



Opening night at the theater for *Mr. and Mrs. Cole Porter* (Kevin Kline, Ashley Judd).

SIMON MEIN, MGM PICTURES, 2004

# A Trip to the Moon

## On gossamer wings

**DE-LOVELY:** Directed by Irwin Winkler. Written by Jay Cocks. Produced by Irwin Winkler, Rob Cowan, Charles Winkler. Executive producers, Simon Channing Williams, Gail Egan. Cinematography, Tony Pierce-Roberts. Production design, Eve Stewart. Editor, Julie Monroe. Costumes, Janty Yates. Music and lyrics by Cole Porter. Music arranged and produced by Stephen Endelman. Starring Kevin Kline and Ashley Judd, with Jonathan Pryce. Also, Robbie Williams, Lemar, Elvis Costello, Alanis Morissette, John Barrowman, Caroline O'Connor, Sheryl Crow, Mick Hucknall, Diana Krall, Vivian Green, Lara Fabian, Mario Frangoulis, Natalie Cole. MGM Pictures, 2004. PG-13. 125 minutes.

Cole Porter's music carries the film, more than the plot, characters and exquisite locations. Some of Porter's tunes are silly, but many of his love songs are among the best ever written. And so American. From the Jazz Age through the 1930s, '40s and into the post-WWII boom, Porter's popular songs helped define the American moment.

The movie begins with an older, depressed Porter (Kevin Kline) being whisked out of his room to the theater by Gabe (Jonathan Pryce), an angel of sorts. Rehearsal is in progress, and the two men watch together as Porter's life unfolds in song, dance and drama onstage.

I'm usually annoyed by such obvious devices, but it works here because Porter's life was theatrical — not opera but Broadway, for which he scored 10 full-scale musicals. And except for the grounding scenes he spends with his wife, Linda (Ashley Judd), Porter pretty much sings and dances his way through his life story on stage. Music was his life, as Linda notes late in the film, and without it, Porter would be rudderless, adrift.

But that's getting way ahead of the story, which unfolds in a roughly chronological fashion. Porter meets socialite Linda Lee in Paris, after at least a decade on the town, drinking, taking love where he found it, and asking nothing more. Why a playboy such as he would choose to marry at all is a real question, but in the film he simply falls in love with the lovely Linda and wants to be with her.

The story of their marriage is at the heart of the film, and biographers can decide whether or not that is truly how it was, but it works for the film Irwin Winkler has imagined. Porter's male lovers are denied any legitimacy, as if they were all one-night stands, which they may have been. Had any of the men who loved him been given at least a few lines and a personality, the picture would have been more complete.

But these are quibbles. What matters is

the music, and this is where the theater setting works best, as we segue from rehearsal to opening night and hear talented contemporary singers put a new twist to old favorites. I loved Alanis Morissette's playful rendition of "Let's Do It, Let's Fall in Love," in her white ruffled dress with red polka dots, her lilting voice filling the hall. Elvis Costello's "Let's Misbehave" is charming, which may not be an adjective often applied to his work. Vivian Green's poignant "Love For Sale" set in a gay nightclub in Hollywood sounded brand-new to me, as if I had never heard its bruised lyrics.

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I had reservations about Kline's performance before I saw the film, a dread that he might take the show biz connection over the top, which makes me very cranky. I saw just the edge of that tendency here, in some of the sillier musical numbers. Overall, I was impressed by the sobriety and dare I say maturity Kline brought to the role of a flawed man but stellar artist.

Judd gave one of her most subtle performances in years, showing Linda's dignity and backbone in a difficult marriage. She evokes our sympathy, but not our pity. And when she needs to save her marriage and rein in Porter's outrageous side, she does it lovingly. No small feat, that.

But it's Pryce as Gabe who anchors the film. He knows the past, the future and what everyone wishes had happened but didn't. His presence is reassuring, in part because his character has none of the religious aspect of his namesake.

