



the movies

**Dan Greenberg**

## Phony is the word for teen romance in soap-opera style

Billy Joel sings: "Don't go trying some new fashion. Don't change the color of your hair. . . I like you just the way you are." Kristy McNichol plays a heroine who isn't true to herself when she takes an injury in "Just the Way You Are," a film as phony as they come.

"JTWYA" opens on a pleasantly audacious note. If they it had maintained the happy, breezy Broadway quality, it would have been a fine, funny film. But no such luck.

Too quickly, Kristy and crew descend into a gooey swamp of romantic claptrap. Heavy-handed, uneven romanticizing may work in a three-minute Billy Joel song. It doesn't work in a 100-minute film.

**SUSAN BELANGER** (McNichol) is a promising young concert flutist, currently playing with the Ballet Orchestra. Susan wears a leg brace because of a childhood illness, and that's the crux of the film's dramatic conflict.

The brace bothers Susan to the psychological extreme. She perceives a materialistic world where appearances count for everything and the brace destroys her success potential.

Never mind she has a promising musical career.

Never mind that Frank, handsome young stockbroker on the way up, wants to marry her and care for her.

Never mind that Sam and Frank and Jack and Ski Hunk and every guy she meets drags her, uncomplaining, off to bed. Some of their ardor cools when it comes to removing the brace, but on the whole she can't complain.

**HER BEST FRIEND**, a Cher look-alike and act-alike, doesn't do nearly as well. She, too, is horny and talented (a ballerina) but flat-chested — sorry, it's all over for her in this materialistic, adolescent world where appearances count for everything. The boys reject Susan's girlfriend but go for Susan.

Before the plane leaves for a European concert tour, there's a short detour for Susan to say goodbye to Mom and Dad. As with most youth-market-oriented films, parents are annoyances that, at best, must be placated out of some primordial sense of guilt. (They raised you and fed you and loved you and did their best, but it wasn't enough.)

Once the guilt is placated, however, you're free to do whatever feels good, however destructive it might be.

**SUSAN QUILTS** her concert tour and runs on up to a slick French ski resort where her intellectual caliber (and the film's) is amply demonstrated by her childish glee when the French desk clerk fails to find a reservation in the name of "Susan Belanger" but does find one for "Soo-zan Bell-an-jay."

Since Susan isn't content just the way she is, she goes to the ski clinic and has her leg brace replaced with a cast. Although the doctor is against it medically, his Gallic sense of romance wins out.

Naturally, casts are elegant at ski resorts, and Susan is off on an ever-greater social/romantic whirl.

By some magical alchemy of motion picture romanticism and youthful hypocrisy, limping from a ski injury is attractive while limping from a childhood illness isn't.

I severely distrust movies that pander to materialistic viewpoints and the need for instant gratification. "JTWYA" is slow, soapy plot development doesn't help either.

It just isn't true to its own self — or anything, for that matter.

## what's at the movies

**ALL OF ME (PG)**, Carl Reiner's latest, greatest comedy with Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin.

**AMADEUS (PG)**, Superb rendition of Mozart's life with Tom Hulce and F. Murray Abraham. Directed by Milos Forman.

**AMERICAN DREAMER (PG)**, Housewife wins trip to Paris and adventures right out of the books she reads. JoBeth Williams, Tom Cetti and Giancarlo Giannini.

**BODY DOUBLE (R)**, Brian DePalma's latest assault on women. Rated R&B for bad and boring.

**CAREFUL, HE MIGHT HEAR YOU (PG)**, Australian film exploring the bitter struggle between two sisters to gain possession of young boy whose mother died in childbirth.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences. All ages admitted.

PG Parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for pre-teens.

G-13 Parents are strongly cautioned to give special guidance for attendance of children under 13. Some material may be inappropriate for young children.

R Restricted. Under 18 requires accompanying parent or guardian.

X No one under 18 admitted.

## table talk

### Some place

The Place is something different from the old casual Royal Lounge formerly on the premises. Manager is David Forli, whose family owns the restaurant. Brother Mark Forli described the restaurant as "a New York super club. That's what we think we've got." He said the menu has everything from the corned beef sandwich the old Royal Lounge offered to chicken teriyaki, chicken wellington, seafood and steaks, plus daily features. Most popular dish is the menu's most expensive, Veal a la Place, at \$16.95. Dinner sandwiches start at \$5.95 and main entrees begin at \$8.95. Hamburgers at lunch are \$3.95 up. The Place, which has been open since May, has a striking art-deco decor in burgundy, grays and black, with custom-made stained glass on the walls. Hours are 11 a.m. to midnight Mondays-Thursdays; 11 a.m. to 1 a.m. Fridays and 4 p.m. to 1 a.m. Saturdays.

### Early dinners

Reduced-price dinners from the regular menu are served from 4-6 p.m. at the Vannelli Restaurant in Lake Orion. Entrees include homemade ravioli or baked lasagne at \$3.25 and a special Bolognese at \$9.95. Other entrees are Veal Dante, Veal Piccata, spaghetti and meat sauce, and pickered. Soup or juice, plus a choice of two from salad, potato, vegetable and side of spaghetti are included.

### French menu

Regional foods are paired with the French style of cooking, by Executive Chef James Abbey, at the Hannah Lay dining room at the Grand Traverse Resort Village. Lake Superior whitefish, smoked rainbow trout from the Traverse City area and northern Michigan duckling are some of the choices for main dishes. Sauces have featured locally grown black and white morel mushrooms, or cherries.

— Ethel Simmons



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