

Jumpin' Jack lacks flash

By ANGELA LAWRENCE

Take a tired suspense plot, flavour it with a touch of modern technology and a dash of humour from a promising '80s star, mix them together and you've got the recipe for *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, Whoopi Goldberg's first comic role in a feature film. However, the recipe for this "adventure comedy" is missing some essential ingredients, most noticeably the seasoning needed to make it a main course success.

Terry Doolittle (Whoopi Goldberg), a bank employee who handles international transactions, is approached through her computer by Jack a.k.a. "Jumpin' Jack Flash," a member of British Intelligence trapped somewhere in the Soviet Union.

Jack requests help from Terry who willingly goes to the British Consulate with a coded message in order to secure Jack's release. Corrupt British officials—in alliance with the Russian bad guys—don't acknowledge the message and Terry unknowingly becomes implicated in the dangerous world of espionage. It is this scenario that serves as the premise for the "adventure" and "comedy" in *Jumpin' Jack Flash*.

The film starts at a slow pace with Terry doing a lot of fiddling with her computer in order to communicate with Jack, and though she soon finds herself in many hairy situations—ranging from being dragged down the street inside a telephone booth to getting her evening gown caught in a paper shredder—*Jumpin' Jack Flash* still doesn't quite bounce into action.

Director Penny Marshall's inability to create an even balance between the comic and suspense scenes is one of the film's central weaknesses. She often integrates the two genres with bad results and many of the suspense scenes come off as no more than extensions of



MAKIN' WHOOP! LAUGH: Whoopi Goldberg, star of *Jumpin' Jack Flash*, left to carry the burden of this confused film.

Terry's far from hilarious situations. When Terry is kidnapped by a double agent played by Roscoe Lee Browne, the thrilling atmosphere is destroyed by a badly timed joke based on Terry's confusion between a pawn and a prawn. The joke, along with the scene, falls flat.

Many films have used the same tired spy plot and remolded it into an enjoyable and successful film, as in *Foul Play* starring Goldie Hawn and Chevy Chase. However, unlike *Foul Play* no teamwork is used in *Jumpin' Jack Flash* although many good actors appear in the film—James Belushi, Carol Kane, Jon (the liar) Lovitz (of *Saturday Night Live*

fame), and John Wood—but these actors are rarely in a scene long enough to make much of an impression, good or bad.

Jumpin' Jack Flash is all Whoopi Goldberg, and with her amusing antics, macho strut and matching yellow scarf and Reeboks, she tries her best to make the audience laugh. Her Diana Ross impersonation, used to get her into a snobby ball, shows Goldberg at her best.

However, in light of the film's weak script and the director's obvious inexperience, too much weight is left on the shoulders of Goldberg who is unable to carry the film alone, and shouldn't have to.

An contest.

Excalibur has five pairs of tickets for the premiere of *Lord of the Rings*, playing at the O'Keefe Centre Oct. 21-26. All you have to do is drop in and tell us what book is the 'prelude' to *Lord of the Rings*. And you'll be off to see Frodo, Gandalf and the whole gang. (And yeah, we know about that typo up there.)

Thanksgiving concert at End was no turkey

By DAVID KYNE

The eve of a holiday weekend is an awkward time to present live music at York. Nevertheless, two bands, Hungry Glass and Company Town, the evening's headliners to take the stage. A far more mature and experienced band than Hungry Glass, Company Town gave a slick, bold and brassy performance of a kind not often seen at a venue such as the Open End.

Right from the start, Company Town was fast, professional and very tight. There was a sense of immediacy, a sort of inspired urgency to their playing that was most pleasing to hear—and feel. The result was a fast-paced, polished and professional performance.

As with Hungry Glass, Company Town played a format of good, solid original tunes interlaced with a wide-ranging selection of covers, from The Byrds and R.E.M. through to John Cougar Mellencamp.

The band has been together for over a year with its present line-up, although it's been around for more than two years in various incarnations. The members describe their style of music as "Downtown" country. That is, pared-down, basic, urban core rock 'n' roll with a tributary country influence.

Although the concerts were successful, Radio York should examine the calendar more carefully next time before setting something like this up. It's unfortunate that the bands were robbed of a larger audience.

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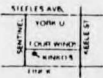
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