

Latest Simon comedy a repeat of past flops

By TODD DAVIS
Staff Writer

Rolling off the Hollywood assembly line, *Max Dugan Returns* is the latest Neil Simon romantic comedy package with the usual contents of actress Marsha Mason (Simon's wife, who has appeared in five Simon movies) and director Herbert (The *Goodye Girl*) Ross. The only thing worth buying in this Simon package is Jason Robard's performance. Everything else in the movie should be shipped back to the complaint department.

Review

The story resembles a bad TV sitcom more than a movie or even a Simon play. Marsha Mason plays a poor, widowed English teacher with a teenage son. The struggling family lives a happy if middle-class life in sunny Venice, Calif., until Mason's car is stolen.

Enter supercop Donald Sutherland as the WASP next door to file a stolen vehicle report. After trading literary jokes (?) about Thackeray and Austen, Mason and Sutherland fall madly in love.

Next to enter the picture is Max Dugan (Robard's), Mason's long-gone father, who mysteriously returns with \$687,000 which is sort of stolen. Con man Robard is dying and offers all his loot to Mason to spend his final weeks with his grandson. Mason is hesitant about the deal but likes the cash and the presents it brings — like a 1982 Mercedes Benz.

The conflicts in the movie proceed as Mason protects her criminal father

from her supercop lover and protects her son from his grandfather's jaded past while at the same time she protects herself from getting too carried away with all the money. The plot sounds like a screwball comedy but has all the comic pace and wit of a steamroller stuck in a tarpit.

Simon is the one to blame for a show-biz-slick story which makes no impression. The characters are weak. There are no funny lines unless names like Spinoza or Wittgenstein can be called funny. The setting in Southern California is too trendy, especially in a little league scene where Venice plays Hollywood. Simon's deepest theme in the movie is that middle class consumer products can buy happiness.

Although the stars don't have much to work with, they don't even try, except for Robard's. Mason just frets and frets with little credibility or emotion. Sutherland is all bland and all WASP and seems to be acting still in the heavy *Ordinary People* rather than a light romantic comedy.

The only redeeming feature of the whole production is Jason Robard's cagey portrayal of con man Max Dugan. Robard puts as much as he can into his role while still being mysterious, as he has done with characters like Dash Hammet in *Julia* or Howard Hughes in *Melvin and Howard*. If it were not for Robard, Simon would have a major comic tragedy on his hands, like his recent failures *Only When I Laugh* or *I Ought To Be In Pictures*.

The direction by Herb Ross is competent but not inspired, with most scenes composed of faces in rooms without much to say.

Fine Arts Festival showcases artistic talent

By DAVID SCHMIDT
Assistant Arts Editor

The 12 days of Christmas feature ladies dancing and lords a-leaping, but they cannot compare to the variety of artists, designers and writers — as well as dancers — appearing during the 12 days of the Fine Arts Festival.

Filmmaker Les Blank, photographer Bruce Davidson, artist William Bailey and designer R. Buckminster Fuller are scheduled to present major programs. Although "these are the people we are proud of as a group," FAF chairperson Rachael Horowitz said, "everyone has their personal favorite. There will be at least the views of 25 people represented."

Filmmaker Paul Morrissey opens the festival Tuesday with a lecture and film presentation including *Heat* and *Trash*, which he made with Andy Warhol in the early '70s. He will premiere his latest film, *Forty Deuce*, that night.

Joan Jonas brings her mixed-media performance to the stage Wednesday when she presents *He Saw Her Burning*, a meditation on popular culture and the mass media. Along with composer Steve Reich, "as far as performance goes and as far as music goes, they're our most extreme in those areas," Programming Chairperson Adrian Biddell said.

Two old friends meet for a heated discussion on "Words" Saturday. Filmmaker Stan Brakhage and UNC alumnus Lawrence Ferlinghetti will be appearing together before an audience for the first time, Biddell said.

Judith Shea and Richard Flood, whom Biddell called "two very hot or of-this-moment New York types," will participate in a panel discussion Sunday titled "At This Moment: Current Art and Its Public."

Architect Gerald Li, who helped design the new art department building, will discuss contemporary issues in architec-

ture with *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger on Monday.

Ellen Webb, an experimental choreographer, will perform three separate dances April 12 relating the way movement is captured in photos, juxtaposing street and dance movements, and developing the movements and postures of ancient sculpture. She will conduct a workshop the next day.

Webb said during a phone interview that she had toured college campuses before journeying to Europe two years ago. "The main thing is to share what I do with people, to have people see it," she said. "This sounds like it's going to be pretty much fun."

Artist Richard Nonas gives a slide lecture of his recent work April 13. "He's going to be constructing a sculpture for the campus," Publicity Chairperson Martha Nichols said. "I saw one of his at Dartmouth College, and it was very interesting."

Photographers Davidson and Tod Papageorge arrive April 14 and 15. "I think it's really good that we got two photo-realists to contrast and compare," Biddell said. "You're not getting a biased view."

