

Only When I Laugh the best of Simon

The seemingly inexhaustible playwright Neil Simon is still going strong in his early 50's.

He's been writing Broadway comedies for over 20 years now, and in recent years he has branched out very successfully into the movies.

Simon's newest movie is ONLY WHEN I LAUGH. It's an adaptation of a Broadway play which he wrote back in 1970 called "The Gingerbread Lady". The film provides a wonderful vehicle for the writer's favourite leading lady, Marsha

Mason, who in real life happens to be Mrs. Neil Simon.

In the film Mason plays an actress who had lost custody of her daughter. The woman was an alcoholic, and as the movie opens, she is just leaving a rest home after 12 weeks of taking the cure.

Mason is ready to begin her life anew, not only being freed of the plague of alcoholism, but in getting to know her teenage daughter better. Her daughter (played by Kristy McNichol) moves into her apartment with her, and the two of

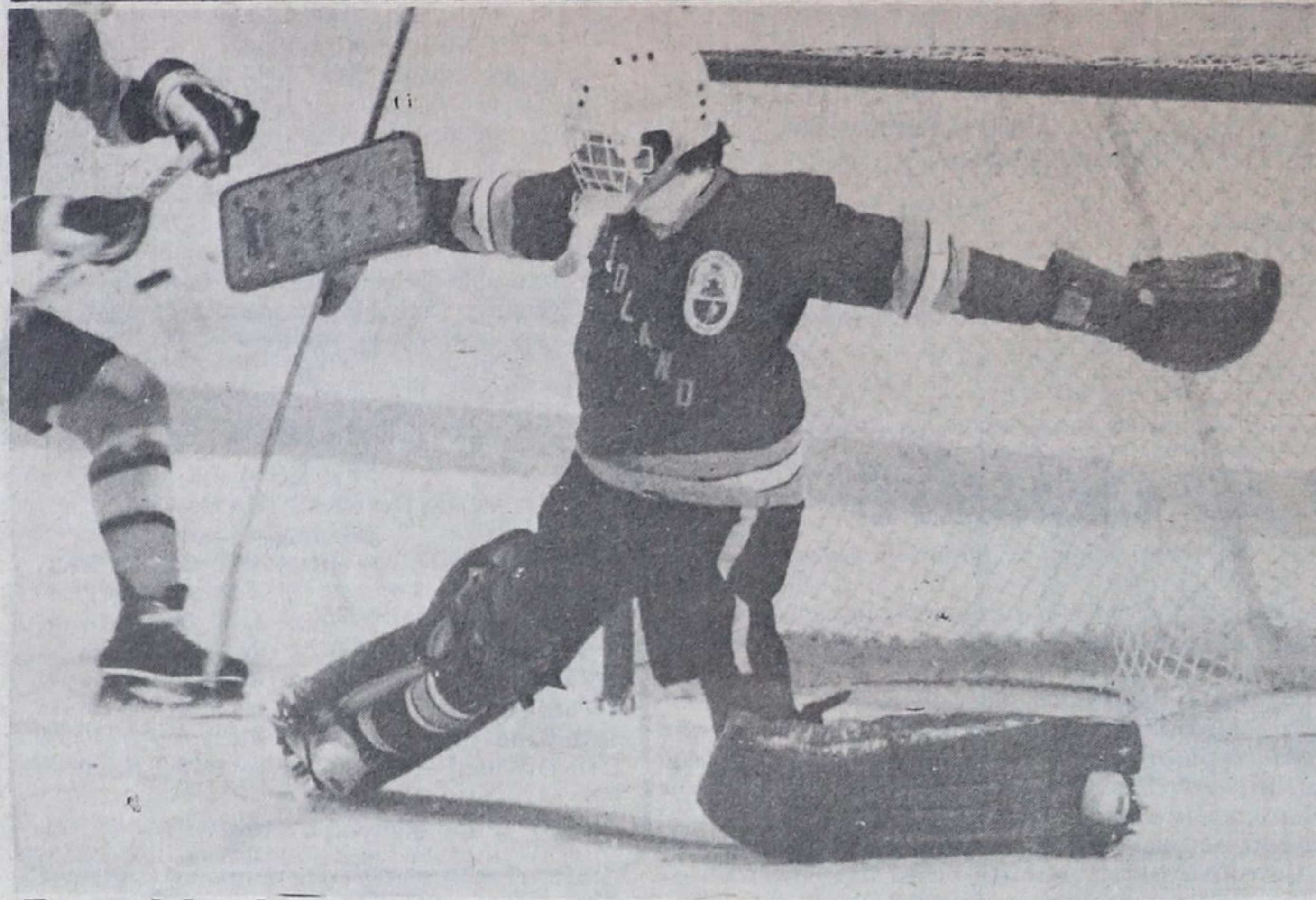
them attempt to pick up the pieces of the years they missed together. The relationship is a struggle, and there are continuous strains on it. ONLY WHEN I LAUGH is indeed a laughter and tears movie, as it has been advertised.

