

ENTERTAINMENT

VOL. 38 | NO. 42 | FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2006

TODAY



VICE is NICE

★★★★ Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*

page 12

page 13

Child actor brings heart to Motel

PLUS:

Woody Allen's latest Scoop, *Another Gay Movie*, music reviews on Abby Travis and Camera Obscura an interview with husband-and-wife directing team behind *Little Miss Sunshine*, and more!



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INDEX



14 MISS SUNSHINE



12 MIAMI VICE

ENTERTAINMENT

VOL. 38 | NO. 42 | FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2006

TODAY

12 HATS OFF TO THE MANN BEHIND "MIAMI VICE"

Peter Sobczynski hails director Michael Mann for his big screen adaptation of *Miami Vice*, the first 4 star review since the arrival of ET's new film writing staff (and new publisher, and new editors) five weeks ago

FILM

- 11 **WOODY UNFUNNY IN "SCOOP"**
Woody Allen's follow-up to his celebrated *Match Point* is a step backward in more ways than one, by Peter Sobczynski
- 13 **CHILD ACTOR BRINGS HEART TO "MOTEL"**
Steven Snyder and director Michael Kang sing the praises of young Jeffrey Chyau who shines in the indie charmer, *The Motel*
- 14 **DOUBLE-BARREL OF LAUGHS**
Kim Voynar interviews the husband-and-wife directing team behind *Little Miss Sunshine*
- 16 **"ANT BULLY" DESERVES A FAIR FIGHT**
Peter Sobczynski had low expectations going in, but came out with a high opinion of *The Aunt Bully*, its style, and its message
- 17 **"GAY MOVIE" SPOOFS "AMERICAN PIE"**
Another Gay Movie soars with spoofy humor, but sinks when in pursuit of more serious intentions, by Steven Snyder
- 12 **A FOND FAREWELL**
Oscar and Tony nominated actor Mako has died at the age of 72. Rusty White remembers him best for his Oscar nominated turn in *The Sand Pebbles* with Steve McQueen

FOOD

- 10 **DINING WITH SHIRLEY FIRESTONE**
Shirley Firestone cheers for Chin Chin in Beverly Hills

22 FUN, GAMES, AND...ASTROLOGY!!!

Comic Tina Kim tells all about her cleanse diet where she only drinks spicy water — but don't call it a diet; it's not a diet, it's a cleanse... plus comics, sudoku, and our favorite psychic astrologers strike again

MUSIC

- 6 **CAMERA NOW LESS OBSCURE**
Jonathan Zeitlin chronicles Camera Obscura's recent climb
- 10 **MISS TRAVIS UNVEILS "GLITTER"**
Abby Travis will perform at the release party for her new CD on Sunday, and ET's Brooke Dammkoehler will certainly be there

THEATRE

- 4 **IN "LOVE" WITH THE BEATLES, PART 2**
Travis Michael Holder is back with more on Cirque du Soleil's tribute to The Beatles, and Beatles producer Sir George Martin

TELEVISION

- 8 **GATOR VS. SNAKE VS. MONKEY WOMAN**
Frank Barron with the latest on the Sci-fi Channel's new Superhero reality show (featuring Monkey Woman), and that snake who ate the gator, or was it the other way around?

COLUMNS

- 8 **HOLLYWOOD BEAT** by Marci Weiner
- 9 **WORDS N MUSIC** with Kat Kramer
- 10 **DEVELOPMENT HELL** with Brad Schreiber
- 10 **HOLLYWOOD INSIDER** with Dawn Miller

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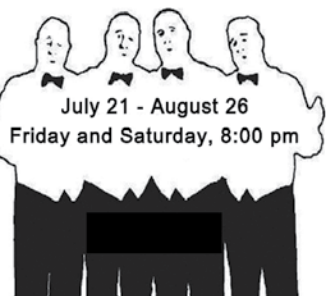
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Theater Review

In *LOVE* with The Beatles

Part II



Paul McCartney, George Harrison,
Ringo Starr, and John Lennon



TicketHolders with
Travis Michael Holder

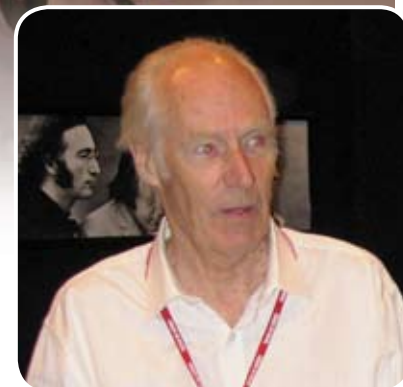
In a space that once housed Siegfried and Roy's tigers, with scratch marks remaining on the floor along with remnants of the bolts that once fastened their cages, acrobats soared to the high ceiling on long vertical ropes, rehearsing for the much-anticipated opening night of Cirque du Soleil's fifth and latest permanent Las Vegas attraction, *The Beatles' LOVE*.

These newly arrived airborne artisans have been rehearsing for months — and not just to learn how to soar like "Lucy in the Sky." In their "Here Comes the Sun" number, 21st in a show of 28 songs, the troupe has honored a tune written during The Beatles' metaphysical-transcendental period by fiercely researching and diligently studying a mix of yoga techniques and Eastern Indian dance. Whether or not they tried a couple tabs of Clear Light they aren't saying.

Opening festivities of this monumental attraction were overshadowed by the presence of Paul McCartney (who answered questions rather dourly, barely venturing past one syllable — understandable considering recent events in his life), Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono, and Olivia Harrison. But the most incredible part of my week in Vegas to cover the event was meeting and talking to Sir George Martin, the octogenarian producer

of The Beatles' original albums and co-musical director of *LOVE* with his son Giles. Working two years on the project was "thrilling," the legendary Sir George admitted. Not content with creating a "retrospective or tribute show," the Martins insisted on bringing to each of the 2,013 audience members the experience of being in a small recording studio listening to the music for the first time. "Our mission was to try and achieve the same intimacy we get when listening to the master tapes at the studio," Sir George explained. "The songs sound so alive. A lot of people listen to The Beatles in a conventional way... but never in such a space as this."

By embedding two speakers in the back of every seat, the Martins created a kind of directional panoramic mode in the theatre-in-the-round. The sounds of *LOVE* engulf and envelope the audience, achieving, as Sir George called it, "a real sense of drama with the music, [making] the audience feel as though they are actually in the room with the band." The master tapes utilized were not mined from the old classic albums or concert performances, but cut during the boys' stints in the studio making small promotional films. Often featuring improvised quips as they joked casually with one another, the final mix offers, as Sir George reasoned to me with infectious, childlike enthusiasm, "an immediate sound... not 'muffly' like with so many shows in rooms this size."



Sir George Martin produced several of The Beatles original albums

Theatre and set designer Jean Rabesse was given a totally blank blueprint schematic of the Siegfried and Roy stage and told to do whatever he wanted — a designer's dream. Rabesse wanted to go "inside the universe of the 60's from the lobby on" and liked the idea of creating a recording studio feeling "to put the audience in the studio with the band." Much of it was designed in computerized 3-D: "Other shows work with models and drawings," he explained, "but this one had to be seen as a P.O.V. from every seat and all angles." An audience member needs to come back "four to 10 times to see everything."

Augmenting the work of *LOVE*'s conceptual creator Guy Laliberte are incredible video projections crafted by Francis Laporte, who admitted to me that a scant two years ago he would not have had the tools to achieve the heights of visual wonder he did with *LOVE*. Using mostly unearthed promotional films featuring The Beatles at their most relaxed, his aim was to be "as timeless as possible." In a spectacular mounting of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps," projected

TRAVIS'
Critic's Picks:

Oklahomo!, Third Stage
The Reunion, Howard Fine Theatre
tick...tick...BOOM!, Coronet

letters of the alphabet float down across the screens or are projected through reams of paper fluttering down on the audience from above. “We wanted the feeling of words falling,” says Laporte, “like a dream falling apart.”

Also contributing were director/writer Dominic Champagne, concept creator Gilles Ste-Croix, creation director Chantal Tremblay, puppet designer Michael Curry (designer of *Lion King* on Broadway), and choreographers Hansel Cereza and Dave St. Pierre. There are also 365 fanciful costumes designed by Philippe Guillotel, colorful make-up by Nathalie Gagne (who’s invented faces for every Cirque show since the beginning), lighting by Yves Aucoin, sound by Jonathan Deans, and acid-dream props by Patricia Ruhl.

Asked about the inclusion of four children depicted without faces, director Champagne’s personal connection with the bandmembers becomes apparent. “Remember, John Lennon was the most famous man on the planet after Jesus Christ back then,” he explains. The Beatles were puzzled by their own fame and rampant Beatlemania, feeling almost invisible within the claustrophobic confines of their own celebrity. This emphasis is also visible in the presence of a lost, Chaplin-like Nowhere Man (Goos Meeuwssen), who reflects the loss of privacy and personal space Lennon was experiencing when he called himself a nowhere man.

“You know, for any of us,” says Champagne with a grin, “all we need is love.” And for the experience of a lifetime, folks, all *you* need is *LOVE*. ♪



John Lennon

Travis Michael Holder has been writing for ET since 1990. Also an award-winning actor, he has authored five plays produced in LA, including *Surprise Surprise*, soon to be a feature film. His first novel, *Waiting for Walk*, will hopefully be published before he jettisons his corpulent frame off the Hollywood Sign.

Theater Review



Jeff Kerr McKivney in *Catch & Release*

Catch Strong in Opening

by Beth Temkin

Cedar Grove Productions presents the world premiere of *Catch & Release*, a taut and suspenseful drama about child molestation, written by Rachel Brenna, who also stars as Angela. Angela has sexual issues and becomes angry for no reason when having sex with her loving husband Fred (Jeff Kerr McKivney). Only Fred is not entirely lovable. He has just knocked out a man at the bar who had touched Angela inappropriately. He compares himself to a lion protecting his lair, and would do anything to save his wife, even kill.

Angela is a third grade teacher. One day in class she notices a little girl named Ellie seems depressed and suicidal. Angela calls Ellie’s mother with her concerns. Upon arrival, Mrs. Gray (Eileen Barnett) superciliously refuses to believe anything is wrong with her child. But she becomes contrite when confronted with the truth.

While this is going on, there are frequent segues to a bar where we find Fred, his bartending brother Sam (Mark Kelly), and a stranger Herman (William Charlton). Fred is overly inquisitive with Herman whom he calls “Doc,” and their verbal jousting leads to a psychologically torturous

meeting between the two of them in Sam’s cabin.

The play holds interest, if with a little too many coincidental happenings for believability. Making a strong impression are Charlton as Herman, Kelly as Sam, and Brenna as Angela, emotionally true as the catalyst for the action. Well-directed by Michael Uppendahl. ♪

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Rachael Brenna confronts Eileen Barnett



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Theater Review

Melodic Cuisine Hits The Spot

by Mary Mallory

An entertaining blend of lovely guitar playing, fine singing, and upscale production values, *Maestro Jerard’s Melodic Cuisine* is a fine one-man show featuring the multiple talents of Jerry Fischkes. Fischkes displayed strong musical talent from a young age, singing in local radio and theatrical productions. He later studied classical guitar.

To celebrate his 60th birthday, he has combined his musical loves to entertain audiences and to raise money for a great cause: all profits benefit St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital.

The show features an eclectic range of numbers from show tunes, to patriotic numbers, to romantic ballads. The program highlights his classical guitar training and

faith in such moving pieces as the “Hatikvah” and “Recuerdos de la Alhambra.” His touch is sure and gentle. Fischkes possesses a fine tenor voice as well, showcased effectively in such songs as “Lida Rose” and “Alexander’s Ragtime Band.” He also complements himself in four-part harmony, singing all the voices in the Maestro Jerard singers.

“Granada” features a sexy, thrilling Spanish dance by Dinora Baragan and Rony Medrano. Production values are top notch, from the classy little Italian bistro set to the professional Powerpoint presentations that accompany each song. A little of these go a long way— perhaps too long, as they sometimes distract from the musical performers. A lighthearted concoction of music and video, *Maestro Jerard’s Melodic Cuisine* serves up an entertaining dish. ♪



Jerard Fischkes’ Melodic Cuisine is a benefit for the St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital

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SATURDAY AUGUST 5 - 8PM - DEADWOOD NIGHT FEATURING...

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7.28 **Rob Laufer, Morty Shallman, Fifteen Grand, Long Distance Call, The Mercy Kiss, Signature Escape, Pensive, Relax 2 Paris**

Concert Review



Kerry McKee, Carey Lander, Lee Thomson, Nigel Baillie, Tracyanne Campbell

Camera Obscura

Live at the Troubadour

by Jonathan Zeitlin

Before Camera Obscura's month-long tour of the U.S. landed them onstage at the Troubadour, the band had been building momentum around their latest release, "Let's Get Out of This Country." Critical praise of their first two albums, along with support from legendary BBC Radio tastemaker John Peel, had earned the band a loyal fan base in the U.K. and a small-but-cultish following among the folk pop-inclined in the U.S. Now, a warm reception for their third album has given the band exposure to a broader audience in the North American indie scene. Heavy rotation on KCRW's *Morning Becomes Eclectic* (with Nick Harcourt giving listeners a diverse selection of cuts from the record on a near daily basis) and positive word-of-mouth gave the band enough muscle to sell-out their L.A. show.

The Troubadour was wall-to-wall by the time openers Georgie James took the stage and brought surprisingly sunny melodies and pop sensibility from the Washington D.C. scene. While the accessibility of Georgie's songwriting matched well with the headliners, their propulsive rhythm section stood in sharp contrast to Camera Obscura's carefully orchestrated percussion.

While Camera's last record "Underacheivers Please Try Harder" had gentle production that drew obvious comparisons to Belle and Sebastian, the warm spacious recording of "Let's Get Out of This Country" makes the band sound more like Phil Spector's Ronnettes than Glasgow's indie veterans. The record's opening track, "Hey Lloyd, I'm Ready to Be Heartbroken" sets the stage with layers of strings and vocals, an addictive guitar hook, and a bouncing bass. Nigel Baillie fills out Lee Thomson's shuffling drumming with roomy percussive flourishes and gentle trumpet melodies. Singer Tracyanne Campbell's voice is strong and confident, with soaring high harmonies and back-up singing by keyboardist Carey Lander. It is an easy pick as a radio single, a high-speed pop song with a strong emphasis on a catchy chorus. When Campbellsings, "I'm ready to be heartbroken/'Cause I can't see further than my own nose at this moment," she opens the door to the full spectrum of emotions that follow the collapse of a relationship.

