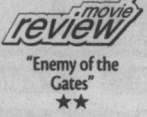


# Melodramatic 'Enemy at the Gates' Tanks Black Media: Looks All Light to Me

By PAUL DALLAS  
Staff Writer

Hollywood tends to imagine the World War II as a two-sided battle between the Western Allies and the Germans. "Enemy at the Gates," the new film by Jean-Jacques Annaud ("Seven Years in Tibet"), is the latest addition to Hollywood's revival of the WWII movie. It offers an entirely foreign perspective for American audiences: the "good guys" are the Soviets.



Set during the epic siege of Stalingrad, the film tells the true story of Vasily Zaitsev (Jude Law), who rose to fame as a sniper in the Soviet army. Like the much-lauded Normandy invasion scene in "Saving Private Ryan," "Enemy at the Gates" begins with a harrowing scene of unprepared soldiers thrown into the heart of battle. And Annaud characterizes the Red Army as particularly brutal. After an attack on a German posi-

tion ends in devastation for the Soviets, Vasily survives amid a sea of corpses. By chance, he meets Danilov (Joseph Fiennes, "Shakespeare in Love"), a political officer whose job it is to print material to boost morale.

When Vasily takes out five Nazis with five bullets, Danilov uses propaganda to transfer the young soldier to the sniper division and turn him into a national hero.

The detailed re-creation of the bombed-out city of Stalingrad is one of the highlights of the film. Filled with abandoned department stores and giant factories, it's a powerful metaphor for the costs of violence.

It also serves as a brilliant set for the intricate game of cat and mouse that develops between Vasily and Major Konig (Ed Harris), the Nazi sniper brought in to destroy him.

As Vasily, Jude Law proves himself to be a charismatic and subtle actor. Next to Joseph Fiennes' endless posing, Law's performance seems effortless.

Bob Hoskins is cartoonish as the ruthless Khrushchev who demands that Danilov exploit Vasily for all he's worth. Ed Harris is effective as the steely Konig,

but his American accent is sorely misplaced.

The film's greatest shortcoming, however, is its heavy-handed script, which succumbs to noxious romanticizing and endless clichés. It simplifies the moral conflicts of war and fails to give any of the characters significant depth.

The story offers the requisite romantic triangle as both Vasily and Danilov fall for the beautiful Tanya, a university-educated militia fighter. She can read Goethe and fire a rifle!

But the real distraction is not all the bombing or gunfire: It's James Horner's unbearably melodramatic score, which threatens to destroy any emotional impact the film might have.

"Enemy at the Gates" is commendable in its attempts to illustrate the devastation suffered by the Soviet Union during the war. While it is rare for big-budget American war films to humanize the Soviets, "Enemy at the Gates" fails to make them more than recognizable Hollywood types.

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

Once upon a time, I was in love with The Box, and all was right in the world.

(For the uninitiated, The Box was "music television you control" - a channel that played music videos all day, every day. It was divine.)



Every day after school, I would bond with The Box, soaking in the latest from Tribe, De La Soul, Snoop, Salt 'N' Pepa, Das EFX and others.

Then one day The Box went away and took my love for music videos with it. Sure, I'd catch Rap City now and again, but it wasn't the same.

But last week, while running a 100-degree fever, I decided that my suffering needed a soundtrack and reached for the remote instead of a CD. I promptly found new reasons to continue my video prohibition.

I spent the better part of two days flipping between BET and MTV. Hours passed, yet I was sure I'd only seen three videos. Was my fever driving me mad?

Unfortunately, no. The reality is that 99.2 percent of the rap and R&B videos currently in rotation simply suck. Where creativity once ruled, complacent conformity now thrives. Every artist wants to be jigy and every director wants to be Hype Williams.

Disgusted, I hit the mute button. But then, things got real interesting. I watched BET for an hour with no sound and my head is still spinning.

It wasn't the abundance of bling bling, do rags, Hummers and trite dance steps. No, it was the women that got me! And it wasn't the objectification of the women, either. (Sadly, that's about as surprising as a Duke star sitting the bench in the NBA).

The women didn't stand out because of what they were (or weren't) wearing but because of what they represented.

It was their complexion that got to me. I watched more than 50 videos and saw a color spectrum slimmer than the chance of a Bobby Brown comeback.

Take Snoop's "What's My Name Part II" video, for example. Remove his flow and the catchy hook and just focus on the visual message.

Amid the bevy of beauties gyrating for the camera the only true differ-

ences are the colors of their halter tops and bikinis. Otherwise, they are essentially the same girl - long, straight hair; hazel or green eyes; Barbie-doll body. And, of course, a skin tone that is "light-bright-damn-near-white."

"The darker the berry the sweeter the juice," my grandmother would say. "But if it gets too dark, then what's the use?" she added.

I always laughed at that aside, secure in the belief that colorism was dying out. But my BET session showed me that, like racism, it has simply taken on slightly more subtle forms.

