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SINCE 1967



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Hail Mary, full of Grace

Grace @ Carrie Hamilton in the Pasadena Playhouse

by Travis Michael Holder



Eric Pargac, Brad Price, and Sara Hennessy star in *Grace*, penned by Six Feet Under's Craig Wright.

When does devout religious faith turn to disappointment and, finally, rage?

As a kid raised in a Jewish household who became a born-again Christian as a teenager and later graduated with a Master of Divinity degree, unstoppably prolific playwright/TV writer Craig Wright (*Six Feet Under*) couldn't be a better person to provocatively debate the question of individuals' belief systems—and imagine what horror can happen when that faith fails to any longer provide viable answers—in his remarkable new play *Grace*, now being presented by the Furious Theatre Company at Pasadena Playhouse. This is a major issue in our confusing times, and never before has it been addressed with such intelligence and gently confrontational style than in this exceptionally dark, disturbing new comedy.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of this play is how it begins: with the shocking end of the story that is then played back, live onstage, as the actors physically rewind, and spring upright, move their bodies in precision reverse motion as Christie Wright's lighting bathes them in a ghostly strobe and Doug Newell's electrifying sound design vibrates through the very floor of the Carrie Hamilton Theatre. It would have been fascinating to be a fly on the wall of this production's rehearsal process while the play's dynamic ensemble worked under director Damaso Rodriguez to perfect this eerie effect.

Brad Paige and Sara Hennessy are marvelous as Steve and Sara, an intensely Christian Minnesota couple who have relocated to the Florida shore to champion the seed—or, as Steve believes, the “harvest paradigm”—of the first in a string of gospel-themed hotels called Crossroads Inns. As Steve and Sara wait in their possibly bug-infested apartment

for the financing promised them to arrive, on the other side of the wall lives Sam (Eric Pargac), a disfigured non-believer who lost his beloved fiancé in a horrific car accident several months earlier.

Along with Dana Kelly Jr. as an exterminator who lost all faith during his teenaged years stuck in the Holocaust (“I've got some news for you, Jesus-freak,” Karl blasts in response to Steve's thinly-veiled evangelical questioning, “One: There is no Jesus; two: there is no God; and three: mind your own business, and everything works out”), these four exceptional actors interpret Wright's story on a stage that, instead of being divided into two side-by-side apartments, is imaginatively played as one space, sometimes crisscrossing the path of others on their way through the two identical living rooms, sometimes seated at the same table or on the same couch, as other characters move about the alternative space.

Despite any suggested condemnation of the twisted nature of misaddressed faith (“See, I'm a knower, not a believer,” boasts Steve before his faith hits the enormous fan of real life), Wright leaves any ultimate conclusion about the inscrutability of religious fanaticism squarely on the heavy shoulders of his audience who collectively stop laughing somewhere near the end of the play and subsequently depart the theatre in virtual stunned silence.

Craig Wright's *Grace* is an amazing play, and this is a gorgeous and lovingly mounted production that features one of the most impressive ensemble casts of 2006 in *Lost Angeles*. 🎭

The Furious Theatre Company's Grace plays through Nov. 11 at Pasadena Playhouse's upstairs Carrie Hamilton Theatre, 39 S. El Molino Av., Pasadena; for tickets, call (626) 356-PLAY.

Marvelous and wondrous

The Marvelous Wonderettes @ El Portal

by Travis Michael Holder

These days, there are a load of tribute shows around that celebrate the indelible bubblegummy music of the 50's and 60's, but of all of them, *The Marvelous Wonderettes*—now rockin' through the walls of the El Portal Forum Theatre—is the most marvelous and wondrous of them all.

The premise is sweetly simple, as a teenage all-girl quartette sings at their Senior Prom at Springfield High School circa 1958, a last minute replacement for the previously scheduled Crooning Crabcakes. Also each competing for the crown of Prom Queen (and two of the four for the heart of one dreamboat classmate), the Wonderettes prove you don't have to have perfect harmony offstage to be in perfect harmony on. As the audience is led into the Forum, which has been charmingly turned into a colorful little slice of 1958 with the serendipitous aid of Kurt Boetcher's whimsical set design and Sharell Martin's tongue-in-cheek costuming, those of us old enough to remember being weenie little munchkins wishing we were as sophisticated as our older cousins and siblings in this far simpler early era are immediately swept back through the decades to a time when a kid could leave the house without ending up on the side of a milk carton or in intensive care for making a color-coordinated fashion statement.

Director Roger Bean, who also conceived and invented the wonderful Wonderettes, obviously has a great appreciation for the old days, as does choreographer Janet Miller, an invaluable collaborator in the mix here.

Bean's world-class sense of humor and Miller's cleverly goofy yet sincere recreation of the "new" dance moves of 50 years ago—heretofore only chronicled in old movies featuring giant crabs or cameos by Frankie Valli—make this an instant classic. Of course, none of this would mean anything without the music itself, including such nostalgic classics as "It's My Party" and "Leader of the Pack."

Then, as the audience exits for intermission for a lobby where letterman-clad coeds sell HoHo's and other treats from before everyone turned from pure sugar to fiber-enriched energy bars, the Springfield High auditorium

is redressed, and the best surprise of all is unveiled: Act Two takes place ten years later, with the four bobbysockers now resembling Dusty Springfield appearing on American Bandstand.

Now in their mid-20's, obviously time has not exactly been uncomplicated for all the girls, but they're still ready to wail a few new tunes, this time belting their hearts out through "Rescue Me" and "Sincerely," as well as two numbers made famous by my old pal and employer Dusty herself (one of which this reviewer was present at the original recording session), and one by my other dear, late-lamented friend Laura Nyro. Perfectly willing to suspend belief that all three of these songs were released prior to 1968 (two were not), artistic license here is easily overlooked and I'd bet—if they were still on the planet—both Dust and Laura would wholeheartedly enjoy this loving tribute show.

Still beyond all other things that make *The Marvelous Wonderettes* so special is the casting of four of our town's best musical theatre stars as the girls themselves. Bets Malone, Julie Dixon Jackson, Kim Haber, and Kristen Chandler provide the heart and soul of the production, and I frankly would dread to see it performed by less dynamic performers. But with these huge voices and effervescent personalities crooning the indelible songs from a time when America wasn't as brutal and hardened to the rest of the world, we can now thankfully sit back and be

transported back to the days when people went steady instead of "hooked-up," a goodnight kiss was enough to set the heart aflutter, and there were, as Bean's script tells us, four-letter words that were still okay to say. ☞

The El Portal is located at 5269 Lankershim Bl., NoHo; for tickets, call (888) 505-SHOW.

Travis Michael Holder has been writing for ET since 1990. Also an award-winning actor and playwright, the first of his five plays produced in LA, Surprise Surprise, is about to begin the festival circuit as a feature film with Travis in a leading role.



Kirsten Chandler, Julie Dixon Jackson, Kim Huber, and Bets Malone.

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Every Singer has his tune

by Frank Barron



Prolific producer Robert Singer on set.

and explored many varieties of the occult. It's a fun show to do." And a fun show to watch.

The horror-fantasy-mystery drama, now in its second season, deserves a better timeslot, because—in the way of *The X-Files*—*Supernatural* has raised the genre to a higher level. Its industry veteran show-runner Robert Singer works hard to make sure *Supernatural* is a "cut above." Over the years, producer-director-writer Singer has ventured into every imaginable position in the production of genre film and TV, and can now rest on his laurels a bit with his present status of executive producer on *Supernatural*.

Do you want to see something really scary? Just take a look at the primetime lineup that battles the CW's *Supernatural* series for eyeballs this season. The powerhouse 9pm schedule has *Grey's Anatomy* on ABC, *Deal or No Deal* on NBC, and *CSI* on CBS. No wonder you can hear the screams from the *Supernatural* cast and production team all the way from their Vancouver set.

"It's been a struggle," says *Supernatural* star Jared Padalecki. "But we're having fun growing along with these characters and learning about their back-story—being careful not to divulge too much too quickly, to keep our loyal viewers interested and coming back for more." Padalecki plays one-half of the paranormal-chasing brothers Sam and Dean Winchester (Jensen Ackles). The duo, who lost their mother to a fiery demon, are on a quest to combat the mysterious forces that obsess their missing father.

"Along the way, we explore spooky small town stories and urban legends. We often discover that the things that go bump in the night aren't the only reason to be afraid of in this world," Ackles explains. "We've been working hard in Vancouver, tackling stories about the Hook Man, Bloody Mary, and the Phantom Traveler. We've visited the Grim Reaper

Along with *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*, Singer has produced Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Also among his film and TV credits are *Cujo*, *Independence Day*, *More than Murder*, *Come Die With Me*, *Scream of the Wolf*, *Nightmare at 43 Hillcrest*, *The Night Strangler*, *Shadow of Fear*, *Midnight Caller*, and numerous others.

So Singer has done it all and advises young filmmakers to remember "not to get caught up in the technology. Sure, you can get some eye-popping special effects now, but don't forget about the story-telling." According to Singer, "That's first and foremost. If it's not on the page, it's not going to happen."

Singer says his production team does its best to present "a quality horror movie every week. *Lost* is more of a mystery show, but this is a pure horror movie kind of thing. That's what separates *Supernatural* from other shows, and we are not bound by a continuing alien threat, or a continuing anything. It's whatever is out there that goes bump in the night. Something spooky to thrill audiences. People like good scares." ☞

Gossip Guy

Haley's comet fizzles out

by Erik Davis



Uh oh: someone's 18-years-old now. And you always thought he'd be one of the good ones...

Haley Joel Avoids Jail!

We have a new catch phrase for **Haley Joel Osment**: "I see 60 hours of Alcoholic Anonymous meetings." Following his DUI arrest this past July, the *Sixth Sense* star was sentenced to three years probation. Osment was driving home from a party when his 1995 Saturn (someone knows how to spend those paychecks, huh?) flipped over after smashing into a brick pillar. Luckily for his parents' slush fund, the boy survived with only a broken rib. No word yet on whether those "I Almost Saw a Dead Haley Joel Osment" T-shirts will ever arrive in a store near you.

The "Dog" is Back!

Duane "Dog" Chapman had his ankle bracelet removed, and returned to work recently after Mexican authorities delayed prosecution of the famous bounty hunter in order to collect more evidence. Chapman, along with his son Leland and associate Tim, were arrested after Mexican officials decided to revisit kidnapping charges relating to the capture of serial rapist **Andrew Luster** back in 2003. At the time, Chapman illegally captured Luster off a tip, and subsequently jumped bail when he was arrested on the wrong side of the Border. However, he's not in the clear yet, as a hearing will take place by the end of the year. Time to bark up another prayer, Dog.

George Michael Goes Crazy... Over Marijuana!

In the quest to prove to people that he's officially lost it, **George Michael** apparently sparked up a joint during a recent live television interview. Even though the show was taped in Madrid, Spain—where it's okay to smoke a

little grass—anti-drug people are all up in arms. Ironically, after lighting up, Michael said, "This stuff keeps me sane and happy." Wow, imagine if he *wasn't* on drugs? That wouldn't be any fun, now would it?

And This Week's Golden Donkey Goes To...

...**Heather Mills**. Don't know who that is? Oh, well she's **Paul McCartney**'s wife of four years. You know, the one who's been running around town telling people that McCartney shoves her over coffee tables and stabs her with wine glasses. What's up with that? The dude is a Beatle. Not only is he a music legend, but the man is also peaceful and very respectful. Where does this girl get off dragging our hero's name through the mud? She should be shot...full of truth serum. Maybe *then* she'll finally admit to being a money-hungry lunatic. So, congrats Heather—you're this week's biggest ass.

That Thing Called Love

Love, sex, marriage, divorce—and that's just the first week of your average

Hollywood romance. Here's what's swirling around the rumor mill this week:

The **Sara Evans** scandal is heating up, and it looks as though pretty soon she might land a starring role on *Dancing with the Judge*. In an attempt to save face (as though *that's* going to happen), Evans' soon-to-be ex-husband **Craig Schelske** claims to have discovered Evans having an affair the day before she filed for divorce. On the other hands, Evans discovered Schelske had taken over 100 pictures of his, um, private parts and posted them all over the Internet on a website of which he cleverly called "craigslists." Oh yes, we're serious.

Although they've been together for just a few minutes (if that), **Eddie Murphy** and **Melanie "Scary Spice" Brown** are not only planning to marry next month, but they're also expecting a baby. Oh, and she may be pregnant with *twins!* Seeing as the man already has seven kids, Eddie might want to think about opening up his own *Daddy Day Care*.

