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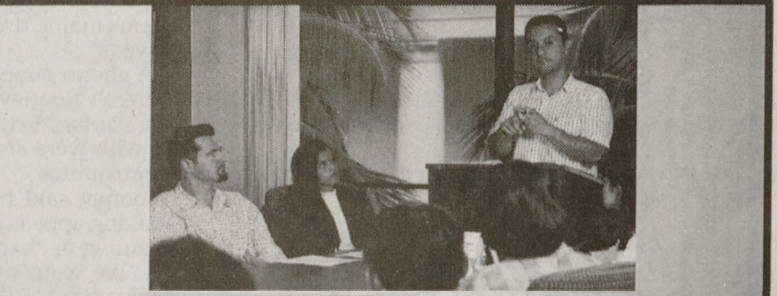
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# AGGIELIFE

## REEL CRITIQUE

### MOVIE REVIEWS

**Music of the Heart**  
 Starring Meryl Streep and Angela Bassett  
 Directed by Wes Craven

A new Wes Craven movie opening on Halloween weekend sounds like good business, but just in case the trailers for this movie have escaped anyone's attention, it should be told *Music of the Heart* is not the typical Craven fright fest. Does that make this movie a bad one? Hardly. Craven and Meryl Streep combine to make one of the best feel-good movies of the year.

After the end of a difficult marriage, Roberta Guaspari (Streep) finds she has no direction in her life and no way of supporting her two sons. An old high school friend suggests she apply for a position at an East Harlem grade school to teach violin. Following an audition by her sons, Principal Janet Williams (Bassett) hires Roberta as a substitute, and therein lies the gist of the movie.

Based on a true story, this movie follows Roberta through her struggles as she raises a family on her own, tries to teach young children to play violin and finding someone she can love.

Horror master Wes Craven (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Scream*) breaks out of the genre with this wonderfully directed drama. Turning an uplifting and inspirational true story into a touching movie that reaffirms faith in the strength of human spirit, Craven proves he does not need knives and gore to make an entertaining movie.

Meryl Streep delivers a flawless, Oscar-caliber performance as the tough but caring teacher and

mother. It is pure pleasure to watch Streep, who seems incapable of delivering a bad performance, at the top of her game as she takes the audience through her entire range of emotions Streep is supported by an outstanding cast that includes Bassett, Gloria Estefan, and Aidan Quinn.

*Music of the Heart* is a movie from the heart. Honest and true, this movie is the sort that leaves a feeling of hope and happiness long after the credits have rolled. Sure to catch a little Oscar buzz, this movie is definitely worth watching for people of all ages. (Grade: B+)

— Matt McCormick

**Bats**  
 Starring Lou Diamond Phillips and Leon  
 Directed by Louis Morneau

Just in time for Halloween, *Bats* is flying into theaters around the country. Yet another in the long and not-so-distinguished line of movies about science experiments gone awry, this movie tells the story of genetically altered bats with a taste for human flesh, intelligence and desire to take over the world.

Why is it that the scientist in movies like this are almost always nuttier than a Payday candybar? Why don't they turn creepy animals into warm fuzzy house pets instead of giving them all the qualities needed to replace humans as the top of the food chain?

When the new and improved bats begin attacking a small

Texas town, it is up to Sheriff Kimsey (Phillips), bat specialist Dr. Sheila Casper (Dina Merrill) and her assistant Jimmy Sandoz (Leon) to stop them before they spread. Sounds pretty straightforward, one might say. Not really. Unless a one has trouble figuring out why the strings cannot be seen when the puppets move.

This film seems to be struggling to be a special effects loaded version of Alfred Hitchcock's classic *The Birds*. It is obvious that the director is no Hitchcock, and the special effects movie, this film's effects are not very special. In *Gremlins* had better effects 15 years ago. One of the nice things about this film is the cinematography. The camerawork is competent enough to serve up some entertaining eye candy, but it is obvious that while the director might have a nice visual style, he has no idea of how to pace a story or direct the actors.

Phillips has proven himself a talented actor. However, as the Texas sheriff, his lines come across as forced and flat. This was caused largely by the screenplay.

