

You won't do much sleeping after this one

Stephen King's Sleepwalkers

Brian Krause, Madchen Amick, Alice Krige, Ron Perlman, Stephen King

directed by Mick Garris

Center
489-4226

●●●● 1/2

Hifolks. My name is Leonardo the Cat. My good friend Mike is on sabbatical this week, so I'm writing the review. And it's a good thing, because this week's film is that new cat opus, Stephen King's *Sleepwalkers*.

Sleepwalkers is the first Stephen King project written exclusively for the big screen. It's not based on any novel or short story. King wrote the screenplay and then hung around the set, providing revisions of the script when necessary. He also makes a cameo appearance as a humbling caretaker. Who cares? It's full of cats!

As the film opens, we are presented with the legend of the Sleepwalkers, a nomadic race of feline-like shape shifters whose lone enemy in this world is *felinus domesticus*, or for you non-phyllum types, cats. The Sleepwalkers are believed to be the basis for all vampire legends.

We then meet Mary Brady (Alice Krige) and her son Charles (Brian Krause), who have just moved to Travis, Ind. They are very close. Read my snout, very close. In their first scene together, Charles seduces his mother. Now that's close. You humans are weird. Mary tells Charles that she is starving and that he must

MIKE LONG Movie

feed her. We immediately begin to suspect that these Bradys aren't going to live up to their TV namesake.

Charles then begins to court Tanya (Madchen Amick, Shelley of *Twin Peaks*). Tanya is beautiful and innocent. Brian acts very shy around her and asks her out. She shyly accepts. You wouldn't have believed how cute these two looked together. This is where King takes off the gloves, flexes his dewclaw and goes straight for the throat.

Charles is a Sleepwalker! He attacks Tanya and attempts to suck the life force from her. She escapes, just as a Sheriff's deputy shows up. Charles kills the cop, but Tanya is saved by the policeman's sidekick, Clovis the Attack Cat, who immediately pounces on Charles. Charles gets away and returns to his mother. He was trying to take Tanya's life energy so that he could "feed" his mother. The film then becomes a fun-filled roller coaster ride as the police and every cat in town follow Clovis to put a stop to the Sleepwalker's reign of terror.

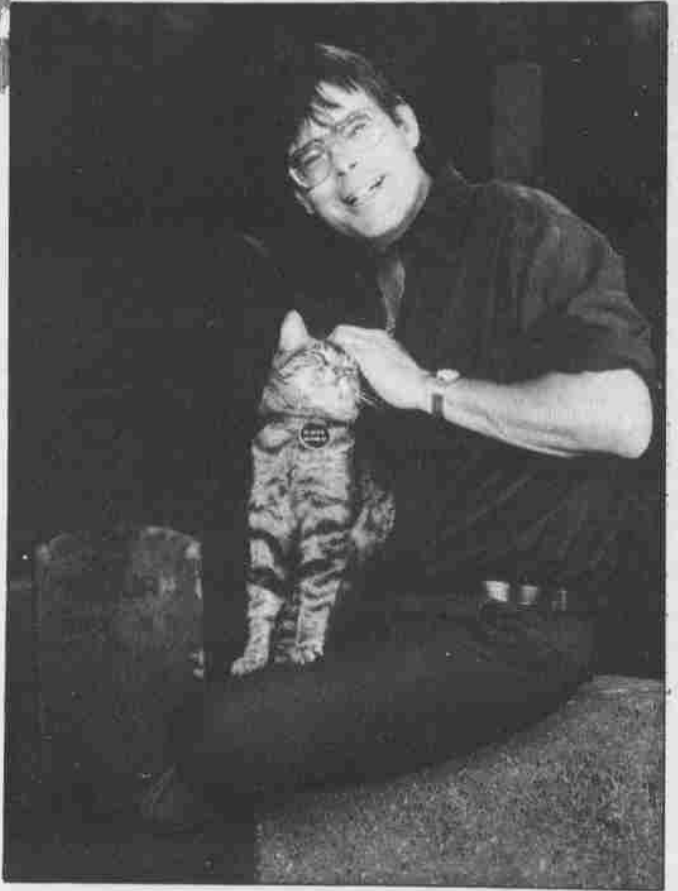
While watching this film, one can almost hear Stephen King laughing in the background. This is a fun movie and you can tell that King had a ball writing it. While there have been some good adaptations of King's work, *Sleepwalkers* comes closest to capturing the macabre depravity (i.e.: the incest angle) that resides with King's writings. The slow-motion scene of hundreds of cats running down Main Street may border on camp, but if not taken too seriously, it's fun. Person-

ally, it made me cry.

The special effects in the film combine hideous makeup designed by Tony Gardner (*Darkman*) and the digital morphing technique used in *Terminator 2* and Michael Jackson's videos. Through morphing, the transformation from human to Sleepwalker takes on a slick, surrealistic feel that gives the film a dreamlike quality.

