It is finally here.

The first weekend of 2010 where there is a movie with so much buzz, word of mouth, and critical praise that it is being called “Must See”.

I’m just hoping that the hype isn’t too much, and I end up being disappointed. You’ll know later this weekend.

Mini Review - “A Single Man”

So here we have a movie that could be describe as “Mad Men for Gays”.

A bit crass, perhaps, but somewhat accurate. No, I don’t mean “for Gays” in terms of it being like “Priscilla, Queen of the Desert” in being flamboyantly gay, but only in the sense that the main character is a gay man dealing with the loss of his partner of 16 years in a time (1963) when most homosexuals still did not dare leave the closet.

Colin Firth plays the title role, and in watching him, all I can say is that his Oscar nomination for Best Actor was richly deserved. Firth plays George Falconer, a transplanted Brit working for years as an English professor at a small Los Angeles college. The movie focuses on one day in his life; the day he has decided to kill himself after eight month of grieving after the auto accident that killed his beloved Jim (Matthew Goode). Through flashbacks, we see the start of the relationship and several scenes of the two of them together. There is very good chemistry between them, and while the scenes are in good taste, it is still not a movie for the homophobic.

George is a neat freak, so he must make sure everything is in perfect order before he ends the day with a date with a handgun. But things come up during the day that may change things. Conversations with a young student who seems very interested in the professor, even though he appears to have a stunning girlfriend of his own. The young man named Kenny is played by Nicholas Hoult, who was previously best known as the hopelessly un-cool young boy with the very bad bowl haircut in the Hugh Grant Movie “About a Boy”. You can barely believe that he’s grown up in this way, and he delivers an excellent performance.

As does Julianne Moore as his best friend Charley. She gives a spot-on 60s London accent as the divorced lush who thinks the world of George, and still secretly hopes she can “turn him straight”.

As with the aforementioned “Mad Men”, this movie succeeds by capturing the era; this time in Los Angeles as opposed to New York. But it is not an ensemble piece. Firth is in every single scene, and his performance is simply amazing.

Not that much of a plot here, as it is definitely a character study. But it is a character well worth watching, and it is complemented by so many strong supporting roles. It may not be for everyone, but I am glad that I saw it.

My Rating – Frank Ryan (3 Footballs)

News and Rumors

~ The previously mentioned Nicholas Hoult is about to be even more known in America, as he will be playing Hank McCoy, aka The Beast, in the upcoming X-Men: First Class. Other casting news has Kevin Bacon on board as a villain (unknown at this time).

~ There is a dirty little dust-up between Edward Norton and the makers of “The Avengers” movie. Seems that Norton will not be playing The Hulk in this film; that role is said to be going to Mark Ruffalo. Robert Downey, Jr. will be playing Iron Man, of course, with Samuel L. Jackson as Nick Fury, Chris Evans as Captain America, and Chris Wentworth as Thor. Josh Weldon is set to direct…which truly elevates this movie in my mind.

~ Aaron Sorkin, who has had so much success with political related scripts such as “The American President” and “The West Wing” is at it again. He is going to pen and direct a screenplay call “The Politician”, based upon the life of disgraced former presidential candidate (and full time dirt bag) John Edwards. I am not yet sure if it is going to be as a biographical film, or if it will be “Fictional” in the same manner that “Primary Colors” was a whitewashed fictionalization of Bill Clinton’s run for the White House.

~ HBO may score again. I’m already geeked about the start of the Sopranos-esque Prohibition mob drama “Boardwalk Empire” with Steve Buscimi. Now comes news that Michael Mann (Miami Vice creator) is going to be directing multiple episodes an HBO series called “Luck”. It will star Dustin Hoffman, set in the world of horse racing. Other actors involved include Nick Nolte and Dennis Farina. The scripts are being developed by “Deadwood” and “NYPD Blue” creator David Milch. Let’s just hope he does something to redeem himself after “John From Cinicinnati”.

~ Mel Gibson…it was nice knowing you. That sound you hear is your career circling the drain.

~ So long, captain Phil Harris. The Discovery Channel received its highest ratings ever last week when showing the last episode before the death of the beloved, cranky crab boat captain. I watched it as well, and was very impressed on how well they handled it. Kudos for a job well done.

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Brent Ratner, quite possibly one of my least favorite directors, even if he isn't at the level of suck seen by M. Night Shyamalan and Michael Bay, is in line to direct a remake of Hercules. After the way he mucked up X-Men: The Last Stand, there is no way he should be anywhere close to a superhero (even ones that are from mythology and not comic books).

~ Nicolas Cage in "Ghost Rider 2". Someone is desperate for cash.

