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MOVIE REVIEW



Justice (Janet Jackson) and Lucky (Tupac Shakur) develop mutual feelings of trust and love in "Poetic Justice."

"Poetic Justice" is a Modern-Day Love Story

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 Chronicle Staff Writer

"Poetic Justice," the modern-day, street romance written and directed by John Singleton, focuses on Justice (Janet Jackson), a beautiful, and Lucky (Tupac Shakur), a postal carrier, who are drawn together by love and common pain during a road trip to Oakland. They are accompanied by friends, Iesha (Regina King) and Chicago (Joe Torry), who represent the part of society that depends on luxury to get them through life. As you see in the movie, they get nowhere.

Behind her tough-talking exterior, Justice suffers from the death of her mother, grandmother, and

first boyfriend (Q-Tip). The powerful poetry written by Maya Angelou serves as a voice for Justice's pain, love and social outlook. The poem with the theme "... nobody, but nobody can make it out here alone" expresses how inhabitants of the inner city must survive. "Phenomenal Woman" is a turning point for Justice because she begins to appreciate her inner strength and beauty. She also realizes that she does not have to feel frightened with people who care about her. Justice's transition from an all-black wardrobe to a multicolored one symbolizes this self-discovery.

Singleton takes a different path through the character of Lucky. Instead of presenting the basic

stereotype of a black male, Lucky has an honest, steady job, does not smoke marijuana, and takes on the responsibility of caring for his daughter in a positive environment. At the same time, he remains on good terms with the other "boys in the hood."

Although the movie demonstrates the struggle of blacks in South Central Los Angeles, the family reunion and cultural festival scenes prove that blacks can exist without violence and other hardships.

RATING - Poetic Justice
 Hanes Mall Cinema 4 - Rating R
 Profanity, violence



The O'Jays Continue with Hit After Hit

O'Jays Eddie Levert and Walter Williams have the rare distinction of being members of one of the few vocal groups who have been making hit records on a consistent basis for three decades. With the 1993 addition of Nathaniel Best (who replaced Sammy Strain), the O'Jays are continuing their hit streak. Following their 1991 gold album Emotionally Yours (EMI/ERG) comes the release of Heartbreaker, a 10-cut set that showcases the group's musical range and diversity.

The O'Jays first hit the charts in 1963 with "Lonely Drifter" and have scored winning R&B singles practically every year since, racking up over 50 hits in the process. From 1972 to 1979, the group had eight No. 1 R&B chart toppers, of which five ("Back Stabbers," "Love Train," "For the Love of Money," "I Love Music," and "Use Ta Be My Girl") made the nation's Pop Top 10 and were million-sellers. During the same period, the group scored five gold and four platinum albums.

In 1987, after signing with EMI, the O'Jays rebounded with the No. 1 R&B hit "Lovin' You," taken

from the Let Me Touch You album. 1989's Serious set yielded a further smash with "Have You Had Your Love Today," while Emotionally Yours achieved gold status thanks to the success of "Keep On Lovin' Me" and the album's Bob Dylan-penned title track, which they performed at the prestigious Madison Square Garden Dylan Tribute, in 1992.

With Heartbreaker, the O'Jays are keeping the momentum going. Two tracks were produced by Gerald Levert (of the group Levert) and Edwin Nicholas, while Eddie Levert, Walter Williams and musical associate Dwain Mitchell produced the remaining eight cuts. The music ranges from upbeat "Can't Let Go" and "Decisions," to the first single and soulful ballad, "Somebody Else Will."

Always embracing contemporary styles while staying true to their R&B roots, the O'Jays are a musical institution — as the industry, the media and general public have recognized and acknowledged. And as the Heartbreaker so clearly demonstrates, the O'Jays continue to be in step with the times — legitimate, legendary, and, indeed, timeless hitmakers.

To Be Continued Wants to Free Your Musical Mind With New Release

From the land of the funky — Oakland, Calif. that is — comes a trio of freedom worshipping hip-hopsters who dare to be as they want to be. To Be Continued, the latest trailblazing group from Denzil Foster & Thomas McElroy (producer of En Vogue, Tony Toni Tone! and Club Nouveau), have borrowed a little from their favorite musical genres and tossed those influences together to create a sound which doesn't conform to any of music's specified boundaries. The trio's debut album, Free to Be, is more than good listening, it is a statement of the group's musical and lifestyle philosophies.

To Be continued members M&M Sweet, Spunky D and Wayne Wayne say they are on a mission to free our minds by broadening our perceptions of how hip-hop is supposed to look and sound. "We don't like the thought of having our personal or musical styles confined by other people's limited definition of hip-hop," says Spunky D. "Once you let people put limits on what is or isn't hip-hop, you limit the scope of the genre and its ability to grow. M&M, Wayne and I all grew up listening to rap, but we also listened to other music too, and we like to throw a little of each into the mix to change up the flavor of our music."

So, just who did influence this musically eclectic trio? Well, for starters, the casual lyrical flow of funkster Bootsy Collins, whose influence can be heard among the smooth beats and delivery of "When the Lights Go Out," is an apparent favorite of the group's. Other influences include the Motown sound, circa late '60s early '70s, as heard on the melodic "One On One" and "Believe in Me," and the funk-rock style of '70s groups such as Rufus can be heard in the guitar

riffs of "Yo Mr. President."

Even the make-up of To Be Continued defies hip-hop's tradition of male-dominated groups. While a number of groups of late have begun to incorporate male and female members, To Be Continued is the only co-ed, hop-hop group which is female dominated. "Contrary to what a lot of people think, female rappers are just as capable and lyrically powerful as their male counterparts," says lone male group member Wayne Wayne. "Both Spunky and M&M have proven that to me. They've paid their dues as rappers. They're not just here to look good," he continues.

In fact, all three members of To Be Continued have paid their dues. Prior to forming the group, each had made their own quiet contribution to the hip-hop nation. "I had a small speaking part in "Boyz in the Hood" and wrote the rap for Sieda Garrett's single, "I Don't Go for That," Spunky rapped on En Vogue's "Lies," and Wayne wrote and rapped the bridge on En Vogue's "Hip Hop Lover," says M&M Sweet. "We hooked up with one another hanging out in Oakland's underground clubs. That's also how we met Denny and Tommy."

Free-styling funk best describes To Be Continued's musical style. From their debut single and philosophical anthem "Free to Be," to their album's unique mix of musical influences, the group chooses to deliver a message of individuality and freedom: freedom to go where you want, love who you want and be who you are.

So take a moment, open your ears and listen to the sounds of freedom ... To Be Continued would like to give you a piece of their minds.



To Be Continued (l. to r.): Wayne Wayne, M&M Sweet and Spunky D