High recommendations to this overlong but rewarding biopic, now playing at Cinema World. Beautiful men and women, Armani clothing, excellent vintage cars and homes of the wealthy — a perfect escape from the 21st century. **EW**

**OPENING OR RETURNING:** **Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com)**

**Dead or Alive Final:** Takashi Miike's third installment of his explicitly violent parody of Hong Kong gangster movies is possibly his most brilliant. It comments on life through "its use of violence, humor, and liberal literary and film allusions." NR. Adults only. LateNite Bijou.

**Family Undertaking, A:** Elizabeth Westrate's film documents a changing social trend: the home-funeral movement. More families bring loved ones' deaths back into the family and away from the commercialized funeral industry. On "POV" at 11 pm on 8/3 on OPB, but check listings.

**Harry and Kumar Go to White Castle:** A comedy about room mates who get stoned and go out for a few burgers but end up on a long, strange trip. Stars John Cho (*American Pie*) and Kal Penn (*Van Wilder*). A summer sleeper, this road film has some critics smiling. R. Cinema World.

**Manchurian Candidate, The:** Updating of Cold War classic psychological thriller stars Denzel Washington as an ex-career officer disturbed by his experience in Desert Storm. Liv Schreiber plays a former squad sergeant, now a vice-presidential candidate and son of a powerful senator (Meryl Streep). R. Cinema World. Cinema World.

**Modern Times (1936):** The last silent film by writer, director, incomparable star Charlie Chaplin is one of cinema's most influential films. Brilliant by any standards, it was the first film to put the man versus machines themes up front. G. Music by Brooks Robertson and buster B. Jones play at 8 pm on 7/30; movie starts at dusk. Broadway Plaza outside. \$2 donation requested.

**Shaolin Soccer:** Elvis Mitchell, late of *The New York Times*, found this super-successful Hong Kong action comedy directed, co-written and starred in by "action avatar" Stephen Chow "too much fun to take seriously, or ignore." PG. Bijou.

**Thunderbirds:** High-tech assistance is required from top-secret International Rescue, former astronaut (Bill Paxton) and his five sons. Ben Kingsley plays the master criminal. PG. Cinema World.

**Village, The:** M. Night Shyamalan's new suspenseful film stars Joaquin Phoenix, Bryce Dallas Howard, Adrien Brody, William Hurt and Sigourney Weaver. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Dodgeball:** A True Underdog Story: Can social rejects save their small local gym from gentrification? Only director Rawson Thurber and his stars Ben Stiller, Vince Vaughn, Christine Taylor and Rip Torn know for sure. PG-

**CONTINUING:** **Anchorman:** Subtitled "The Legend of Ron Burgundy," this comedy stars Will Ferrell as an unctuous, untalented newscaster who's a legend only in his own mind. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Bourne Supremacy, The:** Paul Greengrass (writer, director of *Bloody Sunday*) directs Matt Damon as assassin Jason Bourne in the second installment of Robert Ludlum's espionage thrillers. Also stars Joan Allen, Brian Cox, Julia Stiles, Kurt Urban and Franka Potente. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Catwoman:** Halle Berry makes her action debut as a stunning looking action figure, Catwoman, with Frances Conroy, Benjamin Bratt, Lambert Wilson and Sharon Stone. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinema World.

**Chronicles of Riddick, The:** Riddick (Vin Diesel) ends up on a multicultural planet invaded by a despot planning to subjugate everyone with his non-human warriors, the Necromongers. (Named for a bad rock band?) Also stars Thandie Newton, Alexa Davalos, Colm Feore, Linus Roache and Judi Dench. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Cinderella Story, A:** Teen romance comedy stars Hilary Duff, Jennifer Coolidge, Chad Michael Murray and Regina King. Mark Rosman directs. PG. Cinema World.

