

Multicultural carnival promises exciting mix

BY SCOTT RUDICIL
STAFF WRITER

Opening salsa. According to Chris Elliot's Baked Tostito's commercials, popping open a bag of those low-fat, additive-free corn chips starts a party immediately. But right after Elliot (pathetically) gives up his bag of chips someone always pops into the picture with a jar of salsa. That's when everyone starts showing up: after the salsa has been opened. Really? Yes, really.

That's what Shelli Dronsfield and the rest of the organizers and sponsors of Durham Arts Council CenterFest '97 are hoping for, some opened salsa to attract a party. The only thing stopping the fiesta is another spicy jar of salsa opening in Carboro.

Centerfest '97 begins this year, its 24th in existence, as the second salsa opener of Friday, September 19. Bio Ritmo (bee-o reet-mo) provides the dip, as its salsa music, a Puerto Rican dance music, will open for the highly anticipated Squirrel Nut Zippers concert before they head over to the kick-off dance concert for Centerfest '97. The only visible problem stems from the possible over-extension of Rene Herrera, former member of the Cuban symphony and leader of Bio Ritmo.

"Management [of Bio Ritmo] assures me there won't be a problem," said Dronsfield.

The party that the organizers are trying to initiate is what CenterFest '97 is all about: fun for all. A projected crowd of 70,000 will fill the streets of the Durham-based event over the course of Friday, Saturday and Sunday for what could be the event to attend this weekend.

"68,000 people showed up last year after good publicity. It was two weeks after hurricane Fran, and people wanted to party," said Dronsfield.

With no entrance fee and only a \$2 suggested donation to enter the main festivities on Saturday and Sunday, the price is right.

The opening night starts with Ritmo and their Cuban-influenced dance beat. Tickets for this get down and boogie kick-off are \$8. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. for all the eager party junkies, and Bio Ritmo blasts in at nine o'clock to get CenterFest off to a picante-flavored jump-start. Ritmo's recent success in clubs around Chapel Hill made them the jar-opening favorite to knock everyone's socks off the first night.

The remainder of the weekend offers a variety of entertainment including the construction of a 30-foot art structure with tons of banners hanging down to form a pyramid for more than 30 performers and bands to entertain even the prudes in the crowd.

As participatory activities become the theme for CenterFest '97, even children can get involved with the festivities. Stages upon endless stages are being set up to facilitate not only an entertaining festival, but a hands-on festival as well. Kids, as well as those who still have the kid alive inside the heart, can look for the newly-formed children's

area of CenterFest. Included are temporary henna tattoos, the no-gravity, free-floating experience of the Orbitron and the funny-faces of caricature drawings.

If that isn't enough to whet the appetite, imagine a stand that gauges the speed of the major league dreamers' arms with a baseball-pitching radar gun, and there is even an area where the kiddies can play any instruments they can get their paws on.

Then there are the bands. Anyone can find the music they are looking for with this super-group consisting of over 30 performers. Whether it's Jamaican ska with The Jumpstarts, the Carolina-originated bluegrass feel of New Vintage, blues and jazz aficionado Ed Acquesta, or even the Irish traditional sounds of jigs and leprechauns that Down the Broom brings, CenterFest provides for all. And the bands aren't even the half of the entertainment.

Ready to liven up the dull and monotonous lives of all that attend are the Bouncing Bulldogs Jump Rope Team, a group of high-jumping precision hip-hop middle schoolers, DanceBrazil, a dynamic assortment of rhythm and martial arts and a few choirs mixed and mingled within the variety that is CenterFest '97.

"[CenterFest '97] is cheap," said Dronsfield. "That's always important for college students."

With checking accounts running dry after the initial rush of the school year and UNC ONE Cards not able to pay for the entertainment that everyone wants to enjoy, "cheap" is a luxury that all students can afford.

Douglas, 'The Game' meddle with psyche

The brilliance of "The Game" lies in the fact that it keeps the audience guessing until the final credits start rolling. Echoing the creativity of "The Usual Suspects," the movie establishes an enjoyable and enthralling story line.

Millionaire Nicholas Van Orton (Michael Douglas) lives in the cold, dark loneliness of wealth and power. A Scrooge-like character, Van Orton resents loving relationships and happiness, preferring to concentrate on personal fortune, corporate downsizing, and guilt over his father's suicide many years before.

GREG MILLIKIN

Movie Review
'The Game'

A-

All of this changes when he receives a conspicuous birthday present from his shameful younger brother, Conrad (Sean Penn). The gift is participation in a game, set up by a mysterious company called Consumer Recreation Services that claims they've "never had an unsatisfied customer."

Taking the advice of his brother and friends, all of whom have played "the game" and loved it, Van Orton decides to sign on.

At first, the company relies on cheap jokes and tricks that only irritate him, but soon he realizes his game has taken a turn for the worse.

Narrowly escaping car crashes and frightening assaults, he falls victim to an apparent plot by CRS to financially and physically destroy him. Van Orton struggles to stay alive, while dragging his brother and a waitress, played by Deborah Kara Unger ("Whispers in the Dark," "Crash"), into the madness and danger.

Describing a film like this, however,



Playing the role of millionaire Nicholas Van Orton in "The Game," Michael Douglas must fight to save his sanity as well as his own life. Dodging the sinister plot of his enemies, he experiences a character change.

presents a problem, since it is so intricate. This is a movie where any guess you make about what will happen or who is behind the game is shot down by the filmmakers; and every slow or somber moment suddenly twists into frantic excitement, courtesy of a powerful script by John Brancato and Michael Ferris (both of "The Net," and there are several similarities between the two movies).

Douglas, in top form, turns in a win-

ning performance, cold and pompous at the beginning, melting into frantic and disheveled. One of the film's strongest aspects is Van Orton's evolution from start to finish - perhaps this is the purpose of the game.

Douglas does receive fine support from Unger as the seemingly innocent waitress (or is she a part of the game, as well?) and Penn, who breathes life into a considerably small role.

The stylish directing of David

Fincher, who previously directed "Seven" and "Alien 3," and the artful writing take center stage here.

Forgetting the occasional moments that defy logic or reality, the movie becomes extremely enjoyable. It manages to toy with its audience, while never giving in to conventional plot twists or endings.

"The Game," essentially, is not a movie at all, but more like a thrilling game itself.

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