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# REEL CRITIQUE

MOVIE REVIEWS

**Drop Dead Gorgeous**  
Starring Kirsten Dunst and Kirstie Alley  
Playing at Hollywood 16

For the Leeman family, competitively driving their daughter to win the Sarah Rose Miss Teen Princess American pageant is an obsession; a stop-at-nothing compulsion in the name of small town wholesomeness and good old tradition. But appearances can be deceiving. *Drop Dead Gorgeous* unmasks the hypocrisy of Mount Rose, Minn. in a way only a thoroughly desensitized film-goer could appreciate.

This film could be best summarized in one statement: *There's Something About Mary* meets the Texas cheerleader mom. With this basic theme of obsessive parenting and raunchy humor *Drop Dead Gorgeous* is sure to offend someone. Its dark humor satirizes just about everything from anorexia and mental retardation to deafness and violent death.

Kirsten Dunst does a fabulous job alongside her co-star Kirstie Alley, who gives a hilariously plausible performance with her take on a win-all, take-all mom.

This film takes a clever twist with its use of documentary style film-making. It seems to put the pageant all into perspective by adding to the hilarious innuendo and the theme of beauty pageants lacking seriousness, professionalism, and sincerity.

Overall, *Drop Dead Gorgeous* is a mildly funny and inventive allegory of small-town America and despite its morbid and mildly offensive sense of humor is still rather entertaining. (Grade: B-)

— Brian Fleming

**The Runaway Bride**  
Starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts  
Playing at Hollywood 16

It is no surprise that with the success of Gary Marshall's *Pretty Woman*, Richard Gere and Julia Roberts have returned for one of the most anticipated love stories since the early 90's adaptation of *My Fair Lady*.

With a fabulous supporting cast, wonderful plot and one of the most compatible duos to date, the *The Runaway Bride* is a winner.

For fans of *Pretty Woman*, reliving many of the scenarios, including one ambiguously similar to the famous Rodeo Drive shopping spree, will strike a chord of familiarity.

Contrasting New York City with small town Maryland, *The Runaway Bride* cleverly captures the essence of both ways of life as big city journalist Ike Graham (Gere) writes a story about a small town legend, the runaway bride. However, he gets more than he wanted as he learns more about the woman he once sought to slander. To defend his actions and save his job, he travels to the small eastern town to unmask what soon turns into the love of his life.

Aside from being a typical love story, this film is full of foreshadowing and irony complete with a soundtrack including "Maneater" and U2's hit "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For." It also possesses some rather interesting situations of introspection, rejection and role reversal.

Overall, *The Runaway Bride* is predictable but still proves to be a great summer romance. (Grade: A-)

— Brian Fleming

**The Iron Giant**  
Featuring the voices of Jennifer Aniston and Harry Connick Jr.  
Playing at Hollywood 16

Put simply, *The Iron Giant* is one of the greatest animated movies ever made.

With Disney's chokehold on the animation industry and the lack of substance in them, *The Iron Giant* is a slap in the face to the traditional kid fare sing-along Disney cranks out year after year.

*The Iron Giant* has depth, meaning, most important of all, it doesn't cater to children. It is easily the best feature to come along since *E.T.*

The movie's young protagonist, Hogarth Hughes, is your typical 10-year-old New England during the 1950s. When mysterious meteorite lands in the ocean, rumors start floating around of a giant metal monster.

Hogarth finds the Iron Giant in the woods and saves him from electrocution. The two soon befriends Hogarth.

But it is hard to hide a giant 100-foot robot for very long and soon the boy and the giant are on the run.

With strong undertones dealing with peace, the nuclear scare, the soul-searching of your own destiny, *The Iron Giant* is a classic in the making. (Grade: A+)

## Long-lost J.S. Bach compositions discovered

BOSTON (AP) — More than 50 years after it was lost in the chaos of World War II, a trove of music written by Johann Sebastian Bach has been discovered in Ukraine.

The music, part of the missing archives of the Berlin Sing-Akademie, a still-performing group established in 1791, was found in Kiev after a 20-year search by a Harvard music professor.

"It was believed lost. There was absolutely no trace of it for well over 50 years," Christoph Wolff, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, said yesterday.

"For a long time, we Bach scholars were led

to believe that the material was destroyed." Wolff said the Germans took the Sing-Akademie archive from Berlin in 1943 to protect it from the destruction of war.

When hostilities ended in 1945, it fell into Soviet hands.

Wolff spent the past two decades tracking various leads, but his real break came in April when another Harvard researcher found a Russian document from the post-war years "that described the existence of 5,000-plus music manuscripts in Kiev."

It wasn't until June that Wolff located the archive, cut through significant red tape and

spent three days rooting through the archives at Ukraine's Central State Archive.

"This is really adding a significant dimension to the study of 18th-century music," he said.

The compositions were found among 5,000 or so documents in the Sing-Akademie archives as part of the musical estate of Philipp Emanuel Bach, one of Bach's many children.

The archive also holds works by Bach's 19 other children, as well as other 18th and early 19th-century German composers.

It also has letters written by poet Wolfgang von Goethe.

Wolff said he hopes the works may be returned to Germany.

No decisions have been made about the works' future.

**"It was believed lost. There was absolutely no trace of it for well over 50 years."**

— Christoph Wolff  
Dean of Arts and Sciences,  
Berlin Sing-Akademie

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