



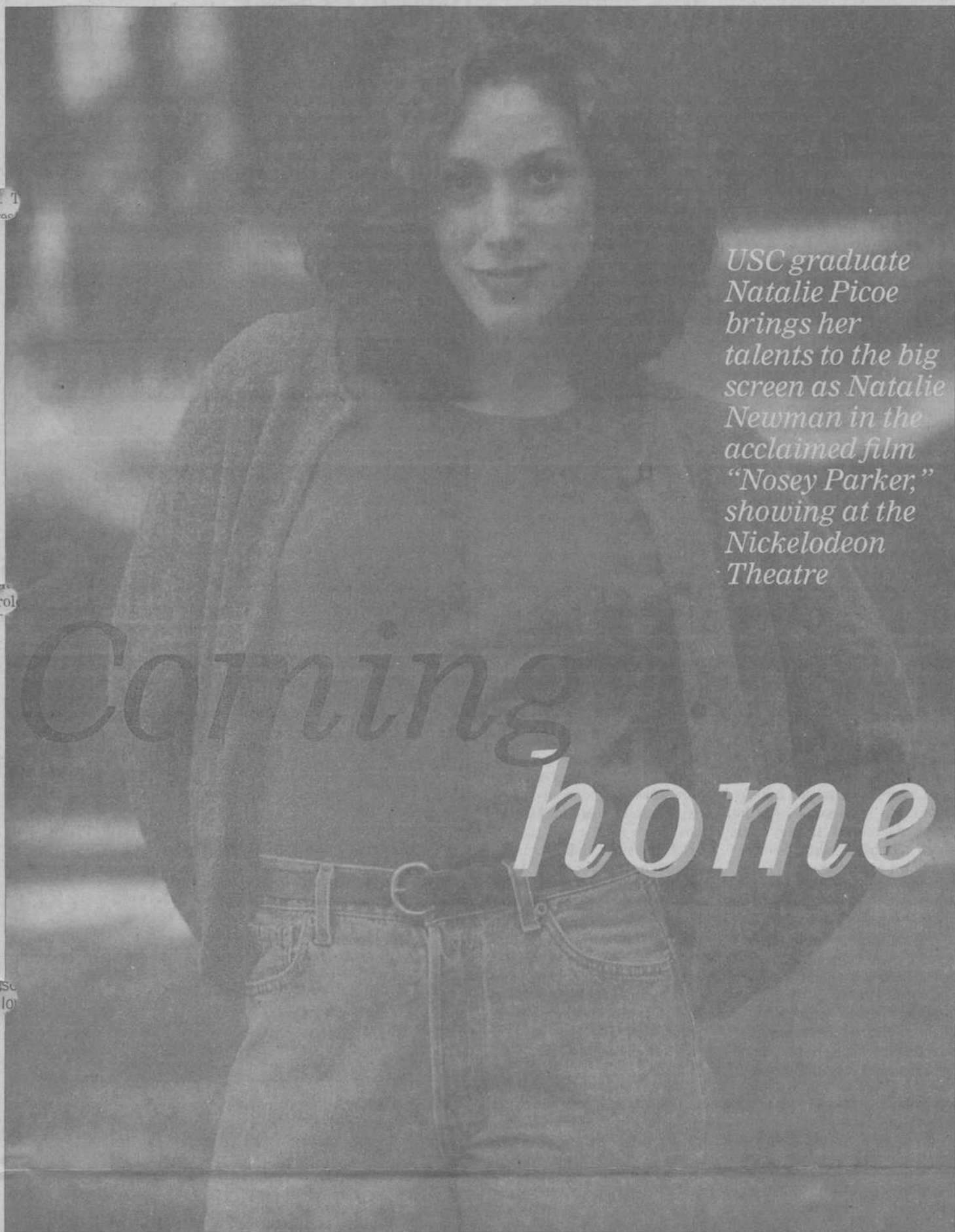
THE MIX

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THEY SAID IT

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."



USC graduate Natalie Picoe brings her talents to the big screen as Natalie Newman in the acclaimed film "Nosey Parker," showing at the Nickelodeon Theatre

BY CARRIE GIVENS
THE GAMECOCK

Meet Natalie Newman, who moves with her husband to the Vermont countryside. Her goal is to renovate an old barn and revamp her marriage at the same time. However, even after settling into her dream house, the former New York trophy wife becomes bored with her new life.

