

November-December 2018

# Video Librarian

VOL. 33 ■ THE VIDEO REVIEW MAGAZINE FOR LIBRARIES ■ NO. 6



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Love & Bananas: An Elephant Story | What Lies Upstream | Three Identical Strangers | The Mayo Clinic | Defiant Lives | The S Word

# Entertainment

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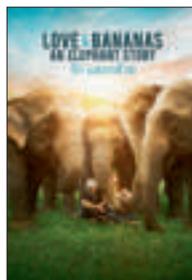
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### Love & Bananas: An Elephant Story

★★★1/2

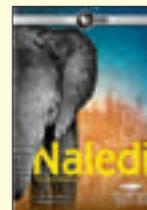
(2018) 75 min. In English & Thai w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.95 (\$495 w/PPR from [www.loveandbananas.com/host-a-screening/](http://www.loveandbananas.com/host-a-screening/)). Cargo Film & Releasing.



Actress Ashley Bell (*The Last Exorcism*, *Novitiate*) directs this emotionally-charged documentary, serving as a passionate onscreen advocate for addressing the sad state of the Asian elephant. While African elephants are estimated to be just under a half-million in number, the Asian variety is currently less than 50,000. It's no wonder that the population is dwindling, considering the tormented lives of these wondrous mammals (the film includes brief sickening footage of the prolonged torture of a captured elephant being driven to madness and submission). Following up on a promise made in 2013 to the renowned, courageous conservationist Sangdean Lek Chailert, Bell with a small film crew arrives a few years later to capture life on Chailert's elephant sanctuary in Thailand. Soon, Bell and Chailert focus on rescuing a nearly blind, 70-year-old elephant named Noi Na, who is at a "trek" company that has been selling rides atop the overstressed, bewildered creature for decades. The drama of

freeing Noi Na takes viewers to the edge of their seats, and there are unforeseen dividends when the company's owner begins to regret what he has done to elephants. Bell has made a fine documentary, an inspiring portrait of compassion that also captures the fantastic bond between humans and elephants. Extras include deleted scenes and the film's soundtrack. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

A fine companion documentary to *Love & Bananas*, filmmakers Ben Bowie and Geoff Luck's PBS-aided *Naledi: One Little Elephant* (VL Online-4/18) tells the story of a newborn elephant who arrives in a Botswana reserve called Abu Camp, a halfway house for elephants who are left orphaned (often due to poachers) or require rehabilitation after lives spent as zoo or circus animals.



Note: *Video Librarian* editor Randy Pitman is up to his eyebrows in documentaries to watch for the January/February issue's "Best Documentaries" list. His "Final Frame" column will return then.

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**TAI CHI DVD FOR WEIGHT LOSS BESTSELLER \$29.95 SRP**  
**UPC 822003006946**  
**Order code: D5635**

Available from Midwest Tape Alliance Distribution, YMAA.com

The first documentary to take a deep dive into one of the most pressing issues of our time: the dramatic decline of global coral reef ecosystems and the impact on human populations that depend on them.

Fourteen deaf people tell stories beginning with a childhood wide-eyed about sound, into the growing pains of adolescence and, eventually, their professional lives. Sometimes humorous, always tender, The Listening Project is a timely coming of age story, one we haven't heard before.

**“Some Like It Hot,” David Byrne’s “True Stories,” Orson Welles’s “The Magnificent Ambersons,” and an Ingmar Bergman Set Head Up the Criterion Collection’s November Releases**

The Criterion Collection’s November releases launch November 6 with a new 4K restoration of Kenji Mizoguchi’s long-unavailable 1954 late-career classic *A Story from Chikamatsu* (DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95), an exquisitely moving tale of forbidden love based on a classic 18th-century Japanese drama. Slated for November 13 is a 4K restoration of Billy Wilder’s sizzling gender-bending 1959 masterpiece *Some Like It Hot* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), which follows Chicago musicians (Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon) as they skip town after witnessing a mob hit, don drag, and join an all-female band—with Marilyn Monroe as the group’s singer—en route to Miami. On November 20, David Byrne explores the wild, wild life of Texas in the 1986 musical odyssey *True Stories* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$49.95), making its Blu-ray debut in a special edition that also includes a never-before-released 23-song CD of the film’s complete soundtrack. Also slated for November 20 is the Blu-ray debut of Orson Welles’s elegiac 1942 second feature *The Magnificent Ambersons* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), adapted from an acclaimed Booth Tarkington novel, featuring powerful performances from a cast including Joseph Cotten, Tim Holt, and Agnes Moorehead, as it traces the rifts deepening within the Amberson family. And November 20 also celebrates the 100th birthday of visionary Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman (1918-2007) with the release of *Ingmar Bergman’s Cinema* (Blu-ray: 30 discs, \$299.95), which spans six decades and 39 films, including such celebrated classics as *The Seventh Seal*, *Persona*, and *Fanny and Alexander*, alongside previously unavailable works like *Dreams*, *The Rite*, and *Brink of Life*, as well as featuring more than 30 hours of supplemental features and a 248-page book with essays on each film.

