Opulent attire enhances ‘Scandal’

By Cristina Flagler

The Interim Performing Arts Center opened its doors to the public on Wednesday with "The School for Scandal," the most popular English comedy that has ever been written, according to Bill Huxson, associate professor of Fine and Performing Arts and director of the play.

Performances will be held today, Saturday and March 6 at 7 p.m., and March 7-10 at 8 p.m.

"The School for Scandal" is a comedy of manners written by Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751-1816), an Irish-born dramatist known for his outstanding comedies of manners. Brinsley is also recognized as an important Whig politician of his period for being advisor to the Prince of Wales (later George IV) and a political orator.

The play is set in 18th century London and depicts the fashions and customs of the period showing the influence the Restoration dramatists had on Sheridan.

"The action of the play centers around the "school for scandal" which follows the contemporary social norms. The criticism of these social manners is done through the satirization of scandal mongering and sentimental comedy. The satirical wit of this play is so clever and general that it made Sheridan gain the title of "modern Congreve" of his period."

All the characters in "The School for Scandal" belong to the aristocracy and instead of being preoccupied in making a living, they are concerned with matters such as the making of proper impressions, marriages and the maintenance or destruction of reputations.

"Trying to learn and show the manners of the 18th century aristocrat society has been a great growing experience for all the actors, Arts senior Tammy Medinger said."

"This play is very different from everything we've done before," she said, "because of the manneuvers of the period and because the actors are constantly conscious of the audience due to the numerous asides the actors have to do."

For most of the actors this play has signified the need for a great amount of energy and concentration, Arts senior Vito LaBella said.

LaBella said this has been the most demanding play he has ever been in because the character he portrays demands the characterization of an old man in both a physical and emotional level showing the sentiments of anger, love and confusion.

Arts senior Heather Winterer said, this has been a rewarding educational experience and also a fun one. "Lady Sneerwell is a wonderful role in which I can release the nastier, more wicked side of my personality which usually remains inside hidden," she said. "It has been more fun portraying a witch than I would like to admit."

The collaboration of everybody in a team effort has made this play possible, costume designer Georgiann Regan said.

Regan, a 1971 theater graduate from Creighton has been working for 12 years with Creighton as costume designer.

Regan said she had to make a historical research on fashion history looking through paintings of the late 18th century.

photos by Cristina Flagler

Above: The "School for Scandal" in action.

Above left: Lady Sneerwell admires her "beauty."

Bottom left: Sir Oliver and Charles in conversation.

Bottom right: Lady Teazle hides from her husband Sir Peter.