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Ahead of its Time



FILMS



Huddle 'round the flickering screen

Continued from Page 41

to really savor. (Even Roger Ebert wanted to see more of Tomlin's bracingly frank archeologist and wondered in his review: "Why do movie lesbians have to recite so much dialogue that keys off their sexuality?") Indeed. Any viewer who doesn't recognize Tomlin for a dyke isn't paying attention.

Cher gets to dash about passionately, collect avant-garde art, wear fabulous frocks and, well, be Cher. But since that's what the part seems to call for, she is well cast.

Although the story is quite episodic, and only one of the women is really changed in any discernible way by the decade of adventure, that also seems to be the point: their steadfast determination to ride out the war in the glorious Tuscany they've all adopted, despite every effort to remove them to safety. Though not particularly heroic, the women are prepared to give up their lives to save some priceless frescoes.

At best, it's a novelty to see a group of female characters, all over 50, who bond together for mutual good and display grand, gutsy temperaments all along the way. Not your ordinary WWII flick. —OG

and criminal, and subsequently as a prisoner in the peculiar World War II-era French penal system.

Poison tells three stories in interspersed, overlapping episodes. Only one of them, which follows a male prisoner's tortuous, violent love for another, is a literal interpretation of Genet. Though the most beautifully filmed, it's actually the weakest link in this chain.

The other two are original stories, replete with apt quotes from Genet's novels. In one, a faux documentary, the playmates, teachers and mother of a 7-year-old boy recount the events leading up to the day he shot his father. The other, a clever AIDS parable, blatantly draws on black-and-white noir films and cheesy '50s disaster flicks to tell the story of a scientist who inadvertently becomes a tabloid-hounded "leper sex killer."

Poison's careful, austere symbolism and disturbingly graphic material may put off some viewers, but for fans of the avante-garde, *Poison* is a fulfilling achievement. —CM



BOUND

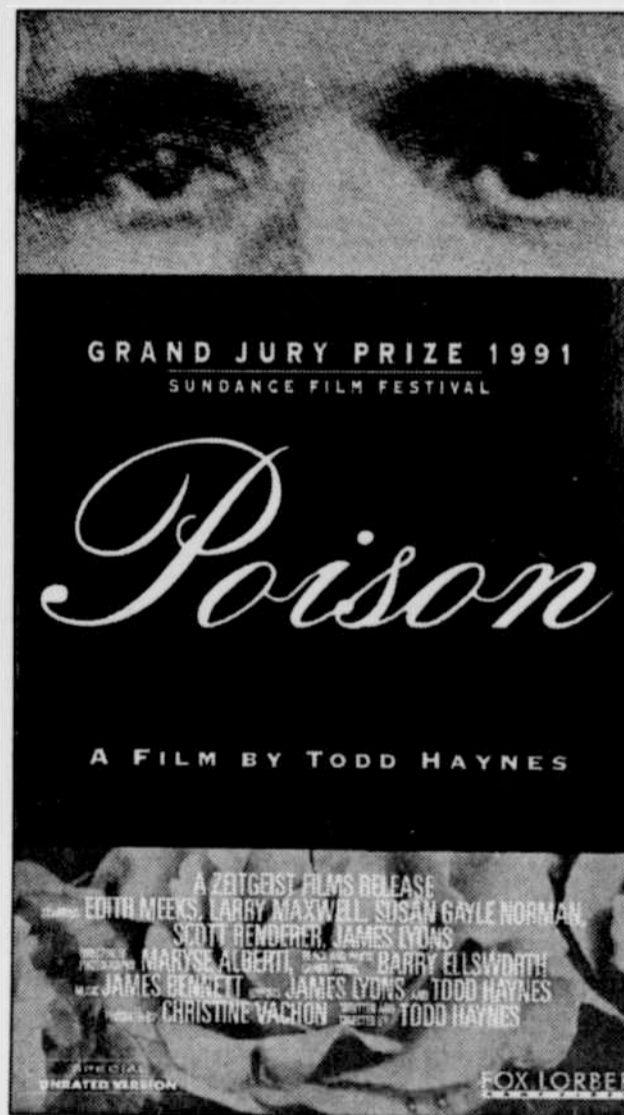
BOUND

All I'd ever heard about *Bound* was that it had a lot of hot sex. However, the one and only hot sex scene takes place within the first 15 minutes, and then we're left not with an erotic relationship film, but with a thriller. I thought this might be a bad thing, but *Bound* is actually quite smart and tricky.

Jennifer Tilly plays Violet, a sex worker who lives with Caesar, a member of the Chicago mob. Gina Gershon plays Corky, a plumber-carpenter ex-con who happens to live in the apartment next door. Violet and Corky get together and do it, then develop an elaborate plot to screw Caesar out of nearly two million dollars. The rest of the movie is a suspenseful ride.

Though Tilly's acting does get a little tiresome, her unconventional relationship with Corky grows more believable as the movie rushes on. Refreshingly, *Bound* is an intelligent thriller that never lets us know where it's headed. —KD

■ CHRISTOPHER McQUAIN is a Portland-based writer and tireless observer of pop culture.



POISON

The 1991 film *Poison*, the first feature by innovative director Todd Haynes, is informed and inspired by the works of gay literary legend Jean Genet. Genet wrote autobiographical, poetic novels about his abject yet romanticized life experiences, first as an orphan