

# Angel epic goes way of all sequels

By JOHN MONAGHAN  
Special Writer

Like most sequels, "Faraway, So Close" stretches a great idea way too thin. Stunningly photographed and engagingly acted, this story of angels in modern-day Berlin walks a fine line between poetry and pretentiousness.

You might say that German director Wim Wenders has earned the right to be so self-indulgent. Actually, he's been that way all along.

A major international director since the early 1980s, Wenders made his biggest splash with "Wings of Desire" in 1988. Bruno Ganz starred as an angel who longs for an earthly life with a beautiful trapeze artist.

Ganz appears in "Faraway, So Close" (playing at the AMC Woodside after a recent run at the Detroit Film Theatre), but the focus here is on "Desire's" right hand man, Cassiel (Otto Sander). Leaning closer to a mortal so that

## MOVIES

he can hear better, the angel listens to not only on conversations but inner thoughts as well.

Usually, he's joined by fellow traveler Nastassja Kinski. Now sporting long blonde hair (remember her in Wenders' "Paris, Texas"?), she nurtures the troubled souls she watches over with a caring, often painful expression.

Black-and-white photography backs scenes in the angels' domain while ultra-bright colors accent the world of humans. Turning mortal so that he can save one of his charges, Cassiel has a bout with alcoholism before entering the lives of those he used to protect.

He also looks up old friend Ganz, a pizzeria owner still married to the trapeze artist. They have a beautiful daughter together, who has her father's angelic personality and her mother's passion for the high wire.

Wenders' films cleverly mix European sensibilities with stunning international casts. Aside from the welcomed return of Kinski, there's a great supporting role for Willem Dafoe as a cynical angel whose loyalties and motives remain clearly ambiguous.

You'll also find Lou Reed, Peter Falk and even Mikhail Gorbachev as themselves. Falk was hilarious and poignant in "Desire," given the superhuman ability to feel the presence of the angels. Here, he's simply along for a gag or two, including a misfire bit where he cons a pair of security guards who, like everyone else in Europe, are big "Columbo" fans.

Several different melodramas unravel at once in "Faraway, So Close," perhaps the most interesting of which involves a gangster/bootleg video exporter (Horst Buchholz) in search of his long-lost sister. They were separated as children during the last minutes of World War II.

Wenders also employs a modern-rock soundtrack, featuring U2's current hit "Stay" and a live performance by Reed. But even this device, a staple in all of the director's recent films, grows too self-consciously "hip" after while.

The movie, which runs almost 2½ hours, looks like it has been edited, though I'm not sure if it was too much or not enough. There are enough loose ends here to support two other movies, especially in the climactic scene aboard a barge loaded down with weapons.

At times an engaging meditation on the earthly and the ethereal, "Faraway, So Close" truly reflects the contrasts of its title.

If you have a comment for John Monaghan, call him at 933-2047, mailbox 1866, on a touch-tone phone, or write to him care of Street Sense, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

# Sharing, talking helped answer son's questions



STREET SENSE  
BARBARA SCHIFF

Voice Mail Message: This call is regarding the column on Playboy subscriptions for teenagers. I have a 17-year-old who goes to a private high school, makes straight A's, and is going to college next year. At 14, he expressed a similar interest and so I went out and bought "Playboy," "Penthouse" and "Hustler." Then I looked them over myself and went up to his room with them.

I showed him all of the magazines and what they had to offer ("Playboy" being the better option). We talked over the cartoons, the articles, the letters. I told him that the letters from "Hustler" clearly were not from real women; I told him that women would have to be psychotic to want to be hurt the way that these women said they wanted to be.

I pointed out that these were not pictures of real women; they were "perfect" — airbrushed, no blemishes or bruises. We talked about the importance of love and about sex and hormones. We talked for about two hours.

I gave him the magazines and told him he could share them with his friends, if he wished, as long as they were locked up (I have a younger son also). He is not allowed to have these magazines on a subscription basis. He may still look at them when I'm not around.

