

TOM'S TOMFOOLERY OF CINEMA

By Thomas LeClair
Movie Critic
tjl191@psu.edu

Collateral ****

Dreamworks Studios in association with Paramount Pictures presents a film directed by Michael Mann. Starring Tom Cruise; Jamie Foxx; Jada Pinkett-Smith; and Bruce McGill. Written by Stuart Beattie. Running time 119 minutes. Rated R for violence and language.

Five years after his bio-pic *The Insider* and three years after *Ali*, Michael Mann returns to the city of Los Angeles to direct another dark crime drama. This time, Tom Cruise and Jamie Foxx lead the way through the story and give us explosive and impressive performances. Foxx plays Max, an LA cab driver who dreams of running a limo service in the future. He only has two fares the entire film.

His first fare is a Los Angeles prosecutor named Annie, played by Jada Pinkett-Smith. Foxx and Smith engage in conversation throughout the ride. Foxx drops her off at her destination and Annie is then unseen until the end of the film. His second fare is Vincent played by Tom Cruise. Vincent is an anonymous man. Dressed in a dark gray suit, light gray shirt, silver whiskers and hair, he literally is a gray character. Vincent offers Max an interesting proposition.

Five stops, five hundred dollars, and no questions asked. When situations arise that prevent this from being anything but a simple evening, Cruise and Foxx take us into the realm of emotional drama with an edge of your seat climax.

Mann once again gives us a remarkable film to sit back and enjoy. About 3/4 of the film's time takes place inside

the taxi, yet Mann still found angles and positions for the camera to give a more open feeling to the car. In the parts that were shot outside the cab, Mann used a handheld camera to give the audience a feeling that they were right in the middle of the action.

Much like *Heat*, the other Los Angeles crime drama directed by Mann, Los Angeles itself became a character providing more than just a location, but an aid to create the mood changes with the story. Also as seen in *Heat*, the film allows the dialogue to tell the story and revolves around conversations.

Cruise still proves he is an A-list actor. He has the ability to make you despise him, but yet you want to see him succeed too. Foxx steals the film from Cruise, however. His performance proves that it's possible for comedians to take on dramatic roles. This was his best performance to

date and Foxx was an absolute pleasure to watch. You understood how his mind was working, and you can relate to his predicaments. Even though Smith's role is very minimal, she created the tension and drama that Mann wanted to convey.

This was more than just a summer action flick. In a summer where most films contained super heroes or gratuitous death and destruction, *Collateral* gives us more to appreciate than stunts and violence. This film had drama, tension, and humor, and gives hope to film lovers that intelligent films are still alive.

Look for Tom's next review of *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* in the October 11 issue.

