



Search: Go Site Web enhanced by Google

advertisement

baltimoresun.com special advertising section

new **travelcentral**

The first stop on your itinerary.

arts/life > movies & video

FILM COLUMN

Underappreciated 'Junior Bonner' rides into AFI Silver

BY MICHAEL SRAGOW
SUN MOVIE CRITIC

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED MAY 20, 2005

AFI Silver's "Sam Peckinpah Showcase" presents Junior Bonner -- the director's least-seen, most-underappreciated great movie -- tomorrow at 1 p.m. and Monday at 6:30 p.m.

It came out in 1972, as part of a small wave of rodeo movies, but it's more like one of Tennessee Williams' poetic dramas than it is like Cliff Robertson's J.W. Coop (1972). Ace Bonner (Robert Preston), a wandering ex-champ, now wants to raise sheep in Australia. His son Junior (Steve McQueen), a rodeo man himself, won't go with him; he says he has to "go down my own road." Both try to reconnect with each other -- and with Ace's estranged wife and Junior's mother, Elvira (Ida Lupino) -- during rodeo days in Prescott, Ariz.

Peckinpah captures the stoic lyricism in McQueen's wiry form and bullet eyes; he was never more of a star, or an actor, than he was in Junior Bonner. When he bandages his banged-up midsection, every checked twinge or sigh conveys his wounded pride.

And Lupino and Preston are magnificent. They brew up a wounded rapport that helps make the interplay between Elvira and Ace say more about male-female relationships (and with the slightest means) than most people thought Peckinpah capable of imagining. "All you are is dreams and sweet talk," says the woman. "And I sweetened the dreams as well, if you remember," says Ace. Her look hardens, despite her tears, and she slaps his face. "I sure as hell deserved that," he says. "You surely did," she replies.

There's a piercing, unsentimental bittersweetness to the vignette of Ace persuading her to join him for one last amorous afternoon before he leaves for Australia. The rickety wooden back steps of a seedy hotel

- Talk about it
- E-mail it
- Print it
- Contact us

MOVIE LISTINGS

- Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith ★★★★★
- Winter Solstice ★★
- Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room ★★★★★
- Kontroll ★
- More movies

MOVIE REVIEWS FROM THE SUN

- A Lot Like Love ★★★★★
- The Amityville Horror ★★
- The Assassination of Richard Nixon ★★
- The Ballad of Jack and Rose ★★★★★
- Beauty Shop ★★
- Be Cool 0 stars
- Born Into Brothels ★★★★★
- Bride and Prejudice ★
- The Chorus ★★
- Chrystal ★★★★★
- Constantine ★★
- Crash ★★
- Dear Frankie ★★★★★
- Downfall ★★★★★
- Dust to Glory ★★
- Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room ★★★★★
- Fever Pitch ★★★★★
- Guess Who ★★★★★
- Gunner Palace ★★

new **travelcentral**
PLAN YOUR TRIP NOW!

ADVERTISEMENTS

cars.com
powered by baltimoresun.com

Shopping for a car?

Shop in your own backyard.

Click on your county:

- [Anne Arundel](#)
- [Balt City/Co.](#)
- [Carroll](#)
- [Harford](#)
- [Howard](#)

become the stairway to a perishable paradise. As always, Peckinpah was a master of the long goodbye.

AFI Silver Theatre is on Colesville Road in Silver Spring. Tickets are available at www.AFI.com/Silver or at the AFI Silver box office.

At the Charles

His sister Jane may be riding high right now at the box office and on the best-seller lists, but it was Peter Fonda who astonished moviegoers in 1969 when he co-wrote Easy Rider with its director, Dennis Hopper. They played dope-dealing bikers who, in a memorable tag line, "Went looking for America ... and couldn't find it anywhere."

The movie grossed an astounding \$60 million worldwide on a mere \$340,000 budget, but it actually works better as a period piece than it did as a counterculture trendsetter. A single line -- like Fonda saying, "I'm hip about time" -- brings back an entire era. And Jack Nicholson's performance as a misfit attorney is magical. He's hilarious when he raises his Jim Beam, toasts "old D.H. Lawrence," then does a chicken-wing flap with one arm. His naturalistic delivery reduces the preachiness and strengthens the truth of speeches like "They'll talk to ya and talk to ya and talk to ya about individual freedom. But they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em."

Easy Rider plays at noon tomorrow, 7 p.m. Monday and 9 p.m. Thursday at the Charles. Call 410-727-FILM or go to www.thecharles.com.

Cinema Sundays at the Charles presents Mad Hot Ballroom this week. This documentary about the ballroom-dancing program in New York City public schools has won over crowds everywhere (including at the Maryland Film Festival) with its portrait of 10- and 11-year-old boys and girls learning the joys of movement and etiquette.

Coffee and bagels: 9:45 a.m. Showtime: 10:30 a.m. Tickets: \$15. Information: www.cinema.sundays.com.

'Swimmers' on Shore

Tara Devon Gallagher, a standout when just being herself in Mad Hot Ballroom, retains her freshness and spontaneity as the young heroine of Doug Sadler's Swimmers, whose sudden need for an expensive operation upends her hard-drinking oyster-gathering father (Robert Knott) and puts her mother (Cherry Jones) into mission mode.

The sold-out closing night attraction at the Maryland Film Festival, Sadler's second feature combines the unexpected humor and intimate emotionality of Carson McCullers with the lived-in working-class detail of director Mike Leigh.

