

film

Baby Mama

Screenwriter and first-time director Michael McCullers (*Austin Powers*) casts Tina Fey in her first lead movie role as a 37-year-old single professional who works as the vice president of an upscale organic supermarket chain. Her biological clock is ticking, so she makes one last attempt to get a baby by paying an agency \$100,000 to find a surrogate mother: a junk-food-eating, white-trash surrogate played by Fey's former *Saturday Night Live* castmate Amy Poehler. These two are a great match, and the movie plays off the odd couple cliché but sometimes seems like another one of their skits from *SNL*. At least it has some good comedy, funny one-liners and a superb supporting cast featuring Sigourney Weaver, Greg Kinnear and Steve Martin. **C+**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

Eraserhead

David Lynch's assured first feature is a bizarrely beautiful nightmare that has long been embraced by nonmainstreamers of all stripes for its allegorical story—involving the attempted escape of a dreamer from the awful things he's subjected to by "nature" and straight society—that is in its way as harsh a critique of traditional institutions as any realistic social drama. Deservedly notorious and not by any stretch for the squeamish or literal-minded, *Eraserhead* is an enduring underground masterpiece. Opens May 2 at Hollywood Theatre. **A-**

—Christopher McQuain

Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay

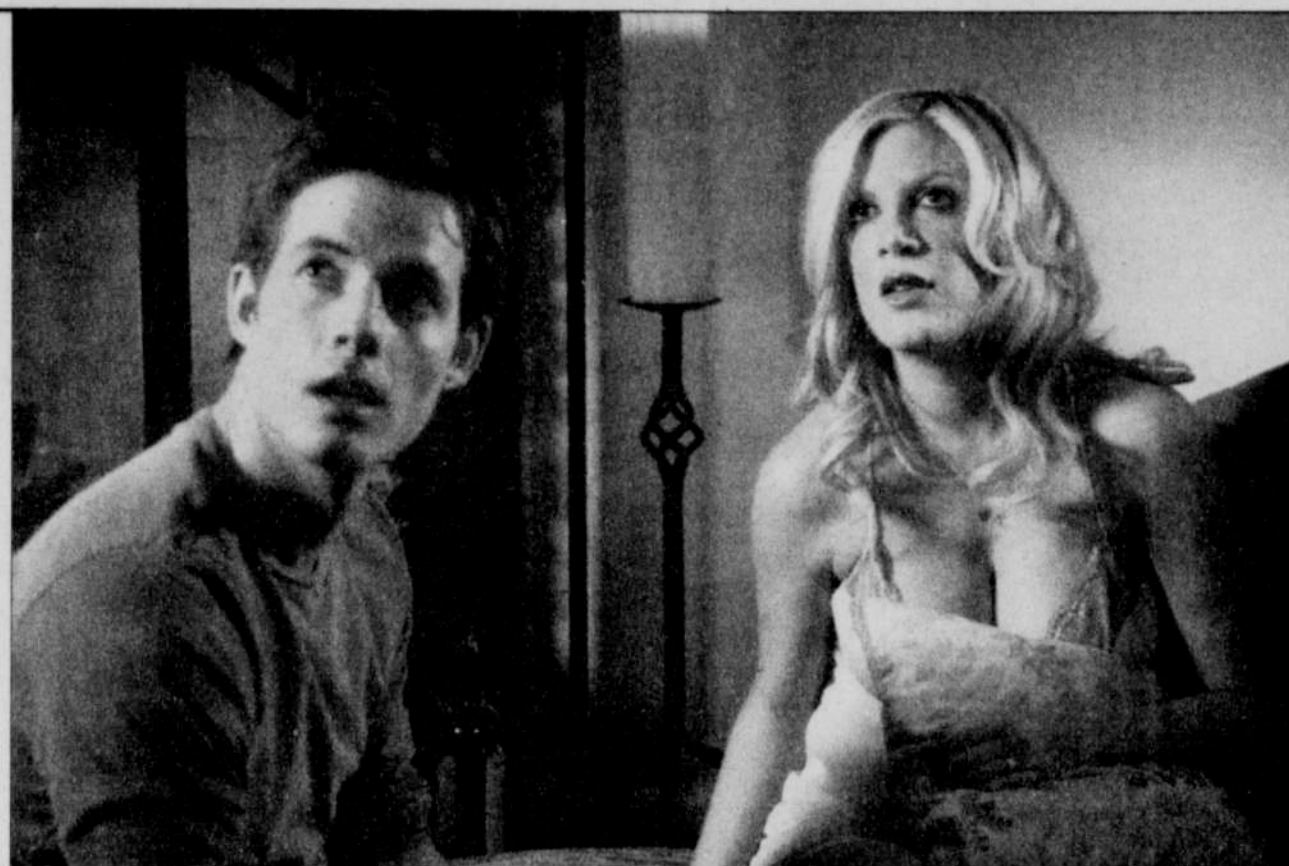
Stoner pals Harold and Kumar have another excellent adventure, in which Guantanamo Bay is only the first stop on a wacky journey through the American South. Racial stereotypes are set up, only to be undone in ways that show that even our good-natured, well-educated Asian-American heroes have their own cultural biases. Rob Corddry (*The Daily Show*) plays a bigoted Homeland Security chief determined to prove Harold and Kumar's nonexistent terrorist credentials, and once again, Neil Patrick Harris brings the best druggy, hilarious, inspired gags. Crude frat-boy humor and blunted political satire should make a better combination. Funny, but disappointing. **B-**

