SPEED

Directed by Jan DeBont. Written by Graham Yost. Starring Keanu Reeves, Dennis Hopper, Sandra Bullock, Jeff Daniels, and John Lithgow. Directed and produced by Mike Nichols.

S
peed is a simple-minded action movie that derives most of its inspiration from high-speed jams through Los Angeles freeways and subway systems and from some pretty silly explosions. The character developments are secondary to the plot. Jack Traven (Keanu Reeves) is a SEAT team member whose living-on-the-edge heroics make him the ideal hero. Howard Payne (Dennis Hopper) is the mis- place psychopath whose exploits as a mad bomber are only slightly less reprehensible than his disdain for the hero; Harry (Jeff Daniels) is Traven's likable but expendable partner. In short, Speed is a fornashische action picture ("The Hrick ex- bus," except less sophisticated than Die Hard) that succeeds as an example of a story for non-stop action and big-budget pyrotechnics.

Needless to say, the action keeps audi- ences riveted to their seats, and Speed ulti- mately succeeds. As the audience members laugh during the climactic action scenes, the performances are so expertly handled that you begin to appreciate the one-liner dialogue, which pro- vokes some comic relief.

The movie would be considered a wild ride. The performances are not stellar but merely solid enough to keep the story in check. The hero and heroine, Reeves and Bullock, are bland. Bullock is rather attractive, and as the Joker in Batman and Robin, you can see some residue of her former beauty. But if the screenwriter is far from poetically inclined, the choreographed crashes and explosions are sheer poetry in motion.

A movie like Speed almost defies criticism because there are no pretentious aspirings and big-budget visual excitement meet. Some people may brush this film off as an expensive way to waste an afternoon, with hardly any character interaction to make you инвести."