

# AGGIELIFE

## Holy-hype, Batman — FOREVER is here

### Film deserves its huge audiences

#### Movie Review

**Batman Forever**  
Starring Val Kilmer, Jim Carrey and Tommy Lee Jones  
Rated PG-13  
Playing at Hollywood 16 and Schulman 6  
★★★ 1/2 (out of five)



*Batman Forever* uses high-tech computer animation and superb light to climb up another rung on the visual ladder. Val Kilmer takes over the lead role as the Dark

predecessor Michael Keaton lacked. Jones and Kidman give solid performances, and O'Donnell as Grayson/Robin plays the roll with a surprising tough-guy quality.

As Dr. Meridian, Kidman plays the good-girl-who-loves-dark-mysterious-men type and adds a little something extra to the film's token romance. Two-Face gives Jones a chance to shed the conservative, tough-as-nails personality he usually gets stuck with. Two-Face is off the beaten path, and Jones lets watchers know that he enjoys playing the role.

By Wes Swift  
THE BATTALION

Director Joel Schumacher said in a recent interview that he wanted his newest picture, *Batman Forever*, to feel just like a comic book.

He succeeded.

The third installment of the caped crusader's saga is easily the most dazzling, stunning and entertaining Batman film yet. Where the first Batman left audiences cooing and aching over the scenery and cinematography,

Knight, Gotham City's protector and local billionaire, Bruce Wayne. This time he battles Harvey "Two-Face" Dent (Tommy Lee Jones), a former district attorney who blames Batman for the incident that turned him into a psychotic freak, and the Riddler (Jim Carrey), a criminal genius bent on the demise of billionaire Wayne.

The gruesome tag team concocts a complex scheme that will make the Riddler the most powerful man in the world and end Batman's crime-fighting days.

At the same time, Wayne falls in love with Dr. Chase Meridian (Nicole Kidman), a criminal psychologist obsessed with his crime-fighting alter-ego, and takes in Dick Grayson (Chris O'Donnell), a young circus performer who watches his family die at Two-Face's hands.

The plot rolls along like a comic book storyline. Each subplot seems to stray in its own direction, giving the audience a look at Dick Grayson's thirst for revenge against Two-Face, the love "triangle" between Batman, Wayne and Meridian and the Riddler's schemes. But as the film moves along, each situation becomes slowly woven into an action-packed tapestry.

Kilmer plays a much more convincing Batman adding a darker, more romantic, gothic side to the Dark Knight that



Chris O'Donnell plays Robin in the sidekick's first appearance in the Batman movies.

While no one role dominates this film, Carrey's performance stands above the rest. He carefully tip-toes down the line between his trademark zaniness and a dark psychosis that should surprise audiences. Carrey's Riddler isn't just Ace Ventura in a green suit.

Joel Schumacher has succeeded in making *Batman Forever* the world's first cinematic comic book.



Nicole Kidman plays Batman's love interest in *Batman Forever*.

### Seal, U2 make soundtrack soar

#### Album Review

**Various Artists**  
**Batman Forever**  
**Atlantic Records**  
★★★ (out of five)



By Michael Landauer  
THE BATTALION

All good superheroes need a rhythm section. And *Batman* has one of the best.

The *Batman Forever* soundtrack offers a wide variety of artists and sounds and will lend a few hits to this summer's music charts.

U2's "Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me" is a standout full of energy. Lead singer Bono's voice is full of power and feeling, and the music gives the song its thrust.

Other songs lack U2's energy but serve to create a mellow mood for the soundtrack.

Seal produces the best of the soulful songs with "Kiss From A Rose." Seal's lyrics are the most poetic on the soundtrack. Seal's voice works well with the music to make "Kiss From A Rose" the collection's most gripping song.

Eddie Reader comes closer to matching Seal's efforts with her pleasant voice on "Nobody Lives Without Love" than Mazzy Starr's mellow song, "Tell Me Now."

"Where Are You Now?" by Brandy also fits the quiet mood, but it just can't compare to Seal's accomplishment.

The Offspring offers a contrast to the mood songs, adding a much-needed punk element to the compilation. Although it starts as a bouncy tune, "Smash

It Up" does just what it says. Lead singer Dexter Holland sings, (or screams) "We're gonna scream and shout till my dying day."

"Smash It Up" carries the same amount of energy as U2's track and does it with a kick.

Nick Cave's "There is a Light" is a dramatic, rhythmic tune that gives this soundtrack a dark side.

The Devlins offer a similar song with "Crossing the River," but it is a little less mellow, relying more on its steady rhythm.

Method Man's "The Riddler," the album's only rap song, creates a deranged picture of Jim Carrey's character in the movie. Unfortunately, Method Man's sound is hollow, and "The Riddler" ends up lacking depth.