In "Come Back Margaret" Campbellsings of "love for him I despise," and throughout the record she conjures memories of better times with her soon-to-be

see OBSCURA on p. 9

CD Review

Travis tempts with "GlitterMouth"

by Brooke Dammkoehler

Abby Travis' new release, "GlitterMouth," is a highly seductive collection of songs that conjures the soundtrack of a yet-to-be-discovered film noir classic — only it explores what happens between the scenes, when no one is watching.

Lush, glamorous but never heavy-handed, the production is impeccable. And why shouldn't it be? Travis was assisted by longtime co-conspirators like keyboardist Kristian Hoffman (The Mumps, Klaus Nomi) and guitarist Dave Bongiovanni (El Vez), as well as hip-hop studio wizard Lamont Hyde (Dr. Dre), Cocteau Twins mastermind Simon Raymonde, Meat Puppets guitar icon Curt Kirkwood, punk trailblazers Alice Bag and Teresa Covarrubias, L7's Donita Sparks, and former Save Ferris vocalist Monique Powell.

Travis' voice is the chanteuse in the smoke filled nightclub — the conscience of this noir narrative of desire and obsession, shadows and seductions, mystery and memory. The music and lyrics create a mood of intoxicating sensuality and summon a dramatic space defined by *décor*, *décolleté*, and *de coeur*. In total, the 10-song disc revels in the physical and tactile. "My last album was rather dark and intellectual, this one comes from the pelvis," explains Travis.

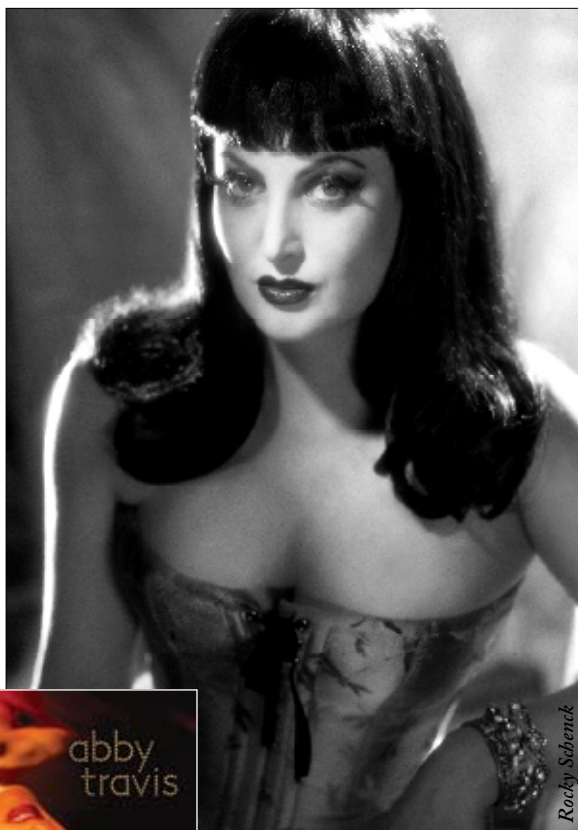
Travis' songwriting is thoughtful and literate. The lyrics are clever without being obtrusive, obnoxious, and/or obvious (in light of the albums' themes, the fact that the word "kiss" is never used is a triumph). The songs are to be experienced on multiple levels: each listening unveils additional layers of meaning in the sonic and poetic palette.

The opener "Now Was" is a sweeping song of epic sentiments reflecting upon one's misspent youth. The emotions build, then soar with an explosive guitar solo and finally come in for a silky smooth landing.

"Blythe" is a soulful song looking back on love lost from a place in between lovers: "Kite. Flying alone. In a desert gas station motel pool and free local phone." The lyric sketches a backdrop as the music evokes a bittersweet longing for what was and will never be again.

There are three trip-hop influenced tracks: "Grace," "La Petite Mort," and "Roberto." The soulful and provocative "La Petite Mort" describes an addiction to sexual pleasure. The trance-like music seduces the listener as a vampire does its victim. On "Roberto," Travis explores voyeurism, the visual delights of an aesthetically pleasing man — and the eventual, inevitable sensual gratification through his physical form.

"Hunger" is a kind of glam-rock fairytale. It begins as a smoky ballad and then erupts into a rock groove with a spell-like incantation: "the rasp of an asp that consumes its own tail." The beats are irresistible and heavy bass hits — way



Abby Travis, performing Sunday in support of "GlitterMouth," is also the touring bassist for all-girl 80's legends, The Bangles

down there — beckon one to bump, grind, and unwind. "Shoot for the Moon" is a carnival-esque tune which points to some of Travis' influences: Tin Pan Alley and the classic American song, Broadway and the show tune, cabaret and art as agitprop.

Travis transforms the The Shangrilas' mid-sixties tune "Past Present and Future" into camp nocturne. It's surreal: she is a lounge singer, alone at the piano in the wee hours, with a monologue that is simultaneously sad and serious, about her melancholy search for love and her hope for its eternal promise.

The denouement of the album is a slinky, luxurious and ethereal remix of Travis' "So Far Way" which appeared on her previous release "Cutthroat Standards & Black Pop."

Abby Travis is a multi-talented hyphenate: "a singer/songwriter, bassist, performer, impresario, and underground fashion icon." She sounds like no one else. She is a music genre unto her own. And the album, simply put, is fabulous. *B*

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•FRIDAY JULY 28•

9:30pm - 770

11:30pm - Dog Faced Gods

•SATURDAY, JULY 29•

9pm - Sharlock Poems

9:45pm - Gio

•SUNDAY JULY 30•

Benefit for Lizzie Lulu Cystic Fibrosis

Scholarship Fund Featuring Throttle

Back Sparky with special guests The

piper downs The Shekes

•MONDAY JULY 31•

8:30pm - The Well Diggers Banquest

9:30pm - Los Dugans

10:30pm - Killing Cassanova

11:30pm - Whiskey Dicks

•TUESDAY AUGUST 1•

8:30pm Shotgun Radio

9:30pm Conjob

10:30pm Ghost

11:30pm Get Licious

•WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2•

7:30pm - Sara Haze

8:30pm - Sick Puppies

9:30pm - King Size Operator

10:30pm - Zealousy

•THURSDAY AUGUST 3•

8:00pm - Sam Rader

9:30pm - Static Man

WHISKY
a GO GO

FRIDAY JULY 28
THE DEAD BOYS CLUB w/
XEO 3

SATURDAY JULY 29
TITO-BILLY BOY ON POISON
•DECOY •NATURAL CAUSE•
WHISKY CIRCUS

SUNDAY JULY 30
FLOORBANDS-COMLETE
NEGLECT-UNTIL MORNING
•SLEEPS-KATHARSIS

TUESDAY AUGUST 1
DROP DEAD GORGEOUS

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 2
THE WOMEN ROCK SHOW
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& She, Mazitit, Sick of Sarah,
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JACK & DANIELLE'S

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UNDER ONE ROOF
CODY MARKS

Friday Aug 4

DANIEL POWTER
MOZELLA

HOLLY BROOKS

Television

TV junkies ready for psychic, Monkey Woman, gator vs. snake

by Frank Barron

In an effort to counter the explosion of cable channels stealing audiences from the networks, NBC plans to rebroadcast the USA Network's hit series *Psych* on August 7 and 14. The light-hearted mystery cop show is fresh and funny. And it certainly benefits from having a charismatic leading man. James Roday stars as Shawn Spencer, a man who pretends he's a psychic so he can work with the police solving crimes without actually going through all the trouble of becoming a police detective. "It's a weird situation. The police come to you and offer you cases when you're a psychic. They pull the tape back and bring you into the center of a crime scene, and everybody listens to what you have to say. Then they offer you free rein to solve things," Roday said of his character. Shawn Spencer may not be a psychic, but he does have extraordinary observation skills, along with a wicked sense of humor.

The new ABC Family cable network's *Three Moons Over Milford*, debuts on Sunday, August 6. It has an outstanding cast with Elizabeth McGovern (*Ragtime*), Rob Boltin (*Joey*), and Nora Dunn starring in a quirky comedic drama that asks the question, "If the world was coming to an end, what would you do?" Sam Murphy, who plays McGovern's randy teenage son having an affair with an older woman, reveals his answer: "I'd go out and party. Wouldn't you?"

Who is the next great Superhero on a mission to save the world from evildoers? To find out, tune in to *Who Wants to be a Superhero?* and watch comic book legend Stan Lee (*Spider-Man*, *Hulk*, *Fantastic Four*, *X-Men*) help ordinary men and women create their own superhero alter ego in a new reality series running on the Sci-fi Channel. The wannabes go through some wacky challenges in the silliest of costumes. And just to make the situation even more bizarre, all the competitors live together in a "secret lair," until they get eliminated. Among the cast of characters is a funny lady who has dubbed herself "Monkey Woman." Bananas give her amazing energy and climbing powers.



James Roday as Shawn Spencer and Dule Hill as Gus Burton in USA's new series *Psych* (feature photo), Mary Votava is *Monkey Woman* (first inset), and Nell Wilson is *Fat Momma* (second inset) in *Who Wants to be a Superhero?*

Another gal calls herself "Fat Momma." "That's my secret identity," she says. "I'm big, but my heart is even bigger, and I'm out to prove that I'm not just filled with hot air and donuts. I've got powers that are unbelievable, and I'll use them to rid the world of bullies." Another contender for the superhero title is a fellow called "Ty'Veculus," who sports a Roman gladiator-type costume, and calls on "the power of light." It's easy to call him a hero already. He works as a firefighter by day.



Sam Murphy

Who Wants to be a Superhero? is surprisingly engaging, because you can't help but root for all the nerdy people who truly believe they have the heroic mojo that will win the grand prize. "The winning superhero will be immortalized in a new comic book from Dark Horse Comics, which I will create myself," says Lee. The winner will also be featured in an original Sci-Fi Channel movie.

Column

Wild party at L.A. Zoo



Hollywood Beat with Marcy Weiner

Kate Edelman Johnson has always been a "Show Business Baby." Her late father, Louis Edelman, produced such television series as *Make Room for Daddy*, *The Real McCoy's*, and *The Big Valley*, and she is the widow of **Deane F. Johnson**, the legendary entertainment attorney, and former President of Warner Communications.

Mrs. Johnson is also a successful producer, and has worked as an entertainment consultant to Hallmark Television and Radio. She currently is producing *Cuba and the Night*, based on the novel by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist **Pico Iyer**. To top it all off, she sure knows how to throw a party! Since her late husband loved Africa (he was partners with **William Holden** in the Mt. Kenya Safari Club) she hosted her latest shindig, "Melodies and Memories," at the L.A. Zoo.



Kate Edelman Johnson

We dined in a huge tent near the African elephants, adorned with jungle spotted tablecloths, African artifacts, and wall hangings. Playing in the background (mixed with the wails of the animal residents) was a steel band, with jungle drums and exotic music. Even the weather was African inspired, as it was probably the hottest day in L.A. history.

Mrs. Johnson hosted the event, which supports the prevention and cure of Alzheimer's disease. She created the Deane F. Johnson Center for Neurotherapeutics at UCLA in her husband's honor, as he succumbed to the disease in 1999. Among the celebrity guests was former Miss America **Phyllis George**, whose mom was a victim of Alzheimer's, and a slew of singers, including **Neil Sedaka**, **John Schneider**, **George Chakiris** (*West Side Story*) and the sisters of **Barbra Streisand** (**Roslyn Kind**) and **Liza Minnelli** (**Lorna Luft**). Wonder why so many

songsters were in attendance? Well, after the banquet, we all trekked off to the Greek Theatre to hear **Michael Feinstein** and **Linda Eder** perform. Eder, who recently released an album "By Myself - The Songs of Judy Garland" has been touring the country with Feinstein, and appears regularly with him at The Regency on Park Avenue in New York.

We were pleased to be seated with our friend **Paul Williams** (recipient of an Oscar, Grammy, and Golden Globe Award) and his wife **Mariana**, who told me she has written her second novel. Currently Paul Williams's latest production *Happy Days* is at the Falcon Theatre in Burbank through August 13. This family musical (words & music by Williams) is directed by **Gary Marshall**, who also wrote the book.

Triumph of the Spirit

Restaurateur and architectural designer **Barbara Lazaroff** (Spagos) was recently honored at the Triumph of the Spirit Gala benefiting the Aviva Family and Children's Services. This organization provides life saving services to over 1,000 children and their families. Over one million dollars was raised that evening to help provide a haven where abused children can heal and grow.

Lazaroff was with her entire family, including her mom, who spoke glowingly about her accomplished daughter. Also lauded that evening were **Carolyn Strauss** (President HBO Entertainment), philanthropist **Susan Casden**, and actress and recording artist **Raven Symone**. **Melissa Manchester** performed during dinner, and **Macy Gray** rocked the room as a special desert treat. A most worthwhile event on the Hollywood Beat. ♪



Left, Mrs. and Mr. Williams: Novelist Mariana and Oscar-winning songwriter Paul



Singing duo Michael Feinstein and Linda Eder

Santana honored at Bowl



Words n Music with
Kat Kramer

Well folks, it's officially summer now, and one of the most exciting places to go is The Hollywood Bowl – which just kicked-off the 2006 season with The Hall of Fame concert honoring the legendary **Carlos Santana** and classical musician **Andre Watts**. The splendid gala was also a fundraiser for Music Matters — the education program of The Los Angeles Philharmonic and The Hollywood Bowl, which brings the joy and power of music to children throughout the Los Angeles area. The stellar musical line-up included performances from hall of fame inductees Watts and Santana — who rocked the Bowl, and enjoyable moments from **Jubilant Sykes**, **John C. Reilly**, **The Blue Man Group**, The Downey High School jazz band, and of course, The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, conducted by **John Mauceri**.

Here's to Mr. Groomsman

Well folks, I attended the sold-out sneak peek of *The Groomsman* at Outfest, sponsored by *In Magazine* in collaboration with The American Cinematheque. The indie film is written, directed and stars the talented **Ed Burns** (*The Brothers McMullen*) and it features a strong cast including **Brittany Murphy**, **John Leguizamo**, **Donald Logue**, **Jay Mohr**, and **Matthew Lillard**. I also attended the film's theatrical premiere at The Arclight Hollywood, with an after-party at The Cat & Fiddle, sponsored by Nautica. Burns noted, "It's always a gamble making an independent film." He is a true gentleman, and has carved out a unique niche for himself. He strives to be his generation's **Woody Allen**. Go check out *The Groomsman*, it's both funny and poignant.



Kat favorite: Ed Burns



Santana at the Hollywood Bowl

Guess Who's coming to the Bowl?

