

'Eyes Wide Shut' highlights summer films

MOVIES from page 3

JULY 9

"Arlington Road" It's been showing in Europe some, and advance buzz is fairly positive. Jeff Bridges stars as a professor who believes neighbor Tim Robbins might be a domestic terrorist. Sounds like a thriller that will keep you thinking after you leave the theater. Might just work, but it can't be like Bridges' other bomb movie, "Blown Away."

Must see factor: ★★★★★ Bridges and Robbins are worthy adversaries.

"American Pie" A teen coming-of-age movie that chronicles four high school senior boys trying lose their virginity at prom. Should be lewd, crude and right along the lines of "There's Something About Mary." Why another movie of this caliber exists is unknown. Great advance buzz. It will draw if it's funny.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ The buzz makes it worth the watch.

JULY 14

"Muppets From Space" Muppets from space. Very self-explanatory, I think.

Must-see factor: ★★★ "Tarzan" might steal much of the glory, methinks.

JULY 16

"Eyes Wide Shut" Cruise. Kidman. Kubrick. It's a tale of sexual obsession about two married psychologists (Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman) who explore their erotic boundaries with patients. Little else is known. From late director Stanley Kubrick, "EWS" could be a stunning success or a fail completely. It's a huge risk for all involved, especially Cruise, who has his leading-man value at stake.

Must see factor: ★★★★★ A great deal is on line for the two stars. It's worth watching just for that. The film ought to thought-provoking either way.

"Drop Dead Gorgeous" A mock-

umentary about small Minnesota town where two beauty pageant contestants (Denise Richards and Kirsten Dunst) engage in a battle royale for the title. It looks very promising and funny.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ Richards is worth the looks alone.

"The Blair Witch Project" A pseudo-documentary about three college students who head into the Maryland hills to investigate a haunting legend. The result had Sundance Film Festival audiences chilled and raving.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ The independent sleeper of the summer.

"Lake Placid" A monster-in-the-water thriller that looks an awful lot like "The Relic" or the fresh water version of "Jaws." I am not impressed. Bridget Fonda and Bill Pullman star.

Must-see factor: ★ One word: video.

JUNE 23

"Inspector Gadget" Matthew Broderick stars in a movie adaptation of the cartoon favorite. Look for tongue-in-cheek humor from the villain Rupert Everett.

Must-see factor: ★★½ Harmless entertainment at best.

"The Haunting" From director Jan DeBont, the movie focuses on scientist Liam Neeson who does a study on patients at a haunted house. Expect spooky haunted house items throughout. De Bont promises to leave most of the special effects behind and focus on the horror. We'll see.

Must-see factor: ★★★ Could be cool. Or it could be De Bont's last film, "Speed 2"

JULY 30

"Summer of Sam" Spike Lee's chronicle of 1977 New York City, a.k.a. the summer Son of Sam struck The Big Apple. Sex and violence will be at the forefront in this film, which stars Adrian Brody and Mira Sorvino. The film originally drew an NC-17 rating. It didn't go over fabulously at the

Cannes Film Festival.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Lee's films are always well-made, but it may be hard to discern a plot point from this one. Seems more like a meditation than plot.

"Runaway Bride" The second Julia Roberts movie of the summer. She re-teams with Richard Gere and plays a woman who's left several men waiting at the altar. Gere's the reporter who writes a story about her. I wonder if they fall in love?

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ Julia struck gold with "Notting Hill" People will flock to this movie. For sure.

"Deep Blue Sea" Mechanical sharks that kill people under water. Why? Samuel L. Jackson stars.

Must-see factor: ★½ Aren't we all tired of water action movies?

"Outside Providence" A father (Alec Baldwin) sends his son (Shawn Wayne Hatosy) to a private school outside the Rhode island town. Written by "Mary" creator Bobby Farrelly.

Must-see factor: ★★½ Farrelly's a plus, but it'll hard to follow "Rushmore" on the prep school scene.

AUGUST 4

"Dick" Retro-comedy, set in 1974, about two girls (Michelle Williams and Kirsten Dunst) who are on a school trip to Washington, D.C., and stumble on the Watergate scandal.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ "Forrest Gump" revisionist history? I'm there.

AUGUST 6

"Fight Club" Brad Pitt is Tyler Durden, the creator of a secret underground fight society that ensnares bored highbrow Edward Norton. Helena Bonham Carter is the woman who gets between them. David Fincher ("Seven" "The Game") directs.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ The limited buzz has been astounding. Norton's on the top of his game and Carter's one of the best, too.

"Mystery Men" A comedy of clumsy superheroes (among them Ben

Stiller and William H. Macy) who must take on an evil villain (Geoffrey Rush) when the real superhero goes down. Looks fun.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Stiller's on a roll. It will be fun to see Rush in a comedic role this side of Shakespeare.

AUGUST 11

"The Thomas Crown Affair" It got moved from a June 18 date to give it breathing room from a similarly-plotted "Entrapment" Pierce Brosnan is rich thief who steals for the hell of it. Rene Russo is the woman trying to stop him.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Something tells me it'll be good. Russo is at least nice to look at.

AUGUST 13

"The 13th Warrior" The pushed back date of "Thomas Crown" gives director John McTiernan the distinction of directing two movies opening in three days. Here, Antonio Banderas plays a banished feudal man who joins warrior to battle a beast in medieval times. The script was written by Michael Crichton, based on his book "Eaters of the Dead."

Must-see factor: ★★ The movie's been on the shelf for a year. Not a good thing.

"Mickey Blue Eyes" Hugh Grant is Mickey, whose girlfriend (Jeanne Tripplehorn) has a father that is a mob boss.

Must-see factor: ★★½ Doesn't seem too exciting.

"Detroit Rock City" Edward Furlong and Natasha Lyonne star as teens trying to break their way into a 1978 KISS concert. KISS stars as themselves.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Hard to turn down a movie full of KISS, isn't it?

AUGUST 20

"Teaching Mrs. Tingle" Kevin Williamson's directing debuts sees a student (Katie Holmes) hold her

teacher (Helen Mirren) hostage for a good grade. Title changed from "Killing Mrs. Tingle" because of Columbine tragedy in Colorado.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Katie Holmes still isn't there as an actress. Be surprised if she can carry this movie.

"The Muse" Albert Brooks directs and stars as a down-and-out screenwriter who get divine intervention from muse Sharon Stone.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ Brooks last wrote "Mother," a gem screenplay. Stone, unlike Holmes, can act.

"Blue Streak" Martin Lawrence is a crook who goes to prison and comes back out to look for his hidden diamond...in a police station. Lawrence hasn't hit it big since "Bad Boys."

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ Lawrence needs to go back toward drama.

AUGUST 27

"Stigmata" Get ready for the Apocalypse movies at the end of century. This one's a rip off of "The Exorcist" as priest Gabriel Byrne tries to save religious damsel in distress Patricia Arquette. The first in the line of many.

Must-see factor: ★★½ The movie's been shelved a couple times. Sounds stupid.

"Bowfinger" Steve Martin and Eddie Murphy team up for the first time as Martin stars as a director trying to geeky action movie star Murphy in his film. Martin wrote it, so it'll have a touch of the comic genius.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★ Martin and Murphy are still among the best in the comedy business.

"Universal Soldier: The Return" Jean-Claude Van Damme is back and the movie world is poorer for it.

Must-see factor: ★½ Do not see.

"The Astronaut's Wife" Johnny Depp is an astronaut who may have brought something evil back from the moon. Charlize Theron is his wife who gets understandably spooked.

Must-see factor: ★★★★★½ Depp is worth three stars himself and plot seems like a winner.

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