Musical takes funny look at Paris

Porter's 'Can-Can' is 'magnifique'

By Karl Pallmeyer
Reviewer

"Ooh la la, C'est Magnifique."

That's the way Pistache, owner of the Bal Du Paradis, describes love. It's also a pretty good description of Cole Porter's musical comedy, "Can-Can." MSC Town Hall Broadway brought "Can-Can" to an audience of about 1,400 people in Rudder Auditorium Sunday night.

Porter wrote a wonderfully funny look at the morals of Paris in the spring of 1893. "Can-Can" is the story of Pistache, the owner of a night club that features the illegal can-can dance as entertainment for both the upper and lower crust of Parisian folk.

Pistache is able to keep the local police off her back with bribes and favors until Aristide Forestier, a judge newly appointed to the bench, takes it upon himself to put a stop to the illegal activities of the Bal Du Paradis. Forestier goes to the club to get some evidence to use against Pistache but instead becomes enamored with this fascinating woman.

A damning photograph of Pistache's girls in action leads to her imprisonment and the suspension of her license. Despite warnings from Forestier, Pistache decides to re-open her club to hold the Cat's Eye Ball, a yearly social event that is so much fun that it guarantees arrests for all those present.

Forestier attends the ball in hopes of protecting Pistache but is unsuccessful. Another damning photograph, this one of Forestier in Pistache's arms, is taken to the newspapers, and Forestier's career as a judge is over. He decides the only way to clear his name is to get the morality laws repealed.

When Pistache reopens her club as the Cafe La Blanchisserie, a laundry that also features the can-can, Forestier, inspired by his love for Pistache, decides to become her business partner. He intends to have the club raided so that he can defend himself and Pistache on the grounds that the old morality laws are outdated and need to be changed. He hopes that life will be better for Pistache once her business is legal.

At first, Pistache is against going to court, but she then gives in to her love for Forestier and decides to stand beside him. And when Pistache's girls perform the can-can in court, the judges are convinced to tear up the old laws.

"Can-Can" is also the story of Claudine, Boris and Hilaire Jussac. Claudine loves Boris, a poor Bulgarian sculptor, but she constantly is hounded by Jussac, a prestigous art critic. Jussac is devious and finds he can spend time with Claudine by claiming an interest in Boris' work. Boris, eager to have his name mentioned in Jussac's art reviews, is more than willing for Claudine to dine with Jussac.

Neither Boris nor Claudine see through Jussac's motives until Jussac writes an article that blasts Boris' sculptures. The cowardly Boris is forced to challenge Jussac to a duel. Fortunately, Boris' faint heart saves him from Jussac's sword in a hilarious duel sequence, and Claudine proclaims her love for Boris. Jussac is so touched by Claudine's devotion that he promises to write an article praising Boris' work.

Except for a few slipping French accents, the acting was super. Jamie Zemarel was perfectly precise as the prefectly precise Forestier. Liz Donohoe was both sweet and seductive as Pistache. Bob D. White was a good stuffy and devious art critic. Each of them have a fine voice and did great justice to Porter's pun-filled songs.

The funniest of them all was David J. Schuller as Boris. He was so indignant telling Claudine that she should manage her money so that she could support him better. His part during the duel scene had most of the audience laughing.

In Advance

Stanford prof to discuss global systems

A Stanford University professor will be at Texas A&M to address a crisis in global systems that he contends is quite different from other troubled periods in history.

Dr. Willis Harman, professor of engineering and economic systems at Stanford, will speak on "The Global Systems Crisis: Its Meaning and the Role of Technology" at **8 p.m. Tuesday in Memorial Student Center 206**.

His lecture is co-sponsored by the College of Engineering and the University Lectures Committee.

Harman founded the Stanford Research Institute International's Center for the Study of Social Policy, where he conducted research in futures methodology and social learning.

He contends that three forces, spurred by recent technological developments, have changed the world — the evolution into an information society, the move to a global perspective and changes in values and underlying beliefs.

Texas Legislature considers passage of 1st tax bill of '87

AUSTIN (AP) — A week starting on Texas Independence Day could include passage of the first tax bill of the 1987 Legislature.

A possible tax increase appeared to be the dominant issue of both the Senate and House as lawmakers began their eighth week of the 4½ month session.

