

Quest for Fire is entertainment but no 2001



Quest for Fire is a movie that's playing in town. This is a picture from the movie. Wouldn't you like to see the movie? Michael McCarthy did and he's going to tell us all about it.

by Michael McCarthy

Quest for Fire is a thought-provoking movie. An entertaining adventure film, it takes a relatively bold step in attempting to break ground for a new cinema genre, the historical science fantasy. The fabulous choice of locations, expert camera work, special effects and stunningly effective acting give the film enormous technical stature. The screenplay is intellectually captivating and often exciting, displaying frequent flashes of creativity in plot and theory. These positive factors combine for a continuously worthwhile movie, despite moments which stretch the story's credibility. These come through improbable coincidence, and an attempt to jam too much into too limited a structure, as well as a lack of true original thought.

The story speculates on the life of man's ancestors 80,000 years ago. It attempts to suggest a possible framework and sequence for some of the important steps/discoveries that helped propel man along the path of evolution which resulted in ourselves.

Comparison with the opening scenes of Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (in which man-

like primates discover how to use implements) would be inevitable, even if Quest's promotion material didn't invite it. While Quest has some of 2001's spell-binding qualities, it has none of its profundity and weight.

2001 dealt with a monumental original discovery - the possible use of implements. The protagonists in Quest do not develop the science of fire-making, but borrow it from a more advanced tribe. It would have been more exciting to watch the awareness of how to create flame grow from the need to create it, or to see how its accidental discovery was turned to a beneficial use.

Another strong theme in the movie was the development of male-female emotional relations as opposed to pure satisfaction of lust. The suggested development is eminently possible. However, it fires no-one's imagination, and adds nothing new to the subject. This does not prevent it from being a dramatic screen portrayal; it does weaken the film from the point of fantasy and original, perhaps even important, thought.

Novelist/linguist Anthony Burgess used Indo-European language roots to come up with an incipient language for the tribes. This is both believable

and effective in adding to the film's strong realism, as are the gestures created by anthropological theorist Desmond Morris (The Naked Ape).

The novelty of the film's approach lies in using a traditional science fiction method of speculating on the development of scientific facts through time, the difference being that it tracks the development backward. Hopefully, this results in a hypothesis with sound factual grounding, yet also involving a strong measure of imagination. Hence, historical science fantasy, different from purely fictional works or the romanticising of historical situations which dominates so much of the popular book market.

From what little I know of Anthropology, it is a highly controversial and speculative field. The suggested lifestyle of man 77,000 years before recorded history which this film provides is certainly possible, even plausible in many details. It is no better scientifically than several other theories, and the film fails to supply enough imaginative force to make it outstandingly appealing. Nonetheless, it does set one thinking about the origins of humankind.

CKDU Top 10

Singles

1. Adam and the Ants "Stand and Deliver"
2. Bob Dylan "Like a Rolling Stone"
3. Martha and the Muffins "Swimming"
4. Talking Heads "Born Under Punches"
5. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers "Don't Do Me Like That"
6. Orchestral Maneuvers in the Dark "Joan of Arc"

7. The Kingbees "The Big Rock"
8. Bob Dylan "From a Buick 6"
9. Tom Petty and Heartbreakers "Refugee"
10. Bob Dylan "Tombstone Blues"

Albums

1. Bob Dylan "Highway 61 Revisited"
2. The Kinks "Lola vs Powerman and the Moneyground"
3. Talking Heads "Remain in

Light

4. Adam and the Ants "Prince Charming"
5. Martha and the Muffins "This is the Ice Age"
6. Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers "Damn the Torpedoes"
7. The Kingbees "The Big Rock"
8. Orchestral Maneuvers in the Dark "Architecture and Morality"
9. Rolling stones "More Hot Rocks"
10. The Clash "Sandinista"

Gazette staff meetings

Mondays
7:30pm

NOTICE

from

PHAROS YEARBOOK

No Grad Photos
Will Be Accepted
After March 31

LBR

Presents



McGinty

March 22-27

Tuesday - Ladies Night*
Wednesday - Gentleman's Night*
*No Cover Charge

Coming soon
Miller's Jug
Mar. 29 - Apr. 3

The Lord Nelson

Corner of Spring Garden Road and South Park Street
423-6631