

'Doc' Simon's unique humor livens up all his plays

By EARL WILSON

NEW YORK — "Doc" Simon, the millionaire playwright, honored at the Cue Magazine party as "Entertainer of the Year," is never one of the drunks at parties because, as he says, "If I have one drink, I am exhausted for the rest of the night, it puts me practically to sleep."

Simon surprises all those who expect him to be a wisecracking extrovert. When I saw him the other afternoon, he had just returned to his town house in the East 60s with his 9-year-old daughter from a Knicks' basketball game. He has a study upstairs where he writes his plays. It is tidy. "I'm a very neat person," he said.

So far he wasn't anything like one would anticipate. Not a lush, not a sloven.

"I would never have lived in a house," he said, "had I not moved to London for 6 months while doing 'Little Me.' The feeling of that house was very close to this one. I loved it so much for its privacy. I'm very unaware of the city here while living in the dead center of it. The minute I feel closed in, I get outside and I'm in the middle of things."

Although his many hits are famous for the fact that they crackle with rapid-fire laughs, Simon doesn't consider that he writes "jokes"—they are character lines, rather than jokes; they are not "one-liners."



DAVID CASSIDY
... millionaire at 20

"Is it true that you've made more money out of jokes — pardon me — there's that word — than any other playwright?" I asked him.

"THAT'S what I read. I imagine it's true. The thing that baffles me is why people are interested in how much money I make when David Cassidy, who's only 20 years old, made a million in 6 months. It's frightening when kids come along and make tons of money.