

Photo by Jay Janner

Heike Garret plays the role of Babette Heinrich, a newlywed at odds with her parents in Die Klei-

nen Verwandten, one of several comedies performed in German.

German Club presents three one-act comedies

By Richard Tijerina
Reviews

Three one-act comedies were presented over the weekend during the eighth annual Spring Affair sponsored by the Texas A&M German Club. And though the productions were clearly not of Aggie Players caliber, what the shows lacked in professionalism made up for in warmth.

The shows, "Die kleinen Verwandten (The Little Relatives)," "Die Kleinbürgerhochzeit (The Wedding)" and "Die grosse Wut des Philipp Hotz (The Great Rage of Philipp Hotz)," featured mostly A&M students in the casts. All of the shows were presented in German.

And although an English synopsis was provided for each performance, detailing the play's plot and scenes of action, following the actors' German lines were next to impossible for audience members who knew no German.

Fortunately for the shows, most of the audience understood the language.

"Die kleinen Verwandten," featured on Thursday and Saturday nights, centered around Heinrich and Mama, the parents of the Hassler family trying to make a favorable impression upon the visiting Max Schmidt, a wealthy merchant who is courting their daughter, Ida.

Expecting Schmidt to arrive at any moment, the Hasslers are both shocked and appalled when Heinrich's sister Babette, played by Heike Garret, shows at the doorstep with her new husband Josef, played by Edwin Garret. Babette is angry at the couple for not attending her wedding, which the Hasslers did not

see fit to attend since she was marrying a man of a lower social class.

Loaded with visual humor, the scenes following Schmidt's arrival were priceless. Babette takes off her shoes and shakes all the leaves out onto the Hasslers' well-swept floor. Josef sneezes into Mama Hassler's spool of knitting. Babette sneezes into a tissue that she unpacks from the bosom of her dress, then stuffs it back in.

The chances of Schmidt proposing do not look good until Ida enters the room. As Schmidt takes Ida into the kitchen to talk, the Hassler parents unload their anger (the synopsis described how Mama "vents her spleen" at Babette) on the young couple. The day is saved when Schmidt and Ida come back from the kitchen engaged.

"Die Kleinbürgerhochzeit" revolves around the family and friends of a newly married couple and their nuptial dinner after the ceremony. The atmosphere quickly turns sour when the father of the bride recounts horrible tales during the meal about the codfish they are all eating and the story behind the bride's Uncle's death.

As if things weren't bad enough, the bride's friend starts making insulting comments about various pieces of furniture in the room, and by the time everything is over and all the dust has cleared, the dining room table, chaise longue, wardrobe and a few chairs are all broken.

To lighten things up, the groom asks the bride's friend to dance, which proceeds to make everyone

jealous of each other. By the end of the play, everyone is mad at each other. After all of the guests have left, the bride and groom are finally alone. Their anger at each other having been subsided, they finally retire to their bedroom for their marriage night festivities. Unfortunately for them, the bed breaks too.

Friday and Sunday night's performance of "Die grosse Wut des Philipp Hotz" was clearly neither as funny or good as the other two. It revolved around Philipp's breaking marriage as a direct result of both his and his wife's infidelities with each other's best friends. Warning his wife Dorli that he is going to run away and join the Foreign Legion, Philipp drones on and on in a wave of much too long soliloquies lamenting his fragmented relationship with his wife and his strong desires to not enlist in the Legion.

After Dorli Doesn't beg him to stay with her, Philipp leaves to join the Legion and calls her from a train station. And although she tries, she fails in stopping his enlistment in time, Philipp returns at the end of the play.

The plays were obviously not meant to come off as well-polished productions, and this contributed to their overall effectiveness. Lines were forgotten and flubbed, props were unintentionally broken and the characters often broke character to smile or laugh a little with the audience. But this just made viewing the show that much better because it let the audience member relate to the cast.

Bentsen wants bill to offset college costs

WASHINGTON (AP) — Concerned that tuition increases have made college education too expensive, Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas, is supporting legislation to allow purchase of tax-free savings bonds if earmarked for children's classes.

"If you have a baby born today, 19 years from now the estimates are that to send that child to a private college would cost, for the four years, approximately \$200,000," Bentsen said.

"And a public college, approximately \$60,000. Now, how many people have that kind of money?" Bentsen asked during his weekly program distributed to Texas television stations.

"The other problem is, people are just not saving to send their kids to college to the extent they used to," Bentsen said.

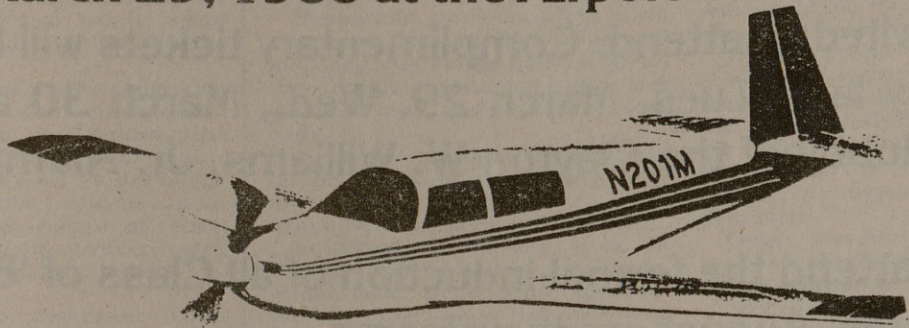
"Savings are down," he said. "We have to find a way to turn that around. So I'm supporting a bill that's before us now that would encourage people to save by buying public bonds."

The legislation, of which Bentsen is a co-sponsor, proposes that interest on the bonds be exempt from tax so long as they are used to send someone to college.

"We have a problem in that there is some dispute as to whether it would cost the government money," Bentsen said. "One of the reasons, of course, is that they'd lose the taxes on that interest revenue. But the other side of the argument is that they'd be borrowing money cheaper — the government would — than they normally would."

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