

Arts, Letters, & Entertainment

Screen Demon

Express Elevator to Hell Would Be Quicker

Well here's something you don't see everyday — a sequel to a film that has become a cult classic. In the case of *Highlander 2: The Quickening*, its presence on the silver screen has safely proven that there are never enough glass windows to explode and that there are now four levels of Dante's SAGE 222 Hell.

Like many cult films, the original *Highlander*, has this realm of fantasy and phantasmagoria that separates it from the likes of mainstream features. And I have to admit that within this cult genre, it has its own strengths of 'peculiarity' — mainly plot structure — that make it an interesting movie. But *Highlander 2* screenwriter, Peter Bellwood, has taken this structure and squeezed impossible and unnecessary factors into the story.

My main concern in this review is the use of a far away planet, Zeist, as the home of Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert) and the rest of the Immortals. If Connor and his pal Ramirez (Sean Connery) were banished from Zeist together, then how could Connor say in the original that he was born "of the clan MacLeod in 1518?" Perhaps I'm caught with my kilt down, but how could Connor be zapped to Earth as a man and then be born into Scottish royalty? This plot is structurally unsound.

In addition to this Planet Zeist thing, we've got an aging Connor MacLeod who was chosen to live a mortal life and nearing the end in this year of 2024. By this time, the Earth had almost completely lost the ozone layer. But thanks to Connor and some of his buddies, they developed a force field that encompassed the Earth which protected it from dangerous ultraviolet radiation. Now, the Earth is suffering from heat, humidity, the tyrannical rule of the company in charge of the "Shield," and basically an all-round bad attitude of the population.

In waltzes ecological Wonder Woman, Louise Marcus (Virginia Madsen) who claims that the Shield is no longer needed and must be destroyed. And back on Planet Zeist, the evil ruler, General Katana (Michael Ironside) has decided that MacLeod must finally die. Out to Earth go two bizarre, frog-looking assassins and after a ten-minute fight complete with exploding windows, decapitations, and a tanker truck fire — MacLeod emerges looking fresh and handsome like we all knew he would.

And it's a good thing that Lambert's accent didn't clear up — I might have been able to understand what he was trying to say.

Veteran character actor/bad guy Michael Ironside makes his appearance as the diabolical General Katana. He's a great actor, but I think that this time, he took too many cues from Alan Richman's movies. And also his character makes too many jokes that are obviously inconsistent for a guy who just popped in from another planet. Watch for the continuity problem with his gloves!

Did I mention all of the exploding glass? And never fear — a few neon signs also bite the dust in this sequel.

Aside from the structural problems, director Russell Mulcahy, director of photography Phil Meheux, and Production Designer Roger Hall pull off a better visual look for the *Highlander* sequel than seen in the original. There is a lot of great camera work going on, along with some outrageous sets — all of them in Buenos Aires. The fight scene that I mentioned before had some really neat techniques — guys flying around on mini-surfboards. And hey, I only saw the wires twice.



Sean Connery puts in another one of his great performances with arched eyebrows in tow. But his re-death scene really sucks out loud — destroy the giant fan with his life-force? I'd rather see his head go flying off again than that lame scene.

Ninety-one minutes of good visuals and too-stupid storylines — *Highlander 2: The Quickening* gets the finger. Don't even bother when it comes out on video.

MPAA Rating: R
Westwood Six — Carmike Cinema, Fayetteville



Angela A. Lynch
Columnist

[Editor's Note: All releases are compiled by Angela A. Lynch. *Screen Demon*, Lynch's regular column, features two reviews for this special Holiday issue. Double truck design by Heather Lyn Gupton and Steve Cohn.]

There comes a time at the end of Fall Term when classes are finally completed and we all return home to work meaningless part-time jobs for meager minimum wages. Many refer to it as the Holiday Season, but Hollywood usually calls it Open Season on your wallet. And this year is no exception, so grab onto your money and hold on tight because the Tinsel Town elves have over twenty-five feature films aimed at your pocket.

November

Cape Fear

That *GoodFellas* director, Martin Scorsese remakes the 1962 thriller that starred Gregory Peck and Robert Mitchum. This time around we see Nick Nolte and Scorsese favorite, Robert DeNiro, in the starring roles. DeNiro's ex-con character stalks lawyer Nolte's family because of fabricated evidence which sent him to jail. With this version, look for a shift in emphasis to a theme on moral guilt and punishment, DeNiro with a Southern accent — and lots of tattoos. (Universal)

November

An American Tale: Fievel Goes West

What else can you say? Perhaps producer Steven Spielberg should call it *Dances with Cartoon*. I doubt if Polk's call for Manifest Destiny is supposed to stretch this far — but it's for the kids. (Universal)

Beauty and the Beast

I think that if you square the number of Walt Disney animated films you'll arrive at — infinity. Anyway, you'll soon be hearing reports of how many months it

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took for cartoon artists slaving away to make this picture — big deal. Here's the interesting stuff: *The Little Mermaid* songwriters, Ashman and Menken, have contributed six new tunes. Vocal talents include Angela Lansbury as Mrs. Potts, Jerry Orbach as Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers (M*A*S*H's Major Winchester) as Cogsworth, Jo Anne Worley as The Wardrobe, and Robby Benson? as the Beast. (Walt Disney)

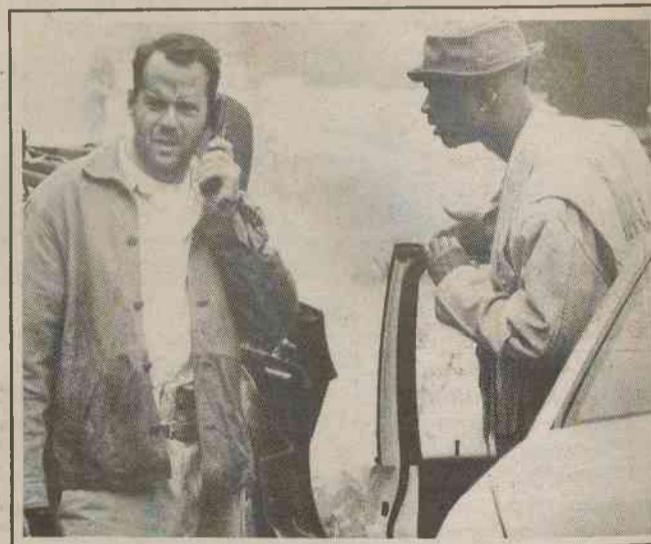
Joel Silver, has teamed up with Bruce Willis for another ammo-adventure. Perhaps Willis is still embarrassed about this summer's megabomb, *Hudson Hawk* and has decided to stick with a producer that knows what he is doing. TV's "In Living Color" Damon Wayans co-stars. *Top Gun* director, Tony Scott, steps once again into the action genre as director. (Warner Bros.)



Beauty and the Beast



Leonard Nimoy and William Shatner



Bruce Willis & Damon Wayans

December

The Last Boy Scout

Once again, the producer of action hits *Lethal Weapon*, *Die Hard* and their sequels,

and the strides to peace with America. Kirk, Spock, Bones, and the rest are back. Nicholas Meyer (*Star Trek II*) returns as director. (Paramount Pictures)

