

Cheap Seats and Sticky Floors

Master and Commander sails the high seas

By **MATT MOSLEY**
Film Reviewer

I sat in the theater cringing, and eating nachos, as I saw the trailer for *The Day After Tomorrow*. It is the new Memorial Day release by Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin, the same European idiots behind big, dumb, glossy special effects pictures like *Independence Day*, *Godzilla*, and the abominably fictitious Mel Gibson tale, *The Patriot*. Their manifesto for making movies seems to be, "The more senseless computer effects we use, the less the audience will realize our scripts suck." It makes sense doesn't it? Sure, if humans still lived in caves eating wildebeest carcasses and walking around on hairy knuckles.

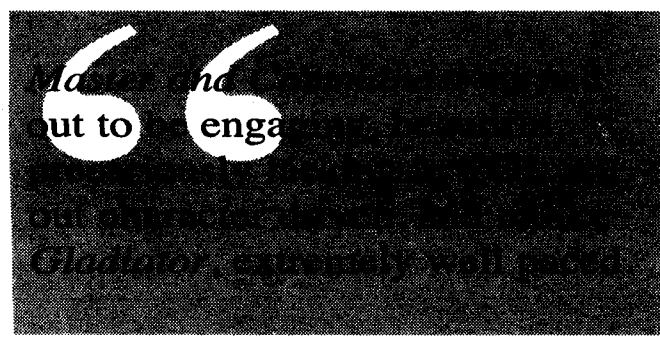
I thought that trailer was going to be a bad omen, considering I was just about to watch *Master and Commander*, the holiday special effects movie I so surreptitiously avoided seeing for the past three months. Depressed, and wanting a cigarette, I sank in my seat and thought, "If this is *Gladiator* on a boat I swear..."

To my delight, *Master and Commander* turned out to be engaging, beautiful, precariously lacking in CGI, all out character driven, and unlike *Gladiator*, extremely well paced. Hands down, it is an intelligent and entertaining film. Note to Devlin and Emmerich: Why pander to the lowest common denominator? Oh I forgot you're missing the key ingredient. TALENT!

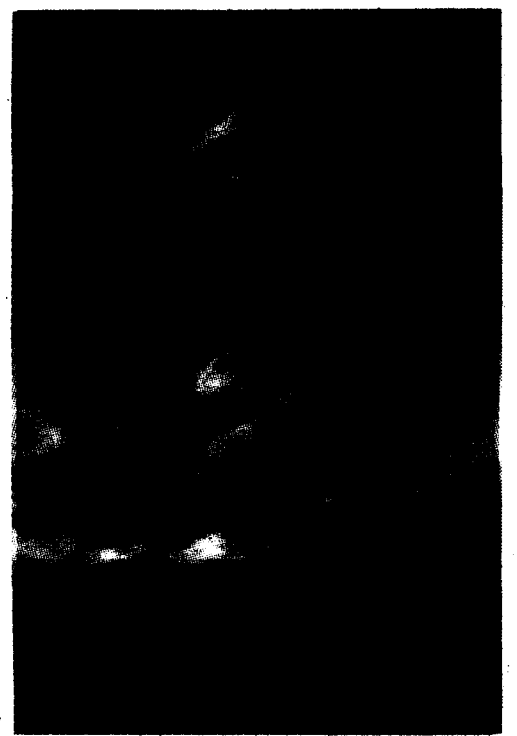
The film is written and directed by the great Peter Weir, the

Australian genius behind *Witness*, *Picnic At Hanging Rock* and *The Mosquito Coast*. Russell Crowe stars as Lucky Jack, the "Master and Commander," of a British vessel during the war with France in 1805. The movie centers on a cat and mouse game between Jack, and the faceless French boat he has been ordered to intercept. It is your "tale of the underdog," except a bit grittier and better developed.

Weir takes you on a journey, showing the glorious experience



of traveling the high seas, while also showing the exhaustion of living on a crowded boat and always being at the mercy of mother nature. *Master and Commander* is surprisingly good, and I would consider it to be one of the better films of 2003. Take out the flat ending and that annoying bump in between Russell Crowe's eyes, and I might even consider it great. As far as *The Day After Tomorrow* goes, well, it might make for a good commercial.



Russell Crowe stars in *Master and Commander*, a movie about being at the mercy of nature during the war with France in 1805.



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Feels Like Home maintains Jones' award-winning originality

REVIEWED BY: MICHELLE O'MALLEY

ARTIST/GROUP: NORAH JONES

ALBUM TITLE: Feels Like Home

LABEL: Blue Note

RELEASE DATE: February 10, 2004


GENRE: Rock

OVERALL RATING: ****

Eight-time Grammy Award-Winner, Norah Jones, has again released an album that will make one feel at home. With her second album, *Feels Like Home*, Jones again displays her unique talent with thirteen new tracks.

The greatest part about this album is the fact that she hasn't gone too far out into an unfamiliar world of music. She stays pretty true to her originality, however, she does add a twist of rock to a few songs. *Carnival Town* and *Creepin' In* display a new flavor to her already moving sounds and *The Prettiest Thing* and *Don't Miss You At All* are definitely the greatest tracks on the album.

This time around, Jones had a large part in the writing process as opposed to her other album *Come Away With Me*. Although her first album won her several Grammys, fans of Jones' can appreciate the young musician a little more due to her hands on approach. After the release of *Feels Like Home*, looks like Jones' favorite direction is UP.



THE KEY
HORRIBLE *
I'VE HEARD WORSE
GROW UP, DON'T BUY IT,
I WOULD PROBABLY BUY IT
IMPENDOUS ***

