

Raunchy, Riotous Comedy:

by Phil Cutrone

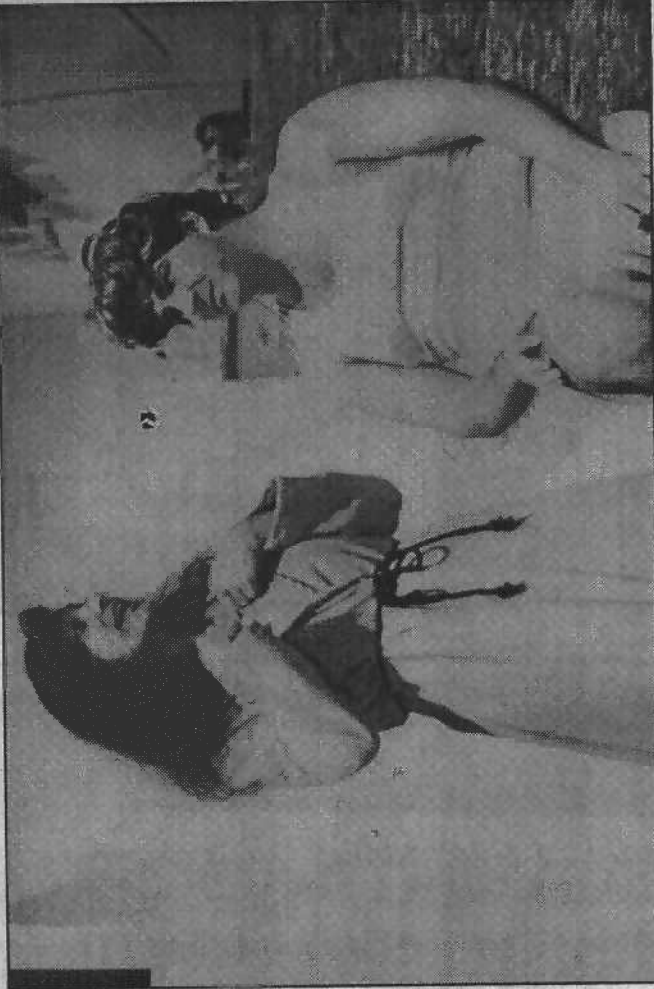
The day Pappa Vespucci died things began to look dim for his son-in-law, Guy Proclo. He's now hiding in a New York City gay bathhouse from his Mafioso-like brother-in-law, Carmine, who is trying to kill him. The gay bathhouse is called The Ritz, and so is the play that opens tonight in Collins Auditorium.

This time the Mimes and Mummies have assembled a well-balanced and very talented cast to entertain us in this raunchy, riotous comedy. The characters are vivid and fun and the dialogue is downright decadent. This, coupled with some fine performances make *The Ritz* a lot of fun.

Joe Pirolli is Proclo and is constantly referred to as a dark-haired, middle-aged, fat man. As the fearful chubby garbageman from Cleveland, Pirolli is enjoyable. His one-liners and glances toward God are a delight. Just looking at the variety of expressions Pirolli can muster, one would think that his face had a mind of its own. Equally enjoyable but ten times as pretty is Sue Mondaruli as sexy Spanish singer Google Gomez, who is high in ambition and low in talent. Mondaruli captures all the fire that is this Latin looney. She gives possibly the worst renditions of "Everything's Coming Up Roses" and "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina" that have ever hit the

stage. This of course is intentional, as Google cannot carry a tune even in a bucket. This is too bad, since Mondaruli herself happens to have a wonderful singing voice. Sue brings across Google's crudeness without being trashy or cheap.

Mike Chimentini and Steve Love really shine as two of the patrons we encounter at The Ritz. Chimentini is hysterical as the skinny little chubby-chaser who goes wild and sings "Jelly Roll Baby" whenever he gets close to anyone over 200 pounds. From the moment he comes on stage in the first ten minutes of the play, to the orgy in room 240, Chimentini maintains nonstop shtick and keeps the audience smiling. Steve Love plays Chris, a raging gay sex maniac. To Chris, sex is "her" way of saying hello. Unfortunately, as someone points out, "she" wants to say hello



STEVE HOFFMAN

Sue Mondaruli and Joe Pirolli in a scene from 'The Ritz'

to everyone she meets. Steve gives a funny performance, and does not make the character too effeminate or too horny, as hell, seems like a

pretty nice guy. Vinny Marano is the ultimate in Italian stereotype as Carmine Vespucci and delivers a very animated and entertaining performance. His constantly moving eyebrows and bulging eyes make you wait for him to explode. Louise D'Arcy is good as Proclo's wife Vivian, constantly crying and yelling at anyone and everyone. Mike Bolton as Detective Brick has a voice that will drive you crazy, but a naive look that makes the part work.

The Set is very impressive, although somewhat stark and cheap looking; it very successfully creates the image of a seedy gay bathhouse. The only thing wrong with *The Ritz* are there are too many chase scenes, the songs are too long, and the acoustics in Collins Auditorium are terrible. These points could not take away from the good time that director Larry Smith brings to us in *The Ritz*. So if you're not doing anything the 9th, 11th and th 16th to 18th of October, treat yourself to *The Ritz*. It's more than a cracker.

Ramm Arts