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behrcoll5@aol.com

The Behrend Beacon

International Women's Film Series

Annual event kicks off with haunting 'Princess'

Review by Daniel J. Stasiewski
a&e editor

"The Princess and the Warrior" is the second collaboration between "Run Lola Run" actress Franka Potente and director Tom Tykwer. After "Lola's" release in 1999, the hyper German language picture reached cult-film status. With the newfound international popularity, Potente and Tykwer were pushed into the spotlight, demanding a huge follow-up.

Originally released in 2001, "The Princess and the Warrior" never became the hit "Lola" was. Maybe it's because "Princess" is not another rapid fire, time trial. Sure there are similarities, but this somber film relies on its subtle, enigmatic characters and stunning imagery more than any stylization of a fast-paced screenplay.

Sissi (Potente) is a nurse at the Birkenhof Psychiatric Hospital. After many years, the routine of her antiseptic hospital existence has left her apathetic and unhappy, though the patients' love for her has never been greater. One day, Sissi goes out for a walk with one of the more pleasant patients. It doesn't seem like anything different until she is hit by a truck, and it changes everything.

As Sissi lies broken and unable to breathe, a mysterious man (Benno Fürmann), who is trying to hide from a couple pursuers, slides under the truck and saves her. The man's teary-eyed rescue changes Sissi's outlook on life. When she returns to the asylum after her recovery, she realizes that she can't live the unhappy life she had before the accident and goes out to find her savior.

"The Princess and the Warrior" is a puzzle. That's not to say this film is a mystery in the Agatha Christie, whodunit sense of the word, but the characters are so slowly and carefully developed through the whole of the film that every new bit of information makes the picture, and the characters, seem so much clearer.

The complexities of the characters drive the film. Yes, the cinematography is fantastic and the direction is purposefully ambiguous, but the hope and concern that develops for these characters is honest and unyielding as questions about fate and love begin to surface.

Because there is so much emotional investment, the climax of the film is mind-blowing. After Potente and Fürmann give such riveting performances and the love story is so close to being fully realized, the film's climax pushes the emotional limits.

And that is exactly what Tykwer sets out to do. "Run Lola Run" was never about the acting or emotion; it was an aggressive and



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Benno Fürmann and Franka Potente star in "The Princess and the Warrior," the first film in this year's International Women's Film Series.

energetic, albeit stylish, action film. This film, however, lets the scenes and the picture move the audience. Not even the occasional hyperactive camera work changes that.

Even in the end, when the film wraps up its subplot a little too nicely, the story of Sissi and her mysterious hero is what resonates. The final scene, a long, reflective pan out, allows just enough time to begin pondering the film's true weight. I say begin, because "The Princess and the Warrior" will stay with you for days.

☆☆☆ 1/2
out of
4 stars

"The Princess and the Warrior," directed by Tom Tykwer, starring Franka Potente and Benno Fürmann will be shown Mar. 18 at 7 p.m. in Reed 17. It is the first of three movies presented in the International Women's Film Series.

Spit on this 'Grave'

Review by Daniel J. Stasiewski
a&e editor

Action movies are rarely anything special, but even the most ardent action film enthusiast has to admit "Cradle 2 the Grave" is a whole different type of blow 'em up, beat 'em down escapism.

"Cradle" starts out as a diamond heist, moves into a kidnapping plot, attempts to be an international thriller, becomes an underground boxing match, as well as a BMX off-roading exhibition, until a morality tale finally rears its head. Sure, this movie flows like a kidney stone, but if the action had been less ridiculous it might have been worth the pain.

Career burglar Fait (DMX) is hired to steal a shipment of black diamonds from the L.A. Diamond Exchange, but a mysterious assailant named Su (Jet Li) beats the details of the heist out of the man who set up the job. The heist still goes off, but Fait and his group of thieves lose their share of the loot during the escape.

Fait decides to take the black diamonds, which he successfully nabbed, to his pawnshop buddy Archie (Tom Arnold) to find out how much the stones are worth. Archie, who is more concerned with cool toys like DVD players and tanks, turns out to be worthless when he lets some thugs steal the stones from his shop.