The actors in the film are dynamite. Madchen Amick is exquisitely stunning as Tanya. Amick and Brian Krause (*Return to Blue Lagoon*) look like the perfect, wholesome teenage couple and that helps to suspend the illusion of their happiness. Alice Krige is positively frightening as the incestuous mother who constantly needs a fix of life force. Ron Perlman, the beast from TV's *Beauty and the Beast*, appears as an asshole cop. Playful cameos by King, and horror directors Clive Barker (*Hellraiser*, *Nightbreed*), Tobe Hooper (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), John Landis (*An American Werewolf in London*) and Joe Dante (*The Howling*, *Piranha*, *Gremlins*), plus a surprise appearance by Zippy, the wonder squirrel, add an extra element of humor to the film. Incidentally, Clovis was played by eight different cats.

Director Mick Garris (*Critters 2*, *Psycho IV*) may not have seemed like a great choice, but he does a fine job. Garris told *Fangoria* magazine that horror doesn't have to take place at night. The scariest scene is filmed in broad daylight and Garris pulls it off perfectly, by employing rapid cuts and strange angles. Trust me, having lived with Mike, I've seen my share of horror films and it takes a lot to excite me. But during the finale, as I was cheering for Clovis, I was on the edge of my seat (and my paws still couldn't reach the floor!). Garris also told



Clovis the Cat tells Stephen King: "I got four letters for you: U-G-L-Y"
Fangoria, "(The cats) are among the best actors in the film." What a guy! Overall, I was very impressed by Stephen King's *Sleepwalkers*. It was scary, funny, gross, exciting and chock full o' cats. What else could you want? There were several cat bashing scenes that I personally found disturbing, but

knowing that Mick Garris is a member of PETA made me feel better. Still, one thing about the film bothers me. The Bradys set traps around their house to keep cats away and are constantly worried about a cat getting inside. Why didn't they get a dog?

Love, lust, jealousy and the mambo — what a deal

The Mambo Kings

Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas

directed by Arne Glimcher

Chelsea
968-3005

●●●●

If I just listed to you the elements of the plot in *The Mambo Kings*, you'd think it was really trite.

Two brothers, fresh off the boat, try to make it big. Love,

MARA LEE Movie

lust, jealousy, adultery and power struggles with managers and each other all figure in the plot. The director even uses medleys.

But because of the caliber of the actors, script and director, it all works. For instance, the compelling medley when Cesar (Armand Assante) gets roughed up in Havana is interlaced with the violence of the floor show.

The dialogue handles funny lines very well. As Cesar says about the cigarette girl that becomes his lover, "If she cooks like she walks, brother, I'm going to lick her plate."

But more difficult, and more powerful, are the serious scenes. When Nestor (Antonio Banderas), the romantic brother, courts Dolores (Maruschka Detmers), it's so believable. His beautiful brown eyes stare shyly over his straw as Dolores talks about her ambitions.

Even more impressive, the unvoiced chemistry between Cesar and Dolores is surprisingly credible. Dolores looks like a bird hypnotized by a snake, and the sparks are so hot they nearly set his hair oil on fire.

But the greatest accomplishment of the script is the conflict between the brothers, Cesar, the older, prag-

matic, assimilated one, wants to manage their own group and become superstars. Nestor still mopes after his love in Cuba, the stunning Maria, and just wants to open a little club where you can eat good Cuban food and he can play his love songs. Nestor tries to express his dissatisfaction — in Spanish — and Cesar says, "I don't hear you. Speak American to me." Their love and their anger compete equally in their dialogue and their faces.

"Beautiful Maria of My Soul," a line from one of Nestor's many letters home, becomes the hit that gets them on *I Love Lucy* and an album.

In case you want to see this movie — and you should — I don't want to spoil it for you with the details of other suspenseful arguments, or the climax.

This is a beautifully filmed movie, with the camera play, costumes and props all making 1952 New York very real. Seeing Cubans in more than stereotypical Miami and seeing black Cubans reminds Anglos not to assume too much about Hispanic communities.

It's really good to see a deep, emotional relationship between leading males on the screen. Nestor and Cesar are more than just buddies, and they can express their feelings in more ways than just scuffing at the ground.

Nestor's trumpet, Cesar's drumming, the band's rhythms and both of their voices are all wonderful. This is certainly not one of those musical movies where you're drumming your fingers waiting to get back to the plot while the songs are playing. The only thing disappointing about *The Mambo Kings* is the ending is a touch unsatisfying.

And after all, as the woman says on the bus to New York, "I think Cuban accents are sexy."

THE RATINGS

- — wait for the video
- — go to the dollar theater
- — only pay matinee price
- — pay full price
- — take your sister, too

Cheeseburgers • Cheesesteak •
Homemade Soup • Eb's Veg • Tuna
Melt • Homemade Fries • Southwestern
Sub • Eggplant Sub • Thai Pita Pockets
• Spicy Wings • Curried Broccoli
Sandwich • Homemade Cheesecake
• Chicago-style Hot Dogs • Middle
Eastern Pocket • Saturday Dinner
Special • Sports • All ABC Permits •
The best sandwich menu in Chapel Hill.
Open for lunch and dinner
Monday • Saturday

Bud & Eb's
Bar and Grill

Timberlyne Shopping
Center
Weaver Dairy Road
Chapel Hill • 942-6624