

Holiday season movies too long, tedious

By Samuel McKewon

Senior editor

This holiday movie season didn't quite set the important records, both in terms of box office standards or in quality of film.

But it probably set a record for number of tired butts.

If nothing else, the holiday movies were long, some so long a couple of bathroom breaks were the standard, not the mark of some guy with a weak bladder. Often, it hurt the overall enjoyment of the movie experience. But there were still some high points, including Oscar-worthy performances.

Here are capsuled reviews of the main winter break fare:

"The Talented Mr. Ripley" — Matt Damon's best work, and some of the best acting of the year, came in the stylish, very dark drama of a man who greatly wished to be someone else.

Jude Law played that someone else, Dickie Greenleaf, with just enough boyish charm and 50s whimsy to build smoldering chemistry with Damon's Tom Ripley.

The visuals of old Italy were rich, the supporting performances fine. The brilliant first half of the film gave way to a more tiring second half. Still, "Ripley" succeeds in making you want what Damon wants, though it goes against our better nature. An intricate, quiet little stunner of a film.

"Galaxy Quest" — More fun than most holiday movies, this spoof of "Star Trek" stars and their fans works well for an hour before devolving into dummy clichés. Tim Allen plays the Commander who is summoned by real-life aliens — who have copied their spaceship after the canceled title show — to save them from total destruction.

Sigourney Weaver dons a blonde wig and works well as the bimbo whose only job is to repeat exactly what the onboard computer just said. Tony Shaloub gets the biggest laughs as a very glib science director. Not too long, it's an easy watch. — B

"The Green Mile" — Long, soulful and occasionally brutal, the latest



Courtesy Photo
ABOVE: TOM HANKS plays a prison guard who develops a remarkable relationship with a death row inmate in "The Green Mile."

AT LEFT: TIM ALLEN and Sigourney Weaver play former television stars-hired to save the universe in "Galaxy Quest."

from Tom Hanks and "The Shawshank Redemption" director Frank Darabont leaves too many dead spots in between the film's more poignant moments. Hanks plays a death row prison guard whose latest inmate, childlike John Coffey (Michael Clarke Duncan, a bit too simple, but good), is capable of miracles none of the guards have ever seen before.

The execution scenes are tough to swallow, especially when a sadistic guard (Doug Hutchinson) botches one intentionally.

But "The Green Mile" provides some high points, specifically performances from Hutchinson and Hanks, who finds the right note for his character when he realizes he might be killing an innocent man in Coffey.

But it would have been better if Hanks, like the rest of the audience, had realized it more quickly than the three-hour and seven-minute running time. — B-

"Man on the Moon" — Not particularly risky, which was a shame. The bio-pic about deceased (and very strange) comic Andy Kaufman (played by Jim Carrey) plays more like documentary, running over Andy's trials and travails throughout his career, all the way to his comic funeral after death from cancer. Carrey mimics more than he does

act, but nothing more is required by director Milos Forman. The movie is a more frustrating experience for those who know nothing about Andy Kaufman compared to those who do, and the largely teen audience laughed very little at this film. A disappointment. — C

"Any Given Sunday" — A movie injected with equal parts truth serum and Hollywood pomposity, director Oliver Stone's take on professional football scores direct hits and wild misses, sometimes simultaneously.

Al Pacino is the perfect coach for the Miami Sharks — in movie terms — but pretty ridiculous in reality. Closer to home is breakout star quarterback Willie Beamon, played by Jamie Foxx. (Who knew he could act?) Beamon wants to get all the fame he can before he's inevitably sent back to the sidelines.

The games are long and so is the movie — football plays poorly at two hours and 45 minutes.

There is so much editing in the film, it gets hard to comprehend what's going on. It's as if Stone forgot that every once in a while a scene just needs to play out with a still camera. — C

"Anna and the King" — A wholly unnecessary remake of "The King and I." Jodie Foster, in one of her less-inspired performances as a English

schoolmarm, warms to the King of Siam (Chow Yun-Fat) despite his gaggle of wives. It's a big sprawling epic, probably a favorite of those hard-core romantics out there, but not for anyone who doesn't equate a slow waltz with heated sex. — C

"Duce Bigelow: Male Gigolo"

— Funny for one minute out of 10, offending and stupid for the rest. If you really feel the need to see a movie that makes such blatant and harsh fun of people with Tourette's syndrome (and somehow makes us believe a gigolo like Rob Schneider is our only avenue to happiness), check your brain at the door. — D

WEEK IN PREVIEW

The Week in Preview

The following is a brief list of events this week. For more information, call the venue.

CONCERTS:

Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St.
 (402) 474-3543
 Wednesday: Ouija Radio, Industrial Lounge
 Sunday: Jumpin' Kate, Sunjack

Duggans's Pub, 440 S. 11th St.
 (402) 477-3513
 Thursday: The Right Mix
 Friday: F.A.C. with The Wheeze Tones; The Right Mix
 Saturday: Face Value

Kimball Hall, 11th and R streets
 (402) 472-4747
 Thursday: Donna Harler-Smith and Michael Cotton

Knickerbocker's, 901 O St.
 (402) 476-6865
 Wednesday: Jumpin' Kate, Square
 Friday: Project Wet, Digital Bitch Shifter
 Saturday: Black Dahlias, Floating Opera

Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway
 (402) 474-2332
 Friday and Saturday: On the Fritz

Seventh Street Loft, 504 S. 7th St.
 (402) 477-8311
 Saturday: Songwriters Sweatshop

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets
 (402) 472-2461
 Friday: Amici

The Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.
 (402) 435-8754
 Monday: Debbie Davies
 Tuesday: Sticky Fingers
 Wednesday: Sleepy LaBeef
 Thursday: John Walker and the Loop River, Night Crawlers with Dan Newton
 Friday: F.A.C. with the Mezcal Brothers, Fab-tones

DANCE:
 McDonald Theatre, 51st and Huntington streets
 (402) 465-2384
 Thursday: "In Praise of Home"

THEATER:
 Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St.
 (402) 489-7529
 All weekend: "The Grapes of Wrath"

Star City Dinner Theatre, 8th and Q streets
 (402) 477-8277
 All weekend: "Songs and Scenes from Stage and Screen"

GALLERIES:

Burkholder Project, 719 P St.
 (402) 477-3305
 All week: 12th Annual Artists Choosing Artists Exhibit

Gallery 9, 124 S. Ninth St.
 (402) 477-2822
 All week: Contemporary Quilts

Haydon Gallery, 335 N. Eighth St.
 (402) 475-5421
 All week: John Spence

Robert Hillestad Textiles Gallery, Home Economics Building, Rm. 231 East Campus
 (402) 472-2911
 All week: "East Meets West," an apparel collection by Hong-Youn Kim

Rotunda Art Gallery, Nebraska Union, 14th and R streets
 (402) 472-6371
 Monday through Saturday: "Beneath the Surface: 'Dimensions of TCD'"

Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, 12th and R streets
 (402) 472-2461
 All weekend: "Judy Burton: Visual Nuances," "Eugene Atget's View of Paris"

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