

Shrew tamed in two worlds

By Colette Hutchings
Battalion Staff

Shakespeare fans, unite. This month two renditions of the classic comedy "The Taming of the Shrew" will be presented — but don't expect them to be repeats of each other.

One will be the traditional presentation of the play, and the other is a wild west version.

Tonight the National Shakespeare Company will present the comedy — Shakespearean-style — at 8 p.m. in Rudder Theater.

Teresa Chaing, advisor for the MSC Arts Committee, the organization sponsoring the play, said the company performed on campus about five or six years ago in a MSC OPAS presentation.

"We're really excited about this," she said.

The Shrew's plot revolves around a combination of tales: the competition between a trio of suitors for the hand of the fair maid Bianca; the dual of wits between Kate, a rambunctious shrew, and Petruchio, the brave man who is determined to make her a docile lover and wife (and get a share of her money.)

Petruchio's rough and hilarious treatment of Katherine in the name of love is the major plotline.

The National Shakespeare Company is touring through Texas and making a stop-over in College Station for this one-night performance. As Teresa Chaing said: "We just got lucky."

The second presentation of "Shrew" is by StageCenter, a local theater group.

StageCenter's version takes the characters to the American West. Instead of lavish Elizabethan sets and costumes, the cast will speak with western twangs and the men will wear

Levi's while courting their fair maidens.

Dr. Ellen Dowling, English professor at Texas A&M and director of the play, said, "I suspect it will be very, very different from the National Shakespeare production."

Different indeed. Dowling likened Shakespeare's Kate to: "an Annie Oakley who's aim is worse than her arrogance."

Dowling says Kate's wife-taming husband Petruchio is a mixture of Clint Eastwood (he's dressed in black) and Wild Bill Hickock.

The rest of the characters are stereotyped in traditional Wild West roles such as saloon keepers and morticians.

Dowling says she is doing the play in this manner for practical purposes and for appeal.

"I think it will appeal to the audience and it's easy to stage," she said.

Dowling said with the small theater, audience interaction and accents, the western portrayal will be geared to Bryan-College Station residents.

The cast for the play includes University professors, students and local citizens.

Dowling says she plans to play up slapstick in the play.

"Our motto is 'if it gets a laugh we'll keep it,'" she said. "We want the audience to leave feeling as if they were just at a party."

Dowling said she is disappointed the two Shakespeare productions will be presented so close together. "I think it hurts both companies," she said.

As for StageCenter's unique presentation Dowling said: "I don't think Shakespeare would roll over in his grave."

The play will be presented at the StageCenter theater on Villa Maria in Bryan Feb. 25 through 27 and March 4, 5 and 6. Tickets are \$3 and are available at the door.



Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" will be presented in its original form by the National Shakespeare Company, and in a western setting by StageCenter, a local theater group.

OPAS presents Polish dancers

Waltzes, polkas, folk and festival dances are on Monday night's program when the Mazowsze Polish Song and Dance Company comes to Rudder Auditorium.

Made up of 115 dancers, singers and musicians, the Polish folk ensemble performances are



based on the traditions and customs of its homeland. The company is famous not only for energetic dancing, but also for its colorful traditional costumes.

Other scheduled numbers include dances about matchmakers, maidens and their loves, Christmas rituals and sheep herders. Wedding festivities and carnival dances also will be presented, along with folk bands and dances which represent almost all regions of Poland.

The company takes its name from one such region — the central area Mazowsze, the site of Warsaw, the country's capital.

The ensemble was created in 1948, when a Polish musician and his actress wife, fascinated by melodies, rhythms, costumes and dances of their country, set up the company in an old country estate.

After auditioning more than 5,000 applicants from various regions and villages in Poland, the founders selected the first members of the company, while at

the same time choosing the most suitable and typical dances and songs from each region.

No number was put into the ensemble's repertoire unless approved by the performers. Since the performers were close to their home regions, the founders thought it necessary for the dancers, singers and musicians to believe in their performances.

Tickets for Monday night's performance are \$9, \$7.25 and \$5.75 for students; \$10.25, \$8.25 and \$6.50 for non-students. The performance is at 8 p.m.

WHAT: Mazowsze Polish Song and Dance Company
WHEN: 8 p.m. Monday
WHERE: Rudder Auditorium
TICKETS: \$9, \$7.25 and \$5.75 for students; \$10.25, \$8.25 and \$6.50 for non-students.



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