

Entertainment

Comedy, drama provide poignant insight into relationships

By Judith Trojan

NEW YORK (NC) — Bette Midler has been a big moneymaker for Disney's Touchstone Pictures, and the reasons for such success are apparent in "Beaches" (Touchstone), Midler's latest triumph.

Based on the novel by Iris Rainer Dart, the serio-comic "Beaches" tracks the improbable 30-year friendship between a California blue-blood and a Jewish singer-tapdancer from the Bronx. As 11-year-olds, the girls meet by accident on the beach at Atlantic City and almost immediately go their separate ways. But they vow to be friends forever and begin to keep in touch by letter, a habit that continues a lifetime. They meet again at transitional moments in their lives, but the relationship is sustained by their prolific correspondence.

At 11, C.C. Bloom (Mayim Bialik) is a fast-talking, sassy young show biz hopeful with a pushy stage Mom, Leona (Lainie Kazan), who riotously sabotages her daughter's career more than she helps it. Hillary Whitney Essex (Marcie Leeds), in contrast, is quiet and shy and immediately taken with C.C.'s gutsy talent for belting out songs and tapping her way through futile Atlantic City auditions.

Although Hillary returns to California with her widowed lawyer father, she remains C.C.'s biggest fan and booster over the years. As the girls mature into young adulthood and C.C. (Bette Midler) flounders about in a series of dead-end singing gigs, letters from Hillary (Barbara Hershey) give C.C. the confidence to keep plugging away.

The film is at its hilarious best when focusing on C.C., the self-absorbed chanteuse who learns the hard way how to hold on to an audience, a husband (John Heard), a mother, a Great Dane and a best friend.

Frustrated little rich girl Hillary never really

gets in gear. She is trained in the law, but her ambitions are stifled by her ailing father and a lawyer husband (James Read) who cuts her off from her promising career and divorces her when she becomes too dull. Hillary's is a leaden story, enlivened by her association with C.C. and enriched by the subsequent birth of a daughter, Victoria (Grace Johnston).

Director Garry Marshall is at his best with the film's many comedic and musical sequences, but gets a tad too sudsy in the poignant, teary moments that close the show. But despite the weepies, "Beaches" will leave audiences with a renewed sense of the value of close friendships and a deeper appreciation for irreplaceable childhood friends once loved but now lost.

Due to some off-color language and vulgar humor, brief fisticuffs and a risqué musical number, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents strongly cautioned that some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

'Rain Man'

Although it profiles an unusual and emotionally charged family bond, "Rain Man" (United Artists) is a cool and distancing film. And unlike the hilarious "Twins," which also unites a pair of genetically mismatched brothers, "Rain Man" aims not for laughs but for a dramatic portrait of an extraordinary mentally disabled individual.

"Rain Man" tracks the travails of shady Los Angeles car dealer, Charlie Babbitt (Tom Cruise), whose seat-of-the-pants business transactions have led him into big trouble with his creditors and customers. But this agony is temporarily tabled when his long-estranged father dies in Cincinnati, leaving Charlie his prize rosebushes and a 1949 Buick Roadmaster convertible, the original catalyst for Charlie's departure from home at age 16.



NC News
'Rain Man' stars Tom Cruise and Dustin Hoffman.

Charlie is shocked to find that his father's \$3.5 million estate has been left to his older brother, Raymond (Dustin Hoffman), whom Charlie never knew existed. Raymond suffers from autistic savant syndrome, a behavioral disorder that leaves him unable to make simple emotional contact with others but enables him to forge genius-level connection with numbers.

Raymond has been institutionalized since Charlie's earliest memory, so the two are strangers. Charlie's debts and anger over his lack of inheritance push him to walk Raymond out of his protected environment and into a

world with which he is ill-prepared to cope.

Charlie hopes to sue for Raymond's custody and half of the inheritance. But as the two drive from Cincinnati to Los Angeles, Charlie is forced to put his needs aside for the very real demands of his autistic brother.