But that boredom ceases the instant Newman answers her door to the town's tax assessors. She meets and befriends George, a "colorful" old-time dairy farmer. Through their initial flirtation, Newman and George forge an unlikely, lasting friendship.

Hailed by eFilmCritic as "the great American hometown love letter," "Nosey Parker" will be showing at the Nickelodeon Theatre tonight at 7 p.m. The film has received glowing reviews from various publications, including L.A. Weekly, Film Threat and Variety.

Variety reviewer Robert Koehler summed up the film, writing that "the cultures of rural Vermont and urban New York meet, look at each other skeptically and find surprising camaraderie ... (the film) depicts the invasion of city slickers with an unmistakably human touch."

Koehler's review added that "Nosey Parker" combines "the improv tradition of Cassavetes, the neurosis of Larry David's 'Curb Your Enthusiasm' and a near-documentary of life in Vermont."

"Nosey Parker" stars Columbia-born actress Natalie Picoe as Natalie Parker, Richard Shee as her husband and George Lyford as himself. Directed by John O'Brien, the film was awarded a special jury prize for outstanding direction at the Nantucket Film Festival. Picoe and O'Brien will answer audience questions and provide insight into the film after the 7 p.m. showing.

This is not the first film directed by O'Brien. He previously directed "Man with a Plan," which followed the story of Vermont dairy farmer Fred Tuttle.

Picoe, a graduate of the University of South Carolina Theatre Department, began acting with Jim Thigpen at Spring Valley High School. Her first show, "Spoon River," inspired her love for acting. She praised her drama experience at USC as "one of the best experiences she has had in acting."

Picoe added that there "were so

many facilities," such as Longstreet Theatre and the Black Box Theatre.

Picoe always thought she would just do theater, but she said that "changed with a move to New York" and she "never thought I would do television or movies."

Picoe has had roles on "Law and Order" and in the movie "Exiled." She has also done voiceovers for Nextel, Givenchy and Sam Adams commercials. Additionally, Picoe has written and produced plays with Puerto Rican Traveling Theater, Naked Angels, West Beth Theater Center and other companies. Currently, Picoe is embarking on her first directing experience with the film "The Poker Detective."

Looking back on her acting career, Picoe comments that she never would have predicted that she would have been "so driven or so proud."

However, her drive has proven successful for Picoe. She added that throughout her acting career, she has always relied on her friends. They are "your contacts and all you have."

When acting in a role, "all you have to trade on is yourself and respect," Picoe remarked.

Picoe concluded that "Nosey Parker" is a "comedy about the unknown ... the outsiders trying to fit in with the insiders." It is "about peace."

"This event provides a rare opportunity for us to have both the director and the film's star at the Nickelodeon," said Anne Raman, executive director of the Nickelodeon. Raman said she thinks it will be "fun to meet her (Picoe) in person. ... She seems really nice and very generous."

She adds that "Nosey Parker" is an important addition to Nickelodeon's repertoire because "it gives our community a unique opportunity to view the work of a nationally recognized filmmaker who is distributing his film independent of the major companies."

"Nosey Parker" will run from Nov. 18 through Nov. 20 at the Nickelodeon Theatre at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. A 3 p.m. matinee will show on Wednesday.

Tickets are \$6.50 for the general public and \$5.50 for seniors and students. Columbia Film Society member tickets are priced at \$4.50. Group tickets can be purchased in advance for groups of 15 or more.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

CD REVIEW

'Fire' gives garage rock a fresh mood



ROOM ON FIRE
The Strokes
★★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY JUSTIN BAJAN
THE GAMECOCK

A lot has happened in the music world since The Strokes released "Is This It" two years ago. The retro-garage-band craze began. The Hives, The White Stripes and The Vines became popular. If your whole repertoire

channeled the hard rock of the late '60s, you were hot.

And now, amid the latecomers of this craze — Jet, The Thrills, Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Kings of Leon — The Strokes are back with their sophomore venture, "Room on Fire." It seems like The Strokes were waiting for the perfect moment to return to the scene, looking to jump back into the hype that previously surrounded the band when it first came out.

