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Devil's discipline Thursday

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What in the devil does Shaw mean by the devil?

The clever and amusing answer will emerge as the Montana Repertory Theater presents Bernard Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple" beginning Thursday night and playing through Saturday at 8:15 p.m. in the University Theater on the University of Montana campus.

The entire repertory company has been examining the Shaw comedy under the direction of Alan Cook to find what elements of the famed play about the American Revolution prompted Shaw to title it "The Devil's Disciple." Cook is associate director of the MRT and associate professor and playwright in residence with the UM drama department.

Characters are brought into exciting comedy conflict against the turbulent panorama of the American Revolution and the sweep of the British Army threatens the safety of the colonists.

Did Shaw mean to find devilish humor in the way married couples misunderstand each other or does the play diabolically suggest that America won her independence through misfire of justice and buffoonery of her officers?

The spectacle and adventure of the age has been recreated in the stage settings of Richard H. James, designer for the MRT, to suggest the raw vigor of a new nation. Careful reconstruction of Early American antique furniture and household goods has been underway with painstaking accuracy.

Miss Beverly Jane Thomas, costume designer for the repertory company, has been faced with outfitting an army as well as designing the feminine fashions of the period.

Robert Cocetti will serve as technical director.

Director Cook pointed out that all the preparation for the play is being done to give the audience what Nobel Prize Winner Shaw wished: "a devilishly good time."