

# Costner treads water with weak script

ROBERT WALTON Staff Writer

Waterworld, Kevin Costner's long awaited epic about a world without dry land, has just about everything an audience could ask for. Just about.

Reportedly costing \$175 million to produce, making it the most expensive film in history, the explosions are big, the photography fantastic and the costumes perfect. The script, however, is non-existent.

In Waterworld, the earth has been flooded by the polar ice-caps, leaving nothing but water. A few people have survived, learning to live on the water, and spending all their time searching for "dry land."

It is a great concept for a film. Not entirely original, with shades of Mad Max appearing throughout, but still an excellent idea.

Kevin Costner plays The Mariner, a man (slightly mutated - he has gills developed by years of living on water) who is the traditional movie hero. He is a tough, hardened loner with no ties to anyone.

He is a cliché with gills.

And like every film, there is a villain. Dennis Hopper leads a bloodthirsty group called The Smokers (so named because they have found a way to use and refine oil).

Hopper is, as always, an excellent villain, but Waterworld's script cheats him of any great moments he might have had. His character, The Deacon, is flat and pointless: Hopper's wonderful talent is completely lost on this role.

It is in the second hour of Waterworld that things fall apart. Some of the underwater special effects are awful - so transparent you can imagine Costner pretending to swim against a blue screen. As the battle between The Smokers and the rest of humanity escalates, the stunts get more and more implausible.

And when the location of "Dry Land" is finally revealed, it is simply South, instead of North. As if, in years of searching, no one had ever thought to look



South.

Waterworld is nothing more than two hours of special effects. If the film was shot without dialogue it probably would have been better, and just as easy to follow.

But as it is, Waterworld is still worth seeing, if only for the effects and photography. Just don't go in looking for any kind of plot or meaningful dialogue.



Top: Kevin Costner stars as The Mariner an enigmatic hero who leads a dying, aquatic civilization on a quest for mythical Dryland. Above, right: Dennis Hopper stars as the evil Deacon, a ruthless warrior-priest.



photos courtesy of Universal Pictures

# Neil Young, Pearl Jam reflect in Mirrorball

DEREK MCKISSOCK Asst. Features Writer

Neil Young with Pearl Jam performing as his backing band has created in Mirrorball one of the seminal albums of the decade.

Mirrorball's shimmering songs, recorded in four days in January and February in Seattle, capture the essence of grunge with breathtaking beauty.

Young wrote all the songs apart from some additional lyrics by Eddie Vedder on "Peace and Love." Pearl Jam's inclusion, however, provides Mirrorball with a seal of authenticity in its attempt to explore the world of the so-called Generation X.

The cranked-up guitar crashing seachanty "Song X" announces, "Hey ho, away we go we're on the road to never."

The song reflects Young's continuing desire to echo the concerns of Kurt Cobain. Cobain's death, which Young eulogized in his last CD, Sleeps With Angels, continues to haunt him.

A melancholic sounding pump-organ and Young's lone voice on "What happened Yesterday" and "Fallen Angel" reveal Young's struggle to understand Cobain's death.

From trying to understand another major human concern on "Act of Love." The relentless hypnotic groove of the music provides a background to lyrics about various forms of twisted love like the Crusades and an abusive relationship.

On "Big Green Country" Young fuses visions of Indians, betrayal and open spaces wrapped around a melody with an infectious hook.

"Downtown" is the Stone's tinged riff of a song that sounds like a 70's good time free-for-all and what Young calls at the songs ends "funky." On the slower paced "Truth Be Known" Young sings about the crushing reality of one's dreams ending.

Young with "Throw Your Hatred Down" and "Scenery" attacks the insanities inherent in modern life.

The first song smacks at forthright honesty in the same vein as John Lennon while the other is a bleak condemnation of a visceral and shallow world.

The two stand-out tracks in this brilliant CD are "I'm the Ocean" and "Peace and Love."

"I'm the Ocean" builds layer upon layer in intensity with its pointed comments - "need distraction, need romance and candlelight, need random violence, need Entertainment Tonight."

This epic song closes capturing the unknown nastiness of existence with Young's reverberant voice singing "I'm the Ocean, I'm the giant undertow."

Eddie Vedder's most notable contribution to the CD is his singing on the bridge to the song "Peace and Love."

The song is classic in its transitions at melodic mood. Young sings plaintively and hopefully, his hippie roots deep in the soul of the 60's.

Vedder's singing is blacker, angrier and sadder.

