

# Cheap Films Attempt to Re-Crete Blockbusters

BY BRENT SIMON  
STAFF WRITER

I will begin with a confession of sorts: I am a movie whore. I freely admit that. But seek help? What are you, crazy? Movies are so much better than real life because they provide instant canned emotion. Any feeling you want, you can get. Life, on the other hand, is full of exams, campus elections and other irrelevancies. What a drag.

Now, perhaps I'm not the best person to be bringing this problem to the fore (after all, I actually liked "Regarding Henry" and "Bebe's Kids"), but the problem as I see it is that too many films these days are nothing but cheap, exploitive rehash and drivel that play upon the public's stupidity and — oh, wait a second, that's politics. At any rate, I wouldn't be quite as bothered if movies were better disguised garbage, but recently, Hollywood has been treating pride like Macaulay Culkin — "Home Alone," baby. First off, there are the obvious problems, namely the large number of cheap, rip-off movies with eerily familiar titles that go straight to video and star people like Shannon Tweed, Michael Lorenzo and Harry Hamlin. All it takes is one hit like "Fatal Attraction," "Basic Instinct" or (for argument's sake) "Body of Evidence." This, in turn, launches the careers of hundreds of non-talented, busty blondes (a rarity in California, I understand) in movies like "Body of Instinct," "Basic Instinct," "Bodies of Evidence," "Fatal Instinct," "Basically It's an Instinctive Attraction With Some Fatal Evidence," and of course, "Don't Tell Mom, The Babysitter's Dead." You can also run into trouble when someone else is renting for you, because when you tell them to pick up "One Good Cop," you'll end up with "Kindergarten Cop" or "Cop-Out."

Second, in addition to all the movies with similar titles and plots, there are the actors and actresses who don't help the situation by playing the same role in every movie in which they appear. For instance, what's the name of the movie where Anne Archer plays an overshadowed wife and winces a lot? "Fatal Attraction"? "Patriot Games"? "Clear and Present Danger"?

And what's that movie where Melanie Griffith plays a spunky, independent bimbo? Where Harvey Keitel bares his ass, yells a lot, and makes you wonder if he's mentally stable? Where Gene Hackman

and James Earl Jones show up long enough to say wise things to the main character before disappearing again? Where Willem Dafoe looks like the missing link between present day man and Homo erectus? Where Kevin Bacon's hair looks like he got drunk and went to SuperCuts?

Then, in addition to these problems, you also have to watch out for the Baldwin brothers (Alec, William, Stephen and Daniel) and the Carradine clan (John, David, Keith, Robert and O.J.). Just because one brother makes a name for himself, the others all think they can act, too. Suddenly, any schmuck with a cocky smirk and black hair is a Baldwin.

In case you were thinking otherwise, this "plague of sameness" extends beyond families and the movie plots themselves to talented (see first example) or marginally decent (see second example) actors that have their own little trademark quirks. Just try to stroll into your local video store and ask for the movie where Harrison Ford gets to blink emphatically, twitch his mouth and switch into his best "shocked indignation" mode ("You... you find that man! He took everything from me!").

I think they have a huge rack with all his films, right next to the "Sylvester Stallone as a Super-Patriotic Moron" section. Ohh, and what's the name of that movie where Julia Roberts is really annoying and stars with some wrinkled, tan, old guy who has more hair than all of Tibet? You want "Pretty Woman," but you'll get "Sleeping With the Enemy" or "I Love Trouble."

And finally there's Steven Seagal, who probably warrants an entire column of his own. He likes to confuse people even more by not only playing the same character in all of his films (a pseudo-sensitive, ponytailed psycho), but also by appearing in films that all have three-word titles. You know how it goes — (deep voice) Steven Seagal is... "Hard to Kill," "Out for Justice," "Above the Law" and "Short On Talent." Therefore, it should be painfully obvious to even the most infrequent moviegoer and the slowest of minds (see Mr. Seagal) that almost all movies are connected by these twisted, if somewhat hidden, similarities. This weekend, when your significant other tells you to run out and rent "Ghost" or "Terminator 2" for a nice evening at home, just pick up "Ghost in the Machine" or "D2: The Mighty Ducks" and tell them to deal with it.

