

More blood and gore

Commando
20th Century Fox
Capitol Square, West Mall

review by James MacDonald

"Somewhere, somehow, somebody's going to pay" reads the promo for Arnold Schwarzenegger's latest opus, *Commando*. And pay they did. Where? All across North America. How? Who knows. A better question might be why? and who? Well who else but the same rambunctious twits who poured millions of dollars into the box office to see Stallone romp in *Rambo*. *Commando* grossed a whopping \$8 million at the box office in its first weekend, and looks to be the hit of the fall film season. All I can say about this is, AAAAARGH!!!

To be fair, this movie does have its moments. Going out on a limb, I might go so far as to say that it *would* have been good (well, maybe just fair) were it not for the fact that *Commando* boasts the most incredible array of senseless violence that this reviewer has ever seen (then again, I missed *Rambo*). Not only is the violence in this movie entirely unrealistic, it goes so far as to be deliberately disgusting and extended. The result for me, was that I left the theatre numbed to what I had just seen, this because in the last half-hour of this movie, there are no fewer than 150 men who die graphically on screen at the hands of our "hero", a retired special forces commando leader, played by Schwarzenegger.

Here's a plot rundown. Arnie's daughter, with whom he has been living under a new identity in the mountains of California, is kidnapped by a group of Latin American revolutionaries who Arnie helped overthrow years before. These revolutionaries, led by an evil dude called Arius (played by Dan Hedaya, with the most bizarre Spanish accent I've ever heard), and an ex-commando who once served under Arnie. On the way, Arnie picks up a sidekick, a stewardess (Rae Dawn Chong) who is forced to utter some of the stupidest, contrived lines I've ever heard on the screen. The revolutionaries want Arnie to overthrow the democratic government he helped install, but do you think Arnie will buckle under to filth scum like that? No way. (For one of life's sweeter ironies, it can be noted that, in this glorification of war and the American way, the folks Arnie fights against strongly resemble the ousted Nicaraguan regime of Somoza, which was American-backed).

The acting in this picture is pretty bad, but not obviously so. Let's just say that the actors in this film are playing, rather than acting, because they are all cast in the right places, and look okay, but they add no life whatsoever to their characters. This, however, is inconsequential to the movie. Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep playing the principal roles could not have done a bit better (that might have been interesting, though. Hmmm... maybe the sequel). It is interesting to note here that the three main characters in this film are played by actors whose most

recognized film experience has been in roles with little or no speaking involved (Arnie, Wells, and Chong). I think that sums it up right there.

There are no excuses for the script of this movie. It is B—A—D, bad. There are countless efforts at giving Arnie a kind of James Bond-ian off-the-cuff savoir faire and to give Chong some hardboiled wisecracks, but most of these fail entirely. These characters have no life written into them, and thus end up being completely stock. If you recognize similarities between *Commando* and *48 Hours*, it's because they share a co-writer, Steven de Souza, and a producer, Joel Silver. The difference is that *48 Hours* had Eddie Murphy, *Commando* does not; I liked *48 Hours*; I didn't like *Commando*.

Before I lambaste this film completely, let me tell you its few good points. First, it had some great stunts, worthy of James Bond himself. Second, the music was excellent, a kind of South American-synthesizer mixture. Third, it did have selected moments of suspense. Finally, the one aspect that might have made this film enjoyable, Schwarzenegger himself. I've always enjoyed his simple, machine-like performances on the silver screen, and while he'll never even be invited to be on the same block as the awards ceremony at Oscar time, he has a charm and screen style all his own. This also may be the best role for him: a mellowed-out ex-tough guy who is forced to use his brawn to defeat the bad guys and make things right again.

None of these good points are all that strong, however, and there is one completely overwhelming bad point to it.

