

Entertainment

Markham Movie Scene

Ghostbusters goofy, fun



By IAN BAILEY  
Ghostbusters, the new comedy playing at Thornhill Square, is full of contradictions that seem quite calculated. They are the substance of this goofy, but entertaining epic comedy.

On one hand the movie features a gallery of ghosts, who look as though they were recruited directly from the climaxes of Raiders of the Lost Ark and Poltergeist. Yet the same movie features the down-to-earth talents of alumni from two classics of TV satire - Saturday Night Live and SCTV. The alumni are all straightmen to the chaos around them.

The movie was written by Dan Aykroyd, of Saturday Night Live, and Harold Ramis, formerly of SCTV. Along with stars Bill Murray (Saturday Night Live) and Rick Moranis (SCTV), the four men represent troupes who refined the punchy TV skit into contemporary artform wherein anything could be harpooned sharply and quickly.

In both shows the traditional key to the performer's success was their ability to play loony roles with straight faces - we did the laughing they suppressed. This talent comes in handy in Ghostbusters as they work with a truly loony premise.

Aykroyd, Ramis and Murray, as well as Ernie Hudson, play ectoplasmic exterminators, i.e. they capture ghosts.

Ghostbusters gives the alumni the biggest, most colorful skit of their careers. The movie is a high-powered special effects epic whose oddities (courtesy of Return of the Jedi visual effects supervisor, Richard Edlund) include plate-eating goblins, spectral librarians, living stone dogs and a 300-foot marshmallow.

The boys are convincing straightmen to these visual excesses, including the Ghostbusters' greatest challenge - a powerful demon ensconced in an art deco Manhattan apartment building.

The straightest performer is Bill Murray. Despite the team atmosphere, Ghostbusters is Bill Murray's show. Murray (whose role was originally written for the late John Belushi) cuts up the mystic mumbo-jumbo that creeps into the film with well-aimed wisecracks and bravado.

He is also a relief from the stiff performances of Aykroyd and Ramis, who often seem as dead as the ghosts they pursue. Moranis plays a nerd to perfection and Hudson and co-star Sigourney Weaver often seem bemused by the movie's happenings. Bill Murray doesn't just steal the show - he keeps it comically alive. The result is a neat comedy-supernatural delight.

Ghostbusters is playing at Thornhill Square.

GREMLINS REVISITED

Gremlins, the mystic stars of the new Steven Spielberg produced movie of the same name, has arrived in movie theatres accompanied by a thorough and tiresome merchandising blitz.

What is worth remembering, however, is the fact that the movie from which Gremlins dolls, coloring books, T-shirts, pillowcases, backpacks and - coming soon - popcorn, arise is a sincere delight.

The Gremlins are cute creatures with the same calculated appeal of E.T. or the Ewoks, but these beings can turn nightmarishly nasty. Director Joe Dante (The Howling) works with their split personalities to create a fantastic tale that balances horror and humor in the same way that Ghostbusters balances comedy and special effects.

Though its human characters are merely appropriate cliches, the movie does offer the Gremlins - the most welcome additions to the summer's movie line-up.

Gremlins is playing at the Markville Cinemas.

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New York City's evil spirits don't stand a ghost of a chance against ectoplasmic exterminators (left to right) Ernie Hudson, Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis in the movie Ghostbusters currently playing at the Thornhill Cinemas. Bill Murray steals the show, according to Economist and Sun reviewer Ian Bailey.

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**Youth wins part in new TV series**

The young son of Markham entertainer Brian Crabb has landed the lead in a 14-part TV series.

Christopher Crabb, 14, will be on location in Vancouver shooting Danger Bay, an outdoor adventure drama.

Co-produced by Walt Disney Studios and CBC, the show will also be aired on pay-TV in the United States. Donnelly Rhodes is playing the part of the boy's father.

Christopher has been acting since he was eight years old in television commercials. He played the part of Tiny Tim with Henry Winkler in An American Christmas Carol, an ABC movie-of-the-week that is still playing.

The talented young actor is also known for his tennis prowess, ranked third in Canada for his age level.

The proud father has been presenting a nightclub-type revue at Fernando's Restaurant on Main St., Markham, since April and will continue through to September. He will also be working with owner Mr. Marto, on some future productions.

But for the time being, Mr. Crabb is ecstatic over his son's success. "We're pretty happy in this household," he said.

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