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AGGIELIFE

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REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS



Patricia Arquette receives one of the stigmata wounds on a subway train in the supernatural thriller *Stigmata*.

Stigmata

Directed by Rupert Wainwright

Starring Patricia Arquette and Gabriel Byrne

Is nothing sacred anymore? The Catholic Church is hit hard and put under the interrogation lamp in this latest shocker.

As the nation's No. 1 movie, some are asking what is the deal with America's need for supernatural gore and horror. Maybe it is new—no, remember *The Exorcist*? Maybe it's Patricia, no she's lost her spunk. Maybe people just like to see blood and guts. Unfortunately, the film's gore serves as the only source of entertainment value.

Frankie Paige (Arquette), a self-proclaimed atheist, seems to be suffering from what the church calls stigmata, the five wounds of Christ. When word of these strange occurrences hit the Vatican, Father Andrew Kiernan (Byrne) is sent to Philadelphia to investigate.

The movie seems to battle itself for a main plot line—Is the church covering up hidden truth or is a woman dying from stigmata?

Byrne turns in the traditional portrayal of a kind priest with good intentions.

Arquette's role could have been taken on by any sweet-faced young actress in Hollywood.

As a man whose only directing credits include music videos, Rupert Wainwright needs some advice on the overuse of cinematic elements. Too much rain and reversed water droplets not only set a mood for this film, they drowned it in the flood. And cascades of burning candles left the audience asking, "who had the time to light these?"

Definite kudos to the special effects coordinators and make-up artists for rivers of blood, but what is scary is the fact that audiences sat through this film and brought it \$18.3 in weekend grosses. (Grade: D+)

— Jeff Kempf

— Matt Mc

For the Love of Game

Directed by Sam Raimi
Starring Kevin Costner and Kelly Preston

Costner takes to the base diamond for the third time in his acting career in hopes of reaching a little glory of years past. He goes above and beyond all expectations with one of the best of the year.

Costner delivers one of the solid performances as Billy Chapel, an aging pitcher who is called to the mound for the game. The film is told from Billy's perspective as he plays what could be the most important game of his career. Through a series of flashbacks, he reflects on the past five years of his life, particularly his romance with writer Jane Aubrey (Preston).

Directed by Sam Raimi (*A Simple Plan*), this film is literally an exercise in perfection. Through clever lighting techniques and editing, the film is given a surreal quality which serves to enhance the compelling story.

Helped by an excellent screenplay, Costner and Preston shine. Costner brings outstanding depth to a character who easily could have been mistaken for his character in Bull Durham.

Fueled by a strong soundtrack and an outstanding supporting cast, this film is an absolute must-see, a stirring movie achievement. *For Love of the Game* is pure magic, bringing a spark and life back to the screen when such qualities are sorely lacking today. Refreshingly funny, touching, and always entertaining, this film will remind us that Hollywood still has a few surprises left. (Grade: A)

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