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ASHLAND

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speare represents the hardest. "Shakespeare is different because it's written in iambic pentameter," he said. "It's written as poetry. It has a meter that's pretty important for people to hear in poetry."

Russell said that though Shakespeare is hard, it's not totally foreign. "I've seen *Hamlet* at the University. I've read the play," he said.

Russell said he often sits back and watches his contemporaries practice their lines.

"I look to see how people handle the text," he said. "I'm still learning."

Russell's acting spot at the festival came last March after he graduated with a master's degree in theater.

Then, he was an understudy for a play titled *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* by August Wilson.

At the University, he appeared in *T-Bone and Weasel*, a comedy presented last winter about a black man and a white man and their life in the South.

Russell also appeared in *Blood Knot* last year, a play about two brothers in South Africa — one biracial and one black.

Russell was recruited from Jamaica in 1986 to run track for the University. He caught the acting bug after taking an acting class in his undergraduate study, he said.

The change from the University acting scene to Ashland was extreme.

Most of the people acting at the festival have master's degrees in acting, he said, admitting that such a degree could have helped his skills.

When it really gets down to it, the different backgrounds of the actors don't make much difference on stage, he said.

"I came March 24 last year, one month late," he said. "I thought I'd have some problems fitting in, but people just made room and really accepted me. No one ever says no."

The size of the organization means the actors have to be on their toes, he said.

"When you have an appointment for costume, you can't be late. If you are, you mess up the next 50 people," Russell said. "It's a really big organization."

Whether Russell will follow his on-stage dreams in the future is now uncertain. "It's a really unpredictable job," he said.

Actors at the festival work from January to October, one of the longest repertory contracts in the field. But, come October, they're unemployed without any guarantee of future work.

"Hey, I'm still young. I'm only 28," Russell said. "I've still got enough energy to try being an actor for a while longer."



Davon Russell

CINEMA

Continued from Page 5

comes on the radio.

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That's the premise behind Ben Stiller's *Reality Bites*.

This movie caters to us, the 18-24 year-old age group and no one else. Those older than us grew up in the hippy revolu-

tion, and those younger were raised in the baggy clothes-wearing hip-hop generation.

The never-ending references to the late 1970s, early 1980s pop culture in *Reality Bites*, will fly right over the heads of anyone not born between the years 1969 and 1975.

Stiller shows guts by making a movie that has such a specific audience, especially since the movie caters to our age-group, which, if you go by the movie, is so poor we have to use daddy's gas card to buy groceries.

The plot of the movie is pretty simple. Girl likes guy. Girl's male friend loves her and is jealous and hates guy she likes. Girl gets guy. Girl dumps guy. Friend gets girl. Friend disses girl after night of sex.

Although it is cool to watch a movie that you can relate to (a movie that discusses the nutritional importance of a "Big Gulp"), the references to The Gap, Brady Bunch and disco

get real old after a while.

Take, for instance, the "Cheesy Vinyl" show on KWVA. For two hours a week, it's fun to listen to because of the novelty of it all. But if KWVA played early 1980s rock for 24 hours a day, the novelty would wear off.

Stiller takes the "Generation X" thing and milks it for all it's worth. Everything these characters do and say in the movie is a cutesy reference to growing up in 1980s.

When the four main characters are in a convenience store and "My Sharona" comes on the radio, they start dancing around saying, "Remember this one," like they haven't heard the song since it hit the Top 10 in 1980.

Yes, there are a number of funny scenes in *Reality Bites*, but is anyone really that into reliving the 1980s to the extent the characters do in the movie?

Let's hope not.

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