On his 16th birthday, I rented an X-rated movie, "Deep Throat," the only one I'd ever seen. I told him about mechanical sex, loving sex and what marriage meant, or should mean. I then left him to watch the movie alone. I think this is a private thing, and I didn't want him watching me for my reaction.

Then we discussed pornography again, and I let him know

that he was not to watch these movies in the house. After watching the movie he said that he became bored with it and felt he didn't have to sit through it a second time.

From the start, my husband supported me in all that I did. He was not, however, comfortable taking part in my talks with my son. I don't know if that's the best way to handle it. This might not be for every body, but it's what worked for us.

Dear Caller, Yours is the sixth response to the question of pornography for teenagers. What is so interesting is to see the wide range of different approaches to the same problem. We do not know everything yet to say this one is right or this one is wrong.

As discussed in the reply to the original caller, what might be right for one family might be the wrong thing for another. What I have to applaud is the good intentions of the parents who put themselves out in order to help their children solve a problem in their growth and development.

Also, I was impressed by the husband and wife working together for the benefit of the children rather than being at odds with one another.

I would like to use my response to your letter as an opportunity to thank all of my readers who are willing to share their experiences with others. I would think that there may be many readers who have opinions about the issues that are printed in this column, but who do not report them to us. May I sway you to overcome your reluctance and help us to learn from your experiences?

Barbara If you have a question or a comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. You can also leave a message by calling 933-2047, mailbox 1877, on a touch-tone phone.

## SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

### DETROIT FILM THEATRE

Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2323 for information. (\$5)

"Naked" (Britain — 1993), 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. March 4-5, 4, 7 p.m. March 6. Mike Leigh, the director of "Life Is Sweet" and "High Hopes," takes a walk on the wild side in this contemporary portrait

of anti-social behavior.

### KINOTHEK

Capital Theatre and Arts Centre, 121 University, Windsor. Call (519) 971-5160 for information. (\$4.50)

"Tristana" (Spain — 1970), 9 p.m. March 5-7, In Luis Bunuel's very dark comedy, a pretty young woman (Catherine Deneuve) is seduced by her guardian, loses a leg, marries the old man and lives to inherit his money. One of the director's finest works.

### MAGIC BAG THEATRE

22018 Woodward, Farmdale. Call 544-5030 for information. (\$4)

"Dazed and Confused" (USA — 1993), 8 p.m. March 3. It's the last day of school in 1976 as teenagers ponder the bigger issues in life, such as who will drive to get the Aerosmith tickets. Richard Linklater directs this subversive and entertaining comedy.

### MAIN ART THEATRE

118 N. Main St., at 11 Mile, Royal Oak. Films play through at least Thursday. Call 642-0180 for information and show times. (\$6.50; \$4 students; \$3 twilight/matinee)

"Schindler's List" (USA — 1993). Stephen Spielberg may finally get his Academy Award for this story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a war profiteer and Nazi crony who saved the lives of more than 1,000 Jews during the Holocaust.

"Six Degrees of Separation" (USA — 1994). Based on John Guare's award-winning play, a savvy young man (Will Smith) poses as Sidney Poitier's son to cajole his way into the home of a Fifth Avenue couple (Donald Sutherland and Stockard Channing).

"The War Room" (USA — 1993). A behind-the-scenes look at the 1992 Clinton campaign focuses not on the candidate but on his team of election advisors, led

by the charismatic James Carville and George Stephanopoulos. Veteran documentary filmmakers D.A. Pennebaker ("Don't Look Back") and Chris Hegedus direct.

### MAPLE THEATRE

4155 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield. Call 555-3950 for information. (\$5.75; \$3.95 matinee; \$2.95 twilight)

"Body Snatchers" (USA — 1994). The third version of Jack Finney's paranoid novel finds people replaced by alien replicas. Abel Ferrara directs.

"In the Name of the Father" (Britain — 1994). In this true story, Daniel Day-Lewis plays an Irishman falsely accused of bombing a pub near London in 1976. The brilliant story of miscarriage of justice is co-written and directed by Jim Sheridan, who teamed with Day-Lewis on "My Left Foot."

"Schindler's List." See Main Art Theatre listing.

