

'Sirens' slowly sinks in its own silliness

BY JOHN MONAGHAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Sirens, according to legend, perch upon craggy cliffs and beckon sailors toward them. As their ships sink after crashing upon the rocks, the seamen are lured to a watery grave by the hypnotic wailing of the sirens.

John Duigan, writer/director of the new movie "Sirens," hopes to cast a similar spell. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of a willing cast and crew, his movie isn't clever or as mythic as it draws us into the trap completely.

Hugh Grant and Tara Fitzgerald

old play an English reverend and his wife who visit the country home of a controversial Australian artist in the 1930s. His "Crucified Venus," depicting a voluptuous naked woman nailed to the cross, has London in an uproar, and it's up to the Rev. Tony Campello to talk him into withdrawing it from international exhibition.

They find in Norman Lindsay (Sam Neill) a playfully mocking and dedicated artist who intends to do nothing of the kind. He cites the various evils carried out in the name of organized religion — from witch burnings to the Span-

ish Inquisition — and doesn't see how his pictures are going to unravel the country's moral fabric.

During these philosophical arguments, the reverend's wife Estella finds herself first repulsed and then strangely attracted to Lindsay's trio of artist models. When they aren't posing or swimming naked, they're dressed in flamboyant costumes, eating suggestively and talking about little else but sex.

While Tony considers himself

broad-minded and worldly, it's the prim Estella who is drawn to the rocks. The days are hot and sunny and the constant talk about the muscular, half-blind handy man (usually shown stripped to the waist, Harlequin-style) has her thinking. Her dreams grow so vivid that she's not sure at one point whether she's been unfaithful to Tony or not.

At it's best, "Sirens" is a playful summer romp for its talented cast. Likable Hugh Grant, still visible on area screens in "Remains of the Day" and "Four

Weddings and a Funeral," may finally take his place as a bankable leading man. Likewise Sam Neill, practically a household name when you add up all the people who saw him in "The Piano" and "Jurassic Park."

Norman Lindsay, as it turns out, really was an Australian artist. He died in 1969 at the age of 90 after seven decades of infuriating the public with his satirical paintings, sketches, sculptures, and novels. The filmmakers actually shot at his 40-acre estate outside Sydney, another plus.

At its worst, "Sirens" is an in-

herently sexist romp filmed with the subtlety of a dirty slide show. Writer/director Duigan ("Flirting") keeps his tongue firmly in cheek, especially when it comes to overt use of sexual symbols. We can practically see him in a fit of adolescent snickering as another snake winds suggestively through the scenery.

"Sirens," nearing the end of a successful run at the Maple and elsewhere, proves once again that sex — or the promise of it — still sells. It's hard not to think of wretched movies that have fallen through the cracks.

MOVIES

In concert

from page 6A

DELTA 88 BLUES BAND
Doc Flocks, 7935 W. Maple, West Bloomfield, (buses)
(810) 624-7200

HAPPY ACCIDENTS
With Chain Reaction at Cross Street Station, 511 W. Cross, Ypsilanti, (alternative rock)
(313) 485-5050

HARVEY THOMPSON
West of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor, (buses)
(313) 662-8310

FOUR HANDS
Jazz, 307 N. Main St., Rochester, (acoustic)
(810) 655-3344

BLUESHOUSES
With IAL at Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit, (buses)
(313) 832-2355 or (313) 886-7860

PETE OR MEAT
With Dabblers and Subsidence at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, (buses)
(810) 334-9292

THE LOOK
The Overline Sports Tavern, 27206 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (buses)
(313) 277-5010

JOHN WESLEY HARDING
Majestic, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (acoustic)
(313) 963-7680

RENEGADES
Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren, (buses)
(810) 756-6140

THE HAND ME DOWNS
With The Poor Trio and The Ground at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (buses)
(313) 831-8070

WIG
With Cathouse at Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (buses)
(313) 996-8555

PIT VIPERS
Speakeasy, 31410 Ford Road, Garden City, (buses)
(313) 425-7373

PAUL MARVIN BLUES BAND
Stan's Dugout, 3350 Auburn Road, Auburn Hills, (buses)
(810) 852-6433

BLUES ACTION COUNCIL
Stan's Dugout, 4000 Garfield, Clinton Township, (buses)
(810) 412-1040

BOOGIEWOMEN
Sports — A 50s Bar and Grill, 166 Maple, Wyandotte, (buses)
(313) 277-5010

(313) 285-5060
HARMONICA SHAM AND BOWERY EAST
New Site, 41270 Hayes, Clinton Township, (buses)
(810) 286-7788

