

Cinema

Poignant film allows son to say goodbye to father in 'Da'

Durham's Carolina Theatre is bidding the public a fond farewell with a film about saying goodbye, "Da." One would be hard pressed to think of a more appropriate film for the grand old theater to close its run of art and foreign films.

Friends of the Carolina need not mourn the loss of this progressive theater — it's just closing for three years of extensive renovations. Come 1991, the Carolina promises to be back on the Durham arts scene even better than before. Those with fond memories of this movie palace, and for that matter, those who have never been there before, may want to go to the Carolina for a final look at the place and enjoy a good little movie in the process.

"Da" is the screen version of Hugh Leonard's autobiographical play of the same name. Barnard Hughes in the title role and Martin Sheen star in this film about a son who tries to come to terms with his father's death. The film bends time and reality in magical ways to show the viewer a part of the grieving process which one goes through when saying goodbye to a loved one.

James Mills Cinema

Sheen is Charlie Tynan, a New York playwright, who travels back to Ireland for his father's funeral. While everyone is in the house paying their last respects, Charlie thinks he sees his father, or "Da" as he called him, among the guests. Since no one else notices Da there, Charlie tries to shake off this sight.

Once everyone has left, Da appears in the kitchen fixing tea and offering some fatherly advice. Later he appears in his favorite chair smoking his pipe and giving more advice. Charlie is so accustomed to seeing his father doing these things that he responds the way he always did — he argues with him. The fact that he's talking to a ghost doesn't faze him in the least.

A trip down memory lane follows as Charlie visits many of his old childhood haunts and goes through Da's belongings. Charlie relives events from his past and sees his life

in a different perspective. By film's end, Charlie has a new understanding of his father and of himself.

Matt Clark directed "Da" superbly. Through Charlie's eyes he distorts time and reality constantly, yet never confusing the viewer as to what is real and what is imagined. Perhaps that is because it all is real to Charlie.

Through Charlie's eyes, the viewer meets many people from his past — some dead and some still living. The importance of these people to Charlie and to Da becomes apparent. Charlie's long-deceased mother (Doreen Hepburn) comes to life through his memories. His first employer, Mr.

Drum (William Hickey), appears both in the past and in the present. The viewer even meets an 18-year-old Charlie, portrayed by promising newcomer Karl Hayden, who provides a view of what Charlie was actually like 30 years before.

With unique juxtapositions, the viewer is treated to some unusual scenes. When the adult Charlie leaves the house to go into town, he hears the voice of his dead mother, turns, and sees her coming toward him with a winter scarf to protect him in the cool, damp Irish weather. Mother places the scarf around his neck, and he leaves for town only to realize this

was all an illusion and he has no scarf on at all.

A touching but humorous scene finds the adult Charlie in a pub with Da and the young Charlie. The two Charlies begin arguing between themselves while Da tries to mediate. Finally the young Charlie tells the adult Charlie that he is not impressed with the way he turned out, much to the adult Charlie's anger. But the adult Charlie, while too proud to admit it, knows that the young Charlie is right.

And in another poignant scene,

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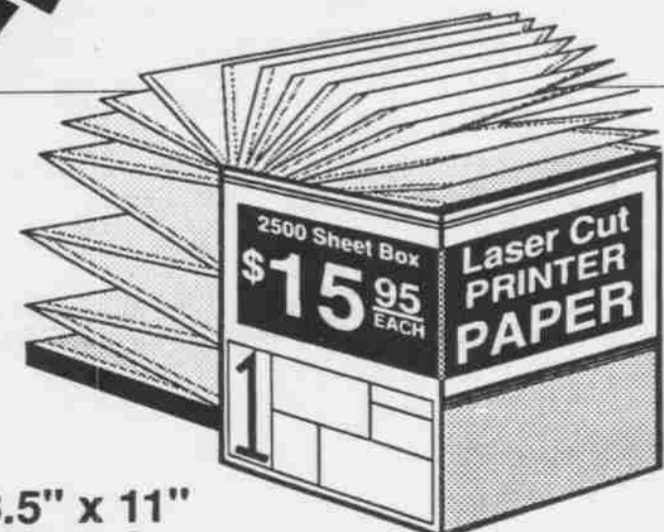
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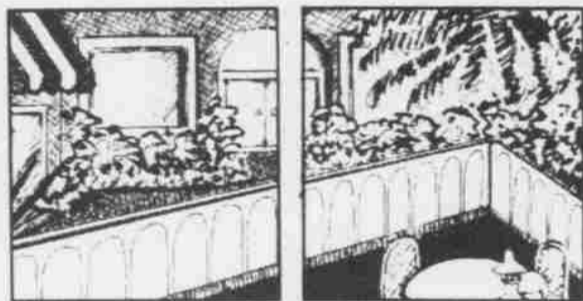
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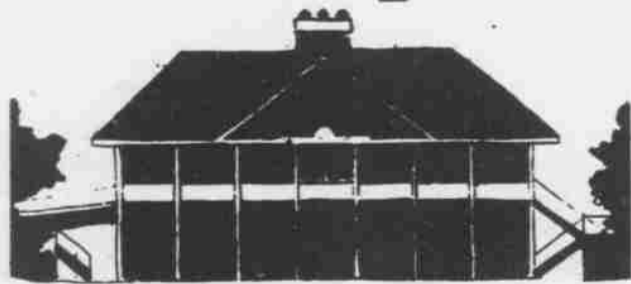


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