

# Sunday Bloody Sunday

Well... another Oscar night has come and gone. I was actually please with my ballot results this year: 10/24!!!! I usually do much worse. Perhaps it was the thrill of actually having something to win that created the competitive urge in me. Most of the movies nominated this year in the BIG categories were not ones you would expect to see in Northwest OHHO so you do the best with what you have.

I started off on a roll. I think I successfully picked 4 or five in a row. THEN, we got to the technical awards. Most of these were won by *The Bourne Ultimatum*. I have seen the first two films in the Matt Damon starring spy trilogy but have yet to see the third and that won for Best Sound Mixing and Sound Editing. How terrible would it have been if it had won one and not both awards.

Another downfall was in Best Song. I should have known that when a movie (even a Disney movie) is nominated more than once in the same category, it is the kiss of death. I know very little about the movie *Once* from which the song "Falling Slowly" comes.

The contest came down to the final award: Best Picture. Three of us were tied. I picked *There Will Be Blood*. **WRONG!!!!** AH, well... I was really pleased with my results. I won two packages of gift bags which is a quite useful prize and did not end up with the Spider-Man cap that I provided as a prize.

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# BEEE True To You

*This above all: To thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

Hamlet, Act I scene iii

How rich these words sound nearly 400 years after William Shakespeare put them to paper. Polonius is advising his son Laertes to be true to himself and he will be true to those around him. Know himself for the person he is before others can know the true him. Many works of art have included this theme within them. One example is a seemingly simple movie: Disney's *Aladdin*.

Aladdin is a street wise beggar who lives by his wits in the village of Agrabah. However, he longs to be much more. One day in the marketplace, Aladdin comes face to face with a beautiful young lady who appears to be a common peasant girl until she reveals herself as the fair Princess Jasmine. When he finds a magic lamp, a comical genie appears and grants him three wishes. Almost immediately, the young peasant wishes to be something he is not: a prince. As Prince Aliababwa (or Ali Abooboo), the streetrat fumbles around making himself look totally foolish as he tries to win the heart of Princess Jasmine.

One night, Ali takes Jasmine on a magic carpet ride to show

her a “Whole New World.” However, even before the couple go on their flight, Jasmine begins to see beneath the “prince’s” disguise. Following the date, Jasmine tricks Aladdin into admitting his ruse. BUT, riddle me this, why was it ok for Jasmine to pretend to be something she was not in the marketplace? Can we say...EEEEVIL WOMAN.

There must be thousands of books, movies, songs, plays, or any type of art which attempts to convey the message of honesty to one’s self. Isn’t it ironic how such a fun Disney cartoon displays this message to children of all ages? Take the time to look back at the best of Disney’s animated movies and see how many of life’s lessons you can discover.

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## **Finding Inspiration**

Everyone has a passion in life. For some it is a hobby. Others maybe family. But whatever it is, most have to learn to balance their passion with what may seem like the mundane world of everyday life. In the movie *Mr. Holland’s Opus*, one man struggles to do just that and along the way finds that his passion in life may have changed.

Richard Dreyfuss portrays Glenn Holland, a would-be composer who accepts a “day job” teaching music appreciation to high

school students. During the course of his 40 year career, he finds that he has the power to instill passion in others. A clarinetist lacking confidence and an academically challenged athlete who HAS to take his course to fulfill his graduation requirements are just two of the students he encounters. My favorite student is the young promising singer who he encourages to follow her dream. Glenn not only inspires musically but in all aspects of life.

However, Mr. Holland's personal life is often filled with turmoil. He spends a lifetime searching for the inspiration to compose his one great piece of music. He struggles to find a balance between work and family. His musical passion and his family life are put to the ultimate test when his young son, Cole loses his hearing. A brilliant scene shows Mr. Holland attempting to bridge the rift with his son my performing a personal rendition of John Lennon's "Beautiful Boy."

Some intriguing historical flashbacks are used to show the passage of time. This creates the illusion that the audience is watching a movie based upon the events of a real person. The Vietnam War is seen through flashbacks and creates drama in Mr. Holland's life.

*Mr. Holland's Opus* is a remarkable movie for anyone who has inspired or been inspired. It is sentimental without being sappy.

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## **Holy Bologna, Batman**

Sometimes a movie franchise which begins on a promising note can take a big leap downhill. One case would be the Batman films began by Tim Burton in 1989. The original *Batman* was dark, very atmospheric, close to the comics began in 1939. By

the time *Batman and Robin* was made, the movies were an all out farce. In 2005, enough time had gone by to attempt a rebirth of sorts with *Batman Begins*.

*Batman and Robin* ended the franchise for several reasons. George Clooney did not a Batman make. He even considered the performance terrible. Perhaps he wanted to be part of a sure-fire money making movie series but upon reading the script found himself in trouble.

The villains were lame. Mr. Freeze was a carry over from the 60s television show and was a laughable character at best. Arnold Schwarzenegger seems well cast in movies in which he can deliver memorable catch phrases (Hasta la vista, baby; I'll be back; Chill out). That seems to what he does best in any movie he is in to say nothing of his ability to govern the richest, most populous state in the country.

