



Courtesy of Columbia Pictures Industries

Nick Nolte and Whittni Wright star as father and daughter Matt and Jeannie Hobbs in "I'll Do Anything."

Nolte's character deals with daughter, Hollywood

By Joel Strauch
Senior Reporter

At first glance, "I'll Do Anything" looks like another dumb kid movie. But because of its realistic slant and some superior acting, it turns out to be a really good film.

The movie deals with the roller coaster life of Matt Hobbs (Nick Nolte), a talented character actor who can't seem to get a break. Even with an Emmy nomination on his resumé, he is unable to land any big roles.

He manages to get a part-time job as a driver for the big-time producer of Popcorn Pictures, Burke Adler (Albert Brooks).

He forms a relationship with one of Adler's executives, Cathy Breslow (Joely Richardson), who tries to get him the acting roles that he deserves.

Suddenly, he is forced to take custody of his six-year-old daughter Jeannie (Whittni Wright) when his ex-wife, Beth (Tracey Ullman) is taken to jail.

He tries to devote time to his daughter and still continue his relentless pursuit of his acting career.

His ego is dealt an intense blow when Jeannie is "discovered" and given a starring role in a television series. But he swallows his pride and fulfills

his duty as a supporting parent.

The acting is great all-around. Nolte is exceptional, as always, as an inexperienced father who struggles with his incorrigible daughter.

Brooks plays the egocentric producer to near perfection. He is very convincing in his portrayal of a man who is driven to the brink of insanity by the stresses of Hollywood.

Wright, as Jeannie, doesn't bring bile to the back of a moviegoer's throat. This is no small compliment as far as most child actors are concerned.

But the best acting comes from Julie Kavner who plays Nan Mulhanney, a movie pollster whose daily vitamins combine to form a truth serum, forcing her to be bluntly honest. Kavner performs beautifully in this difficult role.

The film gives the viewers a glimpse of the inner workings of Hollywood, from the struggling actors up through the conceited hierarchy to the producers and directors, some of whom are shown to be too callous and self-absorbed to be considered human.

Originally planned as a musical (thankfully, it didn't happen), "I'll Do Anything" is successful as a musicless feature film about the trials of parenthood.

MUSIC REVIEWS



"Hot Boy"
Giants Chair
"Frontier Trust"
Frontier Trust
"Rust," "Face Foot Ladder"
Sideshow
Caulfield Records



New shipments are in for anyone with a chronic itch for new seven-inch vinyl. Lincoln-based Caulfield Records once again supplies local and national turn-table needles with a debut release from Giants Chair, as well as two fresh releases from Frontier Trust and Sideshow.

Giants Chair, Caulfield's third out-of-state feature, brings two songs that rhythmically bounce like a barefoot stick man on hot beach sand. The Green Bay, Wis., group offers original song arrangements with smooth, almost soothing vocals reminiscent of Firehose. "Hot Boy" is a record that sounds like it was recorded in a dirty farmhouse basement, not in a white room with too many light bulbs.

Omaha's chisel-and-plow punk heroes Frontier Trust follow up their "Highway Miles" EP with three more songs of Rustler-jeans charm. "Untitled," "Swimming Hole," and "Another Song About Failure" probably have too much in common musically to keep most critics from barking, but listeners must realize that diversity and evolution are undoubtedly sacrilegious in some musical states of mind.

Singer-lyricist Gary Dean Davis provides enough entertainment with his George Thorogood-meets-Mark Twain persona to make any three-dollar record worth the money.

The members of Sideshow are the undisputed kings of longevity in the hard-edged sector of Nebraska's original music. However, the Lincoln band's speedy follow-up to their well-acclaimed "Eggplants and Sunspots" album indicates the threesome is far

from wearing thin after seven years of existence.

In fact, these two new tracks expose the band's edgiest writing yet. "Rust" and "Face Foot Ladder" easily make Sideshow's cult punk classic "Kick In The Teeth" seem emotionally subtle. This release not only captures the talents of guitarist Rich Higgins and vocalist Bernie McGinn, but also Sideshow's evolution to continuously changing melody weaves.