The much-publicized tort reform also will get public hearings in a Senate committee starting today. Six proposals that would affect personal injury lawsuits are on the agenda for the Senate Economic Development Committee, with hearings expected to last two weeks.

Rep. Roman Martinez, D-Houston, has chosen today to announce the filing of a bill to reduce Texas school dropout rate of 33 percent.

"The state cannot achieve economic diversification if a large percentage of our future work force is uneducated," he said.

On Tuesday, a plan to extend temporary sales and gasoline tax increases to Sept. 1, 1989, will be heard by the House Ways and Means Committee.

The increases, raising the state sales tax from 4.125 percent to 5.125 percent and the gasoline tax from 15 cents to 15 cents a gallon, became effective Jan. 1 and would expire Sept. 1.

Committee chairman Stan Schlueter, D-Killeen, predicted his panel would send the bill to the floor, and Speaker Gib Lewis predicted it could win full House approval by week's end.

Schlueter and Lewis have said House members do not want to tackle the tax overhaul this year if it does not raise additional revenue.

Texas inmate on death row wants new trial

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — Robert Excell White, who asked a judge for an early execution date a decade ago, now says he wants to live after spending 12 years on death row.

White, the dean of Texas death row inmates, may go free pending a new trial on charges stemming from a 1974 crime spree in which four men were killed.

White probably will get a new trial because he was examined by a psychiatrist without his approval, Collin County District Attorney Tom O'Connell said. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that such examinations violate a defendant's rights.

White's trial judge recommended to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals that White be freed pending a new trial.

Bryan couple combines two cultures to add quality to Messina Hof wines

By Christina Caywood-Brennan
Reporter

Texas wine — are you kidding?

Paul Bonarrigo and his wife, Merrill, are very serious about winemaking at their Bryan winery.

Established in 1983, Messina Hof Wine Cellars is the only winery in the Brazos Valley. It was the 15th vineyard planted in Texas and is one of 500 vineyards in the state.

"Texas is the fastest-growing wine-producing state in America," Bonarrigo says.

He compares its development with that of the California wine industry. In the late 1960s, he says, many people looked down upon California wines. In the mid-1970s, however, there was a boom, and today California produces some of the finest wines in the world.

Because of a growing interest, he believes Texas wines are heading in the same direction.

Texas wines are becoming so popular, he says, that Messina Hof is testing and marketing its products in Boston, Miami and Denver.

"Be as much a perfectionist as you can be. Anytime you create a flaw, you detract from the quality of the wine." — Paul Bonarrigo, winemaker from Messina Hof Wine Cellars

One goal Messina Hof hopes to accomplish this year, Bonarrigo says, is to establish itself in the Orient, Canada and the Caribbean.

Some of the reasons for the recent popularity of wine, Bonarrigo says, may be that wine has a lower alcohol level than most other liquors and often is associated with dining.

The quality of the wine produced depends on the quality of the grapes, and most importantly, the handling of the grapes, Bonarrigo says.

"Be as much a perfectionist as you can be," he says. "Any time you create a flaw, you detract from the quality of the wine."

When tasting wine, all five senses are used, Bonarrigo said. The wine is visually examined for color and clarity, sniffed to determine its "nose," or fragrance, and then rolled over the tongue so that the tastebuds may pick up the quality of the wine. The wine also is touched with the tongue and chewed to determine its sound.

Bonarrigo, a sixth-generation winemaker, says he's always had an interest in wines. In his family, the firstborn son always is named Paul and is destined to be a winemaker. At age 16, the boy is responsible for his first vintage, he says, and he later will take over the family business.

The Bonarrigos' son, Paul Mitchell, 4, already has developed the ability to determine wine quality.

Bonarrigo and his wife came up with the name "Messina Hof" because his family is from Messina, Sicily, and hers is from Hof, Germany.

Bonarrigo says he plans to expand the winery further.

