

Entertainment

"Big" : Cute Comedy

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In this age, technology dominates society. So much so that all the media now revolve around it: television, radio, print, and even the subject matter of that print. The number of VCRs present in the dorm rooms of Behrend College has steadily increased over the past few semesters. I believe it is high time that this newspaper's entertainment section join its peers across the country in a new form: the video cassette reviews.

(the previous paragraph was a glitzy way of stating that I, the author, did not get beyond the confines of my home to see a film to review this week.)

BIG Directed by Penny Marshall. Starring Tom Hanks, Elizabeth Perkins, Robert Loggia. Released in 1988. Rated PG

Over the past few years, film makers have stumbled upon a genre that has produced large amounts of money, yet few worthwhile films. This is the story of the little boy's mind in the adult body, and vice-versa. (Films like the horrid "Like Father, Like Son" make me wish that all the movie theaters would be the first places to fall in a Communist takeover.)

Only two movies in this vein have even been given any serious consideration. These are "Vice-versa" and "Big." The main stars of these films, Judge Reinhold and Tom Hanks, have shown themselves equals in the fact that their comic ability springs directly from childhood. In both films, they have displayed an ability to literally regress and, low and behold, transform themselves into children (in mind, if not body) right before our eyes, whereas Dudley Moore, in the aforementioned horrid film, only succeeded in looking pathetically stupid.

Enough comparison. On to "Big." The story springs from a problem every thirteen-year-old has faced: competing against parents who demand chores, best friends with big mouths, and sixteen-year-olds who know how to drive.

Director Penny Marshall (yes,

a.k.a. Laverne DeFazio from "Happy Days" and "Laverne and Shirley") intelligently moves the story rapidly to Josh's problem, not wasting any time, saving it for the gimmick that makes this film work.

That gimmick is when Josh finds a game at a carnival called "Zoltar", a wizard that grants wishes. Josh naturally wishes he was big. Foreshadowing the outcome of Josh's wish are the weather, which is threatening to storm, and the fact that the machine, while working, was unplugged.

When Josh wakes up the next morning, he's in the thirty-year-old body of Tom Hanks. Hanks is believable right from the instant, when he's dangling his legs over the side of his bunk bed. He shows genuine fear and amazement when he sees himself in the mirror for the first time and realizes what happened.

He presents himself to his mother, and she screams in horror. "What have you done with my son?"

"I am your son, mom!" Hanks whimpers in mounting fear. This increasing fear of "what in the world is happening to me and how can I make it stop" is what hooks the audience's heart. Hanks flees in terror, and is forced to spend the night in a hotel in a disreputable neighborhood, being that's all he can afford.

Things turn a little hokey when he applies for a job at a toy company, unknowingly listing incredibly outrageous references on his resume. (He's had a home computer for the past four years, so he lists four years experience with computers.) He gets the job (how is beyond the knowledge of any thinking person), and when the boss, MacMillan (Robert Loggia) sees his enthusiasm, automatically takes a fatherly attitude towards him.

This is culminated in a chance Saturday morning meeting in a toy store. MacMillan sees Josh's enthusiasm for toys, and like him all the more. The creme de la creme occurs when they stumble upon a segment of floor designed like a piano keyboard: step on the right keys and play music. I won't divulge this scene, it's too well-done and heartwarming. Just rent the tape and enjoy it.

In the midst of all Josh's good

fortune, there is something bad. As he gets promoted to vice-president in charge of testing new toys (naturally), he becomes less and less like a child. This is director Marshall's analogy to the "lost youth" concept. He becomes involved with MacMillan's secretary (played by the lovely Elizabeth Perkins), and, after his first sexual experience, he seems to even want to be older.

The little things that remind us he's really thirteen are still there, though, such as the bounce in his step, his lack of knowledge of marketing skills that he's constantly picked on about, and that sexual encounter. (He kisses her, she begins to undress. His eyes are transfixed, you know where. She coolly reaches past him to shut off the light, and he, his eyes never moving, reaches back to flip the light back on.)

In spite of his new world, he is constantly drawn back to his childhood days. This is exemplified in the decor of his new apartment, his sense of responsibility to his mother (who still believes that Josh has been kidnapped), and his outsider-point-of-view when he observes other children at play.

He's happy in his new world, but Penny Marshall expertly keeps the story so that there is some constant reminder that he is first and foremost a thirteen-year-old.

In resolving this conflict, Marshall keeps the story from bogging down in too much sentiment. (Let's face it. In a film like this, the audience will be forced to "look back" upon those days. Sentiment is all Marshall has got to work on.) The main point she is trying to make is that once you're an adult, you can't go home again. Josh was an exception. "Big" is a reminder that it never hurts to have a little childishness in your heart.

With any luck, my schedule next week will be clear enough for me to go out and see some real films. As for now, I thank you for bearing with me, and I urge you once more: if you have a VCR, rent this movie. When you talk about it, you'll sound like Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer when you say, "I think it's cute!"

