



Monday, May 01, 2006

## SFIFF: Vincent D'Onofrio revisits Orson Welles

By **G. Allen Johnson**, Chronicle Staff Writer

One of my favorite scenes in my favorite Tim Burton movie, "Ed Wood," is when Wood (Johnny Depp) is at his wit's end late in the picture when he's trying to complete is, uh, masterpiece, "Plan 9 from Outer Space." Angry that his "vision" is not being understood by his actors and producers, he storms out of the warehouse where they are filming and hotfoots it to the nearest bar for a couple of drinks.

There, sitting in a booth in a tuxedo, apparently working on a screenplay, is Orson Welles (Vincent D'Onofrio). They have a conversation that inspires Wood to march back onto the set and finish what would be later called the worst film of all-time. D'Onofrio is so much like Welles -- I'm a huge Welles fan, the partially San Francisco-shot "Lady from Shanghai" being my favorite movie -- and I especially loved that the man who made what is generally considered the greatest film of all, "Citizen Kane," inspires an artist at the other end of the spectrum.



Courtesy of the San Francisco International Film Festival

**Orson Welles (Vincent D'Onofrio) paces as he prepares to shoot a scene in "The Third Man" in D'Onofrio's short film, "Five Minutes, Mr. Welles."**

Anyway, D'Onofrio must have been tickled by his one-scene turn as Welles, too. He has made a 30-minute short film, called "Five Minutes, Mr. Welles," and it plays at the San Francisco International Film Festival as part of the compilation of shorts entitled "Domestic Dramas" (there's only one showing left: Wednesday, May 3, at 12:30 p.m. at the Kabuki).

Filmed in black and white (natch), it's about Welles, who has taken the role of Harry Lime in Carol Reed's "The Third Man" for money, practicing for the classic ferris wheel scene (the one in which Lime, the black marketeer whose fake penicillin has killed thousands, famously compares the scurrying humans below with ants). Woken up from a snooze by his "assistant," a sultry/secretarial blond (Janine Theriault), who helps him with his lines, Welles bellows, paces, gripes about the screenplay, yells at his assistant -- and finally, gets it in gear and is ready to do the scene.

Yo Vince -- I loved the film. I can't wait for your next turn as Welles, perhaps in another decade. Like the fat 1958 Welles setting up the famous crane shot of "Touch of Evil" near Venice Beach? Keep hittin' the spaghetti there, big guy.

Posted By: [G. Allen Johnson \(Email\)](#) | May 01 at 09:30 PM

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And there are scores [more like this](#) on [YouTube](#). For free. [I'm just saying.](#)

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Posted By: [Joe Brown \(Email\)](#) | May 01 at 05:09 PM

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## Stephen Colbert Has Brass Cojones



CSPAN

[Colbert, just warming up, gestures over to Shrub who, presumably, is thinkin' 'bout ways he can have this guy killed](#)

Bush glowered. Laura looked confused. Scott McClellan was like a dead deer caught in the headlights. Many of the journalists, celebs, ranking generals and other 'notables' at the annual White House Correspondents' Dinner laughed openly, [albeit uncomfortably](#), as Stephen Colbert of "The Colbert Report" just made himself about 500 times more of a national treasure and cemented himself as one of the most fearless satirists of this generation (instantly outpacing Jon Stewart, who, you get the feeling, wouldn't have had the nerve to go as far as Colbert did) by way of a savage and hilarious roast/takedown of President Bush, who was seated not eight feet away.

Have you heard? Did you see? You simply must. It was a revelation.



CSPAN

[Bush leans back in his chair as the big polysyllabic words come at him, wishin' he could be sippin' a beer at the ranch](#)

## [Colbert roasts Bush Parts 1, 2 and 3](#)

(but parts one and two are really the ones to see)

(Direct links: [Part I](#) | [Part II](#) | [Part III](#))

Never have you heard anyone go straight at our mumbly and confused prez this way, with the prez in spitwad distance and listening, reluctantly, frowningly, to every word (though possibly not understanding them all). Colbert essentially says everything you wish you could say to Bush (well, almost everything) -- WMD, Iraq, Cheney, tanking poll numbers, scandals, global warming, his absolute refusal to let the truth change his mind, etc -- all while employing his full "Colbert Report" persona, playing a mock media pundit who hates annoying things like books and facts and ostensibly loves Bush because Bush thinks "with his gut" and ignores pesky things like, well, books and facts and ideas.



