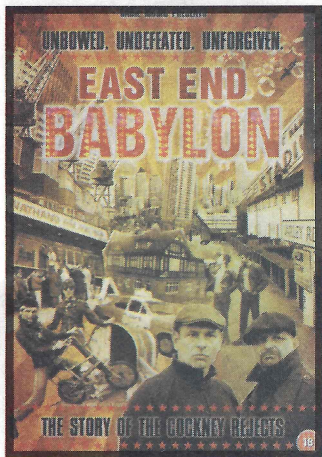


MOVIE REVIEWS

Kids Like You & Me **MVDvisual** **On DVD: 12.03.13**

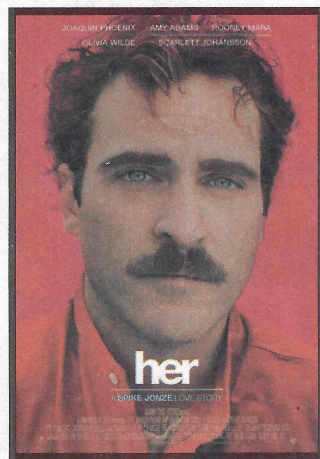
This documentary surprises with its abundance of information and humility. What I thought might be a 75-minute video of **Black Lips'** illegal antics on- and offstage (probably still worth watching) turned out to have more political information than it did illegal activities. The story follows Black Lips across a "revolutionary" Middle East tour. Revolutionary, because places like Egypt don't have much of a garage or punk scene, and they rarely see U.S. bands. If your band has the means to tour anywhere, are you going to pick one of the most unstable parts of the world? Sure, Mexico is insane and Africa is tragic in many ways, but the Middle East seems to be constantly on the verge of imploding. This documentary shows that tension and how the Black Lips' music provides the youth a break from the constant stress of life in the cities they tour. This isn't because the Black Lips are special, but because they're willing. They're willing to share their music where many other American bands can't or won't, and to show those in the Middle East that, in many ways, we are just like them.
—Justin Gallegos

East End Babylon: The Story Of The Cockney Rejects **Cadiz Music** **On DVD: 11.12.13**



Directed by **Richard England** (who produced *Oil City Confidential*) and told from the perspectives of **Mick (Stinky Turner)** and **Jeff Geggus (Cockney Rejects)**, this essential rock n' roll documentary is a must-see for any music lover. Mick and Jeff cite that for them, there were only three ways to deal with living in the infamous East End of London's Canning Town: football (soccer), boxing and rock n' roll. Formed in 1978, the Cockney Rejects cut a swath through the London punk scene. They conned their way into their first demo, went to *Top of the Pops*, then headlong into brutal fights with rival football fans due to their undying allegiance to **West Ham**. Something they more than publicized through their hit cover of West Ham's anthem, "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles." This impressive documentary utilizes historical footage alongside impressive accounts from members of the band. They tell the dramatic history of London's East End through entertaining tales of the toughness and resilience of one of England's most notorious punk/Oil bands. One word of warning: If you're not well acquainted with the cockney dialect, use subtitles when digesting this film. Otherwise, grab a pint and enjoy.
—Nick Kuzmack

Her **Warner Bros.** **In Theaters: 01.10**



Leave it to **Spike Jonze** to take us into the not-too-distant future and excite us with the advancement of tech-

nology, yet shock us with the possibilities. Theodore (**Joaquin Phoenix**) works as an author to other people's intimate letters while unable to keep his own marriage intact. After purchasing the latest operating system with artificial intelligence, our lonely writer is introduced to Samantha (voiced by **Scarlett Johansson**) and the two form an unconventional, passionate relationship that will test their limits on fully sharing themselves with someone else. Spike Jonze is a master at simplifying the extraordinary and making you believe the impossible. As he did with *Being John Malkovich* and *Adaptation.*, Jonze mesmerizes audiences with a twisted sense of reality. Besides the phenomenal acting from Phoenix and an astonishing voice-only performance from Johansson, Jonze succeeds in developing an environment where the likelihood of humans dating machines is not only not absurd, but believable. Think about what the masses thought about online dating 10 years ago, and what the perception is now. With gaming consoles recognizing its users' identity by their physical appearance and modifying its behavior to their preferences, who knows how long until we all have a Samantha in our own lives? —Jimmy Martin

The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug **Warner Bros.** **In Theaters: 12.13.13**

It's been 12 years and four feature films since we were first introduced to **Peter Jackson's** vision of **J.R.R. Tolkien's** Middle Earth. In *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug* (or what I am calling "Walking: The Prequel: Part 2 of 3"), we are reconnected with the company of dwarves who are journeying to reclaim their kingdom and golden treasure from the legendary and deadly dragon, Smaug (voiced by **Benedict Cumberbatch**). In tow is everyone's favorite hairy-footed hobbit, Bilbo Baggins (**Martin Freeman**), and charismatic sorcerer, Gandalf (**Ian McKellen**). It's clear that Jackson is stretching Tolkien's words as much as humanly possible in terms of length, but the liberties that he's taking by adding characters to the story is actually one of the better elements. While their characters are nowhere to be found in the pag-

es of this particular story, **Orlando Bloom's** Legolas and **Evangeline Lilly's** Tauriel lead the majority of the well-crafted action sequences that have them performing feats with a bow and arrow one would never think possible. Seriously, *The Avengers'* Hawkeye and *The Hunger Games'* Katniss Everdeen could only dream of having these types of skills. This rendition is certainly a better execution than last year's adventure, and the cliffhanger ending leaves audiences craving for the "precious" follow-up. —Jimmy Martin

The Secret Life of Walter Mitty **20th Century Fox** **In Theater: 12.25.13**

Just when you thought your case of diabetes was cured after viewing the sweetest film on the planet, *Forrest Gump*, almost two decades ago, along comes **Ben Stiller** and his remake of the 1947 tale of a daydreamer who envisions personal heroics with wild, imaginative sequences. In this modern-day interpretation, Walter Mitty (Stiller), a daydreamer who longs for love and heroism, works for *Life Magazine*, but when the photo negative for the publication's final cover goes missing, a global manhunt for the renowned photographer is set in motion. Stiller sheds all the embarrassing roles of late to genuinely take on the actions of a kindhearted shut-in who decides to live life to the fullest. As our lead escapes volcanic eruptions, man-eating sharks and oxygen-deprived altitudes, his fascination for his co-worker crush (**Kristen Wiig**) keeps him yearning to be a better man who refuses to waste another breath of life. Stiller, who also directs, captures the essence of the human condition with a heartfelt tale of courage, bravery and sensitivity. Stiller has not been this alluring and enjoyable since 2010's *Greenberg*, and Wiig's authentic sincerity only adds to the film's charm. A personal favorite comes with the inclusion of comedian **Patton Oswalt** as an inquisitive and concerned eHarmony employee who continuously offers our protagonist advice on his online dating profile. Stiller has turned this old tale of wonderment into a present-day journey of affection and excitement. —Jimmy Martin