

What's Not To Love?

Kathy Bates stars in new made-for-cable 'pseudo-musical' *Unconditional Love*

BY ROLAND PALMER

I'm a big fan of Kathy Bates, and when I saw this pre-screening edition of *Unconditional Love* sitting on the editor's desk at the *Out In The Mountains* office I couldn't help but beg her to let me review it (even though I had other work to do), I'm glad I begged because this soon-to-premiere-on-cable STARZ! movie was an absolute blast. Heart warming and hysterically funny at times, *Unconditional Love* has something for everyone.

First of all it has an amazing cast headed up by Kathy Bates who plays (and brilliantly, I might add - love ya Kathy!) Grace Beasley, a middle-aged Chicago housewife married to Max (Dan Akroyd), who decides to announce at one the most exciting moments in Grace's whole life some rather distracting (to put it mildly) news. Max and Grace have been married 25 years and have two children, a grandson, and a very outspoken, "take a picture it lasts longer" dwarf (yes I said dwarf) daughter-in-law (Meredith Eaton).

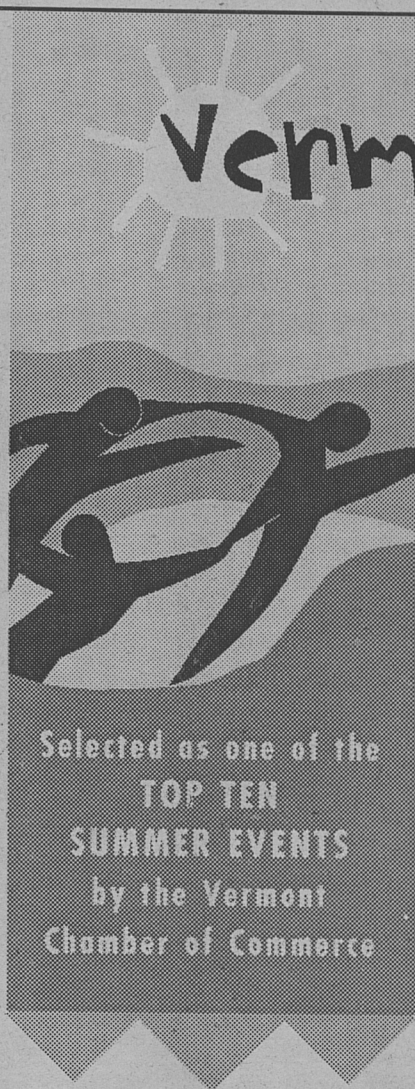
Grace is a huge ("I get stary eyed every time I hear him sing - oh and I have all his recordings") fan of sequin-suited lounge singer Victor Fox (Jonathan Pryce), who melts almost every one's heart. When Victor's career takes a tragic turn (thanks to the window washer) this sets Grace off on her own quest where she meets Victor's faithful (not an adjective to be used with "I have sex with them but sleep with you" Victor) valet Dirk Simpson (Rupert Everett) and Victor's three sisters (one of whom happens to be played by Lynn Redgrave). Grace and Dirk soon discover they have a few more things in common than their love of Victor

(oops, did I give something away?).

Second, we have a movie that could also be called a pseudo-musical, and who doesn't love a musical (ok, ok, put your hands down). From the movie's "steamy" (as in locomotive, silly!) opening song to the "Can't Smile Without You" (no, literally that's the song) duet with Grace Beasley and Barry Manilow, here is a movie that expertly uses music to enhance and further the comedy. Oh my god, wait until you see who distracts the passengers with a song on the rather bumpy flight to England (think *Airplane - The Movie*) - you'll be laughing and singing along (maybe not singing, that could just be me, but laughing definitely).

Take my advice, there are lots of reasons to get that satellite dish tuned in to STARZ! (let's hear it for those hunky satellite dish installers for one - talk about seeing stars - oh, wait, I guess that's a different review) for the world premiere of *Unconditional Love* (a woman's search for love, truth, and who killed the lounge singer) on Saturday August 2nd at 9 p.m. If you can't make the premiere, be sure to check out www.starzmovies.com for additional dates and times. If you can wait until October 7 to be so entertained, the video and dvd versions will be in stores then. ▼

Roland Palmer, a recent graduate of the Mountain Pride Media Board of Directors, lives - at least some of the time - in Hinesburg.



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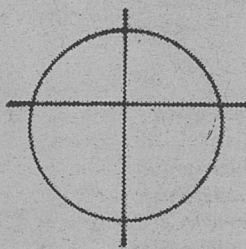
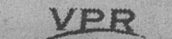
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