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PERSPECTIVES

A viewers' GUIDE

*How to
prepare
yourself for
viewing
'Episode 1
— The
Phantom
Menace'*



Everyone in the galaxy seems to have their eyes turned to the movie screen today. The opening of the new "Star Wars" movie has finally arrived after 16 long years.

Just under two weeks ago, I was lucky enough to score a ticket to the sneak preview in Portland of "Episode I: The Phantom Menace." And without giving the movie away, which no doubt would result in my death at the hands of angry fans who haven't seen the film yet, I feel it necessary to provide first-time viewers with some guidelines to maximize their enjoyment.

'Phantom Menace' Guideline

Guideline No. 1 — Try not to make the film measure up to unrealistic expectations. Remember, compared to any other film of its nature, "Episode I" is an incredible movie. Don't, however, try to compare the plot with any of the films in the original trilogy. If you do, you'll be disappointed with the writing and will feel cheated out of

one of the greatest cinematic moments of your life.

Guideline No. 2 — Think of "Episode I" as just that — the first part of a three-part story. If you keep that in mind, you'll see that this first edition is merely the rising action in a three-part story. Unlike the first trilogy, the facts surrounding the new releases are concrete, so a lack of an actual climax in "Episode I" is justified. It was made to provide just enough detail and suspense to draw us back for the next release in three years.

Guideline No. 3

This guideline hurts me as much as it will hurt you: dumb down and pretend that you are a kid. Unlike the original "Star Wars," which debuted as a sleeper hit, "Episode I" is a predetermined blockbuster with premeditated marketing capabilities.

Opinion



Aaron Artman

George Lucas, in a very un-Jedi-like manner, exploits these marketing capabilities to the fullest. It's almost as if Disney took over during a few sequences of shooting.

Kids buy toys. And for all intensive purposes, "Episode I" is a kid's movie. I realize the first trilogy could be characterized as kid's movies because of their science fiction nature and ability to sell toys (Lord knows I owned a Millennium Falcon and Dagoba System to go along with my action figures). But it wasn't as blatant in the first three films because the plot was richer.

Guideline No. 4 — Do not sit in your seat any later than five minutes before the show starts. The playing of the "Star Wars" anthem just after the Twentieth Cen-

tury Fox drum intro causes the crowd to erupt in a fashion similar to an autumn Saturday at Autzen Stadium. This is followed by the original yellow text that scrolls up the screen setting the scene for "Episode I." If you are a true fan, this may be the most excited you have ever been in a movie theater.

If that isn't enough to get you going, the first twenty minutes of "Episode I" provided me with the movie thrill of my life. If you've ever dreamed of watching two Jedis — and I mean old-school kickass Jedis who have skills Luke Skywalker could only dream of — fight an entire army side by side, then this will be as glorious a moment for you as it was for me.

Guideline No. 5 — Try not to hate Jar Jar Binks. If you've read any of the reviews that have been surfacing during the past two weeks, you know that this alien is not popular. Hating him only makes matters worse because he is in the entire movie. Binks is so soft that he makes C3PO seem like a tough guy. With any luck at all, Binks will get killed during the Clone Wars in "Episode II."

Guideline No. 6 — Welcome yourself to the digital age and forget about shooting on location. Much has been made of Lucas's ability to use digital technology to create 95 percent of the film. It shows. I haven't longed for a shot of nature on the screen since I last watched a prison documentary on HBO.

Guideline No. 7 — Cut loose, because everybody else will. I nearly lost my voice and left my cousin with bruises on his chest and arms after I bombarded him with closed-fisted backhands throughout the film.

May the Force be with you.

Aaron Artman is a columnist for the Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.

Letters to the Editor

Making it count

Gary Zimmerman, a great Ducks lineman from the 1980s, made a generous gift to the University Athletic Department from the attractive professional contract he got. Gary's skill earned the contract. He didn't forget that the Oregon football program made it possible.

Quarterback Akili Smith could do the same from the NFL largess his skill earned him, and that University football made possible, as the No. 3 draft choice. He could choose to endow a Ducks football scholarship, although the Ducks today are rich in athletic revenues.

Or he could provide a scholarship specifically for a grid prospect among inner city African-Americans, although recruiters are sure to take care of those sought-after men anyway.

The most meaningful thing Smith could do would be to underwrite a scholarship for an inner-city student with strong academic potential but who might be overlooked because of an absence of football ability.

George Beres
Eugene

Funding at stake

When House Speaker Lynn Snodgrass fired Rep. Lynn Lundquist from the chair of the House Ways and Means Education Subcommittee, she carried out an act of political vengeance that could affect the lives of hundreds of thousands of Oregon's children. Lundquist, a moderate Republican, understands the need to support public schools. Instead, Snodgrass is determined to refund taxes to those corporations who benefit from the corporate kicker law, and he is pushing hard for a charter schools program that will rob public education even further.

Oregon schools are underfunded. We need to invest in more teachers to reduce class size, to repair existing buildings and to build and equip new schools to accommodate Oregon's many new residents.

Even Snodgrass' big political-money contributors will suffer if we don't prepare students to meet the complex needs of the 21st century workplace.

House Minority Leader Rep. Kitty Piercy and Gov. John Kitzhaber are speaking throughout the state on behalf of public education.

They are trying to convince Oregonians who support public schools to speak out and pressure the conservative Republican leadership to change their minds. Unless they and we succeed, our community's public schools risk losing their reputation for high quality.

Peter Sorenson

Lane County Commissioner-Eugene

An embarrassing moment

I am writing to you to correct a major faux pas on my part Saturday at the Law School commencement at the Hult Center. One of my dearest friends, Joel Corcoran, was giving a passionate speech to the auditorium, during which he read a letter written by a homophobic bigot.

At the end of the letter he said, "Get the hell out of Oregon." I clapped because I thought it was his own personal response to this bigot, and not the last phrase of the letter.

When I explained this to my friends later, who of course were giving me a hard time about it, they all thought it was hilarious that I made such a gaffe, but I still felt bad because I did not have the opportunity

to explain myself to everyone else in the auditorium.

So I apologize to everyone present at the ceremony today for my stupidity in my analysis of Joel's statements. I honestly thought that that phrase was a Joel moment, and I am very proud of who he is and what he believes in. And I still think the state of Oregon is no place for a bigot to have his say.

Paul Porter
Historic Preservation
Secretary, Delta Lambda Phi

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.