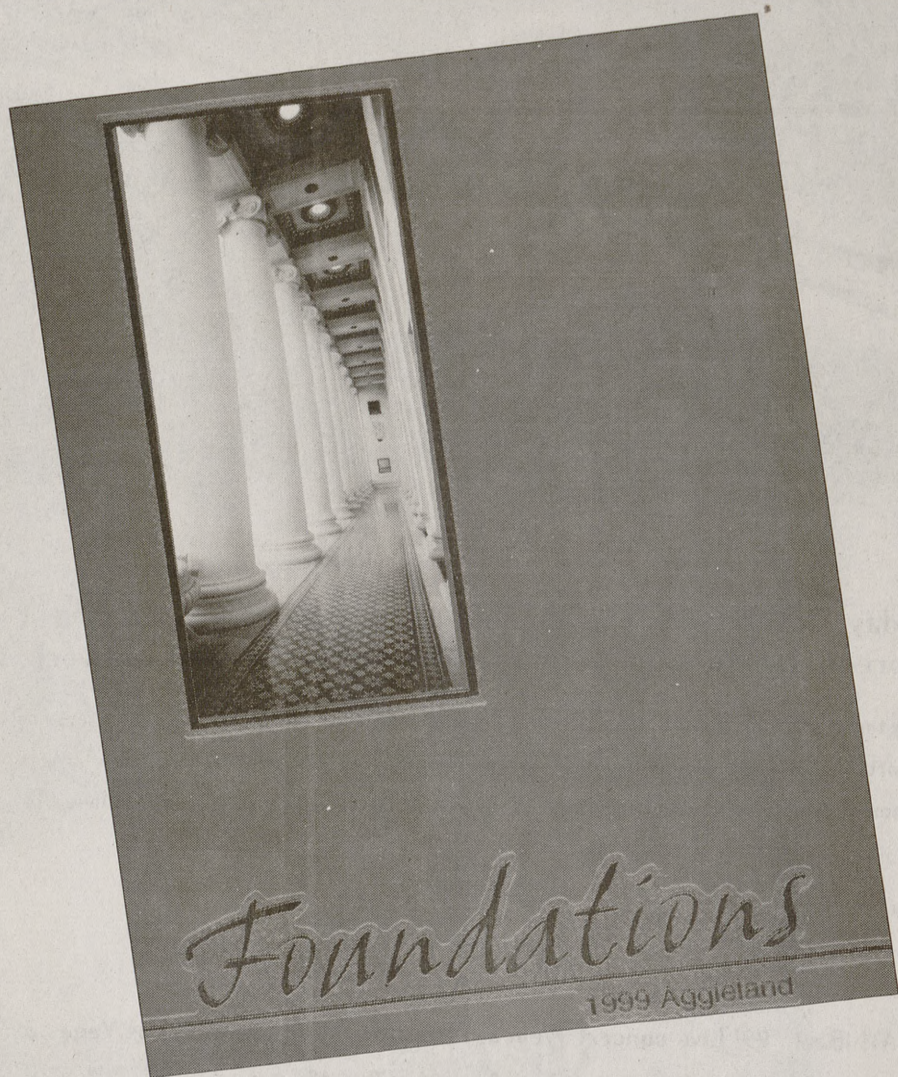
Leon is supposed to be the film's comic relief, but the director does such a horrible job of directing those moments up, no one cares when the jokes arrive.

This movie is supposed to be scary crowd please, but the most pleasing moment is when the bats begin to roll, and the only scary about it is that it got made all. (Grade: D)

— Matt McCormick

**A = instant classic    B = a cut above    C = average**  
**D = don't buy it        F = burn in effigy**

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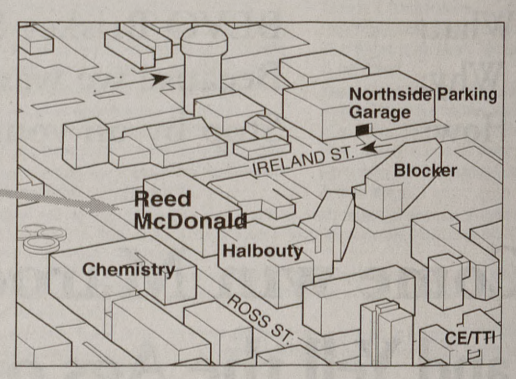
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