

Striking sets and costumes make 'Dick Tracy' a hit

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Visually stunning, a sensualist's dream of a movie, Dick Tracy uses its comic strip origins to serve up some of the most striking sets and costumes we've seen in years. Luscious, vivid colors, anchored by Tracy's banana trenchcoat (it looks good enough to eat), give the movie its remarkable visual appeal. The moody lighting and the atmospheric city sets add to the optical banquet. Throw in some spectacular make-up and Madonna's siren looks and you have a film that is an experience to watch, a treat for your eyes and ears.

AT THE MOVIES

Warren Beatty plays Dick Tracy as a vulnerable, soft-hearted, determined cop facing a moral dilemma - whether to send the Kid to an orphanage, and more intriguingly, whether to give in to *Breathless Mahoney's* (Madonna) demands to frisk her. The Tracy of the comics was a little tougher no doubt, a little stronger, but who can resist Warren Beatty when he is vulnerable (and isn't he always?). Certainly not *Breathless*, nor his true love, Tess Truehart (Glenne Headly).

The rest of the cast offers more big names: Al Pacino as Big Boy Caprice, a misshapen monster who kills off his competition when business demands it, Dick Van Dyke as a corrupt D.A., Mandy Patinkin as the soft-voiced 88 Keys, Mahoney's piano player, Paul Sorvino as Lips Manlis, and Dustin Hoffman as Mumbles. Talk about inspired casting - Hoffman is known for his mumbling accep-

tance speeches; it couldn't have been much of a stretch. All the villains sport the most amazing faces, just the way they do in the comic strip. The opening poker scene is full of bizarre characters, funny and shocking and a little unnerving.

The plot is pretty basic; Tracy has to put Bad Boy Caprice in jail, but he is hampered by the machinations of the sinister and mysterious No-Face. He also has to look after the Kid, an orphaned boy with a penchant for riding on the back of cars. And he keeps trying to get up the nerve to propose to Tess. A good guy's work is never done, it seems.

The movie is not without its flaws. For one thing, it's a little too long, and is rather slow in spots. And the characters aren't fleshed out enough, especially the villains. Remember how utterly evil Jack Nicholson's Joker was? Big Boy Caprice is not evil incarnate, he's only a cardboard meanie without a sense of the grander scheme of things. His is not a black enough soul.

On the other hand, the music is

superb, featuring songs by Stephen Sondheim. While Madonna has never been this reviewer's favorite performer, she lights up the screen with her looks and wonderful comebacks, and her voice suits the torchy music. Her wardrobe is stunning. She wears a see-through black robe in an encounter with Tracy, who complains that she doesn't seem very broken up over the death of boyfriend Lips Manlis. "I'm wearing black underwear," she points out. It's a wonderful line.

This is not the perfect film, but it is better than *Batman*. And this kind of movie reminds us that there is a reason for Hollywood to exist, other than to bring bloated star vehicles like *Bird on a Wire* to the theatres - only Hollywood could have produced this luminous cartoonish movie, with its grand designs and unique vision. This movie is worth the ticket price.

Entertainment

Telegraph granted in 1840

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June 20, 1990

Today is the 171st day of 1990 and the 93rd day of spring.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S

TODAY'S QUOTE: "People change and forget to tell each other." — Lillian Hellman

TODAY'S MOON: Between last quarter (June 16) and new moon (June 22).

TODAY'S BARBS BY PHIL PASTORET

Being up the creek without a paddle isn't nearly as bad as having a paddle, only to find the bottom's out of the canoe.

A tapeworm is a person who borrows your favorite cassette and fails to return it.

TODAY'S HISTORY: On this day in 1840, a patent for the telegraph was granted to Samuel F.B. Morse.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAYS: Lillian Hellman (1905-1984), playwright; Errol Flynn (1909-1959), actor; Audie Murphy (1924-1971), soldier and actor; Chet Atkins (1924-), musician; Brian Wilson (1942-), singer, songwriter; Andre Watts (1946-), musician; Lionel Richie (1949-), singer, songwriter; Cindy Lauper (1953-), singer.

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