Legendary rock band **The Who** will electrify crowds at the Hollywood Bowl on November 5! They kick-off their first world tour in more than 20 years on September 12 at Philadelphia's Wachovia Center. Stay tuned to my column for more! ...And in other news — **Bill Nighy** (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) made a special appearance at The Egyptian Theatre for a double feature of rock movies — *Still Crazy* and *The Commitments*, both co-written by **Dick Clement** and **Ian LaFrenais**.

Kat's Calendar

August 5: *David Brighton* "Space Oddity" — A tribute to **David Bowie** will headline at The Orange County Pavilion at 8 PM. Please visit www.DavidBowieTribute.com.

August 7: EMX — Entertainment Media Expo featuring DVD forum's North American conference takes place at Hilton Los Angeles/Universal City, through August 9. Check out www.entertainmentmediaexpo.com.

September 28: An evening with **Jeff Beck** at The Greek Theatre — sponsored by Chrysler, Jeep and Dodge Dealers. Don't miss a great night of eclectic music from the legendary guitar maestro! (Also at The Grove of Anaheim — September 25!) www.greektheatre.com.

Live Your Dreams...

Kat ☺



John Mauceri, Conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, takes a bow with honorees Andre Watts and Carlos Santana at The Hall of Fame concert at the Bowl, a fundraiser for Music Matters

Kat Kramer is an actress/singer/producer.
Check her out at www.KatharineKramer.com

FORD'S FUSION

'GROWN AND SEXY' EXPERIENCE PARTY TURNS UP HEAT FOR THE MICHAEL BAISDEN LIVE TOUR



Ford will be the exclusive automotive sponsor of the *Michael Baisden Live 2006* tour by hosting its Ford Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Experience Parties.



ABC Radio Networks' *The Michael Baisden Show* is the No. 1 urban radio program among adults ages 25-54 in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Detroit. It is heard in 40 radio markets around the country, including eight of the top 10 markets.



DEARBORN, MICHIGAN—One of the hottest new cars—Ford Fusion—takes to the air with one of Urban radio's hottest nationally syndicated talk show hosts—**Michael Baisden**—by hosting 'Grown and Sexy' parties at 10 major stops on the *Michael Baisden Live 2006* tour.

The Ford Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Experience Party features live entertainment, dancing and an exclusive Michael Baisden appearance. Baisden will energize partygoers, as he hosts the party prior to his *Michael Baisden Live 2006* show and popular relationship seminars in major cities such as Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles. The party series will run throughout the summer and end in December 2006.

Every month, Michael Baisden will be giving away two Ford Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Experience Party round-trip tickets for two individuals to travel to any *Michael Baisden Live 2006* tour stop in the country. The trip includes a special VIP meet and greet with Baisden, first-class accommodations, entry to the 'Grown and Sexy' party and all weekend tour events plus \$200 in spending money.

"I couldn't be more excited to be associated with the new 2006 Fusion," said Baisden. "This relationship demonstrates Ford's commitment to reaching the African American community."

The parties draw on the themes established from Ford's 'Grown and Sexy' urban Web site and marketing campaign for the new Fusion mid-size sedan. The Fusion is a sedan targeted toward young, established professionals who feel grown and sexy and have a strong desire to express their personality and achievements.

The *Michael Baisden Show* is a daily, four-hour radio program combining music, interactive conversation and inspiration, with a heavy dose of self-help and empowerment. Heard in over 40 radio markets around the country, including eight of the top 10 markets, *The Michael Baisden Show* is the number one urban radio program among adults ages 25-54 in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Detroit. Additionally, the

program is one of the highest-rated afternoon drive programs in New York City.

"Ford already has a strong relationship with *The Michael Baisden Show* through existing radio and online marketing campaigns," said Dan Geist, Fusion Marketing Manager. "Partnering with Michael Baisden to turn up the excitement on the Ford Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Experience Party made perfect sense."

For details on obtaining tickets for the Ford Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Experience Party, Fusion 'Grown and Sexy' Party Sweepstakes or the *Michael Baisden Live 2006* tour visit www.michaelbaisden.com, www.grownandsexy.com or visit your local ABC Radio Networks affiliate Web site.

About Michael Baisden

Prior to launching his radio career, Baisden was a best-selling author whose self-published first book, *Never Satisfied: How and Why Men Cheat*, sold more than 300,000 copies. A subsequent publication, *Men Cry in the Dark*, is one of the most popular books ever among African American men and the stage adaptation featured notable actors such as Richard Roundtree (*Shaft*), Allen Payne (*New Jack City*), and Rhona Bennett (*The Jamie Foxx Show*). Baisden's third book, *The Maintenance Man*, was adapted into a stage play starring Billy Dee Williams. His latest novel, *God's Gift to Women*, was also a best seller.

About Ford Fusion

The 2006 Ford Fusion breathes a fresh attitude into the American mid-size car. It distinguishes itself in what is one of the most competitive vehicle segments with its standout exterior design and engaging driving dynamics. With a bold design and more chrome accents than any vehicle in its class, Fusion brings style to the midsize sedan. Fusion supplies a rush of more than 220 horses from Fusion's available V6 with 6-speed automatic transmission. Fusion has a starting price of \$17,795.

OBSCURA from p. 6

ex-lover. "I Need All the Friends I Can Get" is a duet with guitarist Kenny McKeeve singing as Campbell's gun-weilding and desperate former boyfriend. Campbell keeps the song from being treacherously cute with her scaling retorts to his threats. While the other tracks on the record don't stand out on first listen like "Hey Lloyd," the character and charm of the songwriting, coupled with accessible melodies, allow the band to be more openly stylish and suggestive, such as the tango-esque shuffle of "Tears for Affairs," or the big-band shouted vocals on "If Looks Could Kill," which builds to a loud and raucous conclusion.

The album's final track, "Razzle Dazzle Rose," glides on a breezy bass line from Gavin Dunbar, and shimmers as it breaks into a slow-motion build, closing the record with a sense of melancholy and earned maturity. Campbell sings "I'm getting older," and you believe her, and the rivaling emotions earlier in the record resolve into peaceful resignation.

Onstage Wednesday night, the six-piece band occasionally struggled to match the large and layered sound of their record. But they were fantastic in the more intimate songs, especially the waltzing "Dori Prevyn." While Campbell contemplated casual affairs, her acoustic guitar, with Baillie adding a second electric guitar, worked the band into a comfortable and confident groove. The shouts from devotees peppered in the crowd, and the charmingly drunken banter between Campbell and McKeeve complimented a band that has benefited from a busy touring schedule. Campbell joked with the crowd and sang with drooping eyelids and softer intimacy than on the album.

As the band continues touring up the West Coast and the Midwest, they are likely to find some new fans with their endearing personality and sharp songwriting. The support and clout of Merge records, independent radio play, and an active presence on the internet seem to be doing well to spread word of the new record. ☺

Lu captivating, Nickens remembered

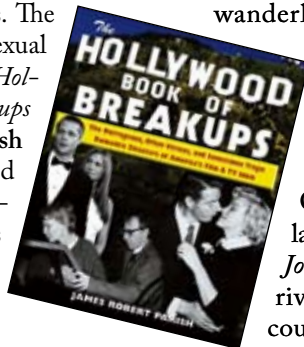


Development Hell with
Brad Schreiber

The effusively clever and perkily filthy **Cindy Lu** can claim a background in feng shui and energy healing. But it's sexual and other forms of healing on her mind in this charmer of a performance piece. Lu's good humor, coupled with flowing improvisational asides, guides us through this dating biography-cum-scientific lecture (complete with overhead projector). Lu details for us her amusing set of rules and, just as we settle into a comfort zone, she stuns us with a moment of dramatic power that shows her serious acting chops. **Paul Linke's** direction is spot-on, Lu's Ultimate Man, **Earl Martin**, does top-notch sound design, and you'll even hear the voice of **Charles Nelson Reilly**, as Lu's Fairy Godmother. Playing at the Ruskin Group Theatre Fridays at 8 PM, Saturdays at 7 PM & 10 PM.

Hollywood breakups, escapes

Whether in a successful relationship or no, many of us revel in the misery of others. The ideal book for this sexual schadenfraude is *The Hollywood Book of Breakups* by **James Robert Parish** (Wiley). Hollywood maven and mega-author Parish subtitles his latest tome in his Hollywood series, *The Outrageous, Often Vicious, and Sometimes Tragic Romantic Disasters of America's Film & TV Idols*. You can savor the salaciousness of recent emotional train wrecks like **Jennifer Aniston** vs. **Brad Pitt**. There are murderous conclusions, like mobster **Johnny Stompanato's** stabbing death at the hands of **Lana Turner's** daughter. You have hard-to-comprehend hookups, such as **Lyle Lovett** vs. **Julia Roberts** and then there was, the epic, on-off-on-off affairs of **Elizabeth Taylor** vs. **Richard**



Cindy Lu is performing *The Four Man Plan* at Ruskin Group Theatre through Sept. 2nd

Burton vs. **Paula Patton**. **Parish's** usual impeccable scholarship is abetted by some quirky and often rare photos of the dearly romantically departed.

If all this talk of love makes one yearn for a romantic getaway with a significant somebody, there is the recently published *Hollywood Escapes* by **Harry Medved** with **Bruce Akiyama** (St. Martin's Griffin), a perfect blend of show biz lore and wanderlust. Medved, creator

of the Golden Turkey Awards for Worst Films, has done exhaustive research, taking the reader to such Southern California cinematic landscapes as the *Indiana Jones* "Temple of Doom" river, the *Sideways* wine country, and the *Kill Bill* desert chapel. Medved relied on the help of scores of Hollywood workers, including directors **Frank Darabont** and **Michael Tolkin**, historians like **Donald Spoto** and **Kevin Brownlow**, actors including **Kevin Spacey** and **Bill Pullman**, and a helpful army of other film researchers and crew members. As an ultra-engaging mix of film and the great outdoors, *Hollywood Escapes* allows us to re-experience, in the flesh, the great escapism that movies provide.

Craft day for writers

The Writers Guild Foundation has had a remarkable year of programming, and its annual Craft Day, with sessions with top TV and film writers, was no exception. The emphasis on "Rewriting" included the impish and thoughtful **Jane Anderson** (*Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom*) who talked about the need for distance when writing about real life characters, as well as the studio system obsession with likeability of lead characters: "We're so invested in our heroes, we make them too marvelous."



Eric Roth

Eric Roth talked about his own baggage, as well as that of his numerous collaborators in nearly 40 years of screenwriting. He discussed a remarkable body of work including *The Insider*, and dealing with *60 Minutes* producer **Lowell Bergman** and his groundbreaking story on tobacco industry insider **Jeffrey Wigand**.

It should be remembered that the Treasurer of the Foundation, **Daryl Nickens**, who co-created with **Georgia Jeffries** the WGA's Words into Pictures conferences, recently passed away from prostate cancer at far too early an age. The many fine events hosted by Writers Guild Foundation are part of his legacy. ♪

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Daryl Nickens

Duffy delivers sports opinion



Hollywood Insider with
Dawn Miller

Paula Duffy is a fresh female voice in the world of sports commentary, appearing as a regular on ESPN, ABC, NBC, *Leeza Gibbons Live*, and *Sports Journey*. She provides cutting-edge comments and insight on her daily blog and podcast at www.IncidentalContact.com.

What do you like most about your job?

Sharing my views on why professional and college sports actually matter and how women and male novices can learn the lessons that sports can teach us.

What are the challenges you face in your line of work?

Being prepared to answer any question about the current or past sports seasons, in all sports, as well as having an opinion as a lawyer on how the legal aspects of sports impact those involved.

Why are there so few women in the business of sports?

Because the major professional sports teams in this country have been bastions of men until the last 10-15 years. Progress has been made and it is more pronounced on the broadcast side. In the actual front offices some women have made great strides but they are still a small percentage. You are more likely to see women execs in women's pro sports leagues like tennis and golf.

What is your take on the Zinedine Zidane headbutt?

An out of control man who couldn't defer his anger until after the game. Then it would have been appropriate to take action if he thought that was

necessary. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree however. His mother, when interviewed, was vitriolic on the subject of what had been said to her son.

Do you think LA should have a football team?

It would be great for the NFL and for major businesses in the L.A. basin, but I personally don't care one way or another. I like to watch football on TV with replay shots and announcers' commentary.



Duffy hosts the podcast sports column, Your Daily Dose of Duffy

Is Lebron James worth \$60 million?

James gets \$60M for 3 full seasons, which are 8-9 months long. Today's pro sports are entertainment and if major movie stars get paid \$10-20M per movie which have 60 day shooting schedules...well you do the math.

Do you have any advice for those looking to get into your industry?

Have a tough skin for interviews by skeptics, never give up your principles, even for publicity and get some rest while you can because when everything comes down at once, you won't be sleeping much.

What are some current projects that you're working on?

My next audio download session called *Paula Duffy, A Woman's Guide to Baseball, How to Talk His Language* and my first article in a series for *Campus Talk Magazine*, circulated at colleges in Florida.

Who are some of your influences?

Pioneering women sports journalists like **Andrea Kremer** of NBC Sports and **Jackie MacMullen**, columnist for the Boston Globe. ♪

Restaurant Review

Chin Chin is for your health



Dining with
Shirley Firestone

I had a delightful dinner at Chin Chin in Beverly Hills, a pleasant, airy place, with a large open kitchen, a dining counter, black cushioned booths, tables, and banquettes. There's also a popular people-watching sidewalk patio. One can come in with "small pockets" for light-hearted generous portions of fun food.

Chin Chin means "to your health," and primarily, the recipes are Cantonese, Mandarin, Szechwan, and Hunan. They will soon be introducing delicacies from Thailand, Japan, and other Asian regions. Now a chain of five restaurants, Chin Chin often surprises diners who had not expected such an eclectic menu. It's an easy place to get in and out of quickly, or stay a while. Their marvelous platter of five potstickers could make a fine lunch (\$5.95) — they're stuffed with chicken, vegetables

and/or pork. But I had the vegetarian ones and enjoyed them to the "Nth" degree. The "gift-wrapped" chicken is festive, with six-pieces of tender bite-sized chicken breast, flavored with garlic and cooked in a foil wrapper. I especially liked the Assorted Pleasures with seven items. Another convenience is their Chinny Chin Chin Kids Menu, for ages 12 and under, priced from \$1.95-\$3.95, with six choices, coming with a beverage and fortune cookie.

Some of my favorites were Almond Chicken, sided with bamboo shoots, water chestnuts, and toasted

almonds — also the Orange Chicken, prepared with a crunchy chicken breast, with bell peppers, and orange sauce. The shrimp dish I ordered was sided with black beans and offered a choice of large tiger shrimp or scallops. I thought Kung Pao Three Treasures was an interesting item, with shrimp, beef, chicken, water chestnuts, and peanuts. According to what I heard, their Chinese Chicken Salad gained notoriety over the past 18 years as the best in town, and I agree. Other items of interest are the roasted meats, such as spareribs, sliced barbecued pork — even a roasted half chicken with rice (\$8.50).