SMALL BALL PAUL
St. Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit, (buses)
(313) 961-MELT

2 IGUANAS FROM EARTH
Mid Street Bar and Grill, 12 S. Mill St., Pontiac, (acoustic)
(810) 334-2037

Saturday, April 16
PANTERA
With Crowbar at State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (rock)
(313) 961-5451

MSX
New Way Bar, 23130 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (rock)
(810) 541-5870

MARY MCQUEEN
Brendan's Pub, 33210 W. 14 Mile Road, West Bloomfield, (acoustic)
(810) 855-6220

THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS
Sully's, 4750 Greenfield Road, Dearborn, (buses)
(313) 764-8350

COMMANDER CODY
Sully's, 4750 Greenfield Road, Dearborn, (buses)
(313) 764-8350

DELTA 88 BLUES BAND
Doc Flocks, 7935 W. Maple, West Bloomfield, (buses)
(810) 624-7200

HARVEY THOMPSON
West of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor, (buses)
(313) 662-8310

GUITAR SHOW
Michigan State Fairground, 714 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, Detroit, (buses)
(810) 546-7447 or (810) 546-5249

THE KEY, MORTON HEAT
West of Paradise, 207 S. Ashley, Ann Arbor, (buses)
(313) 961-MELT

SOMETHING WHY
With Jody Ranchers at Griff's Grill, 49 N. Saginaw, Pontiac, (alternative pop)
(810) 334-9292

THE LOOK
The Overline Sports Tavern, 27206 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (buses)
(313) 277-5010

FRANK ALLISON AND THE ODD SOX
Blind Pig, 206-208 S. First St., Ann Arbor, (buses)
(313) 996-8555

DREAMCATCHERS BENEFIT
Alvin's, 5756 Cass, Detroit, (buses)
(313) 832-2355

RENEGADES
Hoover Roadhouse, 24300 Hoover, Warren, (buses)
(810) 756-6140

SEX DICK RUN
With Lucy's Alibi at Finney's Pub, 3965 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (alternative pop)
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BACK DOOR BLUES BAND
Sports — A 50s Bar and Grill, 166 Maple, Wyandotte, (buses)
(313) 285-5060

ROBERT JONES
New Site, 41270 Hayes, Clinton Township, (buses)
(810) 286-7788

BLUES ROSE
Carnegie House, 2400 Grand River, Detroit, (buses)
(313) 535-3440

POGO STICK
With Big Back and Dirt Eaters at Magic Bag Theatre, 22920 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (alternative rock)
(810) 544-3030

THE TOASTERS
The Majestic, 4140 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (buses)
(810) 645-6666

BILLY DEAN
Michigan State Fairground, Woodward south of Eight Mile Road, Detroit (coun-try)
(313) 369-8250

Sunday, April 17
SEXTY AND THE JETS BAND
The Office Bar, 15414 Telegraph, Redford, (buses)
(313) 553-4477

GUITAR SHOW
Michigan State Fairground, 714 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, Detroit, (buses)
(810) 546-7447 or (810) 546-5249

PANTERA
With Crowbar at State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit, (rock)
(313) 961-5451

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, Detroit, Call 833-2323 for information. (\$5)

"Raining Stones" (Britain - 1993). 7. 9:30 p.m. April 15-16; 4. 7 p.m. April 17. From Ken Loach, the director of "Riff Raff," comes this winning new comedy about an out-of-work plumber who swears off by buying an expensive first communion dress for his daughter.

MAGIC BAG THEATRE
22918 Woodward, Ferndale. Call 544-3030 for information. (\$4)

"Romeo is Bleeding" (USA - 1994). 8 p.m. April 14. Gary Oldman is a hitman assigned to kill the beautiful Lena Olin, but she has other plans. This visceral, violent, and funny new film has been called this year's answer to "Reservoir Dogs."

MAIN ART THEATRE
118 N. Main St. (at 11 Mile), Royal Oak. Films play through at least Thursday. Call 542-0180 for information and showtimes. (\$6.50; \$4 students; \$3 twilight atinee)

"Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Britain - 1994). From Mike Newell, the director of "Enchanted April," an engaging story about a confirmed bachelor who runs across the same woman at the numerous weddings he attends.

Hugh Grant and Anil Mac-

Dowell star.

"The Hudsucker Proxy" (USA - 1994). The camera is the real star in this wacky account of a business graduate's rise from mail room to president's office in 1958.

His invention, the hula hoop, becomes a Baby Boom phenomenon. Capra meets surrealism in this latest from Joel and Ethan Coen ("Raising Arizona" and "Barton Fink"), co-scripted by former Detroiters Sam Raimi.

