



Magic Well

Taking a cosmic tumble

ENCHANTED: Directed by Kevin Lima. Written by Bill Kelly. Songs by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz; score by Alan Menken. Starring Amy Adams, Patrick Dempsey, James Marsden, Susan Sarandon, Timothy Spall, Rachel Covey and Idina Menzel. Walt Disney Pictures, 2007. PG. 107 minutes. ★★☆☆☆

Even before I saw *Enchanted*, I had the film’s centerpiece musical number, “That’s How You Know,” stuck firmly in my head. But watching it on

YouTube has nothing on seeing it in the theater. Now, I go to sleep with the song running ’round my head like a toy train on a circular track, and I wake up with it still spinning. I feel about this song rather like I do about the movie in which it appears: On the one hand, its sugar-bright perkiness is tempered with some sweet notions about the realities of love and life — chiefly that one’s love ought not be taken for granted. But on the other hand, the girl is singing about how it’s the boy’s re-

sponsibility to prove his love, and it’s still all about finding your special someone.

But happily ever after does get a bit of makeover in the hands of screenwriter Bill Kelly (who also — oh, no! — wrote the stinker *Premonition*) and *Tarzan* director Kevin Lima. *Enchanted* takes some of the classic bits of Disney’s fairy-tale films — the handsome prince, the instant love, the woodland animal friends — and makes them into the assumed reality of the film’s animated land, Andalasia. When we meet Giselle (Amy Adams), she’s singing to a chorus of critters about how she’s dreamt of a kiss from her true love, who’ll doubtless be along soon. That’s all it takes in this world: You kiss the right person, you’re golden. But Andalasia also has rather backward inheritance rules: If the prince marries, Queen Narissa (Susan Sarandon) loses the throne, which she’s not happy about. There will be no youthful, spunky princess for Prince Edward (James Marsden). A little shove into a magical well will take care of that.

Oh, what a well. Giselle finds herself, after a stunning fall through some sort of cosmos, in New York City at its hustling, bustling best. There, she meets Robert (Patrick Dempsey) and his princess-loving daughter Morgan (Rachel Covey), who, in one of those totally un-New York turns, take in the possibly batty Giselle. Over a few days, these folks all take turns teaching each other things. Giselle learns about dates and divorces; Robert learns about romance and the

incredible ways pigeons and cockroaches can clean your apartment if you just sing the right song to them.

Much of *Enchanted* is irresistible, and that’s largely due to Amy Adams. Giselle is a mash-up of Disney lasses; she’s got Ariel’s flowing red hair, Snow White’s forest friends and, eventually, a beast borrowed from *Sleeping Beauty* to face (the actresses who voiced or sang Ariel, Belle and Pocahontas, by the way, show up in small roles). She’s also got the shallow pep that marks so many Disney characters, and the best thing about *Enchanted* is the gradual, graceful way this too-innocent sweetheart awakens to the possibilities and depths of life and love.

Adams, even when you just want her to snap out of her storybook sweetness, is a charmer, with her wide eyes and endlessly gesturing hands, and she sweeps the film along like the skirt of her massive, poufy white dress. But as self-possessed as she winds up — and what a refresher that is — in the home stretch, *Enchanted* can’t resist some of the very happy ending standards (and other Disney clichés) that it sort of, kind of, maybe wanted to send up a little. The wicked, jealous old queen must be soundly defeated, and Giselle, no matter what she learns about dates and the real life of a single father, is going to get her Prince Charming, even if he’s not a prince. At least she gets a career, too. And I can hope that maybe, every so often, she takes the initiative in showing him she loves him, no matter what that damn song says. **EW**

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:
Atonement: Finally, Joe Wright’s adaptation of Ian McEwan’s exceptional – and exceptionally difficult to summarize – novel comes to town. *Atonement* takes place across years, as the actions of young Briony (Saoirse Ronan) have lengthy, unimagined consequences to the futures of her sister Cecilia (Keira Knightley) and their housekeeper’s son, Robbie (James McAvoy), who’s in love with Cecilia. R. 123 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Blade Runner: The Final Cut: Ridley Scott used archival footage in this new version of the classic, influential sci-fi film, making the story of replicant hunter Deckard (Harrison Ford) darker yet again (following the previous director’s cut). Not rated. 138 min. Bijou.
Dan in Real Life: Poor Dan (Steve Carrell) is an advice columnist with a passel of daughters whose life is further complicated when he falls for his brother’s girlfriend (Juliette Binoche). Also, the brother is played by Dane Cook. PG13. 99 min. Movies 12.
Dorothy Day: Don’t Call Me a Saint: Documentary about the New York writer and social justice worker being considered by the Vatican for canonization. A young bohemian writer, Day converted to Catholicism and worked to help the hungry and homeless, cofounding the Catholic Worker with Peter Maurin. 7:30 pm Jan. 4, Cozmic Pizza. Donation.
Elephant: Gus Van Sant’s film follows students on what seems like an ordinary school day until two boys unleash mayhem and murder. Van Sant’s respect for his young actors and director’s refusal to explain why school shootings happen make it exceptional. R. 81 min. 7:30 pm Jan. 5, Lorane Grange. \$7. sug. don.
Online archives.
Fred Claus: So what if Santa had a brother? Who happened to be the opposite of the saintly gift-giver: a repo man? That’s the basic premise of this film, but the reason people will see it, I suspect, is for Paul Giamatti in a Santa suit getting in a fight with Vince Vaughn. PG. 116 min. Movies 12.

