

**PRIMARY COLORS**

(R) starring John Travolta, Emma Thompson, Billy Bob Thornton, Kathy Bates, Adrian Lester, Maura Tierney and Larry Hagman. Directed by Mike Nichols.

Henry Burton (Lester) is an idealistic young black man who has reached a crossroads in his life.

After three years as a congressional aide on Capitol Hill, Burton is renowned as a brilliant political strategist, but he has grown increasingly disenchanted with politics as usual. The grandson of the country's most celebrated Civil Rights leader, Burton wants to make history, too.

Though cynical, he's still looking for someone doing something he can believe in. With reluctance, Burton decides to check out Gov. Jack Stanton (Travolta), a presidential candidate.

He sets up campaign headquarters in the governor's Southern hometown. Together, the governor and his wife (Thompson), along with Burton and their campaign staff, begin their long, scandal-ridden road to the White House.

gamecock critic **ROB LINDSEY ★★★**

Though told subjectively through the eyes of an upstart campaign manager (a superb Adrian Lester), Primary Colors achieves a surprising level of objectivity while sustaining a consistent mix of sentiment and satire.

The film portrays flawed Southern governor Jack Stanton (Travolta) on his quest for the nomination in the 1992 Democratic primaries. Obviously based on the campaign of then-governor Bill Clinton, Stanton could have been a ruthlessly cruel and demeaningly satirical character. However, the movie concentrates on Stanton as a human, capable of mistakes and poor judgment. Stanton is a noble man, driven by an idealistic need to help the people. His idealism becomes muddled in the games of politics, and he falters in his quest.

As Stanton's old friend, Kathy Bates delivers a wonderful performance (the best of the film) and reminds him of the ideas he threatens to leave behind. Stanton redeems himself, goes on to win the nomination, and, finally, the presidential election.

Other stand-out performances include Billy Bob Thornton as one of

Stanton's campaign strategists, and Larry Hagman as a rival candidate. However, Emma Thompson, as the governor's wife, is grating and difficult to enjoy as she struggles with the American accent.

Director Mike Nichols adds another quality movie to his credit. Though the film does not try to absolve Stanton of his transgressions, it does point out that, as an imperfect human, he is capable of them.

gamecock critic **JENNIFER STANLEY ★★★★★**

John Travolta doesn't stop challenging himself and surprising audiences.

From Grease to Pulp Fiction to Phenomenon, he has continued to astound me. And now, as a too-close-resemblance of Bill Clinton, Travolta manages to deliver a funny and sincere performance.

While his Southern dialect and voice matched President Clinton exactly, Thompson's British accent shined through. Thompson, however, gave beautiful, thoughtful speeches and portrayed an assertive candidate's wife realistically. She captured the audience's sympathetic ear by supporting her husband, despite his womanizing, while respecting herself enough to show her pain.

Kathy Bates delivered the most emotional performance as a "political spin doctor" with emotional problems. Her character had the perfect mixture of humor, honesty and idealism about how the political arena should operate.

The depiction of the Southern eccentricities is a bit extreme with too much singing of "You're My Sunshine" and the infamous Mama-thon. The movie shows what most of the American public needs to see: the fact that candidates are not perfect but have a heart buried below political talk and games.

Primary Colors is the perfect date movie with humor and hot topics to debate afterward. And, as I'm a stickler for happy endings, Primary Colors does deliver.

gamecock critic **ERIN SHAW ★★★★★**

Primary Colors could have been an easy movie: a stereotypical "glossing over" of the complex game of American politics.



It could have repeated standard portraits of the "corrupt, one-sided politician," raised the same issues repeated over and over again in the same way in daily news, played on the same jokes comics use and reuse. Instead, the minds behind the movie took the rehashed themes and questions and constructed a smart, timely roller coaster of a film.

I spent the whole time engaged, sitting forward in my seat and captured by the complexity of the political landscape that is so real.

Although all the acting was believable, one performer stood out the most: Kathy Bates. Bates portrays a veteran of political campaigning who has built her life on believing that working for a cause can create good, that positive change can occur through the government.

She comes out of "retirement" to give the Stanton campaign one last chance to redeem her beliefs. The result depicts some of the most intense and believable questioning of beliefs that has come out of Hollywood.

Who knows how much of this movie is based on actual fact? Truth is certainly echoed in this picture.

