

Auditions planned, preparations made for "The Pirates of Penzance" spring musical

by Kristi McKim
features editor

For those students, faculty, and community members who have been anxiously anticipating Behrend's production of a musical, the wait is now over. This spring, with the upcoming "Pirates of Penzance," Behrend will produce its first musical in over ten years. For those who are interested in becoming a part of this delightful endeavor, auditions will be held in upcoming weeks.

Directed by Tony Elliot, this Gilbert and Sullivan comedic masterpiece promises to be an extremely interesting, thoroughly challenging piece for the Behrend community to perform. There has been a great demand for a musical production here at Behrend, and plans for this have been developing since last year.

Elliot chose this particular musical because "The Pirates of Penzance" is very popular and at the same time, very challenging." Instead of spotlighting only a few outstanding stars,

this musical has, says Elliot, a "nice feeling of ensemble."

Extensive measures and plans are being taken to ensure that this production is nothing less than top-notch. A musical director and choreographer, with professional experience, are being brought in from the community to strengthen the many elements of musical production; and the Academy Theatre of Meadville has generously offered to lend all necessary costumes for the performance.

The cast has yet to be selected, and auditions are open to everyone of the Behrend community: faculty, staff and students. There are openings for fifteen men (predominantly roles of policeman and/or pirates) and ten women.

While the main characters for women are Mabel (a young fair maiden) and Ruth (a nursemaid to Frederic), the lead roles for men are those of the Major-General (overprotective father of many daughters), the Pirate King (leader of all pirates),

and Frederic (young pirate apprentice). All roles, whether lead or supporting characters, include a considerable amount of stage time.

Elliot emphasizes the need for student/faculty/staff involvement; he hopes for a strong turnout for auditions: "we need to see a lot of people... it is our job to make it work."

Anyone interested in auditioning should sign up on Mr. Elliot's door for an audition time; a two-minute song, which shows range and character should be prepared in advance. A piano player will be available to accompany the vocal portion of audition (sheet music should be provided by those auditioning); scripts are available in Mr. Elliot's office for reading prior to auditions.

Anyone who would like to audition but does not have music or a scheduled appointment time should come to the Studio Theatre at the end of auditions (around 9 p.m.) and some piece of music will be provided for them. Monday, January 26 and

Tuesday, January 27, auditions will be held at 6 p.m. in the Studio Theatre. Judges will stay as long as necessary to hear all interested persons.

For those who would like to be involved, but are more inclined to work behind the stage, Elliot is also looking for stage managers and assistants for all elements of production. Interested individuals, or anyone with questions, should contact Mr. Elliot in #145 Academic or at 898-6279.

Ultimately, "Pirates of Penzance" is an extremely silly, completely fun show which is quite popular with audiences. Set in England during the mid to late nineteenth century, the action of the play is almost cartoonish in its farcical, hysterically entertaining themes and dialogue. Whether as a part of the cast, a stage assistant, or an audience member, those musical-lovers of the Behrend and greater Erie community will be greatly anticipating the "Pirates of Penzance" performances, scheduled for March 26, 27, 28, and 29.

Good Will Hunting a worthwhile film

by Kristi McKim
features editor

Good Will Hunting, directed by Gus Van Sant, proves to be a worthwhile film about the value and spirit of giftedness. The fine directing, quality acting, and realistic, natural writing work together to form a lovely piece of art.

Often, in films such as this, where the central subject is one character's self-discovery, directors and scriptwriters tend to employ traditional, expected "coming-of-age" methods to convey the thematic rite of passage.

In this case, however, *Good Will Hunting* holds all of the emotional impact which a movie such as this should contain; yet it (thankfully) refrains from falling into the cliched, over-used expectations for movies such as this.

Impressively, the script was written by co-stars Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, real-life childhood friends. Their ear for natural, believable dialogue shines through as their characters (best friends in the movie, also) engage in purely honest, extremely funny, often-raunchy conversations. *Good Will Hunting's* script is incredibly fresh.