# Bad Taste in Music Continues To Disturb Western Society

Okay, I give up. Of all the possible candidates, of all the gifted individuals who could have contributed their not inconsiderable talents to the event, why her?

Who the hell picked Diana Ross to sing at the Superbowl?

I mean, somewhere down the line, someone had to put her name on the list. "Mariah Carey? Nah — she doesn't look reptilian enough. Bruce Springsteen? Good idea, except she's had a hit single within the last three decades. We need someone hideous and with absolutely no following whatsoever... Wait! I've got it!"

I can just imagine the tension in the air as the half-time committee dialed up Diana's manager to see if she was still alive.

And that's just part of the problem. Bad judgment in musical selection has also spread to UNC's campus (and no, I'm not talking about WXYC. The Armenian Kazoo Quartet performing "Don't Worry, Be Happy" in Cantonese is a great musical selection, thank you very much). I'm talking about the artist (snicker) most recently chosen to play at the Smith Center.

Again, rather than picking a band with a strong following, or at least a recent album, someone decided on Rod Stewart. The man, who's last hit single was "Bro-

ken Arrow," will soon be asking audience members who else will be bringing them bottles of rain.

Now that I think about it, if my girlfriend was to bring me a gift consisting of broken arrows and bottles of rain, I would probably — out of simple human compassion for the handicapped — be forced to report her to Student Health (although not before ridiculing her in front of all her friends). And speaking of the handicapped, why do rednecks put bumper stickers depicting the rebel flag and the words "Keep it Flyin'" on their beat-up cars? The South lost the war pretty decisively, and it wasn't exactly a fluke. The North spent the war developing better weapons and medicine while Southern leaders were still working on difficult concepts like indoor plumbing and domesticated livestock.

But back to my point, bad taste in music is reaching a disturbing low in Western society. This is particularly frustrating, because we have very few musical alternatives: Eastern Music — How are these singers able to imitate the exact sounds produced by burning house cats? Are there various proficiency levels of cowbell playing? Classic Rock — The Beatles are grabbing hold of their instruments once again? I don't think so. They're so old, they can barely hold their bowels.

No, it is up to us, as concerned citizens, to fight back against bad taste. If you listen to artists so old that some of their albums are on 8-track, throw them out. If someone you know was going to the Rod Stewart concert, mock them and sever all ties of friendship. If you have country music CD's, shoot yourself in the head.

My work here is done.



BEN FISHER  
AND THEN I ... DIED

# 'Seagull' Filled With Masterful Performances

Play Makers Repertory Company's production of Anton Chekhov's "The Seagull" celebrates the 100th anniversary of the play which revolutionized theater for the twentieth century.

First produced in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1896, "The Seagull" centers on the friction between a conceited actress, Irina Arkadina (Annalee Jefferies), and her latest lover, Boris Trigorin (Keir Dullea). The play also spotlights Irina's son, Konstantin (Bo Foxworth), who is floating between the worlds of child and adulthood.

Jefferies, who gave a mesmerizing performance as Blanche DuBois in last season's production of Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," again proves she is master at portraying neurotic and eccentric women.

Jefferies beautifully portrays Irina as a woman who loves the gallantry of being an actress and greatly covets the attention of those around her.

In fact, she desires the attention of her lover so intensely that she ignores her own son. What Konstantin needs and desires is that which he has been denied his entire life — the attention and affection of his mother.

Jefferies' Irina holds the characters of "The Seagull" together yet at the same time is the source of many of the family's problems.

Dullea, who is best known for his portrayal of Commander Bowman in Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey," gives a captivating performance as Jefferies' lover, the famous writer Trigorin, who destroys

life simply because he had nothing better to do with his time.

Dullea intelligently portrays the charismatic Trigorin who seems to have everything and nothing all at one time.

While Jefferies and Dullea may receive top-billing, the play belongs to Foxworth. As the troubled and misunderstood son, Foxworth painfully portrays a young man who has never received love, though he freely gives it to those around him. Konstantin is a boy on the verge of manhood who seems to repeatedly fall short of all of his aspirations.

