

What's Poppin'?

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

DONNIE DARKO: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

If you missed this sci-fi masterpiece during its horribly marketed 2001 release, there is a prime opportunity to do penance for your sins through Sept. 23 at Hollywood Theatre. Yummy Jake Gyllenhaal plays the title character, a 1988 high school student who is convinced that the world is going to end. Genius writer/director Richard Kelly is like a cross between John Hughes and David Lynch.

—Jim Radosta



Don't be left in the Darko—see the director's cut of your fave turn-of-the-century cult classic soon

HERO

In ancient China, a mysterious assassin arrives at an emperor's palace. His intentions—to aid the ruler...or to destroy him?—are revealed through subjective, Rashômon-like flashbacks. Director Yimou Zhang (*Raise the Red Lantern*), evidently an obsessive cinematic perfectionist, has made a film that approaches greatness. An inimitable vibrancy emanates from every luscious, colorful frame. *Hero* is a must-see.

—Christopher McQuain

MEAN CREEK

Writer/director Jacob Estes makes a promising feature debut with this intense morality tale about a group of kids who play a prank on a schoolyard bully with tragic results. Unfortunately, the film's strong acting and beautiful shots of Oregon get overshadowed by a second half that lacks drive and an ending that leaves too much hanging.

—JR

MR. 3000

The target audience for this Bernie Mac vehicle will come for a fun all-American baseball story and for the star, and they won't be disappointed. For the rest of us, there's some good acting by Mac as an aging player making an unlikely comeback and by co-star Angela Bassett, as well as more than a few funny moments, but not enough to save it from the overall lack of substance. Ultimately forgettable and a little tiresome.

—Michael Burdick

RESIDENT EVIL: APOCALYPSE

Zombie movies this year apparently come in two flavors: extremely good (*Shaun of the Dead*) and extremely bad (*Resident Evil: Apocalypse*). The funny trailer, which suggests that makeup reanimates the dead, has zero to do with this dull, tedious waste of time that practically eats your brain as you watch. A multicultural cast led by a tough

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

woman fights evil beasts; where haven't we seen that plot before?

—Andy Mangels

SHAUN OF THE DEAD

Why are British zombie movies so darn good? Shaun tries to keep his relationship together with his girlfriend, his slobby flatmate and his clueless mother, even as England dissolves around him into a land of walking undead. Sounds silly, but this movie, which opens Sept. 24, is probably the funniest and most heartfelt of the year. See it before it becomes the cult classic it's destined to be.

—AM

SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

It's 1939, and gutsy woman reporter Polly Perkins (Gwyneth Paltrow) and her sometime paramour, dashing fighter-plane pilot Sky Captain (Jude Law), must save the world from a mad scientist's apocalyptic scheme. *Sky Captain* has its moments—the romance is of the snappy, unsentimental, screwball-comedy variety, and first-time director Kerry Conran uses cutting-edge technology to create some memorably luscious visuals—but it finally succumbs to dull action-movie clichés.

—CM

TOUCH OF PINK

This film—the opening of which has been continually pushed back, this time to Sept. 24—imagines the ghost of Cary Grant (Kyle MacLachlan) dubiously advising a young Londoner (Jimi Mistry) who's torn about whether to come out to his Muslim mother (Suleka Mathew) and extended family. Writer/director Ian Iqbal Rashid's attempt to join physical comedy and multicultural tension concerning homosexuality doesn't always gel, but it's smart, interesting and well-played enough to overcome its flaws.

—CM

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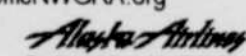
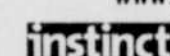


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