

Farrellys help to fuel this fall's movie season

Comedy, religion, romance provide blockbuster relief

BY PATRICK KELLY
Staff writer

Just because summer is coming to an end, don't think the film industry is ready to wrap it up for the year. Sure, there may not be the big-budget, explosion-laden monster flicks that have packed the multiplexes for the past few months, but there's still something for everybody.

Undoubtedly, one of last year's biggest successes was the Farrelly brothers' irreverent comedy "There's Something About Mary." This fall, the brothers are back with the coming-of-age story "Outside Providence." Set in the 1970s, the comedy centers on a boy who has a run-in with the law and is forced to attend an upper-class prep school. Alec Baldwin plays the boy's surly blue-collar father.

In the wake of films such as "Dick," "Detroit Rock City" and the television series "That '70s Show," we can only hope this film will offer a new angle on the plights of adolescents in the 1970s.

For those who love a good scare, there's "Stigmata." The film stars Irish actor Gabriel Byrne ("The Usual Suspects," "Miller's Crossing") as a priest sent by the Vatican to investigate Patricia Arquette, a religious skeptic who suddenly becomes afflicted with signs of the Holy Spirit. The film harkens back to the classic religious-horror films of the mid-1970s, such as "The Exorcist" and "The Omen."

If the thought of a religious horror film doesn't scare you, then maybe the prospect of Antonio Banderas' directorial debut will. The "Desperado" star will direct "Crazy in Alabama," a dramatic comedy set in 1965. Like "Outside Providence," the film is a coming-of-age piece. Banderas' wife, Melanie Griffith, stars as a woman wishing to flee to Hollywood in hopes of a television career.

Bruce Willis, who has grown tired of the shoot-'em-up genre, is returning to romantic comedy this fall. In "The Story of Us," Willis and Michelle Pfeiffer play a middle-aged couple facing the dreaded fact that after 15 years of marriage, the thrill is gone. On a trip

to Italy, the two take stock of their lives together.

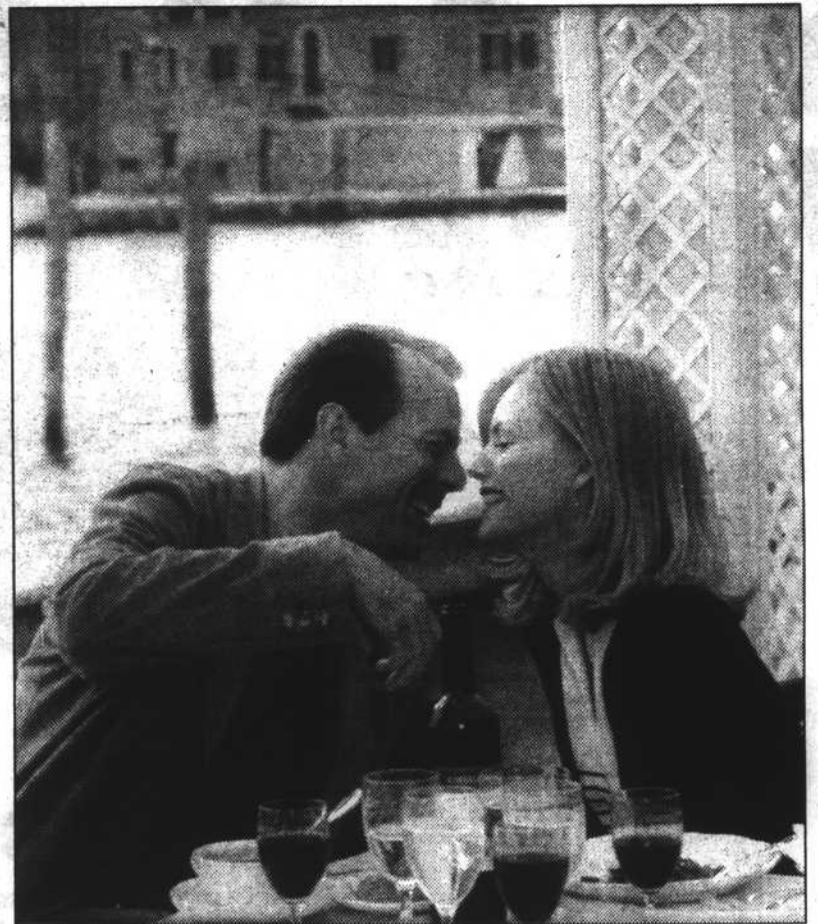
Director Rob Reiner hopes to bring to the film the same slice-of-life style of humor that made "When Harry Met Sally" popular. As usual with Reiner's work, the two leads will be backed up by an eclectic supporting cast that includes Paul Reiser, Rita Wilson, Betty White and Reiner himself.

Another romantic pairing occurs in Sydney Pollack's "Random Hearts," which stars Harrison Ford and Kristin Scott Thomas ("The English Patient"). The two are brought together after their respective spouses die in a plane crash. After Ford and Thomas discover keys among their loved ones' personal belongings, they set out to uncover the whole story. As the plot unfolds, it becomes apparent that Ford's wife and Thomas' husband were in fact having an affair.

We can hope the film will follow Thomas' success with romantic films such as "The English Patient" and "The Horse Whisperer" and not Ford's disappointing "Six Days, Seven Nights."


If you're eagerly awaiting the latest film from Kevin Smith ("Clerks," "Chasing Amy"), you'll have to wait until mid-November for the release of the film "Dogma." "Dogma" deals humorously with organized religion.

The film features Smith's usual



COURTESY PHOTO
In "The Story of Us," Bruce Willis abandons the action film for a romantic comedy with Michelle Pfeiffer. Director Rob Reiner cast Paul Reiser, Rita Wilson and himself in supporting roles.

cast of favorites: Ben Affleck, Matt Damon, Jason Mewes, Jason Lee and Smith himself as the venerable Silent Bob. Smith, however, extends the list this time to include George Carlin, Chris Rock and even Alanis Morissette as Woman-God. These flicks should sate the appetite of the movie-going public for the next couple of months.



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