

# Sayles film leaves audience guessing

BY EMILY PYEATT  
Staff writer

"Limbo" is jam-packed full of risks. Director John Sayles ("Lone Star") takes gutsy risks with stylistic decisions. Characters are fueled by decisions to take risks. And audiences will take a risk by seeing "Limbo."

As in other Sayles' films ("Passion Fish" or "Men with Guns"), the setting serves as a character in the movie. In "Limbo," Alaska is chosen as America's last great frontier.

Sayles also presents his usual themes in "Limbo," where characters and communities face transitions and complex relationships.

Sayles continues the use of strong female leads such as "Lone Star" Oscar Nominee Elizabeth Pena. In "Limbo," Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio ("Color of Money") plays Donna, a nightclub singer troubled by her relationships with men and her daughter, Noelle (Vanessa Martinez).

Donna's struggles and willingness to live life by risk-taking make her character vital to "Limbo." Mastrantonio's performance is strong, and she actually sings all songs in the film.

However, the similarities end there.

The pacing of "Limbo" is much slower than other Sayles' films. "Limbo" subtly introduces Joe

Gastineau (David Strathairn) as a fisherman-turned-handyman haunted by his past. Joe's relationships with Donna and Noelle develop at a snail's pace.

Stylistically, the film's two hours could easily be divided into two separate movies.

The first half of the film begins with a documentary-style view of Alaska. At first, Sayles manages to comment powerfully on the economic development of a rural town. As the town's tourism increases, the community struggles to preserve its home from being destroyed by change.

## Film Review

### The Facts

**Title:** "Limbo"  
**Stars:** Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, David Strathairn, Vanessa Martinez  
**Director:** John Sayles  
**Rating:** R  
**Grade:** B-  
**Five Words:** Limbo - where Sayles leaves you...

Sayles provides brief glimpses of the town's personality, allowing audiences to develop small relationships with the canned salmon warehouse workers, the lesbian couple struggling to define themselves and the locals at the town bar.

The first hour of "Limbo" provides the character development that attempts to hold the second half together. But the town that is personalized so poetically is abandoned in the entire second half of the film.

The second hour of "Limbo" is a tale of relationships taken to their limits by the struggle to survive.

Donna, Noelle and Joe escape from the town in a fateful boat trip that leaves them stranded on a deserted Alaskan island. Without supplies, "Limbo" becomes a "Blair Witch"-style struggle



Donna (Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) and Joe (David Strathairn) become stranded on a remote island in director John Sayles' risk-laden "Limbo."

in the woods against the elements and the mind. This adventure aspect of "Limbo" is so unlike Sayles that audiences wonder what happened to the strong narrative that kept the first half together.

The film's ending demonstrates Sayles' greatest risk of all, leaving the audience in limbo along with the characters.

One aspect of the film that should be commended is Academy Award-Winner Haskell Wexler's cinematography. Wexler has collaborated with Sayles in previous films.

Wexler's style contributes to the completion and aesthetics of each frame. In one of the opening scenes, the camera work is so crisp and clean that it should inspire future filmmakers.

During a scene at a wedding party, the camera floats, following characters, only to pause for brief conversation. As if following music, Wexler's camera glides past others and lands softly and intimately on Donna, who dedicates a "better-off-without-you" song to her boyfriend.

The most poignant images of "Limbo" are captured in Donna's face and the intercuts of Noelle's reaction. In a moment, the women's glances reveal the tension within the mother-daughter relationship.

"Limbo" is full of risks honorable in attempt and worth checking out. Sayles' latest is sure to intrigue some and alienate others into a "condition of unknowable outcomes."

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# Trickster takes show on the road

■ The Amazing Arthur entertains with juggling, balloons and jokes at the Nebraska State Fair.

DANELL MCCOY  
Staff writer

On stage, The Amazing Arthur tells audiences he learned all of his tricks from his grandfather, a vaudeville performer.

In truth, The Amazing Arthur, who performs a variety of juggling, balloon and yo-yo tricks, learned his trade through books.

"You can learn so much out of books," The Amazing Arthur said. "I always emphasize to kids that 'Yeah, what I'm doing up here looks really neat, but can you believe it's all out of books?'"

The Amazing Arthur, whose real name is Arthur Silkknitter, performs daily at the Nebraska State Fair. He keeps his audiences entertained with a

## STATE FAIR EVENTS

Event	Time	Location
Big Chef Zydeco	5:30 - 7 p.m., 8 - 9 p.m., 10 - midnight	West Beer Garden
Nine Live Cats	7 - 11 p.m.	Hooters Beer Garden
Lee Ann Wornack	8 p.m.	Bob Devarney Sports Center

repertoire of tricks, gags and jokes.

Silkknitter is an accomplished balloon artist, meaning he does more than just make a few yellow and pink poodles. He makes elaborate hats that look like rainbows and even some that look like Elmo from "Sesame Street."

"I've known since college that all I wanted to be was a full-time family entertainer," Silkknitter said. "I like entertaining the kids, and I get to work with children every day."

Silkknitter, who graduated from Peru State College in 1996 with a degree in elementary education, taught first grade at Indian Hill Elementary for two years before mak-

ing the decision to go into the entertainment business.

"I got started by entertaining in nursing homes," Silkknitter said. "But I have done everything from weddings and day cares to the Douglas and Sarpy county fairs."

Silkknitter also takes his show on the road. He has performed all over the Midwest, including the Mid-South Fair in Memphis, Tenn.

Although Silkknitter is originally from Lincoln - he now lives in Omaha - this is his first time performing at the Nebraska State Fair.

Silkknitter learned many of his tricks by reading books, but he also had to learn to spend hours practicing to perfect each trick. That was how he learned most of his yo-yo tricks.

"It's all a matter of practice," he said. "You never leave home without it. You practice when your in line and just have fun. That's most important, and that's what has motivated me."

Silkknitter will be performing his routine of comedic juggling and yo-yo every day at the Ag Hall Stage.

After his performances, he can be found roaming around Ag Hall or the Midway making balloon creations and entertaining families.

"I try to stick around Ag Hall because it has air conditioning," he said. "But I tend to go where the kids are."

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**Joe Didn't Pay Attention to the Signs...**

**Until he hit one.**