

Lanes

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is one of the current greats, with a genuinely likeable, down-on-his-luck, regular guy.

But the praise can't stop at the leads. This film relies heavily on its supporting cast, including superb actors such as William Hurt, as Gibson's

Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor; Sydney Pollack, as the cliched cutthroat lawyer; and Kim Staunton, as Gibson's ex-wife. Staunton, possibly the least-known actor in the cast, comes through with one of the film's best performances

Director Roger Michell ("Notting Hill"), directing again after a heart attack that nearly ended his life, gives us one of his more understated films. Such

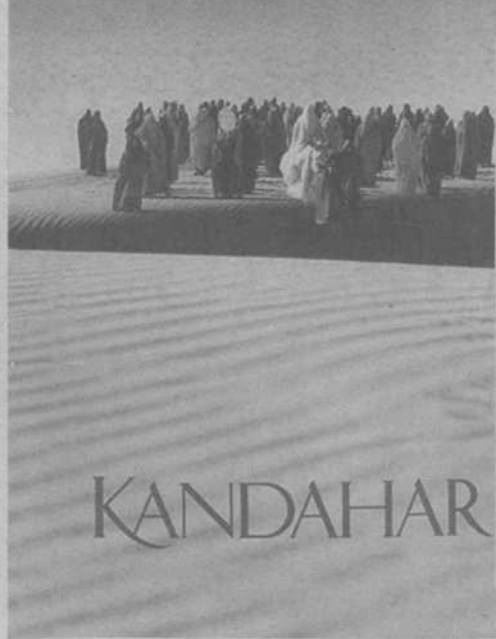
discreet directing is rarely seen, especially with two of Hollywood's larger stars at the helm, and it adds to the film's triumph.

At the end of the day, this movie does not rely on heroes or villains, but simply the complexity of human nature; and therein lies its success.

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CALENDAR

'Kandahar'



Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf's story about a Canadian journalist's trip to Afghanistan to stop her sister, whose legs were blown off by a land mine, from committing suicide. Unrated. 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. Nickelodeon Theatre, 937 Main St.

Monday

April 15

MUSICIAN MONDAY

EVERYTHING JAM SESSION: New Brookland Tavern, 122 State St. \$2

USC COMPOSERS CONCERT: Featuring new music by USC composition students. 7:30 p.m. School of Music recital hall. Free.

Tuesday

April 16

JGB FEATURING MELVIN SEALS: Senate Park, 931 Senate St.

CHAMBER WIND ENSEMBLES: 7:30 p.m. School of Music recital hall. Free.

"INTIMACY": Patrice Chereau's film about two people's adventure with casual sex and its dangerous effects. 7:00 and 9:15. Nickelodeon Theatre, 937 Main St.

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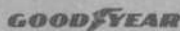
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Waits

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journey they constitute leaves you with a feeling of forlorn solitude.

While the songs' content may be dark, the music is beautiful and sweeping. With its dribbling jazz and Waits' tattered vocals, "Alice" seems to be Waits taking a step forward while looking backwards.

'Blood Money'

Where "Alice" is written out in gorgeous, illegible calligraphy, "Blood Money" is scratched onto a prison-cell wall in stark scribbles of black chalk. Here, trumpets and organs blare

and bleat while Waits snarls his strange melodies, sounding at times like a drunken French circus barker. While "Alice" seems to be about a man looking at himself, "Blood Money" is a man looking at the world and not liking what he sees.

"Blood Money" is flesh and blood, earthbound," Waits said. "The songs are rooted in reality; jealousy, rage, the human meat wheel." But songs like "Everything Goes to Hell" and "God's Away on Business" are countered with "Coney Island Baby" and "Lullabye."

While these new offerings will probably not be as widely loved as some of Waits' earlier albums, they are still incredible pieces from the only living American folk hero. With his piano; his rough voice; and his hangdog, yet charming, appearance, there is something in his music that everyone can admire: a man who walks alone through time, ageless as the days.

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Sweetest

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Christina proclaims in one of the movie's few foxy lines. "And eventually, if he's worthy, that Now part is just going to drop away."

One night at a happening club, Christina bumps into a worthy one, Peter (Thomas Jane), a hunk with whom she clicks to the point that days later, she's still daydreaming about him. On a whim, Christina and Courtney set off on a road trip to track him down, setting up a lot of bad potty humor intercut with Jane's inane sexual shenanigans.

Diaz and her cast mates, hurl themselves into the roles with vigor. But they come off as self-absorbed, monotonous simpletons because of the vacuous script credited to Nancy M. Pimental, who has written for "South Park" and was co-host of "Win Ben Stein's Money."

With drollly playful delivery, Applegate periodically rises above the script. Those few highlights, though, accentuate how dumb the surrounding action is.

In a brief hotel fantasy sequence, Christina imagines Peter as the perfect man, precisely tending to her every sexual whim and arranging for room service to wheel in bucket-sized dishes of ice cream.

"I had them remove all the calories for you," dream Peter tells her.

That sums up this dippy movie: a romantic farce with all the calories removed.

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