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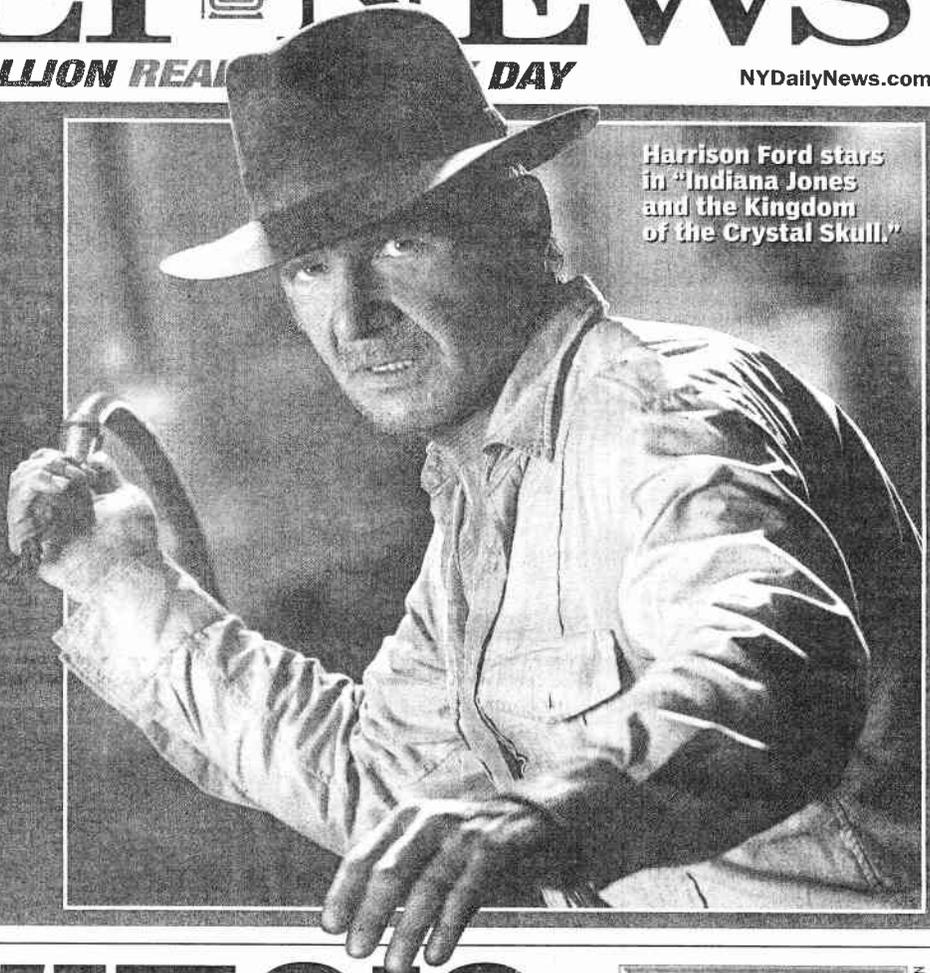
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Hats off to 'Indy'

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Harrison Ford stars in "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull."



Brandon Bethea

TEEN'S TRAGIC DEATH

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VITO'S NEW DIGGS



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EXCLUSIVE — SEE PAGE 5

JONESIN' FOR



'Indy' film fest
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Director Steven Spielberg (l.) and producer George Lucas are joined by cast members Harrison Ford and Karen Allen (r.) at yesterday's Cannes premiere of "Indiana Jones and The Kingdom of the Crystal Skull." Below, Indy gets physical in scene from film. Photo by Getty

Cannes crazy for raiders of lost art

BY MICHAEL GILTZ
DAILY NEWS WRITER

CANNES, France — The world premiere of "Indiana Jones" and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" turned the normally high-minded Cannes Film Festival into a mob of shameless movie fans.

Thousands of journalists pushed and shoved yesterday as if they were at a rock concert hoping to attend the first screening of the movie, which opens Thursday in New York.

They whooped it up at the beginning and applauded strongly at the end.

Meanwhile, fans and photographers clamored for Harrison Ford, Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Cate Blanchett, Karen Allen and Shia LaBeouf everywhere they went during their publicity spin on the Riviera.

For the stoic but friendly Ford, it was an unexpectedly emotional experience.



"The last couple of days, there have been moments where I've been overcome by a wave of unlikely nostalgia for me," said the 65-year-old actor in a news conference right after the film's first public screening finished.

"Especially in the person of Karen, who brings back a lot of memories," he said. Karen Allen played Indiana Jones' first love interest in 1981's "Raiders of the Lost Ark."

"It's maybe the most significant moment professionally in my life — these films, this event and reuniting with these guys and getting back with Karen and getting to progress the story with the aid of all these wonderful actors was just . . ." Ford cleared his throat, before adding quietly, "really wonderful. Wonderful."

