

Spring classics endure

New season brings opportunities for feel-good films

BY KEN DUSOLD
Reviewer

With spring comes Easter, baseball, papers and exams to finish out the school year and April showers, which might put a damper on outdoor activities. But even if it looks rainy and gloomy out the window, there is no need to pout because films offer the perfect escape from boredom and stress.

Listed below are films that represent the spring season by brightening the day of even the most depressed among us.

Although not all of the films will engross everyone, it is certainly possible to find a feel-good movie for any personality or interest.

"You've Got Mail" (1998): This Nora Ephron-directed romantic comedy is full of sweet humor, a touch of drama and New York City's Upper West Side in full bloom. Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan play rival bookstore owners who find themselves confiding in one another via e-mail, although they do not realize it. A modernized version of the classic "Shop Around the Corner," starring James Stewart, this movie is bright, cheery and full of life as the famous Manhattan neighborhood becomes a third character and an excellent choice for any rain-filled afternoon.

"My Fair Lady" (1964): This Best Picture-winning musical gives great attention to renewal as the elitist Professor Henry Higgins takes on the mission of transforming common London flower-girl Eliza Doolittle into a "duchess." Sure, it's not Audrey

Hepburn's real singing voice in every music-filled scene, but her performance is a classic. And Rex Harrison, reviving the role he originated on Broadway opposite Julie Andrews, exudes snobbery in a surprisingly lovable and funny manner. But if the stars aren't enough to win a person over, Eliza's drunken dustman of a father certainly will demand a laugh. This film is best watched during an entire afternoon or throughout an evening as it is time-consuming.

"It's the Easter Beagle, Charlie Brown" (1974): The members of the Peanuts gang are

all here in yet another holiday special. This one has Linus believing the Easter Beagle will take everything, and there is no reason to waste time coloring and hiding eggs. And, at the cost of Lucy's hard work, the Easter Beagle comes through for everyone — except for poor Charlie Brown. But at least he has his best friend, Snoopy. Now if only he would buy a kickstand for his football.

"The Natural" (1984): Along with Easter comes the return of baseball. Starring Robert Redford and his "Wonderboy" bat created from a lightning-struck tree, this endearing story of a 35-year-old rookie pitcher with a fierce ability to hit might be the greatest movie ever made about America's pastime. Roy Hobbs (Redford), hired by the owner (Robert Prosky) in an attempt to embarrass the team's manager, Pop Fisher (Wilford Brimley),

turns out to be just the boost the fictional New York Knights need. A classic all-American tale of triumph in the face of adversity, "The Natural" stands out as a timeless cinematic masterpiece.

"The Paper Chase" (1973): Timothy Bottoms stars as James T. Hart, a first-year student at Harvard Law School. Hart, who possesses a brilliant mind, becomes obsessed with winning over Professor Charles Kingsfield (Oscar-winner John Houseman) — notorious for his use of the Socratic method on his students — by the end of the year. An inspiring film, which

gave rise to the famous phrase, "Think like a lawyer," "The Paper Chase" is a must-see film for future law students and highly recommended for anyone thinking about graduate school.

"Ferris Bueller's Day Off" (1986): The weather is

warming, baseball has begun and school is in its seventh or eighth month. There is only one thing to do — skip classes and have an adventure. Matthew Broderick's break-out role has become synonymous with that spring-time itch to break away from lectures, note-taking and writing papers. Truman State University is offering a Ferris Bueller's Day Off in April — a \$40 trip to Chicago and Wrigley Field. An extremely popular movie among high school and college students, "Bueller" is sure to be the favorite spring — or any other season — movie for generations to come.

"[You've Got Mail] is bright, cheery and full of life as the famous Manhattan neighborhood becomes a third character and an excellent choice for any rain-filled afternoon."



Photos courtesy of rottentomatoes.com and unrealitymag.com
You've Got Mail (top) and The Natural (bottom) are classic films that go perfectly with the positive mood of spring.



