Disappointing WB series embarrasses bat-legacy

By Vincent Civitillo
Features Editor

For years, a champion of the night prowled the streets exacting his revenge into the many faces of evil. His story is unforgettable. His legacy is undisputable. His new show on the Warner Bros. network based on his daughter, however, is unwatchable.

Birds of Prey, the WB’s latest pretentious nonsense, takes place in the near future. It has been since years the dark knight has hung up his cape, as the result of an encounter with The Joker, who left Baggit (Dina Meyer of Starship Troopers) paralyzed.

During the time that has elapsed, meta-humans, people with superhuman abilities, have sprung up in New Gotham as the next wave in the Batman One. Of the meta-humans is The Huntress (Ashley Scott), the tortured offspring of Batman and Catwoman’s secret love, who fights her father’s vengeful cause to protect a city of people like her, battling for acceptance.

Along the way, she is joined by technical-genius Batgirl, now under the identity of The Oracle, Batman’s former butler Alfred (Ian Abercrombie) and 16-year-old psychic Dinah (Rachel Skarsten).

The trio of girls, working together as one, far too reminiscent of the WB’s Charmed, forms the basis of the show as the differing, yet similar, members of the flock form a bond of trust.

However, while the basis for the show is well rooted, although stolen from X-Men, its execution is poor at best. Fake-looking computer-generated shots of the city’s skyline weave in and out in between each sequence, giving the show an artificial feel right from the beginning.

The Joker’s appearance is truly laughable, not because he is a clown, but because his attire looks like a five-year-old’s Halloween costume. Because of this, the villain is only shown in quick, blurry flashbacks where only his voice, provided fittingly by Mark Hamill, can be distinguished clearly.

In the world-premiere, a series of confusing battle sequences lead to the introduction of Dr. Harleen Quinzel (Timothy’s Mia Sara), The Joker’s right-hand girl and sidekick in crime. Quinzel, who is responsible for New Gotham’s current crime-sprees as she fights to free her mentor from prison, also doubles as The Huntress’ psychiatrist. This mishandled trust, while interesting in theory, only leads one to ask why Baggit, who spent years battling Quinzel, cannot identify her.

As the series moves on, it takes a further dive into the original. Episodes feature meta-human villains with varying abilities, much like the WB’s Superman series Smallville, for the Delta flock to battle such as a henchman who can liequefy himself and another

A tale as old as time’ arrives in today’s digital age

By Brian Kibble
Staff Writer

In 1991 Walt Disney Pictures made movie history picture their when their highly praised movie Beauty and the Beast was the first and only animated film to be nominated for Best Picture by the Academy Awards.

Now the Oscar nominee has been re-released into IMAX theaters at the start of the year with one new musical addition shown at the 1991 New York Film Festival — “Be Our Guest,” loveable characters and “Be Our Guest,” loveable characters and “Be Our Guest,” loveable characters

Paige O’Hara provides the voice for Belle in the only animated feature ever to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar, Disney’s Beauty and the Beast. Now released on DVD after being adapted to the Broadway stage, the film becomes the second installment in Disney’s Platinum Series collection, which began last year with Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

For the special edition version, a commentary has been added featuring directors Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, producer Don Hahn and composer Alan Menken. They discuss what it is like to create an animated movie and what did not.

Scenes and characters that were deleted and the computer effects used in the movie were discussed. The commentary is also useful for those interested in the animation field.

As for other extras on the 2-disc set, there are many featurettes on the various stages in the production of an animated film. Original concepts and character designs, behind-the-scenes, music, story, casting and computer animation are all explored on the DVD.

To finish off the supplements, the “Beauty and the Beast” music video with Celine Dion and Peabo Bryson is included, along with multiple games based on the movie.

With an enchanting story filled with hits such as “Beauty and the Beast” and “Be Our Guest,” loveable characters and entertaining as well as informative extras, Beauty and the Beast is highly recommendable for Disney and animation fans alike.