

# ALTERNATIVE FILMFARE '92

by Daniel W. Duffy

It's that time of year again when critics who supposedly know what they're talking about compile a list of the top movies from the previous year. I felt like putting a different spin on my Top 10 by formulating an alternative list for filmgoers around the globe who like something a little different. In other words, thank God for Miramax and New Line.

So if you're a mainstream movie junkie and go to the movies for pure entertainment value or for escapist purposes (from yourself or the law), I suggest you read some Crackerjack critic like Leonard Maltin or Michael Medved's Top 10.

If you're the type who begrudgingly walked out of *Batman Returns* because it was too weird saying, "I knew I should have gone to see *Universal Soldier*," then I strongly suggest you stop reading now. If you thought *A Few Good Men* was a triumphant masterpiece rather than a heartless, clichéd piece of rubbish then I'm going to get a restraining order so you can't read the rest of this article.

When I go to the movies, I like to get involved with the film on an emotional level and be both mentally challenged and stimulated by it. I like films that give me a visceral reaction whether it makes me laugh, cry, eructate, flatulate or whatever. I want to *feel* something (other than disgust or nausea).

Some of these movies might cross over into the mainstream and have actually made money, but I swear it's not my fault. Actually it is partially my fault. You could feed half of Somalia with all the dough I spent on flicks last year. Now if I spent all this moolah on food, I'd probably look more like Ravi

the Rotund Rhino Boy than Dan "I-could-sure-use-some-goat-cheese-for-my-bag-o-bones" Duffy. Well, that's neither here nor there, so without any further ado, let us proceed with the ceremonies. Billy Crystal, I crap bigger than you.

Suffice to say, you won't find films on this list that *ought* to be there like most pretentious critics do. This is my Top 10 and if you don't like it, tough.

10) *Chaplin*—A highly underrated film about one of the most influential people in the history of film. Sir Richard Attenborough's *Chaplin* is a haunting and melancholy look at the Little Tramp who captured the hearts of filmgoers around the world but was always an outsider in the glitz and glamor of Hollywood. I'm not a real big fan of biopic flicks because you always know how they're going to turn out, but this one hit me in the gut.

9) *Of Mice and Men*—Moving interpretation of the John Steinbeck classic from Chicago's Steppenwolf theatrical group grads Gary Sinise and John Malkovich.

8) *Under Suspicion*—Forget *Basic Instinct* or any other Joe Eszterhas project. *Under Suspicion* is a finely crafted psychosexual thriller which is story-driven rather than steam-driven. Liam Neeson and Laura San Giacomo are both riveting in this cold film by England's Simon Moore.

7) *A Midnight Clear*—Surprisingly superb ensemble anti-war film featuring Ethan Hawke, Frank Whaley and Gary Sinise about a group of young soldiers in WWII who come face to face with the "enemy."

6) *The Player*—Director Robert Altman (*M\*A\*S\*H*, *Nashville*) is back in the limelight after a notable absence. This film revolves



Left: Kyle MacLachlan and Sheryl Lee star in David Lynch's prequel, 'Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me.' Above: Robert Downey, Jr. stars in Richard Attenborough's 'Chaplin.' Top: Danny DeVito and Michelle Pfeiffer add to the darkness of 'Batman Returns.'

around the Hollywood movie game and its shortcomings and the fact that Tinseltown has less of a soul than Don "No Soul" Simmons.

5) *Howard's End*—Merchant/Ivory (*A Room With A View*, *Mr. & Mrs. Bridge*) tell another stuffy yet entertaining E.M. Forster tale of class struggle and prejudice in

Edwardian England featuring Emma Thompson, Helena Bonham Carter and Anthony Hopkins.

4) *Batman Returns*—Contrary to being the biggest breadwinner of all films last year, *Batman Returns* didn't have mainstream movie subject matter—dark humor, eccentric characters, gener-

al human oddities and circus freaks, etc. People who didn't like this installment are now questioning why they liked the first one because honestly, the two films aren't *that* different. No one ever accused Tim Burton of telling a great story, he just has dark n' textured characters, dialogue and mood. Michelle Pfeiffer was the purrfect

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