

Sequential cinema: Movie sequels dominate box office

Blockbuster movies develop into fiscally fruitful franchises as studios tailor sequels to replicate the success of their predecessors.

By Emma Williams
Staff Writer

"Goldmember," "Men in Black 2," "Red Dragon," and "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" share one commonality: all are sequels. The year of movie sequels, 2002, passes the torch to 2003.

Sequels to blockbuster hits dominate the coming attractions. The fast-paced action flick, "The Fast and the Furious 2," is due to hit theaters in June of 2003, while in July, "Terminator 3" and "Bad Boys 2" expect to be released. "Dumb and Dumber" fans also can get hyped for the delivery of the prequel to the comical original movie.

The plethora of sequels that has erupted seems inexplicable, but many Grimsley students hold their own theories about the sequel-filled summer.

"The [directors] are hard up for ideas. All the good movies have already been made, so they can't do anything else but make sequels," said sophomore Itai Baron.

Freshman Bryson Young agreed. She said, "They are making so many sequels because the directors are running out of origi-

nal ideas."

Sequels draw their crowds based from a loyal fan base of the original movie. The first films, prototypes for the sequels, will either attract or repel the viewers.

"If I like the first one, then I will probably like the second one," said sophomore Alex Ford.

Seeing the original is usually key before diving into the movie theater seats to view its successor, but some Grimsley students do not find seeing the first necessary.

Ford said, "I like to see the first one, but if I hear good things about the sequel then I will go and see it."

Ford saw the third installment of "Austin Powers" without having seen the first or the second.

Some, however, prefer experiencing the first prior to the second release.

"I always try to see the first before seeing the sequel because then I don't miss anything," said junior Tony Curnes.

Most commonly, the initial film is favored.

"Usually I like the first [movie] better. It is more original," said Alex Ford.

Sometimes, however, students tend to prefer sequels.

Curnes said, "I liked the second 'Lord of the Rings' better. The director was able to incorporate the original ideas into the sequel, staying along the lines of the original, while adding exciting new scenes."

Maintaining original aspects is one of the many expectations students have for follow-up movies.

"I go to see if the [writers and directors] can make another good movie. They should try and make it better, but it has to fit in the original plot," said sophomore Daniel Yount.

Many students also expect to see the original actors with whom they are familiar. Jodie Foster, who played the role of Clarice in "Silence of the Lambs" turned down the role for the movie's sequel, "Hannibal," not only affecting the viewer turn-out but the movie's ratings as well. Many moviegoers avoided seeing the sequel due to the fact that Clarice was played not by Foster, but by Julianne Moore.

"When you go off and replace people they don't always work," said senior Joanna Franz.

Students' familiarity with the original actors will sometimes draw them to the sequels.

Curnes said, "I like to see the original actor. They help me to catch more intricate details, and I know them better."

The movie, however, need not lack new characters.

"I look for the original characters, but there can be a few additional characters if it makes the movie better," said Yount.

Grimsley students' expectations and predictions may be fulfilled in this year's movie sequel menu.

Max's Oscar Picks

The Academy Awards are hardly the be-all, end-all of cinematic judgment. Year in and year out they astound and dismay with their questionable calls and disgraceful snubs. Still, the power of Oscar is undeniable, and the awards never fail to provide a few memorable moments. This year's nominees have their fair share of surprises, snubs, and preposterous choices, but, for the most part, the academy has followed many of its usual patterns, and these will most likely hold true. Now, on to the nominees:

Best Picture

Nominees: "Gangs of New York," "Chicago," "The Pianist," "The Hours," "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers."

Lord of the Rings may seem the obvious choice (the academy does love a grand spectacle), but it is a sequel, and its predecessor was unable to scrounge up the votes for a win last year. Look for Academy voters to honor "The Hours." It may seem a little un-Hollywood, but stars often like to pat themselves on the back for giving the award to the "smart" movie every once in a while (see "Shakespeare in Love").

Best Actor

Nominees: Daniel Day-Lewis, Jack Nicholson, Adrien Brody, Nicholas Cage, and Michael Cane.

Until Jack Nicholson won the Golden Globe, Daniel Day-Lewis seemed like a lock. Nicholson is an Academy favorite, and it hardly matters that Nicholas Cage and Daniel Day-Lewis both acted circles around him this year, but I still give the edge to Daniel Day-Lewis.

