

Monday, October 1, 1984

Au Courant— the trend



Columbia Pictures Photos by Mike Sessums

You probably know him by his voice

Actor makes successful screen move

By Andrew Kinney

You have probably heard his voice. It has supported him through 25 sometimes lean years in the acting business. And although you have probably never heard his name, you soon will.

Adolph Caesar may be most recognized as the voice in the Certs, Atari, and American Express commercials. But, when he spoke to reporters last week in Dallas, he did not speak about his easily identifiable voice. Instead, Caesar was busy promoting his new movie, "A Soldier's Story."

Hailed as a hit at both its Hollywood and New York debuts, "A Soldier's Story" is based on Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "A Soldier's Play." In the movie, Caesar plays the cantankerous Master Sgt. Vernon Waters, the same role that he originated on the New York stage.

The transition from stage to screen presented Caesar with a challenge that he approached with vigor. "I was intrigued by the different size of the canvas," Caesar said.

While a member of the Negro Ensemble Company, Caesar was approached with the original script of "A Soldier's Play." After taking the play to Los Angeles, Chicago and Philadelphia, Caesar had one week to pre-

"I was so overwhelmed with the positive response."

pare himself for the transition from stage to screen.

Caesar related ensemble acting to team sports in that a certain chemistry exists in both that brings out the best in each player or performer. "When we did the play, the morale factor behind stage was amazing. Everyone loved each other. I never thought that the morale we had in the theater would transfer to the shooting of the movie, but it did," Caesar said.

Caesar saw the finished product for the first time at the film's Hollywood premiere. "All

the big Hollywood mucky mucks were there and I expected a typically cynical audience. I was so overwhelmed with the positive response. If I hadn't been in the film and had attended it with a friend, we would have had to go to a bar and discuss it over a couple of drinks." That, he said, "is the measure of a

Davenport learns a lot about himself and his race as his investigation uncovers many unsettling facts.

Norman Jewison decided to direct and produce "A Soldier's Story" immediately after seeing the original play in New York. He chose to retain Caesar for the Waters role because of the heralded reviews Caesar

"... the measure of a good film. If it provokes thought..."

achieved while playing the character on stage. Producer-Director Jewison said that he considers Waters the most interesting character in the story. "He has an insufferable ego and tremendous pride which drives him. He has very little patience with anyone who is not educated or a high achiever or does not share his dream," Jewison said.

Indeed, the most striking element in Waters' character is that he is a black racist. He has been brought up to act and think like the white man who's Army he so wants to be a part of. The inner conflict between Waters and his men is the backbone of the film.

Two performances in this production deserve as much acclaim as Caesar's. The role of Capt. Richard Davenport is played by Howard Rollins. You may remember his first major role as Coalhouse Walker in the movie version of E.L. Doctorow's "Ragtime." He is brilliant in his portrayal of a lawyer who casts aside any foregone conclusions in his search for the truth. He convincingly plays a part which calls for him to arrogantly place himself above members of his own race.

The other performance that deserves mention is that of Larry Riley who plays Cpl. C.J. Memphis. It is Waters' relationship with Memphis that epitomizes the problem that Waters has with the rest of his company.

If the mark of a good film is for it to provoke introspection and thought, then "A Soldier's Story" definitely qualifies.

The film is set to open in the Fort Worth area Oct. 16.



"Soldier's Story" star, Adolph Caesar, was in Dallas promoting the film. Photo by Julieanne Miller

good film. If it provokes thought, if you can't leave it behind you in the theater."

"A Soldier's Story" is a good film to say the least. Set in 1944 near the end of World War II, "A Soldier's Story" is a murder-mystery which centers around an all-black army regiment based at Fort Neal, La. Following the murder of one of the soldiers, the Army dispatches Captain Richard Davenport, a polished, black, Howard University-trained military attorney (played by Howard Rollins) to investigate reports that the Ku Klux Klan is responsible.

During the course of his investigation, Davenport speaks with many members of the company. The men talk of pride and prejudice, of honor and humiliation, of freedom and frustration, of dignity and disdain.



Adolph Caesar (left) and Denzel Washington square off in Columbia Picture's "A Soldier's Story," a murder mystery set in the South during World War II.

Columbia Pictures

Photo by Julieanne Miller

Adolph Caesar contemplates a reporter's question at a recent press conference.

'Red Ryder' product of new emphasis

By Gary Hicks

Imagine yourself having breakfast in a small-town diner. Suddenly your life is threatened. Your very worth as an individual is questioned. How would you feel? Scared? Isolated?

