

Travolta and Tomlin not nearly enough

Moment by Moment
Film review by Dave Samuel

It is tempting to ignore a film like *Moment by Moment*, refuse to write about it on the grounds that it is complete garbage and hope that it will leave town quickly. There are, however, a few things about the film which lead me to resist this temptation.

First, most of the other movies around are even worse. The subject matter of *Moment by Moment*, the complications of a love affair between a young man and an older woman, has some inherent interest. This is more than can be said for the material in, for example, *California Suite*, which seems composed of the pilots of a whole year's worth of rejected TV sit-coms.

Second, *Moment by Moment* does feature two actors who have previously had whatever "star quality" it takes to fascinate some film fans. It's a great film to watch for the purposes of analyzing this quality because there is nothing else, plot, action, ideas, or even change of setting, to distract the viewer from the screen personalities.

Travolta is given a heavy initial handicap by the director. For what seems subjectively to be an hour or more the audience sees him turning Lily Tomlin off by using crudely obvious devices to force himself upon her, lines which are insulting to a woman of her social class and intelligence. Tomlin eventually forgives him these gaucheries but I suspect a normal audience wouldn't. Instead of being shown Travolta revolting, Tomlin, Wagner lets him do it to us as well: a fatal error.

Travolta has two capabilities as a performer — he can be brash in, hopefully, an endearing way or he can play the vulnerability. The vulnerability, which was played at its probable best in *Saturday Night Fever*, is the primary constituent of Travolta's star quality. In *Moment by Moment* his vulnerability is like ketchup on a liver, a little bit hides the taste but too much is worse than the liver.

While Travolta is engaged in being obnoxious, Tomlin is working overtime at being icy. After he's leached her with his much overdone wide-eyed, "helpless-I'm-a-poor-street-waif" shtick, she turns on her most appealing, other than comic, screen self and goes maternal, much as she did in *Nashville*. What with his vulnerability and her maternal instincts it might appear that a genuine triumph of casting had been achieved. Such would have been the case if the plot had called for Tomlin to adopt Travolta rather than sleep with him. Tomlin is about as sensuous as Indira Gandhi; you can visualize her wiping Travolta's nose for him but that would be the limit of their physical relationship. If you cancel Travolta's physical attrac-

tions it's hard to see why Tomlin would be interested in him, there's a certain animal intelligence there but no sense of any real understanding. When overworked, his sensitivity soon reveals itself as a mere pose.

Moment by Moment tends to indicate that neither Tomlin nor Travolta is a real actor, they are both performers with a strictly limited repertoire of film personalities. Neither is capable of adding serious

overtones to a script as banal as this one. As for the young man-older woman issue, *Moment by Moment* does fleetingly call attention to the double standard which ignores a male relationship with a younger female but censures a reverse pairing. Unfortunately, because the film is so superficial, it has nothing to say about the difficulties of actually making such a combination work.

Winnipeg Ballet a mixed fare

Dance review by Shirley Glew

The prestigious Royal Winnipeg Ballet performed recently at the Jubilee Auditorium. Considering the veneration the company enjoys both here and abroad, I found the first two of the three dances presented slightly disappointing. However, the final dance was an impressive performance in every aspect.

Les Patineurs (The Skaters), first on the program, was a costume piece which included some laudable individual performances, including David Peregrine's solo (the Blue Boy) and also his *Pas de Trois* with Sheri Cook and Eva Christiansen (the Blue Girls). As a whole, though, *Les Patineurs* seemed slightly lacking in coherence and focus. The chorus (*The Brown Couples*) seemed to falter slightly at some points and other bits of action seemed too hurried, as if the dancers were not quite comfortable with their personae as skaters.

Con Hall review needed

The Gateway Arts Department is looking frantically for someone interested in reviewing concerts and recitals presented by the University Music Department in Convocation Hall. Although not necessary, a student of music would perhaps best fit the bill, but anyone interested is urged to look into the matter. These concerts are held regularly, and are an important part of the Music Department's program.

This pressing concern was brought to the Arts Editor's attention by some Byronic and sensitive *artiste* whose knowledge of journalistic practices is apparently even less than his grasp of phone manners and etiquette. To my anonymous phone caller—eat it raw, fuzzinuts.

To all others interested in becoming a semi-regular Arts reviewer, please contact the Arts Desk in the Gateway offices, Room 282, Students' Union Building.

The Finale was a bit too rambling to create the emphasis required to make the most of the quite delightful spectacle created when deliciously large quantities of snow literally inundated the stage in the final moments.

Pas d'Action, described in the program as 'a story ballet to end all story ballets', delightfully satirizes that medium. The nonsensical and ridiculously convoluted plot involving a broken-hearted princess, a prince, a count, a duke, a sinister socialist agitator, secret plans, political discourse and the birth of the socialist revolution is belied by the obviously contradictory title.

Marina Eglevsky performs well as the pratfalling and posturing Princess Naissa. Baxter Branstetter, Roger Shim, Harry Williams, and Bill Lark snake stepped imperiously as her highness's four indistinguishable enemies variously dragged, dropped and unmasked her giggling majesty. I found this a light piece which wasn't quite flamboyant enough to live up to the joke which conceived it, but enjoyable nevertheless.

The Rite of Spring, the last item on the program, was by far the most sustained and coherent, a near flawless performance of a very intense ballet. This brilliant choreography for Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Oscar Araiz is presented by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet for the first time outside Argentina.

From the first scene of *Germination* where the earth spirit's diaphanous skirts are slowly drawn up like a membrane to release the awakening life beneath, instantly teeming with primitive energy, the pace never slackens or falters.

The most impressive scenes are spectacles of primordial 'Fertility' and bestial 'Devouring' as the 'Clan' strains to the quirky and strident rhythms of Stravinsky, every insect-like movement expressing fecund violence.

This was most certainly some of the best dancing we will see in Edmonton this year.



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