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Professional

Continued from Page 9

and actually stimulate the viewer into almost interacting with it. The acting is amazing. Making her motion picture debut, Natalie Portman steals the show as a grown mind trapped in the body of a 12-year-old. She lends so much maturity to the role, it is hard to believe that this is her first film. Opposite her is Leon, the elder assassin whose mind quit growing when he was about 15 years old. Jean Reno is as flawless in the execution of this role as his character is in the execution of his targets. Chalk up a Best Actor nomination for Gary Oldman. His portrayal as the antagonist is done with enough psychotic fervor to make Dennis Hopper look like someone's eccentric uncle. It is fair to say that this is the best perfor-

mance in a collection of great performances. Danny Aiello also is impressive in his role as the Little Italy boss who not only holds Leon's leash but also controls his pocketbook. It is interesting to watch how he plays both ends against the middle as the story develops and the audience slowly discovers who the bad guys are and who they represent. The writing and story are marvelous works that stimulate the viewer's mind in ways that most Hollywood films ignore or are incapable of doing. In that light, "The Professional" offers a refreshing surprise with a spectacular yet definitely non-Hollywood ending. An impressive score and soundtrack add to the audio aspects of the film. The score was composed by Eric Serra, who also scored Besson's other films. The soundtrack offers some great background music, including songs by Björk and Sting. When held up to recent action/

Quik Facts

Movie: "The Professional"
Rating: R
Stars: Jean Reno, Gary Oldman, Natalie Portman, Danny Aiello
Director: Luc Besson
Grade: A
Five Words: Assassin protects, instructs little girl

adventure hits. "The Professional" not only holds its own but also exceeds other movies in many areas. The depth of characters, quality of acting and power of writing make this film a must-see. Besson has carved himself a niche in the American film industry and probably will continue to make strides forward for the new European connection.

Fusillo

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Master classes, which are organized workshops with professional touring artists, also offer students a chance to learn about their future profession. Fusillo started the master class program at UNL. Often, artists performing at the Lied Center or in the Lincoln community will give master classes. In the past, this has included the Joffrey Ballet and the New York City Ballet. It appears that Fusillo's efforts have paid off. Most of all, Fusillo said she had seen a change in students' perceptions.

"They come to perceive the seriousness of dance as a career rather than a hobby," she said. "The students are overwhelmed by the amount of work involved in preparing oneself for a career in dance." Most of her students are freshmen and sophomores, she said, who already exhibit a sense of direction and purpose. Fusillo wants them to build on this purpose. "They will tell you that I am a very demanding and disciplined teacher," she said. "And I think that's true." "My goal is to make them see in themselves positive changes they can make to grow and progress and strengthen themselves as individuals and dancers." As the dancers' dedication grew,

so did the number of students. In 1994, the department has 20 dance majors, which is higher than the average of 12 to 14 students at comparable dance programs across the nation, Fusillo said. But Fusillo still has at least one goal to meet. She said she still would wait for her wish of a singular facility, a tangible base from which the dance program could grow. "In my dreams, I want to make Lincoln a center for dance in the Midwest," she said, "but that will take facility, faculty and money." Until then, Fusillo can see the results of her hard work in her graduates. Some have gone on to perform in major companies such as Paul Taylor or Merc Cunningham.

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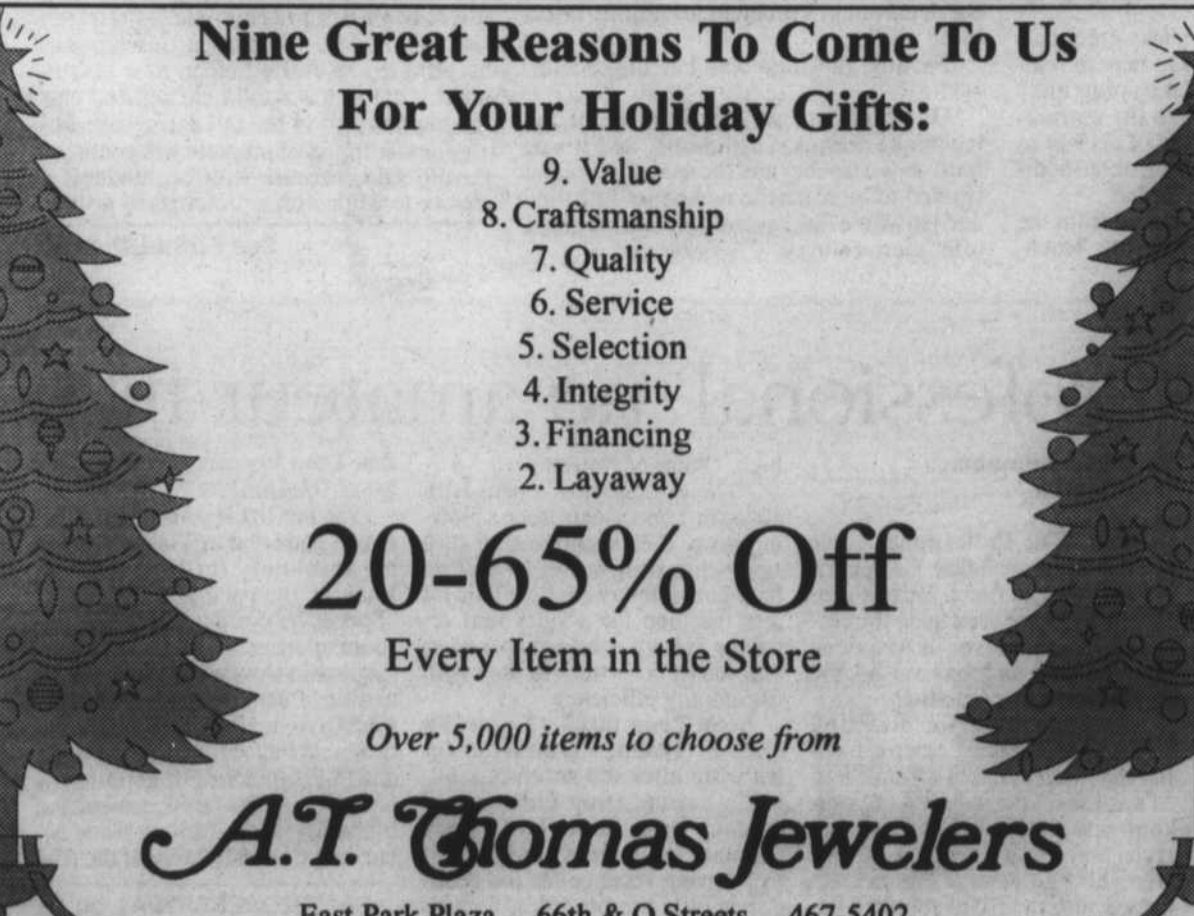
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