With the stones gone, Fait faces a major dilemma. Ling (Mark Dacascos), the criminal who hired Fait's boss, wants the stones back and kidnaps Fait's daughter for insurance. Luckily, Su turns out to be a Taiwanese intelligence agent in charge of taking down Ling's operation. With Fait's posse and Su's extreme ass-kicking ability, the pair is poised to beat the bad guy and save the girl, even if she is only eight years old.

"Cradle 2 the Grave" is the third hip-hop action fusion from Polish director Andrzej Bartkowiak. It's his third time working with rapper DMX, as well as his third and most burnt-out exercise in pure, mind-melting tripe. Bartkowiak hasn't done anything in the past to reinvent the action genre with his hackneyed slow motion and timid fight choreogra-

phy, and only seems to get worse this time around. The action takes top priority in "Cradle" but is so completely over-the-top it's laughable.

DMX soars from rooftop to rooftop on a four-wheeler, while Jet Li takes on the entire roster of an Ultimate Fighting-style boxing club. True, these mo-

shorts, have more continuity when set one after another that the whole of this movie.

Then there's DMX. After "Exit Wounds," it looked like he might be able to pull off this acting thing. In "Cradle," however, he has to acting styles: bad and

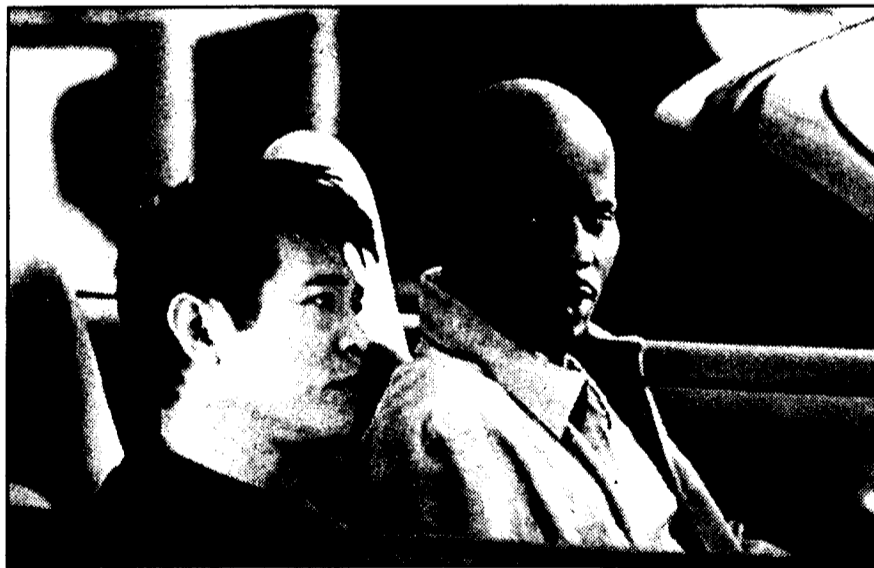


PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAP2IT.COM

Jet Li and DMX in the action disaster, "Cradle 2 the Grave."

ments are integral progression of the story, but does Li really have to use a midget as a weapon? Or how about Tom Arnold's inconspicuous possession of a tank? I don't care if his pawnshop doubles as an Army surplus store. The thought of Arnold with a tank is just silly.

Arnold does have some comedic moments, though. Teaming up with his "Exit Wounds" comedic co-star Anthony Anderson (who plays one of Fait's criminal comrades), Arnold is able to at get a laugh out of something that is legitimately funny, not absurd. Like in "Exit Wounds," "Cradle's" closing credits, with Arnold and Anderson commenting, is the only real reason to sit through to the end.

The rest of the film, however, lacks the continuity to maintain even the facade of a plot. There are so many mutations in the film, it almost feels like a bunch of half-assed action sequences meshed together into one drawn-out action disaster. The BMW Film Series, commercials that double as action

over. While DMX is made into the film's criminal hero, Li, the real action star, is only brought in when there is a need for another asinine fight sequence.

Anything asinine should really be left up to Arnold and Anderson. They have the comedic prowess to make the ridiculous action work. In fact, I can't wait to see an Anderson/Arnold buddy comedy. Then there wouldn't be a need to sit through an hour and a half of bungled action bits to get to the only part worth watching—the end.