Lucas has let slip in recent days that he would love to see the series continue for a fifth film, with LaBeouf's Mutt Williams taking over as main character and Indy becoming a mentor-like presence.

During the round of press interviews and TV interviews, he and Spielberg were in confident, joshing form, with producer Lucas saying his Oscar-winning director and good friend had final cut.

But "I do have an opinion," Lucas added. "At the end of the day, [Steven] gets what he wants. But I make sure he believes in what it is that he wants. I question him in all different ways to make sure that he's sure about his opinion."

Joked Spielberg, "It's like listening to Yoda sometimes."

FUN? GO SEE 'INDY'

Thrills, chills, fights, Blanchett as villain. Yup, 'Crystal Skull' has it all

"INDIANA JONES and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" is entertaining, inventive and old-fashioned in the best way.

Steven Spielberg, Harrison Ford and company prove they still keep their guts right next to their hearts. The adventuring archaeologist's reappearance after 19 years does come with a few curses, however.

Expectations are high, age is inescapable and while it's true that there's not much novelty in "Crystal Skull," that's okay. Starting with 1981's "Raiders of the Lost Ark," the Indy movies have shown that those who underestimate history do so at their peril.

There's been buzz that the film might be a bomb after an anonymous online reviewer's thumbs down made entertainment headlines. And producer George Lucas has said he doesn't expect much positive response. But he has also said he envisions a fifth Indy movie, with a younger hero inheriting the whip.

While it has flaws, this new movie earns its event status.

In "Crystal Skull," set in 1957, greaser Mutt Williams (Shia LaBeouf) seeks Indy out after their mutual friend Oxley, played by John Hurt, disappears while in possession of the title artifact, a quartz relic that evil Soviet agent Spalko (Cate Blanchett) believes was left by early alien civilizations on Earth.

With Mutt as his partner, Indy hunts for Oxley and the skull, and finds his onetime love Marion Ravenwood — Karen Allen, back from "Raiders" — who also happens to be Mutt's mom. (Who's his dad? Hey, even Tarzan found a son.)

On the way to a meeting with the skull's ancient E.T. body, there are hair-breadth escapes, fights and a revelation of mystical power.

Sound familiar? Sure, it does — that's part of the fun.

This film, like 1989's "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," follows the template set by "Raiders" and continued in the underappreciated "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom" (1984), the worst reviewed of the series. "Raiders" made \$242 million in the U.S., "Crusade" \$197 million and "Doom" \$180 million.

There's an early action sequence — here, a truck battle in a familiar ware-

BY JOE NEUMAIER
DAILY NEWS FILM CRITIC

house — a glimpse of Indy as professor then an explanation of a sought-after object's otherworldly powers, along with the obsession with skeletons and bugs plucked from "Strange Tales" magazine.

Some of it seems a bit dusty but Spielberg remains the master builder — elegant chase scenes are constructed perfectly and without overediting or confusion.

In an era of CGI thrills, Blanchett and LaBeouf's sword duel atop moving jeeps and Indy's fistfight with a handful of thugs are like watching an ancient art reborn.

Screenwriter David Koepp ("Jurassic Park") has a knack for sneaking character development into the action beats — a lot about Indy's past is revealed, if you listen — and the film riffs on 1950s pressure points like Communism, UFOs and nuclear testing.

Ford, at 65, may not have the looks anymore, but his weathered take on the old formula works. LaBeouf is more of a cartoon, though he permanently stakes his claim to stardom; and Allen's Marion is still tough and appealing.

The chameleon Blanchett, with her posture imposingly rigid and her face like a V-shaped alien etching, needed to be more villainous. Dr. Jones (called "Henry" for much of the movie) deserves foes who are cunning and scary.

Yet, did he deserve to stay buried in the cinema of the 1980s? Nah. Like any good myth, Indiana Jones shows up when he's needed. Great to have him back.

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It's good to have Indy back cracking the whip.

★★★★☆
'Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull'

Princely 56M for 'Caspian'

LOS ANGELES — "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian" dethroned "Iron Man" as ruler at the box office, pulling down \$56.6 million, according to studio estimates yesterday.

Disney's action sequel took in less domestically in its opening weekend than "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," which sold \$65.6 million in December 2005. "Caspian" also raked in \$20.7 million overseas.

Disney expects the PG-rated movie, based on the C.S. Lewis fantasy series, to ride high through the Memorial Day weekend. The first "Narnia" tale grossed \$745 million worldwide over its theatrical run.

"Iron Man" slipped to second place after two weeks at No. 1 with \$31.2 million.

"What Happens in Vegas," starring Cameron Diaz and Ashton Kutcher, came in third, with \$13.9 million in its second weekend. Its domestic total reached \$40.3 million.

The Associated Press