**Clearing, The:** First-time director Pieter Jan Brugge takes a minimalist approach to the difficult human situation three fallible people find themselves in. Stars Robert Redford and Helen Mirren as a successful couple and Willem Dafoe as the kidnapper who changes their lives. Highly recommended. R. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Day After Tomorrow, The:** Directed by Roland Emmerich, starring Dennis Quaid, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emmy Rossum, Sela Ward. A climatologist (Quaid) tries to figure out a way to save the world from abrupt global warming. He must get to his son (Gyllenhaal) in New York, which is being taken over by a new ice age. PG-13. Movies 12.

**De-Lovely:** Songsmith Cole Porter's (Kevin Kline) life in song and dance centers on his long marriage (Ashley Judd) and relegates his homosexuality to bad-boy behavior. Performances by contemporary singers such as Elvis Costello, Alanis Morissette and Sheryl Crow enhance the music. PG-13. Cinema World. **See review this issue.**

**Mean Girls:** Lindsay Lohan plays a high-school student raised by zoologist parents in the African bush, who falls

13. Movies 12. **Fahrenheit 9/11:** Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes 2004, Michael Moore's non-fiction film is more restrained than his later films and better for it. The film is respectful, moving and informative, as well as opinionated and occasionally heavy handed. Don't miss. Highest recommendations. R. Bijou. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Garfield, The Movie:** The poster promises "frisky business" as Garfield, the smart pants kitty, makes his film debut. PG. Movies 12. **Harry Potter & The Prisoner of Azkaban:** Alfonso Cuarón directs the third film based on the series by J.K. Rowling. Harry (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron (Rupert Grint) and Hermione (Emma Watson), now teenagers, return to Hogwarts, where they face their darkest fears. The very best so far. Highly recommended. PG. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Hidalgo:** Based on autobiography of distance rider Frank T. Hopkins, played by Viggo Mortensen, this epic action-adventure takes place during a 3,000 mile survival race across the Arabian Desert in 1890. PG-13. Movies 12. **Home on the Range:** Disney animated film features voices by Roseanne Barr, Judi Dench, Jennifer Tilly, Cuba Gooding Jr., Randy Quaid, Steve Buscemi, Carole Cook and Governor Ann Richards, while singing comes from k.d. lang, Bonnie Raitt, Tim McGraw and The Beau Sisters. PG. Movies 12.

**I, Robot:** Alex Proyas (*Dark City*, *The Crow*) directs Will Smith as a police detective investigating a crime thought to be perpetrated by a robot. Also stars Bruce Greenwood, James Cromwell, Chi McBride and Bridget Moynahan. Based on Isaac Asimov's classic sci-fi stories. PG-13. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Kill Bill Vol. 2:** The Bride (Uma Thurman) pursues her next foes, Budd (Michael Madsen), Ellie Driver (Daryl Hannah) and finally, Bill (David Carradine). Bloody. Quentin Tarantino's epic shows he makes movies that move and characters who kill, but to what end, besides his own self-gratification? R. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**King Arthur:** Excellent cast includes Clive Owen, Keira Knightley, Stellan Skarsgard, Stephen Dillane, Ray Winstone, Ioan Gruffudd. Directed by Antoine Fuqua and produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, this revisionist history, action adventure is not your great-great-grandpa's Arthurian tales, but is recommended for its performances. PG-13. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Mean Girls:** Lindsay Lohan plays a high-school student raised by zoologist parents in the African bush, who falls

for a popular girl's ex-boyfriend. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.** **Napoleon Dynamite:** Jared Hess' indie comedy stars Jon Heder as a high schooler who lives in Idaho with his grandmother. The *Village Voice* says "the film is an epic, magisterially observed pastiche on all-American geekhood, flooring the competition with a petulant shove." PG. Cinema World. Cinema World.

