

# Strange and solemn music fills 'Tempest'

By KEITH POWELL  
Emerald Staff Writer

"Strange and solemn music" cowers and mystifies the visitors to Prospero's island; undulating waves assault a storm-slashed ship; twinkle-toed sprites scamper deftly across the stage...

These are some of the occasions in which original music will be employed in "The Tempest," the Shakespearean comedy that opens at the University Theatre May 22.

The play is under the direction of Preston Tuttle.

Besides the striking constructivist set and costumes by sculptor Jan Zach, and the original choreography by Phyllis Barstow, another one of the special attractions of this festival-like production will be the original music

by Laura Spray, senior in music.

## Eight songs in show

There are eight songs in the show, all taking their text from Shakespeare's play. Miss Spray has also written the music for two dance sequences, and for background music called for in the script. In addition of writing all the music for the show, Miss Spray has coached the actors in their parts, no mean task considering that most of the actors in the show have untrained—not to say bad—voices.

The background music will be taped by music students who have helped Miss Spray out "for the sake of art," she smiled. The instruments used will include the harpsichord, recorders, percussion and 'cello. Miss Spray explains that although the instruments

used are mainly ones that Shakespeare was familiar with, the music "is not necessarily in the Elizabethan style."

In some of the music sequences, Miss Spray has tried to incorporate a contemporary feeling where she feels it was called for. "I don't want people to think that I've simply copied old Elizabethan manuscripts. I've tried to give the music some of my own feeling. I've tried to use some of the things learned about music since the hundreds of years since Shakespeare's time," Miss Spray explained.

## Music varied

The music in masque dance sequence is "quite Elizabethan," while the music played during the writhings of the menacing Shapes is "very contemporary." This

seeming incongruity of styles is justified by Miss Spray because a strong contemporary style was "the only way to express what the shapes were doing."

This diversity was one of the problems that Miss Spray as the composer had to grapple with.

"I was obliged to keep a unity to the music as well as give a unity of style to the play through the music. I have been obliged to make certain stylistic devices to form our own period, as well as from Shakespeare's time," Miss Spray said.

She is trying to blend the two styles into a harmonious, well-balanced whole. "This is one of the main goals I'm working for," she explained.

One way of doing this is through

recurring thematic material. The same music with slightly different orchestration will portray "ambivalent emotions."

Thematic material will be heard when Ariel leaves his master Prospero. Ariel expresses grief that he, too, although he is gaining his freedom, is losing the affection of a man who was like a father to him.

## "Opera" avoided

The music itself is "sparsely orchestrated, quite thin." Miss Spray pointed out that "we've tried to avoid the operatic, overture type of music for the background music as well as songs."

Miss spray is avoiding operatic songs because of the untrained voices of the actors. How-

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