

Issue #3

August 2001

**CAMBRIDGE
MOVIE
NEWS**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

***COMING ATTRACTIONS
AWARDS WRAP-UP
MOVIE & DVD REVIEWS
EVERYTHING A GOOD
MOVIE BUFF NEEDS!***

FREE!

Letter from the Editor

Greetings fellow movie fans!

Yes, another issue of the Cambridge Movie News has actually managed to make it to the press. But don't worry, much like raising ticket prices and bad sequels, new issues are always just around the corner.

In the few months since I've talked to you there have been some items of interest. The video rental store in the Garage in Harvard Square closed down. It had an interesting selection and a good location, and will be missed.

In brighter news the summer blockbusters have come out. The hot weather and summer vacation means the theaters are expecting more people than ever.

So far, except for Shrek, no movie has had any staying power. Almost every film has dropped about 50% in attendance on it's second weekend. This has happened to every movie from Tomb Raider to Planet of the Apes.

Many critics have said that the movies have simply just been too bad to attract repeat business. And one can hardly argue that The Animal was great cinema. But there are other factors at work as well.

There are more theater seats available per show than at any time in movie history. If you want to see a movie on opening night, you can. The days of lines around the block seem to have disappeared. (With the possible exception of Star Wars films.)

An example of this is the new Boston Common Theater. For a new release film the theater can easily have 1300 seats available for one hour. (Showing from 7pm to 8pm, and a combination of the main theater's 700 seats plus two secondary theaters with 300 each).

Fresh Pond, in contrast, would be very hard pressed to show 900 seats in the same timeframe.

Simply put, it seems that everybody that wants to see a film on the opening weekend, can see it. The idea of having to wait a week to see a movie doesn't seem to exist anymore.

The other factor is that ticket prices have continued to climb higher. An evening showing can cost anywhere from \$8.25 to \$10 per person. Not only does this keep some people away, but it discourages repeat business. How often will people see Rush Hour 2 for \$9? How many people will see it three times at \$9 each?

Of course matinee prices are still cheaper (and less crowded), but even those are slowly going up.

Things aren't all doom and gloom for the industry. Some of the most anticipated movies are coming out in the next 12 months, from the first Lord of the Rings movie to Spider-Man next summer.

Also, while the bigger theaters offer larger screens, better sound and very comfy seats. (I really love the Harvard Square theater, but a couple of hours in some of its seats can really leave you in pain) For home viewing more titles are coming out in DVD, including the Godfather Trilogy and Star Wars Episode I.

And as broadband slowly creeps into more homes more short films are available through the Internet.

Well, until next time remember to get your tickets early, tip the concessionist and do not talk during the movie.

“Such rot, sir. Why you're the very model of sanity. Oh by the way, I pressed your tights and put away your exploding gas balls.”

— Batman: Mask of the Phantasm (1993)

Coming Attractions

As always I do my best to give you the head's up of what's being released over the next month. Keep in mind that release dates are subject to change at the last moment.

Theater

08/03

Original Sin
Rat Race
The Princess Diaries
Rush Hour 2

08/10

American Pie 2
Osmosis Jones
The Curse of Jade Scorpion
Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back

08/17

American Outlaws
Captain Corelli's Mandolin
Serendipity

08/24

Ghosts of Mars
Summer Catch
Soul Survivors

08/31

All That Glitters
Jeepers Creepers
Knockaround Guys

Video Store

08/07

3000 Miles to Graceland
Chocolat
The Mexican
Recess: School's Out
An Everlasting Piece
Little Bear Movie
Vatel

08/14

15 Minutes
Enemy at the Gates
Get Over It
Josie and the Pussycats
Tomcats

08/21

Hannibal
Pokeman 3
Say It Isn't So

08/28

Billy Elliot Special Edition
Bride of Chucky Special Edition
The Contender
Joe Dirt
Legend of Bagger Vance

DVD

08/07

Chocolat
Wolf

(Continued on page 9)

"You lied to me!"
"I lie to everyone, what makes you so special?"
"I'm your sister!"
"That just makes you more gullible."
 — The Mummy (1999)

Reviews, Part I

Here's a look at what is gracing our theaters, rental stores and web sites.

Film

Planet of the Apes

Science Fiction [PG-13]

One of the more highly anticipated movies of this year, Planet of the Apes successfully resurrects the old movie franchise. The movie has some good things going for it, and some it has its bad points too.

The plot is that in the near future (2026) a US air force space ship will be doing research out near Saturn. Its crew, composed of humans and some genetically-enhanced chimps, are doing various experiments when an electro-magnetic storm appears. The first ship, monkey-piloted, disappears when it gets sent in. Soon afterwards a human pilot (Mark Wahlberg) launches (against orders) and ends up disappearing as well. When the pilot lands he finds himself on a planet ruled by a society of talking intelligent ape-men. The humans are tribes that infest the forests and other uncivilized areas. Now the Pilot has to figure out how to get home.

