

# Raimi leads 'Army of Darkness'

BY JOHN MONAGHAN

Twelve years old. You might think Sam Raimi is about that age when you watch some of his films. Look deeper, however, because the intentionally dopey plot lines linked with complex visuals are exactly what make the former Detroiters pictures so beguiling. "Army of Darkness," the third installment in his "Evil Dead" series, delivers everything Raimi fans adore: loads of nonstop action, gory details and dark, dark humor. With the current barrage

## MOVIES

of publicity and decent word of mouth, this could well become his first bona-fide hit.

Raimi's "Darkman" and "Evil Dead" movies earned him a minor cult following among sci-fi/horror buffs. European investors, however, consider him nothing short of a genius, while more than one major Hollywood director has "borrowed" from his hyperkinetic camera style.

It wasn't all that long ago that

Raimi and producer Robert Tapert, founders of Renaissance Pictures, were working out of offices in Ferndale.

His movies blend slapstick with modern horror. The effect worked best in "Evil Dead II," in which the protagonist, Ash (Bruce Campbell, also from Detroit) battled an even force in the confines of a secluded cabin. In one inspired bit, he was challenged by his own skittering, disembodied hand.

"Army of Darkness" picks up where "Dead II" left off, with Ash falling from the sky into the Dark Ages, armed with a chainsaw, a guzzler. He embarks on a quest to retrieve the Necronomicon, the magic book that will rid the kingdom of an encroaching evil and also send Ash back to his own time.

Ash enters a cemetery and finds not one, but three, books atop a gravestone. When opened, the first book sucks Ash headfirst into it. Another bites his nose and then flies off. The final book can only be removed when he recites the proper words, "Klatozu Barada Nikto" (remember that line from "The Day the Earth Stood Still"?)

Of course, Ash botches up, unleashing an entire army of skeletal figures, led by his evil and decaying alter ego.

Raimi keeps the action extremely tongue in cheek, or rather finger firmly in eye. Each of his films has paid tribute to the Three Stooges in one way or another, and this is no exception. In the final act, Ash is dunked in the eye repeatedly by skeletal fingers that rise from their graves. The sound of rattling bones brings a nifty chill to the

scene. I usually can't fathom where all the money goes for a movie's inflated budget, but I can see every penny in "Army of Darkness." Epic frugality has apparently followed Raimi from his days scrapping together film projects in Detroit. He makes the most of his special effects team. Occasional cheesy costumes and visible matte lines only add to the fun.

Likewise music. Though Detroit Joe Lo Duca takes composer credit, Danny Elfman ("Batman" and "Darkman") was commissioned to write the rousing "March of the Dead" theme that dominates the score.

Raimi has become a master of choreographing action scenes and in the climax gives a nod to old Errol Flynn swashbucklers. The director has reportedly been keeping company with Hong Kong action filmmaker John Woo, so you'll also see plenty of martial arts movie tossed in.

Dialogue in "Army of Darkness" is not a strong point. Raimi co-wrote the film with his doctor/brother Ivan, and it's full of supposedly witty asides by Ash, some funny ("I got the book for you... then I'm history.") to predictably stupid ("Come here, baby, and give me some sugar.") He makes the Terminator look like Tennyson.

Arrested adolescent development? Perhaps. But Raimi does something fresh and exciting here. More than any other filmmaker in Hollywood today, he's able to tap into the psyches of teenage fantasy fans who should get a major kick out of this harmless and occasionally inspired dose of horror and silliness.

# By changing self, she can escape dysfunctional life

## STREET SENSE



BARBARA SCHIFF

Dear Barbara, I have a friend — my best friend — who is having a miserable time of it with her family — her mother, father and sisters. This is the oddest family I have ever seen. They are not happy unless they are fighting, and generally, the victim is my friend, who's the most vulnerable to their attacks because of low self-esteem.

I'll try to explain the situation without writing a novel. This fight has been going on for at least six months and got started about the time my friend's daughter ran away from home for a month. (She was under age and madly in love with a man in his twenties.) During that turmoil, my friend's daughter-in-law took it upon herself to prattle to the other family members things that my friend's daughter allegedly told her about her sexual exploits.

At the time, my friend had not had contact with her daughter-in-law for at least five months. She decided my friend could not see her 2-year-old grandson. Her reason was that it upset her husband, my friend's son who chose to disassociate from the family five years ago. The end of visitation rights happened after my friend declined to do daily baby sitting for her grandson.

