Review

Shakespeare: 'shrewdly' done

By Glauco Ruesga

MIT's Shakespeare Ensemble inaugurated its season Wednesday night with a two-hour presentation of "The Taming of The Shrew.

The Taming of The Shrew," which are considered to be Shakespeare's earliest comedy, is an adaptation of an older play by an unknown author published in 1594. The original and the adaptation are similar, but the style and the diction are drastically different in the latter version. The source of the playline may also be found in an Elizabethan poem, "A Merry Gose of a Shrew and Curst Wife" (circa 1575). Evidence suggests that Shakespeare wrote his play around 1597.

The play opens near the home of the rich merchant Baptista in Padua, a university town about 25 miles from the Port of Venice. Baptista has two unwed daughters: Bianca, a sweet lovable girl of worthy character, and Katherine, an ill-tempered volatile shrew who is given to railing and complaining. Bianca has many suitors but Baptista refuses all petitions for her marriage until Katherine, the elder sister, is herself married.

Lucentio, a young gentleman of Padua, poses as the musician in favor. Hortensio, a gentleman of Pisa, poses as the schoolmaster in favor. Petruchio, an adventurer from Verona, takes on the roly-toly task of taming the difficult shrew. The play ends in typical Shakespearean pagantyy, with the triple marriage of Lucentio to the lovely Bianca, Petruchio to the now-tame Katherine, and Hortensio to a wealthy widow of long acquaintance.

Although the play as a whole was presented well by the Shakespeare Ensemble, the opening night performance was not a technical masterpiece. The stage was designed and constructed to afford maximum visibility for the audience, but the view from the back row was still somewhat obstructed. The lack of technical merit, however, at times worked in favor of the company, as when the comic effect of the play became greatly pronounced when a beard was inadvertently dislodged from one startled character's face. Such mistakes are not often repeated. In general, the ensemble should be congratulated for a skilful and artistic performance.

Exceptionally fine performances were turned in by Mitchell Rothstein '77 as Tranio, Jim Walker '78 as Baptista, Alexey Orlovsky '77 as Petruchio and Burton Janikowski '80 as the widow.

The Taming of The Shrew

MIT Shakespeare Ensemble

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22
311 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.
OFFERS 10% DISCOUNT* ON SCHOOL & OFFICE SUPPLIES
(College ID Required)
*College ID Required
Minimum purchase $5.00

MIT Shakespeare Ensemble presents "The Taming of the Shrew," this weekend, see it in the Sala of the Student Center.

If you are seeing only one production of "The Taming of the Shrew," look no further.

Sunday
SATURDAY
FRIDAY
THE TECH
PAGE 3