

## MOVIE (NOT-SO) BRIEFS

### Mermaids

Cher, Bob Hoskins and Winona Ryder

directed by Richard Benjamin

South Square  
493-3502

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The first thing you need to know about *Mermaids* is that the names on the marquee need to be rearranged. This is a Winona Ryder movie first and foremost, with Cher and Bob Hoskins turning in fairly understated performances (surprising when Cher's role is a flamboyantly liberated woman).

Ryder is charming as Charlotte Flax, who desperately wants to be a nun (never mind that she's Jewish) but can't cope with her rampaging 15-year-old hormones. She and her mother (Cher), whom she calls Mrs. Flax, don't understand each other and don't get along until a major crisis (what else?) brings them together in the end.

The performances are excellent, but telegraphed plotlines and uneven shifts from frantic comedy to melodrama prevent *Mermaids* from being an unqualified success.

—Chip Sudderth



Winona Ryder walks away as the true star of 'Mermaids'

### Kindergarten Cop

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pamela Reed and oodles and oodles of little kids

directed by Ivan Reitman

Willowdale  
477-4681

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Yes, folks, it's *Kindergarten Cop*, the amazing story of a hard-boiled cop who bears a striking resemblance to a statue. *Kindergarten Cop* is, and this is rare for an Arnie movie, motionless. Not that it's a bad movie, but the humor and style of *Kindergarten Cop* depend entirely on the "Arnold mystique" and the joke, "There was this big cop who taught kindergarten and nearly went bonkers."

Arnold? He does exactly what the script requires of him and nothing more. Since *Kindergarten Cop* is situation- and not character-driven,

he doesn't have to. His acting evokes his earlier heartfelt performance in *The Terminator*. It's a lot of fun to see him scream in terror as he desperately tries to avert his kids' crying. But any big guy in a Schwarzenegger disguise could perform any of Arnold's scenes. No acting required. The humor comes simply from the fact that this is Arnold Schwarzenegger. The man. The myth. The stone-faced.

If you enjoy Schwarzenegger flicks, you'll probably like *Kindergarten Cop* for that reason. It is fun to see the one-man killing machine meet his match in a 5-year-old who, when he first meets someone, explains the differences between male and female anatomy. (Another plus: Pamela Reed shines as Arnold's partner, an ex-kindergarten teacher who became a police officer because chasing drug dealers was less stressful than teaching kindergarten.) But non-Arnold fans may have to be carried out and resuscitated.

—Chip Sudderth

### Look Who's Talking, Too

Kirstie Alley, John Travolta, Olympia Dukakis and the voices of Bruce Willis, Roseanne Barr and Damon Wayans

directed by Amy Heckerling

Willowdale  
477-4681

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Of all of the disappointing sequels of the year (*RoboCop 2*, *Predator 2*, *Another 48 Hours*), none is more of a letdown than *Look Who's Talking Too*. The first movie was cute and full of great one-liners. Its follow-up is a complete mess. It would be surprising if this movie had a script over a page long. *LWTT* picks up with Mollie (Kirstie Alley) and James (John Travolta) married. Mikey (voice once again supplied by Bruce Willis) is about 2 or 3 and he now has a little sister, Julie (voice by Roseanne Barr). Julie is a brat (she looks amazingly like Barr), and she gets on Mikey's nerves. Barr and Willis have voice-over fights. Travolta and Alley fight and (heavens forbid!) separate. Will they get back together? Do we care? There are about three music videos in the film to fill the gaping holes in the screenplay. By music video I mean a 3-4 minute sequence of shots synched to a song related to the subject matter (here, babies). The only redeeming part of the film is the crazy, screaming comedian Gilbert Gottfried as the instructor of a bizarre, indoor playground called Baby Gym. Richard Pryor was going to play the voice of Mikey's friend Eddie, but he backed out and was replaced by Damon Wayans of TV's *In Living Color*. I guess Pryor saw the postage stamp that the script was written on and thought better of it.

