

'Shanghai' is mindless fun

Gerri Pare/CNS

NEW YORK — Following up their Wild West buddy picture "Shanghai Noon," Jackie Chan's Chon Wang and Owen Wilson's Roy O'Bannon regroup in olde London to become "Shanghai Knights" (Touchstone).

In an overly violent opening in 1887 China, Wang's sister Lin (Fann Wong) survives an attack, but their Imperial Guard father is murdered and the emperor's seal stolen.

Vengeance in her heart, Lin trails the killer to London and writes Wang to leave his sheriff's post in Nevada and join her. On the way, Wang stops in New York and picks up Roy, who's been reduced to what he calls a "waiter-gigolo."

Their prey is British Lord Rathbone (Aidan Gillen), who put a dagger in Wang's father in exchange for a newfangled machine gun that Wu Chan (Donnie Yen) and his Boxers will use on the royal family, making Rathbone heir to the throne.

As directed by David Dobkin, the movie knows better than to take itself at all seriously. Its broad comic vein gradually makes all the physical confrontations look more fantastic than realistic, yet the opening murders are unsettling. The same goes for the loud, bouncy music that tells us we are supposed to be highly amused by the swordfights and martial-arts mayhem, but it's a little too vicious to be just fun, especially as it's aimed at the younger audience.

However, on the level of mindless escapism, the two guys have odd-couple chemistry, and between Wil-



Fann Wong, Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson star in a scene from Touchstone Pictures' "Shanghai Knights."

son's motor mouth and Chan's flying feet the action comedy barrels right along.

The movie plays with its time frame, using contemporary music and slang expressions as the cowboys tear a swath through prim and proper London.

Though pushing 50, Chan is still game for slapstick gymnastics, incorporating props like vases and bumbershoots into his choreographed fights. Wilson plays the wily womanizer ready to settle down with Lin, much to Wang's distress. The director seems loathe to cut out any sil-

ly shenanigans or extended chase scenes, resulting in an overlong movie, but one which moviegoers looking for broad comedy without any brain strain may find to their liking.

Due to frequent stylized violence, some sexual innuendo and an instance of profanity, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting classification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Pare is the director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting.

Comedies receive thumbs down

NEW YORK (CNS) — The following are capsule reviews of movies recently reviewed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting.

'DELIVER US FROM EVA'

Unconvincing comedy in which three guys pay a ladies man (LL Cool J) to woo the busybody, older sister (Gabrielle Union) of their wives and girlfriend so she will have less time to meddle in their relationships. Director Gary Hardwick has an appealing cast with sassy dialogue to spare, but the script takes a ludicrous turn before its predictable wrap-up. Implied affairs, some crass sexual dialogue and expressions, and minimal profanity. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting classification is A-III — adults. The Mo-

tion Picture Association of America rating is R — restricted.

'HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS'

Drawn-out romantic comedy in which an ad exec (Matthew McConaughey) boasts he can make a magazine columnist (Kate Hudson) fall for him in 10 days, unaware that for her next advice column she intends to make him dump her in the same time frame. Donald Petrie directs a contrived and unconvincing battle-of-the-sexes comedy that lacks sparkling dialogue. Sexual references, fleeting violence, some rude slang expressions and occasional profanity. The USCCB classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned. Some material

may be inappropriate for children under 13.

'THE RECRUIT'

Engrossing espionage thriller in which a veteran CIA instructor (Al Pacino) orders his brightest recruit (Colin Farrell) to get the goods on a mole in their midst, a fellow recruit (Bridget Moynahan) the rookie is attracted to. Director Roger Donaldson maintains briskly paced suspense in peeling away layer after layer of deceit, although the ultimate villain is fairly obvious. Brief violence and torture, an implied affair, occasional profanity and an instance of rough language. The USCCB classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

USCCB rates films' morality

NEW YORK (CNS) — Here is a list of recent films the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting has rated on the basis of moral suitability.

The first symbol after each title is the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting classification. The second symbol is the rating of the Motion Picture Association of America.

USCCB ratings: A-I — general patronage; A-II — adults and adolescents; A-III — adults; A-IV — adults, with reservations (this indicates films that, while not morally offensive in themselves, are not for casual viewing because they require some analysis and explanation in order to avoid false impressions and interpretations); O — morally offensive.

MPAA ratings: G — general audiences, all ages admitted; PG — parental guidance suggested, some material may not be suitable for children; PG-13 — parents are strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13; R — restricted, under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian; NC-17 — no one 17 or under admitted.

- Amen, O (no rating)
- Antwone Fisher, A-III (PG-13)
- Auto Focus, O (R)
- The Banger Sisters, A-IV (R)
- Biker Boyz, A-III (PG-13)
- Catch Me If You Can, A-III (PG-13)
- Chicago, A-III (PG-13)
- City by the Sea, A-III (R)
- Confessions of a Dangerous Mind, O (R)
- Drumline, A-II (PG-13)
- El Bola, A-III (no rating)
- Final Destination 2, O (R)
- Gangs of New York, O (R)
- A Guy Thing, A-III (PG-13)
- The Guru, O (R)
- The Hours, O (PG-13)
- Just Married, A-III (PG-13)
- Kangaroo Jack, A-II (PG)
- Manna From Heaven, A-II (PG)
- Narc, A-IV (R)
- National Security, O (PG-13)
- Nicholas Nickleby, A-II (PG)
- The Pianist, A-III (R)
- Rabbit-Proof Fence, A-II (PG)
- 25th Hour, A-IV (R)
- WXIII: Patlabor: The Movie 3, A-III (R)