

Right Said Fred is too sexy for Las Vegas but he's still comin'

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'My Cousin Vinny' good despite inane premise

by Robert Hollowood

On a cross country drive to college, Billy Gambini (Ralph Macchio) and counterpart Stan Rothenstein (Mitchell Whitfield) are stopped by small-town Alabama police and subsequently arrested for murder. Their only hope for reprieve is that Billy has a lawyer in the family in the fish-out-of-water comedy *My Cousin Vinny*.

Joe Pesci, who has spent the last few years creating meaningful supporting characters, (*Goodfellas*, *Lethal Weapon II*) gets his second chance at leading-man status following last year's one-joke disaster, *The Super*. He stars as Vinny Gambini, another loud-mouthed, New York-Italian stereotype, a role he has played so many times it should be second nature. Pesci could walk through this role and collect his paycheck, but is hilarious in a cartoon-like, over-the-top way with his outrageous suits and a hairpiece that must be seen to be believed. Vinny is so out of place in this town, it seems like

MOVIE REVIEW

My Cousin Vinny (★★★)

Starring Joe Pesci and Marisa Tomei. Directed by Jonathan Lynne.

he might be from another planet.

Pesci and his cohorts have their work cut out for them, as the script relies on the previously mentioned, thin premise and a handful of gags to carry the film. Director Jonathan Lynne must be given credit for drawing on the talents of his stars and supporting cast. Without them, the uneven pacing of the story would be unbearable.

Vinny brings with him girlfriend Mona Lisa Vito, played with attitude by Marisa Tomei. She is the film's one big surprise, stealing scenes from Pesci in a tough, but sexy performance.

One of the problems with this film is the lack of sympathy for Macchio and Whitfield. If

convicted, they could be locked up for the rest of their lives. The two combined have the emotional range of a doorknob and don't seem very distressed about their predicament.

This movie is already two-thirds of the way through before it clicks solidly. They get to the courtroom only to discover Fred Gwynne, best known as Hermann Munster, as a judge who is a stickler for procedure. The banter between Pesci and Gwynne is the high-point of the film, as Vinny is locked up again and again for contempt of court. It turns out Vinny is a personal injury lawyer who took the bar six times before he passed and has never been to trial.

When the jokes do work, it is largely due to the cast, but the film is bogged down by other gags that wouldn't work anywhere. There are several running gags that go on and on, stifling what little momentum there is. One of them seems to happen a hundred times.

The movie lumbers on for two hours when a little trimming around the middle and a



Hey Joe, where's the two Utes? Joe Pesci stars as Vinny Gambini in *My Cousin Vinny*.

less rushed conclusion could have cut it to 90 minutes. The trimmed version would have resulted in a better product.

To coin a phrase from Hans

and Franz: "If we took this movie and squeezed it between our legs like a tube of toothpaste, two out of five dentists would recommend it for nothing."

Israel Chamber Orchestra to perform at UNLV



Shlomo Mintz will lead The Israel Chamber Orchestra in Las Vegas.

The Israel Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Shlomo Mintz will perform at 8 p.m. Wednesday in Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall as part of the Charles Vanda Master Series.

Mintz became advisor to the Israel Chamber Orchestra in 1989 and spends 12 weeks each season as conductor, coach, mentor, soloist and chamber music partner. He led the ensemble on its first tour of Europe and South America in June

1990. Mintz has performed as guest conductor of the London Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, and the Rotterdam Philharmonic and regularly performs as a violinist with leading string quartets and chamber ensembles around the world. Mintz performed as a soloist with such orchestras as the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony as well as the symphonic orchestras of Houston, Milwaukee and

Vancouver.

Mintz was born in Moscow, but his family emigrated to Israel when he was two years old. He later studied with Ilona Fletcher, the renowned Hungarian violinist. At age 11, he made his concerto debut with Zubin Mehta and the Israel Philharmonic. Mintz made his Carnegie Hall debut at age 16 with the Pittsburgh Symphony.

Tickets are available at the Performing Arts Box Office.

'Basic Instinct' provides raw suspense and eroticism

by Daniel W. Duffy

Basic Instinct is a tailor-made Mickey Rourke film with the most borderline, gratuitous sex of any film this side of an NC-17 rating, except for the fact that it stars Michael Douglas and it has a story. Douglas returns to the streets of San Francisco (minus the tacky '70s music) as a cop investigating a brutal murder.

The key suspect in the murder case is the spine-tingling Sharon Stone. This film was Stone's chance to prove whether she was just another buxom blonde or an actual Hollywood heavy. After an aerobic yet pitiful acting workout

as Arnold Schwarzenegger's wife in *Total Recall*, she needed a meaty role to make a name for herself. She comes through in a chilling fashion as the femme fatale of *Basic Instinct*. Stone resembles Dana Plato on her best day at Al Phillips. Well, maybe not. Regardless, the chemistry between her and Douglas is exciting as well as thoroughly erotic.

In the film, the lines between good and evil are very fine and not always easily identifiable. Verhoeven casts the characters and their checkered pasts in a neutral light and leaves it up to the audience to determine the character's guilt or innocence.

MOVIE REVIEW

Basic Instinct (★★★★)

Starring Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone. Directed by Paul Verhoeven.

It makes the film all the more suspenseful because it's difficult to determine who's toying with who's brain, a sign of a true thriller.

Inevitably, any thriller set in San Francisco will be compared to *Vertigo*, but *Basic Instinct* draws the viewer into its game with such intensity that everything else going on, other than the story, is secondary. This was not the case of the

recent thriller, *Final Analysis*, that directly lifted certain Hitchcock elements and was so boring that day dreaming about "the master of suspense's" films was far more interesting than watching the film itself.

It's a shame that the majority of the homosexual characters in *Basic Instinct* are mentally unbalanced, but the actual homosexual element does not play a major part of the film. The homosexual characters in the film are portrayed as unbalanced, but not because they are homosexual, and Verhoeven makes a clear distinction here.

Verhoeven has said that *Basic Instinct* is going to do for

sex, what *Robocop* did for violence. He succeeds because *Basic Instinct* is probably the most hard-core R-rated film to date as far as sexual overtones go. The story itself is very sexy though, so the raciness is not out of place.

The filmmakers had to slice parts of the film to avoid the NC-17 labeling, but the question is, what did they cut out? Apparently not much, because nothing is held back. It's no surprise that the Motion Picture Association of America probably judged this film unfairly to begin with, because the MPAA is almost as vague as the NCAA when it comes to logical consistencies in rulings.