Matt Damon acts perfectly as Will Hunting, a janitor at MIT who possesses tremendous inherent intellectual talents; Hunting's delinquent-lifestyle and mischievous behavior inhibit his own realization of his potential. Damon superbly injects his character with a true sense of wonder and charm.

Hunting's circle of friends, who

frequent Boston's bars, portray the genuine familial closeness which bonds this bunch of young friends; together they add a further dimension of tender, light-hearted warmth to the film.

Much like his role of Mr. Keating in *Dead Poets Society*, Williams is natural as the wise inspirational psychologist, who offers sound advice and insight to the curiously-energetic, problematized Hunting. Williams acts wonderfully in this role of the mentor who encourages a sincere appreciation of all aspects of life, beyond merely the intellectual.

In a supporting role as Skyla, the fun-loving, warm-hearted med student from Harvard, Minnie Driver also presents a genuinely admirable, truly believable character.

The soft, folksy music with appropriate lyrics contributes significantly to the film's overall impact, as do the great shots of the Bostonian landscape.

This movie's only flaw, and small at that, is the slightly-less-than-perfect photography. Often, the scene or shot would be cluttered in a way that detracted from the film's beauty; and, though his few shots of the landscape were appreciated, Van Sant should have made more use of the contexts which the bustling small suburbs, the crisp natural setting, and the classical university landscape which Boston could provide.

But, for its meaningful themes, light-hearted humor, refreshingly natural dialogue, and superb characters, *Good Will Hunting* is one you don't want to miss.

★ ★ ★

Acting and writing truly As Good As It Gets in Brooks' film

by Kristi McKim
features editor

James Brooks' *As Good As It Gets* provides a thoroughly entertaining portrait of the universal problems which afflict nearly everyone at some point of his/her life.

Sort of a quirky take on the traditional romantic comedy, this film offers intelligent and funny dialogue—quite a rare combination to find in these days, where every film seems either to consist of purely shallow, no-brain conversation, or of heavy, poignant rhetoric.

Brooks' well-written script allows for the simultaneous presence of smart conversation and natural, "lighthearted" witticism.

A great script can't carry a movie in itself, though—and Helen Hunt, Jack Nicholson, and Greg Kinnear wonderfully bring Brooks' quality dialogue to life, as they so perfectly portray these well-written, carefully-created characters.

Jack Nicholson naturally plays the obsessive-compulsive romance novelist Melvin Udall, an "absolute horror of a human being" with surprisingly quite a "soft underbelly." Nicholson quite vividly brings a cer-

tain "realness" to Udall's character, as he evokes both an affection and loathing from his fellow characters (and from the audience as well).

As Carol Connelly, Helen Hunt beautifully demonstrates her broad capabilities as an actress. Much like her *Mad About You* character, Hunt's likability lies in her charm and cuteness. But, beyond the boundaries of the small screen, Hunt injects her character with a greater depth, which partly can be credited to Brooks' writing, but mainly stems from Hunt's eloquent portrayal of Carol Connelly.

Though Connelly's uneducated, paranoid character seems hard to be-

lieve, considering that Hunt's smartness and perceptibility are so undisguisable, Hunt nonetheless grants her character a refreshingly honest likability. Hunt's grace and eloquence pervade the typical role of frazzled waitress, concerned mother, and lonely woman—and provide even more depth to this well-constructed character.

Greg Kinnear is fabulous as Simon, the struggling artist who has enough problems to deal with, let alone neighbor Udall's homophobia. Though this character is Brook's most poorly written, Kinnear overcomes this shallow writing to provide a genuinely likable character with whom Udall and Connelly, as well as the audience, can empathize.

Although his role is rather minor, Cuba Gooding, Jr., wonderfully plays Frank, Simon's partner and art dealer; the scenes with Gooding are some of the film's most humorous.

And Simon's adorable little dog, Verdell, cannot go unmentioned, as his importance as a character in this film is undeniable.