The stage is now set for Mark Medoff's "When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?" which is being presented tonight through Sunday, Oct. 7 by Theater TCU.

The play takes place in an all-night diner situated in a tiny New Mexico town. A group of average people are seated in an average diner, eating an average breakfast on any average Sunday morning. This everyday scene is repeated in thousands of small-town diners every day of the year. What awaits these people could happen to others.

The diner's calm setting is disturbed by the arrival of a bitter, Vietnam veteran who is determined to take out his hostilities on the diner's occupants. The veteran, portrayed by graduate student Douglas Hoppock, systematically violates the rights of each person in the diner.



Douglas Hoppock plays Teddy, the upset Vietnam veteran.

The play's other characters include Stephen, also known as the Red Ryder, who is portrayed by Mike Wehrli, Angel, a waitress, who is portrayed by Keri Healey, Richard and Clarisse, a married couple played by Jim Roe and Kim Rideout, and Lyle, an aging auto mechanic, played by Tom Kelso. Rounding out the cast of characters is Cheryl, the girlfriend of the veteran, portrayed by Kathy Porter, and Clark, the owner of the diner, played by Bob Plunkett.

The play is difficult to view. One becomes incensed with rage over the inhumane treatment that is unjustly inflicted on innocent people. At the same time, however, it is hard

" . . . a student will get a taste of all different kinds of theater . . . "

not to feel some sympathy toward the Vietnam veteran, Teddy, who has, through no desire of his own, grown apart from society.

Theater TCU's production is excellently cast, and genuinely performed. It is a play with deep feelings, both on the part of the players and the audience.

One word of caution. The play is filled with profanity. It would, however, be difficult to portray the play's deep feelings of insecurity and bitterness without some deviations in proper grammar.

The play will be performed at the Scott Theater, 3505 West Lancaster, in the Will Roger's complex. Curtain times are set for 8 p.m. through Saturday, Oct. 6, with a 2 p.m. performance Sunday, Oct. 7.

The choice of "Red Ryder" as the season opener was made in an attempt to move the theater department in a new direction. Gaylan Collier, a professor of theater and director of the play, said that the theater department is moving toward placing a greater emphasis on contemporary works.

This new emphasis is greatly related to what is available in the job market for theater



Senior Mike Wehrli portrays the "Red Ryder"

majors. "We are aware that realistically our students will be searching for work in TV, films and on the stage," Collier said. "We believe that we should offer training in all these areas."

Collier sees that this reemphasis in training stems from a trend that has been developing since the 1950s. "This trend has grown up really in the last 25 years, and has been strengthened in the last 10. It really began when TV took hold," Collier said.

Despite these new directions that the theater is heading in, the classics still remain a part of the theater major's curriculum. "After four years, a student will get a taste of all different kinds of theater, from the avant-garde to the traditional," Collier said.

Collier's hope for the future of TCU's theater department includes improvements in quality, and not in quantity. "I don't want to be a much larger department," Collier said. "It would be nice, though, to have better facilities."

Whatever comes next, the production of "Red Ryder" is definitely a positive step forward in TCU Theater's quest for the future.

-at hand-

Monday

"When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder?" will be presented by Theater TCU beginning today through Sunday, Oct. 7. Curtain time will be 8 p.m. nightly, through Oct. 6, and at 2 p.m. Oct. 7. Admission is free with TCU ID, but reservations should be made by calling the theater box office at 921-7626.

The University Orchestra, under the direction of George Del Gobbo, opens its 1984-85 season at 8 p.m. in Ed Landreth Auditorium. The performance will be broadcast live over KTCU-FM, 88.7.

-within reach-

All Week Long

Stage West draws its fifth season to a close with the Off Broadway success **The Dining Room**. Performances will run through Oct. 6. Tickets will range from \$7.50 to \$9. For reservations call 332-6238.

Tuesday

Andras Schiff will perform Oct. 2 in an opening concert for the **Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra** in the Ed Landreth Auditorium at 8 p.m. Tickets for the Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra concert, range from \$8 to \$12 and are available through the Symphony Ticket Office by calling 926-8831.

Regency, a vocal group reminiscent of the Mills Brothers, will perform at 8 p.m. in the Student Center ballroom. Tickets, which are available at the Student Center information desk, are \$3 with TCU ID.

The **Sid Richardson Collection of Western Art** will display two bronze sculptures by renowned western artists **Frederic Remington** and **Charles M. Russell**. The sculptures will be on display through Dec. 30. Admission is free.

