

Arts & Entertainment

Fish story doesn't cause big 'Splash'

By Ward W. Triplett III

Splash is almost a very good movie. But a curious reluctance on the part of the filmmakers and the lead actor to explore the potential comedy angles of this mermaid tale leaves it doglapping in a stream of forgettable television-type banality.

Splash is the story of one man's search for the perfect mate. Common enough theme, but when Allen Bauer finds his true love, she doesn't speak English, can't understand American customs (like clothing), and can only communicate through kisses.

Of course, the girl is the mermaid. She and Bauer had met 20 years before when he accidentally fell over board during a vacation cruise. The mermaid,

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whose crimson fins turn into legs in the air, finds Bauer after an unfortunate incident at the Statue of Liberty and learns language from watching six hours of television at Bloomingdale's.

The mermaid picks up the name Madison and she and Allen are nearing the verge of marriage when the story plot comes into play with the arrival of a man of science (Eugene Levy). He sees Madison underwater and won't rest until he can prove to the scientific world she is who he says she is. This, plus the fact that Allen doesn't know Madison is a mermaid and has to return to the water in six "fun-filled" days, give *Splash* its only plot complications.

As light-hearted comedies go, the idea behind *Splash* should carry it to some degree of success. After all, didn't *Love at First Bite*, the vampire spoof with George Hamilton, generate great box office figures? But in that original idea, Hamilton exploited the vampire myths and spoofs to hilarity. *Splash* while it has some very clever and funny scenes, holds back from ever reaching the all-out laughs point, as if the filmmakers wanted to keep a foot in reality. That would be fine most of the time, but it slows and stiffens *Splash*.

The main reasons for this are Tom Hanks, who plays Bauer, and director Ron Howard. Hanks, who might be remembered from the ABC comedy *Bosom Buddies*, plays the straight Bauer too straight. He always seems to be at a distance from the comedy material, and fails to really give off any charisma, charm or comedy spontaneity.

Howard contributes to the problem by letting the film look too much like a 111-minute television sitcom. This isn't a surprise since Hanks, Howard, producer Brian Grazer and screenwriters Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mendel earned much of their



Buena Vista Distribution Co., Inc.

Tom Hanks and Daryl Hannah star in Ron Howard's *Splash*. The film is currently showing at the Plaza 4, 12th and P streets.

credit in television. It isn't as obvious in *Splash* as it was in Howard's last movie *Night Shift* but the television mentality (a perpetually nice guy, a dumb creep with dumbo friends), predictable story twists and improbable running gags, are still there.

On the positive side, there's John Candy as Hanks' con-man but swell-guy big brother, and Daryl Hannah as Madison who is obviously having fun from the time she swims out to find Bauer to when she's squealing her aquatic name in Bloomingdale's. Hanks has some good lines too, but they seem to come only when Candy is around to set them up. And, the underwater shots are great.

I'd hate to seem like I'm knocking *Splash* around, for it is a nice little film obviously made to just cause some smiles. But *Splash* has enough good things going for it that you know it could have, and should have, been much better.

HOTSPOTS

Television

• *Cagney and Lacey*, a television drama about two women police officers, will get a second chance at life beginning at 9 p.m. on Channels 6 and 10. The show, which received a great deal of critical praise during its short run, was taken off the air at the end of last summer. However, audience outrage, coupled with high Nielsen ratings at the end of the season, facilitated the show's return. Sharon Gless and Tyne Daly star.

At the Kimball

• The third annual Flute Feast will be held at 8 p.m. today in the Recital Hall. The program features local high school flautists, as well as participants from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, Union College and UNL. There is no admission charge.

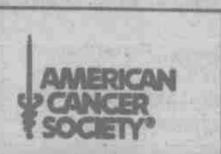
At the Sheldon

• Andrew Sarris, film critic for the *Village Voice*, will give a special lecture on Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* today at 7 p.m. in the Film Theatre. Sarris' talk will be accompanied by a documentary on the making of *Alexanderplatz*. Also, there will be a panel discussion with Sarris and UNL professors June Levine, Peter Reinkordt and Robert Shirer. There is no admission charge.



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Streets, a four member rock band that records for Atlantic Records, played a concert in Lincoln this weekend at the Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker. The group's leader Steve Walsh (above) was formerly with Kansas.



Yes, it's your turn to donate blood! American Red Cross

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 THE BORN CHORLS
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 - 2 Billy Joel concert tickets — floor seats. \$60 for the pair. 472-8842.
 - 1979 Yamaha 750 Special. Must Sell. 436-4184.