
Subject: Re:Hamlet, I was transfixed

Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 08:52:28 GMT

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Ran it thru again instead of watching you-know-what. One knows the story and still can be drawn into the murder mystery, juxtaposition of the melancholy Dane's "feigned" madness and the real lunatic, Ophelia, action adventure with Laertes and the supernatural aspect of the Ghost. The dialogue one was forced to puzzle out by one's high school teacher with threats of 'pop quiz's' which was as obscure as could be just comes to life when the emotion of the actors and the action of the characters comes into play. If the story was by Nelson DeMille, screenplay by William Goldman and directed by Peter Weir we'd be hearing about "Best Picture" nominations. Instead, it's a curiosity owing to forced reading in high school and starring the Lethal Weapon. What a shame. This is absolutely the best movie I have seen in years.

Subject: Re:Hamlet, I was transfixed

Posted by [Wayne Parham](#) on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 15:09:12 GMT

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Thanks Bill, I'll check that out. I remember seeing it before, but it was a long time ago. Thanks for reminding me; I'll watch it again for certain.

Subject: Re:Hamlet, I was transfixed

Posted by [lon](#) on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 18:08:47 GMT

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Bill, You watched Hamlet instead of I-know-what?! I am surprised and gratified since I don't watch I-know-what either. Interesting that you mention high school and Hamlet. You see, it was a high school event that introduced me to Shakespeare. At the time a well-known tv personality named Clifton Fadiman made a film for teachers on Hamlet. My Hs friend's mother was the teacher who had this show. What it did was have Fadiman take the viewer through Hamlet as a detective story-- something a kid could understand. I pretty much got hooked on it from then on and even pursued theatre studies for a time. I have seen pretty much all the Hamlets. That, as Walter Brennan used to say is, "No brag, just fact." (cf "The Guns of Will Sonnet"). I'd have to go back to the Lethal Weapon one but I recall that it was a pretty weak Hamlet compared to the Kenneth Brannagh one. Perhaps you will see another Hamlet to compare and contrast (?) Right now there is a "Merchant of Venice" in the theatres with one of the Corleone clan playing Shylock. Thankfully, it isn't James Caan.

Subject: Re:"One down, two to go, Clifton Fadiman.....
Posted by [BillEpstein](#) on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 20:46:51 GMT
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....and Bennet Cerf and Dorothy Kilgallen: 'What's My Line?'. What a great 50's TV show. Your right. I have no basis for comparison. But it wasn't the actors that brought the action to life. It was the action that brought the prose to life. Ian Holm played the same role he did in 'The Fifth Element', Bonham-Carter was, I dunno, just wrong and R&G! Where did they get those two? Glenn Close was GlennClose and the King as well as Laertes I thought were excellent, not just scenery chewers with good diction which a lot of British actors in Hollywood seem to be. And then we come to Mel. Knowing only the words and the plot I thought there were moments when he really captured the essence. Mostly those were dialogue. The scene in the library with Polonius was quite good. The Soliloquies were OK. In the end, I beleive Zeffirelli deserves the credit. This is a well crafted and executed drama.

Subject: Re:"One down, two to go, Clifton Fadiman.....
Posted by [lon](#) on Mon, 07 Feb 2005 21:10:15 GMT
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I'm doing this from memory but I think Alan Bates was the Laertes. And yes, I sort of forgot about the John Daly show even though I grew up with it. For a different take on all this, go see if there's a copy of Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" over your way. It's a film that's available on vhs etc. Stoppard does his play from the POV of R&G. This would put you in mind of the Absurd. One of the big criticisms of MG and many others in the role is that Hamlet is a student on vacation from Wittenberg. So these old farts going "Words words words" is most often a stretch of the imagination. I sponse a really new twist on this would be to have a Holden Caulfield-type Hamlet showing the angst of youth in all this. I think what holds directors back from casting like this are the Gertrude scenes. They tried it in this one but it didn't work:
Ethan Hawke Hamlet yuck
