

Disney Changes History and Adds Strong Sex Appeal to 'Pocahontas'

It speaks poorly for the rest of "Pocahontas" that the real star of the movie is Pocahontas's heaving breasts. There's no point in railing at good old Disney for failing to serve up real history, why should America's candy store pass up the campy appeal of a legendary fictional love story with maximum P.C. appeal? On the other hand, why should Disney take a story like that and make it boring?

Despite recurring big talk about the New World, the Jamestown settlers barely seem surprised by their first view of a whole new continent. Why should they be? There are no breathtaking "Lion King" vistas here. Virginia in 1607 looks like a camp brochure, where nothing scarier than a cuddly animated raccoon.

MARYA DEVOTO

Movie Review "Pocahontas" C

When Pocahontas (Irene Bedard) leads up to her big number "Just around the River Bend" (surely a rip-off of "Something's Coming" from "West Side Story") by exclaiming "He wants me to be steady like the river—but it's not steady at all!" you have to laugh. Until the script kicks it into action, the water, like the rest of the landscape, is flat and lifeless, as if the animators hoped your eyes would never stray from the middle of the screen. The "dramatic" gesture of having a character stand on a cliff to make a speech appears again and again.

While Pocahontas's songs are beautifully sung by Judy Kuhn (a version of "Just Around the River Bend" by Vanessa Williams), they're not really infectious. Unlike the usual Disney storyline, where good



Disney's "Pocahontas" is "Just Around the River Bend" from making hundreds of millions of dollars, at the expense of changing history.

must overcome evil. "Pocahontas" is in a double bind. After all, we can't make bad guys out of either the Native Americans, who hold the moral and environmental high ground, or the British settlers, who founded American culture. So when Pocahontas sings to Captain John Smith (Mel Gibson, sounding oddly American) about the spirits within all nature, she does it vaguely enough to avoid stomping on his progressive views about land development. This lack of sharp lines makes the comic-book eroticism stand out. Pocahontas's

bosom heaves again and again in her low-cut, off-the-shoulder tunic, which is slit on the sides up to her nubile hips.

Maybe Disney should have stayed with the strategy of "The Lion King," where the issue of hereditary male kingship was defused because the characters were animals. A movie about the friendship of a feisty Native American raccoon and a bulldog puppy from Merrie Olde England might be just the thing for tackling intercultural understanding circa 1607. And we could lose all that yucky kissing.

MOVIE GUIDE

OPENING FRIDAY

Apollo 13. Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton, Kevin Bacon, Ed Harris, and Gary Sinise star in this Ron Howard drama. Rated PG. Plaza, 967-4737.

Bulletproof Heart. Anthony LaPaglia falls for a dangerous Mimi Rogers. Who can blame him? Rated R. Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600.

Judge Dredd. Based on the popular comic book series, Sylvester Stallone's new movie features the weirdest supporting cast in recent memory: Armand Assante, Max von Sydow, Jurgen Prochnow, and ... Rob Schneider. Rated R. Carolina, 933-8464.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers. The low-budget TV sensation is now a low-budget movie sensation. Rated PG. Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600.

The Postman. Michael Radford's film features Philippe Noiret as poet Pablo Neruda, bringing love to a hapless postman Cyrano-style. Not rated. Varsity, 967-8665.

NOW PLAYING

Amateur. Rated R. Grade: A (DK) Chelsea, 968-3005. Ends today.

Batman Forever. The third in this profitable series is definitely better than the second and comes close to equalling the extraordinary first film. Joel Schumacher keeps Tim Burton's dark aspects intact but isn't afraid to let the characters interact in the daylight. With Val Kilmer, Tommy Lee Jones, and Jim Carrey. Rated PG-13. Grade: A- (DH) Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600.

Braveheart. The fate of the latest movie

to bring the fun and excitement of kilts and clubbing to the United States rests solely on the shoulders of Mel Gibson, who directs and stars. Incredible and unnecessary carnage and over-length mar slightly what is, otherwise, a good movie. Rated R. Grade: B (BS) Ram Triple, 967-8284.

The Bridges of Madison County. The best film to hit theatres since "Driving Miss Daisy." Clint Eastwood and Meryl Streep leave behind the cheesy love of the novel and transform it into a believable and desirable whirlwind of romance. Rated PG-13. Grade: A (DH) Carolina, 933-8464. Today at the Carolina, 933-8464. Moves Friday to the Chelsea, 968-3005.

Burnt by the Sun. Nikita Mikhailkov, who directs and stars with his luminous daughter, Nadia, has fashioned a miraculous tragicomedy about the emptiness of political terror: how, finally, every death is no more than a useless waste of love. Not rated. Grade: A (DK) Chelsea, 968-3005. Ends today.

Casper. Casper is a top-notch animated ghost, from the creators of "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" and "Jurassic Park"; in fact, he's a lot more credible than his human co-stars, Bill Pullman and Christina Ricci. Stinkie, Fatso, and Stretch, Casper's uncles, provide the only real spark to the film. Rated PG. Grade: C (DH) Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600.

