

Review: Choose Me

Written and directed by Alan Rudolph; starring Genevieve Bujold, Keith Carradine, Leslie Ann Warren.

Alan Rudolph's *Choose Me* is, as expected, an odd little film. Subtitled "a serious comedy," the film follows the desperate, loveless, sad lives of five people in a cold world of smoky bars, one night stands and impersonal telephone conversations.

Leslie Ann Warren is Eve, a retired streetwalker with a bar sporting her name and a severe weakness for men. Keith Carradine is a self-professed pathological liar who only kisses women he would marry and who just may be telling the truth when he describes his rather eventful past. Genevieve Bujold is Dr. Nancy Love, radio show love counselor who rooms with Eve under the name of Ann and has more problems with relationships than her listeners, who include an unknowing Eve. Along with small time hood and philandering husband Zack Antoine (Patrick Bachau) and his childish, jealous and lonely wife Pearl (Rae Dawn Chong), Rudolph weaves a tale that intertwines these characters with an inwardly spiraling plot.

The plotting is fairly clever, though it relies too much on misunderstanding and coincidence for its complications, and the dialogue is enigmatic enough to pass as intellectual. But what is really surprising is how a story this sad and, at times, morose can be twisted into a comedy. It works often enough, only sometimes turning to slapstick for laughs, but Rudolph is sending mixed signals. Looking at the inconclusive ending it seems that this is his intent, but it's too ambivalent. If



Lesley Ann Warren and Keith Carradine in *Choose Me*.

Rudolph has a point to make it gets lost in the cuteness.

The characters are intriguing enough, brought out by engaging performances and semi-decipherable lines. Again, scripting turns out to be both an asset and a deficit. They are unpredictable, sometimes fascinating people, people we'd really like to learn about. At the same time they seem distracted by the chic, clever lines they spout in their attempts to mask their inner selves or expose their true nature, whichever the case is. Far from natural, this stylized patter is interesting but all too often false.

Rudolph seems to be attempting Altman, his mentor, again, and he just isn't up to it. The result is an often engaging, fairly funny, thoroughly intriguing but ultimately unfulfilling picture, more challenging than the standard Hollywood product but also more pretentious.

—Sean Axmaker

Coda: Sam Peckinpah 1925-1984

On December 27, I saw for the first time Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*. The next day I heard of his death. I never knew his career as well as I would have liked to, having seen only a few of his films. But coming so soon after seeing his greatest work, his death did have strong emotional effect on me. A man who explored the power of violence and the human fascination with it, Peckinpah had a personal vision that made an impact on audiences and filmmakers alike. As for me, I will remember the power, the strange beauty and the elegiac sense of loss that permeates *The Wild Bunch*, and I will never forget the man who brought that vision to the screen.

NOW SHOWING

Attila: Based on the true-life story of George Attila. This entertaining film set in the snowy outback of Alaska details the life of an Indian boy caught between old and new worlds who overcame tuberculosis and grew up to be a champion dogsled racer. Cinema World (342-6536).

Beverly Hills Cop: Eddie Murphy is a Detroit cop who comes to Beverly Hills to solve the murder of his best friend. Directed by Martin Brest (*Going in Style*). National (344-3431).

Buckaroo Banzai: Peter Weller (*Shoot the Moon*) is the world's leading scientist and hottest rock 'n' roller. He sets out to stop the evil aliens from destroying the earth. Directed by screenwriter W.D. Richter, the cast includes: John Lithgow (*Terms of Endearment*), Jeff Goldblum (journalist from *People Magazine* in *The Big Chill*) and Ellen Barkin (*Diner*). Shows with *City Heat*. Cinema World (342-6536).

Choose Me: Genevieve Bujold is a sexually-inhibited radio talk show shrink (Dr. Love) rooming with a lusty female tavern owner (Leslie Ann Warren). They get tangled up with the spirited and crazy Keith Carradine. Directed by Alan Rudolph, this modern love comedy is full of ridiculous twists, accented by neon, guns, libido and improvisational jazz. We are reminded that movies can be crazy fun. Bijou (686-2458).

City Heat: Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood play private eye and cop in this 30s gangster thing. Directed by Richard Benjamin. Also stars Jane Alexander, Madeline Kahn, Rip Torn, Richard Roundtree. Shows with *Buckaroo Banzai*. Cinema World (342-6536).

Cotton Club: Francis Ford Coppola's lavish music, dance, gangster extravaganza. Co-written with Pulitzer-prize winning novelist Wm.

