

# Students work on play, will perform in French

By Catherine Hours  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Work is already under way for the spring term production of *La Dispute*, a play by the 18th century French author Pierre Marivaux.

The romance languages department is sponsoring the play, which will be performed in French.

The cast was determined by audition last week, but the staff still needs backstage help, especially in lighting and costumes.

*La Dispute* is a one-act comedy about the havoc wrought by the excesses of teen-age love and desire. Four performances will be given at the end of spring term, probably in May.

The department has sponsored such events in the past, but they were never this big and involved.

Next term, the preparation for the play will be the subject of a course titled "Gender and Sexuality." Students can earn from one to four credits, depending on their degree of participation.

Instructor and director Tim Scheie said this solution was the most appropriate because the preparation takes a lot of time and energy. In April, participants will have to rehearse every night, and the promise of credits reinforces their motivation.

The course is structured not only around the play itself but around the theoretical question of sexual identity.

"Because this is a very hot question these days, we're going to talk about it a lot and read some very contemporary articles addressing the issue," Scheie said.

The play is all about love and sex, and focuses on an argument over who is, by nature, more inconstant - men or women.

Scheie has previous theatrical experience from the University of Wisconsin, where he prepared his Ph.D.

"It was part of the curriculum, and there was a tradition that every year students in French literature took part in a play," Scheie said. "I acted several years, and I was assistant director a couple of years."

Between 20 and 25 students will participate in this adventure.

Lise Nathan, assistant director and graduate teaching fellow in the French department, said that it's an excellent opportunity for American and French students to meet, and to see the production of a play from the inside.

"This will totally differ from traditional courses," Nathan said. "This experience is going to be enjoyable, very funny and very physical, too."

Laurence Rico, who will play one of the main parts, emphasized the importance of the visual and sound dimensions acting brings to a play.

Rico, also a French GTF, has a

passion for theater. She already had the experience of acting in a French play produced in Great Britain, and she remembers having a good time on stage.

"Acting, as well as teaching, are really in my nature," Rico said. "In both cases, you are on stage, you have to charm the audience. I also play a part in my class. Life is theater."

"This is also interesting to produce an American adaptation of a French play," Nathan said. Indeed, the play adaptation will be transposed to the United States in the 1950s.

This decision originates from several reasons. First, an 18th century adaptation would have required expensive costumes.

"But I didn't want to do that anyway," Scheie said. "That's museum theater."

Moreover, there is little documentation of the original productions from the 18th century because a lot of it was destroyed in the 1870 fire of the Paris Hotel de Ville (City Hall). Consequently, nobody even knows how this play was performed or what theater was like at that time.

"A museum type of play would be artificial," Scheie said.

Given the subject of *La Dispute* (a new version of the Adam and Eve story), the action had to take place in the context of an age of innocence, of a garden of Eden.

"The 50's represents to me a certain age of innocence," Scheie said. "Years when people were very optimistic, positive, a sort of 'age d'or' that we have lost today. At that time, there were really strong sexual rules, unlike the trouble waters of today, when sexual identity is not clear anymore. The idea was so clear about what was supposed to be. You couldn't even say the word 'homosexuality,' for example; it was a taboo."

"This is a modern interpretation of a play whose theme is universal and timeless," Rico said.

Yet, despite these changes, the play will still be performed in French.

Besides the fact that this is part of a French literature class, any English translation is unlikely to be available, and Marivaux's language is very difficult to translate.

Scheie plans to use the original text.

"The French is not that old; it hasn't changed that much since that time," Scheie explained. "Anyway, we'll make it expressive through the acting."

"How many French language plays are put in Oregon in the year?" Scheie said. "Probably not any."

This is also an enriching cultural experience. It will bring together the French-speaking people of Eugene who will come to see the play.

## Brand new



**FROM THE PAST:** Myles Brand and his wife Margaret unpack books at their new home, the McMorrin House, as the University ushered in a new era in June 1989, saying goodbye to outgoing President Paul Olum and hello to incoming President Brand. Brand's top priorities when he

took office were concern for faculty salaries, developing relationships with the Legislature, enhancing University research and graduate instruction and an interest in "providing the highest quality undergraduate education available in and throughout the United States."

## SUPERFLY



**Dear Superfly,**

I unintentionally invited two guys to the same place at the same time. You can imagine the embarrassment when I kissed one as the other walked in. Oops! The dilemma is I really liked the one who found me lip-locked! Now what?

— Fatal Mistake

**Dear Fatal Mistake,**

Girl, you are burying yourself in the sand, let me tell you! You're looking for a fix-it, and it is gonna be hard 'cause you screwed up bad! But Superfly has your fix-it, and it goes like this: go explain to the boy you like that you weren't really kissing, but actually, believe it or not, researching for one of your classes, and the research entailed kissing to discover the amount of saliva exchanged.

Your beau will be so proud to know such a scientist that all will be forgiven.

— Superfly

**Dear Superfly,**

I am a 23-year-old bisexual male who has had some difficulty as of late in regard to my sexual relations. I'm in a bizarre love triangle with my housemates, which involves one man and one woman. These two do not know about each others involvement with me, nor my true sexual orientation.

I'm having great difficulty juggling the two, considering my lovers are just two of the numerous multi personalities within myself. I'm worried about the terrible physical and psychological repercussions that would ensue if I'm ever caught by myself.

— In a tight spot (half the time)

**Dear IATSHTT,**

So, what you're really trying to say is that you live alone? Is that the point of this letter? Well, it doesn't seem to us that you'd have the opportunity of getting

caught in action, unless one of your other personalities comes out, when it is not supposed to. We advise that you name these personalities. In this way they can trust you and er ... vice-versa. In the end, you know they will respect your privacy, like one's selves should respect one-self.

— Superfly

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