Until he comes to accept and love his brother for what he is, Charlie is driven up the wall by Raymond's abnormal repetitive behavior and compulsive attachment to ritual and routine, certain foods, TV game shows, numbers and rigid time schedules.

Director Barry Levinson ("Diner," "Tin Men") is an ace with male bonding scenarios, so the strongest elements in this film are the scenes between Charlie and Raymond.

Hoffman gives another Academy Award-winning acting turn as Raymond, who is disarming and funny despite his frightening limitations and his inability to change to any degree. Cruise is believable and often powerful as the frustrated, unfocused Charlie. His evolution from a self-centered manipulator to a man who finally finds a family member he loves is slow going and unsentimentalized. There is no requisite happy Hollywood ending. Raymond remains permanently locked within himself. And Charlie's rebirth while poignant is open-ended enough to make audiences worry about his financial future.

As written by Ronald Bass and Barry Morrow and directed by Levinson, "Rain Man" is notable for its incredibly realistic portrait of autistic savant syndrome as meticulously enacted by Hoffman, a brilliant actor whose skill with challenging roles is always an occasion for cheers.

Due to much profanity, a few intense but brief emotionally unhinged outbursts by the autistic protagonist and a fleeting sex scene that is heard not seen, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.



DINING AROUND THE DIOCESE



Advertisement

Advertisement

Cannon's
1551 Mt. Hope Ave.
(1 minute north of W. Henrietta Rd.
exit of Rte. 390)
461-1026

A Rochester favorite for 23 years, featuring a diverse menu including seafood, steaks, chops, veal, and Italian dishes. For the late night diner we serve until 1 am Mon-Sat., and midnight Sun. Lunches are served daily from 11 am till 3:30.

Cartwright Inn
5691 W. Henrietta Road
(716) 334-4444

Featuring Early Bird Specials Monday thru Saturday 4:30-6:30 p.m. Fish Fry every Friday 4:30-11 p.m. Beer-Battered, Breaded, (Brolled-\$1.00 more). Sunday Dinners from 12:30-10:00 p.m. For \$7.95 choose from Roast Leg of Lamb, Fresh Turkey with dressing, London Broil, Jr. Prime Rib, or our fresh seafood catch of the day. Try a cup of our famous New England Clam Chowder, overflowing with chunks of clams. We also have our own Lobster tank from which you can pick out your own live lobster. We serve lunches daily from 11:30-4:00 p.m., Dinners from 4:30-11:00 p.m.

Crystal Barn
Corner Clover & Jefferson
at the Barn Bazaar in Pittsford
(716) 381-4844

A pleasant blend of crystal chandeliers and Victorian motif set in an authentic country barn, creates a memorable atmosphere... for lunch, cocktails or an enjoyable dining experience. Your host George and Katherine Gerkos and Chef Russell Brindisi pride themselves in presenting you with the most carefully selected and prepared dinners as well as unique special creations for each evening. We most sincerely hope that you'll find our quality uncompromising and our service unsurpassed. Reservations are appreciated.

Fornataro's
2155 Long Pond Rd.
(corner Long Pond &
Spencerport Rds.)
426-1240

Along the streets of Rome or in the Italian countryside, the word "trattoria" conjures up images of a family-like dining room just off a kitchen, fragrant with the rich aroma of simmering meat sauces, tomatoes and fresh peppers. Such could be a description of Fornataro's. Serving dishes like Filet Fornataro (beef dressed in a sweet sauce with melon balls and grapes), Saltimbocca, Veal Marsala and Madaira, Fettucine Alfredo in its golden cheese dressing, and Beef Tenderloin flavored with spices and cognac in a marinara sauce. Most pastas are homemade. Wines and liquors are used liberally in the cuisine as are artichoke hearts and fruits. Lunches served Monday thru Friday, dinner seven nights a week. Banquet and private party rooms are available.

Gerratano's
885 Buffalo Road
436-9340

Recommended by the Times-Union Food Guide, Gerratano's offers home cooking, Italian-style. This four-star restaurant features specialty dishes including homemade eggplant, lasagne and bread. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. Open 6am till 9pm.

