

Streisand triumphs with 'Yentl,' a comic romance with finesse

By SHERYL THOMAS
Staff Writer

When a film receives a lot of publicity, people usually get so tired of hearing about it they decide not to see the film — it *couldn't* be as good as everyone says it is.

Such is the case with Barbra Streisand's new film, *Yentl*. But *Yentl's* publicity is correct. It is amazing to think that Streisand stars in the film, sings in it, directed it, co-wrote the screenplay and produced it. That is the film's uniqueness.

Review

Based on a short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Yentl* is about a Jewish girl who disguises herself as a boy to study the Talmud. Anticipating her late 20th-century audience, Streisand focused on the humorous mix-ups that *Yentl's* new identity engenders. The strong feminist statement *Yentl's* rebellion makes against the Jewish law which barred women from studying its holy book is explored, but only as a lesser issue.

Yentl does not exhibit any technological wonders, which in many ways is a relief. Streisand's direction has produced a film that is simple and clean, easy to understand and appreciate.

The attention to detail, for example, is remarkable. Streisand has spared nothing in re-creating early 20th-century eastern

Europe, from the lace-curtained windows of the homes to the sexist prejudices of the times.

As always, Streisand's acting is top-notch. Streisand does well in the first dramatic role she has played in a long time. But she really shines in the comic scenes. Her reckless abandon in telling her study mate, Avigdor (Mandy Patinkin), that it is impossible for her to marry Avigdor's fiancée in his place recalls the comic acting for which Streisand is so well-known.

Patinkin works well with Streisand. Patinkin not only matches Streisand's energy but also complements her when she is reserved and acts as a foil for her when she is more excited.

Amy Irving's performance as Hadaas, Avigdor's beautiful and attentive fiancée, is particularly interesting. In this role, Irving does an about-face from her usual parts as energetic competitors. Irving is demure as the eye-bating, dutiful wife-to-be. Yet she and Streisand shine most in scenes where they have to pretend that they are in love.

Michel Legrand has written a beautiful musical score for *Yentl*. Nearly every song begins as a prayer, and Legrand nicely accompanies this style with hymn-like motives that develop with the lyrics into secular themes.

Fans who enjoy Streisand's distinctive voice will enjoy her occasional bursts of song. Those who dread hearing Strei-



Barbra Streisand in male disguise in her film, 'Yentl.'

sand's powerful voice, however, need not shun *Yentl* just for that reason. *Yentl* is "a romantic drama with music," as the posters say, but there is more "romantic drama" than music.

Yentl's biggest handicap is that it is not very inventive. Technical finesse does not draw the audiences that space-age spectacle does. Also, while the story of *Yentl* is interesting, it is nothing new. Movies

like *Tootsie* have sapped the hilarity of cross-dressing. They make *Yentl* seem rather predictable at times.

Yentl, then, is good because of Streisand, the story and old-fashioned simplicity in the spirit of *The Sound of Music*. But it takes no risks and has nothing particular to itself — except the multiple talents of Barbra Streisand.

Books to be moved

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Arts writers needed

The Daily Tar Heel has several openings for writers on the arts desk.

DePalma mangles 'Scarface'

By STEVE CARR
Staff Writer

There is usually one of two things wrong with remaking a film — it's either too much like the original or not enough like it. *Scarface* is flawed on both counts.

A lot of remakes result from someone's overzealous admiration. The original *Scarface* is a great film. Director Brian DePalma's version is evidently a tribute to the 1932 original, right up to its dedication to Howard Hawks and Ben Hecht (original director and scriptwriter, respectively). By putting this sort of pandering on celluloid, perhaps DePalma is saying that he can do just as good a job — maybe even better. But DePalma is no Hawks.

Being a remake, though, is the least of *Scarface's* problems. The big drawback here centers on star Al Pacino. DePalma is correct in his assessment of Pacino as an electric actor. His presence dominates both the screen and the movie itself. He is in almost every scene, and the energy he generates is almost more than an audience can bear. More, that is, until they start to realize that this is not a performance but a showcase. Pacino is not *Scarface*, he is Pacino with a Cuban accent and the title make-up job.

Review

There is nothing wrong with an actor creating a singular persona. John Wayne did it. So did Paul Newman and Robert Redford. Much to the delight of critics and audiences, their personas matured along with their physical appearances. Gradually they learned how to harness their emotions and play and underplay them the best they could.

That, however, is the crux of the problem. Pacino is out of control. When he is angry, he is all energy. When he is happy he is all energy. When he is sad and depressed he is still all energy. He doesn't even let himself play Pacino.

The next problem the film has is its sense of time. *Scarface*, or Tony Manero, is a Cuban refugee. He and his friends start to deal in cocaine until Tony has made a mockery of the American Dream by becoming a multi-millionaire.

DePalma's retelling of the story tends to overdo everything.

Especially the violence. *Scarface* is not a teeny-bopper slash-'em-up movie. It does not show people's dismembered bodies or fountains of blood spurting from victims' temples. But it does seem to extract the same kind of joy in its violence. It is a visual striptease, a violent titillation.

The one scene that best sums up the movie comes in the first 20 minutes. Tony and his friends, still small-timers, are running a drug deal with some Colombians. Things don't go as planned, and Tony watches one of his friends being chopped up by a chainsaw, but not before the camera leaves the hotel room and travels out onto the street in one fluid take. If DePalma had been satisfied to end the scene there, the scene could have been great.