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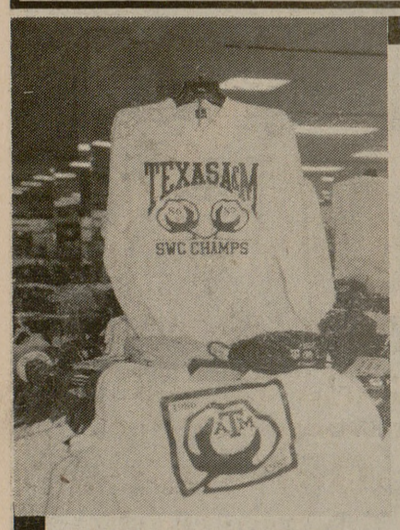

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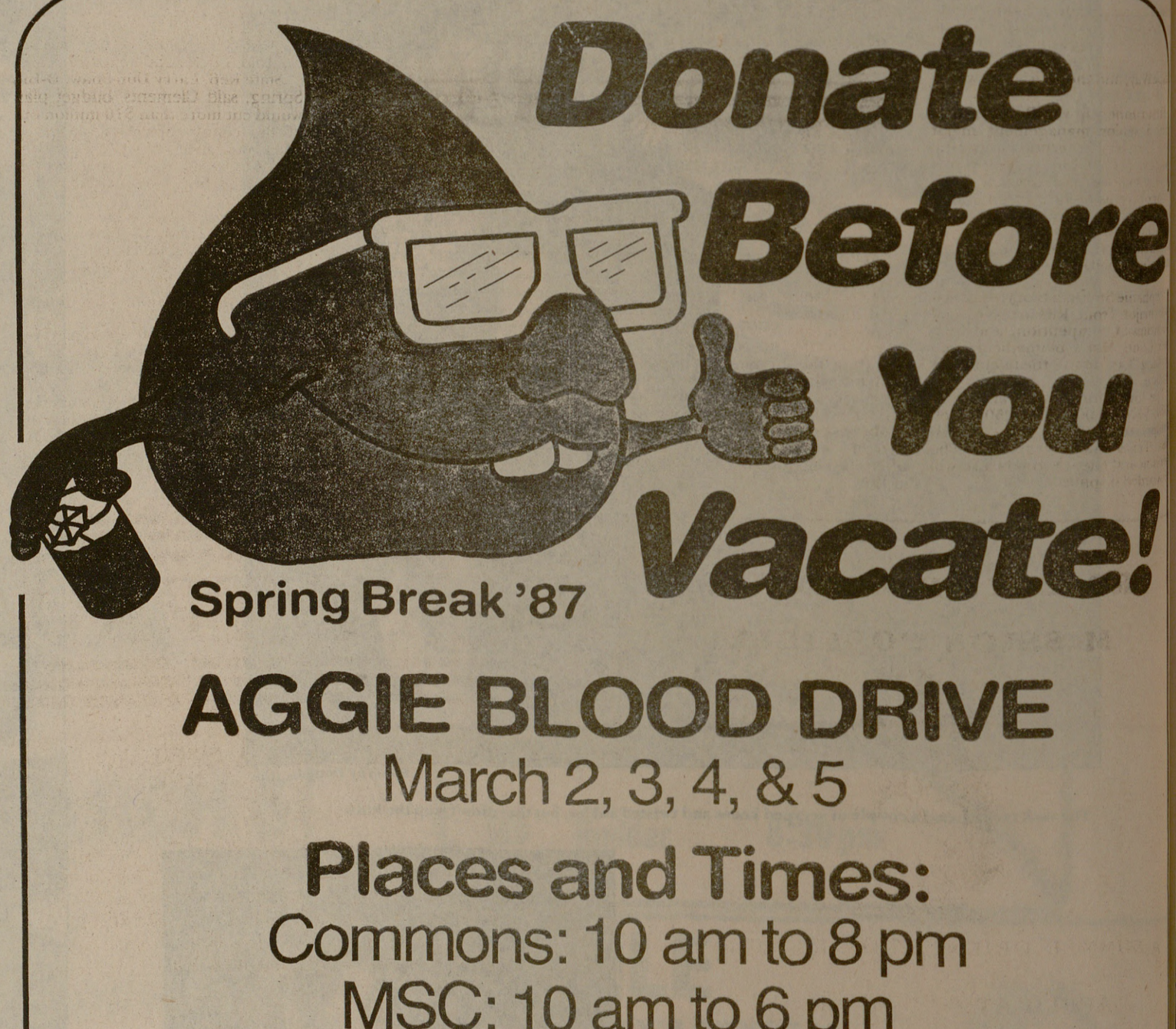
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