

Do the Right Thing is muddled, but good

FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

DO THE RIGHT THING (R) Almost all really good movies divide audiences or incite controversy — ever "Batman." But it doesn't necessarily follow that a movie that stirs people up is all good.

Spike Lee's latest is two-thirds of a very good movie — the first two-thirds. The concluding third — the part of the film that has spawned a heated debate about Lee's intentions — is a muddle.

First, the good parts. Set in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, the film creates a simmering urban environment on the hottest day of the year. "Hot" here means more than temperature; it means racial tensions that have been building. Lee's inspiration for his film is the black/white divisiveness in New York City, a situation widely thought to be getting worse, and one exacerbated by the allegedly racially motivated killings of Eleanor Bumpurs, Michael Stewart and others. (Lee even dedicates his film to the families of these slain blacks.)

Though his is an idealized, drug-free Brooklyn neighborhood, Lee creates the texture of a real community — introducing a dozen or more engaging characters in a series of incisive and funky sketches, monologues and dialogue scenes. (Single best scene: a

scathingly funny series of racist tirades delivered by various characters.)

The two central figures are gook men — one white, one black — who unfortunately catalyze existing tensions. Sal (Danny Aiello, in an exceptionally winning performance) is a likable, somewhat patronizing Italian-American who runs the local pizza parlor, priding himself on having served the largely black community for years. Mookie (Spike Lee) is his delivery man, an equally likable sprite of a guy who is picked on by Sal's openly racist son Pino (John Turturro).

One of Sal's black customers wants him to put photos of blacks on the pizzeria walls — alongside the glossies of Italian-Americans like Travolta and Sinatra. But Sal refuses, and, in a confrontation, he smashes a boom box that belongs to one of the protesting blacks. The confrontation escalates until the cops arrive and kill one of the blacks. For Mookie, this is the straw that breaks the camel's back. Suddenly, he becomes a man of action.

The movie's violent climax is supposed to have an irrational component — a situation that has gotten way out of control in which individual behavior is never all right or all wrong. Yet, by referring to real-life cases like those of Bumpurs and Stewart, Lee clearly wants his film to make some kind of statement.

It's Kidsummer at Halton museum

On Saturday, July 29, the Halton Region Museum will be staging the Kids' Pioneer Festival as part of Kidsummer '89. From 11 a.m. until 4 p.m., kids 10 years of age and younger and their families, will be admitted free into the Museum where they will participate in a variety of activities including: print-making and setting type from a 100 year old printing press; cooking scones and churning butter in the log cabin; spinning and weaving with wool; making and tasting ice cream; nail driving and cross-cut saw contests; games and races; a treasure hunt for information and prizes; and sitting in on a one-room school class.

Kids and their families are encouraged to dress up in "pioneer costume" and step back into the 1870s for an exciting, fun-filled day. No pre-registration required.

Kidsummer '89 is the third annual offering of a summer long free children's festival presented in the Metropolitan Toronto area by Toronto Life Magazine, CHFI FM 98 and CBC Toronto, and made possible with the generous support of Dofasco, Imperial Oil, Canada Post Corporation, Bell Canada, and Atari Canada.

Local sponsors for the Kids' Pioneer Festival at the Halton Region Museum include Field Fresh Farms, McDonald's, Parkinsons Sawmill Eramosa, Sargent Farms, Schneider's Reliable Sweets, and Sifto Salt.

The Halton Region Museum is located in Kelso Conservation

Area, five kilometres west of Milton on Regional Road 28. Ample parking is provided at the Museum.

Visitors will be reimbursed for Kelso Conservation Area gate fee. Please have gate ticket validated at the Museum's Admission Desk.

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