

'Girl' Flops With Superficial Psychoanalysis

By JEREMY HURTZ
Staff Writer

The largest eyes and lips in the entertainment industry (Winona Ryder and Angelina Jolie, respectively) star in "Girl, Interrupted," an unnatural cross between "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and "Thelma and Louise."

MOVIE REVIEW

Ryder plays Susanna, a suicidal young woman committed to a mental institution. There she meets Lisa (Jolie), a "bad girl" — promiscuous, controlling and generally unruly. The two befriend each other and share ostensibly touching and hilarious misadventures dealing with their fellow loonies until

tragedy befalls a minor character. This event causes another, more important character to rethink her life. The result is a climax that became obvious over an hour before it happened — an excruciatingly plodding hour, at that. Occasionally, when their characters aren't saying anything aimed at further muddling their personalities, Ryder and Jolie exchange a refreshing, sincere moment, surprisingly well-acted.

Then they return to lines unworthy of Steven Seagal ("You're already dead. You're already f--- dead.") or impenetrable metaphors such as, "Maybe I was just a girl, interrupted."
What does that phrase mean? Having not read the autobiography on which "Girl, Interrupted" is based, I am not sure if the phrase had any relevance in the source material. But I couldn't divine a good connection to the film.

"Maybe it was the '60s," Susanna says at the outset, in one of many unnecessary voice-overs, trying to explain her traumatic experience. Just in case the audience doesn't catch it then, director James Mangold ("Copland") goes out of his way in the first reel to remind us of the decade in which it's set, throwing in references to John Lennon and 'Nam where they aren't needed.

Mangold leaves some plot elements less than fully fleshed out, to varied effect. Susanna's pre-asylum sexual relationship with a married man is never explored, leaving us to wonder if it contributed to her condition, or resulted from it, or both.
Later she and Lisa exchange an inexplicable chaste kiss. Nothing in the picture either addresses this or builds up to it; the kiss is totally out of place, regardless of whether it really happened.

Ultimately, the single shoddiest aspect of this movie is its main characters' lack of realistic motivation at crucial moments. For instance, Susanna comes to a major revelation at the close which somehow breaks through Lisa's psychological defenses. But given what we've seen of Lisa's previously tough skin, and the nature of the confrontation (which seems more psychobabble than insight), this final triumph is totally unbelievable.

Maybe the movie really appeals only to women, as one critic suggested. Maybe those with a more innate connection to the film's theme of a woman's difficulty finding her place in the '60s could overlook its many flaws. Maybe it's just a film, interrupted. (A phrase that still doesn't mean anything.)

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'Hurricane' Hits Theaters With Well-Crafted Drama

By FERRIS MORRISON
Staff Writer

When a Brooklyn teenager picked up an old book at a used book sale, his teacher told him, "Sometimes we don't pick the books we read. They pick us."

MOVIE REVIEW

The same could be said for films. Denzel Washington's latest drama, "The Hurricane," is the true story of Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, a middleweight boxer wrongfully convicted of three murders in the 1960s. The film chronicles his struggle to proclaim his innocence and find peace within himself.

"The Hurricane" begins when Lesara Martin, a young Brooklyn native who moved to Canada to receive a better education, finds Carter's autobiography at a used book sale. Lesara immediately feels a connection to Carter and ultimately goes to meet him.
Director Norman Jewison creates a film that flows easily from scene to scene. The story danced back and forth from Carter's boxing days to his days behind bars in New Jersey.
Jewison gives the film a distinct doc-

umentary feel, going so far as to use actual footage of Carter's fights and of protesters begging for his release.

Most of the white characters in the film, especially Detective Vincent Della Pesca, are portrayed as genuinely evil people. This aids the audience in seeing the world through Carter's eyes and feeling the blatant racism he witnessed during his lifetime.

Together, Jewison and Director of Photography Roger Deakins juxtapose one of Carter's fights in the boxing ring with a fight he prepared for in prison, showing his lifelong battle. The scene flashes back and forth smoothly from the black and white boxing ring to the Technicolor prison cell.

