

# AGGIE life

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## Disney works magic again with Hunchback

By Kristina Buffin  
THE BATTALION

With the disappointment of Disney's last two animated films, *The Lion King* and *Pocahontas*, Disney redeems itself and its reputation with *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

Not since *Beauty and the Beast* has Disney created a movie with terrific animation, a good and accurate story, and humor to lighten up a dark tale.

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, based on Victor Hugo's novel, is the story of a misshapen boy, Quasimodo, who lives in the bell tower of Notre Dame.

His master, the evil Frollo, has convinced Quasimodo his gypsy mother abandoned him and if it weren't for Frollo Quasimodo would have died. Unbeknownst to Quasimodo, Frollo's story is a lie — Frollo only took care of him because the archdeacon told him it was his responsibility.

Quasimodo grew up being told he was ugly, and if he were to leave the church he would scare people. But Quasimodo decides to take a chance and travel out-

side the cathedral to see the Feast of Fools.

Here he meets Esmeralda, a gypsy woman, who saves him from being ridiculed in the town square. In return, he hides her from Frollo, who wants to rid the Paris streets of the gypsies.

*The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is not as uplifting and carefree as *The Little Mermaid* and *Aladdin*, but it is nevertheless the best movie Disney has made. The movie is dark and contains inappropriate scenes for children under the age of 10, but it turns a tragic novel into a movie teaching children and adults not to judge people by their appearances.

Once again, Disney has recruited some of Hollywood's biggest stars to lend their voices to the animated characters. Tom Hulce (Amadeus) was the voice of Quasimodo, and

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*  
Starring Tom Hulce and Demi Moore  
Directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise  
Rated G  
Playing at Hollywood 16  
★★★★ (out of five)

Demi Moore did an unexpectedly good job with the voice of Esmeralda even though Heidi Mollenhauer supplied the singing voice.

Although Quasimodo is supposed to be grotesque, he is not. The animation makes him look lovable — similar to other Disney protagonists.

Disney did a wonderful job of changing the end of Hugo's dark novel. But unlike *Beauty and the Beast*, Quasimodo does not turn into a prince at the end and get the girl. This illustrates that all Disney movies do not fit the mold of "Once upon a time . . . and the prince and girl live happily ever after."

Like all other Disney movies, there were characters to break up dark scenes with humor. In this film, they were the gargoyles.

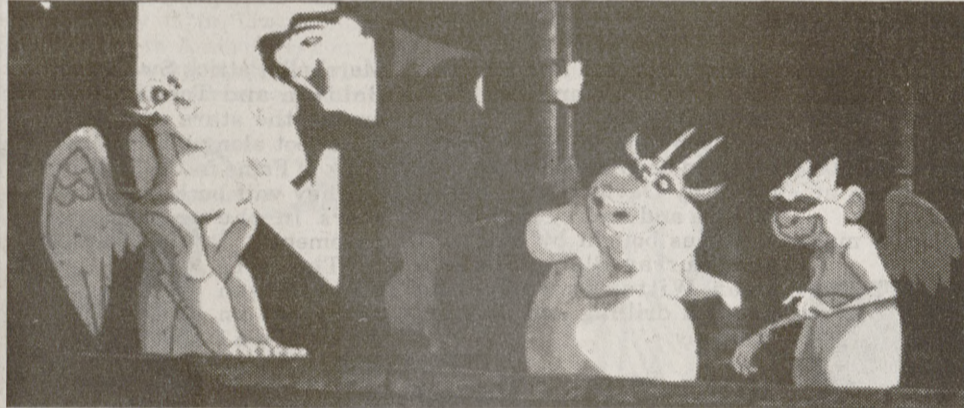
Jason Alexander (from *Seinfeld*) is the voice of Hugo, Charles Kimbrough (from *Murphy Brown*) is Victor and Mary Wickes, who passed away after the last recording session, provides the voice for Laverne. These characters lightened up dramatic scenes and a dark movie.

