

Arnie warned us he would be back, but he didn't say he would be bringing George Bush

by Andrew Brouse

It is a long way from Kapuskasing, Ontario to Hollywood.

Kapuskasing is a medium-sized Northern Ontario town dependant on the mining and pulp and paper industries. It is the last stop on the Ontario Northland train run.

My father, the train freak, once took me up to Kapuskasing just for the ride. About all there is to do on the train is get shitfaced in the bar car.

James Cameron, the director of *Terminator*, is from Kapuskasing. What this has to do with this movie I'm not sure.

At about 100 million dollars, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* is the most expensive movie in cinematic history. If you like action films in the tradition of *Die Hard* and the original *Terminator*, you will like this one. It is a good action film with stunning special effects and pyrotechnics, relatively unfettered by any profound plot development.

Lots of stuff blows up real good: a few tractor trailers, a helicopter,

film

Terminator 2: Judgment Day
directed by James Cameron
starring Arnold Schwarzenegger
produced by Carolco Pictures

countless vehicles and police cruisers and an office building. While the action sequences are great, the film suffers from brooding introspections and fatuous moralizing about how humans have become so good at self-annihilation.

The most irritating internal contradiction is that, while suggesting that the military/industrial technocracy threatens to destroy humanity, *Terminator 2* glorifies technology.

In the first *Terminator*, machines rule the world. Arnold Schwarzenegger is sent back from the future on an abortive mission to terminate Sarah Conner, the mother of the future leader of the human resistance against the machines.

In *Terminator 2* Arnie returns, this time as a 'good' terminator sent to protect young John Conner from the new 'bad' terminator, a T1000

model made of — what else — liquid metal.

Just beyond the death, destruction and general havoc wreaked by the two *Terminators* is a christian/capitalist morality tale.

It shows up here and there: the subtitle *Judgment Day* is an eerie reminder of the belief held by Ronald Reagan (who along with George Bush is a friend of Schwarzenegger) that the "judgment day" of biblical prophesy would come as an all-out nuclear war; the bumper sticker "Jesus Saves" on a truck the protagonists drive; and John's comment that Russians are "good guys now."

Terminator 2 is refreshingly free of misogyny and ostensibly conveys a positive message. "Ultimately the film is about the value of human life," James Cameron says. "However, the film also empowers the individual"

But it really reinforces the notion that violence is an acceptable means of resolving dilemmas.

In this way, Schwarzenegger as the mythological 'good' Termina-



Arnie! Arnie! Arnie! Everybody's favourite Kennedy goes into popularity overdrive and is reincarnated as a good cyborg. Does any of it make sense? Did George Bush's election make sense? Things blow up — blow up real good. What more sense does Arnie (or George) need?

tor becomes an analogue for American foreign policy. Conventional morality relies on polar positions of good and bad in order

to be viable; so when there is no perceived evil 'other' (such as the 'threat' of Communism or drugs) you must invent one.

Food for Thought but no Solace

by Ira Nayman

It is hard (but fun) to imagine Meryn Cadell's comic sensibilities transferred to film or television. The Toronto-based singer-songwriter's first full album, *Angel Food for Thought*, however, gives her great creative freedom.

Cadell delivers most of her songs conversationally, in a quick, breathless style; it's as if we're listening in on the thoughts of a teenage girl. She occasionally sings (on "Secret," or the chorus of "Bumble Bee"), revealing a voice that is adequate, if not outstanding.

The main attraction of *Angel Food for Thought* is Cadell's loopy wit. "Flight Attendant," for instance, portrays a less than enthusiastic job applicant talking to a disconcertingly distant interviewer; "The Pope" tells of Pope John Paul II's Toronto visit from the point of view of a person suffocating in the crowd.

The album contains an unapologetically female point of view, whether the subject is love ("Bumble Bee" or "The Sweater"), religion ("I Been Redeemed"), women's atti-

music

Meryn Cadell
Angel Food for Thought
Intrepid Records

Sarah McLachlan
Solace
Netwerk Productions

tudes towards their bodies ("Maidenform") or roles ("Barbie"). This makes it stand out against our male-dominated mass culture.

