

Matchbox players bring quality theater to Bruno's Café

Kristi McKim
features editor

At 8 P.M., as Tuesday drew to a close, the Matchbox Players presented a one-act play about, appropriately, "the end of the day." David Mamet's *The Blue Hour: City Sketches*, the first of the semester's "one acts," was performed Tuesday, October 21 in Bruno's Cafe. The play consists of three unrelated scenes, their only connection being that they occur during the same period of time and

they share a common theme. The importance of empathy and patience are hailed in this comedy which, underneath its cuteness and humor, comments on character. Through the mirror of these un-named, stock characters of the play, the audience can glimpse their own frustrations, and ideally, reconsider their own treatment of their fellow members of society.

Ray Righi's character, clad in a sleek business suit and sunglasses,

opened the performance by contextualizing the scenes; he announced that the action would occur in that "blue hour" of time at the end of a work day. The play successfully depicted people's intolerance and indifference to their fellow members of society, as the characters of a frazzled saleswoman (played by Meredith Lynch), sophisticated business man (played by Ray Righi), and self-centered college student (played by Bond Davis) were

presented as frustrated and annoyed with others.

In the first scene, which took place in a ritzy dress shop, Lynch's saleswoman anxiously awaited the completion of her work day, only to be bothered with the sudden entrance of the neurotic shopper (played by Stephanie Tolchin) who "wants, wants" everything in the store, only to purchase finally a mere hat.

Bond Davis' other character (he and Righi both play two roles), the frumpled alcoholic, shared a bus seat with Righi's businessman, who wanted no part of the slurred, annoying small talk which the drunken man attempted to share.

In the final scene, which occurred in a train station, Joe Getway played a curious, desperate homeless man, who eagerly prodded Davis' college student for conversation and spare change. The homeless man repeatedly asked the college student to "lend me your car;" thus reiterating the need for communication and understanding among humanity.

The acting was particularly remarkable, as the cast had the difficult task of "rounding" and developing these rather stereotypically flat characters. Tolchin acted well as the whiny, spoiled young woman; her facial expressions and voice contrasted well with Lynch's coolly frustrated sales clerk. Righi's skills as the smooth-talking, slick narrator, and the collected, sophisticated businessman seemed natural and inherent. Davis performed impressively, as he faced the challenge of portraying two nearly opposite characters: his rambling

alcoholic character was quite convincing, as was his cocky, indifferent college student. Davis' booze-guzzling character drew laughter from the audience, as he realistically portrayed the humorous and pathetic sloppiness of being drunk. Getway's acting was also comparably fine, as his character's combined homeless state and childish curiosity effectively drew the sympathy of the audience.

Making her directorial debut, Matchbox Players President Kim McIlwain successfully managed to orchestrate the production and performance of this play. McIlwain also worked as stage manager, assisted by Nikki Buterbaugh, who ran the sound (a catchy mix of groovy-jazzy-soulful-swing) and Amanda Pieper, who controlled the lights.

McIlwain plans to produce these one-act plays on a monthly basis; she hopes that, eventually, they can occur weekly: "the more people who are interested, the more often this can happen." She urges any interested student to become involved with the program, whether as a director, actor, or behind-the-scenes crew. The next one-act play, *The Other 5 Percent*, written by Bryan Goluff and directed by Kim McIlwain, is tentatively scheduled for performance December 9 in Bruno's Cafe.

Regardless of the frequency of these performances, there is no excuse for these entertaining, thought-provoking productions to not have a full audience—the admission is absolutely free—quite reasonable for an evening of quality theater entertainment!



"A truly delightful cast," says Director Tony Elliot of the Penn State-Behrend students who appear in *Only You*, the Studio Theatre's Fall production. The cast includes (clockwise from lower left) Dave Reynolds, Michael Lechner, Amanda Pieper, Bond Davis, Jennifer Quadri, and Joe Getway. Tickets will be available for purchase or reservation on Monday, October 27. Evening performance dates are November 7, 8, 12, 13, 14 and 15 at 8 P.M.; Matinees will be performed November 9 and 16 at 2:30 P.M. Tickets cost \$3 for students, \$5 for adults. A free student preview of *Only You* will be performed Thursday, November 6. For reservations or more information, call 898-6016.

Film review: *Playing God*

by Jon Stubbs
staff writer

Director Andy Wilson does what he can with the poorly written script to this past week's release, *Playing God*. One has to admit, at first it sounds like an intriguing idea: a doctor loses his license to practice because of his narcotics addiction and becomes a physician for a felon.

