



Photo image by Robin Laird

## Persepolis: bold in black and white

**Persepolis** ★★★ 1/2

Vincent Paronnaud, Marjane Satrapi (dir.), Chiara Mastroianni, Catherine Deneuve

By **Kait Feldmann**  
Staff Writer

*Persepolis* is a simply-illustrated story about Marjane Sterapi, a rebel with a sharp tongue who lived during the Islamic Revolution. The film, which is adapted from the graphic novel by Sterapi, is playing in select theatres (like the Laemmle in Pasadena). The movie is in French, with subtitles in English.

The style of the film imitates the illustra-

tions from the book exactly, using bold black lines to draw attention away from the lack of detail. The only differences between the graphic novel and the motion picture are the fuller settings and swift treadmill-like movement of the characters in the movie.

Sterapi's story begins in Iran, where revolution is stirring. Mimicking her parents, who protest their corrupted leader by participating in street marches, young Sterapi parades through her living room shouting, "Down with the Shah!"

When the Revolution begins, Sterapi is sent to Vienna to get away from the bomb-targeted streets of Iran. In Vienna, Sterapi migrates from house to house, struggling to live

through her adolescent years on her own.

After years of feeling alienated and labeled 'violent and bloodthirsty' (as all Iranians were), Sterapi pleads to return home. Upon her homecoming, however, she finds that walking the post-war streets of Iran is not unlike being in a graveyard.

The grandeur of this black-and-white film is the lack of fluff and the observable realism; no blight nor blunder is spared for the sake of the big screen. Sterapi recounts falsely accusing an innocent man of verbal harassment to save herself from the penalty of wearing make-up. At the time, she had found the incident humorous, but was later ashamed when she remembered her friend's parents who had been sent to prison and her own uncle who had been executed by the Iranian soldiers.

As a graphic novel, this clear-cut, even occasionally humorous tale depicts the horrors of life during war in the form of an adult picture book. On screen, the voices of Chiara Mastroianni, Catherine Deneuve, and Danielle Darrieux, who played young, adolescent, and adult Sterapi, brought an even more believable liveliness, and more enjoyable narrative to the story. Watching this movie was literally watching the book come to life.

Sterapi's character, which at first is a displeasing change from Hollywood's usual over-exaggeration and glorification of life, brings a realistic sincerity and warmth to the audience. The minimalist drawings and scenes manage to communicate a story that illustrates the hardships of life and the adventure of coming of age in a way actors or text could not.

## Jack Johnson: *Sleep Through the Static*

By **Rebecca Carter**  
Feature Editor

Jack Johnson's latest album, *Sleep Through the Static*, is a surprisingly mellow blend of soothing guitars and calm vocals. Unlike his previous albums, *Static* doesn't have a stand-out upbeat tune, and obviously isn't relying on a radio-hit for chart success. However, each of the songs possesses a certain charm that will remind fans of the original Johnson sound - it is perfect for a day at the beach. Though fans may at first be slightly disappointed by Johnson's extremely soft and airy sound, true fans will quickly realize that there is a deeper meaning to this album. Songs about love, war, and friendship altogether produce a more mature-sounding record than Johnson's previous feel-good surf songs about relationships and even certain breakfast foods.

The song after which the album was named, "Sleep Through the Static," is an anti-war song advocating peace and justice, and is definitely the most direct and thought-provoking track on *Static*. Some of the other highlights include "Hope," "If I Had Eyes," and "Same Girl." Melancholy at times, the

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instrumentals on *Static* can be slightly sleep-inducing, yet touching at the same time. The lyrics however, keep the listeners' attention.

The anti-pop vibe on Johnson's latest album is more than evident. It seems as if Johnson has moved on for good from his days of beachy, care-free music to more serious issues. That remains to be seen however, since Johnson has proved to be full of unexpected and spontaneous musical decisions. From *In Between Dreams* and *Brushfire Fairytales* to the Curious George soundtrack, Johnson's wide array of musical production and creativity is endless. One can easily infer from this particular album that it was recorded by a man who has settled down with a wife and children and values taking time off from life's stresses. For now, Johnson seems to be focusing on the important issues he values most.

If fans listen to *Static* with an open mind, they may just find that this album will grow on them. Though we haven't quite seen anything like this from Johnson before, it can be said that this is a step in a positive direction. *Static* simply needs to be appreciated on its own, and not compared to his previous albums.

## At SP's Briganti, everything's amore

By **Sabrina Ketel**  
Staff Writer

At Briganti, everyone is a regular. A winking host welcomes customers like they have been coming there every day of their natural-born lives, regardless of whether it's their first time or their fiftieth. Diners don't come to the restaurant just for the cuisine—they come for the atmosphere.

