

## Bringing down the Forvm

**A Funny Thing Happened On the Way To the Forum**, with music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim; performed by the MIT Musical Theatre Guild Thursday night in the Sala; further performances tonight and tomorrow night at 8 pm and Sunday at 7 pm; tickets \$3 for MIT students, \$4 for senior citizens and other students, \$5 for all others.

As I have been at MIT for a year and a half and have been arts editor here for a term, you may be surprised to hear that I had never attended an MTG production before last night. It was therefore in high anticipation that I undertook to review their latest production, *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way To the Forum*. I was quite pleased to find the cast working with a similar enthusiasm.

The biggest damper to the cast's exuberance was the orchestra. A general rule in musical theater should be that if you don't have a full orchestra, don't play a full overture. Twice during the course of the evening I was forced to listen to three trumpets and a drum pound out a conglomeration of the show's mediocre music.

*A Funny Thing...* is a modern musical

comedy set in Roman times. Even if you are unfamiliar with the show you will recognize the Stephen Sondheim opening number *Comedy Tonight*. The cast performs this admirably, completely drowning out the cacophony of the orchestra.

Pseudolus (Michael Martineau), the narrator and main character, occasionally is slow picking up his joke cues, but nonetheless always delivers the punch line faithfully. His singing voice is strong, even when he is bouncing all over the stage.

Hero (Stephen Honig '87), an adolescent boy, at times seems to behave more like a pre-school boy. He has supposedly fallen in love with Philia (Lauren Singer '86) and will free Pseudolus, his slave, if Pseudolus can deliver her to him. Philia also has trouble with her stage attitude. Although her lines make it clear that she is in love with Hero, somehow her actions don't relay that information.

Given the circumstances, *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way To the Forum* is a good show. MTG is obviously operating under low budget and deserves the full support of the MIT community.

Ronald E. Becker

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