

ARTS

When the moon hits your eye like big pizza pie

by Azed Majeed

Miller's Crossing

directed by Joel and Ethan Coen
Good Fellas
directed by Martin Scorsese

Dateline: Toronto; a crisp September evening. My leggy, bleached-blond compatriot with the physics degree (Hey Meathead! This is the 90s... no female stereotypes, get it?) and I are finishing our G and T's and taking in the sights at a dilapidated watering hole.

I can tell by the fist fight which has exploded at the bar that it's getting late. Tensions always rise closer to the witching hour. Me and my companion aren't going to stick around to check out the corner's report; we've got other things to occupy our time.

I slap two fins and a deuce on the bar, stab out my heater and check my "Lifesign" computer before escorting my date out the door.

The time is right. The empty streets echo the cries of love gone rotten. I grab my curvaceous MSC in a heated embrace. She whispers seductively "Where to Goliath?" and I respond "To the picture house, Doll."

(I have to review a couple of new pictures: Martin Scorsese's *Good Fellas* and Joel and Ethan Coen's latest, *Miller's Crossing*.) "And hey... you're gonna have to spring for the Nibs this time, I'm



nearly busted."

I check my watch — Jesus, the show starts in five minutes. I pick myself up, rub my aching jaw and head towards the picture house... alone.

The first of the two gangster flicks I saw was *Good Fellas*. It's one mean picture. Everything about this chunk of celluloid is mean, lean and obscene. Watching this flick makes you scared to leave the theatre.

The film is shot in such a realistic fashion that I practically put on 3-D glasses. Scorsese was not interested in making the mob lifestyle look glamorous, not by a long shot — the key word here is YIKES!!!

The three main goombahs are played by Ray Liotta, Bobby DeNiro and Joe Pesci. The yarn unfolds telling the tale of Henry (Liotta), a poor young sap who

starts into "The Life," in order to clip some respect in the neighbourhood.

Jimmy (Bobby D.), is Henry's mentor and a legendary figure in the area (this is New York, where most thugs are straighter than the "Badges"). Tommy (Pesci) is a small, totally maniacal, murdering psychopath. These fellas are anything but good — as a matter of fact they're hateful.

The mob scene itself is pretty ugly and Scorsese makes it his duty to point that out. Not everything about this film is hateful/ugly, however, for example the acting by the aforementioned "trio de scary," is molto magnifico, capisci?

Hey, let's not forget the great performance by Paul Sorvino... Bello Paolo... Bello. The other thing that's really spiffy about this flick is the direction. I could go on,

but I'll give ya the straight skinny... chalk up another one for the short Italian master.

Pal, that was the real McCoy... got it? Good, you'll go far. Now it's magic time.

Miller's Crossing is the best flick of the year, so far. No shit Johnson.

If *Good Fellas*, represents the flipside of the traditional gangster flick, *Miller's Crossing* represents the complete mastery of this quintessential genre. The Coen brothers are scary-good, ya dig? Remember *Blood Simple*, huh? Smart! How 'bout *Raising Arizona*

Miller's Crossing, requires no plot summary, it is not about plot. It's about atmosphere, it's about poetry... it's about time I came to the point.

The script in this film is the best you're likely to hear in a long time.

