

# "Pleasantville" a classic

BY PHILLIP STEWART  
Staff Writer

**Disclaimer:** If you want to get full enjoyment from "Pleasantville", wait to read this review until after you have seen the film. Just look at the grade at the end of the article and take my word for it.

I only wish that I could describe all of my emotions during my viewing of "Pleasantville." It's a rare movie going experience because you don't want the movie to end, and when it does you wish the projectionist would rewind the reel so that you could watch it again to catch everything missed the first time.

I also wish that I didn't have to spoil some of the surprises to write a review, but it simply must be done. David (Tobey Maguire) and Jennifer (Reese Witherspoon) are twins, one a loser, the other a slut. We are shown their world as tumultuous, unhealthy and dangerous. The only thing that makes David smile is watching *Pleasantville* reruns, a black and white *Father Knows Best*-type sitcom. The show presents a world with no problems, no fighting, no rain. He looks to that world for comfort from his parent's recent divorce while Jennifer "does the slut thing" to escape from the pain.

When their mother leaves town for a date with her new boyfriend, David and Jennifer get in a fight over the television remote and break it. After all, David has to watch the *Pleasantville* marathon and Jennifer must watch the MTV concert with her hot date. They break the remote and there is a knock at the door. It's the television repair man (played by 50's TV superstar Don Knotts), and he has a new remote. It's a unusual kind of remote control, though, and when they push a big red button, David and Jennifer are transported into the television.

David and Jennifer are now Bud and Mary Sue, the main characters in the *Pleasantville* sitcom. They are stuck there, so David (as Bud) is on cloud nine. He's popular in this world, and he is happy. Jennifer, of course, can't stand it. But they both make the best of the situation. Jennifer, as Mary Sue, corrupts the boys by taking them up to "lovers lane" and having sex with them (they usually don't even hold hands). David has fun just by living as Bud. But Mary Sue's corrupting of the boys makes the world less ideal and more dangerous, prompting strange occurrences in *Pleasantville*. The basketball team starts losing, teenagers start using unheard of words like "cool", and most obviously things start appearing in color.

Sound ridiculous? I thought so too, and the first 45 minutes is straight comedy; comedy so funny that I thought the film would be the funniest of the year. But one soon starts to recognize that when people and their surroundings start changing from black and white to color, it is not just a gimmick to warrant the 1,700 special effects shots in the film, more than any movie ever made ("Independence Day" used about 400). "Pleasantville" sneaks up from behind you and starts becoming a social commentary, metaphor, and very complex satire all at once.

In the midst of coeducation week at Davidson, "Pleasantville" becomes an even more powerful critique of our society. In one scene, the mother of the 50's family (Joan Allen) is taught to do something for herself for the first time in her life. She finally recognizes that her life can be more than servitude to her family, and she then appears in color. In addition to women's issues, "Pleasantville" explores discrimination, hate, race relations, and many others.

This film is eye candy. It's a movie that finally uses its special effects to advance the plot rather than replace it. But more importantly, it makes everyone think and nod in agreement with everything it has to say about our society. It's a magical movie written by Gary Ross who wrote "Big" and "Dave", two other movies about people put into unrealistic circumstances. The script is amazing, the directing original, and the art direction and cinematography are out of this world.

The land of *Pleasantville* may seem happy all of the time, but aren't we happier now with a little uncertainty, a little danger, and a little rain in our lives? Watch this movie and be proud of what our world has become and think about how far we have to go. It makes you feel great, but it also makes you think hard. "Pleasantville" is film making at its highest level. **Grade: A+**

# The Student Body



## FLAG Fashion Show returns on Saturday

BY KIM BIEMULLER  
Student Health Advisor

Dresses made of Saran Wrap; blue naked people; Buster in briefs yet again; nude girls transformed into a bright spectrum of modern art; shining silver musicians; Adam and Eve, in only ivy garb, chucking apples at innocent onlookers; and live goat milking — only at the FLAG Fashion Show can you find eccentricities of such high caliber.

I can't imagine a better place for anyone to unleash that oppressed wild side, daring to be different. With sliding imaginations, burning music, and twisting lights, you find yourself caught up in a chorus of banshees — and I'm not even talking about how great a time the performers have. Nowhere else will you find on this campus such a wickedly sultry display of collegiate youth. Beyond all else you see, you are filtered into a room filled with eye-popping... ideas. What makes this such a special event is its ability to expand the mind. You see what confuses your expectations, challenges your credos, and taps on your solar plexus. (What is that exactly?)

The fashion show, coming up on Saturday, Nov. 7 at 8:00 p.m. in the Chambers Gallery, is calling you — it wants you, desires you, and depends upon you. And you, trusty student of khaki and gold, need it just as much. So GO! What more can I say to entice you?

# "Music Department Showcase" dazzles parents

BY SARAH E. OGDEN  
Editor in Chief

Last Friday, hundreds of students, parents, and assorted others gathered in Love Auditorium to hear the 1998 Parents Weekend Concert. The concert featured the DC Concert Choir, Chamber Singers, Wind Ensemble, and Symphony Orchestra. Although the Symphony and the Concert Choir did collaborate in a performance of the Mozart Requiem in April 1997, Friday's show marked the first program to feature all of Davidson's concert hall ensembles. The landmark event drew a capacity crowd that had the fabled venue bursting at its seams.

The evening began with the Concert Choir's performance of Bloch's "Yimloch Adony Leolom" and Biebl's "Ave Maria," which included brilliant solos from senior Ralph Morehead and junior John Moore.

The Chamber Singers followed with Dorsey's "Precious Lord."

The "big choir" then stepped back up with a rousing rendition of the spiritual "Precious Lord," in which senior Samantha Balsam charmed the audience with her vocals during several solos. They finished the evening with the "Gloria" from Argento's "The Masque of the Angels."

Interim Choir Director David Tang conducted with great enthusiasm, even leaping into the air at one point during the

performance.

After a short intermission allowing the Wind Ensemble to set up, they began their concert with two movements from "The Folk Song Suite," by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The ensemble showed its skill during the two movements, which were entitled "My Bonny Boy" and "Folk Songs from Somerset." Music Department chair William Lawing conducted.

The concert concluded with two pieces from the Symphony Orchestra's repertoire, the Overture from Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" and "Hoe Down" from Copland's "Rodeo." As conductor Richard Prior noted, it was a "meaty" program, with both pieces having been used as soundtracks for pork and beef ads, respectively.

Prior himself was a sight to behold, clad in an ivory-colored jacket as he flailed his arms furiously, however rhythmical and in time to the music.

"Head-Tuning Guy" Wesley H. Goldsberry received almost as much applause as Prior when he took the stage just before the orchestra's performance.

The hour that the concert lasted virtually flew by, concluding with long, thunderous applause from an astounded audience, clearly impressed with our tiny institution's ability to stage such an immense amount of talent.

PLACE AN AD.

IT'S A HAPPY  
THING.

Call David Johnston and Peter Clark at x6575