

Sweet Dreams

Starring Jessica Lange as country singer Patsy Cline.

Country music fans who remember the late 50s and early 60s need no introduction to Patsy Cline, Nashville's sweetheart, star of the original Grand Ole Opry. For a few brief years until her death in a 1963 plane crash at age 30, Patsy Cline's richly emotional voice put her at the top of the charts ("I Fall to Pieces," "Sweet Dreams," "Crazy," "Foolin' Around"). The soundtrack to *Sweet Dreams* displays Cline's talents from the original vocal tracks laid down

over 20 years ago and includes terrific recordings by other artists from the period as well. It's clear why Patsy Cline became a source of inspiration for other singers like Loretta Lynn, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt: her feeling and phrasing infuse her music with country soul, heartbreak, and broken dreams.

Jessica Lange tackles the role of Patsy with the thoroughness her critics expect: she becomes this

REVIEW

small-town, fun-loving singer dedicated to furthering her career while striving against odds to make her second marriage work out. Ed Harris is perfect as Charlie Dick, Cline's tortured husband whose frustrations overwhelm his better intentions time and again. Ed Harris played a cheating husband in *Places in the Heart*, too, but in *Sweet Dreams* he cheats in an acutely authentic 1950s style. Lange's Patsy, like the real Patsy Cline, is a little fast by the standards of the 50s, very independent for the times. Together, Lange and Harris breathe life into the troubled relationship between these two strong characters—Patsy and Charlie's story becomes the plot for *Sweet Dreams*.

Patsy Cline was Loretta Lynn's

friend in Producer Bernard Schwartz' 1980 film *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Sissy Spacek as Loretta, Beverly D'Angelo as Patsy). Schwartz selected Martinsburg, West Virginia, to shoot *Sweet Dreams'* hometown scenes. Martinsburg supplied those "old time pointy bras" and a bunch of local folks (some of whom knew Patsy in the 50s) for movie extras. Most important to the film, however, is the town's Rainbow Road tavern where Patsy and Charlie meet and fall in love. *Sweet Dreams* thrives under Director Karel Reisz, who directed the delicious *French Lieutenant's Woman*. Writer Robert Getchell's dialogue in the stacy love scenes and in the violent domestic brawls works. Getchell (*Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*) writes some caustically funny one-liners for Lange. After a potentially disfiguring car accident, she tells the doctor with good humor: "Hell, yes, I'll take all the plastic surgery I can get. Maybe you can make me look like Grace Kelly."

My favorite supporting character is Anne Wedgeworth who plays Hilda Hensley, Patsy Cline's mother. She is a determined, spirited woman, true to her values, never a cliché. Reportedly, the real Ms. Hensley watched the movie making in Martinsburg and thought Lange's performance as her Patsy was "superb." Me too!

—Lois Wadsworth

NOW showing

After Hours: Comedy. A taxi trip to downtown Manhattan leads to a maze of strange people and circumstances. Directed by Martin Scorsese. With Rosanna Arquette, Teri Garr, Cheech and Chong. Playing with *Romeo Williams—The Adventure Begins*. Mayflower (345-1022).

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).

American Ninja: Your guess is as good as mine, I'm afraid. West 11th (342-4142).

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. Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Day of the Dead: All decked out for Halloween. Trick or treat? Cinema World (342-6536).

Death Wish III: Charles Bronson is back on the streets, doing what he does best. Cinema World (342-6536).

Friday the 13th—Part 5: Special midnight showing on Halloween night. West 11th (342-4142).

Fright Night: Roddy McDowall hunts for vampires in the house next door. Late show through Saturday at the Bijou (686-2458).

Jagged Edge: Murder mystery. Glenn Close as a lawyer wondering whether her client deserves love or prison. Co-stars 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 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).

Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome: This is Mel Gibson's third film as Australia's postapocalyptic hero. Eternal rock star Tina Turner provides the challenge. Be ready for lots of violent action. Plays with *Pale Rider* at Fine Arts (747-2201) and with *Vision Quest* at Valley River Twin (686-8633).

National Lampoon's European Vacation: Chevy Chase and family rip the continent. Playing with *Summer Rental*. Oakway (342-5351).

Once Bitten: Vampire spoof. Sneak preview this Saturday at West 11th (342-4142).

Pale Rider: Clint Eastwood rides again. Shows with *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*. Showing at Fine Arts (747-2201).

Plenty: Meryl Streep as a woman reaching for much too much while sliding deeper and deeper. Playing at National (344-3431).

Romeo Williams—The Adventure Begins: Pop paperback hero stuff. Plays with *After Hours*. Mayflower (345-1022).

The Shooting Party: Drama. English gentry gather on a private estate prior to World War I. Outdoors is for killing birds. Indoors is for passion. Edwardian lifestyles have not long to last. Starring the late James Mason. Cinema 7 (687-0733).

Summer Rental: John Candy takes his family for a stressful vacation at the beach. With *National Lampoon's European Vacation*. Oakway (342-5351).

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

To Live and Die in L.A.: Action-drama. Secret Service agents on the trail of a murderous counterfeiter. Cinema World (342-6536) and Springfield Quad (726-9073).

Vision Quest: Romantic Comedy. A teenager is trying to win a wrestling scholarship to college and a girl disturbs his concentration. Playing with *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* at Valley River Twin (686-8633).

—Michael Sussman

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