

New James Bond introduces himself well

By Geoff McMurtry
Staff Reporter

"Bond. James Bond." For the first time since "Live and Let Die," 14 years and several films ago, a new 007 introduced himself.

Movie Review

"The Living Daylights," the latest film based on Ian Fleming's novels and short stories about the British secret agent, is a Bond film with something new.

Besides Timothy Dalton as the new leading man, the obvious, this is the first Bond film in at least five attempts in which it actually doesn't seem that everything in it has been done in a previous episode. There are new stunts, new villains, some new toys and even an intriguing new heroine.

So the plot and locations may seem a bit familiar, but once you've been to all four corners of the globe, the moon and back, you're bound to retrace a few steps here and there.

The best thing about "The Living Daylights" is not the new ground it breaks, but the way it disguises the old ground. Sure, it borrows from a couple of old plots, but this time they're used as subplots swirling around the real action.

The strongest part of the earlier films was a knack for making you believe the impossible — (sure, they could maybe have this huge underground headquarters with shark tanks and stolen nuclear weapons and . . .). Add to that just enough of Fleming's historical, political dogma, and you had a Bond film.

When the filmmakers started to run out of novels, believability went out the window — just watch the car chase and look at the girls. "The Living Daylights" tries to bring back some of the plausibility from the early films.

As always, there are stunts. All Bond films, even the boring ones, were known for great stunts. One scene in "The Living Daylights" is as exciting, original and realistic as any previous Bond stunts. James should feel lucky to be alive.

Another element that seemed lacking of late was a really great villain. But this movie has a classic Bond villain — evil and believable, a sociopath on a crusade.

Another welcome sight was a heroine who was a step above the empty models who had hounded poor James over the last few weary adventures. Maryam d' Abo, as Kara, actually acts. She even has a character to portray. Who's Tanya Roberts?

My only complaint is that he sometimes seems fidgety and irritable under stress. Downright humorless, even. In the books, Bond did get scared, worried

Watch the glamour set dine at Julio's

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After opera at the Lied Center, there'll be fruity specialty drinks at Barmore's and a late meal at Julio's. And just so I can be the first to say it about a Lincoln restaurant, there's high visibility here. That's the Minneapolis term. That's the Denver term. It means people can watch you eat and that you want people to watch you eat, because your status in the community may have a lot to do with whether you ordered the Meatloaf Monterrey or a little something off the gringo menu.

and remorseful and had many of the real feelings often associated with real people. But James Bond 007 never would let it show.

One thing James Bond could be counted on especially in the books, was to remain veddy, veddy British, keeping a stiff upper lip in a crisis. And that stiff upper lip always could be counted on to have a good one-liner behind it. While it may be tough to convey thoughts like that on film through a stream of one-liners, James Bond never would

allow himself to show nervousness, especially around women or enemies.

While it's no "From Russia With Love" or "Man With the Golden Gun," "The Living Daylights" is James Bond's return to the excitement that had slowly been slipping away.

This mostly is because it seemed as though the writers and producers were interested in the film they were making for the first time since "The Spy Who Loved Me."

Dalton, the fourth actor to play Bond

(remember George Lazenby?), handles a tough job well. Following Roger Moore, who had to overcome the memory of Sean Connery, is a job for, well. . . James Bond. As far as favorites go, I still have trouble deciding between Moore and Connery. Dalton doesn't have Connery's sardonic grin or Moore's elegant wit, but he manages to bring his own presence to the screen. Let's just say I didn't want to like him, but I did anyway. Of course, he's James Bond.

Alas, there is one final note of sad-

ness for nostalgics. They finally retired the actress who played the aging Miss Money Penny, the Secret Service's longtime secretary and James' blatant admirer, and replaced her with a new, younger Money Penny. Oh well, that's to be expected when the new regime takes over. She may never have gotten James, but at least she outlasted three of them.

"The Living Daylights" is playing at the Plaza Four Theaters.

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