Here we are in a new millennium and Eurocentric, exoticized images of blackness are still being enshrined as though it were 1901. Only now, the media is global and the culprits are new.

White music executives account for but a small part of the continued malaise of the black female image. After all, they're in the music business, and culture is only as valuable as the number of units it can push.

There are too many black A&Rs, directors (male and female), producers and executives in the game for the buck to be passed.

More than any point in the past, black people control black entertainment. But for some reason, the brass ring has yet to be grasped. For some reason, black girls with wide lips and hips still don't see themselves in videos, movies and magazines. For some reason, a woman with an afro or dressed Afrocentrically still must be "making a statement" instead of simply enjoying her natural beauty. And for some reason, \$40 million worth of skin-lightening products were sold in this country in 1990, according to Kathy Russell's "The Color Complex."

Sound and sight melded almost 20 years ago, and the ability to shape images of blackness came along with it. However, almost inexplicably, that power has been largely ignored.

And, still, the only black that matters in music videos is the bottom line.

I'd love to go into more detail, but,

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- 1. Tortoise** - Standards (Thrill Jockey)
- 2. Drums & Tuba** - Vinyl Killer (Righteous Babe)
- 3. Grupo Exploracion** - Drum Jam (Bembe)
- 4. Lee Scratch Perry** - Born in the Sky (Motion)
- 5. Various Artists** - Traditional Fiddle Music of the Ozarks, Vols. 2 & 3 (Rounder)
- 6. 2nd Gen** - "and/or" 12-inch (Novamute)
- 7. Daisuke Tobari** - Till the End of the Dream (Poon Village)
- 8. Sorry About Dresden** - How the Cold War Began EP (Moment Before Impact)
- 9. Compay Segundo** - Las Flores de la Vida (Noneseuch)
- 10. Greyboy** - Greyboy (+Nicola Conte Remix) 10-inch (Ubiquity)

## MONTREAL

From Page 5

Break we must have seen a garish Catholic church. On our way to skiing at Mont Saint Anne, we stumbled into the

## MOSCOW

From Page 5

Oh God. I liked the ballet. In the intermission after the first act, we discovered that our seats in the nosebleed section were only temporary. Our real seats were right on the main level, with a great view of the stage. If I turned around I could see the whole magnificent theater behind me, with its elegant gold-painted balconies, and a huge gilded representation of the Soviet hammer

largest church I have ever seen, Sainte Anne de Beaupre. Ironically enough, the church contains the tomb of Father Alfred Pampalon, who was renowned for his ability to help those with drug and alcohol dependencies. So as my peers frolicked on sunny

and sickle above the main entrance.

As the lights went down for the second act I didn't even try to deny it anymore - this was cool. The dancers' form and grace was amazing. Their physical strength was impressive to say the least. The huge leaps, bounds and spins were just awe-inspiring. It was like an action movie in women's underwear - a very weird, but really good action movie.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the ballet was that it had a plot. These dancers were telling a complicated story, but without words.

beaches inundated by sex and drugs under the watchful eye of Jerry Springer, I found myself under the watchful eye of the patron saint of alcoholics while shivering in the bitter cold. Maybe MTV was right after all.

Trafton Drew

Duh, Brian, that's what ballet is.

I know, but it really was something to see it and understand the storyline just from the dancers' movements. The uncultured American that I am, I had no idea that dance could be so expressive and convey so much. But there the dancers were, expressing and conveying away, and it was great - and very Russian.

While I didn't wake up on some beach in Daytona the next morning naked in a pool of my own vomit, I'd have to say the Bolshoi was one of my all-time greatest Spring Break experiences. I managed to hold on to a few brain cells, learn a lot, get some culture and see some of the best ballet in the world.

Just don't tell my friends, OK?

Brian Bedsworth



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- **Stephen Malkmus**, Tuesday at Cat's Cradle. Ex-Pavement darling goes solo, preceded by local rising rock stars Kingsbury Manx. 969-9053.
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## Deadline Extended! DTH Editor

The Daily Tar Heel is seeking students to serve on the panel that will choose the editor of the DTH for the 2001-2002 school year.

Applications for the seven at-large positions on the DTH Editor Selection Board are available at the DTH Office, and the Carolina Union info desk kiosk.

Applicants must be available for an orientation meeting from 5-6pm Thursday, March 29 and from approximately 8:30am-4pm Saturday, March 31 to conduct interviews and make the selection.

All students may apply for at-large positions except current DTH news staff members. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Matt Dees (962-4086, [mbdees@email.unc.edu](mailto:mbdees@email.unc.edu)) or Janet Gallagher-Cassel (962-0520, [jgcassel@email.unc.edu](mailto:jgcassel@email.unc.edu)).

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  - 12 TH KRS-ONE\*\* (\$18)
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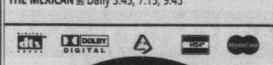
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