

Summary of Performance Option in Lieu of Thesis
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THE APPEARANCE OF EASE AND EFFORTLESSNESS IN THE UNIQUE WORLD OF
RESTORATION COMEDY: “HE WHO WINS WITH THE LEAST EFFORT--WINS”

By

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A Restoration comedy of manners performance presents many challenges to the contemporary actor and audience. This unique genre was created for a rarefied English audience, an aristocratic class who fully expected to see themselves wittily lampooned upon the stage. Therefore, much of the humor and wit that dominates Restoration comedies is by design an in-joke for the in-crowd. In addition to making the story and humor accessible to a modern day audience, the actor must negotiate the performance demands intrinsic to the genre. An effortless facility with heightened language, movement upon the stage, lavish costuming, and calculated presentation of self must be mastered by the actor to accomplish the essential qualities of a Restoration performance.

This report documents an actor’s journey while creating the role of Dorimant, the libertine hero, in the University of Florida’s production of The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter. This rarely produced Restoration comedy of manners by George Etherege was chosen to provide student actors and designers with an opportunity to tackle one of theatre’s most challenging genres.