

## Nicholson, cast impeccable in 'Witches'

By Kevin Cowan  
Staff Reporter

"So. Women. Whaddya think — a mistake?"

—Jack Nicholson

"The Witches of Eastwick"

A chauvinistic film that glorifies the female body and soul. Sound redundant? I would gamble that there are not many actors that could play the role that Jack Nicholson played in the film, and still come off as not being a complete misogynist.

### Movie Review

Set in an obscure eastern seaboard niche, "The Witches of Eastwick" sheds a new light on how and why a homogenous village could turn against those who don't abide by the mores of the staunch east coast.

Cher, Michelle Pfeiffer and Susan Sarandon, star opposite Jack Nicholson, as three women who, at one point, were married. Deprived of their husbands by the "three D's" (Death, Desertion and Divorce) the

trio evolves to rely on each other for vital social support. The film takes about 20 minutes to develop the characters — the slowest part of the movie. Then, on a rainy Thursday, they sit, vodka martinis in hand, and cackle and conjure about their ideal male. Enter Malafecio (Jack Nicholson). A quick tangent: Nicholson does not play the devil proper as the previews would lead you to believe. Malafecio is a demon warlock of sorts, not the antagonistic almighty. Anyway, on with the incantation.

Upon the arrival of Malafecio, the film takes off at an incredible pace. Nicholson meets and seduces the women, saying the words that each long to hear and forms a family of, to use the term loosely, witches. No murmuring chants or devilish ceremonies, Malafecio is just there all of a sudden.

The three, now a full fledged family and having all sorts of supernatural fun, take on a dark glow of fulfillment.

One woman in the town, the owner of the newspaper, is for rea-

sons unknown, hypersensitive to the "evil" that is being performed in the iconic "old mansion on the hill." Thus begin the rumors.

The story is unique, though it's not what really makes the film a spectacular work. The starring performers as well put on an impeccable performance, but that's a given; they're all time-proven. No, the things that make this film so tantalizing are the intricacies that director George Miller arranges on the outskirts of the narrative: the dialogue of the townspeople and the sweeping, ethereal shot of this tiny town that implies "pending doom." Though most important is Miller's representation of the "witches." In a larger city these three could pop up in any suburban area.

And the plot. For those who are tired of the never ending doom of good and evil, where good always wins, then the change of the basic plot in the film will be a welcome relief. I'm not going to say who wins, but it's not really "the good guys."

"The Witches of Eastwick" is showing at the Cooper Lincoln Theater.

## Vega's second avoids sophomore jinx, ranks her in Waits, Reed pantheon

By Chris McCubbin  
Staff Reporter

Suzanne Vega, "Solitude Standing" (A&M).

Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Tom Waits, Van Morrison, Lou Reed. In the rock era only a handful of singer-songwriters stand out for their ability to combine melodic and poetic genius into tough tender and true songs that will remain and be admired long after the hits, and even the "classics," have faded away to cultural footnotes.

### Record Review

With her second album, "Solitude Standing," Suzanne Vega has cemented her place in this pantheon.

Side one and side two of "Solitude Standing" split thematically.

Side one covers territory already well-traveled by artists like Reed and Waits. The material is strong enough to bear the comparison but it lacks the feeling of completely fresh idiosyncrasy that Vega's best work always exudes.

Especially effective moments on side one include "Luka," the album's first single, a quietly harrowing portrait of

domestic violence and the two-part "Ironbound/Fancy Poultry Parts" which begins as an exquisitely detailed word-picture of the inner city and turns into a funny and poignant metaphor for city life.

On side two Vega turns her vision inward, and it is here that she reaches and surpasses the beauties and meanings of her first album.

Every song on side two vibrates with level after level of meaning, by turns haunting and hauntingly beautiful.

The mysterious title track deals with the search for meaning in a life lived alone. Also outstanding on this side is "Gypsy," an exquisitely simple love song and one of Vega's most authentic folk tunes.

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