

SCAPIN

Comedy by Bill Irwin and Mark O'Donnell, adapted from Moliere

Directed by Jennifer Kingry

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Show dates: October 4-7 and 11-14, 2018

6-9 males, 3-6 females

OCTAVE (Argante's son, in love with Hyacinth) }
LEANDER (Geronte's son, in love with Zerbinette) } Late teens thru 20's

“Rich Young Men Hopelessly in Love”. Neither one of these boys is very bright; they really can't focus on anything but their own concerns and the respective Woman of His Dreams. Of the two, Leander is more rash and hotheaded, while Octave is more nervous and gullible.

ARGANTE (father of Octave) }
GERONTE (father of Leander) } “Fatherly” age (must look older than their sons)

Two stingy men who hate to part with money. Both are prone to raging and bullying and have a hint of the lecher in them. Note: Geronte particularly has some very physical scenes, wrestling with Scapin, hiding in a large canvas sack which is beaten with “sticks”.

HYACINTH (beloved of Octave) }
ZERBINETTE (beloved of Leander) } Late teens through 20's, corresponding to boyfriends above.

Hyacinth and her nurse were shipwrecked before meeting Octave; she's very emotional and prone to bursting into tears easily. Zerbinette has been “held by gypsies” for years and is tougher, more streetwise, prone to bursting into laughter. Both roles are small but colorful.

NERINE—Hyacinth's nurse. A savvy woman, she thinks all these people are fools. 25-45?

SCAPIN – Leander/Geronte's servant. Wily, imaginative, resourceful. The kind of guy who'll do anything, say anything to get out of a tight spot, all the better if he can blame someone else (see Sylvestre, below). Sometimes Scapin is too clever by half and his schemes backfire on him. Calls for great comic timing and physicality. Age – 25-45?

SYLVESTRE – Octave/Argante's servant. Not as bright as Scapin and rather afraid of his master. Sylvester is dubious of Scapin's schemes, but is constantly sucked into them anyway. Scapin easily manipulates him with flattery. This role also calls for great comic timing and physicality; does some impressions. Any age.

GEORGE or GEORGETTE – an onstage keyboard player (organ or piano) who provides musical accompaniment, interacts with cast. No lines. Any age.

TWO MESSENGERS/GENDARMES/PORTERS – Multi-purpose characters who function in several scenes in costume and interact with the cast. No spoken lines. Any age.

The Plot: (such as it is) Signor Argante and Signor Geronte are two miserly men who are neighbors. Argante's son is Octave; Geronte's son is Leander. While the fathers are away arranging marriages for their sons, both young men have become involved with "unsuitable" young women – Octave has married the penniless Hyacinth and Leander is deeply in love with Zerbinette, an equally penniless young woman who is "being held by gypsies." Now the two fathers have returned and the sons implore Geronte's servant Scapin, known for his cleverness, to help win the day for True Love. Scapin dives into the opportunity, both to help the young couples and to get some revenge on the masters, not to mention generally wreak havoc.

Director's note: Ages given for characters are wildly approximate.

Moliere was a writer/actor/director of satirical comedies in 17th century France. "Scapin" (it rhymes with "Japan") is not one of his usual satires, written in rhymed couplets. Rather, it is written in the style of Italian commedia d'ell arte, which is broad, slapsticky and extremely physical. Moliere wrote it to compete with Italian commedia troupes then visiting Paris who were drawing away his audience.

This production will be colorful and physical, as much circus as it is theater, a mashup of The Three Stooges, Marx Brothers and Road Runner. The show is almost vaudevillian. It ends with a prolonged chase sequence involving every one of the players. I need actors who can play fast, funny and physical – this is NOT theater for the timid!