**Notebook, The:** Nick Cassavetes directs Gena Rowlands and James Garner, Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams in the screen adaptation of Nicholas Sparks's best-selling romantic novel. With Sam Shepard and Joan Allen. Deserves to be seen for its depiction of real first love, with a great performance by McAdams. Recommended. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Raising Helen:** Directed by Garry Marshall, starring Kate Hudson, John Corbett, Joan Cusack. After her sister and brother-in-law die in a car accident, a young woman (Hudson) becomes the guardian of their three children. Recommended. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Scooby Doo 2 Monsters Unleashed:** Some scary action, rude humor and language. PG. Movies 12. **Spider Man 2:** Peter Parker aka Spidey (Tobey Maguire) returns as a college student by day who still loves Kirsten Dunst and a superhero when needed against his new nemesis, Otto Octavius (Alfred Molina). Sam Raimi directs. Looks great! PG-13. Cinema World. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Thirteen Going On 30:** Jennifer Garner goes to bed 13, wishing she were older. Wakes up 17 years later, and she is. Directed by Gary Winnick, also stars the always excellent Mark Ruffalo, Andy Serkis and Kathy Baker. High recommendations. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Troy:** Wolfgang Petersen directs ancient Greek tale of great warrior Achilles (Brad Pitt) and the lovers Paris (Orlando), Prince of Troy, and Helen (Diane Kruger), Queen of Sparta, whose passions ignite a war that destroys a civilization. Also with Brendan Gleeson, Brian Cox, Peter O'Toole and Eric Bana. R. Movies 12. **Online archives.** **Two Brothers:** Jean-Jacques Annaud (*The Bear*) directs this adventure story about the power of friendship between twin tiger cubs. Stars Guy Pearce, Jean-Claude Dreyfus and Philippe Leroy-Beaulieu. PG. Movies 12.

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458)  
Cinema World 8 (342-6536)  
Cinema World 17 (746-5202)c  
Movies 12 (741-1231)

# Video Clips

**NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO**

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of EW publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com)

**Good Bye, Lenin:** Complicated but sweet movie about the confusions and convulsions experienced when the Berlin Wall came down, as seen through the lives of an East German family. Recommend. **Online archives.**

**Garage Days:** Alex Proyas' rock 'n' roll comedy from Australia follows an aspiring rock band. The film has what Elvis Mitchell (*The NYTimes*) called "flares of cellar-dwelling wit and shameless vivacity." Sounds wonderful. R. **Hellboy:** Based on Mike Mignola's Dark Horse Comics series, this supernatural action adventure stars Ron Perlman, John Hut, Selma Blain and Doug Jones and is directed by Guillermo del Toro. Highly entertaining, sweet film. See it. PG-13. **Online archives.**

**Reckoning:** Paul McGuigan directs this adaptation of Barry Unsworth's excellent *Morality Play*, set in medieval England. A priest in flight joins traveling players. The murder of a child sets in motion a new stage show and the solving of the crime. Stars Paul Bettany, Willem Dafoe, Brian Cox. R.

**Story of Women, The:** Claude Chabrol's 1998 tale of French abortionist, played by Isabelle Huppert during the Nazi occupation of France. Powerful. DVD extras include commentary by Chabrol, interviews and essay by film critic Wheeler Winston Dixon. R.

**Thirteen Going On 30:** Jennifer Garner goes to bed 13, wishing she were older. Wakes up 17 years later, and she is. Directed by Gary Winnick, also stars the always excellent Mark Ruffalo, Andy Serkis and Kathy Baker. PG-13. High recommendations. **Online archives.**

**Whole Ten Yards, The:** Bruce Willis, Matthew Perry, Amanda Peet and Natsha Henstridge star in this comedy sequel. Willis is a retired hitman living the life of a happy homemaker until Mafioso mayhem ensues. PG-13. **Zorba the Greek (1964):** Based on the novel by Nikos Kazantzakis, Michael Cacoyannis's classic about a young Brit (Alan Bates) who befriends a laborer (Anthony Quinn) and meets a beautiful widow (Irene Pappas) from a small, conservative village is a brilliant, humanist film, with humor and the unforgettable Quinn's dance.

**Next Week: The Bad Seed, Envy, Freaks, Kill Bill 2, The Prince and Me.**