Baadasssss!' a soulful ride

BY PHILIP MCFEE MMER EDITO

Here's a little-known fact - The Daily Tar Heel gave "Shanghai Knights" four stars.

Yes, this paper awarded four stars to a movie that drew a major-ity of its momentum from a hackneyed, racially insensitive plot wherein a Chinese sheriff, Chon Wang, goes hunting after a highly valued jewel from his homeland. But hey, when this review ran, I

had no say in the film's star rating. I was a lowly staff writer, the same as the author of the piece in ques tion, whom I respect a great deal. We all make mistakes. I gave "Cold Mountain" four stars.

The problem is movies that gloss over or even exploit racial issues have pervaded the market. For every "American History X," there's a wave of movies in the "Soul Plane" or "Bringing Down the House" vein. But there's a way to make all

this right. Well, not right, but better. Treating the wounds with a healthy dose of "Basdassssss!" a docudrama detailing the production of the landmark 1971 blaxploitation pic "Sweet Sweetbacks

great time.

MOVIEREVIEW "BADASSSSS!" ****

Baadasssss' Song."

It's a story about an exploita-tion-era Hollywood project and its snags that perfectly captures the empowerment-via-encroachment impetus of '70s underground cinema

Before there was "Shaft," "Coffy" or the countless others, Melvin Van Peebles, had a dream - to follow up his first film "Watermelon Man" with a movie that detailed what he strived so hard to achieve - gettin' the Man's foot outta his ass

In the 21st century, a time where the Man might be null but the vibes aren't crystal, Melvin's son Mario tells the story of his father's production. His intense focus is spot-on, down to adopting the Sweetback role as his father once did. While the lead casts the trademark Van Peebles stare over a throwback soundtrack, 'Melvin's diverse cast captures the independent micro-cosm that spawned the feature. The off-the-screen L.A. of the

1970s felt the surge of civil unrest

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News

COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES CLASSICS The strong-willed Mario Van Peebles, channeling his father Melvin, sets up the money shot in the soul-filled period docudrama "Baadasssss!"

that hadn't graced the silver screen, and seeing the rise of a minority voice into the Hollywood ranks is a success story that stirs feelings unlike any other 2004 cinematic offering. With hope, the film will have a double impact, gaining merit for itself while also turning viewers back to earlier works by black filmmakers such as Gordon

renewed appreciation for the clas-sics should erode the credibility of the already-laughable current fare that hardly could be considered portrayals of average life. "Baadasssss!" — like Sweetback

could go revolutionary.



*** GOOD **** EXCELLENT ***** CLASSIC



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MCSWAIN

consulted to keep spirits up. But in December 2002, McSwain was diagnosed with a potentially fatal case of colon cancer and underwent chemotherapy treatment.

Despite the diagnosis, McSwain continued to perform her duties as academic counselor. By March of this year, however, her condition had worsened, forcing her into the hospital. Finally, early Friday morning,

her battle ended. "I'm so sad," said rising senior Jackie Manuel in a statement. "She helped us out a whole lot my freshman year, with much more than just academics. She helped Jawad (Williams), Melvin (Scott) and me work through some tough

DOWNTOWN

the new entity to be aware of the types of programs we have done in the past when we were funded," he said.

House said the downtown commission would like to act in the capacity of an advisor to the new group if asked to do so, drawing on its experiences with successful programs in the past.

The commission sponsored parades, organized the Carolina Concert Series and oversaw the creation of murals in downtown Chapel Hill.

Whereas the downtown com-mission dealt more with promoting and marketing downtown Chapel Hill through the events listed, the new group will be broader in scope by incorporating Chapel Hill citizens' concerns, said Aaron Nelson, executive director of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of

FUND

Reinhardt said he believed it was very good that the University has been able to invoke this clause to remedy its workplace health

"I think it showed a good case of identifying a problem and fixing it quickly."

The second project is repairs to the bathrooms in Old West Residence Hall which have also suffered due to water damage. Water leakage had damaged

much of the wooden framework of the bathrooms, specifically in the

"I think it showed a good case of identifying a

fixing it quickly."

Runberg said the emergency lan was invoked in order to have the project completed by August

About 100 students are expected Hall in the beginning of the school

"We try not to declare an emergency because if we have enough time to do it under normal procedures, we do it," he said.

once a year, he said, and it is only a coincidence that the plan was invoked for the two projects at the same time.



The Baily Tar Heel

times that year and was like my second mom. I'm really going to miss her.

The Burgess McSwain fund, has been established in her honor, Contributions may be made in care of the UNC Department of Geography, Saunders Hall, Campus Box 3220, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3220.

McSwain is survived by her father, Daniel Murphy, 87, of

Chapel Hill. Guthridge said that while her position will be replaced with someone else, nobody will ever really achieve the same relation-ship with her students. "She was not married," Guthridge said. "This was her

family."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

Commerce

The new group consists of two. at-large seats, two property own-ers and two University-appointed,

Nancy Suttenfield, vice chancellor for finance and administration, and Board of Trustees member Roger Perry will represent the University on the board

Investors title head Allen Fine, attorney Bob Epting and Carolina Car Wash owner and developer Tom Tucker, as well as Rohrbacher, will fill the other seats. The 6 members will appoint a seventh member together.

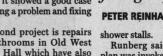
Nelson said the task of the new group is different from the former

"New challenges and new opportunities call for a new orga-nization," Nelson said. "I have high expectations for this group."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

problem and

PETER REINHARDT, DIRECTOR shower stalls.

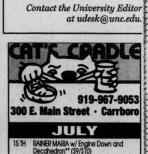


hen residence halls reopen.

to move into Old West Residence

University officials try to avoid calling on the emergency plan, Runberg said.

The plan is called upon about



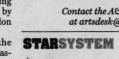
Parks's "The Learning Tree." And, as should happen, the

Ultimately, the film belongs to an exclusive bunch, which could

** FAIR

include only it and the 2002 sci-fi sleeper "Junk." Like a perfect square trinomial, it keeps a delicate balance of apt content and a fitting title. It's an experience that's as affirming as it is inspiring, and — as you know — it's straight baadassss.

> Contact the ASE Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu



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