Veteran performers add life to funny ‘Forum’

By Kevin O’Connor

“A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum” is funny—brilliant, lively, and well-done.

Despite the inadequate facilities of the Little Theater, the theater staff has managed to put on some of the best plays and musicals in the area. Certainly, “A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum” continues the tradition.

Director Suzanne Dieckman has produced a tightly-knit extravaganza of singing, dancing and acting which sparkles from the opening moments through the finale.

Her cast of 18 accounts for a good deal of the brilliance. Jamie Mason, a theater staff member and instructor in the department, is very good as Pseudolus. Years of acting experience are reflected in his easy-going manner; he is obviously at home on stage.

Pat Sokolowski is a veteran of Creighton theater. Two years ago, she played Lady Larkin in Creighton’s production of “Once Upon A Mattress.” Now, as the young virgin in love with Hero, she plays Philia with a naive innocence which charms the audience as well as most of the play’s male characters.

Review

Tom Neumann is Hero and his acting and singing is perfect. Some of his best moments on stage are shared with Mike McCandless (Senex, the father of Hero.) As with Neumann, McCandless’ voice is flawless, as is his characterization. Both held roles in last year’s “Cabaret.”

Another “Cabaret” veteran is Kevin Cassidy, who plays the merchandising Marcus Lycus. His comic mannerisms are priceless. Also notable is Rick Janecek, whose fine acting hilariously portrays the bordering-neurotic, Hysterium.

Dieckman reinforces a theatrical belief, “there are small parts, only small actors,” through the total movement of all players. The performances in “Forum” obviously reflect this philosophy; the cast supportive, energetic and very talented.

The set of “Forum” reflects a good amount of profitable planning on the part of set designer Mason and Dieckman. Also, the lighting of the show is persuasive and moody as it adds to every scene.

Claudette Valentine directs the 16-piece orchestra which provides a strong backbone for the singing and dancing.

The dance numbers are well choreographed and precisely performed. “Forum” is choreographer Rick Brayshaw’s first show and his talents cannot help but bring him continued success in the future.

“Forum” is based upon the works of the Roman playwright Plautus and much of its humor is contained in deliberate exaggerations of typical Roman drama. The comedy is basic; fast and funny, and there is no message to “Forum.” The lighthearted nature of the show offers two hours of pure entertainment.

Dieckman summed up this show quite well when he commented, “‘Forum’ is a perfect escape from the frustrations of mid-terms. It’s the ideal release anyone.

President’s Convocation
for
Faculty and Administration
And Their Spouses

State of the University Address