

'Moscow' shows humor and pathos

An American stars as a Russian immigrant. A Venezuelan plays his Italian girlfriend. And Munich doubles for Moscow.

This cultural jumble stands at the heart of Paul Mazursky's new film *Moscow on the Hudson*, a double-edged comic look at the modern American melting pot.

Robin Williams plays Vladimir Ivanoff, a saxophone player in a Russian circus. Sick of Moscow's endless waiting lines for toilet paper and shoes, of feeling like "an artist without wings" because of KGB pressure, he defects during a New York City circus tour.

The setting for Ivanoff's defection is Bloomingdale's, a site also used in the recent *Splash*. In both films the department store seems to symbolize the height of American culture. One Russian tourist gushes delightedly about the place, "More decadence!"

After sketching a grim, gray Moscow, Mazursky lets his camera spin like a giddy top through the so-called corruption of NYC: fleshy Calvin Klein ads, breakdancers, mohawks.

In satiric contrast to the reverential portraits of Lenin in Moscow, one billboard stands out, depicting Abraham Lincoln wearing headphones.

The sequence recalls Nicholas Meyer's *Time After Time*, in which Victorian H.G. Wells acquaints himself with modern San Francisco. Even if it's no more original than a mirror, it's an amusing look at our skewed society.

This could be said for the entire movie. The pace and editing are smooth, and the acting is fine. Robin Williams is particularly good, delivering a warm, sustained performance and a believable Russian accent.

The Italian girlfriend, Lucia, is played by Maria Conchita Alonso. Cleavant Derricks portrays Lionel, the black Bloomingdale's security guard who gives Ivanoff a place to stay. And

Steve Murray

Review

Alejandro Rey handles the part of the defector's Cuban lawyer.

These three characters and actors provide a strong support group for Ivanoff/Williams as he discovers jazz bands, bars and a collection of jobs ranging from busboy to street vendor.

Luckily, Mazursky doesn't make the crowd-pleasing mistake of setting Ivanoff down on the sure-fire, get-rich-quick path of the American dream. Ivanoff struggles with the new country and soon comes to realize that his boast, "I'm free like a bird," is easily shot down.

He can get a job and pay his own way, but he learns that emotional freedom isn't bought, and loneliness can't be drowned by the wail of his sax.

At times, Mazursky overstates his message to the point of lecturing on the abuse of freedom. And sometimes his symbolism and plot devices are too obvious.

Ivanoff's first pair of American shoes, for instance, are made in Italy. He rides the Liberty Lines bus. And he loses his girlfriend and faith in America simultaneously (and temporarily).

Still, the message is important, and the movie is pleasant. Maybe it's too pleasant. Like a circus mirror, it throws back a funny image of the world.

By making his film so smooth and entertaining, Mazursky runs the risk of letting audiences walk away believing the *mirror* is distorted, not the world itself.



Robin Williams is a Russian who learns about life in the U.S. in 'Moscow on the Hudson'

Zemeckis finds success with 'Romancing'

Once upon a time there was a screenwriter-director named Robert Zemeckis. His first feature film, 1977's *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, was a masterful comic send-up of Beatlemania that was every bit as good as *A Hard Day's Night* itself.

Ed Brackett

Review

Then something went wrong. In 1980 he co-scripted Steven Spielberg's megabomb *1941*. A year later Zemeckis hit rock bottom as director and co-writer of the dismal, idiotic *Used Cars*. The once-promising filmmaker now seemed destined for obscurity.

Zemeckis' latest directorial offering, *Romancing the Stone*, represents a reversal of this trend. The movie is no *Citizen Kane*, mind, but it is nevertheless a light, well-paced comedy-adventure.

Romance novelist Joan Wilder, played by Kathleen Turner, leaves New York City and heads for Cartagena, Colombia, where her sister is being held for ransom by a couple of small-time American hoods, Ralph (Danny DeVito) and Ira (Jack Norman).

What Ralph and Ira want from Joan is the treasure map her brother-in-law mailed to her shortly before he was murdered

by Zolo, a crooked Colombian cop who is privy to the secret of the treasure but does not know where it is buried.

