

Special effects breath life into brainless 'Mummy'

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Special to Sentinel-Voice
If you want to see *The Mummy*, prepare to turn off your brain.

This is a mindless adventure movie that's solely meant to wow you with its neat special effects and take you away from the cares of everyday life.

The Mummy is a blatant rip-off of the classic adventure film *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. However, though *The Mummy* can't even touch the wit and wow of that movie, the mysteries of ancient Egypt and some of the computer-generated effects are just down right fun to look at on the big screen.

The story begins in ancient

Thebes where two lovers, Imhotep, Pharaoh's high priest (Arnold Vosloo) and Pharaoh's mistress Anck-Su-Namun (Patricia Velasquez), plot to kill the ruler.

When their treachery is discovered, the woman kills herself. Imhotep is captured and mummified alive.

Thousands of years pass and its 1923.

Rick O'Connell (Brendan Fraser) and other legionnaires are engaged in a fierce battle amidst the ruins of Hamunaptra where Imhotep and Anck-Su-Namun lay buried. O'Connell escapes the carnage only to end up on death's row in a Cairo prison.

A beautiful, but bumbling librarian named Evelyn (Rachel Weisz) and her

boozing brother Jonathan (John Hannah) come to his rescue by bribing the prison warden. Evelyn and Jonathan think that O'Connell holds the key to finding Hamunaptra which holds the treasures of ancient Egypt. The three set out to find the city.

Soon, they have company in the form of some American treasure hunters. Through a series of mishaps they unleash Imhotep who is now a mighty, supernatural force.

He resurrects himself by consuming the organs of those who raised him. He's on a mission to bring back his lost love. All the while, he inflicts plagues upon Egypt.

If you've been regularly reading my reviews, you've

probably noticed that I often state that many films waste their potential.

The Mummy fits into that category.

No doubt, the filmmakers wanted to create a *Raiders of the Lost Ark* for the Nineties. They missed the mark. Sure, *Raiders* had its share of special effects to draw the audience, but there were also captivating characters.

In *The Mummy* most of the characters are just plain boring. Fraser's O'Connell is a one-dimensional action hero.

He spits out one-liners like they're going out of style. He's shooting with two guns whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Fraser could have taken

notes from actor Oded Fehr who portrayed Ardeth Bay, the leader of a group sworn to prevent Imhotep's revival. Fehr was thoughtful, stoic and dashing with just the right touches of humor.

Evelyn is smart, quirky and beautiful, but she doesn't put new twists on these qualities for her action heroine character.

Fraser and Weisz simply couldn't generate a believable chemistry between their characters.

Their romance is noticeably forced.

John Hannah, who was very talented in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, doesn't do anything special with his lovable lout character. The screenwriters

went overboard with comic relief; that is, Fraser, Weisz and Hannah are incessantly wisecracking.

The special effects are both bane and blessing for this film.

The film wouldn't last two weeks in the theater without the wizardry. On the other hand, the scenes of ancient Egypt including Pharaoh's palace and the mummification chamber, *The Mummy*-generated sand storms and plagues and the flesh-eating scarabs are both fascinating and terrifying.

If you want to flick your brain switch to off and just coast along with a big budget, special-effects driven feature, *The Mummy* is the film for you.

Hollywood studio executives discuss youth violence

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Hollywood studio executives huddled with Motion Picture Association of America president Jack Valenti to talk about Washington's efforts to hold the entertainment industry accountable for schoolyard violence.

Valenti said last Monday's closed-door meeting was called to talk about what's going on in the country — the perceptions and the realisms — and mainly how we can do something positive to be part of any national

crusade, if one is mounted, to lessen youth violence.

"There is a perception of rabid violence in the country that is contradicted by the numbers, which show that youth violence is going down. However, perception is what really counts in the world," Valenti said.

The meeting, arranged by Valenti in the wake of a juvenile crime bill passed last week by the Senate that seeks to curb movie and TV violence, included executives from seven major studios. Valenti wouldn't say who

attended.

Three more meetings are planned in coming weeks.

The high-level debate was a constructive "give and take" about how best to proceed as the Senate bill goes to the House of Representatives, unidentified sources who attended the breakfast told the *Los Angeles Times*.

But no specific strategies were agreed upon, Valenti said. *Times* sources said Valenti's 30 or so guests included Paramount Pictures chiefs Jonathan Dolgen and Sherry Lansing; 20th Century

Fox chief Bill Mechanic and Tom Sherak, chairman of Fox Domestic Film Group; Terry Semel and Bob Daly, co-studio chiefs at Warner Bros.; Bob Wynne, co-president of Sony Pictures Entertainment; Universal President Ron Meyer; Joe Roth, chairman of Walt Disney Studios; and two representatives from MGM, Chairman Alex

Yemenidjian and Vice Chairman Chris McGurk.

The Senate bill includes several provisions aimed at reigning in film and TV violence. It would launch an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice to determine whether the entertainment industry targets children in marketing

violent products.

Valenti has always been an advocate of self-restraint. Thirty years ago, he invented the MPAA ratings system, which the major studios submit their films to voluntarily, in part to lessen the possibility of state legislatures adopting their own regulations to govern film content.

Wilson and Lewis bring jazz to Bally's

Lovers of jazz and beautiful music can have it their way when song stylist, Nancy Wilson teams up with legendary jazz pianist, Ramsey Lewis at



RAMSEY LEWIS

Bally's Jubilee Theater on June 4 and 5. Both sensational recording artists will light up the stage at 9 p.m. nightly and tickets are priced at \$45 per person. For reserved seating please call Bally's Box Office at (702) 967-4567 or 1-800-237-SHOW.

From the era of Ella, Sarah, Carmen, Della, Peggy Lee and Gloria Lynn, Nancy Wilson has endured as a unique vocalist, filled with grace and sophistication and today, she remains in a league of her own. Her record of success includes a Grammy Award, four Grammy nominations, an Emmy and professional awards too numerous to list.

As she prepares to celebrate her 60th



NANCY WILSON

birthday, so too is Wilson ready to release her sixtieth album, "If I Had My Way."

With a career lasting more than four decades, piano legend Ramsey Lewis still has "got it going on." He continuously blends a great love of jazz with his equal affinities for European classical music, gospel and a wide range of South American music.

The gifted artist presents a graceful ivory approach in his unique style of music, which is why he is largely responsible for popularizing Chicago jazz in the 1960's. Having played in some of the nation's most popular jazz venues such as New York's Birdland and Chicago's London House, Lewis continues to perform to large crowds.



From left, Harvey Munford, Nevada Stupak, Charles "Doc" Broadus

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