Juno: Director Jason Reitman’s turned out another buzzworthy movie, this time with a screenplay by newcomer Diablo Cody. Ellen Page (who was outstanding in *Hard Candy*) plays a pregnant teenager dealing with herself, her future, her parents, the best friend who fathered the kid and the couple (Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman) who wants to adopt it. “Hilarious and sweet-tempered, perceptive and surprisingly grounded,” said the *Los Angeles Times*. PG13. 96 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
One Missed Call: Cell phones are scary, especially when they, um, play voice-mails for you? That are of your own death? Who thinks this stuff up? Didn’t electronics-as-nightmare-devices already fail with *Pulse*? Ah well. Starring Shannyn Sossamon and Edward Burns. PG13. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Stevie Wonder: A 1975 TV performance from Brussels and an unreleased live show from the early ’70s play as part of the In-Concert Series. Bijou LateNite.
Films open the Friday following EW publication date unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

CONTINUING:
Across the Universe: Julie Taymor (*Titus*, Broadway’s *The Lion King*) puts her ambitious but unsatisfying spin on a love story built around Beatles songs, following a young man (Jim Sturgess) and the girl he falls for (Evan Rachel Wood) amid the tumult of the 1960s. PG13. 131 min. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (10/18)
Alien vs. Predator: Requiem: Honest to goodness, I didn’t even know they were making another AVP until I saw an ad last week. Directors Colin and Greg Strause did visual effects work on *300*, which ought to be enough to get a certain audience into theaters to watch the nasty monsters fight. R. 86 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Alvin and the Chipmunks: What’s next? A live-action Care Bears movie starring Jason Lee? (He’s in this and *Underdog*, for those not keeping track.) Those

wacky little creatures with the high-pitched voices will surely cause him some trouble in this newest bit of family fare. With, um, David Cross. Now I’m confused. PG. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
American Gangster: Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe face off in the story of 1970s driver turned drug lord Frank Lucas (Washington) and the cop investigating Lucas and his unexpected rise to power. Directed by Ridley Scott. R. 157 min. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (11/8)
Bee Movie: Not much looks all that sweet about this animated comedy, in which Jerry Seinfeld voices a recent bee college graduate who learns, to his shock, that humans have been stealing bees’ honey for ages and ages. With the voices of Renee Zellweger and Matthew Broderick. PG. 90 min. Movies 12.
Charlie Wilson’s War: Mike Nichols directs from an Aaron Sorkin script this political ... drama? comedy? ... about a congressman (Tom Hanks) who combined forces with a CIA agent (Philip Seymour Hoffman) and a rich socialite (Julia Roberts) to direct a massive covert operation during the Cold War era. R. 97 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. **See review this issue.**
Eagle vs. Shark: “*Napoleon Dynamite* in New Zealand” is both too glib a description and not that far off for this overly quirky film about two peculiar characters who sort of fall in love – when one’s not “training” to defeat his high school nemesis in single combat. Still, it’s not without its charms. R. 87 min. Bijou LateNite. ★★☆☆☆ (12/20)
Enchanted: Beautiful princesses! Handsome princes! And ... midtown Manhattan? Amy Adams (*Junebug*), James Marsters (*X-Men*) and Patrick Dempsey (*Grey’s Anatomy*) star in this fairy tale in the real world, which follows Princess Giselle (Adams) after a wicked witch banishes her from her magical kingdom. Why does this Disney flick look so charming? PG. 107 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. **See review this issue.**
Game Plan, The: The Rock stretches his dramatic skills as a football player faced

