### MOVIES

# 'Saving Private Ryan' brutally honest look at war

The landing boats rock and bounce on the rough waters off Normandy, Soldiers vomit from fear and seasickness. The boat gates drop too soon, under the barrage of gunfire, and soldiers jump-into water over their

barrage of gunfire, and soldiers jump into water over their heads, brought down by enemy fire or drowned by the weight of their own equipment.

Time condenses and expands. The noise is unbearably loud and then numbingly quiet. And everywhere is the acrid smell of gunpowder, the wails of the dying, blood, gore, body parts and fent, heroics and cowardice.

This is what war looks like,

sounds like and feels like.

The opening sequence of Steven Spielberg's "Saving Private Ryan" recreates the landing on Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944, from the perspective of one platoen with a bertal honesty rarely senike Day! Zanucke "Longest Day," Ryans" Day landing has no stirring martial music, ne gallant John Wayne and no bloodless, easy death; but the senical mastery to bear on this visually graphic and emotionally complex look at "the last good war."

Richard Rodat's script is decoptively simple and somewhat contrived. Shortly following

the invasion, the War Department learns that an Iowa farm family has loat three sons within days of each other. Gen. George Marshall orders that the last surviving son be retrieved from somewhere in northern France and returned to his mother. The eight man platoon we have watched suffer the horrors of the landing are assigned the task at great risk to their own lives. Rodat's platoon has that typical World War II ethnic and personality mix – the Italian, the Jow, the hot-headed Brooklyn Irish kid, the bookworm, the base-like and stalwart sergeant. But he gives these characters individual personalities and never makes them falsely heroic.

Spielberg takes this material and makes it into perhaps the best movio of his long and distinguished career. As a master of manipulation, he finally brings all that magic into focus to actually put us into the danger and agony of war.

One critic said he couldn't figure on the county of the coun

A scene in a church that is similar to the pre-battle scene in "Henry V" explores the special burdens of leadership. Hanks projects a humanity that speaks volumes.

olumes.
Spielberg draws fine perfor-nances from everyone – Edward mances from everyone – Edward Burns as the cocky Brooklyn kid; Tom Sizemore as the loyal Sgt. Horvath; Giovanni Ribisi as the

compassionate medic; and Jere-

action drama "Saving Private Ryan."

Wartime: Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks) leads a squad of soldiers behind enemy lines to find and retrieve one man, Private James Ryan, in the wartime

compassionate medic; and Jeremy Davies as the wenk, childlike Upham. But it is Matt Damon who is especially convincing as Ryan. He underplays the emotions with exactly the right Midwestern stoicism.

And a special word should be said for Harrison Young as the old soldier with so many unspeakable memories.

The real star, though, is Spielberg. The opening sequence and the final battle for a bridge are works of stunning film chorcography. Using special film stock, varied time sequencing and Dolby sound as you've never experienced it, Spielberg puts the audience into the war as close as any film has ever come. There is a sequence in the opening where Hanks momentarily loses touch with the world, as if

deep underwater, his face glazed over, eyes locked, face flushed and blood splattered. This sequence tells us everything about the man we are going 19 molitor of the control of the contr

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### COMING ATTRACTIONS

Opened Wednosday, July 29

"THE MEDOTIATOR"
Story of a maverick hostage negotiator who becomes the victim of a police frame up. He turns the tables by taking the chief of internal affairs hostage and finds an ally in the negotiator assigned to the situation he's created. Stars Samuel L. Jackson and Kevin Spacey

"THE PARENT TRAP"

"THE PARENT TRAP"
A remake of the Disney classic of two
sisters separated at birth who finally
meet and begin plotting to reunite their
long-divorced parents.

Scheduled to open Friday, July 31

\*P1\*
A science-fiction thriller about the haunting journey into the mind of a renegade mathematician.

\*WHATEVER\*

Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 5

It's been twenty years since the first pumpkin was carved by Michael Meyers...would you like to know what everyone cise is up to now?

