

Movie Review

'Commitments' is worth the time

By DAWN WOOD
Herald Special

One of the more moving films of this day is Alan Parker's *The Commitments*, adapted from the novel by Roddy Doyle and the screenplay by Dick Clement and Ian La Ferpais. The film takes its name from a working-class soul band, *The Commitments*, located in the unlikely location of Dublin, Ireland. Or is it an appropriate location, as the movie challenges us to address.

The creation, life and demise of

The Commitments is an interpretation of the larger struggle of Dublin's working-class. Social issues aside, the movie is worth seeing for the incredible acting ability of the mostly unknown cast, and definitely for the music alone.

The story begins with a glance at urban decay in Dublin's poorer side, with clean, drying laundry hanging from everyone's home. Introduced is Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins), whose idea it is to put together a soul band. He is an avid soul fan, and sees his own

white Irish country people as the Blacks of Europe. His solution to the inequality is to be Black and be proud.

After the band members are selected, their lives both outside of and within the band create the plots. One of the group is unable to attend rehearsals because she is overwhelmed with the responsibility of caring for her many younger siblings and yet again, pregnant mother. Likewise, the job of getting the band started is made difficult by lack of funds due to high unemployment.

Also, the interrelationships of band members are strained by sexual and emotional infighting, and disagreement. They share a crass style and never seem to go too far with one another. And true to form, they have an all inclusive fist fight and quit the band while Jimmy is in the process of securing their first recording contract.

There are very few recognizable actors in this film, one of whom is Colm Meaney (Star Trek, TNG), who plays the Elvis-idolizing father of Jimmy. Trumpet playing Joey-the-Lips (Johnny Murphy) is another credited actor. He plays a fifty-something spiritual guide to the band, and drops some heavy names of acts he has played with. Some true, some not so true.

Joey has Mr. Rabbitte thoroughly convinced of his connections after telling him a story about Elvis at Graceland. Elvis was having a party after being on tour and Vernon (Elvis' father) drank too much and vomited into Joey's trumpet. When Elvis was told what happened, he personally cleaned out the trumpet and asked Joey to please excuse his daddy. Isn't that just like Elvis! Mr. Rabbitte is also vindicated when Joey says that he never saw Elvis take any drugs. Mr. Rabbitte had never believed a word of it. After all, no one likes a fallen idol.

Listening to the band perform Mustang. Sally and Wilson Pickett's *Midnight Hour* shines a reverent light on the band's unique chemistry. Their performances are brilliant, especially the facial expression of the lead singer, Decco.

Although the band does not succeed as a group, the film ends on a positive note with Joey trying to persuade Jimmy that hope was given to those who had none before.



Make a date with "Showtime"

Doreen Boss, well-known and versatile lyric soprano, is appearing this week with "Showtime" at the John Elliott Theatre. Pictured here as she portrayed Eliza Doolittle in "My Fair Lady", this multi-talented performer brings a wealth of experience to "Showtime". Doreen is equally at home performing in a Broadway-type musical, operetta, singing in cabaret with Gordon McRae, or recording, both in Canada and Germany. Don't miss out on this one-time opportunity to see this first-class professional entertainment right here in Georgetown. "Showtime" is presented by Georgetown Little Theatre as part of their aim to bring quality live theatre to Halton Hills. There will be two shows only - 2:30 and 8:00 p.m. Saturday, October 5. Tickets are available at Oxbow Books, or by calling the Little Theatre Box Office at 877-3700, or President Margaret Eggleton Kaye at 877-7309.

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