

'The Gift' has few laughs, not typical French comedy

By STEVE CARR
Staff Writer

A lowly French bank clerk is about to retire from his job. But before he does, he must take one last business trip to Milan. It is on this trip that he receives his retirement gift, a high-class call girl. This is the basis for the incredibly unfunny French film, *The Gift*. Someone should have given the clerk a watch instead.

The distributor of this excruciating movie, Samuel Goldwyn, claims that the film "offers a wonderful combination of classic French farce at its whimsical best, and sophisticated Hollywood romance in the glorious tradition of the great romantic comedies of the '30s and '40s." As the

Albesque quality — a la *Virginia Woolf*. No matter how successfully carried out, such conversations have no place aboard a French farce, especially one that has no comedy to temper its bitterness.

As for the comedies of the '30s and '40s, *The Gift* owes more to *Three's Company* than to *Swing Time* or *Follow the Fleet*. Again, there are some similarities but they are more obvious, and therefore more superficial, than the ones *The Gift* shares with the other French films. The clerk, Gregoire Dufour, loves the old Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movies, and at one point he even gets to do a totally inconsistent and off-key number with his prostitute, Barbara. But cross-eyed porters, lecherous old men, bespectacled nymphomaniacs and people falling into canals do not seem to be included in the footage from those great old American films. Those films did not need to rely on people with bad backs to go crawling and slipping and tripping around to get laughs. *The Gift* owes more to the early Mack Sennet comedies — and even those pre-'20s shorts have a considerably greater adroitness than the slapstick in *The Gift*.

Review

French say, Boff! Still, such a claim, no matter how ridiculous or pretentious, must be disputed for the sake of the other films implicated.

First of all, French farces are light. Fluffy. Elegant. Their seemingly carefree exterior, however, is only a mask to cover their darker undercurrents. Such great French films as Jean Renoir's *Rules of the Game* and Rene Clair's *A Nous la Liberte* are hilarious, fast, frenzied movies which deal in such darker issues as social stratification and loss of identity in an industrialized world. In some respects, *The Gift* does show resemblances to these films, but its attempts at comedy are so lame and obvious that the darker issues take control of the film, making it more sour than sweet.

In one of *The Gift's* best sequences, the French banker arranges with his wife to have a fake chance encounter aboard a train in order to save their failing marriage. However, their conversation becomes a prickly duel of lifetime failures and death wishes that give things a shocking Edward

Perhaps the film itself isn't as bad if what it aspires to be is ignored. It is watchable, although the laughs are few and far between. There are even a few assets — in fact, one major one: Clio Goldsmith. She is absolutely ravishing in the title role. Beauty like hers is destined to stardom, and — it is hoped — to better movies.

The real gifts are the films which writer-director Michel Lang pays homage to. Most of them are housed in the Undergraduate Library's non-print section, where they await their well-deserved viewings.

The major fault in *The Gift* is its reliance on people laughing as a plot resolution — a dead giveaway to sloppy craftsmanship.



Venice, the city of romance, is the setting for 'The Gift' starring international sensation Clio Goldsmith as Barbara, a very special gift. It also stars Pierre Mondy and Claudia Cardinale.

Fire strikes Carrboro apartments

By STUART TONKINSON
Staff Writer

Four Carrboro apartments were damaged Monday in an early evening fire. Carrboro Fire Chief Robert Swiger said that there was "medium damage" to the apartment where the fire began and slight damage to the other three apartments. Most of the damage was the result of the water used to put out the fire, he said.

He would not give any dollar estimate of the damages.

The fire began in Apt. 116D of Bim Street Apartments at about 7 p.m. The apartment is being rented by three UNC graduate students.

Although fire officials had not determined the cause of the fire late Monday, they were able to trace it to a utility room in one of the apartments. A resident of Apt. 116D said the fire began when an air conditioner short-circuited. The three residents of the apartment said it was the second time they had used the air conditioner since their return to school this fall.

Gretchen Edelbrock, a resident of Apt. 116D and a graduate student in English, said she discovered the fire while washing dishes. After smelling smoke, she traced it to the air conditioner in the utility room, she said.

