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REEL CRITIQUE
MOVIE REVIEWS

A = instant classic B = a cut above C = average
D = don't buy it F = burn in effigy

Dogma

Starring Matt Damon and Ben Affleck
Directed by Kevin Smith

The much-anticipated *Dogma* is one of the funniest movies of the decade and also probably one of the most controversial. After some distribution problems because of its touchy subject matter, this hilarious film finally is making it into theaters.

Featuring an all-star cast, the movie tells the story of two angels banished from heaven who may have found a loophole in church dogma which would allow them back in.

Affleck and Damon play Bartleby and Loki, two angels anxious to get home after being stuck in Wisconsin for the past 1,000 years.

There is just one slight problem — humans will cease to exist if they succeed in re-entering heaven.

The task of saving the world falls on the shoulders of Bethany (Linda Fiorentino), a woman of surprising lineage. Divine help is offered to her in the form of the 13th apostle, Rufus (Chris Rock), and prophets Silent Bob (Smith) and Jay (Jason Mewes).

In a movie filled with great performances, Silent Bob and Jay, well-known to fans of Smith's previous work, steal the show.

Fiorentino, one of the most underrated actresses of recent years, is phenomenal.

Alan Rickman also turns in one of the most slyly funny performances of his career.

Written and directed by Smith (*Clerks* and *Chasing Amy*), the film pokes fun at nearly every religious debate of the past 2,000 years.

In his best and most ambitious film, Smith makes many bold statements with *Dogma*, but he impressively backs them up with well thought-out arguments.

Dogma is a wildly entertaining movie, refreshingly irreverent and surprisingly intelligent, however, it will probably anger some viewers.

Dogma really does not bash religion; it just bashes those people who use it as an excuse to be intolerant of others' beliefs.

(Grade: A)

— Matt McCormick



PHOTO COURTESY OF LIONS CLUB OF TAMU
Jason Mewes (left) and Kevin Smith star as prophets Jay and Silent Bob in the movie *Dogma*.

The Messenger

Starring Milla Jovovich
and John Malkovich
Directed by Luc Besson

Luc Besson heard a television movie about Joan of Arc was being made and decided if anyone should make a movie about the French heroine, it should at least be someone from France. So the director made his own version of the story of Joan. Wild and fiery, *The Messenger* recreates history with such passion and vividness that the end result is nothing short of impressive.

Joan (Jovovich) is a young girl who hears voices telling her to rid France of its enemy, the English. Joan goes about this quest by approaching the Dauphin of France (Malkovich), who believes in her visions enough to give her command of an army to be used against the English. The rest is history.

Most people are somewhat familiar with the story of Joan of Arc, but never before has a movie attempted to show so much of her life.

Writer and director Besson (*La Femme Nikita* and *The Fifth Element*) does a brilliant job di-

recting this historical drama. Using a variety of visual styles, Besson gives each scene its own energy and life.

He also does a great job with the story managing, within the constraints of two and 20 minutes, to capture the root of the end of Joan. Was she crazy or a saint? An or an instrument of God? These are questions for which there are no answers, and Besson does not insult viewers by attempting to convince them otherwise. Instead, he captures conflicting beliefs and presents them in a telligent way for the audience to make up their own mind.

Jovovich delivers one of the most deeply haunting performances of the year, a woman torn apart by the battle raging within her mind and her soul. If there has been a car-worthy performance by an actress this it is hers.

Dustin Hoffman also manages to make a short screen time seem so much more with an excellent performance.

The Messenger is an action-packed with Profound and visceral, this movie will satisfy viewers both visually and intellectually.

(Grade: B)

Ujima (Collective work & responsibility)

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Texas A&M Century Singers

Pre-concert Lecture

Dr. Laurine Marlow,

Associate Professor, Dept. of Performance Studies, TAMU

3:00 P.M., Rudder Complex, Room 292B

Sunday, November 14, 1999

4:00 P.M., Rudder Auditorium

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Tickets cost: \$20.00 adults, \$5.00 students and children

Additional support provided by Texas A&M University Department of Performance Studies and the Arts Council of Brazos Valley

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