

Comedy LP really isn't very pretty

By TOM MOORE

Steve Martin's new album *Comedy Is Not Pretty* isn't very funny. While listening to it, I found myself yawning quite a bit and checking my watch every few minutes, which is a rather strange way to react to a new record by one of my favorite comedians. So I think I'd better explain.

To succeed, comedy depends very heavily on the element of surprise. There were no comic surprises on *Comedy Is Not Pretty*. I have heard every joke on the album over and over again in the past couple of years because Martin has become such a phenomenal comedy success.

It seems the public and the media can't get enough of Steve Martin. He has hosted *Saturday Night Live* and *The Tonight Show* several times, as well as having had his own TV special. Martin has put out three comedy albums, a short film and a book. His face has graced several T-shirts and posters. He has been the coverboy for numerous magazines including *Rolling Stone*, *People* and *Newsweek*. And if all this wasn't enough exposure for the grey-haired maniac, millions of Americans, from my 13-year-old neighbors to my 52-year-old father, have been repeating in mock-Martinese such phrases as "Excuuuusse Meeeee!" and "I'm a Wild and Crazy Guy!"

All this overexposure has made Steve Martin a bit of

a bore because, as the tired and trite cliché goes, "familiarity breeds contempt."

To avoid being monotonous Martin could have offered something novel on *Comedy Is Not Pretty*. Instead he serves up his worst jokes—the stuff that gets a few chuckles but no big laughs. The bits on *Comedy Is Not Pretty*, for the most part, fall flat.

Stuff like Martin's tip on how to avoid imprisonment for armed robbery (by telling the judge that you "forgot armed robbery is illegal") and the macabre story "Cruel Shoes" just aren't that funny. Such routines are the products of a tired, over-worked imagination. Perhaps it is time for Martin to take a long vacation.

To be fair I must admit that *Comedy Is Not Pretty* does have some good moments. The album contains one of my favorite Steve Martin jokes—about Steve's one, simple ambition in life: to be "the all-being—the master of time, space and dimension."

Comedy Is Not Pretty also includes Steve Martin's hilarious tales about his luncheon date with Jacqueline Onassis and his grudge against Farrah Fawcett-Majors.

The best thing on the album, however, is a banjo melody played by Martin, which indicates how poor a comedy album *Comedy Is Not Pretty* is.

Tom Moore is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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