Congo. Frank Marshall's adaptation of Michael Crichton's novel has few remarkable human performances and relies heavily on special effects and animated features. Stan Winston's animatronic gorillas are the most interesting aspect of this mediocre film. Rated PG-13. Grade: B- (DH) Plaza, 967-4737.

Crimson Tide. It may amount to nothing more than good pop drama, but thanks to the strength of its acting (especially Denzel Washington and Gene Hackman) and direction (by Tony Scott), it's a riveting ride. Watch for eleventh-hour screenplay doctor Quentin Tarantino's painfully obvious additions. Rated R. Grade: B+ (BS) Ram Triple, 967-8284.

Crumb. Rated R. Chelsea, 968-3005.

Die Hard With a Vengeance. Some of the best action sequences on the silver screen this year, and a great performance by Samuel L. Jackson as Bruce Willis' sidekick, drive the third "Die Hard" movie. But better action films have to be on the way. Rated R. Grade: B (DH) Ram Triple, 967-8284.

The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain. Hugh Grant is full of charm and cute smirks but that's

about it. This romantic comedy, about an English map maker in a Welsh town, is cute, but tries too obviously to achieve that effect. Rated PG. Grade: C+ (DH) Today at the Chelsea, 968-3005; moves Friday to Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8666.

Forget Paris. If you're in the mood for a good romantic comedy, you may want to look elsewhere because this one is about as unromantic as they come. Grade: C (NQ) Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600.

French Kiss. Meg Ryan and Kevin Kline are just so darned attractive that you fall for each of them as they fall for each other. This film is really enjoyable and doesn't demand anything of you. Rated PG-13. Grade: B (DM) Plaza, 967-4737. Ends today.

The Little Princess. This version of Francis Hodgson Burnett's tear-stained children's classic is less about how imagination can deal with real hardships than about how envious tyrants, who aren't in touch with their feelings, try to oppress the smart and spunky. Rated G. Grade: B- (MD) Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600. Ends today.

Mad Love. Chris O'Donnell and Drew Barrymore are lovers on the run. Not the kind who commit bank robberies, though; the kind who call and check in at home to say they're okay. Rated PG-13. Grade: C- (WG) Movies at Timberlyne, 933-8600. Ends today.

Picture Bride. Winner of the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival, this film tells the story of a 16-year-old Japanese girl who comes to Hawaii in 1918. Not rated. Varsity, 967-8665.

Pocahontas. Rated G. Grade: C (MD) Plaza, 967-4737.

The Underneath. Steven Soderbergh tries his hand at film noir. The result is stylish and well-acted, but a pathetic script stops Soderbergh and star Peter Gallagher in their tracks. Hopefully, Soderbergh will learn from his mistakes. Rated R. Grade: B- (DK) Varsity, 967-8665. Ends today.

While You Were Sleeping. The only unorthodox thing about this movie is that it doesn't star Meg Ryan. After Lucy (Sandra Bullock) gets mistaken for the fiancée of a comatose businessman (Peter Gallagher), she falls in love with his brother (Bill Pullman), and various predictable plot twists ensue. Don't look for any surprises. Rated PG. Grade: B- (JT) Plaza, 967-4737. Ends today.

Reviews by Marya DeVoto, Wendy Goodman, Dean Hair, Daniel Kois, Daniel Mardman, Nicole Quinelle, Brent Simon, Jay Taylor

THURSDAY, JUNE 29

DOUBTING THOMAS at the Cave. 968-9308.
CHRIS KNOW WITH LIDA HUSIK AND PORTSTATIC AND TAMMY AND THE AMPS at the Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
GLORY JOURNAL AND THE ALL MIGHTY SENATORS at Local 506. 942-5506.

FRIDAY, JUNE 30

GLORY JOURNAL at the Cave. 968-9308.
50 PACES at the Lizard and Snake. 929-2828.
THE GRAPES at the Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
YOKE AND SECTION 8 at Local 506. 942-5506.
QUEENSRYCHE WITH TYPE O' NEGATIVE

SATURDAY, JULY 1

ADLI PLATE at Ninth Street Bakery. 286-0303.
THE BAD DOG BLUES BAND at the Cave. 968-9308.
SAFEHOUSE AND THE SUB-SONICS at Local 506. 942-5506.

SUNDAY, JULY 2

CAPSIZING WITH CHUNE at the Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
SYRUP WITH SPECIAL GUEST at Local 506. 942-5506.
NORBERT'S BIRTHDAY PARTY FEATURING

LA PAN DOWDIES at the Cave. 968-9308.

MONDAY, JULY 3

DAVE'S MOVIE NIGHT WITH A BAND at Local 506. 942-5506.
GRANDSONS OF THE PIONEERS at the Cave. 968-9308.

TUESDAY, JULY 4

THE CAVE will be closed.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5

TRADITIONAL MUSIC JAM WITH STU COLE at the Cave. 968-9308.

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