

Extraordinary people in extraordinary situations

No Mercy
Tri-Star
West Edmonton Mall

by **Dragos Ruiu**

A famous man once said that interest comes from "ordinary people in extraordinary situations, or extraordinary people in ordinary situations". What of extraordinary people in extraordinary situations?

No Mercy is an extra-ordinary situation indeed. Richard Gere (*Breathless, An Officer and a Gentleman*) is a most uncoplike cop, and Kim Basinger (*9½ Weeks*) is a very seductive slave.

The perennial tough-guy romantic, Gere is a crude Chicago detective who must avenge his partner against a Louisianan crime kingpin. His only 'clue' is a stunning 'possession' of the kingpin named Michelle (Basinger).

Handcuffed to her in a swamp, he makes the mistake of falling in love with her. A war of vengeance then turns into an all out battle to the end over this alluring woman.

Gere is an intense cop who doesn't play by the rules (Oh no, another one) to see that justice is done. Basinger is a stunning illiterate, who is accustomed to being treated like a chattel ever since her mother 'sold' her, and has only survived on her law-of-the-jungle common sense.

The kingpin is a violent man who gets what he wants, and he wants Gere and Basinger, dead and safe in his possession, respectively.

This is a beguiling movie, because the characters start out as cliches and slowly turn into humans that you begin to care about. Both Basinger and Gere deliver very credible and intense performances.

The movie is full of action — you get caught up in the suffocating foggy mood of the swamps and you really feel like you are there. Never in this movie do you find yourself bored, or realizing that you are merely in a dark room watching a screen.

No Mercy constantly keeps the viewer interested, mainly through the powerful performances delivered by the two main characters. It is also tasteful enough to avoid unduly exploiting Kim Basinger's physical attributes. She manages to be truly

erotic without a single nude scene.

Gere delivers his now normal female-melting best. Undoubtedly one of the best romantic leads of the eighties, and opposite Basinger with a good action script, he will probably break a few hearts with this performance.

This movie manages to be romantic, without the soap opera melodrama normally associated with that vein. The suspense is gut-wrenching and action is exciting. This movie is slickly directed and well produced. Check it out. Take your favorite friend along, you'll both enjoy it.

Great show, unfortunately no audience

The Brandon University Trio
Thursday, Jan. 8
Convocation Hall

review by **John Charles**

The Brandon University Trio deserved a larger audience than the 60 music lovers who turned out at last Thursday's concert.

They're an important part of the Canadian music scene, founded in 1955 as the Halifax Trio, with many appearances on CBC radio. The trio moved to Manitoba in 1966, and two of the founding members are still present: violinist Francis Chaplin, and pianist Gordon Macpherson. Cellist Ingemar Ohlsson joined the trio in 1985.

Their program included one bona fide classic, Dvorak's *Dumky Trio*, plus three imaginatively chosen works. The evening opened with Beethoven's *Trio Movement*, which was written in 1811, at the height of the composer's powers. Probably meant for his *Archduke Trio*, it was subsequently discarded, and not published until after his death.

The full sound of the three players was immediately evident, as was a tendency toward the strident on the violinist's part. Few of his solo phrases were really satisfactory in this steady, lyrical music.

Pianist Macpherson's playing had a clarity and elegance which was appropriate, while the cello sometimes had



Richard Gere and Kim Basinger deliver powerful performances in *No Mercy*.

a raw edge. Though the players clearly meant business, Beethoven emerged as a warm-up for the next work.

Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Grammatte's *Trio* (1967) was the most formidable work on the program. This enigmatic composer, who died in 1974, is regarded as Canadian by many, since she moved to Winnipeg in 1953. Since she was then 54, her art was fully formed, so it's hard to say — aside from circumstances — what genuine impact this nation made upon her art, with her French-Slavic heritage, and a life spent for the most part in Berlin and Vienna.

Eckhardt-Grammatte's music is described by the usually blandly enthusiastic *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* as "wilful" and "headstrong," and it often sounds swollen and belligerent, like turn-of-the-century composer Max Reger on the rampage.

The *Trio* is a massive work, with thick textures and a late Romantic/expressionist temperament. But at 14 minutes it doesn't go on too long, and is an impressive work, and the Brandon Trio played it excellently, with coherence and passion. They sounded more unified than elsewhere in the concert, and though the work's concluding movement could sound more playful (and less earnest) it was a commanding, enjoyable performance of a very tough piece.

Joaquin Turina's graceful *Second Trio* of 1933 concluded the evening's first half. Thoroughly attractive, though second-hand, it's one of this Spanish composer's many chamber works which combine Spanish flourishes with French suavity and harmonies. At times it sounds like *Gabriel Faure Goes to Madrid*, but without that French master's originality.

Here cellist Ohlsson let his warm tone sing out, and all three musicians played smoothly and fluently.

Dvorak's *Dumky Trio*, Op. 90, is a leisurely work in six movements, combining simple, lamenting melodies, exquisitely colored, with joyous outbursts of lively, foot-stomping song. It's one of Dvorak's most inspired pieces, but the repetition of slow-fast movements requires the performers to make each one distinct, lest it all seem too long.

The Brandon did not avoid this predicament, partly because there was an edginess to their playing at odds with the vital directness of the music. At times the violin seemed scrappy, and remained dominant even when the cello had the main theme. A lack of blending, occasionally noticeable at other points of the concert, became a bigger problem in the Dvorak, but there were many lovely, tender moments as well.



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