

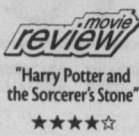
# 'Harry Potter' Enchants Fans, Critics Alike

By **BRIAN MILLIKIN**  
Staff Writer

It's easy to hate "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." It'd be convenient to dislike the literary phenomenon that's now become a movie giant. The bubble needs popping.

But you just can't bring yourself to do it — Harry's first movie is great. It's enchanting and as imaginative and entertaining as any movie this year. Readers and nonreaders alike would be hard-pressed to find much wrong with the film.

After being orphaned as a baby, pre-adolescent Harry Potter (newcomer Daniel Radcliffe) sleeps in a cupboard under the stairs of his adoptive parents' present-day home. Invitations for



★★★★☆

Harry begin to arrive from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. It's only then that Harry becomes aware of his magical lineage and blessed destiny.

Much has been made of Radcliffe's supposedly stilted acting (where's Haley Joel Osmen when you need him?), but he's perfectly fine as the bespectacled boy wizard.

Maybe he ooh's and ah's a bit too much, but that's director Chris Columbus' fault. He's a Spielberg clone, but up until now he hasn't lived up to his teacher's good name.

If anything, Radcliffe's performance suffers only in comparison to those of Harry's two wizard-in-training friends, Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson). Grint is funny as the hapless Ron, and Watson steals most of her scenes as know-it-all Hermione.

The film's brilliant stroke is its adult casting; the wise and weird faculty of

Hogwarts is filled with British acting greats like Maggie Smith and Richard Harris.

Alan Rickman sneers memorably as Professor Snape, and Robbie Coltrane is a standout as gentle giant gamekeeper Hagrid. The weight they add to the film cannot be measured.

But the real stars, however lauded the cast, are the sets. Hogwarts is fantastically realized, from its floating candles to moving staircases. A scene of Quidditch — a high-wire sport played on broomsticks — is exciting and complex without seeming fake. The details poured into each scene in the film, from floorboards to bookshelves, fill out the movie.

It's a funny film, too, but not as clever as the book. Little of J.K. Rowling's book has been excised for the film, but the greatest loss in transition was the constant wit of Rowling's writing.

Therein lies Columbus' only misstep:

He didn't cut anything out. Even though every plot development feels proper within the film, a 2 1/2 hour children's film about wonder seems less wondrous with every passing hour.

It's too long, and what's worse, it feels long. That's the unfortunate burden of movies based on books, and all the special effects in the world won't make you check your watch any less.

Overlong or not, "Harry Potter" is spellbinding. Anti-Potterheads might try to deny it, and anything as successful as this movie always faces a requisite backlash — most of the time deservedly.

But "Harry Potter" beats the odds, and will probably continue to do so every Thanksgiving for the next six years — which will probably piss people off even more.

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# IMAX Theater Features Thrilling Productions

Moviegoers can see "The Greatest Places" and "The Mysteries of Egypt" at the downtown Raleigh venue.

By **SARAH KUCHARSKI**  
AND **GRAHAM PARKER**  
Staff Writers

Slowly but surely downtown Raleigh is turning into something of which to be proud. With the addition of the IMAX theater at Exploris, the area has made a tremendous step toward economic and aesthetic rejuvenation.



★★★★☆

★★★★☆

But while the facilities might exist, their ultimate success boils down to the quality of their product. Luckily the IMAX theater's films, "The Greatest Places" and "The Mysteries of Egypt," stand strong as educational and exciting productions fit for the student, teacher and casual moviegoer alike.

A breathtaking journey to the world's most foreboding and exotic locations, "The Greatest Places" showcases IMAX technology at its best. Gigantic iguanas, imposing glaciers and Buddhist monks span the 55-foot screen, presenting a truly larger-than-life view of Mother Earth and her inhabitants.

While the film does indeed educate, it seems more like an interactive safari than another meet-the-animals-type production from the local television station.

Colorful, venomous caterpillars and baby elephants appeal to younger audiences, while jaw-dropping views of the Amazon River and the Himalayas start older minds thinking of their next vacation destination.

But don't be fooled. "The Greatest Places" has its share of creepy spiders

and stampeding hippopotamuses. Eerie Tibetan ritual music and the thunderous rush of the Iguazu Falls also make the film a bit of a hazard for the weak at heart.

If country-hopping isn't your thing, Exploris offers a look into the past with "Mysteries of Egypt."

Filed by the National Geographic Society, the "Mysteries of Egypt" is a tidy look at some 4,000 years of Egyptian history, narrated by Omar Sharif ("Lawrence of Arabia").

A native Egyptian, Sharif regales his co-host Kate Maberly ("The Secret Garden") with stories from the lives of ancient Egyptians, starting with the earliest human settlements on the Nile River and ending with the mysterious downfall of the world's longest existing civilization.

The dialogue between Sharif and Maberly is a bit forced, and scenes showing the two visiting Egypt's various landmarks are posed and unnatural. And the history of Egypt is far too extensive to be covered in a 45-minute film.

But casual observers will not notice these shortcomings.

They'll be too busy gawking.

Dazzling aerial shots of the Nile Valley yield to eerie twilight views of ruined temples on the riverbank. And landmarks like the pyramids and the temple of Abu Simpel are appropriately massive, forcing viewers to crane their necks to see the gargantuan monuments in their entirety.

