



ANALYZE THAT

Robert De Niro and Billy Crystal reprise their roles as mobster and psychiatrist from 1999's hilarious *Analyze This*, with weak results. Clumsy transitions, a ludicrous finale (*CHiPs* has staged better action sequences) and downright bad acting (stick to hosting the Oscars, Billy) make this shrink session a memory I'd rather suppress.

—Jim Radosta

DIE ANOTHER DAY

James Bond, 40 years older and hornier, shows no signs of losing his stamina in this 20th installment of the spy series. Halle Berry's lack of charisma as generic Bond babe Jinx is more than redeemed by snarling villain Gustav Graves (played by Toby Stephens, Maggie Smith's son) and Madonna's cameo as a fencing instructor.

—JR

FAR FROM HEAVEN

Julianne Moore gives yet another brilliant performance, this time as a well-off 1950s housewife dealing with her husband's homosexuality and her community's homophobia and racism in queer Portland filmmaker Todd Haynes' virtually flawless homage to the "women's pictures" of the period. Each cinematic detail—the music, the framing, the dialogue, the lighting—is a precise replica, allowing the film to be appreciated both for its own considerable merits and as an intellectually

astute exploration of genre and narrative.

—Christopher McQuain

FRIDA

At least it *looks* good. Director Julie Taymor's take on the life of the famous painter and her husband, Diego Rivera, has loads of visual pizzazz, effortlessly evoking the feel, color and sounds of Old Mexico. But the overwrought acting and soap opera script are in constant battle with the film's more thoughtful impulses. Frida (Salma Hayek) was a hellcat in real life, but here she's the dreaded clichéd Latin spitfire brawling in cantinas, noisily swapping tongue with the fetching Ashley Judd and generally screaming and carrying on. Edward Norton apparently rewrote the script—more evidence that actors should be barred from becoming screenwriters.

—Gary Morris

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

I grew tired of this lame series within the first hour of last year's *Sorcerer's Stone*. The sequel finds our young wizard accused of attempted murder, chased by gigantic spiders and haunted by a ghostly diary—yet bland actor Daniel Radcliffe never once manages to convey any sense of peril or joy. Hokum pocus.

—JR

REAL WOMEN HAVE CURVES

Alternatively bitter-sweet and hilarious is this first movie from archaeologist-turned-filmmaker Patricia Cardoso about Mexican immigrants and their first-generation daughters. America Ferrera makes an unforgettable debut as Ana, an 18-year-old who wants to go to college but whose mother (Lupe Ontiveros of *Chuck & Buck*) has serious plans for her to work in her older sister's sweatshop. Cross-generational issues, body image and culture clashes all collide in a refreshingly unforced way.

—Lisa Bradshaw

ROGER DODGER

Remember Campbell Scott from the 1991 Julia Roberts tearjerker *Dying Young*? That title nearly could've served as his career epitaph; fortunately, the *Singles* star has made a welcome comeback as a wannabe ladies man who tries to teach his teen nephew (Jesse Eisenberg) the ropes. Writer/director Dylan Kidd also deserves major credit for the witty banter, unexpected twists and brilliant casting of legendary screen vixens Jen-



Campbell Scott offers advice on women to nephew Jesse Eisenberg in *Roger Dodger*

nifer Beals (*Flashdance*) and Elizabeth Berkley (*Showgirls*).

—JR

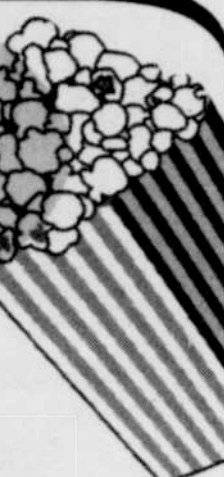
- ☹ dud, bottom of the bag
- ☹☹ only if you're really hungry
- ☹☹☹ good effort, pass the salt
- ☹☹☹☹ mmmm, tasty!
- ☹☹☹☹☹ get the big tub o' corn

nifer Beals (*Flashdance*) and Elizabeth Berkley (*Showgirls*).

SOLARIS

You gotta love Steven Soderbergh's moxie. The renegade director follows up the experimental dud *Full Frontal* with, of all things, a remake of a 1972 Russian film about a widower (George Clooney) who runs into his wife's ghost (Natascha McElhone) in outer space. Hypnotic ruminations on existence ensue. Although Soderbergh's all-killer, no-filler editing style might keep mainstream audiences from squirming in their seats, it ultimately simplifies an otherwise complex quandary.

—JR



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