

Movie Review

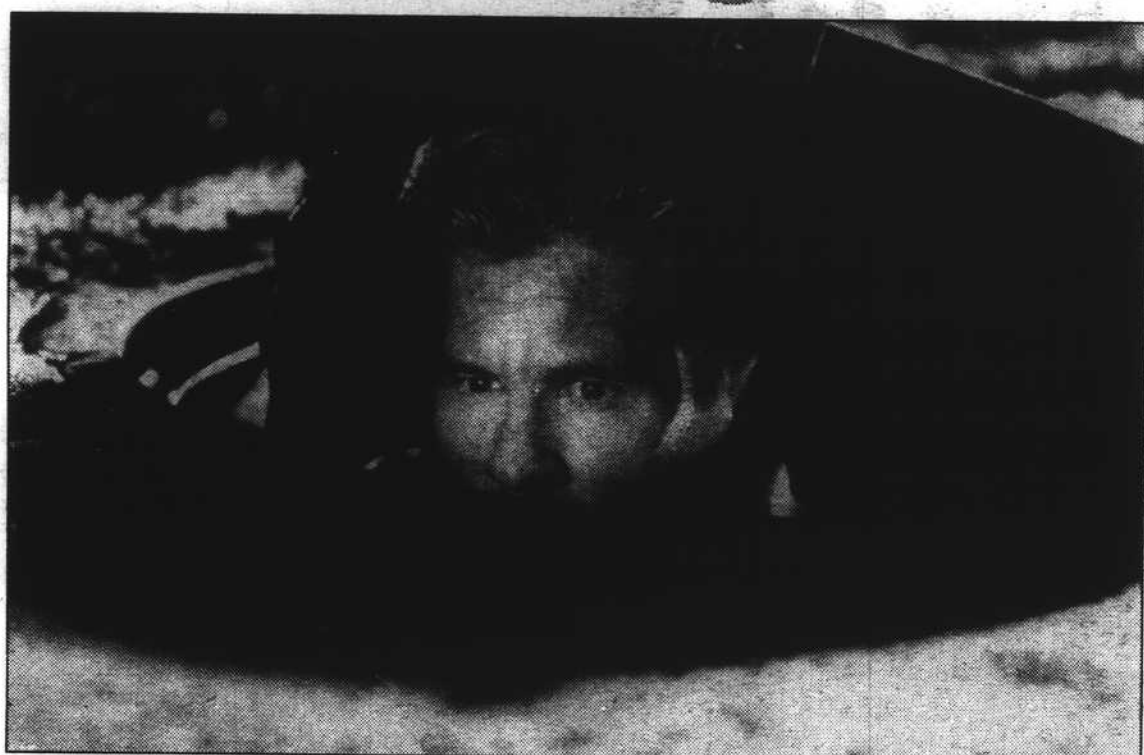


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VAL KILMER stars as Simon Templar, a master thief, in the new Philip Noyce film "The Saint."

## Incomplete ending damns 'The Saint'

By GERRY BELTZ  
Film Critic

"The Saint" is great coming out of the gate but just doesn't have the stamina to make it last.

Who's to blame? Probably not Val Kilmer, who stars as Simon Templar, a suave thief who is a master of disguises and has a few nifty gadgets to help him in his profession.

Director Philip Noyce ("Clear and Present Danger," "Patriot Games") looks to be innocent as well. The film keeps a good pace, and all the performers give excellent performances. Even Elisabeth Shue ("Leaving Las Vegas") is semi-believable as a somewhat eccentric scientist.

(Note: I heavily emphasize the SEMI-believable.)

The burden of guilt would prob-

ably fall on the shoulders of the poor ending, which feels rushed and incomplete.

Dr. Emma Russell (Shue) has supposedly perfected a new power source, and Templar has been hired to get the formula from her. Unfortunately, in the process, he falls in love with her.

Eventually, the bad guys (corrupt Russian dictator and cronies) are after both Simon and Emma, and all they have is their wits — and luck — to save their necks.

Kilmer keeps the laughs and chills going with his excellent work as a man of a thousand faces. Though many equate the character of Simon Templar with James Bond, it should be remembered that Templar is a thief who isn't even aware of his own past.

While Shue does an acceptable job as the scientist swept up in conspiracy and danger, she just acts too

The Facts

Film: "The Saint"

Stars: Val Kilmer, Elisabeth Shue

Director: Philip Noyce

Rating: PG-13 (violence, adult situations, language)

Grade: B-

Five Words: Romance, action and drama too!

flighty and light-headed to be completely believable as a master scientist, even if she is a bit eccentric.

The computer work and technology in this flick is phenomenal.

The action, too, is great. The work at the beginning of the film really draws the audience in, but the last half-hour or so drags by rather sluggishly.

It's not exactly a slice of heaven, but "The Saint" is still a decent film to catch this weekend.

## Variety of influences shape Cincinnati band

By BRET SCHULTE  
Staff Reporter

"We've always heard good things about Nebraska; it's a long trip for us, but it'll be fun."

DUFFY McSWIGGEN  
guitarist

Stich has stuck together, for five years to be exact, and during that time the group has endured month-long stretches on the road.

Now, the road leads to Lincoln, where the Cincinnati-based five-piece will make its first Nebraska appearance tonight at Knickerbockers, 901 O St.

