

## Enjoyable play conquers audience

By David Creamer

"She Stoops To Conquer," a romantic comedy of manners written by Oliver Goldsmith, is currently playing at the Howell Theatre.

"She Stoops To Conquer" is set in England in 1776 at a place called the Three Pigeon Sisters Bar and at the estate of the wealthy Squire Hardcastle. The estate is supposedly located about 40 miles southwest of London. All the action takes place in one evening. This makes the plot of the play easy to grasp because the play does not require as much willing suspension of disbelief.

In short, the play is about mistaken identity and the relationships that come out of such mistakes.

Charles Marlow is a young man who has been chosen by Squire Hardcastle to meet his lovely daughter, Kate, with hopes that the two will hit it off.

Marlow, although a smooth operator among the women of low reputations, is almost completely without words around reputable women such as Kate.

Kate understands this problem, and hence, plays a barmaid in order to try to get to know Marlow, and possibly gain his affection.

A few of the dominant characters in the play are Kate Hardcastle, played by Mari Weiss; Charles Marlow, played

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by J. Christopher Wineman; Hastings, Marlow's companion, played by John M Merriman; and Squire Hardcastle, played by Charlie Bachman.

There seemed to be no real faults in the acting although, at times, it appeared that the characters were not really relating to each other. In a couple instances, it seemed as though the actors were acting rather than reacting to each other.

The plot and conflict of the play make it lighthearted, but there are also some good lines that add to the effect.

The play is humorous as it pokes fun at the upper class and makes a joke out of the difficulty of the formal courtships of the 18th century.

The costuming was eclectic and, coupled with the set, helped to convey the mood of the period well, yet was not distracting for the audience.

Overall, "She Stoops To Conquer" is entertaining and should send each member of the audience away feeling good. The play's loud colors work well with the dramatic style of acting, and together make for an enjoyable experience.

## Strength of 'Dugan' lies in dialogue

By Jeff Goodwin

"Max Dugan Returns," Neil Simon's latest contribution to film comedy, is one of his better efforts.

At any rate, it is certainly better than "I Ought To Be In Pictures," Simon's previous release.

The plot centers around Nora McPhee (played by Simon's wife, Marsha Mason) and the return of her father, Max Dugan. Jason Robards turns in a superb performance as Dugan, who abandoned Nora and her mother 28 years ago.

Max has come back now because he's dying of a heart condition and he wants to meet his only grandson before he dies.

In those intervening 28 years, Max has done six years

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in the big house and also worked as a dealer in a Las Vegas casino, where he has managed to skim \$687,000 from the take. So he's got both the cops and the mob after him.

Max comes along at an opportune time because Nora is floundering in poverty. Max shows up and plays sugar daddy to Nora, buying her a new kitchen, TV, stereo, car, etc.

All of this is complicated by the fact that Nora has just met a cop (Donald Sutherland) who she's going out with. Naturally she doesn't want his to find out about Max. Naturally, he does anyway.

Simon has always been able to write good dialogues and this film has its share. Example: At first Max tells his grandson that his name is Mr. Parker. Nora asks Max where he came up with that name. "I saw it on a package of dinner rolls. I figured it was better than Birdseye."

Robards' performance overshadows the other performers, but all of them do credible jobs, especially Matthew Broderick as Michael McPhee, Max's grandson.

This movie is also noteworthy in that it marks the film debut of Charley Lau, the world-famous hitting coach of the Chicago White Sox. Lau, who plays himself, is hired by Max to teach Michael how to hit. And he does a good job, although Michael is no George Brett.

"Max Dugan Returns," which is playing at the Cooper, isn't Simon's best film but it's worth seeing, especially if you're a Simon fan.



Marsha Mason and Matthew Broderick are surprised by the plethora of gifts left by Max Dugan.

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