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Trailer Watch:

Handicapping this summer's biggest movies

Daily Kent Stater

Issue date: 4/7/05 **Section:** [Undefined Section](#)

Originally published: 4/7/05 at 12:00 AM EST **Last update:** 1/27/06 at 10:21 AM EST

Batman Begins

Starring: Christian Bale, Katie Holmes, Forest Whitaker, Michael Caine, Liam Neeson, Morgan Freeman, Gary Oldman, Ken Watabnabe and Cillian Murphy

Directed by: Christopher Nolan

Distributed by: Warner Bros. Pictures

Opens: June 17

Stater rating (out of four):

? ?? 1/2

This trailer shows us that Batman Begins will not be just another Batman film ... this will be the Batman film, where the character returns to the seriousness of the 1989 film. The trailer opens, showing Bruce Wayne

training with Ra's A Ghul. From there, it shows Bruce creating the Batman costume, followed by a flurried mix of action-shots showing the new crime-fighter in action. Closing out the preview, a terrified thug screams "Where are you?!?" and backs right into Batman hanging upside down, who answers simply "Here."

As a whole, this trailer shows that this film will have plenty of action, as well as introspection into the character of Bruce Wayne as he is led up to the creation of Batman and begins his one-man war on crime. Though much in the same vein as Tim Burton's 1989 movie, this is an entirely new movie that will (re)introduce the world to Batman.

— Walt Kneeland

Cinderella Man

Starring: Russell Crowe, Renee Zelleweger, Paul Giamatti and Craig Bierko

Directed by: Ron Howard

Distributed by: Universal Pictures

Opens: June 3

Stater rating (out of four):

? ??

First Million Dollar Baby and now Cinderella Man. Another boxing movie that's meant to have more to it than just two people belting each other senseless, although judging from the preview there will still be plenty of blood spilled. As for Russell Crowe, with the amount of bar-room brawls he has managed to get himself into, surely he was going to play a boxer eventually.

However, there is a touch of irony in seeing Crowe actually winning a few fights, since we all know he can't fight his way out of a wet paper bag.

But aside from maybe a few too many extreme close-ups of Crowe's eyes, the shots from within the ring do offer the drama that a real boxing match should.

The music in the trailer makes one goal of the film very clear: It's meant to inspire, and we still do like the odd, inspirational film. Not quite as many as Hollywood seems to dish out, but a few sappy flicks here and there. This is a better trailer than most that are going around and hopefully a better film.

— Daniel Bott

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Starring: Johnny Depp, Freddy Highmore, Missi Pyle and

Christopher Lee

Directed by: Tim Burton

Distributed by: Warner Bros. Pictures

Opens: June 15

Stater rating (out of four):

? ???

I've become obsessed with this trailer to the point of turning off the radio on the drive home and singing that addictive "Willy Wonka" tune instead. The Charlie and the Chocolate Factory trailer is a 60-second acid trip, effectively covering all the bases of the book (introducing the concept of the golden tickets, the five children and that room made entirely of candy) and throwing in enough extras to make you chomp at the bit. For instance, we get a peek at what the new-and-improved Oompa Loompahs will look like AND a shot of Christopher Lee's twisted cameo.

At the center of the trailer stands Johnny Depp, who dives into the character of Willy Wonka with all the zest and wit that he brings to any of his characters. It's not quite enough to make me forget Gene Wilder, but it does make me smile from ear to ear despite myself.

— Robert Taylor

House of Wax

Starring: Elisha Cuthbert, Chad Michael Murray, Paris Hilton, Brian Van Holt and Jared Padalecki

Directed by: Jaume Serra

Distributed by: Warner Bros

Opens: May 6

Stater rating (out of four):

? ?

There is only one precious element that makes this film, or indeed this trailer, even remotely worthy of your interest. And that element is none other than professional celebrity Paris Hilton in her first major role.

From the beginning it is very clear this will be remembered as "the Paris Hilton horror movie," as opposed to "the Paris Hilton whore movie" we're all much too familiar with. The trailer even tricks the audience into thinking they might be seeing an ad for the legendary One Night in Paris, as one of the first shots is grainy video footage of Paris voguing while making out with a random guy.

But alas, the filmmakers are intent on making an actual film, which requires additional actors and a plot. Elisa Cuthbert ("24," The Girl Next Door) and Chad Michael Murray, looking more like Justin Timberlake than Timberlake does, lead the cast of pretty half-wits who happen upon a house where a deranged psycho killer captures people in wax molds.

But what really counts here are the glorious shots of Paris. My personal favorite is when she mutters, "This is weird," looking annoyed that she is actually being asked to act and stop interrupting the shoot by having sex with random extras. Also priceless are the shots of her running teary-eyed from the killer while wearing a pink bra, also looking distressed.

But aside from the strictly campy appeal of Ms. Hilton, there appears to be nothing interesting about House of Wax. However, Ms. Hilton is more than enough reason to lure in this filmgoer.

— Jason C. LeRoy

Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith

Starring: Hayden Christensen, Natalie Portman, Samuel L. Jackson, Jimmy Smits, Christopher Lee and Frank Oz

Directed by: George Lucas

Distributed by: 20th Century Fox

Opens: May 19

Stater rating (out of four):

? 1/2

I'm not a complete Star Wars fanboy, but I am a fan of all the films. However, this trailer effectively took away most of the hopes I had for the movie. With nothing outrightly wrong with it, but other than a few brief zingers (Yoda standing with his lightsaber drawn as the Senate crumbles behind him) the preview presents nothing more than a typical trailer for a typical summer popcorn flick. By the end, when Darth Vader theme permeates the theater while on the screen, it is almost a relief to know it's over.

— Robert Taylor

The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy

Starring: Sam Rockwell, Mos Def, Zooey Deschanel, Martin Freeman, Bill Nighy, John Malkovich and Stephen Fry

Directed by: Garth Jennings

Distributed by: Touchstone Pictures

Opens: April 29

Stater rating (out of four):

? ??

This trailer opens with the concept of just “one of those days” where everything seems whacked-out, leading to the “scheduled demolition” of the Earth by aliens. Escaping with his best friend (Sam Rockwell, who's just revealed himself to be from another planet), Arthur (Martin Freeman) is introduced to various personalities throughout the galaxy.

Brief glimpses of characters and scenes show that this film — regardless of how closely it adheres to Douglas

Adams' novel — will be a space-comedy well-worth seeing.

— Walt Kneeland

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