Mirrorball is an outstanding album from the godfather of grunge and his young passionate musical heirs.

# Movie schools Pfeiffer in classroom skills

DEREK MCKISSOCK Asst. Features Editor

A teacher's role in today's public schools can often be more like being a prison warden or handler of dangerous chemicals.

This sometimes "dangerous" job is revealed commendably in the fine new film "Dangerous Minds."

"Dangerous Minds" is the true story of teacher LouAnne Johnson and the inner-city kids she taught against a background of violence, poverty and uncertainty.

Johnson played by Michelle Pfeiffer wrote these experiences in her book "My Posse Don't Do Homework" on which the film is based.

Pfeiffer is very convincing as the ex-Marine recent divorcee, Johnson, who when looking for a job as a substitute teacher is instead offered a full-time position

teaching a designated remedial class.

The film then chronicles Johnson's initial struggle to be accepted by the kids to a final outcome of triumph for herself and the pupils.

There have been other films that have approached this subject but this film never seems staid or cliché because of the all-around fine performances and surprisingly little Hollywood gloss and overblown sentiment.

The surprise comes from the fact that the movie was produced by the same people that gave us Top Gun, Days of Thunder and Beverly Hills Cop.

Production values, loud music and clothes do not dominate this movie.

The kids were all mostly unknown actors, and though they looked like they could step into an episode at Days of Our Lives with their looks, their acting was

superbly unsoapable.

The music by Wendy and Lisa was entertaining without being overpowering and director John N. Smith is economical and never fancy in his direction.

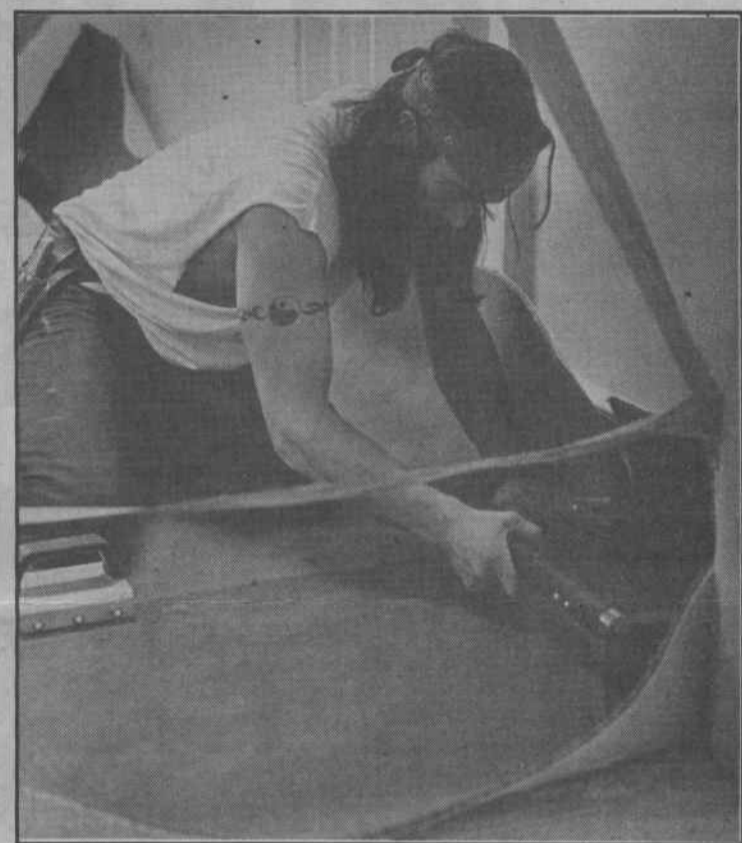
The film itself, however, does convey some depressing observations about our society.

The fact that to relate with the kids Johnson must use violence in images and language to teach grammar and the like (she even teaches some karate) is a disturbing realization.

Through the course of the film as Johnson gets more involved in her students' lives she finds out she can not come to terms with the harsh, deadly world the kids, and ultimately herself, live in.

However, she learns that life must go on and the kids learn that there can be at least one thing certain in their lives - they can learn and there is someone

## Tool time



Mark Corey braved the 100 degree heat to get renovations completed and carpet laid for residents to move into Preston, USC's first residential college.

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# The Gamecock Just Read It!

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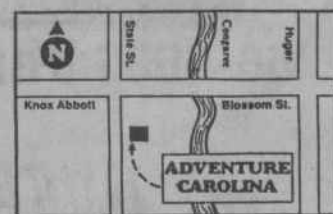
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