

Monday, August 27, 1990

## Movie Retrospective

### Late, low-profile releases improve slow summer season

By Todd Stone

The summer movie season began with all the hype and promise of recreating the cinematic glory of last summer — only to fall flat on its over-promoted face.

Certainly, some quality films have snuck through town here-and-there, but generally, there have been more disappointments than pleasant surprises.

"Die Hard 2" was the only quality blockbuster film of the summer. The film combined strong performances (Bruce Willis shines again), a clever storyline and slick action.

Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Total Recall" made money, but its great science-fiction plot was muddled by excessive violence and a silly, illogical ending.

Hyped as this summer's "Batman," "Dick Tracy" didn't even come close. The film barely eclipsed the \$100 million mark (compared to "Batman's" \$250 million). It seems Warren Beatty and friends couldn't captivate the masses like "Batman's" Jack Nicholson, Michael Keaton and Kim Basinger.

Tom Cruise proved even box-office stars can blow it, as his film "Days of Thunder" failed to sustain audience interest.

The film often has been called "Top Gun" because of its similarities to Cruise's 1986 hit "Top Gun" — including same director Tony Scott, and Cruise playing a manly macho rebel who operates another fast machine.



Bruce Willis leaps into action as Detective John McClain in this summer's hit, "Die Hard 2".

"Days" was number one for only a week.

The sequels?...

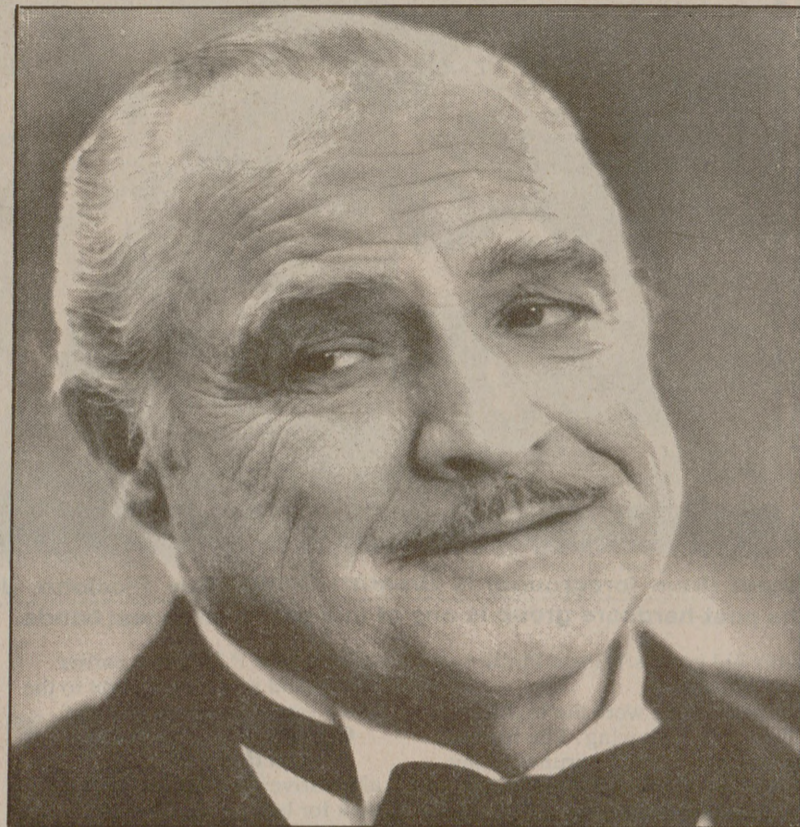
"Back To The Future III" was fair, but like the first "Future" sequel, it lacked the magic and surprise of the original.

"Gremlins 2" and "Robo Cop 2" just copied the same formula as

their firsts. So did "Another 48 Hours," another dud for Eddie Murphy.

"Young Guns II" had all the fun, originality and quality of the first film. Unfortunately, the first "Young Guns" had little of those elements.

Films that did make the grade



Marlon Brando is superb in the off-beat comedy "The Freshman." Mathew Broderick co-stars.

were low-profile releases such as "The Freshman," "Presumed Innocent" and "Ghost."

"Ghost" is this summer's dark horse hit. It even knocked "Die Hard 2" from the number-one slot. Like last summer's "Dead Poets Society," "Ghost" surprised critics with its mass appeal.

The slightly odd-ball mix of Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze with Whoopi Goldberg added spark to the film and the summer season.

Marlon Brando's return to the screen in "The Freshman" will delight any Brando fan. Using quirky humor and relying on

Brando's screen presence, director Andrew Bergman makes this film fun.

"Flatliners," starring Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts and Kevin Bacon, proved to be a solid entertainer. The life-after-death plot could have been more intriguing, but the performances were first-rate.

End of the summer releases such as Steve Martin's "My Blue Heaven" and George C. Scott's "Exorcist III" also should satisfy.

Unfortunately, the place to see some good new films isn't Bryan-College Station.

David Lynch's "Wild at Heart" with Nicholas Cage and Laura Dern has been released only in major cities. The film is praised as a masterpiece for Lynch, who also directed "Eraserhead," "Elephant Man" and "Blue Velvet."

Director and screenwriter Spike Lee's follow-up to "Do The Right Thing," "Mo' Better Blues," is another highly regarded film that hasn't filtered out of the major cities.

"Jesus Of Montreal" is a thoughtful film that's worth catching if you're in Houston or Dallas.

None of these major city releases are scheduled to hit the Bryan-College Station area in the near future.

If you're one of the lucky who have missed the summer failures, now may be the time to give movie-going another try. The hyped duds of summer are gone. It's almost safe again.

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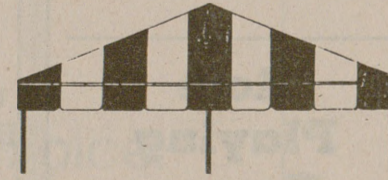
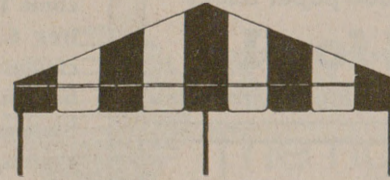
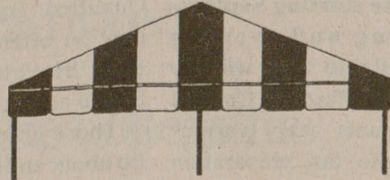
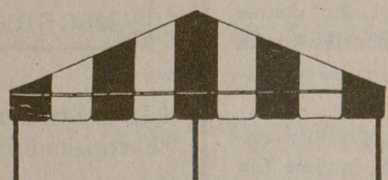
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