Instead, the camera goes back up into the room, treats the audience to close-ups of the chainsaw just about to touch the skin and of Pacino's disgusted reaction (energetic, nonetheless). All this is really unnecessary and numbing to the audience. DePalma made his point when he tracked outside. He never had to come back in, but probably did so because he thought: 1) Pacino has to be involved in almost every scene and 2) There is some sort of quota for violence that has to be met.

The third problem is Oliver Stone's script. Stone can't decide whether he wants to do a scene-for-scene remake of the original or a completely new crime film. The relationship between Tony and his sister is never as thoroughly explored as it is in the original. The 1932 version is much more erotic in making the incestuous implications work on both sides. In Stone's script, only Tony seems to have ambiguous feelings; his sister seems more innocent.

Remaking a film is treading dangerous ground; only a few directors have succeeded. Paul Muni was the original *Scarface*, and it is more to his credit than Pacino's discredit that Pacino can't hold a candle to the role.

While DePalma shows considerable talent for handling action and demonstrating wit, he is too much under the shadow of the original *Scarface* and unable to duplicate its subtleties.

Students with interests in film, theatre, dance, art and music are needed to write reviews and features. Writers are especially needed in the area of current popular music. Experience in covering the arts is helpful but not required. Interested students should contact Jeff Grove as soon as possible at the DTH office, 962-0245, and be prepared to bring in sample reviews or features.

Campus Calendar

The Carolina Student Fund/DTH Campus Calendar will appear every Monday and Thursday. Announcements to be run on Monday must be placed in the box outside the Carolina Student Fund office on the third floor of South Building by 5 p.m. the Friday before they are to run. Announcements to be run on Thursday must be placed in the box by 5 p.m. of the preceding Tuesday. Only announcements from University recognized and campus organizations will be printed.

Today

7 p.m. Meeting of the UNC Audience for Jazz in the Union.
7:30 p.m. Meeting of the UNC Outing Club in the Union. The film "Whitewater Primer" will be shown.
Dialectic and Philanthropic (Di-Phi) speech society will meet in 300 New West.

Tuesday

5:30 p.m. Graduate and Professional Student Federation Senate meeting in the Union.
6:30 p.m. Delta Sigma Pi Business Fraternity meeting in T-1 Carroll Hall.
7 p.m. Carolina Symposium meeting in the Union.
North Carolina Student Legislature meeting in Room 226 of the Union.

Wednesday

5:30 p.m. UNC Women's Rugby Club meeting in the Union.
7:30 p.m. Omega Psi Phi Fraternity presents the Spring Formal Smoker in Room 224 of the Union. All men are welcome.

Thursday

4 p.m. Meeting of the Campus Y Committee on Undergraduate Education in the Campus Y Lounge. All are welcome.
5:45 p.m. Baptist Student Union Worship Service at the Baptist Student Center.
7 p.m. Meeting of the UNC Students for Rufus in the upstairs video lounge of the Union.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Professional Information Files Workshop on choosing and setting up a professional reprint filing system. Thursday, Feb. 2, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in Room 201 Health Science Library. Call 962-0700 to pre-register.
The Baptist Student Union Winter Retreat at Camp Caraway will be Jan. 20 through Jan. 22. Sign up at the Baptist Student Center this week. Cost is \$30.
To pick up cash for books sold at the APO Book Co-OP, come to Room 212 of the Union Jan. 17 through 19 and to the basement of the Union Jan. 20 through Feb. 6, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
The Great Decisions books are now available at the Office of International Programs in 207 Caldwell.
Murdock Center for the Mentally Retarded — a Campus Y Volunteer Program — will have organizational meetings Jan. 17 and 18 at 8 p.m. in the Union. New volunteers are welcome.

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THE Daily Crossword by William Lutwiniak

ACROSS 1 Ellington 5 Sound of discovery 8 Gaucho gear 13 Yet again 14 Quaker colonist 16 Taken — (surprised) 17 Come-on 18 Cartoonist 19 Savalas 20 Song of 1930 23 The Lion 24 Trail all the way 25 Port of 29 Dog's bane 31 Schmo 35 Way in 37 Star: prof. 39 Whopper 40 Song of 1930 43 Take to court 44 Hole-punchers 45 Made money 46 Uncloses, poetically 48 Savvy 50 Links figure 51 Word of frustration 53 Cambridge school letters 55 Famed tunesmith 62 Bird of northern seas 63 Prized 1930 64 Staff person 65 Strange 66 Endorse 67 Lineage chart 68 Consecrated 69 Golf gadget 70 Director 71 Mrs. Roy Rogers' bus — 72 Soho street feature 73 Pitcher 75 Hustling 76 Concerning this 77 Alberghetti 78 Alan of movies 79 Toed the line 80 Fr. composer 81 Rights org. 82 Send soaring 83 "— Roman of them all" 84 Abominate 85 Opera voice 86 Misbehave 87 Rocky debris 88 Portuguese coin 89 Booboo 90 Charlie Chan por-tray-er 91 Creased 92 A Roosevelt 93 Dorcas' forte 94 Displays reflexes 95 Overcoats 96 Lingerie item 97 Crosses the plate 98 Come out 99 "— we all?" 54 Pappas or Dunne 55 Dupe 56 Pa. port 57 Gallop, for one 58 "What — God wrought?" 59 Telegram 60 Patent basis 61 Indigence 62 Fairy queen in literature

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