

'Dune' big with details, short on plot, direction

Details, details. The much-awaited *Dune* is full of them. Even so, its plot — the tried and true good-guys-versus-bad-guys scenario — is ostensibly simple.

Paul Atreides and his army, a pious group, battle the despicable Harkonnens on the faraway, arid planet of Arrakis, a.k.a. Dune. Their struggle involves the mining rights of a precious, somehow magical mineral contained in strata far below Dune's endless mountains of sand.

How despicable are *Dune's* villains? The Baron, leader of the Harkonnens, makes Darth Vader look like Mister Rogers. A homely, bloated slob who prefers flying in his hover-suit to walking, the Baron delights in smearing others' blood on his face in between watching Atreides's crusaders die.

Just as hateful are the Baron's two sidekicks. One of them thrusts his sword at Paul with devilish fervor; the other crushes heads at will, using only one hand. Both, like the Baron, despise defeat, however minor.

But so does the heroic, noble Paul. He and his underground-dwelling legion, equipped with special suits that sustain them on the bone-dry terrain, must avenge the earlier (and schizophrenically shown) defeat of another army, which was led by Paul's father.

Dune tries to cover far too much ground in only 2½ hours. In fact, the wealth of characters and events depicted forms the framework of at least two separate, self-contained films.

In making the movie *Dune*, director David Lynch's main problem was how to best edit the vivid elaborations that fill the book *Dune*, a classic work

Workshop considers educational needs

The Orange County Rainbow Coalition of Conscience will hold an education workshop Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Joseph CME Church at 510 W. Rosemary St.

The theme for the workshop is "Examining our Educational Needs as We Prepare To Move Into the Twenty-First Century."

Ed Brackett

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penned in 1965 by Frank Herbert. Regrettably, the finished product reveals an inadequate paring job by Lynch, who also wrote the screenplay.

Despite occasional displays of hokiness, *Dune's* special effects are worthy of Hollywood's post-2001 standards. Similarly, Anthony Masters's set design, an array of ornate palaces and desolate hideaways, enhances the story as it dazzles the eye.

Stage actor Kyle MacLachlan performs admirably as Paul Atreides in his film debut, backed by such veterans as Jose Ferrer as the emperor and Max Von Sydow as an ecologist. The remainder of the cast — including the oft-typecast Kenneth McMillan as the Baron, Francesca Annis as Paul's mother and rock singer Sting as the evil Feyd — weather the script's sea of superfluous information quite well.

Will sci-fi fans flock to *Dune*? Hard to say. Will Herbert fans? Probably, if for no other reason than to satisfy their curiosity.

Dune will likely thrill some and disappoint others, as if to demonstrate the *Doctor Who* syndrome: either you're completely enthralled by this richly constructed fantasy world, or you're completely indifferent to it.

Of course, *Dune* producers Dino De Laurentiis et. al. hope the former holds true. If it does, there's a good chance the sequel will be filmed at De Laurentiis's Wilmington film studios — North Carolina's much-envied connection to the major motion picture industry.

'Starman' proves worth phoning home about

A peace-loving alien lands on earth and befriends a lonely human, who helps him in his effort to return home before he dies or before some not-so-friendly feds nab him for experimentation. Sound familiar?

It should, because the plot of *Starman* was developed around the same time as that of *E.T.* After the phenomenal success of Steven Spielberg's film, Hollywood powers behind *Starman* were understandably reluctant to offer their extraterrestrial for comparison.

Fortunately, several years, screenplays and directors later, *Starman* finally has landed in the theaters, and it turns out that the voyage was worth the wait.

In a decided change for the better, director John Carpenter of *Halloween* fame steers away from the scary and toward sweetness in both subject matter and visual style.

The strength of *Starman*, however, hinges on a literally stellar performance by Jeff Bridges as the alien who clones himself from a lock of hair belonging to Jenny Hadden's dead husband.

For years Bridges has been turning in fine performances in cult films like *Thunderbolt and*

Ivy Hilliard

Review

Lightfoot and *Cutters Way*, and in otherwise unremarkable films like *Kiss Me Goodbye* and *Against All Odds*, but *Starman* gives him the chance to combine leading-man charisma with quirky characterization. Complete with birdlike mannerisms and halting speech, Bridges is utterly convincing as an alien still uncomfortable in his borrowed skin, and his performance deserves attention come Oscar time.

As the widow, Karen Allen is at her best since *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Both frightened and attracted by this alien in the familiar form of her beloved husband, Allen mixes her character's reactions skillfully. When she undertakes the cross-country drive to rendezvous with a spaceship and her reluctance eventually turns to love, the transformation makes a touching romance story.

Some great character parts and more than one amusing insight into human customs and contradictions liven up the journey that makes up most of the film. There is even something for Tar Heels in *Starman*, since UNC gets a brief plug during the film.

Starman lags when the plot turns toward the government meanies. Predictably, there is a villainous army officer (Richard Jaeckel), who wants the starman for dissection practice, and the well-meaning government flunkie (Charles Martin Smith) who switches sides due to his respect for all life. The film nearly takes a nose dive when this plot line takes screen time away from the intriguing alien himself.

Starman has its share of special effects. Most of these occur when the starman uses some mysterious pocket-size marbles that give him assorted superhuman powers. But the human story eclipses the technical wizardry and makes *Starman* more than an *E.T.* rip-off.