I was amazed at the cocktail choices: Blue Raspberry or Sour Apple Martinis, Ginger Mojito, and their Cape Cod is a mix of cranberry juice and soju served on the rocks. Desserts include two of my favorites, lychees on ice, and those fabulous chocolate and vanilla dipped fortune cookies. It's probably not necessary to describe the rich-creamy cheesecake to anyone familiar with The Cheesecake Factory, because that's where it comes from. ♪

Chin Chin

206 S. Beverly Dr., Beverly Hills
(310) 248-5252 • www.chinchin.com

So much for the comeback

SCOOP



(1 1/2 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN

STARRING: SCARLETT JOHANSSON,
HUGH JACKMAN, WOODY ALLEN,
IAN MCSHANE

96 MINUTES, RATED P-13

by Peter Sobczynski



Hugh Jackman, Scarlett Johansson, and Woody Allen

When Woody Allen's *Match Point* came out last winter, it was hailed by critics and audiences as a thrilling resurgence for a once-brilliant filmmaker whose output over the last ten years had veered from mildly amusing retreads like *Small Time Crooks* to embarrassing misfires like *Anything Else*. Unfortunately, in what may go down as the shortest comeback since Burt Reynolds squandered his *Boogie Nights* career boost, Allen's latest film, *Scoop*, is a dreary, dated, and depressing comedy that is an unfortunate return to his recent form.

It starts off amusingly enough as recently deceased Joe Strombel (Ian McShane), formerly an ace investigative reporter for a top London newspaper, is sailing down the river Styx to his final destination. Along the way, he chats up a fellow spirit who claims that she was poisoned by her boss, the wealthy and politically connected playboy Peter Lyman (Hugh Jackman), because she suspected that he might be the Tarot Card Killer, a fiend currently stalking British prostitutes. If what she says is true, this is the story of a lifetime (and beyond) and Joe jumps overboard in an effort to make it back to the corporeal world in order to follow it up. Eventually, his spirit makes contact with Sondra Pransky (Scarlett Johansson), an American journalism student spending the summer with friends in London, and he implores her to follow up on the lead.

With the help of shabby American magician Sid Waterman (Allen), Sondra decides to pose as an aspiring actress and worm her way into Peter's life and heart in order to prove his guilt and score a journalistic scoop that will make her career. This becomes more difficult for her to do as she begins to genuinely fall for Peter and becomes convinced that someone as sweet and charming as him could never possibly be a killer. Meanwhile, the murders continue and Sondra has to decide whether to follow her heart or her head — if she accuses him and he is innocent, she risks losing the love of her life. But if she doesn't, and he isn't, she runs the risk of losing her life period.

In the past, Woody Allen has

spoken at length of his admiration for the films of Bob Hope and one can see his influence in many of Allen's flat-out comedies. Watching *Scoop*, I was reminded of Bob Hope movies as well — unfortunately, I was thinking of the sad and desperately unfunny ones that Hope was churning out at the end of his career in which he sleepwalked through increasingly tired plots while spouting off painfully dated one-liners. Once the cutting edge of film humor, Allen seems to have fallen into a similar rut and, for the most part, is merely offering weak variations of jokes that he first told three decades ago — he still seems convinced that merely uttering the phrase “dental hygienist” alone is good for three or four laughs. At one point, Allen's character says that he likes being in London despite the language problem.

An even bigger problem with *Scoop* is the undeniable fact that the basic story is perhaps the weakest thing that Allen has ever put on paper. The underlying plot — is Peter a killer? — is so thoroughly undeveloped that it becomes impossible to care even the slightest bit whether he is or not. Even *Manhattan Murder Mystery* demonstrated a certain narrative drive and an interest in following its mystery conceit to its conclusion. Here, Allen seems as bored with the proceedings as we are, and wraps them up in such an arbitrary manner that I am still a bit confused as to who actually did what. The characters are equally uninteresting. Johansson is one of the smartest and most alluring young actresses around, but she is forced here to play a character who is supposed to be a journalism student but is such a dim bulb that she has apparently never heard of Jack the Ripper. Jackman, though visibly relieved to be appearing in a film in which metal blades probably won't be springing from his knuckles, does little more than stand around and smile blandly — he seems too lifeless to be convincing as either a possible serial killer or a studly lover.

As the intrepid reporter from beyond the grave, Ian McShane gets a few big laughs early on but is otherwise wasted (and it is weird to see the foul-mouthed icon of *Deadwood* delivering PG-13 dialogue.)

The worst performance — indeed, the single worst element of *Scoop* — is the obnoxious, abrasive, and laugh-free work turned in by Allen himself. What makes this especially annoying is that there is no real excuse for the character to exist in the first place and he just winds up weighing down a story that is already too flimsy for its own good. The nicest thing that one can muster about Allen in this role is a brief sigh of relief that he decided not to cast himself as a potential romantic partner for Johansson.

Scoop may not be the worst film of Allen's long career — it doesn't quite reach the depths of *The Curse of the Jade Scorpion* (though it is telling that the fake name Sondra chooses while trying to meet Peter is “Jade”) — but it may be his most disappointing, especially coming on the heels of a triumph like *Match Point*. In that film, Allen went outside his comfort zone in order to tell a story unlike anything that he had attempted before, and it seemed to reawaken in him the vitality that made him one of the most consistently inventive American filmmakers of the 1970's and 1980's. Instead of building on that, Allen has returned to the kind of lazy hackwork that has marked most of his recent output with a story that should have been spiked long before it reached the screen. *P*

Peter Sobczynski writes for the *Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers* chain and on-line at www.efilmcritic.com. He can also be heard on the nationally syndicated *Mancow's Morning Madhouse* radio program. Comments, complaints, questions, threats and Milla Jovovich's phone number can be sent to him at petersob@netzero.net.

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Hats off to the Mann

by Peter Sobczynski

When people think of the television series *Miami Vice*, memories tend to focus on the various elements of the show that may have seemed like good ideas during its 1984-89 run, but are now looked upon as fairly embarrassing — the notion of wearing white linen suits with pastel T-shirts and shoes without socks, the notion of Phil Collins as an actor, and the notion of Philip Michael Thomas period. However, if you actually go back and check out some of the episodes — especially ones from its first two groundbreaking seasons—you will notice that it was a show that had a lot more going for it than a splashy visual style and a hip music soundtrack.



Unlike most other cop shows of the time, it told gritty and no-nonsense tales of dangerous criminals and obsessed cops, where the lines between good and bad were blurry and there was no guarantee that the righteous would completely prevail by the end of the hour. In bringing *Miami Vice* to the big screen, Michael Mann (who served as an executive producer on the TV show) has wisely chosen to focus on the no-nonsense aspects, and the result is easily the best adult-oriented entertainment to hit the multiplexes this summer.

After a major undercover sting operation targeting a group of drug-dealing white supremacists goes violently wrong, Miami-Dade cops Sonny Crockett (Colin Farrell) and Ricardo Tubbs (Jamie Foxx) are recruited by an FBI agent (Ciaran

Hinds) to go undercover to find out who is supplying the supremacists with drugs and information. Before long, the two find themselves in Haiti dealing with international drug kingpin Montoya (Luis Tosar). Posing as hotshot drug couriers, the two are convincing enough to get a once-in-a-lifetime look at the inner workings of Montoya's business. One complication is the presence of Yero (John Ortiz), Montoya's ambitious middleman who is convinced that these newcomers are simply too good to be true. Another, more attractive complication, comes in the form of Isabella (Gong Li), Montoya's sexy partner/girlfriend who can be chillingly businesslike in one moment, and eager to run off to Cuba with Crockett for an entirely different

MIAMI VICE



(4 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL MANN

STARRING: COLIN FARRELL, JAMIE FOXX, GONG LI, LUIS TOSAR, NAOMIE HARRIS, JOHN ORTIZ, CIARAN HINDS, ILAN KRIGSFELD, CHRIS ASTOYAN

135 MINUTES, RATED R

kind of undercover work in the next. Crockett is instantly besotted with her, leading to the possibility that he may fall victim to a lapse of judgment that could prove fatal.

Granted, this is not exactly an earth-shatteringly original plot — it could have easily served as an episode of the original series (stripped of the nudity, profanity, and graphic violence, of course) — and Mann is clearly aware of that. What he is more interested in doing — what

he has made a point of doing in all of his crime films (including *Thief*, *Manhunter*, and *Heat*) — is taking the standard premises of the genre and exploring them in minute detail to see what makes them tick. As a result, there is an authenticity to the proceedings that you can genuinely feel throughout — you feel the mixed emotions of Crockett as he finds himself increasingly enthralled with Isabella, even though he knows that she could be the death of him. You also get a sense of the tension and adrenaline (not

to mention a little fear) coursing through the veins of people who voluntarily walk into situations in which there is serious doubt as to their survival. For those going into *Miami Vice* expecting some kind of campy throwback, the intensity might come as a shock and, unlike so many theatrical versions of old television shows, this might be a film where newcomers wind up appreciating it more than fans of the original show.

Another aspect of the film that may surprise some viewers is the relative lack of slam-bang action scenes. By my count, there are only three: an extended opening bit that Crockett and Tubbs only gradually become drawn into, a raid on a group of supremacists holed up in a trailer park to rescue a kidnapped fellow cop (Naomie Harris), and a hellacious climactic firefight. However, Mann is less concerned in presenting one viscerally thrilling set-piece after another — even though there is no one working today who could be called his equal in staging such moments — as he is in presenting only a few of them and making them count. The opening bit, with its multiple locations, numerous character introductions and gradually unfolding plot, is a small masterpiece of storytelling, almost entirely through visual means. The trailer park raid is equally impressive in the way that it slowly ramps up the tension while milking a severely confined location for maximum impact (featuring the single best moment of the film to boot). And while the final shoot-out is as beautifully choreographed and executed as you might

expect— despite the wild action, we always have a clean grasp of where everyone is in relation to everyone else — the real fireworks come from the moment when Isabella discovers the truth about Crockett and how she reacts to it.

In his previous films, Mann has gotten revelatory performances from actors as varied as James Caan (*Thief*), William H. Petersen (*Manhunter*), Ashley Judd (*Heat*), Will Smith (*Ali*), and Tom Cruise (*Collateral*). And, while the contributions from his three leads here may not approach those heights, there are some interesting and impressive turns nevertheless. Slipping into Don Johnson's loafers, Farrell is far more convincing as Crockett than you might imagine — with his slightly gone-to-seed look (thanks mostly to scraggly facial hair) and wired-up intensity, he all but burns a hole in the screen with his most successful display of on-screen charisma to date. As his dangerous liaison, Gong Li may be obviously hampered by her less-than-sure grasp of the English language, but she more than matches up with Farrell in terms of smoldering on-screen sexuality, while still maintaining the kind of cool veneer that never lets you forget what a threat she could become if crossed. Fans of Foxx may be surprised by his relatively limited screen time — he is off-screen for much of the middle stretch — but he makes the most of his moments, especially those shared with on-screen squeeze Harris (whom you may recognize — perhaps not at first — as the weirdo fortune teller in *Dead Man's Chest*).

see MIAMI VICE on p. 17



Top inset: Michael Mann, an executive producer on the TV show, directs the screen adaptation. Bottom inset: Gong Li as the femme fatal. Feature photo: Colin Farrell and Jamie Foxx are the new Crockett and Tubbs. Above: Foxx on the attack with fellow cop, Elizabeth Rodriguez

Child charms in heartbreak *Motel*



by Steven Snyder

The irony of Michael Kang's *The Motel*, an intriguing, edgy and off-kilter coming-of-age comedy opening Friday, July 28th, is that many of its most moving scenes unfold miles away from the building mentioned in its title. In one scene, Ernest, a chubby teenager who has stolen his mother's car and picked up the girl he has a crush on, ditches both in a moment of rage — overcome by the frustrations of a would-be seduction gone awry. He screams at the night and he marches away from the bewildered girl. It's a scene of unbridled anxiety and confusion, about a moment in a boy's life where nothing—certainly not his own emotions—seems within his control.

"I didn't grow up in a dirty motel, and I wasn't chubby — well, I was chubby, but not too chubby," said director Michael Kang, who adapted the screenplay from Ed Lin's novel. "But that's what I felt like growing up, and this scene brought to life all that confusion of puberty. It was cathartic to get this out — that this kid, who most people ignore, has a complete sexual identity and has the same needs as anybody else, that he needs to be loved."

The Motel premiered at Sundance a year ago, and recently opened theatrically in New York to glowing reviews from the *New York Times* and other local publications. Yet for his part, Kang is quick to divert accolades away from himself, redirecting praise to those who collaborated with him on the project — particularly young Jeffrey Chyau, who brings Ernest to life.

"I knew almost immediately that he was it," says Kang, recalling the extensive casting process he went through before being introduced to Chyau on the campus of New York City's Columbia University. "What I saw with Jeffrey and what I hadn't been thinking about, is that even though Ernest has to be awkward and self-conscious and a little off, he also has to be really comfortable with himself."

Blown away by Chyau's acting skills — reportedly Chyau burst into tears during an early read-through of the film's final scenes— Kang said casting the talented young man was the turning point of the project. Now, Kang said, he knew the film could work as he had envisioned it.

Featuring an all-Asian cast, as well as an unmistakable, patient sensibility that seems unique to modern Asian and Asian American filmmakers, the film's title refers both to the seedy, hourly inn run by a blue collar Korean American family, and the title of an essay Ernest writes for school that has been awarded an honorable mention in a writing contest.

Ernest's composition, written in a small, blue essay book, becomes the metaphor for Ernest's uncertain place in this world. This is his attempt to express how he really feels, the one place where he can speak his mind. But when news of his honorable mention reaches his mother, she scoffs at the designation, saying it

means that Ernest not only did not win, he "wasn't even good enough to lose." She stubbornly refuses to read the story.

Faced with a neglectful mother and an absent father, Ernest bonds with one of the hotel's guests, a booze-chugging womanizer named Sam (Sung Kang) who becomes his de facto father figure. Sam tries to earn Ernest's trust by teaching him how to play catch, but Ernest is easily discouraged and wants to quit almost immediately. Instead Sam teaches Ernest how to drive and how to proposition women.

Marking Kang's feature debut, the film's earliest audiences at the Sundance Film Festival — the script itself was a product of the Sundance Labs — were so shaken by the emotional third act that post-film Q&A sessions were surprisingly subdued. And in screenings since, Kang said audiences have split on the film, typically along gender lines.

"Most of the audience gets it, that we're trying to touch on those hard days of being a teenager," he said. "But lots of the guys are squirming. They have a really hard time. And that's why I think that this isn't an age that's covered very often. Generally guys don't want to go back to a time in life that's so difficult."

