A funny thing happened at the Colonial Theatre

By JULIAN WEST

The revival of this classical Sondheim classic which is embarking on a ten-city tour takes no chances and so comes up, on balance, a winner. It promises "something for everyone" and delivers just enough to keep us all satisfied.

The plot is far too complicated to explain, but that hardly matters because it is just a vehicle for the songs, the most famous of which is "Comedy Tonight." The show, which Sondheim based on the comedies of Plautus, is something very like the Dimwitted Edvers Descriptively known as Hero, Senex, and other characters. There is even a Miles Gloriosus - that is his Domina, Hysterium and so forth. The volcano of the girl's inner voice, played by Marie Cappotoli '90, is strong, yet gentle, urging the girl toward the truth. Far sarras and Malaka's scenes together are marked by similar quiet sensitivity and control.

Do you find the line between life and art, or at least television, to be ever thinner? Do you find yourself in a funny situation and say to yourself that you feel like your living a situation comedy? Is everything you say or think a cliche? Do you uncontrollably fantasize about Star Trek?

Mike Barry took up these serious sociological and psychological issues in his wild, offbeat play, "The TV Room." Barry's Anyman characters, Dad, Wife, and Son, Bobby, can not seem to detach themselves from their television.

Like any Dad, this Harvard MBA look-alike Dad (David Poppeal '89) comes home from work, throws his suit jacket into the refrigerator, grabs himself a beer, and sits on down in front of the TV while greeting his family. His Drama Reed look-alike wife, Wifie (Ingrid Olsen W87), floats in.

Their ensuing conversation is a flirtation scene from a bad B movie. Wife says, "Excuse me, sir, is this seat, taken?" Husband says, "Yes, but you're cuter." Poppeal and Olsen played the scene like plastic dolls, becoming human by smiling and stamping if the other missed his cue.

But life can never be truly the television and neither can theatre. Barry's characters put their TV souls into living out their TV fantasies but the result is crazed and contorted.

The son, Bobby (Peter Parnassa '90), for whom Dad and Wife have "given up their lives," comes out of his Star Trek fantasy only when one is looking. Otherwise, he sits hunched in a chair inches from the TV sucking in new fantasies. As he watches, his eyes bulge; he looks like he's about to rip his own skin off.

But, like TV, Dad and son, Bobby, have a great relationship. Dad loves Star Trek too. While they play out a Star Trek fantasy, they are fixing an old rocking chair together for a token dance. And he handles the comedy with a slapstick breadth which would have satisfied Plautus.

But when he starts to sing, it sounds more like the croaking chorus from "The Frogs" of Aristophanes. At least he is aware of this, and tells himself successful-ly through most of the numbers. Richard Burton managed for years to talk his way through "Camarot," but with the aid of a lilting Welsh voice, which will pass for lilting Welsh voice, which will pass for

His other annoying habit is that he cannot resist winking at the audience when (Please turn to page 12)