### REDFOOT THEATRE

17350 Lahser, Detroit. Call 537-1560 for information. (\$2.50)

"Tin Pan Alley" (USA — 1940), 8 p.m. March 4; 2 and 8 p.m. March 5 (organ overture begins a half hour before show time). Alice Faye, Betty Grable, and Jack Oakie star in this musical about songwriters trying to sell their wares. The colorful musical numbers include "Sheik of Araby."

## PUBLIC AUCTION

TO DISPOSE OF INVENTORY PURCHASED AT U.S. MARSHALS SERVICE

SEIZED AND FORFEITED FROM

13 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA JEWELRY STORES

Lots purchased at U.S. Marshal's Auctions will be offered for sale plus other consignments which constitute the majority of the goods including: JEWELRY: Hundreds of 14 ct. gold rings and necklaces, 2 to 10 ct. diamond bracelets, emerald, sapphire, and ruby rings, bracelets, necklaces, diamond earrings, South Sea's pearls, etc. (Some pieces up to 16 ct. total weight) HANDMADE RUGS: Chinese, Turkish, Pakistani, Iran and more. Sizes ranging from 3x5 to 12x18. Many investment quality pieces. BRONZE STATUES: American and European after Remington, Mene, Rodin and more. Also wildlife bronzes including horses, lions, elephants and more. OTHER: Tiffany style lamps, jade carvings, cloisonne vases, oriental furniture, french furniture, a rare collection of bone carvings, lithographs by Chagall, Picasso, Scott and more.

### PLAZA HOTEL - SOUTHFIELD

16400 J.L. Hudson Drive

696 W. exit on Greenfield and turn left on J.L. Hudson Drive, turn right

Auction Held At

Saturday, March 5th

Preview at 11 a.m. Auction begins at 12:00 Noon

\*These lots were purchased at U.S. Marshal's Auction and are the private property of the auction company.

Terms: Cash, Verified check, all major credit cards - ASA Auctioneers Inc., A Private Organization, Info: 800-436-8289

### Bluebird Festival & Wildlife Art Show

**SATURDAY**  
March 5  
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

**SUNDAY**  
March 6  
Noon-5 p.m.

**ADMISSION: \$4**

March 5-6, 1994  
Jackson Community College  
Jackson, Michigan

Wildlife Programs & Workshops  
50+ Participating Wildlife Artists  
DNR Stamp Completions  
Conservation & Merchandise Booths

Stage Shows:  
"Professor Avian Guano"  
Sally Rogers in Concert  
Storyteller Ann Ravetta

Sponsored By The Dahlem Environmental Education Center  
For Festival Information Call: (517) 782-3453

## On the Town

DINING & ENTERTAINMENT

Authentic Traditional

## THAI CUISINE

Try a new taste sensation. It's a little bit of everything sweet, sour, hot and spicy. From lemon shrimp soup to peanut chicken. Your senses will be delighted.

Daily Lunch Buffet \$6.95  
11:00-2:30  
Dinner 5:00-9:30

"Best of Detroit"  
1993 Detroit Monthly

## BANGKOK CLUB

Southfield Road between 12 and 13 Mile Roads  
Southfield Commons 369-1400

MAKE YOUR MONEY WORK FOR YOU!  
LISTEN TO "YOUR MONEY MATTERS" ON

## WCAR RADIO 1090 AM

FRIDAYS, 11 AM TO 12 NOON  
• INVESTMENTS • TAXES • ESTATE PLANNING •  
DON'T MISS THE FREE YEAR END TAX AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES WORKSHOP AT THE LIVONIA CIVIC CENTER LIBRARY  
TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 7 PM TO 8:30 PM  
ADVANCED RESERVATIONS REQUIRED  
CALL 476-1777

LIVONIA COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICES  
MAKE WOOLLS, CPA • TERRY REED, RFP

## WHY PAY MORE?

Save \$\$\$ on your weekly grocery bill when you use the coupons that we're going to insert in this Thursday's home-delivered Observer & Eccentric

NEWSPAPERS

Save \$1.00  
Save \$2.00  
Save \$2.00  
Save \$2.00