

Husbands and Wives

by Michael "victimized 32-19" Graham

I had very high expectations about Allen's new film "Husbands and Wives". It was being touted by most reviewers as being on the same level as "Annie Hall", "Manhattan", and "Crimes and Misdemeanors". However, it falls short of this high plateau of filmmaking and I was at first quite disappointed with it. But now that I've somewhat managed to separate my expectations of "Husbands and Wives" from the film itself, I must say that it is a fine piece of work.

Husbands & Wives

Written and directed by Woody Allen
Wormwood's Cinema, Nov. 13 - 19

"Husbands and Wives" deals with the nature and relationship between marriage, desire, age, fidelity, and separation. The plot is centred around two married couples; Gabe and Judy (Allen & Mia Farrow) and Jack and Sally (Sidney Pollack & Judy Davis).

The movie begins with erratic camera movement as Jack and Sally casually announce that they are going to split up after twenty odd years of marriage. What follows is a lot of introspection on the part of Gabe and Judy as to the state of their marriage. At the same time, Jack and

Sally are readjusting to single life and refusing to admit that they are both failing. Throughout the film, Gabe is having an innocent professor-student "affair" (I use the word loosely) with 20 year old Rain (played outstandingly by Juliette Lewis). Gabe's wife, Judy showers her affections on Michael (Liam Neeson), who is in love with Sally. Oh - did I mention that Jack is having a superficial affair with his flaky aerobics instructor? Confused yet?

It is no wonder that Woody Allen went about 20 minutes over his average film length with "Husbands and Wives". There are seven principal characters and seven interwoven relationships happening! This may sound like a really bad soap opera, but it isn't. The writing and acting are inspired and the characters are completely believable. They deeply question their lives and the morality of their actions. Most of this self-examination comes through during the amateur documentary style interviews which are intercut throughout the story. They reveal (after the fact) what was going on in the character's head during the events covered in the film.

The role of Rain was originally given to an actress with whom Allen

didn't get along with and so Juliette Lewis ("Cape Fear") was cast in the role. I couldn't imagine a better actress. She stole the show. She was totally convincing in her portrayal of a talented young writing student and shined in the numerous three minute uncut scenes with Allen. Perhaps I give her more praise because she was so young among the veteran actors she was working with — and who also put in great performances, but Lewis was just perfect.

This film offers a pretty bleak outlook on marriage...and being single past a certain age — especially for women. Sally reiterates time and time again that time is running out for her. A few more years and she won't be attractive to men so she had better hurry up. Later, after realizing that she isn't prepared to live a single and unstable life she must compromise. Judy, as well, seems to be rushing Gabe to have another child because "time is running out". The men in this movie have a tough time of it as well. Jack is plagued by regret, humiliation and alienation. Gabe chooses morally with regards to Rain and is, in the end, unmarried, unhappy, and "out of the race".

Does this film mirror Woody Allen's life? This question has been



Woody Allen contemplates life, morality, and camera angles

asked of many of his films (especially "Annie Hall" and "Stardust Memories"). Now, however, Woody is surrounded by scandal and allegations — coming from such paragons of journalism as Time and Newsweek. I don't think that there is a definitive answer to this question. You'll have to watch the movie and make up your own mind about this. Don't let this question plague you however,

because you'll never be able to keep track of who is in love with who and why!

Life may not be as wonderful for Gabe in "Husbands and Wives" as it was for say, Isaac in "Manhattan", but it is inevitably worth living. In the same way, this film is not as wonderful as some of Woody Allen's previous efforts, but it is most definitely worth seeing.

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Watchmen's effort short-sighted

by Roland Stone

I rather enjoyed my first couple of listens of The Watchmen's second release, *McLaren Furnace Room*. The more I checked out the recording by this four-piece from Winnipeg, however, the more problematic I found it.

The Watchmen *McLaren Furnace Room* MCA Records

Side one starts off pretty heavily with some fuzzy guitar work leading the way and a punchy, often distorted bass following. The song structures are simple, but have some creative rhythmic and syncopated sections which give the band somewhat of a unique sound. The solos are tasteful and the drumming is solid but not spectacular.

The overall sound of this recording resembles a band that has listened to a lot of Tragically Hip prior to getting signed. The vocals of Danny Greaves are particularly similar to those of Gord Downey of the Hip. One problem Greaves has though, is that he thinks he's a better singer than he actually is and tends to oversing in places (la la la etc.).

This all sounds pretty interesting if not merely tolerable so far, right? I thought so too until I listened yet

closer and caught some lyrics which prompted me to read the lyric sheet. The second song "Run and Hide" has the lines "I hate to see you lying there curled up in a ball, I hate to smash your pretty face against the fucking wall." Now, having been a fan of bands such as Slayer and other similar acts, I've listened to my share of offensive material. But since spousal abuse is a chronic problem in our society, I see no reason for a rock band to write lyrics which perpetuate and even glorify the problem in such a nonchalant way. Forget political incorrectness, this is sheer callousness and stupidity. The same song goes on to say "You and me will be forever, I'm your hero and you're my treasure." Sounds like typical macho male bullshit to me.

Besides this, the lyrical content progresses (regresses) into the realms of cheesiness with such gems as "Something tells me her eyes are green, Makes you feel about fifteen." Having perused the lyrics thoroughly, I found nothing inspiring and would be hard-pressed to say that any of it is even particularly interesting. Enough said about the lyrics.

Side two was a bit confusing because it seemed as if I was listening to a whole different record. Gone were the grinding guitars and powerful songs in favour of a crop of much more pedestrian, anthemic tunes. Just

about any song here could be played of mainstream FM radio to fill out the Can/con requirement. For the most part the songs are still catchy and hummable, but are creatively lacking and fall somewhere in the midst of Tom Cochrane and Glass Tiger. Too bad considering side one is pretty rocking.

All in all this is a decent release by a band that is probably a powerful live act. But in light of the aforementioned lyrical problem and the increasing lameness toward the end, this release will not stand the test of time and will probably disappear as quietly as it came.



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