

THE ARTS

Performances in MTG's *Guys and Dolls* vary in quality

GUYS AND DOLLS

MIT Musical Theater Guild.
La Sala de Puerto Rico.
Oct. 28-29 and Nov. 3-5, 8 p.m.;
Oct. 30, 2 p.m.
Directed by Peter J. Tarsi '93.
Orchestra directed by Jeffrey A. Morrow '96.
Music and Book by Frank Loesser.
Starring John M. de Guzmán '97,
Grace E. Colón G, Andrew J. Berger G,
and Jennifer Santos.

By J. Michael Andresen
STAFF REPORTER

With weak female leads and despite strong male leads, the MIT Musical Theater Guild presents a lackluster production *Guys and Dolls*, the classic musical about bad men and the women who love them. The bad men come out looking quite good, while the good women give only mediocre showings. The first three-quarters of the show plods along tirelessly, though it does finally pick up steam by the end of the second act, giving a semi-satisfactory catharsis to the on-again, off-again performance.

John M. de Guzmán '97 and Andrew J. Berger G steal the show as the low-life gamblers to be reformed by their respective women. Guzmán as Sky Masterson is particularly impressive in all aspects of his performance. His gangster-esque mannerisms are fluent and perfectly executed (with a shrug of his shoulders and a flip of his hat), his singing is enthusiastic and vibrant as well as melodious, and his dancing is more than adequate. He combines all three in his biggest number, "Luck Be a Lady," even throwing in some acrobatics for good measure. This is his show in which to shine, and he is up to the challenge.

Berger does an equally fine job as Nathan Detroit, the man who runs the craps game as effectively as he runs away from commitment. His soapy New York accent is consistent and funny, and his movement on the stage is always beautifully unctuous. One feels sorry for Masterson and Detroit as they reform at the end of the show simply because they look so good in their oversized, double-breasted gangster's suits.

The female leads sadly do not match the intensity and enthusiasm of their male coun-

terparts. While Jennifer Santos is plenty strong opposite Berger as Miss Adelaide, neither is she particularly inspiring. Her thick New York accent is wonderfully grating, but she doesn't imbue excitement with her singing or her acting. Grace E. Colón G, on the other hand, seems sadly inadequate opposite Guzmán as Sarah Brown. She doesn't seem able to find an appropriate motivation as a sergeant in the Salvation Army. Also, her staid, operatic singing voice is fine for her opening numbers, but it seems appropriate that she should loosen it up a bit as her character loosens up and falls in love with the likes of Masterson. She makes a valiant attempt and is moderately successful in places, but her classical instincts prevail for the most part, making her seem disagreeably uptight.

