

film

Dalai Lama Renaissance

This film was made with the intention of documenting a 1999 weeklong conference in which 40 of "the world's most innovative thinkers" met with the Dalai Lama in a misguided attempt to "synthesize" their beliefs and save the world. Instead, we're stuck watching a tedious "process" in which these egomaniacs "dialogue" about "paradigms" rather than accomplish anything meaningful. Continues July 5 at Hollywood Theatre. **D**

—Jim Radosta

An Evening with Rose Bond

The next installment of Northwest Film Center's *Northwest Tracking* series—which focuses on independent filmmakers living and working in Oregon, Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana and Washington who are contributing to the vibrant cinematic culture of the region—spotlights lesbian artist and filmmaker Rose Bond 7:30 p.m. July 10 at Whitsell Auditorium. Exploring the intersection of high art and low art, film and architecture, and interior/exterior installation, her work reimagines animation through multi-windowed projections that transform surrounding spaces into cinema-lit Lyceums. Bond will be in attendance to share stories and images from several of her installation pieces.

Garden Party

This ensemble film traces the intersecting stories of a bunch of annoying douches in Los Angeles: a teenager who turns to porn to make some quick cash, a pot-dealing real estate agent and a sexually confused Nebraskan who gets attacked in a bathroom at a gay bar after engaging in the most cringe-inducing male-on-male dance sequence since Al Pacino's twitchy moves in *Cruising*. For a film filled with this much sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, *Garden Party* is undeniably square. Opens July 11. **D**

—JR

Get Smart

Director Peter Segal (*Anger Management*) captures what made this '60s television series a classic—who could ever forget the shoe phones? Not a spoof, as I had feared, *Get Smart* is actually an homage to the original creator (Mel Brooks) and star (Don Adams) with all their wit and cleverness. Steve Carell and Anne Hathaway have a good onscreen chemistry, and the new special effects are entertaining. **B**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

Gonzo: The Life and Work of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson

Hunter S. Thompson was a jerk. That's what Sonny Barger, president of the Hells Angels Oakland chapter in 1965, said about the reporter who embedded with the biker gang. He was also a gun nut. He owned 22 firearms, and according to his first wife, they were all loaded. He was also a patriot who knew the U.S. Constitution and made it his life's work to shed a kaleidoscopic light on those who trampled on it. This documentary by Alex Gibney (*Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room*) is spellbinding because its subject was a contradictory American hero, who—as all writers aspire to—spoke for his generation. Opens July 4 at Cinema 21. **A**

—Jaymee R. Cuti

Hancock

Will Smith plays Hancock, a surly, alcoholic superhero with a murky past, who, to no one's surprise, is lonely and misunderstood underneath his boozy, grumpy exterior. Jason Bateman brings charm as the PR rep who decides to remake Hancock's image as well as save his own career. His wife, snarky hottie Charlize Theron, dislikes Hancock on sight, yet is drawn to him. They have a cute kid who idolizes Hancock and serves no other purpose. The excellent special effects are great eye candy, and there's one interesting plot twist, but it's not enough. *Hancock* is a mean-spirited, live-action cartoon. **C**

—Jemiah Jefferson

The Love Guru

This reeking pile of mildewed elephant shit is an embarrassment to all involved: creator Mike Meyers (the film is so infantile, it makes *Wayne's World* look like *Major Barbara* in comparison); the entire cast; most especially Sir Ben Kingsley (oh, the horror, the horror) and Justin Timberlake (who brings rock-star-with-no-discernible-acting-talent-or-comic-ability back with this "performance"); the writers (were there writers?); and the entire hockey, Bollywood and East Indian self-help yogi industries, elephants and midgets everywhere. By the time the orgy of nonplot passes through the marathon of pissing/farting/bad-accents-mixed-with-racial-stereotyping-humor/Jessica-Alba-trying-really-really-hard-to-act moments culminating in the fucking pachyderms sequence (really, you don't want to see it...or maybe you do, in which case this will be the hottest film for you since *Dumbo*), I just



A sexually confused Nebraskan (Alex Cendese, left) befriends a homeless musician (Erik Scott Smith) in *Garden Party*.

wanted to give up. Even 6-year-old Ben Kingsley fans will not find this funny. **D+**

—Jon Kretzu

Planet of the Apes

When astronaut Taylor (the great Charlton Heston) and his crew are stranded on a distant planet in the near future, they discover that talking apes are the dominant species and that humans are the oppressed slaves. Based on the 1963 French novel *La Planete des Singes* by Pierre Boulle, innovative director Franklin J. Schaffner created this all-time classic sci-fi movie in 1968. The film features Jerry Goldsmith's beautiful Oscar-nominated score and fantastic makeup designed by John Chambers, recipient of an honorary Oscar. I don't think anyone can ever forget the surprising and breathtaking final shot of the movie. In celebration of the film's 40th anniversary, a new 35mm print opens July 4 at Hollywood Theatre. **A**

—YPB

WALL•E

WALL•E may be the most depressing event of the summer. For its first remarkable 50 minutes it is a true, gentle masterpiece. An artistic triumph (watch out—Pixar has perfected digitized realism to a startling degree) and one of the most engaging, lovely, sensitive, witty and graceful pieces of cinema since Chaplin fell in love with a blind urchin and Buster Keaton had a house fall on and around him—an exquisite poem that manages to touch the hearts and minds of both children and adults by its utter simplicity and delicate innocence. And then it all goes

horribly wrong as subtlety is replaced by sledgehammer proselytizing, grace by yet another endless CGI chase to an all-too-obvious finish line and the magic of silence and simple sounds replaced by grinding, loud, lumpy dialogue and noise. Andrew Stanton directed the most perfect of Pixar films—the funny and moving *Finding Nemo*—and I had high hopes for his return to the form with *WALL•E*. For two-thirds of the film he truly delivers but then manages to destroy his work with the clumsy, heavy-handed last act—even the charming final credits sequence can't save it. What a deep shame, but just remember: If you leave when the cockroach disappears, you will have seen the masterpiece of the summer—stay around and it's just stale popcorn and lukewarm soda pop that await you. **A/D**

—JK

Wanted

Russian director Timur Bakmambetov is one to watch as a creator of over-the-top popcorn flicks that don't leave a bad aftertaste. *Wanted* shows what he can do with a genuinely big budget and high-caliber movie stars like Angelina Jolie and Morgan Freeman. This comic book adaptation evokes both the cheerful nihilism of *Fight Club* and a morally gray version of the hero's journey with the usual attendant father issues. Cubicle drone James MacAvoy hurtles toward his hyperviolent destiny as a genetically gifted elite assassin with the help of the leonine Jolie and her gun-toting pals. Enjoyable mayhem. **B**

—JJ

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