

# Frankie and Johnny get waylaid

by Nigel Hamid

Can a short order cook and a waitress find love in a small New York cafe? That is the question in the bright romantic-comedy, *Frankie and Johnny*, a film from producer-director Garry Marshall.

Marshall brought us last year's blockbuster *Pretty Woman*, in which a street-smart prostitute and a rich businessman bump into each other on Hollywood Boulevard and ultimately fall in love. In *Frankie and Johnny*, the premise is the same, without the "Cinderella" fairy tale. Marshall's superbly written new creation is a more realistic account of two people coming together.

**film**  
**Frankie and Johnny**  
directed by Garry Marshall  
starring Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer  
produced by Paramount Pictures

A short order cook, played by Al Pacino, and a waitress, Michelle Pfeiffer, come together when a customer has an epilepsy attack. While both workers comfort the individual, Johnny asks Frankie out. She turns him down abruptly, piquing his interest. From the start of the film there is chemistry between them.

As you might expect from this kind of film, Johnny's persistence and charm lands him a date with Frankie, a date that includes a pas-

sionate kiss in a flowermart and steamy love scene — the kind that could wake any neighbour. It seems that nothing can go wrong for those two, but everything does.

Frankie does not return Johnny's attention. Her reluctance to build any kind of relationship with him is accompanied by rage and contempt. Still, despite her repeated attempts to brush Johnny off, he returns to profess his undying love for her.

He tries to convince her that they "were a couple before (they) met;" both were born in Altoona; he divorced three years prior, the same time she broke up with her boyfriend; and, coincidentally, their names are part of a famous love song.

Frankie refuses to listen. She believes that love only happens to other people. During this relentless courtship, the mystery of Frankie's misery is kept secret until the film's climax.

Part of the film's appeal lies in the screenplay by Terrence McNally, who adapted the picture from his play *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. The clever and witty interaction amongst the characters is a pleasure to behold. One cannot help but recall the exceptional dialogue of *When Harry Met Sally*.

Another part of the film's appeal lies in the performances. Pacino's love-struck cook is played with the utmost ease. His characterization is effortless as if the part was tailor-

made for him. After his last performances as a lame-brain mobster in *Dick Tracy* and a repenting Don in *Godfather, Part III*, it is a pleasure to see Pacino in a more uplifting role.

Pfeiffer proves she is more than capable of moving audiences with Frankie's slow transition to emotional stability.

The film also has a strong supporting cast. Hector Elizondo steals the picture with his short but sweet portrayal of Nick the cafe-proprietor. Kate Nelligan is a surprise as Cora, Frankie's fellow waitress.

*Frankie and Johnny* is not only a good film, it is also an incentive for those having trouble finding Mr. or Ms. Right. Its message is simple: hang in there, he or she is not far away.

## Small film, big meaning

by Nina Kolunovsky

I realize a Canadian movie about two Jewish guys walking around a park is not everybody's idea of a Saturday night out. But *The Quarrel* is one of the few really good movies out this fall.

The premise is simple. Two Holocaust survivors meet again in 1948 Montreal. Hersh (Saul Rubinek) is an orthodox rabbi; Chaim (R. H. Thomson), his childhood friend, left the faith many years ago and now makes his living as a poet. They reminisce before taking up the classic debate between the religious and secular worlds.

The simplicity of the park setting emphasizes the simplicity of the situation. These men are not larger than life, neither heroes nor villains. They are just ordinary people trying to deal with ordinary problems in the shadow of extraordinary circumstances.

Chaim is haunted by making the wrong choice when no right choice was possible. Hersh regrets the way he treated his father. Both were traumatized by the unresolved quarrel they had when Chaim decided to leave the orthodox world of their childhood.

**film**  
**The Quarrel**  
directed by Eli Cohen  
starring Saul Rubinek and R. H. Thomson  
produced by American Playhouse Theatrical Films

Both have been painfully lonely since the death of their families.

This kind of story has the potential to be depressingly moral, alienating its audience. But, under the able direction of Eli Cohen, it never moralizes or explains. *The Quarrel* lets us observe its main characters and draw our own conclusions. The apt parallel with the biblical story of Joseph and his brothers, for instance, is suggested, not jammed down the audience's throat. Numerous touches of humour release the tension and somehow make the story more realistic.

There are small problems which affect our suspension of disbelief: the actors' accents aren't strong enough, for instance. As well, at that time in Mount Royal park, they would be much more likely to hear English around them than French.

Rubinek is entirely believable as the man whose suffering feeds his faith. Thomson, on the other hand, is a great theatrical actor whose passion

and power sometimes appear as overacting on the screen. A pleasant surprise is Robert Haia's performance as one of Hersh's fanatical students.

The film raises many valid moral questions without giving pat answers. If reason alone causes morality, would not morality become arbitrary? (You can do whatever you want as long as it makes sense to you.) The arguments for and against the secular outlook are extensive and equally well presented, a challenge considering the mainly secular audience for which the film was intended.

In the end, theology is just a mask for the underlying universal feelings of trust, betrayal and divided loyalties. People of all religious and ethnic backgrounds should be able to relate to that.

*The Quarrel* is playing at the Carlton and Canada Square Cinemas.



Michelle Pfeiffer and Al Pacino celebrate romance in Garry Marshall's *Frankie and Johnny*. Worried about your love life? The film offers all of us hope.



RESTAURANT & NIGHTCLUB  
presents

ANNUAL HALLOWE'EN PARTY

OCTOBER 31, 1991

WITH

DJ CHRIS SHEPPARD

from CFNY-FM 102.1

cover \$5.00

(19 years of age and over)

**BEST COSTUMES WIN!!!**

- One-Day Trip for 2 at the World Famous Caesars Palace in Atlantic City
- \$100.00 Paparazzi Dinner Gift Certificate
- Paparazzi V.I.P. Gold Card
- Many More Prizes!

EVERY THURSDAY NIGHT

DJ CHRIS SHEPPARD

from CFNY-FM 102.1

Students show your school ID card at the door and pay NO cover charge till 10 p.m. (19 years of age and over)

270 West Beaver Creek Road, Richmond Hill 886-6239

Earn money while pursuing your full-time university studies.

Challenge yourself physically and mentally. Take advantage of part-time and summer employment opportunities with the Reserve Entry Scheme Officer program.

Be part of a dynamic team. Join the Reserve now!

For more information, contact:

Toronto Militia District  
Recruiting Office  
1107 Avenue Road  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5N 2E4 (416) 482-5938 (Collect)

Gordon, full-time university student and part-time officer candidate in the Militia.



CANADIAN

ARMED

FORCES

REGULAR AND RESERVE

Canada