

Movie Review

'A Life Less Ordinary' holds romantic appeal

BY CHRIS THOMAS
Film Critic

In an overdone and generally tired genre, the makers of "Trainspotting" add their two cents with "A Life Less Ordinary."

As your atypical love story, it combines the light-hearted nature of an average romance with the dark humor found in "Shallow Grave."

Ewan McGregor plays Robert, another loser in the game of life. Dreaming of something bigger than his janitor's mop bucket, he writes a Great American Trash Novel in the hope of freeing himself from middle-class slavery. In the ensuing chain of events, his life takes a critical and tragic downward turn, including losing his job, being dumped by his girlfriend for an aerobics instructor and having his house and car repossessed.

In a desperate attempt to change his plight, Robert storms into the office of his boss, Naville (Ian Holm), demanding his job with whatever force is necessary. After an exchange of words, the arrival of security and some minor gunplay, Robert kidnaps Naville's daughter, Celine (Cameron Diaz). Celine is the poster child for bored, pampered adolescents, as the grossest indignity she can think of is having her credit card rejected.

The movie really takes off from this point as sparks fly between Robert's lovable screw-up character and Celine's sharp-tongued wit. Being an affable and inexperienced

kidnapper, Robert is walked through the proper steps in Kidnapping 101 by the accomplished kidnappee Celine. Their series of magical adventures — including a cross-country odyssey of guns, bank rolling and the always romantic implement of karaoke — draws them closer.

Thrown into the mix are celestial law enforcement officers O'Reilly and Jackson (Holly Hunter and Delroy Lindo), who are charged by Gabriel (Dan Hedaya) with the task of keeping Robert and Celine together to prove that true love does exist in a world of divorce and unfaithfulness.

Written shortly after completing "Shallow Grave," writer John Hodge clarifies his choice of mediums for this deviant romantic comedy. "Although the reality of kidnapping is pretty brutal and murderous," Hodge explains, "what I wanted to do was use it as a device, a conceit within which I would explore a romantic relationship. The rest of the story grew incrementally out of that."

With incredibly inventive and original visuals, first evidenced in "Trainspotting," Boyle creates the backdrop of a simple equation for love with infinitely complex subsets. An air of epic destiny and fated lovers fills the screen, yet retains a fresh and exciting style.

"A Life Less Ordinary" is a less than ordinary love story that entertains as well as renews faith for anyone who dreams of something more.

The Facts

Title: "A Life Less Ordinary"
Stars: Ewan McGregor, Cameron Diaz, Holly Hunter, Delroy Lindo, Ian Holm
Director: Danny Boyle
Rating: R (violence, language, adult content)
Grade: B
Five Words: Love is kidnapping and karaoke.



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

Trio marks anniversary with concert, workshops

From Staff Reports

The Samaris Piano Trio brings its blend of chamber and contemporary music to Sheldon Art Gallery tonight.

The group's concert, presented by the Research Council and University of Nebraska-Lincoln School of Music, begins at 8 p.m. Admission is free.

Cellist Bryan Dumm, violinist Molly Fung and pianist Sylvia Wang comprise the Samaris Piano Trio. The three musicians trained at the Eastman School of Music and are celebrating their 10th anniversary together.

Deriving its name from the Samaris Manor House in the Jersey Channel Isles, the trio performs standard chamber music and 20th-century composers like Aaron Copland, Paul Schoenfield, Bright Sheng, Lou Harrison, Paul

Dresher and Leon Kirchner.

Tonight's concert will include a talk by the three musicians about their collaboration with various composers.

The trio has performed in Cleveland, Washington, D.C., and London. It also was a finalist for the Naumburg chamber music award and winner of the Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition. The trio's performances have been broadcast throughout the United States. Next spring, the musicians will release their first album on the Newport Classic label.

In addition to tonight's concert, the trio will teach two master classes today. Dumm will teach a cello master class from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Westbrook Music Building, Room 110. Wang will teach a piano master class at the same time in Room 119 of Westbrook.

Music

H₂O
"Thicker Than Water"
Epitaph Records
Grade: B+

Most people who listen to music have little chance to give back to the sounds that have inspired them. Toby Morse is thankful he had the desire and opportunity to do just that.

Morse was a roadie for hardcore legends Sick Of It All and was given the chance to shine during a break at one of the band's shows. When his performance of "My Love is Real" became an expected occurrence at Sick Of It All shows, Morse decided to form a band of his own.

After some lineup changes, H₂O became a quintet, and its self-titled debut drew tremendous raves from critics and fans alike. Its second album, "Thicker Than Water," promises to keep this trend alive.

Overall, the album lyrically is a message of optimism, survival and loyalty. Its first song, "Universal Language," displays Toby Morse's explanation of his love for music,

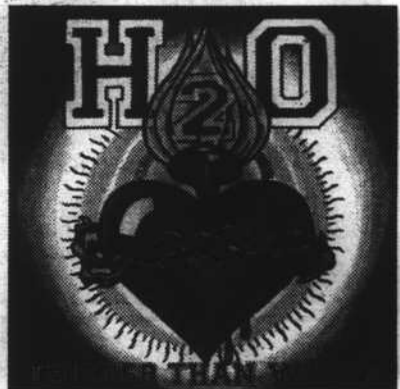
and like the other tracks on the album, H₂O keeps the tunes nice and short.

The pounding drums of Todd Friend and the hectic guitar play of Rusty Pistachio and Toby's brother, Todd Morse, form the backbone of the band. The three also proved back-up vocals throughout, complementing Toby Morse's aggressive singing style.

With the recent addition of bassist Adam Blake, formerly of Shelter, the sound contributes to one of the best melodic hardcore bands around.

You can picture a mosh pit active in "This Time," and things calm down for "No Tears," although Toby Morse's vocals are dramatically inspiring. The melody and back-chat of "Thicker Than Water," and "Universal Language" form the best songs here.

The band has sold out numerous shows along the East Coast and has played with such notables as Murphy's Law, as well as Social Distortion and Sick Of It All on and off the '97 Vans Warped Tour.



Currently, H₂O is on a nationwide tour and will play at Liberty Hall in Lawrence, Kan., Nov. 9, opening for the newly reassembled Misfits.

It's hoped that the live show will prove longer than "Thicker Than Water," with the length of the record — less than 30 minutes — leaving something to be desired. However, H₂O achieves plenty of excitement in a jam-packed jolt of an album.

-Patrick Miner