

Baker Boys

Not your average lounge lizards

by Meredith Usher

What would you say if I told you there is a new film starring Jeff Bridges, his real-life brother Beau Bridges, and Michelle Pfeiffer? What if I told you it was the story of two brothers who are cocktail bar piano players and a new singer who comes between them? Sounds pretty boring, huh? And what if I told you the film is full of old standards like "Ten Cents a Dance" and "My Funny Valentine"? Strictly for old folks, eh? Well, I'm sure this would be most people's reaction (it was mine), but in the case of *The Fabulous Baker Boys*, they couldn't be more wrong. In plain words, this is a great movie!

The Fabulous Baker Boys is the type of film that mainstream Hollywood doesn't like to make any more, a smart, jazzy character study with great dialogue and lots of atmosphere. The three leads all do fantastic jobs by spicing up what could have been some very conventional characters.

Jeff Bridges continues his string of recent triumphs with yet another outstanding performance. The same can be said for the ubiquitous Michelle Pfeiffer. What is really surprising about her is her ability to create just the right mood with her less-than-perfect singing. Her "Makin' Whoopee" is a sultry little gem.

Of course, you have to give credit to Beau Bridges, who does a splendid job as the more conservative and responsible of the two brothers. The fact that Beau has never before worked with his brother Jeff in a film is a total mystery, as the chemistry between them is so natural. The real-brother gimmick is well used by adding immediate believability to their characters.

And the great music, the atmosphere! The smoke-filled rooms of the cocktail lounges where the Baker Boys play are lovingly brought to life in all their gaudy splendor. With this great ambience, you have only to sit



back and listen to the swinging music, performed mostly by Dave Grusin (*Tootsie*, *The Milagro Beanfield War*) doubling for Jeff

Bridges on piano.

Finally, the majority of the credit must go to first-time writer-director Steve Kloves, whose care

and dedication to this unique film show through. He has created a truly enjoyable film-going experience.

★ GAZETTE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ★
 Fri. Oct. 27th
 NOON GREEN ROOM SUB



A question of alliances

by Jennifer Hough

"There is nothing we can do" is the motto by which Afrikaner schoolteacher Benjamin Du Tuit lived most of his life in South Africa. *A Dry White Season* is the story of this average middle-class man (played by Donald Sutherland) whose life is changed forever as he discovers that the foundation on which his entire life has been based is not what he thought it to be, if he thought about it at all.

The movie, based on the novel of the same name, is a fictional account of the life of one man who is forced to confront the problems of the society in which he lives after the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Ben Du Tuit is shocked to discover that within South Africa there is a large gap between the law and justice for the 60 million blacks of the country. After the brutal murders of the family gardener Gordon and his son Jonathan, Du Tuit finds that justice seems to be exclusively for whites. The movie follows Du Tuit's search for justice and his mission to expose the

inequity of apartheid.

A Dry White Season shows not only the struggle between blacks and whites, but also the conflict that exists among the white minority. It exposes the differences between the few like Du Tuit, which choose to make the repression of blacks their problem, and the majority, like his wife, Suzanna, who prefer to remain oblivious to it. They perpetuate their lifestyle at the expense of the blacks. It becomes a question of alliances: "You have to choose. If you don't choose your people, you have no people."

This point is well made in the movie. However, perhaps a more significant amount of time should have been spent following up the family of the gardener. The movie lacks consistency in this regard: one of Gordon's children, who plays a significant role, simply disappears and is never mentioned again.

The star-studded cast of this movie will attract many who would not normally spend two hours watching families be torn apart and children massacred. They will certainly not be disap-

pointed. Donald Sutherland and Marlon Brando (who plays an aging barrister who has been battling apartheid for years) are acting for a cause which they actively support. Their passion is clearly evident and results in two moving performances. It has been said that Brando donated all his earnings from the movie to the African National Congress, an active anti-apartheid movement. The most touching role, however, is that of Gordon, the gardener. It is unfortunate that more of the film was not focussed on Gordon and his family, rather than on Sutherland's baby blues welling with tears.

This movie is definitely made from a white man's perspective. *A Dry White Season* is not a documentary; it is a dramatic story with fictional characters encountering the very real problems of South Africa. If every person who sees this movie comes away feeling more aware of the problems that exist in that country, then the movie has been successful. It is not a replacement for education, but rather a tool for enlightenment. Go see this movie.



No one can be free until all are free.

