'X2' opens; 'Speed' continues at IMAX

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
STAFF WRITER

All the current big-screen hype is about X2, the X-Men sequel opening Friday.

X2 reunites the principal cast members, which include Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Ian McKellen and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, continuing the original conflict between humans and mutants.

X-Men was a tremendous box office hit and kicked off the current wave of comic film adaptations. Released by Twentieth Century Fox, X2 is rated PG-13.

If you want a high-tech flick, but prefer a known quantity, The Matrix shows at midnight May 9-10 at Royal Oak's Main Art Theatre, kicking off the return of the venue's Midnight Movies series. For details and future midnight shows, call (248) 542-0180.

The best high-tech flick in town is probably Top Speed, which continues through the month of May at The Detroit Science Center's IMAX Dome Theatre.

The film explores the science of speed and bring the experience alive via world-class athletes and racing professionals. Look for Olympic medallist Marion Jones, Le Mans champion race car driver Lucas Luhr and downhill mountain bike racer Marla Streb. Comedian and Detroit-area native Tim Allen is the film's on-screen host and narrator. For tickets and additional information, call (313) 577-8400.

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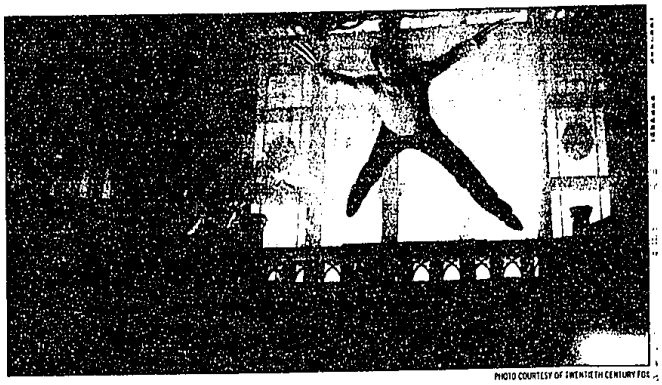

PHOTO COURTESY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

The 'X2' action comes to theaters May 2.

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NP HOLES (PG)
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WHAT A GIRL WANTS (PG)
PHONE BOOTH (R)
HEAD OF THE STATE (PG13)
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PHONE BOOTH (R)
WHAT A GIRL WANTS (PG)
BRINGING DOWN THE HOUSE (PG13)
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(NP) HOLES (PG)
THE PIANIST (R)
HOUSE OF A 1000 CORPSES (R)
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ANGER MANAGEMENT (PG13)
WHAT A GIRL WANTS (PG)
PHONE BOOTH (R)
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6-9
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NP MALIBUS MOST WANTED (PG13)
ANGER MANAGEMENT (PG13)
NP BULLETPROOF MONK (PG13)
WHAT A GIRL WANTS (PG)
A MAN APART (R)
HEAD OF STATE (PG13)
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THE GOOD THIEF
AMANDLA!

Silly 'Identity' suffers from overkill

BY VICTORIA DIAZ
CORRESPONDENT

In this weird, sopping wet movie, 10 assorted types find themselves thrown together at a seedy little roadside motel on a dark and stormy night. Soon, the motley crew begins, in various and sundry ways, to turn up dead, one-by-bloody-one.

A couple of them are run down by cars, some others are shot, one body is found tumbling in a clothes dryer, and another meets his maker via the old baseball-bat-shoved-down-the-gullet trick. As their ranks thin, those who remain become really unnerved by it all, and everybody begins to suspect everybody else. This wouldn't bring to mind Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*, would it?

As moviegoers, we're supposed to get caught up in the mayhem, too, of course, and play the desperate game along with the hapless hotel guests. And, at first, we do. But after awhile, everything turns so silly and nonsensical that our natural inclination is to laugh – in all the wrong places.

Talk about your overkill.

Directed by James Mangold (*Girl, Interrupted*), and written by Michael Cooney (*Jack Frost*), *Identity* stars John Cusack as a guy who's driving a movie star (Rebecca De Mornay) around the washed-out countryside, and Ray Liotta as a guy who's doing the same for a dangerous criminal (Jake Busey). Only don't be too sure, because (heads up!) so many things in *Identity* are not really what they seem.

