

reel reviews

★★★★ Peggy Sue Got Married / Oaks Four West

Francis Ford Coppola is one of our most daring and challenging filmmakers. In one sense, *Peggy Sue Got Married* is a safe, middle-brow venture for the financially beleaguered director. Still, more power to him. If all commercially minded movies were as well-crafted and delightful as this one, Hollywood would be flooded with money.

This sharp, well-written story is reminiscent of *Back To The Future*, but far from derivative. In it, Peggy Sue Bodell (Kathleen Turner) is getting a divorce from Charlie, (Nicholas Cage), her husband of 20 years and a man she clearly is still attracted to. She goes to her high school's 20th reunion, and is named the "Queen of the Ball." That honor, coupled with the trauma of divorce and Charlie's sudden appearance at the dance, cause Peggy Sue to faint.

Inexplicably, she travels back in time to the weeks before her high school graduation with her memories of what will happen in the future intact. Now Peggy Sue finds herself forced to live up to her boast, "If I knew then what I know now, I'd do a lot of things differently."

We've all wrestled with the question of whether we should stick with a relationship or project that may not work out. But Peggy Sue's quandary is slightly different. She *knows* her relationship with Charlie won't last, but try as she might to push him away, Peggy Sue finds herself falling in love all over again.

The comedic possibilities of this premise are milked thoroughly, but rather than make fun of how old-fashioned and naive people in the 50s were, the writers tweak our rose-tinted misconceptions about that "patriotic, innocent era."

Turner's approach to her role is simple and disarming, for she makes no serious attempt to look

like a teen-ager. Turner just puts her hair up in a ponytail and — boom! — the middle-age divorcee is a bobbysoxer. Cage is equally wonderful as Charlie, and his nasal, almost nerdy voice is hysterically effective.

Indeed, the entire cast is marvelous, giving this story a depth of characterization and emotion that it might have lacked in less capable hands. Kevin J. O'Conner is exceptionally good as Michael Fitzsimmons, the local beatnik Peggy Sue always had a crush on.

Peggy Sue Got Married has much more to offer than the enticing idea of time travel. Its message is that we must "seize the day" and make the most of our lives, for though we can't travel into the past, we *can* change the future. As Peggy Sue's grandmother says, "You're just browsing through time, picking and choosing which memories you want. Choose ones you'll be proud of."

by Michael Giltz