

MOVIES

'Smoke' sequel generates little heat



JOHN
MORRIS

"Blue in the Face" was probably the most important movie to make than it is to watch. Shot in less than a week and featuring bits by Michael J. Fox and Rosalanne, it's an odd little film in search of a truly inspired

The project came about this way: director Wayne Wang and writer Paul Auster had just finished shooting "Smoke," the art house hit about a Brooklyn cigar store and its neighborhood clientele. They talked star Harvey Keitel into sticking around and let word get out that an improvisational film was in the making.

They came up with situations and then shot 10-minute takes with a single camera, both Wang and Auster taking turns in the director's chair. They culled the best material from these bits and strung them together with video interviews and newsreel footage of Brooklyn in its glory days.

"Smoke" was a nice little movie about how chance meetings can lead to poignant relationships with Augie's corner cigar store as emotional epicenter. "Blue in the Face" tries to examine the Brooklyn experience through its residents' attitude and history.

People from different ethnic groups stand in front of the store, and rattle off facts about the borough, things like 742 murders in the last year or 2,232 Belgian waffles sold in a given week. Others recount how Brooklyn has never recovered from the day when the Dodgers moved to Los Angeles.

Belgian waffles become something of a running gag throughout the film. They're the food of choice for Jilly Tomlin, who plays a fairly unconvincing homeless person, complete with chest hair

Madonna delivers a singing telegram to Keitel's Auggie and both wear an enjoyably smart-aleg grin. Roseanne, as the frustrated wife of Auggie's boss, takes her part in some surprising directions (apparently even for Keitel), but they don't make much sense dramatically.

You'll find Lou Reed showing every day of hard living and drug abuse waxing philosophical about New York. His bits are interspersed at intervals throughout the film, possibly because he self-consciously adjusts his glasses so many times that you couldn't watch in a single sitting.

Director Jim Jarmusch ("Stranger than Paradise," "Mystery Train") fares best as a guy who has decided to quit smoking. What better place to have his last Lucky Strike than with his buddy Auggie?

"I like to watch the smoke rise from it," he says reflectively, just three drags away from cold turkey. "It trails off like a thought, a memory."

As with "Smoke" the Brooklyn Cigar Company itself remains the film's most vivid creation. Framed pictures of cigar-chomping celebrities hang above ancient wood and glass display cases.

while Auggie's slow-witted assistant endlessly sweeps the butt-scarred floor.

The movie rightly says that little shops like this keep neighborhoods alive and give them character. "Blue in the Face" would like to send a similar message to Hollywood about how quirky, viable films can be made (need to be made) with a little pluck and tal-

ent. With few exceptions, however, this well-intentioned movie might be renamed "Red in the Face" for its lackluster performance with critics and at the box office. It plays through next week exclusively at Bloomfield's Maple Theatre.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 691-7275 or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Girlhood ties strong in endearing 'Now and Then'

By Bob Thomas

Q. How do you sell a female coming-of-age movie in today's male-oriented market?

A. By filling the cast with big names to play the girls as grownups.

That seems to be the formula for "Now and Then," a New Line Cinema release, and the results are generally satisfying, even endearing. Demi Moore, who produced the film along with Suzanne Todd, appears in it, along with Melanie Griffith, Rosie O'Donnell and Rita Wilson.

Most of "Now and Then" is devoted to a quartet of spirited 12-year-olds who portray the stars and youngsters. They are Christina Ricci (O'Donnell), Thora Birch (Griffith), Gaby Hoffmann (Moore) and Ashleigh Astor (Moore (Wilson)).

The story begins in a small Indiana town where the four women grew up. They have been summoned by Wilson, who is fearful as she faces the birth of her first baby. She is the only housewife of the four, her home suggesting a

The other three are overachievers. The sardonic O'Donnell is a doctor who has stayed in town and lives with a man. Griffith is a stuffed-up movie star who arrives in a white stretch limo. The embittered Moore writes best-selling books. Antagonisma erupts until

Flashback to a more innocent time.

REVIEW

The four girls wheel their bikes around town, dreaming up pranks and battling with four peppy brothers. They are gathering information about sex, some of it spurious, and are mostly problem-free, except for one girl whose parents are getting divorced.

