The great adventure has yet again returned to fans, this time on DVD. On Tuesday, Oct. 21, The Adventures of Indiana Jones was released in a four-disc box set containing all three movies of the popular trilogy plus a fourth bonus disc with extra features for all three films.

The first movie in the series, Raiders of the Lost Ark, came out in theaters in 1981. After more than 20 years, the movie is still considered one of the best films of all time. The story centers on the fedora-wearing whip toting archaeologist Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) as he is hired to find the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Indy is up against more than he bargained for since the Nazis are already looking for the ark and he gains an unwanted partner.

Raiders is a non-stop action packed roller coaster ride and is considered the best adventure movie ever made. Directed by Steven Spielberg and with a story written by George Lucas, the movie is well made, and written simply enough so people can understand the archaeological information that is the film's basic premise. Ford is top notch in his role as Indiana. The rest of the cast is perfect as the allies and adversaries of Dr. Jones. The score, by composer John Williams, just adds on to all of that, making the film as enjoyable to watch as the thousandth time around, as it was the first.

The box set allows fans to own the movies in either 2.35:1 widescreen or fullscreen aspect ratio box sets. The film has been digitally restored with the video quality clear with very little, if any, digital grain. This is great news for film buffs since the film is over 20 years old. The audio is another example of current technology used beautifully. The film has been transferred to Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound. The sound is clear throughout, with music that never becomes overpowering.

The special features for Raiders can be found in the box set's fourth disc. There is a featurette entitled "Indiana Jones: Making the Trilogy" which discusses in three parts, one for each movie, the production of the entire trilogy. This making of features all new interviews with Spielberg, Ford and Lucas along with other members of the production team. For Raiders, the featurette begins with the original concept of the film and continues to the final product, discusses various areas of development and problems that arose while filming.

Also on the bonus disc are four additional featurettes which are "The Light and Magic of Indiana Jones," "The Adventures of Indiana Jones," and "Indiana Jones: The Stunts of Indiana Jones" and "The Music of Indiana Jones." Each featurette discusses the various subjects with all three films in mind. For Raiders, the special effects featurette discusses heavily on the end sequence of the film and the various techniques used for the full effect before computers were the norm.

The sound featurette talks about the whip noises heard and various guns fired in the movie. For the stunts on Raiders, Ford talks about stunts he participated in and the stunt men who doubled for him at times, especially for dangerous ones such as the truck sequence in the film. "The Music of Indiana Jones" is a must see for fans. Composer John Williams discusses what went on in creating a score worthy of an adventure film, including the famous theme.

Rounding out the extra features are trailers and DVD-ROM content on the Indiana Jones website available only through the box set. Although not loaded with as many extra features as other DVDs out there, such as The Lord of the Rings, the ones presented within the box set are enough for fans to enjoy.

With some of the best DVD box art out there, good looking menus, entertaining extra features and beautifully remastered films, The Adventures of Indiana Jones is a must own set for anyone.

Holy Grail of DVD arrives

By Brian Kibble
Staff Writer

In the summer of 1989, Dr. Indiana Jones returns to the big screen. Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade gave audiences another wild ride with the archaeologist, this time learning the origins of Indy's characteristic trademark, such as the whip and fedora, and the name Indiana.

Once again Indy finds himself in a race against time with the Nazis, who are looking for the Holy Grail, which is believed to grant the power of immortality to whoever drinks from it. With a new partner, Indy learns that the Nazis have kidnapped his father (Sean Connery), who knows the location of the Grail.

Indiana's third film is as good as the first, with Spielberg, Ford and Lucas returning. Probably one of the most contributing factors to the addition of Connery, Ford and Connery have perfect chemistry together as father and son. This makes the film as humorous as it is adventurous and all the more fun to watch.

With the first two films in the trilogy, Crusade received the same enhanced treatment to bring the film's quality to the best it could possibly be. It is presented in 2.35:1 widescreen format on a single disc, no matter which set is purchased. The audio has been transferred to 5.1 surround sound, along with the other two movies. The audio is great, with no overbearings whistles and moans.

As for the other featurettes, the segmentation discusses the difficulties with the opening scene on the train, along with the boat trip farther along in the movie. "The Sound of Indiana Jones" talks about new sounds brought to the third film, including the boats and the tank that is featured towards the end of the movie.

"The Light and Magic of Indiana Jones" describes how an airplane/car chase was created and how an invisible bridge was brought to the big screen. John Williams discusses the music for the third movie and what it was like to compose music for a trilogy.

All the extra features are interesting and include theatrical trailers for Crusade along with special DVD-ROM content.

With another adventure for Indiana Jones to be released in the summer of 2005, there is a possibility there will be another DVD box set released. With the first two box sets released, which earned them one Golden Globe each, but at the moment it is not likely. In the meantime, fans will have the adventure of their life keeping up with the Joneses with this third DVD set.

Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) dangles the last stones over the bridge in The Temple of Doom. All three movies were released on DVD with an additional fourth disc featuring bonus materials on Tuesday, Oct. 21.

LUCASFILM WHIPS UP INDIANA DVD BOX SET

By Brian Kibble
Staff Writer

‘Temple’ DVD not ‘doomed’

By Brian Kibble
Staff Writer

If adventure had a name, it would be Indiana Jones. The first film was so successful that it naturally spawned a sequel. In 1984 Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was released into theaters. Now its find its way into fans’ homes on DVD for the first time, available only in the box set.

In this film, Dr. Jones crashes lands in India and finds himself searching for a golden stolen sacred stone. He soon finds that foul things are afoot when following the trail of the missing rock. Indiana finds that the stone is one of five, all of which are missing. A mysterious cult that has apparently not existed for 100 years seems to have suddenly come into power. They have the village’s stone along with two more and are searching for the remaining two.

The sequel to Raiders of the Lost Ark is as action packed as the first one, although Lucas’ story takes a hit. Still it is enjoyable and a great adventure. Spielberg and Ford returned to help create another box office success. New characters brought even more entertainment to the picture. Most notably are Kate Capshaw as Willie Scott, the new love interest, and Ke Huy Quan as Indy’s kid side-kick Short Round.

As with Raider’s, Temple of Doom is offered in 2.35:1 widescreen or fullscreen aspect ratio, depending on which box set is bought. The video quality is as clear as Raider’s. The sound is superbly presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound, with dialogue and sound effects clearly heard with no overbearing music.

The bonus features are featured on the fourth disc. The part about Temple’s production in “Indiana Jones: Making the Trilogy” discusses how a sequel was created after the success of Raider’s, the important aspects that go into a sequel and how some ideas that were cut from the first film made it in this time around. All of this is discussed in new interviews with the production team alongside archival footage from when the movie was being filmed.

For the part about Temple in “The Light and Magic of Indiana Jones” and “The Sound of Indiana Jones,” the roller coaster ride in the mine car is discussed, among other effects in the movie. The stunts in this film were more dangerous, but handled with expertise as that particular featurette discusses them. The composer for the series, John Williams, discusses the use of the main Indy theme again, along with new themes heard in the movie.

Also found in the set is the trailer for Temple plus more DVD-ROM content available by accessing the trilogy’s website. The fun-to-watch animated menus are also featured on Temple’s disc, reflecting the movie’s main characters and scenes.

With clear videos, enhanced audio and interesting extra features, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom has not been better.

Friday, October 24, 2003