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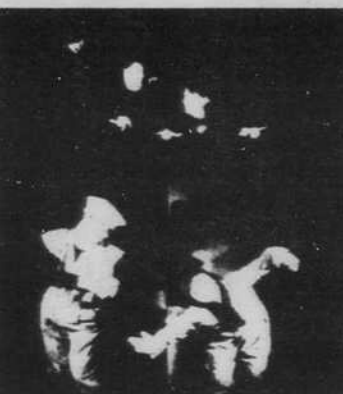
**emu** cultural forum presents

**Seattle Mime Theatre**

Tuesday, January 26  
8 p.m.  
EMU Ballroom

Tickets available at the EMU Main Desk  
\$3.50 UO Students \$4.50 General Public  
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**MOVIES**

**Magic** from page 1B

the people on the screen, but also in the audience, because the event on the screen is real and we care about its outcome. Furthermore, this scene is not gratuitous, nor is it included just for its possible sensationalism. The filmmakers use it to make a point about Ferrell and Torn's relationship, and it winds up as an excellent metaphor for the entire film.

A word of warning might be in order here for the squeamish. The film does show a certain amount of farm violence. A calf is castrated, a pig is shot, bled, and the bristles are scraped from his hide, and a dead cow is skinned. But in contrast, the film contains no violence between human beings, nobody gets shot, stabbed, killed, or even punched out. It's certainly refreshing to see a modern drama which does not rely on those techniques.

"Heartland" is loaded with memorable visual moments which will linger long after the film is over: a beautiful horse galloping off on a spring day to graze, which is recalled during a later shot of the same horse being turned loose during the winter because there isn't enough hay to feed him; the vast open stretches of land (the film was shot entirely on location in Montana) which contrasts sharply with the closed-in intensity of the human story going on; and the awesome beauty and cold of the first snowfall, to name but a few.

"Heartland" exudes a warmth and muted beauty mixed with a brand of truth which is almost never seen in a Hollywood movie. I would even recommend seeing it twice.

The second time I saw "Heartland" was here in Eugene. It was raining when I stepped into the theatre, but when I came out, I was confronted by the unexpected thrill of seeing everything covered by a fine blanket of snow. Maybe this film does contain magic.

by robert webb

**Ragtime**  
James Cagney, Howard Rollins  
Mayflower Theater

Americans are always trying to improve things, like toothpaste and detergents. But why do screenwriters try to improve history? History was the one thing that I was counting on being the same tomorrow when I open the morning paper.

A recent attempt at trying to improve on what's already happened is screenwriter Michael Weller's adaptation of the best-selling novel of turn-of-the-century America, "Ragtime".

Blending historical fact with fiction into a film isn't as simple for a screenwriter as, let's say, blending scotch and soda into a cocktail — but "Ragtime" should be sent back to the bar because some historical ingredients are missing.

The film opens in the midst of the hustle and bustle of America in 1906: new-fangled automobiles frightening horses in the street, socialites drinking up their newly acquired wealth in champagne glasses, and always in the background is the fast, even time of ragtime music.

Somehow, New York's impoverished immigrants were edited out somewhere along the line. That is, except for the Cinderella story of a poor sidewalk peddler of silhouettes who turns his talent into the career of a successful silent movie director. Not something that happened to the majority of immigrants in the Land of Opportunity in the early 1900s.

But if you can remember that you're watching a movie and not a newsreel,

**Ragtime: complex... but catchy**

"Ragtime" is somewhat like its music: syncopated, but enjoyable.

Unfortunately, unless the movie-goer has had the benefit of reading the novel beforehand, or studied United States history of the early 20th century, "Ragtime" includes too many story threads to weave into an easily-understandable yarn.

There's the story of a millionaire who's murdered in the ballroom of Madison Square Garden, the discovery of a little black baby in a garden of a respected

