

# 'Virgin Suicides' Is So Deep, It Drowns the Viewer

**ARIADNE GUTHRIE**  
Staff Writer

Every now and then a film comes along that is so intensely deep and meaningful, it completely confounds its audience.

Sofia Coppola's directorial debut, "The Virgin Suicides," is one such movie.

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
"The Virgin Suicides"



Backed by a purposefully static-filled soundtrack of '70s hits and strange techno/disco music, this bizarre tale of teenage love, angst and self-destruction is as fuzzy as the film's focus.

The story centers on the plights of the Lisbons, a circa 1970s suburban family whose happy-family façade is melted by the gruesome suicide of the youngest daughter, Cecilia.

Mom and dad, uptight Kathleen Turner and forgettable James Woods, can't imagine what caused their lovely daughter's death. The reasons are never given outright, Cecilia merely tells her doctor (a disappointing cameo by Danny DeVito) that she suffers from being a 13-year-old girl.

The rest of the movie follows the paths of the remaining four sisters, led by promiscuous Luxe ("Drop Dead

Gorgeous" star Kirsten Dunst) to their own deaths, and the impressions they leave on four neighborhood boys.

"The Virgin Suicides" deals plainly and honestly with the trials and tribulations of that transitional period known as adolescence. The humor of raging hormones and the pain of empty sex are addressed with equal emphasis; the audience laughs and cringes along with the characters, readily recalling their own experiences. Like an old photo album, hazy and yellowed with age, the film is a walk through our own pasts.

However, the film disappoints in its failure to flesh these moments out; there are so many questions left unanswered by the film's inconsistent plot. Cecilia's attachment to an elm tree dying outside of her window is often mentioned, but never explained. Later in the film, the tree's disease spreads to the surrounding yard much like the way Cecilia's suicide begins the domino-effect deaths of her sisters, but neither the disease nor the desire to die receive much attention.

The movie has an interesting path, but it steps too much on its own feet. Marred by too many characters and vague hints at a plot, "The Virgin Suicides" is as mysterious as the Lisbon girls themselves.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).



Kirsten Dunst takes a leading role in Sofia Coppola's debut as a big screen director in "The Virgin Suicides." James Woods and Kathleen Turner also star in the film.

## New Ballet A Perfect Finale

**ARIADNE GUTHRIE**  
Staff Writer

A smoke-filled café set against a starkly lit gallery floor. Well-dressed lovers swaying cheek-to-cheek contrasted with statues unfolding from their plaster molds with the grace of dancers. Slow, sultry jazz against sweeping orchestral crescendos.

**"Cabaret and Rodin, Mis en Vie"**

Raleigh Memorial Auditorium  
June 4-10  
\$10-\$56

As unlikely a pairing of scenes as they may seem, these are the settings for the Carolina Ballet's production of "Cabaret and Rodin, Mis en Vie."

The ballet, which runs June 4-10 at Raleigh's Memorial Auditorium, promises to be a spectacular finish to

the company's second season.

"This will be a booming, in-your-face production," said Carolina Ballet representative Elizabeth Parker.

The evening begins with "Rodin, Mis en Vie" which, translated, means "Rodin, put to life." Rodin's work, currently on exhibit at the North Carolina Museum of Art, is famous for its true-to-life portrayal of the human experience.

"The ballet takes us through a gallery of some of his masterpieces," says choreographer Margo Sappington.

The ballet will include interpretations of works such as "The Age of Bronze," "Eternal Idol" and "The Kiss."

The costumes, created by Tony and Emmy awards winner Willa Kim, reflect Rodin's emphasis on the body — how muscles strain, flex and twist and the precise tensions between two bodies.

After a 15-minute intermission, said Parker, the mood will shift to the elegant glamour of a 1940's cabaret.

Marcovicci will perform a medley of swing-era favorites while the Carolina Ballet dancers, in pseudo-formal wear, glide through movements more reminiscent of ballroom dances than ballet.

The marriage of song and dance will run the gamut of emotions, from first loves and heartbreaks to the humors of age.

The production brings together some of the country's top talents in dance and music.

The production was designed and

staged by Sappington and Lynne Taylor-Corbett. Taylor-Corbett was nominated for two Tony awards for Best Director and Best Choreography for her Broadway production "Swing."

Taylor-Corbett has recently accepted an invitation to be Carolina Ballet's principal guest choreographer.

The production avoids contemporary ballet stereotypes.

"This is not a traditional classical ballet," said Parker. "It is modern, fresh, very contemporary."

The music for "Rodin, Mis en Vie" was written by

Academy Award winner Michael Kamen, best known for his scores for films such as "What Dreams May Come" and "Die Hard" and "Lethal Weapon" movies. Kamen

received an Oscar for his song in the movie "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves."

"Cabaret" pairs New York singer Andrea Marcovicci with composer Maury Yeston, whose musical "Grand Hotel" received a Tony Award.

