

# Greasy family secrets

**T**HE parallels between the ruthlessness of bugs and the aristocratic lifestyle of an elite British family are symbolic clues to Philip Haas' *Angels and Insects*. If anything, this is a story about people who misguide themselves. Throughout the film there is asked the questions: "What is civil?" and "What is primitive?"

Mark Rylance (*Prospero's Books*) plays naturalist William Adamson — just back from a ten-year expedition in the Amazon — who finds himself at the estate of Sir Harold Alabaster (Jeremy Kemp of *Four Weddings and a Funeral*). It's at this place where William will endure mixed emotions concerning his love life and his future in the natural sciences. While staying with the Alabasters, he falls in love with eldest daughter Eugenia, played by Patsy

## FILM

**Angels and Insects**  
starring Mark Rylance  
directed by Philip Haas

Kensit (*Lethal Weapon 2*), and eventually marries her.

William's new-found happiness is tempered by his brother-in-law's dislike of him. And while tutoring his wife's younger siblings, he begins to take notice of some odd behaviour within the household. William begins to do research on an ant colony with Matty Crompton (Kristin Scott Thomas), an impoverished relative living with the Alabaster family. An attraction between the two grows and it is through her that William discovers the seductive family secrets that shatter his image of the prestigious family.

One could describe this 19th century period piece as simply a

love story, but at times it comes off as soft porn. Director Philip Haas (*Music of Chance*) adds a peculiar score of music that gives *Angels and Insects* a strange atmosphere that is appropriate for the lush English setting. The story is interesting, but the suspense Haas has tried to integrate doesn't have an even flow. Though the climax contained a shocking twist, the pace of the film stayed the same. Hence, it really didn't turn full circle, even if the acting was good.

An alternative to period pieces



William and Eugenia, lust or love?

like blockbuster *Sense and Sensibility*, *Angels and Insects* offers a genre of its own to the big screen.

*Angels and Insects* opens March 8 at and plays at Wormwoods until the 21st of March. Show times

are 7 p.m. on even days and 9:15 p.m. on odd days. Running opposite *Angels and Insects* is *Othello* for the first week and *Carrington* the second week.

JAMES SULLIVAN



## Everyday life, Hollywood style

### FILM

**Beautiful Girls**

starring Timothy Hutton, Matt Dillon,  
and lots of beautiful girls

I was dragged to *Beautiful Girls*.

I wanted to see *City Hall* ("WE ARE GOING TO FIGHT BACK!" barks Pacino in the trailer. You have to love that guy, even when his performances go way over the top like in *Heat*). I did not want to see another movie about a bunch of screwy mid-twenty-year-olds trying to adjust to real life à la *Reality Bites* and *Singles*. I hate those kind of flicks. I go to the movies for entertainment, not to see some semi-distorted reflection of the general chaos surrounding my everyday life.

Yet surprisingly, I liked *Beautiful Girls*.

The setting is a small North Eastern industrial town. Aspiring musician Willie (Timothy Hutton) returns home from the piano bar circuit in New York to attend his 10-year high school reunion. He meets up with his old friends, including Tommy (Matt Dillon), the popular "birdman;" and, Paul (Michael Rappaport), who's kind of a wacky-ass.

The guys are all desperately holding on to the dream of finding the perfect girl and having the perfect relationship. Willie is hesitant to settle down with his girlfriend Tracey (Annabeth Gish), who is a successful lawyer. Upon his return home, he meets a smart, funny, and beautiful girl (Natalie Portman), whom he thinks could potentially make the perfect companion. She's only 13 years old, but cradle-robbing Jerry Lee Willie toys with

the fantasy of returning to be with her a few years down the road.

Tommy also has a devoted girlfriend (Mira Sorvino), but is lured by the advances of his dream girl, Darien (Lauren Holly), an old flame from high school who is now married. Likewise, Paul is having trouble committing to his girlfriend Jan (Martha Plimpton). He is obsessed with the supermodels who adorn his bedroom walls, any of whom, he dreams, would make the perfect companion.

Rosie O'Donnell and Uma Thurman are the women who bring the men back to reality, each in their own unique way.

Although fear of commitment and growing up are a couple of themes that have been dealt with extensively in other movies, the story is fresh enough to keep you interested. Apart from a few cheesy scenes, the characters are fun and the dialogue is pretty amusing. The interactions between Hutton and Portman are among the best in the movie. Portman is an incredibly smooth actress for someone so young. Rosie O'Donnell is standard Rosie O'Donnell, her model-bashing dialogue sounding like something straight from her stand-up routines. Uma Thurman is radiant, as always, and carries her scenes with Hutton. The small town atmosphere is a refreshing backdrop to the story.

I had a good time at *Beautiful Girls*. I don't think it's worth eight bucks, but definitely take a look on cheap night.

LUKE MERRIMEN

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avec Mme Barbara LeBlanc, professeure  
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