

'The Commitments' falls short in developing characters, plot, theme

By Kevin Robinson
The Battalion

New musicians attempt revival of Motown's soul music

By Rob Newberry
The Battalion

It's a general rule that I can usually tell whether or not I'm going to like a movie by the first half hour or so. However, it's not until the very end of Alan Parker's new film, "The Commitments," that I began to feel a little disappointed.

Movie Review

It wasn't that the film hadn't been good up until that point. It was. But that was when I realized that Parker and screenwriter Roddy Doyle had created a two hour movie that was only a beginning to a film. Characters had been introduced and were starting to interact. Situations and conflicts had been created that needed resolutions. There were some interesting sub-plots that seemed certain to resurface. And then Parker pulls the rug out from underneath the audiences feet. The movie's over. The credits roll.

"The Commitments" tells the story of Jimmy Rabitte (Robert Arkins). Jimmy's growing up in a poor, working class neighborhood in northern Dublin. Aside from collecting the occasional unemployment check, Jimmy and his friends escape from the boredom of everyday life through music. After seeing the drunken Deco (An-

See COMMITMENTS/Page 8



Deco (Andrew Strong) screams his way through Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight Hour" in "The Commitments."

"The Commitments"
Motion Picture Soundtrack
MCA

Twentieth Century Fox's new film "The Commitments" preaches that soul music can provide the salvation that Dublin, Ireland's working class needs. But trying to make a bunch of old Motown tunes "born again" by getting a dozen new musicians to cover them doesn't make me a convert. I seem to recall something about "old wine in new wineskins" still being "old wine."

Music Review

The soundtrack to the film is just that - fourteen cover songs originally done by soul music's best artists. There are tunes by Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding among others, and the twelve-member band tries hard to inject them with new life.

Andrew Strong's vocals provide the dominant sound on half the tunes. Strong's vocal style is so fearfully close to Joe Cocker's that the whole project seems like it might be just that - a "Joe Cocker does Motown" kind of thing. With the back-up harmonies and

See SOUNDTRACK/Page 8

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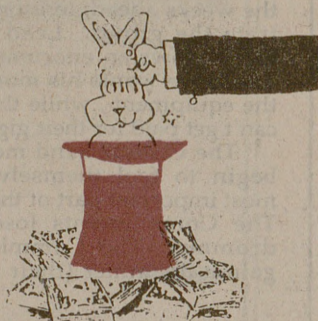
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