Arriving in Colombia, homebody Joan takes the wrong bus and winds up in the middle of a huge jungle instead of in Cartagena. There she meets jungle-wise adventurer Jack Colton (Michael Douglas), who, for a fee, promises to take her back to civilization.

Meanwhile, Ralph and Ira continue to hold Joan's sister, and Zolo stalks Joan and Jack in his quest for the map. Jack soon discovers the existence of the map himself, and the ensuing romance between he and Joan raises the question: What is Jack after, Joan or the treasure (a gem called "El Corazon")?

The script, written by Diane Thomas (an aspiring romance novelist herself and until now a waitress in Los Angeles), travels at a quicksilver pace, and

Zemeckis' direction moves right along with it. Inundated with a mixture of action and light-hearted self-criticism, *Romancing the Stone* never reverts to the wow-look-at-me heroics of its distant celluloid cousin, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Kathleen Turner, in only her third film, does nothing to dispel or downplay her sexual on-screen persona, which she developed with her sizzling debut in *Body Heat*. Although she keeps her clothes on in this movie, Turner's latent sensuality is nevertheless apparent.

Michael Douglas proves himself an apt foil for Turner's talent, and he has all the suavity and sophistication of his old man, Kirk. He does, however, have a tendency to overact a bit.

Clearly the funniest cast member is the diminutive Danny DeVito, formerly Louie of television's *Taxi*. Much of the "comedy" part of this comedy-adventure comes from him.

Even though its ending is somewhat predictable and its content is less than earth-shattering, *Romancing the Stone* emerges as a no-holds-barred story racing to its finish. And for the most part, it's a race worth watching.

'Reuben' combines comedy, sensitivity

What can be said about a film whose main character is a boozing poet who seduces middle-aged nymphomaniacs and is finally defeated by a livid dentist and a hairy sheepdog? One thing — *Reuben, Reuben* is the year's best film, a film with more wit and sensitivity than *The Big Chill* and *Terms of Endearment* combined, and a character study that actually explores its character.

Steve Carr

Review

In another scene, a housewife undoes her bra, whereupon Conti wickedly compares her breasts to hanging men. Conti manages to leave New England in shambles, but he also reveals a certain self-loathing that is crucial to the plot.

The rest of the cast, while not as well known as Conti, is very effective. The players practically match Conti in their depth and control. Standouts are Joel Fabiani giving the definitive portrayal of middle-class revenge and E. Katherine Kerr as his voracious wife.

The people behind the camera read like a *Who's Who* of film. Robert Ellis Miller is most famous for the television plays he directed during the 1950s. While his theatrical output leaves something to be desired, *Reuben, Reuben* is an adroit mix of the outrageous and the subtle. Conti's suicide and train scenes are particularly

bathroom where he breaks down into tears.

In another scene, a housewife undoes her bra, whereupon Conti wickedly compares her breasts to hanging men. Conti manages to leave New England in shambles, but he also reveals a certain self-loathing that is crucial to the plot.

The rest of the cast, while not as well known as Conti, is very effective. The players practically match Conti in their depth and control. Standouts are Joel Fabiani giving the definitive portrayal of middle-class revenge and E. Katherine Kerr as his voracious wife.

The people behind the camera read like a *Who's Who* of film. Robert Ellis Miller is most famous for the television plays he directed during the 1950s. While his theatrical output leaves something to be desired, *Reuben, Reuben* is an adroit mix of the outrageous and the subtle. Conti's suicide and train scenes are particularly

well-handled.

Walter Shenson was responsible for bringing Peter Sellers to public attention and also produced the two Beatles films, *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* Although *Reuben, Reuben* looks like a modest film, it uses every bit of its resources and location. Some of the film was shot at the Earl Owensby Studios in Shelby, N.C.

The real star of the film, aside from Conti, is veteran writer Julius J. Epstein, who worked on such classics as *Casablanca* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Epstein manages to blend a character study with a satire on American mores. Usually the two genres work at odds with each other, but Epstein skillfully manipulates them so they complement each other.

The secret of *Reuben, Reuben* is its script. The suburbanites who inhabit the region are little more than cardboard cutouts. Conti takes pot shots at them and we laugh.

