

diversions

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the best of 2007.



movies

Juno

Having unveiled "Juno" upon the world, rookie screenwriter Diablo Cody has earned her stripes with Generation Y. The film delivers on all the hype surrounding its release with a sharp wit and emotionally affecting character development overlaid on the film's relatively simple plot. Ellen Page gives the title character a pure attitude, tackling her challenges with maturity but constantly being reminded of the inherent difficulties in not only becoming pregnant at 16, but living with the evidence plainly visible to any and all. Fortunately the film strays from too much political commentary, focusing instead on the personal relationships that form the bonds of family, friendship and ultimately love. "Juno" is an entertaining and often lighthearted comedy, yes. But it's also a touching, thought-provoking piece of silver-screen beauty. See page 6 for a full review.

Lars and the Real Girl

Ryan Gosling makes any movie a masterwork. His characters become real people who earn their spot in our hearts with true vulnerability. The delusional, romantic Lars is no exception.

No Country for Old Men

A bleak, fatalistic motif brings "No Country for Old Men" a chilling plot, but the movie would be lost if not for the visceral performances of Tommy Lee Jones, Josh Brolin and Javier Bardem.

Fido

With its sterile, technicolor '50s setting and warped humor, "Fido" turns a simple, heartwarming boy-and-his-zombie romp into a hilarious send-up of Golden Age America and social politics, and it does it with wit and soul.

Hot Fuzz

With "Hot Fuzz," Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg (the duo behind "Shaun of the Dead") turn their sharp satirical eyes on action films and deliver not only one of the year's best comedies but also one of its best shoot 'em-up cop flicks.

Into the Wild

In "Into the Wild," Emile Hirsch deftly portrays a modern-day Thoreau, hitchhiking across America in penniless solitude. Director Sean Penn uses the film as a vehicle for slice-of-life Americana and profound social commentary.

Atonement

Based on Ian McEwan's novel, "Atonement" delivers a sophisticated and multifaceted approach to a complex story based on the fragile relationships between its characters. See page 7 for a full review.

Gone Baby Gone

Morgan Freeman and Casey Affleck give life to "Gone Baby Gone" with the kind of moral and emotional conflict that gives the film a power that Hollywood rarely attempts.

Charlie Wilson's War

Philip Seymour Hoffman delivers an incredible performance in Mike Nichols' dry comedy about covert actions during the Cold War and the consequences of political shortsightedness.

Rescue Dawn

Storied director Werner Herzog creates a moving tale of American fighter pilot Dieter Dengler's true escape from a Laotian POW camp during the Vietnam War with wonderfully saturated colors and Christian Bale's dynamic acting.



music

Panda Bear, Person Pitch (Paw Tracks)

It's a tangled mess clashing delectable sounds, field recordings, samples, programmed rhythms and processed vocals slapped around and thrown together with a true artist's obsessive attention to every detail. It's a Brian Wilson symphony of sound collecting itself into a heaving psych-pop beast. It's a wallowing cry for acceptance in a fragmented world of digital isolation, artificial interactions and manipulated reactions. It's the sound of the soulless fighting tooth and nail to regain that which they've lost. It's Noah Lennox's soothing, reverberating voice and textured arrangements. It's economy in excess. It's *Person Pitch*, by Panda Bear. And it's the best damn record 2007 had to offer.

Okkervil River, The Stage Names (Jagjaguwar)

Okkervil River's Will Sheff draws on the sheer excitement of fanhood to write beautifully tragic, insanely clever songs that become as collectively internalized as the ones he continuously references.

Wolves in the Throne Room, Two Hunters (Southern Lord)

Two Hunters isn't a metal album as much as a four-movement composition of cold desolation, evoking perfectly the frigid, rainy Pacific Northwest woodland that Wolves in the Throne Room calls home.

LCD Soundsystem, Sound of Silver (Capitol/DFA)

With *Sound of Silver*, James Murphy proves once again that getting old and lame doesn't have to sound so, well, old and lame. Check the moving (in all senses) "All My Friends" for proof.

Radiohead, In Rainbows (self-released)

Turning the music industry on its ear, Radiohead surprised its fans — and the world — with *In Rainbows* and the inventive marketing scheme that quickly became the stuff of rock 'n' roll legend.

Jay-Z, American Gangster (Roc-A-Fella)

Jay-Z, declaring himself "more Frank Lucas than Ludacris," delivers a hefty album inspired by Ridley Scott's film of the same name. The album marked a return to form for Jay-Z and one more classic LP on his resumé.

Alex Delivery, Star Destroyer (Jagjaguwar)

Alex Delivery's pulsing, careening debut melds the worlds of art and rock together with an underlying foundation of rhythm and melody in its six propulsive, sometimes abrasive, mini-epics.

Nicole Atkins, Neptune City (Red Ink/Columbia)

With a voice as smooth as velvet and as powerful as a battle-axe, Nicole Atkins carries her lush classic-sounding pop songs with enough emotional evocation and dynamic in her delivery to melt the coldest of hearts.

Justice, (Ed Banger/Vice)

If lead single "D.A.N.C.E." didn't do enough to demand dance floor participation, the rest of *J's* ballsy, bombastic bangers more than finish the job, commanding listeners' ears and booties with equal ferocity.

The White Stripes, Icky Thump (Warner Bros.)

For years Jack White has flirted with both musical eccentricity and blues-rock affectation, but never has he so seamlessly blended the two as on *Icky Thump*, The White Stripes' most accomplished album to date.

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MUFFIN TOP Photos from Dan Deacon's cult meeting at Local 506 last weekend.

DIVEBLOG Stay tuned to the blog for super-radical updates (almost) every day.



concerts

DIAMOND STUDS

Local rap-duo Diamond Studs, led by Juan Huevos, brought the party to Local 506, opening for Dan Deacon. Huevos ruled.

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music

REVEREND OF ROCK

Jim "Rev. Horton Heat" Heath teams up with organist Tim Alexander to form Reverend Organ-drum and create a great record.

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movies

ROMANCE IS AFOOT

"Atonement" brings a dramatic and heart-wrenching tale to life with vivid acting and stunning cinematography.

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Q&A

PAISLEY POP

The music of Violet Vector and the Lovely Lovelies recalls the glory days of go-go pop. Here, the Lovelies recall their origins.

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