Many times in the world of cinematography and film, the merits of a piece are illustrated in the budget, the star power, and how many times cars blow up. Other films are judged by their attempts to recreate the feelings that classic films presented as the first of their kind. Along with the craze of remaking classics, the notion of more and more creative bio-pictures about past legends in sports, literature, and music are all being judged by how historically accurate they are. Even the references to the different events that happened around the setting of these movies tend to be a worthwhile fact sloppily sold to the public as authentic. Forget that! Milos Forman’s Amadeus, the 1984 best picture, got it right. The film left out facts, or at least took a creative twist to them, leaving audience with a more entertaining and engaging story.

The film presents the “what ifs” surrounding one of the greatest composers of the 18th century and highlights a rumored feud between Mozart and Salieri. Salieri, a famed composer himself, must thwart the attempts of the young genius Mozart with the sounds of his notes and strains of wit as both he and Mozart compete for the affections of the emperor and crowd. When competition soon turns to manipulation, mayhem, and murder, Salieri must trick the greatest of musical prodigies in order to win favor and a chance to be remembered by God, Vienna, and history.

Strong performances from two Oscar-nominated leads Abraham and Hulce force audiences to ponder and crave the upcoming scenes as they drift by. Until a viewer chooses to research the mystery surrounding the film’s musical duel, the viewer probably does not know the facts between the fiction. Moreover, he or she needs not know them to feel the drama between two legendary composers the film has fated to compete in the grand music halls of Vienna, the capital of music. What’s more, the movie takes the audience on a ride visually from Italy to Austria and on a ride with a soundtrack consisting of Mozart’s great compositions. Audiences’ ears, eyes, and emotions are hooked to the screen while Hulce and Abraham give the performances of their lives.

Where other historical movies try to focus on accents and language use, Amadeus’ non-emphasis on these makes the film easy to understand. The dialogue between the characters is dynamic and comes as the best trait of the movie while it still respects the traditions associated with the opera writing of that period. Hulce, star of Animal House, manifests Mozart’s childish genius and lets his ego emerge as palpable as ever. Moreover with Abraham, the jealousness and scheming attitude of the disregarded master, Salieri, ring true. Together, they offer two extremes in interplay that yield deadly results and deadly fun for the audience. Mozart’s gift versus Salieri’s work ethic and mild wisdom: a battle royal in just a little over three hours. The relationship between these characters has never been fully established in history as positive of negative; however, in this version of both characters, each master both commands the screen and the other musician.
Forman’s *Amadeus* is not a bio-picture in the sense that if you watch it, you will become a history expert on music in the latter part of the 18th century. However, you will become a believer in strength of story over strength of fact. Forman’s’ creation lends itself as an odd, wrenching, awe inspiring glimpse into the world of genius vs. worker, gifted vs. well trained. And in that glimpse we must acknowledge the performances of both leads and the work that this 8 Academy Award winning film has accomplished for audience and cinema. Epic in scale, music, and performance, *Amadeus* truly is an ode to classic film narrative to be enjoyed by all.