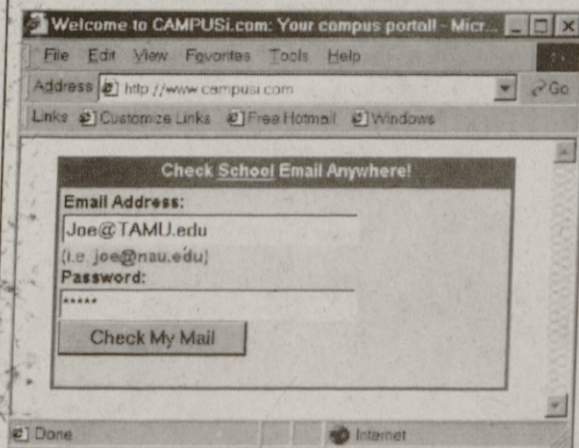


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AGGIELIFE

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THE BATTALION

Thurs

REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS

U-571

Starring: Matthew McConaughey
and Harvey Keitel
Directed by: Jonathan Mostow

Movies featuring submarines seem to bring out the best in directors.

Wolfgang Petersen has never outdone his film *Das Boot*. John McTiernan's *The Hunt for Red October* is his only film worth watching since *Die Hard*. With *Crimson Tide*, Tony Scott displayed his best directing effort ever.

So why is it that Jonathan Mostow, the man behind the intense thriller *Breakdown*, turns in much less than it appeared he had to offer with *U-571*?

Intense and exciting, this movie just does not deliver the emotional punch that one hopes for.

Andy Tyler (McConaughey) is an executive officer who has just been passed over for a promotion to captain shortly before setting sail with the captain who refused him a letter of recommendation. Their mission — seize an injured German U-boat and steal its encryption machine. However, when their own submarine is blown up, a handful of American sailors must pilot the U-boat out of extremely hostile waters.

The script's basis is excellent and the idea is inspiring, but Mostow disappoints audiences with this film. After the masterful way he created a tense atmosphere in *Breakdown*, one hoped his "submarine movie" would surpass all other submarine movies.

As the movie begins it shows potential because the movie has a great storyline. However, after the American sub is blown up, Mostow's film falls apart. In his first large-scale movie, he seems to focus so much on the historical accuracy and action

Center Stage

Starring: Amanda Schull
and Zoe Saldana
Directed by: Nicholas Hytner

With acting a notch above "Beverly Hills 90210" and first-class dancing, *Center Stage* is sure to warm the hearts of 13-year-old girls around the nation.

Set at the American Ballet Academy (ABA) in New York City, this film ventures into the world of teen-age ballet prodigies, male and female. The harsh reality of eating disorders, sleeping your way to the top and hard-ass instructors create a sense of reality for the audience; however, the acting does not.

It is understandable that the acting ability of the stars would be sacrificed in order to utilize the talents of real-life dancers.

The truth is, this movie is nonstop ballet; subplots filled with relationships and snobby characters only seem to be surface-breakers for the dancing. This movie would probably have played better as a documentary.

The drama begins when it is announced that a select few dancers will secure spots with the ABA and various other ballet companies after training held at ABA is completed. The companies from all over the country will be present at a grand finale ballet show for recruitment, and the suspense ensues with the big question, "Who's going to get in?"

Unfortunately, it is very predictable.

The best aspect of the film is the jazz final number. It is provocative and imaginative. This ballet tells a story audience members can relate to. Sadly, a 15-minute sequence carries an entire movie. Strangely, one cast member who makes a beautiful and can dance, but the look-a-like will have to attend more acting classes to break the *Spelling* act-a-like curse. (Grade: C-)



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

A World War II American submarine and its crew out to capture a coding device in *U-571*.

that he forgets to give his actors time to act. But the cast is not given the opportunity to show their skills in the heroics involved. Mostow falls back onto a safe, predictable formula for action.

This movie is amazingly realistic, and the actors make the transition from a wishy-washy guy to a leader with what they have. However, one wishes there were a moment in which McConaughey's character could have made the transition from a wishy-washy guy to a leader.

While it is impossible to fall asleep during this film, it is definitely a cut above the average off-season Hollywood *U-571* forgets that there are no great movies without great actors. Mostow seems to have fallen into that Hollywood trap which emotion is often replaced by explosions. (Grade: C-)

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