

Issue #4

**September
2001**

Cambridge
Movie
News

This Month:

Movie Reviews

Coming Attractions

**DVD vs VHS: which to
choose!**

**Everything a good Movie
Buff needs!**

Letter from the Editor

Greetings fellow Movie-fans, September is looking to be a very exciting month for us. The two big events is that the Boston Film Festival is starting up this month, just over the river at the Boston Common theater (and the Copley). Plus the MBTA is FINALLY starting to run some night service. They're not doing a lot, and they're only doing it for a year as a trial, but it's better than nothing.

Let's talk about the T shall we?

One of the biggest complaints that movie owners and customers have had is that the T shuts down right after midnight.

Keep in mind that on a Weekend evening this can easily leave forty to fifty people all sitting and waiting for a cab after the last show.

Driving would be the obvious solution, except that Cambridge parking is about as bad as downtown Boston parking (with the notable exception of Fresh Pond).

But now people who like going to late shows, or simply couldn't get a ticket to an early one, will be able to have transportation home.

The T's Night Owl service starts on September 7th, and will run on Friday and Saturday nights for a year (barring any serious problems). It consists of several extended hour bus lines, some standard routes as well as bus lines mimicking each of the Subway lines. The Buses will run until 2:30am.

Now you can even catch the Harvard Sq. midnight shows and get home for just a \$1 bus fare.

More information about this may be obtained online at <http://www.mbta.com/schedmaps/nightowl>.

Festive news

Also this month the city of Boston gets to play host to a large amount of independent films, short subjects, quirky Hollywood movies and a variety of shows from the world outside of Hollywood.

The Boston Film Festival (www.bostonfilmfestival.org) will be playing from Sept. 7-16 at the Boston Common and Copley Sq. Theatres over the river in Boston. Some of the selections this year look to be very interesting. Tickets will be \$10, or you can buy 10 for \$85.

Some of the films to look for are:

Brotherhood of the Wolf, a French horror film about two men in 1765 France trying to find who, or what, is killing people in the countryside. It's been getting good buzz from festivals in Europe, and should prove highly entertaining.

Haiku Tunnel. Probably the winner for the strangest title of this year's films, this one talks about a temp. worker who finally gets convinced to go permanent at a company. And after he does so he realizes just how bad such a decision can be (one of the lines from the Trailer: "If you go perm, the company will pay for your psycho-therapy!") It seems like an entertaining premise, and should prove quite enjoyable.

No Man's Land. Set in the Bosnia/Serbian war, this drama talks about a couple of soldiers stuck in between the front lines, while their commandants, journalists and themselves all try to figure out how to survive the insanity. Of course they also have their colleague who is sitting on a mine and could kill everyone if he moves. This film should provide a

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"Don't give up Jack!"
"Okay, I won't Wang. Let's just CHEW our way out of here!"
Big Trouble in Little China (1986)

Coming Attractions

Here's a list of what is coming to stores near you.

Please keep in mind that movie release dates are subject to change at the last minute.

Interesting Trivia: So far Soul Survivors has been bumped from release three times this year alone (and has landed on every Coming Attractions I've published). Will it make it out this time? We'll just have to wait and see...

Theater

09/07

Our Lady of the Assassins
Rock Star
Soul Survivors
The Musketeer

09/14

Deuces Wild
Hardball
The Glass House
The Prime Gig

9/21

Big Trouble
Glitter
Sidewalks of New York

9/22

Don't Say a Word
Extreme Days

Video

9/4

Memento

9/11

Blow
Just Visiting
Shadow Magic
Tailor of Panama

9/18

Driven
Someone Like You
Startup.com

9/25

A Knight's Tale
The Forsaken
Kingdom Come

DVD

09/04

The Dish
Exit Wounds
Memento
Princess Bride: Special Edition
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (Movie)
Quigley Down Under

09/11

Blow
Tailor of Panama
61*
Dr. Who- The Five Doctors

9/18

American Werewolf in London: Special Edition

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"So we tried not to electricute the entire cast and crew, as that would have really slowed down the shooting."

