

AU students to present "Servant of Two Masters" April 17-20

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Alfred University's Performing Arts Division will present "The Servant of Two Masters," a comedy by Carlo Goldoni set in 18th-century Venice, in four performances April 17-20. The comedy features a day in the life of Truffaldino, a clever servant who has a bumpy journey and, at the end of the day, finds himself caught in his own tricks, lies, and attempts to make extra money, said director Becky Prophet, AU professor of theater. "In this era of multi-tasking, a major business collapse, and creative bookkeeping, 'The Servant of Two Masters' may make audiences feel as though their lives are passing before their eyes," she added. "This delightful comedy is set in mid-18th-century Venice, where the business of the day (includes) mistaken identities, pursuit of good food, betrothals, deal-making, and decisions with lifelong implications. Can Truffaldino (and the audience) sort out the tangled relationships, even as he tries to sort out the possessions of his two masters, after he has mindlessly scrambled them in a hurry to unpack and show off what a capable valet he is?" Prophet said. "Who will discover first that his two masters, Beatrice and Florindo, are actually in love and that both have arrived in Venice without each other's knowledge?" With scenery designed by Michael J. Dempsey, associate professor in lighting & scenery, costumes designed by free-lance costume designer Jennifer Harrison of Rochester, lighting designed by junior Lauren Tannenbaum, and stage management by sophomore Rebecca Coppola, "Servant" will come to life with the framework of a travelling commedia dell'arte troupe, which will be enlivened by Denia Hood, an exchange student from Brighton, England. Hood will animate the characters and set the action in motion, with Pantalone, the old, wealthy, grumpy father played by junior Andrew M. Shaw struggling to keep the marriage contract he has made for his daughter Clarice (sophomore Julia Shapiro) to Silvio (freshman Adam Matuszewski.) He's opposed by Silvio's mother Mme. Lombardi (sophomore Sarah Haggett) who knows how to argue for the best possible deal. Into the action comes Truffaldino (junior Shaminda Amarakoon), who is immediately smitten by Clarice's maid Smeraldina (junior Emily Tucker.) Truffaldino announces the arrival of Federigo Rasponi (senior Ashley Long), his new master and an early suitor of Clarice. Not even Truffaldino realizes that his "Master Federigo" is really Beatrice, Federigo's younger sister in disguise. Innkeeper Brighella (senior Laura Randall) gets out of the kitchen's heat, leaving others to cope with confusion. Just booking a room in her inn is Florindo (sophomore Christopher Quinn), the lover of Beatrice and the killer of Federigo. Porters and waiters fill out the Venetian population: junior Kate Reilly and first-year students Michael Anderson, Kara Dunne, Lacey Holmes, and Kristin Quell. This lighthearted play, from sources almost as old as comedy itself, will be performed at 8 p.m. each day April 17-20 in the C.D. Smith Theater of the Miller Performing Arts Center. For reservations and tickets call (607) 871-2828, or visit the new on-line ticket reservation website at www.alfred.edu/performing.... Ticket prices vary according to age and student status.-- 30 --