McGinn's stylistic lyrics and the band's music-writing abilities are rarities that elevate Sideshow's music above the misplaced, East Coast-emotion-core comparisons that have always read like the reaching realizations that they are.

—Chris Heine



"Ring"
The Connells
TVT Records



If you've heard The Connells' latest album, "Ring," for the first time, chances are it won't be the last time you'll hear it. And if you've never heard of The Connells, a six-man college band all grown up, then you might be surprised to learn four albums precede "Ring."

Although originally from the homeland of Otis Redding, Little Richard and The Allman Brothers, The Connells fail to rock southern style, but there's nothing wrong with that.

When the two Connell brothers, David on bass and Mike on guitars and vocals, formed the band in 1984, their sound crossed classic British pop with alternative college rock, resulting in the debut album "Darker Days," followed by three other releases and "Ring."

"Ring" is pure melody and a good mixture of acoustic guitar and electric Slash-type runs bridging chorus to verse. Melody spills onto track after track, beginning with "Slackjawed," an ear-catching radio hit.

"Slackjawed" rocks the listener, implanting high expectations for the rest of the album—expectations The Connells easily meet.

Yet, not all the tracks rock like "Slackjawed" and "Hey You," a collaboration between the brothers and guitarist Doug MacMillan, who wrote five songs. Most "Ring" songs sway with laid-back rhythm accompanied by brother Mike's soft soprano voice.

Mike's cleverness for composing lyrics surfaces on the song "'74-'75," a nostalgic look at a relationship on the verge of revival. In spite of repetition, few listeners will tire of the chorus.

"I was the one who let you know/ I was your sorry-ever-after. '74-'75/ Giving me more and I'll defy/ 'Cause you're really only after '74-'75."

While Mike has a hand in writing nine of the 13 album songs, credit should also be given to guitarist and singer George Huntley. Huntley not only plays a woeefully sweet mandolin on "Running Mary," but he also wrote "Doin' You." His lyrics take a dig at incompatible relationships.

The compositions veer from the beaten track of clichéd love lyrics, although the theme of incompatibility keeps recurring and is best summed up by Mike in "Disappointed."

"If I disappointed you, I'm so sorry./ You're a disappointment too."

Listeners won't be disappointed by this album, the lyrics or instrumentals.

—Jill O'Brien

New videos don't deserve screening



Overwrought emotions and gritty style fill this week's video releases.

"Poetic Justice." Director John Singleton returns after his critical and commercial smash "Boyz 'N the Hood." This time his tale is told from the point of view of South Central's women—specifically a hair stylist named Justice.

Musical superstar Janet Jackson is Justice, a young woman living in the aftermath of L.A.'s violence. After a lifetime of disappointment, Justice turns herself off to emotion after her boyfriend is shot down in front of her.

That is until she meets a mailman (Tupac Shakur, another music sensation) and takes a road trip up California's Highway 1. The story, co-written by Singleton, should have and could have been powerful, but instead it became both a road trip movie and a trite romance.

Jackson has substantial star power, but she lacks the intensity for this role. What could have been an introspective look at the troubled life of one woman instead became too many brooding looks and overwrought angst.

Rap star Shakur shows some true star potential, but his personal life and constant battle with the law may keep him from realizing it.

Maya Angelou wrote the poetry that Justice endlessly writes and recites in voice-over after voice-over. Even with that literary weight behind him, Singleton misses the mark with this one.

"Kalifornia." Misspelled words for emphasis is one of the more annoying tricks the entertainment business overuses.

Now playing at the Starship 9 theater and coming out on home video simultaneously, "Kalifornia" is a road movie with a serial killer.

Brad Pitt ("A River Runs Through It") and Juliette Lewis ("Cape Fear") star as a modern day Charlie and Carol Ann. Michelle Forbes (Ensign Ro from "Star Trek: The Next Generation") and David Duchovny are hip artists writing a book about America's own serial killers, who give the two nasty hitchhikers a lift.

Pitt is always worth watching, although the premise and buzz on this flick don't make "Kalifornia" an appealing choice.

Also this week, "Indochine," an Oscar-nominated film from last year starring Catherine Deneuve, and "Trancers 4: Jack of Swords."

—Anne Steyer

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN'S
MUSIC
RATING SYSTEM

Instant classic

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