



Cho Osaki, clothed in a black uniform, keeps his eye out for a would-be attacker in the martial arts film *Revenge of the Ninja*, currently playing at Markville.

Markham Movie Scene Martial arts film less than thrilling

By IAN BAILEY

I have seen Kung Fu movies on the occasional late show, but a weekend viewing of *Revenge of the Ninja* was the first time I had ever seen one on the big screen.

From TV to theatre these films spring from the same formula; a blend of martial arts mysticism and comic book expediency whose results are simplistic entertainment for those who respond to something in this chop and kick genre.

Before a look at *Revenge of the Ninja* lets look at the features of a standard martial arts thriller.

In these films storytelling is subservient to the fights that satisfy the fans. The story can be brought to a complete stop for a prolonged fight between two masters of the art or a master and a gang whose large numbers serve to emphasize the master's expertise. Throughout the fight quick movements are punctuated by the crunch and snap of fists smacking flesh and breaking bones.

The heroes never provoke a fight. They are prodded into displaying their martial arts prowess by villains ignorant of the destructive power in the fists and feet of their victims (These films are fantasies for every kid who was ever picked on at school).

Most importantly the films demand an actor — or someone to photograph in what passes for a central role — who has the physical savvy to execute the required moves.

All of this said it's possible to address *Revenge of the Ninja*, a fairly easy task because there is painfully little to address.

Revenge's "actor" is Sho Kosugi, a former Japanese Karate Champion, who co-stars with his little son Kane. The two play surviving members of a Japanese family, forced to flee their ancestral land after an attack by a band of dreaded Ninjas.

Ninja's are black-clad, ingenious warriors whose origins in Japanese history date back to the sixth century. In the film Kosugi Sr. happens to be a retired Ninja.

The two Kosugi's emigrate to the United States with the aid of their American friend, Braden (Arthur Roberts). However

Braden turns out to be a master Ninja who uses an unwitting Kosugi Sr. in his drug smuggling operation.

When he is crossed by the mob Braden dons a silver mask and sets out to decimate the gang. After a tedious hour and a half Kosugi himself comes out of retirement. He takes out his steam pressed Ninja suit, and his weapons and sets out after Braden.

Even for a film that depends on the vibrancy of comic book action *Revenge of the Ninja* is pretty thin stuff. There is a distinctly brutal tone to much of the film that gives trivial entertainment a sour taste.

Darts are thrown into faces, needles blown into necks, fingers chopped off by little throwing stars, and a little old grandmother is impaled on a sword.

The film adheres rigidly to the standard formula. The fights are loud and stop the exposition. The two Kosugi's never provoke a fight, yet every opportunity for a fight is exploited.

After being taunted by a gang of grade school bullies Kosugi Jr. takes them apart with his feet. Kosugi Sr. later uses his fists and feet to interrogate a belching gang who look like rejects from a Village People look-alike contest.

The strangest thing about the film is that, by the tone its director establishes, one often senses that we're supposed to take it seriously. Yet after watching any member of the cast struggle with the task of acting it becomes obvious that drama is not what this film is about. There is not a single decent characterization in the entire film.

Revenge of the Ninja adds to an impression that most of these Kung Fu films are junk. Yet these films keep coming, and people seem to enjoy them.

I wish someone would tell me why, because if *Revenge of the Ninja* is any reflection one has to conclude that martial arts thrillers are the genre of junk films.

WHAT'S ON:

Several openings mark the Markham movie scene this weekend. At Thornhill Square Cinemas Pia Zadora is *The Lonely Lady* in Cinema 1. *The House on Sorority Row* opens in Cinema 3 and Mr. Mom holds in Cinema 2. At Markville Cinemas *Fanny Hill* opens in Cinema 1, *Flashdance* returns to Cinema 2, and a new terrorist thriller, *Final Option* opens in Cinema 4. Class holds over in Cinema 3.



