

# 'Battlestar Galactica' is definite rip-off, but it entertains

By Pete Mason

It has been argued that the movie industry thrives because of television, not in spite of it. Television tends to borrow a particular movie theme and repeat it about forty times.

It's a little like beating a snake to death. If you club the snake enough times, it ceases to resemble a snake. The argument concludes that the real creativity comes from the movie industry and television simply copies, and copies and copies. . .

Television's most recent snake is the science fiction craze. In the wake of interstellar successes like *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, the networks have drawn up grand battle plans to cash in on the genre.

The first skirmish began Sunday night with ABC's *Battlestar Galactica*, certainly one of the great rip-offs of all time. *Battlestar* is an example of grand larceny on a cosmic scale. Anyone who thinks its resemblance to *Star Wars* is purely coincidental has been living in a convent. If you believe it I have this land in Florida and a large bridge in New York to sell to you at once-in-a-lifetime, cut-rate prices.

**But not bad**

However, the fact that *Battlestar* is a spectacular work of thievery is the worst I can say about the show. Any displeasure I may have felt concerning the show's origins were dispelled during the first dogfight.

Special effects wizard John Dykstra of *Star Wars* fame has outdone himself this time. As in *Star Wars*, the special effects take the first-place ribbon—they're spectacular. They should be. The network reports that it has spent over \$7 million for the first seven hours alone.

As for the script, bland is the best word I can use. The dialogue is mostly pedestrian, sometimes comic, and sometimes unintentionally hilarious. Somehow, though, it doesn't really matter. The plot is

a pretty grand one.

**Bible paralleled**

The biblical parallels are striking. The first scene shows the 12 chiefs of the 12 tribes of mankind sitting about a table with chalices raised, reminiscent of a last supper.

Adama (Lorne Greene), commander of the giant ship, *Galactica*, is cast in the role of a futuristic Moses, leading his people out of Egypt to find the promised land. In this case, the Egyptians are a race of self-perpetuating robot warriors called Cylons and the promised land is a mysterious planet thought to be the birthplace of mankind and called, you guessed it, Earth. This little twist should appeal to Eric Von Daniken fans who believe that the seeds of space-travel were sown here eons ago.

Benedict) a freebie, she catches him making eyes at Adama's daughter Athena. "Next time it's office rates for you, Buster," she says.

**Sci-fi popular**

It's hard to make predictions where television is concerned. But it would seem that the time is right for sci-fi to finally grab the ratings. The networks are betting that science fiction shows are the westerns of the future. There are at least ten more sci-fi offerings on the drawing boards, either as regular shows or movie-length specials.

It would seem to be a safe bet considering the enormous success of the most recent space flicks. It is quite possible that before long, sci-fi shows will be as prevalent as the now-extinct westerns of 15 years ago.

I can think of worse things to take over the tube. The cop shows and jiggles for instance. Starbuck has a favorite word. It's "felgergarb" like in, "Boy, you really know how to cut through the felgerbarb." If there's such a thing as palatable felgerbarb, it might be nice to see some more of it, as long as the pile doesn't get too big.

## TV review

There is even a marvelous Judas-like villain, played by John Colicos, who sells out his race for power and is in turn betrayed by the Cylons who think fair play is a peculiar alien concept not worthy of study.

**Basic humanity**

There are some lovely touches which seem to reinforce the idea that no matter how advanced the human race becomes certain basic traits still will survive. When the Cylons destroy *Galactica's* home base, the planet Caprica, Commander Adama orders all survivors to grab whatever mode of transport they can and rendezvous with the battlestar. A ragtag convoy of ships is then seen leaving the planet's surface; huge rusted-out hulks, small sleek pleasure craft and one freighter-like ship with the words, "Colonial Movers—We Move Anywhere", printed boldly on its side.

My favorite character on the *Galactica* is a winsome hooker named Casseopeia. After giving Starbuck (Han Solo look-alike Dirk

## Award competition open to composers

A total of \$15,000 is available to young composers in the 27th annual BMI Awards to Student Composers competition sponsored by Broadcast Music Inc., a performing rights licensing organization.

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The 1978-79 BMI Awards competition is open to student composers who are citizens or permanent residents of the Western Hemisphere and are enrolled in accredited secondary schools, colleges and conservatories, or engaged in private study with recognized and established teachers anywhere in the world.

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