While Ernest clearly steals the show — he is the emotional core of a story that could have so easily become too silly, too sad, or too sappy — it's clear that behind every personality in this fictional world is a real person Kang has known. He points to Ernest's love interest as "the girl I know from growing up, who is going to try really hard to be part of the popular crowd." And he sees Ernest, in the end, as the boy "who will get through it somehow, but at 18 or 19, he's still gonna be in the dark. His life isn't going to click until he's far away from that motel."

Not to give anything away, but the film does not have a conventional, happy, Hollywood ending.

"You want your characters to have a totally happy ending, but so often that's a betrayal to the audience. In the end, this is where the story felt like it had to go — this is the only direction that felt right."

It's an ending that's both happy and sad. Both heartening and sobering. Kind of like being a teenager.

Steven Snyder welcomes feedback at SnyderReviews@hotmail.com



Jeffrey Chyau and Samantha Futerman are friends exploring sexual awaking in *The Motel*

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Film Interview



Kim Voynar

Sunshine at last

Kim Voynar talks with the directors of *Little Miss Sunshine*



Eric Lee/20th Century Fox

Abigail Breslin, Toni Collette, Steve Carrell, and Greg Kinnear. Inset: Co-directors and spouses, Valerie Faris and Jonathon Dayton fought for their dream cast for *Little Miss Sunshine*, opening July 28 in Los Angeles — after grappling with Focus Features, they made the film independently

by Kim Voynar

When *Little Miss Sunshine* debuted at Sundance earlier this year, it was one of the most buzzed-about films at the fest, partly because actor Steve Carrell was fresh off the success of *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, and partly because, well, it's just a funny movie. Audiences at film festivals routinely subject themselves to endless war documentaries, serious relationship dramas, and bizarre experimental films, and sometimes, it's just nice to sit back and watch a really well-crafted comedy. Husband-and-wife directing team Jonathon Dayton and Valerie Faris graciously took the time to sit down and chat about their film. Keeping up with them as they riffed off each other and completed each other's thoughts made for a wild ride.

Kim Voynar: Before you did *Little Miss Sunshine*, you were primarily known as music video directors. Out of all the films you could have chosen for your first feature, why this film?

Jonathon Dayton: The script spoke to us on every level. First and foremost, it was a film we'd want to see. I mean, it's an interesting thing. A lot of times I would make a commercial or a video that, of course I want to see, but I'm interested in the technique. But you can do [a video] in a month. A film is such a total commitment of time and energy that you have to love it with every ounce.

Valerie Faris: And we also feel like: Why do a film if it's not what you love about film?

Jonathan: But you know, it's weird, because I hadn't thought of it until just now, but it's not only that we make a movie that we want to see, at least for me. It's that I want to make the movie that was like my absolute favorite movie —

Valerie: Yeah! Well, we're trying to, we're trying to do that —

Jonathan: I'm not saying we achieved that fully. But there are certain movies, I'm sure you've had this, where you come out of the theater and you're just like: Oh my God! I'd forgotten that movies could even do that to me, that I'm moved, I laughed — when I think of some of the great Hal Ashton movies — when I saw *Coming Home*, I was so blown away. That's what you make movies for.

Kim: But there's that fine line between moving people and manipulating people emotionally.

Valerie: Exactly!

Jonathan: Right, right. And that's why I didn't like *The Deer Hunter*, because I felt they were pulverizing us with these sort of cheap — you know, if you do a Russian roulette scene, you may be devastated by it, but I don't see that as great filmmaking. So I think our sights were pretty high when we went to do this.

Valerie: It's hard to judge, when you're making [the film].... Would this be a film that I would love? I can't tell —

Jonathan: (surprised) Oh, really?

Kim: But you knew from the script, right? Because the script must have touched you on some level.

Valerie: Right, right, and then I loved the actors, and it felt really right the whole time. But I don't know how I would feel if I went to see this movie and it wasn't mine.

Kim: So did the script change at all from the time it first landed in your laps until you went into production?

Jonathan: It changed some —

Valerie: No, the story was basically the same. We tried to do a lot of the editing that we felt would happen anyway. And we worked a lot on the Richard character.

Kim: So you measured twice, cut once.

Jonathan: We knew we had thirty days to do this, so we had to be lean and mean. We didn't want to shoot a whole scene and go, Nevermind.

Kim: Especially when you're shooting in the desert in Arizona.

Jonathan: Yeah, yeah, oh God!

Valerie: It was trying. These were hard scenes for everybody. Most of the scenes there were six people in the scene.

Kim: In a van, in the desert.

Valerie: Yeah, in the heat.

Jonathan: In a way it's weird, there's certain things we've discovered

since shooting — we've since heard little stories about how hot it was, but at the time, everyone was really just: Whatever it takes. There were no complaints. Val and I were constantly trying to figure out how to make it more comfortable for the actors. After the first day we asked the van prep people to drill a hole in the bottom of the van and pump air conditioning in there. And we had our assistant run out to Brookstone and get them all their own personal fans. All these little things, trying to make, even if it was just a gesture, just to acknowledge that we understood it was really hot.

Kim: So how is the dynamic between the two of you — you're married —

Jonathan: Married, three children.

Kim: So when you're working together, and you're living together, and you're around each other 24/7, you have to really like each other or you couldn't tolerate that, obviously. But what I'm interested in is the dynamic when you're working. Do you bring your work fights home?

Valerie: With this film, we had so much time to prepare for shooting this movie. All the years we were trying to get this movie made — it was five years to the end of shooting. But in the prep years we spent a lot of time scoring the scenes, breaking it down, working through the scenes, acting things out, we workshoped some of the scenes. So we'd sort of put ourselves through the paces with the whole film. We did our homework, and we went through a lot of the arguments at home, or at work, but with nobody else around. And that's sort of how we work, we try to have this totally unified vision, and then on the set it's fun.

Kim: So by the time you reach the stage of actually shooting, you've worked all that out?

Jonathan: We've had our arguments, and we're done. And now there's a double-barrel shotgun, and it's really fun because there's just an energy from the two of us with the same agenda that's really fun.

Kim: So during the prep time, you were just immersed?

Jonathan: Yeah, yeah. We — it was probably a really unwise thing to do, but we just stopped developing any other features. We just pursued *Little Miss Sunshine*, which nobody ever does.

Valerie: And our agent, who stuck with us for ten years, when we turned other movies down, and just didn't — we didn't want to do a feature for the sake of doing a feature. And he stuck with us through five years of *Little Miss Sunshine*.

Kim: Now I bet he's happy he did.

Jonathan: Well, I hope he is.

Valerie: I think he's very happy. We used to say, I'm not sure if I'm happy for us or for him, that this film is finally getting some attention.

Kim: I'd like to talk about the casting for a minute. I read in the production notes that you essentially got your dream cast for the film. Any disagreement about what that dream cast was?

Jonathan: No, no. We had a lot of really great actors. And we had — I don't want to get heavily into this, but you probably know we were at Focus Features for a while before we left and did it independently. There we had arguments all the time.

Kim: About?

Jonathan: Just about actors.

Kim: They wanted big names instead of character actors?

Jonathan: Yeah. They wanted —

Valerie: Their business is foreign sales. So, I don't know if they ever understood what the film was exactly, they just wanted big names for it to make business sense.

Jonathan: They wanted big, big marquee names.

Valerie: And it's not that they're crazy, that's just how they make films.

Jonathan: And we needed to know who we wanted, even if it wasn't ever gonna happen, we felt like if we were going to argue with them, we needed to be able to say: No, not this one; this one. And so when we finally got financing from one of our producers — it really helps when one of your producers is independently wealthy.

Valerie: And the two of us, and our producers, had been talking about casting for so long that it was pretty easy once we had the money and we had a start date to say, okay, let's offer it to Greg Kinnear. We've met with him, we've talked with him before, we think he's perfect —

Jonathan: Sold! And then Toni Collette, and Alan Arkin, and down the line, and the two kids.

Valerie: And Steve, in some ways, was the biggest leap for the producers.

Kim: Right, because he wasn't a big star yet.

Jonathan: He wasn't a big star, but it wasn't that they were against him at all, they just wanted us to explain why we thought he was good. And there were rumbles already about his potential.

Kim: And then what a bonus it was for you guys that *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* took off like a skyrocket, which had to boost your film.

Jonathan: Oh, my God. It was great.

Kim: I want talk about child beauty pageants: How you really feel about them, and how you tried to portray them in the film.

Valerie: When we first heard about the storyline of this script, you know: Family road trip movie about a family taking their little daughter to a beauty pageant, we were like, oh, uh, not



Co-directors and spouses, Faris and Dayton say they are a "double-barrel shotgun" on set.

interested. We don't really want to delve into that whole world. But then we read the script, and we loved it so much, and we realized the pageant is just kind of representative of the whole world, and the way we allow ourselves to be judged, and how wrong that is. And what the story really expresses is that no one should be judged or do anything for someone else's approval. So for us the issue was, how are we going to present this pageant in a way that can be as neutral as possible. For the most part, anyone who's never seen what really goes on there, they're going to be shocked by it. It's a pretty shocking little subculture. But our goal was to try to just present it authentically, to just get real girls who do what they really do — we didn't tell them when to smile, we didn't tell them how to stand, we didn't tell them anything.

Kim: So the other little girls in the

pageant are all real girls who compete in these child beauty pageants?

Jonathan: Yeah, and they're doing their acts, with their moms there.

Kim: So how did you convince them to be in a movie that's pretty much anti-beauty pageant?

Valerie: I think it's anti-contest period.

Jonathan: Yeah, yeah, but we explained — we didn't let them read the script, but we completely filled them in on every aspect of the events that led the family here. This is really about a family that's coming to an event they know nothing about. And because they were doing what they do, and I think they were okay with it. Now it's going to be hard, no doubt, when they see this with an audience, and the audience gasps,

see **SUNSHINE** on p. 16



In *Little Miss Sunshine*, Steve Carell and Toni Collette leap from the Volkswagen bus that transported the family to young Olive's (Abigail Breslin) first beauty pageant.

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DIRECTED BY JOHN DAVIS

STARRING: JULIA ROBERTS,
NICOLAS CAGE, PAUL GIAMATTI,
MERYL STREEP, ZACH TYLER EISEN,
BRUCE CAMPBELL, REGINA KING,
RICARDO MONTALBAN
88 MINUTES, RATED PG

by Peter Sobczynski



Zoc (Nicolas Cage) and Lucas Nickle (Zach Tyler Eisen) in *The Ant Bully*

I must admit that when I walked into the screening room to see the new animated film *The Ant Bully*, it was not with the greatest enthusiasm. Having seen virtually every example of the genre to emerge in the last few years, I assumed it was yet another attempt to copy the reliable Pixar formula — throwing together shiny CGI animation, numerous pop-culture references, and an all-star group of actors chosen less for their ability than for their marquee value. I can only hope that audiences won't have the same impression, because the film is much better than it seems at first glance. *The Ant Bully* is a smart, funny, and charming family film that has something to say to younger and older viewers alike.

Based on the kids' book by John Nickle, the film begins with young Lucas (Zach Tyler Eisen) being picked on by a fearsome local bully. Upset and humiliated, Lucas takes out his frustrations on the anthill in his yard by repeatedly stomping on it and flooding it with a water hose. To Lucas, the ants are nothing more than a bunch of dumb bugs that no one cares about. But the anthill actually houses a thriving and industrious colony that has grown increasingly tired of having their home ruined by the "The Destroyer." To settle the score, scientist ant Zoc (Nicolas Cage) devises a way to shrink Lucas down to the size of an ant so that he can be taken to their world and brought to justice.

Soon, Lucas stands before the Head of Council (Ricardo Montalban) and the rest of the colony to answer to charges that include the unleashing of the "dreaded yellow rain." Surprisingly, the Queen Ant (Meryl Streep) decides that instead of executing Lucas, she will sentence him to live and work among the ants in order to understand the culture that he so callously tries to destroy. This verdict outrages Zoc, and he is even more upset when his own girlfriend, Hova (Julia Roberts), volunteers to show Lucas the ins and outs of the ant world. After some early missteps, Lucas does begin to see his former enemy through new eyes. In fact,

he winds up leading the defense of the colony when it is attacked by a creepy exterminator (Paul Giamatti) hell-bent on wiping them out in the most environmentally-unfriendly manner possible.

The Ant Bully was written and directed by John Davis, whose previous animated feature was the slyly amusing *Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius*, and the films share a lot of the same qualities. There is a bright and stylized look to both the action and the characters that is fun to look at throughout — notice how the ant voiced by B-movie legend Bruce Campbell has a chin almost as pronounced as the man who speaks for him. In addition, the film smartly manages to be consistently funny without relying entirely on poop jokes (although there are plenty of those) and pop-culture references. And it is consistently exciting without relying solely on quick-cut action sequences. (Viewers of a certain age will probably notice the influence of the legendary Ray Harryhausen at certain points.) And while I have gotten tired of star-choked voice casts in animated films, I have to admit that the choices made here are sound — Roberts is appropriately sweet and charming, Giamatti is appropriately slimy, Campbell is appropriately goofy as the colony blowhard, and Cage turns in some of his funniest, freakiest work as the slightly mad Zoc. I love the moment when he yells, "Curse you and your children!" to a rock. Of course, all bow to the majesty that is Ricardo Montalban. I can't say with any certainty that it has been Montalban's lifelong dream to play the elder statesman of an ant colony, but he tackles it with such zest and zeal that I wouldn't be surprised if it was.

What did surprise me was the message of unity and tolerance that is effectively woven into the film. Without laying it on too thickly, *The Ant Bully* quietly and effectively illustrates to younger viewers the advantages of working together for the collective good, instead of only looking out for oneself. At the same time, it shows them that if they take the time to actually study and get to know those that they have been trained to look at as an enemy, they might find themselves less willing to join a cycle of carnage. Admittedly, these are not exactly radical notions but considering the particular period of history in which this film is coming out, it is refreshing to see an animated film with concerns greater than whether a racecar will learn to slow down and smell the octane.

While it doesn't achieve the same heights as the best Pixar films, or even the current *Monster House*, *The Ant Bully* is the kind of family-oriented film that can be appreciated by viewers of all ages. Kids will be entranced by the bright colors and the exciting action. Adults will be amused by the sly humor and the vocal contributions of the cast. And if both aren't careful, they might wind up learning a thing or two as well — and not just the fact that an ant crossing its heart is going to be aiming a little lower than one might expect. 🐜

Peter Sobczynski writes for the *Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers* chain and on-line at www.efilmcritic.com. He can also be heard on the nationally syndicated *Mancow's Morning Madhouse* radio program. Comments, complaints, questions, threats and Milla Jovovich's phone number can be sent to him at petersob@netzero.net.

