



(500) Ways to Be Cute

Lots of almost

(500) DAYS OF SUMMER: Directed by Marc Webb. Written by Scott Neustadter & Michael H. Weber. Starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt & Zoey Deschanel. Fox Searchlight, 2009. 95 minutes. PG-13. ★★☆☆☆

(500) Days of Summer is just too fucking cute. The nonlinear story marks its constant shifts in time via the changing seasons in a cute little drawing of trees and a city. It's got fantastically cute clothes for its female lead, wide-eyed Summer (Zoey Deschanel), cute moments of bonding over records and

a whole scene about how Summer is so cute, she gets cheaper rent and turns heads on the bus. Summer is so cute that when she tells Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) that she's not looking for anything serious, Tom can't take her seriously. He believes in the one. She's a flirt. This will end well.

Gordon-Levitt is a fine, still-under-appreciated actor who seems to throw himself into the role of Tom as if it's his last; even his mopeiest mope has a particular charm. Tom writes cheesy slogans for a greeting card company, a job

one of the film's writers clearly thought up for him because it makes for a great kiss-off speech wherein Tom decries the bullshit of producing canned greetings. Tom also has this job because he wishes he had another job, and his relationship with Summer will, naturally, be the thing to get him out of his rut.

(500) Days of Summer has a few fantastic moments — an Ikea shopping spree, a brief dance number that amusingly mirrors the joy and the absurdity of falling in love, a scene in which Tom explains how to see L.A. as a beautiful place. But mostly, it hovers nervously around the edges of a moment, a truth about modern relationships, unwilling to really get messy or honest. It's almost a sweet movie about how a failed relationship can give you things you didn't know you were looking for. And it almost understands that mid-to-late-20s time when you're not doing the right thing but you're also not totally sure what the right thing is or whether you're even capable of it. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, just pretend I never said it and have always known what to do with my life, OK?) But all that *almost* is in Tom's movie. Tom is a character; Summer is a catalyst, there to motivate Tom by breaking his heart. What does Summer want? What's Summer not doing with her life? Would it be so much to ask that the dream girl be a bit more substantial? **EW**

(500) Days of Summer opens Friday, Aug. 7, at Cinemark and VRC Stadium 15.

movie clips

OPENING OR RETURNING:

Adoration: The latest from Atom Egoyan (*The Sweet Hereafter*) is a bit of an intellectual exercise, but still interesting: A high school kid imagines himself the son of a man who wanted to blow up an airplane. When he tells this story, it seeps into his community, sparking argument and connection. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Children of the Crocodile: Australian filmmaker Marsha Emmerman screens and discusses her film, a personal history of East Timor told through the story of two Timorese-Australian women, and a clip from her current work in progress. 7 pm Saturday, Aug. 8, DIVA. \$6 sug. don.

(500) Days of Summer: Oh, Joseph Gordon-Levitt. If only this movie were as good as you are in it. A quirky sorta-romance with a carefully created indie aesthetic, Marc Webb's feature debut has a lot of charming offerings, but suffers from an ill-defined female character, played as if from a distance by Zoey Deschanel. PG-13. 95 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15. **See review this issue.**

G.I. Joe: Oh, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, why are you in this movie? It's based on toys, not screened for critics, and the trailers make people laugh. I think some stuff blows up, too. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Girl From Monaco, The: This odd little French offering is about a 60ish lawyer who, while working on a high-profile case in Monaco, meets two particular characters: his taciturn bodyguard, and an irresistible young woman who sees in the lawyer a chance to advance her own career. The performances are as subtle as some of the film's relationships. R. Bijou.

Jaws: Is it still Shark Week? The classic screens as a free movie night at the UQ, 7 pm Wednesday, Aug. 12, 177 Lawrence Hall.

Julie & Julia: Julie Powell's book about cooking her way through Julia Child's masterpiece comes to screens as a two-part story: One part follows Powell in her Queens apartment, the other Child in France. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Mystery of Film Noir: Series continues with Tay Garnett's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1 pm) and Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* (4 pm), Sunday, Aug. 9, DIVA. \$5 for both.

Perfect Getaway, The: An adventurous couple (Steve Zahn and Milla Jovovich) finds that their secluded Hawaiian vacation is a little more deadly than expected. R. 97 min. Cinemark. VRC Stadium 15.

Star Trek: Even the most crotchety critics are loving J.J. Abrams' take on the maiden voyage of the *Enterprise* — and the rivalry-turned-friendship of young James Tiberius Kirk (Chris Pine) and Spock (Zachary Quinto). With Simon Pegg, Zoe Saldana, John Cho and Eric Bana. PG13. 126 min. Movies 12. ★★☆☆☆ (5/14)

Films open the Friday following EW publication unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com

Imagining Your Past

Atom Egoyan's latest film *Adoration* is, to paraphrase a line from the film's chorus of video-chatting talking heads, about how once you imagine something, it becomes a thing you need to deal with, whether it's real or fictional. Simon (Devon Bostick) has been dealing with a story about his father that his dying grandfather told him — a story that put a new spin on Simon's parents' death some years ago. Then, in French class, Simon's teacher, Sabine (Arsinée Khanjian), reads aloud an article that strikes a chord with Simon. It's a story about a terrorist incident — a story in which Simon, suddenly, sees himself. The resulting piece he writes spreads through his class and his community, starting everyone talking about why people make decisions and what they mean, what kind of people they are. The repercussions of Sabine's encouragement slip into the film gradually, as does her investment in Simon's life. As Simon, Bostick is a solemn, convincing storyteller, and Scott Speedman gives a surprisingly affecting performance as the uncle who's taken care of Simon since his parents died. Everyone plays their parts well, but they still feel like parts in an intellectual exercise: What happens when Simon's imagining of one years-past incident infects his community, and they all imagine the same thing, finding their reactions stronger or stranger than they expected? How does imagining what we would do in a drastic scenario shape how we feel about such events? And how is it that people, despite the strange things they do to each other, can wind up connecting? *Adoration* is there to make you think more than feel; it's a well-made film, but one that feels like an assignment more than an inspiration. — Molly Templeton

Adoration opens Friday, Aug. 7, at the Bijou. ★★☆☆☆



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