

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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'Breakfast Time' more interesting with fX

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

A smiling Todd Duncan stepped away from an fX television camera Monday morning. Moments earlier, he had been the subject of a "Breakfast Time" interview, and now he was reflecting on the manic proceedings that continued behind him.

"This is a morning show on speed," said Duncan, whose family owns Duncan Aviation. With a wave toward the still-scrambling crew members, he laughed. "Those guys are downing coffee like it's water."

"Breakfast Time" field host John Davis described the show in a slightly different way. He compared the program to a hybrid of "Good Morning America," "Late Night with David Letterman" and an early morning radio show.

The show is set in the fX studio/apartment in New York City, but three individual "Breakfast Time" teams travel across the country every week, capturing everyday people and giving them a chance at brief stardom.

Davis interviews those people on a daily basis. After spending 10 years interviewing celebrities in his previous jobs (which included a stint at The Nashville Network), Davis said meeting ordinary people is a thrill.

"Interviewing back then, it was like I had to spend two hours waiting to get 10 minutes with the person," he said.

"But these people are genuinely excited about being on television and showing off what they do. And that makes it exciting for me."

Duncan Aviation earned the spotlight because of its role as a



Scott Bruhn/DN

"Breakfast Time" field host John Davis interviews Jeannine Falter of Duncan Aviation during a walk-through session before the live broadcast. The "Breakfast Time" crew will visit various sites throughout Lincoln this week.

private airplane maintenance service for the rich and famous, including talk-show host Oprah Winfrey and pop icons John Travolta and Frank Sinatra.

Davis, coffee cup in hand, agreed with Duncan's assessment that the use of legal stimulants favored heavily into the show's workings. He said that the use was a result of a daily work schedule that can begin as early as 4 a.m.

"You've heard of the informa-

tion highway," Davis said. "This is the caffeine highway."

Larry Hochberg, a segment producer for "Breakfast Time," coordinates the location shots and is responsible for making the segments run smoothly, a task he said couldn't always be easily accomplished.

On-air errors are an occupational hazard in live television, Hochberg said. He and Davis listed equipment breakdowns and inter-

view subjects with cold feet as the most frequent disasters.

"I was interviewing this girl who was a future Olympic diver," Davis said, "and as soon as the cameras started rolling, she just froze up."

"It was a nightmare."

Other incidents included having a monster truck snap a satellite cable and discovering an equipment malfunction five minutes before going on the air with hang-

gliding enthusiasts.

But, Hochberg said, the stress and uncertainty of his job are what make it so appealing.

"Preparation is the most important thing," Hochberg said. "When I prepare well, things usually run smoothly. Not always, but usually."

"Breakfast Time" will be in Lincoln for the rest of this week. It is aired on Cablevision channel 38 from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m.

Multimedia show fuses many African influences

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

Fusion isn't just a concert or a show. The group, produced by Speech of Arrested Development, is a nationally touring, multicultural and multimedia event.

Fusion will bring its layered brand of entertainment and education to the Nebraska Union's Centennial Ballroom tonight at 7:30.

The group uses traditional dancers, storytellers, drummers and disc jockeys to explore cross-cultural influences, particularly those of African origin, said Bob Fitzgerald, managing partner for Vagabond Productions, Speech's production company.

"What audiences see is a series of musical, dance and theatrical vignettes which describe the impact of African culture here in the United States," Fitzgerald said.

A selection of slides and videos will also accompany the live action, Fitzgerald said, in order to highlight the performance.

Examining African culture's changing face throughout history — from the invention of the first drum to modern hip-hop artists — is a primary theme of the production, he said.

"Fusion takes a look at how African culture has evolved both in America and at its source," Fitzgerald said.

That process of evolution begins simply, with the presence of only a drummer and a solo dancer. The performance then progresses into multiple dancers and a disc-jockey accompaniment. Philosopher,

"Fusion takes a look at how African culture has evolved both in America and at its source."

BOB FITZGERALD

managing partner, Vagabond Productions

drummer, sculptor and professor Atu tells the tale of the evolution alongside the physical action.

Audience involvement comes into play later in the performance, Fitzgerald said, as members of the crowd are pulled onstage to dance with the professional dancers in a 1970s disco atmosphere, literally becoming part of the performance.

This examination of culture is just a part of a necessary educational experience for audience members, no matter what culture they believe themselves to be in, he said.

"The whole performance is taking in the essence of multiculturalism and putting it forth to the audience," Fitzgerald said.

"Understanding your own culture is just the first step in helping you to understand and accept other cultures. It's about developing that understanding through a better sense of self."

Tickets for tonight's performance are \$3 for students with identification and \$5 for the general public.

Director breaks norm in realistic first-date flick

By Charles Russell
Film Critic

For anyone who has ever been on a first date, "What Happened Was ..." is a film to make you feel just a little better about yourself. No matter how weird your date was, it can't begin to compare with the one described in this film.

Directed, written by and starring Tom Noonan, who is better known for playing the villain in movies such as "Manhunter," "F/X" and "Last Action Hero," this film is an intensely intimate view of modern mating rituals.

Jackie (Karen Sillas), an executive assistant, and Michael (Noonan), a paralegal, both work in the same law firm. The two have decided to meet socially for the first time. Other than their workplace, the two seem to have nothing in common until the subject of writing comes up.

Michael admits he is working on a book about the firm, and Jackie discloses that she writes children's stories. These apparently innocent remarks lead to an amazingly unusual and often frightening baring of their souls. We learn of the secret nightmares and aspirations the two keep hidden from the outside world.

Noonan has taken a topic that has been around the block in Hollywood and turned it into a richly fulfilling journey. Gone are the cheap sitcom gags and easy laughs that would normally fill up a first-date flick. Instead, we get a realistic depiction of people trying to connect full of nuance and subtle humor.

The film limits itself to a single location, Jackie's New York City apartment, and to

The Facts

Film: "What Happened Was ..."

Director: Tom Noonan

Stars: Tom Noonan, Karen Sillas

Rating: R

Grade: A

Five Words: First date gone bizarrely awry.

only two characters. This removes all distractions and the audience is given the chance to view their relationship as it occurs. The story also unfolds in real time; there are no jump cuts or fade-outs to signify time lapse. If there is an awkward pause in the movie, the audience sits through it.

Gone also is a soundtrack. Rather than using music to tell the audience how to feel, Noonan allows the characters to speak for themselves. The audience is forced to draw its own conclusions.

These kinds of decisions may seem slight, but in an industry addicted to speed and action, Noonan shows he has real guts. He has created a brilliant film that is at once comical, touching and downright scary.

"What Happened Was ..." is showing April 13-16 at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater in the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

As long as you show up late and miss the heavy-handed short feature "Equal Opportunity," you're in for a treat.