—Mike Long

# Does Edward make the cut?

## Edward Scissorhands

Johnny Depp, Winona Ryder, Dianne Weist, Anthony Michael Hall

directed by Tim Burton

Varsity  
967-8665

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**M**ake no mistake about it, Tim Burton is an original. In this age of "Hey, that worked, let's make two more!" marketing, Burton's films stand out as unique. His latest film, *Edward Scissorhands*, is no exception.

*Edward Scissorhands* is simply a fairy tale for the '90s. Avon lady Dianne Wiest, making her neighborhood rounds, decides to visit the big, spooky house on the hill. She discovers a boy named Edward, played by a barely recognizable Johnny Depp, who has scissors where his hands should be. Wiest decides to take Edward home to suburbia. He immediately becomes a local celebrity due to his incredible topiary abilities — he doesn't need garden shears, he just uses his hands.

Edward soon expands his talent and begins cutting hair and grooming dogs. Meanwhile, he is falling in love with Weist's daughter, Kim, played by a newly blond Winona Ryder. Kim's bully boyfriend, played by Anthony Michael Hall, dislikes Edward and frames him for robbery. The neighborhood that once had embraced Edward now hunts him as a criminal.

## MIKE LONG

### Movies

*Edward Scissorhands* is two movies in one. There is the simple tale of a boy created by an old inventor (Vincent Price), who doesn't fit in with the world and must adjust. This tale is full of love, myth and hope.

However, the movie is also a scathing social commentary. Burton portrays life in the suburbs as a homogeneous existence. The houses are all pastel colors, with complementary cars in the driveways. The housewives have a complicated gossip network. When the streetlights come on, the husbands return home from work, and the wives cook. When Edward enters this world, he turns it upside-down, and it becomes obvious that he can't become a part of it.

Depp (who made his movie debut in *A Nightmare On Elm Street* — a lot of people don't know that) does a good job as Edward. He doesn't have much dialogue, and you'd barely know him under the white makeup. He smiles and acts scared a lot. Ryder plays the same character she always plays. Weist (*Parenthood*, *The Lost Boys*) is delightful, as usual. Anthony Michael Hall (*Vacation*, *Sixteen Candles*) used to be one of my favorites, but he plays a real jerk in this movie, and I don't like him anymore.

Edward's hands, created by Stan Winston, are impressive.

But Burton is the real star of the movie. As with his other films (*Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, *Beetlejuice*, *Batman*), *Edward Scissorhands* has a unique visual style and an abundance of unique characters. One of the bravest men in Hollywood, Burton was courageous enough to make the *Batman* film no one else would have, and, in this age of ultra-violent films, he sends us this sweet little gem of a movie. He has a vision and style that are all his own, but that will probably be heavily imitated in the years to come.

(Editor's Note: Alright, enough yakking, Long! Just tell 'em if it was good or not!)

All right. Chill.

Yes, it's a good movie. It's a sweet, wholesome movie with nothing objectionable in it. When you leave, you don't feel depressed or scared, but kind of warm. It's a good movie.

Not great, but good.

Which brings us to the final point. Some people are going nuts over this movie. In a big way. It's good, but it's not anything worth worshipping or seeing five times.

But even though I'm not an *Edward* freak, I think I can see why they love it. Maybe people are embracing this film because of its content. With the world on the brink of war, a sweet little movie might just be what it takes to keep one sane.

TV Listings. Pages 12-15.  
OMNIBUS.

### Discover the Contemporary Roman Catholic Church

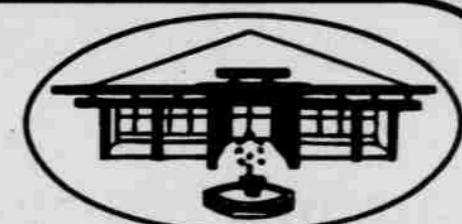
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