

Stages' unassuming appearance shrouds savory diner cuisine

Matti Scannell
A&E EDITOR

Until very recently, I had assumed that the pink sign with green letters that reads “Stages” was referring to a sort of mom-and-tots kind of program at the church next to the sign. I had somehow missed that underneath the name it reads “Casual Dining.” I had also somehow walked past the diner building for an entire semester on my way to school without seeing it.

My lack of awareness was rectified by my landlady’s twelve-year-old daughter, who asking me as we passed it “Have you eaten at Stages yet? It’s my favorite breakfast place. Their blueberry pancakes are really good.” I

had the following near-simultaneous thoughts including: a) My landlady’s family is Catholic so they probably don’t eat at a Lutheran church b) They don’t have any kids that qualify as “tots” in their family c) my taste in breakfast foods has never evolved beyond that of a twelve year old girl (read: sugar) so I should probably take this kid’s advice.

I decided to go on a weekday with my friend Holly in order to avoid the weekend crowd. We were hoping to arrive in time for the early bird special before 8:30 a.m. but didn’t quite make it as we arrived slightly after 9:00 a.m. For those readers who are timelier and more money conscious, their advertisement on the fence next to the building advertises a \$3.99 early bird breakfast special, which

is what Holly and I wanted.

Now I have a theory that coffee always tastes better in diners, so my taste in this area is possibly not to be trusted, but my friend—who is more discerning—agreed that the coffee was better than average. Both Holly and myself ordered off of the specials menu. Holly chose a spicy omelet with chorizo that was too big to finish before we had to leave for school. I—a little less wisely I think—got what was titled “The Eskimo.” This breakfast was as healthy as it was politically correct (not very).

What the menu promised was this: One large waffle surrounded by a protective barrier of whipped cream, topped with strawberries and chocolate syrup and a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Well, I received what I ordered

and it came with all the various accouterments that were promised, plus a small silver pitcher of syrup. It was...exactly what it sounds like. It was sweet in pretty much every way a food can be sweet.

Overall I would say it’s the grossest thing I’ve eaten all semester. That’s not, of course, to say that I didn’t finish it. Overall, I’m a big fan of diner breakfasts and while I do love the occasional late-night or early morning trip to Bridgeport Restaurant, this was a nice change of pace (not to mention a little closer to IIT). My recommendation is if you go to Stages and you don’t want to be in a sugar coma all day, stick with a savory breakfast option and try to make it for the early bird special to save a few bucks.



Movie Review: 'Side Effects' cast, plot make for true thriller

August Lysy
TECHNEWS WRITER

“Side Effects,” Steven Soderbergh’s newest film, just may be the most unsuspecting thriller of the decade. Like the slender blade of a knife, running out its sharpest point only at its very end, the film walks you unknowingly along the knife’s edge.

The film follows Emily Taylor’s (Rooney Mara) psychological descent following the recent release of her husband, Martin Taylor (Channing Tatum), from prison. As is evident by Martin’s crime (white-collar inside trading), the young, married couple is well to do, and so Emily begins going to Dr. Jonathan Banks (Jude Law) for psychiatric counseling. All seems to be going well—that is, until the most unnerving and cringe-worthy scene focuses upon the screen (no spoilers: let me just say, psychological decay is a frightening state to observe).

That’s the watered-down, no-spoiler synopsis; but as always, this hardly begins to convey the film’s dramatically thrilling effect. While Thomas Newman’s original score establishes a subtly ominous tone from the first scene, the true craft of this film lies in the screenwriting (Scott Z. Burns, “The Informant!” “Contagion”). I have always had a difficult time divorcing a film as the final product from its screenplay, but here one can

see (in hindsight) the intricately-weaved brilliance of the writing.

Above, I have chosen the simile of a knife—perhaps a chef’s knife would be most apropos. I believe this communicates best the nearly benign significance the movie appears to garnish on itself, but also the latent threat it conceals from the outset; some knives serve harmless and beneficial purposes, but they all end in a point.

The cast is an unassuming lot, as well, but they stand out with performances that rival the Oscar contenders. Here, I am not just writing about Jude Law and Rooney Mara—although Mara’s performance is the essential cog which turns this whole piece (and Tatum’s, contrastingly, the cog that might just as well be a rubber band)—but also about the supporting actors and actresses, such as Polly Draper, Laila Robert, Peter Friedman, and Michael Nathanson (unknowns all, to me). The natural, understated deliveries of these actors and actresses added a breadth to the film that I do not typically find in most movies, and which rendered every scene a significant experience of artistry.

Honestly, “Side Effects” appeared dull in its theatrical trailer. However, for me, it turned out to be the superbly crafted, sleeper drama/thriller I had been hoping for a long while (I can’t even recall one of recent—“Sleuth,” 1972?). Worth every dollar (only \$7 if you go to AMC East 21 on Thursdays!), “Side Effects” deserves your viewing.



Image courtesy of impawards.com

Oscar-nominated shorts simple, sweet, entertaining

Melanie Decelles
TECHNEWS WRITER

Do you love movies, but aren’t sure if you have the attention span to sit through a whole one? I mean, hell, some of them are 3 hours long now. Do you have trouble following over complicated plots with too many characters? Well then “Oscar Nominated Shorts 2013:

Animated” is exactly the movie for you.

Hosted by last year’s winners the movie showcases all of the short animated films being considered for an Oscar. The hosts Bill Joyce and Brandon Oldenburg, fill the space between films with motivation for the young animator and tantalizing glimpses of their award winning movie—that they don’t show you.

While most films being considered have little if any dialogue, the last film in the

series does everything it can to make up for that, featuring the vocal talents of various esteemed actors, who were paid to say roughly seven words each and grunt.

These films have everything you would ever want in a movie: romance, love at first sight, the bond between a man and his dog, surrealism, beloved characters, and a robotic genesis story.

Unfortunately, the movie doesn’t tell you were the films first aired and how

they came to be considered at all, with a notable Pixar entry among the new surprises. The films, while wildly ranging in subject matter, were largely beautiful and entertaining. The mostly silent films were very peaceful when watched together, combined with straight forward plots, this movie is probably the most enjoyable one out there. Short, sweet and to the point.