**“The Obama Years: The Power of Words” Documentary Now Available from Public Media Distribution**

Public Media Distribution and the

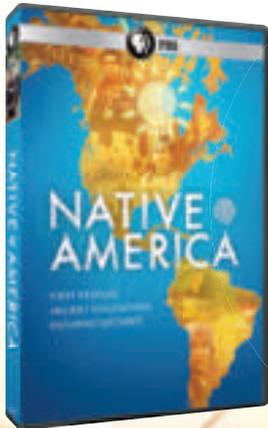
Smithsonian Channel have just released *The Obama Years: The Power of Words* (DVD: \$24.99). Over eight years, President Obama delivered more than 3,500 speeches and statements on topics that ranged from redefining patriotism, candidly addressing race relations, inspiring hope and healing, and turning divisive moments into an opportunity for national unification. But which are the moments that history will remember? Narrated by actor Jesse Williams, *The Power of Words* tells the story of Barack Obama, “writer-in-chief,” taking viewers inside the defining highlights of his political career through the prism of six of his most memorable speeches. The program also features insights from eminent historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Douglas Brinkley, senior advisor Valerie Jarrett, Chief Strategist David Axelrod, Rep. John Lewis, Obama speechwriters Jon Favreau and Cody Keenan, Reagan speechwriter Clark Judge, and Smithsonian curator Harry Rubenstein of the National Museum of American History.



**“Robin Williams: Comic Genius” Boxed Set Available Now from Time Life**

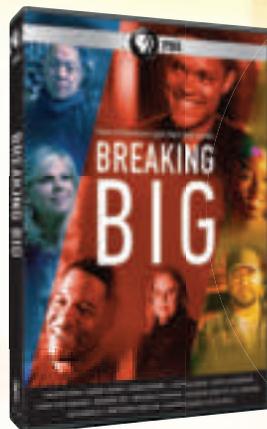
From his breakout role in *Mork & Mindy* to his Academy Award-winning performance in *Good Will Hunting*, iconic actor Robin Williams (1951-2014) displayed an inimitable artistry that made him beloved by millions. In conjunction with the Trustees of the Robin Williams Trust, Time Life is celebrating the incomparable career of this singularly innovative actor with the release of *Robin Williams: Comic Genius* (DVD: 22 discs, \$199.99), available exclusively now at RobinWilliams.com. The extensive boxed set includes five HBO standup specials, including *Off the Wall* (1978), *An Evening with Robin Williams* (1983), *An Evening at the MET* (1986), *Live on Broadway* (2002) and *Weapons of Self Destruction* (2009); never-before-released concert specials; talk show and late-night appearances on *The Tonight Show*, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and *Saturday Night Live*; an episode of *Inside the Actors Studio*; USO shows; exclusive behind-the-scenes featurettes; the 2018 HBO documentary *Robin Williams: Come Inside My Mind*; and a 24-page memory book with rare archival photos.

# New from PBS



## **NATIVE AMERICA**

*Native America* explores the world created by America's First Peoples. The series reaches back 15,000 years to reveal massive cities aligned to the stars, unique systems of science and spirituality, and 100 million people connected by social networks spanning two continents.



## **BREAKING BIG**

Explore how some of today's artists, innovators, athletes and political leaders made their careers. Featuring Trevor Noah, Eddie Huang, Danai Gurira, Jason Aldean, Ruth Zukerman, Christian Siriano, Roxane Gay, Michael Strahan, Senator Kristen Gillibrand, Lee Daniels, Gretchen Carlson, and Mayor Carmen Yulín Cruz.



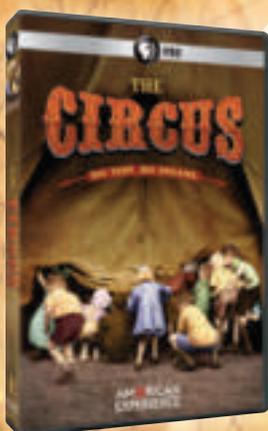
## **WOMEN IN WHITE**

This bold five-part adaptation brings a distinctly modern take to Wilkie Collins' beloved mystery novel, combining romance, intrigue, and danger in a thrilling ride from the corridors of English country houses to the dankest, deepest corners of the Victorian madhouse.



## **POLDARK, SEASON 4**

It's 1796, and to defend Cornwall and those he loves from an empowered George Warleggan, Ross Poldark must play the political game on a journey that takes him to the nation's capital and into new perils. Will he be able to save his marriage to Demelza?



## **THE CIRCUS**

Explore the colorful history of this popular American form of entertainment, in an era when its stars were among the most famous people in the world and multitudes gathered to see the improbable and the impossible, the exotic and the spectacular.



**PBS | Educational Media**

**Find these titles and more  
at [Teacher.Shop.PBS.org](https://www.teacher.shop.pbs.org)**



# DARK HOLLOW FILMS

## New Releases



### A NEW ECONOMY

Seven organizations move towards a more cooperative future by experimenting with non-traditional business models.