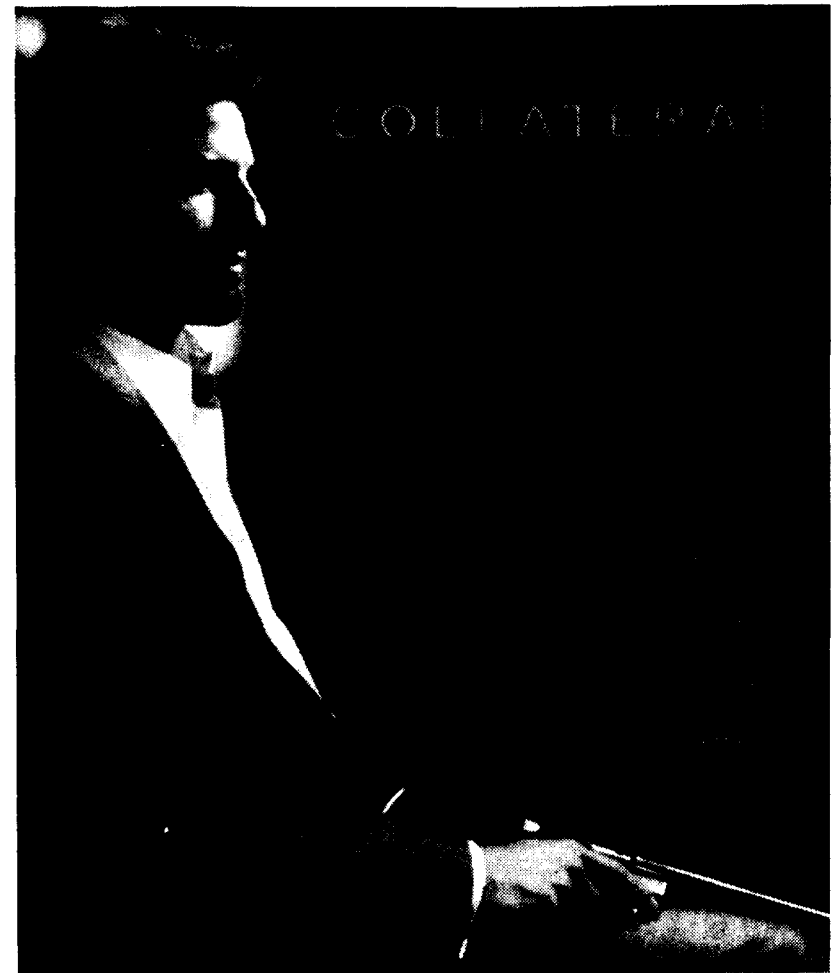


Photo courtesy of Yahoo Images

International House brings culture to Harrisburg

International students living together gives well rounded experience

By Kelly Nagurny
Staff Reporter
kxn163@psu.edu

Over the past summer, I had a unique opportunity to experience both people and cultures from literally all over the world. I learned about the architecture of Casablanca, ate knedlicky (dumplings) from the Czech Republic, and enjoyed the colorful traditional silk dresses of Uzbekistan.

My international experience was both one-of-a-kind and unforgettable and will remain close to my heart for the rest of my life. The best part is that I

never had to leave Harrisburg.

A unique cultural center exists in the heart of Harrisburg, and it is called the International House. I called the International House (the IHouse, as residents affectionately refer to it) home over my summer break.

The IHouse is an apartment-style facility where students and interns from around the world can live while they study and work in the area. Its mission promises to bring people from different countries and cultures together as a community to learn about and from each other in order to promote mutual tolerance and respect.

Tolerance and respect are only two of the many things I gained from my IHouse housemates, who came from countries such as Morocco, France, Czech Republic, Ivory Coast, Uzbekistan, South Korea and states such as Kentucky and New York. I also gained lifelong friends from around the world.

The unique atmosphere at the IHouse allows residents to experience one another's cultural differences, while they learn to deal with and understand these differences. I learned to understand the differences and, more importantly, to appreciate them. The people I lived with at the IHouse taught me that our differences are what make the world colorful and interesting.

Additionally, the house provides a comforting atmosphere to help residents adjust to the culture shock that many of them experience upon arriving. The house's manager and resident assistant are always available for help, advice or just someone to talk to.

The presence of the International House in this area definitely helps to brighten the future of the Harrisburg, which is not renowned for its international and cultural flair. I believe this small building on Chestnut Street will make a big impact on the area. Where else around here can you live in a house where one person is blasting Turkish music, another is cooking Czech food, while a third is telling stories in French?

The International House offers many international programs, and most of them are open to the public. Programs include dance nights, international dinners prepared by IHouse residents, international movie nights, presentations by speakers from around the world and the "Discover the World" series, which focuses on a different country each month.

In my short three months at the IHouse, I attended a Latin dance night, a Czech dinner, a South Korean dinner, a presentation by a resident about Morocco and another about Uzbekistan. These were only a



Photo courtesy of Kelly Nagurny

17 of the 25 students and interns staying at the International House stop their studies and goings on to pose for a picture. Nagurny stayed at the house during her summer internship in Harrisburg. International students living together allowed them to experience several cultures under one roof.

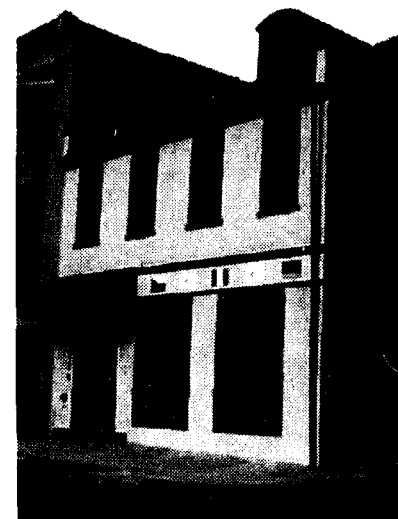


Photo by Kelly Nagurny

fraction of the events offered by the IHouse.

Since its opening in August of 2002, the IHouse has been home to approximately 100 residents from more than 20 countries. Many of the residents are Penn State students either interning in Harrisburg or attending Penn State Harrisburg.