SUNSHINE from p. 15

and maybe laughs at certain times, it's going to be hard.

Valerie: We did pick girls who we thought were really professional, who do this all the time, who are really good at what they do. I don't really approve of it, but they were talented — they could sing, they could dance, or they were gymnasts. So we weren't really trying to make them look bad. We tried to present it like: It's a little bit of a talent show, a little bit of a costume ball. It is what it is.

Kim: But in a way it's almost worse that they were so polished and professional, because, especially as the mother of three girls, I was watching those scenes and thinking, my God, what are they putting these little girls through to get them to this level?

Valerie: But that is the truth — they are put through a lot. They're on that circuit every weekend. And I think it was important to have a contrast between Olive, who really didn't have any experience with these things, and then those girls, who were very experienced.

Jonathan: We talked to the cast about this. This movie is about life as a contest, or life as a dance. And ultimately, we hope, they find the pleasure in just the dance.

Kim: Is there anything you want to say about the film that you haven't had a chance to say?

Jonathan: Having gone through this experience, we have a new appreciation for seeing movies in a theater. In this age of DVDs — we are as guilty as anybody of waiting for DVDs — but I hope people will see this in theaters, with an audience.

Valerie: Especially with a comedy. We never thought about this just making the film, but now — there's just something about being in a room with 300 people, all laughing at the same thing.

Kim: Well, film can be interactive just like theater, only with movies the energy of the audience feeds the other people watching the film, rather than the performers.

Jonathan: Absolutely!

Valerie: I think people just need to laugh. We're in such dark times right now, and sometimes people just need to laugh and have fun. It's not just frivolous entertainment, there's real value there. 🐜

Kim Voynar is Managing Editor and a film critic for Cinematical.com. She also writes for eFilmCritic.com and HollywoodBitchslap.com.

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Jonathan Chase, Mitch Morris, Michael Carbonaro, and Jonah Bleckman in *Another Gay Movie*

Gay Movie riffs on *Pie*

ANOTHER GAY MOVIE

★★★☆☆
(2 1/2 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY TODD STEPHENS

STARRING: MICHAEL CARBONARO,
JONATHAN CHASE, JONAH BLECKMAN,
MITCH MORRIS

92 MINUTES, NOT RATED

by Steven Snyder

Fair's fair. If a stupid, silly heterosexual comedy can feature a teenage boy having sex with a warm apple pie, then a stupid, silly homosexual comedy can feature a teenage boy turning his affections to a freshly baked quiche.

The "another" in the title of *Another Gay Movie* is an encouraging sign — that "gay" movies have become so prevalent that this is merely another in a long line. And the story behind this light-hearted, amiable, if ultimately forgettable affair is refreshing in the way it dumbs down gay characters precisely the same way that so many conventional comedies dumb down hetero boys, girls, men, and women. Actually, that's the point of *Another Gay Movie* — to reimagine a standard formula through a gay perspective. And while there are some laughs to be found — some genuine, creative, guttural laughs — the whole thing seems like a concept more appropriate for a short skit, not a 90-minute movie.

If you haven't guessed, *Another Gay Movie* is a humorous homage to the *American Pie* trilogy, focusing on four gay high school friends who take the pledge to go "anal" by the time they start college. The whole crew is here — the nerdy, the preppy, the eccentric, and the clean-shaven — along with a revamped Stiffler, this time a lesbian, and a whole new MILF (though this time the "M" stands for Man — or more specifically an older Man).

For those familiar with the plot of *American Pie*, it will be fun watch-

ing as the same setups build into extremely different predicaments. The pesky, nosy father character is still pesky and nosy, but this time, instead of condoms, he buys his kid a butt plug. Once again, a group of teens watch as a friend performs sexual acts on the Internet, but this time it's not with a gorgeous female exchange student. It's with a sadomasochistic middle-aged man, dressed in black leather and carrying a whip.

But much like an unfocused episode of *Saturday Night Live*, where every halfway-decent idea is run into the ground until it loses its laughs, the ideas in *Another Gay Movie* play on too long, and, at times, far too seriously. If the appeal of the film is the hook — that we're watching a twisted *American Pie* sequel — writer and director Todd Stephens (*Gypsy* 83) should know that the last thing on our minds is characters or emotions. All we want to do is laugh, and all *Gay Movie*'s last-minute attempts to personalize these characters, and inject some serious melodrama, are misguided.

I was reminded of Woody Allen's character in *Annie Hall*, when he compares a romantic relationship to a shark that must always keep moving, or die. Such is the case with a gimmick-based spoof like *Another Gay Movie*, or others like *Naked Gun*, *Airplane*, or *Scary Movie*. The setups and the punch lines, not the characters or the story, keep the movie's momentum going.

Another Gay Movie isn't just another gay movie; it's also another overdone, under-edited, spoofy comedy. We get it, and we have a good time, and then the director loses the edge that has kept us chuckling and we find ourselves growing tired of it all. Hopefully next time, a gay movie can spoof and reclaim a genre more dignified than the teen shock comedy. ✍

Steven Snyder welcomes feedback at
SnyderReviews@hotmail.com

MIAMI VICE from p. 12

of the English language, but she more than matches up with Farrell in terms of smoldering on-screen sexuality, while still maintaining the kind of cool veneer that never lets you forget what a threat she could become if crossed. Fans of Foxx may be surprised by his relatively limited screen time — he is off-screen for much of the middle stretch — but he makes the most of his moments, especially those shared with on-screen squeeze Harris (whom you may recognize — perhaps not at first — as the weirdo fortune teller in *Dead Man's Chest*).

Miami Vice is not a landmark crime film in the manner of Mann's masterpiece *Heat* — though you could say that about virtually every other such film to appear since that one came out — and it does have a couple of flaws here and there. Crockett and Isabella's field trip to Cuba is nice enough but it goes on a little too long for its own good. The two major villains — Yero and Montoya — lack the kind of fire that you might expect, possibly because the actors playing them don't have the same visceral impact as the other major characters. And for a film based on a television show celebrated in part because of the inventive way it utilized music, the film score by John Murphy is surprisingly undistinguished. (No, we don't hear Jan Hammer's distinctive theme song but we are "treated" to a lame cover of "In the Air Tonight" over the end credits, an ill-advised homage that Mann should have junked altogether.)

Those quibbles aside, *Miami Vice* is the kind of gritty urban thriller that used to be a mainstay, back in the days when Hollywood catered to adults instead of aiming virtually everything at 14-year-old boys. From start to finish, it is alive. It looks astonishing, thanks to the startling digital-video cinematography by Dion Beebe that pushes the boundaries of the format even beyond what he and Mann accomplished in *Collateral*. It contains some great hard-boiled dialogue ("He wants to front them with silver and pay them in lead") and it crackles with an energy that even the most jaded moviegoers will find themselves instantly responding to. This is not only the best of the summer blockbusters — it is the only one that I can think of that, with a straight face, could be described as a genuine work of popular art. ✍

Peter Sobczynski writes for the *Liberty Suburban Chicago Newspapers* chain and on-line at www.efilmcritic.com. He can also be heard on the nationally syndicated *Manco's Morning Madhouse* radio program. Comments, complaints, questions, threats and Milla Jovovich's phone number can be sent to him at petersob@netzero.net.

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The Motel recently opened theatrically in New York to glowing reviews from the New York Times. It opens in Los Angeles July 28 at LaemmliFairfax 3 and Laemmle Playhouse 7. See feature story on p. 13

Azumi (NR) ★ 1/2

Azumi (Aya Ueto) is an eight year old girl who after having to deal with the death of her mother in the Battle of Sekigahara, is trained to be an assassin by samurai master Gassai (Yoshio Harada), who is putting together an elite group of students to finish off enemy warlords. Azumi and her classmates become concerned with the direction of their training and their master's intentions, as they waste time by being teamed up in pairs and then asked to kill each other while bandits kill innocent villagers. Landmark Nuarte Theatre

The Break-Up (PG-13) ★★

One might be inclined to walk into a screening of *The Break-Up* thinking that the title says it all. Except in this case, it doesn't. Now if the film had the more appropriate title of "The Argument," then that would have been more like it. (SM)

Mann Beverly Center Cinema

Cars (PG-13) ★★ ★ 1/2

Pixar is unique in the history of movies. It's the only studio not to have ever produced a flop. Even Walt Disney himself during his heyday would produce the occasional financial disaster. But not Pixar. The only bad movie they ever produced was a short called *Boundin'* and that doesn't really count, which leaves expectations so high as to cause breathing trouble to see them up close. (EL)

Mann Beverly Center Cinema, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific's Culver Stadium, AMC Theatres Burbank

Clerks II (PG-13) ★★ ★ 1/2

This film probably won't bring new fans into the Kevin Smith camp, but it is a smart and funny film that contains a number of big laughs. While watching *Clerks II*, you may recognize yourself or your friends in the characters on screen and you may even find yourself examining your own life choices afterwards. And, I can almost guarantee that you will think twice before getting into an argument with anyone working behind the counter of a fast-food joint before receiving your meal. (PS) Five Star Theatres Los Feliz 3, ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, The Grove, Laemmle One Colorado Cinemas, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14, AMC Theatres Burbank

Click (PG-13) ★★

Since a magical remote control turns out to be the cause of Adam Sandler's problems in his latest comedy, I couldn't help but hope that a real fast-forward button would appear out of nowhere and bail me out of the last 40 minutes. That's because despite an amusing setup that aims higher than you'd expect from a Sandler comedy, *Click* tunes out with an ending that's sappy, redundant and not nearly as funny as the hour or so that preceded it. (SM)

AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, Mann Glendale Exchange 10, AMC Loews Universal Studios IMAX Theater, AMC Theatres Burbank,, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Mann Chinese 6, Mann Beverley Center, Academy 6, Mann Culver Plaza,

Da Vinci Code, The (PG-13) ★★ ★ 1/2

Time to state the obvious: the movie was NEVER going to be as good as the book and everyone knows it. Remember the first *Harry Potter* film or *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Both were fine films, but you can't do things as nuanced as some novels and remain faithful unless you've got a miniseries lasting a total of four or five hours. This is not to say that Akiva Goldsman and Ron Howard didn't TRY. They did a damn fine job of doing an almost exact transcription of the Dan Brown novel, but the simple fact is that the book was better at when expectorating conspiracy theories than doing chases. (EL)

Mann Beverly Center Cinema

Devil Wears Prada (PG-13) ★★ ★

The concept of fashion as art is a theme given a proper send-up in *The Devil Wears Prada*. And when that art is worn by the likes of Meryl Streep, you can forgive the softness of the film. *Prada* deals with adult issues but handles adult situations from a distance to make it appropriate viewing for a large audience spectrum. And while this may help at the box office, it waters down the effectiveness of the story. (JH)

ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, The Grove, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific's Culver Stadium 12

The Groomsmen (R) ★★

Paulie (Edward Burns, who also wrote and directed the film) is experiencing cold feet a week before he is supposed

to marry his pregnant girlfriend Sue (Brittany Murphy) and decides to do a lot of drinking and talking with four of his old buddies as a last rite of bachelorhood. The five friends laugh, argue and fight over issues like fatherhood, marriage, becoming an adult, and the revealed homosexuality of one them. (JC) AMC Theatres Burbank Towne Center 8

An Inconvenient Truth (PG) ★★ ★ ★

Is Al Gore doing a Chicken Little act in *An Inconvenient Truth*? I wish he were. This stunning documentary about global warming is a well-reasoned, clearly-proven, intelligent, cogent, irresistible torrent of scientific data, in a curiously warm, engaging, often funny presentation. What an entertaining horror movie this is! (JG) ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, Majestic Crest, Pacific's Sherman Oaks 5

John Tucker Must Die (PG-13) Not Reviewed

Ashanti, Sophia Bush and Brittany Snow find out that they are all dating the same guy, John Tucker played by Jesse Metcalfe. The three scorned lovers devise a plot of revenge for their former beau, attempting to turn the tables in game of heartbreak. ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, The Grove, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific's Culver Stadium 12, AMC Theatres Burbank, AMC Theatres Burbank Town Center 8

Lady in the Water (PG-13) ★

How could the writer/director who gave us such crisply paced, serious-minded, and intriguing works as *The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*, and *Signs* (up until its dreadful final reel) also be responsible for one of the most convoluted and incompetent films to come around in a long time? Hell, even *The Village*, which was generally derided, contained a basic storyline one could follow. Watching M. Night Shyamalan's *Lady in the Water* is like listening to someone trying to tell a long and elaborate joke, forgetting to include important information and endlessly doubling back. (PS) Laemmle Grande, Flagship's University Village 3, ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, The Grove, Mann Glendale Market-place 4, Landmark Rialto Theatre, Laemmle One Colorado Cinemas, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14

The Lake House (PG) ★★ ★ 1/2

A time warp allows architect Alex Wyler (Keanu Reeves) to correspond with Doctor Kate Forster (Sandra Bullock). Forster lives in the future. Not all that far in the future, about two years to be exact. And as luck would have it they live in the same house. In Forster's future Alex moved out well before. Reeves and Bullock both do a decent job, and Christopher Plummer as Alex's father delightfully chews the scenery. *The Lake House* is a one hankie weepy for gals who really don't want to see any of the superhero action flicks that usually come out this time of year. (EL) Mann Beverly Center Cinema

La Moustache (NR) ★★ ★

A simple argument over facial hair between Marc Thiriez (Vincent Lindon) and his wife Agnes (Emmanuelle Devos) leads to a crisis of identity and existence when Marc shaves off his moustache. Marc is continually told that things he once held dear — his friends, his father, even his moustache — have never existed. As Marc tries to escape from his crisis, the plot becomes as fragile as his reality, ending with suspense and ambiguity, while still full of symbolism. (JC) Laemmle Music Hall, Laemmle Town Center Theatre

Little Man (R) 1/2 star

Calvin (Marlon Wayans) is a midget criminal who along with idiot colleague Percy (Tracy Morgan) is forced a ditch a stolen diamond inside the purse of rising Chicago businesswoman Vanessa (Kerry Washington). After following Vanessa and her husband home, Percy and Calvin hit upon the perfect idea — they will dress Calvin up as a baby and leave him on their doorstep in a basket, and when they take him in, he can grab the diamond and sneak out. You might enjoy this film if don't require actual humor in your comedies, or if you simply want to peep inside the freak show to see if it really is as bad as it looks. Answer: it is. (PS) University Village 3, The Grove, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo

Monster House (PG) ★★ ★

Motion-capture animation created a successful stir with *The Polar Express*, graduated to the creation of Gollum and Kong in the Peter Jackson franchises, and has now been lifted a notch higher in Gil Kenan's *Monster House*. Here, unlike *The Polar Express*, the characters are more expressive, not less, as animation frees them from the limits of natural motion. I won't say the movie is an instant classic, but I will say the technical wizardry is fun and appealing. (MG) AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, The Grove, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific's Culver Stadium 12, AMC Theatres Burbank, AMC Theatres Burbank Town Center 8

The Motel (PG-13) ★★ ★ 1/2

The charming performance of newcomer Jeffrey Chyau as Ernest is the emotional core of this story that takes its title from a seedy, hourly motel run by a blue collar Korean American family. Faced with a neglectful mother and an absent father, Ernest bonds with one of the hotel's guests, a booze-chugging womanizer (Sung Kang) who becomes his de facto father figure. Ernest's sexual curiosity gets him in trouble when he plots the seduction of his friend Christine (Samantha Futerman), and it goes woefully awry. This edgy and off-kilter coming-of-age comedy captures the unbridled anxiety and confusion of adolescence with humor and heart. (SS) Laemmle Fairfax, Laemmle Playhouse 7

My Super Ex Girlfriend (PG-13) ★★

My Super Ex-Girlfriend has so much going for it — a promising premise, a director adept at handling both comedy and large-scale special effects, and the ideal actress in the title role. Unfortunately, it never manages to catch fire. *My Super Ex-Girlfriend* is a sour, unpleasant, and vaguely misogynistic mess that becomes even more frustrating during the isolated moments where things do come together, only to fall to pieces once again. (PS) Laemmle Grande, Five Star Theatres Los Feliz 3, ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, The Grove, Laemmle One Colorado Cinemas, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theatre, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific's Culver Stadium 12, AMC Theatres Burbank, AMC Theatres Burbank Town Center 6

Nacho Libre (PG) ★★

Jared Hess' sporadically funny *Nacho Libre* is a messy film carried through on the misanthropic charisma of its lead Jack Black. Lots of unique sketch type comedy can't make this incomplete story work. And this despite some inspired moments from anti-star Black. (JH) Mann Beverly Center Cinema, AMC Theatres Burbank Town Center 8

The Oh in Ohio (R) ★★ ★ 1/2

Priscilla (Parkery Posey) is a beautiful and successful executive at a corporation designed to attract business to Cleveland. Her marriage to husband Jack (Paul Rudd) and her life seem to be going very well, except for the fact that she has to deal with the colossal bummer of never having had an orgasm. There are several funny, touching, and even sexy moments in writer-director Billy Kent's depiction of Pricilla's chaotic sexual awakening. But an uneven tone that wanders as aimlessly as the movie's heroine causes *The Oh in Ohio* to come off as patchy & incomplete. (JC) Laemmle Sunset 5, Academy 6

The Omen 2006 (R) ★★ ★

This is an awfully good film. Surprisingly, it exceeds its predecessor but could not have been made without it. Though it has been a while since I've seen the Richard Donner directed original, I believe that the 2006 remake is fairly faithful to its source. But instead of feeling like a dirty impostor (ala Van Sant's technically excellent but something missing *Psycho*), this version is sleeker and more consistently entertaining than the first. (JH) Regency Valley Plaza

Only Human (R) ★★ ★

What should have been a standard trip home to Spain for television reporter Leni (Marian Aguilera) becomes a bit tense when she announces to her Jewish family that her new boyfriend Rafi (Guillermo Toledo) is Palestinian. It also doesn't help that Leni's family is a bit on the quirky side, with an overly anxious mother Gloria (Norma Aleandro), boistrous father Ernesto (Mario Martin), and awkwardly straight brother David (Fernando Ramallo). Worse still, Rafi is prone to embarrassing situations. (JC) Laemmle Fairfax Cinemas, Laemmle Town Center Theatre

Over The Hedge (PG) ★★ ★

This computer-animated big screen adaptation of the popular comic strip series created by Michael Fry and T Lewis is a clever, charming and often funny movie that the whole family can enjoy. (SM) Mann Beverly Center Cinema, Regency Valley Plaza



MAKO Died July 21, 2006

By Rusty White



There are some scenes in movies during which even the most stout-hearted men are allowed to cry. Robert Wise's epic film *The Sand Pebbles* provides one of them, about two thirds of the way through the movie. The character of Po-Han played by Mako is captured by Chinese revolutionaries and is hung from a pillory by his hands. He is then cut with a sword repeatedly by the Communists. Po-Han cries out for the soldiers aboard the U.S. Gunship on which he serves to shoot him. Afraid of an international incident, the commander played by Richard Crenna tells his soldiers to stand down. Po-Han worked in the engine room with a sailor named Jake Holman played by Steve McQueen. Holman is a free-spirited sailor who earlier in the film takes Po-Han under his wing and teaches him how a steam engine really works. He is the only American sailor on board who sees the Chinese workers as human beings. He and Po-Han have become more than friends. They are brothers. As Po-Han screams in agony, Steve McQueen's character takes aim and shoots his student, his friend, his brother. It is a powerful scene that remains potent even after many, many viewings. Steve McQueen and Mako both earned Oscar nominations for the wonderful film. Neither won, but their performances showed just what can be achieved when two excellent actors work together. *The Sand Pebbles* was Mako's feature film debut. His Oscar nomination was well deserved and gave him the clout to push for better roles for Asian American actors. Oscar and Tony nominated actor Mako died of esophageal cancer at age 72.

Hi there! If you discover a mistake that needs to be corrected or have a tip for a film industry obituary that I have overlooked please feel free to contact me. I would appreciate it if you would send links to news articles confirming any tips. Also, with all of the computer viruses out there, please do not send e-mails with attachments. I automatically delete those. You can contact me at Rusty@einsiders.com. Thanks!

Mako was born and raised in Japan. During WWII, his parents lived in the U.S. and worked for the Office of War Information. Following the war, his parents were granted U.S. citizenship and they sent for their young son, who would serve in the U.S. Army the following decade. Mako was nominated for a Tony Award as Best Actor in a Musical for the 1975 Broadway production of *Pacific Overtures*. Mako appeared in over 130 films and TV shows. He was also the co-founder of East West Players, the nation's first Asian American theater company. Mako's many feature film roles include a nice turn as a hunted politician in Sam Peckinpah's *The Killer Elite*. He co-starred with Hal Holbrook in the excellent TV biopic *When Hell Was In Session* about Vietnam POW Jeremiah Denton. He co-starred with the future governor of California in *Conan the Barbarian* and *Conan the Destroyer*. In 2001 Mako as Admiral Yamamoto provided the only reason whatsoever to watch the overblown *Pearl Harbor*. Other film credits include *The Private Navy of Sgt. O'Farrell*, *The Hawaiians*, *The Island at the Top of the World*, *The Big Brawl*, *Under the Rainbow*, *An Eye for an Eye*, *Testament*, *Pacific Heights*, *Sidekicks*, *RoboCop 3*, *Red Sun Rising*, *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*, *Seven Years in Tibet*, and *Bulletproof Monk*. His final film appearance is in the upcoming Lucy Liu horror film *Rise*. Early in his career, Mako gained attention for his stage performances in *Rashomon* and *Teahouse of the August Moon*. His early TV credits include appearing with Bruce Lee on *The Green Hornet*, *McHale's Navy*, *The Big Valley*, *The Time Tunnel*, *The Streets of San Francisco*, *Kung Fu*, *Hawaii 5-O*, several appearances on *M*A*S*H*, *Magnum P.I.*, *Tour of Duty*, *Walker: Texas Ranger*, *The Equalizer*, *Frasier*, and *JAG*. Mako is survived by his wife Shizuko Hoshi (*Charlotte Sometimes*, *Come See the Paradise*) who co-starred with him in several episodes of *M*A*S*H*, as well and his children and grandchildren.

Waist Deep (R) ★★ 1/2

How do you recycle old clichés without anyone noticing? Change the location of course. Tyrese Gibson ster in a Western relocated to the modern day inner city. The acting is fine, but the script is so uneven that it almost boggles the mind. The good parts are so good and the bad parts are so bad that it averages out at somewhere around the lower end of mediocre. (EL) Regency Valley Plaza

Wassup Rockers (R) ★★ ★

An affectionate portrait of seven nonconformist Latino punk rock skaters who square off on their home turf in South Central against hip-hop gangstas and skinhead cholos, and then take crosstown buses to Beverly Hills to devastate the rich White pseudos. Part documentary, part narrative reconstruction, and part ridiculous fantasy. Not Larry Clark's best, nor his most polished, but certainly his sweetest. (MG) Academy 6

Water (PG-13) ★★ ★ 1/2

An unflinching look at the life of a widow in 1930's India. A window, is left at a home for cast out widows where she is expected to spend the rest of her life. (JH) Mann Beverly Center Cinema

Who Killed the Electric Car? (PG) ★★ ★ 1/2

The killers of the electric car were so good—so efficient—most of us forgot it existed. But in Chris Paine's documentary, we focus our attention, not on the problem, but on the solution. If you were depressed by *Inconvenient Truth*, you'll be horrified by *Electric Car*. (SS) Landmark Nu-Wilshire

X-Men: The Last Stand (PG) ★★ 1/2

The third, and supposedly final installment hints at "X4." It's entertaining enough, and it's certainly far superior to some of the other recent superhero flicks to come flying off the Marvel Comics conveyor belt (especially 2004's *The Punisher* and 2005's *Elektra*). But the film lacks focus, the dialogue is weak and there are far too many underdeveloped characters, resulting in a franchise that ends on a relative whimper rather than the X-cellent bang that it deserved. (SM) Vine Theater

You, Me and Dupree (PG-13) ★ 1/2

You, Me, and Dupree is a mediocre film that squanders the talent of its stars. The off-kilter humor that earned Joe and Anthony Russo Emmy Awards for *Arrested Development* is missing from Dupree, a formulaic romantic comedy highlighted by too few chuckle-inducing moments. Soon after their wedding, Carl (Matt Dillon) and Molly (Kate Hudson) take in Dupree (Owen Wilson) who has fallen on hard times. The first morning the newlyweds find Dupree sleeping nude on their plush leather couch. As Dupree's stay at the Peterson residence becomes longer and longer, efforts are doubled then redoubled to get him out. Wilson has special on-screen radiance that can earn him instant trust (see *The Life Aquatic* and his early work in *Bottle Rocket*). But without the constant gabbing of Vince Vaughn, Wilson's eclectic magnetism isn't enough to carry the show. (JH)

ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood, The Grove, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Pacific's Paseo 14, Pacific Culver Stadium 12

Peaceful Warrior (PG-13) ★

When college gymnast Dan Millman (Scott Mechlowicz) suffers a serious injury, the limitations of his abilities seem irreversible. That is until he meets Socrates (Nick Nolte) a strange man who can channel different levels of physical and mental power. Along with a young lady named Joy (Amy Smart), the two help Dan to become a "peaceful warrior" and find his place in the world. (JC) Academy 6

Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest (PG-13) ★★ ★

A relatively entertaining film often hobbled by a rambling screenplay and a running time about thirty minutes longer than necessary. The real selling point is the magnificently fruity Johnny Depp as Captain Jack Sparrow. In *Dead Man's Chest* he has here taken the role far beyond mere impression into the kind of demented realm that only the most supremely confident of performers ever dare to enter. In a film that comes close to proving that there really can be too much of a good thing, Depp somehow manages to leave audiences hungry for more. (PS) University Village 3, Akarakan Theatres Highland 3, Pacific's The Grove 14, El Capitan, Pacific's Paseo 14, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX

A Prairie Home Companion (PG-13) ★★ ★ ★

Robert Altman's star-studded ensemble piece was inspired by Garrison Keillor's understated, unpretentious radio show

from a mythical, benign, heartwarming, American hinterland. Altman's direction is as laid-back and unostentatiously clever as Keillor's show. With Keillor himself as writer and self-effacing star, Altman comes up with a wonderfully substantial, light-hearted and wistful film. In it, the radio show is taking place against the suddenly pending demise of station WLT, sold to an evil Texas conglomerate, making this the last hurrah. There is lots of backstage "reality," and - above all - fabulously stick-in-the-brain good music. Surprisingly effective vocals by Meryl Streep, Lily Tomlin, Virginia Madsen, Woody Harrelson, and John C. Reilly. Yes, they also act in the context of monologues and interweaving stories. (JG) Mann Beverly Center Cinema, Laemmle Playhouse 7

A Scanner Darkly (R) ★★ ★

An almost-animated, pitch-black meditation on perception, paranoia and identity. Keanu Reeves stars as Bob Arctor, a drug-addicted undercover cop all but permanently ensconced in a second identity as "Fred" (created by a "scramble suit," a hologram of sorts that masks his identity) ordered to spy on his own alter ego and his friends. For viewers, it's tough to anchor feelings or a rooting interest in a mind-fried character with shifting identities, but he's all we have. Even if we don't quite connect emotionally, Bob/Fred's situation keeps us interested in his plight, wondering if he can stop himself from drowning. (AB) ArcLight Cinerama Hollywood, Pacific Sherman Oaks 5

Shadow Boxer (R) ★

Mikey (Cuby Gooding Jr.) and Rose (Helen Mirren) are vicious cold-blooded contract killers, in the employ of a psychopath named Clayton (Stephen Dorff). Rose is also a pedophile, although the movie isn't explicit about this. When we meet them they are lovers. Apparently Rose raised Mikey and then bedded him. In *Shadowboxer*, Gooding continues the descent he started with his role in *Dirty*, a movie so profane it exceeded any known bounds of propriety. Here, he stars in a film with enough depravity to offend virtually everybody. (TM) AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, Laemmle Sunset 5 Theatre, Laemmle Playhouse 7, Mann Culver Plaza

Strangers with Candy (R) ★

Roughly four times the length of a normal episode, *Candy* unfortunately does not contain a similar multiple of laughs. The film is a smug and dreary slog through largely unfunny material that will completely bewilder newcomers while testing the patience of loyal fans of the show. Amy Sedaris as Jerri Blank is best in small doses. However I will admit that the film does contain one bit that actually made me laugh as hard as anything else that I have seen this year: a gym class sequence featuring an activity more hazardous than even dodgeball. This bit is so weird and unexpectedly hilarious that it makes you wonder who the people were that came up with it and where they were when the rest of the script was being written. (PS) Landmark Nu-Wilshire

Superman Returns (PG-13) ★★ ★

Does the big screen still need a Superman? The answer is a resounding yes. It may take itself a little too seriously, and the love story tends to overwhelm the gee-whiz fun of it all, but *Superman Returns* is a very good movie—it's not quite super, but it's definitely good. Director Bryan Singer's clever device to link to previous Superman films by incorporating John Williams' theme music, familiar dialogue, and unused footage of Marlon Brando will surely give longtime fans the chills. (SM) AMC Theatres Magic Johnson Theatre, AMC Loews Universal Studios and IMAX Theater, Mann Beverly Center Cinema, Pacific's Paseo 14, AMC Theatres Burbank

CAPSULE AUTHORS:

JC – Julian Camillieri

WC – Warren Curry

JG – Janos Gereben

MG – Michael Guillén

JH – Jonathan W. Hickman

EL – Eric Lurio

SM – Scott Mantz

TM – Tony Medley

SS – Steven Snyder

PS – Peter Sobczynski



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Boutique payroll company looking for a person with a min of 5 yrs. experience with entertainment payroll. You should know all the rules and regulations of the business and have an eye for marketing. The salary is very competitive with great incentives based on knowledge and experience. TO APPLY: Email resumes to: billytenz@yahoo.com

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LINE PRODUCER WANTED FOR REALITY SERIES FOR FUSE

Reality series for FUSE is currently seeking a Line Producer for the show, which is based on freestyle motocross, for which we are attempting to find the next major freestyle motocross star. Heavy lifestyle and lots of comedy. Prefer someone with knowledge of sports shows/programming and motor sports. If you know about freestyle motocross even better. Job does pay, industry standard, need someone ASAP. Shooting in September near Magic Mountain. Please email resume to: erikvoake@yahoo.com

GRAPHICS DESIGN INTERN NEEDED

Entertainment Today is seeking hard working individuals to join our creative team. Work 1-2 days a week. Background in Adobe In Design and Illustrator preferred. Job duties include layout design, creating ads, eating pizza at 2 AM, and graphic illustration. Non-paid, but school credit available. Email your resume and samples of your work to cecilia@entertainmenttodayonline.com.

