

ARTS

The MIT Shakespeare Ensemble presents *The Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare, directed by Jonathan Ivester. Playing tonight in the Sala de Puerto Rico at 8pm.

The Shakespeare Ensemble's production of *The Comedy of Errors* takes stock comic situations and demonstrates that it is the freedom of invention to which they lend themselves that makes them classic. This short early Shakespeare play has what, by now in any case, is an embarrassingly clichéd plot basis — the confusion caused by identical twins — and yet the present production has a lightness and freshness that transcends the limitations of the material. While the Bard has provided some delightful scenes, including the interplay involving the twin servants and the wooing sequence between a maiden and the man she believes to be her brother-in-law, his real achievement in this play is the solid plot construction which firmly directs the action without limiting any of the comic possibilities. He has built a springboard from which the players can leap joyously without worrying whether they are being "true to Shakespeare" and such. The triumph of this production, then, is that they leap so enthusiastically, and with success. This is not "a Shakespeare play" — this is a comedy, and in that sense its victory or failure lies with those who perform it. The Ensemble players are victors.

We must tip our hats to the director, Jonathan Ivester, for the fullness of invention which characterizes this version. The essential humor, and it is abundant, lies not in the words of Shakespeare but in the expressions, reactions, and byplay of the characters. Ivester has given his actors plenty to work with and allowed them the full range of their own natural instincts, tastefully tailoring them so they are uniformly amusing rather than egotistically

indiscriminate. Furthermore, his sense of the play in general, not just the humor, is well-integrated and overcomes the unevenness of the work as Shakespeare wrote it. For example, the opening sequence, a long potentially boring monologue, has been so nicely directed that it never fails to hold our attention — and a comic sequence cleverly preceding the dialogue starts the whole play off in the right direction.

Barry Long '83 as Aegeon sets the stage by recounting the long tale of an old man's search for his lost twin sons in a well modulated performance, neither too youthful nor too zealously old. Bill Glickman '83 is hilarious as the ineffectual and simple-minded Duke of Ephesus.

The twins are well-played by Joel Luna '81 and Tom Garvey '82. Luna is on top of the situation firmly and his enjoyment of the part is fun to share in, while Garvey's raging fuming man of the home contrasts nicely with his twin's poetically inclined nature.

In addition to the simple pair of twins in the classic version of this tale (indebted to Plautus), Shakespeare has doubled the confusion. The original twins, both named Antipholus, have twin servants, both named Dromio, and again these two are distinct in character. The one (Ignazio Bellafiore '81) is mischievous, superstitious, and high-strung — the other (Richard Michalski '83) is earthy, fearful, whiny, and impulsive. Indeed, most of the best comedy of the evening owes itself to the terrific energy of the two Dromios, and the list of their combined facial expressions would fill a comic's notebook.

Rebecca Henderson '82 continues her



The Comedy of Errors

delightful history with the Ensemble as Adrian, wife to one of the Antipholus twins. With Sue Darlington W80 as her sister, she personifies good natured innocence in an effectively balanced performance. The earlier interaction of these two women, however, gets lost, though this is more likely due to the denseness of Shakespeare's dialogue at these points than to inadequacies in the acting; they get better as the play unfolds. Indeed, Henderson's terror at her "husband's" supposed madness is startlingly believable and in fact adds a dimension to the play which Shakespeare used to more effect in later plays — tragicomedy. Darlington's best moment is her delightfully awkward reaction to the advances of one who she supposed is her sister's husband.

Jeff Hovis G as the goldsmith, David Innis '83 as the jailer who arrests him, and Stuart Rumsey '80 as the merchant to whom he is in debt all have a good presence on the stage and, though their parts are less open to focus and broad interpretation, all have a competent natural sense of the demands of their parts.

The broad comic parts in this play

included the standard selection: a courtesan (Mary Ellen Zurko '82), impulsively and wily but intensely good-natured, a mountebank (Preston Sweet G), and his servants (Carl Bazil '83, David Buffo '81). The mountebank, Doctor Pinch, was Shakespeare's bow to the masses, and is hence coarse and very funny. Preston Sweet is enjoyable to watch in this eccentric part, but it looking too much fun to be acting. The glasseyed servants are similarly so circus funny that one does not consider this serious theatre, although it doesn't matter really. Perhaps the Pinch sequence is a little messy, but, well, maybe it's excusable.

The last major role was played with a healthy sense of understatement and innocence by Jean Reid '83. As the head of a local abbey, she brought out one of the fine points of Shakespeare — its wonderful aural qualities. Miss Reid has a beautiful voice, and the excellence of it served only to point out the uniform competence and range of the vocal training of the players, an area often neglected.

