

## Beatty's 'Heaven Can Wait' comedy worth waiting to see

By L. Kent Wolgamott

By updating an old story and demonstrating his growing abilities at film production, Warren Beatty has given us one of the summer's best movies, *Heaven Can Wait*.

Based on a play from the '30s of the same name, and a 1941 movie, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*, Beatty's film changes the story of a man who goes to heaven too soon and must return to another man's body, to the Southern California of the 70s.

Beatty produced; co-directed, with Buck Henry; wrote the screenplay, with Elaine May, and stars in this well done comedy.

In his role as Joe Pendleton, a quarterback for the Los Angeles Rams and as his later transformation, industrialist Leo Farnsworth, Beatty, usually in the role of villain,

Charles Grodin as Tony Abbott, Farnsworth's executive secretary.

The two representatives from heaven, Mr. Jordan and the escort who takes Beatty from the earth too early, are superbly played by James Mason and Henry.

Julie Christie, as Betty Logan, the love of Pendleton-Farnsworth-etc.'s life, gives an excellent but unfortunately short performance.

Beatty and May's screenplay rolls along, taking shots at corporate politics, the life of the rich and, in a subtle way, America's obsession with sports, all without losing track of the plot or the characters.

The billowy clouds of the station on the way to heaven—a station complete with a Concorde jet to sweep the passengers along—contrast with the L.A. Coliseum full of screaming fans as Beatty weaves fantasy and reality in a convincing manner, allowing for easy identification.

Under Beatty and Henry's direction, the plot and characters develop into an unexpected, but at the same time expected climax, without sacrificing the humor the screenplay intended.

With *Heaven Can Wait* Beatty has shown us he can put all the pieces of moviemaking together and have them result in an enjoyable film which takes its jabs at today's society but mostly is just for entertainment.



Warren Beatty stars in "Heaven Can Wait."

### review

performs strongly in a new role—the epitome of the nice guy.

Beatty and Henry also get strong performances from the excellent cast they have assembled, particularly Jack Warden as Beatty's trainer and friend, Max Corkle; Dyan Cannon as Farnsworth's scheming wife; and her cohort,

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