

'House Party' examines black lifestyles

FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

HOUSE PARTY (R) Writer-director Reginald Hudlin's musical comedy set largely in a black middle-class milieu is fresh and fun — sociologically revealing and finger-snapping. In many ways, the film is a black

to a stodgy, bourgeois black affair. Meanwhile, three muscle-bound goons (played by members of the musical group Full Force) keep turning up to harass anyone in sight — and guess who's usually there? Why Kid, of course, a scrawny fellow with a towering head of hair. At its most responsible, the movie examines black-macho attitudes. It's Kid who gets the girl, who carries a condom in his wallet, and who has the hippest approach to rap and platter-spinning. He's Mr. Sensitivity compared to the goons who chase him — and compared to the two white cops who cruise the neighborhood looking for trouble. Despite a few gay slurs and a crude jail scene in which Kid is sexually threatened by other prisoners, this is

tory worker (the ever-talented Tom Hanks) who quits his depressing job and is immediately offered another, decidedly offbeat job by an eccentric millionaire (Lloyd Bridges). If Hanks will go to an island in the South Pacific and jump into a volcano as a human sacrifice, the natives will be appeased, and the millionaire will receive the mineral rights he seeks. Since Hanks thinks he is dying anyway, the offer has a devil-may-care appeal. This nonsensical plot gives Shanley a chance to address a heavy subject: In his words, "What am I doing on this planet and what do I do with my limited time here?" Like John Boorman's recent "Where the Heart Is," this film tries to both make an apocalyptic statement and be entertaining. Like "Where the Heart Is," it doesn't come off.

The movie is a hodgepodge. Meg Ryan turns up in three roles, two of which allow her to do some cute character work. There are guest bits by people like Ossie Davis and Amanda Plummer, and sequences set to musical numbers.

Produced by Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, the movie is also heavy on visual effects, with a climax that seems lifted from an Indiana Jones movie. Shanley's dialogue can be very clever, or it can be embarrassingly explicit. "Do you believe in God?" asks Hanks, to which one of the Megs replies: "I believe in myself."

Ironically, the best parts of the movie are the simplest, such as the opening scenes of Hanks at his job. Working at a rectal probe factory, Hanks is surrounded by buzzing fluorescent lights and passive employees. He's also plagued by little infelicities — like instant dairy creamer failing to dissolve in the morning coffee. Unfortunately, the movie, like the dairy creamer, is lumpy and indigestible. **GRADE: ★★**

(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★★ — good, ★★★ — fair, ★ — poor)



KID (Christopher Reid, left), sneaks out to attend a party given by his buddy Play (Christopher Martin, right) in "House Party."

version of an '80s teen comedy. It's a little gross and very broad, but it has a good spirit, a pop-pretty look and some hot hip-hop music and dancing. As it centers on one night in the life of Kid (Christopher Reid), a teen who sneaks out of his house to attend a party given by his buddy Play (Christopher Martin), the movie provides a crash course in black lifestyles — from life in the overcrowded projects

a lively, likable movie that may be eye-opening to many white viewers. **GRADE: ★★★** **JOE VERSUS THE VOLCANO (PG)** "Moonstruck" scriptwriter John Patrick Shanley makes his directorial debut with this romantic comedy fable. It's about a hypochondriacal fac-

Entertainment

'Here lies Jeremy Troy' is GLT's last play of the season

By Margaret Eggleton-Kaye
Georgetown Little Theatre

Georgetown Little Theatre's third, and final production of the 1989-90 season is now in rehearsal. The title of the play is "Here Lies Jeremy Troy," and when a number of people were asked what this conjured up, they all had the same reply — a tombstone. Ah, but this is a farce, and who knows what will take place on stage! One thing is certain, patrons will be both surprised and entertained during an evening of fun and laughter.

Long-time members Lois Fraser and Ashley Windsor are back, together with newcomers Belinda Kruger, Jeff Welsh and Paul Wagner. Under the experienced eye of Director Ron Hunt, and with sets by Jacky Willows, GLT is looking forward to greeting you "across the footlights."

Show dates are April 20, 21, and April 25, 26, 27, 28 at the John Elliott Theatre, Georgetown.

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