

The sci-fi force is with 'Star Wars' trilogy

My friends and I were sitting around watching the *Star Wars* trilogy, back to back no less, when I was reminded that they really are the best three science-fiction movies of all time.

For those who are recent immigrants from Mars, the *Star Wars* series chronicles the epic adventures of a handful of characters as they resist the evil Empire. Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader and Han Solo, among others, are still household names to many Americans.

2001: *A Space Odyssey* is the best movie of all time, but I think it transcends the sci-fi category. No, for plain old wholesome entertainment, the *Star Wars* movies cannot be beat.

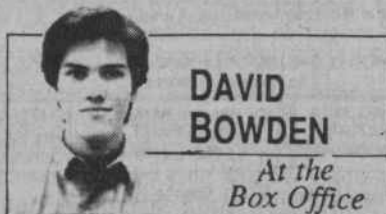
But why do I mention a series of movies that started in 1977? Because, for all the attempts to recreate the magic of *Star Wars*, no one has even come close.

Lord knows George Lucas, the creator of the *Star Wars* saga, has tried. He has produced *Willow*, *Labyrinth*, and of course *Howard the Duck*, yet nothing equals the sense of joy and wonder of a light saber duel or the destruction of either Death Star.

The *Star Wars* series worked so well for a variety of reasons: interesting characters, exotic locales, death-defying adventures, great special effects and the best villains in the history of movies.

Primarily, however, the series worked because the audience feels that the main characters care about each other. There is genuine chemistry between the actors in these movies, be they humans, Droids or Wookies.

The interchange between Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) is one example. Following an old tradition in



DAVID BOWDEN
At the Box Office

movies, these two hate each other at first but fall in love at the end. It might seem cliché, but Ford and Fisher deliver.

The written word can't adequately describe their exchanges, but most readers probably remember comments such as when Leia says "I love you," to which Han replies, "I know."

This is just one of many relationships that are developed through the picture: Han and Chewbacca, R2D2 and C3PO, Luke Skywalker and Ben Kenobi, Luke and Yoda. What little kid did not cry when Ben Kenobi was killed or when Yoda faded away?

The audience must care about the characters themselves before they can care about what they are doing. And people care about these movies. When I saw *Return of the Jedi* in the theater, it was the best film-going experience of my life. When the Death Star was destroyed, there was a standing ovation.

These movies might never be duplicated. George Lucas had originally planned to make nine *Star Wars* movies, three separate trilogies, one set before and one after the first series.

I doubt Lucas will ever follow through with this plan. If he did make more with the same spirit as the last bunch, it would be incredible. Alas, to quote David Letterman, perhaps that is more excitement than humans should be allowed to have.



All the taste, none of the filler

L.A. Guns play at Huger Street

By DENNIS SHEALY
Staff Writer

Today's popular music scene leaves little room for real honest to goodness rock'n'roll.

The few bands that make it usually fall under the Revlon-detox, zucchini-down-the-spandex, take a second to pose glam rock genre (i.e. Poison, Warrent) or slam-crunch, bang-bang-bang, neo-classical speed-dexterity contest a la Death Angel, Yngwie Malmsteen and virtually every artist on Shrapnel Records, which is sometimes passed off as music.

The Los Angeles based band L.A. Guns manages to walk a fine line between these extremes and comes out playing nothing but hard-based blues rock'n'roll with just enough T'n'A and leather thrown in to attract even the most avid MTV top ten watchers.

Once L.A. Guns took the stage Thursday night, there wasn't a head that wasn't bobbing or a foot that wasn't shuffling at the Huger Street Concert Hall.

Lights flared as the band went into the opening bars of "Slap in the Face", and lead singer Philip Lewis skipped out onto the stage to perch himself just out of reach of the grabbing hands.

Concert Review

The band played just over an hour and a half, but that was more than enough time for them to dish out some of the meatiest hooks and juiciest riffs the band-starved Columbia music scene has been hungering for.

And to localize the show just a little bit, the band brought out four of Columbia's own beautiful (and extremely firm) lasses in scanty undergarments (the girls, not the band) to dance and writhe during one particularly rocking song.

The one low point of the show was the completely uninspired power ballad "The Ballad of Jane," which some record company executive forced them to write so that they could get a little MTV airplay. Luckily, the band didn't wait for heart-felt sighs, but instead, launched right into their signature call to hedonism, "No Mercy."

Lead guitarist Tracii Guns (the "Guns" in Guns'n'Roses) solo showed a feeling and

touch that many of today's guitarist lack, but he payed more homage to Hendrix, Rhodes and Van Halen than he displayed originality.

The audience got sort of a treat when original drummer Nicky Alexander filled in for current drummer, Steve Riley (formerly of heavy metal band WASP), who was reported to be sick. Alexander had just joined up with the band a few days before the Columbia show and would be with the band for the next three shows when Riley would be able to join back up with his bandmates.

Alexander did a remarkable job of playing to have just been back with his former band for a few days. He and bassist Kelly Nickels jelled perfectly together and didn't miss a beat, providing ample rhythm for those in the crowd who wanted to bang heads.

L.A. Guns may wear leather but they are not glam. They play heavy but not heavy enough to send them out on tour with Metallica any time soon, but they are one of the best rock'n'roll bands out today, as anyone who was at the show can attest.

On a final note, their opening act, Hurricane Alice, will probably disappear into obscurity in a few months, those at the show will attest to that, too.

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