

# Only You: Purely Entertaining

by Kristi McKim  
features editor

Just how do these "natural and unnatural disasters of relationships...just happen?" ask the characters of *Only You*, which opens in the Studio Theatre this weekend. A refreshing, entertaining alternative to more serious drama, this contemporary comedy provides a light, humorous look at the otherwise "heavy" issues of love, friendship and intimacy. The cast and crew of this Behrend production do a superb job of conveying the often-humorous, somewhat-crazed, always-complex tendencies of young adulthood.

Whether sipping cappuccino at the local coffee shop or downing shots of scotch at Eddie's apartment; shoo-hop dancing to oldies or masquerading as superheroes; pining for Prince Charming or begging for the return of one's ex, the talented characters of the play work together to depict hysterical, witty slices of young adult life.

The acting is exceptional, as each character seems delightfully real and relatable. The "Big Voice," David Reynolds, wisely wields his powers of omniscience to these perplexed twenty-somethings; his confident, Brooklyn-accented voice effectively conveys his street-wise advice.

Jennifer Quadri, "Miriam," successfully depicts the complexities of a woman stricken with the Prince

Charming Complex; her tense, nervous expressions contrast her dreamy conscience. Quadri smartly, carefully shows the conflicts that arise when one "reads too many fairy tales" and is "condemned to spend a lifetime searching for the perfect man."

Bond Davis charismatically portrays "Leo," a man governed by the extremes of emotion, whether it be rapture or distress. His compulsions drive him, as he is ruled entirely by his heart. Davis dynamically captures the essence of this character, as

—blamed on his "eight-and-a-half months of celibacy"—and frustrated with his friends' "indifference" toward his vulnerable self. Getway vividly communicates the tender, warm-heartedness of his character, who wants nothing more than the love of a woman, a shared beer with his buddies, and the closeness of friends.

Mike Lechner provides a primo performance as the suavely-sophisticated "Eddie"—the man to whom all others come for stability, advice and beer. Always the host of the party, "Eddie" knows the ins and outs of relationships, though he remains vehemently commitment-shy in matters of his own heart. Lechner's talents for rhetorical expression shine in moments of truth with fellow troubled friends.

While the cast should be hailed for their individual character portrayals, they also work extremely well together; their overall cohesiveness allows for natural dialogue and believable narrative. Director Tony Elliot attests to the strength of cast and crew, as "they are extremely experienced. It's a pleasure to have experience and continuity in the program because it makes communication much easier."

Stage Manager Jessica Milano and Assistant Stage Manager Nicki Buterbaugh contribute to this unity of cast and crew. The action of the play shifts quickly between a quaint coffee shop and the

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Leo's charm, animation, and fanaticism serve to color his relations with others. He also demonstrates his rather entertaining talents of lip-synching in one of the play's most comedically-strong scenes.

Amanda Pieper provides a charming portrayal of the somewhat-disillusioned, naively innocent "Heather." Pieper's facial expressions and bubbly voice add a delightful dimension to this character who claims to be "deep down, just a little girl in a party dress." Pieper gives a refreshingly cute spirit to this easily amused, thoroughly cheery character.

Joe Getway generates an entertaining, convincing portrayal of "Bo," a sensitive man with prostate problems



Ready for opening night: (clockwise from left) Dave Reynolds, Joe Getway, Amanda Pieper, Mike Lechner, Bond Davis, and Jennifer Quadri.