"Schindler's List" (USA - 1993). Steven Spielberg swept the Oscars with this story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a war profiteer and Nazi crony who saved the lives of over 1,000 Jews during the Holocaust.

MAPLE THEATRE
4135 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield. Films play through at least Thursday. Call 855-9090 for information. (\$5.75; \$3.95 matinee; \$2.95 twilight)

"Jelle Epoque" (Spain - 1992). In this year's Oscar winner for best foreign film, a young army deserter tests the limits of his friend's liberal philosophy by pursuing each of the old man's beautiful daughters.

"Sirens" (Britain - 1994). John Duigan ("Flirting") directs this story of a young Englishwoman's sexual awakening when she visits the eccentric and bohemian household of a controversial painter, Sam Neill, Tara Fitzgerald, and Hugh Grant star.

"Four Weddings and a Funeral." See Main Art Theatre listing above.

"My ad paid for itself"

"When Don Simmons ran his Observer & Eccentric Classified ad, he was amazed at the 'many, many calls' he received. 'My ad paid for itself many times over!' he said. Join Don Simmons and Reach Michigan's Finest Suburban Market

Pantera

from page 6A

Being at the top is nothing new for Pantera.

Their debut album, "Cowboys from Hell," went gold, while their sophomore effort, "Vulgar Display of Power," was awarded a platinum record.

The single "Mouth for War," was the first metal single to ever debut at No. 1 on the genre's single chart; the album topped the metal charts for weeks.

That sort of success is unheard of for a band whose popularity is based mainly on word-of-mouth referrals.

"They're not going to hear us on regular (rock) stations. It's mostly word of mouth. . . . (But) our audience just keeps getting bigger and bigger," Paul said.

Because Pantera's music

"They're not going to hear us on regular (rock) stations. It's mostly word of mouth. . . . (But) our audience just keeps getting bigger and bigger."

Vinnie Paul
Pantera drummer

doesn't fit many radio playlists, they've become known for their savage live shows.

"It's 100 percent pure energy released from both the band and the audience," Paul said.

Even longtime metal fans are stunned by Pantera's ear-crushing volume.

Aside from live shows, Paul attributes his band's success to its accessible metal sound.

"Everything's got to have a groove. Even people that don't really like this kind of music can

groove and feel the music."

He admits, though, that Pantera's status among metal fans surprises him.

"We never thought we'd get this far. Now I have five gold records on the wall."

The band returns to the area Saturday and Sunday with Crowbar for two all-ages shows at the State Theatre, 2115 Woodward Ave., Detroit.

The shows are expected to be sold out by the 7 p.m. showtime. Tickets are \$19.50.

Golf

from page 6A

Young Artists Market. Exhibitors had to be Detroit artists younger than age 30. Many of the Cass Corridor artists, who became internationally recognized, exhibited at the Market in the 1970s. Today the progressive non-profit gallery spotlights emerging and established Michigan artists of all ages.

The art installation/golf course is available for rental by private parties, non-profit organizations and corporations.

"Everyone can see the exhibition for free," Craig said. "There's a fee to play but they'll be contributing to the arts while they're having fun."

Hours are 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday with the last tee off at 5 p.m. "Pore Art" continues until May 1, however, Craig said that an extended run is possible due to the positive response from the community. For more information, call (313) 393-1770.

Woods' best work ever. And what about that killer operon, "Honkin', Shoutin', Pumpin', Poundin'"? Where!

If the Liggins brothers, Jordan, Wynonie Harris or any of the classic specialty acts of the late 1940s and early '50s rock your socks as apastically as they do mine, you're gonna love this!

Mark Gollo

Shakin' the Shack — Mitch Woods and His Rocket 88s

Piano-poundin' Mitch Woods, a 13-year veteran with Blind Pig, continues to be one of the former Ann Arbor label's pillars. There just aren't many waitin' characters out there that can touch our boy Mitch.

Straight out of the jump, live and well Louis Jordan bag, offering no apologies in the process, the rock-a-boogie beat coming out of the speakers for this one is typ-

ically and naturally pile-driving and relentlessly swinging.

"Zydeco the Boogie" should have been left on the studio floor, but one clinker in an otherwise solid sounding 10-song offering (just an' a half bar) "Oyin for My Baby" the follow-up, is a classy and bluesy makeup.

The title cut and the Jimmy Liggins-sounding "Long Lean And Lanky" ranks among some of

Woods' best work ever. And what about that killer operon, "Honkin', Shoutin', Pumpin', Poundin'"? Where!

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Mark Gollo

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