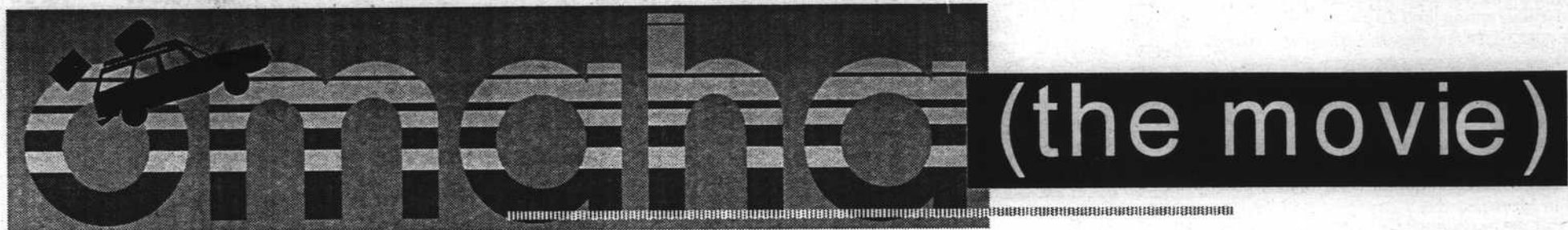


ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Omaha feature to open

By Gerry Beltz
Senior Reporter

Dan Mirvish made a movie with only \$40,000.

Not just a 20-minute or 30-minute short-subject movie, but a bonafide 85-minute feature entitled "Omaha: the movie," which opens at the Plaza 4 Theatres today.

"Omaha: the movie" was Mirvish's thesis film for his work at the University of Southern California. Choosing to do a full-length feature film had both good and bad outcomes, the Omaha native said.

"At USC, everybody was doing a 20-minute thesis," he said, "but that also means that when you're finished, the school owns the rights to that piece of work."

"If you want to own the rights to your work, you do a feature, but that means that USC won't let you use their equipment or facilities, and you have to raise all of the money yourself. But you pay a lower tuition."

There were other advantages to being a student filmmaker, he said, including free food from Runza and Godfathers, fresh cookies everyday from Mirvish's mom when the crew was filming in Omaha and a couple of free cameras to film the movie.

"Panavision and Paramount took pity on me," he said.

Much of the movie was filmed in Nebraska, and some of Mirvish's high school friends had parts. The initial filming had its challenges, however. A scene in Mirvish's film takes place in Alliance at Carhenge.

"We filmed the scenes at Carhenge first, and the footage accidentally got destroyed in the lab."

"Fortunately we had negative insurance, but it was funny because they actually sent a guy out to verify that we were making a movie in Nebraska."

Reshooting the scene caused a small flub in the film's continuity, he said.

"If you watch closely, one minute it's all sunshine," he said, "and the next minute, it gets cold and overcast."

See OMAHA on 13



Omaha native makes good, kooky film

By Gerry Beltz
Film Critic

"Omaha: the movie" has it all: car chases, romance, haircuts, telemarketing and Iowan kickboxers.

No, this is not a joke.

Omaha native Dan Mirvish wrote, produced, and directed "omaha: the movie," a film that teeters on the edge of reality.

Simon (Hughston Walkinshaw of Omaha) has had it with technology, and runs off to a foreign land.

He returns to Omaha a year later with a fresh outlook on life. As a new Buddhist, he feels that he has learned how to deal with himself, with life and with his beyond-dysfunctional family that is transfixed by a "COPS"-like TV show called "FEDS."

He also hooks up with his old girlfriend Gina (Jill Anderson, also of Omaha), who is a permanent student at the local community college and an expert in Tae Kwon Do.

To get money, Simon takes a stab at telemarketing, but it has disastrous results.

The Facts

Film: "omaha: the movie"

Stars: Hughston Walkinshaw, Jill Anderson, Dick Mueller

Director: Dan Mirvish

Rating: unrated

Grade: B+

Five Words: Independent film weaves bizarre tale.

Gina points out that some prayer stones he is chewing on might be emeralds, and this all leads to a climactic battle at Carhenge between our heroes Gina and Simon and two Columbians who have been ordered to steal the jewels.

Yes, this is a comedy, and quite a hilarious one at that.

Mirvish captures a great deal of humanity

with "omaha: the movie," both the good and bad sides. Almost every character is a caricature — something beyond what reality already holds.

The telemarketing scene is especially hilarious, as is the scene where Gina gives him a haircut.

The two Columbian men, Jorge (Frankie Bee) and Gustavo (Christopher M. Dukes) also bring great fits of laughter not just from their actions, but from the subtitles used in their scenes.

Instead of the typical subtitles added in later, the translations were written on strips of white paper and held up into the scene by a mysterious hand (usually the director's).

Nebraskans will recognize a few faces in "omaha: the movie," including Governor Ben Nelson, Douglas County Sheriff Richard Roth, and Omaha Mayor P.J. Morgan in full leather on a Harley-Davidson.

Well-shot, well-acted and well-done in general, "omaha: the movie" is a movie worth seeing.

Bands relieve finals blues

From Staff Reports

With finals approaching, students may be looking for some ways to relieve their stress. One way is to go to the local bars to check out some bands.

This weekend, numerous bands will play in the capital city. The Hurricane, 1118 O St., brings back Punkinhead tonight. The Kind will take the stage Saturday.

Wisconsin's Alien Harvest and Lincoln's own Overman play

Knickerbockers, 901 O St., tonight. Saturday, Town Crier from Omaha and Soterian Frolic take the stage.

Le Cafe Shakes, 1418 O St., will feature six bands Saturday night including XXY, Cherry Crush, Solid State and the Catholics.

Billy Bacon and the Forbidden Pigs will play the Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St., tonight and Saturday.

The Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway, hosts Looker tonight and Saturday.

Barrel of laughs in Omaha

From Staff Reports

The hilarious comedy team of Peanut, Walter and Jose Jalapeno on a Stick will be appearing at the Civic Auditorium Music Hall in Omaha tonight.

Oh yeah, Jeff Dunham will be there too. Dunham's comedy and voice-throwing abilities are known worldwide. He is the only person to have won the prestigious "Ventriloquist of the Year" Award twice, and he has appeared on "The Tonight Show" more than any other ventriloquist in history.

In fact, Dunham is one of the few comedians who was invited over to Johnny Carson's couch on his first visit.

And Dunham has recently been nominated as "Comedian of the Year" for the 29th TNN Music City News Country Awards.

In addition to all this prestige, he's a very funny guy.

Dunham has come a long way since he presented an oral book report at the age of 7 through a toy Mortimer Snerd puppet.

His continuing string of sold out nightclub engagements and comedy concerts across the country (numbering more than 250 a year) and his multiple TV appearances show he is one of the most popular comedians of our time.

Tickets for the 8 p.m. performance are \$19 and can be purchased at the door.