

The good, the bad, and a movie: *Black Swan*

By Rebecca Waterloo
A&E EDITOR

You may have heard the hype about the new cinema hit, *Black Swan*. The reactions from viewers may have called it "disturbing", made them feel "uneasy", but definitely has potential to be an Oscar winner.

Natalie Portman dives completely into her role as a dancer in a production of *Swan Lake*. Many media articles have explained the dedication to her training; early 6 a.m. morning workouts and a small diet, very similar to those who dance as a career.

The story follows that of the *Swan Lake* ballet, and what painstakingly hard work goes into the show. The age is hard to tell of Nina, her skin as young and naïve as her personality. The New York Company Ballet director (portrayed by actor Vincent Cassel) announces their new production of the *Swan Lake*, dumping his "Little Princess" dancer Beth (Winona Ryder) for young Nina (Portman), expecting her to execute with the extreme dedication and seduction through her characters the White Swan (an enchanted woman in bird form) and her evil twin, the Black Swan.

The pressure builds up on the young dancer and things start to fall apart. Although she brings the necessity of perfection on herself, the psychological stress scratches at her skin (or she does?) and her body slowly transforms into the black swan, feathers and all. This film is not for the weak of stomach or shy of mind. The themes of naivete, life as a ballet dancer (cracked toes and fingers down the throat to regurgitate food), and having a smothering mother as protective as the stuffed animals around Nina's room are shown throughout the film.

Those with the darker, sinful mind may be pleased at Mila Kunis' role as Lily, a rancid dancer there to provide competition as well as corrupt Portman, encouraging her to seduce the audience. Multiple reactions are accepted while watching this; whether you're laughing or shrieking, this deadly serious film touches many subjects turning them from goofy to terrifying.

The ending is a twist, as expected, so catch *Black Swan* while it's still in theaters; it is everything it's lived up to.

By Ryan Kamphuis
STAFF WRITER

In my mind, everything was coming together to create one of the best films of the year. Start with a story that takes something as classic as Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and updates it to the current era. Mix in Natalie Portman, an actress who is a master at playing serious roles with a naturalism that sets her above her peers. And to top it all off, bring in Darren Aronofsky, director of 2000's masterpiece *Requiem for a Dream*; a director who is not afraid to try new things, create deeply dark drama, and eschew common convention in order to create an amazing film.

I was really excited to see *Black Swan*. It looked like it was going to be one of those movies that you don't forget for a long time. Because in addition to the strong merits of the film, critics loved it. The movie had an 88% on Rotten-Tomatoes.com. Numerous critics called for Natalie Portman to win an Oscar for her role. Some even said that it deserved the best film award.

I wanted to believe. But after seeing *Black Swan*, I just couldn't. It had its potential, but it all fell apart in the end. The opening half of the film introduces Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman), a ballerina for the Manhattan Ballet Company who is awarded the role as the Swan Queen in the Company's upcoming production of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. The director of the company tells Nina that she can expertly dance the White Swan, a character that represents innocence and perfection, but that she can't handle the Black Swan, a character that represents lust, passion, and rebellion. To make matters worse for Nina, a new ballerina named Lily (Mila Kunis) joins the company who is the perfect embodiment of the Black Swan.

But, as the film progresses, the exciting groundwork laid in the first half degenerates into a tale of sex, drugs, and hallucinations, culminating in a lesbian-sex scene that has little relevance to the plot of the film. In fact, someone who walked into the theater half way into the film would probably have a hard time believing what happened in the first half actually happened; they are that unrelated.

The problem with *Black Swan* is that it tries to do too much. The movie would be fantastic if it stuck to being an

exploration of Nina getting in touch with her dark side. But it tries to do that while being an erotic thriller, a psychological drama, and at times, a dark comedy. The movie has an identity crisis, and decides to do a little bit of everything instead of doing one thing well. It makes for an over the top film that lacks flow.

In my mind, the one good thing about *Black Swan* is Natalie Portman's strong performance. It's a shining beacon in an overall disappointing film. Portman plays her character with a seriousness, gracefulness, and honesty that you rarely see. She does deserve an Oscar for her role, but it's the only Oscar the film should receive.

Black Swan is a real letdown. Not just because of the fact that it wasn't a very good movie, but because we might get more films like it. It sounds hipster, but *Black Swan* sells out its artistic integrity by focusing so heavily on sex. The movie could have done great things, but instead it sold out in the hopes of getting a few more guys' money in the box office. Here's hoping that more good films don't follow this trend.



SPRING SEMESTER BOG EVENTS

- 1.13.2011 Hypnotist Chris Jones
- 1.14.2011 BSU Family Night
- 1.20.2011 Latin Dance Night
- 1.21.2011 Lousy Bowlers Tournament / Karaoke / Trivia Night
- 1.27.2011 Comedian Adam Grabowski
- 1.28.2011 Polish Club Disco Night
- 2.3.2011 BSU Poetry Slam / Dance
- 2.4.2011 IIT Idol Preliminaries
- 2.6.2011 SUPERBOWL PARTY
- 2.10.2011 Nice Peter
- 2.11.2011 IIT Idol
- 2.17.2011 ASB Benefit Night
- 2.18.2011 Valentine's Day Party
- 2.24.2011 TED Info / Cycling Roller Races
- 2.25.2011 Karaoke
- 3.3.2011 Skulls Night (Casino & Band)
- 3.4.2011 ISA Dance Night
- 3.10.2011 Tau Beta Pie (Pie Day)
- 3.11.2011 St. Balderick's / Band
- 3.24.2011 WIIT Band Night
- 3.25.2011 TED Event
- 3.31.2011 Costume Night
- 4.1.2011 April Fool's Day
- 4.7.2011 Latin Dance Competition / Poetry
- 4.8.2011 Ping Ping Tourney / 90s Karaoke
- 4.14.2011 Game Show Night
- 4.15.2011 Night of Noise
- 4.21.2011 Spring Fling
- 4.22.2011 Earth Day Party
- 4.28.2011 Movie Night
- 4.29.2011 Coffee House

* Some dates are subject to change.

The Bog is open every Thursday and Friday from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

For more info, visit <http://bog.iit.edu> or <http://facebook.com/bogiit>



Bog Committee Meeting
Mondays @ 1 p.m. in the
LaSalle Executive Conference Room, MTCC
Everyone is welcome!

BECCA WANTS TO KNOW!



Welcome back! Hope the first week of class was breezy. I need your help – last semester I coordinated a weekly column for you called "How to Chicago: A guide to unlocking the city life." It was a weekly calendar with events happening around the city: some free, some with a bit of a cost. I want to know: is this a useful resource for you? Would you like to continue seeing it, or would you rather have another key somehow telling you what's happening in the city? Fill out the TechNews feedback form to let us know what you want in your A&E section!