

FILM

REVIEWS

**Cinderella Man**

Will lightning strike twice for *A Beautiful Mind* director Ron Howard and actor Russell Crowe? Not exactly. This drama takes a familiar yet intriguing story—underdog boxer defeats heavyweight champ against the odds, including Depression-era poverty—and robs it of all suspense. Besides, so soon on the heels of the far superior pugilist pic *Million Dollar Baby*, we really don't need another hero. **C**

—Jim Radosta

**Deserted Station**

This is a typical film of the new Iranian cinema—neorealist performances, artsy style—based on a concept developed by director Alireza Raisian and screenwriter Abbas Kiarostami while on a photography trip together. A testy and uncertain photographer (Nezam Manouchehri) and his quite sad wife (the delightful Leila Hatami) are stranded in a remote village after their car breaks down. He and the sole adult male inhabitant leave to get help while the young woman bonds with the children of the village. Her presence brings unexpected humor from the kids who live in this strange, deserted place. As the day draws on, the children help bring a new hope and life into the woman's heart. Now playing at Hollywood Theatre. **B**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

**High Tension**

Holy merde! Just in time for Gay Pride '05, here's a thoroughly disgusting French horror flick that equates lesbianism with violence and insanity. The plot hinges on a *Sixth Sense*-like

revelation that can't be revealed here, so you'll have to endure the bloodbath yourself if you want to see how sapphism gets smeared. The story follows two girls who want to spend a quiet weekend in the country but end up getting terrorized by a maniac in coveralls. Razors, axes and power saws make for gore galore, but there are few genuinely creepy moments. Dubbed in English so you won't miss any of the splatter action. **C+**

—Stephen Blair

**Ladies in Lavender**

Judi Dench and Maggie Smith (*Tea with Mussolini*) reunite in this enchanting story by British author William J. Locke. The film, set in Cornwall, tells the story of two sisters who find a young man washed up on the beach and nurse him back to health. He turns out to be a gifted Polish violinist, and one of the sisters falls in love with him. This is one of those beautiful, quiet storytelling movies where you just sit back and simply enjoy, watch and listen. **A**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

**Lords of Dogtown**

A bunch of punks revolutionize skateboarding with their surfer moves in this dramatization of the 2001 documentary *Dogtown and Z-Boys*. Director Catherine Hardwicke (*Thirteen*) and a killer soundtrack transport us back to the 1970s with a tremendous cast of (frequently shirtless) indie boys: Portlander John Robinson (*Elephant*), Emile Hirsch (*The Dan-*

*gerous Lives of Altar Boys*), Victor Rasuk (*Raising Victor Vargas*) and Heath Ledger (*10 Things I Hate About You*). **A**

—JR

**Mad Hot Ballroom**

Opening June 10 at Fox Tower Cinemas, this beautiful, inspiring documentary takes us on a journey into the world of ballroom dancing with 11-year-old students, their teacher and an after-school program in New York City. The viewer is dancing with the kids and can feel their excitement and fear throughout their competition; it is wonderful to see how they

grow with their challenges. I wish I could get my feet together with the music and take up ballroom dancing now. **A**

—YPB

**Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith**

Writer/director/control freak George Lucas fills in the final gap of his 28-year-old saga as Anakin Skywalker (Hayden Christensen) succumbs to the Dark Side of the Force and transforms into Darth Vader. The effects are better than ever and the political subtext is amusing (evil senators, the death of liberty), but the acting is unforgivably stiff and the dialogue will leave you cringing. **B-**

—JR



The French horror flick *High Tension* takes a lesbian bloodbath.

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