

'Runaway Jury,' just let it go



Rachel Weisz, Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman and John Cusack add star flare to the humdrum film adaptation of John Grisham's novel 'Runaway Jury.'

Cyndee Mady
CO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Runaway Jury" starts off strong, but gradually loses impact with the repetitious game of cat and mouse that never quite captivates the audience.

Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman and John Cusack lead an all-star cast in the adaptation of John Grisham's novel, directed by Gary Fleder ("Don't Say a Word").

Unlike other jury movies that pit 'wiseguys' against jury members, "Runaway Jury" is a battle of wits between attorneys, an affably persuasive juror, his female accomplice and an unscrupulous jury consultant.

"A trial is too important to be left up to juries," exclaims Rankin Fitch (Hackman) a statement that influences the direction of the plot.

Set in New Orleans, the plot revolves around a widow whose husband is gunned down at the beginning of the film in a shoot-out involving a disgruntled ex-employee. The husband is played by Dylan McDermott, former star of "The

Practice," who strangely enough, does not make it into the credits.

Two years later, a trial ensues against the gun manufacturer who provided the underground arms that allegedly enabled the murder.

Hired by the defense, Fitch utilizes high-tech equipment, undercover investigators and even a few goons to size up and later influence jurors for the purpose of insuring a win.

During the jury selection, attorney for the defense Durwood Cable (Bruce Davison) is rigged with a microphone earpiece. Fitch is on the other end, barking "yea" or "nay" with the introduction of each potential juror.

In the meantime, Wendell Rohr (Hoffman) and his consultant, simply known as Green (Jeremy Piven, who co-starred with Cusack in "Serendipity"), select members they deem worthy of a vote in favor of the prosecution.

Enter would-be juror Nick Easter (Cusack), who has been summoned to invoke his civic duty to the court. Along with the other jurors, who

have been carefully handpicked by counsel, the seemingly reluctant Easter is accepted.

Cut to a celebration in an apartment pasted with photos and biographies of the jury members, and it's suddenly apparent that Easter and his girlfriend Marlee (Rachel Weisz) have plans of their own.

"Everybody's got a button, we just gotta figure out where to push it," said Easter.

While aspects of the film are intriguing and one often wonders what will happen next, the suspense falls short of the edge-of-your-seat expectations typical of Grisham favorites, such as "The Firm" or "Clear and Present Danger."

The movie seemed contrived and often inconvincible, but top-notch performances by Cusack, Hackman and Hoffman will assuredly win over audiences in this crime drama that weaves plot-twists in and out of the jury room.

"Runaway Jury" rates a score of 7 out of 10, for 127 minutes of mildly-entertaining theater, heightened only by its veteran cast.

INTERNET PHOTO

'Carcassonne' mixes low-tech thrills with complex stratagems

Isaiah Creel
A&E EDITOR

Despite the attention given to the latest in high-tech videogames, "Carcassonne" proves that you can still have fun with out any flashing lights or spiraling colors.

You've been playing "Counter Strike" for years. It's time to step away from the machine and step up to the Carcass Zone... I mean "Carcassonne!" This fast-action strategy, first-out, tile-flipper will knock you out of your socks.

From those wacky Germans at Rio Grande games comes "Carcassonne," an all-out, tile-placing strategy game fit for anyone ten years old and up. This innovative game has been in print for years, but has now resurfaced due to the hideous monotony and lack of ingenuity from the folks in the videogame industry.

Loosely based on the southern French city of Carcassonne, which was taken and retaken so often throughout the course of history that architecture from Romans and Visigoths still stands there today, Carcassonne incorporates simple rules with cunning strategy.

Though the game pieces themselves look like they were made by a ten-year-old and the rules can be mastered in less than ten minutes, Carcassonne has none of the shallow stratagems and random luck that you would expect from a children's game.

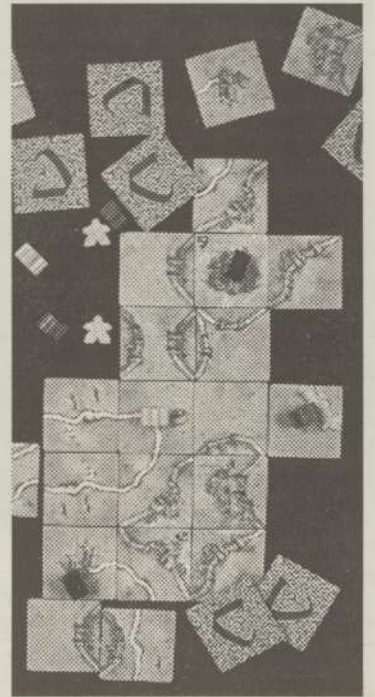
The game play is simple to grasp. Two to five players take turns placing tiles on the table to make the city structure and followers on the tiles to score points. No one is eliminated throughout the course of the game, allowing for surprising upsets and that ever-popular "everyone's a winner" finale and yes, some games will end in a tie.

