

MOVIES

'Entrapment' well made, worthwhile picture

By VICTORIA DIAZ
SPECIAL WRITER

While watching "Entrapment," which stars Sean Connery, you may find yourself thinking that James Bond has metamorphosed into an attractively aging Scot named Robert MacDougal. That 007 has turned to a life of crime, exercising a talent for stealing priceless objects d'art. That, at age 60, the glittery hero has matured into someone made of real flesh and real blood, someone who, after all those years and all those amorous adventures, might even possess a human heart when it comes to romance.

All of which, of course, says something for how closely Connery has come to be identified with the legendary Bond. Probably, he and any picture he makes will be haunted to some extent by the shadow of the famous secret agent forever. But despite its Bond-like shadings, "Entrapment" is a well made, worthwhile picture all on its own. And, in it, Connery shows us once again that old movie stars do not necessarily fade away; sometimes, their screen presence grows ever more luminous with the passage of time.

This "millennium movie," directed by Jon Amick, takes place as the clock ticks down

toward the final moments of the 20th century. We have 16 days to go, to be precise, as the story opens. We are in New York, through we aren't really sure exactly what's happening, even as we watch.

A number of techno-gadgets and other sophisticated tools are playing a part, and slowly, we realize that somebody is going to an awful lot of trouble to life a treasured Rembrandt from a darkened room, only to leave a portrait of Elvis in its place. Here is a thief who is not only nimble and up-to-date (having gained access from the outside wall of the high-rise with those



Thriller: Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta-Jones in a scene from "Entrapment."

DAVID APPLANT

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

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gadgets); here is a thief with a sense of humor. All of this reflects something about the film itself.

Soon, we're whisked away to colorful Kuala Lumpur, high-tech capital of Malaysia. Here lives reptilian black-marketer Conrad Greene (Maury Chaykin), and here, beyond glass, guard, and a thicket of laser beams, is a shining work of art MacDougal has always coveted but never been able to get his hands on. Being the kind of determined connoisseur of art and beauty that he is, we suspect that he is going to eventually (a) obtain the prize, (b) almost die trying, or (c) die trying.

Meanwhile, back in Manhattan, a beautiful insurance investigator named Gin Baker (Catherine Zeta-Jones) talks her boss into allowing her to go after Mac, the suspected thief. She works for the company that insured the stolen masterwork for \$24 million, and so it stands to reason that she's hatched a scheme or two. Her reasons may

not be what you think, however, or her schemes what you anticipate. She's capable of spinning an especially crafty web.

But then, Mac is no slouch at keeping one step (or more) ahead of the competition. And therein pretty much hangs our tale, as these two play their cat-and-mouse games from the streets of Kuala Lumpur. (One especially electric scene has them navigating between the city's Petronas Twin Towers — the world's tallest buildings — via a fast-fraying metal wire strung with holiday lights.) As the 20th Century barrels to a close in this thriller, the tension heats up, and the chemistry between its two main characters really begins to crackle, too.

If you're in the mood for action-adventure, "Entrapment" should prove to be just the ticket. It moves along at a breakneck pace, contains enough suspense to turn your knuckles white, and enough intrigue to make your head spin. Though it

doesn't have quite the visual opulence of some of the Bond films, it's still highly watchable, and some of the scenes are knock-out, especially those shot in Scotland and Malaysia.

Surprisingly, though, "Entrapment" succeeds best on another level. The sparks that fly between the two lead characters are a substantial reason why this film works as well as it does. Scrip writers Ron Bass and William Broyles haven't given the two any particularly torrid scenes, but no matter. Fiery grace (Zeta Jones) and grizzled elegance (Connery), combined with a thoughtful script and their nicely nuanced performances help to turn this match into sheer dynamite. And, by the time Connery's character utters his most memorable line — "I was prepared for everything except you" — many of us, prepared to believe he is something 'way beyond a mere charming adventurer, brandishing a bunch of shiny, high-tech toys.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Scheduled to open Friday, May 7

"WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"
New version of Shakespeare's most magical comedy. Stars Christian Bale, Rupert Everett, Gaius Fickert, Kevin Kline, Michelle Pfeiffer and Stanley Tucci.

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"THE MUMMY"
Self epic about an expedition of treasure-seeking explorers in the Sahara Desert in 1925 who stumble upon an ancient tomb and unwittingly set loose a 3,000-year-old legacy of terror. Stars Brendan Fraser.

Scheduled to open Wednesday, May 12

"TRIPPIN'"
Urban comedy about the fantasies of a black teenager during his final years of high school in Detroit. Stars Denzel Washington.

Scheduled to open Friday, May 14

"STAR WARS - EPISODE 1: THE PHANTOM MENACE"
Story of a nine-year-old boy named Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi.

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