- Head-On
- The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy ★★
- Hitch ★★
- Hostage ★★
- House of D. ★
- House of Wax ★
- Ice Princess ★★
- The Interpreter ★★
- Inside Deep Throat ★★
- Kicking and Screaming ★
- Kingdom of Heaven ★★
- Kung Fu Hustle ★★
- Look at Me ★★
- Melinda and Melinda ★
- The Merchant of Venice ★★
- Millions ★★
- Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous ★
- Monster-in-Law ★
- Nobody Knows ★★
- Off the Map ★★
- Oldboy ★★
- Palindromes ★★
- Paper Clips ★★
- The Ring Two ★★
- Robots ★★
- Sahara ★★
- The Sea Inside ★★
- Sin City ★★
- Star Wars: Episode III Revenge of the Sith ★★
- Turtles Can Fly ★★
- Unleashed ★★
- The Upside of Anger ★★
- Walk on Water ★★
- The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill ★★
- Winter Solstice ★★
- XXX: State of the Union ★★

TOP FILMS

Box office winners

1. Monster-in-Law, \$24 million
2. Kicking & Screaming, \$21 million
3. Unleashed, \$10.6 million
4. Kingdom of Heaven, \$9.6 million
5. Crash, \$7.2 million
6. House of Wax, \$6.3 million
7. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, \$4.8 million
8. The Interpreter, \$4.4 million
9. XXX: State of the Union, \$2.2 million



Contests



Enter to win tickets to movies, concerts, festivals, sporting events and more. This month's featured contest: Smart Talk tickets.

Events



Learn more about events sponsored by The Baltimore Sun and baltimoresun.com,

The film returns to the Eastern Shore (where it was shot) this weekend. It plays at 8 p.m. today (\$25, with a 7 p.m. reception), 1 p.m. tomorrow (\$10) and 8 p.m. Monday (also \$10) at Easton's Avalon Theatre. Writer-director Sadler and cast members will attend all screenings. Information: www.avalontheatre.com.

10. *Mindhunters*, \$2 million

NEW ON DVD

Recent releases



See what movies and TV shows are

available on DVD and video.

TALK ABOUT IT

Have you been to the movies or watched any DVDs lately? Share your reviews here.

Crash is an attempt at allowing moviegoers to see how the ripples of their prejudice and stereotypes affect others and themselves. Though noble, the idea is far from original...ala "Do the Right Thing."

Submitted by: Robb
May 18, 2005, 11:16 AM EDT

I saw "Kicking and Screaming" which I thought was entertaining. I was surprised that Ditka could act although he is remarkably limited in facial expressions.

Submitted by: Kerry
May 17, 2005, 4:19 PM EDT

Total Comments: 17

Read more comments or post your own

MOVIE SEARCH

Pick a theater:

or Pick a movie:

including Baltimore's best darn yard sale.

Special sections



This month's featured section: Simply Home.

Sun Store



Purchase press plates of *Sun* front pages and logo merchandise.

Movies

or Pick a city:

Cities

- View menus with full theater and movie names

IN DEPTH

 [Summer movies](#)

FREE NEWSLETTER

Sign up for our weekly movies newsletter

Features movie reviews, as well as a trivia question, what's new on video, box office reports and special features. Includes movie-related giveaways.

- [Sign up here](#)

ALSO SEE

Movies & Video

- > [Theaters & schedules](#)
- > [Box office winners](#)
- > [Comment](#)
- > [E-mail newsletter](#)

Copyright © 2005, The Baltimore Sun | [Get home delivery](#)

-  [Talk about it](#)
-  [E-mail it](#)
-  [Print it](#)
-  [Contact us](#)

Top movies & video headlines

- [Documentary is ironic look at fall of Enron](#)
- ['Solstice' offers no ray of hope for relations](#)
- [Last curtain call for galaxy far, far away](#)
- [Dear George Lucas: Keep word of no more 'Star Wars'](#)
- [A close encounter between Lucas and Spielberg](#)

Top baltimoresun.com headlines

- [Cardinal says new policy led to Loyola boycott](#) (12:41 PM)
- [Tough odds for Pimlico](#)
- [U.S. launches investigation into photographs of Hussein](#) (11:26 AM)
- [Man enters not guilty plea in killing of Hopkins student](#) (11:40 AM)
- [Senators try to reach compromise on judges](#) (12:28 PM)

[baltimoresun.com](#) > [movies & video](#)

[back to top](#)



[Today](#) | [Live!](#) | [Arts/Society](#) | [Home/Family](#) | [Travel](#) | [Art/Museums](#) | [Books/Mags](#) | [Movies](#) | [Music/Nightlife](#) | [Restaurants/Food](#) | [Theater/Dance](#) | [TV/Media](#) | [Bay/Beach](#) | [On Campus](#) | [Visitors' Guide](#)
[Home](#) | [Maryland](#) | [Nation/World](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Arts/Life](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Marketplace](#)

Contact us: Submit feedback, send a letter to the editor, submit a news tip, get subscription info, or place an ad.

[baltimoresun.com](#) (TM) and [sunspot.net](#) (R) are copyright © 2005 by The Baltimore Sun.
[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

[Maryland Weather](#)

Classified partners: [Jobs](#) | [Autos](#) | [Homes](#) | [Apartments](#)

Welcome, [Doug](#) | [Log out](#)

Search: [Go](#) [Site](#) [Web](#) enhanced by