



Javier Bardem (left) and Johnny Depp star in "Before Night Falls." Bardem, who was nominated for a Best Actor Oscar, plays Reinaldo Arenas in the story of the exiled Cuban poet's life.

'Before Night' Captures Poet's Art

By JOANNA PEARSON
Staff Writer

Not since Ricky Ricardo has Cuba seemed quite so intriguing to the popular imagination. Even the Elian Gonzalez debacle can't seem to counteract America's newfound affection for Cuban culture.

Following the heels of the Buena Vista Social Club phenomenon is Julian Schnabel's newest film, "Before Night Falls." Once again, anyone with a hint of wanderlust will find themselves aching to visit this land of brilliant color and music.

"Before Night Falls" is the story of Cuban poet Reinaldo Arenas, who, exiled, impoverished and dying of AIDS, committed suicide in New York in 1990. Schnabel's film is based on the memoir that Arenas left behind.

In this film, we follow Arenas' childhood of exquisitely beautiful poverty

and the repression he suffers at the hands of Fidel Castro as a sexually active gay man. Apparently a poet from birth, Arenas looks at his world with appreciative eyes, and Schnabel conveys this in the film.

It's no surprise that the film itself is a tapestry of visuals, from the swaying green trees (sort of like "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") to the clear teal water. Images of running water frequently fill the screen. Schnabel, after all, is a painter, and one gets the sense that his works are as much video art as they are movies.

There is also apparently something very attractive to Schnabel about the lives of artists. He made "Basquiat" in 1996 about another artist who died of AIDS. But the two movies have distinctly different moods — whereas "Basquiat" had a certain lightheartedness about it, "Before Night Falls" is the work of a filmmaker who is concentrating very hard.

Indeed, much of the subject matter merits this seriousness, but at times

"Before Night Falls" has the feel of a science-class documentary. On the whole though, this works for Schnabel, and he manages to interweave old newsreel clips and memory sequences of Arenas' mother quite effectively.

There is one true test of a movie's merit, and "Before Night Falls" passes this brilliantly: the big-name actors are invisible in the movie.

In most movies with stars in the billing, it's hard not to concentrate on their names rather than the characters they play. Here, Johnny Depp and Sean Penn are unnoticeable beneath their characters.

Similarly, celebrated Spanish actor Javier Bardem is subsumed by the role of Arenas, and it is soon easy to forget that they are not one and the same. Bardem, with his oddly furrowed yet handsome face, comes across as intelligent and poetic, yet tough.

So does the film.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

'3,000 Miles' a Long, Pointless Trip

By DAVID POVILL
Staff Writer

As the title suggests, "3,000 Miles to Graceland" is a long trip. A long, useless, tiring, frantic, stupid trip into the boldly unoriginal mind of director and co-writer Demian Lichtenstein.

The movie stars Kurt Russell and Kevin Costner as two casino-robbing Elvis impersonators running from the law and from each other. Along the way, lots of people die.

Slow-motion footage, stop-animation shots and tons of slick camera angles give "3,000 Miles" the shimmer and shine of a great action flick, with gunfire galore and bloody carnage the likes of which have not been seen since an '80s Charles Bronson film.

All the high-gloss filler does little to convince you that you're actually watching a good movie, however, as shallow

characters, contrived dialogue and altogether cliched writing plague the film from the onset.

Lichtenstein is almost insulting in his use of pointless glitz, from the first quick-cuts-of-bright-neon-signs-and-big-cars montage to the Matrix-esque slow-motion bullet-slicing-through-the-air shots during a particularly lame showdown between Costner and Russell.

At one point in the movie, Russell's character explains why he robs casinos, saying, "You have to be original." Oh, cruel irony, why must you mock me so?

It's as though Lichtenstein was presented with a really crappy movie, then just pasted on action scenes from other movies to try to spice it up a bit.

The result is an annoying, flashy yet boring, impossibly long movie that's schizophrenic in its styling. Similarly, the casting is just as odd, with (arguably) respected names like Russell and Costner paired with idiots-turned-thespians like Howie Long and Ice-T.

Even John Lovitz shows up for some inexplicable reason, as a short-lived

money launderer.

The only decent performances are from Courtney Cox, who plays Russell's one-night stand and love interest, and David Kaye, who plays Cox's street-smart kleptomaniac son.

Kaye's performance isn't great by any means. He's used in the film the same way sitcoms use a toddler, for cute one-liners. But as a newcomer, and compared to the putrid acting surrounding him, he looks like an Oscar winner.

Meanwhile, Cox, for the first time on the big-screen, has some serious sex appeal, oozing hotness as she reveals copious amounts of bare thighs and bits of thigh. As for her acting, at least you didn't want to smack her, which is more than I can say about the rest of the cast.

