

WASHINGTONIAN



Movie Tickets: "The Grey," "Albert Nobbs," ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival

Our picks for the best in film over the next seven days.

By Ian Buckwalter



Montgomery Clift and Lee Remick in Elia Kazan's *Wild River*. Photograph courtesy of Academy Film Archive and Twentieth Century Fox.

The Grey

While the ads make this look like just another in the recent spate of **Liam Neeson**-beating-people-up

films—this time with the actor taking on wolves—it's not quite as simple as that. Writer/director **Joe Carnahan** has something a little more thoughtful in mind here: Neeson plays a sniper who works at a northern Alaska oil outpost taking out any wildlife that might threaten the roughnecks working the rigs. When a plane carrying these guys back to civilization goes down in the Alaskan wilderness, seven survivors attempt to make it through as both the cold and a territorial wolf pack stalk them with ruthless efficiency. It's clumsy and over the top at times, but engaging on much less of a guilty pleasure level than the marketing would have you believe.

View the trailer. Opens tomorrow at theaters across the area.

Albert Nobbs

A passion project for **Glenn Close** ever since she played the title role in a Broadway production nearly 30 years ago, the film version of Irish novelist **George Moore's** *The Singular Life of Albert Nobbs* finally makes it to the big screen this month. Critical reaction has been mixed, but expect to see multiple clips at the Oscars this year—the film nabbed three nominations, including one for Close in the lead, another for **Janet McTeer** in a supporting role, and one for the makeup team. That team's task was to assist Close in transforming herself into a woman in early-20th-century Ireland who poses as a man to get work, and then continues living that way for three decades. Think of it as *Tootsie* with accents . . . and without quite as many laughs.

View the trailer. Opens tomorrow at E Street and Bethesda Row.

Man on a Tightrope* and *Wild River

The National Gallery of Art showcases two lesser-known works from **Elia Kazan** this weekend: a recently restored version of his 1953 film *Man on a Tightrope*, and 1960's *Wild River*. The former, despite its Communist Czechoslovakia setting, actually largely avoids overt political statements as it tells the story of a small circus whose proprietors are attempting to get into Germany. Kazan used real circus performers to fill in the cast.

The second features a better-known cast, with **Montgomery Clift** and **Lee Remick** starring in a more obviously political film. *Wild River* addresses the clash of rural culture and technological progress that came with the Tennessee Valley Authority as it tells the story of one particular landowner (**Jo Van Fleet**) who steadfastly refuses to make way for a dam that will flood the land she lives on. Remick plays her granddaughter, and Clift is the federal agent tasked with rousting them from the land.

View the opening of Man on a Tightrope. Saturday at 2:30 PM at the National Gallery of Art. Free.

Joffrey: Mavericks of American Dance

Bob Hercules's documentary about the Joffrey Ballet details the artistic highs (and some of the financial lows) of one of the country's most prominent dance companies. Using archival footage of performances and interviews with the company's early leadership (including, of course, **Robert Joffrey**, who died in 1988), along with some new footage shot in the present, Hercules details the history of the prestigious company during the entire latter half of the 20th century through the present day. **Mandy Patinkin** narrates. Saturday's screening at the AFI is a simulcast world premiere, with the film playing at the same time at Lincoln Center in New York City. After the film there will be a Q&A from Lincoln Center with author **Sasha Anawalt**, author of *The Joffrey Ballet: Robert Joffrey and the Making of an American Dance Company*, serving as moderator. Panelists for the discussion will be two former Joffrey dancers, **Christian Holder** and **Trinette Singleton** (who was in the original company), along with current artistic director **Ashley C. Wheeler**.

View the trailer. Saturday at 1:30 PM at the AFI and the West End Cinema. The West End will also be re-airing the documentary at 11 AM on Sunday.

ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival

Four years ago, the ReelAbilities Disabilities Film Festival premiered in New York with a program of films dedicated to raising awareness about the challenges and the triumphs of people with disabilities. Since then, it has been on the road, and next week it makes a stop in DC, sponsored by the Jewish Community Centers of DC, Greater Washington, and Northern Virginia. The festival includes nine films, documentaries and narratives, at a number of venues over the course of nine days. Opening night next Wednesday at the Avalon features *Warrior Champions*, about disabled Iraq War veterans who've adapted to their war injuries and are attempting to get to the Olympics.

View the trailer for Warrior Champions, the opening-night film. Begins on Wednesday evening at the Avalon and continues through February 9 at a number of area venues. Check the festival schedule for complete listings.

Blu-ray/DVD Pick of the Week: 50/50

One of the surprise takeaways from Monday's Oscar nominations was the lack of love for this film, which was thought by many to be in line for a Best Original Screenplay nod. That screenplay, which did get a Golden Globe nomination along with a slew of other awards-season accolades (including a win from the National Board of Review) is the autobiographical story of comedy writer **Will Reiser**, who discovered at the age of 24 that he had a rare spinal cancer. Spoiler: He managed to beat it, and out of the experience came this film, which stars **Joseph Gordon-Levitt** in the Reiser role, and **Seth Rogen** (a real-life buddy of Reiser) as his best friend. Reiser looks to mine the material for the more serious elements of dealing with one's own mortality and fighting for life, as well as for the dark humor inherent in the varied reactions of his friends and family upon hearing the news.

Special Features: Audio commentary with Rogan, Levine, and Reiser; five deleted scenes; a featurette about Reiser, and another that talks about specific scenes in the movie that are drawn from his life.

View the trailer.

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