

## THE ARTS

## Deep philosophy from Bill &amp; Ted

Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure Bay-Bloor Cineplex

REVIEW BY PAMELA POMPOUS AND ARTSIE PREETENZ

The Grope and Flail

If one is willing to suspend one's disbelief for the 90 minute duration of *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, one will find oneself in turn laughing uproariously at its subtle humour and pondering philosophically its profound thematic content; never for a moment does the film become at all tedious, repetitive or boring. Stellar performances are given by two promising young actors in this innovative new film which examines the problems so often faced by adolescents as they struggle to pass into adulthood: Alex Winter, as Bill, is appealing as a young man battling against his overbearing, domineering father: Ted, played by Keanu Reeves, is also exceptional as a boy in the throes of an Oedipal complex.

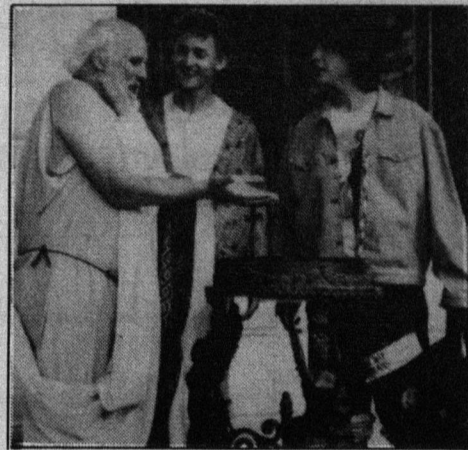
A number of famous literary and historical figures arise in this film; from the philosopher Socrates, of ancient Greece, to Sigmund Freud, the inventor of psychoanalysis. Through facetious portrayals of these figures, the film brings to light the misconceptions which our youth hold of those who have shaped history; sadly, it reveals the ignorance common to school-children whose greatest interest is the opposite sex and whose only ambition is to star in a rock band. Bill and Ted pronounce Freud's name "Frood" and Socrates' with the emphasis on the middle syllable; this points to the fact that our society must redouble its efforts to educate its youth.

One of the film's most interesting and significant attributes is its use of symbolic imagery, the most blatant of which is the phallic corn dog which Freud points menacingly at two young, blossoming women in the shopping mall. The AT&T phone booth, in which Bill and Ted travel, is again a Freudian psychodynamic image, signifying a womb in which the characters are forced to curl in the fetal position. When Bill and Ted journey into their future, the characters whom they meet in the domelike structure wear gowns and sunglasses, thus fulfilling their infantile desire to imitate their mothers. Bill and Ted themselves attempt to pursue their ego ideal, represented by Van Halen, the contemporary popular pseudo-musical band whose members operate only according to the impulses of their id.

Each character in this film has a clear, purposeful function delineated by the director, who is, by the way, a pure genius

at the art. They are all dramatically engaging, acting their roles with clarity, precision and energy. Joan of Arc stands for womanhood everywhere: as she watches the vivacious, dictatorial aerobics slavedriver, she becomes overwhelmed by her own desire to lead the women, finally losing control and pushing her rival unceremoniously off the pedestal.

Mongolian rebel leader Ghengis Khan expresses impotent, frustrated rage which suddenly bursts out as he seemingly calmly browses through a sporting goods store. Viciously, inhumanly, coldly, he fatally swats a mannequin until it is left to a tragic end, a mere shell of its former self. At the same time, classical composer Beethoven wreaks havoc in a music equipment store as he creatively adapts his piano pieces to synthesizer.



Bill and Ted with Socrates: not your typical vacuous American youth, interested only in the opposite sex

One of the most poignant moments of the film occurs when Bill and Ted save Billy the Kid, a mythic cowboy hero, from perishing at the hands of uncivilized Western louts. Billy demonstrates his eternal gratitude by assisting Bill and Ted in cleverly and adeptly capturing other famous philosophical and historical personalities. Napoleon, the French leader of the 18th century, is mocked, ridiculed and likened to a swine in the scene in which he discovers the joys of the American ice cream parlour. This typifies the uninformed, biased opinion Americans have of other cultures. How unfortunate that the glorious Napoleon could not have been portrayed in a more respectful manner. Americans truly need a lesson in history.