Fuller, the 85-year-old designer of the geodesic dome and dymaxion car who amazed even Albert Einstein, is scheduled to visit Memorial Hall on April 16 and talk about design. The subject of *Who's Who's* longest entry is very controversial, Biddell said. "He's a character. He talks about big things, big themes."

Overall, Biddell said he felt a good mixture of past and contemporary artists are appearing for the festival. Simply put, Nichols said, "We're ecstatic!"

For more information, an FAF publicity center offering free coffee will be in the Pit from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. beginning Tuesday.

Festival schedule includes writers, designers and more

By DAVID SCHMIDT
Assistant Arts Editor

Tennyson wrote that in spring a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of love. This may change Tuesday when the 1983 Fine Arts Festival raises its curtains and takes center stage.

"Let's take these 12 days in April and make them a time to turn to the arts," FAF Chairperson Rachael Horowitz said. "It's the most important thing happening this year."

The festival is an educational campus showcase for nationwide artistic talent. This year's FAF focuses on the visual arts "because it hasn't been done before," Horowitz said. "Artists don't normally leave their studios, so people don't normally get to see them."

Festival plans began two years ago when Horowitz—the only returning member of the 1981 FAF committee—worked on a budget and finances. She said the Campus Governing Council awarded the festival \$18,390 but added that the actual amount increased to \$25,000 when the committee solicited funds from patrons on campus and in the community.

The CGC periodically evaluates the festival's progress, but "essentially they let me go with it," Horowitz said. "I'd say it's the only controlling body, but it's a financial relationship more than anything else."

"We are funded by student funds for the most part," said Programming Chairman Adrian Biddell. "We're lucky we got a good budget to be able to do this."

Without the FAF, few artistic VIPs would visit UNC. That spells trouble, according to Horowitz. "The College of Arts and Sciences isn't giving the individual departments enough money to bring in speakers," she said. "It's a major crime if you consider that the responsibility to bring in speakers rests on a bunch of undergraduates."

Some 30 undergraduates in the art, dramatic art, English, music and RTVMP departments joined the FAF staff in August. In order to test their potential motivation, Horowitz threw down scrapbooks from past festivals. She said the students pored over them and have been extremely enthusiastic ever since.

The heads of five subcommittees then formed an executive committee, and students wrote personable letters to personal favorites they wanted to see. They accepted artists who replied favorably to the offers. Horowitz also asked that the artists take the time to acquaint themselves with the personality of the University.

Getting the individual departments to cooperate was not so easy. "I had an incredible experience in realizing

there's competition between departments for money that belongs to the school as a whole," Horowitz said. "It was like watching a mini-Roman Empire, a war."

She realizes this is a university, she said. Although the events should automatically stimulate many students of the liberal arts, Horowitz said the committee sought artists with general collegiate appeal whose works are accessible.

"I'd like to think there are people in Carroll Hall who are going to show up for some of these things," she said. "Hearing a writer read his works is as important as sitting in the library for that hour."

Horowitz also emphasized the quantity of artists scheduled to appear without sacrificing quality by avoiding "a lot of people who call themselves artists and have nothing to say."

Carolina students seem to have plenty to say and want to hear more, for Horowitz said she was absolutely shocked by the large audiences which greeted Robert Bly and Annie Dillard in March. Both writers appeared in FAF preliminary events.

"I hope they (the students) at least get the inspiration to respond to what they're exposed to — at best the understanding that this program has to continue at this university," Horowitz said.

Spanky's offered vacations to help Muscular Dystrophy Association

By JANE OSMENT
Staff Writer

When Spanky's owner Mickey Ewell decided to give something besides food to his customers, many people profited.

UNC student Betsy Ash won a trip to Washington.

Andy Hack, president of a computer software firm in Chapel Hill, won a vacation to Myrtle Beach.

The Muscular Dystrophy Association received money for their campaign.

And hundreds of Carolina students and Chapel Hill residents enjoyed two big parties: the George

Washington's Birthday Celebration and the St. Patrick's Day Celebration, both held recently at Spanky's.

Ash and Hack were probably the most excited. Each won drawings for weekend trips for two with transportation and lodging paid for by Spanky's.

"I've never won anything before!" Ash, a fifth-year pharmacy student from Huntington, N.Y., said the day after she won her trip to Washington.

"When they drew my name, I was really shocked. Then I just felt fantastic," she said.

Hack, who won a trip to Myrtle Beach, seemed a little more subdued.

"I feel pretty good," was all he said after his name was drawn at the St. Patrick's Day party

March 17. However, Hack's silence was partly because he could hardly speak over the cheers and congratulations of friends who were with him.

Friends with Ash at the Washington's Birthday Celebration were also excited by being with a winner.

"I immediately had a lot of volunteers to be the second person going with me on the trip," Ash said. She chose her roommate Barbara Haight, of Newton.

