

REVIEWS

PULSE EDITOR: REBECCA WILSON

'Traffic' more than just another drug movie

■ Four storylines intertwine to create the masterful with a message film with a message

MOVIE REVIEW

'Traffic'

USA Films

★★★★☆

By Lisa R. Griffing
Oregon Daily Emerald

Drugs: They lead to hypocrisy, corruption and death. They exist everywhere, as if embedded in the system. At least, that is what the movie "Traffic" seems to say.

It's not "Requiem for a Dream," nor is it "Trainspotting." I know,

once you've seen one drug movie, you've seen them all. However, "Traffic" takes the cake. It creates an image we rarely see depicted in films: a corrupt system of government that spends millions of dollars to find solutions to drug problems and the effects of governmental decisions on families and society.

The sensation of drugs allows addicts to escape reality as dealers maintain drug cartels. These are the elements that make the motion picture "Traffic" go 'round.

"Traffic" is an original flick directed by Steven Soderbergh, who also directed "The Limey." Four plots intersect and provide a devastating message: A right answer to the drug problem does not exist, nor will the problem ever end. The addiction and the business screw everyone over, but the business will

surely rake in the dough.

Three color tones, according to location, make the cinematography in "Traffic" dynamite. In Mexico, the fuzzy yellow tint gives the film a documentary feel. The blue-tinted camera work in Washington D.C. gives sections of this movie an eerie ambience while the clear shots in Ohio give it a realistic view, as if one were looking through the eye of the camera. The variety of tones sets different moods that play with the audience's emotions. That is part of the fun in this film.

Judge Robert Wakefield, weakly played by Michael Douglas, is hired by the president of the United States to win the war on drugs. The funny thing is, he has his own issues with alcohol.

Straight-A student Caroline (Erika Christensen) is Wakefield's 16-

year-old lost daughter and feels tired by the masks people wear. Nobody understands her and she is "angry about a lot of things." Her emotional baggage and ongoing junkie habits that lead her to prostitution are well-performed. Caroline's position grips the heart. Christensen is by far the most believable actress in "Traffic."

Next, we have the crooked Mexican government, which works with the American government to halt drug trade across the border. Mexico's debased general, Arturo Salazar, is working for the drug lord while conspiring with U.S. officials to catch this criminal. However, two Tijuana cops working for the general, Javier (Benicio Del Toro) and his partner Manolo (Jacob Vargas), are supposed to bust those involved with the drug syndicate. This pro-

duces an unfolding dilemma.

Dealer Carlos Ayala (Steven Bauer) is arrested for dealing. His innocent wife Helena (Catherine Zeta Jones) turns ruthless to get her husband released from jail. She has no choice but to preserve her husband's illegal business transactions. This section of the screenplay unveils the institution where drugs provide an attractive alternative in a situation where a person such as Helena is trapped.

All four stories weave into one creation that is pure genius: "Traffic." The tension throughout the show is disturbing, but the innovative subject matter and cinematography are worth it. The ending is high and dry, leaving the audience hanging. Nothing in this film is candy-coated, but it's part of the film's brilliance.

Comedy

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ing as "my art and my passion."

Pearlson plays Mrs. Saunders in the first act, a character she described as "a bit of a renegade. A bit of a contrast to the other women who are trying to fit the norm. She's

not a hypocrite."

But in the second half of the play, Pearlson switches gears to play Victoria, a young woman who is played by a doll in the first act.

"Victoria is a woman who goes on a journey in the scope of the play. The second act is her journey towards finding her own integrity," said Pearlson, adding that "every

character goes on a journey."

Weddell emphasized that students would find the subject and humor of "Cloud 9" especially entertaining because "nothing else in town is as weird, absurd, current, on the ball ... down the hatch."

Director Pearlstein also thinks "Cloud 9" presents subjects vital to the University community. In an ef-

fort to expand the viewing audience of Lord Leebrick Theatre, Pearlstein is offering up to 60 student tickets for \$5 for this evening's preview and 25 tickets for \$7 Saturday's show.

Performances are every Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening at 8 p.m. Sunday matinee performances will be given January 28 and

February 4. Regular ticket prices are \$11 on Thursday and Sunday and \$15 on Friday and Saturday.

The Lord Leebrick Theatre is located near the Wild Duck at 540 Charnelton St., between fifth and sixth avenues. For more information or reservations, call the box office at (541) 465-1506.

Entertainment briefs

The Associated Press

Paris — Jodie Foster will head the jury at the 54th Cannes Film Festival in May, festival officials announced Tuesday.

Foster, who has a French mother and speaks French fluently, "has received the highest honors. It was time for her to come to Cannes," Gilles Jacob, the festival's president, said in a statement.

"I've dreamed since my childhood of having the honor of being president of the Cannes jury," Foster said in the statement.

She said the Golden Palm prize she received in 1976 for the movie "Taxi Driver" was what "truly launched" her film career.