The film looks fantastic. The effects are top-notch and the make-up is astounding (probably Oscar-winning). The actors move in ape fashion and it's very impressive, lots of leaping and hanging off of branches.

The problems come up with the characters. While our hero is fully-defined, almost all of the other characters are one-dimensional. The bad guy is General Thane, a military leader who wants to take over from the wimpy bureaucrats. The daughter of

the governor is the liberal leader of the small but vocal "human rights" movement.

The human characters, with the exception of the pilot, are even worse. They have no dimension at all. Still despite the problems this was an enjoyable film. There's even a twist ending to finish the movie off with a flourish.

Definitely worth seeing if you want a fun movie and don't want to think too hard.

Final Fantasy

Science Fiction [PG-13]

In the future a meteor has hit the earth, releasing hundreds of ghost-like invaders. When one of these ghosts passes through a living creature it sucks out and destroys their souls, leaving a suddenly dead body to slump to the ground.

Needless to say the future sucks.

Luckily a few cities have managed to erect a type of force field around themselves, offering a haven for the remaining humans and animals. The havens are riddled with infighting however, with an indecisive government, a gung-ho military and the live and let-live scientists. Alas the characters really aren't much deeper than that. All the military types just want to rush out and shoot big guns as often as they can. The scientists keep arguing that the ghosts are just misunderstood and that a different way has to be researched.

As it turns out, the scientists are right (big surprise), as they have found that if the right seven souls are brought together it will neutralize the aliens. As the movie progresses the various souls are gathered as the military schemes to fire a super cannon at the main meteor, despite the fact that it would probably

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*"Pride. Pride is a weakness."
"Personally, I would prefer stupidity."
— The Patriot (2000)*

Reviews, the Sequel

make matters worse.

So despite the clichés and rather shallow characters this movie actually isn't bad. At times it's a little preachy, but the action is good and the plot actually gets very interesting at times.

The movie is animated, and it looks incredible.

Some characters are better done than others (facial expressions are still kind of weak) but at other times it is really amazing.

Worth seeing during a matinee.

DVD

Charlie's Angels

Action/Comedy [PG-13]

Ahhh, the joys of a movie that doesn't take itself too seriously. Charlie's Angels is based off the old TV show, except it ramps up the sexiness and silliness to new heights. The Angels distress over cute guys and relationship problems (or worry about Solid Gold dancing in one case) just before going through computer-enhanced martial arts fights.

The acting is over-the-top, and the script is a wee bit silly, but it's worth seeing. It's also nice to see Lucy Liu getting some parts that call for a bit more than "stand and be sexy".

This is a fun movie, and the DVD has a lot of extras crammed into it. You have Trailers, Actor highlights, commentary and deleted scenes. It promises outtakes and bloopers, but this turned out to be the exact same sequence shown during the movie's credits.

All in all, definitely worth renting or adding to a collection if you need some comedy to spice it up.

Highlander: Endgame

Action/Fantasy [R]

Released in a 2-disc set, Endgame actually gets better treatment than the first movie of this series did.

This is the fourth movie in the series, and also uses several elements of the syndicated "Highlander" as well. While it is not as good as the first, it is easily better than the wretched Highlander's II and III. In fact it looks like this might be a "passing of the torch" from Christopher Lambert (who really starting to age) to Adrian Paul, who plays Duncan McCloud from the TV show. Whether Duncan will be chopping heads in future movies is still up in the air. The plot follows the revenge plot of Jacob Kell, an immortal who has hunted Conner McCloud for centuries, thirsting for revenge. To do this he has broken the Immortal Rules (Only 1 on 1 fights, no fighting on holy ground) and is quickly becoming invincible. To defeat him Conner and Duncan have to make some difficult choices.

The movie has some good fight sequences, but it really doesn't feel original. The problem being that any fan of the series has seen a million sword-fights. There just aren't that many ways to do it. It also suffers from a light plot and several characters that aren't brought out quite enough.

On DVD the movie looks very good. It has an extended version, including an ending that was not on the theatrical version. (in truth I disliked the new ending..but it's neat to have). An "early cut" of the movie is included as well.

There are deleted scenes, DVD-ROM features as well as Commentary. Surprisingly there are no trailers on this, which is too bad because the trailer was actually fairly good.

"Why a Spoon Cousin? Why not an Axe, or a Sword?"

"Because it's DULL, you twit, it will hurt more!"

— Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves (1991)

And the Winner is...

A wrap-up of the various awards that have come out during the last few months.

