

Behrend Theater Presents:

## The Two Gentlemen of Verona

by Timothy Jones  
*The Collegian*

One might think that a production of a play by Shakespeare is a definite wrong choice for a college campus because he is studied in many English courses and students become frustrated by his verse and language. Kathleen Campbell, Behrend's theater director, did not let that stop her when she decided to produce Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. She handled the production very well and did an excellent job with the cast of the play.

*The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is a romantic comedy about two young men who fall in love and make some silly mistakes, but find themselves in the end. Proteus, one of the two title characters, is played brilliantly by Dan Zahniser. He has a great stage presence that is evident throughout the play.

Proteus displays a range of emotions, stemming from being in love with Julia to stabbing his best friend, Valentine, in the back. Zahniser deals with these emotions and makes acting look like a piece of cake. Glenn McCall is superb as the kind-hearted, yet sometimes naive, Valentine. His scenes with Zahniser are right on target. These two actors play off one another well and make a great team throughout the play.

They also have an outstanding supporting cast behind them. Ericha Hagenbuch is perfect in the role of Julia. Her delivery is on time and done remarkably well. She has mastered the dialect of

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Shakespeare and continues throughout the play as if she were speaking everyday, normal language.

The entire cast did a terrific job with the delivery of their lines. Coming up against Shakespeare's Old English verse, understanding it and being able to speak it is no easy task. The cast put a lot of hard work into the delivery of their lines and the hard work has paid off.

Jen Laughner's performance is tender and touching as the hopeless Silvia who wants to be with her love, Valentine. Her stage presence is very elegant and graceful.

The play is a comedy and Skip Heller and Markus Rodriguez deliver the doses of comedy in abundant amounts. Heller's Launce is hilarious in his first appearance on stage and with his companion, Crab, he'll put a smile on your face. Rodriguez's Speed will have you laughing each and every time he is on stage. He is definitely a highlight of the show. Each and every actor does his or her part to add to the production, making it spectacular.

The only downside to the play is the dialogue. At times it is difficult to understand, but don't let that keep you away from this production.

**Editor's Note:** This review is based on a dress rehearsal viewing before the opening of the play.



Greg Geibel/*The Collegian*  
Love is in the air: In Behrend's spring play, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Silvia (Jen Laughner) and Valentine (Glenn McCall) exchange yet another love letter, while Speed (Markus Rodriguez) dreamily looks on and rudely listens in.

play

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Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* opens this week and the cast is ready to blow your mind with this contemporary version of his play. Kathleen Campbell says, "It's a fun show, not academic stuffy theater. It's a fun, festive comedy for young people to enjoy."

Her sentiments are echoed through Ericha Hagenbuch, who plays Julia. "The show is really funny. It has a strong plot and has a lot to say. Many of the students I've spoken to are excited about seeing the play."

One of the major problems in a play by Shakespeare is his use of old English verse. It can be extremely difficult to understand. Kris Beals, who plays an outlaw, Lucetta and Ursula says, "I was surprised how easily the language came. The context helps what is going on, and I think it is easy to understand."

Whatever the case may be, the cast has not let anything dampen their spirits. Campbell says the actors are relaxed and comfortable. Jordan Feidler who plays an outlaw, a servant, a host and Antonio, agrees with Campbell. "It's been a lot of fun. The play is enjoyable."

This Shakespearean play has a contemporary look to it. The actors wear jeans and tennis shoes: nothing unfamiliar. Campbell sums it all up, "When students see this, they'll find they like Shakespeare better than they thought. He's like the Neil Simon of today."


### The Two Gentlemen of Verona

**Run dates:** March 27-28; April 2-4; April 10-12 at 8 p.m., and March 29 and April 12 at 2:30 p.m.

**Place:** Studio Theater on Behrend's campus

**Prices:** \$4 for general public  
\$3 for students, faculty, staff and senior citizens  
\$2 for "Groundlings" - Those seated on the floor surrounding the stage (cushions are provided)

**Reservations:** Call 898-6016



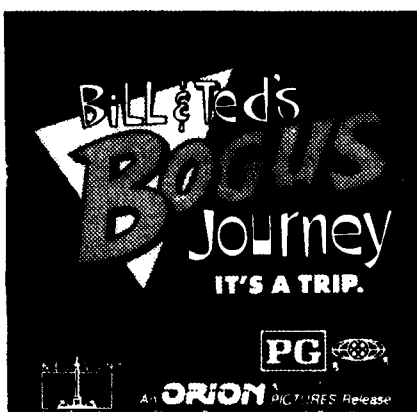
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