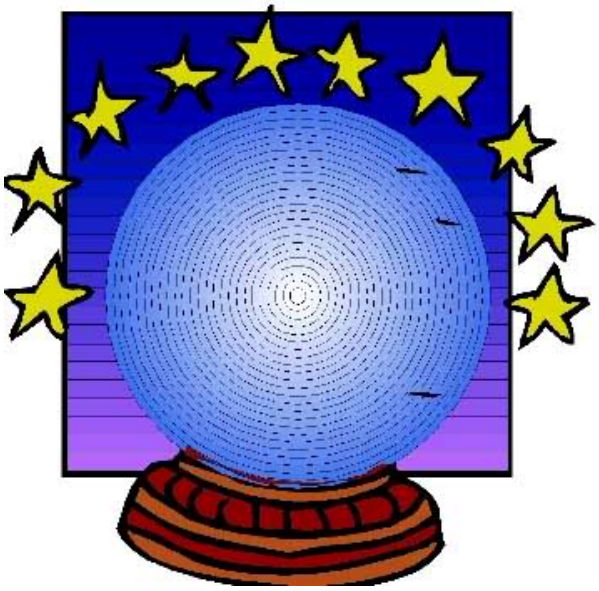
Two big theater releases today, and the trusty Mitch will be reviewing both of them for us here at The Cleveland Fan. He's off to see "The Incredible Hulk" tonight, and we'll run the review in the morning. And we will have Mitch's reviews of M.Night Shyamalan's new one, "The Happening" up early next week. Mitch sneak previews both films, as well as all the week's theater and DVD releases in this Friday's edition of The Crystal Ball.



After a well needed week off from reviewing...sorry, I just couldn't handle the prospect of sitting through another lame-assed Adam Sandler exercise in bathroom humor...it's back in the saddle as there are two movies coming out this week that have definitely sparked our interest.

This same feat will be duplicated in two weeks when both "Wall-E" and "Wanted" come out on the same day.

News and Rumors

~ Now I have YET to destroy M. Night Shyamalan's latest crapfest...er...movie (that will probably happen Tuesday), but that doesn't mean I can't beat the rush and start trashing his next project, a live-action film based on the Nick fantasy/martial arts cartoon "Avatar: The Last Airbender", aimed for a 2010 release. This is not to be confused with James Cameron's "Avatar". Nor

should it be confused with entertainment.

~ Direct Jon Favreau and star Robert Downey Jr have expressed concern over Paramount and Marvel Studios decision to rush into a sequel to "Iron Man". Favreau is worried that the rushed schedule will make for a bad movie. Let's hope the studio heads stop being blinded by dollar figures and actually LISTENS to them.

~ Sony is attempting to bring a live-action/animated big screen movie of "The Smurfs". I think I just threw up a little bit in my mouth.

~ Ben Stiller and Reese Witherspoon will team up for Cameron Crowe's next film. The untitled project will begin filming in January. Details are a bit sketchy at this point on the comedy/drama. Let's hope Cameron's recaptured the magic from "Almost Famous"...and then we can forget about "Vanilla Sky".

~ Jon Voight has joined the cast of "24" for next season. Voight will play Jack Bauer's nemesis for the season; the evil mastermind behind all the terrorist activities Jack battles throughout the "day". The character will be introduced in the 2 hour "prequel" movie in September.

This week's new movie releases:

There's a 1,000 lb Green Monster that has just squashed the 400 lb Gorilla sitting in the room.

The Incredible Hulk

Starring: Edward Norton, Liv Tyler, Tim Roth

Plot: Geneticist Bruce Banner takes flight in order to understand, and hopefully cure, the condition that turns him into a monster. Complicating things is the military trying to track him down and control him as a weapon.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This is not a sequel...as they are proceeding with this movie as if Ang Lee's 2003 stinker "Hulk" never happened. Wise move #1. Wise move #2 was casting Norton. I'll let you know tomorrow if it works out.

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The Happening

Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Zooey Deschanel, John Leguizamo

Plot: A family is on the run after a natural disaster threatens the entire planet

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: M. Night has got steadily downhill in every movie he's made since starting out so well with "The Sixth Sense". Seriously...every single damn movie has been worse than the one before, culminating with 2006's abysmal "Lady In the Water", which received a ½ football rating from me. There is only one spot lower he can go...so we'll see if this one gets Spergeoned, or he starts the slow climb back to respectability. I'll let you know.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, June 17th

Last week had the good releases. This week? Guess again.

Fool's Gold - Kate Hudson, Matthew McConaughey, and the entire tanning bed manufacturing guild brings to you this true piece of fools gold, in the form of the spacey McConaughey playing a loser enlisting his ex-wife's help in finding some lost treasure. Compared to this, the "National Treasure" movies are Oscar worthy.

Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins - Martin Lawrence as a black Dr. Phil coming back home to visit the family he tries to ignore in real life. My best advice? Ignore this movie.

Be Kind, Rewind - I will probably have to check out this little indie film starring Jack Black and Mos Def. Black plays a man whose brain becomes magnetized, and he unintentionally erases every tape at his friend's video store. In order to satisfy the store's most loyal renter, and aging woman at the onset of dementia, the two men set out to remake the lost films.

