

Coming Attractions

In Theaters

Friday 1/23

The Butterfly Effect (R)
Ashton Kutcher, Amy Smart

Win a Date With Tad Hamilton! (PG-13)
Kate Bosworth, Josh Duhamel, Topher Grace

Friday 1/30

The Perfect Score (PG-13)
Scarlett Johansson, Erika Christensen, Chris Evans

The Big Bounce (PG-13)
Owen Wilson, Morgan Freeman, Gary Sinise

You Got Served (PG-13)
Marques Houston, Omarion, Raz-B, Lil Fizz

In Concert

Friday 1/23
Cat's Cradle - Carrboro Urban Sophisticates show at 9 p.m., tix \$5

Saturday 1/24
Cat's Cradle - Carrboro Weekend Excursion show at 10 p.m., tix \$10

In the Bubble

Thursday
Black Box Theater
"When You Comin' Back Red Ryder?"
Jan. 22-24 7:30 p.m.
7:30 p.m.,

The same old Stiller returns in 'Along Came Polly'

Blake Hinton
Reviewer

Ben Stiller is easily one of the funniest comedians around today. He has found a niche that suits him well and has played that role over and over. In "Along Came Polly," Stiller once again plays the average Joe faced with maximum embarrassment. Combined with the talents of co-stars Philip Seymour Hoffman and Jennifer Aniston, Stiller is once again very funny.

The plot, while serviceable, is far from original. Stiller plays a man named Reuben who has just married a woman, named Lisa (Debra Messing). Sadly, while on their honeymoon Lisa cheats on Reuben and he's once again single. The rest of the movie details Reuben's relationship with a woman named Polly, played by Aniston.

Things get complicated, of course, as Polly is Hollywood's version of a "free spirit." Reuben works as a risk assessment analyst and is quite terrified of Polly and her adventurous ways. Things get even more complicated when Lisa comes back asking Reuben to forgive her.

While there is really nothing new to this movie, the lack of nuance does not seem to be detrimental to its overall success. The storyline is not bad. In fact, it is decent. The problem is the story could have been written in someone's sleep, as all the twists and turns seemed to have come out of Plot-O-Matic. Everything from the eventual epiphany on Reuben's part to the typical Hollywood "gays are funny" jokes are elements audiences have seen a hundred times before.

What does work here are the jokes. While not hysterical, the movie is quite amusing. There are many very funny set pieces, including one where Reuben shows off his salsa dancing to Polly. The only problem that arises from the film's jokes is the sometimes odd reliance on

bathroom humor.

What makes the intrusion of bathroom humor even more odd is the treatment of the film's characters. Despite the familiarity of the plot, it is obvious that the script cares about its two leading characters. It can even be said that the screenwriter hoped to elevate the script above the norm with its attention to character. As said before, the stereotypical characterizations do not entirely work, but the groundwork for an entertaining time is there. Therefore, the intrusion of crude jokes does not seem to fit with the sensitive nature of the film. It is too bad that studios feel that this type of humor is obligatory to all comedies now.

Another positive aspect of the movie was the acting. Stiller is a very talented comedian, and so is Aniston. They make a great pair on screen and bounce off each other well. Yet it is really the supporting characters who get most of the laughs, with great turns by Alec Baldwin and Philip Seymour Hoffman.



Photo courtesy of movies.com

Jennifer Aniston and Ben Stiller star in "Along Came Polly," the latest Stiller comedy with a large cast of familiar faces such as Alec Baldwin, Debra Messing and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

In the end, this is a safe but very funny film. It does not do anything new, but the amusing aspects and the attention to characters works. If only they would take out the potty jokes.

"Along Came Polly" makes an amusing and engaging film.

Contact Blake Hinton at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

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