Best Actress

Nominees: Selma Hayek, Diane Lane, Julianne Moore, Nicole Kidman, and Renee Zellweger.

Here's at least one category in which even the blindest Academy voters couldn't miss the rightful winner. Nicole Kidman's portrayal of Virginia Wolfe in "The Hours" is one of the most remarkable performances recently recorded on the screen.

Best Supporting Actor

Nominees: Christopher Walken, Ed Harris, John C. Reilly, Paul Newman, Chris Cooper.

Look for Christopher Walken to walk away with this one easily. He's a great actor, and, for the first time in years, he's in a movie that's worthy of him and worthy of a nomination.

Best Supporting Actress

Nominees: Queen Latifah, Kathy Bates, Meryl Streep, Julianne Moore, Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Meryl Streep has her past on her side, but she hardly stole the show in "Adaptation." Julianne Moore gave an outstanding performance, but she may split her own vote by being nominated in two categories. Likewise, Latifah and Zeta-Jones could split the "Chicago" vote. Look for Streep to narrowly eke out a victory.

Upcoming Shows

Weekend Excursion, Evoka Project, Creamy Velor
Saturday, 3/1/03 at 9 p.m.
Ziggy's in Winston-Salem, NC
\$8

Papa Roach, Nonpoint, Reach 454
Sunday, 3/2/03 at 8 p.m.
Ziggy's in Winston-Salem, NC
\$15

Voodoo Glow Skulls, Roger Miret and The Disasters
Monday, 3/3/03 at 7 p.m.
Tremont Music Hall in Charlotte, NC
\$8

Eugene Chadbourne
Friday, 3/7/03 at 8 p.m.
The Green Bean in Greensboro, NC
Free, donations accepted

Yo La Tengo
Monday, 3/10/03 at 9 p.m.
Cat's Cradle in Carrboro, NC
\$14

Dave Matthews and Tim Reynolds
Friday, 3/28/03 at 7:30 p.m.
LJVM Coliseum in Winston-Salem, NC

Sam 41, The Starting Line, No Use for a Name
Monday, 3/31/03 at 6 p.m.
Tremont Music Hall in Charlotte, NC
\$19

Movie fans marvel at Marvel's movies

Comic book films quench a popular thirst for superhero fun.

By Ricky Leung
Staff Writer

It's a blind lawyer; it's Ben Affleck; but more importantly it's a hot Jennifer Garner kicking some butt. "Daredevil" came out on Valentine's Day, one of several comics-turned-movies done by Marvel and Fox. X-men and Spiderman have both already made their way to the big screen and the Hulk is soon to come.

The movies attract fans of the comics as well as moviegoers who have never even heard of the Daredevil and his cohorts.

The Daredevil, one of Marvel's more prominent super-heroes, lost his sight in a freak accident as a child and developed other superhuman senses. The movie stars Ben Affleck as the Daredevil, also the blind lawyer Matt Murdock, and Jennifer Garner as Electra. The pair faces enemies such as the Kingpin and Bullseye.

"The girl from Alias [Garner] is hot but the movie [Daredevil] won't be any good because Ben Affleck is not a good actor; he just rides on the coat tails of Matt Damon," said junior Larry Durgin.

Much of the comic-movies' appeal lie in special effects and actors such as Halle Berry, Tobey Maguire, Ben Affleck, and Jennifer Garner.

"I'm not a big fan of comics because they are cheesy. The movies are much better

because of the dynamics; you can hear the voices. Tobey was good in Spiderman, but Spidey wasn't," said senior Chip Pendergraft, "And [the movies] sell because people want to relive their childhood."

The comic book characters also create a common ground between the generations.

"[The comic-movies] appeal to a wide audience: adults who grew up with these characters and [their] children," said senior Ashley Wyble. "Everyone needs a hero and comic books [and the movies] give the audience just that."

However, comic-movies are not without their critics.

"Some of them like 'Spiderman' are alright and done well for a comic-movie; others like 'X-men' didn't stand out as a good movie. The movies are not as good as the comics because they are too short and don't give enough time for character development," said junior Ricky Watson.

Whether directed to habitual comic readers or to curious moviegoers who just want to see what "Daredevil" is all about, Marvel and Fox have provided a genre of action-packed fantasy that utilizes modern-day's power of special effects to bring heroes to life; and with that great power, of course, comes great responsibility.

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