



Robin Williams plays Mrs. Doubtfire, an old English nanny, in this holiday movie.

Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

'Mrs. Doubtfire' a funny, smash holiday hit



A film that will tickle your funny bone and touch your heart, "Mrs. Doubtfire" has come to town, and it will probably be the runaway hit of the holiday season.

Robin Williams, who has already earned three Oscar nominations, has a definite shot at Best Actor again this time around. Williams was shut out last year for Best Supporting Actor as the voice of the genie in "Aladdin."

Williams plays Daniel Hillard, an out-of-work actor that loves to have fun with his three children. But one day his fun goes over the line, and his wife Miranda (Sally Field) asks for a divorce.

Since Daniel has neither employment nor a permanent residence, Miranda is given temporary custody of the children. Daniel receives once-a-week visitation rights.

However, he isn't satisfied with that. Daniel wants to be able to see his kids more often, and when Miranda puts an ad in the newspaper for a new housekeeper, Daniel sees his chance.

He goes to see his makeup-artist brother Frank (Harvey Fierstein), in a wonderful — but short — performance to have himself done

up as an old English nanny. With his/her soft voice and gentle advice, she charms Miranda.

He gets hired to watch the children, but life gets complex when it seems Miranda is falling in love with her old friend Stuart (Pierce Brosnan, at his suavest).

The film also looks at the issue of divorce in a serious way. It discusses situations in which the children are sometimes treated as commodities or property. The film handles all the concepts well, and it even addresses how younger children sometimes are affected by divorce.

"Mrs. Doubtfire" gives Robin Williams the chance to show that he is an accomplished performer. He delivers his finest performance since "Dead Poets Society," for

which he received an Academy Award nomination.

Williams adds a magical flair to all of his characters, which helps bridge any age gap that might exist. Whether young or old, he can make you laugh.

Special recognition should also be given to makeup artist Ve Neill and hairstylist Yolanda Toussieng (both worked on "Batman Returns" and "Edward Scissorhands") for their masterpiece — Mrs. Doubtfire. Word has it that Williams' own son didn't recognize him in the costume.

If you only see one movie this holiday season, make it "Mrs. Doubtfire." You will not be disappointed.

— Gerry Beltz

Debut book lacks drive, dimensions



Sean Stewart
"Passion Play"
Ace Science Fiction

The blurb on the cover of Canadian-born Sean Stewart's first novel runs true to mindless publishing industry practice. According to William Gibson, "Passion Play" is "Dark and nastily believable... Sean Stewart is a talent to watch."

The endorsement is designed to reel in cyberpunk fans, but the book is more a mystery than anything else. Very little cyberpunk here, save for the overall depressing tone and nihilism, though he does avoid the hip, trendy slang so common to most other cyberpunk.

"Passion Play" takes place in the 21st century, in an America living under the Redemption Presidency. The Religious Right has triumphed, and stoning adulteresses is unofficially condoned — if you don't get caught.

Those who do face trial and execution, endless appeals of the death penalty are also a thing of the past.

Diane Fletcher is a "shaper," a sort of empath, who can read emotions of others, though not their thoughts. She is called in to investigate the death of Jonathan Mask, a popular actor and Redemption spokesman. Fletcher digs into Mask's past, and discovers he didn't quite live up to his billing as a holy roller extraordinaire.

In the end the murderer is finally caught and killed in the best Dirty Harry tradition. The final pages, however, find Fletcher awaiting execution herself, for killing the murderer.

It is a depressing tale, with a depressing ending. In between, Stewart commits another cyberpunk sin, a persistent now-ness that excludes what could be fascinating and informative bits on just how this Redemption occurred.

Without that information "Passion Play" becomes just another one-dimensional tale that leaves the reader unsatisfied.

— Sam Keplefield

Wake up Lincoln, Stewart's got something to sing to you

Concert preview



British rocker Rod Stewart, who kicked off his "A Night To Remember" tour in July — complete with a 12-piece band and 18-piece orchestra — is scheduled to perform at the Bob Devaney Sports Center, Wednesday night at 7:30.

For nearly three decades, Stewart has scored big with hits ranging from soft, whispering melodies to hot and heavy numbers. Stewart fans, which span several generations, will have the opportunity to hear him play songs from his new release, "Unplugged... And Seated," as well as his historic plugged classics.

Past hits include "Tonight's the Night" from his 1976 album, "A Night On the Town;" "Hot Legs" and "You're In My Heart" from his 1977 album, "Footloose & Fancy Free;" and a host of other unforgettable singles like "Stay with Me" and "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?"

For the first part of his career back in the '60s, Stewart's vocals mixed true blues with rhythm and blues, backed by the rock solid refrains of Jeff Beck and the Faces. In 1969, Stewart emerged as a solo artist with his debut record, "The Rod Stewart Album." Rock was

never the same after that.

"Gasoline Alley," followed Stewart's debut and proved the Englishman's consistency in producing quality songs. "Every Picture Tells A Story," blew everyone away with the international hit, "Maggie May."

And now in the 1990s, Stewart's career continues to soar, with memorable singles like "This Old Heart of Mine" and the unplugged "Have I Told You Lately" showcased by MTV.

When Stewart turned 39, he told a Los Angeles Times reporter that a career obituary was premature.

"I don't think I'm getting too old for this. The body is in good shape, the bones don't creak. I'm not ready for the rocking chair just yet."

A decade later, Stewart is still going strong, although he admits he lacks the energy he had 15 years ago. When looking at him, you'd think he must have gotten a skin tuck here or there. Maybe he discovered rock is the elixir of youth.

Another notable difference is that Stewart sounds better than ever.

Judge for yourself.

Stewart's performance will be in the round. Tickets for the concert, sponsored by the University Program Council, are \$25 and \$35.

— Jill O'Brien



Courtesy of Contemporary Productions

Rod Stewart will perform Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Bob Devaney Sports Center. His "A Night To Remember" tour started in July, and is sponsored by the University Program Council.