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### The Medicine Show or How to Succeed in Medicine without Really Trying

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Koste, Virginia Glasgow. *The Medicine Show or How to Succeed in Medicine without Really Trying*. Anchorage Press, Inc. \$20.00 per performance. 27 pp.

Reviewer: Mindy Nelsen

Reading Level: primary, intermediate

Rating: dependable

Genre: Folklore; Plays; Humorous Plays; Fantasy Plays

Subject: Drama--Reviews; Molière, 1622-1673 --Adaptations--Juvenile drama; Classical comedy--Juvenile drama; Family--Juvenile drama;

Theme: Humor can be found in every situation and sometimes sheer will and wit can beat out knowledge and hard work.

Production Requirements: Simplistic, few props, blocks, etc. Perfect for a traveling show.

Acts: 1

Run Time: 25-30 min

Characters: 8

Cast: 5 men, 3 women, though 2 of the men's parts can be played by women.

Time Period: Present day, then a long time ago.

This play is a self-proclaimed American version of Molière's "Le Médecin Malgrè Lui." The actors begin as themselves, introducing the play and getting ready for the show in front of the audience. Then, they become the characters of the woodcutter Sgnarelle and his wife Martine, who are in a fight because the lazy husband won't shape up. Martine decides to play a little joke on Sgnarelle and tells two other characters (Lucas and Jacqueline) who are in desperate need of a doctor for their employer's (Geronte) daughter (Lucinda), that Sgnarelle is a great physician. They semi-forcefully convince Sgnarelle to come along although he knows nothing about medicine. Lucinda, the sick daughter is betrothed to someone she doesn't want to marry. She is in love with Leandre. In response to this betrothal she suddenly "loses her ability to speak." Her father wants her to marry a wealthy young man and desperately needs the cure for her inability to speak so that the marriage will take place. Sgnarelle is commissioned to heal her and with a mumble-jumble bit of Latin, he convinces all the characters that he is a great doctor and in the meantime, arranges for the Leandre and Lucinda to run away together and marry secretly. In the end, the truth is discovered and everyone is happy. All except for Martine. Despite her wishes, her husband doesn't learn that hard work is essential; after all, he became a doctor without really trying.

The characters are all lighthearted and likeable. Their dialogue is lively with the exception of the first argument between Martine and Sgnarelle, which seems static and forced. The humorous elements of the dialogue helps the play to move along comfortably. Koste has been able to capture the of Molière's farce, at the same time she attempts to teach a lesson, thus detaching her work from that of Molière's. This effort to teach a lesson seems incongruent with the play.

This play is produced as an introduction into the world of Molière and French theatre. The script includes much of his original phraseology and Koste has included additional information for the cast and director about the background of Molière's work and his life. This is done in an effort to spread appreciation for the work of this playwright and a greater understanding of his work. This attempt is not noticed in the play itself, but rather with the additions at the end of the book. It would make a good study of the French playwright's style, but fails to carry its intentions over into the actual production. Simplistic set delivery makes it a nice show for traveling casts and productions.