

Frightening new film, *Fallen*, generates a real scare

by Kristi McKim
features editor

One film that includes the suspense of *Just Cause*, the often-eerie spirituality of *The Prophecy*, the smart construction of *Silence of the Lambs*, and the gruesome horror of *Seven* would seem so intense that it would be beyond one's wildest dreams, or more appropriately, one's nightmares, to imagine.

With last weekend's release of *Fallen*, such a feat was realized, as this film incorporates some of the creepiest elements from some of the best suspense thriller films.

The opening sequence, set to the Rolling Stones' hauntingly lovely "Time Is On My Side," establishes a mood of nauseating horror, which lingers (literally and figuratively) throughout the film.

In the lead role of John Hobbes, Denzel Washington plays the polished, confident detective with a moral obligation to his job. As the center of this frightening context, Washington's character displays a cool sensibility and honor.

Believably rendering the ethical/moral dilemmas of law enforcement, Washington smoothly portrays the wise Hobbes. Except for his cow-like chomping on his chewing gum, Washington is a pleasure to watch perform—his eloquent character

amidst a torrentuous context is quite refreshing.

Donald Sutherland and John Goodman, in supporting roles, are equally strong—though Sutherland's

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character seems a bit too annoyingly self-righteous; and Goodman's character is too much the stock character "buddy/pal/supporter."

In an unfortunately all-too-brief role, Embeth Davidtz (*Schindler's List*) is spectacular as Greta Milano, professor of theology at the university. She and Washington's chemistry allows for moments of warmth in this otherwise-creepy film.

Directed by Gregory Hoblit, *Fallen* makes smart use of camera technique and sound effects to generate an entirely terrifying piece of work.

By using scenes of grainy images, distorted camera angles, and

unnatural murky yellow lighting, the film's photography essentially establishes/contributes to the pervasive mood of paranoia. And the sound effects/score add much to the suspense of the work.

While the acting, photography, and sound are of top quality, the plot is fairly predictable, and the writing (only in particular places) entirely unnatural.

Washington's voice-overs are thoroughly unnecessary and render obvious information to the audience. And if that weren't annoying enough, the voice-overs consist purely of clichés and stale language.

Regardless of the sometimes-predictable plot, enough suspense remains to keep you guessing. And the images and premise, though fairly supernatural, are delivered in a rather believable context, thus rendering the film entirely eerie and bone-chilling.

While *Fallen* certainly has its flaws, you should not let that prevent you from enjoying the thrills and scares which this film provides. For its clever suspense, sometimes-intelligent story, ghastly images and haunting rendering, this film is definitely worth your money.

Rarely does a film truly inspire fear; but *Fallen* is certainly one of those such exceptions—a terrifyingly wonderful experience. ★★

Musical group H₂O's new album sure to please hardcore fans

by Daniel Riefstahl
staff writer

A new record label and a new bass player has New York hardcore favorites H₂O smiling wide. Their 1997 release *Thicker Than Water* has hardcore fans grinning as well. Positive, melodic vocals, fast, fun guitar riffs and sing-along choruses combine to give H₂O a sound that is sure to please—that is, if you are a hardcore fan.

Understanding hardcore as a style of music, of life, and some might even say, of religion, is a difficult task. Each individual appreciates hardcore in a different way; just like any other style of music, the listener's personal tastes will determine what he/she gets out of the music.

A common misconception is that hardcore is a bunch of screaming idiots that thrash around singing about death and murder. This may be true

of some hardcore bands, but there are songs like that in every genre of music; to classify hardcore as merely that is not to give it a fair chance.

Although hardcore is not for everyone, it does have a lot to offer. If you have any interest, *Thicker Than Water* is a good place to start. H₂O sends positive messages about loyalty, friendship, and trust. The title track, "Thicker Than Water," is comprised of significant lyrics which call for an increased understanding of the important things in life, such as friends and family.

As an avid fan of hardcore for about eight years, I feel that the genre has much to offer to a large range of people. Toby Morse, lead singer from H₂O, also believes that this genre of music can appeal to a wide audience.

In a recent interview in R.T.R. (a local magazine produced and distributed by Debbi Lyon, owner of Record Country), Morse discussed his

group's live performances.

In response to the question "What are you guys like live?" Morse replied, "Fun, energetic. It's definitely a crowd participation thing. You're a part of it. It's not just us on the stage and you're in the audience watching. Everybody can go out to the shows and be themselves and look and dance the way they want. There are no labels, no fights, no tough guys. There is so much fantasy and trauma in the scene today. People are so worried that he is a vegan, or he is straightedge, or he is smoking. When you are in a room with us forget about all that sh*t. Everybody's there to have a good time and to sing with us. It's not boring. It's not some boring rock concert."

You never know—maybe hardcore music might even prompt you to learn something about yourself. Having seen H₂O three times, I would strongly recommend their live show to anyone.



Aaron Borunda
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on September 3, 1994,
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