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 7

Exclusively at the Landmark Main Art Theatre, a bold, retro expleration into the rights of passage for a young woman, set in the 1980s. Stars Ura Well, Ched Morgan. Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 12

Scheduled to open Wednesday, Aug. 12"Mow STILLA ON REX GROVE HEALTS"
Based on the best seller by Terry McMillythen, the story of a dy-sparold African ...
American woman who takes a spur of ...
the moment tip to Jamaica and meets ...
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who and the dreams, except he's only
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whop of Goldberg.

Scheduled to open Friday, Aug. 14 "AIR BUD: GOLDEN RECEIVER"
Buddy, the talented dog, continues his adventures when he becomes a kidnap;
torget. Stars Kevin Zogers.

THE AVENCERS\*
The unflappable due of John Steed and Emma Peel are united again. This time to stop a diabolical scientist with plans for world domination. Stars Ralph

#### "BASKETBALL" Plowshares celebrates heritage



PASS

BACKSTAGE

We're all on planet Earth.

Sure, it would be cool if men really were from Mars, and women from Vonus. It'd explain a lot—why men and women can walk into the same office and have entrey different from conversation among women is so totally different from conversation among men; why conversation among men; why conversation between genders can be so completely frustrating.

But nope, we're all born and bred on the same blue marble. We come up with gills interplanetary origins to play with our inability to connect with one another across all the lines we've drawn between us—gender, race, culture and religion among others. And as we've seen so often on Backstage Pass, when we're faced with the problems of "same planet, werlds apart," we turn instinctively turn to the arts for to work it out.

Maybe that's why seme of the most compelling theater in

turn instinctively turn to the arts for to work it out.

Maybe that's why some of the most compelling theater in Southeast Michigan comes out of Plowshares Theatre in Detroit, which is committed to presenting African American life, trends and traditions on stage – Plowshares celebrates the uniqueness of a community while exploring its underlying, universal humanity at the same time.

Plowshare's producing artistic director also happens to be a Backstage Pass correspondent – our pal Gary Anderson, who has heated performances from theaters all over the Metro Area. We've alse frequently pastered him to appear on the show as a guest, bringing his performers to

the studio to appear on the big show, always with fabulous results.

Like many people in the artistic community, Gary's busy preparing for the upcoming season. I gave him a call to see what's coming up at Plowshares. As always, Gary sounded exting about his work. Our season opens Nov. 5 with 'Bourbon at the Border' by former Detrolter Pearl Cleage. Pearl's father was the Rev. Albert Cleage who started the Shrine of the Black Madonna, an Afrocenttic Christian denomination church in Detroit.

tinn denomination church in Detroit.
"Bourbon' takes place in Detroit in 1995. It's a love story between two former civil rights activists who participated in the Mississipi Freedom Summer of 1964, when activists were going down to register voters. They're college students who get caught up in the events, and what happens to them down there impacts them and their relationship with one another all the way into 1996.

"Bourbon' takes place to between two former civil rights activists who participated in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, when activists were going down to register voters. They rollege students who get caught up in the events, and what hapens to them down there impacts them and their relationship with one another all the way into 1995.

"In October, we're presenting our first-ever children's play, Sala Ginderella, an African-centered retelling of the Cinderellatale. We're doing it because there's really no alternative for children to see children's theatre from an African American perspective.

"For February, which is Black History Month, we're presenting in Living Colors,' a dance the atre musical. The play deals with the history and traditions of the Gullah people in the seas with the history and traditions of the Gullah people in the seas with the history and traditions of the Gullah people in the seas talands off the coast of South Carcalina. The Gullah are the African Americans that have the meat pure African heritage. Off on these seen islands, they who weren't as influenced by the mainland culture; although they were enslaved, they were enslaved.

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CULTER COMPLETE UNITAGE AND THE

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drum wasn't taken away from
them like they were everywhere
else. The play talks about the
history of that heritage, and
power of it.
"In March, we're putting up.
The Trial of One Short-Sighted
Black Woman V. Momany Louisend Safretta May'a sattre about
a black female Hollywood execut
tive who puts on trial the stores,
types of the Mammy and the
Safire for the have they've
wreaked on her life.
"Our season wraps up with
August Wilson's tituey,'t takenplace in 1977 at the Gypsy C55
Company in Pittaburgh. 1EZ
really a play about legacy and
about commitment. The calk
company is being threatened.