

summer
MOVIE
preview

Hot, buttery, and queer

Shall we dance?
Saving Face

A handful of the season's most anticipated popcorn fare for gay and lesbian audiences **By Michael Giltz**

Now playing or opening soon

The Holy Girl (now playing, limited): When a man who brushes up against teenage Amalia sexually in public starts to date her mother, Amalia decides he must be saved—apparently, by placing herself in tempting proximity to him again and again. There's a hint of lesbian subtext. Executive-produced by Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar (among others). (Fine Line)

Queer Quotient: ★★

Mysterious Skin (now playing): See review, page 68. (Tartan USA/TLA)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★

Mad Hot Ballroom (now playing, limited): This crowd-pleaser about the thousands of New York City fourth- and fifth-



Mother and child:
Ma Mère

graders who take part in an intensely competitive ballroom competition—sort of a *Spellbound* with music—is great fun. The finale might have been scripted by Hollywood. (Paramount Classics)

Queer Quotient: ★★

Ma Mère (May 13, New York City, Los Angeles): Isabelle Huppert plays a widow who decides to introduce her 17-year-old son (Louis Garrel, *The Dream-*

ers) into the pleasures of sex via her old girlfriend, and then her new girlfriend, and then a little group orgy with some sadomasochism on the side.

Rated NC-17. (TLA)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★

Fixing Frank (May 20, Los Angeles): Out actor Dan Butler (*Fraiser*) stars as Dr. Arthur Apsey, a whip-smart psychologist who specializes in “reparative therapy” for gays. Frank (Andrew Elvis Miller) is posing as a patient to try to expose Apsey as a fraud, but it's soon devilishly unclear who is using whom.

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★

Julie Johnson (May 25, limited): Lili Taylor plays a wife and mom who takes a night class in computer science and finds she has a real gift—not to mention a real attraction to her best pal (Courtney Love). Shot five years ago. (Regent)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★

Saving Face (May 27, limited): Out writer-director Alice Wu's festival favorite is a low-key charmer about a Chinese-American lesbian (Michelle ►



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Krusiec) and her sternly traditional widowed mother (Joan Chen). Mom's authority falters when she shows up pregnant and refuses to say who the father is. (Sony Pictures Classics)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

June

High Tension (June 3): Classic '70s slasher films are given an intelligent but tense update with this French horror film set in a deserted farmhouse. When high schooler Marie spies on pal Alexia in the shower, you know the boogeyman can't be far away. (Lions Gate)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

Lords of Dogtown (June 3): Hot dudes abound in this fictionalized yarn about the California surfers who turned skateboarding into the coolest sport in the country. With Johnny Knoxville and Heath Ledger in supporting roles. (Columbia TriStar)

Queer Quotient: ★★

The Adventures of Shark Boy & Lava Girl (June 10): Queer kids will easily identify with this 3-D family film from writer-director Robert Rodriguez (*Sin City*, *Spy Kids*)—the story of a 10-year-old loner who spends the summer alone with his imaginary friends. (Dimension/Columbia TriStar)

Queer Quotient: ★★ (for that title alone)

Heights (June 10, limited): See cover story on page 54. (Sony Pictures Classics)

Queer Quotient: ★★★★★

Mr. and Mrs. Smith (June 10): A married couple—both secretly professional assassins—are bored with their life until each gets an assignment to kill the other. Not queer, but it's got Brad Pitt for the guys and Angelina Jolie for the gals. (20th Century Fox)

Queer Quotient: ★

Batman Begins (June 17): The Dark Knight has always had a homoerotic undercurrent—and Joel Schumacher's *Batman & Robin* proved that "under" is

where it should stay. This reimagining of Batman's early years stars Christian Bale as the comic-book hero. 'Nuff said. (Warner Bros.)

Queer Quotient: ★★

My Summer of Love (June 17): See review and feature on pages 64–65. (Focus)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★

Bewitched (June 24): Only a John Waters could come close to the queer quotient of TV's *Bewitched*, thanks to Paul Lynde, Dick Sargent, and the imperious Agnes Moorehead. This movie has a game cast—Nicole Kidman, Will Ferrell, Shirley MacLaine as Endora, and Amy Sedaris as nosy neighbor Gladys Kravitz—and a very meta plot, about the filming of a *Bewitched* remake in which they've unintentionally cast a real witch, but the camp factor seems low. (Columbia)

Queer Quotient: ★★★

Herbie: Fully Loaded (June 24): See feature story on page 60. (Buena Vista)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

