

Movie 'Last Rites' lacks credibility

RECENT RELEASES:

"Last Rites" (C) (R) 95 minutes
Father Michael Pace (Tom Berenger) is uncredited as a priest trying to rescue his brother-in-law's mistress, Angela (Daphne Zuniga), from the Mafia. What kind of priest smokes, drinks, and sleeps with the girl? Confusing and disturbing violence and sexuality. Reviewed by Kim Brown.

"Oliver and Company" (A) (G) 70 minutes
Wide range of voices — Billy Joel, Betty Midler, and Cheech Marin for example — place this film with the best of Walt Disney animation. It's sensitive, heart-warming and entertaining with good music boot. Reviewed by Patrick Harris.

"High Spirits" (PG-13)
Another supernatural fable that didn't make it in time for Halloween. This time it's a romantic comedy with Daryl Hannah, Beverly D'Angelo, Peter Onorati and Steve Guttenberg.

"Land Before Time" (A) (G) 75 minutes
Touching story of a group of young dinosaurs and their journey to the promised land. Excellent animation combined with many heart-warming scenes make this film great entertainment for all ages. Reviewed by Fred Barker.

STILL PLAYING:

"The Accused" (C) (R) 109 minutes.
Sara Tobias (Judy Foster) is gang-raped by three men, but Deputy D.A. Katherine Murphy (Kelly McGillis) believes it's impossible to "win" because of Sara's background. She sells out to defense, realizes her mistake and prosecutes speculators who encouraged the rape. This poignant drama about how our judicial system mishandles rape cases is too long and too slow to get the point across effectively. Rape scene is particularly horrible. Reviewed by Kim Brown.

"Child's Play" (B) (R).
Horror story about a mother who buys possessed doll for son's birthday. Plot is a bit corny at times, but film makes up for it with great special effects and unintentional humor. Reviewed by Fred Barker.

"Clara's Heart" (PG-13).
Whoopi Goldberg in touching story of Jamaican housekeeper and her influence on life of young boy faced with harsh realities of his parents' planned divorce.



Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D+	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
*	No advanced screening



Tom Berenger stars as a New York priest who offers the protection of his church to Daphne Zuniga in "Last Rites."

Inaudible and camerawork leaves much to be desired. Despite good acting, the film is unpleasant with no redeeming quality, just a dippy hallo-luh ending.

"Distant Thunder" (D) (R) 110 minutes.
John Lithgow is wooden as Viet vet who can't cope with society. So he hangs out in the Pacific Northwest woods for 16 years before writing to his son. This predictable, cliched, maudlin treatise on one aspect of our Vietnam tragedy isn't helped when sonny-boy (Ralph Macchio) shows up with Jersey accent he acquired while growing up in Illinois. Only good-buddy Larry (Denis Arndt) shows any signs of life. Nice scenery.

"Ernest Saves Christmas" (C+) (PG).
Jim Varney has the role of a lifetime in "Ernest" and is wisely trying to make it pay while the market is hot. This time out there are consistent, but predictable, chuckles and a very earnest Douglas Seale as Santa Claus in search of a replacement. In age when kids flock to see a man spot bleeding by exploding gunpowder in the wound, "Ernest Saves Christmas" is a refreshing change. Ernest P. Worrell is what we used to call good, clean fun. Know what I mean, Vern? Reviewed by Susan Fincham.

"Everybody's All American" (A-) (R) 127 minutes.
In the best sense, a fine, sentimental, nostalgic look at a quarter-century (1958-1981) of America, centering on a Louisiana football hero, the "Grey Ghost" (Dennis Quaid), his sweetheart, the "Magnolia Queen" (Jessica Lange), and his scholarly nephew, (Timothy Hutton). The intricacies of their relationships and social change in that period are nicely blended. Excellent acting carries this long film past soap opera and should cause a lot of sighs for the good old days.

"A Fish Called Wanda" (A) (R) 110 minutes.
A very funny film with the whackiest gang in town. Principals include Jamie Lee Curtis as Wanda the Wonderful, jewel thief extraordinaire. Kevin Kline's inspired performance as a beserk American gusset in London is matched by John Cleese's proper barrister. The whole thing is beyond words. The only solution is to see the movie.

"The Good Mother" (A+) (R).
Superb acting by entire ensemble creates memorable film whose haunting images will remain with you long after final credits. Anna Dunlop (Diane Keaton), a single parent, is liberated, in part, from a conventional background by the love of sculptor, Leo Cutter (Liam Neeson).

However, their relaxed attitudes offend ex-husband Brian (James Naughton), who sues for custody of daughter Molly (Asia Viera). Six-year-old Miss Viera is a talented charmer in her film debut. Jason Roberts, Ralph Bellamy and Teresa Wright are excellent in supporting roles. Based on Sue Miller's best seller of the same name, with fine direction by Leonard Nimoy.

