

The Top 5

Compiled by John Kendle, john.kendle@uptownmag.com

...things to do in Winnipeg.

1. The best Bond yet

In many ways, Casino Royale, now playing in Winnipeg movie halls, is the best instalment in the 21-film James Bond series, and Daniel Craig is the best actor ever to don 007's tux.

From the opening scene, filmed in glorious black and white and ending with the famous gun-barrel-view of Bond rather than beginning with it, it's clear that this is not your father's Bond flick.

Gone are the over-the-top gadgets, the groan-inducing double entendres and the campy gags. In adapting Fleming's first novel, writers Neal Purvis, Robert Wade and Paul Haggis have put all their faith in the premise that this is a film about a professional assassin on his first mission.

Craig finds the perfect note here, as a character much more anxious to kill people than actually serve Queen and country, but he's also aware that he's losing a bit of his soul.

But the payoff, and the sight of Daniel Craig, machine gun in hand, coming into his own as we hear the familiar theme music is worth the wait.

Heck, it's worth waiting 44 years for.

— Peter Vesuwalla



3. Motherhood: the teen years

Mom's the Word 2: Unhinged promises to address hockey moms and more during its run at PTE, which runs until Dec. 3. The production is the sequel to Mom's the Word, which played to PTE audiences in 1997.

The first play went on to become a huge hit, has been translated into many languages and has played to audiences around the world. While the first instalment focused on the initial joys of motherhood — diapers and other fun stuff — Mom's the Word 2 focuses on a troublesome topic: teenagers.

"We always knew we would write a second play," actor/writer Alison Kelly says.

That doesn't mean the success of Mom's the Word wasn't a surprise to its participants, who didn't have global plans for the production. The project simply began as an outlet for six actresses recognizing how parenthood had seriously altered their career plans.

"We all assumed that life would go on but your life is profoundly changed... suddenly you're in a world that you know nothing about," Kelly says of becoming a parent.

— Grant Burr

5. A book a week

England's Mark Billingham used to do standup comedy. But then he took a stab at crime — crime fiction, that is.

It turned out that first book, Sleepyhead, was a critical and commercial hit. The novel introduced Tom Thorne, and the London copper just made his sixth appearance, in Buried (Little, Brown).

This time Thorne investigates the kidnapping of the son of a retired detective, hoping the victim is still alive.

Buried is something of a procedural, and while Billingham usually makes good use of his contacts among the British police, this time he found them less forthcoming. Sources willing to talk freely about murder were tight-lipped when it came to kidnapping because of the fact that the victim is still alive.

2. A Tennessee treat

"He was doing what Borat is doing right now back then," Seana McKenna says.

Excuse me? After delving into Tennessee Williams' Orpheus Descending a bit deeper, I might just be won over to the Borat argument.

Director Miles Potter thought Williams' little-known 1957 play deserved to be seen by more audiences after a good run at Stratford in 2004.

Some of the actors involved have changed for the MTC run — which runs until Dec. 16, but the production brings together Seana McKenna and Jonathan Goad once again as the principal characters. McKenna plays the repressed housewife Lady Torrance, and Goad is the mysterious stranger, Val.

"Miles has captured the essence of what we had before," McKenna says, noting that the production had to be adjusted to fit MTC's proscenium stage (a stage with an arched front).

"It exposes the dark and light of our society," McKenna says.

— Grant Burr

4. Tenacious D will rock you

Tenacious D in 'The Pick of Destiny' is a movie for everyone who's compelled to sing in the shower and who can't play guitar for more than five minutes without doing a windmill before leaping into the air.

Everything that's gloriously cheesy about rock 'n' roll — the riffing, the wailing, the mythology and the posing — is celebrated by two guys far on the outskirts of it all.

The key scene comes when Jack Black fantasizes about hitting the big time and putting on the boldest, loudest, most mind-blowing spectacle of raw power... during open-mic night at the local bar.

It's not about playing stadiums and drawing huge crowds, you see. It's about being awesome onstage. Maybe that's why Black so readily accepts Kyle Gass as a bona fide rock star when he sees him busking on a beach L.A. It turns out Gass is just some unemployed loser who looks about as much like a rock star as Keith Richards looks like an accountant. But in their minds, the pair are the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the history of the universe. If you love rock 'n' roll, see this movie and have a laugh.

