

## **"The Devil's Disciple" will be performed**

**April 13, 1976**

"The Devil's Disciple," George Bernard Shaw's sardonic view of the outcome of the American Revolution, will open at 8 p.m. Friday, April 23, in the UCSD Theatre at the University of California, San Diego.

According to the play's director, Eric Christmas, a noted actor and professor of drama at UC San Diego, Shaw saw the outcome of the revolution more as the result of British stupidity than of American fervor. The play is also an expression of Shaw's outrage at the mediocrity of commercial theater in the late 19th century, Christmas says.

Shaw dubbed the play a melodrama, although he held a very low opinion of that genre. "Disciple" takes the theatrical style for a ride, says Christmas, and he and his actors are enjoying every bumpy moment of it.

"His criticism is absolutely true to our day," Christmas emphasizes. "There are many slick theaters with lots of money appealing to a privileged minority. They are theaters turning out work that doesn't have much heart or soul, in my opinion."

"The Devil's Disciple" takes place in 1777. In his introduction, Shaw said it was the year in which the passions roused by the breaking off of the American colonies from England, more by their own weight than by their own will, boiled up to a shooting point.

"The play tells of young Dick Dudgeon who flouts the fearful Presbyterian faith of his fellow New Englanders and proudly declares himself liege to the devil. Dudgeon calls Satan his "natural master and captain and friend" and says, "I saw that he was in the right and that the world cringed to his conqueror only through fear."

Despite this opinion of rectitude, Dudgeon nearly becomes a martyr. He is mistaken for a rebel minister who apparently takes advantage of the error to escape, leaving Dudgeon to be executed.

"We're having a thrilling last-minute rescue of the hero," Christmas promises. "We don't quite know how we're going to do it yet. But we're hoping to get cheers from the audience."

"The Devil's Disciple" will also be performed April 24-25 and 27-30 and May 1-2. Tickets are \$3 for the general public and \$1.50 for all students. For information and reservations, telephone the UC San Diego drama department at 452-3791, noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

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