with a strange challenge: a little girl who claims to be his daughter. PG. Movies 12.
Golden Compass, The: An only slightly above average film – mostly on account of the fantastic casting – based on Philip Pullman’s utterly brilliant novel. In a world much like our own, everyone has an animal companion who’s part of themselves, and one little girl (newcomer Dakota Blue Richards) is the key to saving not just her own world, but countless others as well. With Daniel Craig, Nicole Kidman, Sam Elliott and Eva Green. PG13. 113 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★☆☆☆ (12/13)
Great Debaters, The: Denzel Washington (who also directs) stars in the (based-on-a-true) story of a debate coach in the segregated South who leads his Texas college team to a face-off with Harvard. PG13. 123 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Hitman: Timothy Olyphant, go back to *Deadwood*! No, kidding, kidding. But honestly, I’m not sure this videogame-based film about a professional assassin trying to find out who set him up (wait, does this remind anyone of Jason Bourne?) is the best place for you. R. 100 min. Movies 12.
I Am Legend: Will Smith does the all-by-his-lonesome thing in a New York City left not exactly empty after a manmade virus devastates the globe. During the day, he tries to find other survivors; at night, he tries to survive the creatures that are what’s left of humanity. PG13. 100 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★☆☆☆ (12/20)
Margot at the Wedding: The latest film from Noah Baumbach (*The Squid and the Whale*, the underrated *Kicking and Screaming* that’s not the Will Ferrell movie of the same name) concerns the strained relationship between two sisters (Jennifer Jason Leigh and Nicole Kidman) and how it plays out as one’s wedding looms. “This lacerating film ... pushes family drama right to the edge,” says *The Los Angeles Times*. R. Bijou. ★★☆☆☆ (12/27)
Mr. Magorium’s Wonder Emporium: This story about a magical toy store, its

owner (Dustin Hoffman) and the young shop employee who might inherit it (Natalie Portman) is written and directed by Zach Helm, who also wrote last year’s *Stranger Than Fiction*. G. 94 min. Movies 12.
National Treasure: Book of Secrets: Nicolas Cage returns for more adventure and hijinks – something to do with the president’s secret book (hey, this sounds like *Crooked Little Vein*!) and clearing his family’s name; did great-great grandpa have something to do with Lincoln’s assassination? With Helen Mirren. PG. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
No Country for Old Men: The latest from the Coen brothers is a near-masterpiece, an adaptation of Cormac McCarthy’s acclaimed novel, and it’s earning plenty of acclaim itself. The story involves a small-town sheriff, a deadly drug deal and a psychopathic killer (Javier Bardem). The reviewers say “intense,” “searing,” “an evil delight.” R. 122 min. VRC Stadium 15. ★★★★★ (11/29)
P.S. I Love You: Holly (Hilary Swank) must go on without the love of her life, Gerry (Gerard Butler) when illness strikes. But for her 30th birthday, she gets a letter and a tape from Gerry, telling her how to make the most of her life. Sorry, have to end this there; I feel a bit queasy from all the sweetness. PG13. 126 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Resident Evil: Extinction: Alice (Milla Jovovich) is *still* trying to get rid of that pesky zombie-making virus. For this third film in the series, Alice gets new friends (we suspect they replace those zombie-fied last time out) including *Heroes*’ Ali Larter and singer Ashanti. R. 95 min. Movies 12.
Romance and Cigarettes: John Turturro’s film finally breaks free from distribution limbo. The peculiar comedy-drama-musical mix gets messy at times, but a great cast (Susan Sarandon, Kate Winslet, James Gandolfini, Mary-Louise Parker), hysterical musical sequences and snappy dialogue make this bawdy working-class romance/heartbreak film a winner. R. 105 min. Bijou. ★★☆☆☆ (12/20)

Sweeney Todd: Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter (and Alan Rickman!) star in Tim Burton’s take on the Broadway musical about a murderous barber who’s sworn revenge for what happened to his wife and daughter. “Depp is simply stupendous,” says *Rolling Stone*. R. 117 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. ★★★★★☆ (12/27)
3:10 to Yuma: Russell Crowe and Christian Bale costar in this solid Western from director James Mangold (*Walk the Line*). Based on a short story by Elmore Leonard that was made into a film in 1957, the film follows a vicious outlaw (Crowe) and the Civil War vet (Bale) who’s volunteered to get the thief to the train that’ll take him to trial. R. 117 min. Movies 12. ★★★★★☆ (9/13)
Underdog: Jason Lee voices the titular canine, who finds himself superpowered after an incident in the lab of mad scientist Simon Barsinister (Peter Dinklage). Bad guys have plots, but Underdog has a spaniel to impress! Oh, and the day to save. PG. 84 min. Movies 12.
Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story: While I’m all for both John C. Reilly and the sending up of *Walk the Line*, this satirical rock ’n’ roll faux-biopic appears, from the trailers, to be trying too hard. But it’s directed by Jake Kasdan, whose *The Zero Effect* was shamefully overlooked. Hrm. R. 96 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
Water Horse: Legend of the Deep: It’s nice to see Ben Chaplin (*The Truth About Cats and Dogs*) again, even if it’s in this too-cute-but-still-charming children’s film about a boy who finds a mysterious eggs that turns into a mythical creature. Directed by Jay Russell (*My Dog Skip*). PG. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.
We Own the Night: Family and loyalty clash in James Gray’s film, in which nightclub manager Bobby (Joaquin Phoenix) hides his relationship to a NYC cop family while also keeping a distance from the gangster who operates out of his club. With Mark Wahlberg, Eva Mendes and Robert Duvall. R. 105 min. Movies 12.