The Ensemble continues to surprise us with the quality of its performances, and in the production of *The Comedy of Errors*, it is the players themselves and the direction given them that makes the show good, and not merely the renown of Shakespeare, which can be a curse as often as a blessing.

Kevin Cunningham

FOOD...HOT & FAST!

FROM 7A.M. TO MIDNIGHT, MONDAY THRU SATURDAY, YOU CAN GET HOT FOOD TO GO...AT PURITY SUPREME, MASS. AVE., CAMBRIDGE EVERYTHING FROM BARBEQUED CHICKEN TO CORN ON THE COB.



You say you want something tasty to eat for a snack or a meal and you'd like it right away. Purity Supreme, 600 Mass. Ave., Cambridge has the answer. At our new Hot Foods Department, you can get everything from barbequed kielbasa to shrimp rolls to daily hot entrees such as stuffed cabbage. We'll pack it up so you can take it with you.

Also, for you late night snackers, we don't close until midnight Monday thru Saturday.

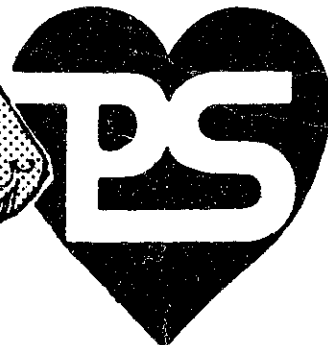
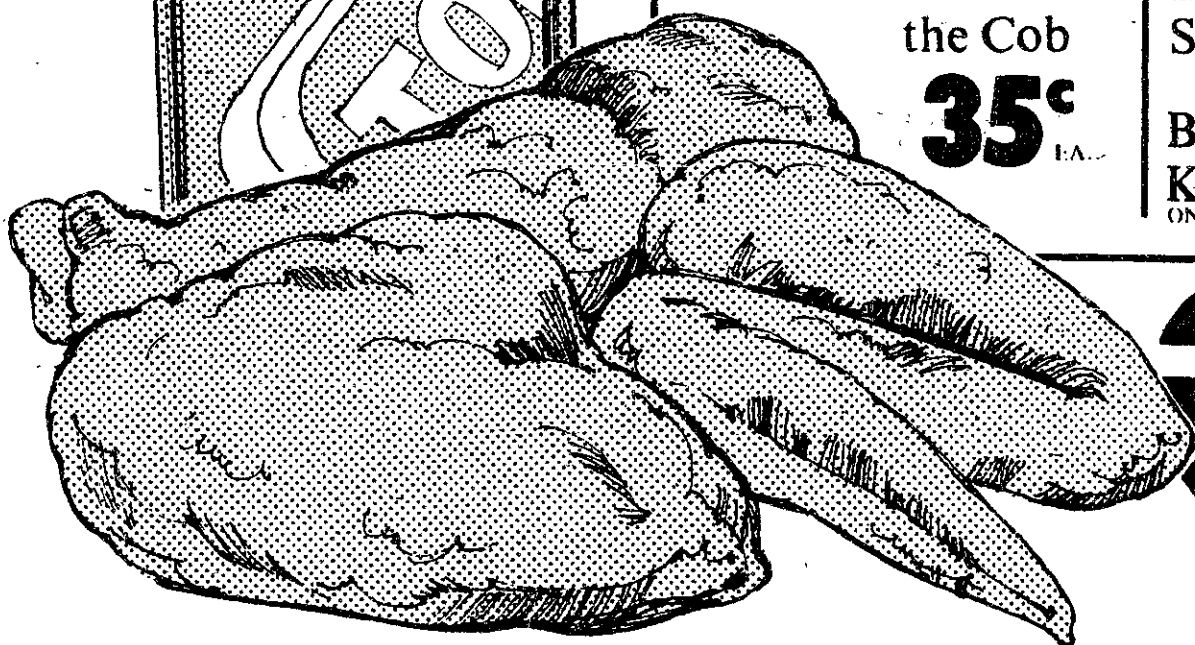
BELOW, IS A REPRESENTATIVE MENU OF SOME ITEMS FROM OUR HOT FOOD DEPT

Corn on the Cob
35¢ EA.

Barbequed Spareribs **\$2.29** LB

Barbequed Kielbasa **\$1.99** EACH ON A STICK

Southern Fried Chicken
• 3 Pieces (WING, 1-BREAST HALF, 1-THIGH) **\$1.99** SERVING
• 6 Potato Logs
• 2 Rolls



PURITY SUPREME
the basic value store
600 Mass. Ave., Cambridge