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Robin Williams' genie spins a witty, modern 'Aladdin' tale

By **TODD STONE**
Contributing Writer of THE BATTALION

"Aladdin" Voices of Robin Williams and Gilbert Gottfried
Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements
Rated PG
Playing at Manor East Mall

"Aladdin" entertains with the perfect blend of zany humor from Robin Williams and the unlimited imagination of Disney animators. Williams—providing the voice of a genie who grants three wishes to a young rogue in ancient Baghdad—is the foundation of this film's success. His energy throughout the film is almost exhausting to watch, and Disney animators admitted to making several last minute additions and changes to keep up with Williams' performance.

But unlike the recent Disney hits "The Little Mermaid" and "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin" stretches beyond the traditional Disney films with a modern focus on American pop culture, including game shows and politics.

But aside from a modern thrust to its humor, the story is pretty much a standard fairy tale. The main character, Aladdin, is a young vagabond with a hunkish look, searching for self-esteem. He falls in love with an independent-minded princess who is trying to break away from her kingdom's tradition of arranged marriages.

Throw in a hilarious genie offering three wishes and a vile villain, Jafar, trying to overthrow the kingdom, and "Aladdin" brings a traditional Disney fantasy to the screen with a popular twist.

Of course, Williams is the center of this modern approach, and his celebrity imitations of icons from Jack Nicholson to William F. Buckley Jr., generate many of the laughs and fun.

Comedian Gilbert Gottfried fills in nicely for laughs when Williams' genie is not on screen. As the voice of the Jafar's parrot, Gottfried and his caustic style bring some grit to the film's humor.

"Aladdin" also features some catchy new musical numbers from the music makers (Alan Menken and Howard Ashman) who contributed to "Mermaid" and "Beast." Most of the tunes are fine toe-tappers, but not quite as memorable as those from previous films.

Certainly, the creators' hip attitude, along with Williams' hip performance, ensures that "Aladdin" emulates its recent predecessors by entertaining the adults as well as the kiddies.

So if you enjoyed "Beauty and the Beast," then "Aladdin" will serve as a satisfying follow-up.



Garth Brooks ropes seven prizes at Billboard awards

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Country superstar Garth Brooks won seven trophies Wednesday night at the 1992 Billboard Music Awards, including best pop artist and country singles artist.

Phil Collins hosted the two-hour ceremony. Genesis, Arrested Development, Richard Marx and Boyz II Men performed.

Winners were based on worldwide record sales, radio airplay and marketplace tallies as compiled by Billboard magazine from Nov. 30, 1991, to Nov. 28 of this year.

Michael Jackson was honored with a special award for best-selling artist of the past decade.

Billboard's first annual Century Award for distinguished creative achievement was presented to George Harrison.


Winners of the 1992 Billboard Music Awards

Pop Artist, **Garth Brooks.**
Country Artist, **Garth Brooks.**
Hot 100 Singles Artist, **Boyz II Men.**
Hot Country Singles Artist, **Garth Brooks.**
Billboard 200 Albums Artist, **Garth Brooks.**
Country Albums Artist, **Garth Brooks.**
R&B Artist, **Jodeci.**
R&B Albums Artist, **Jodeci.**
New Pop Artist, **Kris Kross.**
Billboard 200 Albums Group Artist, **Guns N' Roses.**
Hot Adult Contemporary Artist, **Richard Marx.**
Modern Rock Tracks Artist, **U2.**
Hot Rap Singles Artist, **Cypress Hill.**
Billboard 200 Album, **"Ropin' the Wind," Garth Brooks.**
Country Album, **"Ropin' the Wind," Garth Brooks.**
Album Rock Track, **"Mysterious Ways," U2.**
Album Rock Tracks Artist, **U2.**
Modern Rock Track, **"One," U2.**
R&B Album, **"Forever My Lady," Jodeci.**
Worldwide Album, **"Dangerous," Michael Jackson.**



Phil Collins hosted the 1992 Billboard Music Awards show.

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