Audience loves 'nostalgic' romance

The Birmingham Village Players production of "Romantic Comody" by Bernard Stade continues at 8:30 pm. Friday-Saturday at the playhouse on the corner of Hunter Bitot, and Chestnut Street, south of Maple Road, in Birmingham. Tickets at \$4 are available at the door or by calling 644-2075.

By Cathle Breidenbach special writer

Bernard Slade's "Romantic Comedy" is a refreshing, perhaps nostalgic, re-turn to ideals about love that dominat-ed the first half of the revolutionary

ed the first half of the revolutionary century.

Imagine a modern play that applauds the virtues of good-old-heteroserual love and lust and never even hints about the other kind. Imagine a play that takes three acts and 12 years to get the here and herolice in the sack together and holds to the belief that it's decidedly had form to carry on with one person when married to another.

In real life, and especially in the theater, such antiquated ideas about love supposedly surrendered years ago to more free-wheeling sexual mores.

Imagine a play which admits that friendship and love outwelgh even the most breathless between-the-abects compatibility. If such ideals are outmoded, the opening night crowd at the Birmingham Village Players never let on. The audience loved "Romantic Comedy." Maybe society is returning to traditional values. Then again, maybe lots of people never abandoned them.

lots of people never abandoned them.

JUST BECAUSE It bolds to tradidiocs, Stade's councy is hardly fare for
the Bible Belt, Smoday School circuit.
People mess around, get divorced,
wear their aktivities on stage and talk
about sex. Teomantic Comedy' is a
lively, applisticated love story.

Urbano New York playwright Janon
Carmichael takes on a fiedgling
carmichael takes on a fiedgling
takes on a firedgling
takes on the stage of the stage
stage willing portion. Through
their years of writing together, they
suffer through sinus beadaches and
backaches, plays that bomb and marriages that faller.

Bill Haycook plays the proud, wellmown playwright with incelligence and
believable reserve and Diane Evans
Forrest plays the offent Phoebe with
valuerable charm.



Both Jason and Phoche marry, but too each other, and this fact rightfully interferes with the course of their romance. Debra Ball plays Jason's wife, Allison, with appropriate cool explirication and Harry Loucks plays Phoche's husband, Leo, as a roughedge good goy. Harry, who a master comedian, times his lines superbly to leave room for laughter, but the seemed leave room for laughter, but the seemed less at case with serious passages.

Maureen Cook plays Jason's axist-

ant as a woman who's been around the wheel of love numerous times and comes out with her wit and hindness intact. To paraphrase her line, 'I married once for sex, once for mooey, and once for good conversation and none of them is what 'it's cracked up to be.' Of course not, because those old-fashioned ingredients love and friendship were missing.

The tasteful set of Jason's study lends credibility and color to the play—combining green, purple and corat for sophisticated/arty style appropriate to a man who would never wear an off-the-rack suit or a polyester ite. Director Dee Dwelley keeps the action voiling and the laughter simmering. FREE ADMISSION
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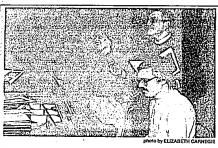
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Gene and Audrey Grier go over a song with Ron DeRoo of the Oakland University music staff during academy classes the Griera

Students develop positive images

The Griers, who celebrated their 10th anniversary this summer, have no children of their own but they clearly enjoy building the eges of their students. We love you and we look forward to each and every Saturday we're with you," Gene tells his students in a post-rebearsal locture.

AWAY FROM the kids, the efferve-

AWAY FROM the kids, the effervescent and irrepressibly outspoken Grier says, "We love it because these kids are so great, These are kids who are secure within themselves and they've got such wonderful attitudes." And even if they don't always come to him that way, it's evident in a public performance (which the cardemy has at least twice a year) that that's the way they leave the cardemy. First-year students often appear to be polished professionals when they solo, and the ensemble theoreography is precise and resembles the work of older and more mature show-business performers.

older and more mature show-business.
Every student who has left the academy and gone on in music has swon a scholarship. Most of the former students are in an aspect of show business or are pursuing a degree in Most of the student are the student are all the students are all the students or are pursuing a degree in Admitting they are frequently tough on their students, the Griers aim to

teach young people how to perform in front of audience with a look of com-plete professionalism.

"We're tough but honest," says Gene. "We won't accept anything but a best effort. Whatever they do on stage better be the best they can do.

"THEY WOULD rather flop on stage then have to face me afterwards if it wasn't their best effort. Most of them think after they left the stage, 'Wowl I didn't think I could do

"But I knew they could all the time or I wouldn't have made them do it. That's our teaching technique."

Besides weekly rehearnals and classes at Oakland University, the academy students often appear on television and occasionaly do tours and out-of-state performances. The students performed in New York City two years ago for the American Choral Directors Association convention.

Because of the Griers' widespread contacts in the music world, the stu-dents frequently have special oppor-tunities to study with such renowned choral directors and arrangers as Norman Luboff, John Rutter and Kir-by Shaw.





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