THE ARTS
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ON THE SCREEN

BY THE TECH ARTS STAFF

★★★★: Excellent
★★★: Good
★★: Average
★: Poor

★★★★ The Age of Innocence
The film version of Edith Wharton's novel home to one of the conflict felt by Newland Archer (Daniel Day-Lewis), who must bal-
ance the rigid social code of 1870 New York and his passion for Ellen Olenska (Michelle Plffeifer), his fiancé's independent and intel-
lectual sister. Despite the Victorian setting, this is obviously the work of director Martin Scorsese, who specializes in movies about people's struggles to make decisions. The directing is meticulous, the sense of authenticity is impressive. The chemistry be-
 tween Day-Lewis and Pfiffer is also pow-
erful, but the camera focuses on the internal struggles of the two and thankfully avoids the torrid sex some typical of Hollywood movies. —Craig K. Chung, LSC Friday

★★★★ Backbeat
As a gratifying entry for the 30th anniversary of the Beatles' arrival in the United States, this film may seem a little shallow at first. However, director Iain Softley offers a different perspective on the group's history, at a time when the lads from Liverpool were struggling for recognition in slummy Hamburg nightclubs. The story focuses on the friendship between art schoolmates John Lennon (Ian Hart) and the original 'fifth Beatle,' bassist Stu Sutcliffe (Stephen Dorff). Softley uses this as a vehicle to explore Sutcliffe as a tortured artist and Sutcliffe's burgeoning relationship with German existential photographer Astrid Kirchherr (Sheryl Lee). This is not the conventional Beatles biopic that you'd expect, but instead leaves his solitude to become a part of their family. Many amusing scenes keep the story moving. —Kamal Swamidoss, Loews Natick

★★★★ Mrs. Doubtfire
After a messy divorce, Daniel Hillard (Robin Williams) will do anything to see his kids again. His plot involves becoming a woman. As Mrs. Doubtfire, he manages to turn around his life and the lives of others. Williams' hilarious performance and a few touching scenes make up for a dismal beginning and much run-of-the-mill slapstick. —CNJSC Monday

★★★★ Naked Gun 33 1/3: The Final Insult
From what is promised to be the final chapter in an unpretentious trilogy, this film was anticipated as a letdown but proved every bit as enjoyable as the first Naked Gun. Leslie Nielsen reprises his role as the inept Lt. Frank Drebin, but he has retired from Police Squad to domestic bliss with his wife, career-minded woman (Priscilla Presley). The plot, as transparent as ever, centers around a terrorist (Fred Ward), his bosom accomplice (Annie Nicole Smith), and a scheme to neutralize the festivities at the Academy Awards. The film is merely a vehicle for the staggering number of lowbrow references, pratfalls, and sight gags, but nonetheless is a streamlined vehicle which can boost more hits than misses. Sometimes the acting appears more brainless than the plot, but Nielsen's maners and the effective Zacher-Bruno-Zucker production val-
ues are appealing and transcendent of the material. For mindless entertainment, it's pretty impressive. —SD, Loews Chestnut

★★★★ Philadelphia
Hollywood's film about AIDS is really about discrimination and human dignity. Tom Hanks is the HIV-positive lawyer who alleges he was fired from his prestigious law firm because of AIDS discrimination, and Denzel Washington is the homophobic lawyer that agrees to take his suit to court. The film's power lies in its message, but at times it suf-
fers from Jonathan Demme's heavy-handed direction, miscalculating sentiment for raw emotion. Still, the performances of Hanks, Washington, and a fine supporting cast carry the film to a near-triumphant conclusion. —SD, Loews Southgate

★★★★ Schindler's List
Director Steven Spielberg triumphs in this historical drama about Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), who was responsible for saving the lives of more than a thousand Jews during the Holocaust. Shot almost entirely in black and white, the film takes you to the Poland of the late 30s and early 40s. Neeson is great, care-
fully portraying the slow change from a man who only cares about money to one who cares only about saving lives. Ben Kingsley perfect-
ly plays Itzhak Stern, Schindler's Jewish accountant who cunningly infiltrates Nazi offi-
cials. Ralph Fiennes portrays the unsparing-
ly-loyal Amon Goeth, the Commandant of the Nazi labor camp. Through Fiennes the audience is able to witness the hatred, brutality, and widespread death. Overall the movie is incredibly powerful, and brings to light one of the darkest periods of human history. —Patrick Mahoney, Loews Fresh Pond

★★★ Threesome
Writer-Director Andrew Fleming tried to create a film about college life but ends up with a weak look at the struggle of one con-
fused student who is trying to determine his sexual orientation. Eddy (Josh Charles) is attracted to Stuart (Stephen Baldwin) who is attracted to Alex (Lara Flynn Boyle) who is attracted to Eddy. The film's premise, which finds Alex mistakenly placed as a roommate to Eddy and Stuart, is overplayed in importance and only distracts from the initial presentation of the characters. Overall, the film would have been much better had Fleming either concen-
trated on the development of Eddy's character or on the interaction of all three characters. —PM, Loews Harvard Square

★★★ With Honors
Joe Pesci and Brendan Fraser give a good performance as two people from very differ-
ent worlds whose lives are dramatically altered by their meeting. Fraser plays Monty Kessler, and ambitious senior studying gov-
ernment at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Harvard who loses his one shot at Har...