Director's Commentary, Deep Blue Sea (1999)

DVD or VHS?

The new home video question...

Owning a movie at home is a true joy, and many movie buffs have a sizable collection of titles at home. But what medium should you use? The new kid on the block DVD? Or the old reliable, VHS?

They both have their advantages, and different types of fans and not everyone will go with the same one.

First let's look at the qualities of each:

several speaker setups.

Plus, most discs have at least some extras. All of them have the ability to jump between chapters, allowing a search to a spot much easier.

One of the big things about DVDs is a variety of presentation options. On most discs you are given the several choices on Language, subtitles and wide screen or letterbox. The choice is yours. VHS is typically English, wide screen and possible closed-captioning.

Other discs have options including deleted scenes, alternate endings, directors commentaries and several other extras unavailable anywhere else.

DVD Pros	VHS Pros
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Quality Video/Audio • Long Shelf-Life • Extras • Freeze-frame, Chapter Search • Smaller Size makes it easier to store • Playable on Computers as well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Massive Selection • Cheaper • Can stop and remove tape without losing place • Available at more retail/rental outlets
DVD Cons	VHS Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less selection • Expensive • Newer DVDs sometimes glitchy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short Shelf-life • Inferior Video/Audio quality • Storage takes more space • Almost all full screen

Those are the choices in a nutshell.

DVDs have some real benefits. The quality of the audio and video is the best available right now. Many discs are DTS certified and equipped to handle

DVDs are the top of the technology right now, and that can lead to some problems. Remember the reports about the Matrix? When they use the newest technology sometimes the discs won't work right on

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“And how did you defeat them?”

“I’m trying to remember...there were an awful lot of casualties that day.”

Transformers: The Movie (1986)

So What Should I See?

As always I go in to show you the good, the bad and the truly strange for your viewing pleasure. If you have any comments about my reviews you are more than welcome to drop me a note.

Now, on with the shows....

Movie Reviews

Ghosts of Mars

Horror [R]

Hooo boy. John Carpenter managed to do another Vampires. What I mean by that is that he put out a movie with several interesting points, several really bad points and just leaves you thinking "that could have been so much better".

The plot concerns a mostly-terraformed and colonized Mars. It seems in the outer mines/nameless towns a gruesome murderer has been apprehended and needs to be transferred back to the main city. There are also rumors of something having been uncovered, something nasty and it's sweeping in towards the cities.

The cops get to the town to find it deserted, except for bodies and the people who had been locked up. Soon enough they discover that the original Martians are now just ghosts (kind of like a nastier version of Final Fantasy...) and they are possessing the "invaders" (aka Humans) and using the invaders bodies to kill, destroy and drive us off their planet. They also like decorating their human hosts with what can only be called severe body-piercing. Icky. The martians quickly move in on the town with the cops inside. The Cops are trying to stay unpossessed, work together as a team with the crooks, and fight off an army of sword, razor-disc-thing, and

spear-wielding possessed humans.

I'll let you figure out the rest for yourself. But think Assault on Precinct 13 or Dawn of the Dead.

Good points: There are some actually very interesting things in this. The score is very good, lots of energy and metal that perfectly suits the bad guys and the action scenes.

Also some of the fight scenes are done quite well.

As the cops fall back the fight begins to resemble the British vs. Natives fights in the various Zulu movies. It's nice to see professionals actually working like professionals. (In horror movies that is can be quite rare...)

Bad Points: This movie has a severe overdose of flashbacks. At various points we are actually two or three layers deep in memories.

Most of the flashbacks are used to follow character's actions when the group had split up. That would have worked fine, except that these flashback scenes move back far enough to recap a line or two of dialog that we've already heard. It's annoying and seriously insulting to the audience.

Secondly the idea of the Mars society of being Matriarchal is totally wasted. Instead of making for some interesting social and character interactions, we just get the basis for a few insults. You could literally have taken out four lines of dialogue and you never would have known that Mars is supposed to be a women-run society.

