

UNC has its own soap opera expert

By KATHY HOPPER
Staff Writer

It is 1 p.m. and the basement of the Student Union is filled to capacity. Students are sprawled out on the floor, eating yogurt and cheese-crackers.

"I hate that Enid Nelson. Now Jenny and Greg will never get back together," one student says.

Others hiss and boo; some laugh and roll their eyes.

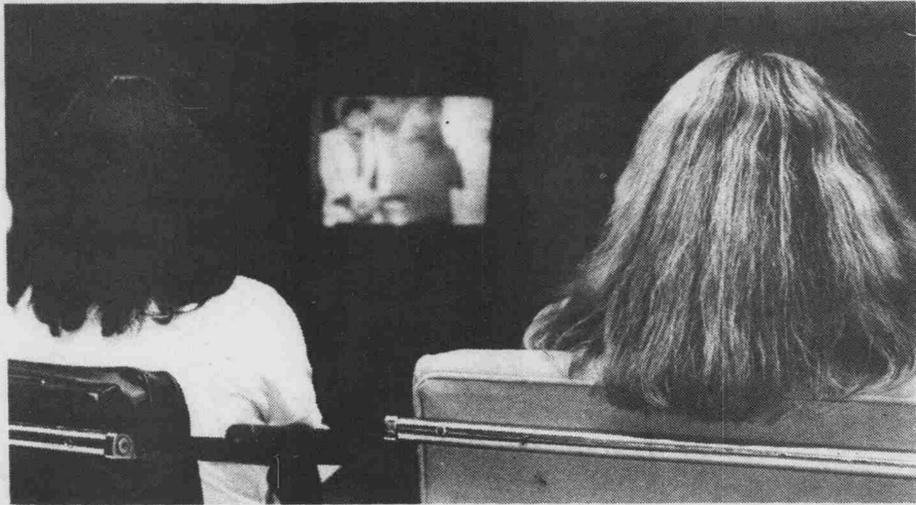
More than 50 million people in the United States watch soap operas, but until recently these programs have received little scholarly attention, says film historian Robert Allen, an assistant professor of RTVMP at UNC.

Allen, one of this country's few experts on daytime dramas, helped complete a study for the American Broadcasting Company in February 1982 that showed that more than half of all college students watch soap operas at least once a week.

College students watch for different reasons from the typical home viewer, Allen says. They use viewing as a social activity, as a way to start conversations.

Michelle Keasley, a freshman from Fayetteville, agrees. "It's a communal thing. Everyone sits down here together and watches them. Basically it's a sideline entertainment. You know the stories aren't real, but it's fun to keep up with the plot."

Michael Ingram, a junior RTVMP ma-



DTH/Lon Heemann

These two in the basement of the Student Union are among the 50 million in the United States who watch soap operas. Recently UNC professor Robert Allen finished a study on the daytime dramas.

Allen says "It gives you an escape from daily pressures to watch make-believe people who have problems that make yours seem small in comparison."

Senior Chuck Massey enjoys watching characters "get into things and get out. There's always something. No one is ever happy."

Ingram and Massey are part of a growing number of men who watch soap operas. Allen says about 15 percent of the daytime drama audience is male.

"Guys watch them; they just don't admit it," says Don Courtney a freshman from Greensboro.

But women between the ages of 18 and 35 still make up the largest single group of viewers, Allen says, and most commercials are aimed at them. If the network

can prove that large numbers of college students watch the programs, then new advertising revenue will be attracted, he adds. In one week ABC makes more than \$1 million from General Hospital alone.

Allen attributes the success of soaps to the threading of four or five different plot lines into the same program, the wide general appeal and the characters' ability to remember what happened a week or five years ago.

Some viewers use soap operas to compensate for lack of social activity in their lives, and a few get so caught up with the characters that they write letters, Allen says. If a character cannot generate any mail, then he is likely to be "killed" or

moved off the show.

Despite this instability, a job on a soap opera can be very attractive in an industry where 80 percent of the performers are out of work at any given time.

