THE FREDERIC WOOD THEATRE PRESENTS
SEPTEMBER 29 – OCTOBER 7, 1967, AT 8:30 PM

Volpone

PRODUCTION

Production Stage Manager and Technical Director ..... MATT YOUNG
Assistant Technical Director ..... BRIAN ARNOTT
Costume Execution ..... GERALDINE RICHARDSON
Stage Carpenter ..... BRIAN BUECKERT
Lighting Execution ..... MICHAEL IRWIN
Costume Assistants ..... SHERRY DARCUS
GEORGINA DETWILLER
Properties ..... ROSEMARY VALE
Assistants to the Director ..... ISABEL SINCLAIR, MARIKO VAN CAMPEN,
ADRIENNE WINTERMANS
Sound Operation ..... HANNAH FISCHER, MARIKO VAN CAMPEN
Stage Crew ..... STUDENTS OF THEATRE 350
House Management ..... PHILIPPA STEEL
Box Office ..... MARJORIE FORDHAM
VICKI BRUNO
ISABEL SINCLAIR
Production ..... JOHN BROCKINGTON

Wig Fashioned By FIRST LADY COIFFEURS. 4554 W. 10th Ave.

ABOUT THE PLAY

"Comedy aims at representing men as worse than in actual life." Aristotle, Poetics II. 4

Volpone was written in 1606, when the prevailing style in comedy was romantic. But Ben Jonson always set his own fashions, and in doing so struck in this play the deepest and darkest note in all of Elizabethan comedy. That he did so was not only due to his temperament, which was moralistic, but to his learning, which was prodigious. Deeply read in both the classics and contemporary literature (popular and serious), Jonson drew upon both in **Volpone.** From Roman satire, for example, he takes not only particular figures and lines, but its general tone of scurrilous savagery. From contemporary sources come such delights as the mountebank scene and a whole treasure trove of topical references which, unfortunately, we cannot fully appreciate. Whatever his sources, however, Jonson transforms everything with his own unfailing genius for convincing detail and telling theatrical effect.

The Italian setting of the play is calculated. By placing the action in Venice, Jonson clearly intends to evoke the dankness and dirt, the odor and corruption of that city as an important tonal element in his satire on avarice and lust. The play takes place, that is, not on the picturesque, gondola-dotted Grand Canal, but in the mouldy palaces and sewage-filled alleys around and behind it. Such an action in such a setting places the play firmly in the tradition of satire, the bitter bastard brother of comedy.

For our production, we have taken this darker tone of satire as the keynote. We have seen the play as a black comedy — that is, one concerned more with vices than follies, more with

crimes than misdemeanors, more with the dark lusts of human nature than with its charming eccentricities. To the objection that this view simplifies or vilifies human nature, one can only answer that romantic comedy does the same in its way — though with fewer objections generally being heard. If the play seems less funny or pleasant in this sombre light, it is because this particular truth is meant to hurt, perhaps even more when found in comedy. Where there is pain, laughter is always hollow.

This production is also experimental in that we are using some new materials and techniques to try to communicate not the literal but the essential experience of **Volpone.** In all humility, we feel that Ben Jonson, one of the great experimenters of his age, would not disapprove of the attempt. If the play seems less conventionally a Great Play when viewed thus, it is not merely because breadth has been sacrificed to sharpness, but because we who have produced it and you who are watching it have lost some of the vision Jonson and his age possessed, whatever we may have gained in its place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Frederic Wood Theatre wishes to express its appreciation to the many friends of theatre at the University who have generously assisted in the presentation of "Volpone"

The Vancouver Sun, The Vancouver Province, Weekly Newspapers, CBC, CHQM, The Ubyssey, The University Departments of Extension, Purchasing, Physical Plant, Traffic and the University Information Office.

COMING EVENTS

LITTLE MALCOLM AND HIS FIGHT AGAINST THE EUNUCHS
by David Halliwell
Directed by Kenneth Livingstone
in the Frederic Wood STUDIO, October 12–21

Moyra K. Mulholland will give a Lecture Demonstration of Noh: Classical Japanese Drama —October 19 & 20 —12:30 pm

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November 17–25
MEASURE FOR MEASURE by Wm. Shakespeare
Directed by John Brockington