Nicky Hilton and *Entourage's* **Kevin Connolly** have reportedly called off their two-year relationship. The two briefly dated right before Nicky's quickie marriage to **Todd Meister**, then later reunited after that union was annulled. So, how many people will Nicky have to marry now before these two wind up back in the sack?

Quote of the week: *Project Runway's* **Tim Gunn** on **Britney Spears**: "Aside from looking as though she's just been dragged out from under a truck that tried to run her over, she always looks like she's in need of personal hygiene. The whole package to me is just repugnant. Ugh!" ☞



George Michael waves to the crowd, considers whether he'll later go for the OG Kush or not.

Read the latest movie review & check out what's playing near you in

ENTERTAINMENT TODAY

See p.14-17 for reviews & listings

Hope I live before I turn into Pete Townshend

by Brad Auerbach

A quarter century since their last album, the Who have finally delivered a collection of new songs.

Built around a mini-opera, the 19 tracks will please the fans who have aged with the band's two surviving members. Pete Townshend and Roger Daltrey have shown their creative friction over the years, and this tension mostly works well throughout the album. Townshend sings a far greater proportion of the songs than on prior albums, here often with only acoustic guitar. In "God Speaks to Marty Robbins," Townshend is essentially alone in the studio with his guitar. Equally delicate is the 90-second love song, "You Stand By Me." On "Trilby's Piano," Townshend pits his vocals against orchestral strings, and the collusion plays nicely.

The album's fourth track, "In The Ether," echoes some of the piano from "Pure and Easy," a once-lost track from the early 70's. Townshend considers "In The Ether" one of the best he has ever written, despite Daltrey's improbable invocation of Tom Waits. The song that sounds the most familiar to long-time fans will be "Black Widow Eyes," filled with swooping guitars and rolling drums. It would not sound out of place on *Quadrophenia*.

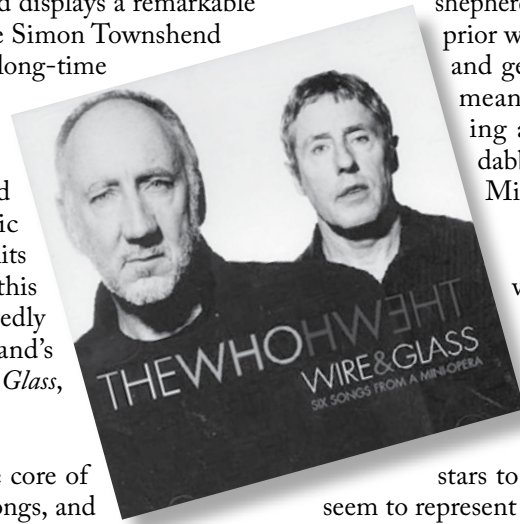
the cusp of the band's US tour—John Entwistle died in Las Vegas) does a worthy job holding down the bass chores. Ringo Starr's son, Zak Starkey, has filled Keith Moon's slot behind the drums for a decade, and displays a remarkable confidence. Also on the record are Simon Townshend (Pete's brother), Billy Nichols, and long-time compadre, keyboardist John "Rabbit" Bundrick.

The Who have the unintended prize of having seen their music released on more compilations and hits collections than studio albums, so this album of new material will undoubtedly be met with excitement by the band's legions of fans. The album, *Wire & Glass*, is set for release on October 31st.

The mini-opera that forms the core of the album seems to include ten songs, and is both grandiose and personal. Nowhere as coherent as Townshend's original rock operas *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*, on this one, the band nonetheless gives the songs a workout on the current tour.

early in his career about hoping to die before getting too old. Of course, he has instead taken to wandering from his role as guitar-smashing rocker, to working as a literary editor, shepherding stage and film productions of his prior works, working on his autobiography, and getting into trouble online. Daltrey, meanwhile, has, as of late, been pursuing a more bucolic path: farming and dabbling on a Keith Moon biopic with Mike Myers.

I have often feared that the surviving Who members would be like aging boxers, neither one knowing enough to retire at the peak of their prowess. When I had a chance to interview Entwistle in 1984, he said that there were no aging rock stars to use as role models. He and Moon seem to represent one direction that rock stars can go, and Daltrey and Townshend are doing an impressive job revealing the alternative, against the expectations of many.



The Who play the Hollywood Bowl on November 4th and 5th, and the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on November 11th.

Pino Palladino (who joined the band in 2002 when—on

It was Townshend, of course, who famously wrote very

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Ta-Dah! Cutting the rug with the new Scissor Sisters album

by Rachel Campbell

Maybe it's the environment. I'm being naughty and writing this in my office at my day job, and I can see why four blank walls of "buff" or "cream" or whatever this paint is called aren't exactly conducive to the Scissor freaking Sisters. Although I do have a window. I'm very proud of my window.

Sad, huh? No wonder I'm having such a hard time with the glitter-boot-stompin' death "disco" on the Sisters' new album, *Ta-Dah*. But if I'm in any way representative of Corporate Polo America, a little more of this music could be just what this poor country needs.

After all, this crazy new trend of making


ironic love to the 70's has actually been around for nearly 20 years. Those sweet demographic plums—kids and teens—have never known a time when the 70's weren't "back," and the rest of us traded in our vintage flares for skinny black 80's pants years ago.

But there's something going on here that appeals to the everything-sucks emo brat in me: *Ta-Dah* didn't remind me of my mom's copy of *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* on beats alone. Listen to the lyrics, and suddenly each song is far more than a game of Name That 30-Year-Old Tune: Yeah, "She's My Man" is basically Sir Elton's "All the Girls Love Alice" with the lesbian affairs replaced with

gender-bending erotic asphyxiation. And sure, "Lights" sounds an awful lot like the opening from Bowie's "Fame" tacked onto the beat from the Rolling Stones' "Miss You," but it's hard to think of a better combo for a song about the difference between good times and selling your soul.

"Intermission"—that like the opening track, features Captain Fantastic himself on the ivories—is a dapper little song about existential horror; and "I Can't Decide" finds the Sisters merrily singing to a lover (who's probably very hot but keeps stealing twenties out of their purse), "Oh I could throw you in the lake/Or feed you poisoned birthday cake/I

won't deny I'll miss you when you're gone." It's definitely one of the most honest relationship songs I've ever heard: I just didn't expect to hear it bouncing off of a mirrorball.

I still smirk at the affirmation closing "The Other Side" ("And I have a right to be in love, and I have a right to be loved. There'll be 'over the rainbow' for me"). I don't care if it's a Judy Garland quote or not: to this jaded drone, it still sounds like something Stuart Smalley says in front of his mirror. But twisting a mortal coil into arguably the shallowest musical genre ever—dark, biting lyrics winding like barbed wire through a to-hell-with-it-let's-go-dancin' production—kinda trips my trigger. 

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WHIPPED CREAM
NEW MAXIMUM DONKEY
SERVICE GROUP
NEW FIDELITY / RIZORKESTRA

SUN 10.29
KANE HODDER FUELED BY RAMEN
THE STILETTO FORMAL
HOPEFIELD / CAPULET / TRACY


THURS 11.2
Headley
THE SUMMER OBSESSION


FRI 11.3
THE RED ZONE PRESENTS
volumen PASTILLA
cero LIK + ALLISON


TUES 10.31
Club VODKA HOLLYWOOD
L.A. GUNS WW III MANDY LION ROKTOPUSS
Halloween Night
24 Bands on 3 Stages
Also Wood End Lane
Appearing Doors open 6:30pm
Ages 18 & up
DROP 8 QUIETUS
THE MIKE ALBERT PROJECT
STAR OFF MACHINE

SUN 11.5 - 6:30PM
Leftover Crack
CITIZEN FISH
THE SAINTE CATHERINES / INTROPECT

SUN 11.5 - 10:45PM
DEVIN The Dude
TRIFLON / GAME & BENGALIF
WITH JOEY BROWN / OPUST

MON 11.6
CALIFORNIA GUITAR TRIO
SPECIAL SEATED SHOW! with Zoe Keating

TUES 11.7
THE EAST VILLAGE OPERA COMPANY

WED 11.8
ZION I THE GROUCH
DEUCE ECLIPSE / BICASSO


SAT 11.11
zebrahead AUTHORITY
dumbluck ZERO


ON SALE NOW

11.10.....IRONROOM PRESENTS: DEICIDE	11.27.....NEW MODEL ARMY
11.10.....JFA + THE STITCHES	11.28.....MY AMERICAN HEART
11.12.....EXENE CERVENKA & THE ORIGINAL SINNERS	11.28.....SPITALFIELD + PUNCHLINE
11.12.....PLASTILINA MOSH	11.29...THE DUHKS + GRAN BEL FISHER
11.12.....FILTER PRESENTS: THE SLIP	11.30.....MR. LIF + THE COUP
11.17.....BETH HART	12.2...CHARLOTTE MARTIN & FRIENDS
11.18...3 FLOORS OF SKA FT. THE TOASTERS	12.4.....FOUR GOOD MEN
11.19.....FIREBALL MINISTRY	12.5.....THE SHAPESHIFTERS
11.20.....HEAVY HEAVY LOW LOW	12.8.....CHARLIE HUNTER TRIO
11.22.....LOS TRES	12.31...NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH PARTICLE

FRONT BAR
FRIDAY OCTOBER 27TH - 8PM
SoCal TurboJugend Party Starring...
KISSFITS / ADZ
L.A. SLUMLORDS / POOP
EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT - 10PM
Evil Club Empire Presents...
BLACKLIST 18+
GOTHIC - INDUSTRIAL - FETISH
EVERY MONDAY NIGHT - 7:30PM
THIS MONDAY - 10:30
Tin Panda Presents...
TREMELLOW / AMITY (CD RELEASE)
EVERDAE / MON FRERE
DANTHELION
TUESDAY OCTOBER 31TH - 7:15PM
Club Vodka Presents...
VYRUS / LOADER / THE CHIMPZ
NATIONAL DUST / DAME FORTUNE
MORNING RIOT / FOIL / STELLA VICARIOUS
FRIDAY NOVEMBER 3RD - 8PM
EVA O with PINS & NEEDLES
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 9TH - 8PM
STEPHEN KELLOGG & THE SIXERS
KYLE RIABKO / RONNIE DAY

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SELF AGAINST CITY
QUIETDRIVE / THE FOLD

SUN 10.29 Punk Rock Matinee - 5pm
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2ND HAND JUSTICE / RIOT THIS
FATAL RIOT / EXISTENCE IS CORRUPTION

TUES 10.31 Club Vodka Presents...
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KRELL / BREAKER
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THE NO SHOW / THE SQUARES

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THE OSGOODS (CD RELEASE)
THE HARPETH TRACE

SAT 11.4 Indie 103.1FM's
Complete Control Radio Presents:
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Little children in the bedroom

An interview with director Todd Field

by Peter Sobczynski



"It was an impulse, and as soon as I said it to Tom, he was excited by it, and we went forward."

When he made his directorial debut in 2001 with the highly acclaimed drama *In the Bedroom*, former actor Todd Field (perhaps best known as the mysterious piano-playing pal of Tom Cruise in Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*) was hailed as one of the more self-assured first filmmakers to come along in a while. Five years later, Field has returned with his second film, a screen adaptation of Tom Perrotta's novel *Little Children*, a work that launches the director from promising newcomer to major American heavyhitter.

After becoming such a lauded filmmaker with your *In the Bedroom*, has the experience of making and releasing *Little Children* been different in any way?

I've been making films for a long time. My first formal execution was when I started film school at AFI in 1992—these very involved exercises which I took as seriously as anything I have ever done. We did three of those the first year, and then I did my graduation project. When I did *In the Bedroom*, I considered that my fifth exercise, and I consider this film my sixth exercise. In terms of the perception of other people, you don't make a movie to be a tree falling in the forest with no one to listen to it, to be sure. But, I just concentrate on making my work as best as I can. All that other stuff can be terribly distracting.

How did you come to select Lit-

tle *Children* as your follow-up project?

