

The Object of My Affection

Starring Jennifer Aniston and Paul Rudd

Directed by Nicholas Hytner

Rated R

Playing at Post Oak Mall

Critique: B-

Reel CRITIQUE



AARON MEIER
Night news editor

"All the good men in the world are either taken or gay." This modern-day adage could be the battle cry of Jennifer Aniston's character in the romantic comedy, *The Object of My Affection*.

While the comedy in the movie is smart and tinged with wit, the real strength of the movie lies in its serious subject matter.

Aniston plays Nina Borowski, a social worker who falls for her gay roommate George, played by Paul Rudd.

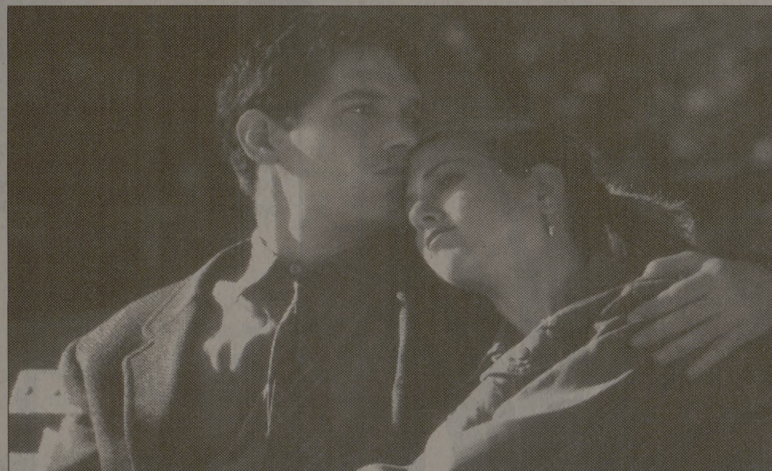
Affection brings an interesting scenario to the screen that puts a twist on the *Chasing Amy* genre of films. The "girl-meets-boy-who-is-in-love-with-another-boy" thing — an American love story for the '90s.

Working against *Affection* is the fact that it is a film that will be placed on the list of movies starring cast members of "Friends." A list that is short and not too distinguished.

Aniston does not venture far from her "Rachel" character — even the story takes place in New York — but she does produce some scenes with real dramatic weight, a task that none of the other residents of Central Park can say.

Rudd gives a somewhat wooden performance as George, but after having to play Alicia Silverstone's boyfriend in *Clueless*, he deserves some recovery time.

The movie's screenplay is a real gem though. Tony and Pulitzer Prize winner Wendy Wasserman pens some brilliant scenes using the supporting characters. Unfortunately, the supporting characters occasionally make for more interesting fare than the leads.



Paul Rudd (George Hanson) consoles Jennifer Aniston (Nina Borowski) in *The Object of My Affection*.

Dixie Chicks take stage at Shadow Canyon

By ROBERT SMITH
City editor

In today's Nashville country music, countless artists use good looks and posture in an attempt to hide the fact that their music is not strong or even remotely country.

With that in mind, one glance at Dallas' Dixie Chicks could fulfill that stereotype.

However, the Dixie Chicks are the exception rather than the rule.

Yes, the Dixie Chicks are gorgeous, but the band's musicianship and authenticity was apparent at their Shadow Canyon performance on Friday.

The band performed songs mainly from its major label debut *Wide Open Spaces*, while sprinkling in material from its previous three albums.

Led by 23-year-old Natalie Maines' up front vocals

and spunky presence, the Chicks tore through various styles of country, ranging from the honky-tonk shuffle of "Tonight, the Heartache's on Me," to the all-out rocking "Let Her Rip" to the country-pop of "There's Your Trouble."

Perhaps the most remarkable part of the performance, besides duplicating the album's near perfect three-part harmonies, were the musical capabilities shown by sisters Martie Seidel and Emily Erwin.

Seidel's excellent fiddle and mandolin work distinguished each song, while Erwin made picking the banjo and dobro look easy.

The band pleased the near-capacity crowd by saving the hit single "I Can Love You Better Than That" for last, before returning for an encore to play "Stand By Your Man," in tribute to the late Tammy Wynette.

New music from alternative groups take A-B-C ratings

REVIEWS BY
Chris Martin

The High Llamas
Cold and Bouncy
V2/Alpaca
Critique: B-



Tuscadero
My Way or the Highway
Teen Beat/Elektra
Critique: C-

When *Hawaii* finally hit the shores of America last year, the world felt the collective gasp of every bedroom 4-track Brian Wilson wannabe. The record was finally pulled from the stone. Sean O'Hagan and the High Llamas picked up right where Wilson and Dyke Parks' ill-fated *Smile* sessions left off with the vision of a laser-guided Tomahawk missile.

