



SCENE EVALUATION — As opening night nears, Jim Maya, director, and Betsy McIntosh, assistant director, evaluate a scene during rehearsals of "Play It Again, Sam," a Woody Allen comedy produced by Gilroy Community Theatre. The play begins Friday, March 31 at 8 p.m. at Gavilan College Theatre, followed by a reception for cast and audience. Tickets for opening night only are available at Buena Vista Travel, The Hairloom, The Latent Image or by calling Maria Springer at 847-8117. Performances continue April 7 and 8, with tickets available at the Music Tree in Gilroy and Morgan Hill.

'Play It Again Sam' rehearsals under way



REHEARSAL SCENE — Members of the cast of Woody Allen's "Play It Again Sam", set for a March 31 opening by Gilroy Community Theatre, are rehearsing for the comedy to be staged at Gavilan College Theatre. Above Joe Berezna, Las Animas School teacher who plays Allen Felix' alter ego, checks out his side arm during a scene from the comedy-fantasy.

Gilroy Community Theatre's production of the adult comedy-fantasy "Play It Again Sam" is now in rehearsal in preparation for opening night at Gavilan College Theatre on March 31.

Woody Allen's play deals with a movie critic, Allen Felix, who is a balding, neurotic hypochondriac riddled with ego and sexual problems. His personal angel materializes frequently during the play in the form of his idol, Humphrey Bogart.

Jim Allen, drama teacher at San Benito High School, plays Felix, and Bogart is portrayed by Joe Berezna, teacher at Las Animas School in Gilroy. Allen has starred in GCT productions of "The Odd Couple," "Plaza Suite" and "Star Spangled Girl;" and Berezna has been in its productions of "The Crucible," "A Man For All Seasons" and "Sugar."

Romantic involvement is provided by Allen's best friend's wife, Linda Christie, who is also a neurotic hypochondriac. She will be portrayed by Susan Stagna, a French teacher at Live Oak High School, and newcomer to local theatre. Richard Lord will play her husband, Dick Christie.

Other characters in the comedy are played by Barbara Borrina, Betsy McIntosh, Liz Gifford, Jeanne Rouse, Janet Periat and Kelly Michelini.

James Maya, Gilroy High School drama teacher and a director of GCT, will be directing the production slated March 31, April 1, 7 and 8 at 8 p.m. at Gavilan. He starred as John Proctor in "The Crucible" and directed "Plaza Suite" and "Lion In Winter".

Betsy McIntosh is assistant director and stage manager.

Tickets will be available at the Music Tree in Gilroy and Morgan Hill.

Theatre Angels Art League will sponsor the opening night performance and a reception to follow.

Curtain rises tonight on 'Play It Again Sam'

Tickets will be available at the door for tonight's opening performance of Gilroy Community Theatre's "Play It Again Sam."

Curtain time is 8 p.m. at the Gavilan College theatre for all performances. The comedy will also be presented Saturday and April 7-8.

A coffee and cake reception hosted by the Theatre Angels Art League for the audience and cast in the college library follows tonight's production.

The Woody Allen play deals with a neurotic movie critic, Allen Felix

played by Jim Allen, San Benito High School drama teacher, who is also a hypochondriac riddled with ego and sexual problems.

Felix's personal angel who materializes in the form of his idol, Humphrey Bogart, is played by Joe Berezna, a Gilroy elementary school teacher. Allen and Berezna have appeared in previous GCT productions.

Other in the cast are Susan Stagna, Live Oak High School French teacher who portrays Linda

Christie, Felix's best friend's wife; and Richard Lord playing the part of her husband, Dick Christie.

Also in the cast are Barbara Borrina, Betsy McIntosh, Liz Gifford, Jeanne Rouse, Janet Periat and Kelly Michelini.

Director is Jim Maya, Gilroy High drama instructor. Serving as assistant director and stage manager is Betsy McIntosh.

Tickets for next week's performances are available at Music Tree in Gilroy and Morgan Hill.