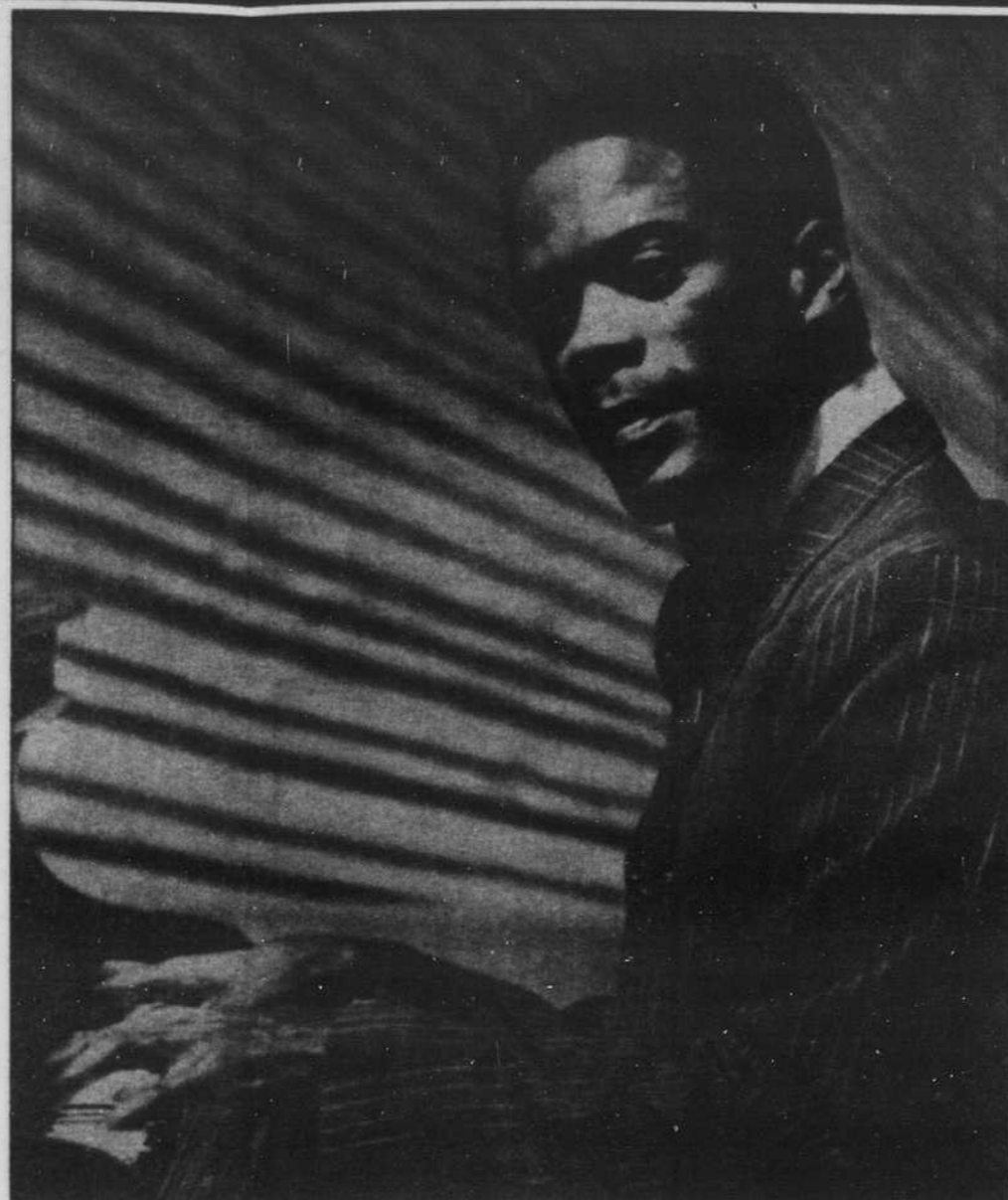
white family, and, most developed, the story of Coalhouse Walker, a ragtime piano player who finally becomes successful enough to own a Model T Ford. Bigoted fire chief Willie Conklin (Kenneth McMillan) victimizes the glib, well-dressed Walker, and he and his band vandalize the Ford.

After Walker tries every legal means to gain retribution, he organizes his own band to firebomb a series of firehouses with the demand that Conklin be turned over to them. The battle finally leads

them to occupy the famous J.P. Morgan Library, threatening to blow it up if Conklin is not given over to them.

There are as many transitions in "Ragtime", perhaps, as there were in America at the turn of the century. Although the movie packs a powerful emotional punch that makes up for some of the story's complexity, it's hard to tell who the players are if you don't have a scorecard. This is one time when you should read the book before you see the movie.

by gabriel boehmer



**Screwed-up screwball**

**Modern Problems**  
Chevy Chase  
West 11th Cinemas

There's a class of Hollywood films called "screwball comedies," happy-go-lucky affairs where things get really crazy and everyone has a good time. Kind of like Friday nights in a freshman dorm.

"Modern Problems" is a screwball comedy... a bad screwball comedy. Oh, it's crazy all right, but it just isn't very funny.

Chevy Chase is an air traffic controller whose girlfriend (Patti D'Arbanville) walks out on him because of his uncontrollable jealousy. After being doused with radioactive waste, he develops telekinetic powers, and uses them to get his girlfriend back, and get back at all his enemies.

"Modern Problems" is a real radioactive waste. There are only two relatively cute scenes: one in which Chase gives a romantic rival a bloody nose rivaling Old Faithful, and a bedroom scene in which Chase uses his telekinetic powers on his girlfriend. Unfortunately, everything else is either dumb, predictable, or totally ridiculous. There's nothing in "Modern Problems" that a group of stoned high school students couldn't come up with in an hour or two.

Ken Shapiro, who directed and co-wrote the film, and Tom Sherohman and Arthur Sellers, who make their screenwriting debut with this film, should go back for a long session at the drawing board. Chase should be forced back to late-night television, or maybe into a sequel to "Foul Play." Movies like "Modern Problems" are a waste of his talents.

Sometimes I wonder what future generations will watch as "classic screwball comedies." I don't know, but you can be sure "Modern Problems" won't be one of them.

by matt meyer

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