

Theatre

"It's like living in a tavern!"
an exasperated Fabrizio (Tory Coombs) cries out.

Il Campiello does brim with the energy, arguments, humorous incidents, and drunken disorderliness of a tavern. However, the goings-on that take place between the characters living in the square are instigated by more than simply an abundance of drink. Carlo Goldini's play is a comedic and zealous examination of love, jealousy, miscommunication, and class conflict, set in Venice of 1756.

We are quickly introduced to the petty jealousies and competitiveness of the characters in the first scene, where they bicker over which lady is the finest during a game initiated by Zorzetto (Ian Harmon), the young son of Orsola



Ryan Bell as the Count with the Company

(Ruth Brown). Gasparina (Ella May and Andrea Blakey, alternating days), a self-centred, snobbish young lady, exclaims: "I am worth more than them. I drew...The Sun."

The other daughters, frustrated, withdraw back into their homes as the two widowed mothers, Pasqua and Katherina converge upon the centre of the square to gossip about the selfish girl, and then to bicker about their lost youth to the amusement of the audience.

Pasqua and Katherina are played brilliantly by Kerry Duff and Johanna Khalema, respectively, who doubled-over the audience with laughter as the lively, conspiring old mothers of Gnese (Niki Brown) and Lucietta (Anastasia Filipczuk). The two confide in each other their plans to marry off their daughters as quickly as possible so that they can remarry. They become enamoured by "the Foreigner", who we later learn is a Count,

and who is himself enraptured by the lovely Gasparina.

Ryan Bell's performance of the Count also succeeds in earning the audience's affection. Exclaimed one audience member after the show, "I thought the Count was fantastic." It was particularly enjoyable observing his attempts to calm the residents of the campiello, as well as witnessing his discomfort as Pasqua and Katherina flirted shamelessly with him. At one point the half-deaf Pasqua suggestively bends over to pick up her broom, waving her behind in the air with a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

Equally amusing is Orsola, the other mother in the play. Her son Zorzetto pines for Gnese, and is dismayed by the thought that she may not be interested in him. At one point Orsola attempts to console him. "Inside," she insists, "she's on fire! Errmnnngh!" Directed by

faculty member Stephen Heatley, Il Campiello bursts with energy from every doorway and window. The Telus theatre is home to french bread battles, wooing suitors, quarrelling daughters, and colourful cardboard and fabric costumes.

Reading the profiles of the actors and actresses outside of the theatre, a simple statement of Khalema's sums up UBC's production of Il Campiello the best: "What a cast, what a blast!"

The production runs in the evening at 7:30pm, until October 25th. Phone 604 822 2678 for tickets, or buy them at the Frederick Wood Theatre box office. Il Campiello is playing at the Telus Theatre in the Chan Centre.

photos by Tim Matheson

