

## 'Honeymoon in Vegas' provides colorful characters, despite mediocre plot

JENNY MAGEE

Special to THE BATTALION

"Honeymoon in Vegas" Starring Nicolas Cage, Sarah Jessica Parker, James Caan Director/Writer Andrew Bergman Rated PG-13 Playing at Manor East 3

"Honeymoon in Vegas" fulfills all the requirements of a typical American movie. In a nation that has been raised on Saturday morning cartoons and bedtime stories, the movie's predictability is easily melted by the flashing Las Vegas lights.

Jack Singer (Nicolas Cage) is a 90's man. He has a good job as a small-time private detective in New York City. He has a beautiful girlfriend, a slightly receding hairline, and a big problem with commitment.

Jack's girlfriend, Betsy (Sarah Jessica Parker) is understanding and patient about Jack's aversion to walk down the aisle. She is subtly persuasive, playfully flirtatious, and pours into every outfit that she wears. But a woman can only fight the ticking of a biological clock for so long, and competing with the final request of Jack's deceased mother for him to remain single is too much to expect.

Faced with an ultimatum, Jack fights off nausea, pushes back the memory of his mother, and jumps on a plane to Las Vegas with Betsy to get married. They figure they will try their luck on the slot machines, grab the Ali Baba Suite for a couple of nights, then take a short trip down the aisle. Simple as that. End of story.

But in every good Las Vegas fairy tale a wealthy, sleek-suited gambling shark must appear. Tommy Korman (James Caan) is the type of man who lives faithfully by the philosophy that taking people by the balls or the pocketbook is a sure-fire way to get what you want.

When Korman spots Betsy (entangled in Jack's arms) across the casino, Korman is reminded of his deceased wife by Betsy's striking resemblance. So, Korman uses his connections at the hotel to set up a "get acquainted" poker game, in which Jack is conveniently invited.

Jack spends the rest of the movie trapped in a Wile E. Coyote cartoon, fighting against incredible odds.

The audience was easily drawn to both Nicolas Cage's performance and his character.

It is easy to relate to the whiny New York accent that carried him through the dirty diapers in "Raising Arizona." In watching the movie I could also understand his frustration, especially in his pursuit of love.

Sarah Jessica Parker and James Caan both do adequate work. What really brings life to the story is the use of several minor characters, who add a fresh complication just when the plot begins to drag. Such characters include a multitude of Elvis impersonators and an extremely brief appearance by the professor (Ben Stein) in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." Overall such characters credit writer/director



Nicolas Cage, Sara Jessica Parker and James Caan star in the comedy, "Honeymoon in Vegas"

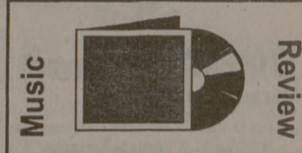
Andrew Bergman's sense of exaggerated humanity.

This is not a heavy movie. It probably won't change your life. There are no gang fights, drug busts, and no pregnant teenagers. But, in the movie there was an actual Las Vegas preacher who married the 80 year old couple sitting down the aisle from me a few months ago.

Seeing this movie probably did change their lives. Because I have never heard old people make so much noise in a public place in my life.

I always liked a good fairy tale, whether it be in real life or on the silver screen.

## Damn Yankees' new release falls short on originality, energy



By TIMM DOOLEN

Special to THE BATTALION

Damn Yankees "Don't Tread on Me" Warner Brothers

Those damned Damn Yankees - they had to go and make a second album that's better than their first. But even though it's an improvement, don't expect miracles.

Two years ago when I first heard of the odd combination of Ted Nugent, former Styx member Tommy Shaw and former Night Ranger Jack Blades, I expected a lot. Their first album was good, but in my opinion somewhat of an artistic failure.

Two years later, they're trying it again with the same lineup, and the group's accomplishments are moderately better on "Don't Tread on Me."

Although there are a few songs that I call "generic rock" ("This Side of Hell," "Fifteen Minutes of Fame") on the album, the band has diversified its styles a bit more. I say "generic rock" meaning songs that bands like Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, the new Van Halen and other hard rock bands put out that all seem to sound exactly the same.

Treading in better directions are songs like "Where You Goin' Now," a wonderful rock-ballad that has the obvious influence of writer-singer Shaw stamped all over it.

In musical contrast is the best song of the album, the bluesy "Double Coyote," that is more than likely Ted Nugent's creation. Nugent, Blades and Shaw take writing credit for all the songs on the album, but on most of them it's easy to tell who had the heaviest influence - Shaw definitely dominates the album and sings on the best songs.

A problem throughout the album is inane lyrics that are either plainly meaningless or attempt to be meaningful and just come off as shallow.

"Uprising" is supposed to be about the plight of the Native American Indian. Or is it? The lyrics are almost indecipherable: "When you feel an uprising/ And your blood runs cold/ You dig a little deeper/ To the bottom of the hole." Hello? What are you talking about?

Another problem is the band slipping into the "generic rock" formula - some songs start out great and then suddenly shift into the same hard rock, heavy guitar, heavy drums, shrill voice formula that we've heard a hundred times before.

One important exception is "Firefly," which starts off with mellow guitar and then explodes into a flurry of energy behind a heavy drum beat.

It seems that the creators of the album were trying to run a particular theme through the songs - one of freedom, accomplishment and uprising. And although lyrically this album falls short across the board, the music and singing more than make up for it on most of the songs.

Quite honestly, the most interesting aspect of this album is trying to figure out how the musicians with their different styles and attitudes combine to make an album. And that's what will continue to make the Damn Yankees an interesting prospect on future albums.



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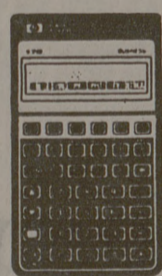
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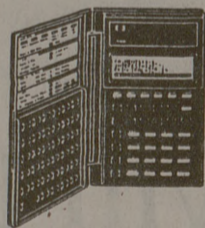
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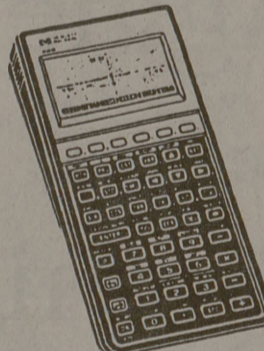
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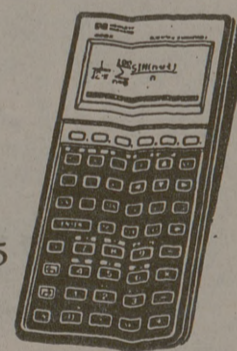
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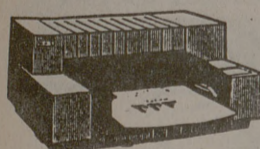
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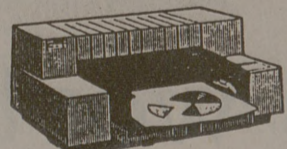
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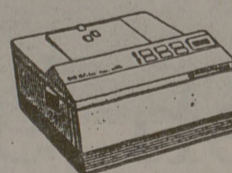
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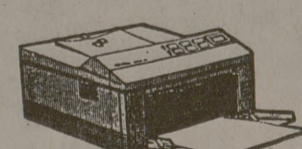
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