This week's new movie releases:

Inception

Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Ellen Page, Ken Watanabe

Plot : Dom Cobb is a thief who specializes in the art of extraction, the stealing of secrets from a target's subconscious. Though his profession cost him everything he has ever loved and has turned him into a fugitive, an offer for a final job -- one that requires him to plant an idea instead of pilfering it -- could be his chance at redemption.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Currently this film has Rottentomatoes numbers that are as high as what you see for Oscar nominated films (at 87% positive today). As mentioned at the start of the article, this is being touted as Must See, and expect HUGE numbers from this film this weekend. Christopher Nolan has been working on this non-stop ever since he wrapped up the hugely successful "Dark Knight". The founder of IMBD has already called this "the Movie of the Decade". I'm just hoping that I'm not as disappointed as I was after finally seeing "Memento", as I really didn't think that movie was as spectacular as advertised. Stay tuned.

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The Sorcerer's Apprentice

Starring: Nicolas Cage, Jay Baruchel, Alfred Molina

Plot : Master sorcerer Balthazar Black recruits a seemingly everyday guy in his mission to defend New York City from his arch-nemesis, Maxim Horvath

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This has not been a good year for Jerry Bruckheimer. First his video game adaptation "Prince of Persia" disappointed, and now this film is getting lukewarm reviews. It opened on Wednesday to very low crowds, and will probably get swamped this week by the phenomenon that "Inception" seems to be. That's too bad, as it is getting a better response from audiences than from the critics, and it looks to be some mindless fun in the same vein as "National Treasure". My wife wants to see it, so I'll get back to you sometime late next week with my opinion.

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Standing Ovation

Starring: Absolutely no one you've ever heard of.

Plot : A rip off of "Glee" about a group of friends competing in a national Junior High (Middle

School) music video contest.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This piece of crap is being released today to over 600 theaters…for no apparent good reason except to maybe make a few bucks from the 10 – 12 set with nothing else to do. This film is directed by the guy (Stewart Raffill) that years ago directed the OK fantasy "The Philadelphia Experiment". Then he did "Mannequin 2: On the Move". Let that be a cautionary tale to all of you.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, July 20:

Cop Out – Bruce Willis proving that he, like Nicolas Cage, will sometimes do anything for a buck. Here he stars with Tracey Morgan, possibly one of the least talented people in Hollywood not named Megan Fox or Lindsay Lohan. For even more proof of how bad this sucks, it also stars Seann William Scott. This is the first film directed by Kevin Smith that he didn't also write. It should be his last as well.

The Losers – Standard revenge based action flick about a bunch of special ops types that are sold up the river by corrupt government officials. Nothing original, but it does appear to have enough non-idiotic action to make it worth a risk to put on my Netflix queue.

Calendar Watch

Next Week: *Salt* , *Ramona and Beezus*
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Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

Eat Pray Love – August 13 – Julia Roberts in this critically acclaimed ultimate chick-flick about a newly divorced woman's journey of self-enlightenment. Guys…get ready to get drug to this one.

The Expendables – August 13 – Sylvester Stallone, Jason Stratham, Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren, Mickey Rourke, Randy Couture, and Steve Austin in a movie about mercenaries. With appearances from Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger. What more could any guy ask for?

The American – September 1 –George Clooney as an assassin hiding out in an Italian village awaiting what he hopes is his last job.

Machete – September 3 – Yes, they made a full length film from the "trailer" shown in "Grindhouse" with Danny Trejo as the revenge minded blade wielder.

Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps – September 24 – Oliver Stone brings Michael Douglass back as Gordon Gecko, teaming him with Shia LaBeouf in a film that looks to be quite different in tone than the last one.

Secretariat – October 8 – Diane Lane in the story of possibly the greatest race horse ever. Could this be another "Seabiscuit"?

Red – October 15 – Another Bruce Willis action vehicle. This time he is a former black ops agent reassembling his old team to thwart an attack from a high-tech assassin.

Hereafter – October 22 – Clint Eastwood directs a supernatural thriller with Matt Damon.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I – November 19 – Part One of the final book about Harry, Hermione, and Ron. This one (and I'm sure the last one) will be in 3-D.

Red Dawn – November 25 – Yes, they actually remade this semi-classic.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader – December 10 – Third tale of the series…some people (like my wife) are still looking forward to it.

Tron Legacy – December 17 – Might be the most anticipated Holiday release of this year.

Gulliver's Travels – December 22 – Jack Black takes on the iconic role.

True Grit – December 25 – The Coen Brothers remake the iconic John Wayne movie with Jeff Bridges and Matt Damon.

The Green Hornet – January 14 – Seth Rogan in a completely different take on the old radio/TV show.

The Adjustment Bureau – March, 2011 – Matt Damon in a mind bender about a politician falling for a ballerina (Emily Blunt), only to be stymied by mysterious forces keeping the would-be lovers apart.