Michael Hutchence (INXS) contributes a remake of an old Iggy Pop song, "The Passenger." The song has a steady beat, and combined with Hutchence's vocals, it creates an intriguing sound. The song grabs the listener's attention.

Few other songs are able to draw in the listener. Sunny Day Real Estate's "8" and The Flaming Lips' "Bad Days" carry some appeal, but neither song adds much to the mood or the energy of the soundtrack.

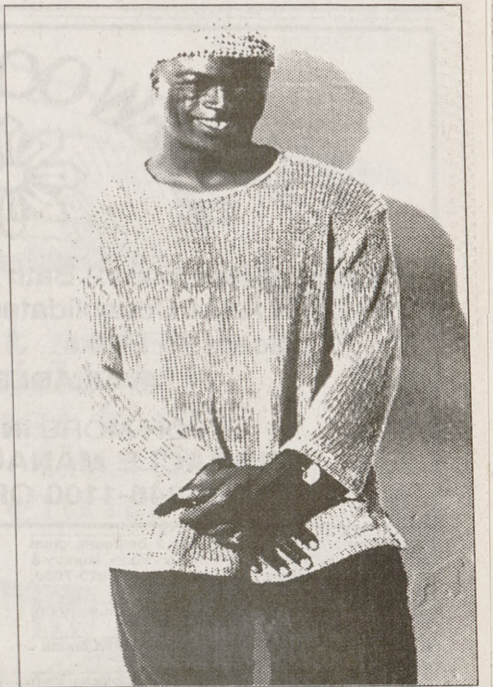
At times the music is just too slow. But the slower tracks may be preferred by listeners when compared to the noise offered by PJ Harvey on "One Time Too Many." Given the other high-energy offerings on this compilation, listeners could do

without Harvey's distorted screaming voice.

The contrast between the songs makes this soundtrack an interesting compilation. It succeeds in bringing together a good mix of mellow poetry and loud, penetrating tracks. Considering the film for which these songs were chosen, the broad mix should be no surprise.

Although the whole collection is unremarkable, certain performances make it a solid soundtrack.

U2, Seal, The Offspring and Hutchence all offer songs that do more than just create the soundtrack's polar moods. Each of these performers has taken a Batman project, given it wings and made it fly on its own.



Seal

## Screaming Fields fails at pop-culture publicity

#### Album Review

**Sonic Youth**  
**Screaming Fields of Love**  
**DGC**  
★★ 1/2 (out of five)



By Libe Goad  
THE BATTALION

Sonic Youth seems to be just out to make a buck with its April release, *Screaming Fields of Sonic Love*.

The sonic clan catalogs its pre-DGC recordings on a nifty compilation released in time for the Lollapalooza tour that it's headlining this year.

Coincidence? Don't think so. Despite the band's questionable intentions, this album guides the listener through the highlights of the band's underground sound, covering songs like "I Dreamed I Dream" from the band's 1982 self-titled.

The band seems to follow circular trends in its music, alternating between hard-core noise and more melodic guitar and singing.

"Teen Age Riot," "Eric's Trip" and "Candle" capture Sonic Youth's melodic, atonal sounds that Sonic Youth fans have come

to know and love. *Screaming Fields of Sonic Love* features an edited version of "Teen-Age Riot," which Moore says in a press release is "about the kids who don't give a f—k about the prez and his pals, but they hang on every solipsistic syllable floating frothily from J. Mascis' [of Dinosaur Jr.] lipz."

The band also has a satirical version of Madonna's "Into the Groove," a humorous deviation from the band's usual straightforward speak against pop culture's apathy.

Moore sings like a sarcastic, lazy Madonna, randomly adding samples of her voice.

But this pop-culture marketing attempt contradicts Sonic Youth's underground image and appears to be diversion from its "riot trail."

## Moore goes solo but does not depart from Sonic style

By Amy Uptmor  
THE BATTALION

Thank the music gods for Thurston Moore. Not only has he fronted Sonic Youth, but he has come into his own as a musician and songwriter.

*Psychic Hearts* does not quite have Sonic Youth's characteristic abrasiveness, but it is by no means a large departure from the band's sound. The 15 songs are moody, occasionally angry and always noisy.

Thurston Moore does not have as much of an edge without his fellow bandmate, Kim Gordon. But Moore has created a hybrid Sonic Youth style on this album that is good enough to keep fans from missing the band's traditional style.

Moore brings nothing short of rage to the album's title track, where he threatens to take revenge on people from an abused loved one's past. Despite the apparent fury in Moore's voice and lyrics, this song is surprisingly poignant — not exactly what listeners would expect from the leader of a ground-breaking punk band.

