

The 10 Worst Films of 2003

Don't show me the movie; 2003 bad for Cuba

By Kam Williams
Special to Sentinel-Voice
Never before has an actor or actress made three of the movies on my Annual 10 Worst List.

Sure, there was a long stretch when crowd displeaser Sandra Bullock and kiss-of-death Will Ferrell would contribute one or two entries year in and year out.

But then Bullock finally found the right vehicle in Miss Congeniality while Ferrell recently turned his career around with Old School and Elf.

Cuba Gooding, Jr. alone has remained the one thespian who can be counted on to churn out bomb after bomb. Cuba's stock has been plummeting since 1997 when he won the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for shouting "Show me the money!" at Jerry Maguire. Some of Cuba's unwatchable flicks which have figured prominently on earlier 10 Worst Lists of mine, including What Dreams May Come (#1 in 1998) and Instinct (#6 in 1999).

It is no mean feat to enjoy an enduring career in the face of so many flops, for one must repeatedly con not only studio executives, casting directors, colleagues and other industry insiders, but also audiences, of course, to keep landing so many lead roles.

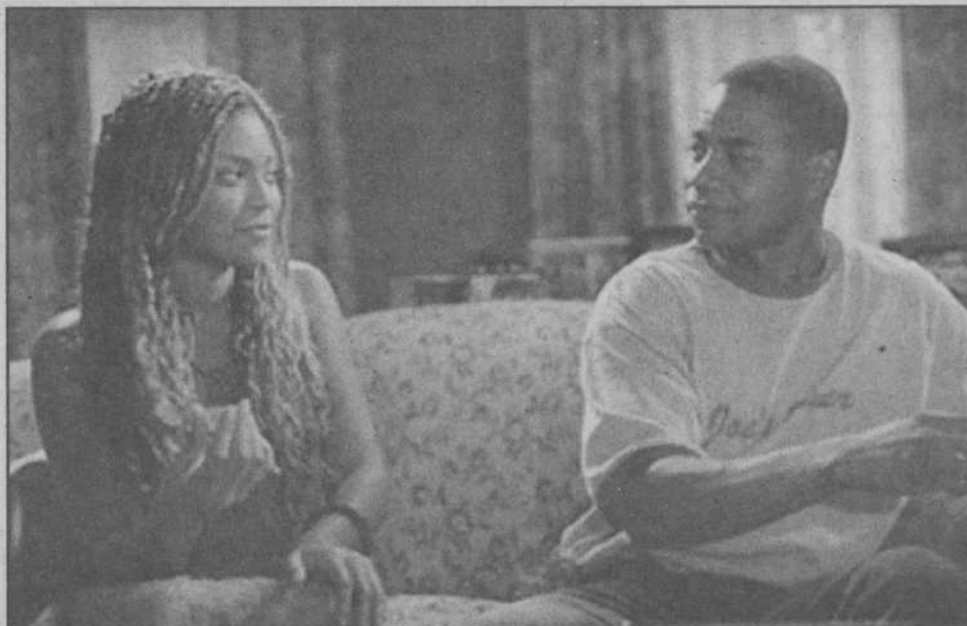
Therefore, Cuba is to be saluted as much as he is lambasted for this year's improbable achievement. Without further fanfare, here's the countdown to the very worst film of 2003.

10. Marci X
Lisa Kudrow stars in the title role of this romantic comedy as a Jewish rap music mogul who falls for Damon Wayans as Dr. Snatchcatcher, a crotch-grabbing, foul-mouthed hip-hopper wearing pantyhose for a hat who woos her with charming lines like, "Bitch, bring your pasty, white ass out here. I'm a real [n-word]."

Wayans and Kudrow should sue their agents for attaching them to such an offensive, unfunny, insensitive, ill-fated project. This film made me feel like setting myself on fire in protest like a Buddhist monk.

Only if you are a big fan of bad cinema, might Marci X be for you.

A vanilla movie with a rap muzak message every bitch way but loose.



Fighting for Relevancy: "The Fighting Temptations" failed to tempt audiences. The MTV-produced vehicle paired Beyoncé and Cuba Gooding Jr. in a dreadful piece of filmography.

9. The Fighting Temptations

What practical joker would even think of dooming this project from the start by pairing Beyoncé with Cuba Gooding, Jr. as romantic leads in a romantic comedy? After all, the 22-year-old singer-turned-actress has got to be one of the hottest commodities around while the fatherly Cuba looks every bit of 35. Yet, somebody decided that Cuba and Beyoncé could play contemporaries.

Earlier this year, Gooding unleashed the walk out-bad Boat Trip, where he played a straight guy booked on an all-gay cruise by a vindictive travel agent. Still, he was able to generate more chemistry in bed with a flamboyant drag queen, there, than the sizzle he fails to find with Beyoncé in this dead on arrival adventure. He spends most of the movie prancing about awkwardly, like a middle-aged goofball, while the sultry, retiring beauty could easily pass for a teenager. Two hours of torture.

8. From Justin to Kelly
When Kelly Clarkson beat out Justin Guarini to land the title of American Idol on the Fox-TV reality show, it looked like the sky was the limit for these overnight sensations. However, judging from this frightening flick, it seems that the pair have already found their limit, acting. For the wooden Justin fails to project his voice when he speaks, exhibits no range in emotion and moves like a marionette on strings.

In every scene, the curly-locked heartthrob grimaces with a half-frozen face, lumbers across sets Frankenstein-stiff, sporting that same in-

delible, substance-eating grin he wears on his face whenever he sang on TV. The big screen is no friend to Kelly either, who simply has the wrong shape to squeeze into bikinis or other skimpy outfits. Another concern is that the romantic comedy never captures even one iota of chemistry between its co-stars.

How bad is this movie? If I were Simon Cowell, the insufferable American Idol judge, I'd congratulate Justin and Kelly for inventing a new form of torture.

Careful kids, it won't take much for your fickle fans to turn on you. Fame can be so fleeting.

7. Mambo Italiano
What kind of idiot is Emile Gaudreault taking us for? Mr. Gaudreault is the writer and director of Mambo Italiano, the most insultingly flagrant, unapologetic ripoff of another movie I've ever seen.

For Mambo is so similar to My Big Fat Greek Wedding that this homosexual-themed carbon copy ought to be titled My Big Fat Gay Comedy. At the very least, it should have credited Nia Vardolos, since she created and starred in the original, which was based on a play written about her own life.

To give you an idea of exactly how uncreative Gaudreault is, he even made his protagonist a travel agent, which is the same profession of Nia's character in Greek Wedding.

And the actors playing his parents were obviously picked because they favored Nia's parents in Greek Wedding. Worse, they are also overprotective immigrants who trade in the same sort of Old World sentiments. Spare

me. gets turned off way before any meaningful message gets a chance to be delivered. Such is the case with Radio, a lost cause with the incomparable (for better or worse) Cuba Gooding, Jr. in the title role. Something awful often happens with a project so consciously calculated to cram in all the right ingredients for

an uplifting experience. As a result, Radio is so overlaid with sentiment from start to finish that the plot is rendered utterly irrelevant. This true story was transformed into the most paternalistically racist screen saga in eons. The mute, illiterate, snaggle-toothed Radio (See 10 Worst Films, Pg 9)



Can You Hear Me Now? Apparently not, according to pundits who lambasted Gooding's performance in "Radio."

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