

MOVIES

'Armageddon' has fun with the end of the world

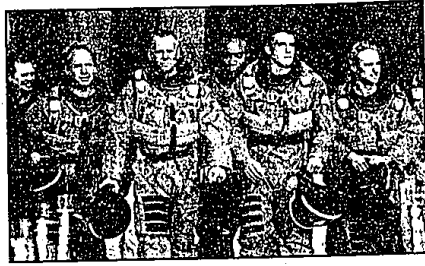


JOHN MONAGHAN

Jerry Bruckheimer bullies you into enjoying yourself. The director's movies, "Con Air" and "The Rock" among them, rely more on explosives than on believable characters to get the job done. And usually they're a rocking good time.

family-friendly PG-13 rating, making it the least crass of Bruckheimer's outings. Bruce Willis heads the team of oil rig drillers whose job is to plant a nuclear bomb in the center of the Texas-sized asteroid hurtling toward earth. Fragments of the rock have already landed, wiping out much of New York City and Paris.

by going head-to-head with the military to carry out the plan he knows is right. Willis continues his hit-and-miss career with his most satisfying action role since the first "Die Hard." This may, in fact, be his first truly adult part as he tries to raise a daughter amidst a band of roughnecks.



Action film: a roughneck crew of the world's foremost deep core oil drillers including (left to right) Rockhound (Steve Buscemi), Charles "Chick" Chapple (Will Patton), Harry S. Stamper (Bruce Willis), Jayjits "Bear" Kurlebenear (Michael Duncan), A.J. Frost (Ben Affleck) and Oscar Choi (Owen Wilson) set out on a heroic journey into space to save the world.

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

Table with columns for National Amusements Showtime Cinemas, Showcase, United Artists Theatres, MGR THEATRES, Maple Art Cinema III, and various theater listings with showtimes and ratings.

SCREEN SCENE

Right before that, Bruckheimer indulges in a producer-flexing in-joke as a scrappy dog lurches at a street vendor's display of Godzilla dolls before both vendor and dolls are obliterated by a meteorite. Not especially subtle, but Bruckheimer and

company know they have a winner. And, unlike those other summer blockbusters, "Armageddon" actually delivers what it promises. It's a great big steak dinner of special effects, not especially

good for you, but oh-so good going down. John Monaghan welcomes your calls and comments. To leave John a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1866.

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan. Abbey Theatre - 14 Mile Road (at I-75), Madison Heights. Call (248) 588-0881 for information. (\$6.50; \$4 students/seniors; \$3 twilight)

Sheedy and Radha Mitchell play a pair of women whose lives change due to a chance meeting. "The Hanging Garden" (USA - 1998). An offbeat drama about a 25-year-old gay man who returns home to his seriously dysfunctional family after a 10-year absence. Starts Friday.

"The Spanish Prisoner" (USA - 1998). Campbell Scott plays a young businessman who develops a dangerous relationship with a mysterious tycoon (Steve Martin). Expect plenty of fascinating verbal interplay in this latest film written and directed by David Mamet ("Glengarry Glen Ross").

Maple Art Theatre - Maple (at Telegraph), Bloomfield. Call (248) 855-9090 for information. (\$6.50; \$4 before 6 p.m.) "Cousin Bette" (USA - 1998). This romp through 19th-century love and revenge, based on the novel by Honore de Balzac, has a high-pedigree cast, including Jessica Lange, Elizabeth Shue, and Bob Hoskins.

"The Last Days of Disco" (USA - 1998). Another talkfest from Whit Stillman, director of "Metropolitan" and "Barcelona," set in the late 1970s. Here a group of young twentysomethings ponder their future at the end of the Disco era.

"Love Me or Leave Me" (USA - 1958). 8 p.m. Friday, July 10; 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Saturday, July 11 organ overture begins a half hour before showtime). The screen biography of singer Ruth Etting (Doris Day) is buoyed by James Cagney's performance as her gangster boyfriend. Songs include "Ten Cents a Dance," "Mean to Me" and the title song.

"The Opposite of Sex" (USA - 1998). Christina Ricci ("Addams Family") "The Ice Storm" plays a teenaged girl who runs away from her home one summer and wrecks the lives of virtually everyone she encounters.

"The Opposite of Sex" (USA - 1998). A documentary portrait of the often destructive relationship between rock singers Kurt Cobain and Courtney Love. She has fought to keep the movie out of theaters, not surprising since makes the case that, short of handing him the gun, Love encouraged his noxious side.

Library screens documentaries. Local filmmaker Gary Glaser will present three of his award-winning documentaries 7 p.m. Monday, July 13, at the Troy Public Library. The library is in the Troy Civic Center complex, 610 W. Big Beaver Road. The screening is free and open to the public.

Large advertisement for the movie 'ARMAGEDDON' featuring the cast and promotional text: 'THE BLOCKBUSTER WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!' and 'Soundtrack Features "The Aerosmith Hit "I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING"'