The man that I work with, Leon Vitali, was sent the book in galleys by our producing partners on the film, who had a long-time association with Tom. They had optioned *Election* and turned that into a film and optioned his other novels and short stories. I had never read [Perrotta] before, and Leon called me up and said that this was something that I really needed to read. He sent it over, and I read it. I like to go to movies blind, and I like to read blind, and so I had no idea of what to expect. For the first few chapters, I was laughing, and I thought it would be this rip-roaring riot, but when I got halfway through it, I found myself having to set it down and catch my breath because it really snuck up on me. I started to feel affected in a very different manner. When something like that happens, it is very rare. I read a lot anyway—not just for film material—and it is always very exciting to come across a voice like that which you have never heard before.

What were the particular challenges of adapting a full novel like *Little Children* into screenplay, as opposed to using a short story in the case of *In the Bedroom*?

You get the cards that you are dealt, and if you are inspired by a piece of material, then you take an angle on it that interests you. The fact that one is

a short story and one is a novel...the only difference is that with a novel, you know that you aren't going to be doing the entire novel because it just isn't a practical thing to do. You find what is most interesting in the room.

One of the striking things about the screenplay for me was the narration that is used throughout. How did you come to develop this particular aspect of the screenplay?

When I read Tom's voice for the first time, that was the thing that attracted me to the novel more than anything. That was what really tied it together, and Tom's voice was so strong that I didn't want to leave that feeling that excited me in the first place. Also, it is a novel with a lot of literary references in the story itself. The main character is a fallen English Lit major, and it is also a satirical melodrama, as opposed to a straight-up drama. It just seemed like the thing to do, and it wasn't a hard thing to decide. It was an impulse, and as soon as I said it to Tom, he was excited by it, and we just went forward. Our only rule was that every single main character would have a moment of having their interior life reflected back through that third-person narration with the exception of Ronnie, who would only be seen through the eyes of others and, ultimately, us. That was the only rules.

Do you prefer working with material originally written by someone else?

The first film I did was from an original screenplay and fairly autobiographical. It was praised at school. Perhaps *over*-praised. And it made me sort of a moving target at school. On my second project, I started looking for other material, because film students can be very vicious creatures. It can be very exciting to work on autobiographical material in some way, but, ultimately, it is always autobiographical if you connect to a piece of material, it is informed by some kind of involuntary response of yours. There are a couple of stories that I really want to tell and a couple of scripts that I have written that I'll probably do when I am fifty or so, but it is kind of "apples and oranges." If it feels like it interests you and you go down that road and hope that it takes you someplace, it can be a book or a story, or you and I having coffee and you telling me a story that I can't get out of my head. It is all the same. ♪

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Art film of the week

by Aaron Sheley

Dog Star Man

Auteur Stan Brakhage unleashed this most potent experimental film with frame by frame cell painting mixed with varied live action, as he pioneered the art form along with the likes of Andy Warhol. Though Salvador Dali and Dziga Vertov maintained their own similar experiments years before (along with many others such as Man Ray), the movement disappeared until Brakhage reawakened the intelligent hybrid of form and content as an abstract ideal.

His pure cinema is silent, as he leaves the viewer with only images that beautifully bloom and coalesce to a grand explosion of sights that rattle the senses. The film consists of five parts of rapidly cutting collages. Of Brakhage's 400+ films, *Dog Star Man* is an especial encounter with form at its finest, displaying a phantasmagoria of color cascading freely in space. Light and shadow imageries dance in an infinite vortex of Brakhage's masterpiece composition.

Keeping with his signature naturalist and "homemade" aesthetic, Brakhage disposes of narrative film characteristics such as story and representational images. Thus, he leads the pack of the "New American Cinema" independent directors. Indeed, *Dog Star Man* is said to have been the first avant-garde film to be inducted into the Library of Congress' coveted National Film Registry where, alongside the likes of *Citizen Kane*, a print of the film is almost as protected from the elements as the US Constitution.

A swirling dalliance of nature, Brakhage himself in Jack London-inspired frontiersman get-up, the moon, the stars, the sky, the leaves, the river, colors, and more colors, *Dog Star Man* remains one of the most influential art films—and indeed *films in general*—of our American heritage. From David Fincher to Gus Van Sant to Trey Parker, Brakhage's efforts have moved an entire new generation of filmmakers to a new plateau. And all this, for the most part, out of his own backyard. **B**

AFI Fest celebrates 20 years

by Nice!Dave

The fall season is upon us, and Angeleno cinephiles, along with guests from all over the world, will converge in Hollywood for one of the largest film festivals in Southern California: the AFI Fest 2006, presented by Audi, and running from November 1st to November 12th. This year's festival celebrates a 20-year history of bringing new cinematic works to Los Angeles.

This year's AFI Fest will continue its renowned legacy with films from almost every corner of the world, including: Asia, Latin America, Europe, USA, and Africa. The opening night film is the brilliant and moving *Bobby* from actor/director Emilio Estevez. This fictional story takes place on the night that Senator Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles in 1968. With compelling performances from a huge ensemble cast that boasts William H. Macy, Sharon Stone, Anthony Hopkins, Shia LeBoeuf, Demi Moore, Laurence Fishburne, Harry Bellafonte, Lindsay Lohan, Martin Sheen, Helen Hunt, and Freddy Rodriguez, *Bobby* takes us back to a time when America was full of hope and when events were making historic changes within our society. Closing the festival is the World Premiere of the new epic film from Zhang Yimou, entitled *Curse of the Golden Flower*. The film stars Chow Yun Fat and Gong Li.

In between the opening and closing events, festival goers will be treated to Centerpiece gala screenings of the new David Lynch film *Inland Empire* starring Laura Dern, and the new film from Darren Aronofsky, *The Fountain*. Other events include a special tribute to the beautiful

Penelope Cruz. This gala takes place just prior to the Los Angeles premiere of Pedro Almodovar's latest film, *Volver*.

Special Presentations this year include a collection of documentaries and narrative features including *My Name is Jackie Beat* from director Randolph Mark Viverito. The doc highlights the life of performance artist Jackie Beat. Also screening will be the directorial debut of Joey Lauren Adams (yes, the squeaky-voiced Kevin Smith habitué), *Come Early Morning*.

The International Feature Competition will be fierce this year with films such as: *Cashback* from the UK's Sean Ellis, *Drama/Mex* from Mexico's Gerardo Naranjo (whose executive producers include actors Gael Garcia Bernal and Diego Luna), and the World Premiere of the French murder mystery from first-time feature filmmaker Alante Kavaite, *Ecoute le temps* starring a compelling Emilie Duquenne.

Asian New Classics brings to Los Angeles some great new films including Hong Kong's official Oscar submission *The Banquet/Yeyan* from Feng Ziaogang, the Ken Watanabe tear-jerker *Memories of Tomorrow* from Yukihiro Tsutsumi, the Simon Yan action double-feature *Election* and *Triad Election* from legendary director Johnnie To, and Kim Ki-duk's latest film, *Time/Shi Gan*, from South Korea.

The AFI Film Fest 2006 presented by Audi runs November 1st – November 12th 2006 at the ArcLight Cinemas, the Cinerama Dome, and the Graumann's Chinese Theatre. For tickets and schedules go to www.afi.com.

A new strategy of filmmaking

by Joseph Trinh

DEATH OF A PRESIDENT



(2 1/2 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY GABRIEL RANGE

STARRING: HEND AYOUB, BRIAN BOLAND, BECKY ANN BAKER, ROBERT MANGIARDI

90 MINUTES, RATED R



"What would happen if someone were to assassinate President Bush?" is the question posed by filmmaker Gabriel Range.

The winner of the International Critics Prize of the 2006 Toronto Film Festival, *Death of a President* comes to us with quite a bit of controversy. Set as a documentary made in 2008 about the assassination of President George W. Bush in 2007, the film details the event—from the frighteningly meticulous mechanics of the crime and its investigation to the background context that led up to the incident.

A film about the death of Bush? It seemed too good to be true to this reviewer. At the screening I attended, a woman asked her escort where he wanted to sit, and his response was: "To watch George Bush die, I want to get as close as possible." God bless America and Free Speech! Hey, the Canadians seemed to enjoy the film, so it must be good.

The filmmakers' use of different forms of footage was an attempt to create the reality of an A&E (or, in this case, BBC) documentary. In this, they succeeded brilliantly. They took (actual) archived footage of the President, then manipulated and edited the footage in such a way as to fit within their fictitious storyline. Though not flawless in execution, the viewer can easily accept the doc as legitimate.

The first half of the film plays similar to Haskell Wexler's meditation on the violence that erupted at the DNC in 1968, *Medium Cool*, with a lot of crosscutting between President Bush's speech made inside a Chicago-based Sheraton Hotel and the escalating vehement protesters outside.

Back inside, Mr. Bush (in actual footage taken from this actual speech made to these actual people) warms up the crowd with his homespun humor and charm that, in context to the film itself, plays off as a sympathetic perspective on the President...especially in juxtaposition to the angry, out-of-control protesters outside rallying for his beheading. For once, *he* seems as though a quiet, soft-spoken, and—surprisingly—semi-witty fellow (though his speech writer, played by Becky Ann Baker, in an apocryphal interview by the filmmakers of *Death of a President* explains just how little Bush is involved in the speechwriting process), and the protesters seem like bloodthirsty lunatics

who almost *deserve* to be maced. Indeed, when Bush leaves the Sheraton, there's a bit of instant commotion, then...POP/POP. 'Nuff said.

Death's use of fictitious interviews of the main players of the assassination a year after the fact came off well, as the filmmakers utilized characters that wouldn't have a high profile but would still have intimate knowledge of the situation—an FBI agent, a member of the President's Secret Service, Baker as the speechwriter, a forensics investigator, et al. All of the interviewees seemed credible, though every once in a while, the lines and situations seemed a bit forced.

The second part of the film goes into a kind of *Thin Blue Line* jag, as the film continues with a dramatized version of the investigation of the crime interspersed with interviews with three different suspects of the crime. As expected, the suspects are: 1) A man the investigators believe (or at least are able to "prove") to be part of Al-Qaeda, 2) A black indigent man with nothing to lose, and 3) A rogue shaved-headed space monkey straight out of the fiery pits of Berkeley.

These particular scenes don't play nearly as truthful as those of the manipulated archived footage nor of those interviews with Baker and the others who, even though actors, seem to carry with them the cadences and nuances of their roles (in addition, they seem to have an uncanny knowledge of certain aspects of forensics and the way a Presidential assassination would "work" were it to actually transpire). There are moments when you almost ask yourself, "Well, yeah, they're talking about something that didn't really happen, but are they *actually* speechwriters or forensics investigators who simply decided to lend themselves to the film?"

The film, though well done, focuses only on the crime itself with no real development or diegesis to make it more than a stretched-out half-hour television special. As such, the film really gives nothing back to the audience, less those who have been fantasizing about the moment of Bush's demise since he first won the Presidency. **B**

A PREVIEW OF THE HOLLYWOOD-CHINA FILM FESTIVAL

by Jonathan W. Hickman



A World Without Thieves tells the story of a motley crew of larcenists who seek the big score.

A WORLD WITHOUT THIEVES



(3 out of 4 stars)

DIRECTED BY XIAOGANG FENG

STARRING: ANDY LAU, RENE LIU,
YOU GE, BAOQIANG WANG, BINGBING

100 MINUTES, RATED NOT RATED

After conning a lecherous businessman out of his expensive luxury car, two grifters escape by train back to the city. Along the way, they pick up a conscience.

Xiaogang Feng's *A World Without Thieves* is a smart combination of martial arts action and drama. The action is just real enough to retain credibility, and the character development, story, and sentiment never feels forced or artificial. But the film's undoing is in its convoluted subplots and large cast of characters that became a little tough to track.

Thieves opens in the impressive home of a rich man who tries to learn English. When the man's family leaves, the rich man attacks his English teacher, Wang Li (Rene Liu). To her rescue comes the teacher's boyfriend, Wang Bo (Andy Lau), and, we learn, her partner in crime. Soon, the two speed away from the rich sap's home in his BMW. The trip back

home takes them past a monastery. And when the two grifters split up, Wang Li picks up a young admirer. The admirer is a carpenter who has spent a large part of his life helping the monks fix up their monastery and has now decided to return to the city with his life savings, some 60 thousand yen.

Reunited Wang Bo and Wang Li take to a train with their new "little brother," the naïve carpenter tagging along. But on the train, a clan of thieves sets their sites on the carpenter hoping to acquire his life savings through thievery adroitness. Now, the clan's leader is a guy named Uncle Bill (You Ge) who's a master thief possessing almost supernatural abilities. And when Bill and Bo square off, it's a battle royale, pick-pocket style.

