

CINEMA

Maxie

Starring Glenn Close, Mandy Patinkin, and Ruth Gordon. Directed by Paul Aaron, screenplay by Patricia Resnick.

Maxie promises more than it can deliver, wasting an excellent cast on a cinematic piece of cotton candy. The plot is simple-minded, and familiar. Glenn Close plays both a conventional modern woman juggling a career and a marriage and the ghost of an ambitious, unfulfilled actress from the 20s who died before making the big time in Hollywood. Close works hard for the eccentric Archbishop of San Francisco (played by Barnard Hughes) in an unglamorous unsatisfying job. As the flapper, the gorgeous Close dresses in some beautiful outfits—almost reason enough to recommend the movie. Mandy Patinkin (*Yentl*, *Daniel*) is her befuddled, bedazzled, dopey husband who gets the best lines in the show. He loses his straight library job after Maxie shows up at a stuffy benefit. Ruth Gordon, in her final

screen role, is touching and sweet as the flapper's best friend.

While remodeling their apartment and removing layers of wallpaper, the couple discovers a message in lipstick from a former tenant, Maxie Malone (READ IT AND WEEP). Gordon tells them all about the long deceased Maxie, her dancing partner in the twenties. We are not surprised when

to expect from Glenn Close's performances.

The challenge of switching from one character to the other is difficult with this script. The best scene occurs at a Hollywood screentest Maxie sets up to find out if she could have made it in pictures. Maxie is mad at the wife and humiliates her by not appearing for the first two takes. Close must first be the wife pretending to act like Maxie, then the flapper performing her best. This part reminds me of the great scene in *All of Me* where Steve Martin, a lawyer, must argue a case while the madcap ghost of Lily Tomlin inhabits his body: Martin playing Tomlin pretending to be Martin.

Maxie is a bit of froth dreamed up by a Hollywood mindset dedicated to perpetuating the nonsense of TV sitcoms onto the big screen, a rehash of shows like *Bewitched* and *Topper* where a witch or a deceased husband or wife comes back to create havoc for the living. Maxie is made of the same limited ideas, dressed for the kill. You may enjoy it, but don't expect a prize in your cracker-jacks.

—Lois Wadsworth

REVIEW

Maxie materializes, bringing a little life into the relationship between Close and Patinkin with her long unrequited desires. Maxie takes over Close's body, much to the delight (and chagrin) of Patinkin, the guilty husband who won't quite let himself go.

My favorite scene is when Maxie hears boop-oop-a-doop music coming from Gordon's geriatric aerobics class. Bubble headed egocentric Maxie barges in and starts hoofing it up. When she finally recognizes Gordon as her old girlfriend, we feel the emotional warmth and depth we have come

NOW showing

After Hours: Comedy about night life, from director Martin Scorsese. With Rosanna Arquette, Teri Garr, Cheech and Chong. National (344-3431).

Agnes of God: A court-appointed psychiatrist (Jane Fonda) investigates whether a young nun (Meg Tilly), charged with murdering her newborn baby, is capable of standing trial. Anne Bancroft plays the mother superior. McDonald (344-4343).

Back to the Future: A boy trips back to the past, and meets the teenagers who'll become his parents. West 11th (342-4142) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Better Off Dead: Romantic comedy. Cinema World (342-6536).

Commando: Arnold Schwarzenegger as Chuck Norris as Rambo. Cinema World (342-6536) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Cry From the Mountain: Religious fund-raiser from World Wide Pictures (aka Billy Graham). Leasing this week at Oakway (342-5351).

Dangerous Moves: An aging Russian chess master defends his title against a young and arrogant defector. Winner of 1985's Academy Award for best foreign film. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

E.T.: Steve Spielberg's lovable, mega-money-making alien finds a temporary home in suburban America. With *The Goonies*. Playing at Fine Arts (747-2001).

Ghost Busters: Parapsychologists Bill Murray, Dan Akroyd and Rick Moranis capture ghosts to keep New York City safe. With *Teen Wolf* at Mayflower (345-1022).

Goonies: Adventure. Kids searching for treasure must outwit bandits and bank robbers. Plays with E.T. at Fine Arts (747-2201).

Invasion, U.S.A.: Chuck Norris saves America from foreign terrorists. Cinema World (342-6536).

Jagged Edge: Murder mystery, with Glenn Close and Jeff Bridges. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

The Journey of Natty Gann: A girl searches for her father during the Depression. A Disney release. Springfield Quad (726-9073) and West 11th (342-4142).

Kiss of the Spider Woman: A macho leftist journalist shares a Latin American cell with a gay film devotee. Beneath their personal conflicts lie analogous, impossible yearnings. Stars William Hurt, Raul Julia, Sonia Braga. Playing at the Bijou (686-2458).

Remo Williams—The Adventure Begins: Starts this week at Springfield Quad (726-9073).

The Rocky Horror Picture Show: Still more. Friday and Saturday late show at the Bijou (686-2458).

Silver Bullet: Werewolves, a la Stephen King. Horrors. Valley River Twin (686-8633).

Sweet Dreams: Jessica Lange portrays country-western singer Patsy Cline. Co-stars Ed Harris. Cinema World (342-6536).

Teen Wolf: Hair-raising hormones turn Michael J. Fox (*Back to the Future*) from high school wimp to basketball hero. With *Ghost Busters* at Mayflower (345-1022).

Trek: Said to be a travel/adventure film from the land down under. West 11th (342-4142).

—Michael Sussman

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