CSPAN

[Stunned laughter seemed to be the general consensus. Can you really get away with saying stuff like that to the president? Oh, hell yes](#)

It is a beautiful public scolding couched in a satiric wink, and it simply could not have been much better. It is making the rounds on the Net faster than any viral marketing junk, as well it should. It is an [instant classic](#).

I've been of mixed feelings on "The Colbert Report," never quite sure Colbert could sustain that brilliant but slightly annoying persona for entire episodes and whole seasons, without needing to break character. Almost too much of a good thing, a one-note joke without enough range.

But this, this makes it all worthwhile. This changes everything. Colbert should get some kind of award. Sit back, click play, and be amazed. God bless America. Oh, and also YouTube.com.

Posted By: [Mark Morford \(Email\)](#) | May 01 at 11:10 AM

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Friday, April 28, 2006

## Bay Area Essentials?

The Chronicle's Joel Selvin and Aidin Vaziri took issue with iTunes' "Bay Area Essentials," a list of the 25 top songs that represent the San Francisco sound. Here's some of what they say:



AP / Toby Talbot

### Essential Bay Area music?

*"Truckin'" by the Grateful Dead is hardly a surprise at the top of the list, but it also doesn't really belong there. San Francisco music -- and the iPod list is almost entirely rock-centric; no Johnny Mathis, Dave Brubeck, Vince Guaraldi, Cal Tjader, although mysteriously enough, the Kingston Trio is included -- does not have a trademark "sound" like country records out of Nashville or grunge rock from Seattle. San Francisco music is an attitude, a freedom from convention, a slap in the face at commercialism.*

[Click here](#) to read the iTunes list, and the one Vaziri and Selvin offer up.

What do you think? Peeved someone's not on the list? Or do you think iTunes did just fine? What Bay Area artists and songs should have made the list? Post your comments and let us know.

Posted By: [Karen Reardanz \(Email\)](#) | Apr 28 at 06:12 AM

Listed Under: [Bay Area](#), [Music](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(107\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

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Thursday, April 27, 2006

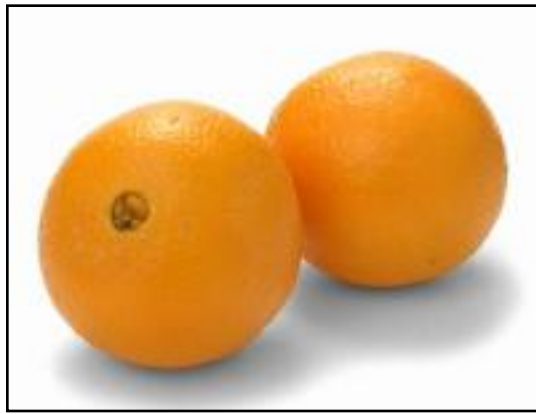
## Bigger Boobs in China



China before

While Americans are busy getting fatter by the minute and while we [accommodate our increasing ungainly mass](#) by inventing everything from larger child car seats to bigger umbrellas, stronger chairs, armless chairs, wider doorways, seat belt extenders, reinforced mattresses, bigger coffins, special hospital lifting equipment, wider airline seats, longer needles, XXXXL t-shirts, stronger staircases, handbooks that discuss "irritations caused by skin folds," sponges attached to extra-long handles and pants the size of sailcloth, over in China it's a slightly different body issue entirely.

Seems many Chinese women are apparently starting to eat a little bit better (read: more protein, less gruel) and become a bit more active in sports (read: no longer just government-sponsored synchronized swimming in a giant red pool with Mao's face at the bottom), and it's all resulting in a notable increase in, um, [Chinese breast acreage](#). It's true. No more A and B cup sizes on traditionally small-framed Chinese women. Now it's C, D, and even E cups. No word yet on weight-to-frame load-bearing issues. Also, no word yet on what foods, exactly, help enlarge your breasts. Presumably not Kraft Lunchables, Diet Pepsi, or Pop Tarts.