Another great big flaw was in costume design. In some awful anatomical promotion, a cod piece was added to the Bat-costume. To add even more insult, nipples were added to the chest area. These may not have been so noticable had it not been necessary to blatantly display both in close up shots  . This must have been an attempt to promote the new and improved Bat-suit. And who to blame for this... the director himself, Joel Schumaker (who should take all the blame for this mess).

After the success of *Batman Begins*, one can hope that the superhero will once again return to the movies in a good way.

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## Don't Worry, Be Happy

I was having a brain freeze today and could not come up with a suitable movie to review... until I read a blog form a friend.

Happy Gilmore is one of the funniest movies involving one of the most boring sports imaginable: GOLF... UGH!!!!. Adam Sandler is one of the funniest guys around. I abhor watching golf... it is so quiet that that you are just dying to yell out "FIRE" or some other attention grabber. But this movie makes it hilarious. My favorite part of the whole movie has got to be when Happy is in a celebrity pro/am tournament. He was lucky enough to be paired with America's favorite game show host: Bob Barker former star of The Price is Right. Happy's day on the course does not go well. Bob makes the comment that Happy's hockey playing could not be worse than his golf game. Then, the hilarity begins. Bob Barker gets into a knock-down, drag-out fight. When it seems that Happy is victorious, he exclaims: "The price is WRONG, B\*%#H." To which Bob goes into a fit of rage and gives his golf partner a good beating. After finishing Happy off, Bob returns the favor by saying: "now, you've had enough... b\*\$@h." All those days Bob spent boxing in the service must have payed off because the fight actually resembled a choreographed boxing match. It was one of the highlights of the movie to watch the normally composed game show host lose his cool. Speaking of boxing matches, Happy's golf mentor, Chubbs, was played by Carl Weathers who played Apollo Creed in the Rocky movies.

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## **Snakes... Why Did They Have To Be Snakes**

Since this is to be a blog concerning movie reviews, I suppose I should start reviewing more. On May 22, one of my favorite movie franchises will be resurrected with *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. Let me take a moment to deal with the previous 3 movies in turn. All four movies contain

two essential elements: Harrison Ford and director Steven Spielberg

*Raiders of the Lost Ark* was one of the top grossing films of 1981, if not THE top money maker. It is here we meet the great archaeologist and follow him around the globe on his quest to find the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Along with his female companion Marion Ravenwood (played by Karen Allen), Indy battles Nazis, a treacherous rival treasure hunter, and the bane of his existence... deadly snakes. However exhausted he may seem, Dr. Jones rises to each challenge with courage and at times a bit of a swagger. In one scene, Indy shoots a menacing swordsman with one bullet fired from his gun. However, his favorite weapon of choice: his trusty bull whip.

*Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* was released in 1984. The second installment was considerably darker than its predecessor. In fact, Spielberg had to lobby for a new movie rating in order to avoid getting an R-rating. Thus, the PG-13 rating was created. *Temple of Doom* concerns our intrepid adventurer searching for the lost sankara stones which were stolen from a small village in India. These rocks may have meant "fortune and glory" to Indy but to the village they meant their very livelihood. Some of the highlights in this epic are a speeding mine car chase, a rickety rope bridge, and a sumptuous feast consisting of snake surprise, beetles, eyeball soup, and for dessert... **Chilled Monkey Brains** (a tasty treat anyone would enjoy).

The third part of the saga, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989), had a lot to do with the background of the character: why archaeology, where his whip came from, and why the name Indiana. In a very brilliant piece of casting, Sean Connery was chosen to play Indy's father. Who else but the world's greatest superspy could play the world's greatest adventurer's father? After rescuing his father from Nazis, they set out to find the Holy Grail: the cup which held the blood of Christ at the Last Supper and gives everlasting life to anyone who

drinks from it. In a flashback at the beginning of the movie, the late River Phoenix plays a young Indy on one of his teenage escapades.

Now, comes the next chapter. Very little is known about the new movie aside from the title and who knows what the purpose of the crystal skull is. Karen Allen is returning as Marion and Shia LaBeouf is cast as a young man who speculation suggests has a familial tie to the hero. Watch the trailer [here](#)

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## Pamper Me

NO... do not put me in a diaper. I was invited to attend a Pampered Chef party at the house of my very good friends. It was very entertaining. Everyone there got to help make brownies... (which ended up being slightly burned but with a little ice cream, were quite good). I ACCIDENTALLY spilled a smidgen of brown sugar on the floor as I was filling the plopper thing. THEN, I gracefully dropped a scoop of ice cream on the floor... sorry.

