

APRIL 2, 2004
THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF RICE UNIVERSITY

enter query

Search Archives

the Rice Thresher

the Rice Thresher

Location: http://the.ricethresher.org/ae/2004/04/02/picasso_at_the_lapin_agile_martin_lovett_undergrounds

[April 2, 2004](#) > [Arts & Entertainment](#) > ['Picasso' capitalizes on Steve Martin's trademark wit](#)

'Picasso' capitalizes on Steve Martin's trademark wit

By Elizabeth Mims | Thresher staff

Sometimes there is nothing better than a show that makes the audience laugh. If this is what you are after, look no further than the Lovett Undergrounds, where you'll find Picasso at the Lapin Agile and all the Steve Martin wit you can handle.

Written by comedian Steve Martin, the play revolves around a fictional encounter between artist Pablo Picasso and physicist Albert Einstein in 1904 at a French bar, Le Lapin Agile — an actual bar in Paris, painted by Picasso in his Au Lapin Agile. Martin plays with the idea of a clash between two geniuses of entirely different realms — art and science. He wonders what would have happened if a mind of prophetic visuals had mixed with a mind of logic. Did these men know that they were about to change the 20th century? (Incidentally, Einstein published his Special Theory of Relativity a year later, Picasso painted Les Femmes d'Alger in 1907.)

Martin entertains the conversational and comic possibilities of this chance meeting through his kooky cast of characters and a slew of intellectual repartee.

Freddy (Lovett College junior Lanny Bose) owns the bar that Picasso (Hanszen College sophomore Reynaldo Valdez) regularly frequents. As Freddy opens the bar for the night, Gaston (Lovett senior Nicholai Stephens), a stereotypical drunk Frenchman, is already under the influence. Einstein (Lovett sophomore Brian Doctrow) walks in and sits down, awaiting his date, the Countess (Lovett freshman Jacqueline Kirby). Minutes later, Germaine (Will Rice College senior Katharine Gurba) and Suzanne (Lovett College freshman Leilani Hawks) — two very sexually charged women — enter and light up the scanty, testosterone-filled bar of men, adding layers to the script. Sagot (Corey Cogswell, Jones '02) — the art dealer — bursts into the bar next, full of maxims and great comedic timing, and joins the cast as they await Picasso.

When Picasso arrives, the debate between the characters really gets heated and delves deep into the unknown and the absurd. The battle of the brains culminates with a draw, when Picasso sketches a figure and Einstein creates a formula. "Mine touches the heart," Picasso says. "Mine touches the head," replies Einstein. "This will change the future!" exclaims Picasso, to which Einstein answers, "Oh, and this won't?"

Picasso and Einstein eventually become convinced they will be the great names of the 20th century, but — as everything always comes in threes — there must be a third genius. Introduce Schmendiman (Lovett junior Sean Smith), an inventor who claims he is the missing name, but the audience soon realizes that his mouth is louder and more productive than his inventions. But with the help of The Visitor (Lovett freshman Patrick Young), an Elvis-esque songwriter from the future, the cast is given some insight into the identity of the third genius, who is revealed later in the play.

In their quest through the unknown, Picasso and Einstein come to realize what they have in common — neither man's ideas fall under

conventional beliefs of the time. They recognize that both theories and art help to rationalize the indefinite, and in that respect, both are beautiful.

Martin has constructed a play of ceaseless laughs, but the plot lacks some fluidity and consistency. Sometimes the lack of action makes the constant stream of wit seem lackluster, so some of the jokes are not fully realized. But Martin has packed enough punch in his script for laughs every minute. For instance, Einstein remarks, "A triangle with four points is what Euclid rides into hell."

Lovett junior Adriana Ramirez directs the play and has put together an energetic show full of talented actors. There are some fabulous standouts, including Cogswell, with his striking stage presence; Doctrow, with his flawless accent and meditative inflection; and Gurba, who brings a startling honesty and charm to her seductive role. The production staff made a smart decision to create an intimate setting in the Lovett Undergrounds. The audience is unsettlingly close to the actors, but the intimacy is appropriate, since Martin crosses the mythic "fourth wall" throughout the play and connects with the audience on several occasions.

Behind Martin's familiar silliness and a script full of zany tangents lies a backbone of reality. The play is a clever commentary on what is considered real and whose opinion makes it so. The characters emerge anew in the end after they "say good-bye to the age of indifference ... hello ... to the age of regret."

I highly recommend a trip to Picasso at the Lapin Agile, for you will neither forget nor regret such an entertaining spectacle.



[Back to top](#)

Other arts & entertainment stories

- [New films look promising](#)
- [The Israel-Palestine conflict personified in 'Dirty Story'](#)
- [You can't keep a dead man down](#)

News

- [24 faculty promoted](#)
- [Buckyballs may be harmful](#)
- [Envision, Janus winners start projects](#)
- [IT seeks feedback on CCA program improvements](#)
- [Loop section to be closed during summer](#)
- [Scholar speaks on effect of Brown case](#)
- [Seniors consider work alternatives as hiring improves but remains slow](#)
- [Three colleges announce four new resident associates](#)
- [Trustees approve Rice sustainability policy](#)
- [Will Rice to receive \\$1.35 million in summer capital improvements](#)
- [Year-old Faculty Council athletics report released](#)

Sports

- [Baseball batters Bulldogs](#)
- [Club water polo sinks state competition at UH](#)
- [College Sports Roundup](#)
- [Men's tennis drops a pair](#)
- [Owls head to Texas Relays](#)
- [Owls to play Nevada](#)
- [Sports Notebook](#)
- [Tennis hopes to convert against Boise, BYU](#)
- [Women's track wins Bayou Classic](#)

Opinion

- [Diversity at Rice should be more than skin deep](#)
- [Faculty needs facts to justify calendar change](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- [Passion unable to escape religious roots](#)
- [Position will allow focus on environmental issues](#)
- [Take faculty athletic report for what it is](#)
- [U.S youth deserve more from pro athletes](#)

Copyright © 2004-6 The Rice Thresher

[Archives](#) [About Us](#) [Subscribe](#) [Advertise](#) [Contact us](#) [RSS](#)