Rize (June 24): Legendary out photographer David LaChapelle focuses his video camera on the dance craze called "krumping." None of the African-American subjects comes out, but the street choreography is exhilarating—and may go further into the mainstream than voguing. (Lions Gate)
Queer Quotient: ★

Tropical Malady (June 29, limited): This arty Thai critics' favorite delicately limns the growing affection between a relatively worldly soldier and the younger farm boy he romances. Then the movie literally stops and begins anew, retelling a mythic tale about a wild beast and the hunter who must kill it or be devoured by it. (Strand)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★

July

Fantastic Four (July 8): More comic-book queer subtext, this time in the form of an alternative family: the Thing, Mr. Fantastic, the Invisible Woman, and the Human Torch. (20th

Century Fox)
Queer Quotient: ★★★

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (July 15): Out screenwriter John August reportedly insists he'd never seen the Gene Wilder version before adapting the Roald Dahl classic into a new vehicle for director Tim Burton, starring Johnny Depp and Freddie Highmore (*Finding Neverland*) as Charlie. In previews, Depp's Anna Wintour look makes pirate Jack Sparrow seem positively butch. (Warner Bros.)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★

Happy Endings (July 15, limited): Writer-director Don Roos returns to the loopy comic terrain of *The Opposite of Sex* with this freewheeling comedy. Steve Coogan plays the unwitting father of Lisa Kudrow's child—he's now teamed with his lover (David Sutcliffe) in a fight with lesbian friends who may be hiding the fact that the men's sperm donation actually was successful. Then it gets *really* crazy. (Lions Gate)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★★★



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Three Dancing Slaves (July 22, New York City, Los Angeles): Gaël Morel (the pillow-lipped star of *Wild Reeds*) cowrites and directs this erotic French story of three brothers. The middle child thinks he might be attracted to older ex-con Christophe, and the youngest knows he's attracted to his best friend. All shot in the most deliriously sexy style since *Beau Travail*. (TLA)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

The Reception (July 29, limited): *Parallel Sons* director John G. Young returns with a look at a dysfunctional couple putting together a party to celebrate their daughter's marriage. When groom and father-in-law become sexually embroiled, there's bound to be some awkwardness at the punch bowl. (Strand)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★



Ethan Mao (July, New York City, Los Angeles): Quentin Lee's third film combines the tragic characters of Thomas Hardy and the love-drunk figures of Kar Wai Wong in a thriller modeled on Hitchcock. Its hustler hero, with his drug-dealing boyfriend, impulsively takes his own family hostage overnight while trying to reclaim his belongings. (Margin)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

August and after

Formula 17 (August, New York City, Los Angeles): This swoony romantic comedy with a gay spin that became a box-office hit in Taiwan. Seventeen-year-old sweetheart Tien heads to the big city of Taipei for the summer and immediately catches the eye of the biggest playboy heartthrob in town. It's all very innocent, so

don't expect anything more explicit than the latest issue of *Tiger Beat*. (Strand)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

The Dukes of Hazzard (August 5): Not gay and yet *extremely* gay. Now a new generation can yee-haw it up with Bo (Seann William Scott), Luke (Johnny Knoxville), and Daisy (Jessica Simpson). With Burt Reynolds as Boss Hogg. (Warner Bros.) Queer Quotient: ★★

Valiant (August 19): Rupert Everett is one of the voices in this all-star cast of actors giving wing to an animated tale about the derring-do of British carrier pigeons during World War II. (Buena Vista) Queer Quotient: ★★

Asylum (August 19, limited): Sir Ian McKellen is the voice of reason in this drama set in an insane asylum, with Natasha Richardson as the wife of the new head who quickly finds herself falling for one of the inmates. (Paramount Classics) Queer Quotient: ★★

Hardcore (August, New York City, Los Angeles): Two runaway teenage girl prostitutes in Greece find shelter and tenderness in each other's arms—and revenge in a series of brutal murders. Don't expect a happy ending. (Strand)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

Dorian Blues (September 2; New York City, Los Angeles): This fest fave follows the neurotic adventures of gay teen Dorian (Michael McMillian), who comes out to his parents with deflating results. Undeterred, he heads to New York, where his Woody Allen-ish dreams of being a writer smack up against reality. (TLA)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

Côte d'Azur (September 9, New York City, Los Angeles): The codirectors of *The Adventures of Felix* return with a frothy comedy that would set even Kinsey's head spinning. During a family seaside holiday the teenage son is bonded tight to his best friend, who is in love with him, while Mom and Dad have their own secrets. Then the son's pal meets a hot plumber in the dunes, and things get really farcical. (Strand)
Queer Quotient: ★★★★★★

Giltz is a regular contributor to periodicals, including the New York Post.

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