The Three Amigos make no friends

Three Amigos
Orion Pictures
Odeon Theatre

review by Glenn St-Germain

The thunder of hooves, a cloud of dust, and a hearty "Let's ride!": It's . . . *The Three Amigos*!

Steve Martin, Chevy Chase, and Martin Short have combined their comedy/acting talents to give us the Christmas movie that had the most hype, (even more than *Star Trek IV*). If nothing else, this movie lends support to the idea that movie quality varies inversely with the amount of hype accorded said for it.

The ads make one expect something along the lines of a Zorro sendup. Nope. There *was* that element there, but a sendup of a genre it wasn't.

The year is about 1920. A small village in the middle of nowhere in Mexico is being besieged by bandits. A young woman seeks help, and finds none. Then she sees a movie featuring *The Three Amigos*. Not aware that they're only movie characters, she asks for their help (poor innocent naive girl that she is).

Meanwhile, after a string of successful silent adventure flicks, the three actors who are the Three Amigos on screen (Martin, Chase, and Short) are fired after their latest film bombs. They get the telegram asking for their help, and misinterpret it as a request for a live appearance by fans.

It gets rather silly from there. Extremely silly, in fact. Silly enough to make me sigh with disbelief in places. (Extreme silliness can work if handled the right way. Not here, though).

Three Amigos is typical for a recent Chevy Chase movie: stupid. For Steve Martin, it's another example of how uneven he has been; some of his movies have been excellent, while others have been very, very bad. (He does much better in another movie currently in release, *Little Shop of Horrors*.) For Martin Short, one of the most talented of the SCTV alumni, it's a major disappointment. He deserves better material than this.

The characters are one-dimensional for the most part. Martin Short as Ned, the "sensitive" one of the trio, fares a bit better in that he manages to give his character more depth (ie, two dimensions instead of one). The rest of them . . . stock villagers, stock bad guys (except for El Guape ("The Hood"), the bandito leader, who looks like something out of a TV sitcom), stock Hollywood types . . .

Sure, there are some high points in the film, but these are mainly sketches-within-a-movie that have little to do with the continuity of the story. (The trio singing "Arizona Moon" around the campfire — accompanied by local wildlife — is great fun.)

Three Amigos is a major disappointment considering the calibre of (some of) the principals. The fact that Steve Martin directed and co-wrote makes me wonder what went wrong. This movie should have been at the very least a throwaway comedy worth seeing on $2.50 Tuesday.

It's not even that.

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Mean While skanking

Mean While
Leroy Sibbles
Attic Records

record review by Scott Gordon

This is an excellent album that pulls no punches. And this is a singer that pulls no punches.

Leroy Sibbles is an ex-member of one of the great reggae bands of the sixties, The Heptones, and his singing since then has only improved. He wrote the original version of that abomination 'Pass the Dutchie,' called 'Full Up' and bands such as UB40 and The Police have borrowed from him. He can be considered a pioneer, at the least, and a great performer, at the most.

Songs such as 'South Africa' and 'No More A Dat' are blatantly political, and this is to be expected from an artist such as Sibbles, and especially from reggae in general, since this musical form seems to be the only one around today that is political and that actually makes a statement other than a financial one.

'You're My Sugar', 'Don't Worry (You Safe)' and 'Dance Hall Style' have radio airplay potential, but they still have a message. The musicianship is great, but I wonder if Sly Dunbar ever gets a chance to sleep; he seems to be everywhere. But if you're good, what can you do?

Leroy Sibbles, who now lives in Canada, is an artist to listen, dance, and cry with. Attic Records is to be commended, not only for this album, but all the other reggae albums they have putting out lately. But, 'Mean While' I and I skank back to the beat with the herb. Jah Guide.

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