



'Memoirs of an Invisible Man' shows off convincing special effects

By Kevin Robinson
The Battalion

"Memoirs of an Invisible Man"
Starring: Chevy Chase, Darryl Hannah, Michael McKean, Sam Neill
Directed by John Carpenter
Now playing at Cinema 3
Rated PG-13

In "Memoirs of an Invisible Man," Chevy Chase plays a lazy and cocky con-man who seems to glide through life on a wave of one-liners and sarcasm. Even though the odds are always against him, Chase comes through in the end, with only the help of a deadpan approach and a smile. If this sounds familiar at all, it's because this is the character that Chevy Chase has been playing for the past ten years. Like stars Jack Nicholson and Eddie Murphy, Chevy Chase doesn't really act in his movies, he just plays himself and lets the plot go around him.

This tradition continues in "Memoirs." "Memoirs" isn't a bad film. If you like Chevy Chase it doesn't matter whether he's invisible, head of a vacationing family, or an investigative reporter named Fletch, he's still himself and "Memoirs" is a Chevy Chase movie.

This time around, Chase plays businessman Nick Holloway. Holloway is sent out to cover a meeting at an experimental scientific facility. Typically, he's hungover, and sneaks off to catch a nap somewhere else in the building.

While asleep, a malfunction occurs in one of the building's labs, leaving the building's molecules "displaced." When Holloway wakes up, he finds the building surrounded by armed guards, and he finds himself invisible.

Sam Neill plays Jenkins, a C.I.A. agent who makes Hannibal Lector look like a nice guy. Jenkins wants to recruit Holloway for his own private intelligence force, one that can be hired out to the highest bidder. He gives Holloway a choice: he can join or he can be killed.

Holloway escapes, but discovers that he isn't safe at home. He decides to hide at a friend's (Michael McKean) beach house to hide from Jenkins and his fascist operatives. Unfortunately, the owner of the house now takes the opportunity to show up for the weekend with several

friends, including Alice Monroe (Darryl Hannah) a woman that Holloway had been seeing shortly before his accident.

In no time at all, Holloway has revealed his invisible state to Alice and begins working on a plan to find a cure. All the while, Jenkins and his goons are hot on Holloway's tail.

"Memoirs" isn't exactly a straight comedy. It's more of a romance-adventure story with some funny scenes thrown in. Chase probably hasn't seen this much action since "Fletch," and the movie occasionally gets pretty dark. However, as soon as situations look bleak, Chase trips over a chair and gets the film back on track.

The real attraction of "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" is the high-tech effects. An invisible man picture hasn't been made in some time. In this era of "Terminator 2" computer effects, it seems that there's nothing that can't be convincingly put on the screen. "Memoirs" uses this to its advantage. For the first time in cinema history, the audience can actually see (or not) how things would appear if there really were an invisible being. Whether it's watching smoke go down into Chase's lungs as he puffs on a cigarette or seeing Chase eat (a disgusting sight), the effects are impressive.

A sad aspect to the picture is the direction of John Carpenter. After releasing "Halloween" in 1979, Carpenter was considered one of the up and coming young Hollywood directors. After "The Fog," "Escape From New York," and "The Thing," Carpenter was known for a distinctive style that made him one of the best horror directors around. Unfortunately, through most of the mid to late eighties, Carpenter went into a decline. With "Memoirs," Carpenter has hit bottom. The direction of the picture is competent enough, but any trace of Carpenter's former touch is lacking.

It's a tragedy that "Memoirs" could have been directed by anyone.

Fans of Chevy Chase or his style of humor will want to check out "Memoirs of an Invisible Man." It's easily one of his better movies. Being invisible only gives Chase the excuse to go into the "klutz routine" that he perfected 15 years ago, but clumsiness is something Chase does best. "Memoirs" succeeds in its own way. It's not a spectacular picture, and it doesn't try to be. What it delivers is a simple little adventure story starring Chevy Chase as himself.



Too many players confuse 'Devils' plot



By Timm Doolen
The Battalion

You'll have a devil of a time trying to figure out "The Devils," the latest production by the Aggie Players in their strongest year.

This epic, three-and-a-half hour production directed by Robert Wenck is a bit different than the traditional play (if there is such a thing) to say the least. The drama concerns beliefs and customs of various townspeople in 17th century France.

Early on, many of the dozens of characters are introduced. The main character is Father Urbain Grandier (Oscar Giner), the priest of the town of Loudon, and also a fairly promiscuous soul.

During the day he prays to God and in the afternoon and at night he gives in to sins of the flesh. The local surgeon and chemist, Mannoury (Clay Loveless) and Adam (R. Sean Dunham) track his womanizing exploits in an attempt to expose him.

Meanwhile, Sister Jeanne (Stephany Tramel) of the local nunnery has had a vision that Father Grandier should be the spiritual adviser to the convent, but Grandier refuses the offer.

To get back at Grandier, the sisters of the nunnery claim they have been possessed by Satan in the physical form of Grandier.

Political factions from inside the town, from the Catholic church and even from the throne all combine to utilize the nuns' claims to bring about Grandier's demise.

The intricacies of the story are far too long and complex to explain in a simple review, and to be quite honest, I couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on about half the time.

Performances vary from wonderful (Giner as Grandier and John Flores as Father Barre) to good (Tramel as Sister Jeanne) to pretty bad (Ernesto Maldonado as Father Minon, who

stumbled on some words, and Allen Horton as Bishop De La Rochepozay, who sounded like a robot).

Giner, a professor of theatre arts at A&M, is only one of two non-students in the production, and his performance alone is well worth the price of admission. The other non-student is Scott Kelly, whom might be remembered from last summer's happy-go-lucky "Pump Boys and Dinettes" production. He performs here as admirably as in that musical.

Of the student actors, one wishes the wonderful talents of John Flores could have been better utilized. He is by far the best dramatic actor of any Aggie Player I have seen. His acting has a natural rhythm to it that makes you forget he's either a student or an actor.

Other students put in worthwhile performances, but unfortunately, none was allowed to shine because of the large number of small roles. Many students had parts in the play, but it was tough for any actor to build a meaningful rapport with the audience.

The choreography of many of the ensemble scenes is wonderful, almost surrealistic. More than two dozen players move individually as if controlled by a single mind, a visual experience seldom seen on stage.

I admit I didn't get a lot of the deeper meaning of the play and I fault my own ignorance as much as the author, John Whiting. For example, I have no idea why one of the characters looked like a punk rocker, while the rest were in period costumes.

The production is worthwhile to see for the performances, remarkable set, staging, and costumes. But it seems unlikely that people will fair too much better than me in trying to figure out what everything meant.

The play runs Wednesday through Saturday at 8 p.m. Admission is \$5 for students and \$6 for non-students. Call the Aggie Players at 845-2621 for more information.

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Associate Dean of Student Affairs
UT Southwestern Medical School

Date: Tuesday, March 3, 1992

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