*"This isn't touchy-feely stuff; this is about getting the world to actually work."*

— Richard Sennett, London School of Economics



### BURTON BEFORE AND AFTER

A short documentary portrait of one person's gender-affirming transition showing what life was like before the change and then fifteen years after.

*"Deeply, sweetly human."*

—Parent of a gender non-conforming child



### SEED & SPROUT

Can ordinary people end hunger? This film follows eight innovative food rescue initiatives in an effort to find out.

*"This film is a must see for those who care about our environment and are concerned about our hungry citizens."*

—Michelle Winning, Vista/EndHunger.org

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

## Books Into Movies

The following films based on books are slated to open during November and December. Movie release dates are subject to change.

### Coming in November

**Boy Erased** (Nov. 2) is based on Garrard Conley's 2016 gay conversion therapy memoir. Directed by Joel Edgerton, the film stars Lucas Hedges, Nicole Kidman, and Russell Crowe.



**The Nutcracker and the Four Realms** (Nov. 2) is based on E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 holiday tale. Directed by Lasse Hallström and Joe Johnston, the film stars Keira Knightley, Mackenzie Foy, Misty Copeland, Helen Mirren, and Morgan Freeman.



**The Girl in the Spider's Web** (Nov. 9) is based on the 2015 addition to late author Stieg Larsson's crime novel series, which was taken over by David Lagercrantz. Directed by Fede Álvarez, the film stars Sverrir Gudnason and Claire Foy as computer hacker Lisbeth Salander.



**The Grinch** (Nov. 9) is a 3D-animated adaptation based on Dr. Seuss's 1957 classic *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* Directed by Scott Mosier and Yarrow Cheney, the film features the voice of Benedict Cumberbatch as the notorious holiday curmudgeon.



**Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald** (Nov. 16) is loosely based on J.K. Rowling's 2001 *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Directed by David Yates, this sequel again stars Eddie Redmayne as Newt Scamander.



**The Front Runner** (Nov. 21) is based on Matt Bai's 2014 book *All the Truth Is Out: The Week Politics Went Tabloid*.

Directed by Jason Reitman, the biographical film stars Hugh Jackman as politician Gary Hart, and costars Vera Farmiga and J.K. Simmons.



**If Beale Street Could Talk** (Nov. 30) is an adaptation of James Baldwin's 1974 classic novel. Directed by Barry Jenkins, the Harlem period drama stars Kiki Layne and Stephan James.

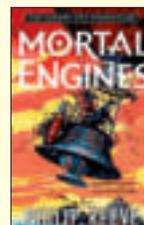


### Coming in December

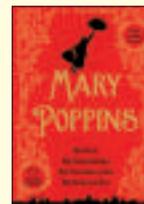
**Mary Queen of Scots** (Dec. 7) is based on John Guy's 2004 biography *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart*. Directed by Josie Rourke, the film stars Saoirse Ronan and Margot Robbie.



**Mortal Engines** (Dec. 14) is adapted from the 2001 titular first entry in a futuristic YA series by Philip Reeve. Directed by Christian Rivers, the film stars Hera Hilmar and Robert Sheehan.



**Mary Poppins Returns** (Dec. 19) is adapted from the sequels by P.L. Travers (written between 1935-88). Directed by Rob Marshall, the film stars Emily Blunt as the beloved magical maid, and costars Lin-Manuel Miranda, Meryl Streep, and Angela Lansbury.



### Looking Ahead

Coming in February is **The Turning**, a modern adaptation of Henry James's 1898 classic *The Turn of the Screw*. Directed by Floria Sigismondi, the supernatural horror film stars Mackenzie Davis, Finn Wolfhard, and Brooklynn Prince.





## TVTV: VIDEO REVOLUTIONARIES

82 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917704D  
**COMING TO HOME VIDEO ON NOVEMBER 20**

Featuring Bill Murray, Hunter Thompson, Steven Spielberg, Goldie Hawn, Bob Dylan, Lily Tomlin, Jim Belushi and more, TVTV is an inside look at Top Value Television, a collective of video makers who, in the early 1970s, took the brand-new portable video camera and went out to document the world.

Directed by TVTV alum Paul Goldsmith, the film opens a treasure chest into the seventies, filled with cultural and political events captured by now-famous personalities.

*"It's brilliant. It's VICE before VICE, reality TV before reality TV, sketch comedy before sketch comedy, 30 FOR 30 before 30 FOR 30."* -Luke Kelly-Clyne, Showrunner

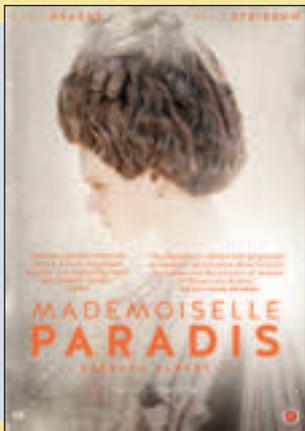


## THE BREAST ARCHIVES

57 minutes, color, \$19.95, FRF 917711D  
**COMING TO HOME VIDEO ON NOVEMBER 20**

*The Breast Archives* uncovers nine women's personal stories of empowerment. Baring their breasts and their hearts, the women share the unique journeys they've made with their bodies. From their formative years of hiding, shame and disconnection, to adulthood and the discovery of what it means to be a powerful woman. As the women slowly reconnect with their body-based stories they find a reservoir of strength and wisdom that lies within their breasts.