Although different in almost every other aspect, Sarah McLachlan's second album *Solace* shows a similarly female point of view. Not surprisingly, it is also the product of a smaller label (Vancouver's Netwerk), which gives McLachlan the freedom to explore this point of view.

McLachlan's main concern is relationships, personal and political. Despite its title, *Solace* offers little comfort; it aches with the memory of love lost, the realization that there is a lot of suffering in the world and the suspicion that the way our society is organized has caused it.

The lyrics sometimes approach the maudlin — as if Meryn Cadell's teenager started taking herself dead seriously — but there are enough original images to redeem McLachlan's lapses.

Befitting the subject matter, the music is dark and complex with a touch of the exotic, even on relatively up-tempo pop songs like "Drawn to the Rhythm" and "Into the Fire." The final cut on the CD, "Mercy," is positively dirge-like.

The main attraction of *Solace* is McLachlan's voice. She has abandoned some of the vocal pyrotechnics which appeared on her first album *Touch*, concentrating on straightforward delivery, and occasionally builds complex sounds through harmony. Classically trained, McLachlan has a beautiful, angelic voice that is a joy to listen to.

Both *Solace* and *Angel Food for Thought* are mature works that explore the world from a woman's perspective. They are complex, and must be listened to repeatedly to be fully appreciated.

arts

Get the microwave cookbook

by Stephen Balsky

From the program for Theatre's *Passe Muraille's Laurier*, I got the impression that the production would be lavish and stylish but about as interesting as reading microwave cookbooks. Unfortunately, the play fulfilled my expectations.

Laurier is the fifth instalment of playwright Michael Hollingsworth's *History of the Village of the Small Huts* cycle. The first four plays were satires of Canada's colonial past, characterized by short, rapid-fire scenes.

This instalment chronicles Sir Wilfrid Laurier's political awakening of the unlikely duo of Bishop Bourget and Sir John A. MacDonald. The young Laurier marries the ravishing Zoe LaFontaine, has an unpublished affair with Emile Lavergne and is elected to the Parliament of Canada as a nationalist from Quebec.

As Sir John A's government is riven with scandal after scandal, Laurier becomes a father as his mistress bears his first son, Armand Lavergne/Laurier.

The fiery rogue eventually becomes the first Prime Minister from

theatre

Laurier: The History of the Village of the Small Huts, Part 5
written and directed by Michael Hollingsworth
Theatre Passe Muraille

Quebec after four members die in office in five years. Ironically, Laurier's most stubborn opposition comes from his son Armand, thus defining the patricidal character of the war between Quebec and Canada.

The biggest flaw of this production is Jim Plaxton's allegedly stylish "black box" lighting. Every character is seen through some obscure peephole of light as if the viewer is in a box. Not once is the stage totally lit and only the occasional spotlight brightens some of the actors. I found this very annoying.

The pace of *Laurier* also leaves something to be desired. There are too many dull stretches; I often found myself glancing at my watch or shifting in my seat.

Laurier does have its merits, however. Stephen Ouimette in the title role gives an engaging performance, displaying more energy than any other cast member. As he grows

from the wide-eyed political freshman to the older, wizened Prime Minister (who resembles Doc Brown, the zany professor in the *Back to the Future* trilogy), Ouimette invokes the most laughter.

Robert Nasmith is also amusing as the Jimmy Swaggart-like Bishop who delivers his lines at twice the volume of the others.

The costumes — from what could be seen of them — were impressive, reflecting the Victorian and Edwardian eras.

Laurier employs one interesting stage technique when the Prime Minister and Henri Bourassa, his archrival, play a mental tug-of-war with the confused Armand. Each actor stands to one side of the stage (like the old devil/angel conflict of decision); they speak as if they are at opposite poles of Armand's psyche. This is clever and effective.

Overall I found *Laurier* overlong; it dragged in spots. Scholars of history or political science might be interested in checking it out.

For more information phone Theatre Passe Muraille (16 Ryerson Street) at 363-2416.

