

TCC THEATRE | 'THE DOCTOR IN SPIE OF HIMSELF'

Molière farce is a prescription for laughs

By Eric Feber
The Virginian-Pilot

GREAT BRIDGE

This time TCC Theatre is going for laughs.

Cheap laughs.

For its 2009 fall production, which debuts Thursday, Tidewater Community College's students will present one of classic French playwright Molière's fluffier, goofier comedies in "The Doctor in Spite of Himself."

"Yes, it is 'low art', a farce," department head Edwin S. Jacob said about one of the French master's lesser plays. "There's not a serious moment in it."

Why pick this Gallic version of "hey, doc, it hurts when I do this!"?

"Coming off 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (spring TCC Theatre) and 'Macbeth' (summer Shakespeare in the Grove) we figured we needed to laugh ...," Jacob said. "And I found this wonderful new version, all done in rhyme."

The new version mentioned by Jacob is a 2008 adaptation by Chicago-based playwright Timothy Mooney.

"He bounces out the words," Jacob explained. "The dialogue's fun to say and fun to hear. It will be a challenge to the actors: The



MATTHEW GORRIS | TCC THEATRE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Kryss Wrenn, left, as Sganarelle and Amanda Gall as Martine rehearse a scene from TCC's production of French playwright Molière's "The Doctor in Spite of Himself."

dialogue should be crisp and quick, delivered in a bim-bam-boom rapid pace. This stuff is so goofy and unbelievable we can't give the audience time to think about it."

Jacob said he wanted to expose his students to classic playwrights, such as Jean Baptiste Poquelin, (stage name Molière), and all types of drama, including screwball comedy.

"It's got a country bumpkin, a greedy father, lots of zanies, a far-fetched plot, double entendres, sexual wordplay, gags, mistaken

identities, pratfalls, an ooh-lah-lah French maid, and two lovers who eventually get together in the end."

The story features a woodcutter, an ignorant peasant named Sganaralle, and his domineering wife Martine who are in a love-hate relationship, Jacob said.

The wife meets two retainers sent by their master looking for a doctor to cure his daughter's mute condition.

She tells them her hubby is a great physician who can cure all, but only if he's convinced physically. After the two slap Sganaralle around,

going?

What/who TCC Theatre presents Molière's "The Doctor in Spite of Himself," with department head Ed Jacob directing a cast of nine students. Parental discretion is advised; the play contains mature comic elements.

Where Studio Theatre at the Chesapeake campus of Tidewater Community College, 1428 Cedar Road

When 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday and 8 p.m. Nov. 11-14.

Tickets \$8 adults and \$5 students/seniors.

More info Call 822-5219

he agrees to be the doctor.

But the daughter won't speak because her rich daddy won't allow her to marry the man of her choice, a seemingly poor nebbish who poses as an apothecary.

"It's physical and fast paced with several melodramatic elements and jabs at the medical community," Jacob said.

And that's an effective prescription for laughter.

Eric Feber, 222-5203,
eric.feber@pilotonline.com