— Peter Vesuwalla

CONCERTS & EVENTS

FABULOUS FAKES 2006: POP ART WITH A TWIST • Plug In ICA • Nov 23-25 — Works on view • Nov 25, 7 pm — Fundraising party, silent auction, & reception; Free admission

FESTIVAL OF TREES & LIGHTS • Assiniboine Park Conservatory • Nov 23 & Dec 3, 9 am-4:30 pm; Nov 24-Dec 2, 9 am-9 pm; Free

THE GRAND CARIBOO OPRY • West End Cultural Centre • Nov 23, 8 pm — Feat. Barney Bentall, Leslie Alexander, Ridley Bent, Dustin Bentall, Rob Becker, Kendel Carson, John Ellis, Jack Guppy, Romi Mayes & Chris Carmichael, Leeroy Stagger; Tix \$25 @ WECC, Folk Festival Music Store, McNally Robinson, Music Trader, Into the Music

GROUNDSWELL • Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall, U of W • Nov 23, 8 pm — *Of Experimental Fruit*, curated by Diana McIntosh; Tix \$19-\$9 @ 943-5770, McNally Robinson Book-sellers, India School of Dance, Music & Theatre, door

WINNIPEG ABORIGINAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL • Eckhardt-Gramatté Hall (U of W) & Globe Cinema • Nov 23-26; Info @ www.aboriginalfilmfest.mb.ca

A DAY TO REMEMBER • The Garrick Centre • Nov 24, 12:30 pm — Teens Against Drinking and Driving presents a day of music hosted by Mitch Dorge, feat. 20 Pound Shovel, The Brat Attack, Moments of Brilliance, The Public, Captain Bring-down, The Exception, First Time Since, Colors in Midnight; Tix \$12 @ door

THE THREE B'S • Manitoba Conservatory of Music & Arts, 211 Bannatyne • Nov 24, 7:30 pm — Music of Brahms, Bach and Beethoven, feat. Blair Burns, Patrick Lussier, Michael Oike, Christopher Wolf, Eric Lussier; Tix \$15 @ 943-6090

INSINGIZI • West End Cultural Centre • Nov 24, 8 pm; Tix \$17 @ Ticketmaster

XAVIER RUDD • Burton Cummings Theatre • Nov 24, 8 pm — w/ Ndidi Onukwu-lu; Tix \$30/\$25.50 @ Ticketmaster

JAW • A Label for Artists • Nov 24, 7 pm — w/ Infraction, Xplicit; Tix \$8 @ door

THE LETTERMEN • Pantages Playhouse Theatre • Nov 24; Tix \$30/\$25 @ 792-6703

THE BARRYMORES CD RELEASE • Nov 24, 10 pm (Royal Albert Arms) — w/ The Fabulous Kildonans, Universe; Tix \$5 @ door • Nov 25, 8 pm (A Label for Artists) — w/ The Crackdown, The Spades; Tix \$5 @ door

CAMERATA NOVA • Union Station, 123 Main • Nov 25, 2 & 8 pm — Christmas Concert Nova Noel; Free

HIGH FIVE DRIVE CD RELEASE • West End Cultural Centre • Nov 25, 8 pm — w/ Lives of Many, Asado, The Cease Fire; Tix \$8 @ Salon Venator, Into the Music, SK8

JACOB & LILY CD RELEASE • Canadian Mennonite University Auditorium, 500 Shaffesbury • Nov 25, 8 pm — Tix \$10 @ Cafe 100 FM, Winnipeg Folk Festival Music Store, The Park Theatre, The Haberdashery, door

JASON MCCOY • Club Regent Casino • Nov 25, 10 pm; Tix \$21.20 @ Ticketmaster

MANITOBA OPERA • Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall • Nov 25, 8 pm; Nov 28, 7 pm; Dec 1, 8 pm — Johann Strauss Jr.'s *Die Fledermaus*; Tix \$86.75-\$25.75 @ Ticketmaster

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