



Coos Bay native Jeff Whitty (third from left) celebrates opening night of *Avenue Q* in the Broadway documentary *ShowBusiness*.

Mala Noche remains uniquely alive enough to assure its own place both in Van Sant's body of work and in the affections of his fans.

A brand new 35mm print opens Sept. 7 at Clinton Street Theater. The Criterion Collection will release the film Oct. 9 on DVD. **B+**

—Christopher McQuain

Resurrecting the Champ

One night in Denver, sports reporter Erik (Josh Hartnett) rescues a homeless man (Samuel L. Jackson) who turns out to be a former boxing legend. As their friendship develops, Erik re-evaluates his personal relationships with his family, especially with his son (impressive newcomer Dakota Goya). Without being too cheesy, this heartfelt and uplifting story is sensitively directed by Rod Lurie (*The Contender*) and brought to life through great performances. The stellar supporting cast includes Alan Alda, Teri Hatcher and Peter Coyote. **B+**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

Right at Your Door

This tremendously tense, claustrophobic and gripping thriller begins innocently enough as a husband sends his wife off to work in downtown Los Angeles. But when dirty bombs are detonated in the city and chemical fallout begins to rain down, the handyman next door joins their fight for survival. Cocooned inside their home, the husband is protected, but his wife is outside and not so lucky. Slow-moving but tightly written and well-acted, *Right at Your Door* offers a lot of "what ifs" and one killer of an ending. **B+**

—Andy Mangels

ShowBusiness: The Road to Broadway

The real drama is behind the curtain in this thoroughly edible documentary now playing at Living Room Theaters. The film follows the progress of four Broadway musicals over the course of a year: *Wicked*, *Taboo*, *Caroline*, or *Change* and *Avenue Q*. The latter emerges as the real heart of the story, with gay composer Jeff Marx as the hapless hero. His clashes with Oregon-born librettist Jeff Whitty (who is also gay) provide dramatic tension, although the real villain of the piece is Michael Riedel, drama critic for *The New York Post*, who comes off as bitchy and vindictive. *ShowBusiness* points out numerous times how the critics who supposedly uphold the values of the theater seem determined to destroy it. In particular, director Dori Berinstein shows how journalists sabotaged the Boy George musical *Taboo* from the

moment Rosie O'Donnell announced she was spending \$10 million of her own money to produce it.

There are also some terrific moments with Boy George himself looking surreal in a wig made out of Barbie dolls, as well as plenty of rehearsal and performance footage.

The film isn't all dish, however, with the most insightful commentary coming from *Caroline* director George C. Wolfe, who is also gay. (In a film about Broadway, perhaps it would be simpler to say who isn't gay.) But what's most striking about *ShowBusiness* is the sheer earnestness of the creators of musicals, with the film capturing both the joy and heartbreak of dreams fulfilled and dashed. That the performers and writers are passionate and sincere comes as no surprise, but so are the theater producers, who come off as committed crusaders taking risks at considerable odds. Their love of the Broadway musical bursts off the screen, as does the filmmaker's, making *ShowBusiness* a must-see for theater lovers. **A+**

—Floyd Sklaver

Superbad

How many comedy movies have many of us seen about geeky high schoolers trying to lose their virginity? Too many? While that's the base plot for *Superbad*, it's probably the best film that this overdone genre has ever produced. The script is tremendously profane, and the leads (gawky Michael Cera and roundish Jonah Hill) manage to be both amazingly awkward and truly endearing. Running through the film is a not-so-hidden line of man-love (do straight guys really bond like this in movies?), and Seth Rogen is utterly adorable as a clueless cop. I suspect that, like *Borat* or *There's Something About Mary*, the humor will diminish in later viewings, but *Superbad* is a definite must-see comedy for those who like profanity and awkward humor. **A-**

—AM

3:10 to Yuma

Director James Mangold (*Walk the Line*) brings the old western genre back to life with this remake of a 1957 classic. A rancher (Christian Bale) desperately needs money to survive with his family and captures an outlaw (Russell Crowe) who needs to be on the 3:10 train to Yuma; until then, he faces a lot of obstacles and unfriendly people. The cinematography is great, the sets are wonderful, and the supporting actors (including Peter Fonda and Ben Foster) are absolutely brilliant. **A-**

—YPB 10

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