*"Like a warm conversation between you and nine of your closest friends."* -Lena Wilson, The Valley Advocate



## MADEMOISELLE PARADIS

97 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917728D  
**COMING TO HOME VIDEO ON DECEMBER 11**

Set in 18th century Vienna, this is the true story of Maria Paradis, a gifted piano player and friend to Mozart, who lost her eyesight as a child. Desperate to cure their talented daughter, her parents entrust Maria to the famous Dr. Franz Mesmer. Using the doctor's controversial technique, Maria recovers her sight.

But this miracle comes at a price as Maria progressively starts to lose her gift for music. She will have to choose: an ordinary life in the light or an extraordinary life in darkness, as a virtuoso.

*"An inquisitive, curious and gorgeously accoutered period piece about science, the senses and the position of women in Mozart-era Austria."* -The Hollywood Reporter



*"Sensual, fresh, inquisitive... the engrossing result feels entirely modern."*  
 -Variety

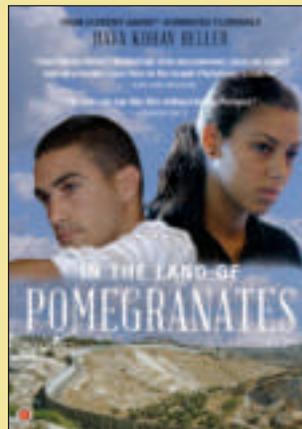


## QUIET HEROES

68 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917735D  
**COMING TO HOME VIDEO ON DECEMBER 11**

In Salt Lake City, Utah, the socially conservative religious monoculture complicated the AIDS crisis, where patients in the entire state and intermountain region relied on only one doctor. This Sundance Film Festival documentary is the story of her fight to save a maligned population everyone else seemed willing to just let die.

*"Inspirational, just like its central figures. It underlines the gestures of compassion and bravery that made all the difference both for those who survived the epidemic and those who didn't."* -Variety



## IN THE LAND OF POMEGRANATES

125 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917698D  
**COMING TO HOME VIDEO ON OCTOBER 30**

*The pomegranate is the fruit of the land, a symbol of rejuvenation and rebirth. It is also a euphemism for a hand grenade.*

From Oscar-nominated director Hava Kohav Beller comes a suspenseful, multi-layered documentary centered on a group of young people born into a violent, on-going war. They are young Palestinians and Israelis, caught in the duality of the pomegranate: will they embrace rebirth and each other's humanity, or will they pull the pin on the grenade?

*"Sobering and clear-eyed."* -New York Times

*Mixed Media features new release information on upcoming video games and TV series on DVD/Blu-ray, as well as notable older titles that are re-priced or new to DVD/Blu-ray.*

**Video Games**

Note: Entertainment Software Ratings Board (ESRB) ratings for video games are: E (Everyone), E10+ (Everyone 10+), T (Teen), M (Mature), and RP (Rating Pending). Some titles are not rated until just prior to release date.

**October 28—November 3**

**Diablo III: Eternal Collection** (Blizzard, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: M). New to the Switch, this highly-acclaimed third-person action-RPG game set in the perilous world of Sanctuary includes the original *Diablo III*, along with the expansion pack “Reaper of Souls” and the bonus Necromancer character.



**November 4—November 10**

**Carnival Games** (2K, PS4/XOne/Switch: \$39.99, Rated: E10+). This fun party collection features 20-plus mini-games, including shooting basketballs, drone racing, and cosmic bowling.

**GRIP: Combat Racing** (U&I Entertainment, PS4/XOne/Switch: \$39.99, Rated: E10+). This racing game features high octane combat, with players achieving ferocious speeds while armed to the teeth with heavy weapons.

**November 11—November 17**

**Fallout 76** (Bethesda, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). The latest entry in the popular first-person role-playing franchise—set in the aftermath of a global atomic war—drops players into a massive online open world where every surviving human is a real player you can work together with to survive.



**The Golf Club 2019 Featuring PGA Tour** (2K, PS4/XOne: \$49.99, Rated: E). This golf simulation game featuring famous courses—including TPC Boston and TPC Sawgrass—has a PGA Tour career mode.

**Hitman 2** (Warner, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). This third-person action-stealth sequel puts players into the shoes of Agent 47, who is tasked with dismantling the elusive Shadow Client’s militia across the globe in six new sandbox environments with all-new weapons.



**Pokemon: Let’s Go, Pikachu!** (Nintendo, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: E). In this third-person adventure game, players journey to the Kanto region with energetic partner Pikachu to become a top Pokémon Trainer while battling other trainers.

