

**Opportunity knocks but don't open the door**



by Ira Nayman

*Opportunity Knocks* directed by (some schmo you'll probably never hear of again) Donald Petrie produced by (a studio that should really know better by now) Imagine Films; a Universal Studios release

You say to yourself, "Oh, no! Not another one!" You say to yourself, "There's no way they're gonna get me to see that!" But, they've been coming for over 10 years, and some of them have made a lot of money, so there's no reason to believe that they'll ever stop. And, you still go to see

them, and you still feel foolish about it.

They're the FILMS THAT CAPITALIZE ON THE POPULARITY OF TV SKETCH COMEDIANS! And, the latest one is coming to a theatre near you!

It's called *Opportunity Knocks* and stars Dana Carvey, *Saturday Night Live's* Church Lady. The film is about a small time con man (Carvey) who stumbles into a major con. On the way, he falls in love with one of the women he is conning, gets chased by the "bad" crooks and, well, you know the rest.

*Opportunity Knocks* is a cross between *Trading Places* and *The Sting* with "homages" (or outright theft, depending upon how charitable you feel) to a dozen popular movies. To say that it doesn't have an original idea in its head would probably be a compliment.

The film's biggest audience pleaser occurred when one of the bad guys, in a full body cast because he was previously dropped off a bridge onto a free-

way, is kicked in the head by the hero. This got a big laugh and applause. The next biggest round of applause was for a car.

It was a red car. A sports car. But, really! Applause for a car! I don't have the analytical tools to deal with this kind of aesthetic!

Carvey is pretty much what you'd expect: he's a wonderful sketch comedian who is way out of his depth. True to type, he simply doesn't have the talent to carry a movie. (Personal aside: I can remember a time when *Saturday Night Live* was considered an end in itself, not merely a good looking entry on a resume that opened doors to a film career — does that date me?)

When confronted with this limitation (every five minutes or so), Carvey resorts to the old trick of throwing out some caricatures (the dreaded Dan Aykroyd Effect). Thus, Carvey enters the ranks of the poorly motivated, smart-ass one-liner spewing machines (Bill Murray, Jim Belushi, Eddie Murphy, etc. etc. ad absurdum). They don't create

characters as much as assault their audiences with attitude.

This reaches its *nadir* (or apex, depending upon those old charitable feelings, again) with a pretty pointless, not even well-written impression of President Bush. Come on, Dana; work on that "vision thing."

Moreover, the morally regressive point of the story grows tiresome through repetition. Carvey lies to almost everybody throughout the film; he makes his living stealing from people. Yet, we're supposed to sympathize with him because the antagonists are more corrupt and violent than he is, and he has a change of heart (or does he?) just before the closing credits. The worst crime portrayed in this movie is that his immoral behaviour is rewarded with a happy ending.

The next time a TV sketch performer graduates to film, let's hope he keeps a little presidential advice in mind: "Acting, good. Caricature, bad."

*Opportunity Knocks* starts in theatres March 30.

**no intellectual stimulation here**

by Josh Rubin

*Prom Night III: The Last Kiss* Directed by Ron Oliver Norstar Entertainment

The latest instalment in writer-director Ron Oliver's series about ghoulish and periodically reappearing prom queen Mary Lou Maloney (Courtney Taylor) is *Prom Night III: The Last Kiss*.

This time, Mary Lou has chosen as her victim a certain Alex Grey (Tim Conlon) who is, in all respects, supremely average. It seems that the ghostly Mary Lou is getting lonely hanging around in hell with all those deadbeat

prom couples from the 1950s, and wants to come back to the land of the living, this time for love.

Mary Lou seduces the hapless Alex, whose jealous girlfriend Sarah (Cyndy Preston) soon senses that not all is right with her "regular" guy.

In order to keep his otherworldly tryst secret, Alex is forced to take precautionary measures that are not so average, such as burying some dead classmates and teachers at the 50 yardline of the school's football field. The bodies keep piling up until Alex finally puts an end to the carnage

in a final hellish scene which is a cross between Michael Jackson's *Thriller* video and the old black and white episodes of *The Twilight Zone*.

Not to spoil any surprises, but you've got to love any movie that features former Canadian heavyweight boxing champ George Chuvalo as a chemistry teacher and "whipped cream sundae." This film also has a few chronological errors in technology, but these miscues add to the campy fun of what can only be described as a B-movie with a first-run budget. A morbid sense of humour is needed to fully appreciate

this truly warped piece of cinema.

This film's appeal for the most part (the exception being Alex's dreamy best friend Shane, played with dazed perfection by David Stratton) definitely doesn't lie with its actors. But Ron Oliver's wacky script and direction provide a great escapist way to kill time with some very demented

characters (if you don't have any sick friends, this film can still be done alone).

But potential moviegoers must be warned not to come looking for intellectual stimulation; you'll be in for a big disappointment.

p.s. Bring your motion sickness bag, it'll come in handy.



Prom queen Mary Lou Maloney (Courtney Taylor) rises from hell in director Ron Oliver's *Prom Night III: The Last Kiss*. Be there.



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