Briganti sits nestled among private law firms and copy shops, almost unnoticeable to the passing traffic. But slow the tempo down a little, take a stroll down Mission St. itself, and the eye is immediately drawn to number 1423. Even from the sidewalk, the fresh aroma of authentic Italian cooking is tempting enough to draw in passersbys.

The inviting ambiance is perfect for family dinners, meetings with friends, dates—anything. The hand-picked wines and incredible Italian food, complemented by a backdrop of warm, golden light and the murmur of good-humored conversation, would put even

the most awkward of situations at ease.

This could be because uncomfortable silences are never on the menu at the cozy restaurant—even when conversation falls short, there's always the slight, bright clatter of cutlery and loud, open-mouthed laughter to fill the emptiness.



Robin Laird

The friendly owner of Briganti with the popular New York steak.

Besides the charming atmosphere, the restaurant's cuisine is just as appealing; from the Tagliata al Rosmarino, served in a delicate rosemary balsamic sauce, to the Ravioli

Pomodoro, filled with spinach and ricotta and topped with an extraordinary pink sauce, it's impossible to go wrong.

But for most patrons, the night doesn't end when the main course is cleared away—the best part's still to come. Though the incredible dessert menu is reinvented every night, and the fruit dishes change according to season, the Flourless Chocolate Cake is a constant that is sure to delight. Drizzled with raspberry chocolate sauce, dusted with confectioner's sugar, and served with a spoonful of sliced fresh fruit on the side, this dessert is a rare treat.

At Briganti, the food is just as good as the company. At Briganti, those few moments in heaven that come after every mouthful outweigh any and all guilt one might feel about spending \$14 on an entrée. At Briganti, it doesn't matter who you are, you always come back for more.

## Upcoming films are sure to entertain audiences

Highlights include *The Dark Knight*, *Hitchcock*, the new *Harry Potter* and *Wall-E*

By **Grey Anderson**  
Staff Writer

Only a few weeks into the new year, the film industry has already released some very exciting film titles. The year of 2008 is sure to be a memorable time in film history.

The following (in no specific order) are only a few of many anticipated titles to hit the big screen this year.

**Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay (April 4)**

Sequel to the infamous *Harold & Kumar go to White Castle*, *Escape from Guantanamo Bay* finds the outlandish friends running from authorities as suspects of terrorism after trying to smuggle a bong into Amsterdam.

*Iron Man* (May 2)

Already being heavily advertised, *Iron Man* follows the story of missile-engineer Tony Stark. Stark, who is injured and captured in Afghanistan, puts his creativity to the test and—rather than creating missiles for terrorists—designs an impenetrable suit of armor, complete with weapons and a pacemaker.

**Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (May 22)**

The fourth installment in the series, *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* has been rumored to be on par with *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade*, but not much can be said—the storyline has been kept secret. Returning to the set are mastermind director Steven Spielberg and renowned actor Harrison Ford. New to the production is Cate Blanchett.

**Wall-E (June 27)**

Possibly the most anticipated film of 2008, Pixar's *Wall-E* is the story of a lonely robot who finds a new goal in life. After carrying out his duty for hundreds of years,

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WALL•E (short for Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class) discovers a new purpose in life when he meets an attractive robot named EVE. EVE races through space to alert humans that Wall-E had ac-

identally discovered the key to Earth's future. Grouped with malfunctioning misfit companions, Wall-E travels through space to find EVE.

**Hancock (July 2)**

Will Smith plays an alcoholic superhero hated by everyone. A publicist helps rehabilitate him and the superhero has an affair with the publicist's wife.

**The Dark Knight (July 18)**

The sequel to highly-acclaimed *Batman Begins*, *The Dark Knight* raises the stakes as Batman (Christian Bale) continues to work with District Attorney Harvey Dent to eliminate crime on the streets. Heath Ledger plays The Joker, a mastermind criminal known to terrorize the people of Gotham.

**The Lovely Bones (Summer)**

Peter Jackson's adaptation of the best-seller *The Lovely Bones*, by Alice Sebold, is the story of a 14-year old girl who is murdered. She tells the story of her murder from heaven, and discusses how the lives of her family and friends have changed while searching for her missing body.

**Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince (November 21)**

And what would a top-film list be without Harry Potter? Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe), Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint), and Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) are back at Hogwarts for the sixth year in their magical education. Harry finds a mysterious book labeled, "This book is the property of the Half-Blood Prince" and unknowingly learns of Voldemort's dark past.