And Now For Something Completely Different

Time Bandits, produced and directed by Terry Gilliam. Now showing at Sack Theaters everywhere.

You wonder what happened to Terry Gilliam of Monty Python fame? Well, I'm glad to tell you he's alive and well; he's teamed up with buddy Michael Palin in his latest project, Time Bandits. The trouble is, after seeing Time Bandits, I won't ever see it again. It's hard to say what went wrong with this film; all the pieces essential to a good movie are there: the killer writing team of Gilliam and Palin, a score by none other than ex-Rebel George Harrison, Sean Connors even appears in a cameo appearance as King Agammenon, and yet the entire piece falls short of what I consider a successful movie. This is a clear case of the whole amounting to less than the sum of its parts.

That's not to say that there aren't any interesting points to this movie. The main characters are six cads who play their roles as energetic little pinheads perfectly, the most endearing of these little guys is Wally, played by Jack Palance. I don't want to say he was ugly, but this guy would put turned down by Quasimodo's girlfriend away, when the little bodies are in motion, just hard to tell who's who, so it doesn't make much difference.

It seems that these nudes have obtained a secret map which plots certain time holes in the fabric of the universe, the holes being the result of the Supreme Being's growing aches with the arduous task of creation at the end of the First Week. The map, in turn, is utilized to plunge the diminutive group hither and yon into history, looking in on such things as Robin Hood, the Sherwood Forest, ancient Greece, and the ill-fated Titanic's maiden voyage.

The good thing I can say about Time Bandits was that the set designs are superb, front the scene in Greece, filmed in Morocoo, to the primeval forest scene, filmed in England. The cinematography is vivid, the scoring usually filled with intense images and very memorable scenes.

However, superficialities like pictureque settings or big-name actors do not a movie make. The film is more of a collection of individual stories than a story with a substance or some semblance of continuity. Even George Harrison's "Dreamaway" isn't enough to lift this one out of the ooze. If you want to enjoy yourself, have a good laugh, or maybe even learn something, go see reruns of And Now For Something Completely Different, but don't see Time Bandits; it stinks.

David Rho

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