

Fans of 'Dirty Dancing' have seen it many times

"Dirty Dancing," the romance of an upper-class teen with a working-class dancing instructor at a summer resort, hit the video stores this month with a vengeance.

Patrons have been known to bang around the rental racks waiting for someone to bring back a copy of the film.

Evidently, the film is attaining something of a cult status, with some fans shouting answers to questions spoken on screen, ala "Rocky Horror Picture Show." Then, of course, there are the fans who have seen the film upwards of 18 times.

POOR BOY Johnny Castle (Patrick Swayze) falls for rich girl Baby (Jennifer Grey). Her dad objects to him, but in the end love triumphs. In keeping with the tradition of those Elvis movies, it's a pat ending. Dad, the doctor, swells with pride that his darling daughter dances like a pro. All is forgiven.

Fortunately, Swayze proves to be a better actor than Elvis. He's convincing as a young man who's just about ready to believe his ambitions should be limited to joining the house painters' union.

Grey's Baby has the tight, calculated movements of someone raised with country club memberships, deb parties and the comfortable assumption that she'll continue to live in affluence.

This film isn't a showcase for acting talent. Instead, it conveys the atmosphere of the summer of 1963 — the last outwardly peaceful season before war and assassination jolted society full force into the '60s.

Underneath it all, the soundtrack boops and rocks, with vintage tunes of Otis Redding and the Ronettes used to emphasize the differences between those who work at Kellerman's and those who play there.

THERE ISN'T much playing around in "Turtle Diary," a 1985 production of Harold Pinter's screenplay. "Dirty Dancing" duo is looking for their place in the world. "Turtle" characters once occupied a position but lost or relinquished it.

Glenda Jackson plays Neara Dun-

second runs
Louise Okrutsky



Jeroen Krabbe as Sandor (left) and Ben Kingsley as William battle over kitchen cleanup in "Turtle Diary."

can, an author of children's books who has succumbed to writer's block. Ben Kingsley's William Snow, a quiet bookstore clerk, sties away from dealing with others.

As is the case in much of Pinter's work, these characters are struggling with isolation and loss. Jackson and Kingsley unite for the sole purpose of "freeing" large turtles from their 30-year captivity in the zoo. With the cooperation of the gameskeeper, they steal the turtles and release them in the sea.

Through that act they free themselves from their own frustrations in dealing with the world.

Filmed in muted colors, the movie is rife with the silences, fragmented dialogue and unexplained circumstances typical of Pinter.

William Snow mentions two daughters, a wife and a home he once had. Explanations about his

past aren't offered. He shares a house with people who are equally removed from each other.

It's a slow, almost ponderous film which insinuates but doesn't reveal many details about its characters. While it makes viewers feel more like voyeurs, the technique heightens the feeling of segregation.

An interesting 93 minutes from Samuel Goldwyn Films for those who are determined to stick with it. Definitely not for those who want a happy little film with their popcorn.

IS THERE a silly little love story that's stolen your heart, even in secret? How about a few you'd love to kiss good-bye?

Send in your nominations for the best and worst in smooch-rama by Monday, Feb. 1, to Second Run, c/o Entertainment Department, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.



Chuck Moss

Ridgedale Players show has sparkle

By Chuck Moss
Special writer

Although Troy's Ridgedale Players prides itself on big musicals, its small-cast shows are invariably the gems. This was demonstrated by the excellent performance of "Crimes of the Heart."

For those unfamiliar with Beth Henley's smash comedy-drama, recently a hit movie, "Crimes" concerns three sisters in a small Southern town. It's an around-the-kitchen-

table sort of show, an emotional symphony of three women trying to find their way through the bad days.

Ridgedale took on a toughie, as the stellar Hollywood version is well-known. Still the group does a bang-up job. Ridgedale regular Holly G. Helsten is low-key but effective as Meg, the depressed California girl. Diane Evans makes an effective Babe, although she often seems a tad rational for the Sissy Spacek role.

It's semi-pro actress Cara Bielaki who wins the greatest plaudits. Her

Lenny is the vital linchpin of the show, holding everyone together and providing everybody with support. The sniveling Lenny is harder to play than she looks, and Bielaki deftly walks the fine line between veracity and obnoxiousness.

THE TWO MINOR supports, Mark Carley's lanky Doc and Debbie Landis' overstuffed Chick, are competently done. Although Landis' Southern accent comes and goes, she is properly petty and hateful, and wins cheers when chased up a tree. A line job.

The backstage folks are unnoticed, which is the highest compliment. No falling boards and disembodied hands this time around. The set is a homey, old-fashioned kitchen overflowing with authentic bric-a-brac. All through the audience were whispers such as, "My grandma's kitchen had that."

Director Bill Haycock and assistant director Kathryn L. Jensen are to be congratulated. Their "Crimes" is compelling, fast, funny and dear, one that makes the people in the audience care about what's happening in front of them, and forget that movie.

Birmingham resident Chuck Moss is a freelancer who writes on a variety of subjects for the Observer & Eccentric.

table talk

Gold medal

Wanda Williams, a pastry chef for Charles's Crab in Troy, recently received a gold medal in the Michigan Restaurant Association culinary arts salon held at Cobo Hall in Detroit. She entered an Australian Lace Wedding Cake. Williams also won a gold medal for a pate and two galantines entered in the Oakland Community College culinary show.

Special feast

A "Southwestern Feast" will be held Wednesday-Thursday, Feb. 3-4, at Sebastian's Restaurant/Raw Bar at Somerset Mall in Troy. The main course will be grilled pheasant with black beans and rosemary. Appetizer, soup, salad and dessert also are

included in the prix fixe feast, \$36.95 per person. Prix Fixe Wines, a different one with each course, may be ordered for an additional \$19.95. For reservations, call 649-6625.

Fine cuisine

The fourth annual Cuisine Extraordinaire featuring international delights prepared by the Chefs de Cuisine Association will be held 6-9 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, at the Roostertail in Detroit. The fund-raiser is sponsored by the Children's Hospital of Michigan Auxiliary. Tickets are \$60 per person. For ticket information, call 745-5325 or 745-5373.

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