

Bill and Ted's adventure is, like, OK dudes

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure ★★
Famous Players Eaton Centre

review by Mona-Lynn Courteau

Keanu Reeves seems to be making quite a career out of portraying young headbangers. He was seen in *Youngblood*, as well as in the

current mega-hit *Dangerous Liaisons*, but his starring roles have been for *River's Edge* (one of the finest '80s films that I have seen), *Permanent Record*, and now *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*. He has displayed incredible potential in his work so far, especially in *River's Edge* and could go very far with his acting if he is careful

about which movies he does. However, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* (he plays Ted) may just keep him out of the big leagues for a while yet.

When this film came out, I was quite surprised at how many people were going to see it. I thought that maybe it was better than most high-school movies. In reality, *Bill and Ted* is only slightly more than your typical teenybopper flick designed to milk dough out of the nubile young masses.

If you ignore the silliness, and there is an awful lot of it, the movie is actually quite entertaining to watch. There are a few really interesting time-travelling paradoxes and twists that are quite admirable, and that suit the characters very well. Beethoven playing heavy metal on mall synthesizers is neat, and Sigmund Freud analyzing everyone is just plain hilarious ("Tell me about your mother"). Also, some of Bill and Ted's lines and language ("Be excellent to each other; party on, dudes") are quite funny, although they are sometimes exaggerated (too many "dude"s). And thank God that the movie more or less spares us love interests and typical high-school clichés!

It's a pity, however, that the casting and portrayal of the characters is so sloppy. I'm sorry, but wimpy Dan Shor does NOT suit the part of Billy the Kid. Jane Wiedlin (former Go-Go) is completely miscast as Joan of Arc. And Napoleon is one heck of a bumbling conqueror. Director Stephen Herek would have had more success if he had tried to educate the teenaged audience a little, but he made no effort to let anyone know of these peoples' actual historical significance, which is a real pity.

And the acting? Well, Reeves tends to overshadow Alex Winter, who plays Bill. Winter, one of the vampires in *The Lost Boys*, should not have cut his hair, because he looks too clean-cut to play a lazy



Bill (Alex Winter), Socrates (Tony Steedman) and Ted (Keanu Reeves) engage in some telephone booth philosophizing.

George Carlin... should definitely stick to stand-up comedy.

However empty it is, though, its success is no accident, because it is original and fast-paced enough to hold one's attention.

The film is about two aspiring "musicians" from San Dimas, California, who are failing history. If their oral report doesn't score an A+, they will fail, and Ted will be off to military school. So, with the aid of Rufus, a "dude" from the future, they embark on a journey through history, using a telephone booth(!) as a time machine. They end up enlisting the help of a whole pile of historical figures, including Socrates, Abraham Lincoln, and Beethoven.

There are plenty of stupid things about this movie. Quite frankly, the production needs a lot of work. Often the details are very contrived and silly. Take the visit to the mall, for example. Joan of Arc is so enthralled by an aerobics instructor that she pushes her off the stage and takes over! Or how about Genghis Khan destroying a sporting-goods store with an aluminum baseball bat (gee, what a great new weapon!)? We are also expected to swallow the fact that every one of the historical characters gets arrested, and THEN put in adjoining jail cells, from where the two can conveniently rescue them using Ted's father's keys (of course, he happens to be the police chief). And on top of it, Bill's father has remarried to a gorgeous, sleazy blonde girl who went to high school with the two boys, and who still excites them both. Just a little dumb.

There are plenty of stupid things about this film...

metalhead. His acting is not bad, though, which is lucky because bad lead actors would have made the film a whole lot worse than it was. George Carlin was pretty abysmal, though: he should definitely stick to stand-up comedy.

I don't want to trash this movie too much because it really is amusing, and it always maintains a positive outlook on things. However, one gets the impression that it was filmed with the production only half-finished and the details still in their conceptual stage. It is worth seeing if you want a pleasantly silly evening of entertainment.

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