

arts

Zorbá script a difficult challenge for MTG

By Kevin Cunningham

Zorbá, presented by the MIT Musical Theatre Guild, Thursday through Saturday, November 9-11, in Kresge Auditorium. Tickets \$4, 3.50 with MIT ID (\$3 on Thurs.). Tickets in Lobby 10, at the door, or by calling x3-6294.

Something is wrong with *Zorbá*, the musical. Where the difficulty lies is hard to determine. It may be tied in with the particular way it has been produced by the MIT Musical Theatre Guild, but the fault is more likely related to the nature of the musical as it is written.

Zorbá can be divided into two areas: what happens in the play, and what fails to happen. Or, more precisely, what goes on plotwise, and the play tries, but fails, to say.

First, the story: Nikos (Marcus Filipovich), a teacher from Athens, is going to Crete to restore and operate an old mine. In a cafe on the way, Zorbá appears and Nikos, impressed with the live-for-the-moment Zorbá (Dave Waggett '81), decides to take him along. They arrive in Crete, where they meet an aging French madame (Kimberly Price) who can provide them with rooms. Unknown to the two travelers, fevers are running high in the village against a young widow (Marianne



Nikos (left) and Zorbá (Photo by Gordon Haff)

Labriola), a young lady with whom Nikos quickly falls in love.

A similar situation appears to be developing between the French hortense and Zorbá (but of course Zorbá is simply being the gallant man about town, and is not really serious about her). Nikos soon sends Zorbá off to buy supplies for opening the old mine, and naturally the hortense feels

Zorbá will forget her (a prediction which turns out to be accurate). Zorbá writes back to Nikos, describing his experiences in a cafe, but leaving out any references to the hortense. When the hortense catches Nikos reading the letter, she asks if Zorbá has any messages for her and Nikos fakes one to the effect that Zorbá will marry her. Naturally, Zorbá is in a difficult situation when he returns to find this out.

Meanwhile a young villager has killed himself since he saw Nikos with the widow, whom he loves, and the family tries to take its revenge. Tragedy follows.

Now, what's wrong: Despite its promise and length, *Zorbá* is incredibly thin. It is strangely shallow and superficial; there is a definite lack of depth all around — character, plot, etc. It is doubtful that this is due to the MIT production. In spite of everything the acoustics at Kresge could do to muffle the show, the bouncing and lively energy the players and orchestra embodied shone through it all. Everyone down to bit players vibrated with the power of their production, but it was a losing battle. The inadequate nature of the material itself smothered the life from this troupe.

Marcus Filipovich's Nikos, with a sure sense of reality and good-natured fun, established itself as a viable competitor for main character over Zorbá. One could sense in the widow the pain she was feeling, and the hortense was irascible throughout. Zorbá was naturally epicurean, and

(Please turn to page 9)



Marianne Labriola. (Photo by Gordon Haff.)



Kimberly Price, as the French madam, and an admirer. (Photo by Gordon Haff.)

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