



ADVOCATE *insider*

May 19, 2008

Cannes Day Five -- Indiana Jones Arrives

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull -- Sure, the cineastes who come to Cannes love high art. But except for Godard, we all like pure fun too. And though George Lucas is convinced critics have the long knives out for Indy (maybe because his last three "Star Wars" movies were so awful fans took it personally), the truth is that everyone is very excited for the new Indiana Jones movie. Why not? I don't know if I've ever met a movie buff who didn't think "Raiders of the Lost Ark" was a genuine classic. So we get in line an hour early and I'm scared that if I stumble I'll get crushed under the crowd. Everyone is pushing and shoving to get into the Lumiere and I make it, but it sure ain't comfortable. And the movie doesn't suck! It's not actually good and I can never love any film that includes not one, not two, but three reaction shots from a mole. (Or a mole-like creature of some sort. Anyway, it looked like the thing from "Caddyshack.") There are a zillion reviews out there so I won't bore you here. It's painless if you're a fan, but nothing to draw in newcomers. That should leave it with a modest \$750 million worldwide gross (at least) with more on DVD. I think they'll be fine and there will be an Indy V with Shia LaBeouf apparently taking the lead and Ford stepping into the mentor-like role briefly held by Sean Connery.

El Dorado -- After a day of preparing for Indiana Jones and seeing Indiana Jones and going to the press conference for Indiana Jones and not getting into the press conference for Indiana Jones and standing by a monitor and TAPING the press conference of Indiana Jones and then rushing home and writing about Indiana Jones for other outlets, I decided it was time to see something else. I was going to have a sit-down dinner for a change, but took a chance on "El Dorado" at the separate Director's Fortnight event at the last minute. Thank goodness. This is the find of the fest so far for me -- a thoroughly distinctive, charming road movie from Belgium. It

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was written and directed by and stars Bouli Lanners, a heavy-set fellow who would make a good bear and -- I think -- has previously been best known for his novels. I think. Anyway, he's a natural here. Lanners plays a man living in the countryside who restores American cars and then sells them to collectors. He comes home to a burglar, traps the kid under a bed and then they have a lengthy stand-off that hilariously goes on for hours. Ultimately, Lanners agrees to drop the kid off at a crossroads. Hours later, the kid is still there and Lanners agrees to drive him to the border near France so the kid -- a junkie -- can meet up with his parents. It's hard to get across the quirky charm of this film, which has its own internal rhythms. When Lanners is arguing about a car he's selling (the man thinking about it says the car isn't "competition ready," Lanners says what does that phrase mean? "That it's ready for competition." "Well, this is ready for competition." "No it isn't." "Yes it is." "No." "Yes." "No!" [long pause] "Yes!" "No." And on and on for a few more minutes with hilarious changes in rhythm and emphasis. The film becomes a road movie, with the two men of course becoming closer and having some oddball adventures, like getting drunk with a man who collects cars involved in auto fatalities, being stranded in an abandoned field of RVs, being rescued by a naked old man, having a dog crash onto their roof and so on. What's lovely is how it's all so grounded in natural, but funny dialogue and characters. The thief's father will have nothing to do with him giving the tale an unexpected weight. And even the finale is quite bittersweet and unexpected. I believe this is the film debut of Lanners and it's a gem.

Acne -- On the other hand, Acne is a typical coming of age tale. Sure, it's about a 13 year old Jewish boy in Uruguay who has already been to a brothel but is naturally obsessed with achieving his first real kiss. But been there, done that. Despite the relatively exotic setting, this is nothing new, though the lead boy is appealing and holds the screen. Awkward transitions and a bizarre twist don't help, though the divorce of his parents is handled in a subtle, admirable manner. But the shiksa girl of his dreams is clearly out of our hero's reach, just as turning this standard story into something unique is beyond the filmmaker's.

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Indiana Jones Arrives:

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for some reason i keep thinking Cate Blanchett will be speaking English with a German accent in the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull... even though she's supposed to be Russian

Posted by: [patrick](#) | [May 21, 2008 at 09:54 PM](#)

Well, certainly the villains are pretty interchangeable. In earlier films, Indy has sighed, "Nazis." This time, he says, "Russians!" and the audience laughs. Cate Blanchett hung her head at a press conference when a Russian reporter started to ask a question and said, "I'd like to apologize in advance to the entire Russian populace" for her cartoonish accent.

Posted by: [Michael Giltz](#) | [May 24, 2008 at 11:28 AM](#)

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