O'Hagan even found himself summoned to the tubby bare feet of Wilson, to assist in the rotund muse's comeback. O'Hagan bailed, and apparently experience scared him into making *Cold and Bouncy*. The vibes, banjo, honky-tonk piano and strings still there, but this time textured with the hum and flutter of synth and drum machine. Different enough to be a new sound, similar enough to be the High Llamas.

Like the band's namesake from "Happy Days," Tuscadero puts on a rough-and-tumble face to hide its soft-cuddly nature. (That's a nice way of saying they fail to rock).

The band's sophomore major label album never strays from its unified focus. (That's a nice way of saying every song sounds the same). *My Way or the Highway* finds a place between the bite of Sincola and the pop of Heavenly. (That's a nice way of saying they're derivative — and in a bad way). The song "Paper Dolls," a stinging refutation of supermodel culture, contains the soon-to-be teen-angst mantra "carbon copy cutter phony little paper dolls." (That's a nice way of saying Tuscadero doesn't realize the irony of their own lyrics).

Beth Orton
Best Bit EP
Dedicated
Critique: A-

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PLEASE SEE REVIEWS ON PAGE 4.

Reel CRITIQUE



TRAVIS IRBY
staff writer

Billy Crystal gives his latest movie a huge amount of sentiment, but audiences may give it a giant groan.

My Giant is the story of Sammy (Billy Crystal), a talent agent, who learns valuable life lessons from a freakishly huge man named Max (Gheorghe Muresan). The business-minded Sammy is neglectful of his wife Serena (Kathleen Quinlan) and son Nick (Zane Carney).

Sammy finds Max, by accident, when his job takes him into Romania. Max is the caretaker at a monastery, where he spends most of his days pining for his long lost love Lilliana (Joanna Pacula).

Sammy takes one look at the massive Max, and sees box office gold. (Too bad the same can't be said for this movie.)

Sammy convinces Max America is the place to go to become a big movie star. Max agrees, only because he wants to be reunited with Lilliana, who is living in New Mexico.

This truly odd couple makes their way across the United States learning about life and each other.

Crystal came up with and produced *My Giant*, after his experience with pro wrestler Andre the Giant. The movie's heart is in the

right place, but the execution leaves a lot to be desired.

The film seems to go from one stock sentimental situation to another. For example, Sammy doesn't pay attention to his family, but eventually learns of their importance. Max is a physically imposing character, but in reality he is as gentle as Jesus.

These are not original plot lines, but the film doesn't even try to freshen them up.

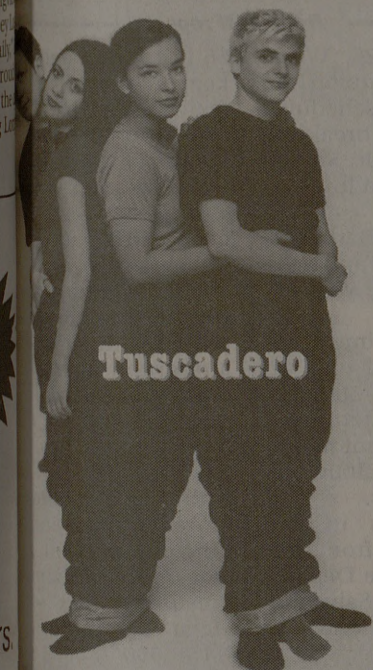
Crystal is his usual wisecracking self. He stops being a smart ass long enough to learn about the important things in life. The problem here is Crystal is the same as he is in every one of his other movies, without the benefit of a strong story to fall back on.

NBA big man Muresan gives his role a shot, but ends up hitting a brick. His English is the movie's biggest setback. Max is supposed to be a highly articulate fellow who quotes Shakespeare. Unfortunately, Muresan's impenetrable accent is so thick, he might as well be speaking his native Romanian.

If a film could be carried on the strength of a pleasant smile, then Muresan would be fine, but it isn't enough.

The screenplay, by David Selzter, is fairly bland as it tries to balance safe comedy with safe sensitivity.

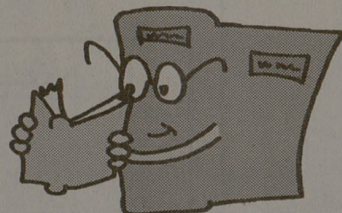
The end result of *My Giant* is a film that is not bad, just boring. Audiences are going to have to be desperate to be won over for this one to work.



Tuscadero

and our posterity, do ordain and establish this *Best Bit EP*

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