

Starring in 'Royal Family'

Frid: Calls comedy 'refreshing'

"My face lends itself to horror," says actor Jonathan Frid with a laugh. Frid is currently playing the role of the flamboyant actor Tony Cavendish in the Penn State Festival Theatre production of "The Royal Family."

"So, it's both refreshing and challenging to do a comedy role as I'm doing in this play," he says.

"The Royal Family" marks the Canadian-born Frid's first appearance in a Festival Theatre production since the 1965 season. That year he appeared in three productions — "Skin of Our Teeth," the comedy "Room Service" and the title role in Shakespeare's "Richard III."

Frid says he considers the last to be the artistic highlight of his career and a role that he would definitely enjoy playing again.

Of the Penn State campus, Frid says he is very impressed. "It's one of the nicest that I've performed at," he comments. "The elm trees here are the crown jewels of the American landscape."

Frid's other credits include stage productions of "Macbeth," Marc Antony in "Julius Caesar" and "Wait Until Dark."



Jonathan Frid

He is best remembered, though, for his role as Barnabas Collins in the Gothic soap opera "Dark Shadows," a role he played from 1967 until the show's end in 1971.

In speaking of his role of the vampire on that memorable series, Frid says that he never played it simply for pure evil. "I played Barnabas as a man with a problem," he says. "He was a man with a strange affliction and, as an actor, I played him for his objectives."

Frid says that he feels sinister-type roles, such as Barnabas Collins or Richard III are much more interesting to do than purely good characters. "God is simple to play, the devil is complex," he says. "There is more challenge for an actor in portraying a villain."

To be a successful working actor or actress, Frid says you are ahead of the game if you follow three rules: be on time for rehearsals, know your lines and listen to the director.

"These are three goals that I'm still working towards," he says. Frid says that there was an actress on "Dark Shadows" that he particularly remembers for following these three rules. Her name was Kate Jackson and she is doing rather well these days in "Charlie's Angels."

What are his acting plans when he's done here? "None really," he says. "I'll go back to New York or Canada."

'Star Wars' best since '2001'

By TOM MARCINKO
Collegian Staff Writer

"Star Wars" is a film that demands a rave review. It's easily the best film of the year so far, one of the best adventures ever brought to the screen, and in the genre of science fiction is the finest since "2001."

Director George Lucas has put together a film providing pure escape. For all its futuristic hardware and remarkable special effects, "Star Wars" has a distinctly old-fashioned atmosphere about it, owing as much to Buster Crabbe and Errol Flynn as to Stanley Kubrick. The only aim here is entertainment, and you get what you pay for.

The story opens in the middle of a revolution against the oppressive galactic empire. Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) is captured by Darth Vader (Dave Prowse), a villain somewhat to the right of Atilla the Hun.

He commands a weapon that can destroy a planet. He's not nice.

Leia is carrying the plans to Vader's weapon, a giant space station called the Death Star. She entrusts them to two amusing robots and sends them on their

way before Vader gets his clutches on her.

The robots, or "Droids," fall into the hands of our hero, young Luke (played with wide-eyed innocence by Mark Hamill). He's bored with being a farmer and wants to see a little action. The droids lead him to Ben Kenobi (Alec Guinness), who teaches him the ways of laser swordfighting and "The Force," a mystical entity which "binds the galaxy together."

movie review

The already unlikely group enlists the aid of Han Solo (Hamilton Ford), a swaggering mercenary who agrees to hire his spaceship. They elude Vader's hitmen and alien gangsters, get off the planet and slip into hyperspace only to get captured by the Death Star.

From there things get far-fetched. As printed science fiction, "Star Wars" is strictly pulp stuff, but as a film it works wonders where words would fall flat.

Writer-director George Lucas (responsible for two other fantasies, "American Graffiti" and the Orwellian "THX-1138") has given us a thrilling

wonder story, an episode of Flash Gordon done with a large budget and convincing special effects.

"Star Wars" offers no apologies for being just fun. Lucas sees that most of it gets played straight, but knows when to keep it tongue-in-cheek.

Another pit filmmakers fall into is the obligatory message. Science fiction can be an effective vehicle for satire or allegory, and Kubrick comes to mind here, but most "message" SF films fall flat on their own long faces. "Star Wars" is simple-minded, maybe even mindless, but it won't hit you with a lecture on the role of technology or the true nature of the universe.

"Star Wars'" major flaw is its shallow characterizations, though in a film like this they're hardly needed. Most of the reviews I've read have said that the droids are the best actors, but Harrison Ford gets my favorite line: "Travel through hyperspace ain't like dusting crops, boy!" Let's see Dustin Hoffman or Marlon Brando get away with something like that.

I hope the popularity of "Star Wars" will see to it that we'll have more good SF films, instead of the occasional fluke.

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