

Pacino's on the crest of a major comeback

Sea of Love

Al Pacino, Ellen Barkin, John Goodman
directed by Harold Becker

Carolina Blue and White,
South Square
call for times

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New York City is a paradox: while it is one of the most vibrant cultural centers of the world, it is also one of the loneliest. In order to adapt to its frenetic pace, its social ambitions, its overpopulation, its violence and its noise, New Yorkers develop air-tight defense mechanisms to protect their fragile egos. Yet in the midst of this intimidating, energetic city, many people long for that certain someone who will allow them to exhibit their vulnerable side and make them feel connected to the society they both love and hate.

ZANDY HARTIG

film

Sea of Love, written by Richard Price and directed by Harold Becker, evokes this alienated, overwrought city so well that it is more than just a backdrop, it becomes yet another skillful player in this tense murder-mystery thriller.

Someone is killing men who write personal ads in verse to a well-known New York magazine. All the victims are murdered naked, in their bedrooms, at the peak of sexual excitement, while an old 45 of "Sea of Love" drones endlessly on a phonograph.

Detective Frank Keller (Al Pacino) is assigned to the case. Keller has no other life outside of his 20-year devotion to the police force; his wife left him for his partner, and in order to deaden the pain of his mid-

life crisis, he has turned to drink. Frank personifies the sometimes desperate loneliness of New York. Holed up in his dingy little apartment on the Upper West Side, his liquor is his only bedside companion.

The murderer strikes again in Queens, so Frank teams up with a Forest Hills detective, Sherman Touhey, vibrantly played by John Goodman (Roseanne Barr's husband on TV's *Roseanne*). He is the antithesis of Frank's depressed character. Jovial and rotund with a stable family life, Sherman is a man who enjoys and is securely tied to his world. These two men, who are as different physically as they are psychologically, develop a strong sense of camaraderie and friendship which had previously been absent from Frank's life.

In order to catch the killer, the two detectives place personal ads in the same magazine and pose as singles. One woman stands out above the rest of the respondents. Helen, acted with remarkable strength and sensu-

ality by Ellen Barkin, is a gutsy, powerfully intelligent woman who eludes Frank's attempts at interrogation veiled in small talk. Her animal magnetism, her sexual ferocity and unabashed demand to get what she wants makes Frank suspect her of being the murderer.

But it's not that simple. Frank is more attracted to Helen than he has ever been to any woman. His life is loveless and desolate, and despite the danger she poses to him, Frank is drawn helplessly to her vital, smoldering presence. Who is Helen? Is she just a restless, empassioned woman who seeks a connection with another lost city soul, or is she the killer?

I must admit, I was so thrilled to see Al Pacino back on the screen after his six year hiatus that he could have flared his nostrils and I would have been satisfied. Nevertheless, his performance as the mournful homicide detective, Frank Keller, is a triumph. His soulful eyes are invaluable instruments for expressing his

pain and isolation. Yet he maintains his grouchy, deadpan sense of humor, which is a key asset to survival in a tough city.

Unlike many method actors, like Dustin Hoffman and Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino's vigorous acting technique does not interfere with the purity of his performance. I can never forget that I am watching Hoffman *act* like an autistic, or Nicholson *act* like the Joker, although their performances are mesmerizing. But Al Pacino seems to *become* his character completely. I forgot I was watching Al Pacino. I was only watching Frank Keller.

Sea of Love is not a perfect movie. It does not deliver all the excitement and thrills it promises the viewer, and there are inconsistencies within the plot. Yet Richard Price is so adept at the smart, brash city lingo, the actors are so gifted, the mood is so right and the suspense is so taut, that the imperfections are relatively unimportant. *Sea of Love* is definitely worth seeing.



Eddie and his new Cruisers do it all again one more time

Give it up, Eddie

Eddie and the Cruisers II

Michael Pare, Marina Orsini,
Bernie Coulson, Matthew Laurance
directed by Jean-Claude Lord

Plaza
closes tonight
●● 1/2

What's that you say, *Eddie and the Cruisers Part II*, *Eddie Lives!*? Why not? After all, this has been called "Sequel Summer." So with another blast into the past and hard-rocking music that is sure to please, here's the movie to answer the question that hasn't exactly been burning in our hearts for all these years: Is Eddie Wilson alive?

If you remember (and the movie assumes you can for the first thirty minutes), in the first *Cruisers*' movie Eddie Wilson (Michael Pare) drove his car off a bridge in 1964, just when his music career was beginning. His body was never found, a circumstance which leads to the million-dollar scam for music producer Lew Eisen (Harvey Atkin) that opens *Part II*.

Eddie has been lying low in Canada for the past twenty years as a regular Joe (by the name of Joe, Joe West) trying to cope with his haunted past. He soon finds himself caught up in a romance with struggling artist Diane Armani (Marina Orsini) and in a conflict with a degenerate, over-ambitious guitarist named Rick DeSal (Bernie Coulson) who wants "Joe" to join his band. After a battle with his macho conscience and a not-half-bad love scene, he decides to build a new band in hopes of bringing the old sound back to life.

DONALD BECK

film

The movie cranks up with the unmistakable sounds of Eddie and the "New Cruisers" (courtesy of John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band). From speechless "Conan the drummer" Charlie Tansey (Paul Markle) to the sophisticated and wimpy pianist Stewart Fairbanks (David Matheson), Eddie's ensemble of misfits produce a penetrating sound while singing (actually lip-syncing) and playing their way to the top. The music was the most impressive part of the movie and you may find yourself, as I did, tapping your foot and singing along. I even went as far as trying to find the soundtrack (Record Bar only had one).

Director Jean-Claude Lord (*He Shoots, He Scores*) uses flashback sequences and brings back Eddie's best friend Sal Amato (Matthew Laurance of TV's *Duet*) in hopes of keeping the spirit of the original movie alive, but it doesn't work. With America engulfed in Eddiemania trying to figure out if the star is alive or dead, the movie loses its emotional involvement as we wait an hour and 45 minutes for Eddie to come out of the closet. I found myself wishing . . . pleading . . . hoping (not out loud, of course) for someone to discover he had not been killed.

Eddie could not have said it better when he states, "A man's music speaks louder than his words." This is especially true for this film, since music is all the entertainment it has to offer. Eddie Wilson and John Cafferty fans ought to give it a shot, but others should just buy the soundtrack.

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