

Nostalgic Noel

We are rapidly moving towards the lovely Christmas time, and what is more prone to give you that lovely Christmas spirit than a few good old Christmas movies under a warm blanket and a cup of hot chocolate? In thread with the holiday spirit I have taken the liberty of reviewing a few good old Christmas movies – naturally I cannot give them a roll on the die, since we all know deep inside that they are all 6es by default!

Love Actually:

This lovely movie from 2003 consists of eight snapshots of lives ultimately tying together. They are all little short-stories of holiday situations from ordinary people with all their



problems and difficulties – in essence relating completely to the everyday man. They are all short stories of love and hope, and the daily challenges most face around Christmas.

Love Actually is the ultimate feel-good love movie, and it leaves the viewer with a sweet lingering feeling of that all is good around the sweet romantic Christmas time. Everything will work out in the end, and everyone will live happily ever after. The movie is backed up by a really strong crew of actors, but the beauty of it is that one does not get the feeling that they are hired for the purpose of a flashing billboard, but for their suitability to the role. Keira Knightly, Liam Neeson and Hugh Grant are only some of the grand faces that flash by – and they all deliver convincingly.

The most captivating aspect of this film, aside for the ultimate happy ending, is the fact that most people can relate to some aspect of the plot. Everyone knows the stress before and around Christmas time, and the snapshots and short scenes are from all layers of society; from Prime Minister to Housekeeper. And

ultimately, they are all scenes from family life and love as it really is... Love Actually.



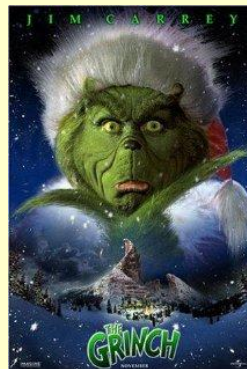
The Nightmare Before Christmas:

This movie is a dark musical directed by Tim Burton, made in 1993 it is an oldie but goodie. It is one of the few Burton films which does not feature Johnny Depp, but rather has Chris Sarandon and Danny Elfman talking and singing Jack Skellington's voice respectively. The film is not a Christmas movie as such, seeing most of the action takes place in the land of Halloween, but manages in the course of the plot to incite the jolly Christmas spirit. Of course the film possesses the grand happy ending, and the love interest is heartfelt and convincing.



The most memorable aspect of this movie is, for me, the amazing job Ken Page does in voicing the role of the Gambling High-Roller Oogie Boogie. All the songs are perfectly tailored to set the mood – dark, but yet hopeful. Like all Tim Burton productions, he reshapes the category he is currently in – and in this particular film he takes the animated and makes it adult. I would argue that both the themes, the gruesome and the ultimate morale of the movie is more suited for a an adult audience – although it can also be enjoyed by older children.

Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas:



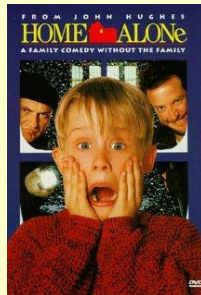
The ultimate guilty-pleasure children movie: Jim Carrey in a Dr. Seuss classic story. The Green outcast Grinch is stealing Christmas – but in the course of the action his heart awakens, and he is re-absorbed into society, and lives happily ever after in the happy Christmas spirit. Behind the whole plot

is a lesson in morale, which tells children

that Christmas is not only about the presents and the decorations – but about your family, and spending time with loved ones. This film has always received rather low reviews, but it is after all a children's film, and should be reviewed as such. I give it a huge plus for costume design and the Whos are very convincing despite the fact that this is a budget remake of a classic cartoon. The city and the morale also go hand in hand with Christmas, and it is all in all a very cosy family film. What makes this movie interesting in particular is how the dialogue rhymes! Most of the rhymes are originally from the book by Dr. Seuss – but some were added for the theatrical effect and to add humour which suited the screen better. There are also plenty of songs in the film, and that is naturally one of the reasons it remains a classic – for what is a Christmas movie without some catchy songs which will be stuck in your head for the rest of the season?

Home Alone:

This movie from 1990 will always have a special place in my heart. It has been an annual tradition in my family to see this film together before Christmas. Even though you know what is going to happen at every turn, it simply does not stop being funny. Kevin, an 8 year old boy, is left home alone when his family completely forgets him in the middle of the stress of going to France for the holidays. When two stupid house-burglars decide to rob the house where the clever Kevin is all alone, hilarity ensues. Piled high with slapstick and physical humour, the movie is also spiced up by it mostly being shown from the point of view of a naïve boy who thinks he has wished his family away. Eventually he changes his mind and realises that Christmas probably is best with his family, and he misses them despite all the trouble they put him through. The story is timeless, because it really captures Christmas from a child's point of view. What would a child do if s/he had unlimited money and freedom to do as s/he pleased? In the beginning it is all fun



and games, and in the long run you end up missing your family, and as in the Grinch the realisation eventually dawns that Christmas is not only about presents and food, but about the people you surround yourself with.

Smother the Stress

The best part about the Christmas Holiday, while being a student, is that in the middle of all the exam stress and hard-core studying you can take a break from it all, and delve into the magical world of films that give you the Christmas spirit that pondering over the immense stack of books seems to crush. Remember that blanket and hot chocolate from before? Come on... You deserve a break! Merry Christmas to you all, and best of luck on your exams!

Benny Baumann