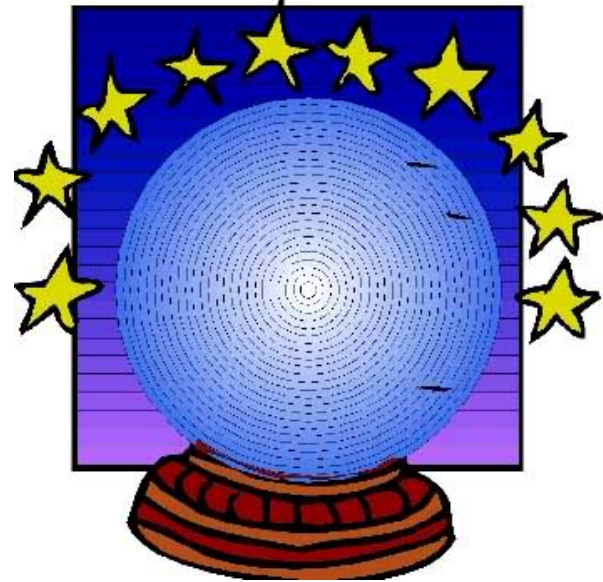


The Crystal Ball - October 31 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, October 30 2008 7:00 PM -

Back from a very well deserved one week sabbatical, The Mitch Man checks back into his regular slot with this week's edition of "The Crystal Ball", the very popular weekly look at the film industry that we've been running on Friday nights since we started this thing almost three years ago. Mitch hits on all the theater and DVD releases this weekend, the latest Hollywood news and rumors, and the big film projects coming down the pike.



Back from a well needed one-week sabbatical. What did we miss? Huge lines last weekend at the box office, with two very different demographics as "High School Musical 3: Senior Year" made an absolute killing at the box office as seemingly every girl in the country between the ages of 3 and 13 made sure she at least drug her mother to the multiplex.

And standing in line with all those obnoxious tweens were the sickos who couldn't wait to see more torture porn in "Saw V";

Me? I skipped the weekend...preferring the horror show that was Ohio State's offense on Saturday night against Penn State.

If that wasn't bad enough, I finally hit the theater on Monday to see "Max Payne". S werb will post the review of that wonderful little piece of "entertainment"; sometime over the next few days.

News and Rumors

~ Steven Spielberg has taken his name out as the director of the long approved, but never started film "The Trial of the Chicago Seven". The new name attached to it? Ben

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Stiller.

Huh?

Stiller's not a bad director...but he's never done a drama before, let alone something this serious.

But I'll reserve judgment for now.

~ Looks like they'll be moving forward with a "Bourne 4" movie. George Nolfi, the co-writer of "Bourne Ultimatum" was given the go-ahead to start creating the script.

Both Matt Damon and director Paul Greengrass are expected to return.

This would be the first film that will not be based at all upon Robert Ludlum's novels.

~ I've already given you a warning about my opinion of the latest movie adapted from a video game, the mediocre "Max Payne"...so now here comes another dud in the making as they are planning a movie adaptation of "Gears of War". I can't wait (and the check is in the mail).

~ So many graphic novels get made into movies anymore, but I like the concept of this one. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty" and the upcoming "Revolutionary Road") will direct the big screen adaptation of "Preacher", a 1995 graphic novel concerning a Texas preacher who journeys across the country to battle a supernatural evil that decimated his town.

~ The Jonas Brothers may star in an adaptation of the childrens book "Walter the Farting Dog". You. Have. Got. To. Be. Kidding. My only reaction is to quote the Rude French Soldier in "Monty Python and the Holy Grail" and say "I fart in your general direction!"

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

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~ "Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans". To be followed by Underworld 4: Rise of my Blood Pressure.

~ Hairspray 2 and American Pie 4. I'm not sure which is worse. At least for Hairspray, we won't have to put up with John Travolta in fat drag again, as he states he will not return for the sequel. If John Travolta is turning you down, you know you've got a huge pile of crap on your hands.