Washington is known for his roles as powerful historical figures. His portrayal of "Malcolm X" won him an Oscar; his portrayal of Carter will certainly cause a stir in the bonnets of Hollywood moguls and muster up discussion of another Oscar nomination.

"The Hurricane" is not a story of courtroom drama, but one of human emotion and the power of a man to survive adversity. If books and films can pick those that read and watch them, hope that "The Hurricane" chooses you.

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Strong Performances Power 'Boys Don't Cry'

By JIM MARTIN
Staff Writer

In the relatively new genre of queer cinema, early films (starting in the '70s) featured the tragic homosexual, one misunderstood by the masses and inevitably smited.

MOVIE REVIEW

Recent queer-centered films ("Get Real," "Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss") than-

fully strayed away from AIDS as a central plot theme and tackled love. So with the advancement of the genre, the tragedy factor has been considerably lessened — directors are leaning toward more uplifting fare.

Then where does Kelly Pierce's "Boys Don't Cry" factor in to the mix? Her homage to Nebraskan Teena Brandon, a woman brutally raped and murdered by homophobic rednecks, harkens to the past, but Pierce's gaze looks very much to the reality of today.

In Lincoln, Neb. circa 1993, Teena Brandon cut off her hair, strapped down

her breasts, stuffed her underwear and switched her name to Brandon Teena. Taking on the persona of a young man, she searched for her Juliet. In her words, she wasn't a lesbian. In the words of her killers, she was sick and needed to die.

Pierce doesn't make this pretty to watch. Her personal story makes the viewer feel Brandon's desperation.

The harrowing narrative receives its power from its principal actresses. The remarkable metamorphosis that actress Hilary Swank ("Beverly Hills 90210") undergoes to become a man inspires awe. And Chloë Sevigny's role as

Brandon's unsuspecting yet sympathetic love interest is touching. The startling Oscar buzz surrounding both women has brought attention to an otherwise low-budget art film.

With the murder of Matthew Shepard still registering on America's radar screen, Pierce crafts a film with a strong message, "a true story about finding the courage to be yourself." I'd say that fits in the annals of Hollywood quite well, not just in the queer cinema genre alone.

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Star Power Can't Salvage Spaced-Out 'Supernova'

By JUSTIN WINTERS
Staff Writer

Pieced together like Frankenstein's monster and twice as scary, the newest sci-fi yawner "Supernova" teleports into theaters as undoubtedly the worst flick of 2000 so far.

MOVIE REVIEW

With big stars like Lou Diamond Phillips and Angela Bassett, one might believe that "Supernova" would be a little more than a \$65 million B-movie, — but someone made a drastic mistake when greenlighting this umpteenth addition to the "Alien" clone clan.

The setup for the movie is so convoluted that the audience is forced to forgo all hopes of explanation 10 minutes in. Trying really hard to catch on, I deciphered that the story revolves around a group of space people (including Phillips and Bassett) who live together in a spectacularly tacky rescue ship.

These people like to speak space jargon at this talking computer named Sweetie ("2001" anyone?), get naked and have sex. But due to the PG-13 rat-

ing, the movie uses camera angles and smoke to cover up the naughty parts.

To sum it up, this movie has so many major problems that any educated moviegoer will have a field day singing its praises. I kept waiting for a young audience member to cry out afterwards, "Mommy, that was really dumb."

About a year ago, Director Walter Hill decided that he didn't like the movie either, jumped ship and left Francis Ford Coppola (yes, Mr. Godfather) to paint-by-number the movie into something reprehensible.

Acting-wise, everyone in the film seems like they thought they were in a better movie. Phillips gives his best comedic role yet as a medic on the ship that trades the sultry Robin Tunney in for an evil alien artifact that looks strangely like a jello-mold.

The bulk of the film's cost must have been devoted to bad special effects instead of a script. Space has never looked so boring and the film seems to be missing an entire middle section. Either way, the only thing that makes "Supernova" anything close to super is the way that it will fade from theaters.

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