



Nicholas Rowe plays the title role in "Young Sherlock Holmes," a film set in an English boys' school where a series of mysterious deaths occurs.



the movies

Dan Greenberg

Spielberg explores young Sherlock's exciting schooldays

"Young Sherlock Holmes" (PG-13) is a perfect blending of the spirit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the British theater and Steven Spielberg's cinema magic.

At open and close, a fond disclaimer announces that this film is an affectionate speculation regarding Sherlock Holmes' early years, about which Doyle did not write. That spirit, a rich British sense of theater, and Industrial Light and Magic's superior animation and special effects infuse "Young Sherlock Holmes," making it a very entertaining film.

London 1870, just before Christmas, and a new boy, John H. Watson (Alan Cox), enters a posh English school. His ill-stated goal: to become a doctor. He is befriended by Sherlock Holmes (Nicholas Rowe), the school's leading intellect, best student, fine athlete and an extremely peculiar person.

Holmes impresses Watson with his deductive powers, and a fast friendship develops. Holmes has three other close relationships: Elizabeth (Sophie Ward), who lives at the school with her eccentric inventor-uncle, Cragwitch (Freddie Jones); the former headmaster, who has been allowed to live there in his retirement, and the school's fencing instructor, Ruthe (Anthony Higgins).

THE FILM opens with a mysterious hooded creature blowing Mr. Bobster (Patrick Newell). Bobster hallucinates after being hit by the drugged dart. In fact, his visions drive him to suicide, a fate that soon befalls others, including Elizabeth's uncle Cragwitch. Holmes, with Watson in tow, recognizes the uncanny similarities in these deaths but is unable to convince Sgt. Lestrade (Roger Ashton-Griffiths) of Scotland Yard.

The filmic representation of the poor suicide victims' hallucinations provides Industrial Light and Magic ample opportunity to demonstrate its skill when nonexistent fire, aggressive phantasms attacking restaurant patrons, and a host of decorative Victorian gargoyles come to life. These animated figures are always intriguing, usually violent and hostile, but never excessive as is the fashion these days. The attack of the French pastries is my favorite.

This admirable restraint in hallucinatory violence is matched by the violence level throughout. While there is plenty of it, the depiction is tense and suspenseful without becoming gross. To some extent this is a function of the film's time and place, Victorian London. Audiences tend to be less influenced by the impact of violence in faraway places.

In the main, however, the film uses violence for the sake of the story, not for its own sake. That makes a tremendous difference in its ultimate impact.

STEPHEN GOLDBLATT's cinematography effectively captures the mood and atmosphere of Victorian London. The dark and cool graveyard sequence, London at night and the hidden passages of the religious cult's temple are lit well enough to see but dark and misty enough to stimulate anxiety. In the school, as well as other daytime sequences, the slightly diffused, warm tones provide nostalgic evocation of the past.

The stimulation of the mind and eye to believe, visually, is complemented by the British theatrical style so evident in the acting. The cast uniformly possesses extensive English stage, film and television credits. The actors' experience and talent create credible, enjoyable images.

In particular, Rowe and Cox as Holmes and Watson build a fine, pleasant and touching relationship that becomes as enjoyable as their adventures. The audience comes to care for these people — they have dimension, and that adds immeasurably to the film experience.

So there you have it: excitement, special effects, sword fights, mysterious religious cults and three very personable young people whose intelligence, good looks and sense of duty engage our sensibilities. Good entertainment for all.



Alan Cox is John H. Watson, a new student at the school, who wants to become a doctor.

table talk

At Hogan's

Wild Game Autumn Fare, a seven-course gourmet game meal, is being planned by Chef Tom McGlone for Tuesday at Hogan's in Bloomfield Township. Ken Weber, "trout king," will be on hand to talk to customers, and wine expert Paul Mann and his assistants will pour wine. For reservations at \$35 per person, call 626-1800. Monday Nights are Cajun Night, with four Cajun entrees on the menu and five additional ones as specials, continuing tonight (Dec. 9). McGlone sent his assistant to K Paul's in Louisiana and is using that chef's authentic recipes.

dy Herman, Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson and others. Musician Earl DeForest will direct the Jazz Lab Band II playing music from both the big band and small group repertoire. Admission is \$2 for the general public and \$1 for students and senior citizens. For information, call 577-1705.

WSU announces jazz concert

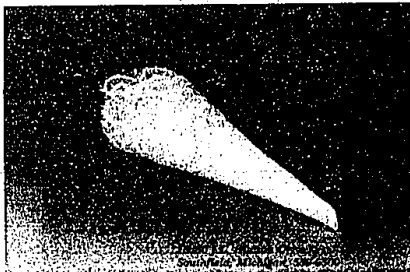
The big band sound will be featured in a jazz concert sponsored by the Wayne State University Music Department at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Community Arts Auditorium on the main campus in Detroit.

The concert will feature music from the big band era made famous by Woot-

dy Herman, Count Basie, Maynard Ferguson and others.

Musician Earl DeForest will direct the Jazz Lab Band II playing music from both the big band and small group repertoire.

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