



Daryl Hannah plays Madison, a mermaid, who tackles a lobster dinner in an unusual way.

the movies
Dan Greenberg

'Splash' offers fun, fantasy, romance

There's lots of new movies around, as Hollywood gears up for post-Oscar summer prime-time. Good news if you're tired of the same old numbers overlaying their welcome.

There's something for everyone: song and dance, sex and serious drama, adventure and comedy.

On the lighter side is Touchstone Films' "Splash" starring Daryl Hannah as Madison the Mermaid and Tom Hanks as her lover, Allen Bauer, the Vegetable King. The film is a two-hour Disney adventure with a mildly mature theme.

Hannah, the aerobic replicant in "Blade Runner," is an accomplished swimmer, dancer and gymnast. She showed her training in "Rockless," starring as the sweet young thing who had everything, except a steady boyfriend. She soon remedied that. When she wasn't working out on the parallel bars, she worked out on the mat (tress).

"Splash" showcases her attractively and she does her own stunts and swimming while conveying the rudimentary emotions required.

Hanks manages his mermaid-lover role minimally well, strongly aided by two very funny supporting actors. John Candy plays the fat, fast-living playboy brother Freddie as a cross between John Madden and Hugh Hefner. Eugene Levy provides a lot of laughs as screwball scientist Dr. Kornbluth, who is out to prove there really is a mermaid in town.

On the whole, "Splash" is fun, although unevenly paced with draggy moments between comedy, romance and slapstick routines. It's a Disney real-life adventure with nifty underwater sequences, fantasy and a somnolent plot. It's PG enough for parents and probably will do well at the box office.

Apparently Disney Studio fears its real-life-adventure "G" rating would prove terminal box office, so it opted for a new name, Touchstone, which screams out, "This is not a Disney film!"

The bottom line: If "Splash" does as well as Disney's "Never Cry Wolf," now nearing the \$25-million mark (and it probably will), then all the Disney concern about no market for "The Racoon Who Thought He Was a Hound" was for naught.

Everyone loves the gymnast who thought she was a mermaid.

"ICE PILATES" is an unabashedly naked steal of "Star Wars," with liberal borrowing from "Alien," "I Spy," "Raiders" and everything else since "The Jazz Singer."

How the theme music avoids copyright infringement is beyond me. Perhaps the film makers borrowed so much from so many that no one knows who should file the first lawsuit.

It's a fairly polished production, however, and worth an idle 90 popcorn-minutes if you don't mind plagiarism and occasional foolishness: High-heeled boots in the desert, spaceships brigs with windows and actors dragged unscathed across the rocky desert by unicorns.

Come on, Make-up, rumple their clothes, and one facial bruise, please.

"CARMEN" CONTINUES exclusively at the Maple Theater in Bloomfield Township. With "The Dresser" at the Prudential in Southfield, these two films have six well-deserved Oscar nominations, five for "The Dresser" and Best Foreign Film for "Carmen."

Another nominee for Best Foreign Film is Diane Kurys' "Entre Nous," also exclusively at the Maple. Beautifully photographed, well-acted and beautifully designed, the production nonetheless has an unsatisfying, episodic quality.

Viewers certainly deserve logical events, clear relationships and discernible motivations in realistic drama. In this film about a close, loving friendship between two women, Kurys seems more intent on supporting a weak feminist message than on directing credible drama. Still, a beautiful-looking film.



Tom Hanks is Allen Bauer, who is gifted with a statue of a mermaid from his girlfriend.

what's at the movies

- ANGEL (R). Do you care what drives a 14-year-old all-"A" student to night-time prostitution?
- BLAME IT ON RIO (R). Michael Caine in comedy romance about a middle-aged man and his best friend's daughter.
- BROADWAY DANNY ROSE (PG). Excellent, warm comedy with Woody Allen and Mia Farrow. No need to worry about taking the kids.
- CARMEN (R). Beautifully choreographed modern version of the opera. A very mild "R."
- THE DRESSER (PG). Life and relationships behind the scenes of a touring stage company.
- FOOTLOOSE (PG). Energetic dance numbers wasted in this mish-mash of musical comedy and human drama.
- HARRY & SON (PG). Paul Newman and Robby Benson as father and son who have nothing in common.
- HOTEL NEW HAMPSHIRE (R). Based on John Irving's best-seller about the oddball Berry family. With Jodie Foster, Nastassja Kinski and Beau Bridges.
- LASSITER (R). Tom Selleck as international jewel thief working for Scotland Yard.
- LIQUID SKY (R). The R is for rotten. Plot's about aliens and New Wave decadence.

- REUBEN, REUBEN (R). Alcoholic poet modeled after Dylan Thomas or Brendan Behan played by Tom Conli.
- THE RIGHT STUFF (PG). Story of test pilots and aviators, from Chuck Yeager to Mercury Astronauts in film based on Tom Wolfe's best-seller.
- SILKWOOD (R). Meryl Streep, Kurt Russell and Cher in moving story about Karen Silkwood, plutonium poisoning and union politics.
- UNFAITHFULLY YOURS (R). Funny, entertaining romantic comedy with Dudley Moore and Nastassja Kinski.
- ZELIG (PG). Excellent film, a cleverly done statement about conformity in America, with Woody Allen and Mia Farrow.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.

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