The festival runs from May 9-20, but the rest of the jury will not be announced until the end of April.

Foster won best actress Oscars for "The Accused" in 1989 and "The Silence of the Lambs" in 1992.

LOS ANGELES — "Wonder Boys" and "The House of Mirth" were among the best films adapted from books last year, a University of Southern California literary group says.

Rounding out the top five were "All the Pretty Horses," "Chocolat" and "High Fidelity," the university announced last week. The winning collaborators of the 13th annual award will be announced Jan. 22.

The Friends of the USC Libraries nominates the author of the original book and the screenwriter of its English-language film version for its Scriptor Award. About 40 film and literary professionals selected the honorees.

The nominated films in alphabetical order:

— "All the Pretty Horses," author Cormac McCarthy, screenwriter Ted Tally.

— "Chocolat," author Joanne Harris, screenwriter Robert Nelson Jacobs.

— "High Fidelity," author Nick Hornby, screenwriters D.V. DeVincentis, Steve Pink, John Cusack and Scott Rosenberg.

— "The House of Mirth," author Edith Wharton, screenwriter Terence Davies.

— "Wonder Boys," author Michael Chabon, screenwriter Steven Kloves.

Previous winners include "The Hurricane," "A Civil Action" and "L.A. Confidential."

PASADENA, Calif. — Damon Wayans is looking to make a "Cosby" for the new millennium.

The actor is starring in "My Wife and Kids," a family sitcom that will premiere on ABC this March. He said he wanted to pick up from "Cosby" and "deal a little more with problems that kids are facing today."

He has plenty of material to draw from. Wayans and his siblings are a famous show-biz family, but Wayans said his own children are more an inspiration for his new series than are his brothers.

Wayans, 40, has four children who range in age from 18 to 10, and he's about to become a grandfather.

"Having kids, there's always something new," he told reporters last week. "And the older they get, the less control you have over them."

PASADENA, Calif. — Actress Elisabeth Shue has that terror back again.

She plays the mother of a teenage daughter who is involved in a manipulative relationship with an older man in the upcoming ABC

movie, "Oprah Winfrey Presents: Amy and Isabelle."

Shue said last week the role terrified her more than any except her best-known one, playing Nicolas Cage's girlfriend in the alcohol-drenched film "Leaving Las Vegas."

"I was afraid that I couldn't do it, which is really why I wanted to do it," she said. "I had never played a mother of a 16-year-old daughter. I had never played somebody who was so emotionally rigid and somebody who was so lonely and isolated and shut down sexually."

"There is so much about her character that I had never experienced."

LOS ANGELES — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has set an April 2 deadline for college students to submit films for the 28th annual student Oscars.

Entries must be provided on VHS videotape, though films chosen as finalists must be submitted on a film print 16mm or larger.

Films are accepted in four categories: alternative, animation, documentary and narrative. Top prizes of \$5,000 in each category will be awarded.

Winners will be chosen from three regions around the country, and those films will be judged by academy members. The national winners will be announced June 10 at a ceremony in Los Angeles.

On the Net:

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Web site: <http://www.oscars.org/saa>

LOS ANGELES — Cheryl Cecchetto, a special-events producer who organized celebrations for the millennium and last year's Democratic National Convention, has been picked to put on the top party at the Oscars for the 12th year.

Cecchetto will arrange the Governors Ball that follows the Academy Awards on March 25. The bash includes a lavish dinner and party for Oscar winners, nominees, presenters and other participants.

"We have produced numerous great events, but the Governors Ball is in a class all its own," Cecchetto said.

NEW YORK — Many bands have spoken out against Napster, saying it strips them of their copyrights and their royalties. But the Dave Matthews Band has created an unusual alliance with the music-sharing Web site.

The group has placed on Napster a link to its own Web site, www.davematthewsband.com, to allow fans to listen to the first sin-

gle off its new album.

"Everyday," the band's fourth studio album, won't be in stores until Feb. 27. But now you can download the first single, "I Did It," through the Internet.

According to the Dave Matthews Band's management, the group was happy that Napster users were excited about the new song, but wanted to make sure fans heard the best possible version of the track. Band members made a high-quality MP3 file available on their site that "sounds as the band intended."

On the Net:
Napster:<http://www.napster.com>
Dave Matthews Band: <http://www.davematthewsband.com>

Amateurs only

SALSA COMPETITION

Prelims: Jan 19
Semi Finals: Jan 26
Practice Week: February 2
FINALS!! Feb 9

JUDGES WILL INCLUDE:
NATIONAL CHAMPION REMOS REYNOSA,
AS WELL AS OTHER LOCAL SALSA EXPERTS!!

PRIZES

Salsa/Merengue Dancing
Fridays, 10pm - 2am
Friday, Jan 12, lesson: 10 - 11pm by Remos Reynosa
\$5 cover
(dance & lesson included)

Lakepark Entertainment Center
6400 NW Hwy 99W Corvallis
Just 2 miles north of Corvallis
541.745.5443