Superior performances and tight action set pieces (that includes a thievery ballet) make *A World Without Thieves* engaging and thoroughly entertaining, two elements more often than not missing from typically bloated Hollywood offerings at the neighborhood megaplex.

The Hollywood China Film Festival @ Laemmle's One Colorado, 42 Miller Alley, Old Pasadena; (626) 744-1224; Nov. 2nd - Nov. 9th.



Andy Lau and Rene Liu in Xiaogang Feng's A World Without Thieves.



Andromeda: The Slipstream Collection

by Mike Restaino

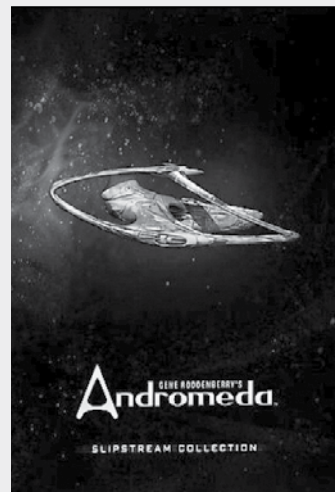
This writer is trying to learn about science fiction. I have two dear friends who have spent the better part of three years going out of their way to recommend books that will elucidate upon and crystallize the magic that lives within that most notoriously nerdy (and proud) literary genre. Movies are no problem—this writer can stomach just about as much *Star Wars* and *Flash Gordon* as you got (do you have any? Because I'll seriously watch them...)—but ever since I had a girlfriend in college who loved to read those fantasy books with dragons and mermaids and beefcake guys in capes and protagonists whose names didn't have any vowels in them, I've been wary—no, *mortified*—of science-fiction literature.

Even though it's more film than literature, this *Slipstream Collection* of the relatively popular *Andromeda* series (from the Sci-Fi channel) has—at least at its base—an interesting and very literary science-fiction backbone. The storyline of the show revolves around Dylan Hunt (Kevin Sorbo), the captain of the most astonishing spacecraft in the universe, a vessel created in the most widespread and holistic intergalactic of societies ever known to universe-kind (it's a *Star Trek* utopian future times about a million). But after the *Andromeda* spacecraft accidentally gets stuck in a black hole for 300 years (damn, I hate it when that happens!), Hunt and his crew awaken to find that the limitless Eden that existed upon their departure has crumbled, and the universe lies in chaos.

So the 50 (!) DVD's in this collection—spanning *Andromeda's* entire TV life—follow Hunt and his band of confused yet nobly chivalrous crew members as they attempt to both comprehend and augment

their newfound societal turbulence with the peaceful sentiments of the lands they left behind. The bad news, though, is that the concepts of the series far outshine its execution.

Unfortunately, *Andromeda* features some of the hands-down cheesiest special effects that this writer has ever seen—on a boob tube or otherwise—so any time the action of the show cuts to a spaceship or planet shot, it's difficult not to groan out loud (again, the show exists fairly well theoretically as a wide-ranged sci-fi thinkpiece). Add to this the fact that the video quality of these fifty DVDs are shockingly hit-and-miss—for some reason, the third and fourth seasons look heavily worse in terms of grain and edge enhancement than the first two—and it makes it doubly difficult to warm up to the series.



And to add insult to injury, the bonus features on this set are ho-hum at best. The handful of audio commentaries are dull as dirt—I found it exceptionally difficult to hear people speak again and again about the

exemplary nature of their stories and special effects while the end result looks one step worse than my grandma's meow-kitty screensaver—and the behind-the-scenes features and cast/crew interviews never dive deep enough into the ethos and syntax of the show's society definitions to be satisfying.

More intriguing are the visual effects demonstrations—yeah, they suck, but it's fun to watch how they did it, anyway. That being said, I'd also recommend staying away from the deleted scenes and set tours (zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz) and instead hitting the deliriously geeky gag reel also included here.

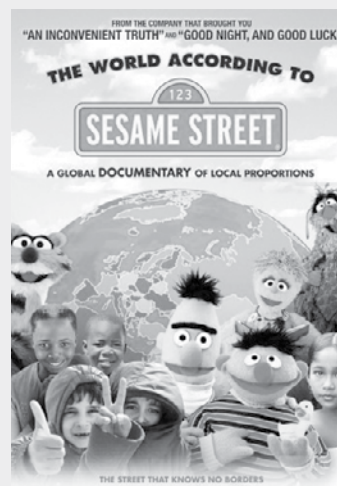
The World According to Sesame Street

It's without hyperbole or exaggeration that one can say that *Sesame Street* changed the world—it forever altered the syntax with which children absorb information and the way adults (and educators) view children.

Yet, while the idea of looking at different cultures and their interpretation (and re-interpretation) of *Sesame Street* in regard to their own youth is an exceptional one—and a great bedrock for a documentary—*The World According to Sesame Street* almost completely screws the pooch (I don't think the tots are gonna learn that phrase on the show).

Presented with all the droll pseudo-bravura of a corporate shareholders meeting, *The World According to Sesame Street's* lack of filmmaking prowess leaves its subject matter completely high and

dry. The challenges and advantages of transmutating *Sesame Street* to different corners of the world is a mesmerizing conceit (it's almost irresistible), to be sure, but Linda Goldstein Knowlton's and Linda Hawkins Costigan's documentary is stillborn.



Sure, it's intriguing to go to countries like Bangladesh and Kosovo and see what their interpretations of *Sesame Street* look like, but don't be fooled: this is surface-level filmmaking at its most self-serving. The *what's* and *where's* of *The World According to Sesame Street* come across loud and clear. The *why's* are nowhere to be found.

And this DVD comes as a bare-bones release, to boot. ☹

David Lynch will save the world with TM, China, and you

by Mathew Klickstein



Cindy Xi, David Lynch, and Mathew Klickstein unashamedly promote LA's oldest weekly entertainment journal.

Upon my being enlisted to steer the leaky freighter of *Entertainment Today* toward more placid waters, I made one humble request: Should any news break over the upcoming swells of John Cameron Mitchell's *Shortbus* or David Lynch's *Inland Empire*, I wanted to be involved. Unfortunately, the former film turned out to be a marly hodgepodge in which its creator did injudiciously slap me across the face with his swinging proboscis. So, when our publisher came into the office to ask if I would like to cover an exclusive meeting with David Lynch, I took to the opportunity like a fish to a bicycle.

I was not privy to exactly what the encounter would entail, or even to what it would be in reference. Knowing that it had recently screened at Venice and would be showing soon again at the New York Film Festival, I assumed, wrongly, that the meeting would be in aid of *Inland Empire* pre-press. Arriving at the predetermined destination, I was instantly jolted by the notion: "Holy shit! This is David Lynch's house!" (I've seen pictures of the maestro's house before, and what self-respecting *Lost Highway* fanatic could ever forget that gray-slate house in which Bill Pullman finds out that

Dick Laurent is dead?)

Inside I entered, with the help of one of Lynch's many dedicated charges who flutter about his compound (three "connected" houses make up his living quarters, his offices, and his personal studio area comprised of a woodshop, a roof-top painting studio, and a full-functioning film and music enclave). I recognized various Lynchian miscellany: periphery from his films and pieces of artwork (notably, one of his "Blue Bob" paintings that bursts from its muddy seams with dead roses globbed with beige paint and is scrawled by words across the canvas that appear penned by the cold, dainty hand of a moppet's lost soul: *Bob loves Sally until she's blue in the face*).

I'm taken into his film studio/theater, where I sit and am left alone to ponder *just what the hell I'm doing here*. And then it happens: in file two very auspicious-looking Asian men, who say nothing to me, hunker down in different seats of the theater, and wait. One of Lynch's subalterns is embroiled in the editing of some kind of sound montage that belts out weird cartoonish noises from the speakers all over the room: *beep/bloop/bang/blop*.

The impassive Asian businessmen break into a laconic colloquy about their respective businesses, cards are exchanged, and they finally turn to introduce themselves to me. Doing my best not to snicker at the oddness of the whole affair, I shake their welcoming hands, and we talk: they're both indeed wealthy mercantilists (one of whom is a partner of the company that owns *Entertainment Today*, as it would turn out). The other fellow, Charles, explains that he owns a company that now manufactures pills produced to detoxify the body, especially after cigarette smoking. In Hong Kong, he explains, these pills will become invaluable, as there are not only many cigarette smokers, but also a lot of air pollution and cramped areas.

Ohhh kaaay.

Steve, the gent who is one of the owners of my paper (as best I understand) starts up a screed about some woman in China—he not only has various pictures of her from covers of different magazines, but he makes sure to consistently hold up the covers whenever he mentions her name—named Cindy Xi (pronounced "See") who went to college when she was 14, came over here to become a big shot on Wall Street, and ostensibly became a multi-millionaire by her early 20's. Now in her early thirties, she is today considered one of China's premiere businesswomen, the "Pretty CEO," as Steve and Charles explained. Ms. Xi, as they led me to believe, owns and runs the Internet's most successful educational website.

Ohhh kaaay.

Hmm, this was getting curiously and curiously. At this point, I remember thinking to myself, Thank *God* I decided *against* partaking in any kind of mind-altering substance before coming into this strange scenario (it was Lynch, after all, and I had originally planned to be in an altered state before arriving that morning). Enough of this nonsense, I thought, *time to figure out just what this is all about!*

Sipping the absolutely delect-

table and rich cappuccino that had been proffered up by one of Lynch's minions a little earlier, I inquired at last, "So, what does all of this have to do with David Lynch, if you don't mind my asking?"

Both smiled convivially, and Charles explained that in conjunction with Cindy Xi's other ventures, she is also getting heavily involved in a new movement that plans on spreading Transcendental Meditation all over the world. This movement wants, specifically, to place TM learning facilities in every school in the United States. The price-tag of this massive undertaking will be seven billion dollars (yes, that's "billion" with a "b").

At once, I recalled having heard from a friend about six months prior of his going to see Lynch speak at some college only to discover that the man was weirdly monomaniacal about Transcendental Meditation; it was all Lynch talked about, and he even mentioned that he was starting a worldwide foundation—at seven billion dollars—that would indeed thrust TM into homes all over the world.

Real quick: Transcendental Meditation was founded in 1955 by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and employs a bi-daily meditation process that lasts for twenty minutes in which the meditating person closes his eyes and repeats his own individual mantra in his head over and over again. The meditation is supposed to illicit a great deal of euphoria and overall calm in the person. There are, of course, those critics who see TM as another Scientology or cult of sorts, but time will tell, eh?



Regular David Lynch film habitue Laura Dern awaits direction on set.

see **DAVID LYNCH** on p.20



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LINDA BLAIR AND CAST OF *THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE* HORRIFY AUDIENCE AT RED CARPET



Linda Blair
& Vernon Wells



Arloa Reston, Steve Westell,
Vernon Wells, Paula Ficara



Alex & Tony Todd



Amanda Marr

Hollywood, CA — The cast of *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* hit the red carpet at ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood for the film's West Coast premiere. Tony Todd (*Candyman*), Vernon Wells, Michael Jai White (*Spawn*), Adam Green (*Hatchet*), along with the film's director, John Carl Buechler and producer, Peter Davy were in attendance.

The screening was a benefit for The Linda Blair WorldHeart Foundation, headed by Linda Blair (*Exorcist*). "My foundation is grateful for the film's support and its donation and on a personal level I still find it a fun night out to watch a great horror film," said Blair.

For more info, go to www.jekyllandhydemovie.com



Lynn & John Buechler



Deborah Shelton & Guest



Judi Shekoni



Peter Lupus & wife



Michael Pare
& Arloa Reston



Michael Jai White



Peter Davy
& Rebecca Grant



Derek Luke and Tim Robbins in Phillip Noyce's *Catch a Fire*, a true story of one man's quest for freedom.

