



Courtesy

An aged Elvis Presley ('Evil Dead' alumnus Bruce Campbell) and John F. Kennedy (Ossie Davis) battle mummies in 'Bubba Ho-Tep.'

## 'Bubba' goes beyond genre

'Bubba Ho-Tep,' opening Friday at the Bijou, offers a well-crafted horror story free from cheap gimmicks

By Ryan Nyburg  
Senior Pulse Reporter

Let's get this out of the way right now: "Bubba Ho-Tep" is not a great movie. The effects are marginal, the supporting cast is hardly more than a group of cardboard cut-outs and the screenplay occasionally lacks focus. But it is a good movie, and one of such wonderful down-home absurdity that it's hard to feel any malice toward it for its faults.

The film stars Bruce Campbell as an elderly Elvis Presley, who isn't dead but instead resides in an east Texas nursing home along with a man who claims to be John F. Kennedy (played by Ossie Davis). All of this feels like something ripped out of the headlines of the Weekly World News. And this is before the soul-sucking mummy arrives on the scene.

This is not standard fare for a horror/comedy, and it comes as no sur-

prise that the film is based on a short story by Joe R. Lansdale. He's the sort of writer whose work should be adapted more frequently. His writing has the tinge of a late-night movie junkie mixed with the sun-baked humor of a Texas native. Think of the Butthole Surfers in prose form.

Another thing "Bubba" has going for it is director Don Coscarelli, creator of the "Phantasm" film series. His direction is unobtrusive and devoid of too many stylistic flares. This is a welcome relief from the long stream of recent horror films full of fancy camera tricks and cut-n'-gut editing, the only purpose of which, it seems, is to obscure the sloppiness of the production. Coscarelli seems more concerned with telling a story than showing off, and it is good to see that his love of dark, murky corridors and bizarre imagery hasn't faltered.

In the case of "Bubba Ho-Tep," the murky corridors are those of the rest home that Campbell and Davis inhabit. In many ways the setting is similar to the mortuaries in Coscarelli's "Phantasm" films, in that both are dark institutional places that practically reek of death. The way that the film captures the monotony and small humiliations of everyday nursing home life is rather surprising, as it is not the sort of touching detail that is usually associated with

films about the undead.

But this film has many surprising elements, the best being Campbell's performance as the aging Presley. He hits every note perfectly, playing it with a straight face and never just going for laughs. He creates an image of a forgotten rock star looking back on his wasted life, concerned about all the things any old man would be concerned with: his children, bodily growths, making it to the bathroom in time, etc.

Davis is also excellent as the man who believes himself to be Kennedy. He fills the role wonderfully, and there is a subtle irony in the fact that he's as much of a conspiracy buff as anyone who has studied "that day in Dallas."

All of this adds up to intelligent, character-based entertainment, something that you see less and less of in modern cinema. That such a thing can turn up in a small genre film is a reassuring sign. And although the film never takes off the ground, the ground is inhabited by such a wonderful mixture of enjoyable trash culture that it doesn't feel too bad spending some time there.

"Bubba Ho-Tep" will open Friday at the Bijou Art Cinemas, located on 492 E. 13th Ave.

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## New album has 'everything'

'Everything to Everyone,' the eighth release by the Barenaked Ladies, is full of variety and catchy tunes

By Natasha Chilingierian  
Pulse Reporter

It seems like only yesterday when the Barenaked Ladies' stream-of-consciousness hit "One Week" played over and over on the radio. They have since released three albums, and their latest, "Everything to Everyone," shows they can do more than just vocalize a fast-paced string of random ideas.

"Everything to Everyone" makes a total of eight albums for the Canadian quintet since their first release in 1992, including a greatest hits album. The new record covers topics from the pain of drug addiction to the joy of shopping. The song styles are silly, serious, bright and thoughtful, with rich

vocals whether the lyrics are sung fast or slow.

The album begins with the slightly egotistical but catchy "Celebrity," which exposes the deepest thoughts of a person who has become famous. Next, the group covers girls in the slightly psychedelic "Maybe Katie," examining the hesitation involved in dating a single mother.

"Another Postcard" is a fun ballad about going crazy after receiving a large amount of postcards depicting chimpanzees. The lyrics include the group's trademark of quick-paced verses with a slower chorus. That tune is silly, but the album gets even sillier with "Shopping," a goofy, pop-techno tune that boasts, "Everything will always be all right / When we go shopping." These last few songs are examples of how far the Barenaked Ladies take their songwriting — they know that almost any obscure thought is worthy of a song.

Some songs are based on more concrete ideas than shopping, however. "Unfinished" tells a fun story about uncompleted tasks. Even the lyrics are cut short, as shown in the



Courtesy

The Barenaked Ladies recently released 'Everything to Everyone.'

chorus: "Everything is un / Everything is unfin / Everything is unfinished." Playing with words seems to be the specialty of the group, and they show that songwriting can be successful even when it is casual and light-hearted.

But the Barenaked Ladies can also make the heart flutter. The last track, "Have You Seen My Love?" is a sweet, nostalgic tribute to a first lover and the

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