This week's new movie releases:

Zack and Miri Make a Porno

Starring: Seth Rogan and Elizabeth Banks

Plot: Two platonic lifelong friends who are now roommates decide to make a porno movie to pay for their mounting debts

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Kevin Smith scores again...at least according to the buzz. Smith tends to make either profane comedies ("Clerks") or semi-sappy love stories ("Chasing Amy").

This time, he's combined the two of them.

Every bit as vulgar as his earlier movies, but with a sweet, romantic side as well.

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Casting current and former porn stars Katie Morgan and Traci Lords was quite inspired as well.

I'll be getting to this sometime early next week.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

RockNRolla

Starring: Gerard Butler, Tom Wilkinson, Thandie Newton

Plot: In London, a real-estate scam puts millions up for grabs, attracting the attention of some of the city's shadiest characters.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: A return for Guy Ritchie to the genre that he has done so well in the past with "Snatch" and "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels". Along with one of my favorite actors in Butler, it also has Ari Gold himself, Jeremy Piven, and Ludacris...so my hopes are pretty high on this one.

Then again...they were pretty high for "Body of Lies" and look how that turned out.

I'll let you know in a couple of days.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Changeling

Starring: Angelina Jolie, Colm Feore, Amy Ryan

Plot: In 1920s Los Angeles, a woman is reunited with her missing son, but she soon claims that the boy is not hers, exposing massive police corruption in the process.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I plan to catch this one as well, but it is getting very mixed reviews.

Most praise Jolie's acting ability, and say that she is a lock for an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress...but that the movie itself drags, and that for once, director Clint Eastwood may have missed on this one; as he's shooting too much for awards which results in a movie that moves at a snail's pace.

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The Haunting of Molly Hartley

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Starring: Haley Bennett, Chace Crawford

Plot: A high school girl trying to fit in at a new school has a shock awaiting her when she finds that her parents sold her soul to Satan, and he'll soon claim it when she turns 18.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: A low budget thriller trying to scrape up a few bucks on Halloween. No advanced release for critics means one thing; it sucks. "Saw V" will still outdraw this bomb by a 3:1 margin.

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New DVD Releases

Journey to the Center of the Earth - One of two semi-successful Brian Fraser adventures released this summer...this one is the one that critics preferred. Pretty good effects, and not a bad storyline either; so it will probably be worth putting on your Netflix queue.

Kit Kittredge: An American Girl - When you make a movie based on a doll...you're not exactly going for "The Godfather", are you? You nine year old daughter may pester you to rent this Abigail Breslin sap-fest...hopefully she won't insist that you have to watch it with her.

Kung Fu Panda - On the other hand, when your kids insist on getting this animated flick, you probably will enjoy sitting down and watching it with them, as Jack Black, Jackie Chan, Angelina Jolie, Seth Rogan, Lucy Liu, Dustin Hoffman, and Ian McShane have a blast providing the voices of the pudgy martial arts "expert" bear and his cohorts.

Calendar Watch

Next week: *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa, Role Models, Soul Men*

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

[Quantum of Solace](#) - November 14th - The next James Bond

film, picking up shortly after the events ending "Casino Royale";

[Twilight](#) - November 21st - the adaptation of the popular book series concerning a relationship between a non-blood drinking vampire and a teenaged girl.

[Australia](#) - November 26th - Baz Luhrmann's epic tale set in WWII Australia. With Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman.

Think "Gone with the Wind"; with kangaroos.

[The Day the Earth Stood Still](#) - December 12th - Keanu Reeves in a remake of the classic 1951 sci-fi film.

[The Spirit](#) - December 25th - Frank Miller's next comic book adaptation, done in the same style as "Sin City";.

[Valkyrie](#) - December 25th - Evidently some good editing has

been performed on this film once destined for the scrap heap.

Very positive buzz about Tom Cruise's performance as the German colonel who attempted to assassinate Hitler.

