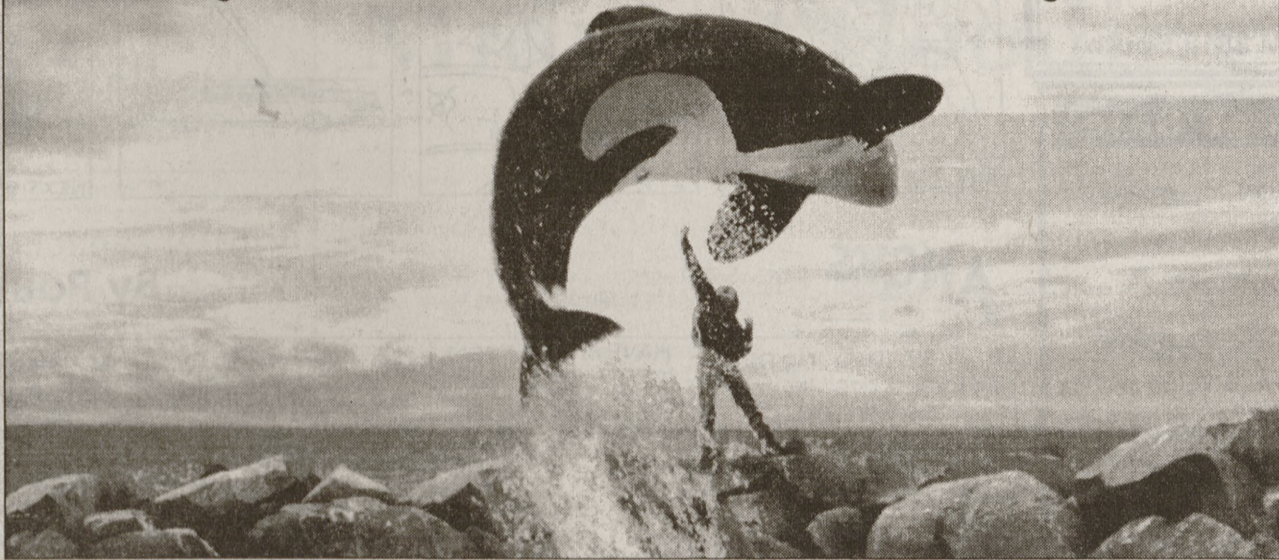


Film reviews

'Willy' frolics with family fun



By JENNIFER SALCE

The Battalion

"Free Willy"
Starring Jason James Richter, Lori Petty, Michael Madsen and Jayne Atkinson
Directed by Simon Wincer
Rated
Starts playing Friday

"Free Willy" will move you emotionally in so many ways that you will not want to leave your seat until the music's over and the credits have stopped rolling.

I immediately fell in love with the whales in this movie when I saw them in the opening scene freely swimming together in their natural habitat. The underwater scenes of the whales are dramatic. I almost forgot I was in the theater and thought I was back in my high school marine biology class. But, this

serene setting is destroyed when a group of men capture Willy to take him back to an amusement park.

Willy becomes the victim of captivity and dislikes the daily tricks he has to perform. He becomes a mean whale and will not let anyone near him.

Jessie (Jason James Richter), a 12-year-old street kid, and some of his friends decide to paint graffiti on Willy's observation tank as a prank. But Jessie is the only one that gets caught.

After the authorities review a list of Jessie's previous violations, they decide to send Jessie to a foster home and in addition make him clean up the observation tank.

At first, Jessie makes it hard on his foster parents Glenn (Michael Madsen) and Annie (Jayne Atkinson) Greenwood. They struggle to get Jessie to talk to them and abide by

the family rules. But nothing seems to bring Jessie around.

When Jessie's duties of scrubbing and painting are almost complete, Jessie realizes he doesn't want to leave his new friend Willy. So, Jessie gets a job at the park and spends every day and night playing with Willy.

Everything is going great until Jessie discovers the owners of the park are plotting to kill the whale. In his efforts to save Willy, Jessie and two other workers, Rae (Lori Petty) and Randolph (August Schellenberg), take matters into their own hands and race to free Willy.

This touching movie is one the whole family would enjoy. The amazing flips, rolls and dives Willy performs for Jessie will take your breath away. The mysterious bond between Willy and Jessie will steal your heart.

Disney witchery fizzles

'Hocus Pocus' fails to entertain

By JOHN BAYLESS

The Battalion

"Hocus Pocus"
Starring Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker and Kathy Najimy
Directed by Kenny Ortega
Rated PG
Starts playing Friday

"Hocus Pocus" was the worst Disney film I've ever seen. It seems Bette Midler, Hollywood's "Divine Lady M," has fallen on hard times.

The film is a madcap tale of three witches from 1693 who are brought back from the grave accidentally by a teenag-

er, Max (Omri Katz). Executed three hundred years before for witchcraft, the witches arrive back hungry for revenge against the town that killed them.

Winifred (Bette Midler), Sarah (Sarah Jessica Parker) and Mary (Kathy Najimy) are opposed by Max, his little sister Dani (Thora Birch), and his friend Allison (Vinessa Shaw). The kids have to keep the town safe until daybreak, when the evil trio will return to the grave.