Calendar Watch

Next week; *Get Smart*, *The Love Guru*

Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

Wall-E - June 27th - Pixar's next masterpiece, about a garbage cleaning robot who dreams of the stars.

Wanted - June 27th - Look for this to make a box office star out of James McAvoy ("The Last King of Scotland", "Atonement") as he plays a young man brought into a secret society of assassins by a hot, hot looking Angelina Jolie. Morgan Freeman plays their boss.

Hancock - July 4th - Will Smith as a hard-living superhero needing the use of a public relations professional (Jason Bateman) to repair his image.

Hellboy II: The Golden Army - July 11th - The big red cigar chomping demon with a bad attitude is back for more butt kicking.

The Dark Knight - July 18th - Batman is back, and this time he's tracking the Joker, played by Heath Ledger. Most likely the box office champion of 2008.

Mamma Mia! - July 18th -

Something for the ladies to attend while the guys are busy watching Batman kick the Joker's ass. A musical featuring the songs of ABBA. And my wife wants us to go see it. Sigh.

X-Files 2: I Want to Believe - July 25
th

- I want to believe this won't be as lame as the first X-Files movie. We'll see

Tropic Thunder - August 15th - A group of actors shooting a big budget war movie are forced to become the soldiers they are portraying in the film. Stars Ben Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert Downey Jr, playing a white actor donning black make-up to "fit the part".

Star Wars: the Clone Wars

- August 15th

- First ever animated Star Wars project from Lucasfilm Animation.

Righteous Kill - September 12th

- Robert De Niro and Al Pacino together again as

NY detectives working on a case that may be related to both a serial killer and a man they might have wrongly imprisoned years before.

Burn After Reading - September 12th

- The latest Coen Brothers' movie, with Brad Pitt joining Frances McDormand, George Clooney, Tilda Swinton and John Malkovich in a dark comedy about missing memoirs of a CIA agent.

Eagle Eye - September 26th - Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monoghan as a slacker and a single mother who become unwitting members of a terrorist cell plotting a political assassination.

House of Lies - October 10th

- Russell Crowe and Leonardo DiCaprio in Ridley Scott's spy tale of intrigue in the Middle East.

RocknRolla - October 31st - Guy Ritchie hopefully back in form for another tale of London gangsters. Gerard Butler, Thandie Newton, Tom Wilkenson, and Jeremy Friggin' Piven

star.

Quantum of Solace - November 13th

- The next James Bond film, picking up shortly after the

events ending "Casino Royale"

Australia - November 14th - Baz Luhrmann's

epic tale set in WWII Australia. With Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. Think "Gone with the Wind" with kangaroos.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - November 21st - The sixth of J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in

2010 and 2011.

The Road - November 28th

- Viggo Mortensen as a man walking

with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization. Charlize Theron co-stars.

Defiance - December 19th

- Daniel Craig and Live Schreiber as Jewish brothers in WWII Russian, leading a band of refuges in striking

back at the Germans. A major early Oscar contender

Revolutionary Road - December

19th -

Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as a young couple raising a family in a Connecticut suburb during the

mid 1950s. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directs the "Titanic" stars in their on-screen

reunion.

The Spirit -

December 25

th

- Frank Miller's

next comic book adaptation, done in the same style as "Sin City".

Blockbusters on the Distant Horizon (movies that would seem to be big hits...as soon as they get made).

Watchmen - March 6, 2009 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1, 2009 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamentium enhanced anti-hero. With

Live Schreiber as Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

Star Trek - May 8, 2009 - J.J. Abrams and a young cast reboot the franchise, going back to Kirk and Spock's days at

Starfleet Academy.

Angels and Demons - May 15, 2009 - Tom

Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

Terminator 4 - May 22, 2009 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

Transformers 2 - June 26, 2009 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

Public Enemy - July 1, 2009 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger. Co-staring Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

The Taking of Pelham 123- August 7, 2009 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a

remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

Shutter Island -

October, 2009 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954.

Nottingham - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time

through the eyes of the Sheriff of Nottingham (Crowe).

Avatar - Decemb

er 18, 2009 - James Cameron's sci-fi/CGI extravaganza.

Iron Man 2 - May , 2010 - Right on the heels of the success of the first one, Marvel is quick to get Robert Downey Jr. back into his

titanium suit.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader -

May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the books already know.

Thor - June 2010 - Another Marvel superhero...but the Nordic God is about as bland personality-wise as Superman, so

we'll see how it goes.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I -

2010 - The start of the End for the boy wizard and his battle against He-Who-Shall-not-Be-Named

Lincoln - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

The Hobbit - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce the prequel to "Lord of

the Rings". Ian McKellen will return as Gandalf

Fantastic Voyage - 2010 - Roland Emmerich ("The Day After Tomorrow", "10,000

B.C.") remakes the classic 1967 movie about a miniaturized sub and crew operating on a scientist from

inside his brain.

The Avengers - 2011 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain

America open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II - 2011 - The end of the line for what will be beyond doubt the most

profitable series in the history of film making.

The Hobbit 2 - 2011 - del Toro

and Jackson again, this time covering the time between the end of Tolkien's book, "The Hobbit"

and the start of LOTR.