

ARTS

Gentle greasy dog

by Azed Majeed

White Room
directed by Patricia Rozema
produced by VOS Productions

Patricia Rozema's *White Room* is an urban fairy tale/thriller/media statement which is beautiful to look at, but falls flat in the plot department. This film is another example of the corrupting influence of money in film.

Rozema's last film *I've Heard The Mermaids Singing* garnered much of its kudos because of Sheila McCarthy's fun performance. The film itself had that low budget Canadian look, but it worked because of the character and the script.



This time around Rozema has become a stylist in search of a good script... hmmm, maybe she should change her name to Coppola. (She should work with less money so as not to be tempted by cranes and other toys.)

White Room tells the tale of Norman Gentle (give me a break, Pat), a young would-be writer who leaves home after witnessing the murder of a famous pop chanteuse Madeline X (Margot Kidder). However, Norman didn't just happen to witness this murder; rather he was in the habit of spending his evenings in voyeur-

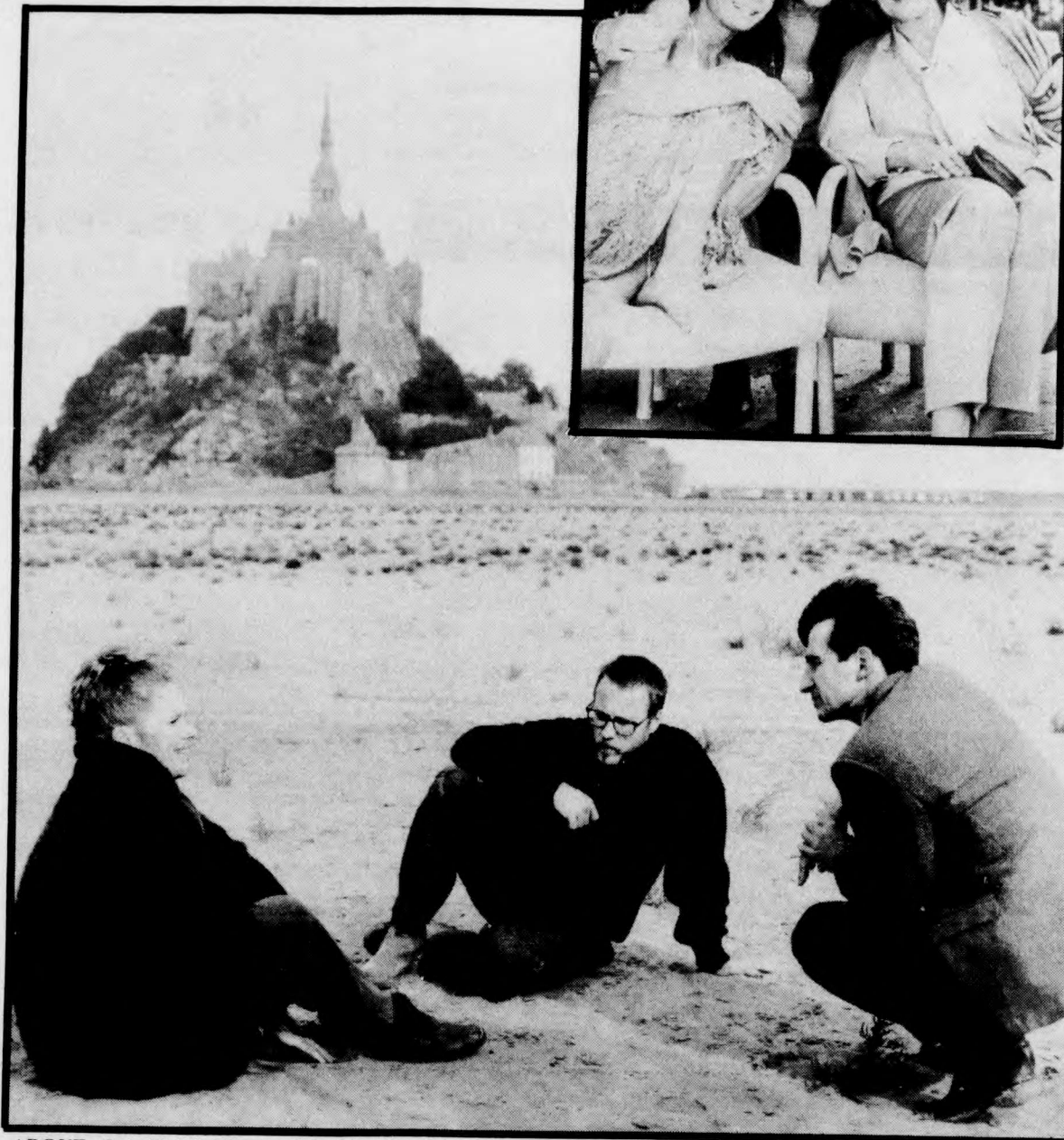
istic pleasure outside the singer's house. Norman, you greasy dog! One of the main problems with *White Room* is that it starts things but never finishes them. The voyeuristic aspect of the character is pure Hitchcock/De Palma, however Rozema never follows this dark side of Norman's character. In the end he becomes a big, bland moral "Prince Charming." Yech!

The plot of *White Room* does not hold up mainly because it is shallow. Sometimes it seems as though an adolescent wrote it. (Interestingly enough, I've heard the same comment from most of my prof.'s after they read my essays). The mystery portion of the story is practically given away at the beginning when Madeline X (who is only seen in video flashbacks) says in a previously taped interview, "Sometimes I think I should stage my own death," or words to that effect (give me a break, Pat). Wasn't this the plot of *Eddie and the Cruisers*? Anyway, the plot is kind of goofy.

The acting is pretty good, especially Kate Nelligan as the reclusive alter ego chanteuse. Sheila McCarthy is always fun to watch, but her character, Zelda, is truly bad. She's one of those flakey neo-punker, conceptual artists who don't exist in real life (give me a break Pat).

White Room has some of the coolest looking sequences I've seen in a long time. Patricia Rozema and cinematographer Paul Sarossy have crafted a fascinating style. Now, let's get the story straight, okay Pat?

RIGHT: (R to L) Mary Crosby, Henry Jaglom and Frances Bergen in *Eating*



ABOVE: (L to R) Liv Ullman, John Heard and Sam Waterson compare world views in the film *Mindwalk*



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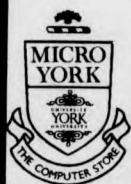
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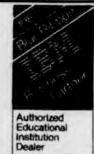
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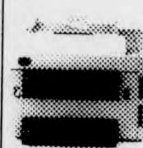


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