

reviews

"Dudes"
 Directed by Penelope Spheeris
 Starring Jon Cryer,
 Catherine Mary Stewart,
 and Lee Ving
 Rated R

Penelope Spheeris, best known for "The Decline of Western Civilization," her documentary of the punk scene in Los Angeles, displays an incredible amount of talent as

director of "Dudes," her first major movie. Her use of camera angles, lighting, and editing is superb.

"Dudes" tells the story of three teenage New York punk rockers, Grant, Biscuit and Milo, who decide to move to California after coming to the conclusion that their lives are going nowhere in New York. They all get in a Volkswagen and start their journey to the promised land. The trip is

uneventful until the trio decides to camp for the night off the roadside in a Utah desert.

During the night they are attacked by a gang of outlaws led by Missoula, whose idea of a good time is killing illegal aliens hiding in the desert. The fact that the punk rockers are white does not seem to bother Missoula as he and his gang rob and beat up the teenagers, and eventually kill Milo when the kids try to escape.

Grant and Biscuit are more fortunate, but receive no help from the local police. Grant decides to try to catch up with the thieves and avenge the death of his friend and Biscuit reluctantly joins him. During one of their stops they meet Jessie, played by Catherine Mary Stewart, who helps the boys in their quest for Missoula and his gang. She teaches the boys the things they need to know about the West to survive and helps them out of trouble more than once.

Jon Cryer (who has also appeared in "Pretty in Pink" and "No Small Affair") as Grant and Daniel Roebuck as Biscuit give commendable realistic performances as the troubled punks who come of age, and Lee Ving (lead singer of the punk band Fear) makes an excellent bad guy as Missoula.

Even more enjoyable is the effort put forth by Spheeris as director. It would have been easy for her to make another humorous movie about

punk rockers like "Repo Man," but instead she chose a more serious story line that keeps the humor on a more subtle level. The soundtrack incorporates music from a variety of genres including punk, industrial, country, and rock 'n' roll, and very effectively complements the movie.

The cinematography is consistently excellent. The final shootout in a ghost town factory incorporates the use of shadowing in an exciting way. The chase scenes are intense but also contain a strange, dark sense of humor. This is definitely a movie worth seeing.

—Review by Tom Reinarts



"Psonic Psonspot"
 The Dukes of Stratosphere
 Geffen
 ***1/2

A few years ago the British band XTC had to stop touring because one of their lead singers had throat problems. The band members decided to continue recording albums, but had plenty of spare time on their hands between records. To help fill in that gap they decided to record under

the pseudonym The Dukes of Stratosphere. "Psonic Psonspot" is the second album with the Dukes alias.

Whereas the XTC albums are more pop oriented, "Psonic Psonspot" recalls the psychedelic era of the 1960s and early 1970s. Starting with "English Settlement" XTC spent a considerable amount of effort trying to create moods with their albums. Sometimes it worked, like in "English Settlement," and sometimes it did not, as in "Mummer." The Dukes' albums seem to be more collections of songs than thematic wholes.

Colin Moulding and Andy Partridge do most of the singing and song writing for the band, and on "Psonic Psonspot" they have created some songs that are as good as anything they have done under any band name. The best are "Have You Seen Jackie?" and "You're my drug." Both of these do a splendid job of blending the vocal harmonies of the two lead singers.

The influence of the Beatles is obvious on several songs. "Branic's Daughter" and "Pale and Precious" are both slow numbers that sound like they could have easily been written by Paul McCartney 15 years ago. The songs of John Lennon seem to have inspired the band when they wrote "Collideascope."

"Vanishing Girl," the opening track of the

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