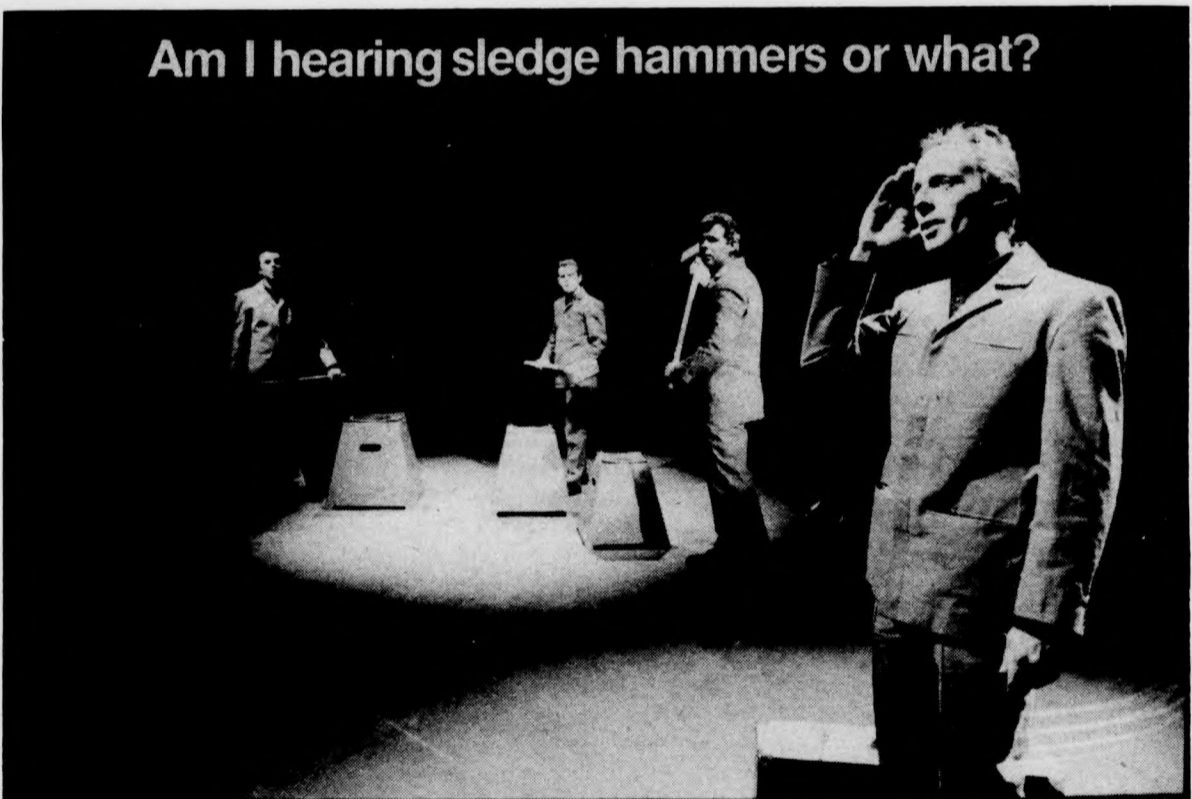
The direction and cinematography are exemplary: the images will stay with you for an even longer time.

The acting is so good it hurts. Gabriel Byrne gives a super-fantabulous performance in the style of the heavyweights. Albert Finney — has he ever given a bad performance? No further comment is required. John Turturro is slimy-riffic and brings tons' o'emotion to a grease-ball character.

Quite simply, this picture is what movie making is all about... ya know that inexplicable feeling of content and stimulation which occur about as often as Mickey Rourke bathes.

Well, that's the rumpus, now it's up to you pal. I ain't here to tell you what to do, but if you like gangster flicks these two will hit the top of your list or my name isn't... (thud).

Am I hearing sledge hammers or what?



by Peter Atwal

Het Nooderwartier (The Northern Quarter)

by Alex van Warmerdam

The MacMillan Theatre's presentation of *The Northern Quarter*, produced by Alex van Warmerdam's Mexican Hound music/theatre company, reaffirms this group's preference for intense and unconventional theatre.

This latest effort, which featured van Warmerdam's skill as a writer, director, and actor, concerns the topic of parent-child relations.

It tells the story of Faas (Jack Vecht), a forty-three year old man who still lives with his parents and wants to become a painter.

As the story unfolds we see that Faas' parents Kloos (Alex Van Warmerdam) and Martha (Loes Luca), shelter their son from the

events of the outside world by preventing him from reading most books. We follow Faas on his journey towards becoming a painter and eventually learn more about the world that exists beyond his.

The play uses music (performed by Vincent van Warmerdam), drama, and cinematic effects to establish its own reality. It is a production where very few props are used and very few words are spoken. It is as if the playwright tells the audience only what it needs to know about the characters and their actions, leaving the rest for us to figure out.

The play is fast paced and laced with a variety of music that ranges from rock and pop to opera that mixes with often ambiguous scenes which follow Faas and his search for truth.

When Faas finally manages to step outside, he encounters a group of workers making a lot of noise with sledge hammers and

rocks to the beat of a loud rock musical score being played in the background. Faas questions the workers and asks them to define the meaning of the world for him. He asks them if they really know about existence, or if reality is just a product of our perceptions.

Alex van Warmerdam is able to create very intense yet humorous, expressionistic theatre which works on many levels. It addresses the dilemma of Faas' search for life's meaning while accompanying this visual montage with music and simplistic dialogue.

The Northern Quarter breathes fresh air into the theatrical mainstream, as do all of Alex van Warmerdam's plays.

Texturally, this play is a dark study about individuals posing as intellectuals who claim to have all of the answers while in fact they have none. It is also a piercing glimpse into the heart of many faceted ignorance.

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