

at the movies

Star Trek: Insurrection

Starring Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, Brent Spiner, Levar Burton, Michael Dorn, Gates McFadden, Marina Sirtis, F. Murray Abraham, Donna Murphy.
Produced by Rick Berman
Directed by Jonathan Frakes
Written by Michael Piller.
Paramount Pictures, 1998.

When I went to Empire Theatres, I went in expecting just another *Star Trek* movie, but I was pleasantly surprised.

I have to make a confession. For me, *Star Trek* is beginning to get boring. True, I do watch *Deep Space Nine* semi-religiously, but I've abandoned all interest in *Voyager*. Unlike most of the other *Star Trek* fans I've talked to, I haven't been particularly enthralled by the crop of movies involving the crew of the *Enterprise-D* (*Enterprise-E* now), in large part because the movies – *First Contact* in particular – seemed to adhere to the basic storyline of “find and destroy problem.” I went to the movie theatre with the intention of finding something mindlessly entertaining to do for two hours.

I was pleasantly surprised. *Insurrection* does adhere to the “find and destroy problem” storyline, but it manages to do so with a sense of humor, not to mention interesting elaborations on the above hackneyed basic plot. The *Enterprise-E* has been sent on a diplomatic mission to a distant system when the crew are told that Data has gone insane in the midst of ethnographic research of the peaceful, agrarian Paku community, who are protected by the Prime Directive. Picard and crew rush to the planet, only to find that the Paku homeworld is threatened by the depredations of the militaristic Son'a and a faction of Starfleet. It seems that if one lives on the Paku homeland, you are exposed to metaphasic particles that, among other things, ensure that one never ages.

Insurrection is an interesting twist on the lust for technology demonstrated in most of the previous installations of *Star Trek*. Like the less successful *Generations*, *Insurrection* asks the question of whether technology is worth all of its so-called rewards, and would it be better to consciously choose an uncomplicated life. Picard, of course, is the focus of this struggle, as the consummate Starfleet officer falls in love with a lovely Paku woman as the valiant crew of the *Enterprise-E* lead the fight to keep the Paku from being driven from their home.

Aside from the storyline, the movie itself is quite good. Acting is rarely wooden, Jonathan Frakes' directing is excellent, and judicious use is made of the latest in computer-generated special effects. One is quickly drawn into the story of the Paku and the *Enterprise-E* with nary a protest.

It's beyond question that *Insurrection* is one of the best – perhaps the best – *Star Trek* movies ever. I can't wait to get my copy on videotape.



Answers to your contraceptive health questions

Q. Allie, I am considering taking the birth control pill, but I'm curious about all the different kinds of Pills that might be available to me. Which one should I choose?

A. It can be mind-boggling when you first ask your doctor about the Pill. There seems to be many birth control pills available, but it's up to you and your doctor to decide what's best for you. One important thing to know is that there are really only three types of birth control pill: monophasic, triphasic and the mini-pill.

Monophasic (Combination) Pills

Combination pills contain two sex hormones, estrogen and progestin, and are more than 99 per cent effective at preventing pregnancy. A combination pill is very tolerable, which means it's easy to take and has the fewest nuisance side-effects.

The newest of these monophasic pills is Alesse. Alesse is different in that it contains a low amount of estrogen while keeping the ideal balance between the amounts of estrogen and progestin. The World Health Organization and Health Canada recognize that it's important to always use the lowest possible dose of estrogen. This makes Alesse a good option for most women, and may be appropriate for those taking the Pill for the first time.

Triphasic Pills

Triphasic pills are divided into three phases during a cycle. In each phase, the amount of estrogen and progestin can be slightly different. This is done to match the natural rhythm of a woman's menstrual cycle and keep side-effects, like breakthrough bleeding, to a minimum. Triphasic pills are also more than 99 per cent effective and fairly well-tolerated.

Continuous Low-Dose Progestins (Mini-Pill)

The mini-pill contains only one hormone, progestin, and is generally used by women who can't take estrogen. The mini-pill is not as effective as other birth control pills, due to the absence of estrogen. It can also result in erratic periods, breakthrough bleeding and spotting between periods.

It's encouraging to know that more women are becoming interested in learning about their choices in birth control in order to make responsible decisions. Remember that this is a decision you don't have to make alone. Talk about all of your birth control options with your doctor and together you'll make the best decision for you. Also, keep in mind that birth control pills only protect you from getting pregnant, they do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.

Other types of birth control and their effectiveness*

COMBINATION PILL	less than 1 to 2
Norplant	less than 1 to 2
Depo-Provera	less than 1 to 2
Intrauterine Device (IUD)	less than 1 to 6
Condom with Spermicidal Gel or Foam	1 to 6
MINI-PILL	3 to 6
Condom alone	2 to 12
Diaphragm with Spermicidal Gel or Foam	3 to 18
Spermicide alone	3 to 21
Sponge with spermicide	3 to 28
Cervical cap with spermicide	5 to 18
Rhythm method	2 to 20
No birth control	60 to 80

* (measured in pregnancies per year for 100 women)

