Lively, exciting interpretation given to 'Shrew'

By Beth Harig
Staff Writer

Shakespeare's wild comedy classic, "The Taming of the Shrew," opens this year's Creighton Performing Arts season. Traditional interpretations of the play depict a humorous but brutal conquest of the sharp-tongued Kate by a crafty and handsome Petruchio. But director Alan Klem and his cast give the popular tale a lively, exciting interpretation.

The story is one of two sisters. Jackie Hogan, as Bianco, is coy, spoiled and well-mannered. She has many suitors, but before her father will allow her to marry he must find a husband for her sister Kate.

Brash, outspoken

Kate, portrayed by Kathy Christal, is brash and outspoken. No man wants to marry her. But then Frank Kosmicki, as Petruchio, comes along.

Kosmicki sets about "Taming the Shrew." Kosmicki is just as sharp-tongued and brash as Christal, yet they allow the warmer and farcical side of their characters to be seen.

Kosmicki woos Christal by giving her a dose of her own violent and childish medicine, and then he kills her with kindness.

Playful performance

The performance is playful and the entire cast, using good eye contact, makes the audience feel like it is on stage with the actors.

Frank Kosmicki and Kathy Christal portray Petruchio and Kate in "The Taming of the Shrew."

The setting, created by technical director Tom Maxur, is lively, but not distracting. Wooden barstools and tables clutter the stage and brilliantly colored tapestries hang from the ceiling.

Live music, performed by a group of on-stage musicians led by William Cook, is realistic and enhances the mood of Renaissance Italy.

Costumes designed by Georgiann Regan are colorful and bright, complete with knickers, tunics, sashes and hats.

"Less intellectual"

Director Klem's professional theater credits include serving as artistic director of Shakespeare-in-the-Park of Fort Worth, Texas, for four years and touring with the Omaha-based Nebraska Theatre Caravan for a season. Klem directed another Creighton play, "Two Gentlemen of Verona — the Rock Musical," in 1989.

Klem hopes Creighton's "Taming of the Shrew" is "less intellectual" and "has more movement so people can relate." The play is action-packed and the cast creates an aura of fun.

Remaining performances are scheduled for tonight, Saturday and Oct. 10, 11 and 12 at 8 p.m. and Sunday and Oct. 13 at 2:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center at 30th and Burt. Admission is $5 for the general public and $3 for students and senior citizens.