The average game takes about 30-45 minutes and rarely comes to blows

in the end. "Just don't let Isaiah keep score," said Robb Egan, a gaming enthusiast. "He cheats."

In all fairness however, Egan won that game, all on his own. Fans of games such as Risk might dismiss this game at first glance (as I mistakenly did) for a simple child's game, due to the cartoon knight on the box. Don't be fooled! This is a super-great game which you will have fun beating your siblings at.

Additionally, all those nerds out there with girlfriends (I know there have to be some of you), please know that she will have no trouble figuring out the rules regardless of prior gaming experience. Just watch out, she might beat you.



CORY PRICE CLACKAMAS PRINT

Puzzling out 'Carcassonne' is easier than it appears.

Ethereal rock band stomps forth solid sounds

Ben Maras
THE CLACKAMAS PRINT

The debut album of Anatomy of a Ghost is entitled *Evanescence*, which means "to dissipate or disappear like vapor," however, it's obvious from the first track that this band will not disappear anytime soon.

If you haven't heard the name by now, my guess is soon you will. Originally hailing from Alaska, the band relocated to Portland and within months, their haunting sound had taken the local music scene by storm. After playing on the Vans' Warped Tour, they are now gaining momentum all over the United States, and even as far away as Europe.

Anatomy of a Ghost has a unique sound that combines the emotive sound of the New York-based band Coheed and Cambria with the energy and sonic attack of the legendary group At the Drive-In.

Twin guitars lace the fury with rich intertwining melodies. Vocalist John Gourley's soprano voice soars above the chaos with both angst and melancholia, while somehow binding it all together to form one unique sound, creating one of the tightest rhythm sections in modern music.

To call them the Tool of melodic hardcore would not be an understatement. Just as Tool, Anatomy's songs commonly change key and meter multiple times, while still keeping just

enough of the dark yet beautiful melody to keep the flow of the song.

Evanescence opens with possibly the album's heaviest song, "Birth of a Mile," which, instead of gearing up with an introduction, kicks straight from neutral into fourth gear in five seconds flat, with only a brief bout of feedback preceding it. Then, just as suddenly as it began, the song drops down to a single clean guitar riff. Reintroducing bass and drums, the music swells back to the end of the song with a memorable finish and fades into silence.

All of the songs on *Evanescence* have this kind of flowing quality, leading the listener on a sonic journey through the blood, sweat and tears of the band members.

The two best songs on the album are "Since Yesterday" and "On to Morning Stars." The former shows Anatomy's softer side, exposing the more melancholy side (the 'yin' to the 'yang,' if you will). It begins with one of the most intriguing guitar riffs ever recorded, and contains the memorable line, "You never told me you hate me, but you showed it so well."

"On to Morning Stars," on the other hand, has almost a triumphant sound to it. The song is written in two parts. The first is the epic buildup "Dearest, I'll Meet You in the Hollows," which starts from one fuzzy broken rhythm, sounding almost like Morse code. It slowly adds swirling reversed guitars, bass and drums, until it suddenly seems to just reduce and compress itself into one distorted riff, marking the beginning of this sonic marvel.

The lyrics read more like abstract poetry than a love sonnet: "We flail onto morning stars, we'll offer up ourselves, just not to close our eyes. Seize onto the sun, as it rises in the east ascends to open doors hanging heavenly, suspended in the superlunary."

Band members Zach Carothers and

Dewey Halpaus provide back up for lead singer John Gourley in this song. They supply intertwining vocal lines, sometimes literally screamed at the physical limit of the vocal chords, other times nearly whispered, both happening simultaneously. In typical fashion, halfway through the song, the music slows to a single guitar, before reemerging with twice the emotion and energy, and ending strong.

The final track, eight-minute "Last Transmission," sums up Anatomy's sound better than any.

Beginning as a quiet ballad, it rips into full force and goes off on sonic tangents before finally circling back to the beginning again, and bringing the album to a close.

The most amazing thing about Anatomy is that they can pull it all off with such efficiency. They find a harmony between total opposites, without compromising the integrity of either. It is this intricacy of both the music and the emotion behind the music that makes a listener appreciate *Evanescence* more with each track, and proves the album has achieved the difficult status of being a classic in its own time.



INTERNET PHOTO

Rising stars 'Anatomy of a Ghost' prove their skill with their debut album 'Evanescence.'

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