

# Depp's 'Pirates' swashbuckling spectacular

By Kam Williams  
Sentinel-Voice

If you liked "Pirates of the Caribbean," you're likely to enjoy the latest installment just about as much as the original.

"Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," is a seamless sequel, a scary seafaring adventure that's virtually indistinguishable, visually, from the first. Sure, sashaying Captain Jack Sparrow may have added a few new tics to his eccentric assortment of already-exaggerated facial mannerisms, and the production appears to have upped the ante in terms of special effects. Not surprisingly then, this movie is essentially another spine-tingling, tangled web of intrigue, romance and horror designed with pre-pubescent



"Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" has lived up to blockbuster expectations.

crowd in mind.

After all, Johnny Depp and the rest of the principal cast has returned, as has Director Gore Verbinski and the bulk of the rest of the original off-screen team: scriptwriters Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio, Stuart Beattie and Jay Wolpert; Darius Wolski, cinematographer; Penny Rose, costume designer; editors Craig Wood and Stephen Rivkin; John Knoll, visual effects supervisor; George Marshall Ruge, stunt coordinator; Ve Neill, makeup artist, and Martin Samuel, hair stylist.

That being said, the fright fest suffers slightly from a malady common to the 'tweener in many a trilogy, namely, serving as setting the table for the franchise's finale. Here, the two and a half hour investment ultimately feels a tad frustrating because the flick ends on an obvious cliffhanger, necessitating that one invest in Pirates 3 to see how this story turns out.

But to be honest, I had no complaints prior to that frustrating development, as I found myself fully-engaged by the multi-layered mystery, which picks up where the last

left off. At the point of departure, we find lovebirds Will Turner (Orlando Bloom) and Elizabeth Swann (Keira Knightley) putting their wedding plans on hold after being arrested and facing execution for aiding and abetting Captain Jack's escape.

The couple is granted a reprieve conditioned on Will's tracking down Jack and returning with the elusive Captain's magical compass. What ensues is a special effects extravaganza during which our heroes encounter wave after wave of grotesque, mostly computer-generated creatures, including cannibals, zombies, slaves, ghosts, a headless hermit crab man, squid-faced Davy Jones (Bill Nighy) and a hammer-headed shark man.

But don't kid yourself, despite all the eye-popping distractions, this second "Pirates" installment remains, at heart, a Johnny Depp vehicle, where the ever-prancing pirate can be relied upon to steal every scene in his own inimitable fashion.

Excellent (3.5 stars). Rated PG-13 for frightening images and intense action, adventure and violence.

## Judge orders Death Row takeover

LOS ANGELES (AP) - A federal judge on Friday ordered a bankruptcy trustee takeover of Marion "Suge" Knight's Death Row Records, saying the record label has undergone gross mismanagement.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Ellen Carroll made the ruling as part of proceedings initiated when the rap label filed for bankruptcy in April. Carroll said the label's accounting practices were in

disarray and noted that Knight testified he hadn't reviewed the financial statements in a decade.

"It seems apparent there is no one at the helm," she said, adding there appears to have been gross mismanagement, allowing her to take away Knight's control.

Knight was not present at the hearing and a message left for his attorney was not returned.

The label and Knight filed

for protection under Chapter 11 of federal bankruptcy law. Knight has claimed debts of more than \$100 million. The federal filing halted a state court action in which a former couple, who claim they helped found the label, were trying to collect a \$107 million judgment from Knight.

Knight has a history of legal problems.

He was convicted of assault in 1992 and placed on

probation, then jailed for five years in 1996 for violating that probation.

He was returned to jail in 2003 for again violating parole, this time by punching a parking attendant at a Hollywood nightclub.

He was released in 2004.

## Protests nix reggae concert

NEW YORK (AP) - Citing concerns about potential violence, an organizer on Wednesday canceled a reggae concert meant to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS after protesters complained two of the scheduled performers were anti-gay.

The organizer, LIFEbeat, came under fire by Black gay activists and bloggers after it was announced that Jamaican dancehall artists Beenie Man and the group T.O.K. were scheduled to perform during a July 18 concert at

Webster Hall. Protesters asked that the artists be dropped or forced to denounce controversial lyrics.

LIFEbeat executive director John Canelli said the group had been flooded with calls, some of them threatening, in recent days and was concerned safety would be an issue at the concert.

"The possibility of violence at the concert from the firestorm incited by a select group of activists makes canceling the event the only responsible action," said a

statement from the group, which uses the music industry to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Board member Tim Rosta said the motive behind the concert was to raise awareness about AIDS and its impact, especially in Caribbean communities, but the uproar made it clear how deeply people were hurt and offended by the lyrics of the artists' songs.

"I think that we misjudged the depth of the hurt around some of the issues that are raised by some of the lyrics," he said.

Beenie Man and T.O.K. have released songs that deride gays through slang terms. One Beenie Man song calls for a lesbian hanging, and a T.O.K. tune suggests gay men be burned.

"The idea that they would invite artists who encourage murdering gays and lesbians is so outrageous, insulting and unbelievable," activist Keith Boykin said before the (See Reggae, Page 9)

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Reggae star Beenie Man raps during a recent performance.