

'Bus Stop' stays for a spell on campus

By **BOBBY DENSFORD**
Staff Writer
rdensfor@ius.edu

"Bus Stop" arrived last Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Robinson Theater in the Ogle Center. The play, written by William Inge in the 1950s, addresses the subjects of love and relationships.

In 1956, the play was adapted into a film starring Marilyn Monroe. The film, while it helped launch Monroe's career, is not anywhere near the quality of a good theatrical production of the play, Michael D. Morris, visiting assistant professor of theater, said.

"'Bus Stop' is a story about a group of people who are caught up in circumstances beyond their control," Morris said. "They [the bus riders] are stranded in a diner somewhere in Kansas, by a blizzard. They have to stay overnight and in so doing, they get to know each other."

Morris said the play is actually accomplishing two things simultaneously.

"On the one hand, it's a play about the people who are stranded at the diner," Morris said. "On the other hand, it's all about relation-

ships and how people deal with love. It's about how different people define love and relate to it."

The bus, which is headed west out of Kansas City, gets stranded in the state of Kansas, with the driver and four passengers. One of the passengers, a cowboy named Bo Decker, in town for a rodeo, spies a pretty little nightclub singer named Cherie. It's love at first sight, and when Cherie doesn't warm up to Bo's advances, Bo decides to kidnap Cherie and take her back to his native Montana by bus.

Rebekkah Meixner, assistant professor of theater design and technology, is in charge of the set, lighting, props and sound. She said her goal is to make the set a recreation of a classic 1950s mid-western diner.

"I researched this project a lot differently than in the past," Meixner said. "For example, I looked at a lot of postcards of diners and their interiors."

Meixner also did her research in person.

"When I went home for Christmas break to upstate New York, my father and I would go out for lunch to a

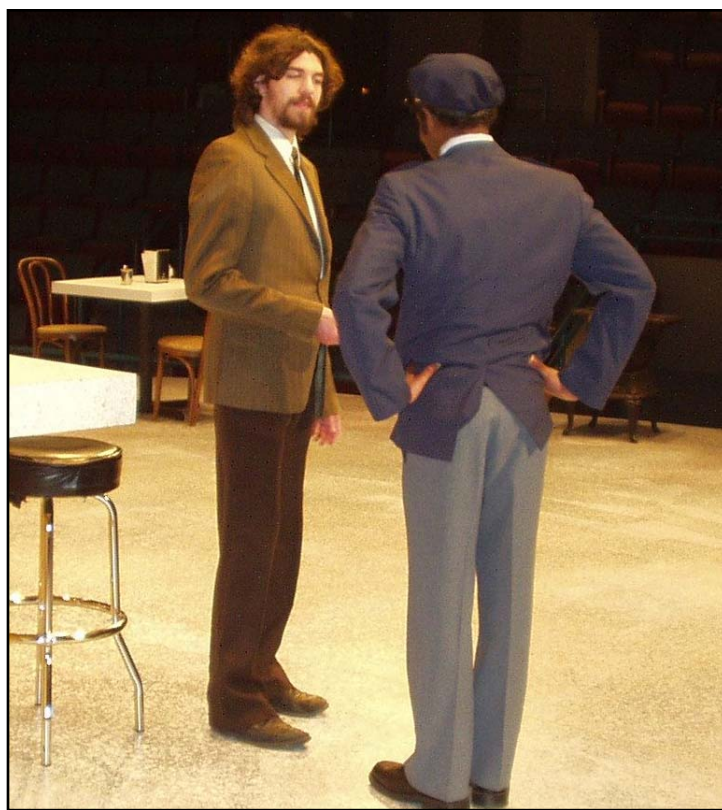


Photo by Bobby Densford

Gerald Lyman (Kent Carney) talks to Carl the bus driver (Miguel Walker), at Grace's Diner, in "Bus Stop."

different diner every day," Meixner said. "The Little Gem Diner in Syracuse had the greatest influence on me. It opened in the '50s, and has not changed. You can see the wear of the years."

Meixner will attempt to replicate that "worn look" by

first creating the original, new look and then using a sander or metal grinder on the floor and tiles to reproduce the look.

"Like all good plays, 'Bus Stop' is universal in its ideas," Morris said. "It's a 50-year-old play, there's going to

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Michael D. Morris
assistant professor
theatre

be a little bit of difference in how people talk, and how people express themselves, but people have the same dreams and hopes as 50 years ago."

