

MOVIE REVIEW

The Rich Man's Wife

Starring: Halle Berry and Christopher McDonald
Directed by: Amy Holden Jones
Rated: R
Playing at: Hollywood 16

A rich man with a loving and devoted wife is murdered. No, the butler didn't do it, but the plot of *The Rich Man's Wife* carries a similar premise.

Halle Berry portrays Josie Potenza, wife to the powerful Tony Potenza

The Rich Man's Wife attempts to tell a simple story of murder and deceit, but fails in an attempt to be another *The Usual Suspects*.

True — the film will engross an audience, people will cheer during Berry's fight scenes and gasp at moments of surprise — but the final sequence throws the plot into the wind.

Acting in the film is notable, and it is a shame such a poor script was given to these actors.

Berry is convincing and likable as a woman trying to keep her marriage together, and her frail on-screen presence makes the audience feel for the



Halle Berry (right) and Christopher McDonald (left) star in *The Rich Man's Wife*, playing at Hollywood 16

(Christopher McDonald).

They share a rocky, seven-year marriage and decide to take a vacation in a friend's cabin. In no time, the husband is called away on business.

Josie, stays behind and befriends Cole (Peter Greene), a man who helps her when her car breaks down. After the two share dinner, he attempts to rape her, foreshadowing a dangerous evening.

When her husband is found dead, Josie and the audience have a clear picture of who did it.

Wrong.

hard times she deals with.

McDonald delivers the right voice inflections, gestures and facial expressions to make his character dynamic and complex.

Greene, on the other hand, is a plausible villain, complete with the usual ranting and raving of a madman. His acting is smooth and cunning for the most part, and it accommodates the other actors' fine performances.

The Rich Man's Wife is a modern thriller with good acting and a penniless ending. **B-** —James Francis

A Moral Inquiry

The Aggie Players' presentation of Machiavelli's *Mandragola* digs into author's political world

By JAMES FRANCIS
THE BATTALION

A young man has come from Paris to meet the most beautiful woman in the world. She resides in Florence, Italy, and in the words of an older time, he wants to bed her.

Whether the young man accomplishes his goal or not is the theme of *Mandragola*, the first play presented this fall by the Aggie Players.

Dr. Michael Greenwald, director of the presentation, said the story by Machiavelli embarks on the concept where "the ends justify the means."

He said, among the world of theater, literary works by Machiavelli are held in strong regard and there is a reason why.

"It was written by one of the most important

"I try to tell the story clearly," he said, "and try to create new entertainment from a play almost 500 years old."

Greenwald said he has made *Mandragola* more modern in order to revamp the story for an audience of the '90s.

"We've broadened the play out a lot," he said, "playing it like a vaudeville/cabaret presentation. I don't think the message of the play has been lost."

Greenwald said the play should be a great comedic romp, and some members of the audience will end up on stage.

"It's anything but a musty, dusty old classic," he said.

Another innovative technique Greenwald used was to assign each cast member an animal to research over the summer.

He said patterning after animals helps actors raise their physical stylization.

Todd Rennels, a senior theater arts major, portrays the character of Siro and was assigned an animal akin to a bloodhound.

Rennels said the animal research helps one make contact with the playwright and, in the process, learn a valuable life lesson.

"Machiavelli is about animal instincts," he said. "You have to bring out those animal traits to survive."

Rennels said the loyalty and listening quality a bloodhound holds is presented in his character as well as his personal life.

"I'm sort of everyone's Dutch uncle," he said. "My character is a good listener, and that's what I am."

He said the Dutch uncle personification, the surrogate uncle people count on during hard times, also leads his character to a bit of obscurity.

"I do a lot, but my character is one that doesn't get noticed," Rennels said.

This falls in line with his character's name, Siro, meaning "zero" in Italian.

One thing Rennels hopes the audience will notice the timing and the camaraderie among the actors.

"Everyone is important," he said, "and you really need that unity or the timing and comedy doesn't work."

Rennels said a show either falls on its face or

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Pat James, THE BATTALION

Tim Hollenbeck (left) conspires with Guillermo Deleon (right) in the *Mandragola*

political theorists," he said.

After writing comes directing, and Greenwald set his sights on the target of putting on a good show.

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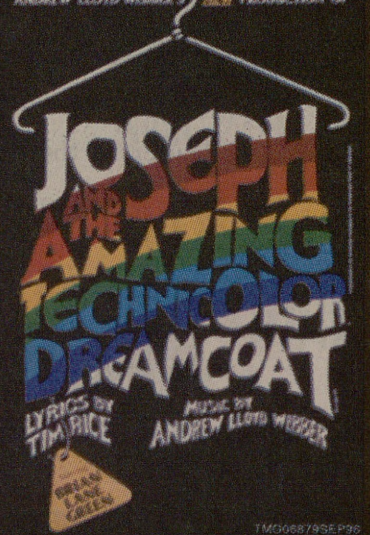
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