

'Smash Palace' captures dynamism of human conflict

by Mike Potter

A film from New Zealand, usually perceived as rustic and even provincial, might be preconceived as insignificant or irrelevant, particularly one on the subject of divorce. But *Smash Palace* is a powerful movie with a universal message.

In his second feature, director Roger Donaldson examines marital discord and dissolution, and its effects on children who uncomprehendingly find themselves in the midst of such strife.

The opening shot is a pastoral sunrise over the central volcanoes of the North Island, the area in which the action is set. The tone of *Smash Palace* is established quickly, however, by a car accident which hits with a shock.

The movie is replete with sudden and dramatic changes of pace. The tension between the couple is evident from the beginning, and builds as the plot progresses. There are nevertheless good comic moments which provide cathartic relief.

Anna Jemison as Jacqui Shaw gives an excellent performance, combining restraint and rebelliousness. Frustrated by her husband's

lack of sensitivity, she attempts to find solace elsewhere. Her features could be described as refined (not intended to be a pun, although it is pertinent that when she goes back to work, it is as a French teacher).

Alan Shaw, the proprietor of an auto salvage yard, is a man of swarthy build and very aggressive disposition, played extremely well by Bruno Lawrence. He is overwhelmed and puzzled by his

dilemma, and reacts impulsively. His redeeming qualities include a quick repartee and a genuine — if possessive — tenderness toward their daughter.

His preoccupation with cars seems stereotypical, but one can identify with his affinity for the bush: as a place to try to sort things out, though perhaps also escapist.

The cinematography of *Smash Palace* is quite effective, except for

cliché scenes such as playing pool in a pub and the race sequences. There is a helicopter ride through a spectacular gorge to be enjoyed.

The Kiwi dialect (if the liberty is taken to call it so) is fun to listen to, with terms like 'drongo' ... used by Al before singing 'Happy Birthday' with Georgie, their little girl. I laughed when they put on paper hats before blowing out the candles on a special cake.

Greer Robson portrays the vulnerability of a child caught in a divorce/separation situation, not knowing which parent to turn to. The policeman (Keith Aberdein) is good in his role; externally appearing to be a straightforward representative of the law but exhibiting a personal side to. And he really looks like a bloke from Down Under!

Smash Palace is a dynamite film.

Betcha' can't get this week's trivia quiz

THIS WEEK'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1. Who said, "I know many things, for I walk by night?"
2. "Your mother forgives me, _____" Fill in the blank, name the film, character, and actor speaking.
3. Name the women (and actresses) who have adventured with John Steed.
4. Sylvester Stallone had a small part as a youth mugged by an irate visitor to New York. Name the film and its two stars.
5. Who hosted *River Inn* and what was its closing theme?
6. Before Quincy there was a Canadian investigative coroner. Name the show and its star.
7. Who sang the theme to the car-

8. What does Chap. 3 of the 'Book of Love' tell you?
9. Thanks to chemistry there was Buddy Love. Name the film, its star, and the song he sang and his debut.
10. Who sang the theme for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*? Who had the hit single?

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

1. Mrs. Trefoile was played by Tallulah Bankhead who menaced Stephanie Powers. Donald Sutherland had the minor role

in *Die, Die, My Darling*.

2. Jack Pierce was married to Joan, daughter of Edgar Rice Burroughs — creator of Tarzan.
3. In *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, Sinbad (Kerwin Matthews) needs a piece of shell from a giant roc's egg in order to restore the princess (Kathryn Grant) all filmed in SUPER-DYNAMATION.
4. *Lord of the Flies* was written by William Golding and directed by Peter Brook.
5. *The Naked Prey* starred Cornel Wilde.
6. *The Sands of Kalahari* starred

7. George Harrison used the pseudonym when he recorded 'Badge' with Cream (Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker, and Jack Bruce).
8. Mary Robbins sang about Felina in El Paso, Texas.
9. Cliff Edwards and Jackie Ralph. The Five Bells. Ann Ralph was Jackie's sister and Cliff's wife.
10. Don McLean was supposedly killing Lori Lieberman.

CURRENT LEADERS:
The Cincinnati Kid & Stephen Allen — 58 pts (tied for 1st place).
John Keigan — 54.5 pts.

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Dave Pierce British Columbia Institute of Technology Burnaby, B.C.	Renzo Purchio Dawson College Montreal, Que.	Kevin Johnson Durham College Oshawa, Ontario.
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