

# Curtain closes on Star Wars saga in fittingly fun finale

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

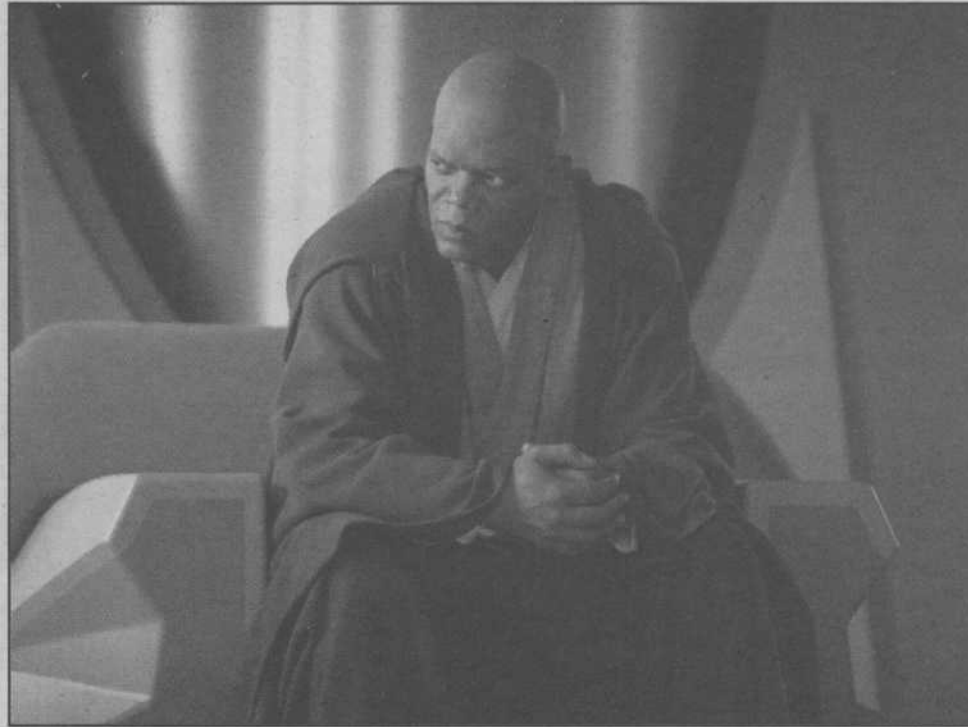
A long time ago (1977), with "Star Wars," George Lucas introduced us to a "a galaxy far, far away," mesmerizing both young and old alike with his endlessly imaginative, state-of-the-art, special effects-driven, outer space opera. Over the intervening years, he parlayed that success into a couple of equally-enchanting sequels, "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "The Return of the Jedi" (1983). And then, after a long hiatus, he decided to revive his review-proof franchise with a trilogy of prequels.

Though the first of these two additional adventures, "The Phantom Menace" (1999) and "Attack of the Clones" (2002) were, quite frankly, a bit of a disappointment, Lucas now brings down the curtain on the sci-fi series with a worthy finale which just might be the best of the whole darn bunch. With "Return of the Sith," which serves to tie together all the loose ends nicely, getting there is all the fun. After all, there isn't any mys-

tery about how it's going to end, since, by design, this installment has to finish back where the original began.

Still, the picture ought to prove intriguing, whether you're a dilettante or a Star Wars trivia devotee, as it fills in blanks for plenty of pivotal unanswered questions. Plus, it is also the most graphic of the sextet, which explains why it's the first one to warrant a PG-13 rating. The illuminating storyline, which starts three years into the democratic Republic's campaign against the dreaded androids, delves deeply into the de-evolution of Anakin Skywalker into the infamous Darth Vader.

Over 30 cast members from earlier installments return to reprise their roles, including Hayden Christensen as Anakin, Natalie Portman as Padme Amidala, Ewan MacGregor as Obi-Wan Kenobi, Samuel L. Jackson as Mace Windu, Jimmy Smits as Senator Organa, Frank Oz as Yoda, Christopher Lee as Count Dooku, Ahmed Best as Jar Jar Binks, James Earl Jones as the voice of Darth Vader, Kenny Baker



Samuel L. Jackson is one of the many stars lending his talent to the last Star Wars movie.

as R2-D2, and Anthony Daniels as C-3PO, the only character, by the way, to speak in all six flicks. Meanwhile, among the noteworthy additions are Keisha Castle-Hughes as the Queen of Naboo and creator George Lucas cameoing as Baron Papanoida.

As the movie opens, we find Anakin and Obi-Wan on

an urgent mission to rescue a kidnapped Supreme Chancellor Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid) from the clutches of General Greivous (Matthew Wood) and his dastardly 'droids. The confrontation leads to the first of many fights staged with light sabers.

Far more compelling than any of the swordplay, how-

ever, are the assorted emotional subplots. For instance, Anakin after reuniting with Amidala for the first time in months, learns that his secret wife is pregnant with twins, a no-no, because Jedi's warriors are not allowed to marry. Plagued by visions of his lover perishing during childbirth, Anakin finds himself driven to make a deal

with the devil to prevent what he sees as inevitable from occurring.

It would be unfair of me to spoil the fun by revealing any further details, as it'd be best to arrive uninformed and sit with bated breath for each successive revelation. As for the technological wizardry, Lucas has outdone himself in this regard, from battle sequences to molten rivers to hyperbolic spaceships to futuristic skylines to haunting holograms and beyond, all pulled off with a seamless interface of the real with the computer-generated.

The film's only glaring flaw, regrettably, lies in its dialogue which presents trite lines like, "Your arrogance blinds you!" and "You are fulfilling your destiny!" as if profound. While such pretentious pronouncements might impress the kids, they only elicit groans from the average adult.

Nonetheless, a fitting capstone on a collection of screen classics for the ages.

Very Good (3 stars). Rating: PG-13 for sustained, sci-fi violence and some disturbing images.



A DVD on the 1994 Rwandan genocide underscores the enormity of the loss of life.

## Rwanda revisited in docu-drama

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Covering substantially the same ground as "Hotel Rwanda," "Sometimes in April" is another flick about the country's bloody tribal war. This HBO made-for-cable TV movie directed by Raoul Peck (Lumumba) might actually be a better movie than its predecessor. It stars Idris Elba and the recently-unretired, three-time Oscar-nominee Debra Winger.

As was the case with "Hotel Rwanda," this picture revolves around the efforts of a Hutu man, married to a Tutsi woman, to save his family from slaughter at the hands of his own people.

What sets this tale apart, is that it does not present a pat story with a feel-good

ending which serves to absolve all viewers from any feelings of guilt about having turned our collective backs in the Spring of 1994 while a million people were hacked to death with machetes during a hundred days of ethnic cleansing.

Shot on location in Kigali, the film divides its time between a recreation of the grisly goings-on and the war crimes tribunal held 10 years later, which was intended to bring those who had committed genocide to justice. Both broader in scope and richer, emotionally, than "Hotel Rwanda," "Sometimes in April" ultimately offers a more soul-satisfying experience, even if it comes at the expense of an happily-ever-after ending.

Excellent (4 stars). Unrated.



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