After the demo, we arranged an Oscar night party. I have not seen any of the movies nominated for any of the major awards. I have heard that *Gone Baby Gone* is not all that great. Only that it is Ben Affleck's directorial debut and has his brother, Casey in it. We briefly discussed *Little Miss Sunshine* which I have not seen but hope to. And while we were on the topic of Steve Carell movies, we mentioned *Get Smart* which will be coming to theatres this summer. I will say that I have seen *Norbit* on DVD which is up for Best Makeup. That movie should be a contender for WORST MOVIE EVER. I wonder how many movies have ever won both Oscars and Razzies.

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# Superman 2x2

When you are 8 years old sitting in a movie theatre watching one of your favorite characters on the screen, you have no idea how much turmoil goes into putting that action on film. Richard Donner directed *Superman the Movie* and simultaneously his version of its sequel. However, following the release of *Superman*, Donner was fired and a new director for *Superman 2*, Richard Lester, was hired. The funny thing is nearly 80% of what was seen in theatres in 1981 is what Donner had filmed. So 25 years later, Donner released his version of *Superman 2* from the rolls of film shot while making *Superman the Movie*.

Richard Lester's version is a good film. However, it does have many problems. In the Fortress of Solitude battle scene with the three Kryptonian villains, the Man of Steel is given powers that he never had before and were cheesy powers to begin with. From his "S" shield on his costume he pulls out a cellophane shield which he hurls at the evil doers.

Also during the Fortress battle, Superman and General Zod participate in a game of hide and seek. They apparently were endowed with the power to magically appear and disappear anywhere within the fortress. Or maybe it was a trick ice crystals within the fortress. But that was meaningless as well.

Richard Donner's version had no such new powers for Superman. However, it also has ONE BIG FLAW!!!! The same thing that plagued the climax of *Superman the Movie*. I will not spoil for the uninitiated.

Personally, I prefer Donner's version. Both are flawed, but Donner's version also has a brilliant scene with Superman and

his father Jor-El (Marlon Brando) at the Fortress. Both do include the diner scenes which are some of my favorite scenes from the movie.

Richard Lester's version also led to the ultimate demise of the Christopher Reeve starring movies. The final two films of the series took a horrendously comedic tone. Richard Pryor was added to the cast of *Superman III* as a comedic foil. *Superman IV* was just an awful mess which spelled the end of the Last Son of Krypton on the big screen for 20 years .

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## The Lion Roars

☒ So... the "Disneyfication" of Broadway continues. There have now been 5 Disney movies made into Broadway shows (*Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King*, *Tarzan*, *Mary Poppins*, and now *The Little Mermaid*). Many critics suggest that these will be the downfall of the musical itself because the shows are not original and are only tailored to little children. I feel that any chance to introduce a ten year old child to a theatrical experience is well worth the critics panning. After all, there are more than 5 theatres on and off-Broadway.

I was fortunate enough to have seen *Beauty* on stage during its final previews on Broadway. It was an excellent spectacle (which is something else which has been another favorite critical complaint). The set draws the audience into the world of a small French village and to the dark castle in which the Beast resides. All of the characters from the movie are there. The music is fun along with a few new numbers added to the show. "Be Our Guest" is a show stopper with the dancing plates, cutlery, and other enchanted household objects. "If I Can't Love Her" is sung by the Beast at the end of the first act as

he falls into even more despair. Actually a fun show which will delight everyone.

The touring cast of *The Lion King* is coming to the [Toledo Stranahan](#) theatre this weekend through March 30. I do not know of any other show that has been performed for that long at this theatre. Apparently, they are expecting sell outs the entire run.

From everything I have read and heard, this production is supposed to be magical. Realistic puppets for background characters while other actors perform behind masks and other costumes. Again, all of the songs from the movie are featured as well as new songs such as "Morning Report" and "Endless Night."

*Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* are just two of the 5 Disney movies turned into musical extravaganzas. I do think that there should be some point at which more original productions are created which introduce children to theatre as well as entertain adults. Beginning with the **END OF HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL** (but since that is already a stage show... UGH!!!!). But I do not think Broadway is in any danger of being overrun by Disney. What would be next... DisneyYork?



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## Silver Spoon

Ok... so there are 10 days until Williams County Community Theatre presents an evening of MURDER and dinner, too. Our first show is for a group of Kiwanis members at Orchard Hills Country Club on March 1st. We also have two performances at Rita's on the Square in Bryan, OH for the general public on

March 7th and 8th.

I have never before been cast in a dinner theatre performance. I saw a performance of *Nonsense* in which the actors interacted with the audience between dinner courses while on my high school senior trip and it was fun. The performers kept picking on ME?!. That may have been because I called attention to myself and was sitting in the front row.

*Murder with a Silver Spoon* was written by one of our own community theatre members. It is just a fun, very light bit of theatre. It involves a 3rd rate (or maybe 4th rate) novelist who comes to a small town in order to promote her new book, *Murder with a Silver Spoon* (ironic, isn't it?). During the course of the play and meal, there is a murder and everyone is a suspect. The bumbling sergeant and his ever-reliable, very intelligent, and quite dashing deputy attempt to solve the case.

SO.... for an evening of dining, murder, singing, and comedy be sure to call for reservations: 1-888-569-9228.