"Gorillas in the Mist" (C-) (PG-13) 120 minutes.
Welcome to the wonderful world of gorillas. Sigourney Weaver plays it like the Magic Kingdom, and the film's erratic pacing largely misses the point of Dian Fossey's life and her obsessive reverence for gorillas living freely in their natural habitat.

"Ghost Town" (R).
This is about a place where everybody's dead — or soon will be — and I thought Halloween was last month.

"Halloween 4" (R).
It must be that time of year again.

"Iron Eagle II" (R).
Soviet-American strike team pitted against terrorist forces.

"Madame Sousatzka" (A) (PG-13) 122 minutes.
Lush, sensuous photography, inspired music and brilliant acting plus John Schlesinger's fine direction

equal an excellent film. This touching portrait of Madame Sousatzka (Shirley MacLaine) and her obsessive piano-teaching techniques also tells the story of a young genius, Manek Sen (Navin Chowdhry). His desire to please his mother (Shabana Azmi) and his teacher, Madame Sousatzka, tears at him as does his desire for success and his awakening sexual impulses focusing on a slightly shopworn singer, Jenny (Twiggy).

"Mystic Pizza" (A) (R) 102 minutes.

Warm, wonderful comedy about three young women dealing with life's unpredictable experiences in a pizza restaurant where they work, sharing the joys and pain of love and friendship. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Pumpkinhead" (C) (R) 86 minutes.

Mediocre monster movie with Ed Harley (Lance Henriksen) summoning up evil to punish bikers who killed his son. Low-level lighting keeps the gore impact down, but this limited, unimaginative morality tale is right on time for Halloween. Too bad Pumpkinhead doesn't have a pumpkin head.

"French Line" (B) (R) 120 minutes.
Being a standup comedian is not always funny, or easy. Lila (Sally Field) is a housewife who wants to make people laugh. Stephen (Tom Hanks) is a medical student who makes laughter his life. Struggling in a New York comedy club they learn more than how to be funny. Comedy-love story teams Hanks and Fields in convincing performances. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Split Decisions" (R).
Gene Hackman's latest with Jennifer Beals examines three generations of a New York family and the corrupt world of boxing.

"They Live" (R).
Allen Groun manipulates subconscious with high-tech. And a very happy Halloween to you, all-year-round.

"U2 Rattle and Hum" (C) (PG-13) 101 minutes.

This is not a film about the inside, personal views of U2 and their lives off-stage. It is a movie about music, a combination of some very brief but poor documentary work and footage derived from two shows. For a band with such a social conscience, I expected more than two hours of MTV. Reviewed by Kim Brown.

"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (A-) (PG) 110 minutes.

Pure entertainment in this technically amazing combination of live action and animation. Private eye Eddie Valiant (Bob Hoskins) saves the day by helping Roger Rabbit beat a bum rap. Hoskins' acting is super in a tough situation where he had to work with blank walls and imagine cartoon characters, which were inserted later. Reviewed by Jennifer Morse.

Ski resorts abound in the Detroit area

Continued from Page 1

Bend, Ind., to the campus of Michigan Technological University on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

In the Detroit area, evening and weekend skiing is a short drive from home at such facilities as Alpine Valley (Milford), Mt. Brighton (Brighton), Teeple Hill, Mt. Holly (Holly), Pine Knob (Clarkston) or Riverview Highlands (Riverview). Vertical drops are 200-350 feet, and night skiing is often available.

EASTERN Michigan boasts nearly a dozen resorts, such as Tyrolean and Sylvan resorts near Gaylord, MI.

In the northwest, upscale is the native language. Vertical drops tend to be higher — from 150 to more than 600 feet — and the emphasis is on longer weekends and vacation packages with indoor and outdoor pools, nightclubs, discos and full-service resorts.

They are well-known throughout the Midwest — The Boynton, the Homestead, Crystal Mountain, Nub's Nob, Shanty Creek-Schuss Mountain, Sugar Loaf, Caberlae and Grand Traverse Resort Village which isn't a downhill resort, but is active in winter sports promotion, including cross-country skiing.

In the Upper Peninsula, 600-foot drops become routine — as does the snow and Michigan's closet brush with deep powder skiing. Big Powderhorn and BlackJack at Bessemer, Indianhead at Wakefield, Porcupine Mountains State Park and Ski Brule/Ski Homestead at Iron River are legends in the Midwest.

MARQUETTE Mountain in Marquette, Mt. Ripley at Michigan Tech in Houghton, Mt. Zion at Gogebic College in Ironwood, along with Al Quail Recreation Area in Ishpeming, Gladstone Sports Park and Pine Mountain Lodge in Iron Mountain round out the Upper Peninsula collection of ski resorts — a collection that ranges from day-trip facilities to full-service resorts.

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