

'Fatal Attraction' is predictable, sensual

By Lisa Stankus
Staff Reporter

"Fatal Attraction" (Douglas Three)

"Fatal Attraction" is a thinking person's thriller. It doesn't rely on a host of blood and guts to keep you on edge, but rather browbeats the bejeezus out of you.

The story line is simple: happily married man stumbles upon desirable, unmarried woman. His wife and kids are out of town for a couple of days.

Movie Review

They have one sexually charged weekend romp.

For him, the liaison is over. For her, it's the proverbial straw that triggers a pathological obsession, thus beginning her "fatal attraction."

The screenplay is predictable and turns the movie into an absorbing mix of ordinary circumstances, leaving the viewer with a "what if" on the mind.

As the story progresses, Alex (played by Glenn Close) becomes pregnant from the illicit affair and plans to keep the child.

Then the action begins. Dan Gallagher (played by Michael Douglas) tries to ignore Alex and dismisses the fact that the weekend ever existed, going on with his life as a successful

lawyer, husband and lover extraordinaire.

But Alex has ideas of her own. A tremendous performance by Close takes us deep into the Alex's psyche as she allows this "one married man too many" to turn her life into a series of subplots harassing and haunting Dan about their encounter. The telephone becomes Alex's ally and is as terrifying as any rip-'em-up slash scene. The effect is subtly nerve-wracking and works splendidly.

Completing the love triangle is Anne Archer as Beth, Dan's loving and completely naive wife. Throughout the first half of the movie, Beth was just a little too naive to ring true. Some of the odd goings-on would have even the most trusting spouse shuffling through some trouser pockets looking for cheap matchbooks. But not Beth.

The happy wife neither suspects nor questions, but once the tete-a-tete is unearthed, out come the big guns. The transition of Beth's personality was too abrupt.

Director Adrian Lyne ("Flashdance," "9 1/2 Weeks") is masterful in his use of symbolism to create and maintain an air of sensual realism throughout the film—from the opening credits of stark white on black with silence as a backdrop to the simple suggestiveness of water.

The most disturbing aspect of "Fatal Attraction" is that it is a very credible happening. The movie is so



Glenn Close and Michael Douglas in "Fatal Attraction."

Courtesy of Andy Schwarz

convincingly portrayed that we are reminded of this possibility, both directly and indirectly.

In preparation for the role, Close said, she did intense research with psychiatrists to see if Alex's actions were credible. Once confirmed, we are taken into the frightening world that exists in each of us that could surface once that final extreme is hit.

Michael Douglas is very convincing as anybody's husband who lets that vulnerability of being human surface and become a married man's

worst nightmare.

The opposing sides of a cozy family life vs. the cold, empty but intriguing life of Alex has you pulling for the sacredness of the family unit but at the same time feeling for Alex, who reacts with a "he can't get away with that" sense of justice.

All aspects of filmmaking paint an ingeniously disturbing picture. Using the appropriate setting of New York to show the eclectic mix of character, as well as using dull hues of

background, music and costuming, Lyne becomes a provocative Brian DePalma.

If only Lyne had quit while he was ahead. The first three-quarters of the movie are a refreshing approach to the thriller genre, but unfortunately it ends up in a predictable "Psycho"-esque climax that cheapens the film.

Still, "Fatal Attraction" is a wonderful film and might have swept the Oscars if the ending had kept up with the originality of the beginning.

Wild Seeds germinate at Zoo Bar

By Charles Lieurance
Senior Editor

Bands of the New Sincerity is a phrase rock critics blab about. An infinite number of bands have been pigeonholed by it. Yet, the more it's used, the more it has taken on all the heartfelt significance of a Hallmark card.

Concert Review

Just when you think some American band is sincere, really concerned about its rock 'n' roll heritage and oblivious to corporate rock star pitfalls, it winds up hawking Budweiser for the man.

"Sincerity is a buck fifty, dollar at happy hour," says the guy in the leather fringe jacket with all the hair.

Austin, Texas, has spawned its share of roots rock pretenders to be sure, but the Wild Seeds, playing at the Zoo Bar tonight, almost make up for them.

Vocalist, guitarist and songwriter Michael Hall comes at music with an ex-rock critic's desire for variety, storming nearly every creative avenue on the band's first LP, "Brave, Clean and Reverent." From Jonathan Richman-like wide-eyed innocence to raw, masculine bar-band rock and soul, the Wild Seeds make flawless, kinetic tracks through fringe and well-trod territories alike.

Poring through the press bios one runs across a lot of comparisons for the Wild Seeds' sound: Neil Young, Richie Valens, Tom Petty, the Long Ryders, Pontiac Brothers... all just ever so slightly off the mark.

For every piece of wild rip-out-the-bar-stools bravado there's some indescribably pretty little pop song, that if produced just a bit more immaculately might wind up on commercial radio, pale and drained of emotion under a blanket of synthesizers.

