

Worse than *The Goonies*

Transylvania 6-5000 is the absolute worst

Transylvania 6-5000
New World Pictures
Rialto

review by Dean Bennett

When asked what is the best way to learn his craft, film director Guy Hamilton said, "The best way to learn is to work with a genuinely inept director. Watching the great ones is like watching someone ride a bicycle with no hands. They make it look so easy, you don't see the skill. But when things fall apart on a bad director, you learn in a hurry." Well if you want to appreciate good filmmaking, go see *Transylvania 6-5000*.

If there was such a law enforcement body as the Bad Film Police, they'd have to wheel up the paddy wagon to haul in the entire cast and crew of this dog. This film has no, repeat, zip, redeeming features. The acting is stilted, the plotline is insulting to children of all ages, the production values are almost nil. I mean, this is worse than *The Goonies*.

Transylvania 6-5000 is the story of two reporters (Jeff Goldblum and Ed Begley, Jr.) They work for *The Sensation*, a tabloid newspaper along the lines of *The National Enquirer*. They're sent to Transylvania to check the verity of a rumor that Frankenstein is alive and well and roaming around free. Well, to make a disjointed story short, Frankenstein turns out to be a patient of one Dr. Malavaqua (Joe Bologna). Frankenstein, along with a mummy, a vampire, and a wolfman (the gang's all here) are actually poor human beings who have come to Malavaqua for reconstructive surgery or to have him help cure some exotic disease of

theirs. Malavaqua's methods, however, make his patients look like monsters and the reason for this is that he has to cut corners because any money allotted to him for research is quickly siphoned off by the slimy mayor and the corrupt police chief.

Although the storyline is this film's main failing, the acting is a close second. Jeff Goldblum is positively awful as the cynical, street-smart reporter (a foil to Begley's naive innocence). Goldblum looks embarrassed to be here so he walks through the movie on auto-pilot. The most emotion he shows is when his eyes bug out upon meeting the wolfman.

Among other performances, John Byner is his usual nauseating self as the hunch-backed servant and diminutive Carol Kane reprises her mousy *Taxi* character.

You get the feeling the producers didn't really know where Transylvania was, because different elements of the movie are drawn from all over Europe.

Another grating part of this film is the so-called comedy. There's lots of sexual innuendo - the vampire is a she vampire and she's dressed like a playboy bunny with a high collar; there's lots of slapstick - people slipping on banana peels and getting hit on the head with oranges. The jokes have long pregnant pauses between them in the hope that more laughs can be milked out of them.

One could go on and on pointing out the subtle annoyances of this film, but there's really no point to it. If the ship is sinking you don't point out the faulty paint job. Suffice it to say the only horror about *Transylvania 6-5000* is the \$5.50 ticket price.



Kate Bush is complex

Kate Bush
Hounds of Love
EMI

review by Mike Evans

I wanted desperately to give Kate Bush a good review for her newest album, in part to recognize her consistent, uncompromising approach to music that makes her an innovator in the world of popular music. And so I tripped merrily home to put her latest disc, *Hounds of Love*, on the turntable and sloshy the eerie sounds of Bush power pop.

I listened to the album six times.

I put it away for twenty-four hours and listened to it again, six times.

I put it away for a week and...

At risk of sounding like some pompous literary critic, this album is incredibly complex. Bush has created an enormous textured tapestry of sounds with this album, and it plays like an expressionistic Motown "wall of sound" production. In many ways it is reminiscent of Pink Floyd in its use of incidental sound effects to evoke an atmosphere behind Bush's music. In fact, Pink Floyd is thanked for supplying the helicopter effect on the track "Waking the Witch".

The music is strange in a way I cannot fully express: it frequently intimates a hidden threat in its use of harmonies and counterpoint further enhanced by Bush's own unique vocals. The overall effect is disquieting and makes the album difficult to listen to until a familiarity is developed that allows the listener to appreciate certain of Bush's arrangements. But not all.

Bush returns to certain themes throughout the album which are used as a framework for each of the songs contained on the album. Sometimes this technique is effective, sometimes it is



boring. The music begins to sound too similar between tracks for my liking.

This could however, be a deliberate intention of Bush, because when the lyrics are examined with the music, the overall effect is not unlike a painting of foreboding and alienation. It is entirely possible that Bush intended the album to stand as a whole aesthetic piece and not a collection of independent tunes. This is hardly a new idea in pop music, but it is an approach that has to be well-conceived to be effective.

I like this album, but I cannot be too exuberant in my praise of it. It is a record that "grows" on you with frequent listening, but I also feel that it ultimately misses the mark. Bush is to be applauded once again for producing an album that is an honest reflection of her own musical eccentricity, but I cannot recommend it to any but the genuine Bush fan.

But, but, but. I'd like to think that even if this isn't a good review, it is at least fair.

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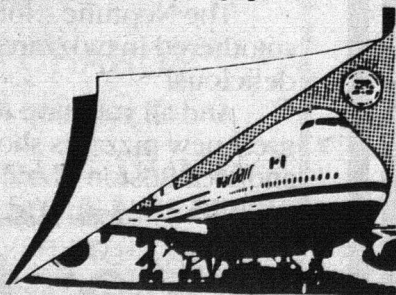
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