Conti's character, however, is a real one, and we are made to identify with his isolation, his creative impotence, his rampage through American culture. The characters make us identify all the more with Conti, and his viewpoint is what gives the film its drive and emotion.

Why take a Chance?

This fall Granville Towers begins its 20th year of service to UNC-CH. Our reputation is established as COMPLETE student housing, and THE PLACE TO BE AT UNC.

Our 1984-1985 rate of \$13.79 per day includes EVERYTHING:

- 19 meals per week while classes are in session
- Super location
- Furnished room with all utilities including AC
- Weekly maid service
- And, of course, active social programming

The price is right, and so is everything else
Come let us show you



Granville Towers

—Where Convenience is Standard—
Applications still available for fall.
University Square 929-7143

THE ATLANTIC AND THE PACIFIC, THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND CAPE COD...

THE DARK AGES, THE GULF OF MEXICO, NOVA SCOTIA, NEW YORK...

PING!

THAT'S IT, MA'AM... MY HEAD IS FULL!!

BLOOM COUNTY
by Berke Breathed

I SIGH... I GUESS YOU'RE STILL DOING THE SAME THING FOR A LIVING, AREN'T YOU?

YOU KNOW I STILL HAVE A LAW PRACTICE, MA.

WELL, A MOTHER CAN ALWAYS HOPE.

I MEAN, REALLY... MAKING MONEY BY KEEPING RAPESTS AND MURDERERS OUT OF JAIL... WHERE WOULD SUCH A NICE, RESPECTABLE, UPPER-CLASS BOY HAVE GOTTEN THE NOTION FOR SUCH A LIFE?

OH STEVE... I PRAY YOU'LL GO TO TRUCK-DRIVING SCHOOL ONE DAY...

hair forever

106 Henderson St. (2nd Floor)
Directly above Hectors,
enter from Henderson St.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
967-CUTS (2987)

\$10.00 off perms \$10.00 off highlights
Expires April 30, 1984

SPECIALS HAIRCUTS

\$9.50

(reg. \$12.50)
with selected stylists

Please bring coupon

RALEIGH WOMEN'S HEALTH ORGANIZATION

ABORTIONS UP TO 12 WEEKS—\$195.00
FROM 13-14 WEEKS—\$300.00 15-16 WEEKS—\$400.00

—Pregnancy Tests—Birth Control—
—Problem Pregnancy Counseling—

For Further Information Call 832-0535 or 1-800-532-5384
917 West Morgan St., Raleigh, N.C. 27605

2 Terrific Films

VARSITY 1 & 2
EAST FRANKLIN
CHAPEL HILL 967-8665

ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS—
BEST SCREENPLAY - Julius J. Epstein
BEST ACTOR - Tom Conti

"A witty comedy with bittersweet bite!"
—Lead Amer. NEWSWEEK

Reuben, Reuben
filmed in North Carolina
A VARSITY EXCLUSIVE
3:00 • 5:00
7:00 • 9:10

Fri. & Sat. 11:45 **HAIR**

THE COMEDY SMASH OF THE YEAR!
TOM HANKS • DARYL HANNAH
EUGENE LEVY and JOHN CANDY

Splash
2:45
5:00
7:15
9:25


TAR HEEL SPORTS SHORTS

THIS WEEK:


TODAY: 3 PM BASEBALL vs. CAMPBELL

WEDNESDAY: 3 PM BASEBALL vs. WAKE FOREST
SOFTBALL vs. WINTHROP
8 PM LACROSSE vs. DUKE

FRIDAY: MEN'S GOLF—TAR HEEL INVITATIONAL




213 West Franklin St. &
1800 Chapel Hill-Durham Blvd.



IT'S TIME TO GET PHYSICAL!
Anytime's the right time to look great and feel better.
Why wait! Make this the best summer yet.

Join us at

THE GYM

Nautilus • Free weights • Aerobics • Free child care • Wet area

See how fun fitness can be!
CLIP THIS COUPON FOR ONE FREE WEEK!
Coupon valid with appointment only until April 30, 1984

one coupon per customer
Call 933-9249 503C West Main St., Carrboro