I'll be mission you

Mission of Burma at the Bradford Hotel Ballroom, Saturday, March 12.
Saturday was a day for pilgrimages. Boston's serious artists and art lovers flocked to Laurie Anderson's performances at Berklee, and Boston's music fans, both the hardcore and the curious, flocked to the Bradford Hotel to bid farewell to a local legend. Mission of Burma made its last Boston appearance, playing an incendiary final set to an audience that had only recently begun to appreciate the band's prodigious talent.

An element of Mission of Burma's sound—the sheer, enveloping volume—is responsible for the breakup. Years of unplanned exposure to loud music have afflicted guitarist/vocalist Roger Miller with tinnitus (constant ringing in his ears), which never comes. When the condition worsened, but bones unprotected exposure to loud music have been Robert's best chum since their college days and has become quite redundant in structure. We never get to meet. As a result of this backwards telling of the story, the audience is left somewhere confused, waiting for a wave of emotion which never comes.

Betrayal also suffers from a problem common to movie adaptations of plays: it looks too much like a play to succeed as a movie. The picture is a series of flashbacks spanning nine years, which results in a presentation of seven or eight scenes with two or three people sitting around talking about themselves. After a while, the scenes become so redundant in structure that we start to lose interest in what is taking place. The opening segment with Jerry and Emma in the cafe lasts for about fifteen minutes. Even at this stage, the viewer starts to get restless, hoping for some variation or some action. The resulting experience is not unlike watching a play—a scene ends, the lights dim, another scene starts, it ends, and so on. Betrayal is so self-conscious about its style and structure that the audience is never allowed to feel that it is watching a movie; therefore, we never get involved in the story.

I feel a bit guilty at panning a film that has so much talent and potential going for it, so I should note that "Betrayal" is marginally worth attending for the performances of Kingsley, Irons, and Hodge, and for the attempt at originality in filmmaking, which is commendable if not completely successful.

Returning to that aforementioned bottle of wine I propose a toast. Here's to hoping that all the people who were a part of this film will reunite to make another movie—remembering the center next time. Cheers.

Michael C. Magras

David Shaw

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