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Film Shorts

The Beaver Trilogy

Trent Harris' one-of-a-kind film that was made from 1979 to 1985—the film's one part documentary, one part Sean Penn reenacting the documentary, and one part Crispin Glover reenacting the documentary again. **The Artistry.**

Bike Porn 2.0

More "cinematic cyclical sex," now with "live performances and brand new content." Not screened for press. **Clinton Street Theater.**

Black Sheep

Horror comedy *Black Sheep* begins with a young boy killing his little brothers' pet sheep and wearing its wooly, bloody pelt. By the time the film wraps up, its protagonists (well-meaning Kiwis, for the most part) have waded through rotting medical waste, been attacked by half-aborted sheep fetuses, blown the brains out of more than a few lambs, and sprouted hooves and wool of their own (don't ask). Meanwhile, the film's antagonists (fluffy, cute, vicious, bloodthirsty sheep) have gnawed through necks, torn out ropy intestines, bitten off limbs, broken through doors, and learned what "animal husbandry" means to lonely, rural New Zealanders. The gruesome gore is pretty entertaining, as are a few clever lines of dialogue. But mostly, it's the simple sight of murderous sheep—whether they're grazing ominously or swarming *en masse* over New Zealand's once-green, now-crimson farmland—that makes the flick so much fun. **ERIK HENRIKSEN Hollywood Theatre.**

Broken English

Reasons to see this movie: Parker Posey is excellent as a neurotic, slightly spoiled thirtysomething looking for love in the big city. Melvil Poupaud is incredibly sexy as the charming, free-wheeling Frenchman with whom she finally finds it. Reasons not to see this movie: Writer/director Zoe Cassavettes



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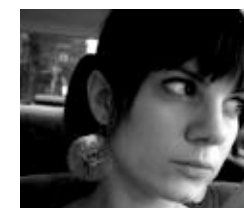
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awkwardly treads the line between conventional romcom and indie arthouse, shooting for both edgy realism and a fairytale ending. In trying for the best of both worlds, she frequently misses the mark on both. ALISON HALLETT **Living Room Theaters.**

Burnside

This locally grown film has a lot of good going for it. For starters, the director of photography and location scout deserve awards for beautifully capturing just about every recognizable nook and cranny of Portland without devolving into a tourist promo. The editing is smooth, and the story isn't half bad (if a little trite): Three people—an office drone, a drug dealer, and a teen who dreams of being a musician—represent three archetypal Burnside personalities. They go about their often fucked-up lives, and those lives—surprise!—eventually intersect. Unfortunately, the film's characters fall incredibly flat, especially in comparison to the impressive Portland backdrop. While characters' voiceovers hit the mark, melodramatic and amateurish acting (with a few exceptions, like Siobhan Carter as the teen who throws down beats under the bridges) combine with awkward dialogue, tainting almost every narrative scene. AMY J. RUIZ **Hollywood Theatre.**

Chinatown

"I goddamn near lost my nose. And I like it. I like breathing through it. And I still think you're hiding something." **The Press Club.**

Cowboy Bebop

Cowboy Bebop is a beautifully drawn, brightly colored, candy-coated piece of shit. It's an R-rated action-adventure cartoon that somehow manages to be appallingly weak on action (it drags on with boring, pensive scenes in which the literally two-dimensional cartoon characters say boring, pensive things like, "Of the days I've lived, only the ones spent with you seem real") and completely absent of unquestionably the best thing about every R-rated movie ever made: sex. CHRISTOPHER FRIZZELLE **Clinton Street Theater.**

Dharma River: Journey of a Thousand Buddhas

"A lyrical and exquisite sensory journey through Southeast Asia's great spiritual and cultural treasures," and part one of director John Bush's "The Yatra Trilogy." Other films in the trilogy screening this week at the Northwest Film Center: *Pranja Earth: Journey Into Sacred Nature* and *Varja Sky Over Tibet.* **Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium.**

Dr. Bronner's Magic Soapbox

See review *this issue.* **Hollywood Theatre.**

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Finding Normal

I'm not gonna lie to you recreational drug use is pretty damn great. But what happens when "recreation" turns into "occupation"? When one is so ill-equipped to handle normal life that they retreat so far into a haze of intoxicants that they can't emerge, and life becomes little more than a frantic, incoherent stumble from fix to fix? That's when people like the fine folks at Central City Concern (CCC) step in to help guide addicts back to a life of normal. That process is at once ugly, frustrating, and hopeful is at the heart of *Finding Normal*, a quiet documentary shot last year by local filmmaker Brian Lindstrom. With no narration and no expository text, Lindstrom tells the personal stories of addicts and counselors at CCC's downtown Portland rehab center. SCOTT MOORE **Cinema 21.**

From One Rose

"A cinematic journey through the life of woman born at the turn of the century in Portland, Oregon, who grows up with the Rose Festival." For the sake of Rose Festival authenticity, the screening will include plenty of drunk Greshamites, who will likely be fighting with a good number of overpopulating Beavertonians over cotton candy, stuffed animals, spots on the filthy sidewalk, etc. Carnies may or may not be in attendance, depending on the weather. **Living Room Theaters.**

Grease

Grease, screened on a big inflatable screen in Pioneer Courthouse Square. Watching a movie in the Square is pretty awesome, even if *Grease* makes you want to put a bullet through your temple. As it should. **Pioneer Courthouse Square.**

Gypsy Caravan

Gypsy Caravan tracks gypsy (or, as they're known in more PC parlance, "Roma") musicians from four countries on a tour around America, showcasing the wide variety of music and culture found in the scattered gypsy nation. It follows a path similar to *Buena Vista Social Club*, with impoverished, aging, regionally popular musicians finding a wider audience in America. Concert footage is juxtaposed with footage from the musicians' homes, many of which are poor villages that get all their money from the musicians' tours. As a smorgasbord of Spanish, Eastern European, and Indian music, the film should make world music fans drool. SCOTT MOORE **Hollywood Theatre.**

Hairspray

A blend of John Waters' original 1988 film and the 2002 Broadway musical. Shiny, colorful, and cheerful, the new version is all about the

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energy and good times—even the segregation issues at the story's heart are treated as little more than a pesky buzzkill. Still, its enthusiasm is infectious, and the campy satire is in full swing. **MARJORIE SKINNER Various Theaters.**

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

In this writer's opinion, *Order of the Phoenix* is by far the most stressful *Harry Potter* book so far: When Harry arrives at Hogwarts at the beginning of year five, it's to find that no one believes that Lord Voldemort has returned, Professor Dumbledore won't speak to him, the horrible Dolores Umbridge is the new Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher, and Harry himself has the biggest case of teen angst since Christian Slater in *Pump Up the Volume*. Plus he's trying to get a piece of hottie Cho Chang. In one of the most satisfying *Harry Potter* films, director David Yates and screenwriter Michael Goldenberg (both new to the franchise) do a fair job deflecting some of the anxiety inherent to the plot. The movie is surprisingly funny, and the special effects and magic tricks of the Pottverse are as impressive as ever—more importantly, the 870-page novel is pragmatically abridged, the pacing is quick, and all of the important plot points are touched upon. **ALISON HALLETT Various Theaters.**

I Have Never Forgotten You: The Life & Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal

After surviving the Holocaust, Simon Wiesenthal dedicated his life to hunting down Nazi war criminals who escaped justice, most famously helping to capture Adolf Eichmann and Karl Silberbauer, the man who arrested Anne Frank. It's a moving tale of sacrifice, nobility, and remembrance, and so is this documentary—even if it's difficult to trust a film about Simon Wiesenthal produced by the Simon Wiesenthal Center to be completely balanced. Still, the film (narrated, with shocking effectiveness, by Nicole Kidman) delves into some of the worst times of Wiesenthal's post-WWII life; he was criticized and ridiculed by everyone from neo-Nazis to the Israeli secret police to other Nazi hunters. Even if you believe his detractors, one thing is indisputable: Wiesenthal forced multiple generations of



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wisemen forced multiple generations of Westerners to continually remember the lessons of the Holocaust. SCOTT MOORE **Hollywood Theatre.**

I Know Who Killed Me

Lindsay Lohan's latest, in which she plays a "well-liked college student" who is "kidnapped, raped, and tortured." Also, her legs get cut off. Also, Ms. Lohan strips in this movie (presumably with legs intact). No, we're not making any of this up, and sadly, *I Know Who Killed Me* wasn't screened for critics, but keep an eye on portlandmercury.com for our upcoming review. **Various Theaters.**

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Despite sounding like the plot to the best gay porn you never rented, two firefighting buddies (one of whom is a bear) turn up the heat at the firehouse when they reveal their true feelings for each other. *I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry* is just another in a long line of mainstream comedies that specialize in gay jokes for people who, most likely, hate gay people. Much like last year's horrific *Wild Hogs*, this latest film from Adam Sandler and to a lesser extent Kevin James, a man forever typecast as the fat friend, is a limp parade of wacky gay jokes aimed at a target market who prefers their gays to be played by a pair of goofy straight guys. EZRA ACE CARAEFF

Various Theaters.

Introducing the Dwights

A family "dramedy" in the vein of *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Introducing the Dwights* hails from the suburbs of Australia. Already met with middling reviews, *Dwights* doesn't stand a chance at garnering the attention *Sunshine* enjoyed, but that constitutes no reason to bypass it if you're looking for a feel-good cry, don't miss this one. MARJORIE SKINNER


Laurelhurst.

Knocked Up

The latest comedy from Judd Apatow (*Anchorman*, *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *Freaks and Geeks*), *Knocked Up* is and there's really no other way to put this fucking hilarious. Starring the great Seth Rogen and Katherine Heigl as two singles who unexpectedly find themselves pregnant, I'd be shocked if a funnier or sweeter movie comes out this year. ERIK HENRIKSEN **Various Theaters.**

License to Wed

This new estrogen-washed rom-com features one of my current TV star dreamboats, the droll John Krasinski (Jim from *The Office*). I love this guy. He's got this great, loosey-goosey acting style like a cross between Hugh Grant and Robert Redford and I can totally see him as a romantic lead. But then the



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movie studio sours the deal: "Well, if you want John Krasinski, then you're also going to have to take Mandy Moore and Robin Williams." NO EFFIN' WAY. I'll take Mandy, because I can IGNORE Mandy. (Her cardboard characterization of this film's central cardboard character is dead-on in its cardboard-iness.) But you can't ignore Robin Williams, because he refuses to let you not even for a split second. The studios know he's pulling your mom and dad into the cineplex, which means you're going to have to endure an hour and a half of the same tedious improv he's been beating into the ground since *Good Morning, Vietnam* and *Patch Adams*. WM. STEVEN HUMPHREY **Various Theaters.**

Live Free or Die Hard

The good news about *Live Free or Die Hard*: Despite being the oldest person in the cast by about 20 years, BRUCE WILLIS IS STILL AWESOME. Here, Willis has some great action sequences and a few killer jokes at his best, he makes this entry as fun as the previous three. But now for the not-so-good news: *Live Free or Die Hard*, with its annoying PG-13 rating and light, funny tone, isn't nearly as intense or cool as the series' earlier, better movies. ERIK HENRIKSEN **Various Theaters.**

No Reservations

See review *this issue*. **Various Theaters.**

Noriko's Dinner Table

Sick of your family? Rent a new one. This companion piece to the 2001 Japanese thriller *Suicide Club* serves up the bizarre coming of age tale of one Noriko Shimabara, who escapes her idyllic small town because it doesn't have enough empty, sinister internet cafes. Naturally, she heads for Tokyo, where she meets a "friend" from a chat room. (And, as anyone who's seen "To Catch A Predator" knows, internet friends are kinda creepy.) She joins her friend's family rental business; hilarity (and suicide) ensues. The low-budget film is perhaps a little too calculated, but it certainly keeps you guessing. TOM LUNDBY **Clinton Street Theater.**

Paprika

Those who make their living putting words down on a page are loathe to admit it, but nevertheless, it's true: Sometimes, words aren't enough. Merely describing the appeal and beauty of Satoshi Kon's *Paprika* can't quite be done. Sure, I can tell you about the stunningly detailed animation, the overwhelming colors, the way that *Paprika*'s hand-drawn characters convey their weight and personalities and movements as effortlessly as if they were real-life actors, and about how there are a few sequences in which music, movement, and

color align as beautifully as they have in anything else I've seen. But it's not quite enough. ERIK HENRIKSEN **Academy Theater, Laurelhurst.**

Pranja Earth: Journey Into Sacred Nature
See *short for* Dharma River: Journey of a Thousand Buddhas. **Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium.**

Pump Up the Volume
Long before he became a bloated fixture on the celebrity rehab circuit ("Oh, hello Robert Downey Jr.!"), Christian Slater was "Hard Harry," the greatest pirate radio DJ that ever raged against the 'burbs. Not only did he spin Concrete Blonde records and smoke cigarettes, he got Samantha Mathis to take her top off in his backyard, thus bringing this teenage boy's (wet) dreams to fruition. EZRA ACE CARAEFF **Mississippi Station.**

Rescue Dawn
See *review this issue.* **Century 16 Cedar Hills Crossing.**

Seville Southside
A 2003 Spanish documentary about "the multiracial denizens of a Seville housing project [who] do not just perform flamenco—they live it." Damn straight they do! **Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium.**

Sicko
There's no question that *Sicko* is a brilliant documentary. Michael Moore outdoes himself—largely by stepping aside, keeping his usual "gotcha!" pranks to a minimum, and personalizing a complex issue. The question, however, is how effective Moore's public shaming of the US health care industry will be. He's recast the debate in terms we can all understand—explaining the problem as "[here is] what the greatest country ever in the history of the universe does to its own people, simply because they have the misfortune of getting sick." But will Americans listen? And if they do, will they join Moore in demanding a solution? AMY J. RUIZ **Various Theaters.**

The Simpsons Movie
See *review this issue.* **Various Theaters.**

Stephanie Daley
When a young girl gives birth unexpectedly and the baby is found dead, a pregnant psychologist is charged with ascertaining whether the girl killed the baby or not. The film contains some memorable performances, but is nonetheless utterly miserable to sit through, thanks to the beyond-depressing subject matter. ALISON HALLETT **Living Room Theaters.**

Sunshine

See review this issue. **Various Theaters.**

Tekkron Kinkreet

See review this issue. **Cinema 21.**

Vajra Sky Over Tibet

See short for Dharma River: Journey of a Thousand Buddhas. **Northwest Film Center's Whitsell Auditorium.**

Welcome to the Dollhouse

"You think you're hot shit, but you're really just cold diarrhea." **Fifth Avenue Cinema.**

Who's Your Caddy?

Not screened for critics, this black remake of *Caddyshack* finally brings together Big Boi and Andy Milonakis. Oh, how we've waited! **Lloyd Mall 8.**

★ **MEANS WE RECOMMEND IT**

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