

Friday, Jan 19, 2018

Did you hear? Gossip, mischief run amok in OU's production of 'The School for Scandal'

Oakland University's **School of Music, Theatre and Dance** will present *The School for Scandal*, a comedic tale of gossip, deceit, and the perils of social media, from Thursday, Feb. 1 through Sunday, Feb. 11 in the Varner Studio Theatre in Varner Hall on the OU campus.

"Set in 18th century London, *The School for Scandal* focuses on a group of slightly self-involved characters who will go to extremes to fulfill their heart's desires," said Director **David Gram**, assistant professor of theatre at Oakland University.

Based on the play by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The School for Scandal* tells the story of Sir Peter Teazle, a wealthy older man; Lady Teazle, his young wife; Joseph and Charles Surface, brothers and romantic rivals; Lady Sneerwell, a wealthy widow and malicious gossip; Sir Oliver Surface, the wealthy uncle of Joseph and Charles; Maria, Sir Peter's ward and Joseph's romantic interest; and Snake, Lady Sneerwell's servant who helps her by spreading rumors.



Mannon McIntosh (Lady Teazle) and Mark Ujkstivani (Joseph Surface)

"Gossip at that time was delivered via pamphlet, and the news quickly spread around town," Gram said. "It was their version of social media."

The trouble begins when Lady Sneerwell, who is in love with Charles Surface, spreads a rumor about Charles and Lady Teazle in an attempt to drive a wedge between him and Maria, who is also desired by Charles' brother, Joseph. The rumor spreads quickly and results in comedic mishaps as the characters try to separate truth from scandal.

"Given all the hoopla that is going on now with 'fake news,' this play represents a wonderful opportunity to explore the topic a fun way," Gram said. "It has a lot to say about how people communicate, and about how we talk about people when they aren't in the room."

According to Gram, the show will be performed in the round.

"Creating an immersive experience was very important to us," he said. "We want the audience to feel like they're part of the show. We want them to feel like they're there, watching and listening, and that they're complicit with these characters' actions."

The cast and crew have also embraced the social media aspect of the show via posts on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

"It's been a lot of fun," Gram said "Social media is such an important part of our world — our need to know other people's business, even when it gets in the way of our own lives. For this production, we've really embraced that scandalous aspect of social media."

Tickets to *The School for Scandal* are \$15 for the general public and \$8 for students, and can be purchased online at [StarTickets.com](#) without a service fee, at the Varner Box Office, or by phone at (800) 585-3737.



Mark Ujkstivani (Joseph Surface), Mannon McIntosh (Lady Teazle) and Alex Benoit (Charles) will perform "The School for Scandal" from Feb. 1 through Feb. 11 in the Varner Studio Theatre on the campus of Oakland University. (Photos courtesy JLBoone Photography)

- Thursday, Feb. 1 at 8 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 2 at 8 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 3 at 8 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 4 at 2 p.m.
- Thursday, Feb. 8 at 8 p.m.
- Friday, Feb. 9 at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 10 at 8 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 11 at 2 p.m.



*Michael Lison (Sir Peter Teazle)
and Mannon McIntosh (Lady Teazle)*