Irondequoit Town Lounge
705 Titus Avenue
(716) 342-3465

Serving lunches 11:30-3 p.m. daily except Sunday. Featuring an Early Bird Special every night but Friday. Fish Frys every Friday. Our party room can accommodate up to 60 people for your next gathering. Clip out this ad and receive \$5.00 off two dinners (specials not included), offer good Sunday thru Thursday, during the month of January.

Mastrella's
4300 Culver Road
323-1450

Stop by Mastrella's for the best burger in Seabreeze. Enjoy the Friday fish fry, or try Mastrella's seafood, Italian specialties like lasagne, or a bowl of fresh homemade soup. Serving lunch daily, Mastrella's also features live entertainment Friday and Saturday nights. Thursdays savor the N.Y. strip steak dinner special for \$9.95. Mastrella's also caters small parties. Dining hours: Thurs., Fri., Sat. 5-9 PM.

National Hotel
Rte. 20A & 39
Cuylerville, N.Y. 14481
(716) 382-3130

Built in 1837, the 150 year old National Hotel is a landmark in and of itself. Serving dinners only, Tues.-Sat. 4:30-10 p.m. and Sundays, 12-8 p.m. A special Senior Citizen menu is featured nightly and Sunday. From Rochester, take 390 South to exit 8. The National Hotel is located on Rts. 20A & 39 in Cuylerville just 3 miles south of Genesee or 3 miles east of Letchworth State Park. Reservations are appreciated.

(Oswald's) Hof Brau Haus
406 Lyell Ave.
(716) 458-2084

Authentic German cooking in an olde world Gasthaus decpr. Specializing in German wines, and featuring more than 50 imported beers. Special arrangements for groups. Serving lunch and dinner. Live Bavarian entertainment on weekends.

Papa Joe's
8508 Grieg Street
Sodus Point, NY
(315) 483-6372

Your hosts Don and Jude Buchwald welcome you to Papa Joe's Restaurant located on the scenic waters of Sodus Bay. Featuring steak, veal, chicken, seafood and pasta dishes. Not one, but two chefs, Chef Pasquale and Chef Nique, prepare all your meals fresh daily on the premises for your dining pleasure. Every Thursday we feature Prime Rib, Chicken French or Chicken

Centra for only \$7.95 each. Steak and lobster, at only \$14.99, is served daily for the season. Enjoy complete lunch and dinner menus on our casual outdoor deck or in our elegant indoor dining area. Lunches and dinners served 7 days a week, 11:30 a.m. till 10:00 p.m. Major credit cards accepted. Reservations appreciated. "Papa Joe's ... A truly unique dining experience."

The Villa Carlo
55 Main St., Mt. Morris, NY 14510
1 mile south of
Letchworth State Park
(Mt. Morris entrance)
(716) 658-2204

Before or after skiing at Swain, come and experience the casual dining pleasure of the Villa Carlo. Enjoy a cup of Cappuccino after a meal featuring all homemade soups, bread, pasta and desserts. Cooked to order for your dining satisfaction by our owner/chef. Reservations are appreciated. Open 7 days. Monday-Saturday 11:30 a.m.-10:00 p.m. Sundays, noon till 9:00 p.m.

Yellow Rose Cafe
1784 Penfield Rd.
Penfield, New York 14526
(716) 385-3673

Come and dine at this historic landmark, former home of Daniel Penfield, founder of Penfield. We offer good cooking, good service and a quiet, gracious atmosphere. Hours are Mon.-Fri. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 a.m.; Sat. 11:30-2:00 a.m. and Sun. 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Both lunch and dinner are our special talents. See you there!

Dining Around the Diocese

The first issue of each month, the Courier-Journal will be featuring some prime dining spots in and around the Rochester diocese. If you, or someone you know, would like to have your restaurant included in our Dining Guide, call the Courier-Journal at 328-4340. Look for our Dining Guide in the upcoming months, and pay a visit to the restaurant of your choice, and enjoy a pleasant evening of "Dining Around the Diocese."