

Latest Alba film an eyesore of a thriller

BY DAVID BERNGARTT
STAFF WRITER

Jessica Alba fails to impress as the leading lady of the lackluster thriller "The Eye."

Alba plays the role of Sydney Wells, a violinist who has been blind since the age of 5, until she's given sight by a new technique of retina transplant surgery, made possible by the wonders of stem cell research. (It's hard to say if "The Eye" means to comment on the issue.)

As she learns how to see again, she is haunted by nightmares and vivid scenes of death.

Her vision comes into focus, as do her ocular demons, and Alba realizes she can see the dead.

This Hollywood version of Hong Kong's "Jian Gui" is certainly eerie, as it's impossible to tell where and when the next ghoul will appear.

This terror, however, doesn't work for long. The cheap scare tactics of "The Eye" begin to lose their edge when the viewer realizes that there's nothing scary about this movie other than a bunch of "things jumping out" moments.

The acting in the film is predictably feeble. Alba's mediocre talents, on display throughout the movie, are given a painful conclusion with a laughably campy "moral of the story" narration at the end.

Parker Posey stars in a disappointing supporting role as Alba's

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THE EYE



sister. Posey has been brilliant in her campy, over-the-top roles in films such as "Best in Show" and "Superman Returns," but her attempt at being a down-to-earth, worried sister is just a waste of talent — especially with the bad scripting.

The movie could have been a mediocre Japanese-horror ripoff, with weak execution but an interesting premise, if it weren't for its pointless and chaotic ending.

Not to ruin it for you, but I'll give you a hint — it involves Mexico, a terrorist bomb scare and the biological memory of cellular peptides.

How does this thriller stray so far? It's simply a weak attempt at a compelling story and what would be called a plot twist if it didn't feel more like a plot sprain.

The best part of "The Eye" is the stellar display of contacts worn by Alba to show the different stages of her eyes' healing.

That isn't a very good sign. Upon leaving the theater, all I really wanted to give to "The Eye" was the finger.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

Broadway's Menzel falls down on pop LP

BY EDWIN ARNAUDIN
STAFF WRITER

Idina Menzel has a lot going for her.

She's got a Tony Award for "Wicked," the support of her husband and "Rent" co-star Taye Diggs, and is landing more prominent film roles ("Enchanted"). She has a talented voice — a little husky, like a Broadway version of Dolly Parton, but still good — and a shot at pop stardom with *I Stand*.

Produced and co-written by Glen Ballard, who helped make Alanis Morissette a star with *Jagged Little Pill*, the album has all the components of greatness.

But then there's this thing called "songwriting."

As someone known for singing stage tunes written by others, Menzel is detached in tracks of her own. Her words underwhelm most sixth-grade poetry, depending on sappy love songs clichés, including such crutches as "It's the first day of the rest of my life," "if time stood still" and "my heart on my sleeve."

She's been immersed in show tunes for so long that she knows only that brand of music. She incorporates these familiar stage situations into her songs, making for the kind of cheese that one would sing if one's life was a musical.

It's as if she locked herself in her room with an aisle of Hallmark cards, a few self-help books and her

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IDINA MENZEL
I STAND
POP/ROCK



high school diaries, and wrote the first words that came to mind.

Then, there's that thing called "arrangement."

James Blunt, who co-wrote "Don't Let Me Down" (the only track Menzel didn't help write), is a perfect example of making mundane lyrics listenable. His "You're Beautiful" got old fast, but his voice and the backing music made the recycled words sound catchy.

Without appealing production, the drudgery of Menzel's tired subject matter is exposed with nothing to distract from each song's emptiness, a no-no that even the least talented pop successes avoid.

Unfortunately, the album doesn't have the charisma of a musical, so casual Broadway fans won't be able to connect. The only remaining audience is made up of super-casual musical fans; those who dig surface emotion and believe that Disney movies are real.

Their hero, Menzel, makes no stand, other than stating that she's not qualified for recording fame.

Contact the Diversions Editor at dive@unc.edu.

'Over Her Dead Body' a lifeless attempt at comedy

BY RACHAEL OEHRING
STAFF WRITER

With the rising popularity of supernaturally themed movies and television shows, it's natural that this theme would trickle down to poorly made romantic comedies.

"Over Her Dead Body" follows the pattern of having a cute girl talk to dead people, which works most of the time but falls totally flat in story and execution.

Watching "Ghost Whisperer" on mute would be better than this.

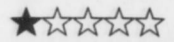
A movie so perplexingly pointless that star Paul Rudd couldn't even bother showing up to the premiere, "Over Her Dead Body" basically details the progression of Eva Longoria's fake tan, which is wonderfully offset by all the white she wears — since she's a ghost.

A ghost who terrorizes the cute psychic/caterer (everyone loves foodies these days) who's trying to date her (ex-)fiance (Paul Rudd).

These obnoxiously forgettable "romantic" comedies, which are quickly pooped out by Hollywood on the cheap (save for the ridiculous salary of the top-billed semi-celebrity who carries the movie), make you wish the writers' strike would never end.

The movie offers no real laughs, and the whole redemption thing that's supposed to happen in the end feels so insincere and tacked on, it's as if the writers remembered at the last minute that, oh wait, the

MOVIEREVIEW
OVER HER DEAD BODY



two romantic leads are supposed to end up together, and tacked on a lame scene in which he chases after her to win her back.

The one and only thing that makes this movie at all bearable is Paul Rudd. Despite the fact that he seems like he really doesn't want to be there the whole time, he manages to muster a cute and funny performance.

He's self-deprecating and provides the movie's only real laughs, but his lines seem mostly improvised. It's hard to believe that the writers would be capable of mustering any truly funny lines, since the rest of the movie and performances are so unfunny and over the top.

This movie, like so many other subpar romantic comedies that come before it, is so bland and slapped together, it's hard to dignify even with this many words.

It's still a bit of an insult that those in charge of movies think that women (or anyone, for that matter) will be entertained by uninspired, unfunny, derivative crap.

And it's even more of an insult that we watch it.

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