

The Princess Bride: a charming fairy tale

The Princess Bride
20th Century Fox
Westmount

review by David Smith

At last! A romantic comedy that isn't about middle-aged men chasing young women or teenage boys trying to lose their virginity. I thought that making movies that were honest in their approach to love and humour was a thing of the past; I was wrong. Rob Reiner's new film *The Princess Bride*, successfully combines both romance and action with the right amount of comedy to produce a film that never has to voyage south of the waistline in order to be funny.

"The duels were both performed by him, not a stand-in, and it shows..."

The story is both simple and straightforward, but never dull. A young boy is in bed with a cold. One day Grandpa, played by Peter Falk, drops by with a present. The young boy is very disappointed to discover that it is not another video game or a collection figure for his *Masters of the Universe* set; instead, it's a book called *The Princess Bride*.

As his grandfather reads him more and more from the story, the child's initial disinterest turns to concern for the book's hero and heroine, and eventually he's absorbed by it all. Fact is, this movie is also

about the boy's reaction to a form of entertainment that has almost died out in the world. Reiner provides not only an involving story of buccaners and beauties, but he also subtly slips in a moral.

I don't wish to tell you what the story of *The Princess Bride* is about, because that would spoil it. This movie must be seen without much prior knowledge if it is to be enjoyed. What I will say is that the cast did a wonderful job in bringing out a lot of childlike qualities such as innocence and bravado. It made this movie very fun to watch.

As the bride, newcomer Robin Wright was wonderful; as the story required, she went back and forth from being a woman of virtue to a sinner with convincing ease. Cary Elwes, the leading hero, was set up from the start to look like Errol Flynn, which may or may not be a good thing. Some of his jokes don't quite hit the mark, and one or two miss the target completely, but in the end, his swordsmanship and glib one-liners make up for it.

The top mark goes to Mandy Patinkin, who portrays the Spaniard Inigo Montoya, a man out to avenge his father's murder. Not once in this film did he appear to lose his enthusiasm for the role. The duels at the beginning and end of the film were both performed by him, not a stand-in, and it shows; he's put a lot of effort into his work here. There are many other pleasant surprises as well. Billy Crystal and Carol Kane appear towards the end of the film as a pair of unhappily married miracle workers.

All of this is set against the beauty of the English countryside, of which Reiner's director of photography, Adrian Biddle, took full advantage.

I would recommend *The Princess Bride* on its charm alone. Elwes, Wright, and Patinkin add to this an extra helping of wit and romance, and the soundtrack featuring Mark Knopfler is the icing on the cake. Reiner's film is, well, wholesome — but not bland.



All they need is a "killer single."

Vice has great lyrics

Thrashing Doves
Bedrock Vice
A & M Records

review by Christopher J. Cook

The Thrashing Doves are a four-man British assemblage based in London. Brothers Ken and Brian Foreman — the band's spokesmen and composers — as well as guitarist Ian Button are descendants of The Climbs, a reasonably successful mod band that broke up in 1984. Now, along with percussionist Kevin Sargent, they have formed Thrashing Doves, and Bedrock Vice is their first effort on vinyl for A & M Records. While the album has met with decent success in the UK, it has had very limited exposure on the left side of the Atlantic. This is strange because theirs is not a particularly inaccessible sound.

The songs on Bedrock Vice are intelligently written, not to mention incredibly diverse lyrics with liberal amounts of wry humour. "Rochedale House" is without a doubt the most buoyantly cheerful song about a loved one's decline into the dregs of heroin addiction that I have ever heard.

"Biba's Basement" is about the bombing of a trendy London boutique by a social terrorist group known as the First of May. "Magdalena" tells the story of a Mexican prostitute who convinced an entire town that she was a reincarnation of an Aztec goddess, and was finally thrown in jail after a few human sacrifices were performed. Songs with titles like "Jesus on the Payroll" are also good and need no explanation.

In fact, if Bedrock Vice had the one key element needed for a pop album — the killer single — it would become a relatively popular top 40 album. The more I hear Thrashing Doves, the more they sound like both of Neil Finn's bands: Split Enz and Crowded House. Crowded House's album is no better than Bedrock Vice, but what it had was the single ("Don't Dream It's Over") needed to get the proverbial ball rolling.

Overall, Bedrock Vice is a very well-written and -musical album that deserves wider recognition by AM radio. But what can I say? This album is a little bit too top 40ish for my own tastes. But if you like Neil Finn, you'll love the Thrashing Doves.



Hero and heroine face dangers, but never for long.

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