

Arts and Features

Indiana Jones takes the sequel too far

It's going to be a blockbuster of a summer as far as Hollywood is concerned. And sequels will be leading the pack.

"Lethal Weapon II," "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier," "Back to the Future II," "Ghostbusters II," even "Friday the Thirteenth Part VII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (I swear I am not making this up.)

The season of sequels got off to a rousing start on May 25 with the release of one of the most anticipated films of the summer: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade."

Director Steven Spielberg and producer George Lucas, the team behind the original "Raiders of the Lost Ark" and its sequel, "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," return for the third (and probably final) chapter in the life of the intrepid archaeologist Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford).

In one of the better casting coups in recent years, Ford is paired with Sean Connery, who plays his father, Dr. Henry Jones, Sr.

Ford and Connery play off of each other brilliantly and provide much of the film's humor. For the elder Jones to refer to his daring, adventurous son as "Junior" is hilarious.

John Bland Cinema

"Last Crusade" is an attempt to return to the successful elements of "Raiders": there is a quest for a Biblical object, this time the sacred Holy Grail; the setting is the Middle East, and once again, Nazis provide the main villainy.

Unfortunately, "Last Crusade" is merely a re-creation of the first film. The reason "Raiders" was so successful was because it took elements from old movies of the 1930s, added some spectacular special effects and great stunts and came up with a completely original concept. "Last Crusade" fails to provide any new or exciting twists and turns and only winds up frustrating the viewer as, in attempts to be original, the movie pushes at the limits of imaginative logic.

The beginning of the film is very promising. Set in Utah in 1912, it shows us a teen-age Indiana Jones, Boy Scout extraordinaire (River Phoenix, doing an exceptional Harrison Ford imitation), stealing the legendary Cross of Coronado from a

band of grave robbers. This segment introduces us to the origins of some of Indy's trademarks: his fedora, his bullwhip, his aversion to snakes and most importantly, his stubborn will. The opening is clearly the best part of the movie.

From there we are transported to 1938, and Indiana is hired by American industrialist Walter Donovan (Julian Glover) to continue the work started by the elder Jones, a Grail scholar, on the quest for the Holy Grail. Indy accepts, ostensibly, only to find his father — who has mysteriously disappeared — but winds up getting more involved in the quest that he had hoped.

The first movie had snakes, the second had bugs and the third one has rats. Lots of rats. If you liked "Ben" or "Willard," you're going to love this one.

The audience is taken to Venice, Austria, Berlin and the fictional Republic of Hatay, where we are joined once again by Indy's sidekick Sallah (John Rhys-Davies). Along the way we find out that several characters are not who they seem, and that finding the Grail is going to be a race between the Nazis and the Joneses.

Despite the combined charm of Ford and Connery, the rest of the characters are either too stereotypical or too shallow. Most disappointing is the sole woman character, an Austrian double-agent scientist (played by the delectable Alison Doody). Neither sequel has been able to live up to the promising portaroyal of the tough-but-romantic barkeeper

played by Karen Allen in "Raiders." The second film offered us Kate Capshaw as a screaming bimbo, and Doody does the best she can with the little character she has, giving us only lame facial expressions to show us she's really not as bad as she seems.

Humor abounds in this film. One segment, with the Joneses trying to escape from a burning Nazi castle, has many sight gags and is probably the funniest scene in the movie. Of all the sight gags (and there are a lot), about 75 percent of them work.

Unfortunately, Spielberg's comic timing is about a half-second slow, so gags that should be quick and hilarious become slow smilers. As with his sole attempt at comedy, "1941," Spielberg shows us that while his sense of humor has improved, it still needs work.

If there's one thing in this movie that works, it's the action element. As far as chases go, this flick's got it all: horse, train, foot, boat, motor-

cycle, automobile, airplane, even blimp and tank. The tank chase is the most successful, original and exciting.

The ending is to be faulted as well. Once again, Spielberg has given us a nice, tidy ending. Unfortunately, he takes this one too far. The audience is left thinking, "This is ridiculous."

As with last year's bomb, "Willow," Lucas has thrown money at special effects when he should have thrown it at a better story. But since he takes co-story credit (with Dutch screenwriter Menno Meyjes), as he did with "Willow," he is to be faulted as well.

"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" is by no means a bad film, and it's encouraging to see the effort put into it. The special effects are spectacular as usual, but seem experimental at times. See this movie, if only to see the pairing of Ford and Connery. But for real action go out and rent "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

We're back — and begging once again

Now, we don't like to beg. Usually.

But let me relate to you a little story: Once upon a time, way back in 1884, a bunch of damn-fool UNC journalism students got together and decided they were going to start a little newspaper-type thing. They decided to call it The Tar Heel and it was going to run once a week or until they all got kicked out.

Well, I think you know the rest of the story. They all did get kicked out, and it wasn't until 1893 that it really got going. And it's been going strong ever since, unless you listen to what conservative readers have to say.

But as I said before, we don't like to beg. We don't. So please, make it easy on us.

Write for The Tar Heel this summer. Anybody is welcome, regardless of race, color, creed, political

beliefs or looks. Just give us a call at 962-0245 or come by the DTH offices in the Student Union. Ask for Dave Glenn, the Head Honcho, or his overworked assistants, Sarah Cagle or John Bland.

And don't worry about this taking up too much of your time. This rag only comes out once a week in the summer, so an hour a day, three days a week is probably the most work you'll end up putting into a story.

As I said before, we don't like to beg. But we will if we have to.



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