M. Ward and Zoey Deschanel form the band She and Him, which recently released its second studio album.
Photos courtesy of sheandhim.com

Rockers exhibit complex rhythms



COREY BOMMEL
Reviewer

Like red and purple, the bands showcased this week come from opposite ends of the spectrum.

The Dillinger Escape Plan

The Dillinger Escape Plan robs the air of silence with the tenacity and precision with which John Dillinger robbed banks.

Despite frequent lineup changes, The Dillinger Escape Plan has continued to create new music. The band released its fourth studio album, "Option Paralysis," last week.

The Dillinger Escape Plan is known for its pioneering work in the mathcore genre, a style of music influenced by punk and metal characterized by complex rhythms and unusual time signatures. This style is in full effect on "Option Paralysis" as the band changes its tempo on the fly many times throughout the album.

Vocalist Greg Puciato demonstrates his range superbly in this album. Puciato screams on one track and croons on the next. On a track or two he goes all out and just sings, minus the growls.

The instrumentals are varied and complex throughout "Option Paralysis." Lead guitarist Ben Weinman, the only remaining founding member, shows his mastery

of the genre. His guitar lines swell and dip chaotically, changing times — especially on the interludes. The drums are as violent and booming as ever with Dillinger newcomer Billy Rymer slamming out the beats. Many songs leave the listener not remembering exactly how they went, yet awestruck by the way in which the complex patterns emerged.

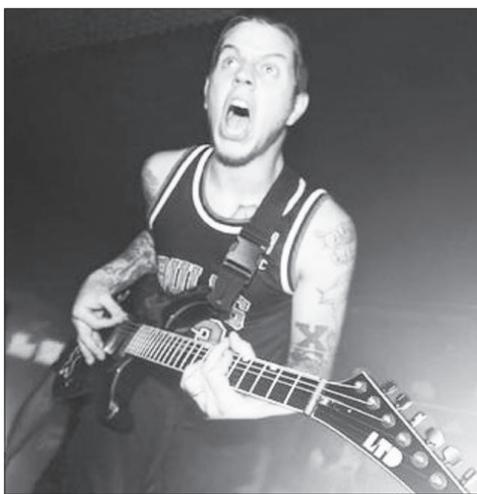
The album's opening track, "Farewell, Mona Lisa," demonstrates the chaos to follow. It begins with a mix of grindcore and synth-fueled speed metal, changing briefly to a dreary ballad before changing styles yet again. It is this ADD-addled style that might throw off new listeners but is expected by the established fan base. "Widower" showcases the band's range, opening with smooth piano that dissolves into lurching metal before returning full circle.

The album's closer, "Parasitic Twins," fades out with bluesy guitar rather than shredding, sounding like a NIN b-side. The album is full of songs made up of interesting parts rather than songs that grab you with focused hooks.

"Option Paralysis" constantly plays to the converted, not striving to garner new fans as one would expect. If the listener can get past the first couple of tracks to the meat-filled center, this is liable to be one of their top albums for the year.

She and Him

The She is actress/singer Zoey Deschanel, known for her folk-blues singing and deadpan delivery in her acting. The Him is guitarist and singer M. Ward, known



Photos courtesy of myspace.com/dillingerescapeplan
Guitarist Jeff Tuttle of The Dillinger Escape Plan performs at a concert in 2009.

for his collaborations with bands such as Bright Eyes, My Morning Jacket and Cat Power. Together they form the indie duo She and Him.

She and Him recently released their second album, aptly entitled "Volume Two." The duo continues its delivery of retro-pop, sounding like AM-friendly vinyl from a simpler time. The music caters well to the NPR pledge pin set, and after the band's first release it only strengthened Deschanel's hipster cutie status.

Deschanel resides in a place where the Lindsey Lohans and Eddie Murpheys of the world all want their chance at a hit album. Zoey proves she is the exception to the actress-turned-singer stereotype, however, distancing herself from the pack by miles. Although she still has more personality than range, her vocals have

improved and become more confident since She and Him's last release. Her singing is adorable as ever.

