

anything but sweet

by Ira Nayman

Sweetie
directed by Jane Campion
Avenue Entertainment

Sweetie is the kind of movie that lulls you to sleep with its gentle pace, then kicks you in the gut at the end.

Everything about director Jane Campion's first feature film is gentle; the pace, the conflicts, the performances and even the humour. Perhaps too gentle for North American audiences.

The only thing not the least bit gentle about this Australian film (despite the fact it is Australian, don't expect the usual references to Crocodile Dun — damn!) is the

title character. But, if you aren't interested in gentle, she will more than redeem the rest of the film for you.

The story centres around the relationship between Kay (Karen Colston) and Louis (Tom Lycos). Kay seduces Louis away from his fiancée of a few minutes (almost an hour, really) because a tea leaf reading suggests they are fated to be together. After an initial period of happiness (over a year), Kay inexplicably moves away, physically and emotionally, from Louis.

Into this situation jumps Kay's sister, Dawn (Genevieve Lemon), dragging her current boyfriend/business manager behind her. She is the Sweetie of the title, but sweet doesn't seem an appropriate

way to describe her. Dawn is a creature of voracious appetites, oral and sexual, an incredible slob and quite likely emotionally deranged.

Sweetie begins as a light film about an unusual relationship, but changes gears halfway through into a serious exploration of a family falling apart because of the inability of its members to deal with each other. Surprisingly, the transition is smooth, and viewers may find themselves wondering exactly when the mood shifted.

In the way it explores the differences between, and the relationship of, the two sisters, *Sweetie* is reminiscent of a Margaret Atwood novel. Dawn, spontaneous and wildly emotional, is everything

Kay, ascetic and distant, is not. There is the suggestion, particularly in the ending, that they are two sides of a single female persona.

But where Atwood would give us a clear indication of how the two characters came to be the way they were, Campion gives us only sketchy suggestions. For me, this was the weakest part of the film.

As Kay, Colston gives a wonderfully deadpan comic performance and even manages to invest her dramatic scenes with emotional depth which may or may not have been in the script. But, its Lemon's Dawn which will get most of the critical attention; just when you think you've seen the definitive over the top performance, somebody like her comes along.

Campion's direction is a little showy. Characters don't enter rooms, they are framed by doorways. There are numerous close-

ups and extreme close-ups of faces at the edge of the frame, speaking directly off-camera. The intention may have been to suggest that the characters are isolated, psychologically as well as physically; the actual effect, after repeated repetition, is to call attention to the direction.

Campion also uses symbols with mixed results. The use of broken ceramic animals (symbolizing the emotionally crippled characters) was straight out of Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. On the other hand, the use of trees (which ordinarily symbolize life) to represent evil and death, was more inspired.

Sweetie is a mixed bag of a film. I admit, I have a lot of difficulty coming to terms with it. But, if you're prepared to work at being entertained, you will find it very rewarding.

I think.

artscalendar

compiled by Kristy Gordon

With spring right around the corner, the dance dept presents *Spring Dance '90* featuring York's dancers on the brink of their professional careers. The performance will showcase original choreography by faculty members **Donna Krasnow, Holly Small, Jean-Louis Morin, and guest artist Philip Drube** March 16, 17 at The Betty Oliphant Theatre (404 Jarvis Street). Admission is \$8 for students, call 736-5137 for more info.

Make plans to catch **Professor Carl Rollyson from Bernard Baruch University**, New York, speaking on "Picking a Victim: A Biographer's Choice." Rollyson has published biographies on **Marilyn Monroe, Lillian Hellman and Martha Gallhorne** and is currently working on a biography of **Norman Mailer**. This free lecture is presented by the English dept March 8 at 4pm in 201 Stong. Call 736-5166.

La Maison de la Culture presents **Puzant Apkarian's** photographic exhibition *28 Men*. This display runs until March 26 in Glendon Hall, Glendon College. The gallery is open Mon-Fri from 11am - 4pm. Call 487-6730 for more info.

The music dept has a series of recitals lined up for the next few weeks. On March 8 at 8pm in DACARY HALL, a *Student Recital* by **Becca Whittle** will include works by Brahms, Ginastera and Gershwin. On March 13 at 3pm, **Janice Noble** will present a saxophone recital with works by Bozza, Maurice and Glazounov. At 3:30pm **Samuel D'Alfonso** presents works by Scarlatti, Bach, Mendelson and Barber. At 8pm,

Nina Scott-Stoddard will present a contralto recital of works by Purcell, Handel and Debussy.

Have you been to see *The Ties that Bind?*; an exhibit addressing women's issues. Catch this display in the Founders Art Gallery until March 15. Gallery hours are Mon-Fri 10am-10pm.

The York University Choir will perform on March 14 at 8pm in DACARY HALL featuring works by Brittan and Beethoven. Tickets are \$2 at the door.

The Glendon Gallery presents *Little Travesties* by Fred McSherry until March 18. Phone 487-6721 for more info.

The IDA Gallery (first floor fine arts building) presents an exhibition of work by students at all levels in an Interdisciplinary Studio Show until March 16. The gallery is open weekdays from 10am-5pm.

James Coleman presents *Box (Ahhareturnabout)* in the AGYU (RN145) until March 30. The display features the use of

sound and visuals which take the audience from the past to the present and into the future. The gallery is open Tues-Fri 10am-4pm, and Wed 10am-8pm.

Have you set aside March 16 to go to the Glendon College Cafeteria to see the **Scott Liddle Band** and **Big Ska Country?** Admission is \$4 for non-Glendon students. Phone 487-6703 for more info.

If you want 16,000 pairs of eyes reading about your event please bring your listing to the EXCAL office and leave it in the big manilla envelope on the arts board.



Genevieve Lemon (l) shown with Michael Lake upset family life in *Sweetie*.

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