Molière's Misanthrope good entertainment


This was the first Dramashop production that I have had the opportunity to see. I'm glad I did. Under the direction of Prof. Robert Scanlan, director of the Dramashop and professor of dramatic arts here at MIT, the troupe successfully conveyed the essence of Molière's feelings.

Emil Miller '79 gave a most interesting dimension to the character of Alceste. His anger for his fellow Frenchman (the driving force for much of the action) guided the character towards most interesting conflicts. One could not help but get caught up in his eloquent use of rhyme, enhanced by his varyng vocal intonations. I found here at MIT, the troupe successfully combined the actions of Molière's plays, they warrant being done in their contemporary eighteenth century style. I once witnessed a local failing attempt to contemporize this same play, one that was as unfortunatelly for the audience. However, Robert Scanlan insightfully presented his production in the graceful manner of classic French comedy. With his combination of all theatrical techniques (make-up, costumes, sets, and lighting) he promoted the natural flow of Molière's creation. His use of the rhyming translation also added to the accelemated style, allowing the audience to delight in the recitation of every line. Finally, his use of period poses and gestures worked into the actors' movements, which were unfortunately repetitious at times, did help to place the show into its classic genre.

There was, however, one innovation towards which I had certain aversions: Prof. Scanlan's insertion of a portion of a shorter Molière play, L'impromptu de l'orifice. I agreed with the addition of the scene in that it demonstrates Molière's predilection at that time and adds to the natural, increasing intensity of the play; however, it breaks the core continuity of the action. The scene is so ambiguosly entered upon, that not only does the audience take some time to recuperate from it, but the actors do as well. One must commend the designers and technicians who worked with Prof. Scanlan to bring about such a successful production. With William Fregel's sets as background and Edward Darna's varying lighting techniques as the mood setters, watching the play was like viewing an animated masterpiece. — William Glickman