Live Show With Bohemians

by Robb Frederick
Collegian Staff Writer

The lights dimmed, the anxious crowd produced an ear-splitting roar of approval, and six silhouettes moved into view, backed by the familiar chords of...the Peanut's theme? That's right- the Peanut's theme, and Schroeder should feel privileged.

This light-hearted introduction served as a perfectly suitable beginning for the night's entertainment - the Pittsburgh debut of Edie Brickell and New Bohemians. Utilizing the moderate success of their debut release, "Shooting Rubberbands at the Stars," Brickell and the Bohemians have launched a tour of small venues emphasizing sound quality, not seating capacity. And if Thursday's performance at the Syria Mosque is an indicator of the tour's other stops, this band will soon be playing in much larger halls.

Beginning with the song "Beat the Time," the Bohemians led fans through their debut recording, omitting only the ballad "I Do." The swift beats and catchy choruses of "The Wheel" and "Love Like We Do" brought fans to their feet, as the aisles filled with dancing ticket buyers, and even a few gyrating ushers.

The slower, more Bohemianesque songs like "She," "Nothing" and "Little Miss S" showcased the fresh, care-free style of Edie and the Boys.

Percussionists John Bush and Matt Chamberlain combined their talents for an overwhelming drum solo which hinted at the Bohemians' slight reggae influence. This solo smoothly began the song "Keep Coming Back," which was performed with a level of intensity not often reached by this usually laid-back group.

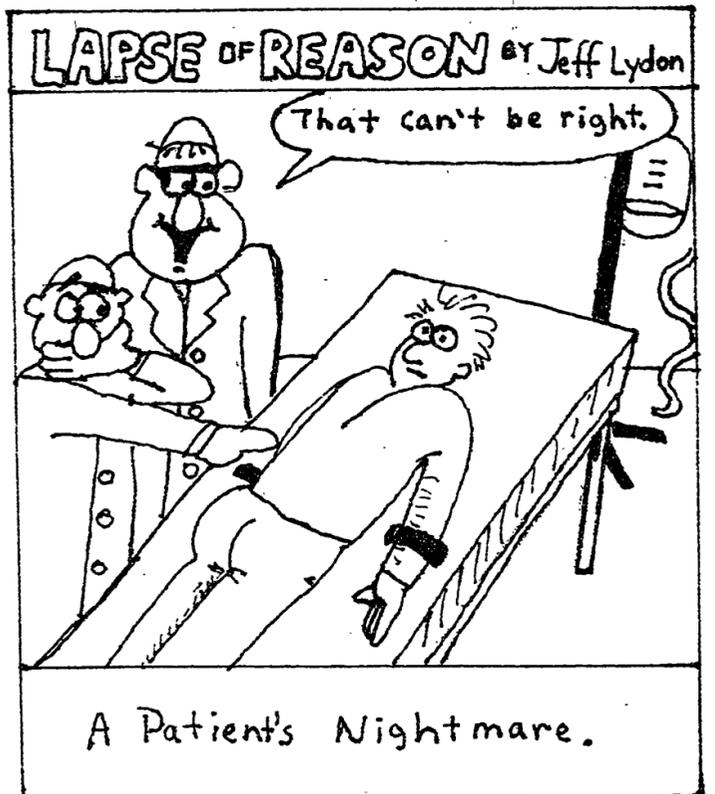
The familiar "What I Am," and "Circle," the latest single by the Bohemians, brought the Mosque to life as the surprisingly small crowd compensated for the hall's empty seats by singing loud enough to almost obscure Brickell's airy vocals.

The Bohemians also gave the crowd a sampling of new material. Interspersed between the more recognizable tracks, these new songs were well received by the eager crowd, giving the band's future a promising outlook. The success of this new material lies in the continuation of the Bohemian's current musical success - catchy beats supplementing the dreamy vocals of Edie Brickell.

Brickell is unquestionably the driving force behind the Bohemian's commercial success. The appeal of this twenty-two-year-old Texan songstress can not be pinpointed, but it was obviously felt by a majority of the fans representing Pittsburgh.

Dressed in a button-down shirt and jeans, Brickell received screams of adoration for the slightest wave of her hand. As her impressive vocal range challenged the musicianship of her bandmates, Edie would slink against the microphone, stand with her hands in her pockets, or cross her legs in an absent-minded fashion, all to the approval of her newfound musical following.

The performance of Brickell and the Bohemians focused on their respectable musical ability, not the elaborate effects of an expensive light show. The Bohemians' visual effects consisted of a few pieces of cloth draped from the ceiling and an occasional pattern of moving lights projected onto the stage's backdrop.



CONCERT CONNECTION

April 17 -	Escape Club, Mike and the Mechanics	Palace Theater
April 18 -	Living Color	Fantasy Theater
April 18,19-	Cats	Warner Theater
April 19 -	The Fixx	Metro Agora