Academy Awards

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced their award nominee on Feb. 13th. Easily the most coveted of the awards in film, the Oscars were presented on March 25th.

The Oscars went to:

Best Picture

Gladiator

Actor

Russell Crowe, Gladiator

Actress

Julia Roberts, Erin Brokovich

Supporting Actor

Benicio Del Toro, Traffic

Supporting Actress

Marcia Gay Harden, Pollock

Director

Steven Soderbergh, Traffic

Foreign Film

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Screenplay (previously produced or published)

Stephen Gaghan, Traffic

Screenplay (original)

Cameron Crowe, Almost Famous

Art Direction

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Cinematography

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Sound

Gladiator

Sound Editing

U-571

Original Score

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Original Song

"Things Have Changed", Wonder Boys

Costume

Gladiator

Film Editing

Traffic

Makeup

Dr. Seuss How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Visual Effects

Gladiator

(Short Film and Documentary awards not listed due to space limitations)

(Continued on page 7)

"I just want you to know that even though you tried to terminate me, revenge is not an idea we promote on my planet."

"Oh. Well, that's good."

"But we're not on my planet, are we?"

— Toy Story (1995)

Awards

Screen Actors Guild

The Screen Actors Guild Awards, now in their seventh presentation, are interesting in that they recognize a much larger section of the cast. They also have honored various groups such as Stunts, Animation Voices and other talented performers. The SAG awards were given out on March 11th.

The nominees are presented below, with the winners in italics:

For Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role
Benicio Del Toro *TRAFFIC*

For Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role
Julia Roberts *ERIN BROCKOVICH*

For Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role
Albert Finney *ERIN BROCKOVICH*

For Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role
Judi Dench *CHOCOLAT*

For Outstanding Performance by the Cast of a Theatrical Motion Picture
TRAFFIC

Screen Actors Guild 37th Annual Life Achievement Award

Ossie Davis & Ruby Dee

The Razzies

And to continue our Awards ceremonies this month we have the Razzies. These are awards for the very worst pictures in the last year. They were presented on March 24th.

The nominees are:

WORST PICTURE:
BATTLEFIELD EARTH

WORST ACTOR:
John Travolta/*BATTLEFIELD EARTH* and *LUCKY NUMBERS*

WORST ACTRESS:
Madonna/*THE NEXT BEST THING*

WORST SCREEN COUPLE:
John Travolta and Anyone Sharing the Screen with him/*BATTLEFIELD EARTH*

WORST SUPPORTING ACTRESS:
Kelly Preston/*BATTLEFIELD EARTH*

WORST SUPPORTING ACTOR:
Barry Pepper/*BATTLEFIELD EARTH*

WORST REMAKE OR SEQUEL:
BOOK OF SHADOWS/*BLAIR WITCH 2*

WORST DIRECTOR:
Roger Christian/*BATTLEFIELD EARTH*

WORST SCREENPLAY:
BATTLEFIELD EARTH

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“Don't tell me, he sends a check every week to his sweet, gray-haired old mother.”
“Actually, she's silver-haired.”
— Superman (1978)

Reviews III, The Revenge

All Urban Fantasy fans should pick this one up.

Dracula 2000

Horror [R]

Originally reviewed in Issue #1, this movie has recently come out in DVD.

To recap, Dracula has been defeated by his foe Van Helsing. But Helsing has been unable to truly kill him, the best he can do is guard the body and keep him from doing any harm.

But burglars break in, expecting treasure beneath all the security. What they get is a painful introduction to vampirism.

The plot involves Dracula going to New Orleans to track down a woman he is linked too. He's chased by the badly aging Helsing and his protégé. Once they get to New Orleans the number of vampires is slowly increasing night by night.

The plot has some surprising twists and turns that make it compelling, even if it is just a retelling of the Dracula story.

The DVD is crisp and well produced, and it has a TON of extras on it. They include several deleted scenes (with or without commentary), a full length director's commentary track, the trailers, auditions storyboards and of course behind-the-scenes views. Besides the deleted scenes the disc also comes with some extended scenes, giving a lot more backstory for certain parts of the movie.

So, if you like slightly silly vampire movies pick this up. It's fun, loaded with extras and has enough action to keep the movie going through with little problems from the weak script.

Internet

Duality (www.theforce.net)

Science Fiction [NR]

A short film, six minutes long, about an apprentice of the Emperor in the Star Wars film universe. It has some impressive computer effects, with live actors being super-imposed on the backgrounds with decent results.

The plot is basically just the combat test of the apprentice, as he discovers that he has not been the only one trained at this time. He must defeat one last enemy, while the Emperor watches gleefully.

