

# Scorsese's 'Cape Fear': Moviemaking to die for

By AARON DOBBS

Daily Bruin, U. of California, Los Angeles

It's unusual for a remake to be better than the original film. Something's almost always lost in the transition.

But in the case of "Cape Fear," director Martin Scorsese not only surpasses the terror of the 1962 version starring Robert Mitchum and Gregory Peck, he also redefines the psychological thriller the same way he redefined mafia drama with 1990's "Good Fellas."

Add Wesley Strick's intricate storyline and the compelling performances of Nick Nolte, Jessica Lange, Juliette Lewis and, most notably, Robert De Niro to Scorsese's near-perfect direction, and what we have is a motion picture audiences should die for.

The basic story is simple and almost identical to the original. Max Cady (De Niro) is released from prison after serving a 14-year sentence. All he could think of during his incarceration was revenge against the man who helped put him there — Sam Bowden (Nolte).

But Cady doesn't want to kill Sam, at least not at first. He wants him to experience the loss he felt during his 14 "missing" years. To do so, Cady terrorizes Sam's wife Leigh (Lange), and 15-year-old daughter Dani (Lewis).

Strick's script makes Cady more calculated and the film much more thrilling. With obvious help from Scorsese, he creates a family more realistic for the '90s. The original family, in which Peck played Sam, was a tight, happy unit. That's



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

One, two, he's coming for you....The Bowden family (Juliette Lewis, Jessica Lange and Nick Nolte) are up against a psychotic ex-con, (Robert De Niro) in "Cape Fear."

fine for 1962, but in 1991 the Bowdens are on the verge of self-destruction. Sam tries hard to stay faithful. Leigh is recovering from heavy depression and near suicide. Dani can't stand the fighting at home and has to attend summer school for having a joint in her locker.

One of the most important differences between the two pictures, though, is the basic essence of character for each of these men. The original movie shows a basic struggle of good versus evil, but this film doesn't depict a pure "good." Cady's actions are horrifying, but Sam is no longer "Father

Knows Best," and at times the audience feels empathy for Cady.

The camera work, shot by two-time Academy-Award winning cinematographer Freddie Francis ("Glory"), is very fast-paced, accelerating the action and bombarding the audience with visual punches. Scorsese's camera almost never stops moving, and when it does, the characters don't.

The most noticeable change in this picture from its predecessor is the injection of religion into the storyline, a major Scorsese theme. In many ways, Cady believes his actions will actually "save" Sam.

## Now showing at a theater near you

By SUZANNE ROSS

The State Press, Arizona State U.

Christmas season is here, and with it comes a slew of films to top off 1991. In a ritual as traditional as geese flying south for the winter, filmmakers have joined the holiday rush in an effort to get their films in under the Academy Awards wire.

**City of Joy** — It looks as if Patrick Swayze finally

landed a role in a film that has some semblance of a plot and does not play on his sexy-guy image. Swayze portrays Max Loeb, a young American doctor who is beaten and robbed outside a bar in Calcutta. A poor Indian peasant Hasan Pal (Om Puri) comes to his aid and takes him to the City of Joy Self-Help Clinic. Loeb gets a job there and learns the harsh realities of life facing the poverty-stricken people of India. "City of Joy" is directed by Roland Joffe, whose previous works include "The Killing Fields" and "The Mission." The movie is the first to be filmed entirely on the crowded streets of Calcutta.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRI STAR PICTURES

A mafia man and his moll.

**Bugsy** — Will America's fascination with the Mafia ever end? Not as long as filmmakers keep pumping out mob thrillers like "Goodfellas," "The Godfather" trilogy and "Mobsters." Warren Beatty stars as Ben "Bugsy" Siegel, who rises from a young, aspiring gangster to legendary mob mogul status in director Barry Levinson's release.

"Bugsy" portrays Siegel at the height of his crime-ridden career during the 1940s. It's westward ho for Siegel and the Mafia when our underworld hero picks up his digs in New World and moves his operations to California and Nevada. Siegel will dazzle viewers with his charm, innovativeness and infidelity as he builds a resort-casino and paves the way for the gambling metropolis we know today as Las Vegas.

**Fried Green Tomatoes** — This film promises to be more appetizing than its name. Oscar-winner Kathy Bates plays Evelyn Couch, a woman on the hairy edge of a mid-life crisis who befriends a nursing home patient (Jessica Tandy). Her tales of family, friendship, love and murder in her

hometown of Whistle Stop, Ala., provide Evelyn with the fuel to change the course of her life. The film is based on Fannie Flagg's best-selling novel *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* and casts talented actresses Mary Stuart Masterson, Mary Louise Parker and Cécily Tyson.

**Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country** — Trekkies will get one final look at the Starship Enterprise under the command of Captain James T. Kirk (William Shatner). Twenty-five years of futuristic magic will end in thematic resolution with this final chapter in the Star Trek series. Original cast members, including James Doohan, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols and George Takei, will reunite with Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and DeForrest Kelly before being beamed up into filmmaking history.

**The Prince of Tides** — Barbra Streisand directs, produces and stars in this drama that explores the complexity of family relationships. Streisand plays Susan Lowenstein, a psychiatrist who tries to help a troubled patient by delving into her family's history. Dr. Lowenstein enlists the help of her patient's brother, Tom Wingo (Nick Nolte). Tom leaves a crumbling marriage to encounter a painful journey into a troubled past that has affected him and his sister Savannah (Melinda Dillon). The film looks at the effects seriously flawed parents have on the lives of their children. And, of course, there's always room for romance as Tom falls for Dr. Lowenstein.

One aspect of the film that was not really changed is Bernard Hermann's original score. The music from the original "Cape Fear" was fantastic and terrifying on its own, but adapted, arranged and conducted here by Elmer Bernstein, the music actually becomes even more haunting and forceful.

In addition to the actual filmmaking, the acting is superb across the board. Nolte is fantastic as Sam. He gives Sam the necessary fear, guilt and frustration at being totally helpless.

Lange and Lewis both benefit from well-fleshed-out female characters, something the original film didn't have. Near the end of the film, Leigh gives a speech about loss which completely describes her character. Lange's performance in that one scene is one of the best of her career.

Lewis certainly holds her own, an impressive accomplishment considering the company she's keeping.

Appearing in cameo roles are Peck and Mitchum, the former as the lawyer who defends Cady and the latter as the police lieutenant who tries to help Sam.

Still, all these great performances are eclipsed by De Niro's, who — if there is any justice in the world — could very well win his third Academy Award. He is a chameleon able to physically and mentally immerse himself into the role of Max Cady.

"Cape Fear," one of the finest pieces of filmmaking to come out this year, is definitely the movie to see this winter. It's pure entertainment with a couple of messages thrown in, and it'll scare your socks off.

## 'Beast' brings 'toon time back to life

By MARISA LEONARDI

Daily Trojan, U. of Southern California

Something about the magic of animation appeals to the child in all of us.

"Beauty and the Beast" reunites Disney with the song-writing team of Howard Ashman (who died



COURTESY OF DISNEY  
Animation lives.

earlier this year) and Alan Menken, who also did the award-winning music for "The Little Mermaid." The magic of that film has carried over to "Beast."

The story is a familiar one, with a few extra twists to satisfy modern audiences.

It has everything that a classic Disney film should: lead characters who are good, but not perfect; beautiful, imaginative scenes; catchy songs and frightening villains.

For many years, it seemed that animation was dead. With the help of Disney, animation has a new life.