Humor in "Hocus Pocus" is limited to crude and often violent slapstick comedy. In one scene a zombie's fingers are

chopped off by a manhole cover; in another scene two witches munch on human toes. Furthermore, there is a good bit of sexual innuendo in the film, which seems strange considering that "Hocus Pocus" is a film for children.

The language is also cruder than that of any Disney productions I've ever seen. Words like "damn," "jerkoff," and "whore" undoubtedly are the reason for its PG rating.

But the film did have its good points. Bette Midler's voice was excellent in a witchy rendition of "I Put a Spell on You," and there was quality acting by



Midler

all of the younger stars in the show. Thora Birch was especially good in her role as Dani.

"Hocus Pocus" doesn't have the Disney feel to it. Instead it has a more worldly, hard edged view that clashes with what a children's film should be. It would be more appropriate for FOX than the Disney Channel.

A 'weekend' in Hell...

'Bernie's II' stinks like a rotting corpse

By ANAS BEN-MUSA

The Battalion

"Weekend at Bernie's II"
Starring Jonathan Silverman, Andrew McCarthy and Terry Kiser
Directed by Robert Klane
Rated PG
Playing at Cinema III

What is worse than a story about a corpse tossed around like a sack of potatoes or being used as a baseball bat... the sequel - "Weekend at Bernie's II."

The second part starts where the first part left off. Bernie (Terry Kiser) is finally put to rest at the New York City Morgue, but a high priestess of voodoo from the U.S. Virgin Islands puts a spell on two tourists from New York and orders them to bring Bernie back. In order for her to find the \$2 million dollars Bernie had embezzled from his insurance company, the voodoo witch instructs her helpers to put a spell on the corpse.

Unfortunately, the morons lose the chicken that is the vital ingredient in the spell and instead use one of the more common birds that populate the New York rooftops, a pigeon.

Of course, the spell is not perfect and Bernie can only move when some snappy Brazilian/South American mu-



Andrew McCarthy, Terry Kiser and Jonathan Silverman star in the mind numbing "Weekend at Bernie's II."

sic is playing.

With all of this going on, the two-bird brains from the first Bernie movie, Richard (Jonathan Silverman) and Larry (Andrew McCarthy) get fired from the company and find out the \$2 million dollars are still around. With such a suspenseful and intriguing plot, it's no wonder why I was more interested

in reading a dictionary.

The only question I had throughout this hellish experience was what studio president in his right mind would think that a film so idiotic would actually make money or be funny. All the studios are jumping at the chance to make more "family-oriented" films, without realizing audiences are still looking for quality entertainment.

Furthermore, many parents would not subject their children to seeing a film where the main funny point is a corpse being dragged down a beach, stuffed in a two-foot refrigerator and used as a battering ram.

With such a "brilliant" plot and "funny" scenes, the acting was an absolute "wonder."

McCarthy's performance can only be described as a heat rash that won't go away. As the sexist, egotistical Larry, how can any woman not be flattered and appreciative of such lines as "look at the tits on that woman."

Silverman was only a tad better, if you like sado masochism. Throughout the film, it seemed stupid to think Richard would follow or have a friend such as Larry. A man whose only good quality is his virginity.

"Weekend at Bernie's II" filled me with such longing, such drive to commit suicide. It made comedy reach a new low... the grave.

Clint

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album. Wynonna's voice is simply magical.

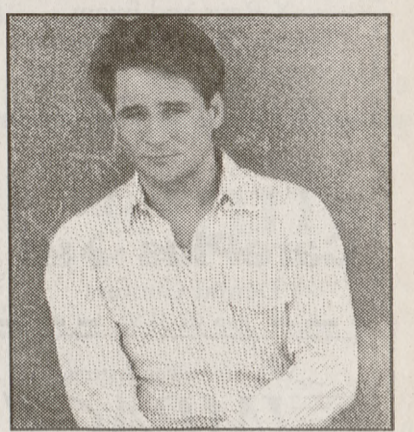
The sound created will take you back into a world where dimensions of feeling are limitless.

After hearing the album twice, resisting to sing along to "Thinking Again" and "No Time To Kill" just wouldn't be natural.

The slow, meaningful words capture the light in Black's voice and lead the listener in.

Some of the more upbeat songs like "Tuckered Out" and "I'll Take Texas" still show his style, but they don't reveal the elements of emotion Black can bring like second nature.

It's the slow songs and Black's poetic feel which make this album what a country album should be.



Black

Karaoke

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people credit for having enough guts to sing in front of a room full of college students.

Sad but true, some of the performers took Karaoke more seriously than others.

One girl sang with such power and enthusiasm, it was hard not to laugh every time she purposely closed her eyes and raised her arms to the people sitting in the restaurant. The poor girl must have thought she really was on

"Star Search."

One girl who sang Patsy Cline's "Crazy" gave me the chills. Thank goodness she held off on the arm gestures.

And yet, there were those with enough of a buzz and not much talent to courageously get up and sing a song. At least they had a sense of humor.

Karaoke is a fun thing. It's hip and it's crazy and great for the young and old.

There's just one thing I wish could improve where Karaoke videos.

The Battalion
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