

**Jinxed! not worth the chance****It's just another filmic tease that doesn't deliver**

Marshall Golden

*Jinxed!* is like foreplay without sex. At first, it's a lot of fun, but ultimately it's unsatisfying.

This pre-Christmas release from director Don Seigel is a return to the screwball comedies of Buster Keaton's day. There is a cute dramatic premise, a few wacky chase scenes and lots of slapstick humour. However, this style of light, visually-

oriented comedy is really not enough for the intelligence of today's audiences. It's much like ginger ale without the bubbles.

One of the film's saving graces is Bette Midler in the lead role of Bonita. She plays the feisty common-law partner of Harold (Rip Torn). Together they drive in their motorhome through the heartland of American greed, Vegas and

Tahoe, in search of the great, glittering American promise of something for nothing. Bonita is (what else) a singer and she gets jobs in whatever casino Harold chooses to gamble in. But Harold does not choose his casinos indiscriminately. He is following a certain black jack dealer, Willie, over whom he believes he has a jinx. That is, whenever Willie deals, Harold wins.

Willie, played adequately by Ken Wahl, is being fired from casinos as fast as he can get employed. He is, thanks to Harold's jinx, a losing dealer. Until this point the film is exciting--with lots of casino action--well paced and humorous. Willie is told that, to break the jinx, he must possess something of Harold's. And what else does he seek but Bonita. He successfully seduces her and beats Harold in a marathon black jack game.

**An hour is enough**

*Jinxed!* would do well to end here, even though its only been running for about an hour. But Seigel has decided that its not enough. *Jinxed!* takes a macabre turn for the worst. What follows is murder, suicide and life insurance schemes that are



Excalibur critic, Marshall Golden, says *Jinx!* "should take a lesson from *Masters and Johnson*."

capped off with a boring and anti-climatic chase across the desert.

The film is too long and the pacing is uneven. And while there are enough chances to laugh, most of the jokes are one-liners embodied in a silly plot.

It is amazing that with the Hollywood system of making films-a

script is read by at least 500 people before it is filmed--no-one noticed the major pacing and content flaws of *Jinxed!* But then again, Hollywood has never had great vision--it suffers from "greenback blindness". *Jinxed!* should take a lesson from *Masters and Johnson*--foreplay just isn't enough.

**A Sleazy Satin Thigh**

Lesbianism, and an "inventory of grime."

Sheree-Lee Olson

The closing scene of Theatre Passe Murville's new play *Satin Thigh* has the young prostitute, Becky alias Satin (Isabelle Mejias), wretchedly huddled on a fire escape above the audience, mourning Harriet (Barbara Barnes), her dead lover. She should have jumped. That would be the logical outcome of a two hour play that plods through every know cliché about "the seamy side of life."

That Harriet committed suicide by overdose two scenes earlier shouldn't discourage playwright, Liberty Jane Carter; she and director Hrant Alianak haven't let the rule of good drama interface anywhere else. Except, as the publicity emphasizes, this a "story of survival", so that in the grossest material sense, Satin survives.

Ostensibly, this is a play about a love affair between the plump and naive girl, Becky and the lean and worldly wise black prostitute, Harriet. The action moves between front stage, which alternately serves as Yonge St. or the boardwalk, and the five specific staging area which make up the stationary set. Most imposing is the white upolstered hotel room complete with satin sheets and sunken bath, from which Harriet plies her trade. This is where the most flesh is exposed and where a series of flashbacks illustrate the beginning, the consummation and the problems of the affair between the two women. The series is punctuated by the antics of a pair of skinny street walkers who bitch and commiserate about their tricks--the white one coolly cynical and the black one abusive and graphic. She douches over a garbage can with a Finger Pinkie while passing the time of day with Harriet and her girl Satin, out for a Yonge St. stroll.

But the problems between Satin and Harriet are not, as one might expect, about lesbianism or prostitution. Becky's eager leap into the life is neither justified nor explored. We see her wander about the room in a black garter belt as the two prepare for that day's appointments, but we never see her alone with a 'john'. This is odd because Becky's first morning with Harriett finds her

more concerned with the fact that Harriet's a hooker than with the stated fact that she's never slept with a woman before. Not only does the story have little to do with love--it is simply declared--but it doesn't touch the one thing that could've brought them together--sexuality. There are sidelong glances, a few kisses, a lot of nudity in this play, but "no" suggestion of passion.

Their problem is Harriet's dreadful past--Becky's is hardly mentioned--explored in a second series of flashbacks in which the 14-year old Harriet is sold by her alcoholic mother (Sandi Ross), of whom the only thing believable to her is her fat, to the vile pimp Deddy Gee (Errol Slue). This is to save Harriet's junkie brother Ivan (Philip Akin) from certain buggery in prison. Harriet is almost convincing as she wails on her mother's lap, and this scene drew applause. But the plot gets worse: Ivan then pays Deddy Gee for the use of his sister's body. By now we know the play isn't about Harriet and Satin, but about the obligatory degradation of poor black girls.

Mejias is supposed to be the star of the play, but she only has half a part. For the most of Satin's lines are spoken in a plangent recorded voice accompanied by the lush strains of disco technology. The absurd contrast between this artsy interior monologue and the dumpy, stunned-looking girl onstage, a filmy pink dress emphasizing her pendulous breasts, rankles from the outset. When she does speak, her lines switch from notable literary to double negatives.

The real love affair in this play is the old one between middle class voyeurism and the seamy side of life. The writer, with the help of a creative writing workshop and several interested professionals including the director, has indulged this puerile fascination at the expense of art. In the same way the Mejias' plentiful nudity tries to compensate for her non-acting, this inventory of grime tries to substitute for insight and depth. The fact that this is "semi-autobiographical" doesn't justify anything. Life, even low-life, isn't art.

Just say **OV**



**AFTER A GREAT GAME.**