

First time for timeless Captives

THEATRE PREVIEW

THE CAPTIVES

Claire Cummings

Some theatrical themes are timeless. Heroics, intrigue and the search for love and money are returned to again and again in movies and plays. For whatever reason, stories that explore these basic emotions and experiences continue to ring true for audiences.

The Captives, written by nineteenth century author and playwright Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, is such a story. Bulwer-Lytton lived during the Victorian period, when the frenetic pace of the new mechanical age created nostalgia for simpler classical times. The playwright adapted the Roman comedy by Plautus to the Victorian stage, and put a new spin on the archetypal roles of hero, heroine and villain.

The Captives has never been played, and was recently rediscovered

in a British archive by University of Calgary professor Dr. Barry Yzerref who decided to put on a production.

Cast member Katherine Pakarnyk believes audiences today can identify with the characters of *The Captives*.

"These themes are timeless because the root emotions stay the same. They draw the audience in," said Pakarnyk, a fourth-year Drama major, who plays the innocent heroine Alcetis. Despite Alcetis' stereotypical role as an innocent beauty, Pakarnyk describes the character as a strong woman who stands up for herself.

Graduate student Donovan King plays the evil Sisyphon. Sisyphon attempts to outwit Alcetis' good-natured uncle, and take his fortune and daughter. King enjoys the challenge of playing such a colourful character.

"Sisyphon is melodramatic, and very indulgent. He loves food and money," said King. "Villains are fun to play. I'd rather play this role than

the young romantic character."

The U of C cast is also invited to perform at the Bulwer-Lytton 2000 Conference in Hertfordshire, England, the playwright's ancestral home. This is the first time the U of C Drama department will be involved in an international project, and both King and Pakarnyk feel it will give positive exposure and experience to the department.

"Some universities do exchanges like this on a regular basis," said King. "It's good for establishing contacts, and for exposure to other cultures. It will widen horizons for the future."

Pakarnyk hopes audience members will allow themselves to be "taken away on the journey" of the story. She cited a good dynamic between the members of the production as the reason she thinks it will be successful.

"This play has been lots of fun for the cast; the process was enjoyable. I hope the end result will be too."

Before the July performance in the U.K., the production will play at the Theatre from May 25-27.



David Kenney/The Gauntlet

These captives will act on both sides of the Atlantic.