—Jemiah Jefferson

Kiss the Bride

Matt (Philipp Karner) is one of those cute, clever queens who's better at slinging the dish than at maintaining a stable, rewarding relationship. But unlike some people, he's got a specific reason for being unable to commit: He's still mooning over his high school sweetheart, hunky Ryan (James O'Shea). That was 10 years ago, but Matt can't move on. He covers his frustration by reviling gay marriage as "our obsession...so masochistic." But when he receives an invitation to Ryan's wedding—to a woman, no less—he can't resist going back to his hometown to see his old flame and, with luck, snatch Ryan from the bride.

Of course, once he arrives in Hicksville, nothing is quite as he expected. In one of those boilerplate mix-ups, he's mistaken for an erotic dancer. Ryan's fiancée, Alex (Tori Spelling), is not the manipulative shrew he imagined but a simpatico gal who becomes his new best friend. And Ryan—well, best not to spoil what's up with Ryan. Suffice



A clever queen (Philipp Karner) tries to snatch his high school sweetheart from his fiancée (Tori Spelling) in *Kiss the Bride*.

it to say that things get very complicated.

If all a movie needed to be considered successful were snappy dialogue, *Kiss the Bride* would be a masterpiece. Some samples: "Tom took too many drugs, and didn't want to share." "You can't get hung over if you don't stop drinking." "I'm like Mother Teresa but with better skin care." *Kiss the Bride* is a little reminiscent of *Will & Grace*, with superficial characters slinging brittle, often hilarious dish, then pausing for a moment to be all vulnerable and everything. In fact, if the dialogue were cleaned up and the butt shots removed, this might make a dandy ongoing series on, say, Logo. Most of the actors are refugees from television, and the whole thing has the slick, contrived feel of a sitcom.

Still, *Kiss the Bride* gets points for its sexy cast and fleeting moments of actual emotion—and

episodic road picture. As a result, the movie carries the emotional weight of Jones' albums, which have led to her nickname, "Snorah Jones." There are excellent performances by David Strathairn and singer Chan Marshall, aka Cat Power. But the real joy is watching Jude Law, Natalie Portman and the cinematography by Darius Khondji, all of which are gorgeous. **C**

—Floyd Sklover

Some Like It Hot

Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* is such a frothy, cartoonish cross-dressing confection that it's easy to miss its sly challenge to the idea of concrete sexuality and gender roles. This is not a movie about queer desires being repressed; unlike even Dustin Hoffman in *Tootsie*, "Josephine" (Tony Curtis) and "Daphne" (Jack Lemmon) have to

have not only their livelihoods but also their lives threatened before they embrace their opportunity to wear lipstick and stockings. But it's what they discover in the process, through a series of funny near-misses and lightning-quick role-switching, that has an intriguing point to it: The trappings of gender, sexuality and even class are just that, rather arbitrary and nothing to be taken seriously.

In 1959, the year of its release, the film's rediscovery of



The 1959 classic *Some Like It Hot* challenges the idea of concrete sexuality and gender roles.

perhaps the best movie line of the year. When Matt's Asian fag hag co-worker hears about the messy doings he's involved in, she quotes her wise grandmother: "Granny Ho is right. 'The gays—they make too much big crazy!'"

Opens May 2 at Living Room Theaters. **C+**

—Gary Morris

My Blueberry Nights

This might be the most beautiful film of the year, but it's also the dullest. Director Wong Kar-wai (*In the Mood for Love*) chose singer Norah Jones for the leading lady in his first U.S. film, an



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Opens May 2 at Laurelhurst Theater. **A-**

—Christopher McQuain 10