

SNL members can't save film

Orion Pictures
Capilano, Westmount, West Mall 8, Whitemud

review by David Smith

he art of film making and the study of psychology both originated at about the same moment in history. Michael Ritchie's new movie The Couch Trip is a pure example of how not to mix two random elements such as these. My guess is that Ritchie assumed that the whole would be greater than the sum of its parts. Well, he was wrong.

Ritchie's career as a director has had its ups Ritchie's career as a director has hand its ups and downs. He has had major hits (Fletch and Semi-Tough) and major flops (The Island and Student Bodies), so failure is nothing new to him. The Couch Trip will undoubtedly go down on his record as less than successful, mostly because Ritchie chose to make the film almost completely from formula: there is earlist new been. is nothing new here.

The basic premise is that John W. Burns (Dan Ackroyd) is a convicted computer fraud felon who made his way from prison to the Cicero Correctional Institute for Men by

Nicholson did in One Flew Over the Cuc-koo's Nest). From there, he impersonates his koo's Nest). From there, he impersonates his way into a high paying radio therapy shown in Beverly Hills, where he gives straight talk to distressed listeners. And when the mood moves him, he packs them all up into a fleet of buses (categorized according to neurosis) and takes them all to a baseball game. There is a lot of space in this film for good honest humour, but Ritchie falls to realize its potential. All (and I mean all) of the psychiatry iokes are stale and Ritchie delivers them in okes are stale and Ritchie delivers them in

heavy doses.

Neither Dan Ackroyd nor Walter Matthau do a substantial job with their roles as societal misfits caught between the cracks in the mental health system. Ackroyd fairly walked through the film, shooting off fast one-liners that the audience rarely picked up. In fact, most of the laughter in the theatre was in response to the grotesquely obvious and uncomfortable humour that neurosis jokes relyen and Matthau is waster in his role as a relyen and Matthau is waster in his role as a rely on. And Matthau is wasted in his role as a former minister whose single fall from grace has resulted in his career as an airport prophet. He spends his days outside the arrivals terminal saying things like "no man is so tall as when he stoops to pet a plant". It is

an utter waste of refined talent.
In the course of the film you will notice a
great number of past and present Saturday'
Night Live cast members in various roles;
Chey Chase even pops up in a television
commercial at one point. By the end of the
film it is very obvious what director Michael
Ritchie assumed: if you can put a lot of
established comedians into one film (especially people from SNL), then there's no way. cially people from SNL), then there's no way you can make an unfunny movie. What Ritchie has done instead is concocted a mishmash of bad sight gags and one-liners

delivered by people who are accustomed to delivering semi-humorous sight gags and

one-liners.
Truthfully, I could not finish this piece
without commenting on Donna Dixon, a
woman who has proven that even people
without talent can make it in Hollywood.
Without a doubt, her performance on the
screen is an absence, her delivery an intolerance, and her dialect contrived. But as
long as her marriage to Ackroyd holds up,
I'm pretty sure we'll be seeing more of them
together for some time. Pily.

LITERARY CONTEST INFO: Deadline for all entries: 4 pm Feb. 12

All entries must be typewritten and doublespaced, with name, address and ID number on a separate page.

Maximum Lengths:

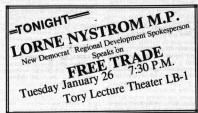
Short poem: 25 lines Note: poems counted Long poem: 200 lines Short story: 3000 words

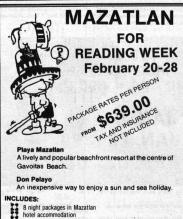
by lines!

Submit entries with self-addressed stamped envelope to: Elaine Ostry.

Only 2 entries each for poetry categories only 1 entry each for short story category

The Gateway Rm. 282, S.U.B. University of Alberta Edmonton, AB T6C 2G7





hotel accommodation return airfare & transfers to hotel welcome cocktail party city tour reliability of a stable travel company operating for over 15 years all for a very affordable price Main Floor SUB **4 TRAVELCUTS** Going Your Way! 432-2592

Charles S. Noble Award Student Leadership

he Charles S. Noble Award for Student Leadership is intended to recognize post-secondary students demonstrating outstanding dedication and leadership to fellow students and to their community.

Nominees for this Award must be Alberta residents and currently enrolled in a minimum of three full-time courses. Nominees should display commitment in one or more of the following areas:

- student government at the local, provincial or national level · student societies, clubs, organizations or in non-profit community
- organizations

Commemorative plaques will be presented to recipients upon recommendation of the Selection Committee at each institution.

Nomination Deadline: March 1

Nomination forms and further information may be obtained from your Student Union offices.