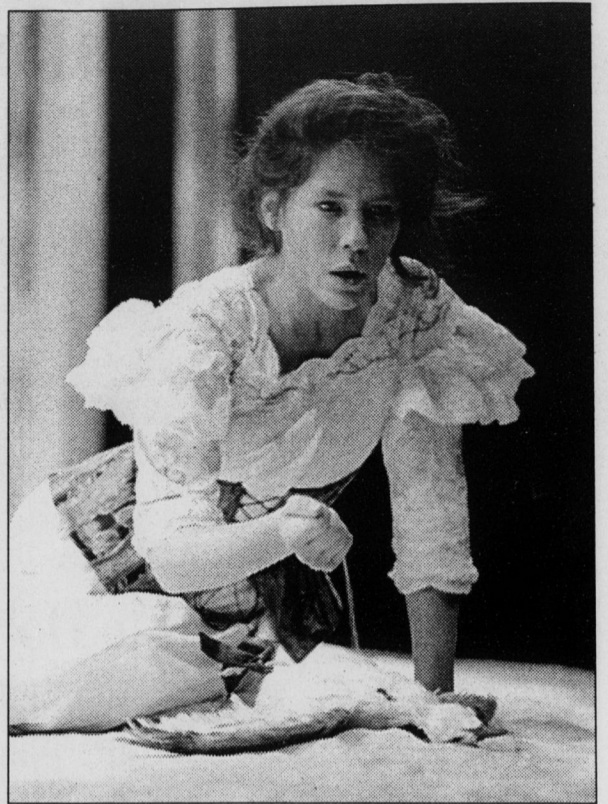
Konstantin competes for the of Nina (Alyssa Bresnahan), attempts to create a new kind of theater and vainly tries to capture the eye of his mother.

Loving the aspiring Nina is Konstantin's tragic flaw. Nina does not love people but the idea of people, desiring fame at any cost. Nina mirrors what Irina may have been like in her youth. Bresnahan attempts to achieve a masterful performance but slightly falls short, seemingly bored with her own performance.

PlayMakers, as usual, employs an impressive stage coupled with excellent costumes. Sand strewn across the stage with flowers and tables create a perfect country club atmosphere appropriate for the production. As a written work, "The Seagull" is a masterpiece and translates well from paper with such fine actors as Dullea, Jefferies and the outstanding Foxworth.

Michael Wilson (director) carefully orchestrates and choreographs the scenes of "The Seagull" creating smooth transitions and clear, concise movements.

Performances run through Feb. 25. For reservations and additional information call 962-PLAY.



Alyssa Bresnahan is Nina in PlayMakers 'The Seagull.'

## Arts & Entertainment Calendar

### MUSIC

THURSDAY, FEB. 15

**THE TROUT BAND.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**LEFTOVER SALMON.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**THE LINCOLNS with SPAGETTY.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**NC SYMPHONY CLASSICAL CONCERT.** Williams High School Auditorium, Burlington. (910) 570-2027.

FRIDAY, FEB. 16

**GRAVITY'S PULL.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**LILITH'S CRADLE.** Ninth Street Bakery. 776 Ninth St., Durham. 286-0303.  
**MARK BELK.** Barnes & Noble. 5400 New Hope Commons, Durham. 489-3012.  
**AQUARIUM RESCUE UNIT.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**NC SYMPHONY CLASSICAL CONCERT.** Kenan Auditorium, UNC-Wilmington. 1-800-732-3643.

SATURDAY, FEB. 17

**THE TREMBLERS with THE TWO DOLLAR PISTOLS.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**QUEEN SARAH SATURDAY with ED CRAWFORD.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**VELDT with PLUTOPIA.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**SUSIE CRATE.** Ninth Street Bakery. 776 Ninth St., Durham. 286-0303.  
**HARPSICHORDIST ELAINE FUNARO.** Chapel Hill Arts & Music in Progress. 229 S. Elliott Road, Village Plaza, Chapel Hill.  
**NC SYMPHONY CLASSICAL CONCERT.** Carolina Theatre, Durham. 560-3030.

SUNDAY, FEB. 18

**SCHLEIGHO with MERCY ME.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**ASS PONYS.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N.

Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**NC JAZZ SHOWCASE.** ArtsCenter. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 929-2787.  
**CIOMPI QUARTET.** N.C. Museum of Art, 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh. 839-6262.

MONDAY, FEB. 19

**JIM SMITH.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**HUM with MERCURY REV and JENNYANYKIND.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**YETI with QUATRO.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.