Babel

★★ (R)
Babel is a film that starts off with great promise and then winds up playing things relatively safe—there are moments at the beginning that suggest the ambitious panoramic scope of DW Griffith's grand 1916 epic *Intolerance*, but it soon turns into something more akin to a multinational *Crash*. Perhaps it is a good thing after all that producer and director (respectively) Inarritu and Arriaga have had a well-publicized falling-out that will presumably preclude them from working together again anytime soon. Let's just hope that when the filmmakers do find someone else with whom to work, they'll be better tuned to communicate. (PS)

The Black Dahlia

★★★★ (R)
 Brian De Palma ably directs this stylish period piece based on the true crime book by James Ellroy (*LA Confidential*). Starring Josh Hartnett, Aaron Eckhart, Scarlet Johansson, Mia Kirshner, and Hilary Swank, the film takes us to the Golden Era of Hollywood and into the seedy underbelly of a town that was anything but golden under the surface...where a young starlet-to-be is found brutally murdered in a back alley. Eckhart and Hartnett play the fuzz on the case, and what though they never (true to this day) find the culprit, what they do find will change both their lives forever... (PS)

The Bridge

★★★ 1/2 (R)
 This documentary takes fly-on-the-wall filmmaking to the extreme, with cameras

set up on the north and south ends of the Golden Gate Bridge—the world's most popular suicide destination—to capture the 23 suicides that took place throughout 2004. According to his letter requesting a film permit, director Eric Steel duped authorities by claiming he was going to shoot the "powerful intersection between monument and nature" for a three-part series that would include the Statue of Liberty and the St. Louis Gateway Arch. He later allegedly interviewed the victims' friends and family without revealing that he had footage of their loved ones' deaths. In his defense, he claims he chose not to reveal his intentions for fear of causing more suicides. The result is a meditation on the bridge's elegance and grandeur, contrasted by the dark and troubled souls who dive off it. As the bridge slowly emerges through the heavy fog in the opening credits, so too do the personalities and inner turmoil of the jumpers throughout the rest of the film. (WT)

Catch a Fire

★★ 1/2 (R)
 On paper, *Catch a Fire* sounds like it should be a slam-dunk example of an intelligent, adult-themed drama. It tells a true story that opens our eyes to a tale of which many American audiences may be unfamiliar and which remains powerfully relevant to the times that we live in today. The film also contains strong and effective performances from a cast consisting of a mixture of reliable veterans and surprising newcomers. It has been directed by someone who has in the past demonstrated a facility for handling nail-biting suspense, hard-hitting politics, and tender scenes of human drama. And

yet, after watching the film, I found myself walking away from the theater feeling as though something had been missing. (PS)

The Departed

★★★★ (R)
 The film is a tough, hard-edged, and decidedly adult wonder that respects the conventions of gangster films and director Martin Scorsese's past work while finding ways of tackling them anew. The result is not only one of the best films of the year, but one of the best films of Scorsese's illustrious career. Based on the acclaimed 2002 Hong Kong thriller *Infernal Affairs* (as well as elements from the source's two sequels) and relocated to Boston, the film gives us Jack Nicholson as a gangster heavy who sets in motion a series of events that lands police mole Leonardo DiCaprio in almost as hot water as Nicholson's own mole, played by Matt Damon. Though *Departed* boasts a stellar cast, the real star here is Scorsese, who once again shows why he is generally considered to be the greatest American filmmaker working today. It is an indisputable fact that the director hits the ground running here with a determination and purpose that he hasn't displayed in years. (PS)

Flags of Our Fathers

★★ (R)
Flags of Our Fathers, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Adam Beach, Ryan Phillippe, and Jesse Bradford as the supposed soldiers who raised the flag in the famous Iwo Jima photograph, is a well-made, well-intentioned, and ambitious film that—because of the way in which it is told—somehow never connects with us on any kind of genuine emotional level. I don't want to say that you shouldn't see the film, but those hoping for a film that matches the in-your-face emotionalism of *Saving Private Ryan* or the haunting lyrical beauty of *The Thin Red Line* are likely to come away somewhat disappointed by Eastwood's strained attempts to make a Great Movie instead of a good one. (PS)

Flicka

★★ 1/2 (PG)
 This 2006 update of Mary O'Hara's beloved novel *My Friend Flicka* is a perfectly wholesome oater, but falters due to one too many saccharine enriched artificial sugar cubes. But this only makes it harmless and even good family fare. Michael Mayer's new *Flicka* isn't really inspired but makes great use of Wyoming vistas and a likable cast that includes Alison Lohman, Maria Bello, and Tim McGraw. This story of a wild young girl and her wild stallion Flicka has its shortcomings, but manages to tug at your heart-strings in an old fashioned way. This means that parents and their itty bitty tiny children will have a ride with *Flicka*. (JH)

The Grudge 2

1/2 Star (PG-13)
 Slinking into theaters with 37% percent more grudge, 97% less Sarah Michelle Gellar, and the exact same number of genuine scares (i.e. zero) as the original (which itself was a remake of a remake), *The Grudge 2* is a film as creative and daring as its title suggests. Once

again, the vengeful spirits of a murdered Japanese woman (Takako Fuji) and child (Ohga Tanaka) wreak havoc on the lives of those who stumble upon their path. Of course, the rage felt by the undead characters on the screen will be nothing compared to the rage felt by the poor suckers in the audience who just shelled out \$10 a head for a film whose sole virtue is that it isn't quite as bad as *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Beginning*. (PS)

The Guardian

★★ 1/2 (PG-13)
 The good news about the inspirational adventure film *The Guardian* (starring Ashton Kutcher and Kevin Costner) is that it manages to transcend its essential cheesiness, despite a few rough spots here and there, in order to provide viewers with 110 minutes of relatively solid action and drama anchored by a couple of performances that are better than you might expect. The bad news is that it then goes on for another 25 minutes as it offers up one ending after another in an increasingly desperate attempt to wrap up the story. As a result, even the most indulgent viewers are likely to wind up tuning out long before the end credits finally begin to roll. (PS)

A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints

★★★ (R)
 Director/writer Dito Montiel has good reason to be proud of his debut film, *A Guide to Recognizing Your Saints*. Loosely based on his memoir of the same name, the movie boasts a superb cast that earned the Best Ensemble Performance Award at Sundance. Montiel's goal was to make the movie feel real, and he succeeds in drawing the viewer into the intense lives of his characters. While some of the editing techniques are a little too "indie" for my taste, and the soundtrack is lackluster, several actors shine and help create an enthralling film. (JB)

Infamous

★★★ (R)
Infamous draws from a wider emotional and social palette than *Capote*, employs star power, and spells out—in more explicit terms—the emotional bond between killer Perry Smith and Capote. *Infamous* was still in script form when McGrath discovered there was another film about Capote's *In Cold Blood* era in production, but the director still persevered with his project. For moviegoers who saw *Capote*, this new film might feel like déjà vu all over again, but McGrath's take on the material adds another dimension to the story of this fascinating but troubled literary icon. (MM)

Jonestown

★★★★ (Not Rated)
 Though it has been nearly three decades since the people of Jonestown committed mass suicide via grape-flavored cyanide, the fascination and conspiracy theories remain. Did Jim Jones really believe he was the reincarnation of both Jesus and Lenin? How did he attract so many supporters regardless of race and class to join his Peoples Temple? What compelled people not only to fly thousands of miles away from home but also to willingly poison and murder their own

children? And why was he always wearing those sunglasses? Stanley Nelson's gripping documentary, *Jonestown: The Life and Death of People Temple*, attempts—with the use of unprecedented access and never-before-seen footage—to shed light on the horrific event. Nelson's personal quest for answers led him to uncover recently declassified photographs from the CIA, original audiotapes, and footage shot by Temple members. (WT)

The Last King of Scotland

★★★ (R)
 Director Kevin Macdonald (*Touching the Void*) sheds some light on the subject of Idi Amin through the eyes of a young Scottish doctor who becomes close to the tyrant in the early part of his bloody rule. Scotland is a brutal and beautiful film, one that looks at a truly horrendous leader from the inside, as the film presents the romance of a charismatic president and his intoxicating effect on those around him. (JH)

Little Children

★★★ 1/2 (R)
Little Children, directed by *In the Bedroom*'s Todd Field and based upon a book by Tom Perrotta (who also co-wrote the script along with Field), the author of *Election*, knows its subject intimately. It is a film that breathes with tiny references to the mundane existence of a monastic suburban family life in contemporary America. Field well understands thirty-something angst, and shows us how some of these fears spawn from our own irrationality. They boil up from somewhere, then explode. And the fear itself can be as damaging as the thing that is feared. The performances (by a cast that includes Jennifer Connelly and Kate Winslet) are all exactly right for the mature material, but the most surprising is delivered by Jackie Earle Haley who, takes on the unforgiving character of maligned child molester Ronald James McGorvey. His performance is definitely Oscar-worthy, and—along with the rest of the film—leaves us considering that perhaps we may have empathetic feelings for people in our society that we would rather scrape off our shoe and leave for dead. (JH)

Man of the Year

1/2 Star (PG-13)
 The good news about *Man of the Year* is that, despite what the commercials suggest, it is not simply two hours of Robin Williams kibitzing in the White House after inadvertently being elected President of the United States. The bad news is that the actual film—the one hidden behind the previews that highlight Williams doing his rapid-fire patter and dressing like George Washington—is so much worse that you'll find yourself wishing that it actually was just one giant piece of shtick instead of one giant piece of something else. Williams plays Tom Dobbs, a kind of Al Franken meets Jon Stewart type who, under similar auspices of Chris Rock's *Head of State*, is brought in to run for President...and actually wins the whole thing. When it turns out that his win might have been the fault of a glitch in voting machines, Laura Linney comes into play as an ex-employee of the company that makes the malfunctioning machines (she was, of

JIM GLENNON Death announced Oct. 20, 2006

By Rusty White

Emmy-winning cinematographer Jim Glennon died at age 64.

Mr. Glennon won an Emmy for his work on the HBO series *Deadwood*. He was the son of Oscar-nominated cinematographer Bert Glennon (*Stagecoach*). Mr. Glennon first worked his craft as a camera operator and assistant cameraman on such films as: *The Conversation*, *Breaking Away*, *The Electric Horseman*, *Absence of Malice*, *Altered States*, *True Confessions*, *Taps*, and *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*.

He was also the location director of photography on *Return of the Jedi*.

Mr. Glennon was the cinematographer on nearly 60 films and TV shows over his career. His many other credits include: *El Norte*, *Flight of the Navigator*, *The West Wing*, *About Schmidt*, *Local Boys*, and *Big Love*.



any of those involved with *Hedwig*, let alone its director/writer/star. The film itself falls completely flat on its bare-ass bottom, and seems to have only been an excuse for JC to run around naked with a bunch of libidinous friends whilst partaking in all manner of carnality...which would be fine if they could have conserved enough energy to make the orgy into a watchable movie. (MK)

Shut Up & Sing

Not Yet Reviewed (R)

Documentary that follows the wake of torrential controversy when the Dixie Chicks' Natalie Maines mystified her country-fried fans by telling them that Bush is so dumbheaded that he doesn't know whether he should scratch his watch or wind his butt. Yee-haw!! As we'll all remember, the Chicks were busier than a one-armed paperhanger when they were suddenly thrust into the political hotseat, and this documentary presents the whole story. If you're thirsty while watching the movie, just remember to order some ice tea—as Truvy'll tell you, it's the house wine of the South! (MK)

Tideland

★★★ 1/2 (R)

Part Lewis Carroll, part Alfred Hitchcock, part Terrence Malick, and *all* Terry Gilliam (the film's writer/director), *Tideland* is a unique and personal vision that, like it or not, will stick in your mind for a long time after you finish its viewing. To judge from the initial reactions of audience members at *Tideland's* Toronto Film Festival premiere, the film appears to be too much for many. Story gives us a young girl named Jeliza-Rose (an absolutely spectacular Jodelle Ferland) who, after her Nancy Spungen/Courtney Love of a mom (Jennifer Tilly) OD's, absconds with her rocker/junkie father (Jeff Bridges) to the Middle of Nowhere, USA in which they "live" in a dilapidated shack surrounded by miles and miles and miles (and miles) of nothing but golden fields of tall dead grass. When Dad croaks almost immediately upon entering their new home (he shoots, he scores), Jeliza-Rose is left on her own...but seems to be either in a state of shock or truly oblivious to her dire situation, as she enters her own dreamland by taking all the motley aspects of her new life (including a crazed woman with one eye and her mentally-challenged younger brother with a penchant for dynamite) and transforms it to her own limitless imagination. (PS)

Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas in Disney Digital 3D*

Not Reviewed (PG)

So, you think you already know about *The Nightmare Before Christmas*? Well, did you know that Tim Burton neither wrote nor directed the film? It's true: he was busy with *Batman Returns* at the time, though the story is based on a poem he wrote. His name being ahead of the title is the same reason Disney's is now after: some nice marketing (works both ways here). Don't be too disappointed when you check this one out and find that the modern classic soundtrack has been revamped by Fall Out Boy. Ick, now that's something that really might belong in a nightmare. (MK) ☞

course, fired—though not simply killed on the spot—when she brings the error to the attention of her bosses). Linney attempts to bring this to Williams' attention, but is too boy-shy to do so, and instead helps facilitate the shoddy romantic-comedy aspect of this messy romp through American politics that *could* have been at least *somewhat* as irreverent and smart as director Barry Levinson's own *Wag the Dog*. (PS)