While acknowledging a definite Cincinnati influence, guitarist Duffy McSwiggen said the band was the product of a kaleidoscope of musical preferences.

"Our drummer (Paul Moran) is really into hip-hop and English rock," said McSwiggen. "The vocalist (Johnny Hodges) digs '80s hard rock like Cheap Trick, and our bassist (David Koenig) plays out of a southern punk style."

Although Stich has worked hard to maintain its distinct style and sound, the group has been reared in a thriving local scene, led by the dark soul-rock band, The Afghan Whigs.

"John Curley (bassist of Afghan Whigs) produced and recorded our first demo tape," McSwiggen said. "It went pretty far, a lot further than we had expected."

In addition to Curley, Stich received input from an Afghan Whigs sound engineer, Steve Gurtain, who assisted in production of Stich's album, "The Vehicle," on Violently Hip Records.

"I guess we do have that Cincinnati kind of sound," McSwiggen said. "A lot of us have that kind of sound. We don't sound like the Whigs or any-

thing but we have jammed together." Stich has brought its "Cincinnati kind of sound" on the road for years, frequently in the Ohio tri-state area and the Southeast. The Nebraska visit marks the first stop of a three-month tour in which the band will work its way back to Cincinnati and then hit the road once again.

While appearances in Nebraska aren't generally a necessary pit stop on the road map of musical success, McSwiggen is looking forward to the trip.

"We've always heard good things about Nebraska; it's a long trip for us, but it'll be fun."

With a second album in the works, numerous 7-inches, and a decorated touring history, Stich hopes to impress the Nebraska crowd.

"We've been working hard to make sure we can come back. Hopefully we'll be regulars," McSwiggen said.

Stich's performance will begin at 11:30 p.m. The show has a \$3 cover charge.

## Digital signals will replace traditional analog TV system

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cinema-quality digital television should start appearing in homes in two years — assuming people lay out a hefty \$2,000 for new TV sets — under a plan federal regulators adopted Thursday.

The current analog broadcast TV system will die in nine years, meaning that viewers will either have to buy new digital TVs and VCRs or purchase set-top converters that let analog TV sets and VCRs receive the new signals.

The Federal Communications Commission approved the plan on a 4-0 vote.

While the new digital sets will have a significantly better picture, a "converted" digital signal fed to an analog set will produce no better picture quality than the analog set already provides.

And get ready for sticker shock: The wide-screen digital TV sets are expected to cost at least \$2,000 initially. If the new sets sell as briskly as VCRs did when they debuted, those prices should come down fairly quickly. The set-top converters will range in price from \$150 to \$300.

Some new digital TV sets may include a built-in digital-to-analog output, eliminating the need for a separate set-top converter, consumer electronics officials said. New digital products should be on the market by Christmas 1998, they said.

Even with the new sets, most of the nation's nearly 68 million cable TV subscribers will have to use their TV's rabbit ears or a rooftop antenna to receive the digital signals.

Tele-Communications Inc.'s system in Hartford, Conn., is now the only cable operator in the country that has gone digital. More cable systems are preparing to go digital, but until they do, viewers will have to rely on antennae.

The Federal Communications Commission's plan caps 10 years of work to clear the way for the biggest television advance since color in the 1950s.

Stations owned by or affiliated with the ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox networks in the nation's 10 largest TV markets will be required to begin providing some digital broadcasts within two years.

Those markets are: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Dallas-Fort Worth, Detroit and Atlanta.

Network-owned and affiliated stations in the next 20 largest markets will have 30 months, and the remainder of U.S. stations will have five years.

The commission already has received written pledges from 23 stations in the top 10 markets to offer some digital broadcasts within 18 months — in time for the 1998 holiday shopping season.

"We're reinventing analog TV ... and we're making it a digital business for the 21st century ...," said FCC Chairman Reed Hundt.

Commissioner Susan Ness called the FCC's buildout plan for stations "rapid, rigorous but yet reasonable."

The FCC leaves it up to the stations to decide whether to move up to an even better form of digital, high-definition television. Stations will be free to broadcast as little or as much HDTV programming as they want.

With the new digital technology, TV stations could cram more services into their airwave space. For example, they could offer sports scores to laptop computer users or even establish a separate pay-for-view sports channel. But the FCC is requiring the stations to continue providing free TV service.

VAL KILMER ELISABETH SHUE

Never reveal your name.  
Never turn your back.  
Never surrender your heart.

SAINT

PARAMOUNT PICTURES PRESENTS A PHILIP NOYCE FILM THE SAINT STARRING VAL KILMER AND ELISABETH SHUE  
MUSIC BY DAVID BROWN COSTUME DESIGNER ROBERT EVANS EDITOR VAL KILMER  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS GRAEME REVELL PRODUCED BY PAUL HITCHCOCK DIRECTED BY PHILIP NOYCE  
CASTING BY JONATHAN HEUSLEIGH  
PRODUCTION DESIGNER WESLEY STRICK EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS DAVID BROWN ROBERT EVANS  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS WILLIAM J. MACDONALD PRODUCED BY PHILIP NOYCE  
SCREENPLAY BY PHILIP NOYCE  
DIRECTED BY PHILIP NOYCE  
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SCREENPLAY BY PHILIP NOYCE  
DIRECTED BY PHILIP NOYCE

STARTS FRIDAY, APRIL 4

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