

'Dreams' shows sweet and sour life of Patsy Cline

By WENDY JOHNSON
Entertainment Writer

"Sweet Dreams"

Director: Karel Reisz
Starring: Jessica Lange, Ed Harris,
Anne Wedgeworth, David Clennan
Tri-Star Productions

The soundtrack to "Sweet Dreams" will delight Patsy Cline fans. With songs from original recordings made by Cline in the early sixties, it reads like a greatest hits album cover.

However, I was never a Patsy Cline fan. I was only two years old when she died. Cline is a country music legend, but I've never been a country music fan either.

So I thought the movie was mediocre.

I was interested in finding out about the legendary country music star, whose blossoming career was cut short when she was killed in a plane crash. My interest had been

piqued by her short appearance and tragic death in "Coal Miners Daughter." I remembered wondering then if a movie would be made about her life.

But Patsy's life wasn't interesting enough to make a movie. If it was, the good parts got left out of "Sweet Dreams." People who remember Patsy Cline and listened to her music may enjoy seeing some of the details of her life. They'll enjoy the song clips that pack the dialogue. But those who are already fans will be the movie's main supporters — watching it won't make you a convert.

Most of the movie focuses on Patsy's relationship with her second husband, Charlie Dick. The relationship was rather rocky, as I expected. What I didn't expect was Patsy's exaggerated self-centeredness. Her world revolved around herself and her music career, and poor Charlie was a distant satellite.

Patsy's mother, Hilda Hensley, played by Anne Wedgeworth, was the poor Southern mother, content with the crummy hand life had dealt her, and all the stronger for it. Hers

was the most interesting character. Patsy's mother was the only one who could put Patsy in her place and get her off her high horse, but even she was easily manipulated by the spoiled singer. Her mother's constant scoldings of her foul language are quaint. Patsy did *not* have a lady-like mouth.

David Clennan, as Patsy's agent Randy Hughes, had the plainest role in the whole story. I kept expecting something from him, but nothing ever happened.

There are also a few unexplained holes in the time sequence that bothered me. When Patsy is pregnant with her first child, we experience almost the whole nine months with her. I'm not sure why — nothing of any consequence happened. Then, in practically the next scene, she has two children — no pregnancy, birth, infancy, explanation, nothing.

Another time, right after a car accident, Patsy's head is unwrapped at the hospital and we see stitches all over her forehead. As she looks at herself, the doctor mentions something about plastic surgery, and Patsy emphatically agrees. In the

next scene, the stitches are gone but she has obvious scars. In the next scene, her face is absolutely flawless — did she have plastic surgery or not? Maybe she's just a thorough healer. Unfinished details like that bug me.

Jessica Lange and Ed Harris, as Patsy Cline and Charlie Dick, are wonderful; it's a shame the movie lacked the luster to show them off. Lange does a superb job playing Patsy, from the slightly buck-toothed set of her mouth to the deep Southern drawl. I'm always impressed when an actress can adopt a foreign accent and pull it off.

Harris brings a vulnerable air to Charlie, making us *almost* understand his drinking, unfaithfulness and violence. (P.J. Soles — the blond M.P. in "Stripes" — makes a brief appearance as one of his love interests). From his total infatuation with Patsy in the beginning, to the sullen and spiteful games he plays with her in the end, Harris is convincing as the husband struggling for his own identity, as his wife claws over him on her way to the top of the country music charts. □

movies -

RATING KEY

***** = A Classic!

**** = Excellent, but has some flaws.

*** = Okay, but not that great.

** = Barely watchable.

* = Forget it.

- movies

AGNES OF GOD (PG-13): Meg Tilly ("The Big Chill") is a young nun who gives birth to a baby. It's found strangled and Sister Agnes says she doesn't remember the birth or the impregnation. Anne Bancroft and Jane Fonda also star. **** Plaza 3

BACK TO THE FUTURE (R): Michael J. Fox, (TV's "Family Ties") stars in this time-traveling comedy. Worth the second trip just to catch all the details you missed the first time. **** Cinema 3

BETTER OFF DEAD (PG): John Cusack ("The Sure Thing") stars in this comedy about the pitfalls of falling in love. Cusack plays Lane Myer, the young hero who believes that a lover is better off dead than dumped. Plaza 3

BOYS NEXT DOOR (R): "They're the boys next door, and they have nothing but time to kill." Plaza 3

COMMANDO (R): Arnold Schwarzenegger is a retired commando forced back into action in order to rescue his 11-year-old daughter from a deposed South American dictator and one of Schwarzenegger's former men. They want him to assassinate a South American president to get her back. Rae Dawn Chong is his reluctant accomplice. Cinema 3

COMPROMISING POSITIONS (R): Susan Sarandon stars as a housewife who is so shocked by the murder of her dentist she decides to turn reporter and investigate the

case herself. A comedy about life in suburbia. *** Schulman 6

DEATH WISH 3 (R): The newest Charles Bronson adventure. Cinema 3

JAGGED EDGE (R): A mystery-thriller starring Glenn Close ("The Big Chill") and Jeff Bridges ("Starman"). A beautiful and wealthy San Francisco newspaper heiress is stabbed to death and the only suspect is her husband. **** Post Oak Mall

LOOSE SCREWS (R): A group of guys attend a summer detention school. Teenage T & A. Schulman 6

MARIE (PG-13): Sissy Spacek stars in this true story of a woman who works to rid Tennessee's government of corruption. Manor East III

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 2: FREDDY'S REVENGE (R): The saga continues. The first one was supposedly one of the better horror movies. Schulman 6

PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE (PG): A wacky comedy starring comedian Pee-Wee Herman. ** Schulman 6

REMO WILLIAMS: THE ADVENTURE BEGINS (PG-13): After a New York cop plunges to his death in the East River, he wakes up in the hospital the morning of his funeral with a new name (Remo Williams), a new face, and a new job as the new "enforcer" for a secret government agency. Trained by the last living

master of Sinanju, the sun source of the survival arts, he learns how to dodge bullets, walk through fire, run across sand and leave no footprints, etc. Post Oak Mall

RETURN OF THE JEDI (PG): Part three of the Star Wars series. I thought it was the best so far — it's the one with those cute little Ewoks. **** Cepheid Variable, Friday and Saturday, 7:00 and 9:45, Rudder Theater.

SILVER BULLET (R): A Stephen King movie about a werewolf that terrorizes a small town. Schulman 6

SILVERADO (PG-13): A new look at the Old West. This western revolves around four reluctant heroes who fight to put things right in the town of Silverado. **** Manor East III

STOP MAKING SENSE: The critically-acclaimed Talking Heads movie. Schulman 6

SWEET DREAMS (PG-13): Jessica Lange stars in this movie about the life of country music legend Patsy Cline. *** Post Oak Mall

THX-1138 (PG): An early George Lucas film. People of the 25th century live underground and are ruled by computers using mind-control drugs. Cepheid Variable, Friday and Saturday, midnight, 701 Rudder.

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A. (R): Two Secret Service agents track a ruthless professional counterfeiter in this crime drama played out in the streets and back alleys of Los Angeles. Filmed on location in L.A. Manor East III