David Duchovny stars as Dr. Eugene Sands, who is lured in by the stylish gangster Raymond Blossom

Raymond Blossom is a complete ripoff of Nicolas Cage's character in the much more entertaining film, *Face/Off*

(Timothy Hutton) to remove bullets from his injured hitmen and thugs. Sands is not convinced that he has the heart of a criminal, but he keeps working for Blossom because of the \$10,000 per-house-call salary and free drugs. Sands also seems to be interested in Blossom's beautiful girlfriend, Claire (Angelina Jolie).

Sands becomes further confused when he receives a proposition from the FBI to help apprehend Blossom. This conflict provides the greatest depth of plot for the movie.

Raymond Blossom is a complete ripoff of Nicolas Cage's character in the much more entertaining film, *Face/Off*. Blossom's Russian partners in crime exhibit horrible fake accents as characters with less than original names such as "Vladimir" or "Dimitri." Director of photography Anthony B. Richmond makes an honest attempt to play with the presentation with blurred images (perhaps symbolizing Sands' frequent intoxication) and creative wipes and dissolves, but they seem inconsistent and really don't contribute to the film.

Playing God has neither plot development or originality. The casting department did their job at least; David Duchovny, Timothy Hutton and Angelina Jolie all give an adequate performance. ★★ 1/2

Internationally acclaimed film screened at Behrend

by Tammy Freeman
staff writer

"It was fascinating to see diversity alive in another country," Gretchen Kline, 07 Psychology, commented on *Butterflies on the Scaffold*, an award-winning documentary presented last night in the Reed Lecture Hall. Margaret Gilpin, co-director of the movie, led a discussion of her work about female impersonators in Cuba, after the movie was shown.

The film, which won the Silver Plaque award at the Chicago International Film Festival, was a part of the feminist speaker series at Behrend. It was sponsored by The Vice Provost's Commission on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equity and by Trigon. The documentary on Cuba details how female impersonators have gained their neighbors' respect through entertaining at local cabarets. These entertainers provided local entertainment for about 5 pesos which is equivalent to 20 American cents.

Butterflies On The Scaffold has shown in many cities including New York and Toronto.

The documentary was dedicated to the community of Havana which gave their continuous support to performers. One native says in the film that the transvestites give "this neighborhood a new level, a new character." Another man simply said "to each his own." As for the performers themselves, during the day they were students, bakers and cooks — it was only at night when they transformed into their personalities. The cabaret was in no way similar to a American night club or bar; children and adults alike came out to see the men perform. One man said "I don't think it damages society."

Christopher Caraballo, 01 Agricultural Science, emphasized the necessity of the performance's message, saying, "I think it's important for the faculty and student community members to leave with

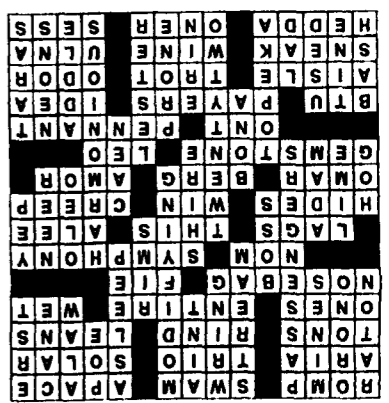


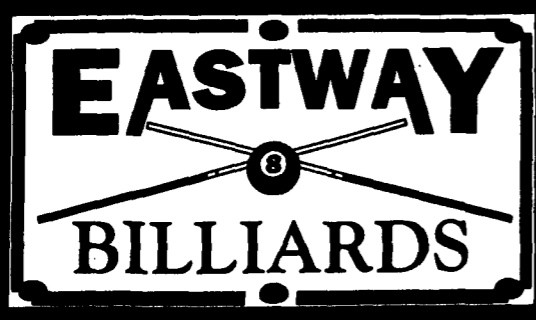
Director Margaret Gilpin and Dr. John Champagne introduce the film *Butterflies on the Scaffold* photo by Jessica Trzeciakowski

knowledge that this is a community for who they are not what they are. As they accepted these people, the entire community benefitted from it. They began to flourish because of the fact that they are not against

themselves, they are united people." In America today, there are many stereotypes of people who are considered misfits of society, inevitably not everyone is comfortable with the idea that men dress up like

women. But, as one man interviewed in *Butterflies On The Scaffold* reassures us "at the bottom of the grave we are all dressed up in the same clothes."





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