

The Crystal Ball - Feb 29 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, February 28 2008 7:00 PM -

Lots of stuff about Cleveland sports dominating the headlines today, but for a little relief from that stress, Mitch is here with his weekly viewpoints on the world of entertainment. This week, Mitch looks back at the Oscars and looks at the week's offerings on screen and on DVD, plus reports of a casting call for a new movie being filmed in Pittspuke.



First up, a few blurbs about the Oscars.

~ For last two years, I only missed one guess each time I made predictions. Didn't work out that way this year, as I missed on Best Actress, Best Supporting Actress, and Best Director.

On the other hand, in my preview, I did come right out and say that the actress categories were wide open.

~ All of you that jumped on my case about not liking "No Country for Old Men" can consider yourselves vindicated. (But for the record, I still think "Fargo" was a better Coen Brothers movie).

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~ Best moment of the Oscars for me was everything about the song "Falling Slowly";

The performance from Glen Hansard and Marketa Irglova, the ovation and their reactions when they won, Hansard's speech ("This is MAD!"), and then the classiest move ever seen for an Oscar show, Jon Stewart escorting Irglova back onstage after the commercial break to give the speech she was unable to do after being cut off by the orchestra.

Great stuff.

News and Rumors

~ Now that the writers strike is over, the long talked about "Justice League" live action film is back on. I am almost to the point where I'm thinking the over-hype on this is about to burn me out.

~ There is an interesting fantasy comic series that looks to be coming to film. "The Megas" will look at a futuristic society in which the American Revolution produced a monarchy, not a democracy, one consisting of a culture of aristocracy and commoners.

The movie itself would focus on a government agent investigating a murder-suicide involving the royal family and some prostitutes.

~ This is just too good to be true. Seems like they are filming a horror flick in PITTSBURGH called "Shelter", starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers ("The Tudors") and Julianne Moore. And they need some extras for a scene that is supposed to take place in the Appalachians.

Here is what was announced by the castings site:

"Extraordinarily tall or short. Unusual body shapes, even physical abnormalities as long as there is normal mobility. Unusual facial features, especially eyes... 'Regular-looking' children should not attend this open call."

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Should have no problem...haven't they ever seen the people piling into Condiment Stadium to watch the Inbreds?

This week's new movie releases:

Semi-Pro

Starring: Will Ferrell, Woody Harrelson, Andre Benjamin

Plot: the owner/coach/player of the ABA Flint Tropics rallies his pathetic team in a make-or-break effort to get their franchise absorbed into the NBA.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: This goes immediately into the category of "Critic Proof". There is absolutely nothing new or original here...Ferrell will make a fool of himself in a sports parody that is long on laughs and very short on intelligence.

The early buzz puts this as better than "Blades of Glory" but not as good as "Talladega Nights".

For me, I'll probably catch it on DVD, and laugh my ass off at certain parts...anyone mocking the hideous time in our history known as the 70s can't be all bad.

Bottom line; if you like Will Ferrell comedies, run out to see this one.

If you hated his other movies; this won't be the one to change your mind about them.

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My Estimated Rating: Bill Nelsen (2 ½ footballs)

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The Other Boleyn Girl

Starring: Natalie Portman, Scarlett Johansson, Eric Bana

Plot: Two sisters vie for the affection of King Henry VIII. The winner gets her head chopped off...the loser doesn't.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: This one is getting some seriously mixed reviews, and I can't figure it out based upon them. The fact that some of the critics are slamming it for being "too melodramatic" might make me want to see it a bit more, as I was so damn bored at "Atonement", that I'd love a little heat and spice.

Some top critics loved it (about 60% of them on Rottentomatoes), but the other 40% found it a bore.

In other words, I have no friggin' clue...but being that it has Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson, I'm probably going to check it out.

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Penelope

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Starring: Christina Ricci, James McAvoy, Reese Witherspoon

Plot: A modern day princess who was born with a pig's snout must find true love with a prince to break the curse.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Didn't they do this before, calling it "Shrek"? I'm intrigued by the casting, which is top-notch, but the storyline just seems so...overdone.

My Estimated Rating: Kelly Holcomb (2 footballs).

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, March 4th

Mr. Magorium's Wonder Emporium - Dustin Hoffman as a 243 year old manager of the world's strangest toy store who tries to bequeath it to his mousey clerk (played by Natalie Portman). First of all; the words "mousey" and "Natalie Portman" NEVER belong in the same sentence.

