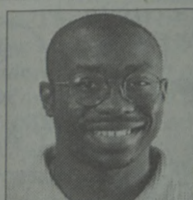


Reel CRITIQUE



JAMES FRANCIS
aggiefLife editor

Three definitions given for the word "palmetto" include (1) nickname for a southern state; (2) a small fan-leaved palm tree; (3) a fat bug found in Florida. Oddly enough, all of these definitions can be applied to the film by the same name.

Palmetto focuses on the topsy-turvy life of its main character Harry Barber (Woody Harrelson), a newspaper reporter.

The film opens with Barber being released from prison after a two-year stay behind bars. As he walks down a dirt road, Barber is torn between heading out to Miami or returning to Palmetto, the sleepy seaside Florida village that always brings trouble even to the most innocent of people.

On the road, Barber sees Palmetto District Attorney John Renick (Tom Wright) in one car and his old girlfriend Nina (Gina Gershon) in another car.

Without haste, Nina gets out of her car and lures Barber back to Palmetto as if there had not been a two-year gap since she had last seen him.

Before long, Barber befriends the mysterious Rhea Malroux (Elisabeth Shue) who makes him with an offer he cannot refuse: \$50,000 to pretend to kidnap her stepdaughter.

Although this may seem like a lot of trouble to be getting into right after being released from jail, Barber is thrown another twist in his already skewed life — the district attorney wants him to act as press liaison for the kidnapping case in which he is directly involved.

But as dead bodies unexpectedly pop up, hidden identities make their true faces known and past situations come back to haunt him, Barber finds himself in a whirlwind of criminal activity.

The cast of *Palmetto* — Harrelson, Shue, Gershon and Michael Rapaport — is one thing that may attract people to see the film; the act-



WOODY HARRELSON PLAYS HARRY BARBER IN THE NEW FILM PALMETTO.

ing is another aspect that will keep audience members in their seats. But it is the plot of the film that is sure to have people feeling satisfied they paid to see the film.

Harrelson has come a long way from his pop-culture character in films such as *White Men Can't Jump* and *Indecent Proposal*. Following in the success of *The People vs. Larry Flint* and *Welcome to Sarajevo*, Harrelson proves a worthy actor in the film.

Gershon and Shue, both extremely seductive and polar opposites in the film, help bring back the good and bad female depictions in film from days of the old silver screen.

Palmetto

Starring Woody Harrelson,
Elisabeth Shue and
Gina Gershon

Directed by Volker Schlöndorff

Rated R

Playing at Hollywood 16

Critique: A-

Carolyn Wonderland dreams into The Dixie Theatre Feb. 27

BY RHONDA REINHART
Staff writer

Carolyn Wonderland
and The Imperial Monkeys
Bursting With Flavor
Justice Records
Critique: A

Carolyn Wonderland and The Imperial Monkeys' latest album is bursting with more than flavor. Wonderland's gruff vocals and sassy songwriting make *Bursting With Flavor* a spicy mix of rock, blues, country and soul. Add salt and lime, and you've got an instant party.

Regardless of the group's eclectic style, it is undoubtedly a rock 'n' roll band. The energy emitted by the heavily accented drum beats, electric guitar and lyrics about drinking, drugging and partying bring to mind early Rolling Stones and The Black Crowes.

Although Wonderland and the Monkeys' sound is definitely rockin', the heavy rhythm and blues influence cannot be ignored. Tracks like "Loose Ends" and "Stay" sound more like Motown tunes with a hint of rock 'n' roll.

The reason this Houston quartet can pull off the switch from rock to blues to rock so well lies in the lungs of Wonderland. The strength of her voice provides amazingly soulful sounds on *Bursting With Flavor's* 12 tracks. Wonderland has been compared to Janis Joplin, Bonnie Raitt and Melissa Etheridge, but her vocal style is certainly all her own. She can go from a screeching falsetto to full-force growl with no warning and she sounds like she's having fun in the process.

The tracks on *Bursting With Flavor* resonate with emotion and make their listeners want to close their eyes, shake their heads and stomp their feet. The album completes the musical spectrum with weepy ballads and raucous, good-time rock 'n' roll antics.

Although Wonderland's



FROM BACK LEFT, CLOCKWISE: ERIC DANE, GUITAR; LEESA HARRINGTON-SQYRES, DRUMS; CAROLYN WONDERLAND, LEAD VOCALS; CHRIS KING, BASS.

voice is the most striking aspect of *Bursting With Flavor*, the album would not be nearly as impressive without the talented backup performers.

Guitarist Eric Dane, bass-player Chris King and drummer Leesa Harrington-Sqyres bring to the album a nice blend of musical styles and genres. The group members work well together and

play off each other fabulously.

Carolyn Wonderland and The Imperial Monkeys is scheduled to open for Storyville Friday, Feb. 27 at the Dixie Theatre. And if *Bursting With Flavor* is any indication of what the group's live shows are like, audiences are in store for a night of sweaty, rowdy rock 'n' roll from two talented Texas bands.

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