Marie Antoinette

★★★★ (PG-13)

In *Marie Antoinette*, writer/director Sofia Coppola expands on her particular approach to filmmaking to the point where the mood she creates is literally everything, and traditional storytelling is treated as an afterthought. Whether this approach works or not will depend on what kind of movie you are looking to see. If you are craving a straightforward biopic that chronicles the who's, what's, where's, why's, and how's of the life and death of one of the most (in)famous names in French history, you are likely to walk away from the film feeling that it is the most shallow and one-dimensional effort to date from a shallow and one-dimensional filmmaker. On the other hand, if you are looking for a film that approximates what the giddy day-to-day life within the lavish-but-insular walls of Versailles—an existence where everything is pretty and the ugliness and unrest of the real world is kept far outside the palace gate—must have been like for Marie Antoinette, which is pretty much Coppola's intent, then you are likely to find it a visually dazzling and surprisingly powerful work that is more about the pleasures of perils of superficiality than merely a superficial film. (PS)

The Marine

Not Reviewed (PG-13)

Nip/Tuck's Kimber Henry plays Kelly Carlson, a young woman who is kidnapped upon the homecoming of her husband from War. Now hubby played by Jon Cena must put his on-the-field training to use to find his wife... who has a few training techniques

of her own up her sleeve... (MK)

The Prestige

★★★ 1/2 (PG-13)

Magic is not the act of mystifying, but the act of fooling an audience who, deep down, wants to be fooled. And, for the most part, until director Christopher Nolan (*Memento*, *Batman Begins*) takes this premise a bit too far, that's what *The Prestige* resembles: a magic trick that starts in the realm of the realistic but takes a turn into another dimension as obsession leads two men down a dangerous path of self-destruction. Story gives us two fledgling magicians (Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale) who "apprentice" for a successful illusionist. We follow them as the boys become rather successful in the field themselves. A certain kind of "sibling rivalry" spurs the duo, who begin sabotaging each other's act, until they both receive their respective comeuppances. *The Prestige* is a dark and mysterious world whose unique style is ably managed by Nolan; this is no simple "thriller" chocked full of magical gimmicks, but rather a true drama with a story to tell. (SS)

The Queen

★★★ 1/2 (PG-13)

Ably directed by Stephen Frears (*High Fidelity*, *The Grifters*) and written by Peter Morgan (*The Last King of Scotland*), *The Queen* gives us Helen Mirren as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in a role that one would think was penned specifically to grant the beloved actress a definite Oscar...if it weren't based a person who already actually exists. The crux of the film takes place during the week after the tragic death of (ex) Princess Diana, a time in which progressive and modern English prime minister Tony Blair is already butting heads with the conservative and stogy Royals who rarely leave their palatial estate to see just what changes have occurred during the turbulent 1990's. *The Queen* has an intimate understanding of Diana's radiance, and shows us the real woman behind the image through old stock footage, much of which

is used to ground the film in a certain state of truth that shines bright and clear already through the fantastic performances and the impressive behind-the-scenes dialogue somehow culled by Morgan. The film gives us a more human Queen Elizabeth II, a more human Royal Family, and does something that I didn't think would be possible: made me feel a certain degree of pity for these people whose real enemy, as the movie (and supposedly Blair) implies, isn't the ghost of a woman who gave them nothing but grief and annoyance over the years, but themselves. (JH)

Running With Scissors

★★★ (R)

Based on Augusten Burroughs' memoir of the same name, *Running with Scissors* explores the struggle of surviving the minefields of adolescence and taking the leap into adulthood with one's mind still intact. Written for the screen and directed by first-time feature helmer Ryan Murphy (the creator of *Nip/Tuck*), the film is at once a comedy and a tragedy, a period piece that encapsulates the dementia and liberation imbued by the 1970's. A series of great scenes with brilliant performances, *Running with Scissors* is the film that independent produces are always complaining doesn't get made often enough. The film is easy to like, despite some shortcomings in the plot and pacing. (JA)

Saw III

Not Yet Reviewed (R)

Well, what do we have here? From the director of the second *Saw* and the writer of the first two (and a number of special-feature nonsense thingies, to boot) comes the third installment of everyone's favorite new horror thingy. Jigsaw's back, and this time...he's in *traction!* After somehow kidnapping a doctor to keep him alive, Jig's new apprentice takes over to basically act as the Baby Jaws to his Big Mama. And gruesome torture follows. Legend has it that the final script was written under a week. So... (MK)

The Science of Sleep

★★★ (R)

The fact that *The Science of Sleep* is Gondry's most autobiographical artistic offering to date can be seen, as the film was shot partly in the same building where the director lived in Paris...during a time when he, like the main character (Gael Garcia Bernal), worked at mundane job at an uninventive calendar design company. Though some might feel that the wild dream sequences—shot ten months before there was even a full script or a cast signed to the film—are a little too evocative of music videos, many others will see that the visuals are those that might belong in a Magritte painting. As such, *Science* is both playful and sophisticated, a feat that only Michel Gondry could accomplish with such "scrumtrulescent" vim. (BS)

Shortbus

1/2 Star (Not Rated)

Yes, we've all been long awaiting John Cameron Mitchell's special project he had been trying put together for years, but his effort has produced a slapdash romp in the hay that was undoubtedly fun to make, but is also incredibly soporific to watch. All the energy and homegrown smarts of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* are completely absent from *Shortbus*, a film that has little to offer, even in its controversial and hot-topic scenes of sexual abandon (actual penetration) that neither impress nor arouse. The acting is piss-poor, the casting wasn't much better (non-professionals can often lend a refreshing veracity to a film such as *Shortbus*, but this doesn't work when your "amateurs" are in fact closet-case drama queens who over-perform as spoiled, frustrated thirteen-year-old girls throughout), and the storyline is nowhere to be seen. There's a lot of bash-you-over-the-head symbolism in this messy chemistry-set experiment gone wrong (a constant series of brownouts alludes to the disconnection of the people in Mitchell's dreamland New York) and enough tiresome clichés that you begin to wonder how *Shortbus* could possibly have been made by

WEEKLY SPORTS WRAP-UP

by Joseph Trinh

I'll just come out and say it; I know nothing about baseball. I thought the Dodgers had a chance, they were swept. I was calling the Yankees to win it all, they only won one game in the playoffs. I said the New York Mets will win the National League, the St. Louis Cardinals got in to face the Detroit Tigers. Screw it, I'm going with the Saddleback Roadrunners from Santa Ana to win the World Series. God, I'm hating baseball right about now. At least the NBA season starts soon.

On to football. The Michigan Wolverines leapfrog the USC Trojans in the BCS poll, beating the Iowa Hawkeyes, 20-6, in the Big House. The Trojans, who were on a bye, still have the inside track for the BCS, with #2 Michigan still needing to face #1 Ohio St., who remains undefeated with a 44-3 beat down on Connecticut, later in the season, meaning one of the two will definitely get knocked out of the race. West Virginia, who currently sit at #4, have a strong chance to stay undefeated in the Big East, which keeps their hopes alive. USC travels to Oregon this weekend.

In the NFL, a lot of big news was to be had. The *previously* winless Oakland Raiders finally are winless no more, as they beat the Arizona Cardinals, 22-9, intercepting Matt Leinart twice. Being torn with this matchup, the Raiders win is bigger than a bad game by Matt, so it all works out in the end.

ESPN's favorite story of the week is the

injuries to the two quarterbacks of the last Super Bowl, Matt Hasselbeck and Ben Roethlisberger. Both went down this weekend. Hasselbeck sprained his knee in the Seattle Seahawks loss to the Minnesota Vikings. The early reports have him missing at least three weeks, which marks the beginning of the Super Bowl curse to be thrust upon the 'Hawks, with Shaun Alexander still to miss a week or two more. Roethlisberger suffered a concussion in the Pittsburgh loss to the Atlanta Falcons. The Steelers will go with Charlie Batch, who has performed well in Big Ben's absence so far this year, if Roethlisberger can't go next week.

Also this past weekend, San Diego Chargers linebacker, Shawn Merriman, was suspended for four games due to failing a drug test on a banned substance. This is a huge hit to San Diego, losing their best defensive player, probably one the best in the whole League, as they will not have Merriman when they face the 4-2 St. Louis Rams and divisional rival Denver Broncos during that four game stretch. What a dumbass.

In the Monday Night Game, the New York Giants beat the Dallas Cowboys, 36-22, which completely ruined my night. As I was on an unexpected errand during the game, the Giants led, 29-15, late in the game. My numbers in a football pool was 9-5, which meant that if the score stayed as that at the end of the game, I would've won \$350, but Tony Romo threw an interception that was returned for a touchdown, throwing my numbers out the window. Thanks a lot, Tony. ☹

DAVID LYNCH from p.12

Cindy Xi's plan is to use the money she's amassed over the years to help kick-start the David Lynch Foundation that will spread TM accordingly. She has also brought in numerous investors from around the world (if I heard right, this elite phalanx boasts the likes of Steve Forbes, Bill Gates, and, "Many other Fortune 500 members"). Her idea is to spread a mental and emotional emollient throughout the land... Charles is here to help facilitate the *physical* cleansing through his new pills and other similar machinations. David Lynch will apparently be their "in" to Hollywood and America at large.

By the time Lynch enters, I barely notice. I'm so enraptured by the bizarre happenings of these Chinese people (who, I'm made to believe, are some of the richest in their country). This is also after a few more of them have entered the cavernous screening room—including Cindy and her duenna, Angel. Both Cindy and Angel are as pleasantly ebullient as can be, almost straight out of an episode of *The Simpsons*. Everyone is a "Number One Hollywood Superstar" or "the Number One Star in China." Cindy and Angel are more than affable, shake hands, introduce themselves to all those in the room.

So, yes, Lynch comes in with his David Lynch hair and his David Lynch white button-up shirt, and speaks in his scratchy, high-pitched, nasally David Lynch voice. Everything is "beautiful" and "fantastic." Flashes of Andy Warhol or Truman Capote. "Fantastic. Oh, that's *beautiful*. That's just *beautiful*." He sits behind us, and we all swarm around him in the mini-theater seating area. OK. Now what? The cameras are set up by a few of Lynch's minions, and then it *really* begins: the promotional video Q&A between Cindy and Lynch that will be used in order to promote TM.

Ah, so I'm here to observe and to ask a few questions during brief intermissions between shooting. And that owner of our paper must know these people from China, and that's how I got to be here. Of course. One-two-three. I do my best to do my "job," and fire off a few quick questions. This becomes more and more onerous, however, as Lynch seems to not really appreciate The Media being present. Frankly, his answers to the few questions I had about *Inland Empire* were so terse that I inevitably ended up asking him a couple of softball inquiries about TM. Are his kids into it? (Yes.) That kind of thing.

All right, I realize, I'll just hang out and watch the fun. The "fun" turns out to be Lynch going on and on for, sometimes, fifteen minutes or more (nonstop) to proclaim why TM is the most important new cultural advance our species has developed to save itself from itself. He repeats phrases three times in a row (frequently). Things like "consciousness-based education" and "diving within" and "developing the full potential of the human being." "Unified fields," "improving all walks of life," "enlivening, enlivening, enlivening." "Life isn't supposed to be a tangled barbwire of stress."

Funnily enough, between rants about everything

being so beautiful and how fantastic everything is and how "when you enliven unity, negativity goes away," Lynch can't help but direct the three consumer-grade mini DV cameras facing him and Cindy. He talks to those behind each camera, tells them to stay here, go there, make this camera the wide-angle, this one the two-shot.

After a little more of Angel and Cindy telling Lynch that he's somehow the biggest star in China now (the "Number One Superstar," more to the point), Lynch steps back over to the middle of his mini-theater seating area, sits down, and busts out his red-packed American Spirits that are ubiquitous throughout his whole compound (you'll find a pack here, there, and just about everywhere... along with toy police cars, decapitated plastic skeletons strewn about the floor, and a dusty box or two of life-sized dolls). Apparently, even though he's attained inner peace, every so often Lynch still requires a cig or two (if not a full pack).