Although the film is almost totally predictable, Bridges and Allen make *Starman* something to phone home about.

UNC choral ensembles to hold auditions this week

Auditions for choral ensembles in the UNC department of music will be held during the first week of classes.

The department sponsors four choral groups; the Carolina Choir, the University Chamber Singers, the Women's Glee Club, and the Men's Glee Club.

The Carolina Choir, a 60-member mixed-voice ensemble, rehearses from 1 to 1:50 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Chamber Singers, a small group of advanced vocalists, rehearse from

3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 3 to 3:50 p.m. Wednesdays.

The Women's Glee Club rehearses from 3 to 3:50 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Men's Glee Club rehearses alone from 5 to 5:50 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays and joins with the Women's Glee Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Choir and Chamber Singers meet in Person Hall; the Glee Clubs

meet in 103 Hill Hall.

Undergraduate students may receive one hour of credit for participating in these ensembles. Graduate students earn 1½ hours of credit.

Larry Cook, director of choral activities, conducts the Choir and

Chamber Singers. Students who wish to audition for these groups should contact Cook immediately at 962-1093.

Michael Tante-Horan conducts the Glee Clubs. Students who wish to audition for these groups should contact Tante-Horan immediately at 962-5695.

'Vertigo' first of Student Union's free flicks

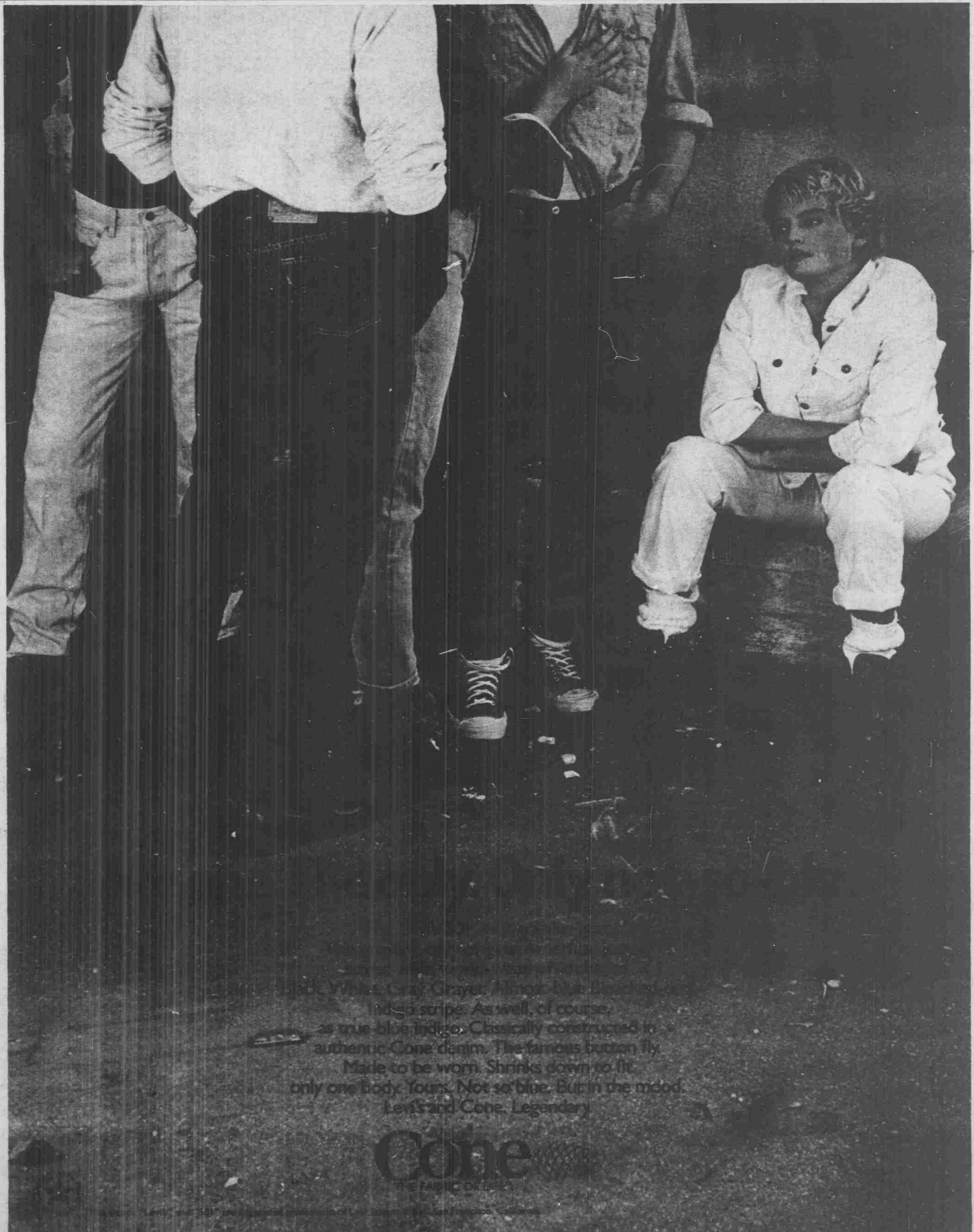
The Carolina Union film committee will begin this semester's run of "Free Flicks" tonight with screenings of *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 film,

starring James Stewart and Kim Novak, will be shown at 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. in the Union auditorium.

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