

THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Skulls inspires massive headache

ANGIE DASCHEL
A&E Editor

It's pretty difficult for a community college student to feel sorry for sheltered Ivy League rich boys whose biggest problem is deciding which convertible to drive every day. It's also hard to swallow the thinly developed plot of *The Skulls*, a movie that tries to be suspenseful but falls as flat as the "acting" presented by the WB-infused cast.

Here's what is supposed to be so scary: every year, a secret society dubbed the Skulls chooses a few college pretty boys to become members in their elite group. Joshua Jackson of *Dawson's Creek* plays Luke McNamara, a local poor boy who is chosen by the Skulls for some reason that is never made clear. Also hand-

picked is Caleb Mandrake, (Paul Walker, *Varsity Blues*) the mandatory big man on campus who becomes Luke's so-called "soulmate." Luke and Caleb are expected to be each other's best friend, while also finding out dirty little secrets that can be used against each other in the future.

What is that you say? This movie doesn't sound scary? You just saved yourself some money with that little revelation, but there's more to this "plot." Soon Luke and Caleb are drenched with money, serious money, as well as sweet cars and models. Everything is taken care of for poor boy Luke, including his massive college debt and early acceptance to law school. After a while, Luke wants to get out of the group because of its secrecy, but that ain't gonna happen because you're

not in *Dawson's Creek* anymore, Dorothy.

While all this "drama" and "intrigue" ensued, all this community college student could think was "Where is the dotted line and the pen, because I want in NOW." The only down side to the Skulls is that they bug your apartment, watch everything you do, and sometimes cover up little accidental murders that happen to involve members. Hey, that description isn't too far away from our government, except they don't give models and cars and major money to poor college students.

Suspense is a foreign concept to this film and predictability is a constant. The audience is always a step ahead of every plot "twist" and Luke is never believed to be in any real danger. The viewers don't really care what happens to

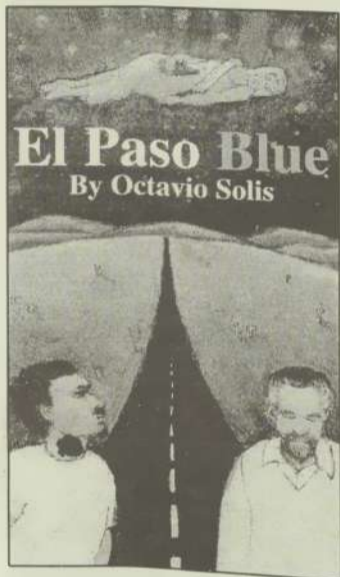


PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

Ivy League-ers discover a world of secrecy in *The Skulls*.

the dumb Ivy League boys, who couldn't find their way home without leaving a trail of breadcrumbs behind them. Besides, the group's name is the Skulls, for crying out loud. Shouldn't that be some indication that this group isn't a bunch of boy scouts who help little old ladies across the street?

So if you're panting over Joshua Jackson, *The Skulls* will fulfill your needs, but a better bet would be *Cruel Intentions*, in which he portrays a gay drug dealer. He only has about five minutes onscreen in *Cruel Intentions*, but that more than makes up for the sad, pitiful waste of money that is *The Skulls*.



Chasing the American dream in *El Paso Blue*

ANGIE DASCHEL
A&E Editor

Up get things mixed sometimes. The above sentence may seem confusing at first glance. Somehow, if you stare at the sentence long enough, the message comes out as "sometimes things get mixed up," and the same is true for *El Paso Blue*, a play written by Octavio Solis. This powerful play unfolds its complex story in a setting that alternates between present time and a series of flashbacks, which can be puzzling at first, but ultimately satisfying.

El Paso Blue tells the story of a Mexican family trying desperately to have a chance at the American

dream, which turns out to be a sham. The play starts out with an explosive musical number by Kellie Johnson, who plays Sylvie, a former pageant princess from Dallas with a drinking problem. She is married to Al, a young man who is trying to get his life on track. Al should have tried a little harder, because in walks his loony friend Duane, who coaxes him to take the rap for a robbery. Al grudgingly visits his estranged father Marcello to ask him to let Sylvie stay with him until he is free.

Sylvie, a woman who is perpetually drunk, walks into Marcello's house and they immediately dislike each other. Within days however,

the blond princess from Dallas and the hard working man from Mexico fall in love.

To say it simply, *El Paso Blue* rocked, and it wasn't just the songs; the depth that the actors brought to the characters was astounding. Every ounce of energy was pouring out of these people into the play and into the development of the characters. The actors' comic timing rivaled that in Hollywood, while the physicality of the play never seemed forced or staged.

Nothing about this play is conventional. There is hardly any set, no costume changes, and there are at least three songs. This play is about pure emotion, and an intricate

set and fancy costumes would have taken away from the action of the play. Johnson uses her voice as a character of its own, and boy, this girl has got some lungs. When she opened her mouth to sing, every person in the room was focused on the notes falling from her lips and nothing else mattered.

If at first you are confused with the structure of *El Paso Blue*, stay with it. All at once, the whole play fits together in a wonderful combination of song, dance and emotion that leaves you awestruck.

El Paso Blue is playing at *Miracle Theatre*, 525 Stark St. in Portland. For reservations and showtimes, call 236-7253.

Actors tackle Shakespeare

ANGIE DASCHEL
A&E Editor

Are you itchin' for a dose of Shakespeare but can't make it to Ashland this year? Look no further, because Clackamas' Theatre Department has chosen the Bard's famous comedy *As You Like It* as their spring play.

Rehearsals began last week, and director David Smith-English is excited to dive into the challenge of Shakespeare.

"I love Shakespeare," said Smith-English. "I love to make it clear to people."

Written around 1600, *As You Like It* tells the comedic love story of Rosalind and Orlando, a pair who must overcome their surroundings, as many of Shakespeare's lovers do.

"[*As You Like It*] is a great situation about power," said Smith-English. Clackamas' production is set in 1815, almost two centuries after the play was written.

The setting in Shakespeare's plays, or any play in general, is up to the director and the cast, said Smith-English.

"Some people set this play during the Civil War or Nazi Germany, but that's not much of a comedy to me," commented Smith-English.

This production weighs in with a whopping 19 cast members; in addition, some are playing two roles. *As You Like It* is the final show for several actors, but the play will also introduce some new faces to the Theatre Department.

The large cast will also be doing a great deal of singing and dancing, according to Smith-English. Wes Hanson is providing the choreography of the comedy and Mike Van Liew is composing the original music score. Van Liew's music was showcased in last year's production of the *Imaginary Invalid*.

As You Like It will run May 18-21 and 31, and June 1-4.

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