

Once Bitten is a tasty comedy

Once Bitten
Pan Canadian Films
Rialto

review by Dean Bennett

Once Bitten is definitely one of the quainter comedies to come along in a little while and certainly proves that the boy-coming-of-age genre (a la *Risky Business*) is certainly not dead, and can actually be quite amusing if it uses a little wit and doesn't take itself too seriously.

Lauren Hutton plays the "Countess", a she-vampire who's so old she can't remember what her sign is.

The film begins ten days before Halloween. The Countess is in a dilemma. She must three times have the blood of a male virgin before "Hallow's Eve" or she will lose her perpetual youth. But trying to find a male virgin in Southern California in the 80's is the proverbial needle-in-the haystack.

Mark Kendall (Jim Carrey) is the sweet, innocent boy next door protagonist and the object of The Countess' desires. He is still a virgin and it looks like he will stay one for a while because girlfriend Robin (Karen Kopins) wants the first time to be beautiful. She doesn't want it to happen in the front seat of Mark's ice cream truck. (On the back of the truck, incidentally, is a huge replica of an ice cream cone with a huge cherry on top).

The Countess meets Mark at a Hollywood nightclub and eventually lures him to her mansion. Then, Mark is first bitten. (The Countess does not bite her victims on the

neck, by the way — too mundane. She picks the inner thigh. I guess that's appropriate for a film of this genre.) After the Countess bites Mark a second time, Robin figures out what's going on and tries to prevent her boyfriend from turning into Dracula.

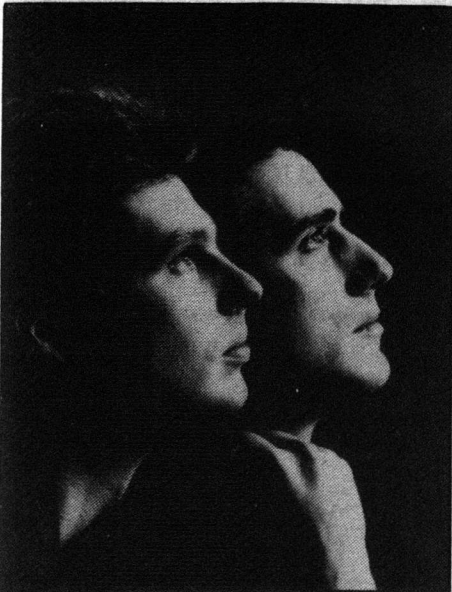
Mark in the meantime is showing signs of becoming a vampire: he starts wearing a lot of black leather outfits, he sleeps in a trunk at the end of his bed, and he prefers his dark hair slicked right back. He even wins the best costume prize at his high school's Halloween dance. He wins it for his vampire outfit. "But I'm not wearing a costume!" he screams.

Lauren Hutton is at her vampish best in the role of the Countess. She is definitely the modern vampire: the only one I know of who has a VCR and an exercise bike. She also has culture and taste. When her butler Sebastian brings her a glass of blood she is able to 'recognize' it immediately ("Austrian Peasant early 1700's," she muses after one sip.)

Jim Carrey is excellent in the role of the frustrated teenager. Of particular note is his mastery of facial muscles. A twitch of his eyebrow here, a pouting of the lips there, makes the film visually as well as verbally witty.

It is Cleavon Little however, who steals the show. He plays Sebastian, the homosexual butler. He approaches the role with a kind of foppish snobbiness that is quite endearing.

Except for an overdrawn chase scene near the end of the film moves at a brisk pace and is never boring. An interesting movie, worthy of a glance.



OMD: Paul Humphreys (left), Andy McCluskey

OMD: an intricate mosaic of sound

Crush
Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark
Virgin Records

review by John Watson

Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark's sixth album, *Crush*, is an intricate mosaic of sound. It is not standard electronic pop: the music is strong and powerful.

Throughout the album is a heavy, though at times ponderous, drum beat. Even the electronic portions tend to be richer than the average synthetic pop available.

The current single "So In love," is the lightest piece on the album. Its suave melody is accentuated by the silky smooth vocals. The drum beat is there, but it is far from the level found on many of the other tracks.

"So In love" sets the pace for most of side one. The music and lyrics are both upbeat. Methinks OMD is hedonistic.

Then we are crushed. The title track is weird; who ever said art-rock was back in? The track seems to be misplaced on this album. Is it an interesting montage of sound, or is it clutter? I don't know. The ponderous beat of "Crush" should not be here, you think, then you flip the album.

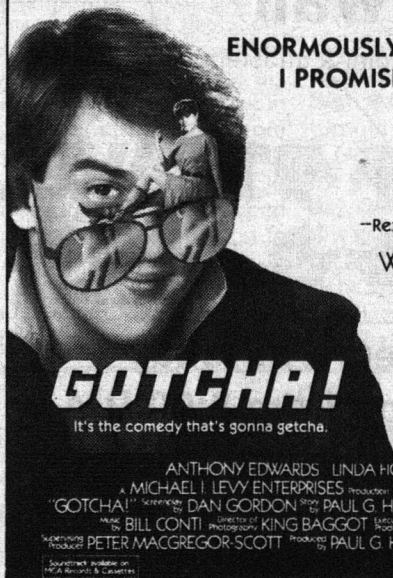
This could, perhaps should, be a different album. Gone are the gentle vocals and rich musical landscape. In their place we get a simple strong, heavy melody.

"88 Seconds in Greensboro" would probably not sound out of place on a Van Halen album, but it would on side one of *Crush*. OMD seems adept at juxtaposing songs that

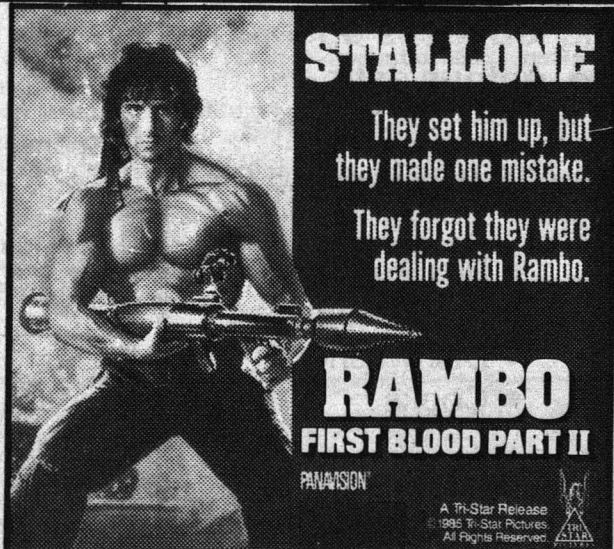
are very smooth with ones that are very harsh. Each song has a definite feel to it. "Hold You", for example, is a tender ballad-like love song. It is preceded by "88 Seconds in Greensboro," and followed by "The Lights Are Going Out" both of which are far from gentle. This effectively leaves you lost. Individually the songs are very good at setting a mood, but the mood keeps changing.

When I asked a friend "What kind of mood would you want to be in to listen to this music?" "When you want to go to sleep," was the reply. *Crush* the album is good (the single is something else.) OMD has created an original and identifiable sound. It is contemporary, but it also has a strong feeling of familiarity. An unusual quality in synthesized pop.

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