The quintessential moment of this film occurs when Billy the Kid and Ted convince Socrates to accompany them into the future. Ingeniously using the analogy of dust in the wind, Ted relates to Socrates on a powerful, nonverbal level. Socrates' message is not only passed along to his followers in ancient Greece, but to modern-day high school students whose lives are sadly lacking philosophically prior to Bill and Ted's dissertation.

Let us not forget to mention the unique costumes, the spectacular special effects

## Benefit for the dead by the dead

BY NEIL ISTIC

The Grope and Flail

Another mega-concert, to hit North American venues early next year, is now in the planning stages. The concert, tentatively titled "Dead Aid," is planned to raise money for lost souls now bitterly imprisoned in purgatory.

Benefit organizer Shirley Maclaine says the concert will be the first of its kind ever, featuring such famous names as Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Jim Morrison and Keith Moon. Maclaine wants to first conjure up these spirits during a massive seance to be held at the Houston Astrodome. "The Texas climate will make most of the musicians feel more at home," she explains.

Stealing a page from pre-reformation theological doctrine, Maclaine hopes that with the proceeds from the concert she will be able to purchase enough indulgences to spring literally millions of souls from purgatory — souls that are now in limbo, torn between heaven and hell. "I just got off the horn with the Pope yesterday, Maclaine reveals, "he seems to think that if we can raise enough money to build a new Basilica in Managua, we might just be able to reach our set target of a million souls. I'm following his advice because, after all, who am I to argue with the Pope?"

Several contacts have already been made. Hendrix and Morrison are genuinely perplexed as to the reason Burton isn't with them right now. "I mean he can play base ten times better than Sid," says Morrison. "I think the Big Guy's just trying to make him sweat a little. I should know, I've been there before." Hendrix had little else to add, except that he's been miraculously cured of his manic depression, and that he's now enjoying the best purple haze he has yet experienced. Wedged firmly between two foxy ladies, he said, "I was only joking when I said 'let me stand next to your fire.'"

accentuated by futuristic music, and the captivating cinematography apparent in this film. It is the absolute pinnacle of the modern-day cultural and intellectual experience of movie-going. The final scene of the film, in which Bill and Ted discover their true potential, is awe-inspiring, although it could be more moving. Finally, good/rock/future/youth triumphs over bad/classical/past/age in this stunning *piece de resistance*.

A bitter Sid Vicious is upset by how quickly Morrison and Hendrix have forgotten about him. "That stuff about me not being able to play bass is bollocks," he pouts. "They'll never make it unless they do it my way! How I wish I could get out of here. Nancy's driving me crazy! I thought I'd be rid of her after I killed her, and now she lives down the block! All I hear all day is 'Siiiiiiid...' If I hear 'Siiiiiiid' one more time I'll go insane. I'll get you Malcolm!"

But apart from the affirmative responses of Morrison and Hendrix, things aren't going as smoothly as Maclaine had hoped they would. "We're having a little trouble locating Elvis," she says, "word on the cloud has it that he's still down here with us. And even though I'd like him to perform, if he's not dead I have no use for him."

Also noticeably absent from the bill is ex-Beatle John Lennon. Speaking to me from his home at 666 Lucifer Drive, Lennon had this to say: "I'm morally opposed to this concert. First of all, the whole idea of purgatory is absurd, and I don't believe in God, Satan, heaven, or hell. Phew, is it hot in here! Will this heat never let up? And besides, I've already told the organizers I wanted top billing, but they tell me I'm no longer more popular than He is."