Lastly, these are supposed to be cops going to pick up a very dangerous criminal (responsible for at least 5 deaths, plus several wounded officers). So what do they do? They send five cops, one of which is a recent transfer and the other two are pure rookies.

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*"Hello this is Killian.
Give me the Justice Department, Entertainment Division"
Running Man (1987)*

DVD vs. VHS

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older players. And when I say older players I mean only one or two years ago. Also the companies have been trying to upgrade the regional coding in an attempt to fight "region-less players" and bootleggers. Again this has caused problems in older machines.

Selection is also a problem. While almost all new releases come out on DVD, a lot of the older films have yet to come out. LucasFilms and Disney have just recently begun to release their works on DVD. And they are not doing it in a big hurry. The Star Wars trilogy and Raiders of the Lost Ark are not available, and plans for their release is still up in the air. Still progress is being made. Phantom Menace, and the Godfather Trilogy are both due out later this year.

TV series is another area where releases are few and far between. If you want to see the original Star Trek series, HBO series or Stephen King mini-series you're in good shape. If you want to see anything else your chances aren't as good.

For example, of Star Trek only the first series is on DVD, while every episode for the original series, Next Generation, Deep Space 9 and most of Voyager are all available on videotape.

A simple fact of DVDs is that a collection of them takes up much less room than a VHS collection. Paperbacks are wider than dvd cases, and the discs themselves are the size of CDs.

Shelf-Life is a very important consideration for collectors. A typical video-tape will last about ten years, assuming normal usage (and that the VCR doesn't eat it). DVDs will last for decades, again

assuming normal usage and no frisbee lessons with it.

When you're going out to purchase movies the benefit is with Videotapes. This is especially true with the big rental chains "guaranteed availability". Basically it goes like this:

Blockbuster buys twenty copies of Dirty Dancing III. Rentals are brisk for two months, but afterwards Blockbuster needs to move it to the Drama section. Perhaps three tapes are kept, depending on demand. The other seventeen tapes are going to be in the "previously viewed" section, and that means a cost of \$8-\$12. Not bad, and the condition is usually not decent.

DVDs, however, are not like that. They come out and are usually priced around \$20 and may be up to \$50 for special editions or imports. While used discs can be found for \$12-15 the numbers are nowhere near as big as video.

So what should I get?

My advice is that for the serious movie fan who really wants the best quality should go with DVD. They offer the best options as well as the best quality. DVDs are also the way to go if you watch the same film frequently. While it is still possible to wear out a disc, it is far less of a problem than with tape.

If you just want to have some movies around, tapes are the best option. Movies can be bought cheaply and anything you want is probably on tape. For TV addicts, VHS is also the way to go. The availability easily makes that choice for you.

"You're cuter than I thought. I can see why she likes you."

"Who?"

"Not too bright, though."

Matrix (1999)

Reviews

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Sure sounds safe to me.

So there you have it. Ghosts of Mars could have been really good. It had some great ideas, good effects and music, and some decent actors. But the direction and writing completely failed it.

Rent it, see it on HBO, but don't fork over the theater admission for it.

The Others

Horror [PG-13]

A classic Victorian/gothic ghost story. The tale follows a mother (Nicole Kidman) who hires on some help around the house. The house must be kept silent, so as to keep the mother from getting migraines, and her two children who are deathly allergic to any strong light source.

This means the house is very dark, with drapes on every window and doors that are carefully shut as soon as you pass through them. The entire place looks utterly creepy.

Oh, and did I mention the strange noises and visions the kids keep saying they have?

Unfortunately I can't go into the plot without spoiling it. Suffice to say there are a couple of plot twists and the ending is very...interesting.

The movie is genuinely spooky and achieves one really good scare. But for the most part it is basically just a good story. The characters are believable and the atmosphere is done perfectly. The mother figure is surprisingly strong and intelligent, although she does have some serious denial issues. (when a door opens by itself repeatedly and then slams shut in your face that means your house IS haunted ya dope...)