Edelbrock and roommates Susan Ameel and Stephanie Lutz, both computer science graduate students, said they expected the smoke to cause most of the damage to the apartment.

The fire never got out of control, Swiger said, and firemen were able to contain the flames within the first apartment. Firemen were able to leave the scene by 8:35 p.m.

Residents received help from neighbors in carting valuables from the apartment after firemen doused it from the roof.

The residents said they would be forced to stay with friends for a few days.

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed



ANCHORS AWEIGH.

ARMY

The Army's active, reserve and national guard units have nearly 800 landing, amphibious and harbor craft. More than the Navy, in fact!

If the smell of the sea excites you, you'll be excited by the executive opportunities available to the Army officer. Opportunities, for example, with the Corps of Engineers—responsible, among other things, for construction and maintenance of dams, waterways, harbors and bridges. Opportunities with the

Transportation Corps, moving equipment and personnel through military ocean terminals along the United States coastline and overseas. These and many other opportunities give adventure and solid leadership experience. It's the kind of experience that can put you a step ahead in any job market—military or civilian.

Make your first step now. See the Professor of Military Science on your campus.

BE ALL YOU CAN BE.



ARMY ROTC.

Contact: Major John Modica
684-5895 at Duke.
Call Collect.



SHARE THE COST OF LIVING

GIVE TO THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY.

YOUR BSN IS WORTH AN OFFICER'S COMMISSION IN THE ARMY.

Your BSN means you're a professional. In the Army, it also means you're an officer. You start as a full-fledged member of our medical team. Write: Army Nurse Opportunities, P.O. Box 7713, Burbank, CA 91510.

ARMY NURSE CORPS.
BE ALL YOU CAN BE.

POSTER SALE

Choose From 500 Tagged Prints!

Buy 1 print, Get 1 FREE of equal value

DRY MOUNTING SALE

15% OFF

Styrofoam backing of all prints & posters August 22-September 10

the print shop
fine art prints • posters
custom framing • dry mounting

northgate mall
286-0386

university mall
942-7306

SEMINAR: STUDY-SMART STRATEGIES FOR GETTING HIGH GRADES

NEVER SWEAT ANOTHER EXAM... STOP CRAMMING... RELAX IN CLASS... CONTROL YOUR CAREER OPTIONS

NOW you don't have to be just "an average student" anymore! AT LAST, a practical, test-proven approach that shows you HOW to get the A's and B's you want, plus WHAT you need to know and do, and WHY. You don't have to be a genius either... and you'll still have plenty of time to party... because it's study-smart. Your seminar will be personally conducted by B.W. Quay, consultant, author and lecturer. He is a one-time college dropout who developed this study-smart system out of his own mistakes, then used it to become a double-major Dean's List student and university teacher.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN: A total package from the basics to subtle persuasion tactics... Why 95% of students never actually study... How to study in "junk" time... Insights and strategies that your teachers won't and can't reveal to you... from an ex-teacher... Simple, sensible do-it-once techniques... Visualization skills that can make your memory almost photographic... How your classmates make it easy for you to gain the secret edge that jumps you way ahead in the race for A's... The 3 hours per month spent not studying that will raise your scores... How to guarantee your grade... Put an end to Test-Tension... and much, much more! STUDENT RATE seminar fee of \$25 includes workbook with additional reading and resources. **GUARANTEE:** If you are not completely satisfied with this seminar after just the first hour, your tuition will immediately be refunded in full.

Decide **THIS SEMESTER** to stop settling for C's and start going for what you really want to be!
Attend this unique and exciting Study-Smart seminar
6:30 to 10:00 pm, Thurs., Sept. 8 U.N.C., The Carolina Inn, (Campus) Pittsboro St. at S. Columbia St.
Clip this ad and bring it to the Seminar
Registration: 30 minutes prior to Seminar. Cash, MC, Visa, and Check accepted.
Peak Performance Programs, Inc., Hodges St., P.O. Box 414, Oriental, N.C. 28571 (919) 249-1511