

Cage bound for success

Handles delicate issues with class

by John Hafner
Collegian Staff

The key phrase to this decade is no doubt "political correctness." Each of us is expected to be sensitive to, or at least tolerant of, other people's needs and opinions.

So how do you produce a film about two homosexual men and their son without inciting opposition and protest from certain sectors?

That's easy. You combine the comic genius of Robin Williams and Nathan Lane with the "tough guy" image of Gene Hackman.

Their collective effort is called "The Birdcage" and it opened in local theaters last week.

Williams and Lane co-star as Armand and Albert, a gay couple who have been together for years. Armand owns a drag club called "The Birdcage," a local hot spot

along a strip of night clubs, and Albert is his most popular performer.

The film's story line focuses on Armand's son, Val, and his engagement to the daughter of a conservative senator (played by Hackman). The Senator just happens to be running for reelection, and his campaign is anything but solid.

As chairman of the Committee for Moral Order, the Senator senses the danger surrounding his future son-in-law's family. The press would have a field day with their unique situation, and that could potentially tarnish the Senator's public image as a hard-nosed, right-wing politician.

Val also sees the impending awkwardness and embarrassment. In an attempt to keep things "in the closet," so to speak, Val gives his dad a crash course in

masculinity. Subjects they cover include, but are not limited to, walking, talking, fashion, and table manners. They also redecorate their loft, removing their pastel paintings and their flamboyant furnishings.

The Birdcage focuses on the side-splitting situation of one truly unique family.

One problem remains, though. Val must decide what to do about Albert, Armand's insecure, pretentious partner. Feeling unappreciated, Albert throws one of his usual temper tantrums and storms out of the loft.

The situation is resolved, but I won't reveal how. Let's just say that it involves Albert's overtly feminine personality, a wig, some lipstick, and the fact that someone is needed to play the role of Val's "mother."

"The Birdcage" is definitely bound for box office success. Its hilarious mishaps throw political correctness out the window and handle an otherwise delicate issue in a classy manner. It sidesteps the debate over whether or not homosexuals should raise children and focuses instead on the side-splitting situation of one truly unique family.

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By Brad Martin



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