It's also refreshing to have a movie that is not a scooby-doo slasher flick (ala the Scream wanna-bes) nor does it depend on the special effects to carry the tension (such as House on Haunted Hill). Instead it is the characters and the story that do it.

The flip side of that is that the film does drag a little bit in parts and audiences that are used to the scare-a-minute of recent films may be disappointed.

But if you want to see a good classic ghost story, get your butt over to see this film.

DVD

Akira-Special Edition

Anime-Science Fiction [R]

One of the most successful animated Japanese movies ever (and also one of the most expensive to make), Akira has quickly become a classic in the genre.

The animation is amazing, with speed-blurred lights, strong characterization and some awe-invoking scenes. The character designs are a little weird in places and the movie is also known for the amount of violence in it (and it does not soften any of the blows, if you get shot or punched, you actually get hurt in this movie)

The story involves Neo-Tokyo, the city rebuilt after WWII started here. The city is in a severe state. Students are violently protesting new tax reforms, police are pounding on everybody, motorcycle gangs are running rampant in the streets and the military is doing nasty experiments on people.

The experiments are designed to access the full psychic potential of a human being. Basically to give humans the power of God. The army grabs one

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"When you first started at Pacific Tech you were well on your way to becoming another Einstein and then you know what happened?"

"I got a haircut?"

Real Genius (1985)

Reviews

of the local street punks and begins to experiment on him after he accidentally meets one of their previous test subjects.

The problem is that when the punk is experimented on he does gain the psychic powers, and begins abusing his power almost immediately. Soon he is completely uncontrollable.

Soon he is facing off against the Army, the scientists and pretty much taking his revenge on everyone who didn't give him respect. Eventually it leads to a one-on-one fight between him and his old gang-leader.

The ending gets very surreal, and the whole movie is pretty dark. But the storyline is very interesting and you begin to really feel for the various characters. There are some clichés, especially in the Military and scientist characters, but they don't distract too much from the movie.

The DVD comes with a dubbed or subtitles and has tons of extras including trailers, production notes, and interviews.

This movie is well worth picking up for your collection. And if you are an Anime fan, then you don't have any choice, buy this as soon as you can. It's a keeper.

Unbreakable

Drama/Urban Fantasy [PG-13]

M. Night Shyamalan's film after *Sixth Sense* brought back Bruce Willis in this well done movie about the existence of a man with abilities beyond normal man. IE a super-hero, just like in the comics. (but no tights or cape)

The story unfolds as David (Bruce Willis) slowly begins to accept and use his abilities under the tutelage of a mysterious stranger (Samuel L. Jackson). The stranger is the opposite of David,

having a genetic defect that makes his bones far weaker than normal.

The film has a wonderful style about it. The differences between the two main characters creates some interesting interactions. David's struggle to accept what he has and yet must still try and fix his nearly-destroyed marriage.

The movie's look is nicely styled, with lots of darks but various colors showing through. Each Color highlighting a specific mood or character. Rain and other water effects are also used effectively throughout.

Interesting Trivia: The film producers tried very hard to get this film to break \$100 million at the box office and kept it running for a very long time.

When they finally pulled it from the theaters it had racked up \$99.98 million.

The DVD is a two-disc set and well worth having. It contains Deleted scenes (each with an intro from Shyamalan) along with documentaries and behind-the-scenes footage.

It is disappointing that there is no director's commentary with this movie. Shyamalan did a great job on the *Sixth Sense* commentary, and I would have really liked to have heard his thoughts on the aspects of this film.

Still, the movie is well worth owning and should be bought by movie (and comic book) fans.

Internet

The Star (www.bmwfilms.com)

Action [NR]

In an interesting move BMW has sponsored a number of short films and placed them on the internet. They approached a number of high-quality directors and offered them the slots. The only

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"If he'd just pay me what he's paying them to stop me from robbing him, I'd stop robbing him!"