"All of Me" shows new side of Steve Martin

By Todd Camp

The latest comedy of the talented director Carl Reiner is "All of Me." Reiner's favorite actor and star of the film is the well-known Steve Martin. Also starring in the film with Martin is the popular comedienne, Lily Tomlin. Tomlin and Martin play basically the same role. Well, sort of.

Steve Martin plays the role of Roger Cobb, an unhappy lawyer who'd rather be a jazz musician. He decides that he has to stop dreaming, so he quits moonlighting with his unpaid jazz band and decides to marry the boss' daughter and straighten out his life.

Meanwhile, Lily Tomlin is the rich, eccentric invalid Edwina Cutwater, who's trying to come to terms with her approaching death. Edwina looks back on her life and decides that being an invalid has caused her to miss out on the good things in life.

In her attempt to get even with life, Edwina calls upon a mystic to transfer her soul into the body of her stablehand's young, lustful daughter. She then decides to leave her fortune to the girl so that Edwina can return from the grave and live a little.

Roger gets mixed up in the mayhem and accidentally becomes the host of Edwina's soul. While Roger controls the left half of his body, Edwina controls the right. They constantly argue back and forth.

For those who have seen the long line of Reiner/Martin films, which include, "The Jerk," "Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid," and "The Man With Two Brains," "All of Me" stands out as a giant step forward for Martin. Although the basic Martin zaniness is still

present in the film, the role of Roger Cobb offers something unique.

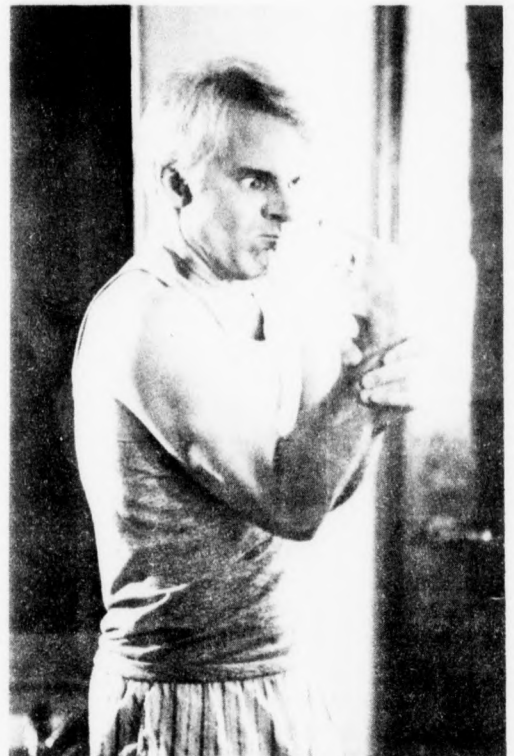
Steve Martin began at the age of ten selling guide books and doing magic tricks at Disneyland. Upon his graduation from the University of California at Los Angeles, Martin started writing for television. He wrote for such performers as the Smothers Brothers, Sonny and Cher, Glen Campbell, Pat Paulsen and John Denver.

He later began performing on his own in night clubs and eventually became successful through appearances on popular TV shows like "Saturday Night Live" and the "Tonight Show."

Lily Tomlin began her trek to fame through night club performances at such famous places as The Improvisation, Upstairs at the Downstairs and Cafe Au Go Go. She really, however, owes her fame to the variety of characters she created in the hit TV series, "Laugh-In." She later went on to star in "The Incredible Shrinking Woman," "Moment by Moment" with John Travolta, "Nashville," and her screen debut as Violet Newstead in "Nine to Five."

Both Martin and Tomlin do an excellent job in a film that will definitely make you laugh, but will also make you think. "All of Me" has a hidden quality that has been lacking in Martin's other films.

"All of Me" is a humorous look at the mixed up lives of the rich and the unlucky. Though the point is to make you laugh, it also makes you look more seriously at your own life. It may not be up there with the big grossers like "Ghostbusters" and "Temple of Doom," but it has a hidden quality of "class" that the other two just don't have.



Roger Cobb (played by Steve Martin) tries to restrain the accusing finger of Edwina Cutwater, whose spirit is trapped in his body.



Spinster Edwina Cutwater (played by Lily Tomlin) schemes to free her spirit from her dying body.

Au Courant

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Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin star as Roger Cobb and Edwina Cutwater, whose lives become hilariously entangled, in Carl Reiner's new film, "All of Me."