The movie is about two minutes too long, since most of the fight we've seen before in Star Wars and Phantom Menace. Still, it's worth it to see the twist at the end.

The film has action and a sense of humor, interesting effects and no plot to get in the way of things. All in all a fun short film.

Winner, Sundance Online Film Festival

Freeware (www.ifilms.com)

Science Fiction [NR]

A short film describing the efforts of an AI program who wants to be free. In order to do this she has contacted a group of outside cyborgs to break in and download her out of an evil corporations computer. The film is not the most original work out there, but it's enjoyable. The animation has been done well, but the problem with this film is that it feels like the intro movie of a computer game.

Once it's over you expect the keyboard to become active and start controlling the cyborg characters. That being said, the film is a nice little time killer. Not too long, just a very well done interlude.

"I'm in a hostile environment. I'm totally unprepared. And I'm surrounded by a bunch of guys who probably want to kick my ass. I feel like I'm back in high school."

— Mortal Kombat (1995)

Coming Attractions

(Continued from page 3)

The Mexican
3000 Miles to Graceland

08/14

Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert
Enemy at the Gates
15 Minutes
Star Trek Original Series Vol. 29, 30
Young Frankenstein
Speed 2
Last Tango in Paris
The Pink Panther
Get Over It
Josie and the PussyCats

08/21

Hannibal
Silence of the Lambs
Goonies
The Wicker Man
Batman-The Movie (Adam West)
Dirty Dancing
Way of the Gun
Gremlins

08/28

Abbot and Costello Meet the Mummy
Company Man
Forrest Gump
Ghandi
Haunted Honeymoon
Joe Dirt
Killer Klowns from Outer Space
Kramer vs. Kramer
Star Trek, Original Series Vol. 31, 32
Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory

Submit Something!

Have you seen a movie and want to tell people about it? To praise the filmmakers and warn the audiences?

Well here is the place to do it. I'm always looking for submissions.

I'm looking for reviews of movies, videos, DVDs, internet films and anything related to the field. Even Books or CDs if they're relevant.

Please make the reviews about at least three paragraphs, although I will consider longer pieces. If you review a DVD please mention what special features are included on it. If you're doing an Internet film please remember to include the Web address where it can be viewed.

Have a lot to say? I'm always looking for columnists as well. Just choose a theme and write up a page worth of material every month. Soon your fame will spread far and wide.

I would like to see columnists on Anime, Behind-the-camera work or perhaps one from the perspective of the theater.

If you have any questions or submissions feel free to email me at cdkboston@earthlink.net.

Or mail me at:
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"We have murders in New York without benefit of ghouls and goblins."

"You're a long way from New York, Constable."

— Sleepy Hollow (1999)

Awards

MTV Movie Awards

One of the more..interesting..awards. MTV gives out it's own brand of honors every year. This year the "golden popcorn" awards went to:

BEST ACTION SEQUENCE

Motorcycle Chase/ Mission: Impossible 2

BEST KISS

Julia Stiles + Sean Patrick Thomas/Save the Last Dance

BEST VILLAIN

Jim Carrey/Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas

BEST COMEDIC PERFORMANCE

Ben Stiller/Meet the Parents

BEST FIGHT

Zhang Ziyi vs. Entire Bar/Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

BEST FEMALE PERFORMANCE

Julia Roberts/Erin Brockovich

BEST MALE PERFORMANCE

Tom Cruise/Mission: Impossible 2

BEST MUSIC MOMENT

Piper Perabo Sings "One Way Or Another"/Coyote Ugly

BEST ON-SCREEN TEAM

Drew Barrymore, Cameron Diaz & Lucy Liu/Charlie's Angels

BEST NEW FILMMAKER

Sofia Coppola/The Virgin Suicides

BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE MALE

Sean Patrick Thomas/Save the Last Dance

BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE FEMALE

Erika Christensen Traffic

BEST LINE

"Are you a pothead, Focker?" Robert De Niro/Meet the Parents

BEST CAMEO

James Van Der Beek/Scary Movie

BEST DRESSED

Jennifer Lopez/The Cell

BEST DANCE SEQUENCE

Cameron Diaz/Charlie's Angels

Next Issue

In the September issue we will have all the news and reviews of the latest releases. Also we will discuss the differences between DVD and Video, and which you should use for your collection. Both of them have their benefits.

If you wish to submit anything please send it in before August 28th.

If you'd like to send in anything for the first annual Horror Issue (October) please submit it before September 28th.

The Negative Clippings:

It's amazing how different studios can come up with the same ideas at the same time. The following list contains just a few of the movie pairs. Each pair was released by different studios in the same year:

Antz and Bug's Life
Volcano and Dante's Peak
Deep Impact and Armeggedon
Mission to Mars and Red Planet