



DR. STRANGELOVE (OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB)

Thank you to Laurelhurst Theater for bringing to the big screen Stanley Kubrick's brilliant 1964 satire (starring mad comic genius Peter Sellers—times three!) of Cold War arms-race U.S. militarism run amok, complete with bumbling he-men and loony cowboy wannabes, which all rings unfortunately true in the Dubya era. Kubrick derives much humor from the unmistakably alpha-heterosexual anxiety of an Air Force general (Sterling Hayden) whose mispronounced fear of "pre-verts" and delusional paranoia regarding Communist infestation of "precious bodily fluids" leads to nuclear holocaust.

—Christopher McQuain

FINDING NEMO

Lame-ass Disney should get on its knees and thank the heavens it owns Pixar. Once again, the animation studio outdoes itself with its newest full-length feature about a clown fish dad (voiced by Albert Brooks, pretty much playing himself) whose only son is whisked away in a zip-lock bag by a human diver. With the aid of his new fish friend, Dory (voiced by Ellen DeGeneres, pretty much playing herself), normally skittish Dad faces sharks, whales and deadly jellyfish to find his offspring. Adults will have even more fun at this remarkably astute movie than the kiddies.

—Lisa Bradshaw

THE HULK

This month's comic book film du jour is long and full of angst but not nearly as entertaining as many will want. Although scrumptious in the little-seen *Chopper*, Eric Bana is bland here as the repressed Bruce Banner, whose genetics hold the key to a door unlocked by exposure to gamma radiation. Now, when he gets angry, he turns into the less-than-jolly green giant. There are nice performances by Jennifer Connelly and Sam Elliott, though Nick Nolte and Josh Lucas chew the scenery as if in a bad high school play. Director Ang Lee tries for a monster movie with heart, but it doesn't have much momentum or suspense. You might like to see *The Hulk* once, though, just to witness the latest in computer-generated imagery. Size queens

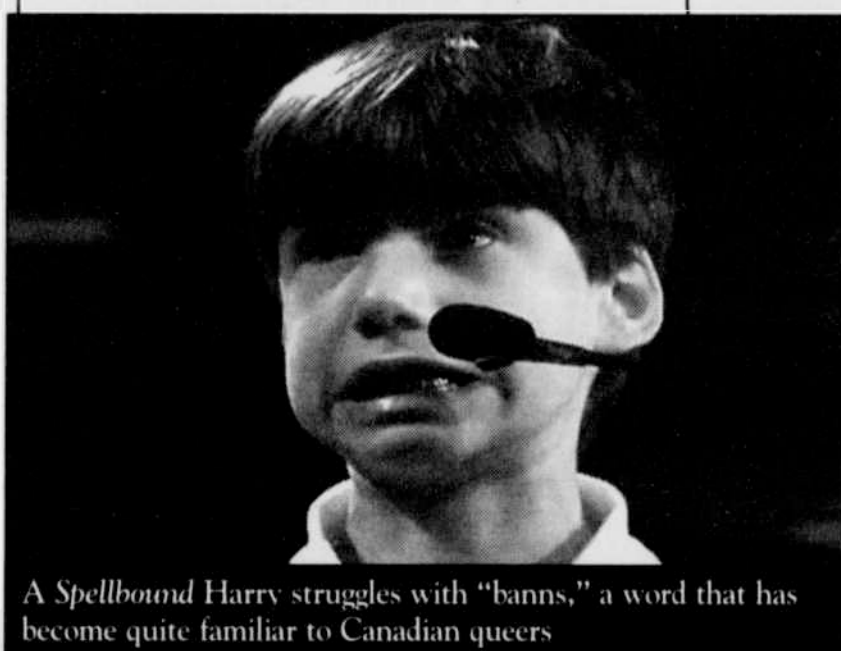
will be disappointed that Hulk's pants have an infinite ability to stretch, while TV purists will love the film's final lines.

—Andy Mangels

SPELLBOUND

This Oscar-nominated documentary follows eight kids from diverse ethnic, social and economic backgrounds as they prepare for and compete in the National Spelling Bee. A fascinating, revelatory survey of modern America. And in our era of spell checkers and instant messaging, it's reassuring to see students who are obsessed with the lost art of linguistics.

—Jim Radosta



A *Spellbound* Harry struggles with "banns," a word that has become quite familiar to Canadian queers

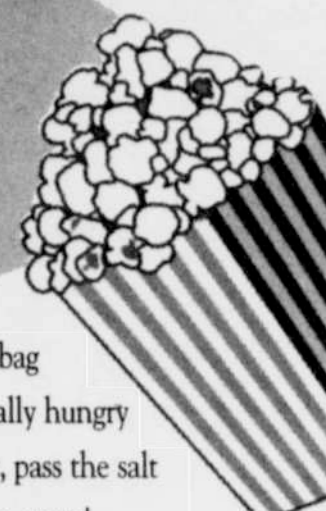
TOGETHER

Although it occasionally dips into unexpected schmaltz, this new film from Chinese writer/director Chen Kaige (*Farewell My Concubine*) is a lovely story about a small-village father who takes his son to Beijing to foster his amazing, inborn talent for the violin. Colorful characters, bustling scenery and surreally shot background narrative carry along the sometimes tired theme of dreams not always being worth the cost.

—LB

What's Poppin'?

What's popped and what's flopped, in a theater near you.



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

WHALE RIDER

While it's not exactly a threat to Hollywood (much as some of us might welcome any threat to that wheezing trash factory), New Zealand is making its mark as one of the more intriguing centers for film production, what with the 1994 hit *Once Were Warriors* and Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Now Niki Caro's *Whale Rider*, based on the popular novel by Witi Ihimaera, brings it home with a stunning story of the struggle between a 12-year-old girl who believes she has the mystical powers of a Maori chieftain and her stubborn, traditionalist grandfather who does everything he can to break her. With fine acting, sweeping cinematography, sharp direction and an honest feminist message, it's nearly perfect filmmaking.

—Gary Morris



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