**Sid Meier’s Civilization VI** (2K, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). In this turn-based strategy game players explore new lands, research new technology, and conquer enemies to build an empire that will stand the test of time.

**Spyro Reignited Trilogy** (Activision, PS4/XOne: \$39.99, Rated: E10+). This HD-remastered classic third-person (or dragon) adventure game collection includes *Spyro the Dragon*, *Spyro 2: Ripto’s Rage!* and *Spyro: Year of the Dragon*.

**November 18—November 24**

**Battlefield V** (EA, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). This latest addition to the blockbuster first-person action-shooter series is set during World War II.



**Wreckfest** (THQ Nordic, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: T). This full-contact racing game features epic crashes, neck-to-neck fights, and brand new ways for metal to bend.

**November 25—December 1**

**Darksiders III** (THQ Nordic, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). Players return to an apocalyptic Earth in this third-person hack-n-slash action-adventure sequel, assuming the role of FURY in her quest to hunt down and dispose of the Seven Deadly Sins.

**RIDE 3** (Maximum Family Games, PS4/XOne: \$49.99, Rated: E). In this motorcycle-racing simulation sequel, players have access to over 230 licensed bikes to race around the globe on a wide variety of challenging tracks.

**December 2—December 8**

**Just Cause 4** (Square Enix, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this third-person open-world action game, players once again step into the shoes of rogue agent Rico Rodriguez as he journeys to Solis, a huge South American locale filled with conflict, oppression, and extreme weather conditions.

**Persona 5: Dancing in Starlight** (Atlus, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: T). The Phantom Thieves return for a new heist in this rhythm dancing game featuring familiar characters from the action-adventure hit *Persona 5*.

**Super Smash Bros. Ultimate** (Nintendo, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). Gaming icons clash in the ultimate brawl action game, featuring new characters Simon Belmont and King K. Rool, who join Mario, Donkey Kong, Sonic, and others.



**TV on DVD/Blu-ray**

**Available Now**

**9-1-1: The Complete Season One** (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). Angela Bassett, Peter Krause, and Connie Britton star in this 2018 debut season of the police procedural series co-created by popular showrunner Ryan Murphy.

**800 Words: Season 3, Part 1** (Acorn, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99). Newspaper column writer George (Erik Thomson) deals with life in a seaside New Zealand small town in this first compilation from the 2017-18 third season.

**The Affair: Season Four** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$33.99). A flash-forward in time leaves one character missing in this 2018 fourth season of the Showtime drama series starring Dominic West, Ruth Wilson, Maura Tierney, and Joshua Jackson.

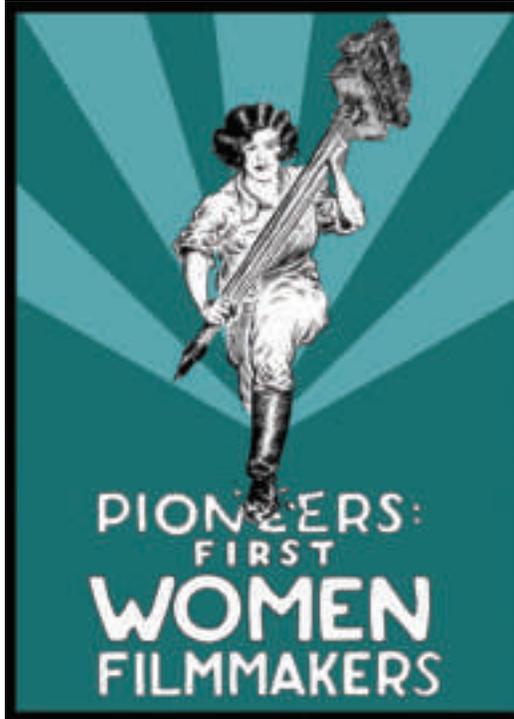


**Alice: The Complete Eighth Season** (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99). Linda Lavin, Vic Tayback, and Celia Weston star in this 1983-84 penultimate eighth season of the Phoenix-set roadside diner sitcom.

New Releases From

# KINOLORBEREDU.COM

**PIONEERS: FIRST WOMEN FILMMAKERS NOW AVAILABLE FOR EDUCATIONAL PURCHASE**



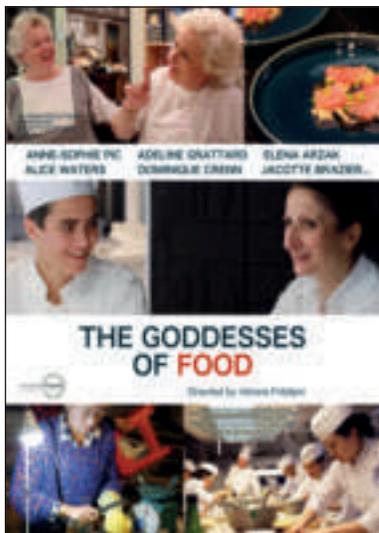
In the early decades of cinema, some of the most innovative and celebrated filmmakers in America were women. Alice Guy-Blaché helped establish the basics of cinematic language, while others boldly continued its development: slapstick queen Mabel Normand (who taught Charlie Chaplin the craft of directing), action star Grace Cunard, and LGBTQ icon Alla Nazimova. Unafraid of controversy, filmmakers such as Lois Weber and Dorothy Davenport Reid tackled explosive issues such as birth control, abortion, and prostitution. This crucial chapter of film history comes alive through the presentation of a wide assortment of films, carefully curated, meticulously restored in 2K and 4K from archival sources, and presented with new musical scores. Includes films made from 1911-1929. Produced in collaboration with the Library of Congress.

