

# The Main Feature



Issue Number 5 – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007

## The Prestige

12 USA/2006/130 mins

Directed by – Christopher Nolan  
Written by – Jonathan & Christopher Nolan  
Robert Angier                      Hugh Jackman  
Alfred Borden                      Christian Bale  
Cutter                                  Michael Caine  
Julia McCullough                  Piper Perabo  
Sarah                                  Rebecca Hall  
Olivia Wenscombe                  Scarlett Johansson  
Jess                                      Samantha Mahurin  
Tesla                                      David Bowie  
Alley                                      Andy Serkis  
Judge                                      Daniel Davis  
Prosecutor                              Jim Piddock  
Defender                                  Christopher Neame  
Captain                                  Mark Ryan  
Owens                                      Roger Rees



"Every great magic trick consists of three acts: The first act is called The Pledge; the magician shows you something ordinary, but of course it probably isn't. The second act is called The Turn; the magician makes the ordinary something do something extraordinary. Now, if you're looking for the secret you won't find it, that's why there's a third act called The Prestige; this is the part with the twists and turns, where lives hang in the balance, and you see something shocking you've never seen before."

**This opening narrative delivered superbly by Michael Caine (in the role of Albert Cutter) describes the roller-coaster ride of twists and turns that this film takes you (the audience) on.**

Christopher Nolan's fifth film is yet another cunning exercise in narrative sleight-of-hand - this time set in Victorian London - which requires sharp senses. Scaling back after his gargantuan **Batman Begins**, Nolan returns to the manner of his debut **Following** and its momentous follow-up **Memento**. In other words, take nothing for granted in this tale of two magicians whose rivalry escalates into a deadly game of cat-and-mouse.



Based on the novel by Christopher Priest, the film starts at a crucial axis point with a scene, shown as edited highlights, which we return to later. Cockney illusionist Alfred Borden (Bale) sneaks backstage to find out how his former friend Robert Angier (Jackman) performs his remarkable version of the so-called 'Transported Man' trick. He watches helplessly as Angier drowns in a tank of water below stage, just as Angier's colleague Cutter (Caine) arrives on the scene. Borden is then sentenced for Angier's murder, awaiting his death in a prison cell with just the late Angier's diaries for company.

Borden ploughs back through the diaries, given to him as a sweetener by the legal representative of a lord desperate to buy his tricks before he is sentenced to death. This gives Nolan the chance to lay out the pieces of the puzzle.

Swiftly we learn that the rivalry began between Borden and Angier after the



former mishandled a trick that caused the death of the latter's wife. Nolan rapidly builds up a picture of two men whose bitter rivalry, jealousy and hatred for each other becomes darker and more obsessive as they attempt to sabotage each other's magic acts.

The performances are all first rate from Michael Caine, Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale to Scarlett Johansson and recent newcomer Rebecca Hall (who stars in the recently released and excellent **Starter For Ten**). Jackman is perfect for the role of the slick and assured showman, and there's few better than Bale to play the working-class underdog, whilst Johansson adds the sex and glamour of the magician's assistant. Caine is the go to man for a wise and experienced mentor and Hall is wonderful (as she was in **Starter For Ten**) as Borden's long suffering yet loving and devoted wife. With a cameo from David Bowie as Nikola Tesla, this is a powerful cast put together to deliver a fantastic (in the literal sense of the word) storyline.

The script by Christopher and Jonathan Nolan is as taut and exciting as the direction but it's what we've come to expect. Nolan is fantastic and clearly loves to keep the audience guessing and to do things a little bit differently.

As you'd expect in a film involving magicians, things are rarely as they appear. Buoyed by its original setting and multiple twists, the accomplished and absorbing **The Prestige** shows that Christopher Nolan is by no means a one trick pony.



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In **The Prestige**, we are asked to believe that two men would go to the very limits of human behaviour to earn (or deceive to earn) that prestige. It is a tale about obsession and it all starts after a terrible accident - or was it an accident? This is a movie that revels in its twists and turns and if you delight in cinema as a puzzle, you will devour **The Prestige** and love every throat contraction as it goes down...

Watch closely....

Suzi Olohan.

**BBC NEWS**

## **Queen dominates Academy shortlist**

**Oscar-winning royal drama *The Queen* has been nominated for six prizes at this year's European Film Academy awards.**

Dame Helen Mirren is in line for yet another best actress prize. Director Stephen Frears and writer Peter Morgan have also been shortlisted.

James McAvoy is up for best actor for his role in *The Last King of Scotland*, as is *Perfume's* Ben Whishaw.

Other British talents in contention include singer Marianne Faithfull, up for her role in the comedy *Irina Palm*.

The 20th annual awards will be handed out in Berlin on 1 December.

### **Piaf biopic**

The Queen faces stiff competition in the best film category from Romanian drama *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*, winner of the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Other films shortlisted in this category include *The Last King of Scotland* and *La Vie en Rose*, also known as *La Môme*.

French actress Marion Cotillard is up against Faithfull and Dame Helen for her performance in the Edith Piaf biopic.

Also up for best film is *Persepolis*, an animated feature about the 1979 revolution in Iran that is France's official submission for the 2008 best foreign language film Oscar.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/entertainment/7078750.stm>

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## Reactions to ....

The Day I became a Woman - 25<sup>th</sup> October 2007

Score 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Votes ~ ~ 2 1 2 6 8 7 3 ~ ~

Total Votes - 29 Average Score - 6.66 Position in Season - 4<sup>th</sup>

### Offside

Score 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10  
 Votes ~ ~ 1 ~ 1 4 7 5 7 2 ~

Total Votes - 27 Average Score - 6.56 Position in Season - 5<sup>th</sup>

Film	Score	Position
The Lives of Others	8.23	1 <sup>st</sup>
Notes on a Scandal	7.73	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Pans Labyrinth	6.88	3 <sup>rd</sup>
The Day I became a Woman	6.66	4 <sup>th</sup>
Offside	6.56	5 <sup>th</sup>

## Your views

After that I will definitely be supporting Iran in the World Cup, not keen on the Women's Cycling Team however.

Interesting but too much sand and see

Football seems to be the same the world over, a really good film

Fascinating insight into Iranian life but a terrible indictment of the position of women.

## Next Time

22<sup>nd</sup> November 2007 - L'Enfant (The Child)

Set in Belgium, a young couple, Bruno and Sonia play together, living on benefits and the profits of illegal gang activity. However, into their frivolous lives comes a valuable asset, their baby son.



Belgium/2005/100 mins



**Repropoint**

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