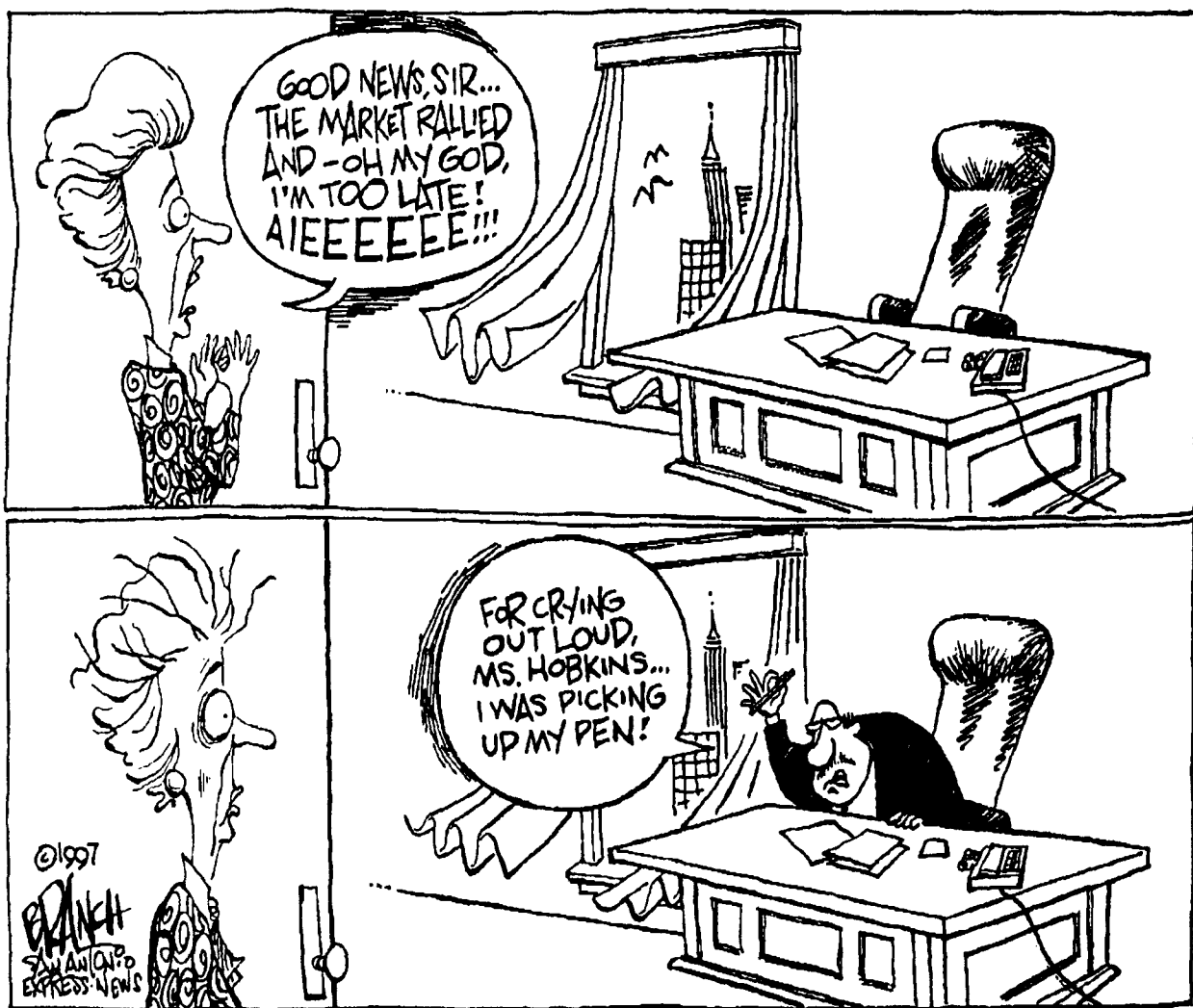
character's individual apartments, via the many doors leading off stage. This fast-paced, efficient style allows the nearly-two-hour performance literally to speed by; the ever-present humor and relatable themes contribute to and further the play's unity and entertainment value.

The set and technical aspects, designed and directed by T.J. Laffan and controlled by Adam Gaines and Mike Kristufek, are bright, creative, and

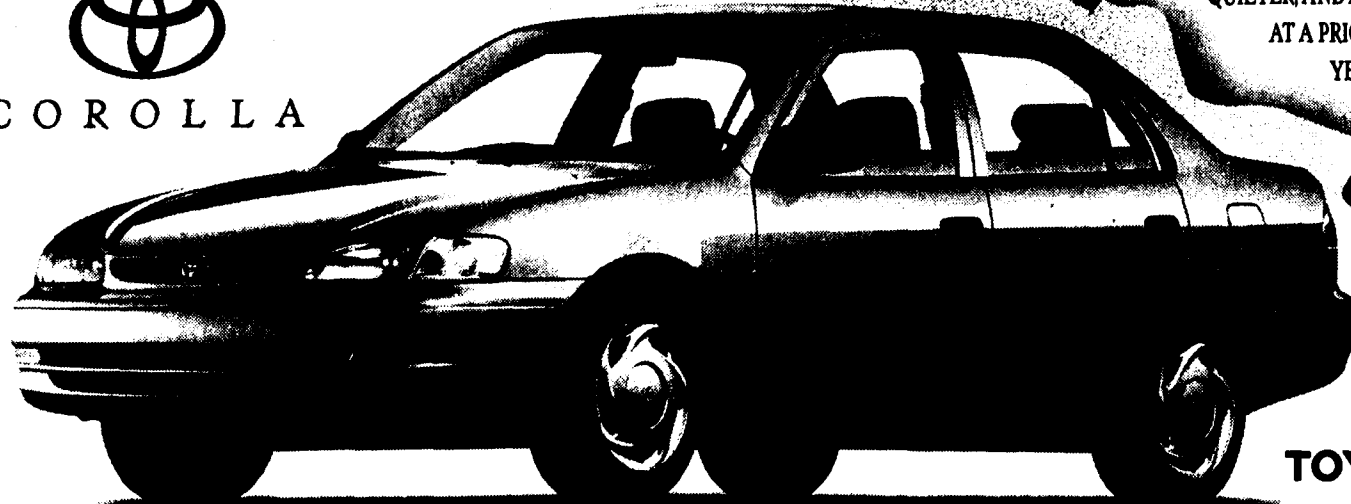
appropriate to this comedy. Costume director Kim McIlwain coordinates the outfits which contribute to each character's development.

As Elliot describes, the cast and crew have had "a wonderful time rehearsing; it's been a real blast." Guaranteed, all who attend this contemporary comedy will share in this energetic intensity; surely, the audience will enjoy watching this performance as much as the cast and crew enjoy

performing. A free student preview of *Only You* will be presented this evening at 8 p.m. in the Studio Theatre. Tickets are available for all performances, including opening night, Friday, November 7. Timothy Mason's *Only You* will be performed 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. For reservations or more information, call 898-6016.



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