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'Arms and the Man' heralds spring

By Andrew Mayer
Freelance Reporter

Spring is in the air, and George Bernard Shaw's play *Arms and the Man* is an enchanting, if slightly flawed, expression of all its delights.

Robert Barton adapted the play and opened the Robinson Theater's Spring Season with an audience-pleasing show. Graduate student and director of the theater's last showing, Michael Phillips, said the show has the year's largest budget of all the 1995-96 plays.

The play is a romantic comedy based on the story of the tug-of-war over Bulgaria between Turkey, Serbi, and Russia, albeit, not at the same time in history. The characters' diverse nationalities create many occasions for revels begot from communication voids and stereotypical assumptions.

Dramaturg, Jim Utz, said Shaw "attacks the values of Victorian England and its lingering attachment to grandiose, Romantic-era" through this play. I agree with Utz.

Arms and the Man

Robinson Theater

★★★

scenery that reminded me of going into a candy shop after seeing a dentist.

Justin Davanzo plays a consistent and convincing Captain Bluntschli. The Captain seems to be happy with his place in life and accepts weighty responsibilities with the air of an heir.

Sara Martyn, as Raina Petkoff, transitions her character well from an ice princess in Act One to a love-engorged debutante by the end of the play.

The set design (Styrofoam?) was by Jerry Williams. If I lived during the time of this play, I would have called it realism. It was very picturesque, and I enjoyed the fireplaces.

The lighting by Ryan Webber was perfect except



Raina Petkoff feeds chocolates to Captain Bluntschli in the play 'Arms and the Man.'

for the moon in the first scene, which was waxing or waning on two sides (shhhh — fix it, and nobody seeing it twice will remember).

The sound was just what I expected. I enjoyed the music but not the background fuzz in the recording of the last sequence of gun shots.

First-time professional costume designer Chianti Lui put together a fine ensemble. Raina's mother's green dress in Acts One and Two was perhaps a fall or winter green and would have been more effective if it was a shade or two lighter.

The other characters' costumes created the historical atmosphere and served to keep the actor's histrionics in check.

Other notable acting performances came from Troy Fischmaller as the servant Nicola, Charlie Kimball as Major Sergius Saranoff, Cameo Morningstar as Louka, M. Chandler Melvin as a Russian Officer, and the husband-wife acting team of Paul M. Rubenstein and Rebecca Foster.

Rubenstein played a good North European pantalone. (Nice make-up, Rustan and Alba.)

I recommend that everyone see *Arms and the Man*. The more history a viewer knows, the deeper the humor and appreciation he or she will have of this play. Historical knowledge is not a prerequisite, however, as the entire audience seemed to find the opening night's performance entertaining.

The show will run on April 18, 19, 20, 26 and 27 at 8 p.m. A benefit performance for the Center for Community Counseling will be held at 2 p.m. April 21. For more information, call 346-4191.

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Musical: 'Seven Brides' features gymnastics

Continued from Page 5

brother, Adam, marries Milly, an orphan, the entire family is shaken out of its backwoods life.

Milly is determined to marry off her brothers-in-law to insure the success of her own marriage, but she ends up chaperoning six girls until their weddings.

A company of more than forty performers adds new songs to the classic film score, composed by Johnny Mercer and Gene de Paul. The Broadway stage version recreates the feeling of the

original film, starring Jane Powell and Howard Keel, but revises some of the comedy, music and choreography.

Choreographed and directed by Robert Durkin, "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" features impressive dancing and gymnastics work, including somersaults, leaps and jumps. According to Lonn, auditions for the production took longer than most because they wanted to cast only the best performers. "Almost everyone must dance

in the production. Some of them have to be pretty fair gymnasts, as well," he said.

Lonn said the sets are also particularly striking.

"The Pontipee house is as wide as the stage and two stories high," he said. "It is basically a working house with the side cut off. So when a performer is supposed to go upstairs, they literally go upstairs."

Tickets are \$27.50 or \$18.50 at the Hult Center Box Office or at the EMU Ticket Office.

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Disability Awareness Days

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|-----------------|--|---------------------------|
| Tues. 23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kick-off EMU Breezeway Music by "Bluejour" | 11:30a.m.-1:30p.m. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Come Laugh With Us - Free comedy show | 8-9:30p.m. |
| Wed. 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EMU Ballroom Dynamic Duo Bjo Ashwill & Gweneth van Frank Chris Fonseca Real-time captioning & sign-language interpreter provided For other accommodations please contact Hilary Gerdes no later than April 22 @ 346-3211 | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Info & Technology Fair - Both @ EMU Fir Room | 10a.m.-2p.m. |
| Thur. 25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Issues & Images" - A forum focusing on the media & disabilities (How people with disabilities are portrayed in the media) Sign-language interpreter provided | 3:30-5:30p.m. |

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