But this album is not all hype. Lead singer Julian Casablancas and company didn't just release an album to satisfy the starving garage-rock fans and those who jumped onto the bandwagon late. "Room on Fire" is evidence of hard work and maturation, the product of going through two producers and months of studio time to compile 33 minutes of music.

Through the music and especially through the lyrics of

Casablancas, the listener can tell that The Strokes have grown up. Even though most of the members are still in their mid-20s, they reflect a sense of maturity that seems to escape most of their garage-rock counterparts.

The lyrics are printed in the liner notes, calling attention to their importance. Albert Hammond Jr., the lead guitarist, manages to fit in some pretty tight solos into three-minutes-or-less songs. And this time, drummer Fab Moretti gets to impress his soul upon each song and not sound like a perfunctory drum machine like he did on "Is This It."

"Room on Fire" goes places. Unlike "Is This It," which sounded like one continuous party, the new album changes speeds and moods and gives the listener a little more to process. It starts off fairly up-tempo with "What Ever Happened?" and "Reptilia" but slows down on the groovy and

smooth "Automatic Stop."

Then the new-wave sounding single "12:51" comes on — everyone should know that one by now. This song is a good example of Casablancas' style as a singer — he would rather blend in with the rest of the music surrounding him, making it easy on the ears but pretty tough to comprehend if you're trying to hear what he is saying. The fact that the lyrics are printed in the liner notes also serves the listener who is trying to decipher Casablancas' words.

The beginning of "Between Love & Hate" sounds like it was lifted from an early Run DMC record as Moretti lays down the head-nodding backbeat. Meanwhile, Casablancas begins to paint a story about a former high school love. He takes the listener back a few years with such lines as "Thinking about the high school dance, worrying about the finals."

"Under Control" finds The Strokes exploring new territory. Gone is the standard pulsating guitar and metronome-pushing tempo in favor of a ballad-like approach. The usually dominant Hammond Jr. mutates into a refreshing rhythm guitarist, combining with Moretti, co-guitarist Nick Valensi and bassist Nikolai Fraiture to act as the rhythm section for Casablancas and his soothing vocals.

Rather than falling into the trap of sounding exactly the same again in fear of losing fans and breaking the critics' hearts, The Strokes instead show signs of artistic expansion. It's amazing that the band has grown this much, and only on its second release.

"Room on Fire" is a short listen that crams a unique range of songs into one satisfying album.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecockmixeditor@hotmail.com

MOVIE REVIEW

'Love' loses viewers amid many subplots

LOVE ACTUALLY
★★★ out of ★★★★★

BY GABRIELLE SINCLAIR
THE GAMECOCK

"Love Actually" is little more than a crowd-pleaser, but there's something to be said for making people leave the theater glowing.

Set during the five weeks before Christmas, this latest overseas import features something like half of the working actors in Great

Britain, from Hugh Grant and Colin Firth to Liam Neeson, and still manages to throw in a few key Americans for good measure. The acting is phenomenal, and it's apparent that everyone enjoyed being a part of this quirky little piece of fluff.

"Love Actually" is like having a book of short stories acted out for you. The best two involve the American, Laura Linney, and the sacrifices she makes for her handicapped brother, and Colin Firth, the

master of being torn apart by love, as he falls for a Portuguese housekeeper.

Still, the central character is the abstract feeling of love. The human beings merely serve to add atmosphere and keep the plot moving.

Love comes in many forms, we're taught. Mother and child, brother and sister, husband and wife, has-been pop star and manager.

This is the perfect movie for the chronic channel surfer. There are at least a dozen or

so plots, but they are entities among themselves. They do not require the others to exist and thrive. It seems that the only intertwining factor is that they all live in the same section of England, and at least one person in each vignette has some connection to Emma Thompson's housewife character.

There are some lovely moments, like the aging pop star's pathetic cover of "Love Is All Around Us," rewritten as "Christmas Is All Around

Us," and a school nativity play with sea creatures.

Directed by Richard Curtis, the movie jumps around like "Snatch" but with more lovin'. The screenplay is biting but not hilarious. It's definitely a British movie, but even factoring that in, some moments seem very forced and unnatural. It's a definite feel-good flick and it isn't ashamed to let viewers know it. Right from the beginning, we're informed



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

British import Hugh Grant stars in "Love Actually," directed by Richard Curtis.

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