

Malpractice or Love Is The Best Doctor

Adapted by The Dell'Arte Players from the comedies of Moliere

Directed by Ruth Griffin

About the production:

In *Malpractice*, a Father who is a hypochondriac charges his daughter to marry a doctor in order that he, the Father, need never pay for health care. It then follows that two disputatious and disreputable doctors endanger the young daughter with their treatments. At death's door she is saved by a trust in the natural healing power in her body as an inner healing figure emerges. One of the doctors sternly demands unquestioning obedience, which he gets from the girl's father. But the girl says, "Your medicine is killing me," which, in a nutshell, is the play's message. Dressed as 17th-century contemporaries of Moliere - who himself directed satires at physicians - the play attacks with a whole arsenal of theatrical weapons. The staging is rooted in the traditions of the Commedia Dell'Arte, the stylized Italian street theatre that the great French playwright adapted to his satirical purposes.

The characters are:

- Dr. Patin
- Dr. Courant (Young Doctor)
- Dr. Diaforus (Old Doctor)
- Death
- Sgnanarelle (The Father)
- Lucinde (The Daughter)

Casting considerations:

Originally three actors played all of the characters. I am considering expanding the cast to 5 actors with the possibility of either 4 roles for men and 1 for a woman or 3 roles for men and 2 for women. I am also planning to cast understudies. The rehearsal process will be engaged with learning techniques of lazzi (stage business in language, movement, and use of props) and employing them. The actors cast for roles and the understudies will form the company that is engaged in continuing with the Director to devise the play. The script as it stands is a blueprint.

Background:

The Dell'Arte Players adapted the play from 3 of Moliere's plays about Doctors: *The Imaginary Invalid*, *The Doctor In Spite of Himself* and *Love Is the Best Doctor*. "Dottore" in Commedia, who the Doctors in *Malpractice* are patterned after, is a charlatan. He is lecherous, sensuous, greedy and a pedantic charlatan whose endless tirades and speechifying stupefy his listeners.

Interested parties may e-mail the director, Ruth Griffin, for the script: ruthg@csufresno.edu.