Wender's latest disappoints: Hearts is apocalyptic

UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD
Directed by Wim Wenders
Starring Sam Neill, Bruno Ganz, and Sam Neill
Now playing at Elgin Cinerama

HEARTS OF DARKNESS: A FILMMAKER'S APOCALYPSE
Directed by Fax Bah and George Hickenlooper
Now playing at Legare Nickelodeon

By CHRIS ROHRER

It is nearly impossible to sit through Until the End of the World and not be impressed with its many technical achievements of the film. Then again, merely sitting through Until the End of the World — for well over two hours — is an impressive achievement in itself. Sat in 1999, the film was photographed in eight countries across four continents and boasts both innovative additions to computer graphics and video technologies and an incredible sound track featuring such alternative acts as 12 R.E.M. and Talking Heads. This immensity in scope is nevertheless put to the service of a story that has a surprising tenderness to drag, preach, and often bore.

1999, as envisioned by the movie, is a time when world travel is simultaneously quick and accessible, and communication from any location on the planet to any other with the help of videophones and other gadgets is relatively easy. Not all technologies have been as beneficial, though. A satellite-powered satellite is plummeting out of its orbit and could have catastrophic consequences for the planet.

According to the movie's narrator, Eugene (Sam Neill), one of this bohemian's solid friends, who is currently party-hopping throughout Europe. Intricately enough, Frances, emotes two bank robbers who offer her a percentage of their take — if she films the heist and sends it to Nice. Along the way, she runs into a similarly distressed man, Sam Farber (Bruno Ganz), who is on the run from secret agent Bert (Eric Diago), who claims that Sam has committed some form of industrial espionage.

A romance begins to develop between Claire and Sam, who is traveling around the world "photographing" family members with an invention of his father's (Max von Sydow). The device records the biochemical process of sight so that it may be replaced as a means for giving a crude form of vision to the blind. Sam and Claire chase each other from city to city while they themselves are being chased by Elga and Burt, still a haphazard detective, Philip Winter (Rudiger Vogel), throughout the first half of the story. This section of the movie plays like some type of all-house murder adventure with the requisite passionate couple and bumbling puritans. The results are innocuous but fairly enjoyable thanks mainly to the exotic locations and excellent music.

The group eventually makes its way to the Australian outback, where Dr. Farber's lab is located, and begins to explore the possibilities of the revolutionary camera. Once in Australia, any sense of fun from which the film benefited disappears, and the pace grinds to a halt. Wenders introduces the iconic proposition that in a time in which people can visit all places, the world is a global entity ceasing to exist, being replaced by a world as a personal entity within our own minds. As technologies work to bring different cultures and individuals closer, we want less to visit them, and curiosity turns inward. This transition from "wacky chase film" to "deep, pediatric film" is poorly executed, and Until the End of the World never recovers.

Until the End of the World is difficult to review. Many sequences are individually excellent, but director Wim Wenders' fame for the beautiful Wings of Desire, doesn't show much storytelling sensibility here. He's provided a strong narrative pull to guide the audience through his vision, and without that, a few hours and twenty minutes of movie become fatally flawed.

AUXNO MORE INTERESTING and entertaining movie nor playing is the documentary Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse, which describes the making of Apocalypse Now in exciting and frightening detail. The filming of Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now became famous in the late '70s for the production's astounding ability to attract disaster, and Hearts of Darkness uses documentary footage shot by Coppola's wife, Eleanor, and contemporary interviews with film-makers close to the project to demonstrate this fact. Directors Fax Bah and George Hickenlooper have created a very good movie that is both a great look behind the scenes of one of the more significant films of the past few decades and a suspenseful and engaging work in its own right.

From the beginning, Apocalypse Now sounds like a poorly planned project. George Lucas, the film's original director, is shown explaining that initially, the movie was to be shot in Vietnam in the midst of heavy combat. Apparently someone woke up and realized the inherent stupidly of this idea and the crew, now with Coppola at the helm, traveled to the Philippines in 1976 for what was expected to be a 16-week shooting schedule. The该村 local labor constructs huge sets, which are partially destroyed by the strong winds and rains of typhoons that batter the island. Military helicopters rented from the Philippine government are called away.

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