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**movies** BY LOIS WADSWORTH



**UNCLE SWEETHEART (JOHN GOODMAN), BOBBY CUPID (LUKE WILSON) AND JACK FATE (BOB DYLAN).**

SONY PICTURE CLASSICS, 2003.

## Dazed and Confused

Not the movie, the audience

**MASKED AND ANONYMOUS:** Directed by Larry Charles. Written by Rene Fontaine, Sergei Petrov. Original music by Bob Dylan. Produced by Nigel Sinclair, Jeff Rosen. Executive produced by Anatoly Fradis, Joseph Cohen, Vladimir Dostal, David M. Thompson, Guy East, Marie Cantin, Pietro Scalia. Cinematography by Rogier Stoffers. Editors, Luis Alvarez y Alvarez, Pietro Scalia. Production design, Bob Ziembecki. Costumes, Abigail Murray. Starring Jeff Bridges, Penelope Cruz, Bob Dylan, John Goodman, Jessica Lange and Luke Wilson. With Angela Bassett, Val Kilmer, Giovanni Ribisi and many others. Sony Pictures Classics, 2003. PG-13. 107 minutes.

**W**ith a cast like this, how could you go wrong? Easily, is the answer, especially if you're a director new to the medium. The stars here are Big Stars. By nature, they need special treatment. Their egos are strong enough to take over the movie and skew the whole shebang their way if they aren't controlled by a dictator. That's not Larry Charles. He directed multiple episodes of Larry David's HBO series, "Curb Your Enthusiasm," but it doesn't look like that's enough training to take on this many high-profile actors.

Whatever else may be Charles's problem, he doesn't get bupkis from his stars.

tor Charles's. I can see why they didn't want to claim this sorry mess up-front.

The only way I can make sense out of the 107 minutes I spent watching *Masked and Anonymous* is that it's like observing a train wreck: You don't want it to happen, but it's inevitable. And as long as the train's going to jump the rails and hurl itself spectacularly into the abyss, you don't want to miss a minute of it.

Besides waiting for the train wreck, another reason to see it is to determine if the movie's about Dylan's fame. It's as if someone asked: How bad can we make this thing and still trick people into coming to the theater? Answer: Lace it with a lot of Dylan songs. Some he sings, some are sung by others, the best's a young girl's rendition of a Dylan anthem from yesteryear.

I love Dylan's music a lot, and I've seen him perform numerous times. I don't mind his mumbles, his taciturn manner, his occasional hostility to the audience. Frankly, I

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No, that's not quite true. You can't keep Bridges down. Even in a role this ill-conceived, he will act. Goodman always brazen his way through the show, but this character is so shallow and bellowing you don't know whether to hate him or not. Go ahead and hate him, I say. Bassett projects warmth and respect, as usual, while Kilmer gets up a head of steam to give a good, mad rant. I like him a lot as a loonie. Remember Kilmer's great imitation of the Brando character in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*? Or maybe not. Not everyone sits through as many exquisitely bad movies as I do.

Writers Rene Fontaine and Sergei Petrov are excluded from the film's production notes, which I first took to be a bad sign. Then I was enlightened by the IMDB (Internet Movie Data Base) that Fontaine is Dylan's *nom de plume*, and Petrov is direc-

can't imagine what being famous for 40 years would do to the delicate balance between your inner self and your persona. Dylan clings to his persona like a drowning man, and the mystical aura that's surrounded him looks worn and bitter in this silly movie.

The names of the characters are worth recalling: Jack Fate (Dylan); journalist Tom Friend (Jeff Bridges); Pagan Lace (Penelope Cruz, who plays Friend's friend); the entrepreneur Uncle Sweetheart (John Goodman); resident bitch Nina Veronica (Jessica Lange, still crazy after all these years); Fate's friend, Bobby Cupid (Luke Wilson); Mistress (Angela Bassett); Animal Wrangler (Val Kilmer); Soldier (Giovanni Ribisi). And lots more.

See it if you must. And if you must, see it early in its run. Opens at the Bijou Friday Oct. 10.

**EW**

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**McDONALD THEATER**  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**8:00 pm**

|           |                        |                       |                      |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Portland  | Schnitzer Concert Hall | Oct. 23 <sup>rd</sup> | 6:00 & 9:00 pm       |
| Portland  | Schnitzer Concert Hall | Oct. 24 <sup>th</sup> | 6:30 & 9:30 pm       |
| Portland  | Schnitzer Concert Hall | Oct. 25 <sup>th</sup> | 3:00, 6:00 & 9:00 pm |
| Corvallis | OSU - Austin Audit.    | Oct. 24 <sup>th</sup> | 8:00 pm              |
| Salem     | Elsinore Theatre       | Oct. 26 <sup>th</sup> | 7:00 pm              |

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