

Movie Review

The Fabulous Baker Boys - charming comedy

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

The Fabulous Baker Boys: The Baker boys are the true life brothers Jeff and Beau Bridges. In this charming comedy they play a couple of lounge pianists, an unusual dual-piano act that has seen better days. Prompted by small audiences and cancelled dates, Frank (Beau), the business head, decides to hire a female singer. Jack (Jeff) reluctantly agrees, and after a painful (but very funny) search for a singer, they find Suzie Diamond (Michelle Pfeiffer).

Diamond is a true cynic, as cynical as Jack, and the two proceed to circle around each other for most of the film, while Frank looks on anxiously. Given the act's

dramatic rise in popularity with Suzie, he is unwilling to have anything jeopardize her commitment. The interaction between the three characters is the meat of the movie, and we're never quite sure what will happen.

The Fabulous Baker Boys garnered a lot of critical kudos on its theatrical release, and while it deserved most of the praise, there is a small sense of disappointment - it doesn't quite live up to the hype, although it is quite good. The Bridges are both excellent, and Michelle Pfeiffer, in an Oscar nominated performance, is superb and very sexy. However, she doesn't really have enough screen time, and her incendiary singing-on-the-piano scene seems too

short. Watch for the delightful Jennifer Tilley in the role of aspiring singer Monica Moran - she's one of the best things in the movie.

Sex, Lies and Videotape: This is one of the most fascinating movies made in recent years. Done on a shoestring budget by Hollywood outsider Steven Soderbergh, Sex, Lies and Videotape is an utterly engrossing study of sex and adultery, and the power of the camera.

Andie MacDowell plays Ann, a frigid beauty in an unsatisfying marriage to John (Peter Gallagher). She's in therapy, he's having an affair with her gloriously sexy sister (Laura San Giacomo). Suddenly old college buddy Graham (James Spader)

arrives on the scene and upsets the apple cart. Both sisters are attracted to him, although he confesses openly to impotence, and they are curious about his videotapes. Seems old Graham has been travelling, living out of his car, and videotaping women talking very openly and intimately about their sex lives. He is irresistible - he must know something about women, with all that talk.

Smug Peter's life begins to fall apart as wife and mistress rebel, and Graham becomes the focus of all his trouble. Ann awakens to all sorts of things through Graham's presence, and Graham soon finds life as a voyeur less than perfect. By the end of the movie everyone

has gone through a catharsis of sorts, leaving the audience satisfied that something has been achieved.

Writer director Soderbergh has coaxed some terrific performances from his actors, most notably MacDowell and San Giacomo, who is wonderfully animalistic. Sex, Lies and Videotape is a small movie, but a hypnotising one. Soderbergh shows great promise, and one can only hope that success doesn't spoil that original mind.



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