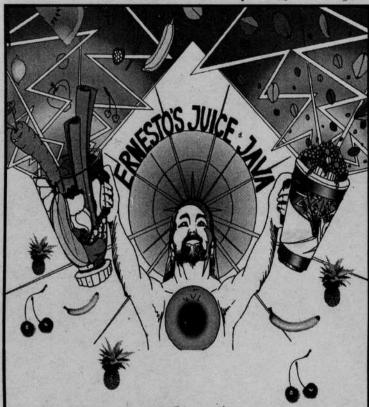
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MOVIE REVIEWS



courtesy of October Films

"Black Cat, White Cat" has been called Felliniesque thanks to its colorful, larger-than-life characters. The movie centers around a group of gypsies who live on the banks of the Danube River. The story, about three generations of men, gamblers and hustlers, centers on the themes of "love at first sight" and longtime friendship. The film earned Bosnian-born writer/director Emir Kusturica the Silver Lion Award for Best Director at the 1998 Venice Film Festival. "Black Cat, White Cat" is currently playing at the Bijou Art Cinemas, located at 492 E. 13th Avenue.

We've all played the game of "If

you could be anyone else, who

The name John Malkovich probably hasn't passed many lips in response, but writer Charlie

Kaufman apparently believes that

the enigmatic actor is a damn good

answer, hence the new movie "Be-

Jonze have taken that body-swap-

ping question and created the weirdest, wildest and wackiest

movie since the 1992 French film

"Delicatessen." The pair has also found a fresh and unique way to

exploit the beaten-to-death pop culture mantra, "Andy Warhol said everyone will have 15 min-

The movie's plot centers on four

main characters: the eponymous

one, of course; a veterinarian

named Lotte Schwartz (a frizzyhaired Cameron Diaz), who has a

soft spot for a chimp named Elijah;

Maxine (Catherine Keener), a

wisecracking woman with a nose for moneymaking schemes; and Lotte's husband Craig (John Cu-

sack), who works hard at his hob-

by of puppeteering, yet has to suffer indignities such as being told he's not sexually attractive be-

Using the art of puppetry as a

foundation, a home base in a way,

Kaufman and Jonze get their

movie to lift off like a spaceship once the portal to John Malkovich

is discovered, and moviegoers can

only ooh, ahh and laugh uproari-

At first, the on-screen travelers

are limited to Craig and Lotte, who

are in a battle to woo the oh-so-

not-smitten-with-either-one Max-

ine. Until they inhabit John

Malkovich's being, that is, then

Maxine can't get enough of them.

gain is realized, thanks to Maxine's more rational side, literally every-

one wants to take the ride. That's

when the movie really gets strange. In a scene that ranks as one of the

best ever filmed, Malkovich takes a

journey to be, well, himself. And

you thought this guy played some

Once the potential for financial

ously at the trippy sights.

cause he still plays with dolls.

Kaufman and director Spike

ing John Malkovich.

utes of fame.'

Living in someone else's shoes

By Jack Clifford Oregon Daily Emerald

would it be?'

■ "Being John Malkovich" explores society's obsession with Hollywood-style life with a comedic flair



Being John Malkovich Starring John Cusack, Cameron Diaz, Catherine Keener, John Malkovich . Directed by Spike Jonze.

odd roles in his past movies.

This film couldn't have been made without John Malkovich's presence, which isn't meant to point out the obvious — after all, the movie is called "Being John Malkovich." The implication here is that no other fairly mainstream actor, male or female, could make viewers believe that something like this, as absurd as the idea is, might happen to him or her. "Being Johnny Depp"? Nope. Even "Being Johnny Depp"? Nope. Even "Being Kevin Spacey" doesn't sound right.

Only Malkovich fits the role and

Only Malkovich fits the role and the story of how Jonze talked him into filling it would probably make a pretty decent movie, as well.

Back to this movie, however, which also sort of loses track about two-thirds of the way through.

Although Orson Bean does a nice turn early on in the movie as Craig's boss, Mr. Lester, his eventual importance to the plot and increased screen exposure starts to drag the film down a bit.

In addition, when we lose Cusack's sad sack Schwartz to Malkovich's inner self, the movie is set adrift without its anchor. Cusack as an actor just keeps getting better and his role here continues that progress.

Diaz and Keener are above average in their portrayals as Lotte and Maxine, who end up representing one of the movie's deeper themes about gender identity and how confusing the entire issue can be. Mary Kay Place, in a smaller, more comedic role, works well as a secretary with an ear for malapropisms.

On the whole, this flick is just one laugh after another. Yet, when you leave the theater, it will have you thinking about such ideas as our culture's insidious love affair with all things celebrity-oriented and society's search for immortality.

From a pop culture perspective though, the film is just one treat after another, especially with its sometimes quick star cameos. So forget "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," because "Being John Malkovich" is the coolest fad around.

"Being John Malkovich" plays at the Bijou Art Cinemas.

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