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Boutique Talent Management and Film/TV/Theater Production Company looking for an Executive Assistant to start immediately. Must have at least two years office experience in the industry – agency experience a plus. Duties include scheduling, answering phones, planning travel, general management and maintenance of a small home office, talent submissions, coverage and notes. Mac experience a must! Be highly organized with strong people skills and bring creativity and dedication to the job. TO APPLY: Email resume and cover letter to:

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We are casting people who have a hard time getting motivated for a new prime-time reality show for CBS. We are looking for people who are depending on friends or relatives to support them and are not contributing to the household. The person may be someone who sleeps till noon, spends the day in front of the tv, and the night out with friends, but doesn't have the motivation to get off the couch and get a job. This show will help families get to the root of the problem, and help the person find a job and apartment! No drugs or incarceration stories and no actors. The person should be over 21. Please email Allison at allcasting@yahoo.ru.com or call 323-201-2515.

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Astrological forecasts

by Lady Katsura and Suki Yaki

WARNING: This is a humor piece, and, unlike most astrological columns, it is NOT intended to guide your life decisions.



Capricorn (December 22 – January 20)
Mercury is in retrograde which means bad news for goats like you. There’s nothing you can do about it, so just stay in your apartment and ride it out. We know we’ve told you to avoid the outside world for a few weeks in a row now. But there’s some good stuff on daytime TV nowadays, right? And honestly, you didn’t miss anything during the month of July except really hot weather.

Aquarius (January 21 – February 18)
So how did it go with that redhead from the mail room? Our psychic sensors are unable to penetrate janitor closets. But assuming you did the nasty, our advice is to flaunt it around the office and see if you can get your boss jealous.

Pisces (February 19– March 19)
You’ve probably heard that old adage: “No means no.” Well, it’s only true about 52% of the time (Source: *The Bill O’Reily Show*, Fox News). If that special someone you’ve been harassing, oops complementing, at work says no the first time you offer to rub her nipples with fried food, she will most likely say yes the second time. It’s the law of averages.

Aries (March 20 – April 19)
Don’t let the heat this month stop you from donning those long fluttering false eyelashes and wearing that ruby red lipstick. We’re talking Marilyn, baby. The stuff Queens die for. Strut your stuff, hot mama, and show the summer sun who’s hotter.

Taurus (April 20– May 20)
If you pray five times a day eastward towards New York and swear on your unborn child you’ll stop touching yourself forever, the Nicks just might come back and surprise everyone next season. So get on your knees!

Gemini (May 21 – June 20)
Unforeseen objects will obstruct your path causing great pain and discomfort. There’s only one thing to do to prevent it. Whenever you have to walk more than three steps, keep your eyes on the ground, your chin on your chest, and both hands covering your privates. You might not look too hip when you go clubbing this weekend, but your future children will thank us.


Cancer (June 21 – July 20)
Remember when you took a job at a law firm having told them you were really experienced? And then they put you at the front reception desk and everyone started talking legal jargon! You were toast. The lesson: don’t lie. It never pays — unless you own stock in oil companies, or cigarette companies, or war profiteering companies, or control both houses of Congress.

Leo (July 21 – August 20)
Stop dwelling on your moment of weakness when you called that number for that escort service rent-a-date. We know you were hoping you’d get lucky, but I guess it’s not always a sure thing these days. Better luck next time.

Virgo (August 21 – September 20)
What? Still no tattoo? Listen, we have ways of finding out whether you do what we tell you to do or not. So if you’re going to keep ignoring us, we suggest you get yourself a new source of expert psychic advice on love, life, and employment happiness.

Libra (September 21 – October 22)
Put down that cosmo right now (yes, I mean the one in the martini glass), you instant-gratification diva, you. Those empty calories may make ugly losers look like supermodels, but it will go right to your thighs, and besides, two one-night-stands is enough for this week.

Scorpio (October 23 – November 21)
There are infinite faces in this world but only a few dozen heads. Underneath all that hair and make-up and skin, we’re all basically the same. So find the head that fits you just right, and don’t get caught up in trivial matters such as eyes, noses, mouths, and ears.

Sagittarius (November 22 – December 21)
No, the scale is not broken in the 200 region. You’re getting fat. Air conditioning is one of the causes of weight gain. It’s true, we read it on AOL. They said another cause is Mexican immigration. We can’t figure that one out though. 

SUDOKU

The ultimate logic puzzle

- The object of the game is to fill in the blank cells with the numbers 1 to 9 such that:
- 1) Every row should have the numbers 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 (in any order).
 - 2) Every column should have the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (in any order).
 - 3) Every 3x3 bolded square should have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (in any order).

	2			7			3	
				3			6	
5		6			1	8		
	3	1	8			4		
	7			4				8
		7		6				
6			1		3		7	
								5

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Answer to last week's puzzle:

1	5	7	6	4	3	2	8	9
8	4	3	9	5	2	6	7	1
9	6	2	7	8	1	5	4	3
7	9	5	4	1	6	8	3	2
6	2	4	8	3	7	9	1	5
3	1	8	2	9	5	4	6	7
5	8	1	3	2	4	7	9	6
4	3	6	5	7	9	1	2	8
2	7	9	1	6	8	3	5	4

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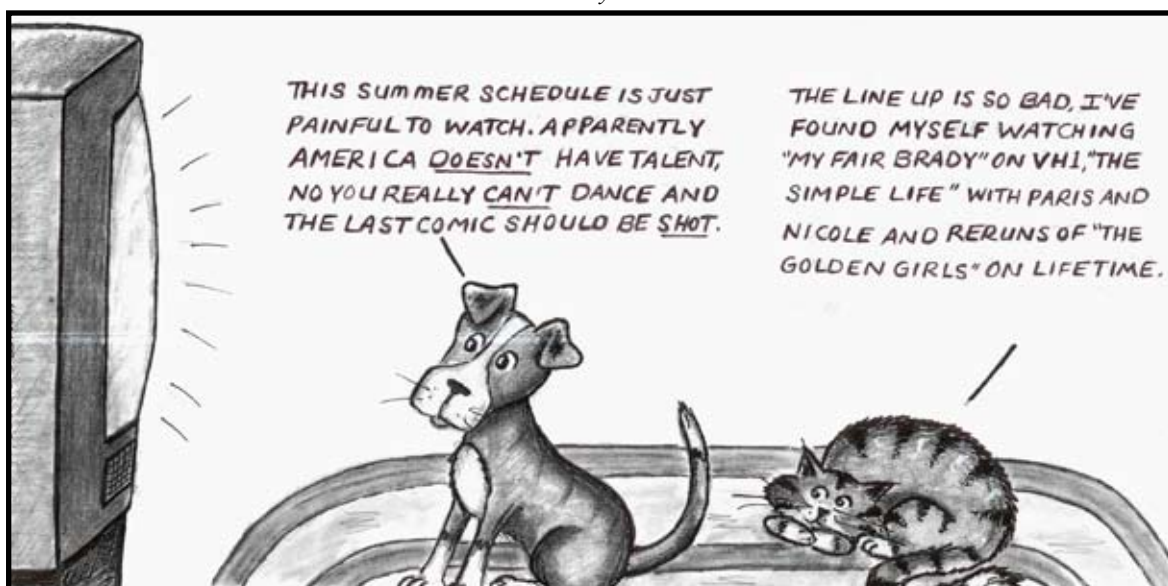
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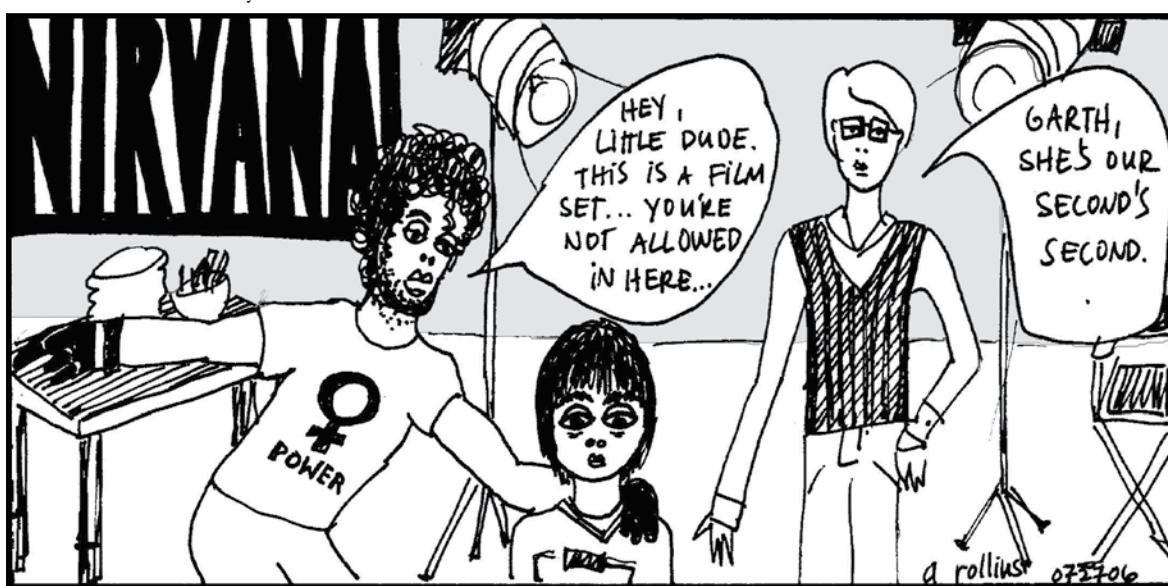
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Column

NOT A DIET; a cleanse



by
Tina Kim

Chocolate soufflé, a cheeseburger, pretzels, rice, white bread, beef jerky, and muffins are just some of the foods that I will be eating in six days. **YIPPEE!** I have been on the **master cleanse lemon diet** for the past four days and this is absolutely the biggest challenge I have **EVER** taken in my life. Forget about performing for thousands of people at a Narcotics anonymous convention in the middle of an afternoon or riding a bike for 100 miles. **I love to eat.** And drinking *lemon juice* with *cayenne pepper* and *honey* everyday, well, lets just say **it's not pretty.**

You do spend quite a lot of time in the bathroom but it feels good, knowing that all the toxins are coming out. I am quite amazed that I have lasted this long and I plan on doing it for the prescribed ten days, or more. I even went to the gym today and did cardio for one hour.

When you are doing a Master Cleanse, you start seeing things differently. In the last four days, my mind has been playing tricks on me. When you are *only* drinking all day long, you start thinking about all the foods you miss, such as a pepperoni pizza. But so far I don't feel deprived of food because on my first three nights, I dreamt that I was at a bakery buffet eating to my heart's content. In my dream I was saying, "I can't believe I am eating all this. I feel so guilty." Then in my most *shameful* moment, I went into a corner and gobbled up all the cream puffs I could possibly carry. Boy was I feeling bad. Then miraculously I woke up and **whoohoo!** It was just a dream. *Phew.* And I actually felt as if I had eaten all the deserts!

You also get more time during the day. I have never realized how much time I spend planning what I want to eat for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack, what I will cook, how I will cook it, where I will go out to eat, what I feel like eating, who I will eat with, what desert I want to eat, where I will go to buy food, and what wine I want to drink. **That's four hours right there!**

When you are on a cleanse, you get more time to actually do things that you intended to do, but had to eat. Now I finally have the time to catch up on my *Nip/Tuck* DVD's, email people back, block perverts on my MySpace page, talk to old friends, catch up on all the gossip magazines, and (this amazed me) even talk to my **mom** on the phone.

Being on a cleanse not only feels great but you also get to find out who your real friends are. Being that I live in Los Angeles, I have met way too many girls with an eating disorder. And what **kills** me is that the ones with an eating disorders are telling me that I should not do a cleanse. I realized my real friends stuck by me and did not tempt me in anyway. They said things such as *you can do it. Stick with it.* On the flip side, another friend of mine really showed me her true colors. I called to say I have started a cleanse, so I will not be eating at our lunch date. This girl **went off** on me. She has an eating disorder and she goes, "Tina don't do that. You will gain the weight right back. It is not worth it." I told her I don't care if I gain it back, this is a cleanse and I really want to stick with it. Then she replies, "Tina you have to eat, eat a powerbar, do what I do. Take laxatives, don't eat during the day and if you must eat a protein bar." Ugh, I don't have an eating disorder. I like to eat three meals and enjoy my food. Then to her dismay I told her, "Look this is something I am doing for myself and if you can't support me, I can't be around you." Then she says she is just looking out for me. **Oh puh-lease! She probably just doesn't want me to look good.** This town is filled with weridoz.

I am going to stick with the cleanse. Just six more days. I know **I can do it.** I feel great and I know it is not forever and when I reach my goal, the prize is waiting for me at a buffet in the real world. Sourdough, you better watch out because I'll be **tearing you up!** *P*

Catch Tina Kim LIVE
at The Ice House
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See video clips of Tina Kim's stand-up performances at www.TinaKim.com
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