They discover the four brothers skinny-dipping in a pond and get their revenge by scattering the boys' clothes over the landscape. They perform odd jobs to raise enough money for a tree house where they can hold their meetings.

The girls hold a seance in a graveyard, summoning the soul of a boy whose marker reads "Dear Johnny." They are consumed with curiosity to learn how the boy died. Bit by bit they unravel the 25-year-old mystery.

When the girls' story ends, the film returns to their adult counterparts. They realize their girlhood ties are just as strong as ever.

Lesli Linka Glatter, director of television series and prize-winning shorts, makes an impressive debut in features, eliciting heartfelt performances from both generations of actresses. The young stars perform just as adeptly as the women. The script, by I. M. Marder, is sensationally good.

lene King, is reportedly semi-autobiographical, and it is obviously deeply felt.

"ABSOLUTE PERFECTION."



Winona Anne Ellen Kate Alfie
 RYDER BANCROFT BURSTYN NELLIGAN WOODWARD
 HOW TO MAKE AN
 AMERICAN QUILT

[illegible]

AMC ABBEY 8	NOW PLAYING		AMC LAUREL PARK
AMC MAPLE 3	AMC STERLING CTR. 10	BEACON EAST	
GENERAL CINEMA CANTON	GENERAL CINEMA NOVI TOWN	SHOWCASE AUGUM HILLS	
SHOWCASE 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100	SHOWCASE STERLING HEIGHTS	SHOWCASE WESTLAND	
STAR GRADUAT AT 15 MILE	STAR ROCHESTER HILLS	STAR TAYLOR	
UNITED ARTISTS FAIRLANE	UNITED ARTISTS WEST RIVER	PRESENTED BY KITS NO PASSENGER CO-OPERS ACCEPTED	

**SATURDAY NIGHT,
SNEAK HOME FOR
THE HOLIDAYS.**



A black and white photograph of a man in a dark, textured coat, looking down with a somber expression. The image is grainy and high-contrast.

A JOCKE FOSTER FILM

HOME

FOR THE HOLIDAYS

[illegible]

SPECIAL SNEAK PREVIEW SATURDAY NIGHT

INVESTIGATION

SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE PARTIAL	SHOWCASE
SHOWCASE WESTLAND	STAR CROTON AT 2:30 PM	STAR JOHN H. AT 1:40 PM
STAR CROTON AT 2:30 PM	STAR TAYLOR	STAR WEST RIVER

Christina Ricci Thora Birch Gaby Ashleigh Aston
Ricci Birch Hoffman Moore

Melanie Demi Rosie Rita
Griffith Moore O'Donnell Wilson

**"THE BEST
COMING-OF-AGE
MOVIE SINCE
'STAND BY ME'"**
—*Los Angeles Times* (AUGUST 11, 1999)

**"NOW AND THEN MAKES
YOU LAUGH AND CRY!
IT'S FUNNY AND CHARMING!"**
—*United States: USA Today* (AUGUST 11, 1999)

**"NOW AND THEN IS A
WONDERFULLY HEARTFELT STORY."**
—*Journal News* (AUGUST 11, 1999)

**"WARM AND WONDERFUL
'OSCAR' TO ALL!"**
—*Chicago Tribune* (AUGUST 11, 1999)

**"IT WILL TOUCH YOU LIKE
NO OTHER MOVIE THIS YEAR."**
—*Chicago Tribune* (AUGUST 11, 1999)

NOW and THEN

new best picture... awarding picture... and best lyric poster
christina ricci thora birch gaby ashleigh aston moore
"now and then" melanie griffith demi moore rosie o'donnell rita wilson
"it will touch you like no other movie this year" "it's funny and charming!"
"now and then is a wonderfully heartfelt story." "warm and wonderful 'oscar' to all!"
"now and then makes you laugh and cry! it's funny and charming!" "it's a wonderful story."

AMC EASTLAND 5	AMC LAUREL PARK	AMC MAPLE 3
NOV. 10 TOWN	SHOWCASE	SHOT/CASE DRAGON
SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE	SHOWCASE WILLIAM
STAR GRANT AT 5 MILE	STAR JOHN D. AT 5 MILE	STAR ROBINETTE HILL
STAR TAYLOR	LAKEVIEW	WEST RIVE