I'm talking about the violence. This picture has so much of it, and seems to take such pride in it, that if someone told me that they really enjoyed the film, I would not only be surprised, I would be revolted. To me, the film ended up as something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Don't get me wrong, I'm not a rabid anti-violence-on-the-screen protester, but after seeing this movie, I might just become one. The best thing to be said about the last half of this movie is that it put a lot of out of work actors to work as extras, to be slaughtered relentlessly on the screen. It is completely unbelievable and unreasonable, but worst of all, paramount to anything else, it is unnecessary. And when violence on the screen becomes unnecessary and the films in which it occurs are the top films of the year, it is time for the industry to take a long look at itself. Nay, it's time for society to take a good, longer look at itself.

Commando is torn between being an exposition of Arnie's magnificent biceps and a nauseating display of senseless death and destruction. It may have achieved the status of a low-level, second rate James Bond type suspense-adventure with its own amusing level of mediocrity, which would have been considerably less successful; the producers copped-out, instead creating a mishmash of blood and gore, which will quite probably become the third, second, or even the top grossing (excuse the pun) film of the year. Yecch.

sub theatre

Information Line: 432-4764
S.U. BASS Box Office: 432-5145
OPEN Weekdays
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

MOVIES \$1.00 Students \$3.50 Non-Students

THE MAN WITH ONE RED SHOE



If the shoe fits... beware it!

The Man With One Red Shoe
Sat. Oct. 12 - 8 p.m. • PG

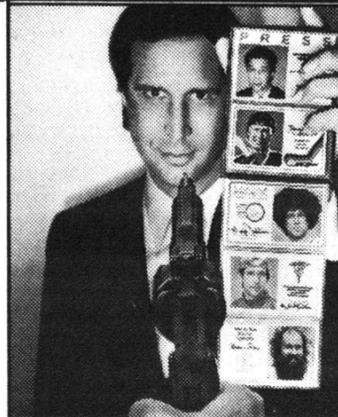
BASED ON A TRUE STORY

They told 16 year old Rocky Dennis he could never be like everyone else. So he was determined to be better.



Mask
Sometimes the most unlikely people become heroes.

Mask
Sun., Oct. 13 - 8 p.m. • M



Fletch
Sat. Oct. 19 - 8 p.m. • M

Meet the only guy who changes his identity more often than his underwear.

CHEVY CHASE IS **Fletch**

© 1984 UNIVERSAL CITY STUDIOS, INC. A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

CJSR presents
In association with U of A
Student Union and Alberta Culture

THE BLASTERS

With Guests
October 11 • 8:00 PM
Sub Theatre
Tix: BASS and all its outlets

PRODUCED BY PERRYSOPE

DINWOODIE CABARETS

U of A Mechanical Engineering Club
& SU Cabarets
presents



DOUG and the SLUGS
and guests **Bob Deutscher**
Dinwoodie Lounge, SUB
Friday October 11 - 8 p.m.
DINWOODIE LOUNGE, 2nd floor SUB
Phone 432-2048

Tickets are available from SUB Box Office (432-5145) and various club members.
Note: These cabarets are open to U of A students, staff and guests.
NEW: DESIGNATED DRIVERS' PROGRAM. Absolutely no minors admitted.
Age ID required.

les ballets jazz de montréal

Artistic Director:
Genevieve Salbaing



Thursday, October 17
8:00 p.m. Jubilee Auditorium
Tickets at all BASS Outlets
Charge by phone 451-8000
\$1.00 Off For U Of A Students
(limit of 2 tickets per student)

With the assistance of the TOURING OFFICE of the Canada Council



JANE SIBERRY
SUB Theatre
November 6

UPCOMING S.U. PRESENTATIONS

VALDY
SUB Theatre, 8:00 p.m. Saturday, October 26.

Speaking of the **Heresy Of Apartheid**, from New York

DAVID MESENBRING
NOON, SUB Theatre, Monday, October 28. Free

JANE SIBERRY
SUB Theatre, November 6

JUDITH MARCUSE REPERTORY DANCE CO.
SUB Theatre, 8:00 p.m. November 7 & 8

TWELFTH NIGHT
By Vancouver's Arts Club Theatre
SUB Theatre, 8:00 p.m. November 21

ANNA WYMAN DANCE THEATRE
SUB Theatre, November 23.

co-sponsored by **Alberta**
CLUB FUND