

Cheap Seats and Sticky Floors

Mystic River driven by good performances

By **MATT MOSLEY**

Film Reviewer

Clint Eastwood's *Mystic River* is one of the best films of 2003. Filled with an outstanding ensemble cast, at the helm of which is Sean Penn, the film is saturated with atmosphere and melancholy emotions. It's uncomfortable, yet powerfully moving.

The story centers around a trio of estranged friends, Sean Penn, Tim Robbins and Kevin Bacon, who are continuously haunted by a chilling childhood experience. When Sean Penn's daughter is suddenly murdered, the trio, and their families, are brought together in an attempt to solve the grisly case. Things go awry when suspicions arise and evidence is revealed creating conflicts between childhood memories and present day problems.

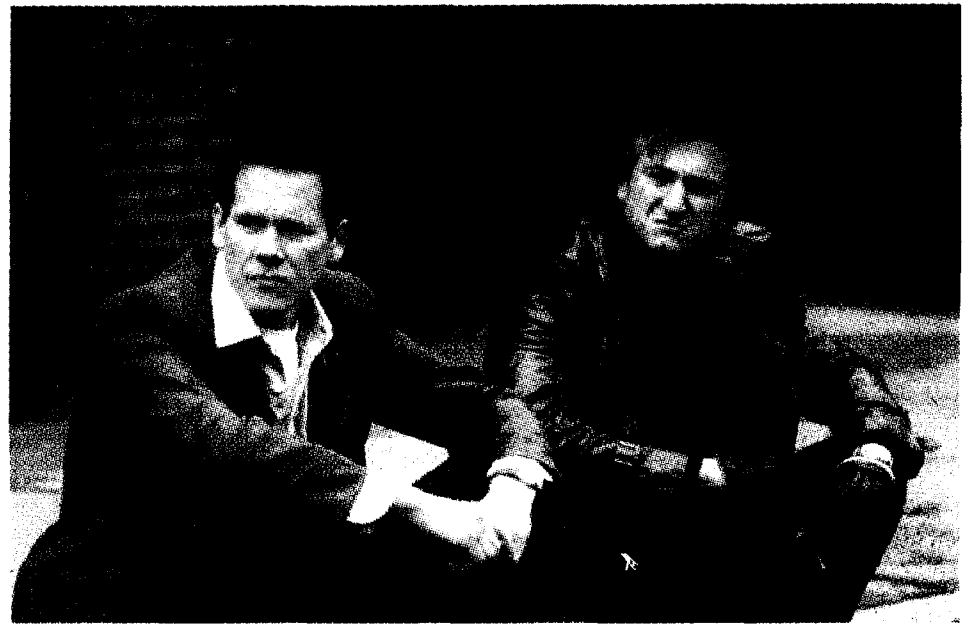
This is by far Clint Eastwood's best film as a director, which is to say his direction finally meets the level of his script. It's adequate, but nothing more. Nevertheless, he is able to develop mood and momentum that perfectly encases his characters making them shine like new Cadillacs. That's what *Mystic River* is about the performances.

I predict that Sean Penn will be nominated for an Academy Award for best actor this year. The emotions and sincerity he is able to exude are painfully brilliant. It's his best performance since *Dead Man Walking*.

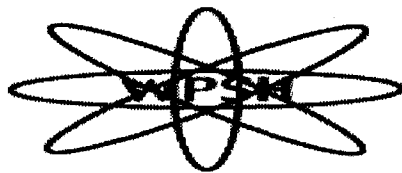
Marcia Gay Harden will also be nominated this year in the best supporting actress category. Her turn as Tim Robbins' paranoid wife is incredibly poignant and telling, and well deserving of recognition.

Mystic River is by no means a perfect film, but it is leagues ahead of most of the commercial movies to have come out this year. With the exception of a really poor character device involving the Kevin Bacon character, and an overblown red herring in the second act, the film is fantastic. You can't help but be reminded of Barry

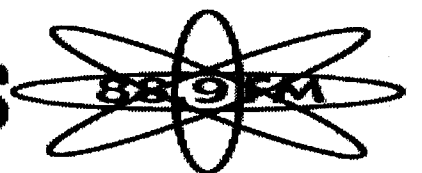
Levinson's *Sleepers* (also starring Bacon), a similar film from the mid-90s with equal power and strength. As good as *Mystic River* is though, it brings out a disturbing question that you may, or may not, want to know the answer to. What is it with Kevin Bacon and movies about pedophiles?



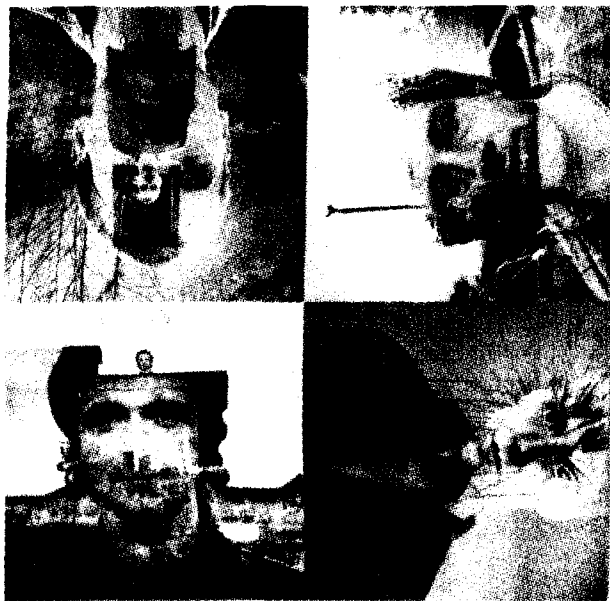
Kevin Bacon and Sean Penn star in *Mystic River*, which was directed by the legendary Clint Eastwood.



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Travis, the winner of 2003's Best Album, and Best British group at the Brit Awards, released their fourth album entitled *12 Memories*. With great albums like *The Man Who*, and *The Invisible Band*, I was sure this record was going to be just as a great. I wasn't entirely incorrect. Travis goes a different route on *12 Memories*. The songs aren't as breathtaking and moving like their previous ones. This album includes a lot of tracks about living alone and being angry where as their other albums talk about the grass being greener on the other side, and just being happy. Although it seems as though they've created a detour for themselves, the album is still full of incredible talent.

On previous albums, lead singer, Fran Healy's voice resembled Chris Martin's from Coldplay and the band, in it's entirety, sounded similiar to Radiohead. On this album, "The Beautiful Occupation" brings back memories of The Beach Boys. "California Dreamin'" perhaps? And I swear that this CD was mistakenly switched with the Steve Miller Band. The music itself is pretty average. Nothing really blew me away. "Peace the **** Out" is a powerful tune ending with a group of people chanting and "Walking Down The Hill" is without a doubt the best track on this record. Unfortunately, I think Travis should turn themselves around and stick to the type of music they're good at. With beautiful arrangements in both the lyrical and instrumental portions, their other three albums make it hard for another record of theirs to compete against.

REVIEWED BY:	MICHELLE O'MALLEY
ARTIST/GROUP:	TRAVIS
ALBUM TITLE:	12 MEMORIES
LABEL:	EPIC RECORDS
RELEASE DATE:	OCTOBER 13, 2003
GENRE:	Pop/Rock

OVERALL RATING:
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