As with most movies with many layers of plot and meaning, complex stories, and round characters, this film consists of moments of mediocrity followed by scenes of smart humor or sincere poignancy. At times, the movie seemed to drag—but before you can check the time or drift into sleep, a one-liner grabs your attention and encourages you to keep watching.

If you're looking for a light-hearted, often hysterical, depiction of the seriousness of life, then this movie is a definite must-see; there is something for everyone here. As

a film about the ins-and-outs of relationships, the aloneness and loneliness of being single, and restorative powers of generosity and love, everyone can, on some level, identify with one or more of the situations being presented.

As Kinnear's character states and the film proves, "if you look at someone long enough, you discover their humanity." And the film's portrayals of such discoveries provides for an interesting and delightful two-and-a-half hours of entertainment.

For its realistic depiction of the complexities of relationships, and for the witty, funny and intelligent dialogue within those relationships, this film is truly *As Good As It Gets*.

★ ★ ★

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14			15						16			
17			18						19			
20							21		22			
23				24	25	26		27				
			28					29		30	31	32
33	34	35		36				37		38		
39				40				41	42		43	
44			45			46					47	
48				49	50		51				52	
			53				54			55	56	57
58	59	60				61			62			
63				64		65	66	67				
68				69						70		
71				72							73	

© 1997 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Massachusetts cape
 - 4 Indian guitars
 - 10 Landlocked African nation
 - 14 Individual
 - 15 Decorative bush
 - 16 Ear part
 - 17 Running around
 - 19 Alternative to a saber
 - 20 Dutch flower
 - 21 Jumps tracks
 - 23 Hearings
 - 27 Actor Cariou
 - 28 Family car
 - 29 Actress Mimieux
 - 33 Sweet potato
 - 36 Tender spots
 - 38 Destine to tragedy
 - 39 Actress Thurman
 - 40 Check grabber
 - 43 Sailor's drink
 - 44 Tillis and Torme
 - 46 Roller blade
 - 47 Time period
 - 48 National song
 - 51 Spiral-horned antelope
 - 53 One of Frank's exes
 - 54 Liberated
 - 58 Desert Storm gear
 - 62 Movie whale
 - 63 Comic Rudner
 - 64 Go to bed
 - 68 Biblical garden
 - 69 Spookier
 - 70 Contend
 - 71 Mountain passes
 - 72 Laundry machines
 - 73 Begley and Wynn
- DOWN**
- 1 Charges
 - 2 When actors enter
 - 3 Bargains
 - 4 Most sugar-coated
 - 5 Verb-forming suffix
 - 6 Black goo
 - 7 Forty Thieves' leader
 - 8 Tear
 - 9 With wisdom
 - 10 Tidied
 - 11 Arizona natives
 - 12 First victim
 - 13 Sandra and Ruby
 - 18 Shoot wide
 - 22 Gun it in neutral
 - 24 Smell
 - 25 Nostrils
 - 26 Sport shoe
 - 30 Ripped
 - 31 Junket
 - 32 Austen novel
 - 33 Arizona city
 - 34 Grace ending
 - 35 Brewer's barley
 - 37 Past prime, breadwise
 - 41 Latin list-ender
 - 42 Subscription extenders
 - 45 Tribal healers
 - 49 Gabor sister
 - 50 Converted into pulp
 - 52 Speaker's platform
 - 55 Toil hard
 - 56 Spanish hero
 - 57 Levees
 - 58 Diver Louganis
 - 59 Verdi heroine
 - 60 Part of a plan
 - 61 Dyeing vat
 - 65 Attempt
 - 66 Deadlock
 - 67 One of the girls

answers on next page



Frank Sachs (Cuba Gooding, Jr.) (Left) and artist Simon Nye (Greg Kinnear) prepare to confront neighbor Melvin Udall about throwing Simon's dog down the garbage chute in the TriStar Pictures Presentation of the Gracie Films Production "As Good As It Gets"

Sell it...
in the Behrend Classifieds
behrroll4@aol.com