One thing led to another, and before long, my friend's mother was lecturing her on what she should do to see her grandson. My friend, who hates to fight with her mother, decided not to call her mother until things settled down. That decision prompted several scathing letters from her mother and sister. There were orders for my friend to grow up, disbelief that she would give up her "family" for her husband and wishes that he drop dead — physically, not literally. Her husband is no saint, but honestly, Barbara, he is

truly innocent in this case. The clincher came the day before her birthday. Her mother sent her a card — a sorry card. Inside she wrote how she was sorry my friend isn't the woman she raised her to be, sorry that she would give up her family for her husband, sorry she won't grow up, sorry she won't see her grandsons (there's a new one) and a multitude more. After all those nasties, she closed by saying that she and her father still loved her.

I hesitate to say my friend was devastated by the card, but the hurt it was meant to cause was quite obvious. I myself was angry. I saw mother do something similar to her son and saw the hurt it inflicted. I suggested my friend return the card, now slightly crumpled, with a note that it's only right her mother is sorry since, by her behavior, she's a sorry excuse for a mother.

How can some mothers act this way and still say they love their children? Is there anything my friend can do or say to let these people know she won't be a part of their hateful games?

S.M., Westland

Dear S.M., My response to your question is that it takes two to tango. If your friend were not accepting this treatment, then the family would not be able to dump on her.

The problem of being a member of a dysfunctional family revolves around the ability of the victim to go for treatment to change her character. If she is successful in her treatment, she will be able to disentangle herself and live a normal, healthy life among normal, healthy people.

Barbara

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, Observer & Eclectic Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. You can also leave a message by calling 953-2047, mailbox 1877, on a Touch Tone phone.

On the march: Sam Raimi will keep his army of "Evil Dead" fans happy with his third installment, "Army of Darkness."



## SCREEN SCENE

A sampling of what's playing at alternative movie theaters across metro Detroit as reviewed by John Monaghan.

**CAPITOL CINEMA**  
121 University Ave. W., Windsor. Call 519-253-8065 for information. (\$4.25; \$3.25 students and senior citizens on Thursdays)  
"The Devil" (Britain — 1971), 9 p.m. Feb. 22-23. Director Ken Russell went off the religious deep end with this depraved story of a hunchbacked mother superior (Vanessa Redgrave) who becomes obsessed with a charismatic priest (Oliver Reed) and sees to it that he's burned at the stake. This is only one of the horrifying images in this still controversial film.

"The Last Temptation of Christ" (USA — 1988), Feb. 25-28 (call for show times). Martin Scorsese's banned adaptation of the life of Christ stars William Dafoe as the reluctant savior who accepts his divine nature and begins to perform miracles. The final 20 minutes, in which Christ on the cross considers what a human life would have been like, is incredibly powerful while the rest of the film isn't that far removed from the religious epics that came before it.

"Reservoir Dogs" (USA — 1992), Feb. 25-28 (call for show times). The stylish new film about a heist that goes way wrong boasts knockout performances from Steve Buscemi, Lawrence Tierney and Harvey Keitel.

**DETROIT FILM THEATRE**  
Detroit Institute of Arts, 5200 Woodward Ave., Detroit. Call 833-2323 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)  
"Indochine" (France — 1992), 7 p.m. Feb. 20-27; 1, 4 and 7 p.m. Feb. 28. Catherine Deneuve stars as a plantation owner in 1930s Indochina who finds herself vying along with her daughter for the affections of the same man. The almost three-hour epic is a showcase for the beguiling Deneuve, here in her 70th film.

**HENRY FORD CENTENNIAL LIBRARY**  
13671 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. Call 943-2330 for information. (Free)  
"His Girl Friday" (USA — 1939), 7 p.m. Feb. 22. Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell play a newspaper editor and his star reporter who were once married. She's about to get hitched again, to insurance salesman Ralph Bel-

lamy, but the wily editor has other plans in this lightning-paced comedy classic from director Howard Hawks.

**MAPLE THEATRE**  
4135 W. Maple Road, Bloomfield Hills. Call 855-0990 for show times. (\$5-7.50 evenings; \$2.95 twilight)

"The Crying Game" (Ireland — 1992) Love, loyalty, murder and seduction are the themes of this stylized new thriller from Neil Jordan. Giving away the plot would be doing an injustice, so suffice it to say that the Irish director of "Mona Lisa" and "The Miracle" provides more twists and turns than a ride on the Tilt-A-Whirl. Stephen Rea, Miranda Richardson, Forest Whitaker and Adrian Dunbar star.  
"Rain Without Thunder" (USA — 1992). In the year 2042, a daughter and her mother are the first to be prosecuted for "fetal murder," an abortion-related crime of the future. Jeff Daniels, Betty Buckley, Linda Hunt and Frederic Forrest star.

**MICHIGAN THEATRE**  
603 E. Liberty, Ann Arbor. Call 668-8397 for information. (\$5; \$4 students and senior citizens)

"The Crying Game" (Ireland — 1992), through Feb. 28 (call for show times). See item above.

