The Rivals' reveals romantic relations

By Annie Hall
Entertainment Editor

The road to true love is never easy. Especially when those involved are wearing corsets and powdered wigs.

Creighton's presentation of "The Rivals," an 18th century play of love and its twists and turns begin this Thursday at the Lied Center. Director Bill Hutson, associate professor in the dept. of Fine and Performing Arts, chose to mount this rich English costume drama by Richard Brinsley Sheridan because "we thought it would be an excellent challenge," Hutson said.

"The emphasis is on the language of the play," Hutson said. "The timing and language put such demand on the actors." Arts & Sciences senior Denise Chapman as the overblown, pompous Mrs. Malaprop faces the additional linguistic challenge of the malapropisms, which are the man's amusing words caused by confusing similar sounds.

The story of the play revolves around Captain Jack Absolute (Arts & Sciences senior Andrew Brooks), who disguises himself as a lowly ensign to court Lydia Languish. (Arts & Sciences junior Natalie Tiehen and Arts & Sciences senior Robert Valenta play a troubled couple in "The Rivals." The play follows two couples and their path to romance.

The title "The Rivals" suggests only the rivalry between Absolute and his alter ego Ensign Beverly but likewise with the rustic clod, Bob Acres, (Arts & Sciences senior Nicholas Zadina,) as well as with Sir Lucius O'Trigger, (Arts & Sciences senior Chris Clyd.)

The set, designed and built by Bill Van Deest and his crew, offers an authentic stage arrangement featuring a raked stage, which is low in the front and rises in order to give the audience perspective.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of this production is the authentic costumes designed by Wendy Stark, former theater costume designer. The costumes were constructed by Charleen Willaby.

"To get the look of the time we had to employ the use of corsets, the corsets create the look which was tight waists, wide hips and pushed up boobs," Willaby said. "The costumes alter everything. It changes the way you walk, move, breathe, sit and stand."

"The Rivals" runs through March 3, with performances at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, March 1 through March 3, and at 2 p.m. on Sundays.

Tickets are $8 for general admission, $6 for senior citizens and $5 for students, faculty and staff.

Photo by Jay Langhurst