



### This Week: Would You Believe... *The Return of Maxwell Smart*

**Starring Don Adams, Sylvia Kirstel, Dana Elcar**  
**Directed by Clive Donner**  
**90 minutes, 1980**

With our intrepid B-movie expert Trent Drake somewhere in Ontario, and seeing as I haven't watched any good classic films lately, I've decided to try to pick up the slack on the B-movie review front. This is not intended to replace Turkey Dinner -- hopefully our resident lupine reviewer will be back and writing columns before long.

Most of you will remember *Get Smart*, that zany secret agent spoof show from the late sixties. It's still running in syndication on cable. As well, there's a new series with some of the same characters. For those who don't remember, Don Adams starred as Maxwell Smart, the bumbling but eternally lucky Agent 86, who always managed to thwart the fiendish plans of KAOS. More recently, Adams provided the voice of Inspector Gadget in the cartoon of the same name.

In the movie, KAOS has built a weapon that will destroy all the fabric in the world, rendering everyone nude. What's more, if they don't get a rent payment of ten billion dollars per week, they will use this nude bomb. Who is the agent to stop them? The Chief and various officials consult the supercomputer which will tell them the right agent for the job. The machine calculates for a moment, then gives its choice -- Agent 86. The Chief is not amused.

Max and a large cast of other operatives get right to work, and leads abound. The investigation takes Max to New York, Los Angeles, and Switzerland. Soon he starts getting close, and the fabric of the KAOS scheme starts to unravel. Will Max thwart the evil plans of the enemy, or will KAOS finally succeed and take over the world? Anyone care to venture a guess?

This comical romp of a movie is too silly to be believed, but so was the show. In a nutshell, *The Return of Maxwell Smart* is a quadruple-length episode of the show with a big budget. This allows some impressive stunts and gimmicks. Max jumps out of a plane with a score of KAOS paratroopers chasing him. He goes skiing

in Switzerland. He chases a KAOS boss through the Universal Studios Theme Park on a tour bus. The gadgets used are plenty of fun. The supercomputer needs a quarter before it will work. Max's turbocharged desk can do 80 mph and is armed with machine guns -- this makes for a fun chase scene towards the end of the movie. I won't bother discussing the shoe phone (with touch-tone dialling, a big deal fifteen years ago), the ski-boot phone, or the shoe answering machine.

Silliness is the order of the day. Most of the trademark cliches from the series are easily found, from "Would you believe?" to "Sorry about that chief." The only one skipped is "Missed it by that much," but they do manage to throw in a corruption of said phrase. The unlucky Agent 13 is back in full force, and shows up in an overhead baggage compartment, a filing cabinet, and a toilet.

The acting is not particularly inspired, but one does not demand Lawrence Ollivier for this type of flick. Adams is fine in the starring role, Sylvia Kirstel is adequate as his partner Agent 22, and Dana Elcar shines as the Chief. Many of you will remember Elcar from *MacGuyver*, where he played (shock) a secret service chief. This must be his specialty. The most notable absence in the acting department is Barbara Feldon as Agent 99. No mention is made of her, which is a pity. The relationship between Max and his new partner has to be hyped to make things work.

Feldon is not the only person from the series not present in the movie. Mel Brooks is nowhere to be found, not even in the end credits. I get the impression that this project went on without the series creator's approval. That might be for the better, though -- *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (a movie that I've heard so many bad reports of that I won't watch it) springs to mind.

Should you watch *The Return of Maxwell Smart*? That depends. This brand of humour is not for everyone. If you liked *Get Smart*, odds are that the movie will suit your tastes. On the other hand, if you thought that the original series was insipid and stupid, steer clear of this movie.

## Sex, Love, and Infidelity

by David MacDonald

The UPEI Theatre Society is preparing for their new fall productions this year, and with the theme being Sex, Love and Infidelity, it's bound to be an intriguing group of plays. There are three plays, all one-act comedies, ranging from older works to more contemporary ones.

The three directors involved are Christopher Michaud, Carly MacKinnon and Geraldine Quinn. Michaud, who is directing *Sganarelle* by Moliere, is involved in directing for the first time. He says "I saw this as an opportunity to attempt something new for me, a challenge I've been looking for." Although this is his first time directing, he has had acting experience, being in a high school production of *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as a two-year stint as a Father of Confederation.

MacKinnon, who is directing George Bernard Shaw's play *Overruled*, has had a little more experience in the director's chair, having once directed a high school production of Hamlet. Carly has her reasons for wanting to do this particular play. She wanted to do something that was lighthearted and that had a small cast to work with. She ended up with *Overruled* because "He is such a well-known playwright and because I just couldn't stop laughing as I read it!" Carly has aspirations to continue in this particular field, saying that her dream is to someday direct feature films, and to maybe work for Jim Henson Productions.

Quinn is directing the play *Salve Regina*, a modern work by New Zealand playwright Edward Bowman. Quinn, who is an exchange student from Australia, says that it was a stroke of good luck to come across this particular play, saying that it was a good opportunity to show audiences a play whose origin is other than North America. Geraldine has had experience in the theatre back when she was in Australia, as a member of the Stonnington Theatre Company in Melbourne for two years, as an actor. She also produced a company production of Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, but this is her first time directing. She says "I have been pressured to direct by my colleagues at home, and would scarcely have considered it likely that the first time I locked horns with the director's chair was to be halfway across the world."

What have the three directors learned about this experience? Michaud says that directing requires a lot of imagination on the director as well as the director, saying that while he wouldn't recommend it for everyone, it's a lot of fun, and hard work. MacKinnon says that with this experience, she has more respect for others in this profession, and she realizes that she wants to be a part of it. Finally, Quinn says she is grateful to stretch her directorial limbs here, as well as being able to learn more from experienced people in the theatre.

*Sex, Love and Infidelity: An Evening of One-Act Comedies* is playing on November 17, 18, 19 at 8:00 pm in the Steel Recital Hall.

## Sound Bites

by Lorne Caborn

I'm back to review another set of CDs, some good, some bad, and others not worthy of mention. I'll start this week off on a positive note as Toronto natives Bass is Base are back with another funk infused CD. *Memories of the Soulshack Survivors* is the group's much-anticipated second offering and they don't disappoint. Fans of Dignable Planets and De La Soul will love the hyped up sound, and appearances by the Barenaked Ladies, Sarah McLachlan and the Dream Warriors make it a must for music fans.

Jimmy George offers those with no taste something to listen to. The eight piece pop/rock/celtic/punk band spreads itself too thin for anyone to enjoy *Hotel Motel*, the Ottawa band's second release. Most of the songs sound like bad Weird Al polka tunes. If you pick this one up, don't say I didn't warn you.

*What's Inside* is the newest CD for R&B mainstay Joan Armatrading. With soft melodies and beautifully written ballads, it's a shame she doesn't have a voice to compare. Most of the songs are ruined this way while a few survived the lyrical beatings. On a whole I'm afraid I can't recommend this one.

The Celtic rock group Oysterband have put out their eighth disc, *The Shouting End of Life*. Traditionalists won't find this one very entertaining and I was personally disappointed by their remake of "Lovers in a Dangerous Time". It still offered some tracks worth a second listen, but I would still prefer to hear them live with a few drinks to cloud my judgement.

Those who have listened to everything that Enigma has to offer may want to check out *Timeless* from Goldie. Not as good as Enigma, but comparable, the disc takes UK house and transforms it into soothing New Age. I hope something catches your eye this week and if not be sure to catch the next edition of Sounds Bites.