**Flashdance**, starring Jennifer Beals, Michael Nouri, and Lilia Skala. Directed by Adrian Lyne, screenplay by Tom Hedley and Joe Eszterhas. A Paramount Pictures release, now showing at the Sack Chest.

A beautiful, talented young girl, yearning to break free from the chains of tenement life, moves out on her own to the big city to realize her dream of becoming a dancer. She lands a gig dancing a few nights a week at a local club, but she must work a menial day job in order to supplement her income. She falls in love with the handsome owner of the company and is overjoyed with having met Mr. Right, the man who will provide her with the inspiration and moral support to pursue her career. When she discovers, her lover with another woman she is completely shattered.

The plot thickens: Our heroine is irked, infuriated, exasperated - yes, even emotionally wounded - over her lover's unfaithfulness, and a public display of emotion between the two ensues. Words are exchanged and tempers are flared, but an understanding is reached as the lovers kiss and make up before an approving crowd of fellow employees. When the boss pulls some strings to get his girl an audition with a prestigious repertory company, she is outraged at his meddling and refuses the audition.

She credits her decision to her desire to achieve her goals unassisted, but her real reason for backing away is fear of performing before a committee of right-lipped, hard-nosed judges. It is not until the death of her mentor and confidant, a wise and once-famous dancer, that our leading lady goes through the obligatory soul-searching scene and realizes her mistake. She phones before the committee, her confidence restored, and all is well.

Sound familiar? It ought to. With a few minor alterations, this is the same dress that countless mediocre movies have been wearing as a loose-fitting story line for the past half century. The latest motion picture to model this design is *Flashdance*, a film with some impressive and energetic television advertisements which do not live up to their promise when transferred to the big screen.

Newcomer Jennifer Beals plays Alex Owens, the dancing hopeful who finds work as a welder for a construction company. Alex promptly falls for Nick, the dashing owner, played by former soap opera star Michael Nouri. It seems Nouri brought some soap opera with him into this movie - it plays like bad daytime drama.

The producers and writers must have searched for every cliché they could find because almost every line we hear has been spoken in other films many times before. The relationship between Alex and Nick is thoroughly unbelievable, partly due to lines that are mechanically delivered rather than felt. Every character in this story is a stereotype: the successful boss who grew up in poverty and has "made good," the nightclub owner and street hustler, complete with toothpicks in their teeth, dark shades on their eyes, and lovely women at each arm; the troubled best friend; and the square owner, played by former soap opera star Michael Nouri.

The cast of *Flashdance* has obviously tried to re-capture the excitement, poignancy, and realism that made *Fame* such an appealing and popular movie three years ago. They even hired Irene Cara, the girl who achieved stardom in the earlier film, to sing the lively title theme in this picture. The producers' efforts, sad to say, have gone for naught; in comparison to *Fame*, *Flashdance* is a sister film that was either born prematurely or should never have been born at all. *Fame* was better off being an only child.

---

**South of the (Somerville) border**

I am increasingly convinced that authentic Mexican food is served in but a handful of restaurants north of the Sun Belt. I went to Latin-O Restaurant recently, and discovered only mediocre food at relatively high prices. One source of heartburn would have been enough.

I don't want to unconditionally condemn Latin-O. If you want to try a Mexican restaurant fairly close to MIT, this place will do, provided you convince yourself that you were there. There should, however, be much convincing involved.

The Latin-O is a reincarnation of the old Latin-O, which was blown up by fire. I visited the present restaurant soon after it reopened some four months ago; the management seems to have done little in terms of redecoration. The stucco walls are bare, save two or three obscuresly placed Mexican hats, and the dining room feels more like a Mexican barn than a Mexican restaurant.

People at Latin-O before the fire claim they were served good food at reasonable prices. Things always change, and sometimes for the worse. The food, at $6.75, allowing a starving student to eat as many of the tortilla-and-meat dishes as he can bear to order. My dining companions took advantage of the special, but barely got through the first dish, because of the filling amounts of rice and beans served with the entrees. The rice is moderately spicy, but the refried beans are as much fun to eat as gritty sawdust.

**Thought for Food**

Latin-O isn't bad; it's just not worth the average price ($6.25 to $7.25) of an entree. None of the dishes were very spicy, nor were they served very hot. Good Mexican food should render the palate useless with only a slight hint of what should normally be powerful flavors. I don't always expect a devastating blow to the palate, but a jalapeno or two wouldn't hurt.

I chose the mole poblano, which is usually served very hot. Good Mexican food. The mole sauce was not as spicy as I would have liked, and it was certainly no bargain at $7.25. Latin-O has an all-you-can-eat special, only to find rejection and broken dreams. Jennifer Beals makes a rather impressive screening debut as Alex, the clausless, tough cookie who longs for her big break in the dancing world. Her charm and beauty are entertaining and manage to shine through the muddled script. Yet the character she has to play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one. She has so play is not a completely convincing one.

**Flashdance** is a sister film that was either born prematurely or should never have been born at all. *Fame* was better off being an only child.

---

Michael Magras