'Rivals' Called Rambunctious Good Humor

Players' Production Will Be This Weekend in Hamman Hall

By ARMSTRONG PRESCOTT
Director, "The Rivals"

Why do amateur theatrical groups, especially university amateur theatrical groups, insist on producing period pieces, Shakespearean tragedy, and antique comedy, as opposed to contemporary drama?

There probably are a number of valid reasons why they should and a number of equally valid reasons why they shouldn't persist in this.

The Rice Players have chosen to present "The Rivals" on the evenings of February 23, 24 and 25. When I was asked to direct the Players' production, I must admit I was dubious. As I dimly recollected the play from my reading, twenty odd years before, all of the reasons opposed to such a choice came to mind.

I AGREED, however, to reread the play and thus discovered that it contained perhaps the most valid reason there is for producing any play. It is full of vast rambunctious good humor from start to finish.

After twenty years of viewing realistic drama devoted to social criticism, deep psychological implications and bitter caustic humor a la John Steinbeck, Tennesse Williams, Marlon Brando and "Method a Becket," or the reverse of the coin: soap opera—"Life with Dad, Mom and Junior or Junior Miss," plus salacious little items on "John's Other Di-Wife, Sally, Trapped in the Ladies' Powder Room at the Stork Club," I was perhaps more anxious for a change than I knew.

'The Rivals,' I was happy to discover, was just the remedy needed for a theater constipated with moral blight, urban blight, and decaying magnolias.

A PERVADING sense of fun, foolishness, affection and optimism is achieved at the expense of a group of funny foolish, affectionate, and optimistic characters.

There is no one to hate, no one to laugh to scorn and no one to
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'RIVALS'—

(Continued from Page 1) cry for. You can identify yourself with every character without feeling shame or the need of a psychiatrist.

By laughing at them you can laugh at yourself and be delighted to find that it's fun.

THE CAST FOR the present production includes Madith De-Zurko as Mrs. Malaprop, Virginia Sturgis as Lydia Languish, Judy Gathers as Lucy, Sam Stewart as Bob Absolute, Roy James as Sir Lucius O'Trigger, Bill Edwards as David, Chuck Yingling as Thomas, and Steve Rogers as Sir Anthony Absolute.

Appearing with The Players for the first time are Beverly Wehking as Julia, John Bassler as Bob Acres, Clark Moore as Fag, and Dick Robson as Faulkland.

Why not drop around to Hamman Hall and see if we succeed in bringing to our small stage the essential wit and fun of Mr. Sheridan's period piece?