At the St. Patrick's Day party, Hack was still undecided about who would go with him to Myrtle Beach, but like Ash, he had many volunteers.

Spanky's had standing room only that evening, and many of the people were willing to share

Hack's good fortune.

The people at Spanky's that evening were not only out for their own benefit, however. They were also supporting the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

One dollar of every St. Patrick's Day T-shirt and 10 cents of every green beer sold went to the MDA, and, consequently, sales of those items were high.

Besides supporting a good cause, Ewell gave other reasons for the St. Patrick's Day Celebration.

"It's fun to do special events," he said. "It makes people think of Spanky's as more than a

restaurant and bar. They think of it as a fun place to be.

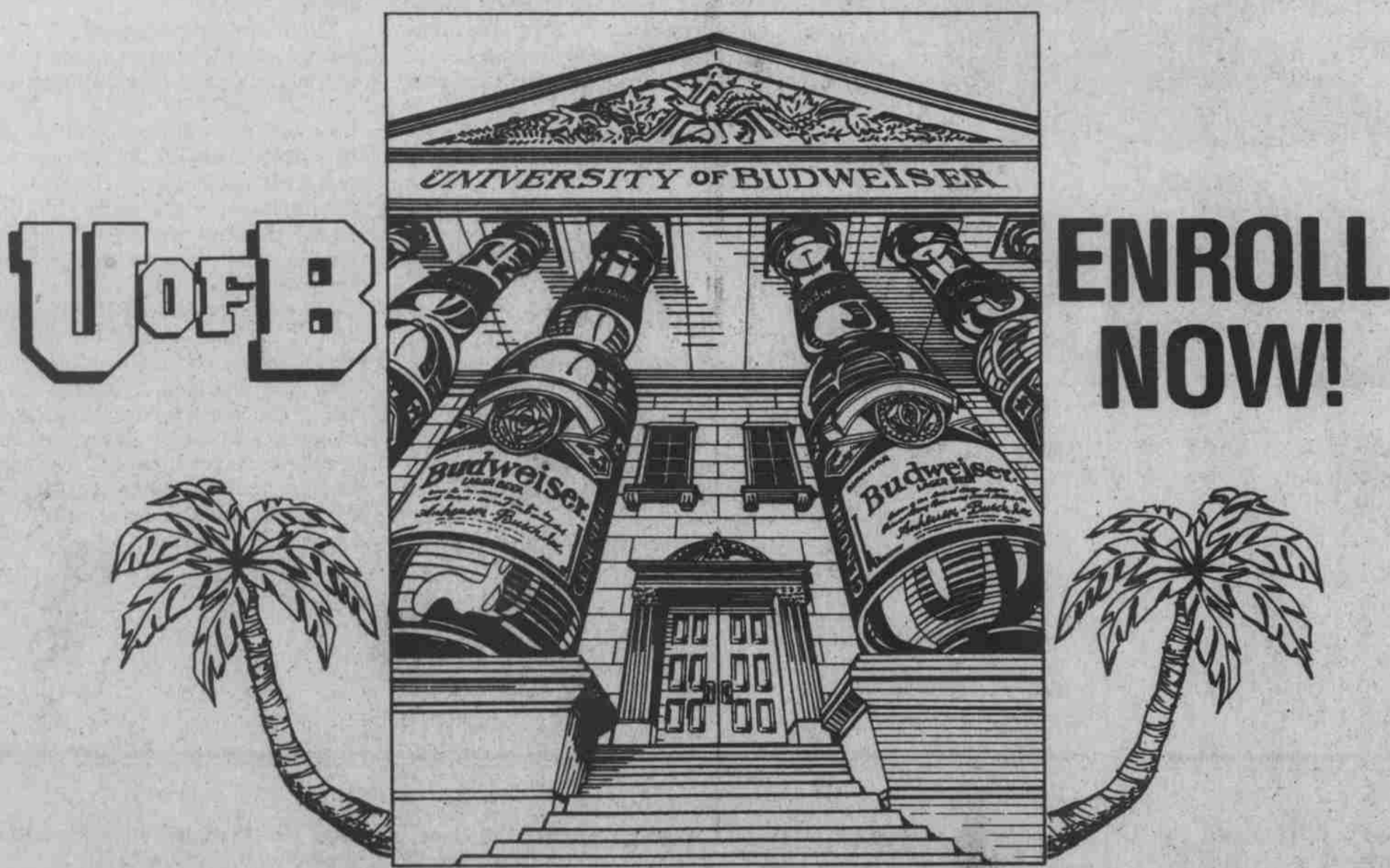
"The people of Chapel Hill like to have a good time. They like an excuse to have a party."

Ash and her roommate traveled to Washington March 18.

"It was great!" Ash said. Among other things, the two attended a Senate meeting, shopped in the Watergate hotel and dined at a champagne brunch.

"The flight up was kind of rough, though. We were still pretty tired from the Spanky's St. Patrick's Day party we went to the night before we left."

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