

Good but not great" was the judgment of *Star Trek* fans at the opening of *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*.

Expectations ran high as the supposedly last *Star Trek* film, with the old cast, ventured "boldly where no man has gone before."

The chemistry of the past four *Star Trek* movies, combined with new special effects, a new starship and, most importantly, Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock and 'Bones' McCoy are the ingredients for yet another satisfying chapter in the *Star Trek* saga.

Being a *Star Trek* fan, I felt uneasy walking out of the theatre. I felt as if I ate a chocolate sundae without any fudge.

Was there something missing or were my expectations too high? I was forced to agree with the rest of the audience at that opening night in labelling the movie, "good but not great."

Star Trek V takes us from the Planet of Galactic Peace (Nimbus III) to Yosemite National Park on Planet Earth, stardate 8454.130, then back to Nimbus III and finally on a journey to the centre of the universe through the great barrier.

During all this travelling, the Enterprise is taken over by Spock's half-brother Sybok, who is a master hypnotist and can peacefully "control" those around him. Sybok, a Vulcan ruled by his emotions, forces the Enterprise into the great barrier: "the ultimate expression of universal fear." The crew learns that Sybok's quest for ultimate knowledge lies in consulting the all-mighty who exists beyond the barrier.

The movie leaves many questions unanswered and fantasy is stretched a little too far beyond the cosmic reaches of the universe.

What made the previous *Star Trek* movies great was the ability of the director and actors to portray 23rd century events in a realistic, believable manner. *Star Trek V* does not reach the line of believable fantasy.

Blame it on the director if you wish, William Shatner, in addition to playing the courageous Captain Kirk, took the director's chair away from Leonard Nimoy, who directed both *Star Trek III* and *IV*, to direct the *Final Frontier*.

With a weak plot and a shaky story line, the movie barely measures up to the other four. It is only the presence of those familiar faces which we grew up with during the endless season of re-runs that save the movie. It does not matter what plot these actors wander through, it's the warm glow of nostalgia that lights up the screen.

It has to be seen on a large movie screen to be appreciated. The visual effects and photography are wonderful and bring the movie to a 23rd century level.

There is no question that *Star Trek V* leaves room for number six. After all, no one wants to end a legend on a low note.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER KIRK?



Stomachs in, chests out, chins up: a slightly older *Star Trek* crew.



"Just relax, Scotty, you'll get to direct *Star Trek VI*."

WHO CARES! Star Trek V Lost In Space

6 EXCALIBUR

Like Roger Moore playing an over-the-hill James Bond, William Shatner portrays the aging Captain James T. Kirk in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*.

Let's face it, Shatner and his cronies are getting a bit old for this sort of thing. In fact, as the other *Star Trek* films have hinted, perhaps our gallant crew should go on an extended shore leave.

For the first time, in *Star Trek V*, we finally get to see our crew resting on Earth. The film opens with Kirk, McCoy and Spock taking a quiet vacation in Yosemite National Park, providing a comedic opportunity much like

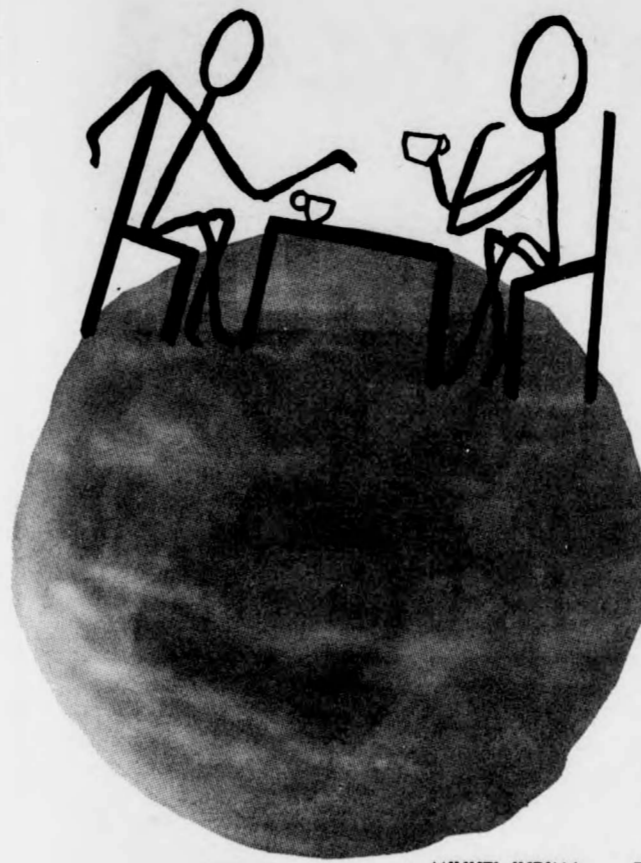
the scenario of *Star Trek IV*, in which the Enterprise went back in time.

After this fairly funny opening, however, the film quickly falls apart. Unlike the previous films (not counting the first one—a commercial failure), *Star Trek IV* is not a continuation of any particular story. It is, therefore, an irrelevant film, with none of the previous films to steal ideas from.

The entire film is a gobbledygook story about a raving nutcase in search of—dare I say it?—God. I mean... who really cares anyway? It isn't as if the Enterprise crew hasn't searched for God already. They did that in a dozen episodes of the old series, not to mention the first *Star Trek* movie, a thinly disguised search for "the Creator."

