

Film review:

Star Wars – Attack of the Clones

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A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, an earthling by the name of George Lucas decided that four Star Wars movies (five if you include my personal favourite, "An Ewok Adventure") were just not enough.

As I bunkered down into my seat for a screening of his latest epic, I wondered if the world was really ready for another bought of inter-galactic warfare.

However, as the Star Wars anthem rung out defiantly and the familiar text foreshadowing the coming saga made its way to the top of the screen, I decided that George was right, when you are onto a good thing, stick to it.

According to die-hard Star Wars fans (I can't profess to being one), George Lucas really let the side down with "Episode

One, the Phantom Menace". The question looming larger than Carrie Fisher's coffee-scrub hair-do, was – would George Lucas save face with this latest installment and bring back some of the magic that fans first experienced so many years ago?

Thankfully, I can answer this question with a resounding yes. It is a far better movie than the first. With a more compelling story, less Jar Jar Binks and more Yoda, it goes a long way towards filling the void created by the first re-incarnation. However, there are still some issues that detract from the film.

When the director admits to not liking dialogue, choosing instead to emphasise the 'visual', you sense the script will be poor. Whilst dialogue was never a strong point for George, even in the original series, it seems to have taken

a turn for the worse, with horribly laboured romance scenes and cumbersome transitional moments.

The acting, which George insists as being in the vein of 1930's melodrama, comes across as 'wooden' and in the case of Hayden Christensen, the young Anakin Skywalker, it is just plain bad. It says much about the acting when, as happened on the night I attended a screening, the audience became more engaged and excited by the performance of a computer generated Yoda than by the human actors around him. On this note, the film was visually awesome. I should use the word "film" here with caution as no actual 'film' was used in the shooting of this movie. The film was shot entirely with digital cameras and represents a distinctive move away from the traditional elements of movie making.

With the full technological backing of his own leading edge special effects studio 'Industrial Light and Magic', George had virtually unlimited scope for developing the "look and feel" of the Star Wars Universe.

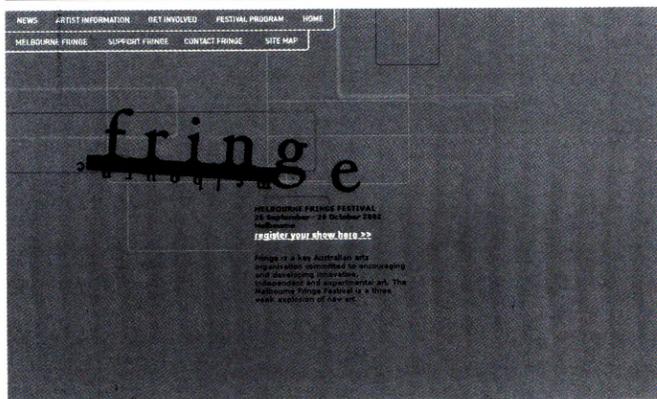
The highlight of the film came toward its climactic end when Yoda, a shrunken and arthritic green man with a previously undeserved reputation as one of the greatest and most powerful of the Jedi, confronted the sinister Count Dooku, played with menace by Christopher Lee.

The audience erupted as this most humble of Jedi 'showed off' some of the most impressive geriatric powers to hit the screen since "Cocoon". It was the stuff childhood dreams are made of and will no doubt ignite the magic of Star Wars for a whole new generation of fans. ■

Website review:

Melbourne Fringe Festival

Noam Shifrin, Dwyer & Company Solicitors



The Melbourne Fringe Festival website can be found at www.melbournefringe.com.au.

The Festival runs from 26 September to 20 October 2002. This year, the Melbourne Fringe is celebrating the Festival's 20th birthday. An exhibition featuring a collection of photos, posters, audio and video of

past performances will be held to mark the occasion. This year, the Festival will be focusing on Sound Art. This is in recognition of the work of sound artists and in particular, the contributions that indigenous artists have made in this area. The program will be posted on the website in early September.

The website provides access to current and past newsletters which are published quarterly by the Melbourne Fringe. You can also find out how to get involved with the Festival, by either becoming a member of the organisation or by volunteering to help out at the Festival. Volunteer application forms are available on the website.

The website also contains information for artists wishing to be part of the Festival, either independently or as part of an event which is produced by the Fringe management. At the time of writing, the information on the website appears to be directed towards giving interested artists information leading to

their participation in the Festival. The website also contains information about who sits on the Board of Directors, who are the staff members, sponsorship information and how to advertise at the Festival.

The website is clearly laid out, has no special effects requiring flash or javascript to be loaded on the viewing computer and in short has something for everyone.

The fact that the site is continually updated means that, if you want to have any involvement with the Fringe Festival, it is well worth returning to the site periodically to keep abreast of the latest developments. ■