

# In the wake of Presidential scandal

## Primary Colors fun, fair

BY KARAN SHETTY

Any serious conversation on US government these days inevitably devolves into lurid gossip about "presidential kneepads" or "the angle of the dangle". Unfortunately I have to tread where everyone else is sick of going, since Bill Clinton and his little peccadilloes are at the heart of Mike Nichols' new film, *Primary Colors*.

*Primary Colors*, if you haven't heard by now, is a thinly veiled satire of all the pre-election fervour surrounding Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign. It is based on the best-selling book by an anonymous author who was later revealed to be *Newsweek* columnist Joe Klein. I only read the first 100-or-so pages of the book before watching the movie, since viewing a film after reading the novel it is based on always makes the film less enjoyable. One inevitably starts comparing the film and the novel which isn't really fair considering the fact that literature is a much more artistically refined form of art. A film should be judged on its own merit and only in

comparison with other films. Anyway, enough with the editorializing...

*Primary Colors* is one of those slick Hollywood productions which plays more like a well-oiled machine than a movie, but that doesn't mean it isn't any fun. While the book's charm lay in its verisimilitude through its attention to detail, the movie's focus on the story aspect is what makes it work.

The story is told through the eyes of Henry Burton (played by British stage actor Adrian Lester), a young black campaign worker whose grandfather was a famous civil rights leader. Henry gets sucked into the sleazy world of campaign politics and becomes the closest aide to Jack Stanton (John Travolta), a governor from a backwater southern state. He believes that Stanton actually stands for something and is a throwback to the days when those who ran for office had strong moral convictions. As the election progresses, though, Henry can't help but see a seamier side of the Governor while trying to conceal aspects of his private life: affairs, draft-dodging, illegitimate children and even a jail term.

The film is quite good at

presenting Stanton as morally ambiguous. He's not just a philanderer with a heart of gold but a guy who has some real problems. At the end Henry is left to decide whether or not Stanton's energy and charisma outweigh his moral weaknesses.

The film is a little shaky at the beginning while trying to establish the storyline but once it gets going it's a pleasure to sit back and watch a group of veteran actors, which also includes Emma Thompson, Kathy Bates and Billy Bob Thornton, slip into their roles.

Will this film sully Clinton's already tarnished image? It really depends on how you personally interpret it. The film, to its credit, doesn't sanitize all its character's faults like most other Hollywood movies have the tendency to do (take *The People Vs. Larry Flynt* for example). Seeing the "First Lady" weep after learning of one of her husband's affairs or watching "the President" have a heart-to-heart discussion with the guy behind the counter at a donut shop are poignant reminders of how the human element is often lost after the media manipulates all the facts.



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## Reapin' the benefits

Christian rockers on the divine path...to success

BY KAREN PARKER

In the few years they have been together, Halifax's Sow & Reap have won a provincial Battle of the Bands, opened for a nationally known band at the McInnes Room and released a CD. Not bad for a group of young men who describe their sound as "contemporary Christian rock".

The band, comprised of five recent high school graduates from the Halifax area, came into being about two years ago when a group of friends decided to

combine their common backgrounds in Christianity and music.

Since then, they have made a name for themselves playing

and released last June. It has sold well in both Christian and secular music stores in the Halifax area.

When asked if they plan to release another CD, Bergman says that Sow & Reap has enough material for a new project, but they would first like to pursue a contemporary Christian record contract before releasing another album.

One of the group's more recent accomplishments was securing a gig at the McInnes Room this past November, where



churches, coffee houses and schools in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

But band member Mark Bergman says that the band would not limit themselves to the above-mentioned types of venues. Their main goal is to let as many people as possible hear their message, and they have no aversion to playing a bar or other such venue if it means they might reach a wider audience.

Sow & Reap's success reached new heights last April when they participated in the provincial Battle of the Bands competition in Dartmouth. They competed against 25 other bands from across Nova Scotia and came away with a first place finish.

Their win was one of the factors which encouraged the band to record their debut CD last summer. The disc, *The Harvest*, was recorded locally

they opened for Hocus Pick, one of Canada's most popular Christian bands.

At the end of April Sow & Reap will be returning to Dalhousie for another show. It will be at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, and this time they're the headliners. The group has taken on the financial and organizational responsibilities for the event, which will benefit a local ministry called ARK, which provides food, clothing and support to homeless and needy people in the Halifax area.

Tickets for Sow & Reap's Apr. 24 show are \$10 and can be purchased through the Rebecca Cohn Box Office (494-3820). Concert-goers are also asked to bring a used pair of shoes, which will be donated to ARK.

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