TUESDAY, FEB. 20

**SONGWRITER'S ALLIANCE with JEFF HART and WES LACHOT.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**MOPED with PAPA LUNA.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21

**SOLUTION A.C. with THE DRAG.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**TAZ HALLOWEEN'S CARNIVAL OF NIGHTMARES.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**DYSLEXICON.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.

THURSDAY, FEB. 22

**TODD JONES and THING.** The Cave. 452 1/2 W. Franklin St., Chapel Hill. 968-9308.  
**KICKBALL with SOLSTICE.** Lizard and Snake Cafe. 110 N. Columbia St., Chapel Hill. 929-2828.  
**EVERYTHING with ATHENAEUM.** Cat's Cradle. 300 E. Main St., Chapel Hill. 967-9053.  
**JOHN MCLAUGHLIN and THE FREE SPIRITS.** Reynolds Auditorium, Winston-Salem. (910) 650-9522.

### LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS

**THE COMMUNIST PARTY: THE FIRST CONCEPTUALIST IN THE SOVIET UNION.** Feb. 15. Duke University Museum of Art, Durham.  
**YOJI MATSUMURA, ARTIST.** Feb. 16. City Gallery of Contemporary Art, Raleigh. 839-2077.  
**HARLEM HEYDAYS: ARTISTS OF THE**

**HARLEM RENAISSANCE.** Feb. 18. N.C. Museum of Art, 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh. 839-6262.  
**WARREN BLANK: THE NINE NATURAL LAWS OF LEADERSHIP.** Feb. 18. Barnes & Noble, Durham. 489-3012.  
**NADINE STROSSEN, PRESIDENT ACLU.** Feb. 19. Memorial Hall, UNC-CH. 962-1449.  
**VISITING TEXTILE ARTISTS WORKSHOP.** Feb. 19-23. East Carolina School of Art. 732-1818.  
**DR. RAYMOND MONELLE: TOPIC AS UNIVERSAL.** Feb. 22. Biddle Music Building, Duke University, Durham. 681-ARTS.  
**PLENTY OF PORTRAITS.** Feb. 24. N.C. Museum of Art, 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh. 839-6262.  
**DAZZLING DOORS.** Feb. 24. N.C. Museum of Art, 2110 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh. 839-6262.  
**UNC HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ WORKSHOPS.** Feb. 24. Hill Hall, UNC-CH. 962-1449.

**SESSION.** Feb. 20. Carolina Pines Recreation Center, Raleigh. 990-1900.  
**PINECONE STORYTELLING SWAP.** Feb. 21. Pullen Arts Center, Raleigh. 990-1900.  
**AFTER HOURS: VODKA TASTING.** Feb. 22. Duke University Museum of Art, Durham.  
**TRANSACTORS IMPROV COMEDY CO.** Feb. 23. ArtsCenter, Chapel Hill. For information, call 929-2787.  
**KIDSCABERET: PLUTOPIA.** Feb. 24. ArtsCenter, Chapel Hill. 929-2787.  
**PINECONE SHAPE NOTE SING.** Feb. 25. St. Mark's Chapel at Mordecai Historic Park, Raleigh. 781-3596.

### ART EXHIBITS

**"GRADUATE STUDENT ART."** Main Gallery, Student Union, UNC-CH. Through today.  
**"FABLE/FOREST."** Steinway Gallery. Through Feb. 24.  
**"IMPRESSIONISTIC WORKS."** Lilly Library Gallery, Duke University. Through March 2.  
**"FAMILIAR ALIENS: ANOTHER LOOK AT ANIMALS."** Ackland Art Museum, UNC-CH. Through March 17.  
**"RUSSIAN CONCEPTUAL ART OF THE 1980S."** Duke University Museum of Art, Durham. Through March 31.  
**"INSTALLATION BY YOJI MATSUMURA."** City Gallery of Contemporary Art, Raleigh. 839-2077.  
**"THE STORY OF A PICTURE."** N.C. Museum of Art, Raleigh. Through June 2.  
**"MOUNTAIN SPIRIT."** Steinway Gallery, Feb. 26-March 30.

Calendar compiled by Dean Hair and Melissa Milios.  
Calendar announcements are due one week prior to the event.

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