China after

Chinese men were reportedly driven slightly mad by the trend, with many seen running around smacking themselves in the face with large pieces of wood and giggling like maniacs and openly drooling in public, which in many parts of China would normally have been grounds for immediate arrest and ten-year internment sentences followed by the Communist-mandated removal of all saliva glands. However, the Chinese police were too busy staring into lingerie shops and looking at the new bra mannequins and humping the glass.

D-cups in China. It's a surefire signs of the inevitable march of democracy. What's next, collagen injections? Camaros? A free and uncensored media? The mind reels.

Posted By: [Mark Morford \(Email\)](#) | Apr 27 at 09:27 AM

Listed Under: [Fashion](#), [Health](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(3\)](#) : [Post Comment](#)

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## Flavor Flav: Will Someone Please Explain?



VH1

**Would you date this man?**

According to [Popbitch](#), our source for rampant rumors, randy goings-on and the occasional factoids, "Flavor Flav is the new Ozzy Osbourne - his US reality show Flavor of Love's finale drew 6m viewers, the most-watched program in VH1's history."

If this is true, I find it depressing beyond words. If you insist on torturing yourself, [this](#) will give you a sense of the flavor of "The Flavor of Love." Please, please -- no "Flavor of Love 2." We can't take any more!

Posted By: [Laura Compton \(Email\)](#) | Apr 27 at 09:00 AM

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Monday, April 24, 2006

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## SFIFF: Andy Lau shows me a card trick

(By G. Allen Johnson, Chronicle Staff Writer)

Andy Lau had the girls swooning during his whirlwind trip to The City this weekend to attend the 49th San Francisco International Film Festival. On Saturday, a hundred or so members of his fan club (San Francisco branch) showed to watch him check into the Westin St. Francis on Union Square. He had a full house at the Kabuki 8 Theaters' biggest auditorium screaming Sunday afternoon before and after a screening of his newest film, "[All About Love](#)."

But on Monday afternoon, he had me scratching my head. You see, one of the biggest pop idol/movie stars in Hong Kong history loves magic, and he broke out a deck of cards during our interview at the Hong Kong Economic Trade Office downtown. His nimble fingers shuffled the cards, turning groups of about 10 cards face up and leaving others face down, mixing them together. When he spread out the cards on the table, all of them were face up.



Kin Cheung/Associated Press

**Andy Lau bows toward the cameras at the 30th International Hong Kong Film Festival on April 4.**

"Magic can make something disappear, and suddenly make something appear again," Lau said as he reshuffled and showed me another trick. "It's like in life. Once you lose something, you miss something, if you get it back later, you are soooo happy. Magic can bring lots of hope to the audience."

Lau, 44, does a few sleight of hand tricks in "All About Love," practices every day and he frequently does magic during his stage show, including levitating a lovely assistant. But he has something bigger in mind. His company has been working with magician David Copperfield in a technical and venue support capacity, and although Lau insists Copperfield has not shown him any tricks of the trade ("He's a friend of mine ... but he didn't even let me go backstage!"), clearly something is going on: Copperfield is on the agenda when Lau leaves for Los Angeles today, although Lau's company is not involved in a creative or conceptual capacity.

I don't know much about Lau as a pop singer (he does about 25 concerts a year and has released 116 albums), but I do know about his quarter of a century of film work (Lau's personal favorite, of his 130 features: "Love on a Diet." My top five: "Infernal Affairs," "Love on a Diet," "Days of Being Wild," "A Moment of Romance" and "House of Flying Daggers"), and some I've interviewed who know Lau say he knows more about film than most directors he works with. Now, I'm assuming Zhang Yimou (Lau's director for "Daggers") and Wong Kar-Wai ("As Tears Go By," "Days of Being Wild") are among those exempt from that list.