But Sonic Youth fans will love "Hang Out," which has the band's trademark sound.

#### Album Review

**Thurston Moore**  
**King**  
**DGC**  
★★★★ 1/2 (out of five)



Thurston Moore

The album might be better off without the last track, "Elegy for All the Dead Rock Stars," a noisy 19-minute long instrumental that cycles through three-minute repetitive guitar riffs.

Although most of the instrumentation on *Psychic Hearts* sounds the same, it is still outstanding with the contributions from Moore's bandmates from Sonic Youth.

*Psychic Hearts* exposes Thurston Moore as an impressive songwriter who is more than capable of standing on his own. He runs the spectrum of emotions without ever sounding pathetic or whiny.

## The MTV Movie Awards Show succeeds where Oscars fail

And the golden popcorn goes to ...

It just doesn't seem like a prestigious trophy. But that is what makes the MTV Movie Award

show so fun to watch because it doesn't take itself seriously.

When you consider all the show has to offer, it doesn't seem like it should give the Oscars much competition. The two shows don't compete, of course, but if I had to live on a deserted island and could only take one movie award show with me (I've been faced with this question many times), I would take MTV's.

In short, the MTV Music Awards kick Oscar's ass.

MTV has cooler stars, an incredible stage, complete with an elevated phone booth-type entrance for presenters, and Courtney Cox (even if she did look worse than anyone ever thought possible).

The Academy Awards has some things that MTV is lacking. Take the opening act every year, for example. Wow! It never ceases to entertain people. Or is it that it never entertains people? I forget.

But the Academy Awards does have Price Waterhouse to protect the sealed envelopes that contain the super-top-secret winner's names. Now that is prestige.

But who cares? MTV had 1-900 numbers. That may not be prestigious, but it is funny to think that MTV actually made money off of poor saps with nothing better to do than call up and vote 100 times for Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock as the best on-screen couple.

Now that's democracy.

MICHAEL LANDAUER  
AGGIELIFE EDITOR



And what do we get from the Oscars? Pure dictatorship. Yeah, they say they vote, but rarely does a film win big and do well

with the public. It's all a conspiracy led by Paul Newman and a conglomerate of other salad dressing companies.

MTV chooses to honor the bad movies that we all like. *Speed* was not a good movie. Neither was *Dumb and Dumber*. But we don't always like good movies. If there is one thing that MTV taught us as we grew up, it is that crap entertains as much as quality.

However, it is important to take note of which award show honored *Hoop Dreams* this year — MTV's. Sometimes when justice isn't done, it takes the rebellious, young award show to do the decent thing and recognize innovative work.

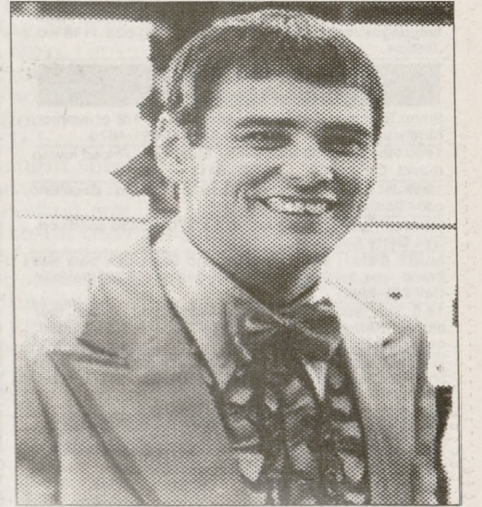
Aside from a few moments of seriousness, the awards show stuck to the crazy categories and raked in the best acceptance speeches we have ever seen. Seeing Jim Carrey share his award with himself — both he and himself were nominated in the same category for different movies — was truly touching.

The most notable difference between the Oscars and MTV's awards lies in how each show presents the nominees for best song. While the Oscars take the cheesy Broadway-style route, MTV chose one band with three chords and gave them 2 1/2

minutes. In retrospect, how can you have an awards show without the Ramones singing Madonna's "I'll Remember" as part of a melody?

And never would the Oscars think to have the cast from "Welcome Back Kotter" act out a Pulp Fiction scene when presenting it as a nominee for best picture.

But we should beware — this is not our fathers' award show. The MTV Movie Awards is for people who have gotten a taste of the channel's creativity and can't



Jim Carrey shows that *Dumb and Dumber* is winner — on MTV.

settle for anything else. If someone would just beat up whoever did Courtney Cox's hair and make-up, the award show would be poised to make America forget the Oscars.

And when forced to choose an award show to take with us on our trip to a deserted island, we would all agree — "We want our MTV."