M. Ward makes the simple songs his own. Ward plays most of the instruments on the album and uses this to his advantage. He mixes different playing styles into each song, adding an overall complexity to the album. He accentuates Deschanel's metaphors and emotions with instrumental overtures. Ward manages to be heard without crowding out Deschanel's vocals, as they are expertly layered together on the album.

"Volume Two" is a feel-good album down to its core, blown in on a soft spring breeze to accentuate lazy afternoons. Deschanel and Ward prove that their collaboration was no accident and continue to create soothing melodies.

"Battlefield 2" proves respectable



BY ALEX CARLSON
Reviewer

Since Infinity Ward released the bombastic and highly successful "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2" last year, many game developers have been aiming to cash in on the modern shooter craze.

The most recent follower of "Modern Warfare 2" is "Battlefield: Bad Company 2." "Battlefield: Bad Company 2" isn't the most original shooter in its class, but some new elements end up making some respectable changes to the modern shooter genre.

The single-player campaign of "Battlefield: Bad Company 2" follows a group of American soldiers as they try to take out a foreign threat and save the world from an explosive demise. The story is ripped right from "Modern Warfare 2" and does very little to distinguish itself from the shooter standby.

"Bad Company 2" instead adds some character to the squad of soldiers. While this is admirable, many of the characters' personalities are predictable. There's the technical expert, the combat-focused tough guy, a strict squad leader who wants only to go home and retire and the quiet protagonist whom the player controls. The character designs are entertaining, but they don't push the storyline factor of the genre any further than "Modern Warfare 2" did, which really wasn't very far at all.

The campaign of "Bad Company 2" is very linear at first, but once the battles begin it has its share of open-endedness. The "point A to point B" progression typical of shooters is present, but battles usually force the player to take cover in different areas and attack strategically to continue. One of the biggest draws of "Bad Company 2" is the use of destructible environments. Hiding behind a single piece of cover is no longer the best idea as explosive blasts now can level houses and rip apart conveniently placed barriers like paper. The destructibility of the environments keeps tension high, but it also makes the

game more difficult, for better or for worse. The fact that the battlefields are so large and the objectives so diverse helps "Bad Company 2" have a solid single-player mode, even if the overall exposition feels flat and the difficulty a bit too uneven.

Throughout its development, "Bad Company 2" has been named "a new type of online shooter," attempting to take the crown from the stellar multiplayer mode in "Modern Warfare 2." After setting up an EA online account, players can dive into the massive multiplayer offerings of "Bad Company 2." Much like "Modern Warfare 2," "Bad Company 2" has a number of different modes for varying amounts of players. Lone wolves looking for a simple deathmatch against other players will find the mode addictive, while those looking for a tremendous team-based brawl will find that as well. Different mode variations, like securing points on the map, also are offered. These are all well-implemented, even in the massive team-based matches where trying to find an enemy can be very difficult. The unlockable weapons, items and abilities resemble the experience system of "Modern Warfare 2," but customizing arsenals is as addictive as ever. The multiplayer is unquestionably comprehensive, even if many of the advancements feel familiar.

"Battlefield: Bad Company 2" is obviously trying to take on the "Modern Warfare 2" juggernaut, but it doesn't reach the fluidity and accessibility of "Modern Warfare 2." However, it makes some notable alterations that end up changing the entire focus of the genre. The single-player campaign is full of action-packed moments, and the banter between the squad is entertaining, but the lack of much exposition makes the single-player a pretty forgettable experience compared to many other shooters in the genre. The multiplayer is a tremendous experience, much like "Modern Warfare 2," and the destructible environments add a new dimension to the shooting. Taking on "Modern Warfare 2" was a challenge in itself, and while it doesn't surpass Infinity Ward's efforts, "Battlefield: Bad Company 2" adds just enough new and worthwhile elements to be worth any shooter fan's time.