ON THE SCREEN

BY THE TECH ARTS STAFF

**** Excellent
*** Very Good
** Good
* Fair
-


** Aladdin
Neverbeforehasanemotionallyentertaining,Disney's latest animated delight is a hilarious, a bit uneven adventure. Set in the fantastical world of Agrabah, the latest Aladdin, the story of an IRA terrorist with a charming new voice, is by far the funniest of the series. The film, which contains some completely unforgettable plot twists, becomes mirrors of one another, reflecting how understanding and compassion may be a means of survival. -CR. Loews Harvard Square

**** 1/2 A Few Good Men
Nearly every element of director Rob Reiner's adaptation of the military murder/coverup trial drama clicks into place with the efficiency of a finely tuned machine designed to churn out entertainment. Sure it's unsentimental, but it's also extremely effective. The performances by Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson are stirring, and the photography, with crystal clarity and frequent symmetry in its images, is polished until it shines. For the plot is the story, precision leads to tragedy, but for the film it leads to a triumph of sorts. -CR. Loews Copley Place

**** 1/2 Malevolence
Spike Lee has translated the complex life of Malcolm X into a fascinating and involving epic which, like most of Lee's work, raises more questions than it does answers. Despite the occasional lapses into excess and the omission of some Malcolm's more incendiary remarks, the film is a well-balanced portrayal of a man who went through many different phases, each flawlessly acted out by Denzel Washington, in an attempt to right the injustices done to the black. Although the film, like Malcolm, never comes to a truly workable solution, it expresses the racial problems at the root of society powerfully than any other recent movie. -CR. Loews Charles

**** The Muppet Christmas Carol
The latest film featuring the late Jim Henson's Muppets provides a few solid laughs and is a fair version of Charles Dickens' periodical classic but it is usually the weakest of the four Muppet movies. Michael Caine does a commendable job at playing a straight Scrooge while his more lively artificial costars consist studies with the dark London setting. And the film makes the most it can out of amusing scenes involving singing vegetables, Dr. Busan Howondew and Breaker as charity collectors, and Forzie Bear as Scrooge's former employer, Fezzewig, but most of the humor comes from the audience's prior knowledge of the Muppets rather than any genuine wit. -CR. Loews Copley Place

**** 1/2 Peter's Friends
After going two for two with Neapolitan and Dead Again, screenwriter Kenneth Lonergan has made his first disappointing film. A comic about six college friends who reunite for the first time in years, the movie is fine when it sticks with its smart sense of humor. Unfortunately, it ventures too often into smarmy and contrived melodramatic territory as every one of the characters faces some type of crisis. All the performers are good, particularly Emma Thompson and Stephen Fry, but for every extremely funny one-liner there is a scene in which the best walks up to someone and says, "Well, congratulations! I just did X to Y and raised Z and..." -CR. Loews New Hope


**** The Player
Robert Altman's comedy about the intellectual decay of Hollywood is as hilarious as it is true to life. Tim Robbins is very good as a movie executive troubled both by an uppity moving in on his job and by threatening postcards from a writer whose he ignored is the past. The film's self-effective style entertains immensely while revealing the highly constructed and costumed nature of today's movies. -CR. Loews Copley Place

**** Singers
This light and entertaining film focuses on the struggles of six singles in their 20s as they try to understand love and relationships. Steve Carell, Kyra Sedgwick, Bridget Fonda, and Matt Dillon are all good, the script by director Cameron Crowe is often extremely funny, and Seattle locations and music provide an interesting backdrop. Although it is not as realistic as Crowe's Say Anything, the movie is filled with wonderful isolated moments that are filled with warmth and humor. -CR. Arlington Capital Theatre

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