



Photo Submitted

Junior Dan Conway and junior Sarah Hitzel perform in the Theater Department's production of "Enchanted April" that ran last week.

Theater chooses dud

"Enchanted April" actors give great performance with poorly picked play

BY FRANKLIN K.R. CLINE
Reviewer

Truman's most recent theatrical production, "Enchanted April," though well-acted and at times amusing, was marred by a boring, predictable script featuring limited, obvious character development and a happy ending meant to induce sighs of relief but more deserving of frustrated groans.

The plot is simple, with overt themes of redemption through love and the way in which that search is intertwined with (an unfortunately unrealized) dream of independence. Wives Lotty Wilton (junior Adrienne Miller) and Rose Arnott (sophomore Sarah Hitzel), fed up with their husbands, rent out a castle in Italy with veritable strangers Caroline Bramble (junior Jessica Ridenour) and the old widow Mrs. Graves (sophomore Elizabeth Necka).

While there, the women embark on individual quests for self-discovery that ultimately result in happy-ever-after lives.

The men in this play are all fools in their own ways. Mellers Wilton (sophomore Nate Sullivan) is the embodiment of the phrase "ignorance is bliss."

Frederick Arnott (freshman Max Glenn), the character with whom I sympathized entirely, is half-writer,

half-man and all drunk. Antony Wilding (junior Dan Conway), the aw-shucks Casanova meant to grab all of our hearts (although his romantic antics are annoyingly forced) is more lonely than genuine.

There's also the comic relief, Italian housekeeper Costanza (freshman Claudia Capuano), who was played as well as possible by Capuano but invariably fell flat — after all, when a character is built around a one-note joke of surprise mixed with an inability to speak English that results in some Italian gibberish, the laughs inevitably will subside quickly.

And that's really the story of this production: Excellent performances all around, with each actor or actress going as far into his or her character as possible but always hitting a brick wall caused by a flimsy script filled with obvious, plain dialogue (an example: "What follows an enchanted April? Why, an enchanted May!") and a silly, painfully hackneyed plot clearly geared (somewhat condescendingly) toward women. All three women (this is not counting the widow) set out to be independent, but they all wind up in the arms of men.

Although this play incited a number of giggles from the audience (what is it about Truman students that makes them such suckers for double enten-

des?) and a few genuinely comic moments, I couldn't shake the feeling that the whole thing was forced — that no one was really happy to be on that stage playing those characters.

Technically speaking, the play was very well-designed. Although there were many scene changes, especially in the first act, the tech crew was always quick and unobtrusive, and pauses between scenes were short.

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The set was well designed, being built piece by piece during the first act to create a representation of ostensibly idyllic upper-class English life and static during the second act, which takes place at the castle San Salvatore, the truly peaceful place at which the characters come to realize their desire for happiness.

I'm really not sure why this play was selected, especially following the joyous raucousness of "The Threepenny Opera." Perhaps it was meant to be a reactionary choice, or one that proves the range of abilities of our actors and production crews.

Or maybe it's even more punk rock than "Threepenny" was, simply because it's so bland, but whatever the reason, "Enchanted April" provided a fine example of talented actors doing the best they could with what they were given.

La Pachanga continues to spice up Kirksville

BY DYLAN HERX
Reviewer

Up to this point in my life, I'd been told that "party" in Spanish is "fiesta."

Now, however, thanks to Freetranslation.com, I have come to find out that "pachanga" also means party. I immediately consulted my Spanish-speaking roommate who said "pachanga" actually is a mega-party, if you will, comparable to a festival. I needed to know as this is the restaurant of choice for this week's review.

I suspect that many readers probably already have been to La Pachanga prior to reading this. The reasons for not visiting at least once are probably solely comprised of, "My friends took me to El Vaquero first, and I fell in love," or simply "I don't like Mexican food." For those who have gone, perhaps you've sworn allegiance to La Pachanga or fallen by the wayside and been swept up by El Vaquero or La Fuente.

I can't help but wonder how Kirksville drew in three original Mexican restaurants. Maybe the citizens have an unfathomable love for Mexican food or the large Mexican-American population of nearby Milan, Mo., has something to do with it.

La Pachanga has gone through a few changes throughout the years. It was once a carpeted, one-room restaurant with average décor but good food. The food still is good, but the interior has been renovated somewhat — for better or worse. The carpeting has been replaced with tan ceramic tile, and each of the once-plain booths now is made of hand-carved wood. The walls and ceiling have been painted in a faux-finish style of rolling that in some places could use another layer or two, but all in all, La Pachanga has been

transformed into what I can only assume the owners meant for it to be: an authentic Mexican-style restaurant.

So La Pachanga has the look completed, but what about the food? I'll start, unsurprisingly, with the quintessential staple of every great Mexican restaurant: the free chips and salsa. La Pachanga has a great chip, not too thick, not terribly thin, and as long as it isn't overcooked, it is near perfection. The salsa varies, which leads me to believe that they have not yet settled on the recipe or that a different individual makes it each day. The salsa I had earlier in the week carried a delightful zest of cilantro and was milder, whereas the salsa I most recently partook of was a bit thinner, saltier and spicier.

