

MOVIE REVIEW

Junior: Another warm fuzzy holiday film

By Kathy Amen

Junior. Directed by Ivan Reitman; written by Kevin Wade and Chris Conrad; produced by Ivan Reitman for Universal. Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Danny DeVito and Emma Thompson. Rated PG-13 ★★☆☆

If you're looking for a warm fuzzy movie to get you into the holiday spirit, you could do a lot worse than *Junior*.

Unless you've spent the last month in total media deprivation, you must know the basic idea of this movie. Genetics researcher Alex Hesse (Schwarzenegger) tries out an experimental anti-miscarriage drug on himself. In the ensuing nine

months he becomes a better person by discovering his feminine side and how!

The idea of a pregnant *Terminator* is a mind-boggling concept, and certainly the makers of *Junior* counted on curiosity to provide a large number of early ticket sales.

But the pleasant surprise of this movie is that, for a one-joke story, it's richly entertaining. And for a picture with such a preposterous premise, it's just as sweetly warm and fuzzy as anyone could wish.

Part of the reason for *Junior*'s success is Schwarzenegger, who plays his part completely straight, despite the undoubtable temptation to do otherwise. We care about Alex and

his morning sickness, eating binges and crying jags, and that's because Schwarzenegger obviously cares about him, too.

As big a star as he is, though, I doubt that Schwarzenegger could have carried such a slender (in a matter of speaking) story by himself.

Fortunately, he has first-rate help. DeVito is always a treat to watch, and even though he has less to do here than in his previous project with the big guy (*Twins*), he does everything just right.

The player who makes the picture, though, is Thompson. Many of you who know her only from her husband Kenneth Branagh's movies, or from *Remains of the Day*, etc., were proba-

bly shocked to hear of her in a comedy and co-starring with Schwarzenegger, no less. Well, she not only displays her considerable comic gifts here, playing a klutzy egghead scientist with a great deal of charm and wit.

She and Schwarzenegger also make a quite successful romantic couple, in the sweetly screwball vein of, say, Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn. (Hey, I said *Junior* is a pleasant surprise, didn't I?) For my money, a woman who can generate chemistry with such varied types as Branagh, Anthony Hopkins and Schwarzenegger can do anything. I eagerly await her next adventure.