"Young people of today, if they look closely, they will see things that speak to them," Morris said. "The way we do things changes, but those things that are important to us don't. Things like love, loyalty, friendship."

Jordan Smith, undecided freshman, leads the cast as Bo Decker, the love struck cowboy. Smith described Decker as a loud, angry and misunderstood cowboy, but deep down, he's innocent and shy. Smith said Decker is a fun person to play even

though he has very little in common with the character.

"I auditioned because I had done a lot of theater in high school," Smith said. "I had never auditioned here before, and I was surprised and honored to have won the role."

Shannon Braune, a 2003 theater graduate from IU Bloomington, plays the lead female role of Cherie, the sultry nightclub singer. The New Albany resident said she hadn't acted in four years and saw this as a way of getting back into the craft.

"The character is very real and I feel everyone can relate to Cherie because many people don't know if they've ever really been in love or if it really exists," Braune said.

Morris said the cast is great and the actors are well-suited for their roles.

"We could probably use another week or two of rehearsal," Morris said, "but that's true of any production."

"Bus Stop" will be performed at the Robinson Theater in the Ogle Center on March 1, 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. The final performance will be a matinee on Sunday, March 4 at 2:30 p.m.

Salsa club 'moves' to campus with 4/4 timing

By **MARY Q. BURTON**
Editor
mqburton@ius.edu

There is a new club at IU Southeast that anyone can join, even those with two left feet. The Salsa Club is less than a month old and is already off to a busy start, meeting every Wednesday in the Hoosier Room from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thomas Wilson, general studies senior and Salsa Club president, decided to start

the club when he transferred to IU Southeast this semester from Eastern Kentucky University, which had recently begun its own salsa club.

"It grabbed me from the first time I did it," Wilson said. "I'm very into the whole Latin culture thing. Learning salsa dancing went hand-in-hand with learning Spanish."

Salsa dancing is a series of basic steps, turns and twists set to 4/4 time. The dance began in Cuba and Puerto

Rico and has permeated most Latin cultures, resulting in several variations which focus on different moves.

Josh Surowski, marketing senior and Salsa Club lead instructor, said nobody should find the dance intimidating.

"I think anybody can really do it," he said. "You've got to get past that initial stage where you feel like you're just terrible. Just keep going and it will click."

The club is open to both experienced and inexperienced dancers. The first half hour focuses on teaching basic dance steps without music so the instructors can guide students. The second half of the session is devoted to utilizing the moves learned with musical accompaniment. Students take turns dancing with the instructors and each other.

Wilson, who also instructs students, said he has seen improvement in some students after only a couple of sessions.

"There are some people who had two left feet when they came in, and then they're actually doing something and they're enjoying it," he said. "It's a good thing."

He said he does not claim to be an expert, but is enjoying becoming a more experienced dancer.

"If I do it right and if I get



Photo by Mary Q Burton

Salsa Club president, Thomas Wilson teaches freshman, Erin McCorckle, some moves.

really into it, I'm Rico Suavé," Wilson said with a smile. "What can I say?"

Grace Stamper, undecided freshman and Salsa Club secretary, had no prior dance experience before joining the club. She said she is enjoying the club and thinks Wilson and Surowski are great teachers.

"I always liked the beat and the energy that Spanish-speaking people put into their dance, so I thought I would give this a shot," she said. "It was very easy. I think once you know the steps you can improvise as much as you want."

The club is currently mak-

ing plans to visit Coconuts on Bardstown Road in Louisville to put what the students have learned into practice.

Surowski said salsa dancing is a good alternative to the usual dirty dancing that happens in many clubs. He said since the variety of styles with salsa is wide, there is a style just about anyone can enjoy, even if one prefers a more risqué style of dancing.

"So if you still like doing

all the grinding stuff, it's there, but yet there are other cleaner dances too," Surowski said. "I like to see people having a good time, and people usually enjoy salsa when they're doing it."

Wilson and Surowski agreed there are many men who would like to learn how to dance, but are too embarrassed to try.

While weekly attendance for the club varies, the majority of the attendees are women.

They said the Salsa Club is a safe place for men to learn how to dance because nobody is judging each other and most people there are inexperienced.

"If you don't know anything about salsa, please come," Wilson said. "We're not going at a break-neck pace. We'll take our time with anybody."

He said he hopes the club will encourage more campus activity and will help students to get to know each other better, in addition to developing their salsa skills.

The club is currently working with Campus Life in conjunction with Blu Mondayz to have a salsa session during lunch to expose more students to salsa dancing.

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