Guys and Dolls a sure bet for a good time

By David Shaw

The MIT Musical Theatre Guild's production of Guys and Dolls is a lively and exciting presentation of an excellent musical.

Guys and Dolls is based on a story by Damon Runyon and presents Runyon's picture of life in New York City, particularly the Broadway-Times Square section. The plot revolves around the love affair of Nathan Detroit and Miss Adelaide, and revolves around the theme of marriage and sin. Nathan and Adelaide have been engaged for three years, with Adelaide constantly pressuring Nathan into marriage, which he keeps postponing. Sky Masterson meets Miss Sarah Brown after a bet he made with Nathan. But the meeting seems doomed from the outset because Sky is a gambler and Sarah is a missionary. Nonetheless they quickly fall in love. Both relations are jeopardized only to be resolved for the better at the end.

The play was greeted with excellent acting by the performance of Dierdre Alexander in the vanguard. Her portrayal of Miss Adelaide, a typical Runyon character, was delightful. She was able to maintain her character's high-pitched voice and still make all her lines and songs clear and audible. Her overall talent was best displayed in her musical numbers: "A Bushel and a Peck," "Adelaide's Lament," and "Take Back Your Mink."

Curt Fennell's performance in the role of Nathan Detroit, with his animated expressions adding just the right touch to his humorous role. His singing voice was somewhat lacking during his one song "Sit Down, You're Rockin' the Boat", which should have been the most lively number. Instead, the lack of movement on stage made it almost boring. The orchestra rendered Frank Loesser's score perfectly, playing loud enough to be heard, but not loud enough to drown out the singing.

The technical aspects of the production were adequate. John VanderMeer's sets were simple and functional, but they seemed to limit movement of the actors in certain scenes. The lighting was poor in some scenes, but that is partially the fault of the theatre's construction; some of the lighting angles cast shadows across the actor's faces or onto the rear stage walls. Hopefully these conditions have been corrected.

All considered, the play should be seen for its fine acting and singing. You shouldn't miss this show, because "The Oldest Established Permanent Floating Crap Game" might not return.

Lance Roberts (left) as Benny Southstreet and Jonathan Goldblith as Nicely-Nicely Johnson sing the title song "Guys and Dolls." (Photo by Gordon Haft)

Dierdre Alexander as Miss Adelaide sings "A Bushel and a Peck." (Photo by Jordan Haft)