We shall see.

Oscar Contenders - Movies that will have limited releases by the end of the year, and if they are any good...you'll see them in January

[Milk](#) - Sean Penn as the first openly gay man elected to public office in San Francisco in 1977, only to be assassinated the following year.

Cadillac Records - A chronicle of the rise and fall of Chess Records, the label founded by Leonard Chess (Adrian Brody), that featured Etta James (Beyonce Knowles), Chuck Berry (Mos Def), and others.

[Doubt](#) - The principal (Meryl Streep) of a Catholic school in the Bronx grows suspicious of a priest (Philip Seymour Hoffman)

who might have molested a student.

[Frost / Nixon](#) - December 26th - Ron Howard's latest Oscar attempt, adapting the stage play of the disgraced president's attempt to re-habilitate his image on David Frost's TV show, and Frost's attempt to drag out the truth from Tricky Dick

The Wrestler - Mickey Rourke is picking up early Oscar buzz in this character study of a professional wrestler nearing the end of his performing days.

Revolutionary Road- Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as a young couple raising a family in a Connecticut suburb during the mid 1950s. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directs the "Titanic" stars in their on-screen reunion.

[Defiance](#) - Daniel Craig and Live Schreiber as Jewish brothers in WWII Russian, leading a band of refuges in striking back at the Germans. A major early Oscar contender

Blockbusters on the Distant Horizon (movies that would seem to be big hits...as soon as they get made or released).

[*The International*](#) - February 13, 2009 - Clive Owen and Naomi Watts in a thriller about an Interpol investigation of a world-wide bank funding murder and corruption. And you thought Wachovia was bad?

[*Watchmen*](#) - March 6, 2009 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

[*The Soloist*](#) - March 13, 2009 - Rober Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx star about a talented musician who is now living on the streets.

The Road - Viggo Mortensen as a man walking with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization. Charlize Theron co-stars.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1, 2009 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamantium enhanced anti-hero.

With Liv Schreiber as Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

Star Trek - May 8, 2009 - J.J. Abrams and a young cast reboot the franchise, going back to Kirk and Spock's days at Starfleet Academy.

Angels and Demons - May 15, 2009 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code";

Terminator 4 - May 22, 2009 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

Transformers 2 - June 26, 2009 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

Public Enemy - July 1, 2009 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger.

Co-staring Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

[*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*](#) - July 2009 - The sixth of J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in 2010 and 2011.

The Taking of Pelham 123- August 7, 2009 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

Shutter Island - October, 2009 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954.

Nottingham - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time through the eyes of the Sheriff of Nottingham (Crowe).

With Sienna Miller as Maid Marion.

Avatar - December 18, 2009 - James Cameron's sci-fi/CGI

extravaganza. The C.I.A. should take lessons about secrecy from Cameron, as he's keeping info about this film very much to himself at this time.

Iron Man 2 - May, 2010 - Right on the heels of the success of the first one, Marvel is quick to get Robert Downey Jr. back into his titanium suit.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader - May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the books already know.

Thor - June 2010 - Another Marvel superhero...but the Nordic God is about as bland personality-wise as Superman, so we'll see how it goes.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I - 2010 - The start of the End for the boy wizard and his battle against He-Who-Should-not-Be-Named

Lincoln - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

The Hobbit - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce the prequel to "Lord of the Rings"; Ian McKellen will return as Gandalf

Fantastic Voyage - 2010 - Roland Emmerich ("The Day After Tomorrow", "10,000 B.C.") remakes the classic 1967 movie about a miniaturized sub and crew operating on a scientist from inside his brain.

The Avengers - 2011 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain America open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II - 2011 - The end of the line for what will be beyond doubt the most profitable series in the history of film making.

The Hobbit 2 - 2011 - del Toro and Jackson again, this time

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covering the time between the end of Tolkien's book, "The Hobbit" and the start of LOTR.