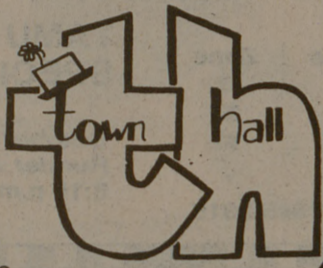


TAMU MSC TOWN HALL  
SERIES ATTRACTION #2  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20 8:00 P.M.  
G. ROLLIE WHITE COLISEUM

	A&M Student	Non-Student Date	General Public
General Admission	FREE w/ticket	3.00	4.00
Reserved	4.00/4.50	4.00/4.50	6.00/6.50

Tickets and Info:  
MSC Box Office 845-2916



## Tartuffe: music enlivens old plot

"Tartuffe," produced by the Aggie Players in Rudder Center Theatre at 8 p.m. Oct. 6 and 7.

By DOUG GRAHAM  
Battalion Staff

Comedy can be compared to an automobile since, with time, it can get stale, ragged out and ready for the scrapheap. However, good humor, like a fine car, can transcend the graveyard of overworked jokes and become classic.

Such is the case with Moliere's "Tartuffe," a comedy about a con-ning religious fake who attempts to gain control of a nobleman's property. The play, written in 1664, is not like the stylized and artificial "Comedy of Manners" popular later in England. It is a comedy of characters.

Each character represents a different type of human being. Tartuffe, played by David Campbell, is one of those predators on human gullibility who has fooled the nobleman, Orgon, and his mother. Orgon's household is aligned against Tartuffe. That includes his son who is as ruled by emotion as his father, Dorine, the earthy and practical maid, Orgon's wife, daughter, and his utterly rational, at times boringly pedantic brother, Cleante.

These characters serve as foils to one another. Cleante, whose viewpoint is probably closest to

Moliere's, tries in vain to use reason to convince his brother of Tartuffe's fakery, but Orgon is convinced only when he sees Tartuffe trying to seduce his wife.

In the meantime, however, Orgon loves Tartuffe as a brother. When he returns home from a trip he is told his wife is dead.

"And what of Tartuffe?" he asks. He is told Tartuffe ate a hearty meal and retired for the night.

"Poor fellow," Orgon laments. Orgon remains under the fake's spell. After banishing his son for insulting Tartuffe, he gives the hypocrite title to his estate.

Of course Tartuffe then resorts to legal means to secure Orgon's eviction. But happily, the King of France through his discerning heart, sees through Tartuffe's treachery and has his guards arrest Tartuffe in front of Orgon. The King also forgives Orgon a trespass involved in harboring a traitor's correspondence. That shows the play's age. It also demonstrates Moliere's intelligence as a playwright. There was no future in 17th century France in insulting the King.

Thus there is a happy ending. The play as presented in Rudder Center was fine. The costumes were well done, though the veil-like thing Orgon's wife wore on her hair looked like a piece of an old sheet.

The set designed by Roy O'Valle was superbly crafted. The anomaly was the table cloth on the center table; it looked cheap compared to the fine woodwork, painting and windows.

The acting was very competent. Debbie Ellis as Dorine, was outstanding along with Campbell. She played Babette in Pajama Tops this summer and seems to do well in roles demanding assertive, saucy and practical women.

Campbell fit his role. It was a role for a ham, a ham with good comedic gestures and timing. His pursuit of Orgon's wife was excellent when, with a rebuff, he recoiled only to pursue once more. He maintained a crafty demeanor well, summing up a hypocrite's creed in one line: "Sin is no sin in confidence."



Lovers Valere and Mariane in Moliere's "Tartuffe," played here by Owen Sonik and Julie Scott, convince each other they don't love each other, much to the chagrin of the maid Dorine (Debbie Ellis). The conflict has arisen

because Mariane's father wishes her to marry Tartuffe, and she intends to honor his will. The Aggie Players are presenting the play 8 p.m. tonight and Saturday in Rudder Center Theatre.

Orgon, played by Philip Hafer reminded one just a bit too much of Oliver Hardy. It may have been the voice, or the mannerisms, but despite that, Hafer successfully portrayed the gullible nobleman as a rather pompous fellow ruled by emotion rather than reason.

Jonathan Plessner as Cleante turned in one of the most winning performances of the night. His self-congratulatory smiles and facial expressions stole scenes all night.

On the other hand, Orgon's daughter, Julie Scott, and her lover, Owen Sonik, turned in weaker performances, not simply due to the characters they were to portray—Sonik more so than Scott, who did seem to be in character for a sniveling, tearful daughter of a noble.

Orgon's son, Jim Wither, was a bit overplayed. Too often he seemed like a 17th century Luke Skywalker straining to get into the thick of the struggle and fight.

I wasn't sure about Beth Potten, Orgon's wife, at first. But as the play progressed, she seemed to pick up her composure. At first she seemed just a copy of the spineless daughter. She improved, but even so, hers was a rather weak portrayal of a worldly woman capable of running a household and rebuffing unwanted amorous advances. One would have thought such a woman to have more backbone and calculating intelligence than was displayed.

The walk-ons were not inspiring, but were adequate.

Overall the play was successful. It was authentically done, with special

praise going to the group of actors under Penelope Koenig who wrote the baroque-style play between scenes. A member of the players said Koenig built the harpsichord played. The group also played oboe, a clarinet, and a French horn.

Wencke, the director, should be congratulated. There were one or two slight mistakes in direction but other than those, the play ran smoothly.

So the 300-year-old play made its humorous tone in spite of and the transition to modern English from its native French.

It leaves one with one thought to make: Vive Moliere.

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