And then there'll be a soul song, and there you are, scratching your neck trying to peg where it came from.



Courtesy of Pat Blashill

Wild Seeds

Spin's editor hopes for publication's rise

SPIN from Page 6

Guccione Jr. echoed that belief. "There are some people who won't talk to us," he said.

He said Spin refuses to "play the press game" when it comes to interviewing stars and won't pander to prima donnas who demand celebrity treatment.

Guccione Jr., who was born in New York City but raised in England, never attended college or had any formal journalism training because, he explained, "I always hated school."

He received most of his journalism training from his father, who he once said was his "publishing professor," according to the New York Times.

Guccione Jr. said he believes Spin will eventually become even more successful. That belief reels back to his philosophies about journalism and the public's need for something different and irreverent.

"Journalism is sacred," he said. "It's the oxygen for society."

'Glass Menagerie' poorly directed, and abjectly acted

By Scott Harrah
Senior Editor

"Three's Company" does Tennessee Williams? It's an absurd thought, but it certainly applied to The Missouri Repertory Theatre's appalling production of "The Glass Menagerie" at Kimball Hall Friday night.

Theater Review

"The Glass Menagerie" is not only Williams' finest work, it's also one of the most realistic plays of the modern theater. But The Missouri Repertory Theatre turned this simplistic, sentimental classic into a cheap, slapstick farce peppered with poor direction and abject acting.

Bruce Roach's version of Tom Wingfield, the romantic would-be writer who is nagged constantly by his mother, Amanda (Nora Denney), about success, was most annoying. Tom is supposed to be a working-class Southerner in St. Louis, but Roach couldn't decide

whether he was doing Williams or Shakespeare. At times his accent was Southern, but for some reason it kept slipping into aristocratic British tones. It seemed that Roach was too busy projecting his "thespian" enunciation to worry about his character's true persona.

This was especially true in the opening and closing scenes, in which Tom narrates the play and discusses his family's fate with all the great poetic soliloquies that were Williams' forte.

Set in a tenement section of St. Louis before World War II, the story revolves around the Wingfields. Amanda, the overbearing mother, perpetually harps on the fact that Tom and his crippled sister, Laura (Elizabeth Robbins), are doing nothing with their lives. Amanda is especially domineering and outspoken when she discovers that Laura dropped out of business college. Laura spends her days playing old records and admiring her menagerie of glass animals.

The tone is supposed to be tragic, but the cast's pacing was so inappropriately fast and the small

bits of humor were played up so much that the play appeared to be a comedy. Williams' other works, especially "A Streetcar Named Desire," are sometimes made unintentionally humorous by melodramatic overtones, but that's not the case with "Menagerie." The melodrama in "Menagerie" works in the play's favor, but apparently The Missouri Repertory Theatre tried to tone down the melodrama with some added laughs.

The best example was the family portrait of Tom and Laura's father, who deserted them when they were young. In past and far superior productions of "Menagerie," the portrait was understated, serving as nothing more than a portentous reminder of the Wingfields' bleak reality. But The Missouri Repertory put a flashing disco light behind the portrait and flashed it whenever the father was mentioned, creating a ridiculously comical touch that's hardly germane to the story.

Amanda's petulance is hardly worthy of compassion, but audiences are supposed to feel some

sympathy for her. Nora Denney's approach to the character was too harsh, her diatribes were way overdone and it was difficult to relate to her. Laurette Taylor and Maureen Stapleton, who both played Amanda in Broadway productions, added enough warmth to her psyche to make her distantly three-dimensional.

Mark Robbins' version of Jim, the "Gentleman Caller" whom Tom invites to dinner, also was too forceful. Amanda spruces up the dismal apartment and hopes Jim will marry Laura. Jim and Laura have a deep conversation about her inferiority complex and come to terms with her alienation, but the poignant mood was destroyed by unnecessary "hamming."

Mark Robbins acted like a cocky high-school jock instead of an understanding yet confident inspiration for Laura.

The soft atmosphere Williams created for the play was supposed to lighten the dark surroundings.

Williams once said the metaphorical gloss of the animals and Laura's fragility symbolized "all the softest emotions that belong to recollections of things past... all the small and tender things that relieve the austere pattern of life and make it endurable to the sensitive."

But The Missouri Repertory Theatre's levity used a theatrical sledgehammer where it wasn't needed. Each line of dialogue and each tone was sullied by a grotesque misunderstanding of the thematic acumen of "Menagerie."

As Tom leaves the family in the end and goes off to find a more meaningful existence, the audience's eyes are supposed to moisten as Amanda and Laura are left to rot in the automatism of life without direction.

But on Friday night at Kimball Hall, all this reviewer felt was dismay — that a professional theater group had somehow ruined a usually thought-provoking, illuminating play.