

Thriller, romance entertain despite flaws

By Gerri Pare
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Marlee Matlin plays a strong-willed deaf woman terrorized by corrupt cop Martin Sheen in the romantic thriller *Hear No Evil* (20th Century Fox).

Before his untimely end, Jillian's (Matlin) reporter friend Mickey (John C. McGinley) secretly plants a priceless stolen coin in her beeper — evidence in a murder case he was building against Portland police Lt. Brock (Sheen).

Mickey's pal, Ben (D.B. Sweeney), suspects Brock had Mickey killed and fears Jillian may be in danger as well.

And, of course, she is, and from more than the several dirty cops in cahoots with Brock.

Back in 1967, Audrey Hepburn expertly played a blind woman terrorized by murderous stalkers in the sleek thriller *Wait Until Dark*. Director Robert Greenwald's '90s spin on a similar theme is only mildly successful. He does work at showing a suddenly terrifying world from Jillian's silent perspective and she is not portrayed as just another disposable female victim, shrieking at every turn.

The menacing scenes are briskly shot in the photogenic Pacific Northwest and a plot twist near the end may catch a few off guard. Sheen's rogue cop, though, is a strictly one-dimensional bad guy and despite Matlin's smart performance, the movie seems destined for a quick trip to video stores.

Because of intermittent violence, a discreet bedroom scene, fleeting nudity and minimal rough language, the U.S. Catholic Conference classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

Benny & Joon

A young woman coping with mental illness finds romance with an artistic eccentric in *Benny & Joon* (MGM).

Their parents killed in a traumatizing car crash, older brother Benny (Aidan Quinn) is determined to keep unpredictable Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson) at home, her mood swings controlled by medication.

This leaves no time for 30ish Benny to develop a life of his own, but his commitment is sincere if a little smothering of Joon's independent instincts.

Problems arise when oddball would-be mime Sam (Johnny Deep) moves in as caretaker-housekeeper and he and Joon find in each other kindred spirits and secretly fall in love.

Benny, meanwhile, has met a lovely waitress (Julianne Moore), but both siblings' romances seem doomed when Joon is committed to a mental institution.



Merrick Morton-20th Century Fox
Marlee Matlin plays a strong-willed deaf woman terrorized by a corrupt police officer in the romantic thriller, *Hear No Evil*. Martin Sheen, John McGinley and D.B. Sweeney also star in the film.

Director Jeremiah Chechik never lets us in on how disturbed Joon really is, so the upbeat ending borders on suggesting the cure to mental illness is love. This is pathetically simplistic, of course, but the movie's charms lie in this whimsical acceptance of all people, whatever their frailties.

The cast gives highly sympathetic performances, with Depp's portrayal reminiscent of his kooky turn as Edward Scissorhands.

Some may question if the movie trivializes mental illness by glossing over it with a warm fuzzy vagueness, but that would seem unintentional since poignancy, gentle humor and a sweet sense of caring shine through the film's flaws.

Due to an implied sexual encounter and an instance of rough language, the USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

Missions

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Nineteen Sisters of Mercy of Rochester have served in Chile since 1965, with six currently serving there. Although the country has had democratic leadership since 1990, Chileans are still feeling the effects of the 1973 military coup that crippled the middle and lower classes.

"A lot of the people live on bread and tea," said Sister Curtis. "There are real crowded living conditions. People live in shacks, really."

The Sisters of Mercy have attempted to equip Chilean residents with skills to become more self-supportive.

"They learned to become leaders in their own right, and that was especially important after the coup," said Sister Korn.

In Brazil, 24 Sisters of St. Joseph from Rochester have helped impoverished people over the last 29 years. Ten sisters are currently serving the mission.

Because Brazil is South America's largest country, missionary work can involve several thousand miles of travel per year.

"There are many religious congregations (serving as missionaries) in Brazil, but it's a drop in the bucket compared to the need," said Sister Mary Ann Mayer, SJ, who spent 1971-80 in Brazil.

According to Sister Hollis, many of the goods produced in the democratically governed country are being exported for substantial income to reduce Brazil's gigantic national debt. These same goods, however, are too expensive for its own people.

"The food is there. Brazil is rich, enormous and fertile. But the people who pick the coffee beans can't afford to drink the coffee," Sister Hollis said.

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Question: Name the woman who recently won an Oscar for Best Actress in the movie, *My Cousin Vinny*?

Answer: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Last month's winner: **Catherine Brozak** of Rochester correctly identified **Spencer Tracy** as the father in the original *Father of the Bride*.

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