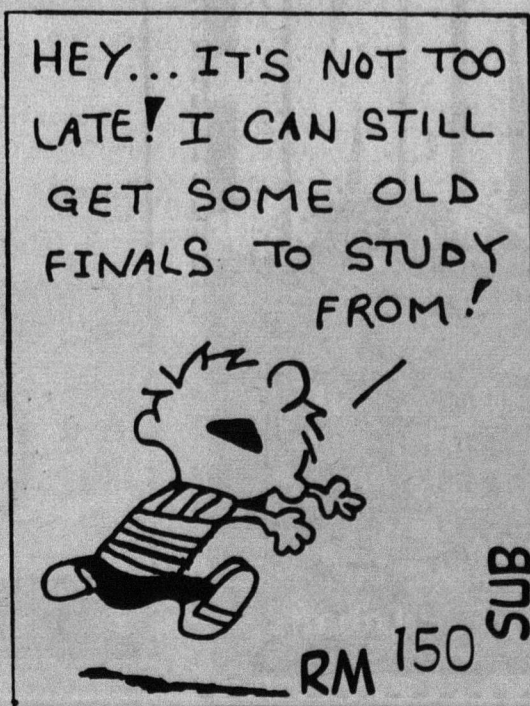
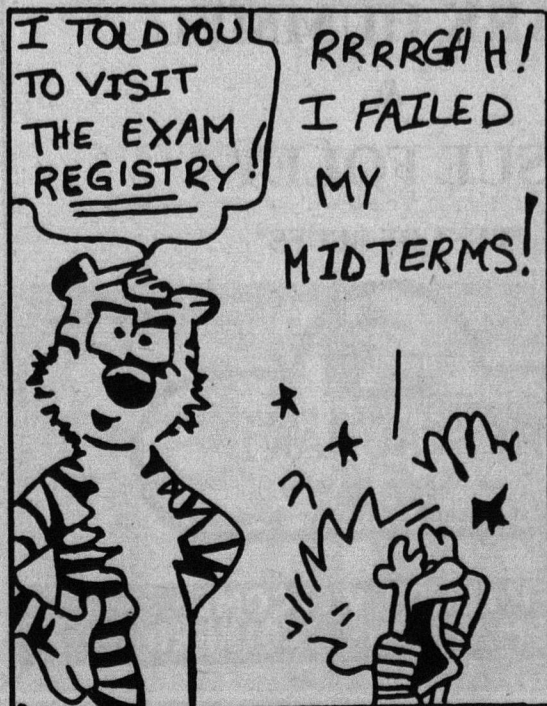
On a more positive note, it appears that Maclaine has come close to signing drummer Keith Moon. "There are just a few details yet to be worked out," she explains. "Before Keith will play he wants a guarantee that he will receive an upgrade in living accommodations. Apparently his flat is too hot right now, and the air-conditioner is always broken."

The only major obstacle yet to overcome is Satan. "Heck ya, I oppose this concert he exclaims. "I don't want to lose any more souls than the next devil. If this concert goes, I demand compensation. I didn't invest all my money in PRSPs (purgatory retirement savings plans) for nothing. What if they get Cliff Burton? Then all I'm stuck with is that pouting baby Sid Vicious. Is that fair?"

Maclaine, however, isn't afraid of Satan. Confronted by the possibility that Satan might want her soul in return for his permission, Maclaine responds, "that smoky little misfit couldn't negotiate his way out of a wet paper bag. He seems to forget that he's dealing with the power of harmonic convergence here. He's out of his league."

So with just a few details left to iron out, a spirited Maclaine is confident that the concert will be a go. "I had some reservations when I first conceived this project," she explains. "But when Roy Orbison died all my doubts evaporated. I simply had to organize this concert. They have more talented musicians over there than we have over here."

## THE EXAM REGISTRY



Edie Brickell & New Bohemians

Dinwoodie Lounge  
Saturday, May 13  
8:30 pm Doors  
"guests Steve Forbert"  
Tickets on sale soon at S.U. Info Desks  
No Minors