DVD Total running time: approx. 1,320 Min. Blu-ray Total running time: approx. 1,710 Min.

**"A corrective to our collective amnesia. A thrilling look at the variety of films made by women, most before they won the right to vote."** – Manohla Dargis, *The New York Times*

**"Provides a rare opportunity to see some of the greatest films helmed by early Hollywood's intrepid women... filling in the blanks of the past and reclaiming the medium's forgotten stories."** – Christina Newland, *Village Voice*

## NEW & NOTABLE RELEASES



### THE GODDESSES OF FOOD

In the male dominated food universe, discover the women changing the game on all levels. Presenting the best female chefs, including multi-Michelin star chefs Dominique Crenn and Barbara Lynch, and introducing rising new stars and those making incredible food in all corners of the world. **GODDESSES OF FOOD** is a global journey exploring female strength in gastronomy.

Prominent chefs and journalists investigate what holds women chefs back in the modern mediated world of cuisine and what needs to be done to change the way women in the food industry are viewed and covered in the press. Featuring Michelin chefs and sommeliers from USA, France, Italy, UK, Spain.



### ATOMIC CAFE

The Atomic Cafe is an absurdist blast from the past that would be downright laughable if it weren't so eerily relevant to our fake news present. This 1982 cult classic juxtaposes Cold War history, propaganda, music and culture, seamlessly crafted from government-produced educational and training films, newsreels and advertisements. Taken together, these sources cheerily instruct the public on how to live in the Atomic Age, how to survive a nuclear attack and how to win a nuclear war. As a U.S. Army training film advises, "Viewed from a safe distance, the atomic bomb is one of the most beautiful sights ever seen by man."

**"A stunner, a movie that has one howling with laughter, horror and disbelief. Deserves national attention."**

–Vincent Canby, *The New York Times*

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**Billions: Season Three** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98). An attorney general and hedge fund manager continue with various schemes in this 2018 third season of the Showtime drama series starring Paul Giamatti and Damian Lewis.

**Blondie: The Complete 1957 Television Series** (ClassicFlix, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.99). This 1957 adaptation of the popular titular comic strip stars Arthur Lake as Dagwood and Pamela Britton as Blondie.

**Crazy Ex-Girlfriend: The Complete Third Season** (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99). This 2017-18 penultimate third season of the romantic comedy series features guest appearances by Josh Groban, Dr. Phil, and B.J. Novak.

**Deception: The Complete Series** (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99). A former illusionist begins working for the FBI in this short-lived 2018 series that stars Jack Cutmore-Scott, Ilfenesh Hadera, and Amury Nolasco.

**The Gifted: The Complete First Season** (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). Set in the Marvel Comics universe, the 2017-18 debut season of this sci-fi adventure series introduces viewers to the Strucker family, who discover that their children have mutant powers.



**Good Witch: Season Four** (Cinedigm, DVD: 2 discs, \$19.98). Witch Cassie Nightingale (Catherine Bell) works on wedding plans in this compilation from the 2018 fourth season that also includes the 2017 companion TV movie *Spellbound*.

**I Married Joan: Classic TV Collection #4** (VCI, DVD: \$19.95). A wacky housewife causes havoc for her judge husband in this fourth compilation from the 1952-55 sitcom starring Joan Davis and Jim Backus.

**Killing Eve** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$24.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$29.98). An MI5 officer (Sandra Oh) goes after a psychopathic assassin (Jodie Comer) in this 2018 debut season of the BBC America drama based on the *Codename Villanelle* novella series by Luke Jennings.



**The Love Boat: Season Four, Volume One** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.98). Guest stars for this first volume of episodes

from the 1980-81 fourth season of the cruise ship series include Nipsey Russell, Debbie Reynolds, and David Cassidy. Also newly available at the same price is **The Love Boat: Season Four, Volume Two**.

**The Miniaturist** (PBS, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99). Based on Jessie Burton's 2014 debut novel, this two-part adaptation of the 17th-century Netherlands-set drama stars Anya Taylor-Joy, Romola Garai, and Alex Hassell.



**Peyton Place: Part Five** (Shout! Factory, DVD: 5 discs, \$34.99). Based on the New England-set 1956 classic by Grace Metalious, this fifth compilation features episodes from the 1964-69 primetime soap starring Mia Farrow, Ryan O'Neal, and Dorothy Malone.

**Police Story: Season Three** (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs, \$34.99). This 1975-76 third season of the LAPD anthology series features guest appearances by Dean Stockwell, John Astin, and Louis Gossett Jr.