The film's IMAX format presents the viewer with extraordinary images that ordinary movies simply cannot produce.

The airborne camera work is stunning, and shots of tomb artifacts and treasures render every intricate detail with astonishing clarity.

"Mysteries of Egypt" might be little more than eye candy, but the eye-popping images almost make up for the lack of a decent script. If the film was a two-hour long documentary instead, it would be perfect.

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## EMPLOYEE

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"I understand that with some creative bookkeeping it can be done, but it's not as easy as it sounds," Estroff said. "It will take some financial gymnastics." Elfland said her department can avoid cutting back services by consolidating administrative and management positions because no physical labor positions will be eliminated.

## POTTER

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year when I heard it was coming out," said Chapel Hill's Mason Cordell, who was standing in line with his father.

But children weren't the only people excited about "Harry Potter."

Bonnie Bunn, a visitor from New York, was first in line at the Lumina Theatre on Sunday, bringing along a wizard hat and wand. "We've never been this excited about going to a movie ever," Bunn said. "We've never dressed up for a movie before."

Ruth Moose, a creative writing professor at UNC who uses Harry Potter in her classes, said the movie provides families with an opportunity to come together.

"It does appeal to all ages, and it's good for kids to be able to share that language with their parents," Moose said.

More than two months after the ter-

rorist attacks, many people in Chapel Hill said it is time for people to put aside grief and return to normal activities.

"People have to move on with their lives — you can't dwell on things like that," said Betty Beane of Chapel Hill. "Harry Potter" is a good distraction.

But some, like Alice Smith of Chapel Hill, said "Harry Potter" is more than a distraction from terrible events. "The books teach children wonderful things like how to recognize prejudice and the goodness of tolerance and acceptance," Smith said.

Smith also said "Harry Potter" could help people get back to normal after September's incidents. "There's something magical about Harry Potter, and that's important in the healing process," Smith said. "People just can't go on being sad like they are."

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Runberg said his department also has been able to absorb the cuts without hindering its work as a whole. But he warned that any further budget reductions might be too difficult to accommodate. "We're being cut to the bone," he said.

"It's going to be very difficult to take any additional cuts without hurting the quality of our work."

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# 2 Senate Buildings Set to Reopen Today

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Two of the Senate office buildings closed for anthrax testing are set to reopen for business, but a third building will remain shut, officials said Sunday.

Lt. Dan Nichols of the Capitol Police said the Dirksen and Russell buildings would reopen at 8 a.m. Monday. The Hart Senate Office Building, shut last month when an anthrax-tainted letter was found in the office of Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., will remain closed.

The Dirksen and Russell buildings were closed Saturday after a letter mailed to Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., similar to the one sent to Daschle, was discovered in the 280 barrels of mail quarantined after the contaminated Daschle letter was opened.

Nichols said the letter to Leahy was being analyzed at the Army's Fort Detrick in Maryland. Test results are not expected for several days, he said.

It was unclear whether the letter addressed to Leahy ever reached his office, said the senator's chief of staff,

Luke Albee.

The envelopes addressed to Daschle and Leahy were similar, except for the name and address. They had block printing with a slight slant to the right; an Oct. 9 postmark from Trenton, N.J., and the same, nonexistent school listed as the return address.

The FBI said all congressional mail set aside after discovery of the Daschle letter has been inspected, and the Leahy letter was the only suspicious piece.

No congressional staff member or lawmaker has contracted anthrax, and business for the most part has returned to normal on Capitol Hill despite the introduction of National Guard troops this weekend to help overburdened Capitol Police officers.

Four people have died from anthrax: two Washington postal workers, a hospital worker in New York and a photo editor in Florida.

Leahy's spokesman, David Carle, said his office decided on its own Oct. 12 to set aside all unopened mail after an anthrax-contaminated letter was sent to NBC News anchor Tom Brokaw.

## SANGAM

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segment, dancers had paired up with their cross-cultural counterparts.

"(Sangam Nite) is a chance to share our own background or share other South Asian backgrounds with an audience," said cultural Co-chairwoman Smriti Bhotika.

Freshman Jonathan Hilliard was one audience member who said he was unfamiliar with South Asian culture. "I was expecting a good performance, but I was actually surprised," Hilliard said. "It was really interesting."

Hilliard said his favorite act was Bhangra Elite, which performed in a style common in the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. The group's mix of folk music, dance and acrobatics elicited loud cheers from the audience.

Sangam had only two months to prepare for this year's Sangam Nite because it was held in the fall. In the past, Sangam Nites have always been held in the spring, but renovation of Memorial Hall planned for the spring forced the group to reschedule.

Tariq said she was proud of the group for putting on the best show in its history. "I've never worked with such a dedicated group of students before."

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## ANTHRAX

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facilities in Washington, D.C., and New Jersey.

The study is being done to determine how far anthrax might have spread from main facilities in Washington and New Jersey. "This is purely an environmental issue, not a health issue," she said.


Despite reassurances from health officials and management, some workers say they still feel threatened.

"All along we knew we were at risk, but they promised us that they would close the facilities down (if they found anthrax), which they did not do," Hill said.

Julio Colon, another worker at the facility, said he thinks the post office officials are dealing with the current situation poorly. He emphasized that the post office will not pay for employees to be tested for anthrax.

"They did not give us the opportunity to be tested," he said. "We are going to the union to get a petition to close the building."

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