

Film

# New Life for man and ex-wife

A New Life  
Paramount Pictures  
Westmali 5, Westmount 4

review by June Chua

Oh no! not another mid-life crisis film? The answer is yes... and no. This film comes straight from Alan Alda's heart and guts. Alda (writer, director, actor) has made this movie a fairly honest portrayal of middle-age people attempting to find their "second wind"; it is also very funny and a joy to watch. In many instances, familiar situations are quite humorous while possessing an underlying lesson.

At first, Alda seems to play the cynical, wise-cracking belaboured man that he usually portrays. His character is Steve, a trader on the New York Stock Exchange, who overeats, overworks and complains a lot. However, as the movie unfolds, so does his character.

After divorcing his wife (played by the lusty Ann Margret), Steve goes in search of the single life but finds it an impersonal world. Similarly, his wife doesn't have much luck either, dating about five men in succession: one is obsessed with soft drinks, while another wants a list of all men that she has been intimate with.

Eventually, Steve and his ex-wife find new

partners. At first, for both, it's a whirlwind romance marked with hesitation, awkwardness, then total surrender. Steve marries a doctor (Veronica Hamel) and goes through many trials and tribulations about birth: "It's like Friday the Thirteenth for nine months."

For his ex-wife, it is a gradual realization of what she truly wants and needs: freedom. John Shea as the new man in her life is every woman's idea of The Perfect Man: he's charming, considerate, makes dinner, and is totally enraptured by the woman he loves. This is NOT reality. Nevertheless, it's a small twist in the younger man - older woman relationship because, in this film, the younger man acts like a den-mother.

The film has numerous pat phrases, some of which are priceless. For example, when Hal Linden as Steve's sleazy, swinging friend remarks about their much younger dates: "They're convivial, they're modern, they're productive... they're sluts!" Also when he criticizes Steve's greying beard, "who likes men with facial hair... only women who are sexually attracted to Santa Claus!" Hal Linden has certainly shed his Mr. Nice Guy image with his portrayal of Steve's vacuous, chauvinistic, insensitive friend. He acts as a foil for Alda's character who evolves into a more caring person.

This film is heart-warming because the



Just a bunch of sensitive New-age guys and gals.

audience can see and feel what Steve is going through. The viewer can actually sense what it's like to fall in love all over again. You can feel Steve's angst when he tries to understand why his new wife wants a child and why she needs him to be there when the baby is born. The film is more about a man's adjustment to what is expected of him than what he expects others to tolerate. Several types of relationships are explored

here, although one may not realize it through all the jokes: husband-wife, woman-man, father-children and even older generation with the younger generation. Steve and his wife find parts of themselves with which each is comfortable.

A New Life is fast-paced, witty and refreshing. Alan Alda fans will be satisfied with this entertaining film.

Music

# Hot social issues in Diesel and Dust

Diesel and Dust  
Midnight Oil  
Columbia/CBS Records

review by Tracy Rowan

And in the most recent issue of Musician magazine jumps out at the reader with a haunting black and white photograph. It depicts two weary-faced Aborigines set against the background of Ayers Rock: the dramatic monolith located in the middle of the Australian outback.

The caption beneath the photo is taken from the lyrics of Warakurna, one of the songs found on this Aussie quintet's latest release. It reads "Diesel and dust is what we breathe."

Indeed, the plight of the Aborigines' land claims and sad living conditions (sound familiar?) as fringe dwellers in mainstream Australian society, is the focus of this brilliant LP.

There's a sense of urgency conveyed throughout the album, an element also present in the 1984 LP *Real Gone with the Sunsets*, which concentrated on the nuclear devastation

issue.

Although only one track with this theme appears on *Diesel and Dust* ("Put Down That Weapon"), lead singer Peter Garrett is still passionate about this social problem. He cared enough about it in 1984 to run in the national elections for the Nuclear Disarmament Party (NDP) and almost won.

Recorded in Sydney in 1987 with Warner Livesy and Midnight Oil sharing the production tasks, *Diesel and Dust* makes full use of the band's solid musicianship and Garrett's impassioned vocals, especially on side one.

While mostly a thoroughly rock n'roll effort, one tune, "The Dead Heart", even features a rather deft use of a cello and a beautiful French horn (played by Hunters and Collectors' Jeremy Smith).

Lucky enough to be in the right place (Sydney) at the right time (1984), I was able to catch Midnight Oil's stunning live show. While a Canadian tour is being rescheduled due to an onstage injury received by Garrett, look for some dates in Calgary and Vancouver, as rumours abound that Edmonton will likely be left off the circuit (thanks to dwindling concert goers).

This is an album that demands your attention and a band that will earn your respect.

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