A job on a show can last from 13 weeks to a lifetime. Actress Charita Bauer has played the same character for 31 years on *The Guiding Light*, Allen's favorite soap.

Everyone seems to have a favorite show. A quick poll in the Union basement found ABC's soaps most popular. But that could be because the union television is tuned to ABC.

"One of the programs I watch is on another network, and they turn the channel at one," says Janice Gaymon, a junior RTVMP major. "You could take a vote, but I know I'd lose."

At last, a perfect film arrives

By JEFF GROVE
Arts Editor

A film which rings true down to the last carefully nuanced detail is a rarity. These days, in fact, such films sometimes seem to have gone the way of the dinosaurs. But this is, happily, not true. *The Return of Martin Guerre* is such a film, one of those gems that make the attainment of perfection seem easy.

In 1542 in the French village of Artigat, the real-life Martin Guerre married Bertrande de Rols. Six years passed before he was able to consummate the marriage. The following year, soon after the birth of a son, Martin Guerre left his village with no explanation. His wife waited for him, praying for his safe return. After nine years, she saw her prayers answered. Mar-

Review

tin returned, and their family life was happier than it had ever been — until the day a group of vagabonds arrived in Artigat, one of them claiming that the man living with Bertrande was not really Martin Guerre.

This almost folkloric tale has fascinated scholars for centuries, but it holds one major trap for the potential film adaptor: It could easily become either a plodding documentary of 16th-century French peasant life or a stolid historical drama. Director and scriptwriter Daniel Vigne and co-author Jean-Claude Carriere have carefully avoided this trap, and the result is one of the most perfect films made in quite some time.

Vigne searched France for the right location for filming, and found it in a little village only 60 miles from the real Artigat. His crew removed what few modern conveniences the village had, and the residents of the village were persuaded to don antiquated peasant clothing and participate in the filming. Perhaps this is one reason why the film seems so real, so utterly believable.

But the film is primarily a love story, as Vigne maintains; and a love story is nothing without the right chemistry between

the leading players. Vigne has that chemistry in Nathalie Baye and Gerard Depardieu. Neither is conventionally attractive, yet each blooms with beauty as the film progresses. Baye's performance is a masterpiece of restraint which balances Depardieu's — he always seems to be moving or at least squirming, as though he can never rest.

During the film a third major character emerges — Jean de Coras, the Parliamentary Counselor of Toulouse, who is called in to hear evidence concerning Martin Guerre's identity. Roger Planchon invests Coras with great wisdom yet avoids making him a plaster saint. Coras becomes a calm, measured man capable of doubting his own opinions and decisions.

Solid supporting performances are turned in by Rose Thiry and Maurice Barrier as older relatives of Martin and Bertrande. Thiry and Barrier provide a link between the leading players and the villagers at large, which gives the cast of characters its incredible range.

Vigne and Carriere have neatly structured the film in four distinct but interwoven segments. By mingling the techniques of straight narrative and both subjective and objective flashback, the writers open the story to a number of points of view. As the story advances, the writing becomes tighter and tighter, reaching an almost unbearable high point in the final courtroom sequence before the Parliament of Toulouse.

Cinematographer Andre Neau gives the film its final polish. He bathes the screen in rich earth tones and displays a special talent for handling candlelit scenes. He makes the film glow with a visual magic to match the equally important sorceries of director and performers.

No one person seems to make a crucial contribution to *The Return of Martin Guerre*; the responsibilities for creating the film are evenly spread out among the entire cast and crew. In the end, it is probably this ensemble technique of filmmaking, the failure to rely on one person to carry the show, that makes *Martin Guerre* what it is — that rare perfect film.

Artistic director chosen for PlayMakers Repertory Co.

By DAVID SCHMIDT
Assistant Arts Editor

When PlayMakers Repertory Company hired a new artistic director this summer to replace David Rotenberg, it helped kill two stones with one Boyd.

Not only will Gregory Boyd continue to work as an associate professor in the department of dramatic art, but now he also will serve as artistic director for PRC — itself a role with more than one part. "It's a relatively new kind of beast and does for the company what a director does for a play," said Boyd, who last year directed the PRC productions of *Pygmalion*, *The Greeks and A Moon for the Misbegotten*.

