

'Drowning' a quirky offering

★ ★ 1/2

Plays at the Bijou Fine Arts Cinemas.

.....
 * "don't bother" * * "wait to rent"
 * * * "worth the time" * * * * "I must see"

ADMIT ONE

Drowning By Numbers begins with a scene that is ambiguous and eventually grows tiresome, but not before infecting the viewer with fascination and hypnosis. It features a pretty young girl skipping rope and counting, naming the first hundred stars in the sky. This type of action mirrors what will be seen in the rest of the film.

The story is just as odd as you would expect from the director of *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*. In a picturesque coastal town, three women, all named Cissy Colpitts, reside with their husbands.

The first, played by the great Joan Plowright, discovers her husband drunk, taking a post-coital bath with a young woman. While he is passed out in the tin bathtub, she drowns him. She goes to the local coroner, Madgett, who she knows will lie on the death certificate for her because of his obsession with her.

Enter the two other Cissy Colpitts'. They too decide to drown their husbands, leaving Madgett to cover for them.

Throughout the picture, the numbers one through 100 appear



Drowning By Numbers stars (from left) Joely Richardson, Juliet Stevenson and Joan Plowright as three women who drown their husbands.

on the screen. Much as you try to catch all the numbers, a game invariably goes on in your mind to catch all the symbols thrown at you. Peter Greenaway knows what he's doing to the audience and gleefully does so.

I was watching for the numbers and catching as many symbols as I could. But then I became wrapped up in things as simple as the beauty of the photography (by Sacha Vierny) and ironic nature.

As far as the motivations, multiple meanings and red herrings piled on red herrings are concerned, there are endless possibilities for pseudo-intel-

lectuals who love to chat incessantly about hidden meanings.

I still enjoyed the film on a gut level. I was taken by the scenery and the skill with which Greenaway inserts human depravity into beauty.

There's an uneasy message in this film that women have a conspiracy to control and manipulate men. That is probably the point most worth pondering. If viewers find nothing other than symbols to appreciate in *Drowning*, they will be drowned by the numbers.

Lucas Gutman
Emerald Contributor

Theater showcases local talent

By Christina Komeshian
Emerald Contributor

"We won't be known for our musicals," jokes Steve Bove, owner of the Willamette St. Theater.

In addition to films, live theater productions by local groups and other community events are featured at the Willamette St. Theater, making it stand out among the other theaters in Eugene.

"It's something I've always wanted to do," Bove said about the non-film entertainment at the theater. "Film is manipulated to the moment while theater is the magic of the moment before it disappears."

This is not the first time Bove has owned a theater. It all started back in 1971 when he brought "Screen Gems" to Eugene's WOW Hall, showing classic American cinema and foreign films, as well. In 1972, he operated the Mayflower Theater, showing matinees and midnight shows.

Between 1974 and 1989, he owned Cinema 7, which featured foreign films, including an 8-week international film festival.

In the Spring of 1988, Bove took over the Fine Arts Theater in Springfield, renaming it the Mercury Theater in an homage to the great Orson Welles. Double features and second-run films were shown, as well as repertory premieres such as Woody Allen's *September*. It was here that the scandalous *Last Temptation of Christ* played — a film that wasn't brought to other theaters in Eugene. But because the street in front of this theater was being torn up for 6 months, which made for bad business, it closed July 4, 1989.

All of these endeavors had provided Lane County with avant garde films and Bove wanted to continue this for the community. With fifteen years of film viewing behind him, he was able to develop what he calls "the art of film programming" and he wanted to put his knowledge to good use.

The Willamette Street Theater opened on February 22 of this year. Since the opening, many events have taken place with the community in

Turn to THEATER, Page 8

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