Most struggle mightily to rescue this film, but much of the time, it just keeps springing leaks, mainly because *Identity* contains enough clichés to sink a small ship.

The same goes for the rest of the cast, which includes Amanda Peet as a prostitute (with something like a heart of gold, of course), Alfred Molina as a kindly doctor, and Pruitt Taylor Vince as his patient, who either may or may not be insane.

Anyway, it just keeps raining and raining and raining, and then there's another clap of thunder, and then another flash of lightning, and then yet another dead body, until we all feel rather oversaturated and half-drowned with blood and gore and water.

Then, finally, the sun shines, and we find ourselves in a nice orange grove, and things are supposedly cleared up. But they aren't really. There's one last matter to attend to, rain or shine. We must dig a little deeper (please observe, somebody really is digging in the dirt as the scene opens). Then...

Oh, stop laughing.

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia resident and writes about movies, books and theater for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*.

DSO

FROM PAGE B1

1933 using the fresco process of painting on damp plaster with water-based pigments. Fresco is one of the most durable mediums. Once the pigments dry the paintings become part of the wall.

Daugherty tells the story of the murals in three movements he refers to as dances – "Volcano," "River Rouge" and "Assembly Line" – using dramatic devices like dissonance and consonance to illustrate the many different moods in the murals.

"I responds to visual images," said Daugherty. "It's a feast for the eye. It gave me a lot of ideas. The murals' prominent motif is steel mills. The fire in *Fire and Blood* comes from the fire of machinery and the blast furnace, and the fire of Diego Rivera's personality. He painted the volcano in the murals because he lived in Mexico City where he was surrounded by volcanoes. The *Blood* is for the humans who operate the machinery.

"Diego Rivera felt that machine and man would work together to create a harmonious collaboration to bring freedom to the worker. The violinist is like the worker and is surrounded by a mechanical orchestra of percussion instruments. There are industrial sounds coming from a brake drum, ratchet and whip. It's rhythmical, precise and mechanical with lots of repetition."

Like the rest of his work, Daugherty intensely researches a subject before sitting down to compose the music. For *MotorCity Triptych*, a work which made its World Premiere with the DSO in 2001, Daugherty spent hours riding up and down the streets and boulevards of Detroit, and listening to Motown music. He not only tries to reflect an environment in his own writing but tries to pass that philosophy on to his composition students at University of Michigan School of Music in Ann Arbor.

CAPTURING DRAMA

"I tried to capture the drama. It's over the top, very operatic almost," said Daugherty who's currently composing *Raise the Roof*, a work for tympani to celebrate the opening of the DSO's Max M. Fisher Center in fall.

"It's been called one of Diego Rivera's best works because of the ambiguity. There's no Lenin like in his Rockefeller Center murals (that were eventually removed). There's revolutionary ideology in the murals but subtle. I think what made it one of his best works was the color and use of icons. The images have double meanings. And it's the use of irony. He paints himself in the mural standing with the workers doing one of the most undesirable jobs. Everyone has a frown on their face. He painted Dick Tracy and Charlie Chan, the cars and early planes in the murals. You can tell the time it comes from.

Frida Kahlo's suffering influenced the murals as well. At 18, she was seriously injured in a bus accident. The pain affected her throughout the rest of her life.

In Detroit, Kahlo was homesick for her beloved Mexico. Yet it was here she created some of her most important work after a miscarriage. "Henry Ford Hospital" and "My Birth" are very bloody depictions. Rivera, in the murals, paints a child in vitro as a loving tribute to Frida.

Daugherty weaves together two violin themes to symbolize her spirit in River Rouge. One is dissonant and flowing like a river of blood. The other is haunting. Through the orchestration Daugherty brings in the colorful Mexican dress for which Kahlo was noted.

"It's very intimate," said Daugherty. "The violinist and orchestra play chamber music together. It's very lyrical. While the music is haunting, there is an echo of hope."

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