

arts and entertainment

Witty script, cast combine for anything but a foul movie

By Peg Sheldrick

If you go see *Foul Play* expecting two hours of Chevy Chase up to his usual schtick, you're likely to be disappointed. If instead you go prepared for an incredible but enjoyable comedy-mystery, chances are you'll come away more than satisfied.

movie review

Foul Play is like a funhouse, its intent being to startle as much as to amuse. It brings back memories of *Charade*, an old thriller that also blended chills and chuckles. The wildly contrived plot in *Foul Play* never is really believable, but it is always fun. You can't take the story too seriously when it concerns a librarian caught up in an assassination plot, and being pursued by an albino and a dwarf. Even the Hardy Boys could come up with something more convincing. But in spite of the absurdities, *Foul Play* works.

The fantastic coincidences and sudden plot twists add to the humor of a crisp, funny script. The fine performance by Goldie Hawn as Gloria Mundy, the hapless but not helpless librarian, is one of the major elements in the film's success. With a different leading lady the whole thing might have collapsed in its own silliness.

Chevy Chase does well as the suspended detective who falls (figuratively and literally) for Hawn. His tongue-in-cheek delivery and the basic inconsistencies of his character (alternating between Sam Spade and



Photo courtesy Paramount Pictures

Chevy Chase makes his movie debut in *Foul Play* as a suspended detective who falls (figuratively and literally) for Goldie Hawn.

Inspector Clouseau) combine to make Chase's movie debut less than Oscar-material. The supporting cast is well chosen, particularly Burgess Meredith as the feisty old landlord.

Violence and comedy

If there's a message in the movie, it's that even the nicest of people can lash out violently in self-defense. Beyond that, the film has little to offer that's edifying. It is interesting to note the strange juxtaposi-

tions of violence and comedy in this and other recent films. The suspense comedy in a popular genre these days that mixes mayhem and mirth indiscriminantly.

Foul Play is a successful example of this kind of movie, and you can appreciate its strong points by comparing it to a less successful attempt: the comedy thriller, *Somebody Killed Her Husband*. This is Farrah Fawcett-Majors' newest vehicle, and it just never goes anywhere. It's a case

wherein *Foul* is fair and Farrah is foul.

Majors can't really be held responsible for the problems with this show. Her co-star Jeff Bridges certainly gives it his best shot. The troubles are mainly related to Reginald Rose's mediocre script. Bridges is a toy salesman who dictated children's books on the subway and Majors is the dutiful but dissatisfied wife of a nasty businessman; they fall in love evidently because they both love anchovies and provolone cheese. When they discover her husband with a large knife in his back, they decide to track his killer themselves because, of course, no one would believe their innocence.

Witty script

Foul Play is no less improbable, but what saves it is a high-spirited, witty script and a pair of charming leads. *Somebody Killed Her Husband* offers a lot of cutsey dialogue and a couple of nice but monumentally stupid characters. Majors is given nothing more taxing to do than look worried and wear her clothes well. Bridges' character is a real dumb bunny, pettable but maddeningly dense. The contrivances of the plot just don't come off here. *Foul Play*'s antics ask only a willful suspension of your disbelief; *Somebody Killed Her Husband* demands a willful suspension of your intelligence.

Somebody Killed Her Husband isn't an especially bad movie, but it isn't especially good, either. If you're in the mood for frivolous fun, well-executed comedy, and a few good scares, chances are *Foul Play* will fill the bill. It frolics where the other merely limps along.

Foul Play is playing at the Stuart Theatre. *Somebody Killed Her Husband* can be seen at the Douglas Three Theatre.

Jazz jam ensemble relies on improvisation, pianist

By Lori Rosenlot

On Tuesday, a girl walking through the Nebraska Union on her lunch break heard a jazz music group playing, and ten minutes later she joined the group on the South Crib stage and performed two musical selections.

The girl was Diane Meyers, an undeclared UNL student, and the group was seven students from the school of music who enjoy jazz jam sessions.

The performance was sponsored by the Student Y and was designed to introduce black music to UNL. The Student Y is the student arm of the YWCA.

It also was the fall kick-off of the Black Speak program sponsored by the Student Y, according to Carol Gourlay, student director.

The group does not have a name because they do not perform regularly and whoever is interested in playing may join them, according to group members.

During the two-hour jam session on Tuesday the group performed "Scrapple from the Apple," "Blues for Alice," "Autumn Leaves," and "Equinox."

"We don't practice together before we perform," pianist Tom Larson said. "We know the basic song and chords but from there we just improvise."

Meyers sang with a group called Second Edition, so, she said, performing is something she has always done and enjoyed.

"I know several people in this group and it's not that hard to improvise, especially when you have a good piano player and this group has a real good one," Meyer said.

In addition to Larson, other members of the group are, Bill Wimmer and Barry McVinney on alto, Wardell Smith on drums, John Kirsh on trumpet, Chris Hofer

on bass, and Beth Teller on flute.

Teller is a UNL senior and conductor of one of the two university jazz lab bands. She is the first woman ever to conduct a UNL ensemble group.

"Conducting is a fun experience and I like it, but I would much rather play my flute," Teller said.

Teller said she has been interested in jazz music since she was a child.

"I heard it around the house a lot when I was little and as I got older I got interested in its history and origin."

For Wardell Smith, jazz music is an

expression of emotions.

"I think of jazz music as the interpretation of feelings. It's the expressions of musicians."

"Jazz jam sessions provide an opportunity for young and upcoming musicians to learn from first-hand experience what jazz is all about."

However, they point out there are not many places for jazz artists to play in the Lincoln area.

"Although jazz is growing in popularity in the Lincoln area, there are not many

opportunities for jazz musicians to perform," Gourlay said.

Meyers agreed that there were not many places in Lincoln that sponsored jazz music.

"The popularity of jazz is isolated and is only among those people who are really interested in it," Meyer said. "There is really a lot of talent here but people just aren't aware of it."

The Student Y plans to sponsor similar performances in the South Crib so jazz musicians on campus will have the opportunity to perform, Gourlay said.



Photo by Mark Billingsley

A jazz jam session, sponsored by the Student Y, Tuesday rocked the South Crib.