I knew that meeting David Lynch would be an interesting experience. But, I never for a *minute* thought I'd end up at the auteur's house with some of the richest people in China who'd be working with the man to establish a seven billion dollar foundation with the intention of changing the world through Transcendental Meditation.

Why is this all so important, then? Time for a public reappraisal of a glaring, unsaid truth. America has always been and continues to be grossly retarded in its cinematic output... especially since the late, great 1970's when Robert Evans blew his career up his nose, Hal Ashby and Stanley Kubrick walked that long path to their good night, John Cassavetes was "Pauline Kael-ified," Woody Allen decided to spend more time with the family, and Coppola took to cultivating his vineyards and darling dauphine with her obtuse, tone-deaf emperor of a brother.

Yes, we'll see how PTA's and Harmony Korine's respective new endeavors bode, Gus Van Sant and Vincent Gallo keep them a-comin', and we can count

Canadians Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg (*History of Violence* notwithstanding) amongst our flock. Otherwise, what've we got? (RIP Gilliam, Altman, Oliver Stone.) Lynch is the answer, and he presents a far more formidable ally to a nascent cultural movement such as TM than, say, a John Travolta or a Tom Cruise. Whereas those two are (or, *were*) money-makers, Lynch is a kind of modern-day Harry Smith, an artist who operates under

the radar while his ideas furtively fecundate and profoundly influence our shared American ethos.

Much in the same way that—based on her nose ring and doleful gray eyes—the raven-haired cherubic coquette who works at the NuArt is undoubtedly easily swayed by a beguiling Byronic musician, David Lynch is a powerful weapon; as in both cases—and as with the good ship *Entertainment Today*—all hinges only on which direction they are pointed. ☹

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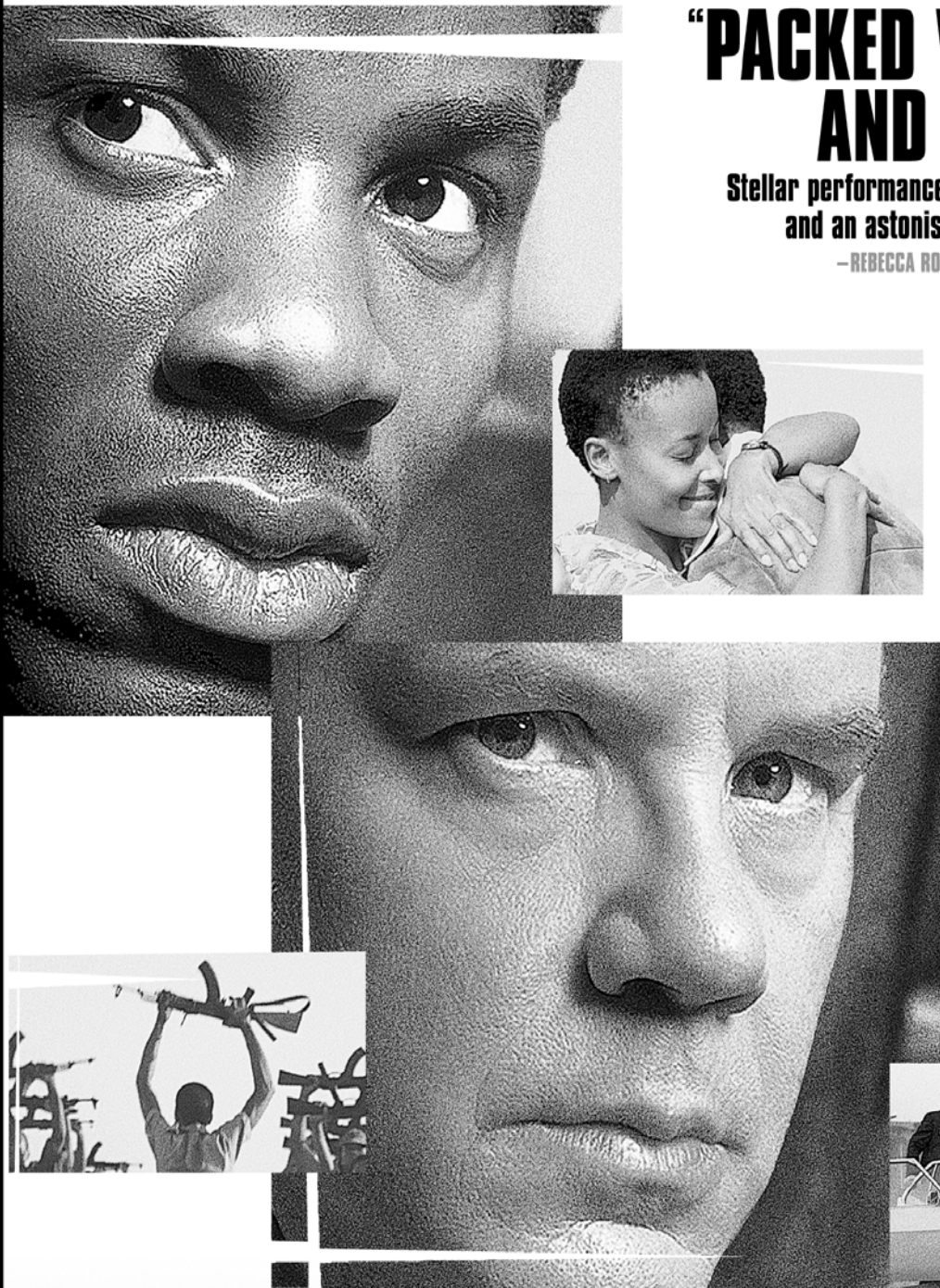
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Astrological forecasts

by Lady Katsura and Suki Yaki



WARNING: This is a humor piece. Unlike most other astrology columns, this column has no scientific basis, and is not intended as a guide to life decisions.

Capricorn (December 22 to January 20)

Wait, so tell us again why dressing up as a one-armed Dr. Phil in drag for Halloween will really impress your new girlfriend?

Aquarius (January 21 to February 18)

Girl, you knew he was wrong for you the minute he took off his pants and said, "Baby, it's hammer time!" Too bad it was more like "pocket-sized screwdriver time," huh?

Pisces (February 19 to March 19)

Congrats on that script sale, buddy! See, we *told* you a Sunday afternoon garage sale was the way to go. Any luck with grandma's old silverware?

Aries (March 20 to April 19)

We can't believe you slept with someone else behind your boyfriend's back. Weren't you afraid he would turn around at some point? Or is he one of those boys who is easily distracted? Like a puppy...or your last seven boyfriends.

Taurus (April 20 to May 19)

Try telling her you're sorry, the wheel broke off accidentally, and your friend didn't know Superman was a fictional character.

Gemini (May 21 to June 20)

Next time you hear the words, "It's getting hot in here, so take off all your clothes," please look around and make sure you're not at your friend's little brother's Bar Mitzvah. No one wants to see the dinosaur underwear—it's about time you realize that and just move on.

Cancer (June 21 to July 20)

To answer the question that's been perplexing you all week: No, we're not sure if there's a self-help book for people who hate self-help books, but we've seen weirder stuff on eBay. And speaking of eBay, stop bidding on stuff you won't use. A statue of Oprah made out of butter? We know she's your idol, but seriously now.

Leo (July 21 to August 20)

Wait, hold on—he wants you to do *what?* At the *park?* In front of a bunch of *complete strangers?* Tell him you're from Los Angeles and there's no such thing as a "stroll." Yuck, it sounds too much like "troll." Who does he think he is? A poet? Maybe he should think of something that rhymes with "get lost," because that's where this thing is headed.

Virgo (August 21 to September 20)

Do you really think a Kama Sutra book is a good gift idea for a person who hasn't been to the gym and over two years? Unless he plans on using that book as a headrest, we suggest a lot of stretching. Last thing anyone wants is a cramp. You know how much *you* hate those cramps? Wait, or was it summer camp you despised? We forget; which one involved that game of naked dodgeball?

Libra (September 21 to October 22)

This week, try to stay away from the color green, lawnmowers, flowers, white fences, and automatic garage door openers. Trust us, something very bad is about to happen...and we believe it involves missing a football game or two. Try coming up with a fake injury that will prevent you from any outside yard work. Don't worry, professional athletes do it all the time.

Scorpio (October 23 to November 21)

The only reason she got wet is because you sprayed her with a water bottle in a crappy attempt to wake her up in the morning. Next time, try lowering the lights and replace that water with chocolate syrup. Oh, and while you're replacing things, she really seems to like that guy from the office.

Sagittarius (November 22 to December 21)

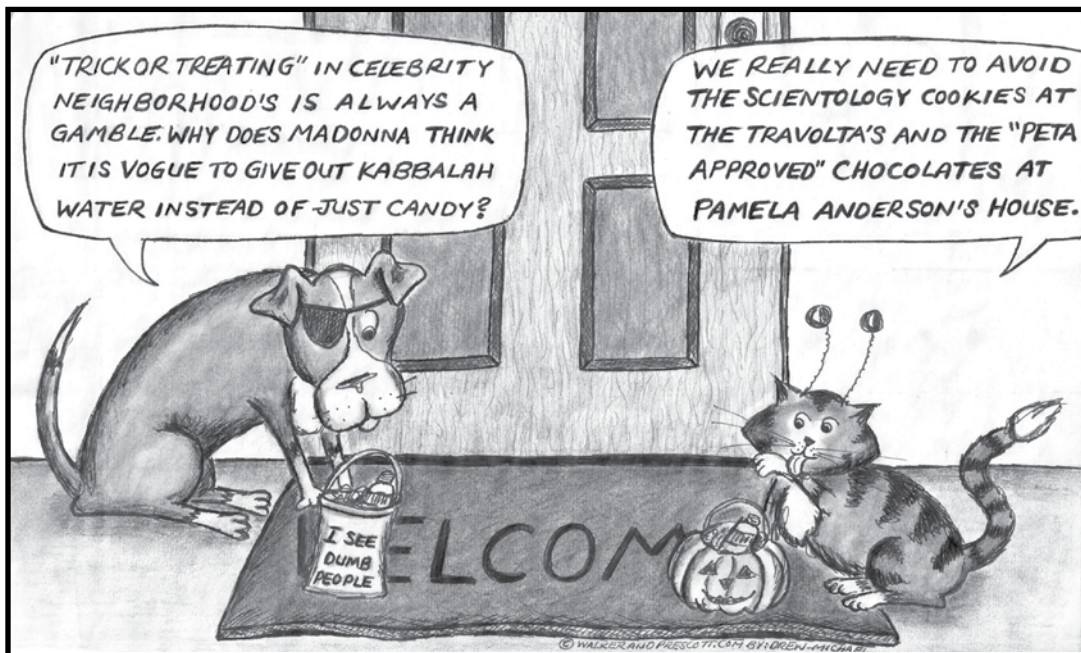
So what if you're the only person on the planet who doesn't like sushi? It's not against the law to be afraid of sticking raw fish in your mouth. Who cares if all your friends make fun of you? And we're positive that's not the only reason why your last relationship didn't work out. Sometimes being completely alone can feel good. Nah, the dog is avoiding you because she's probably sick. Who knows?, maybe it was a bunch of rowdy kids who egged your car, and spray-painted "Sushi Hater" across your driveway. Things will get better next week...just hang in there. If not, try moving to Russia. ♪

