

100 Favorite Movies, 2000-2009: Mike Schulz

Written by Mike Schulz

Monday, 04 January 2010 06:00

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After telling friends and family members that, for 2010's first issue of the *Reader*, I'd be compiling a list of my 100 favorite movies from the last 10 years and ranking them in preferential order, a few of them asked me, "So how do you *do* that?"

It was simple, really. First, I gathered titles from my DVD cabinet, my reviews since January of 2000, and the past nine years' worth of Oscar nominees, and winnowed that list of 130-ish down to 100 movies I could/can happily watch over and over again. Then I broke those 100 titles down into separate lists of 10, starting with the movies I'd ditch if composing a "desert island" list of absolute favorites; the first 10 to be excised would consequently be ranked 91 - 100, the second 10 would be ranked 81 - 90, and so on. Then I broke *those* down, deciding which title would be the first to go from each individual list of 10, and *voilà*

! Instant Top 100!

Hey, it was the holidays. I had a lot of free time on my hands.

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So what did I learn from the experiment?

Well, I apparently don't have much repeat-viewing use for effects-heavy blockbusters once their big-screen thrill has worn off; despite my adoration for them, none of Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings*

films made the list, nor did such deserving possibilities as

X2: X-Men United

or the first two

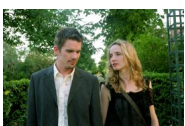
Spider-Man

s. (I continue to doff my cap, though, to entries 17, 64, 86, and 97.) And despite outstanding offerings by Nick Park, Hayao Miyazaki, the geniuses at Pixar, and others, fewer animated movies made the cut than I initially expected. (I've only included five here, although all of them cracked the top 50, and two landed in the top 13.)



I obviously continue to be knocked out by first-rate documentaries, with 12 of them making the line-up - 13, if you count the nonfiction/fiction hybrid at #27 - and am deeply embarrassed by the paucity of foreign-language titles, with all of *two* - ranked at numbers 39 and 89 - on the list. (My sad excuse for their lack of repeat-viewing appeal? Like many, I'll oftentimes re-watch DVDs with only half an eye while paying bills or housecleaning or whatever, activities that don't much allow for the reading of subtitles.)

My favorite filmmakers of the nineties, the Coen brothers, were also my favorite filmmakers of the aughts, with five of their works - including their most recent three - landing on the top 100. Beyond the Coens, directors with multiple titles on the list include Christopher Nolan and Gus Van Sant with three each, and Robert Altman, Wes Anderson, Alfonso Cuarón, Clint Eastwood, Stephen Frears, Christopher Guest, Spike Jonze, David Lynch, Bryan Singer, Andrew Stanton, and Quentin Tarantino with two. (As a lifelong Woody Allen devotee, it was with regret that I didn't find room for any of the prolific auteur's 10 titles from 2000 - 2009. Though, dishearteningly, not *much* regret.)



I learned - or rather, was reminded - that you should never take critics' first impressions as their final words on a subject; after subsequent DVD viewings, three of the included titles (at rankings

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36, 40, and 67) were movies I didn't care for the first time around. I was reminded how some films that you initially like (numbers 23, 31, 45...) can, over time, morph into films that you *love*. I was reminded of the unapologetic joy that can sometimes come from a really, really, *really* bad movie. (Thank you Tommy Wiseau for inclusion #100!)

And I was reminded that no matter how thorough your planning, there's always going to be a title you just plum forgot about. (*Damn it!*, I thought when scanning my editor [Jeff Ignatius' own top-100 list](#), *how did I miss*

The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada
?!?
")

I hereby submit my favorites of the last 10 years for your perusal and mockery... with titles and rankings subject to change within minutes of publication.

1. [There Will Be Blood](#)
- 2.

[Mulholland Dr.](#)

- 3.

[Before Sunset](#)

- 4.

[Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind](#)

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5.

[WALL•E](#)

6.

[The Royal Tenenbaums](#)

7.

[Zodiac](#)

8.

[Gosford Park](#)

9.

[Brokeback Mountain](#)

10.

[The Squid & the Whale](#)

11.

[The Departed](#)

12.

[No Country for Old Men](#)

13.

[The Incredibles](#)

14.

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[Moulin Rouge!](#)

15.

[Sideways](#)

16.

[The Dark Knight](#)

17.

[Capturing the Friedmans](#)

18.

You Can Count on Me

19.

[The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford](#)

20.

[Murderball](#)

21.

[A Mighty Wind](#)

22.

[Inglourious Basterds](#)

23.

[Shaun of the Dead](#)

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24.

[*Donnie Darko*](#)

25.

[*Michael Clayton*](#)

26.

[*Elephant*](#)

27.

[*American Splendor*](#)

28.

[*A Prairie Home Companion*](#)

29.

[*Adaptation*](#)

30.

[*Lost in Translation*](#)

31.

[*Team America: World Police*](#)

32.

[*Fantastic Mr. Fox*](#)

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33.

[Capote](#)

34.

[The Hurt Locker](#)

35.

[Children of Men](#)

36.

[Shattered Glass](#)

37.

[Grizzly Man](#)

38.

[25th Hour](#)

39.

[Y tu mamá también](#)

40.

[Almost Famous: Untitled](#)

41.

[Finding Nemo](#)

42.

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[The Fog of War](#)

43.

[The Station Agent](#)

44.

[Memento](#)

45.

[The Mothman Prophecies](#)

46.

[Spellbound](#)

47.

[Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit](#)

48.

[The Good Shepherd](#)

49.

[Munich](#)

50.

[Erin Brockovich](#)

51.

A Serious Man

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52.

[Juno](#)

53.

[Happy-Go-Lucky](#)

54.

[Far from Heaven](#)

55.

Little Children

56.

Gerry

57.

[Across the Universe](#)

58.

[High Fidelity](#)

59.

[Bowling for Columbine](#)

60.

Synecdoche, New York

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61.

[*Knocked Up*](#)

62.

[*O Brother, Where Art Thou?*](#)

63.

[*\(500\) Days of Summer*](#)

64.

[*X-Men*](#)

65.

[*The Queen*](#)

66.

[*Startup.com*](#)

67.

[*Burn After Reading*](#)

68.

[*Million Dollar Baby*](#)

69.

[*Kill Bill: Volume II*](#)

70.

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[Into the Wild](#)

71.

[Adventureland](#)

72.

[Good Night, and Good Luck.](#)

73.

[The Hours](#)

74.

Inland Empire

75.

[The Prestige](#)

76.

Tarnation

77.

[The Pianist](#)

78.

[Crash](#)

79.

[Milk](#)

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80.

[United 93](#)

81.

[Gone Baby Gone](#)

82.

[The King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters](#)

83.

[Forgetting Sarah Marshall](#)

84.

The Man Who Wasn't There

85.

Shortbus

86.

[Superman Returns](#)

87.

[Mystic River](#)

88.

[Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle](#)

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89.

[*Talk to Her*](#)

90.

[*Anvil! The Story of Anvil*](#)

91.

[*Best in Show*](#)

92.

[*Metallica: Some Kind of Monster*](#)

93.

[*Where the Wild Things Are*](#)

94.

The Bridge

95.

[*Revolutionary Road*](#)

96.

[*Ghost Town*](#)

97.

[*Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*](#)

98.

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[Rachel Getting Married](#)

99.

[Before the Devil Knows You're Dead](#)

100.

The Room