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'Bus Stop' opening on Friday

GILROY — Gilroy Community Theater has found its Marilyn Monroe and Don Murray. Kimberly D'Arcy and Don Barr have been cast in the starring roles for the spring production of *Bus Stop*.

In the movie version, Monroe played the part of Cherie, a foot-loose singer, and Murray portrayed Bo, a young cowboy and ranch owner.

Tony Tomaro will play the role of Dr. Lyman, a drunken ex-professor who reveals his past. Torie Berger is cast as Elma, a young waitress, and Sue Rowlison as Grace, owner of the diner where a group of bus passengers wait out a storm.

Others in the cast are Al Bloom as the sheriff; William Burdick as Carl, the bus driver; Jack Ray as Virgil, a ranch foreman; and Tony and Betsy Andrade as extras.

Martha Holder is director and Kai Lai is producer.

Opening night is scheduled for Friday at 8 p.m. at Gilroy High School Theater. Repeat performances will be April 4, 10 and 11 at the same time and place.

Tickets are available at Creative Woods, Plaza Drugs, Town and Country Liquors, Dick Bruhn's and M'Lady Bruhn or by calling Holder at 847-3099 or Lai at 842-7355.

Discount rates are available for students, senior citizens and groups of 15 or more.

New characters steal show in GCT's 'Bus Stop'

By Joanne Rife
Special to The Dispatch

There is a curious flatness about William Inge's *Bus Stop*, Gilroy Community Theater's latest contribution to South County drama.

It is not so much the production that is flat as the play itself. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the addition of two characters, who I do not believe were in the original play, and who stole the show. Betsy and Tony Andrade played a couple and brought down the house without a word spoken. Betsy played *Impending Motherhood* and was at minimum 14 months pregnant. Her tidbit of comedy was enough to rescue the production from oblivion.

Briefly, the story is a *Ship of Fools* — *Grand Hotel* type that throws together a mishmash of characters at a bus stop between Kansas City and Topeka. The bus is delayed by a March blizzard and the passengers must spend the night in the small cafe, where all the action occurs. On board the bus is a cafe singer, two cowboys, a drunken professor and the pregnant couple. The bus company must have been losing money on this run. Others at the cafe are the bus driver, two waitresses and the local sheriff. The main story revolves around one of the cowboys and the singer, who have been, as is so delicately put, "familiar," and who are *quasi* in love.

In GCT's production, taking the part of the singer is Kimberly D'Arcy. She is, she explains to the young waitress, a "chan-too-see," and her name is "cher-ee," not "cherry" as the cowboy mispronounces it. The cowboy, Bo Decker, is a hell-bent-fer-leather ta hog-tie the little gal in matrimonial bonds. His courtship can be likened to steer wrestlin' and Cherie is not happy. In fact, she is terrified.

D'Arcy has good command of her role, putting in a sparkling, if overshadowed, performance.

The overshadowing comes from the cowpoke, whose opinion of himself is reflected in the words from Mac Davis' current hit, *Oh lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way*. Don Barr plays Bo Decker, and when he is mouthing-off, nobody, even Marilyn Monroe, has a chance. Barr plays the role broadly, and it is a broad role, but as a result the play teeters a bit, off balance.

One of the problems with *Bus Stop* is that the

characters are no-where people going nowhere and the comedy becomes a statement of sadness instead of delight. Virgil Blessing, Bo's older sidekick, is the only one who knows that. When the waitress says, "I'm sorry, Mister, but you're just left out in the cold," Virgil replies, "Well, . . . that's what happens to some people."

Jack Ray plays Virgil in his best effort to date. Ray remains something of a stone face (although who can really tell under that bush of a beard), but in the role of the taciturn Virgil, Ray is very good. He seemed to understand what Virgil was all about and as a result the audience knew what Virgil was all about.

Tony Tomaro played Dr. Lyman, the professor

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who turned out to be a professional lecher. Tomaro seems uneasy in the role, although he makes a good drunk. Dr. Lyman is thoroughly unlikable and just why the young waitress, Elma Duckworth, even given her naivete, cottons to him is unclear. Elma is played by Torie Berger, who gives a fine performance as the bouncy and wide-eyed high schooler eager to learn about life and love.

Another good performance is Suellen Rowlison's as Grace Howland, the older and wiser waitress and owner of the restaurant. And Al Bloom as Will Masters, the sheriff, is properly authoritarian and caring, a good combination if you can bring it off. He did. Bill Burdick plays the bus driver. He leers well (at Grace) in a shallow role.

The advent of the couple, although it adds the best laughs of the play, also is disruptive to the dialogue. It is so funny watching Betsy Andrade's asides in the pickles and forays to the restroom that this writer lost the flow of the dialogue that is occurring at the same time. Andrade is a true comedian. She waddled onto the stage and had the audience in the palm of her hand immediately.

The performance will continue this weekend, April 10 and 11, at Gilroy High School Theater. Curtain is 8 p.m.

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Photo special to The Dispatch

Bo Decker (Don Barr) declares his love for Cherie, (Kimberly D'Arcy) in *Bus Stop*.