

Entertainment

Top Ten Box Office Hits of 1988

Movie	Gross*
Roger Rabbit	\$149,965,100
Coming to America	\$128,113,607
Big	\$111,932,494
Crocodile Dundee II	\$109,201,624
Die Hard	\$79,708,955
Cocktail	\$76,796,206
Beetlejuice	\$73,281,472
A Fish Called Wanda	\$59,991,944
Willow	\$55,782,590
Rambo	\$53,715,611

*As of Dec. 29, 1988

Listed in the above chart are the top-grossing movies of 1988.

AP—Wide World Photos

Two films garner 'O' rating for presentation of sexuality

By Judith Trojan

NEW YORK (NC) — Few subjects today are more difficult to tackle in the cinema than homosexuality. "Torch Song Trilogy" (New Line), the film incarnation of Harvey Fierstein's Tony Award-winning play, attempts to validate the alternative lifestyle with much candor, raucous humor and some poignancy. But while it dramatically shows the common threads that connect heterosexual and homosexual family relationships, courtship, love and sexual byplay, this film will still make uncomfortable viewing for Catholic audiences.

The smokey-voiced Fierstein recreates his Tony Award-winning role of Arnold Beckoff, the musical-comedy performer from Brooklyn whose flamboyant stints as a female impersonator in an off-Broadway drag revue, unfulfilling love life and ongoing mother-son conflicts are catalysts for the action that unfolds.

The film follows Arnold through the years 1971-1980, with a brief flashback to Brooklyn circa 1952 showing little Arnie's predilection for his mother's clothes and makeup. By 1971, he's an avowed homosexual, playing-dress-up for a living, lamenting societal pressures on homosexuals and looking for real love in all the wrong places.

Arnold finally meets Alan (Matthew Broderick), a model who at 21 is also disgusted with his empty life. Alan becomes Arnold's great

love and inspires his adoption of a 15-year-old son named David (Eddie Castrodad), a nice but nifty gay boy who needs a home.

Throughout, actor-writer Fierstein leaves no stone unturned in his coverage of the pre-AIDS gay lifestyle. There are the pick-up bars, the bawdy drag shows and the eternal battles with self-worth, pride and prejudice that rage within gays and around them in straight society. "Torch Song Trilogy" is crisply directed by Paul Bogart and overflows with laughs and angst.

The scenes between Arnold and his beloved Ma, played brilliantly to type by Anne Bancroft, are supercharged. Her inability to accept Arnold's sexual preference and her hope for his miraculous cure never abate until mother and son have one final battle over his decision to adopt David and to bury murder victim Alan in the family cemetery plot.

By delineating the parallels between homosexuality and heterosexuality, "Torch Song Trilogy" directly seeks audience acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle as a valid alternative. It explores the universal desires for love and permanent commitment in addition to sex, as well as bonding with one's extended family.

Despite these compassionately drawn connections, the film's validation of homosexuality and clear depiction of promiscuity within the homosexual community of the 1970s will be objectionable in light of the current devastating AIDS epidemic. Catholic audiences will be offended because the film contradicts church teaching on homosexual activity.

Due to a few fleeting scenes of male kissing and discreet touching, a brutal, bloody beating scene, much rough language with homosexual innuendoes and a few bawdy musical drag acts, the USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

'Dangerous Liaisons'

Despite its sumptuous 18th-century setting, "Dangerous Liaisons" (Warner Bros.) might just as easily be set in any contemporary social circle in which the idle rich have time to indulge in wicked seductions and personal betrayals.

The film is adapted by British playwright Christopher Hampton from his celebrated play which was, in turn, based on Choderlos de Laclos' controversial 1782 novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. Hampton's dialogue almost drips with venom as it flows through this mesmerizing psychological tug of war between two pre-French Revolutionary aristocrats.

The roguish Vicomte de Valmont (John Malkovich) is the eternal seducer. Valmont dedicates his very existence to the art of sexual entrapment. Yet, his insatiable libido seems less the motivator than the mental ecstasy he derives from the chase. Devoid of moral or religious fiber, his carnal game plan knows no boundaries. Unattainable women are his specialty.

His equal in this webbed court of sexual intrigue is the beautiful Marquise de Merteuil (Glenn Close). Once lovers, the pair plot as one to achieve their treacherous goals. The marquise is out to hurt her recent lover, a man who left her to marry the young, virginal Cecile de Volanges (Uma Thurman).

Valmont's aim is the seduction of the exquisite Madame de Tourvel (Michelle Pfeiffer). Deeply religious and virtuously protective of her marriage vows, Tourvel becomes Valmont's obsession and ultimately his ruin.

Close is brilliant as the marquise, an anachronism who has had to channel her raging intelligence and individuality into the only avenue open to women at that time — the sexual arena. Since decadence is the norm, the marquise buries her true emotions beneath a slick, heartless veneer that ultimately backfires and causes the destruction of the one man she truly loves.

Malkovich is surely an odd but inspired choice to play the bewigged, powdered Vicomte de Valmont. A slick verbal manipulator, Valmont is not above spinning the most wicked lies and deceits to win his conquest.

Since the lead protagonists are wanton, selfish creatures, both are brought down in the end in a fashion befitting their evil machinations. While endemic to the decadent pre-Revolutionary aristocracy, these characters are easily symbolic of the moral indifference that exists within society today.

Due to nudity within several brief but explicit sexual encounters, an acceptance of adultery as the norm within its historic context, much sexual innuendo and a climactic, bloody sword fight, the USCC classification is O — morally offensive. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

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