"The Hairdresser's Husband" (France — 1992), through Feb. 25 (call for show times). When a 12-year-old boy saves the half-obsessed hairdresser, he becomes obsessed. He grows up to eventually marry a young hairdresser and the two slowly shut out the world in this new French comedy from Patrice Leconte.

"Koyaanisqatsi" (USA — 1983), 7:30 p.m., midnight Feb. 26. Godfrey Reggio's fascinating documentary has neither story or narration. The collage of images — some beautiful, some frightening — is set to music by Philip Glass.

**STAR JOHN R**  
32289 John R. (at 14 Mile), Madison Heights. Call 585-2070 for information. (\$6; \$3.75 before 6 p.m.)  
"Passion Fish" (USA — 1993). Mary McDonnell and Alfre Woodard play women who are uprooted from their city lives by sudden events and then transplanted in rural Louisiana. From independent writer/director John Sayles, who could use a thoughtful, insightful character study to help us forget his last couple of efforts.

**Ann Arbor Civic Theatre MainStage Productions**  
**THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK**  
dramatization by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett based upon the book, "Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl" Directed by Cassie Mann  
February 24-27, 1993 at 8 p.m.  
Saturday matinee at 2 p.m.  
LYDIA MENDELSSOHN THEATRE  
For tickets or information call 971-AACT Beginning February 22, call 763-1085  
Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs

When You Think of BBQ What Comes to Mind?  
11:00-4:00 Lunch  
10% OFF From Your Total Bill  
Sunday thru Thursday  
With Coupon Expires 3/18/93  
7010 N. Telegraph Dearborn Heights, MI 561-0102  
31006 Orchard Ln. Rd. Farmington Hills 561-7000  
30643 Plymouth Rd. Livonia, MI 427-6500  
\$2.00 OFF Slab Dinner for 2 Expires 3/18/93 Sunday thru Thursday  
\$2.00 OFF BBQ Chicken dinner for 2 Expires 3/18/93 Sunday thru Thursday

**Cheesaning SHOWBOAT**  
July 12-17, 1993  
Starring Brenda Lee  
Featured guest Charlie Callas  
Tickets on Sale February 25th  
Office hours Mon.-Fri. 9am to 5pm Sat. 10am to 1pm  
Show times 8:00 p.m. Amateur — 8:30 p.m. Professional Show  
Please make reservations for (DATE)  
at \$ each.  
Remittance of \$ is enclosed. Remittance must accompany order along with self-addressed stamped envelope. ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER.  
Name (PLEASE PRINT) Phone No.  
Address (STREET)  
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE (Orders will be billed pending availability of tickets.)  
NO REFUNDS AFTER JUNE 1, 1993  
Mail to: Ticket Committee — Cheesaning Showboat, 123 W. Broad St., Cheesaning, MI 48610  
NO SMOKING NO VIDEO CAMERAS NO COOLERS NO CREDIT CARDS  
\$3.50 CHARGE FOR ALL RETURNED CHECKS

**Corsi's**  
Served in our beautiful banquet hall. We seat 400 guests for all occasions. Perfect for your holiday Party.  
**Wednesday Buffet**  
Featuring:  
• Homemade Soups  
• Cold and Hot Fresh Fruit  
• 3 Homemade Pastas  
• 1 Meat Entree and Vegetable  
• Assorted Pizzas  
• Homemade Bread & Garlic Rolls  
• Dessert Table  
Served 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.  
Groups Welcome — Cocktails Available  
531-4960  
Adults Under 10 Years \$6.95 Seniors \$7.95  
\*We cater to all areas.  
7 Mile between I-96 and Middlebelt Livonia

**Walt Disney's WORLD ON ICE**  
Produced by HEINRICH FELD  
**Beauty BEAST**  
The most romantic story ever told on ice!  
Just wait 'til you see it on ice!

**MAR. 9 THRU 14**  
**Joe Louis Arena**  
Tue. MAR. 9 \* 7:30 PM FAMILY NIGHT - SAVE \$4 ON ALL TICKETS  
DETROIT NEWSPAPER AGENCY AGENT FOR THE Detroit News  
\* JOE LOUIS ARENA BOX OFFICE (no service charge)  
\* All concession outlets including HUDSON'S, HARMONY HOUSE, and SOUND WAREHOUSE  
\* CHARGE BY PHONE: (313) 646-6666 and (519) 792-2222  
\* KIDS SAVE \$2 ON TICKETS FOR KIDS UNDER 12 with coupons from BIG BOY Company of BIG BOY/CORSA/POX 80  
\* \* \* \* \* YOUR BEST VALUE! ENTERTAINMENT VALUEZ!  
ALL SEATS RESERVED - PRICE INCLUDES TAX  
\$8.50 - \$11.50 - \$14.50  
TICKETS ON SALE NOW!