Marsha Mason makes her fourth appearance in a Neil Simon film here. She previously acted in THE CHEAP DETECTIVE, THE GOODBYE GIRL and CHAPTER TWO.

Kristy McNichol is equally fine as the teenage daughter. Her performance in

ONLY WHEN I LAUGH confirms her as one of the most appealing adolescents in today's movie scene. There are two other supporting roles in ONLY WHEN I LAUGH which should be noted. If Mason and McNichol supply most of the movie's emotion, a good deal of the humour in the film is contributed by James Coco and Joan Hackett. They play Mason's good-hearted but definitely offbeat friends.

On balance, I would rate ONLY WHEN I LAUGH as the best Neil Simon movie since THE GOODBYE GIRL.



Busy blocker

Midland Major Midgets goaltender Tom Chapman blocks a Collingwood shot in MMHA exhibition play Wednesday at Midland Arena. Unfor-

tunately, for Chapman and company the Collingwood club found an opening six times in the game while the Midlanders only scored twice.

Midgets split first outings

The Midland Major Midgets split their first two exhibition games of the season with a win in Barrie last Sunday and a loss to Collingwood at Midland Arena Wednesday.

In other MMHA exhibition play, the Bell Canada Major Atoms opened their season on the right note with a 6-4 win over Sharon last Sunday at Midland Arena.

The Major Midgets opened the scoring in their Wednesday matchup with a goal from Allen Whidden, from Drew Varley, late in the first period. Collingwood tied it up early in the second and the score remained even until the visitors opened up with two more in the third.

The Midland squad drew close again when Whidden and Varley teamed up with team captain Steve Charlebois before Collingwood notched three more to take the game in hand.

Chris Lemieux and Tom Chapman shared the goaltending duties for Midland. The Major Midgets collected 36 minutes in penalties, including two five-minute misconducts and a game misconduct late in the contest, while Collingwood amassed only 14 minutes.

In last Sunday's matchup, Charlebois scored twice, Peter Wright added a pair and Paul Quilty and Whidden each scored one apiece to pace the Major Midgets to a 6-2 drubbing of Barrie.

Lemieux, Chapman and Bob Houston all shared netminding duties for Midland in that encounter.

The Bell Canada Atoms got off to a flying start in their Sunday game with three straight goals -- two from Scott Bales and one from Jim Ball -- before the visitors got on the board.

Sharon answered with three of their own before the second period was over, but Midland took control again in the final frame with goals from Sean Lunnie, John Richardson, and another from Bales. Sharon scored once in the period.

Picking up assists for the Bell Canada squad were Chalmers, with three, Lunnie, Bales, Chalmers, Lyle King, Greg Lalonde and Sean Best.

The Bell Canada Atoms play are scheduled for a re-match with Sharon in Sharon tomorrow.

Next outing for the Major Midgets is set for Oct. 17 in Collingwood.

MMHA NOTES:

The Midget and Juvenile clubs are continuing their fertilizer drive to raise funds for this season's tournament and travel expenses. Anyone requiring manure for lawn or garden may call 526-6003 anytime today for delivery tomorrow or anytime next week for delivery next Saturday.

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