COMEDY REHEARSED — Woody Allen's "Play It Again, Sam" opens at Gavilan College Theatre on March 31 for performances on two weekends as a Gilroy Community Theatre production. Betsy McIntosh and Jim Allen are caught in an intimate situation while rehearsing the adult comedy-fantasy. Allen, drama instructor at San Benito High School in Hollister, plays the lead as Allen Felix, who is the type of character personified by the author. He is a neurotic hypochondriac, full of sexual neurosis and ego problems. His own personal angel materializes frequently during the play in the form of his idol, Humphrey Bogart, French coat and all. Bogart is performed by Joe Berezna, Las Animas School teacher. Allen's romantic involvement comes from

his best friend's wife, Linda Christie, a neurotic hypochondriac herself, who is played by Susan Stanga, Live Oak High School French teacher. The best friend, Dick Christie, is portrayed by Richard Lord. Other actors in the production are: Barbara Borrina, Liz Gifford, Jeanne Rouse, Janet Periat and Kelly Michelini. Director of the production is James Mead Maya, Gilroy High School drama instructor. He is assisted by Betsy McIntosh, who is also stage manager. Tickets for the production which will be March 31, April 1, 7 and 8 at 8 p.m., are available at the Music Tree in both Gilroy and Morgan Hill. Opening night is sponsored by the Theatre Angels Art League with a reception following the performance. - Photo by K.S. Lai



Review

'Play It Again, Sam'

By Walden Sampson

"Play It Again, Sam" is a play by Woody Allen (a stand-up comic turned playwright). It was presented by the Gilroy Community Theatre at Gavilan College Theatre March 31 and April 1; and thankfully it will be presented again April 7 and 8.

It is a play where the "clown" becomes the "ringmaster." It is a play which could paint with a broad brush for it burlesques the "closted burlesque" in all of us. Though it uses our sexual timidities as its springboard, it is really about moments of "awful truth" where we are trained and coached to meet with fierce attack; only to find our rewards are just a bit more egg to brush from our faces.

At the rise we learn that if "marriage is the maximum of loneliness with the minimum of privacy" then divorce would seem to maximize them both.

We first meet Allan Felix at the apex of his discontent. His wife has just left him from boredom and other forms of emotional diminishment. He is watching a Humphrey Bogart movie on television and it becomes abundantly clear that "Bogey's" anti-hero ways is Felix's fantasy of male conduct.

The greatest burden (and thus the greater applause) must go to Jim Allen who portrays the diminutive Allan Felix...a man who counts up his losses with the same fervor that Midas once counted his gold. Allen plays Felix with skill and range. He portrays moments as dark as a confessional booth, only to then leap into the play's sometimes orgasmic humor. Joe Berezna is uniquely believable as the "showdown" of Bogey. And, I must single out Susan Stanga for her versatility of emotional stanzas.

Other members of the cast are: Barbara Bottini (Felix's expiring wife), Richard Lord, who as Dick Christie shows great promise (even, moments of brilliance), but whose appearance is still blessed with a quality a touch too sophomoric to pass as a seasoned

husband and investor of large amounts of money. The boltage will come later. Betsy McIntosh, whose brief appearance on stage emits charm. Jeanne Rouse as Gina, Liz Gifford (who portrays a holder of in-door championships), Kelly Michelini, a go-go-dancer, Janet Periat and Margaret Morales.

The director, James Maya, deserves special credit for either insisting or permitting, the players to become one-and-one-eighth life size; for handling a froth of blocking that could stagger a computer; for the technical planning of flashbacks which never eclipses the "now," and for permitting only rare instances of excessive cuteness.

It was my understanding that director and cast of "Play It Again, Sam" requested a review unsweetened with saccharin judgment. It is a good time to ask for candor...for the performance shows well against any reasonable standard for community theatre.

More and more the difference between the talented amateur and the career performer is less and less. That community theatre cannot always recruit the exact prototype (from lead to walk-on) of every character which playwrights can invent, is not a serious drawback to the very special type of charm which good community theatre provides. It can be validly said, that these defects (if that is what they are), can add a fresh dimension to the "believability" of emotional portrayals of the quite ordinary people who live everywhere. It may well be that the gestures and restraint of Lawrence Olivier are the finest in the world...but on the other hand, they are not the only standard around.

"Play It Again, Sam" is also a dimensional Woody Allen. The very same Woody Allen who has created a rich career out of publicly confessing our "foiblesins."