

FILM

from page 2

string of successful horror films. 97m
9 p.m.

"Chinatown" (1974) - The brightest film noir movie ever made, this Roman Polanski-directed film stars Jack Nicholson as Jake Giddes, a private investi-

gator who gets in way over his head in a case involving the precious water supply in the Los Angeles area.

Numerous plot twists lead the viewer guessing as Giddes unravels the mystery behind the murder of a prominent L.A. businessman. 131m

September 21

The Nickelodeon

7 p.m.

"I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932) - This early sound film stars the original Scarface, Paul Muni, as James Allen, an upstanding young man who ends up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Convicted for a crime he didn't commit, he ends up on a chain gang in an unnamed southern state (Georgia). After a breakout from prison, he heads North, where he creates a new identity and becomes one of the elite of Chicago.

However, he is spotted and eventually brought back to prison. A surprisingly brutal (and critical) depiction of life on a chain gang, this film was banned in much of the South. 93m

9 p.m.

"Raging Bull" (1980) - Martin Scorsese's masterpiece about the life of boxer Jake LaMotta, a disturbingly violent man both in and out of the ring.

Shot in crisp black and white, the film follows the rise of LaMotta, from middle card fighter to world champion. LaMotta, played masterfully by Robert DeNiro, beats his way mercilessly through his opponents and his own family.

The staging of the fight scenes, in almost operatic fashion, will leave you shaking your head in amazement and clutching your queasy stomach.

Also starring Joe Pesci and Cathy Moriarty. 129m

September 22

Russell House Theater

8 p.m.

"March of Time: Inside Nazi Germany" - Documentary from the March of Time newsreel series of the 1940s.

It provides an inside look at Hitler's Germany during WWII. Introduced by Dr. Raymond Fielding, dean of the film school at Florida State University. 20m

"The Battle of San Pietro" - John Huston's WWII documentary that was suppressed by the government for years.

Introduced by William Murphy of the National Archives. 33m

"Topaz" - The world premiere of a film that documents the inside of the Topaz internment camp. This was a camp in Utah where Japanese-Americans were kept during the latter years of WWII.

Shot by Dave Tatsuno, a prisoner in the camp.

Introduced by Karen Ishizuka of the Japanese American National Museum. 70m

September 23

Russell House Theater

8 p.m.

"2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968) - Stanley Kubrick's metaphysical masterpiece about the evolution of man.

A technically brilliant and complex film, Kubrick broke all of the rules by creating a film that leaves the viewer questioning not only what they've just seen on the screen, but what they know about the human race.

Combine this with perhaps one of the most recognizable scores in motion picture history and one of its most memorable characters, HAL, and you will have what will truly be an incredible viewing experience. Terrific way to close out the tour. 139m

NOW PLAYING:

'Stigmata'

BY TED ANTHONY
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A safe bet: The Roman Catholic Church will not like "Stigmata." Not by a long shot.

That's understandable. The movie questions the very validity of the church's existence. This thought-provoking, literate horror film — an odd mix of religious iconography and techno imagery set against the backdrop of post-industrial Pittsburgh — is worth a look, even if you walk away a bit offended by the viscera and blasphemy it depicts.

With echoes of "The Seventh Sign" and a bit of "The Exorcist," "Stigmata" follows a beautiful young hairdresser, Frankie Paige, through an extraordinary sequence of events. Through no fault of her own, she is mailed a rosary that belonged to a Brazilian priest (Jack Donner) who died while on the verge of uncovering information that could shake the Vatican to its foundations.

Soon after, Frankie — played by Patricia Arquette as one part ingenue, two parts street-savvy twentysomething — is stricken in her bathtub, in a scene that blends trauma, religion and erotic energy in a truly unsettling way. Rushed to the hospital, Frankie is found to have puncture wounds that go all the way through her wrists — just like Christ's crucifixion. The doctors think she tried to kill herself. Ridiculous, she says: "I love being me. Ask anyone."

After another attack on a subway leaves her with phantom whip marks (and a diagnosis of possible epilepsy), Father Andrew Kiernan, a Vatican paranormal-events investigator who's torn between his science and his faith, is dispatched from Rome to investigate. Father Andrew (Gabriel Byrne, in a muted, deliberate performance) scoffs at first; it can't be stigmata, he tells Frankie, because she's an atheist and stigmata only strikes the deeply faithful.

But soon, after he witnesses more attacks and sees her scrawling on walls in Aramaic, the language of Galilee in Jesus' time, he begins to believe. His superiors back in Rome, slowly realizing the importance of what's happening to Frankie, begin to get involved in various questionable ways.

Ultimately, a truth emerges: What's happening to the increasingly scuffed and bleeding Frankie could hold the key to a new way of seeing God — one that could reverberate through Christianity and undermine all that the Vatican espouses. Dangerous, powerful stuff, even for priests confident of their faith in Christ.

"We're all blind in a cave, looking for a candle that was lit 2,000 years ago," Vatican linguist Father Gianni Delmonico (Dick Latessa) tells Father Andrew.

Jonathan Pryce is alternatively enigmatic and menacing as Cardinal Daniel Houseman, the Vatican higher-up who keeps tightening Father Andrew's leash. Competent but a bit cliched is Nia Long, as Frankie's supportive friend, Donna, who's trying to figure out what's happening.

The talented Portia de Rossi (Nelle from "Ally McBeal") is underused as a beauty-shop colleague who favors black eyeliner and multiple piercings. Thomas Copache has a nice small role as Father Durning, a Pittsburgh priest.

An interesting ancillary player is the city itself, constantly under storm clouds, reflecting Frankie's moods and deeds. In "Stigmata," 1990s service-industry Pittsburgh



SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Patricia Arquette (top) and Gabriel Byrne star in MGM's "Stigmata."

becomes steel-mill solid once more — filled with belching steam, dark stonework, wet cement and broken glass, showing off its roots as iconic industrial town. Rain-soaked and dreary, it's never looked more compelling.

Stylistically, "Stigmata" is fascinating. It alternates traditional camerawork and editing techniques with MTV-style cutting and oblique angles. It works well because it's done sparingly and for contrast, not as a gimmick to carry the film. Especially interesting is the decision to vary lighting, contrast and filters within scenes, which adds to the sense of unease.

Though slow at times, "Stigmata" ultimately succeeds in its determination to be interesting and to explore the meaning of Frankie's injuries. And it really gets going at the end.

"The real miracle is that anybody believes anything," Father Andrew laments. But despite its standoffishness about the Vatican, "Stigmata" is indeed a film about belief — and about the gray area that lies between religious faith and scientific truth.

"Stigmata," an MGM release, is directed by Rupert Wainwright and shot by Jeffrey L. Kimball. Waldemar Kalinski did the production design. It is rated R.