The IHouse has a flexible lease program that allows residents to stay as little as one week to as long as one year. The facility, which is comprised of both single and double units, can accommodate approximately 25 residents at one time. Rent is comparable to other downtown apartments. Linens,

pots and pans, utensils, local phone service and cable television are all provided in the cost of rent. Essentially, a resident can arrive with little more than clothes and feel right at home.

Comprised of four separate buildings on the corner of Chestnut and Third Streets, the house includes a building called the "Art Suites" with colorful and artistic decor. The IHouse is owned and operated by the Harrisburg Development Corporation.

This fall, construction will begin on a major expansion of the IHouse that will nearly triple the house's occupancy. In addition to the residential aspect of the construction, a new restau-

rant, a pastry shop and a meat shop will also be built. Food in the restaurant and stores will be prepared by students in Harrisburg Area Community College's culinary program.

The new construction should help to create a new district with cultural flair in the downtown.

Other International Houses exist around the world in cities such as Tokyo, Washington D.C., Sydney, Paris, New York and London. The International House Harrisburg is located at 318 Chestnut Street in Harrisburg. For more information on the International House, visit www.ihousehbg.org or call (717) 255-1095.

Gregorits: "Everything in life inspires me to write"

very popular website with thousands of daily viewers.

Sex & Guts rocketed Gregorits' profile in entertainment circles and one person that took exceptional notice was Lydia Lunch, much to Gregorits' pleasure. Lunch, who is hailed by the Boston Phoenix as "one of the 10 most influential performers of the 90's", began a stormy relationship with Gregorits that prompted him to move out to L.A. with her to continue *Sex & Guts* as well as pursue other projects.

"I was obsessed with the work of Lydia Lunch for years," said Gregorits. "I was a major fan of her music and writing. Plus, I thought, like many others, that she was the most intimidating and sexy woman alive. I left New York in 2000, for Los Angeles, to live with Lydia."

Their relationship caused a buzz in Hollywood and there was

talk of a movie deal.

"The producer of the *Blair Witch Project* gave Lydia \$10,000 to finance my move to L.A., after she pitched to him my romance novel, then called *Johnny Behind the Deuce*," said Gregorits. "The money was supposed to be used to adapt the novel into a screenplay. I talked with Vincent Gallo in a club one night not long after I arrived, and he was fascinated by the project, and offered to executive produce the film, as long as he got to play me."

Gregorits reflected deeper of his experience with Lydia in L.A.

"In L.A., I became a cocaine addict and full blown alcoholic," said Gregorits. "I was tortured by certain aspects of Lydia's past, and we fought every day, mainly because of my drinking and inability to stop doing cocaine. Lydia and I would binge for a day and a half, but she'd pass out

eventually and I would keep going. I saw Los Angeles as a dark and dangerous place. I wasn't comfortable in the Hollywood culture. If I hadn't left when I did, I'd have died."

Gregorits briefly moved back to Harrisburg to recover from the relationship before settling in Detroit, where he currently resides and continues to create. He talked about his writing style and inspiration.

"My style is direct, punchy, and experimental," said Gregorits. "When I'm writing prose, my goal is to recreate the hell of the moment, being trapped in the moment. For example: being stranded in a Greyhound station. If I can truly articulate what it is to spend 24 hours lost in the middle of nowhere, on a highway at night, with no money, trying to get a ride back home, then I've done my job. If I can define the reality of going

through divorce, or falling in love, and do so in my own way, than I can say that I've created something original. Everything in life inspires me to write; the good, the bad, the ugly, and the beautiful."

Gregorits still feels as emotionally isolated from the rest of the world as he did during the NO FUTURE days. I asked Gene where he fits in with the rest of the world.

"I don't, in any way," said Gregorits. "I can't drive and don't pay taxes. I am a lousy employee. I'm not lazy, or a slacker, but I am aberrant, and this limits my options severely. I'm a reflection of the worst qualities in people, and my life has been about trying to balance my obsessions with my day to day survival. My concerns are not the concerns of the average man in the street, beyond food and shelter."



Photo courtesy of

Gregorits' final reflection was about the labels he has always rebelled against. I asked him to associate his work with a particular genre.

"I still haven't figured that out yet," said Gregorits. "If you want to force a cliché, I guess it would

be post-noir, post-gonzo, post-beatnik, and post-punk. I'm the son of all the fathers who raised me through their own art. I learn from the masters."

You can check out Gene Gregorits in all his glory on the *Sex & Guts* website, sexandgutsmagazine.com.