Rose Garlatti, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gio Garlatti of Markham, recently graduated from Seneca College with a diploma in legal administration. She currently is employed with a Toronto law firm.



Andrew Mingay, son of prominent local lawyer Paul Mingay, has recently been granted membership in the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants. He is a graduate of Queen's University and is currently working in the small business advisory group at Clarkson Gordon, Chartered Accountants.

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Per capita giving low

BY FRANCIS KING
Last year, the town of Markham contributed \$124,000 to the York Region United Way campaign, but the man whose responsible for Markham's contributions is not impressed with the figure.

Richard Crispi of Crispi and Repath Insurance Brokers told the *Economist* and Sun most of that money came from the town's industrial community.

"That figure (\$124,000) is very misleading because the residential part of Markham raised only \$9,784," he explained. "That works out to 12 cents per person. It's pretty embarrassing."

Mr. Crispi has devised a tight strategy for his efforts in Markham. He's lined up a roster of leading executives for his own area cabinet. Among them is Bob Shea of Family Trust Real Estate, a former York Region United Way Chairman himself.

Mr. Crispi is optimistic about Campaign '83.

"This year we're going for \$200,000, and we're confident of getting it," he stated. "People have to remember these dollars are spent within the region (and damn it all, they have to support these things wholeheartedly. It's their responsibility."

Mr. Crispi said

thanks to local firms like American Express, Magna International, Steelcase, Baker Instruments, Travelways and Chesebrough-Pond's. Markham has already topped its industrial community last year.

"I'm very pleased with the industrial response so far," he said. "They've accepted the challenge, but the residential sector hasn't."

Last Monday, the United Way launched its most ambitious campaign ever. This year's campaign goal is \$800,000, up 38 per cent from 1982, but Campaign Chairman Frank Stronach is confident the region will come up with well over \$1 million.

"We owe it to ourselves to support the 25 United Way agencies," he explained. "They provide essential services — everything from credit counselling and daycare, to emergency hostels for battered wives."

If we don't get involved now and give money, as well as our time as volunteers, agencies will suffer," he continued.

From his office at Magna International, Stronach is spearheading an aggressive campaign. York Region is a large and diverse area, almost 300,000 people living

in an region that exceeds 600 square miles. Therefore Stronach has divided it into nine target areas, and recruited community leaders to organize tailor-made United Way campaigns for each area.

This decentralized approach puts the onus on the geographic chairmen to activate United Way interest right on their own front porch. Each chairman is directly responsible for all fund-raising activity within his or her domain.

Ron Hauth of A. E. LePage Real Estate is responsible for Vaughan, and Chris Paterson, also of A. E. LePage heads up Richmond Hill. Peter Clark of Lorimer Realty Services Ltd., in King City takes on King, and Dave Kelly of the Bank of Montreal in Aurora is banking on Aurora to make a bet-

ter showing this year. Fran Sainsbury will be organizing United Way fundraising in Whitechurch-Stouffville, and Paul Range of Jackson's Point plans to raise community awareness in Georgina.

Geographic Chairmen for Newmarket and East Gwillimbury have yet to be announced. Chairman Stronach has also created several other key positions in his York Region Campaign '83 cabinet.

For instance, it will be difficult for employees of local York Region governments to resist Vaughan Mayor Lorna Jackson. She will be canvassing government employees at all four levels (federal, provincial, regional and municipal).

Community Education Co-ordinator for the York Region Board

of Education, Barbara Rowe has committed herself to seeing that school kids support the United Way too.

"If we can make people aware of the good work United Way does, and the need to support it when they're young, then we'll have an even better community for them to grow up in now, and in the future," she explained.

Basil Weeden, President of Faberge Canada Ltd. is Chairman for National firms. He will approach the corporate executive officers of national companies that maintain plants but not head offices in York Region.

If United Way is to meet its \$800,000 goal, much less break the one million dollar super goal, then it will be up to this cast of characters to promote interest in the United Way of York Region.



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