

# Audiences are bound to love 'McManus in Love'

By **Ivan M. Lincoln**

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**McMANUS IN LOVE**, continues tonight (Friday) at the Provo Tabernacle at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday at 8 p.m. at the Ellen Eccles Theatre in Logan, and Tuesday-Saturday, March 18-22, at 7:30 p.m. at the Off Broadway Theatre, 272 S. Main, Salt Lake City (also one matinee on March 22 at 2 p.m.). All seats for all performances and venues are \$12.50 for adults and \$8 for youths 16 and under. For reservations, call 752-0026 in Logan or 355-4628 for the OBT performances. Tickets for the Provo performance will be available at the door. Running time: 2 hours, 15 minutes (one intermission).

Timing is everything in the world of stand-up comedy. And Tim Behrens — the voice of Patrick F. McManus, et al. — has his comic timing down, well . . . down pat.

Drawing on an incredible array of vocal inflections, physical gestures and facial expressions, Behrens recreates more than a dozen characters from McManus' hilarious essays. McManus himself has an imagination as fertile as an Idaho potato farm.

You don't have to be privy to the author's earlier works to enjoy this production.

(Speaking of privy . . . there were a couple of stories with outhouse connections, but don't worry, this is a clean, family show).

The setting for McManus' mirthful mayhem is Blight, Idaho — one of those tiny little places where time probably stands still. But not life. Certainly not when two rambunctious kids like Pat and his best friend, Crazy Eddie Muldoon, are on the loose.

I don't know when they have time for school (and Pat admits to going through the second grade at least twice), when there are dreams to be followed. Such as . . .

. . . training the skunk trapped in Herbert Muldoon's tool shed (a kid could get fabulously wealthy selling tickets) . . . wondering if Herbert will ever return from chasing Lightning, their not-quite-domesticated horse, across the countryside . . . the huckleberry-picking expedition that turns into "The Night the Bear Ate Goombaw" . . . and the incredible, life-changing experience when Eddie and Pat decide to pursue girls instead of becoming mountain men.

The pursuit of girls, and the awkwardness

and angst of the dreaded First Date is the central theme running (amok) through "McManus in Love." (This is the one experience that will warp your personality forever. Behrens warned one young Ogden lad.)

The evening's laugh quotient is almost off the chart as Behrens darts through the boys' search for meaningful advice on dating. Their choices of counselors may be questionable, though — such dubious folks as lecherous Cousin Buck and aromatic Rancid Crabtree, himself the subject of a wild experiment in ice-fishing on Lake Blight.

Behrens' outrageous comedy leads up to the Double Date From Hell: Pat and Eddie taking Melba Peachbottom and Mary Beth Cannon to Blight's premiere showhouse, the Pandora Theatre, where a Randolph Scott western has suddenly been switched to a preview of "Dracula" (but "The Fly" may have been more appropriate).

Author McManus has a huge and fiercely loyal following, and Behrens does a bang-up job in bringing his characters to life.

Miss Manners might not like the advice dispensed here, but Will Rogers would.