All in all, "3,000 Miles" eerily parallels the actual career of The King. It starts out with a lot of promise but ultimately drags on way too long and dies old, fat and bloated, on the crapper.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

'Monkeybone' Smokes, Like Crack Cocaine

By JUSTIN WINTERS
Staff Writer

I've never smoked crack.

But I realize, after taking a good 90 minutes of weekend time that could have otherwise been spent studying for midterms, anyone involved in subjecting me to "Monkeybone" must have been on it, big time.

More "Fritz the Cat" than Disney, "Monkeybone" is a HUGE waste of a talented array of Hollywood whatnots whom I used to respect. It's not a movie that you would just watch for fun, or my idea of fun. It's not even drink-a-few-beers-with-your-buds fun. It's just UGGGGHHHHH!!!!

Brendan Fraser plays Stu Miley, a cartoonist, who besides the fact that he is on the verge of becoming a mainstream hit, has no business being in the same company as his girlfriend, played by Bridget Fonda. After a car accident, Miley is transported to his own pure

hell, where he (and the audience) is subjected to a freak show of animation and a groan-inducing little monkey that makes Jar-Jar Binks look saintly.

And, get this. Miley's woman, who is some kind of sleep doctor, injects him with nightmare juice in order to "scare him awake." This is to prevent his sister, who inexplicably is already in the know and hates Miley as much as I did by that point in the film, from pulling the plug on Stu's life support.

In a film such as "Monkeybone," suspension of disbelief is essential. Hell, "Pee-Wee's Playhouse" back in the day worked because you believed that Pee-Wee was plain crazy. But for the love of Homer Simpson, virtually everything in "Monkeybone" looks as fake as a \$5 whore. Even the relationship between the two main characters, which is the prime motivation for Miley coming back from cartoony-world, is grossly underplayed.

Director Henry Selick is undoubtedly-

ly getting his home egged by Hollywood executives who obviously put a large amount of dough into "Monkeybone." He was responsible for "The Nightmare Before Christmas," a movie that was entertaining and fun, of which "Monkeybone" is neither.

In fact, the only bright light in this dark film comes courtesy of the extremely talented physical comedy of "Saturday Night Live" funnyman Chris Kattan (a.k.a. Mango). Somewhere near the end of this whole mess, he plays the inhabited body of a recently dead gymnast that keeps losing his most precious body parts while looking for an AWOL monkey deserving of a hard spanking. See, I can hardly even explain it.

So if, like me, you have never smoked crack, avoid "Monkeybone" like the plague. You will be happy, crack-free and seven bucks richer.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

ALL SERVICES FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL

- Pregnancy tests
- Counseling on all options
- Medical and community referrals
- Compassionate post abortion support
- Convenient location
- Abstinence support

We understand and we care.

CARE NET
A member of Care Net

(919) 942-7318 • 1-(800)-395-HELP
431 W. Franklin St., Ste 23, Chapel Hill, NC 27516
pss@pregnancysupport.org

Paint a perfect evening.

See how the art of fondue will please everyone's palate. For reservations, call (919) 878-0477.

The Melting Pot.
a fondue restaurant
Dip into something different.

3100 Wake Forest Road
Raleigh, NC 27609
www.meltingpot.net

\$8.95
(haircut reg. \$10.95)

141 Rams Plaza, Chapel Hill
(located off 15-501, on the bus route)
967-0226

M-F 10AM-8PM • Sat 9AM-6PM
Sun 12PM-5PM

www.supercuts.com

SUPERCUTS®
As hip as you want to be.

expires 4/12/01

The price looks good too.

BUY ONE DINNER - GET ONE FREE!

BANDIDO'S MEXICAN CAFE

Buy any dinner and two beverages at the regular price and receive the second dinner of equal or lesser value **FREE!!!!**

Dine-in only. One coupon per table. Valid Sunday-Thursday. Expires 03/07/01

159 1/2 E. Franklin St. • Downtown Chapel Hill • 967-5048

Crook's
Fine Southern Dining
Serving Dinner & Sunday Brunch

Bar & Dining room open every night at 5:30 pm
Sunday Brunch 10:30 am-2 pm
610 West Franklin Street Chapel Hill, NC
919-920-7842

Delta Zeta Sorority
Would Like to Congratulate Its

New Members	New Initiates
Susan Cheng	Erin Baker
Andrea Fitcher	Megan Bottegal
	Leslie Bumgarner
	Nicole Deal
	Amy McAdam
	Jessica Marriner
	Kimberly Pendleton
	Lindsay Sewell
	Laura Shehan
	Rachel Suls

DRINKING QUIZ #6
IN A SERIES

Your housemates' 24/7 party habits and your pre-med course load are proving to be an unhappy marriage. You should consider:

A	Renting a room in a local motel.
B	Transferring to a dry campus.
C	Changing your major.
D	NONE OF ABOVE.*
*	You can run, but you can't hide. To really escape the annoyance of someone else's over-indulgence, advocate for change. Visit www.HadEnough.org .

HadEnough.org
Binge drinking blows.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST