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Thursday, September 27th, 2007
Thursday, September 27th, 2007

Screen Listings

CALENDAR » Screen Listings

Wednesday August 1st thru Tuesday August 7th

EDITED BY AARON MESH

Listings (Aug 1 thru Aug 7): [Performance](#) | [Screen](#) | [Visual Arts](#) | [The It List](#) | [Outdoors](#) | [Words](#) | [Dish](#) | [Movie Times](#)



Becoming Jane

This film should teach you to beware the word "Becoming" in movie titles as much as the word "Beginning." In fact, *Jane Austen: The Beginning* might more accurately convey the cliché approach of writers Kevin Hood and Sarah Williams, who reduce the youthful days of the popular author to meet-cute melodrama, the sort of thing that in her novels is barely achieved or described. It's all veddy Hollywood: Austen is played by the gamine American Anne Hathaway, and she wins the heart of James McAvoy's hunky Irish boxer-lawyer

BECOMING JANE: Dear reader, this motion picture is bullshit.

with such proto-feminist antics as playing cricket with the boys. This historically speculative fling becomes the currency of genius, buying our heroine the inspiration for Mr. Darcy, et al. "My feelings will not be repressed," she writes, like she's taking dictation. And of course, the usual Regency fashions are out in force, along with old pros Maggie Smith, James Cromwell and Julie Walters. Admittedly, this stuff will probably delight today's teenage Austenites, as will the flattering notion that even this coldly disdainful satirist was once—*sob*—a star-crossed young lover. The film's best, simple idea is that Austen's own romantic failure moved her to write all those unbelievably happy endings—what she snarkily calls "brilliant, happy marriages." For many loyal readers, though, this Jane will still seem too damn nice. **PG.** ALISTAIR ROCKOFF. *Cedar Hills, Fox Tower.*

Big Screen on the Green

[OUTDOOR, REVIVAL] Portland Parks and Recreation sets up screens in local parks and shows off its DVD collection. This week it's **Charlotte's Web** (Sellwood Park, Thursday, Aug. 2), **The Pursuit of Happyness** (Laurelhurst Park, Friday, Aug. 3) and **Wallace and Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit**. Screenings start at dusk. Free.

Black Book

Paul Verhoeven's first Dutch film in 23 years plays out just like the Hollywood blockbusters he has left behind. *Black Book* is a World War II epic complete with nail-biting twists and turns, giant explosions and bare breasts. Never mind that director and screenwriter Gerard Soeteman apparently spent 40 years researching the historical facts that serve as its basis—the damn thing is entertaining enough for the multiplexes. Carice van Houten plays a brave Jewish woman who refuses to die. After the Nazi bastards wipe out her family, she joins the resistance, bleaches her pubic hair, infiltrates Sicherheitsdienst headquarters and seduces an officer played by Sebastian Koch (*The Lives of Others*). Once again, Verhoeven boldly



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Eat Me Do Believe The Hype | Checking in with a trio of new big-city food imports.

2 comments



Jáce Gáce | Waffles and beer: Great idea, sloppy execution.

10 comments



Streets of Flamenco | Campallo breaks out, and the people say, "Alé!"

4 comments



Brandon Graham & Corey Lewis | It came from Seattle: anime at Floating World.

0 comments



Eeeee Eee Eeee | The way of Tao Lin.

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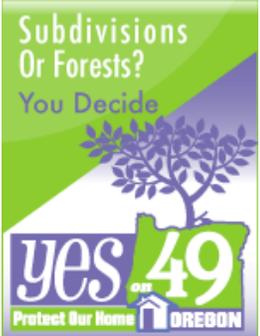
Queer Window All About Steve | A lifelong bachelor acts more gay than most gay guys, but don't call him a metrosexual.

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goes where few, if any, filmmakers have gone before, not least by eschewing the somberness of most Holocaust films and including a sympathetic SS officer and a duplicitous Dutch resistance fighter. **R. MARTIN TSAI.** *Living Room Theaters.*

The Bourne Ultimatum

The world's glummiest action hero returns. Here's guessing Matt Damon will expressionlessly kill some people. Look for AP Kryza's review on WWire at [wweek.com](#). **PG-13.** *Pioneer Place, St. Johns Twin Cinema-Pub, Lloyd Cinema, Lloyd Mall, Roseway, Eastport, Division, Moreland, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza.*

Bratz

They shop. They dance. We skipped the screening. Look for the review on WWire at [wweek.com](#). **PG.** *Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Division, Cornelius.*

Broken English

Broken English begins with the face of its heroine, Nora Wilder, positioned between two glasses of wine. This is a place where Nora finds herself most of the time. But as imagined by director Zoe Cassavetes (yes, the daughter of John) and inhabited by Parker Posey, Nora isn't a typical movie drunk, smashing from one blinding binge to another. She self-medicates the way real people do: She feels intoxicated because it's better than feeling something worse. She's sipping her way through another party when in bounds Julien (Melvil Poupaud)—lanky, French and possessed with the remarkable ability to make a straw hat look sexy. It's not terribly difficult to imagine where *Broken English* goes from there, but it's not so easy to predict where Posey goes with her character. She doesn't blossom, coo or unwind. She cracks. And the fissures expose dimensions of acting that Posey has never shown before. She has a little speech in an aquarium—no more than 30 seconds long, and about penguins, of all things—that ranks among the finest, most affecting displays of vulnerability I've ever watched on a screen. **R. AARON MESH.** *Living Room Theaters.*

Brooklyn Rules

Now is the season when *Sopranos* writers fly from the nest, like baby birds packing heat. First, Matthew Weiner created the AMC series *Mad Men* (see Dan Carlson's opinion on page 69). And now Terence Winter—who wrote some of television's finest moments, including the magnificent "Pine Barrens" episode—has scripted a coming-of-age tale that isn't a Mob movie quite so much as a guys-who-hang-out-near-the-Mob movie. A little *GoodFellas* and a lot *Good Will Hunting*, the film sports some gorgeous images from cinematographer Richard Crudo, including one dolly shot of a murdered capo, splayed amid potted flowers as if his funeral had been prearranged. The only major misstep is casting: Director Michael Corrente has chosen Freddie Prinze Jr. for the lead. Looking simultaneously streetwise and conflicted is too large a task for Prinze to handle, and he resorts to giving his best impression of Tony Danza. The supporting cast outpaces him by a New York block—especially Scott Caan, who, summoning the lethal charm of his father, gives a delighted chuckle before leaping into a brawl. **R. AARON MESH.** *Hollywood Theatre.*

Dr. Bronner's Magic Soapbox

[TWO NIGHTS ONLY] Like millions of people, when I hit the showers every morning a weird man named Dr. Bronner makes my genitals tingle with pepperminty goodness. Dr. Bronner's Magical Soap can clean you from head to toe (even doubling as toothpaste)—but it can also free your mind. Bronner pasted religious and political manifestos on the bottles of his holistic soap, preaching a "One God" religious ideal about uniting "Spaceship Earth." A strange pulpist indeed. The documentary *Dr. Bronner's Magic Soapbox* chronicles the German idealist's journey to America, his escape from a mental institution and his rise as a preachin' soapmaker. In director Sara Lamm's somewhat unfocused documentary, Bronner's not as crazy as you might imagine—although seeing him in sunglasses shouting about communists

2 comments



A Place Where Nothing Changes | The Obituaries are back—with a decreased risk of suicide. 0 comments



PDX Pop Now! Friday-Sunday, Aug. 3-5 | WW's Casey Jarman expounds on what makes PDX Pop Now! so effin special. 0 comments

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does bring Dr. Strangelove to mind. The documentary gets slightly tedious, especially during footage of Bronner's son, Ralph, pushing soap and peace to strangers. But Bronner's an inspired subject—a strange, intriguing and sweetly insane man who took the idea of cleanliness and godliness to literal levels. He's a kooky hoot, and regardless of your thoughts on his sociopolitical religious tirades, you have to admit that he makes a damn fine—and oh-so-tingly—soap. AP KRYZA. *Hollywood Theatre. Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 4-5.*

El Cantante

Ahh, J-Lo's ass. It truly is a thing of glory. OK, now that's out of the way and I am free to expound profoundly on the deep and touching cinematic masterpiece *El Cantante*—or, as it's more commonly known, that movie starring Jennifer Lopez and her vampire husband. The story follows the rise and fall of Hector Lavoe, a starry-eyed Puerto Rican singer (born Hector Juan Perez Martinez and played here by he of the perpetual paleness, Marc Anthony) who moves to New York at 17, begins a music career that spans decades, and eventually earns the title "The King of Salsa." At his side through this wild ride is his fanatical and possessive wife, Puchi (played by J-Lo in a simply stunning transition from polyester to shoulder pads), whose passionate love for her husband is highlighted not only in flashback scenes but also in a black-and-white interview-style monologue that runs intermittently throughout the film. These scenes (as well as enough slow-motion shots to make you wonder who was stalling for time) detail Hector and Puchi's passionate and tormented life of *drogas, sexo* and...well, you get the point. R. ANNIE BETHANCOURT. *Broadway, Lloyd Cinema.*

Flicks on the Bricks

[ONE NIGHT ONLY, OUTDOOR, REVIVAL] Pioneer Courthouse Square hosts Friday-night screenings (like a drive-in, but with MAX trains). This week's bus-mall treat is Brian De Palma's underrated *Mission: Impossible*. 715 SW Morrison St. Screenings start at dusk. Free.

From One Rose

Ira Flowers' historical panorama of the Rose Festival delivers a highly conventional civics lesson with a bizarre conceit: It's narrated by a composite Portlander—a nonexistent old lady with a slightly unhealthy obsession with the Grand Floral Parade. The Ken Burns-y images are accompanied by the narrator telling us about ostensibly beautiful and tragic moments in her life, some of which are almost touching until you remember that she doesn't exist. AARON MESH. *Living Room Theaters.*

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Gypsy Caravan

Following a group of Gypsies (five bands from four different countries) as they travel from the familiarity of their homes to embark on a six-week musical tour around North America, director Jasmine Dellal highlights the differences, as well strong bonds and underlying similarities, of the Romani people worldwide. While *Gypsy Caravan* is a neat little documentary that brings awareness and insight to this often-marginalized and misunderstood culture, I found myself wanting less talk and more action. The performances are vibrant and alive, but the behind-the-scenes commentaries (even with a Johnny Depp cameo, swoon!) take a bit of the momentum away. ANNIE BETHANCOURT. *Hollywood Theatre*.

Hairspray

John Waters' indomitable PG cult flick has been made over: First into a pastel-pink Tony-winning Broadway musical in 2002, and now a Hollywood-style song-and-dance buffet packed with more stars than an L.A. plastic surgeon's waiting room. The juicy script, filled with oddball cameos and campy dialogue, has been reshaped into a steamroller of cheeky, cheery songs about the power of self, most of which involve lame metaphors about lights in the darkness, chocolate or food. What really saves the whole sugary works is that the heart of the movie has been transplanted from hotheaded hair hopper Tracy Turnblad (Nikki Blonsky) to her massive mother, Edna, played by John Travolta in that much-discussed fat suit. Her transformation from shut-in to fat, fabulous siren rings more true than the film's clunky march for black rights. Maybe it's because you can see Travolta inside Edna, distancing himself from *Wild Hogs* and *Swordfish* with each kick and coquettish triple-extra-large booty shake. As a remake, *Hairspray* is a dirty shame. But as a musical, it's a surprisingly good time. **PG.** KELLY CLARKE. *Pioneer Place, Lloyd Cinema, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Vancouver Plaza*.

Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix

My, has he grown. From pipsqueak to full-blown hero, Harry Potter's cinematic self has seen young actor Daniel Radcliffe mature from cute kid to *Tiger Beat* hunk, and Radcliffe's skills have improved with his character's magical abilities. Here, Harry faces multiple challenges, not the least of which is the funny feeling in his pants when he locks eyes with Cho Chang (Katie Leung). But Harry is viewed as a conspirator against the Ministry of Magic and its representative, new Hogwarts professor Dolores Umbridge. As played by the magnificent Imelda Staunton, Umbridge is the devil in a home-economics apron, sneering through a smile like a snake hiding behind a wall of kitten-embossed plates. With *Phoenix*, obscure British TV director David Yates crafts a dazzling mix of magic, fun and scares, and scores big in what is arguably the best Potter film—on par with Alfonso Cuarón's *Prisoner of Azkaban* and miles ahead of 2005's dismal *Goblet of Fire*. But, in the end, Harry's struggle is not unlike that of any teenager. He learns that nobody can go it alone. Whether you're fighting pure evil or just going for your first kiss, you need a system of support. With friends—and supporting actors—like Harry's, you really can't go wrong. **PG-13.** AP KRYZA. *Pioneer Place, Lloyd Cinema, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, 99 West Drive-in, Sandy, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza*.

Have Yourself a Psychedelic Summer

Film archivist Dennis Nyback dips into his catalog to present four tributes to the Summer of Love. One highlight: Matt Groening's high-school collaboration, ***Drugs: Killers or Dillers?*** *Clinton Street Theater. 7 and 9 pm Friday-Sunday, Aug. 3-5. See clintonsttheater.com for screening details.*

Helvetica

[ONE NIGHT ONLY, DIRECTOR APPEARANCE] A documentary about a font. It is a very nice font. *Hollywood Theatre. Saturday, Aug. 4.*

Hobo Film Festival

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] It's not TV, it's HOB0: A traveling caboodle of films for tramps, by tramps. A cursory examination of the festival's trailer confirms that hobos spend a good deal of time on trains. *Red & Black Cafe, 2130 SE Division St., 231-3899. 8 pm Friday, Aug. 3.*

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Hot Rod

It's finally happened: A Hollywood comedy appears to be made entirely of outtakes. Since the mistakes are the funniest parts of most *SNL*-alum efforts anyway, this is not an entirely unwelcome development. *Hot Rod* stars Andy Samberg (he of the Jewfro and rubbery, wide mouth) as a moped-riding stunt man who unsuccessfully performs tricks to raise money for his dying stepfather (Ian McShane), a man he hates so much he wants to keep him alive just to physically assault him. Director Akiva Schaffer (who helmed Samberg's *Lazy Sunday* digital short) aims for laughs by throwing every silly idea he has at the screen—and gets most of them by throwing the same stuff for minutes on end. (Samberg takes one tumble down a hill that feels like a live-action version of Homer's endless plunges on *The Simpsons*.) The other players are game, although it's hard to watch the gentle Danny R. McBride proceed from *All the Real Girls* to this idiocy without feeling a little sadness. **R.** AARON MESH. *Broadway, Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Vancouver Plaza.*

I Don't Want to Sleep Alone

Ming-liang Tsai, the director of Taiwan-set films like *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, explores the urban nooks and crannies of Malaysia, where he was born. His new film is set in Kuala Lumpur and stars Kang-sheng Lee in two roles: a paralyzed man cleaned and cared for by a poor nurse (Shiang-chyi Chen), and a Chinese drifter who, after being mugged, is cleaned and cared for by a Bangladeshi laborer (Norman Bin Atun). The latter also acquires an old mattress, which gets a similar scrubbing, in what becomes a pattern of nearly religious ablution. The style is wordless minimalism: A series of long, stationary shots that observe an emerging love triangle among the nurse, the drifter and his caretaker. Yet human passion eventually seems threatened less by jealousy than by the environment. In one of the film's many believably surreal moments, two lovers struggle to embrace while choking on the forest fire smoke that has enveloped the city. Tsai's sultry ode to erotic satisfaction suggests that everyone deserves some kind of perverse release. At one point, a TV announcer advises throwing out one's old mattress and getting a new one, but these characters steadfastly refuse to throw out the objects of their intense affection. **ALISTAIR ROCKOFF.** *Living Room Theaters.*

I Know Who Killed Me

To Lindsay Lohan: I know what you did last summer (and this summer). And now, I know who killed me. You did, Ms. Lohan, with your hilarious new film. In what should have been titled *I Was a Teenage Stripper*, a saintly suburbanite escapes a serial killer, only to shock her parents with a tawdry new persona. It's all an excuse for the nubile starlet to exhibit virtually every last freckle, before shrieking and whimpering while some nutjob cuts her limbs off. And like the recent *Mr. Brooks*, Lohan's opus is best appreciated as a luridly loony psycho-potboiler, complete with creepy dolls, hooting owls, hysterical hausfraus, smug shrinks, people with jackets that say "FBI" on the back squinting at laptops, and a ridiculous doozy of a twist. **R.** **ALISTAIR ROCKOFF.** *Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Cedar Hills.*

I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry

Rest easy, gay people. That movie where Adam Sandler and Kevin James get married is not just some tasteless exercise in homophobia. Far from it. It's also an exercise in xenophobia, misogyny and relentless contempt for people with a functioning sense of humor. It's a movie where Rob Schneider plays a Japanese minister who laughs at a homeless wino: "Ooh, he bloke his reg!" It's a movie where Sandler—in full Brooklyn goombah mode—describes himself and his ostensible partner as "paper faggots." And it's a movie that spends its last hour desperately faltering for an apology for all the offense it caused before, like a frat boy trying to talk his way out of a date-rape charge. The best that can be said about *Chuck and Larry* is that it marks our entrance into an era in which queers get the same treatment from the Happy Madison crowd that women and foreigners have been receiving for years: semi-fond abuse. "Gays and lesbians didn't spend 40 years fighting for these rights to see them made a mockery of," says the lawyer/sex kitten played by Jessica Biel. Well, it looks like they did. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza.*

Interview

There's nothing in contemporary society quite so farcical and insipid as celebrity journalism—unless it's the people who go around talking about how pathetic celebrity journalism is. Both extremes are on display in Steve Buscemi's *Interview*, as an arrogant political pundit (played by Buscemi) condescends to a sit-down with an apparently vapid starlet (Sienna Miller). The

subsequent battle of wits is far more evenly matched than you'd expect (Miller's performance is as least as good as Buscemi's), with a tone that plays like Mamet reading the tabloids. But while it's based on a film by the courageously offensive Theo Van Gogh, *Interview* doesn't have anything revelatory to say about celebrity. That's because there's nothing worth saying. But like the similarly cynical *Closer*, it also has limited things to say about human nature. That's a bigger shame. **R. AARON MESH.** *Cinema 21. Friday-Thursday, Aug. 3-9.*

The Iron Ladies

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] A comedy based on the true story of a Thai volleyball team comprising gay men, drag queens and transwomen. Continually turned away by other homophobic teams, they come together under the banner of equality to kick their opponents' (and bigotry's) asses! *Red & Black Cafe, 2130 SE Division St., 231-3899. 7 pm Monday, Aug. 6.*

Knocked Up

In Judd Apatow's magnificent comedy, the bewilderment of an entire generation finds a face in Seth Rogen. He's that teddy bear who's been hulking in the corner of Apatow's frames since television's *Freaks and Geeks*, and here he takes top billing as Ben Stone, a layabout who isn't too sure he's cut out to be a leading man. He bumps into Allison (*Grey's Anatomy's* Katherine Heigl) at a club, and takes her name at the bar. They both take a few too many shots, she takes him home, he doesn't take proper care with the condom. When Ben learns that his boys have swum, he is prepared to do the honorable thing, but he isn't prepared in any other way. Apatow's *The 40 Year-Old Virgin* first gained attention for its raunch, and *Knocked Up* is likely to achieve the same notoriety. But *Knocked Up* is a sex comedy in the same way that most people's lives are sex comedies: Nobody's getting any. And Apatow's movies aren't about "family values"—the hollow pettifogging that accompanies every election cycle—but the values required for growing up and starting a family. He makes responsibility and commitment funny; no mean feat. **R. AARON MESH.** *Cinemagic, Wednesday-Thursday only.*

Live Free or Die Hard

Director Len Wiseman's take on John McClane packs a hard action wallop, offering up some of the biggest thrills so far this summer. What sets the fourth installment of the series apart from other summer dreck is that the majority of the action in *Live Free* is done with real stunts. At 52, Bruce Willis remains a seminal action hero, and the majority of the film will have audiences screaming, "Yippee-ki-yay, mother—" Nope. Not in a PG-13 *Die Hard*. It's obvious this was an R-rated film edited down, and the movie suffers from poor overdubbing ("jughead" still looks like "fuckhead" on Willis' mouth) and skimps on the blood. Still, it's fine popcorn, loaded with buttery goodness, amazing stunts and its fair share of jolts. If only it felt like a *Die Hard* movie. **PG-13. AP KRYZA.** *Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Division, Cedar Hills, Hilltop, Cinema 99.*

The Method

Seven job applicants in Madrid are told their last interview will consist of "the Gronholm method." They marvel—what is this Gronholm method? Turns out it's just the tricks used for years on reality-television shows: voting one another off the island, playing silly games of agility, and being persuaded to betray loyalties. There's nothing here you didn't see on the first season of *The Apprentice*. Except Donald Trump didn't think he was making a brave anti-corporate statement. And he had better hair. **AARON MESH.** *Living Room Theaters.*

My Best Friend

Patrice Leconte, director of *The Man on the Train*, brings us another, lesser French drama about late-life redemption through male bonding. Challenged by a skeptical colleague to produce his best buddy, friendless antique dealer Daniel Auteuil enlists the help of gregarious cabbie Dany Boon. A light and casual tone makes everything a foregone conclusion, yet as dramedy the film offers little real laughter. The affecting Auteuil and Boon are saddled with the paper-thin roles of soulless prince and saintly pauper, plus a climax so maudlin and literally American as to take place on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*? Those who've seen that program can guess who ends up phoning who. Admittedly, there is something funny about an American game show teaching the French life lessons. If the very idea doesn't trigger the Gallic gag reflex, I don't know what will. **PG-13. ALISTAIR ROCKOFF.** *Hollywood Theatre.*

No Reservations

Catherine Zeta-Jones headlines an unremarkable, inoffensive heartwarmer that has the bad luck of being the summer's second fancy-kitchen movie—and less appetizing than the one where rats make the food. Zeta-Jones is a tightass executive chef who gets saddled with an orphaned child (Abigail Breslin) and a free-spirited sous chef (Aaron Eckhart). She spends more time with the kid than the co-worker, which makes her a good person but assures a duller movie. (I always wanted to see Zeta-Jones in a pillow fight, but would have preferred that it not be with an 11-year-old.) Eckhart spices up the predictable conflicts a bit, and there's nothing really wrong with the movie—if you can stomach a heavy dose of treacle. **PG.** AARON MESH. *Lloyd Cinema, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza.*

Once

Irish director John Carney has found a loophole to the logical problem that haunts every musical: Why *are* these people breaking into song at the slightest provocation? Carney's solution is to make *Once*, a winsome movie about a street musician trying to finish a demo tape. Yes, he croons in the street, but that's his job. So it's perfectly reasonable that the unnamed busker (Glen Hansard) should conduct a hesitant romance with a Czech flower seller (Markéta Irglová) via rhyming couplets and guitar strumming. Shot on digital video and set to Hansard's own music (he's a member of The Frames), *Once* has the same ratio of irritation and appeal as a first album by any lachrymose singer-songwriter: You can condemn it for being histrionic and self-pitying, but you'll have to do so with a lump in your throat. The performances by Hansard and Irglová are both affecting, but the most touching moments in a hopelessly tender film come from Bill Hodnett as the hero's dad—a man who provides warmth and care without a hint of commotion. It goes without saying that he doesn't sing. **R.** AARON MESH. *Fox Tower.*

Overdrawn

[ONE NIGHT ONLY, DIRECTOR APPEARANCE] In a climactic moment of Portlander Karney Hatch's documentary, the filmmaker tells his bank over the phone, "I got some overdraft fees that I wasn't very happy about. I was wondering if I could get them removed." After a quick small-claims suit, he gets his money back, suggesting an annoying solution for irresponsible debtors everywhere. I don't know that banks profiting from debt is such a shocking injustice, or that we need massive regulation through "usury laws." But Hatch does expose the dirty tricks of predatory lending—the ways in which low-income areas are targeted, and big charges are processed before small ones with no explanation or disclaimer. There is also a former Bank of America VP to remind us that through 401(k) programs, many of us are investors in the banks' credit-debit gravy train, not just victims of it. Ralph Nader advises you to know your teller, know your rights, and be ready to complain, and I particularly like his own personal, Luddite approach: "I do not have a debit account. I do not have a credit account." You heard it from Ralph: Don't hate the player, hate the game. ALISTAIR ROCKOFF. *Clinton Street Theater. 7 and 9 pm Thursday, Aug. 2. Karney Hatch will attend and answer questions.*

Pump Up the Volume

[REVIVAL] Do you ever get the feeling that everything in America is completely fucked up? Christian Slater does. And he runs a pirate radio show. *Mississippi Station, 3943 N Mississippi Ave. Dusk.*

Ratatouille

Brad Bird's story of a foodie rat's rise in Paris' culinary world is not just the best animated film this year, it's the best animated film to come out of the U.S. since Bird's last effort, *The Incredibles*. The story of a rat named Remy (Patton Oswalt) who finds himself secretly spicing up bland food in a Paris eatery is aimed at kids, but it's loaded with so much madcap humor that adults won't be able to resist. That's Bird's gift. Whether his characters are saving the world from destruction or saving a pot of soup from bad aftertaste, there's a sense of urgency and awe in his films. *Ratatouille*'s technical marvels and storytelling are trumped by this unique quality. Bird twists the ordinary in a way we've never seen, and accomplishes something no other movie this summer has—originality. **G.** AP KRYZA. *Pioneer Place, Lloyd Cinema, Eastport, Division, Cedar Hills, Cinema 99.*

Rescue Dawn

German legend Werner Herzog returns to his favorite theme—man battling man amid heartless wilderness—by remaking one of his finest documentaries, *Little Dieter Needs to Fly*. Christian Bale steps into the role of Dieter Dengler, a pilot shot down over Vietnam and dragged to a POW camp, where he plots escape. Bale shades his usual charisma with a dash of mania, but it's Steve Zahn—who's spent most of his career playing dim in cheap horror and comedy—who steals the movie as a fellow prisoner who responds to torture like most of us would: with horrified insanity. While Herzog is busy with atmospheric and Bale with his heroics, Zahn delivers the performance that lingers in the memory. He strikes a blow for the timid, the mistreated, the ordinary. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Cedar Hills, Vancouver Plaza, Fox Tower.*

Screen 360: Films for Children of the World

An international smorgasboard of kiddie flicks. *Hollywood Theatre. Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 4-5.*

Sicko

Michael Moore's latest smear campaign has in its crosshairs his most reprehensible villain yet: the health insurance industry, a numbers racket disguised as a medical service. The first half of *Sicko* is a forceful complaint: We meet the victims of HMO deceit, who line up to tell wrenching stories of lost mortgages, legal loopholes and dead relatives. None of this could be mistaken by anyone with the slightest intelligence for a nuanced policy discussion, but it's an effective broadside, and fairly entertaining. It's also too good to last. As *Sicko* drags into its second hour, Moore exchanges his old standby of hyperbolic accusations for a cloying credulity. Shouldering his way to the center of the screen, Moore visits Canada, England, France and Cuba, rejoicing at their universal care. Doubtless some of the acclaim is deserved, but without asking a single probing question, Moore crosses an ethical line. If a filmmaker goes to Cuba, documents free medical treatment for Americans, and does not go on to mention that the country has in the past six years suffered a shortage of doctors because its government is shipping them to Hugo Chavez's Venezuela, if the filmmaker does not show any actual Cubans getting health care, or even ask to what degree the doctors helping him are engaged in an international public relations exercise, then that filmmaker is lying to you. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Lloyd Mall, Tigard-Joy.*

The Simpsons Movie

Nationwide Groening veneration makes it harder to see *The Simpsons Movie* for what it is: a mediocre film based on an obsolete television show. The actual product—as distinguished from the hamburger promotions and magazine profiles—doesn't feel like a culmination of the series so much as an extended reunion program, like one of those *Happy Days* specials where everybody gets together and remembers how funny the Fonz was. Except in this case everybody reminisces about how stupid Homer was, and there's the strange realization that this show is still on TV. Actually, the movie is very funny, if only in sporadic bursts. The extended gag of Homer's infatuation with a pig leads to the further extended gag of a song called "Spider-Pig"—a tune that for some reason gets better the more it's repeated. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Broadway, Pioneer Place, St. Johns Twin Cinema-Pub, Lloyd Cinema, Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Cinemagic, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Sandy, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza.*

Spanish Docs

[ONE NIGHT ONLY] *Seville Southside* is a documentary about the Three Thousand houses—the most impoverished and troubled neighborhood in the Triana district of Sevilla, Spain—and Gitano, the old gypsy culture of flamenco dance and song that thrives there. Amid the new threats of drugs and techno beats, the Gitanos speak in verse and heated discussion about the conflicted relationship they have with their barrio: loving it as home yet despising its deterioration and the toll it's taking on the next generation of sons and daughters. This tension is at the core of the film—families crowd around dinner tables to sing lamentations about poverty, men meet for a midday beer in local bars and banter about the government that has abandoned them, old Gitanos talk wistfully of the days when the sky was their roof, and mothers mourn the addictions of their lost sons. Yet the hope that exists in *Seville Southside* always comes from the music. At the film's end the Triana Gitanos organize a tribute festival to a flamenco hero, and there the Three Thousand sing of loss and despair, but also of yearning and possibility. ANNIE BETHANCOURT. *NW Film Center. Whitsell Auditorium, 1219 SW Park Ave., 221-1156. 7 pm Thursday, Aug. 2.*

Stanley Kubrick Films

Anyone with a passing interest in the works of Stanley Kubrick has seen his space ballet **2001: A Space Odyssey**. And probably his gladiatorial epic **Spartacus** to boot. But what about **The Killing**, Kubrick's 1956 debut, a cracking good noir about a racetrack heist? Sterling Hayden maintains a stoic menace as a carefully crafted plan goes haywire amid bad luck and worse women. Then there's 1957's **Paths of Glory**, a Kirk Douglas picture set amid the French trenches of World War I. That's not a promising premise, but the movie is astonishing: A damning commentary on the masters of war that still triggers outrage. "Gentlemen of the court," Douglas tells a kangaroo court-marshal, "there are times that I'm ashamed to be a member of the human race." It was a sentiment that Stanley Kubrick felt from the start, and he would follow its lead for the rest of his career. AARON MESH. *NW Film Center. Whitsell Auditorium, 1219 SW Park, 221-1156. 2001 screens at 7 pm Friday, Aug. 3. Spartacus screens at 7 pm Saturday, Aug. 4. Paths of Glory screens at 7 pm Sunday, Aug. 5. The Killing screens as part of the Film Center's Top Down series atop the Hotel deLuxe parking garage, 729 SW 15th Ave. at 8 pm Thursday, Aug. 2.*

Stephanie Daley

Tilda Swinton investigates infanticide. How come Tilda Swinton never investigates anything happy? *Living Room Theaters.*

Sunshine

Danny Boyle's grim space thriller follows a crew of astronauts trying to reignite our dying sun with a bomb in the year 2057. Handily enough, this will save the human race from extinction. Until an implausible last-minute twist, the crew faces challenges strictly technical and ethical: repairing the ship's shield and deciding who should get the last of the oxygen. Boyle, who directed the zombie picture *28 Days Later*, was once sought to helm the fourth movie in the *Alien* franchise, and it's clear he could have knocked it out of the park. *Sunshine* is realistically claustrophobic and employs a kind of subliminal editing to ominous effect. But among all the reverence, you keep waiting for something really dramatic to happen: a clash of personalities, a close encounter of any kind. **R.** ALISTAIR ROCKOFF. *Fox Tower, Lloyd Cinema, Eastport.*

Talk to Me

Ralph Waldo "Petey" Greene Jr. was an ex-con-turned-radio personality-turned-standup comedian whose "tell it like it is" mantra had the brass at his station sweating bullets and made him a household name in the D.C. area from the 1960s to the 1980s. In *Talk to Me*, Don Cheadle's portrayal of Greene is somewhat incongruously reminiscent of Tim Meadows as Leon Phelps in *The Ladies Man*. While it's easy to see that Greene would make a charismatic subject for a movie, it's unfortunate that his biopic comes off so uninspired and clichéd. Aside from trying too hard to turn the dialogue into quasi-*SNL* smack, screenwriters Michael Genet and Rick Famuyiwa also digress too much by establishing parallels between the outrageous Greene and the strait-laced radio station program director Dewey Hughes (Chiwetel Ejiofor). Since Cheadle starred in an ingenious biopic like *Boogie Nights* and he also served as a producer here, you would think that he of all people would recognize that the rise and fall of someone as colorful as Greene warrants a more unorthodox rendering. **R.** MARTIN TSAI. *Fox Tower.*

Ten Canoes

Set among Aboriginal Australians in the days before white folks came crashing in, it's a story within a story about what happens when a young man covets his brother's wife. But it's really about the power of storytelling. With unconventional narration and scenes that echo history-museum dioramas, the film has an almost National Geographic feel. It's also really funny, irreverent and gorgeously filmed. **BECKY OHLSEN.** *Living Room Theaters.*

Them

French filmmakers David Moreau and Xavier Palud join *Hostel* director Eli Roth in the campaign to destroy Eastern Europe's tourism industry. However, their Romania-set thriller is not another mindless snuff film, but rather a sleek, 77-minute slice of home-invasion horror. Apparently based on a true story (with what must be great imagination and exploitation), it follows a French schoolteacher and her boyfriend as they are stalked in their country house by mysterious assailants. Though we've pretty much seen this all before in movies like *M.*

Night Shyamalan's *Signs*, the clever ways in which the unseen creeps bait and flush their prey out into the open are distinctly chilling, as is the final revelation. ALISTAIR ROCKOFF. *Hollywood Theatre*.