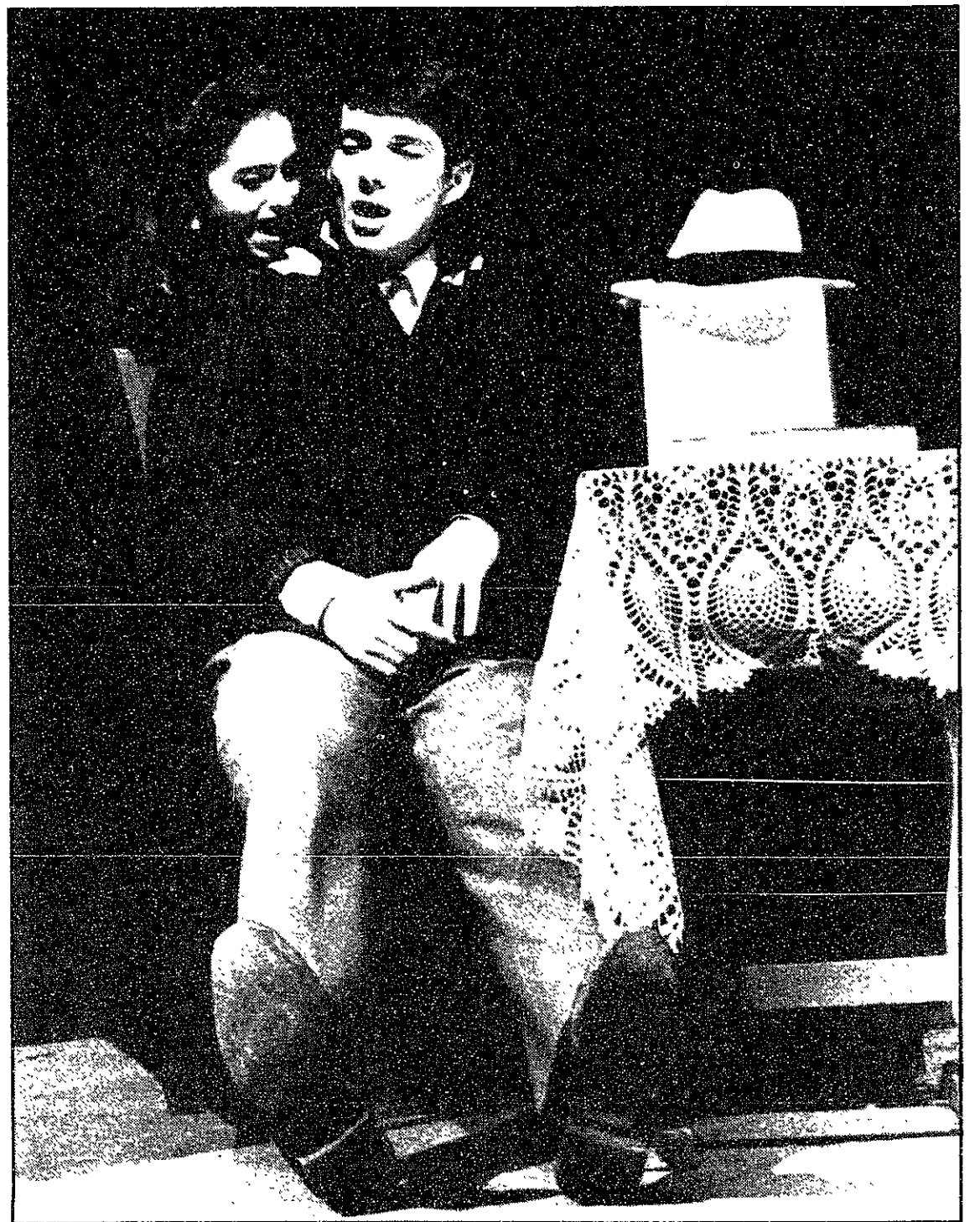
The supporting male cast members do a fine job with their chorus and dancing parts. Ethan L. Butler G as Nicely-Nicely Johnson and Evan Serbrooke G as Big Jule are particularly outstanding. Butler has a delightfully strong singing voice, and his aloof delivery charms the audience. Serbrooke was simply hilarious as the visiting high roller from Chicago. The smug and stupid expression on his face matches his demeanor perfectly. His mother may have been right if she told him that funny faces can stick, because he doesn't break his characteristic pursed lips during the performance, even while dancing.

Like the acting, the production side of the show is of variable quality. The pit orchestra, under the direction of Jeffrey A. Morrow '96, is excellent, and (in sharp contrast to some recent shows) is in wonderful balance with the singers. Other than a few scattered intonation problems, they sound quite confident. The stage direction has several wonderful moments, such as using President Charles M. Vest's voice as telephone character Joey Biltmore, or the hilarious dream sequences for Miss Adelaide and Sarah Brown, or the choreography for waitress Laura Allen W'96; but, there aren't enough of these moments overall. The show's program really sticks out as a missed opportunity for some additional class: It consists of three loose folded sheets of badly photocopied text with writer/composer Frank Loesser's name misspelled on the front cover. Producer Jacqueline Brener '96

would have done well to pay a bit more attention to such details.

Still, the good moments that the show has are worthwhile. The ensemble finally comes

together as a cohesive comedic unit halfway through the second act, generating some great laughs, and the men are great to watch throughout. Just don't expect too much.



SHARON N. YOUNG-PONG - THE TECH
Nathan, played by Andrew J. Berger G, listens to Miss Adelaide, played by Jennifer Santos, during the opening act of the Musical Theatre Guild's presentation of *Guys and Dolls*.

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