Secondly; this movie is a major bore.

Why did someone ever decide that

"Toys" needed a companion piece?

(No, it wasn't really made to be a companion piece, but the comparisons are inevitable...and quite fair).

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Before the Devil Knows You're Dead - Critically acclaimed movie that showed up on screens across the country for about 35 minutes. Philip

Seymour Hoffman and Ethan Hawke play brothers planning the robbery of their parents' jewelry store. I'm

hoping my son doesn't watch this film and get any ideas.

Into the Wild - Another critically acclaimed, little watched film about an idealistic young man who gives up his scholarship to college, gives away his money, and sets out on a journey of self-discovery that ends up taking him towards Alaska. Warning; not the type of film someone loving happy endings will appreciate.

Things We Lost in the Fire - Shoot for critical acclaim, and sometimes you get a rock. Great casting, and a great concept as Halle Berry stars as a woman suddenly widowed who takes in her late husband's friend, a psychological wreck in the form of Benicio Del Torro.

Rent this and "Into the Wild" as a "More depressing than my 401(k) report" weekend.

Bring Jager-bomb!

Awake - "Acclaim" can only be used about this movie in the same context as "Class" is used about Barry Bonds. Hayden Christensen, the worst actor on the entire planet, co-stars with Jessica Alba, quickly turning into the worst actress on the planet in a stupid tale about a murder plot involving killing some rich spoiled brat on the operating table.

Calendar Watch

Next week: [10,000 B.C.](#), *The Bank Job*, *College Road Trip*, *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*

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Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

[Horton Hears a Who](#) - March 14th - Not content to have made Dr. Seuss spin in his grave with "How the Grinch Stole Christmas", Jim Carrey now takes on the voice of Horton the Elephant in this animated tale.

[Pride and Glory](#) - March 14th - Ed Norton and Colin Farrell in a tale of a multi-generational family of NYPD officers and an investigation of corruption that could tear the family apart.

[21](#) . - March 28th - Swerb's favorite upcoming movie, the true tale of six MIT students that are trained by one of their professors (Kevin Spacey) in the art of card counting. T
they later take down Vegas casinos for millions.

[Leatherheads](#) - April 4th - George Clooney and Renee Zellweger in an old fashioned screwball comedy set in 1925 about an aging football legend and the college hotshot he's drafted for his pro team both fighting for the heart of an intrepid up-and-coming journalist.

[Iron Man](#) - May 2nd - The latest mega-budgeted superhero flick. Looks very promising, and the casting of Robert Downey, Jr. as the alcoholic billionaire who designs a supersuit.

[Speed Racer](#) - May 9th - Emile Hirsch, Matthew Fox, and Christina Ricci as Speed, Racer X, and Trixie in the Wachowski Brothers' ("The Matrix" trilogy) adaptation of the campy 1960s Japanese anime.

[The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian](#) - May 16th - The same four kids from the first movie return to Narnia...1300 years after their last visit in that enchanted land's time frame, to help restore the throne to the rightful heir.

[Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull](#) - May 23rd - Spielberg and Ford team up one more time, with Cate Blanchett as the romantic interest, and Shia LaBeouf

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(["Transformers"](#)) as Indy's son.

[Sex and the City](#) - May 30th - The movie version of the HBO series hits the big screen. Can we guys get our share of this pie and have a movie version of ["Deadwood"](#)?

The Incredible Hulk - June 13th - Looks to be much, much better than the Ang Lee stink-fest, with Edward Norton taking on the role of Bruce Banner.

[Get Smart](#) - June 20th - Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway, and Alan Arkin take on the roles of Maxwell Smart, Agent 99 and The Chief. As much as I hate movie adaptations of television shows, this one has potential.

[Wall-E](#) - June 27th - Pixar's next masterpiece, about a garbage cleaning robot who dreams of the stars.

[Wanted](#) - June 27th - Look for this to make a box office star out of James McAvoy (["The Last King of Scotland"](#), ["Atonement"](#)) as he plays a young man brought into a secret society of assassins by a hot, hot looking Angelina Jolie. Morgan Freeman plays their boss.

[The Dark Knight](#) - July 19th - Batman is back, and this time he's tracking the Joker, played by Heath Ledger. Most likely the box office champion of 2008.