Towncraft

[TWO NIGHTS ONLY] Little Rock, Ark., may be best known for Jim Crow and Bill Clinton, but documentarian Richard Matson makes the case that it should be equally known for Trusty, Numbskullz, Chino Horde and Soophie Nun Squad. These were the punk bands—comprising mostly kids no older than 17—who created the Little Rock punk scene in the early '90s. And as Matson's movie makes clear, it was quite the DIY experiment, with teenagers running the bands, the 'zines, and even a record store (open from 4 to 6 pm weekdays). What made Little Rock unique? "I think what Little Rock has that a lot of cities don't have," explains a participant, "is total boredom." *Towncraft* has some dull patches of its own, but it's a testament to the creative fertility of living where nothing happens. AARON MESH. *Clinton Street Theater. Monday-Tuesday, Aug. 6-7.*

Transformers

It doesn't matter that the Autobots and the Decepticons look like they were designed by Frank Gehry. It doesn't matter that the relationship between Shia LaBeouf and his Camarocum-alien Bumblebee borrows liberally from the plot of *E.T.* None of it matters, because *Transformers* is a movie that offers the twin pleasures of laughing at Michael Bay's turgid filmmaking and gasping at his unprecedented effects. Until it doesn't. Because the fun of *Transformers*, which increases the more mindless it gets, hits a wall once you realize that every imaginable curiosity has been thrown at the screen, and there's still another 30 minutes of kinetic aerial battling left to endure. **PG-13.** AARON MESH. *Lloyd Cinema, Eastport, Division, Cedar Hills, Forest, Cinema 99, Cinetopia, Vancouver Plaza.*

Unconscious

Anyone who's made it through Psychology 101 will get a kick out of this Spanish romantic comedy set in the Freudian milieu of 1913 Barcelona, where apparently there are enough sexual complexes to fuel a Woody Allen retrospective. Strait-laced doctor Salvador (Luis Tosar) joins his wife's sister, Alma (Lionel Watling of Pedro Almodóvar's *Talk to Her*), in a search for her missing psychoanalyst husband. ALISTAIR ROCKOFF. *Living Room Theaters.*

Underdog

First Ingmar Bergman dies. Now this. It's been a rough week. **PG.** *Broadway, Lloyd Mall, Eastport, Division, Oak Grove, Cedar Hills, Cornelius, Hilltop, Lake Twin, Sandy, Cinema 99, Vancouver Plaza.*

Vitus

Boring Swiss film about a 12-year-old piano prodigy. The Schumann and Liszt on the soundtrack are bewitchingly performed, as is Mario Beretta's original score, and there's a to-die-for marriage of sight and sound as the pianist's hands prestidigitate above the keyboard in a wild wash of clusters, creating thick block-chords clangorously reverberating through our senses. Yet the movie isn't really concerned with classical music, or with the world of a young musician adjusting to life on the concert stage (that does come, but not until the final scene); if anything, it's a sort of stock-market caper film in which plot developments arrive as slowly as an oyster forms a pearl—not that there are any pearls here. Little Vitus has a mother from hell, a high-strung, red-haired biddy who fires his first piano teacher, then quits her day job in order to be a controlling bitch full-time. The boy's resentment and antisocial behavior are thus understandable. Even so, I couldn't care about a brat embittered by his own superiority who has to *try* to fail. "The hardest thing," he confesses, "was to lose at chess." Poor baby. **PG.** N.P. THOMPSON. *Fox Tower.*

Walking to Werner

[TWO NIGHTS ONLY] In 1974, a young filmmaker named Werner Herzog walked from Munich to Paris to visit the dying critic Lotte Eisner. In 2005, a young filmmaker named Linas Phillips walked from Seattle to Los Angeles to visit Werner Herzog. Being a man of eccentric vision, Herzog carried on his journey the conviction that his friend would still be living when he arrived. Being a member of the YouTube generation, Phillips carried a digital video

camera. The result is *Walking to Werner*, a meditation on Linas Phillips' face—a particularly ugly face when it is grimacing or whining, which it does a lot. Phillips is less self-involved as a filmmaker than he is as a narrator, however, and the movie broadens its scope as it progresses south: We meet several prophets, men with strange, sad stories, and one exceptionally hostile drunk on a bicycle. We also taste of the flavor of wonder that imbues Herzog's movies—although with Herzog, that taste doesn't come within 12 inches of the director's face. AARON MESH. *Hollywood Theatre. Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 4-5.*

Who's Your Caddy?

Big Boi is, in what looks like *Caddyshackonia*. Not screened for critics. **PG-13.** *Lloyd Mall.*

You Kill Me

Hitmen are people, too! Every so often one might even shed his hardhearted façade and endure such humiliating ordeals as a high-school reunion and AA meetings—which can make for a promising caper comedy. Reminiscent of *The Matador*, *You Kill Me* has Ben Kingsley as a hired gun with a drinking problem who's becoming a liability to a tenuous Polish crime outfit in Buffalo, N.Y. Finally given an ultimatum, he heads to San Francisco, joins a 12-step program and works temporarily as a mortician. Anyone who was captivated by all the seething in *Sexy Beast* will probably find Kingsley amusing as the hapless henchman here. Alongside Dennis Farina and Philip Baker Hall, he breezes up more cool and panache than the entire cast of *Ocean's Thirteen* can manage. *You Kill Me* is biting witty, but its humor is too understated to be everyone's cup of tea. R. MARTIN TSAI. *Fox Tower, Wednesday-Thursday only.*

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