He is known to throw himself into roles, and constantly asks questions in order to learn. He'll ask a cinematographer, say, why a certain lighting concept or a certain lens is chosen. He has a reputation as being one of the hardest working stars in Hong Kong. Yet he feels he is not ready to direct yet ("When I'm 50!" he laughs), instead pouring his energies into developing projects through his production company, Focus Films,

which often fosters up-and-coming producing and directing talent.

"I'm not so good, not as talented as other artists," Lau said. "So I'm willing to spend all my time to make it better. I spent a whole year learning how to ballroom dance for just one picture ("Dance of a Dream"). ... People say 'all you do is work -- work work work work. But I enjoy it.'" Later, when asked what his philosophy is, he said without hesitation, "Work harder to get closer to perfection."

Posted By: [G. Allen Johnson](#) (Email) | Apr 24 at 06:57 PM

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Friday, April 21, 2006

## SFIFF: Peter Chan Ho Sun, the Pan-Asian auteur

By G. Allen Johnson, Chronicle Staff Writer

Lost among the shuffle of the Opening Night hullaboo over "Perhaps Love," which kicked off the 49th San Francisco International Film Festival -- and for more Opening Night coverage, read my colleague Ruthe Stein's coverage in the Saturday Chronicle -- is that this is Peter Chan's first feature-length Chinese-language film in a decade.



Kimberly White/Reuters

**Peter Chan smiles at the paparazzi as he enters the Castro Theatre on Opening Night.**

If you're a Hong Kong film fan, it seems as if Chan, also known as Chan Ho Sun, never went away. Since that last feature, the great "[Comrades, Almost a Love Story](#)," his directorial output has consisted of only his lone Hollywood film for Steven Spielberg ("[Love Letter](#)") and the 50-minute "Going Home," part of the Pan-Asian horror omnibus "Three" (2003).

Instead, Chan turned producer, creating the Applause Pictures and producing a slew of movies -- horror films like "The Eye" and "Three Extremes," the erotic drama "Jan Dara" and the social comedy "Golden Chicken."

The upshot? He is the freest director in Hong Kong. "I could see around the time of 'Comrades' that the Hong Kong market was drying up," Chan said Friday at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office downtown. "So I

decided to go to Hollywood. But in Hollywood, the director is just one component ... in Hong Kong, the director is the film. So I decided to open a third door -- I created this whole market, this whole network (as a producer with Applause Pictures). Now I can direct anything I want."

Indeed, the main cast of "Perhaps Love" is culled from Hong Kong, Japan/Taiwan, Mainland China and South Korea.

[I first met Chan](#) after I was blown away by "Comrades" in 1997, and it has been a pleasure to watch this filmmaker develop his business savvy. Of all the directors I have interviewed, after Spielberg, Chan seems -- outwardly, at least -- to have the best instincts for survival in a cutthroat business.

"Perhaps Love" -- you didn't hear it from me, but you can pick it up on VCD at Asian video stores in Chinatown and around the Bay Area -- begins the next stage of his career. "I'd like to direct a film a year, or at least every 18 months." His next film is "The Assassination of Ma," which takes place during the Chinese civil war in the 1860s.

Posted By: [G. Allen Johnson](#) ([Email](#)) | Apr 21 at 01:25 PM

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## The rare and beautiful Suri



[www.alpacainfo.com](http://www.alpacainfo.com)

### Who is the fairest of all Suris?

The latest salvo in the [controversy](#) over TomKat's bid to join the grande celebrity tradition of distinctive, exotic or unusual names for offspring comes from the [Alpaca Owners and Breeders Association \(AOBA\)](#). According to them, Suri is also another rare and beautiful creature. One that has been around for thousands of years.

*A Suri is a type of alpaca. Alpacas, cousins to the llama, are native to the Andean Mountain range of South America, particularly Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. Once an Incan civilization treasure, alpacas provided clothing and transportation. Their luxurious fleece was reserved for royalty and was known as the "fiber of gods".*



AP

### TomKat

Even though they had the name first, it seems they're more than willing to share. And aww...don't you think this Suri might be a contender for cutest? Perhaps we'll have a photo of the Tomkitten soon for comparison purposes. Apparently, there's a [million dollar bounty](#) on it.