**Private Eyes: Season One** (eOne, DVD: 3 discs, \$38.99). Jason Priestley stars as a former professional hockey player who joins forces with a private investigator (Cindy Sampson) in this 2016 first season of the dramedy inspired by G.B. Joyce's 2012 novel *The Code*.

**Scorpion: The Final Season** (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$46.98). Elyes Gabel, Katharine McPhee, and Eddie Kaye Thomas star in this 2017-18 fourth and final season of the high-tech drama series.



**The Resident: The Complete Season One** (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). This 2018 first season of the medical drama series stars Matt Czuchry, Emily VanCamp, and Bruce Greenwood.

**Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In: The Complete Sixth Season** (Time Life, DVD: 6 discs, \$39.95). Hosted by Dan Rowan and Dick Martin, this 1972-73 sixth and final season of the sketch comedy series features appearances by Isaac Hayes, James Caan, Della Reese, and Dom DeLuise.

**Shetland: Season Four** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$38.99). Based on novels by Ann

Cleeves, this 2018 fourth season of the crime drama series stars Douglas Henshall as Detective Inspector Jimmy Perez.

**Silicon Valley: The Complete Fifth Season** (HBO, DVD: \$19.98). The team works to make PiperNet a success in this 2018 fifth season of the Mike Judge-created satirical comedy series.

**This is Us: The Complete Second Season** (Fox, DVD: 5 discs, \$39.98). Bouncing between the present and flashbacks, this 2017-18 sophomore season of the ensemble drama centers on the "Big Three" siblings (Sterling K. Brown, Chrissy Metz, and Justin Hartley).

**Timeless: Season Two** (Sony, DVD: 3 discs, \$35.99). Starring Abigail Spencer, Malcolm Barrett, Matt Lanter, and Goran Visnjic, this 2018 second season finds the "Lifeboat" crew trying to thwart the evil Rittenhouse's scheme to reshape history through time travel.



## November 6

**The Good Fight: Season Two** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98). Christine Baranski stars as a Chicago law firm partner who balances personal and professional issues in this 2018 sophomore season of the spin-off of *The Good Wife*.

**Poldark: The Complete Fourth Season** (PBS, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$54.99). This 2018 fourth season of the British period drama finds former Revolutionary War fighter Ross Poldark (Aidan Turner) heading to the nation's capital.

**Silent Witness: The Complete Season Six** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$34.98). This 2002 sixth season of the procedural drama includes the two-part episodes "The Fall Out," "Kith and Kill," "Tell No Tales," and "Closed Ranks."

**Succession: The Complete First Season** (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$47.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Hiam Abbass, Nicholas Braun, and Brian Cox star in this 2018 debut season of the HBO series centered on a media dynasty.



**Who Is America** (Paramount, DVD: 2



“A stellar romantic breakout”  
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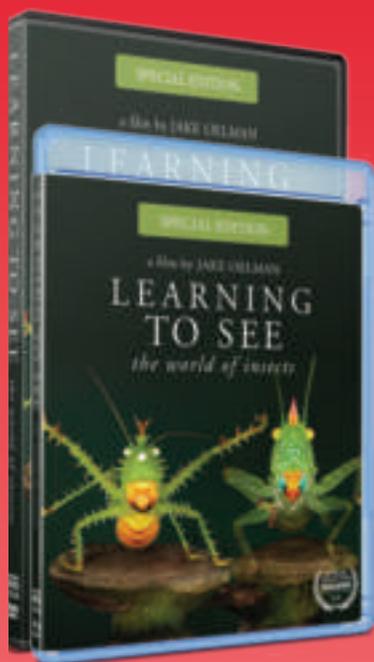
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discs, \$24.99). Sacha Baron Cohen poses as various characters to shake up political figures in this 2018 satire series that features Bernie Sanders, Dick Cheney, and Barney Frank.



**The Woman in White** (PBS, DVD: 2 discs, \$34.99). This 2018 five-part adaptation of the classic novel by Wilkie Collins chronicles the story of half-siblings (Jessie Buckley, Olivia Vinall) who are embroiled in a sensational conspiracy.

### November 13

**The Crown: The Complete Second Season** (Sony, DVD: 4 discs, \$45.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$55.99). This 2017 second season of the Netflix-aired period drama profiling the life of Queen Elizabeth II stars Claire Foy, Matt Smith, and Vanessa Kirby.

**Elementary: The Sixth Season** (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$44.99). Jonny Lee Miller and Lucy Liu are back in this 2018 sixth season of the contemporary Sherlock Holmes police procedural series.

**Ernie Kovacs: The Centennial Edition** (Shout! Factory, DVD: 9 discs, \$69.98). In celebration of funnyman Ernie Kovacs's 100th birthday, this compilation includes various episodes of his local and national morning shows, five ABC-aired specials, commercials, and more.

**Hidden: Series 1** (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99). DI Cadi John (Sian Reese-Williams) works to solve a cold case stemming from disappearances in Snowdonia in this 2018 eight-part Welsh serial.

