

# Crowe 'Master' of historic sprawl

BY GARRETT MANIS  
STAFF WRITER

Director Peter Weir's résumé — which includes "Dead Poets Society" and "The Truman Show" — doesn't preclude crafting an adventure on the high seas.

Teamed with the able Russell Crowe as Captain Jack Aubrey and Paul Bettany as Dr. Stephen Maturin, Weir's "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" shows competence at handling capable actors and life on a 19th-century naval ship.

But the film slips on its plot and the action scenes that were advertised so heavily.

Set in the waters surrounding South America during the Napoleonic wars, Aubrey has orders to capture or destroy the French warship Acheron with his massive frigate, the HMS Surprise. Disappointingly, the film does not guide us through a tight and suspenseful cat and mouse chase between the French and the British like the ever-popular "Das Boot" or "Run Silent, Run Deep."

Of course, "Master and Commander" is not a submarine movie, but the French ship never serves as a haunting presence to spike suspense as enemies do in those submarine movies.

The first scene of "Master and Commander" is the film's most exciting, bracing the viewer for nonstop action. After those first 15 minutes, however, suspense is

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
"MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD"  
★★★★

absent from the rest of the film. The action also is pretty sparse for 140 minutes of reel time.

Despite being a meek excuse for the genre, the film does a superb job of rendering an accurate picture of sailing on a British ship in the early 1800s.

Awful food, uncomfortable quarters, poor medical relief, constant creaking, storms, discipline, filth and even enlisted children all help paint a colorful portrait of ship life.

The portrayal of the ship's day-to-day operations is not only a directorial feat for Weir, but also in a sense — a fascinating tour of local color.

Crowe delivers a fine performance as a great leader sometimes conflicted with pride. His ponderous gaze and low, deep voice (and we can't forget that Aussie accent) do wonders for a British sea captain. He even has long flowing hair going on for the ladies.

But it's all for naught as the absence of a love story might deter otherwise enthusiastic female viewers.

Bettany (also Crowe's co-star in "A Beautiful Mind") complements Aubrey beautifully as his best friend and best critic.



Australian heartthrob Russell Crowe takes to the high seas as Captain Jack Aubrey in "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World."

His passion as a naturalist leaves him with a scientific frame of mind that does not always agree with Aubrey's running of the ship, but his philosophies are ultimately quite useful in the "survival of the fittest" setting of maritime warfare.

Weir's directing is top-notch, revealing captivating visuals of the sea, impeccable details of the ship, the tensions of Aubrey and Maturin's friendship and realistic sea battles (the few that there are).

The film's ending is a bit con-

fusing. There is some ambiguity as to whether victory really is achieved. Though the movie might be shooting for a theme of "the fight is never over," it's unclear as to what's going on.

Whether you should see "Master and Commander" depends on your affinity for acting and directing.

If you're all about plot and action, you might want to sit this one out.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

**DIVER RECOMMENDS**

"The Simpsons" The recent episodes supply mystery and wonder.

How could something that symbolized everything that was pure and holy turn into utter crap?

The episodes are a healthy dose of redundancy, taking the same stupid jokes and repeating them like they were funny to begin with.

Sometimes this show provides entertainment, in bizarre world.

**Public Enemy, Yo! Bum Rush the Show** This 1987 LP makes politicians wet their pants, Dead Prez sound like they're basket weavers and anyone look cool — even P. Diddy. Look at any interview by your favorite rapper, and most likely he mentioned this album.

Unless you like "bling-blingers" like Ja Rule — in which case you most likely can't read.

If you ever feel weak or diminutive, then you should pop in this radical and empowering LP. A warning — it is not safe to quote Chuck D or Flavor Flav in public. People will point and laugh at you.

**"Memento"** In this psychological thriller, Guy Pearce — the Count of Morderc himself — plays Leonard Shelby. His character has intense short-term memory loss and is out to find his wife's murderer.

The story is told out of sequence, starting at the end and ending in the middle. This mental roller coaster probably will annoy you to the point of convulsions, but you will definitely be smarter at the end — or more prone to have a seizure.

LL Cool J, "And the Winner is

..." The legendary and long-lived rapper's children book supplies important messages about humility and sportsmanship. It is much more important to note, however, that this is the same rapper who performed "Doin' It." I guess the children will receive sex education as well as an unassuming nature.

**Flogging Molly, Swagger** The band's major-label CD combines drunk Celtic instrumentals with a dash of punk music that will make people want to wear a kilt and a Mohawk.

For the 13-year-old female readers, Blink 182 isn't punk — you can only have the cover of Teen People so many times before it should be obvious, so don't get confused.

At a real punk rock show, I witnessed two members from the octet pass out from a ungodly amount of alcohol consumption.

Not only did Flogging Molly keep playing, but they still put on a knockout performance and drank like they were trying to catch up with their two friends.

Contact Tanner Slayden at [slayden@email.unc.edu](mailto:slayden@email.unc.edu).

**STAR SYSTEM**

- ★ POOR
- ★★ FAIR
- ★★★ GOOD
- ★★★★ EXCELLENT
- ★★★★★ CLASSIC

# Broadcast rolls with transatlantic trance rock

BY BRANDON WHITESIDE  
STAFF WRITER

It seems nowadays that for every four guys and a dame, there's a keyboard-drenched, experimental ambience band fronted by a quirky-but-cutesy chick with retro style and the voice of a siren.

If you haven't yet guessed, yeah, this description applies to Broadcast, a quintet of English rockers whose across-the-pond tour brought them to the fair burgh of Chapel Hill on Sunday.

Perhaps this oversimplified, if not jaded, categorization of Broadcast implies that you, the concertgoer, should have known what sound to expect from the

**CONCERT REVIEW**

**BROADCAST**  
**CAT'S CRADLE**  
**SUNDAY, NOV. 16**  
★★★★

group's show — maybe.

But does this mean you wouldn't have been impressed? Not at all.

During the past eight years, the group has refined an atmosphere that hypnotizes without the tedium of overambient indistinctness. Its performance gave a lot to take in other than hallucinogens.

Take your pick of components to isolate and analyze.

The drummer served as an

enduring focus of interest from the get-go. He was a divergence from convention, his repertoire of beats varying from light shuffles to tumultuous impacts resonating in the venue's wooden skeleton.

Ironically — and perhaps artistically — juxtaposed were singer Trish Keenan's temperate vocals that often transcended words into unrestrained melody.

Meanwhile, the bassist's fingertips jumped the range of notes on his instrument's neck and the keyboardist and guitarist channeled an overarching ambient medium of distorted treble.

As if Broadcast's sound weren't already swimming in atmosphere,

video images painted the stage from the eye of a projector.

Images such as a transit down a bloodstream accompanied the performance, cast upon the stern faces of the musicians.

If the show seemed over before it began, that's because Broadcast left the stage at 11:30 p.m. Its 30-minute encore was much appreciated, because these guys are a lot to digest in one sitting.

If you aren't yet impressed, make sure to give them a second listen. Their sound warrants at least that much.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

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