

Janelle Buchanan, Steve Swartz and Katherine Catmull star in Never Leave Nevada. In the tradition of such well known cineastes as Jim Jarmusch and Wim Wenders, Swartz' first film explores pop culture and the American psyche.

Never Leave Nevada is more than a road movie, but less than perfect

by Pedram Fouladianpour

Never Leave Nevada might look like a Wenders/Jarmuschinspired road movie to an impatient viewer. It concentrates on Luis and Sean, two salesmen who travel around the United States selling tube socks and anti-nuclear tshirts at demonstrations outside nuclear test sites.

The pair, played by Rodney Rincon and Steve Swartz, arrive in Beatty, Nevada, a town on the edge of just such a site. There they meet Betty, the head of a medical clinic which draws most of its patients from the local bordello, and her roommate Lou Ann, who works in the town's

The rest of Never Leave Nevada is a "living room movie" studying the relationship of these four human beings

Despite the fact that it lacks originality or innovation, Never Leave Nevada has many aspects which can win an audience over. It is a simple character study that benefits from a witty screenplay. The characters are introduced separately, meeting circumstantially.

The spontaneity of the characters' behaviour and

film

Never Leave Nevada directed by Steve Swartz starring Steve Swartz and Rodney Rincon produced by Cabriolet Films

speeches, which sometimes seem improvised, brings them close to reality.

Writer/director/actor Swartz, a Moroccan-born Jew who emigrated to America in the early sixties, started his career as a playwright, which is more or less reflected in his directorial style. Action is subordinated to dialogue in many scenes, with a static camera that gives the actors the chance to work in a longer time segment.

Although the images suffer from a more than obvious grain (the film was shot on 16mm and blown up to 35mm for theatrical release), Never Leave Nevada offers some visual subtlety. Cinematographer Lee Daniel has composed the shots in a way that makes up for the grain.

Never Leave Nevada makes one curious about Swartz, wondering what his next move in the aesthetic game of filmmaking will be.

Bathgate is not kitsch

by Anthony Pizzari

As much as I am reluctant to admit it, Billy Bathgate is a well-made, entertaining commercial film.

Billy Bathgate is set in 1935 New York. Based on the book by E. L. Doctorow, it tells the story of 16year-old Billy Bathgate (Loren Dean) as he moves from rags to riches via the mob. He discovers how to survive in the racket and life from his mentor/ boss Dutch Schultz (Dustin Hoffman) and Drew Preston (Nicole Kidman). The film also stars Bruce Willis as Bo Weinberg, who betrays Schultz, and Steve Hillman as Otto Berman, Schultz' head accountant.

To the credit of both director Robert Benton and his actors, the performances are very convincing, especially Hoffman's. It's hard to believe that this is the same person who played an autistic adult in Rainman

The story is littered with dualisms like trust/mistrust, love/hate, riches/ poverty. Part of the reason the film works so well is the way screenwriter Tom Stoppard (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead) has woven film

Billy Bathgate directed by Robert Benton starring Dustin Hoffman and Loren Dean produced by Touchstone Pictures

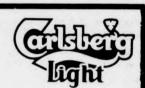
them into the fabric of the story. Under our very noses, the script moves from a straight mob story to one about human relationships and love.

The cinematography is impeccable, a kind of chiaroscuro in the same vein as Miller's Crossing (which some have said was an overlit film noir). The film was shot by Nestor Almendros, who has worked with New Wave directors Francois Truffaut and Eric Rhomer. His camera movements make you forget you're watching a film while you're in the theatre, but stick in your memory after you leave.

Even though it's obvious the film was made to earn mega-bucks for Walt Disney Studios, it would be unfair to say that Billy Bathgate is just another kitsch film excused by postmodernism. It's the kind of film that demands to be taken at face value. Like any film noir, its cynicism, craft and high production values make it worth seeing.



Dustin Hoffman, Otto Berman and Loren Dean star in Robert Benton's film adaptation of E. L. Doctorow's Billy Bathgate. The film isn't as bad as it could have been.



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- GO FIGURE Spirit Of The West
- ROAD APPLES . The Tragically Hip

- FAVOURITE JAZZ/FUSION RECORDING LIVE AT SWEET BASIL • Jane Bunnett
- GIRL TALK . Holly Cole Trio
- EXTRA EXTRA Manteca LIVE AT THE BLUE NOTE • Oscar Peterson
- WHAT DO YOU WANT . Shuffle Demons

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- The Leslie Spit Treeo

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MELVILLE • Rheostatics ☐ OTHER

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THE GHOSTS THAT HAUNT ME

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