The movie and music, scored by Alan Menken, does not fit the stereotype of a happy, colorful and loving Disney movie, it is nevertheless a film that illustrating one of the most important lessons in life: deformity and appearance should not determine whether a person should be accepted in society.

Disney should be commended for branching out and making not only an entertaining but excellent film.



Quasimodo (Tom Hulce) is crowned the "King of Fools" at the annual Feast of Fools



Quasimodo is encouraged to attend the Feast of Fools by his Gargoyle friends.

## Schwarzenegger sticks to action formula in *Eraser*

By Jason Brown  
THE BATTALION

Bullets, blood, betrayal, beauty and biceps.

Yep, Arnold Schwarzenegger's back with the latest megabudget action film of the summer. *Eraser* does little to break the action-movie formula, but nonetheless delivers what action filmgoers usually want.

In the film, Schwarzenegger stars as Federal Marshal John Kruger, who hides witnesses in the Federal Witness Protection Program, effectively "erasing" all traces of their past lives.

He's called on to protect Lee Cullen (Vanessa Williams), who uncovers a plot to sell a shipment of high-tech weapons to unsavory hands while working for a major defense contractor.

But the scandal reaches the highest levels of the government,

and Kruger is unable to hide Cullen from those in the government who will do anything to keep the corruption concealed. So, Kruger and Cullen must avoid being captured by their enemies while gathering incriminating evidence to bring the villains to justice.

*Eraser* offers what one would expect from a Schwarzenegger film.

Schwarzenegger shows off his physical strength and delivers cornball lines like,

"You have just been erased," in his trademark Austrian accent.

Although Williams doesn't act as well as she sings "with all the voices of the mountains," she performs competently as a smarter-than-average damsel-in-distress. (Besides, anyone hoping for great acting shouldn't go see a Schwarzenegger flick.)

Robert Pastorelli does a good job in the role of the Joe-Pesci-Italian-comic-relief, and James Caan plays the hardbody's mentor well.

*Eraser* has its share of explosions and shootings, although dramatic, suspenseful stunt scenes are a little lean.

The special effects are also decent. The token high-tech weapon is a "rail gun," whose sight capabilities put Superman's X-ray vision to shame. But there's one scene with alligators that look like leftovers from *Clash of the Titans*.

The plot moves along briskly and is not difficult to follow — welcome relief for those still confused by *Mission: Impossible*.

But unlike *Mission: Impossible*, it doesn't keep you wowed by gadgets and sitting on the edge of your seat through one thrilling scene after another.

Perhaps Schwarzenegger's engine is running out of steam. Still, the movie is certainly no worse than most action films, and if it grosses \$100 million, there won't be much reason to break up the formula.

After all, if it ain't broke, why erase it?

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
*Eraser*  
Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, James Caan and Vanessa Williams  
Directed by Charles Russell  
Rated R  
Playing at Post Oak Cinema 3  
★★★ (out of five)



Federal Marshall John Kruger (Arnold Schwarzenegger) hides witnesses in the Federal Witness Protection Program.

## Same theme different venue for *Mystery Science Theater*

By David Winder  
THE BATTALION

**MOVIE REVIEW**  
*Mystery Science Theater 3000*  
Starring Michael Nelson, Trace Beaulieu  
Directed by Jim Mallon  
Rated PG  
Playing at Hollywood 16  
★★★ (out of five)

In the last decade, Hollywood has made it a habit of taking old television shows and putting them up on the silver screen. The movies, good or bad, try to improve on the originals by adding characters, bizarre plot twists or better special effects and writing.

But in the case of *Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Movie* not much has changed from what spawned it, "Mystery Science Theater". There are no new characters, no bizarre plot twists. The special effects are still purposely

weak, and the writing is still excellent. It's just like watching *MST3K* on a really large television screen in a room with aisle seating.

The plot for the movie and the television show are the same. The evil Dr. Forrester (Beaulieu) wants to rule the world and he plans to do it by showing the planet the worst movies ever made. So he picks Mike Nelson (Nelson) to be the lab rat for the experiment, and shoots him into space aboard the *Satellite of Love*.

