



DON CHEADLE IN MILES AHEAD

MILES RUNS THE VOODOO DOWN

Don Cheadle portrays the fallen jazz legend in his excellent new film *Miles Ahead*

Although critically lauded as a talented and versatile actor, Don Cheadle has been flitting on the periphery of mainstream movies for the past two decades. Most casual moviegoers don't recognize his name, though they may recognize Cheadle's face from *Iron Man 2*, Showtime's *House of Lies* or Steven Soderbergh's *Traffic*, one of several films (including the 1998 political satire *Bulworth*) for which he deserved but never received an Oscar nod (he was nominated for his role in *Hotel Rwanda*).

This is too bad. Cheadle, as an actor, has a rare gift: He is intense and gritty yet intimately approachable, and his performances carry equal parts explosive threat and casual humor, drawing viewers into the edgy territories his characters typically inhabit. Cheadle turns these qualities to fantastic use in his new film, *Miles Ahead*, an offbeat biopic about legendary jazz trumpeter Miles Davis.

Co-written and directed by Cheadle, who also stars as the man himself, *Miles Ahead* plays fast and loose with the staid formula of the biopic. Taking his cues from the wild improvisations that characterized Davis' mid-career work, Cheadle gangsterizes the story, which opens in the mid-'70s with *Rolling Stone* reporter Dave Brill (the adorably scruffy Ewan McGregor) interviewing the coke-addled legend, who has been "retired" for the past five years.

Jumping back and forth from this debauched retirement to Davis' breakthrough in the mid-1940s, the film paints a jittery, semi-fictionalized portrait of a great artist in free fall, as Davis and Brill get in a series of tragicomic scrapes: They fight, score coke and then spend most of the movie hunting down — through lowbrow car chases and sloppy gun fights — the stolen session tapes that Columbia Records is clamoring for and which will prove Davis' big comeback.

Davis was a genius, but he was also one badass motherfucker — nasty, brutish and obscene — and Cheadle inhabits the role completely, turning his voice into a baritone hiss of impossible cool while his eyes shoot daggers of desire and contempt into every corner. He's surely to get an Oscar nomination for the performance, though not for the usual reasons of facile imitation and heroic grand gestures. Cheadle gives Davis a humanity and fallibility that, ironically, comprise the finest tribute to his immortal status.

More importantly, *Miles Ahead* sidesteps the typical pitfalls of biopics, which routinely treat the life of their subjects as a greatest-hits collection, moving rapidly from highs and lows over the course of a whole life while failing to put meat and bones on the people they end up merely exploiting. The film has no ax to grind other than providing a glimpse into psyche of a tortured artist: The film depicts racism, but it is not about racism; it is suffused with drugs, but it is not about addiction.

At one point during an interview, Davis snaps at Brill, telling him not to call what he does "jazz." Brill asks him what he'd prefer. "Call it social music," Davis says with inimitable hipness. The movie should be considered similarly: It's less a biographical portrait than a meditation on music and life, and as such it moves with the jagged bleats, searing squeals and surprising transitions of Davis' music itself.

By focusing on a very brief span of time, and doing so with a creative use of montage and surrealism, Cheadle ends up giving us a deeper, richer understanding of what drove Davis to make such timeless music: his loves, his hates, his demons, his desires. Perhaps the finest compliment I can pay is that, after watching this film, you'll be digging out your copy of *Kind of Blue*.

Or maybe *Bitches Brew*. ■

Miles Ahead opens Friday, April 22, at Broadway Metro.

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Tue & Wed: 2:00, 4:15, 6:30, 8:45
Thu: 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45

THE FIRST MONDAY IN MAY (PG-13)
Fri - Sun: 1:30, 6:15 Mon: 12:30, 5:00
Tue & Wed: 1:30, 6:15 Thu: 1:30, 8:30

MARGUERITE (R)
In French with English Subtitles
Fri - Sun: 3:30, 8:15 Mon: 2:30 PM
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POPSTAR: NEVER STOP NEVER STOPPING (R)
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Mon: 7:00 PM

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10:30, 1:25, 4:10, 7:00, 9:45

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (3D) (PG-13)
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BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (DIG) (PG-13)
11:05, 2:30, 3:25, 6:25, 7:00, 10:10

BOSS (DIG) (R)
10:35, 1:10, 3:45, 7:25, 10:00

CRIMINAL (2016) (DIG) (R)
10:55, 1:45, 4:35, 7:20, 10:15

DEADPOOL (DIG) (R)
10:40, 1:20, 4:45, 7:50, 10:30

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (DIG) (PG-13)
10:25, 1:15, 4:30, 7:35, 10:25

EYE IN THE SKY (DIG) (R)
1:05, 7:45

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 (DIG) (PG)
11:55, 3:35, 6:55, 9:50

HARDCORE HENRY (DIG) (R)
10:20, 4:05, 10:30

HELLO, MY NAME IS DORIS (DIG) (R)
11:25, 1:55, 4:20, 7:05, 9:35

THE HUNTSMAN: WINTER'S WAR (DIG) (PG-13)
11:00, 12:05, 1:50, 3:15, 4:40, 6:05, 7:30, 8:55, 10:20

THE JUNGLE BOOK (2016) (3D) (PG)
SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00 UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS
10:45, 4:25, 6:15, 9:15, 10:05

THE JUNGLE BOOK (2016) (DIG) (PG)
12:00, 1:35, 3:05, 7:15

MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (DIG) (PG)
11:30, 2:10, 4:55, 7:40, 10:20

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 (DIG) (PG-13)
11:35, 2:15, 4:50, 7:15, 9:40

ZOOPTOPIA (DIG) (PG)
10:50, 1:30, 4:15, 7:10, 9:55

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CITY OF GOLD	12:00	4:25	6:40		
THE WITCH	2:15	9:00			
MIDNIGHT SPECIAL	FRI-TUE	3:15	8:30		
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6 OSCAR NOMINATIONS HAIL, CAESAR! 7:40	6 OSCAR NOMINATIONS SPOTLIGHT 9:10	6 OSCAR NOMINATIONS HAIL, CAESAR! 9:35

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ELVIS & NIXON [CC] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:05 1:50) 4:15 6:35 9:25

HUNTSMAN: WINTER'S WAR [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★
Fri. - Sat. (11:00 1:30 1:45 2:15) 4:30 5:00 7:15 7:45 10:05 10:35

BARBERSHOP 3: THE NEXT CUT [CC,DV] (PG-13)
Fri. - Sat. (11:50) 4:20 7:00 9:55

CRIMINAL [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:10 1:55) 4:45 7:35 10:20

THE JUNGLE BOOK [CC,DV] (PG) ★
Fri. - Sat. (10:55 1:55 1:30 2:30) 4:10 5:10 6:50 7:50 10:30

THE JUNGLE BOOK 3D [CC,DV] (PG) ★
Fri. - Sat. (12:25 3:00) 6:20 9:30

HARDCORE HENRY [CC,DV] (R)
Fri. - Sat. (12:00 2:25) 4:55 7:25 10:25

THE BOSS [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:40 2:50) 6:45 9:40

CHONGQING HOT POT NR Fri. - Sat. 9:35 PM

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (11:15 AM) 6:25 PM

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3D [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat. (2:45 PM) 9:50 PM

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE [CC,DV] (PG-13)
Fri. - Sat. (11:35 2:55) 6:30 9:45

ZOOPTOPIA [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (11:20 2:10) 4:50 7:30 10:10

DEADPOOL [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (11:45) 4:25 7:10 10:15