The other major problem with the film is Shatner's direction. He simply doesn't have the talent that Leonard Nimoy displayed so finely in *Star Treks II* and *III*. The film seems somewhat disjointed, and the performances aren't as heartfelt as they could be. And, as ridiculous a criticism as it may seem, the film's short length of about 90 minutes adds to the substandard feeling of the film.

While the other films were sincere gestures that made serious points about aging (*II* and *III*) and ecology (*IV*), *Star Trek V* appears to be a limp film. Based on *Star Trek V*, I sincerely hope that this is the final frontier.



White women from a coupla planet white chicks sitting earth around talking

A Coupla White Chicks Sitting Around Talking is a funny, touching and intelligently revealing play produced by Femeth Theatre, making its debut in Toronto with this New York hit by John Ford Noonan.

This spanking-new company, dedicated to "producing plays for and about women" and "to creating opportunities for young artists," has made a wise choice in picking this play as its debut.

Delightfully suburban, contemporary and relevant, it is about female bonding and the war between the sexes in marriage.

The story takes place in Westchester County in New York, a similar perhaps to our Markham, A Texan woman, Hannah Mae, moves in next door to Maude, a typical, uptight Westchesterite.

Before Maude can curtly but politely refuse, she is forced into a whacky, emotionally poignant relationship with the boisterous Hannah Mae.

Both women are caught in stagnant, unfulfilling marriages, one worse than the other and the other crazier and more bizarre.

The beginning and middle of the play are rewarding. We are torn in deciding which character to favour; the pushy, nosy and self-confident Hannah Mae, or the conservative, elitist, bitchy Maude.

The dialogue is very intense and kicks forcefully into the two character's personalities. Over many, many cups of coffee—and coffee cup smashing—the clash between the two stereotyped cultures softens. With the emotional walls breaking down, we begin to see the growth and bonding of the

special relationship between Hannah Mae and Maude.

The climax comes with their return from New York City after an intense, excitement-filled weekend of fun. Both characters revel in their newly liberated-from-marriage selves and in each other.

The newly independent Maude is ready to burn her *Better Homes and Gardens* and is set to wreck her prize kitchen. The anti-climax, however, puts a quick stop to this action.

Before the play continues into a vicious circle of friendship and enmity, hugging and fighting, a telephone call from Maude's husband brings it all to a quick, satisfying, surprise ending.

A male rights advocate can, of course, argue that the play is nar-

row and biased, using clichés to describe the husbands and not even giving them a chance to appear and defend themselves. However, this play is about a couple of white chicks...talking, and gives a proper and funny portrayal of these two culturally diverse, but psychologically similar, married women.

Both Toni Prins and Monica DeSantis (the producers, and Maude and Hannah Mae respectively) do a great job portraying the characters in a vivid and believable manner. Although overly stereotyped, the characters are funny and amiable and there are several lines in the play worth remembering.

The play continues at the Alumnae Theatre (70 Berkeley St.) until June 25.

arts section

A brief visit to a magic world

The opportunity to escape into the enchanted world of children's fantasy is now possible.

All of us, although we may not admit it, desire to return to childhood. "Magic Places," a show featuring three of the best Canadian illustrators of children's books, enables us to do just that. All three artists—Warabe Aska, Laszlo Gal and Robin Muller—differ in their styles but the essence of the child's innocence and beauty pervades in all their works.

Aska's oil paintings are breathtaking. His pieces for the book *Who Goes to the Park* are so full of vibrant colour and fanciful images that one immediately drifts off to a world of dreams.

Aska portrays the real world in the bottom of his paintings and the fantasy world in the upper part. In his "Dancing at Midnight," the sombre trees represent the real, or adult world, where everything is dark and gloomy. The clouds in the sky, however, are in the forms of little children holding hands. It is sad that we cannot stay in the fantasy world of the clouds like the children. It is sadder yet that, in reality, we are the ones to bring them down from this heavenly place.

Gal is a veteran of the "wonderful world of children's books." He has illustrated many and always with great detail to areas of colour, creating a textured effect.

"The Twelve Dancing Princesses," a beautiful watercolour which includes his daughter, is

indicative of his lavish style.

Muller is a master at making his stories come to life. His precise works are done in ink and livened with watercolour. Muller is also displaying his tools, which include a toothbrush, and his own toys for the show.

The magic of this artist is his mixture of fantasy and reality. By including his own toys and furniture into his works, one actually feels included in Muller's life because of these personal touches.

The intensity of "Take It, Insisted the Old Man" leaps out at you because of its dramatic contrast of light to dark. It seems to tell the story of *The Magic Paintbrush*, the book it illustrates, without the words.

Margaret Thompson Nightin-



Muller's "Take It, Insisted the Old Man," on display at Glendon's Maison de la Culture.

gale, guest curator for the exhibition, says this is a great opportunity for the three talents to get more recognition.

"These are three wonderful people who never lost touch with their childhood and that's the magic," she says.

Nightingale refers to the show as her peace effort. "When you live in the world of the child, the hate

and jealousy are not there," she says. "It's really a beautiful place to be."

"Magic Places" coincides with the 68th annual conference of the Canadian Authors' Association. It provides a visual aspect to the literary events that will be taking place June 22-26. "Magic Places" can be seen until June 27 at Glendon's "Maison de la Culture."