Arts cont'd

men don't leave: inconsistent tearjerker

by Tony Cogliano

Men Don't Leave Warner Bros. directed by Paul Bickman

Many of today's films tend to be either severe tearjerkers or corny rehashes of glory long gone. Very rarely does one find a film both original and heartwarming, subtle yet meaningful. Take heart, Kleenex fans . . . such a film has just arrived.

Men Don't Leave blends comedy and pathos into a formula for tears and laughter. The film is honest, appealing and tender. The story revolves around the Macauly family. John, the loving husband, provides his wife, Beth, and their two sons, Chris and Matt, with a contented country lifestyle. John is killed in a working accident, and here begins the struggle that makes Men Don't Leave such a powerful film.

In the aftermath of her husband's death, Beth must learn how to deal with her emotions, her finances and, most importantly, her children. She finds out quickly that keeping her family together is as great a task as anything else in her life.

Jessica Lange, as Beth, delivers a refreshing and powerful performance. Ignore the Lange of past disasters ... this movie is no King Kong. She is animated and determined, and her performance is brilliant. Arliss Howard (Full Metal Jacket) co-stars as Beth's newly found love interest, a charming, eccentric, professional musician. Joan Cusack, fresh from her roles in Working Girl and Broadcast News, plays the nymphomaniacal neighbour in the Macauly's apartment building.

She (very) quickly seduces the eldest son Chris (Chris O'Donnel), and becomes an integral part of the film's storyline.

IMAGINE TOPPER DIRECTED BY INGMAR BERGMAN

"NOTHING LESS THAN THE BEST GENRE FILM OF 1989!"

"A SUBTERRANEAN CLASSIC ... CRUDELY POETIC

* * * (HIGHEST RATING



The matriarch of the Macauley family, Beth (Jessica Lange) and her sons Chris (Chris O'Donnel, left) and Matt (Charkie Korsmo).

However, this film is not without problems. It is choppy, as though the plot skips over something important every now and then, dumping the audience into a new setting without revealing the reason for the jump. Luckily, this becomes nothing more than a slight annoyance.

The other problem is that the

New York Daily News

character Matty (Charles Kirsmo), who can't be more than nine years old, occasionally seems to say things that would put a professor to shame. Throughout the movie the child is unbelievably deep-in-thought. It is obvious that a child in these circumstances would be forced to grow up, quickly, yet some of the

things Matty says and does border on the unbelievable.

Perhaps the film's biggest problem, however, is the treatment of Cusack's character. Her importance to the film (she is, in essence, a reflection of Beth; her conscience) is almost overlooked because for three quarters of the film, her character is a pain. She

whines, she's overbearing and utterly irritating. Consequently, this portrayal seriously undermines her later, more serious performance in the film.

Men Don't Leave is a human story of hope, love and perseverance. It is, simply put, a tearjerker. Men Don't Leave opens nationwide February 23.

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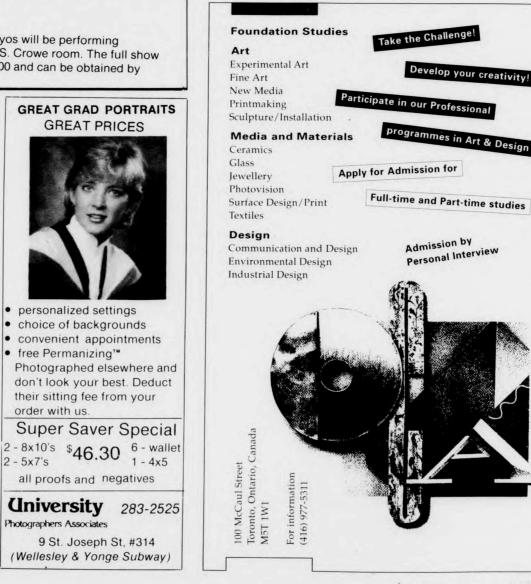
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CORRECTION: Contrary to Tuesday's artscalendar, Roberto D'Amico and Kitty de Hoyos will be performing excerpts from Historias de Romances Y Corridos Feb. 10 in the Harry S. Crowe room. The full show is being performed Feb. 9 at the St. Lawrence Centre. Tickets are \$25.00 and can be obtained by calling 736-5172. A reception (included) will follow. EERILY ATMOSPHERIC CHILLER. RETURNS TO CLAIM ITS PLACE AS A CLASSIC Peter Travers, Rolling Stone Terrence Rafferty. The New Yorker J. Hobberman, Village Voice



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