Nelson becomes lonely in space, so he makes some robot friends — Tom Servo, Crow and Gypsy — out of the spacecraft's materials. Forrester then starts sending cheesy movies to Mike's ship and monitoring his mind to see how quickly it deteriorates.

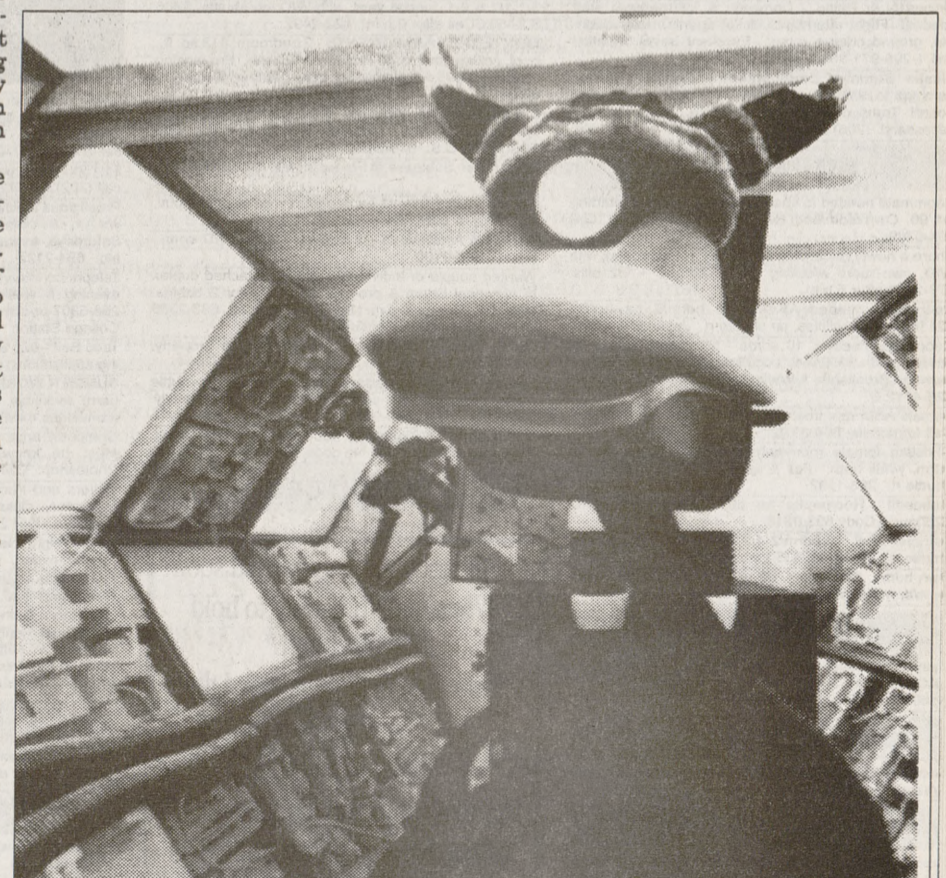
But Mike has fun with the experiment as he, Tom Servo and Crow yell sarcastic comments at the screen.

For *MST3K: The Movie*, Mike, Tom Servo and Crow talk back to a showing of the 1950s sci-fi adventure film *This Planet Earth*. The boys have a field day with one of the worst scripts ever to find its way to celluloid. Part of the fun of any *MST3K* showing is watching the bad movie.

In the case of *MST3K: The Movie* it never gets to the point of being bad, but disappointment does set in. Almost all of the gags that focus on the daily routines of Mike and the robots fall flat. In the television show the gags move pretty quickly, but in the movie they seem to drag on forever.

It's almost as if someone told the guys to make the movie longer and that's all they could think to do. This is disappointing in comparison to the brilliant stuff they have been able to do in the past. Finally, getting to see Tom Servo's room is a big letdown.

"MST3K" is funny television but the *MST3K: The Movie* could have been a funnier movie.



Gypsy (Jim Mallon) heads for the control room while Crow T. Robot (Trace Beaulieu) looks on.