An artistic director with such experience might easily capitalize the second word of his title and try to control the directors of the individual plays. Not Boyd. "That's not being an artistic director," he said. "That's being a martinet. The whole enterprise is collaboration."

Boyd said his artistic control can best be used by choosing co-workers from what he called PRC's "extended family." Douglas Johnson, who played Professor Henry Higgins in *Pygmalion* last year and attended the University of California at Berkeley with Boyd, will direct two plays — as many as Boyd himself. Also, Hope Alexander-Willis, the star of last season's *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, will play Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* in October.

With Johnson and a former artistic director like PRC producing director

Robert Tolan around, Boyd said he is not at a loss for colleagues who are like-minded. He will not, therefore, need an associate artistic director — the position he held under Rotenberg last year.

That was a relatively somber season, Boyd said, so he wanted something lighter this year. With members of his professional training program learning about Shakespeare and the style of his contemporaries, Boyd decided to present a year of British music and comedy that can be intellectual, dark and modern.

Boyd said he also would like to include a new script each year. When it's time to begin planning next year's season this October, Boyd hopes to schedule an original American play and select others in the American realist tradition "because we're an American company."

Even as head of play selection, Boyd wears two hats. On the one hand, he said, he likes to start with a "company play" — a major production which involves a large cast. Yet he also needs to make a selection which will be popular with the public.

As *You Like It* fit the payroll this year. Already a company play, PRC's production will be non-traditional and not simply cosmetic, sentimental and pretty.

"I think it's the only way to do cause it provides the basis of the next festival play. *Travesties*, he said, is about art vs. anti-art, raising the unanswered question "Why do you involve yourself in something so ethereal and capricious as theater when people are starving in Bangladesh?"

Doug Johnson's *Dracula*, a Musical *Nightmare* arises as both the PRC festival and season set. Boyd compared it to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (which it predated in 1973) and acclaimed it as "one of the most extraordinarily funny things I've ever seen in my life."

Shows such as this should appeal especially to UNC students, an untapped resource and relatively small percentage of previous PRC audiences.

"There's a vitality in the undergraduate population of UNC and a theater savvy," Boyd said, "and this season is much more apt to be attractive. I expect it to be popular."

Shakespeare," Boyd explained. "I'm a great believer in Jan Kott's phrase that Shakespeare is our contemporary, and that is obscured in plays with pointed shoes and pointy hats."

In December PRC and the department of dramatic art will present *Pickwick! A Dickens Celebration of Christmas* to "get away from the inevitable *Christmas Carol*, which has been done here *ad nauseum*," Boyd said.

The spring semester will begin, as did the fall, with another company play. Boyd believes *The Hostage*, with 16 great parts, is "ironic, bitter and tragic at times." Yet this look at the horror of Irish troubles is tempered with music and humor, he added.

A spring PRC Festival will open with Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Not only is it "the ultimate in the English language of a 'style' play," but Boyd said it also works thematically be-

CAMPUS CALENDAR

Public service announcements must be turned into the box outside the DTH offices in the Carolina Union by 1 p.m. if they are to be run the next day. Only announcements from University recognized and campus organizations will be printed. All announcements must be limited to 25 words and can only run for two days. In the event that the Calendar does not run because of space limitations, groups should turn in announcements at least two days in advance to ensure they run at least once.

TODAY'S ACTIVITIES

Learn to skydive! UNC Sport Parachute Club will meet at 6:15 p.m. in the Union. Come by if you've jumped before, want to learn or just want information. Check at the Union desk for meeting place.

The Navigators have large group meetings (fellowship and Bible teaching) every Thursday at 8 p.m. in 205 Carolina Union. All students are welcome.

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes will meet at 8:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Carolina Union. We'll have huddle groups. Bring a Bible, a friend and a smile.

Play real football! Join the UNC Club Football team. Practice at Ehringhaus Field at 5:15 p.m. For more information, call D.C. Taylor at 933-2410.

Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity is having a new member cookout at 5:00 p.m. at Forest Theater. All interested business majors are invited to attend.

Come speak French at the Petit Quebec at 4:30 p.m. at Molly Maguire's in the Franklin Street NCNB Plaza.

Auditions for the BSM Gospel Choir will be held at 9 p.m. in Upendo Lounge.

Attention physical therapy applicants: students planning to apply for admission to the junior physical therapy class, fall 1984, should attend the meeting scheduled in physical therapy classroom B-107, medical school wing B at 4:14 p.m. The admissions process will be reviewed and applications will be available. Contact Bonnie Strowd at 966-4708 or 966-4709 if you have questions.

Northeast IVCF chapter meeting at 7 p.m. at University Presbyterian Student Center. Paul Leary will speak on "The Power of Prayer." Anyone welcome, bring a friend.

IVCF-mid campus invites you to attend its first chapter meeting of the semester at 7 p.m. in the Carolina Union. Dennis Gill will address our priorities.

The first meeting of the Women's Soccer Club will be at 7 p.m. in the Carolina Union. Everyone wishing to participate this semester should attend.

Does planning fun recreational events make you happy? Come to an organizational meeting of the Carolina Union Recreation Committee at 4 p.m.

The Black Ink, the official magazine of the BSM, will hold a special interest meeting for potential staff members at 5 p.m. in the Carolina Union.

Anyone interested in joining the Special Projects Committee should meet at 6 p.m. in the BSM office in the Carolina Union.

Alpha Phi Omega, UNC's only co-ed service fraternity invites you to formal rush at 7 p.m. in the Carolina Union.

ABSECE's first officers' meeting of the year will be held at 5 p.m. in the Frank Porter Graham Lounge.

Tryouts for the new UNC Women's Fast Pitch Softball Team will begin at 4 p.m. on the Carmichael #4 field.

The Thursday program at the Baptist Student Union will begin at 5:45 p.m. It will feature Don Parry, minister to college students at the Forest Hills Baptist Church.

COMING EVENTS

The University Relations Committee will meet briefly Friday at 3:30 p.m. in Suite C of the Carolina Union.

The Carolina Tai Chi Club is presenting a weekend Tai Chi martial arts workshop Saturday and Sunday at the Carolina Union. Free exhibition Sunday afternoon in the Pit. All are welcome to attend and participate.

The UNC Waterpolo Club will have an organizational meeting at 4 p.m. Monday in the Carolina Union. All members and anyone interested please attend. Call 968-9062 and ask for Jason if you have questions.

St. Anthony Hall, UNC's only co-ed literary and social fraternity will hold its annual fall party at 9 p.m. Friday. Located behind the Carolina Inn at 207 Pittsboro St.

The Campus Pagan Fellowship will have a picnic this Sunday at noon in the Forest Theater. All are welcome.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Campus Y Volunteer Action Center is open daily 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to help you find an appropriate volunteer position. Call 962-2333 or stop by the Y.

Contraceptive Health Education Clinic is now meeting every Monday at 4 p.m. in the Health Education Section of the Student Health Service is geared to help UNC students be responsible partners in sexual matters. CHEC provides an informative, informal discussion of contraception. Individual consultations also available by appointment. Call 966-2281, ext. 275.

The Campus Y Volunteer Action Center needs students with volunteer experience to work two hours weekly as volunteer counselors. Call 962-2333 or stop by the Campus Y.

The final application deadline for students planning to apply for admission to the junior physical therapy class, fall 1984 is Oct. 1.

ESAT (Law School Admission Test) Oct. 1: Late registration for \$15 extra will be accepted if postmarked today. Applications are available in Nash Hall.

The Y Bazaar, a three-day extravaganza at semester's end: Anyone interested should attend informal interviews from 2 to 4:30 p.m. today at the Campus Y.

All Freshmen should check by the Alumni House behind the Carolina Inn to see if their parents ordered them a Freshman Record. They are on sale from 2 to 4 p.m. until Friday.

The Sexuality Education & Counseling Service is accepting applications for volunteers. Applications are available in Suite B Carolina Union and at the Union Desk.

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