If there is not a direct commentary on an actual political figure, there are at least echoes of each of us who want to believe, has tried desperately to be a part of or remotely considers themselves a part of the red, white and blue.

gamecock critic **SARA LADENHEIM ★★★★★**

Candidates are supposed to represent the people they seek to govern.

In the wonderful adaptation of Joe "Anonymous" Klein's All the King's Men for the 1990s, Primary Colors, we see that campaigning isn't all about finances and debates. We see there is a heart, too.

Hillary Clinton, I mean Emma Thompson, plays a wonderful role as the wife, Susan, of the candidate, Jack Stanton. She is a woman who clearly wears the pants in the campaign. Clinton, I mean Stanton is portrayed by an overweight, capped teeth, gray haired John Travolta.

The narrator of the story, Henry Burton, played by British Shakespearean actor Adrian Lester, is the grandson of a "great civil rights leader," and adds balance as the deputy campaign manager for Stanton. Kathy Bates, Billy Bob Thornton and Larry Hagman play vital supporting roles in the film and add color to such topics as lesbianism and redneck ideology.

The most memorable moments in the film occurred in a Krispy Kreme Donut shop and a bar-be-que restaurant. Food played an integral part in the film and was used as a crutch for the major players, as well as playing a key role as comic relief. Another memorable moment was a "Mama-thon" which, as Emma Thompson's character states: "Could go on forever in the south."

The movie will touch your heart and will make you see that candidates are people too. The womanizing aspects of the film are overshadowed by pure human emotion. I promise you will laugh and you might cry as well, but in the end you will leave saying: "Wow, that was awesome."

**Female musicians to perform to celebrate women**

**staff REPORTS**

March is Women's History Month, and USC is sponsoring events throughout the month in commemoration of this nationally recognized event.

To cap off this month-long celebration, Carolina Productions and the Women's Student Association are sponsoring "Les Femmes: A Festival of Women Artists" at 7 p.m. Tuesday on the Russell House Patio.

"Les Femmes," a free event hosted by Honorary Mistress of Ceremony Toni Odom, the wife of USC's provost and executive vice president for academic affairs Jerry Odom, features national recording artist and local sensation Danielle Howle.

Singer/songwriter/guitarist Elaine Townsend, who has opened for artists such as the Indigo Girls, Fleetwood Mac, Taylor Dane and k.d. lang, also will open for "Les Femmes."

The jazz music of local musician Bess Daniels and her band also is slated for the event. To complete the showcase of female talents, several spoken-word artists and string musicians will perform.

Refreshments will be served, and dress is casual. In the event of rain, "Les Femmes" will be held in the Russell House Ballroom.

For more information, contact Carolina Productions at 777-7130 or by e-mail at carprod@hotmail.com.

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**CONCERTS**

- Drew Bunting, March 25, Pizza Bistro
- Hatebreed, March 25, The New Library
- The Nixons w/ Treadmill Trackstar, March 25, Elbow Room Music Hall
- Sarah McLachlan w/ Lisa Loeb, 7:30 p.m., March 25, Independence Arena (Charlotte). Tickets \$22.50 and \$30. (704) 522-6500.
- Brian Jones Band, March 26, Sharky's
- Deacon Brody, March 26, Characters
- Dharmia Dogs, March 26, Pizza Bistro
- Four Eyes, March 26, Beulah's Bar & Grill
- Hobex w/ Edith's Wish, March 26, Elbow Room Music Hall
- Muses Night Out presents Danielle Howle, 7 to 9 p.m., March 26, McKissick Museum.
- Palmetto Pans steel drum band, March 26
- Spanakarzo w/ Nute, March 26, The New Brookland Tavern
- Spoonful, March 26, The New Library
- Balance of Power w/ Shaman Mary and Hand Over Fist, March 27, The New Brookland Tavern
- Crude Earles, 10 p.m., March 27, Pizza Bistro

**EVENTS**

- "Anything Goes," through March 28, The Town Theatre. 799-2510.
- "Inconsciencias (Dark Series)," display of Marcelo Novo's art, through March 28, City Art (1224 Lincoln St.)
- Annual Student Art Exhibit, through April 5, McKissick Museum
- "Ireland and Irish Writers from the Book of Kells to Seamus Heaney," through April 12, Mezzanine exhibit area of Thomas Cooper Library
- "The Splendor of the Box," through April 12, McKissick Museum
- "Backyard Monsters," through June 8, the State Museum

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Contact Cindy Benton, Coordinator of Leadership Programs at 777-6688 for more information.

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