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What's Poppin'?

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



FAHRENHEIT 9/11

You may have heard about this little film—you know, that one that's going to change the course of world history? What might get lost in the hype and hyperbole is that *Bowling for Columbine* shit-starter Michael Moore has created an incendiary, heartbreaking masterpiece of investigative journalism that does a better job documenting current events than all of our "liberal media" outlets combined. President Bush comes off as a buffoon at best—and a cold, corrupt, elitist warmonger at worst.

—Jim Radosta

THE INTENDED

A poorly executed period piece about an English surveyor and his fiancée who find work at an isolated trading post in the primeval forests of Malaysia. The characters are two-dimensional and the plot is generally lost at sea, grasping at clichés and underdeveloped conflicts. To make matters worse, the film, which opens July 9, pushes a decrepit moral lesson about the evils of money and the subsequent corruption of the human soul. Been there, done that.

—Evan James

THE MOTHER

A beautifully filmed and provocative story about a 60-year-old widow who, before her dead husband's body has had time to cool, starts an affair with her daughter's strapping lover. Anne Reid does a brilliant job with the titular character, but the film lacks a certain believability and consistency of tone. Nonetheless, it is something you haven't seen before and is worth a trip to the theater.

—J.B. Rabin

NAPOLEON DYNAMITE

Mercifully, this flick starring Oregon-grown actor Jon Heder turns around after the first dismal 30 minutes and proves to be an agreeably quirky story about the ultimate high school goof, his embarrassing family and his divinely placid friends. Stuck midway between inane National Lampoon offerings and the calculatingly droll films of Todd Solondz, Jared Hess' first feature ultimately reaches a nice balance of pathos and smarm.

—Lisa Bradshaw

THE NOTEBOOK

No matter how big a cynic you are and how much you try to dislike this movie about young lovers separated by class and World War II, it will end up charming the pants off you. And while you sit, pantless, in the theater, be sure to take in the phenomenon that is Ryan Gosling's (*The*

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

United States of Leland) on-screen chemistry with relative newcomer Rachel McAdams. Bring tissues.

—JBR

SPIDER-MAN 2

The amount of sequels better than their predecessors can be counted on one hand; add director Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man 2* to that list.



Spider-Man 2, you're our hero!

Peter Parker (Tobey Maguire) is so tortured by his secret for so much of the film that when he's "outed," it's a huge relief for the character and the audience both. Excellent special

effects and strong acting make this not just a summertime must-see but one of the best superhero films ever made.

—Andy Mangels

THE STEFFORD WIVES

In the ultimate remake gone wrong, writer/director team Paul Rudnick and Frank Oz (*In & Out*) take a chilling 1970s novel about paranoia and the gender wars and turn it into a circus farce starring Nicole Kidman as a new suburbanite trying to figure out her robotically perfect neighbors. The addition of a gay family somewhat intrigues, but the strong cast is wasted on a film that doesn't know where it's going and doesn't know what to do when it gets there.

—LB

TWO BROTHERS

Beautifully shot in remote jungle temples, this fabulous feature by Jean-Jacques Annaud (*The Bear*) follows the adventures of separated tiger cubs against the dramatic backdrop of early 20th century Cambodia. Despite the film's seeming kids-only appeal, adults will respond to its powerful mix of myth and pathos. *Two Brothers* is also a perfect argument for replacing human actors with animals.

—Gary Morris

