

LAW WEEKLY

The Malcontent

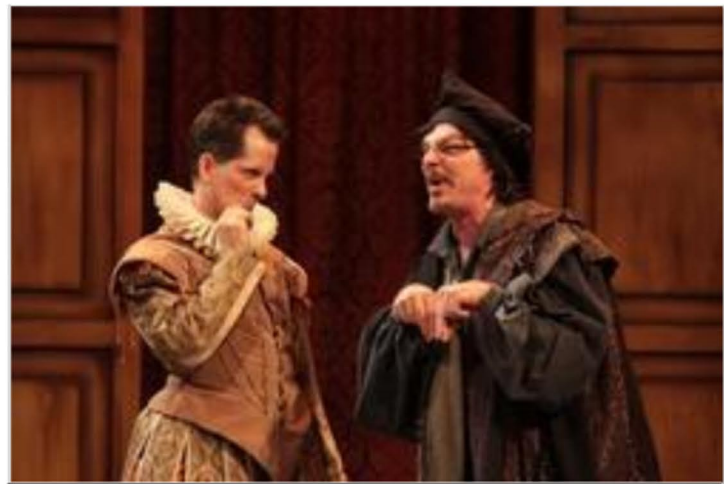
By **Deborah Klugman** *Thursday, May 12 2011*

GO!

Malevole (Bo Foxworth), the scruffy misanthrope at the nub of John Marston's 17th-century satire, is the proud possessor of a scathing tongue. A frequenter of aristocratic circles, he's tolerated by the reigning Duke of Genoa, Pietro (Mark Doerr), for his bawdy wit and for the lacerating barbs that furnish welcome relief from the dull obsequiousness of the court.

Not the plebeian jester he strives to appear, Malevole is really

a duke — in fact, he is the Duke of Genoa, Altofronto, the city's legitimate regent before being maneuvered from office by a lecherous rascal named Mendoza (Ramón DeOcampo). Labeled a "tragicomedy" by scholars, the play is an outraged ethicist's critique of corruption and deceit (the tragedy lies in the world's moral morass, I guess, since in the story itself no one actually dies or suffers gruesomely). The plot, with its slapdash details, spins out in intricate metaphor-studded syntax whose handling requires enormous skill. Adapted from the original and directed by Elizabeth Swain, this spirited production does not disappoint. While Foxworth's splenetic cynic is all fire and spit, it is DeOcampo as the treacherous toadying villain — utterly contemporary in his sociopathic me-ism — who drives the comedy. In addition to Doerr's artfully finessed Pietro, the accomplished ensemble includes Lynn Milgrim as an unprincipled procuress and John Achorn as a clueless courtier prepared to pimp his wife and daughter-in-law. Designer Tom Buderwitz's handsome set replicates the Blackfriars Theater in which the play first premiered, while A. Jeffrey Schoenberg's costumes add dashing flavor to the farce. (Note: The show is double-cast.) Antaeus Company at Deaf West Theater, 5112 Lankershim Blvd., N. Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m., Sun., 2:30 p.m., thru June 19. (818) 506-1983, antaeus.org.



Thursdays-Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2:30 p.m. Starts: May 5. Continues through June 19, 2011