

arts

Huston's latest features a Deep South setting

By Tom Moore

Wise Blood

There isn't a sane character in *Wise Blood* and that's what makes the movie quite hilarious. Adapted faithfully I'm told—I haven't read the book—from Flannery O'Connor's first novel *Wise Blood* is the story of Hazel Motes, an army veteran who comes home to the Georgia sticks to found his own church. Sick of the fear tactics of fire and brimstone fundamentalism, Hazel decides to create his own religion which he entitles the Church of Christ Without Christ. Preaching his gospel on the city streets Hazel gets entangled in the lives of several other lunatics—a sidewalk preacher who fakes blindness (Harry Dean Stanton) and his sex-starved daughter (Amy Wright), a lonely zookeeper (Daniel Shore) and a shyster evangelical merchandiser (Ned Beatty).

Wise Blood is directed by John Huston and though it doesn't quite measure up to his greatest films—*The Maltese Falcon*, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, *The African Queen* and *The Man Who Would Be King*—*Wise Blood* ranks with the best American features to come out in the last couple of years.

The flaws in the film would seriously mar it if *Wise Blood* weren't so damned funny. The alteration from the zany tone that has gone on for 70 minutes or so to the tragic ending doesn't work at all because nothing has prepared you for it. *Wise Blood's* musical soundtrack is horrendous. Using splashes of "The Tennessee Waltz," it sounds like a bad cross between Muzak and the music that underscores shoddy television dramas.

cinema

And several of the local actors that Huston uses in bit parts give stilted performances that draw too much attention to themselves. Huston shot *Wise Blood* on location in Macon, Georgia and used a number of area residents in the movie. Most of them are quite good; I've never seen so many great redneck performances in any film. This includes not just the local yokels but also the professionals that Huston uses. The major performers in *Wise Blood* never overplay their roles, which is quite amazing because their crazy Southern Gothic parts would

be so easy to overplay.

Under just about any other director the actors would have muffed up their roles, but Huston has a special aptitude for lunacy (which he displayed best in *Beat The Devil*). Although all the major performances are quite good, there are three real standout performances from Brad Dourif, who played the stuttering Billy Bibbit in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*, Harry Dean Stanton and Ned Beatty. Dourif plays Hazel Motes with just enough sullen zeal that he becomes believable. Ned Beatty and Harry Dean Stanton have long specialized in playing rednecks on the screen (their rural accents have more or less kept them typecast) and though neither is on screen in *Wise Blood* very long they manage to create memorable roles as two preachers who are attracted to religion only because of its monetary rewards.

Funny as it is, *Wise Blood* isn't a film that everyone will enjoy. The constant joking about Jesus and religion could be a big turn-off for many. If you don't get a few chuckles out of early Sunday morning gospel fare on television or those country preachers who hurl apocalyptic jeremiads from the radio then you probably should avoid *Wise Blood*. But if those things make you guffaw, then *Wise Blood* is a must to see.

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Union free flick schedule offers variety and escape

By Tom Moore

Summer school can get quite monotonous—the same classes every day. The Carolina Union for the first summer session has scheduled several films as pleasant diversions from the rigors of academic life. The films, mostly light stuff, include something for just about all the various tastes on campus.

Several comedies are scheduled. *Animal House* director John Landis' *Kentucky Fried Movie*, an irreverent series of skits satirizing such diverse topics as kung fu movies and TV commercials, is scheduled for May 26.

Adam's Rib with Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn as husband and wife lawyers who must face each other in the courtroom shows May 28. *Uptown Saturday Night*, with Sidney Poitier and Bill Cosby as a pair of gamblers who hire detective Richard Pryor to recover a stolen lottery ticket, will show June 1. Woody Allen's *Sleeper* is scheduled for June 2, and Mel Brooks' *Young Frankenstein* will show June 11. Peter Sellers at his bumbling best in *The Return Of The Pink Panther* will close out the first session films on June 20.

And several action/adventure films are scheduled for the first session. Jane Fonda, in the

role that won her an Academy Award, will be threatened with the possibility of being murdered in *Klute* scheduled for May 30. James Bond, in *The Spy Who Loved Me*, scheduled for June 6, sets out to stop a fiendish shipping magnate who wishes to destroy the world. Private detective John Shaft takes on a dangerous kidnapping case in *Shaft* which shows June 9. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* shows June 15. *Wizards*, Ralph Bakshi's animated film about a power struggle among elves is scheduled for June 16.

For lovers of musicals *My Fair Lady*, the winner of eight Academy Awards including best picture, is scheduled for June 8. And for those who love to weep at wartime love stories *Hanover Street*, with Lesley-Anne Down torn between Harrison Ford and Christopher Plummer, is scheduled for June 18.

And Jack Nicholson fans have been amply provided for during the first session with the booking of *Easy Rider* for June 4 and *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* for June 13.

All summer free flicks are shown at 8:30 p.m. on the days listed in Great Hall of the Carolina Union. Admission is by UNC ID or Union Staff Privilege Card.

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