

The Best Films That I Watched in 2001

by Jeff COLL

The problem with writing top ten lists of films that were released in the previous year is that some of the best films don't get released until the last week of the year to ensure that they will be remembered during Oscar nomination time. This means that it may take months before some of the best films of 2001 get to Charlottetown.

Instead of a conventional top ten list like critics in big cities might write, I feel that I must write a list of the top ten movies (plus a bonus fifteen) that I watched in theatres in 2001. This will inevitably include movies that were actually released in 2000, but didn't make it to Charlottetown until 2001. Also, there is a re-released film on the list, to give me an excuse to complain about re-releases.

I saw 133 different films in theatres last year, so I think I have enough films to choose from to make a good list. I would have seen more, but as far as I could tell, it wasn't really a great year for films.

TEN FILMS THAT MORE FILMS SHOULD BE LIKE

When I go to movies, I love to see something new; I love to be surprised; I love to be challenged. The following ten films are entertaining, thought provoking, inventive and worth watching many times over. They represent, in their various categories, the way most films should be, but rarely are.

Best Re-released Film: *A Hard Day's Night*

Ever since George Lucas revised and re-released the *Star Wars* trilogy with great financial success five years ago, it seems that more and more special editions of some of the greatest films ever made have been appearing in theatres. Even though these special editions usually boast restored picture and sound, added scenes, and modernised special effects, most of them



The Fellowship of the Ring: Best Film with Wizards

are rarely better than the original; they are more cash grabs than improvements. Recently, Francis Ford Coppola's Vietnam War epic *Apocalypse Now Redux* was released in theatres and hailed as a masterpiece by many critics. Improvements to the film were definitely made, but much of the extra 44 minutes bogs the film down or is incomprehensible. The 20th anniversary special edition of *E.T. The Extra Terrestrial*, due out in theatres in March, is bound to be another example of a classic being marred, considering the fact that guns will be replaced with walkie talkies and the word *terrorist* will be removed from the dialogue because of these sensitive post September 11th times. Thank goodness for re-releases like the classic Beatles film *A Hard Day's Night*, which merely cleaned up the picture and sound quality instead of opting to digitally remove crooked teeth or cigarettes. Richard Lester's 1964 film is a delight to watch because of its visual style, its energy, its humour and, of course, its music. Every film could use improvement, but there is a certain comfort in knowing that a film remains constant throughout the ages.

Best Musical: *Dancer in the Dark*

There was a time when the musical

blind and is trying to save enough money to pay for her son's operation so that he will not suffer the same fate. For roughly the first forty minutes, the film is in the spirit of many of von Trier's Dogma '95 films—simple, cold and difficult—then Selma retreats into a fantasy world in which she is the star of a Hollywood musical and her depressing life is made glorious for a few minutes. The rest of the film blurs the line between fantasy and reality even more as her life becomes more and more depressing and the music takes over. The final musical number, "107 Steps," is one of the most heartbreaking and breathtaking scenes on film. *Dancer in the Dark* is a daring, one of a kind film.

Best Romantic Comedy: *Bridget Jones's Diary*

Most Romantic comedies are about beautiful and charming people inevitably being thrown together by The Plot. In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, although Renée Zellweger is certainly a beautiful and charming person, Bridget Jones is plump and shy, and Mark Darcy (Colin Firth)—the man with whom she is inevitably thrown together—is, to say the least, awkward. The best romantic comedies are the ones that don't follow the conven-



Amélie: Best Foreign Film