Kennedy. The stories are drawn from *The Cotton Club*, a New York prohibition-era speakeasy. Stars Richard Gere, Gregory Hines, Dianne Lane, Lonette McKee. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Dune: The story spans four planets and focuses on the water-starved world of Arrakis, also known as Dune, which is at the brink of economic and ecological ruin due to bad mining practices. The hero, Paul Atreides (newcomer Kyle MacLachlan), joins an army of sandworms to fight the forces of evil. Directed by David Lynch (*The Elephant Man*, *Eraserhead*), the film also stars Jose Ferrer as the evil Emperor and Max Von Sydow as the Fremmen planetologist, Dr. Kynes. West 11th (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Flamingo Kid: Light drama. A city kid takes a summer job at an upper-middle-class resort and grows up. Directed by Gary Marshall, writer-director of TV's *LaVerne* and Shirley. West 11th Tri-Cinema (342-4142).

Johnny Dangerously: Gangster-spoof. Stars Michael Keaton (*Mr. Mom*). Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Micki & Maude: A man falls in love with two women and marries them both. Directed by Blake Edwards, stars Dudley Moore and Amy Irving. Cinema World (342-6536).

Out From Under: 3 Australian Lesbian Films:

Farewell to Charms: Carla Pontiac's 13-min. satiric lesbian soap opera for the 80's pokes fun at gender roles and stereotypes. Shows first with

On Guard: Four lesbians, among them an aerobics instructor and disillusioned nurse, conspire to sabotage UTERO, a reproductive engineering facility. Winner, Best Experimental Narrative, San Francisco International Film Festival. 51 min. Shows second with

Tread Softly: Two women, one older than the other, struggle to overcome their differences. 27 min. Jan. 11-7. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Pinocchio: Springfield Quad (726-9073) and West 11th (342-4142).

Out of Control: Mayflower (345-1022).

Places in the Heart: Sally Field is a courageous young widow trying to hang onto her family and land in depression-era Texas. A moving and heart-warming story, written and directed by Robert Benton (*Kramer vs. Kramer*). Beautifully photographed by Nestor Almendros. Shows with *Tootsie*. (Oakway (342-5351)).

Protocol: Goldie Hawn saves the life of an African Ambassador in Wash., D.C. and the State Dept. makes her an official in Protocol. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

River: Sissy Spacek and Mel Gibson fight the gov't. bureaucrats to protect their small Tennessee family farm in the early 1900's. Directed by Mark Rydell (*On Golden Pond*). McDonald (344-4343).

Runaway: Tom Sellick (Magnum, P.I.) and Cynthia Rhodes combat a future world where the machines invented to save people begin to turn on them. Shows with *The Terminator*. Oakway (342-5351).

Starman: Jeff Bridges (*Tron*, *The Last Picture Show*, *Against All Odds*) is the endearing alien who materializes in the form of the dead husband of Karen Allen (*Animal House*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Directed by John Carpenter (*Halloween*, *The Thing*). Light comedy, escapist, family fare. PG rating. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

The Terminator: Arnold Schwarzenegger is the perfect robot-beast from the future sent back to kill the woman (Linda Hamilton) who will bear humanity's white knight. Both dreadful and comic images of life after the nuclear holocaust. Non-stop action and scary stuff. Shows with *Runaway*. Oakway (342-5351).

Tootsie: Dustin Hoffman is an out-of-work actor who pretends to be a woman to land acting jobs. Shows with *Places in the Heart*. Fine Arts (747-2201).

2010: More in the nature of *Star Trek* than 2001, a well-done comic book film story. While Russia and the U.S. prepare to fight a war over a crisis in Honduras, a Russian craft with a Russian-American crew sets out to explore the circles of Jupiter. Cinema World (342-6536).

—S.R.

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OUT FROM UNDER:
AUSTRALIAN
LESBIAN FILMS

Directors: Susan Lambert, Carla Pontiac, Di Drew
(Australia 1983) JANUARY 11-17

Shows: Fri. & Sat.—Complete showings of all three films at 7 & 9 pm; Sun.—Complete showings of all three films at 7:30 pm only; Sun. Matinee—Complete showings at 2 pm

ON GUARD (shows 2nd on program, 51 min.)

Winner Best Experimental Narrative at the San Francisco International Film Festival. ON GUARD is Susan Lambert's first feature, a science fiction thriller. Four lesbians, among them an aerobics instructor and disillusioned nurse, conspire to sabotage UTERO, a reproductive engineering facility, and alert the media to its Brave New World bioproduction line. The frank depiction of our heroines' domestic and sexual lives, their personal and political troubles is "thought-provoking, urgent and witty." Anna Dellio, SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

FAREWELL TO CHARMS (shows 1st on program, 13 min.)

Carla Pontiac's short satire is a lesbian soap opera for the 80's which pokes fun at gender roles and sexual stereotypes.

TREAD SOFTLY (shows 3rd on program, 27 min.)

Di Drew's critically acclaimed TREAD SOFTLY looks at the serious side of lesbian relationships. Two women, one older than the other, struggle to overcome their differences. "A work of love which honestly treats the problems of relationships and affirms lesbian lifestyles." AUSTRALIAN NATION REVIEW