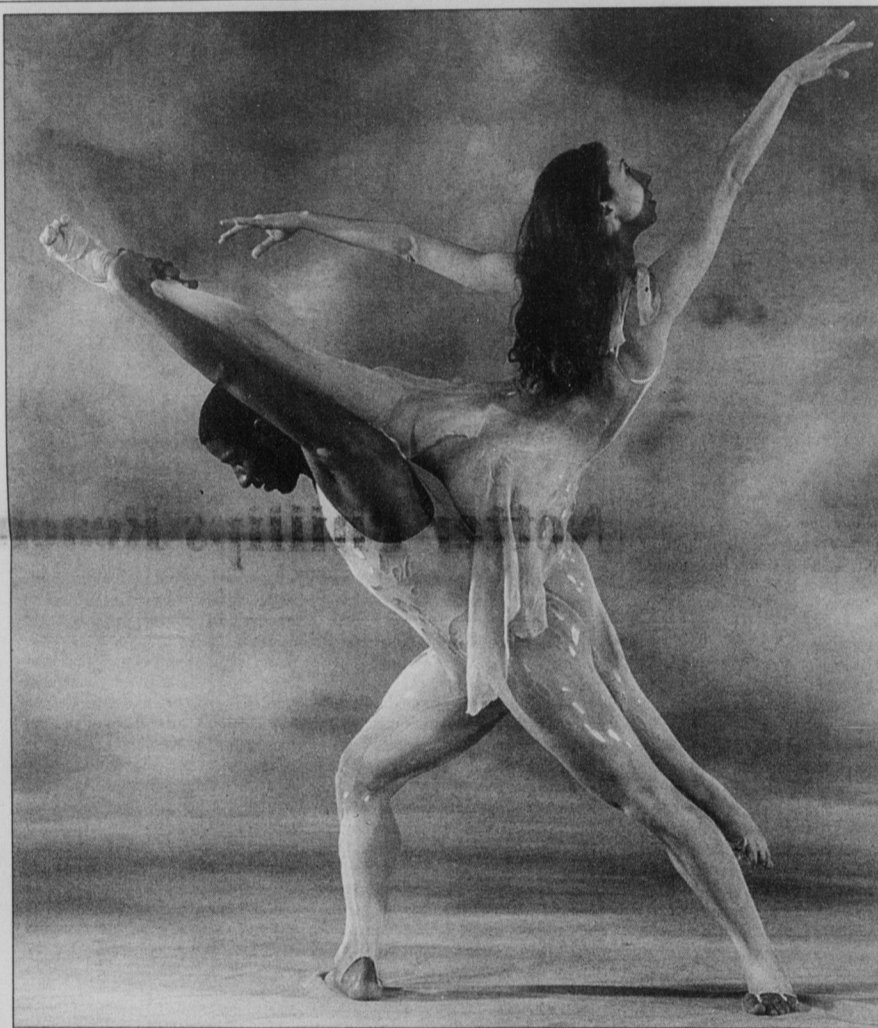
For those who equate visits to museums and ballets with early morning lecture classes, "Cabaret and Rodin, Mis en Vie" should present a fresh perspective on the arts.

Tickets are available through Ticketmaster (834-4000) and the BalletLine (303-6303).

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

*"This is not a traditional classical ballet. It is modern, fresh, very contemporary."*

**ELIZABETH PARKER**  
Carolina Ballet Representative



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## 'MI:2' Starts Off On a Slow Foot

**JUSTIN WINTERS**  
Staff Writer

Combining the star power of Tom Cruise ("Eyes Wide Shut"), the keen direction of John Woo ("Face/Off"), and the writing of Robert Towne ("Chinatown"), "Mission Impossible 2" had the makings of a balls-to-the-wall extravaganza.

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
"Mission Impossible II"

Too bad the real action of this particular "Mission" doesn't start until after an hour of snooze-worthy exposition. The first "Mission Impossible" was criticized for a jumbly plot. Don't bother looking for an easy-to-follow plot this time around. A hybrid of "The Thomas Crown Affair" and "The Rock", the story revolves around villain who has a virus he wants to spread. Ethan Hunt (Cruise) and a crew that includes the A-type acting skills of the luscious Thandie Newton ("Beloved") and Ving Rhames, who also starred in

the first "Mission", team up to save the day while kicking a little booty. In this self-proclaimed "action blockbuster", the action doesn't start until an hour in. So, you end up waiting, perhaps dozing, and BAM!!!, the fears start. Without director Woo, the film would have been a complete bore. No matter how often Cruise flashes his pearly whites, nothing compares to a complete Woo flick (try "Hard-Boiled") with the use of double guns, doves, and operatic gunfire in one sequence. If you're looking for brainless action and a great ending, this mission is slow-to-start but worth the wait.

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