I've visited Mexico twice and eaten at roadside taco stands as well as sit-down restaurants, and the one thing I have yet to find is a full selection of Mexican favorites. La Pachanga carries a vast array of the typical fare — tacos, enchiladas and quesadillas — but I have long craved a torta (a Mexican sandwich made with meat, cheese and guacamole, served on a fresh roll), roll-your-own corn tortilla tacos with fresh guacamole or a genuine chalupa or gordita. That being said, if you ask the servers at La Pachanga, they could possibly have one custom-made, but the typical fare is well-received.

If there are two things about La Pachanga's food that I can guarantee, they are that you will leave full and that the food is nicely prepared. So what should you order? Well, the house favorite is probably the Burrito Pachanga, a burrito the size of my forearm filled with lettuce, tomatoes, rice, beans and your choice of chicken or beef, all smothered in melted Monterey Jack queso. If you'd like to try something off the beaten

path, I also recommend the Brother's pizza, a meat-filled quesadilla with pico de gallo (fresh tomato salsa and herb salsa) and guacamole on the side or the grilled taco salad, a fried tortilla bowl filled with lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream, chicken, steak and shrimp — an unusual combination that keeps the taste buds guessing with each bite. Each of these meals is no more than \$9 and includes complimentary chips and salsa.

One of the highlights of La Pachanga is its specials: Margaritas are just 99 cents Tuesdays from 5 to 7 p.m., students get a 10-percent discount on Sundays and lunch prices chop an extra \$2 off most of La Pachanga's most popular dishes. In addition to margaritas, the restaurant offers regular happy hours with discounts on Mexican beers. "The party" is an accurate name for the restaurant, as it is a fairly inexpensive way to enjoy a south-of-the-border taste without leaving Kirksville.

Boiled DOWN LA PACHANGA

Atmosphere:
Mexican decor and murals

Food:
filling meals, large variety of dishes

Price:
ranges from \$5-\$14 free chips and salsa

Overall:
a good showing with a vast selection of Mexican fare

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Photo courtesy of New Line Cinema

Will Ferrell stars in New Line Cinema's "Semi-Pro" as Jackie Moon. Ferrell's character resembles those of his other films but lacks the charm they possess.

Ferrell film drops ball

BY RYAN DALTON
Reviewer

Back in 2004, Will Ferrell tickled many funny-film aficionados with his role as Ron Burgundy in "Anchorman," but he did so at a price. Ferrell sold his talent to a character formula — the boisterous, hyper-masculine male — that worked so well as Ron Burgundy.

That formula showed up in his future performances in "Blades of Glory" and "Talladega Nights" and appears yet again in his new sport spoof "Semi-Pro."

Sadly (for Ferrell fans, at least) his basketball movie is much like receiving an 'H,' along with the 'O,' 'R,' 'S' and 'E,' in immediate sequence. It's just that pathetic.

Ferrell's character, Jackie Moon, is a one-hit wonder from the 1970s who, through his great fortune, acquired Michigan's pride, the American Basketball Association's Flint Tropics. The irony of having a tropical team in the icy, highly industrialized city of Flint, Mi., fuels the film with a few empty laughs. The movie does find the shamelessness to make (or miss, depend-

ing on how you look at it) a few shots at Flint's people. After all, what's more funny than pointing a finger at the socioeconomic status of a group facing the hard luck brought about by the selfish, inconsiderate automobile industry?

As you might already have assumed, Jackie Moon is completely egotistical — the fuel to Ferrell's comedic machine. Moon's ego is unwarranted, and he remains largely ignorant to its adverse effects on the Tropics as a team with his self-indulgent promoting and inability as an athlete. Essentially, Ferrell conducts his song and dance act episodically, and conveniently every basketball game has a halftime show for him to do something completely frivolous and idiotic. There is nothing underhanded or clever about the jokes in this movie. Rather it is full of fart jokes that miss nearly every time.

To be completely honest, Ferrell's character is precisely the reason why this movie flops. Former "Daily Show with Jon Stewart" correspondents Ed Helms and Rob Corddry have appearances in "Semi-Pro," and they are quite funny in

their roles. Corddry plays the boyfriend of Woody Harrelson's love interest, and it just so happens that Corddry's character is love-struck himself with Harrelson's character. It makes Harrelson's romantic struggle with the lovely "ER" actress Maura Tierney all the more of a triumph for the comedy. André Benjamin of Outkast and Will Arnett of "Arrested Development" drop in on this film, but less successfully.

Ultimately what I'm getting at is, you should avoid this movie unless you're prepared to grind your teeth through nearly the whole affair.

Don't get me wrong, though. Ferrell has his charms here and there, but they are very, very sparse. It's completely safe to say that Ferrell has exhausted the beat of this drum. Walking into this movie expecting Ferrell's buddies from previous movies are going to carry it on their backs would be foolish, and I'll guarantee you that. Even if Ferrell's seemingly barbaric egotism, child-like blissfulness and ignorant vociferousness attract you, this movie will disappoint you. "Semi-Pro" isn't even a "semi-no": It's an outright, definite "no."

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