Posted By: [Amy Moon \(Email\)](#) | Apr 21 at 11:49 AM

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## The Great Media Smackdown of '06



**Olbermann raises a different finger -- verbally, that is -- when speaking of his pal Bill O'Reilly**

[A most excellent breakdown/celebration](#) of the glimmering and rousing Media Smackdown happening now between thuggish ham-fisted boor Bill O'Reilly at Fox and savvy smug smartass Keith Olbermann over at MSNBC, as scribed by Jack Schafer over at Slate, because you need to know.

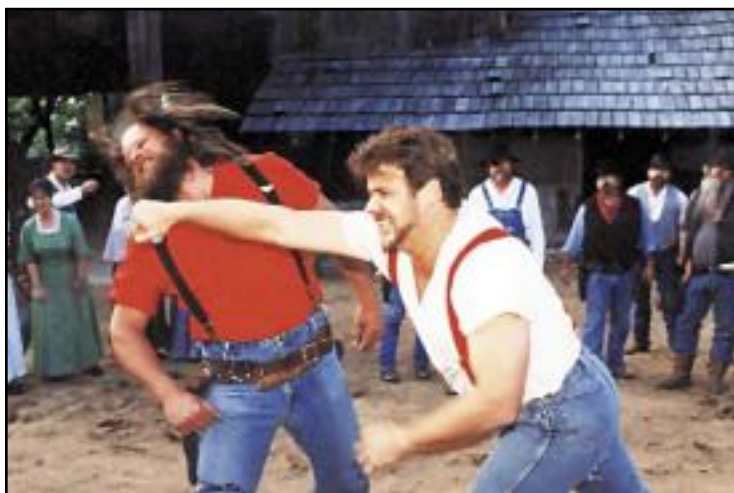
Here's the situation: Olbermann effortlessly mocks BOR on his increasingly wonderful "Countdown" show nearly every week. BOR sneers about Olbermann's unvarnished insults on "The O'Reilly Factor," threatens reprisals by whining to Olbermann's boss. It's a nasty, no-holds-barred Battle Royale which looks like it might turn into one of

the great media feuds of recent history, which would be a good thing indeed given how we don't really have any snarky media pundits going at each other much anymore ([Jon Stewart](#), who's job it is to satirize all media, notwithstanding), no Katie Couric bitching about Diane Sawyer's skanky dye job, no Paul Krugman calmly commenting on how Peggy Noonan should just offer Bush some crappy oral sex and get it over with (wait, has he? Has *she*?), no pissy anchor from just about any other network revealing in a sassy, tell-all whisper that hunky boy-toy [Anderson Cooper](#) likes to get his chest waxed while watching the "Doll Collector's Show" on QVC.



**BOR, checking in on his chins, hates Olbermann almost as much as he hates French fries and gays**

Olbermann's "Countdown" show on MSNBC is on the rise, while O'Reilly's ideological armpit of a show "The O'Reilly Factor" on Fox is sliding big in the ratings (or so says Olbermann himself, on the air, with no small amount of glee). Fact is, no one of any serious news acumen anywhere respects O'Reilly for anything other than his ability to snarl and shout down those who disagree with him, whereas Olbermann has obvious smarts and news savvy oozing from his well-manicured pores, and merely chooses to dole it out with a winking smile that gives you a small glimmer of hope for the future of media -- all while effortlessly smacking BOR with carefully placed verbal jabs (ref: "loofah," "falafel"), and grinning disbelief at how utterly simpleminded and inarticulate O'Reilly can be.



**O'Reilly takes one on the chin from Keith. Ooh, that's gotta hurt**

See? I've obviously already chosen my champion in the battle of Smug vs Thug. What fun. Next up: Anderson Cooper tells Katie Couric her ass looks totally fat on NBC News. Ooh, snap!

Posted By: [Mark Morford](#) (Email) | Apr 21 at 09:38 AM

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