

CRITICAL PRAISE FOR *TARTUFFE*

2012 Wilde Award Winner: Best Comedy

(*Tartuffe*, Michigan Shakespeare Festival; Robert Kauzlaric, director)



“Sometimes the most biting forms of truth can be found in the heartiest of laughter. If the original actors performed *Tartuffe* with the relish and commitment that the Michigan Shakespeare Festival actors did this weekend, it is little wonder France's archbishop threatened to excommunicate any who watched it. It is, after all, a persuasive farce showing how a charlatan can wear the outer face of piety as a means for personal financial and political gain...

“Don't think, though, that you'll be attending a sermon or agitprop theater. No, Director Robert Kauzlaric plays this one straight, which is to say with all the affectations of a French farce with its over-the-top characters, quick pacing, humorous wordplay and intense physical humor. Every moment is played for laughs while always supporting the furtherance of the story...

“From the first syllable the actors speak, it is apparent that the audience is in for a wild ride... Each performer shows equal and total commitment in an impressively consistent manner throughout the four acts of this classic farce... It is a play filled with long monologues that could be dangerously dull, were it not for the expert handling of those speeches by each of the actors. They play with the language and the rhyming couplets, making all of it a sheer delight to hear... When the speeches elongate, the actors make it work through their verbal skill and physical reactions... The scenes where [Orgon] and [Cléante] argue with strained amicability become a playground of sliding couplets, swinging rhymes and a merry-go-round of moralizing banter...



“*Tartuffe* is not merely a morality play for the French of the 1600s. Four centuries have passed, but charlatans still use the name of religion to sway the uncritical devout to support contemptible actions for their personal gain. They, perhaps, would find the Michigan Shakespeare Festival farce uncomfortable. For all else, though, it is a romp that inspires belly-deep laughter at the performance of highly skilled professionals.”

-Bridgette M. Redman, *Encore Michigan*

"This year, I can honestly say it is worth the trip to Jackson to see the Michigan Shakespeare Festival... I said last year that, to be a success, the MSF needs to be more than just the best live theatre taking place in the Jackson area; it needs to be good enough for people in other parts of the state - and beyond - to want to attend. Well, based on seeing the first two productions of this summer's edition of the MSF... it now deserves the attention of that wider audience.

"With *Tartuffe*, director Robert Kauzlaric has given us an excellent production of the 17th-century playwright Moliere's delightful 1664 play about a pious hypocrite who, having wheedled his way into the good graces of a wealthy man, then seeks to seduce his benefactor's wife and steal his property."

-Robert Delaney, *Detroit New Monitor*