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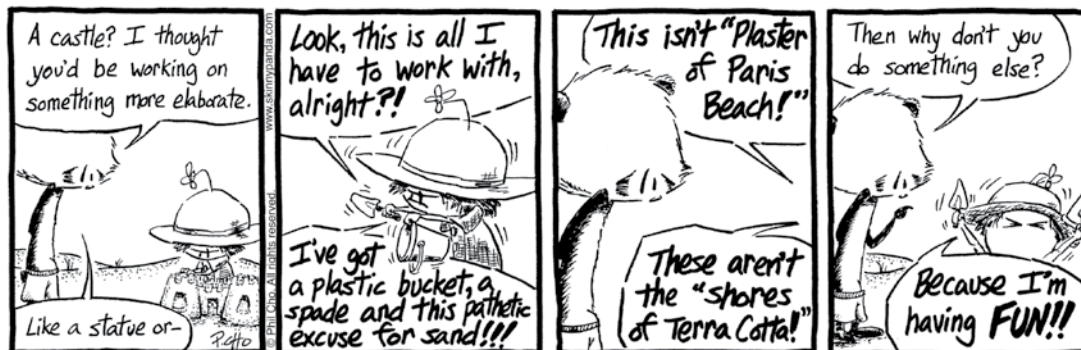
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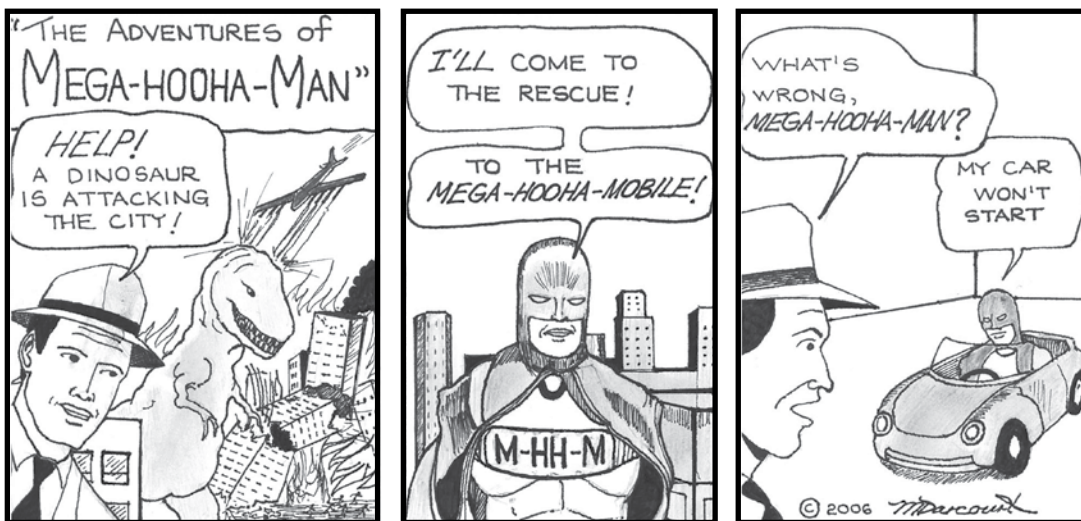
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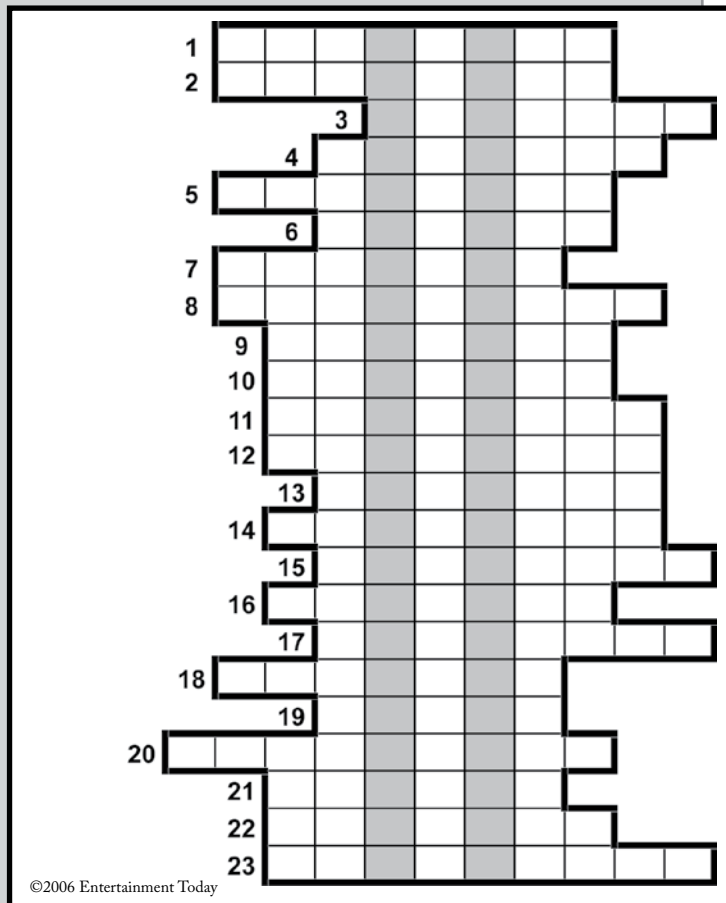
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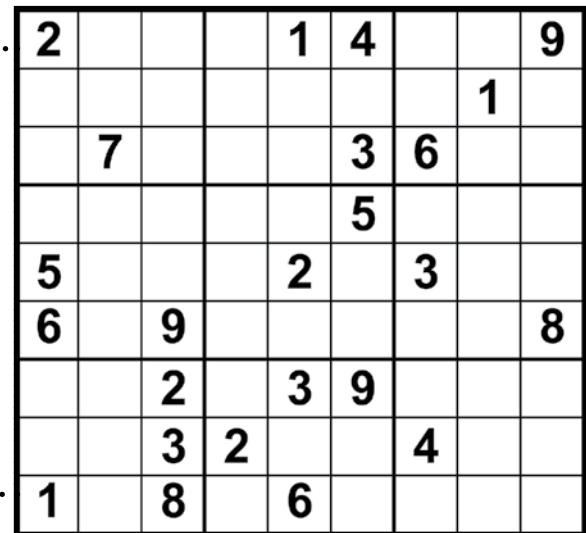
POPGRIDDLE CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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The ultimate logic puzzle



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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 - 9 (in any order).
- 2) Every column should have the numbers 1 - 9 (in any order).
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5	3	2	9	1	4	8	6	7
1	6	9	8	2	7	5	4	3
8	4	7	6	5	3	9	2	1
3	8	1	4	9	5	2	7	6
9	2	6	7	8	1	4	3	5
7	5	4	3	6	2	1	8	9
6	1	3	5	4	8	7	9	2
4	9	5	2	7	6	3	1	8
2	7	8	1	3	9	6	5	4

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Find the answers to read a quote from *Casablanca* (1942) on the colored columns.

Created by G. Gillen

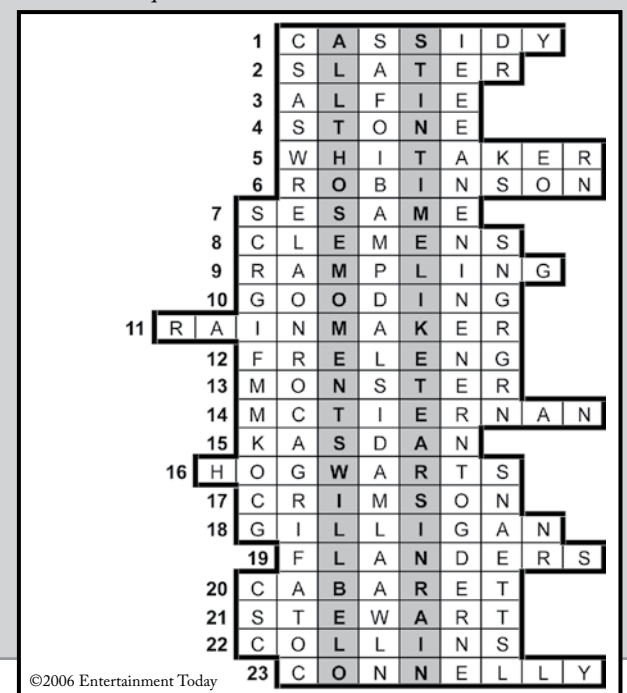
1. Won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for *LA Confidential*.
2. Actor, director, earned an Oscar as director and a nomination as actor for *Unforgiven*; repeated in 2005 with *Million Dollar Baby*.
3. Desperate Housewife and pre-operative male to female transsexual in *Transamerica*.
4. 2004 film with Vigo Mortensen; Pony Express courier travels to Arabia to compete in a dangerous horse race.
5. In his mind lies the clue to finding a ruthless killer; played by Anthony Hopkins in 1991's *The Silence of the Lambs*.
6. Elected Miss Sweden in 1950, played a bombshell actress in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*.
7. Director, born in former Czechoslovakia; his credits include *Ghost Busters*, *Kindergarten Cop*, and *Evolution*.
8. First Afro-American actor cast for the role of Othello in a theatrical film, also played Morpheus in the *Matrix* trilogy.
9. Actress, played Rachel Green in *Friends*.
10. 1982 film with Jack Lemmon; the story of an American father searching for his son in a South American country.
11. Successful sitcom about "nothing," ran from 1990 to 1998.
12. 2002 film with Dana Carvey, an Italian waiter fights off a criminal mind with his inherited powers; *The Master of _____*
13. Actor, had his own show, made his big screen debut in Steven Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*, also directed *Reality Bites*.
14. Former supermodel born in Germany, appeared in *Black and White*, *Love Actually*, and episodes of *Dharma & Greg*.
15. Original "Incredible Hulk" in the TV series, made a cameo as security guard in the 2003 big screen remake.
16. Singer, composer, former lead singer of rock band Genesis, has composed songs for *Gangs of New York* and *Shall We Dance*.
17. Director, his recent filmography includes *The Perfect Storm*, *Troy*, and *Poseidon*.
18. Young Hobbit entrusted with an ancient ring he must destroy.
19. Character played by Pam Dawber in 1978-82 TV series, also starring Robin Williams.
20. Actress, earned a *Hollywood Reporter* Young Star Award for *The Horse Whisperer*.
21. 1982 film with Ben Kingsley, directed by Richard Attenborough, biography of famed leader of the Indian revolts against the British.
22. 1980 film with Jack Nicholson; about a man, his wife, and his clairvoyant son who take care of a haunted hotel over the winter, based on a novel by Stephen King; *The _____*
23. 2006 film set against the backdrop of boxing at the Naval Academy, centers on a young man played by James Franco.

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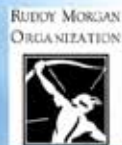


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Beijing Man

Director : Qin Zhiyu
Cast : Cheng Qian
Li Jing
Lv Liping

2000 The 18th St. Paul International
Festival Best Film



A World Without Thieves

Director : Feng Xiaogang
Cast : Andy Lau
Ge You
Ren'e Liu
Li Bingbing

The 12th Beijing Undergraduate
Students' Film Festival Best View Effect
The 10th Golden Bauhina Awards Best
Actress
The 10th Golden Bauhina Awards One
of The Ten Chinese Films



Perhaps Love

Director : Peter Chan
Cast : Zhou Xun
Jacky Cheung
Takeshi Kaneshiro
Jin-hee Ji

2006 The 25th Hong Kong Film Awards
Best Film
Best Art Direction
Best Original Film Song
Best Original Film Score
Best Costume Make Up Design
Best Cinematography
Best Actress Zhou Xun

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2	4:00pm	Huayao Bride in Shangrila
	6:45pm	A World Without Thieves
	9:15pm	Perhaps Love
3	4:00pm	Ballet of Two Dancers
	6:45pm	2 Young
	9:15pm	Perhaps Love
4	4:00pm	2 Young
	6:45pm	A World Without Thieves
	9:15pm	Perhaps Love
5	4:00pm	In The Blue
	6:45pm	Beijing Man
	9:15pm	Huayao Bride in Shangrila
6	4:00pm	Ballet of Two Dancers
	6:45pm	A World Without Thieves
	9:15pm	Perhaps Love
7	4:00pm	Beijing Man
	6:45pm	2 Young
	9:15pm	Huayao Bride in Shangrila
8	4:00pm	2 Young
	6:45pm	A World Without Thieves
	9:15pm	Perhaps Love
9	4:00pm	Ballet of Two Dancers
	6:45pm	Huayao Bride in Shangrila
	9:15pm	Beijing Man

In The Blue

Director : Yuan Weidong
Cast : Zhang Lifu
Qi Zixiu
Zhao Jiaqi
Du Ma



2 Young

Director : Eatonssin
Cast : Jaycee Chan
Eric Tsang
Xue Kaiqi
Teresa Mo

2006 The 25th Hong Kong Film Awards
Best Supporting Actress Teresa Mo

Huayao Bride in Shangrila

Director : Zhang Jiarui
Cast : Zhang Jingchu
Yin Xiaotian
Cui Zheming

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the Best New Comer and the Best
Director Nominee.
2005 The 14th Rooster & Hundreds Flower
Movie Festival Best Actress Nominee

Ballet of Two Dancers

Director : Chen Li
Cast : Ni Ping
Li Lu

The 13th Rooster & Hundreds Flower Movie
Festival Best Cinematography
The 13th Golden Rooster & Hundreds
Flower Movie Festival Best Art Nominee
The 11th Huabiao Awards Best Screenplay
The 11th Huabiao Awards Best Feature
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