1/2 ☆
out of
4 stars

"Cradle 2 the Grave," directed by Andrzej Bartkowiak and starring DMX, Jet Li, Tom Arnold, and Anthony Anderson, is currently showing at Tinseltown.

Behrend students miss with 'Soul Train' predictions

by Olivia Page
staff writer

Ashanti, Musiq and B2K nabbed two "Soul Train" awards each on March 1. Last month, Behrend students made their predictions, but were wrong on most of them. Not psychics, students only predicted four out of 10 awards.

On the "Soul Train" awards, the co-hosts were "Chicago's" supporting actress Queen Latifah and "Star Search's" Arsenio Hall.

The show opened with Mariah Carey singing "As Long as I Believe." Carey is also this year's recipient of the Quincy Jones Award for Outstanding Career Achievement Female. With more than 150 million albums sold, it was no surprise that she was honored.

B2K was Behrend's prediction for Best R&B/Soul Single, Group Band or Duo. Behrend won this round because B2K won for "Bump, Bump, Bump." B2K was not present to accept its award.

Behrend students may not be psyched to see that they were wrong about their other prediction. R. Kelly/Jay Z's "Best of Both Worlds" beat out B2K with Best R&B/Soul Album, Group band or Duo with "Pandemonium."

Behrend students were wrong about Nappy Roots being the Best R&B/Soul or Rap New Artist. Amerie, who shocked the crowd with her sheer black outfit, won this award. Amerie later performed her single "Talkin' To Me."

The Male Quincy Jones Award for Outstanding Career Achievement went to LL Cool J. The crowd was ecstatic when LL came out performing "Love You Better." He teased the audience by taking off his Philly jersey, girls screaming, and throwing it into the audience. Jennifer Lopez presented the award to LL, saying, "For nearly two decades LL has entertained and inspired us with his music, film and television. His talent to captivate and mesmerize a audience on the screen and on the mic, makes him hip hop's true renaissance man, not to mention, the lips, the body, and the arms and all that."

LL then accepted his award with an emotional edginess as he said, "I didn't know that when I was 14, it would be like this...I lost my grandmother, this (award) is for her."

Behrend's prediction for Best Gospel

album was correct. Kirk Franklin won the Best Gospel Album Award with "Rebirth of Kirk Franklin."

Nelly was the recipient of the Sammie Davis Jr. Award for Entertainer of the Year. It was handed to him by Chris Rock. Later, Nelly and the St. Lunatics took the stage rapping "Air Force Ones" and "Pimp Juice." During the "Air Force Ones" performance the stage was decked out with six gigantic white Air Force One shoes. One of the Air Force One shoes was displayed with wheels on it. Also during this performance, guys up in the balcony were taking their Air Force Ones off their feet and waving them in the air.

Behrend students were wrong about the Best R&B/Soul or Rap Music Video. Students said that the award would go to 50 Cent. In actuality the "Michael Jackson" award went to Missy "Misdemeanor" Elliot for "Work It."

Behrend students missed with their prediction of Justin Timberlake in two categories. Though Timberlake performed "Cry Me a River" and "Like I Love You," Musiq was the winner of awards for Best R&B/Soul Album Male with Jusliens and Best R&B/Soul Single Male with "Don't Change."

Musiq appeared with his classic jeans and hat ensemble, this time with a twist. Musiq performed "Don't Change" with a sweater embroidered with "Soul Train" in gold lettering.

Ashanti did not win Best R&B/Soul or Rap Album of the Year. This award went to Nelly's "Nellyville." Ashanti was predicted to win three awards. Although Ashanti was a no-show for the awards, she did win two. Ashanti won Best R&B/Soul Album Female and Best R&B/Soul Single Female for "Foolish."

Some of the other performers were Dru Hill, India Arie and Gerald Levert. Don Cornelius's "Soul Train" show has opened the doors to many music performers. The show's intro is a great way to tell people about Soul Train: "I got everything you need to worry about nothing, from hip-hop to pop, soul, R&B and classical. The new millennium is guaranteed to be magical, as long as people keep getting together, and remember the Soul Train line is forever. Don Cornelius had a vision, now we on a role, the destination of this train, love, peace and soul."