern students, \$12 for general admission, \$10 for Eastern employees and seniors 62 years of age and older.

Samantha McDaniel can be reached at 581-2812 or slmcdaniel@eiu.edu.