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)

Attractions, **Reviews**

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Basic Instinct
 Blood Simple
 Cape Fear (1962)
 Cape Fear (1991)
 Driven
 Spy Kids
 Total Recall: Limited Special Edition

9/25

French Connection
 Citizen Kane
 Simpsons: Season 1
 Someone Like You
 A Knight's Tale
 Along Came a Spider
 Heathers

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Letter From the Editor

slightly different take of war movies.

Along with these we have documentaries on Drive-In theaters, Porn star Ron Jeremy, the Hollywood film premieres of Training Day and Serendipity, plus the new Stephen King-inspired film Hearts of Atlantis (which is a drama, not horror).

So this month provides plenty of films, a possible way home and plenty of fun.

Just remember that when you go to any movie be sure to go early, avoid the crowds and never, ever talk during the movie.

See you next month!

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requirement being that it had to involve a BMW sports car and it's mysterious driver. A surprising number of directors said yes.

The Star is one of these films. It is a short view of how the ultimate snotty movie-star gets a seriously rough-ride. Basically the driver bouncing her around all over the back seat with high-speed turns and sudden accelerations.

As you can probably guess that's about it for plot. What this movie does do, however, is entertain. The car chases combined with both some witty dialogue and an excellent score make this move worth seeing. Even if it is just a six-minute commercial.

Antebios (www.scifi.com/exposure)

Science Fiction [NR]

A short computer-animated film, Antebios is a fun little diversion. It looks very similar to this summer's Final Fantasy, with the characters looking interesting but a little waxy. Also they still don't have the human speech patterns quite right. Still, minor flaws considering that the over-all look is very nice. Besides, the monster looks cool and that's all that matters right?

The storyline is your basic Alien Astronaut meets Humans to Help Fight a Monster. Nothing terribly new here. The humans don't trust the alien, the monster is really big and nasty and the alien has to trust the primitive way-too-gun happy primitives of the planet.

Still, it does the story well and provides a fair amount of characterization for the tiny parts of the film when things aren't going boom or characters aren't shooting at things to make them go boom.

Click on it when you want to kill some time and have some fun.

"We decided to make it female so it would be docile and controllable."

"More docile and controllable, eh? You guys don't get out much."

Species (1995)

Next Issue, Submissions

Next Issue

October, Halloween. The horror movies are back among us. I'll have ghouls, skeletons and other shocks all waiting to reveal themselves to you next month.

Expect to learn about haunted theaters, horror reviews as well as a wrap-up of what September had to offer.

So come back in 30 days...*if you dare.*

Submit something!

I'm always looking for help in putting this magazine out. So if you have any opinions, views, interesting facts or long ramblings please send them to me

Right now this is a free zine, so no payments are offered. Other than the nice warm fuzzy feeling that you'll get to see your name in print.

Send any submissions to:

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Boston, MA
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Or email:

Cdkboston@earthlink.net

What I'm looking for:

Reviews.

Current or recently released films. Please include the genre and the rating, along with your thoughts about how good the film was. Anything that was in release 4-6 weeks before the publication month are fair game. In the review please have a little bit more than "it was neat", and try for about three paragraphs.

Videos and DVDs, write down a brief description of the movie, and if it's a DVD please include the special features, or lack there-of. With DVD reviews the "recent release" rule is greatly relaxed. New stuff, is nice, but there is plenty of other releases to talk about.

TV films, Internet films. Reviews of this sort are also appreciated. Please include the source (website, or network) of the broadcast.

Columns, articles. If you want to write on something long, I would love to see your work. An article will hopefully fill an entire page or more. If you want to cover a topic every month, then you're a columnist. Write a page every month and figure out a name for your wonderful new feature. Right now I'm looking for the following columnists: Anime and Behind-the-scenes/Filmmaking. Suggestions for others are always appreciated.

Artwork of theaters and other cinema affects would also be useful. Just try to keep it somewhat tame.

Negative Clippings

Yummy! The movies that prove that magic exists in the kitchen. But just be careful, for sometimes the cooks make you a banquet, and sometimes they serve you your just deserts.

Like Water For Chocolate
Simply Irresistable
Chocolat
Woman on Top