**Star Trek: Discovery—Season One** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$63.99). Set a decade before the original series, this 2017-18 debut addition to the sci-fi franchise focuses on the crew of the *Discovery* and stars Sonequa Martin-Green, Doug Jones, Mary Wiseman, Jason Isaacs, and Wilson Cruz.



### November 20

**No Offence: Series 2** (Acorn, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99). While secrets still swirl around the recent death of her husband, DI Vivienne Deering (Joanna Scanlan) comes back to work in the midst of a bomb blast

in this 2017 second season of episodes from the Channel 4 procedural drama.

### November 27

**Elizabeth I and Her Enemies** (Acorn, DVD: \$34.99). Lily Cole stars as the titular monarch in this 2017 three-part British docudrama presented by historians Dan Jones and Dr. Suzannah Lipscomb.

**Jack Irish: Season 2** (Acorn, DVD or Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99). Starring Guy Pearce as the titular brooding alcoholic private investigator, this 2018 second season features Marta Dusseldorp and Aaron Pedersen.

**Picnic at Hanging Rock** (Acorn, DVD or Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99). Based on Joan Lindsay's 1967 Australian novel, this mystery series concerning a small group of students from an all-female college stars Natalie Dormer, Lily Sullivan, and Harrison Gilbertson.

**Sharp Objects** (HBO, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$59.99). An adaptation of the 2006 debut novel by Gillian Flynn, this 2018 HBO-aired limited series follows a reporter (Amy Adams) with bad hometown memories who returns to cover a murder.



### December 4

**Westworld—Season Two: The Door** (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$54.98). Android theme park host Dolores (Evan Rachel Wood) takes control in a search for survivors in this 2018 sophomore season of the sci-fi Western series that also stars Thandie Newton and Jeffrey Wright.

**Yellowstone: Season 1** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$39.99). The conflicts and issues involving the borders tying together a ranch family, an Indian reservation, land developer groups, and the National Park are at the center of this 2018 first season starring Kevin Costner, Luke Grimes, Kelly Reilly, and Cole Hauser.



### December 11

**Death in Paradise: Season Seven** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$34.98). Murders of a billionaire's wife and a bestselling thriller author

are key cases in this 2018 seventh season set of the Caribbean crime drama that stars Ardal O'Hanlon, Joséphine Jobert, and Don Warrington.

**Father Brown: Season Six** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99). Father Brown (Mark Williams) worries about a revenge-seeking woman from his past in this 2017-18 sixth series based on the short stories by G.K. Chesterton.

**The High Chaparral: Season Two** (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs, \$29.99). Set at the titular ranch in Arizona Territory, this 1968-69 sophomore season of the Western series stars Leif Erickson, Cameron Mitchell, Mark Slade, and Linda Cristal.



**Instinct: Season One** (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98). CIA operative turned quiet psychology professor Dr. Dylan Reinhart (Alan Cumming) joins forces with an NYPD detective (Bojana Novakovic) to thwart a serial killer.

**Nathan for You: The Complete Series** (Paramount, DVD: 9 discs, \$39.98). A business advisor thinks out of the box for his clients in this compilation from the 2013-17 four seasons of the Comedy Central-aired docu-reality series starring Vancouver-born comedian Nathan Fielder.

**The Orville: The Complete First Season** (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.95). Creator Seth MacFarlane also stars in this 2017 debut season of the sci-fi comedy series that features guest appearances by Rob Lowe, Holland Taylor, Charlize Theron, and Liam Neeson.

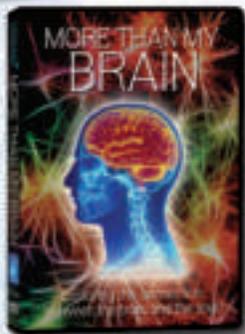


**Top of the Lake: China Girl** (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$24.98). A sequel to the original 2013 series, this 2017 second season follows Sydney detective Robin Griffin (Elisabeth Moss) as she investigates the case of a Jane Doe colloquially known as "China Girl."

### December 18

**The Sinner: Season Two** (Universal, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98). A teen poisons his parents, and Detective Harry Ambrose (Bill Pullman) returns to his upstate New York roots, in this 2018 second season of the anthology series that also features Carrie Coon, Elisha Henig, and Tracy Letts.

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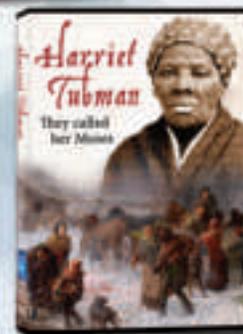
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## Breaking the Silence

From the outside, the Amish all look the same, and yet each Amish person has his own story. Take an inside look at the Amish in this six-episode series. *Episode One:* A rare inside view of an Amish church service. *Episode Two:* The story of Amish minister Lester Graber and his wife Rebecca. *Episode Three:* The story of three people who left the Amish. *Episode Four:* Where did the Amish come from? *Episode Five:* Frequently asked questions about the Amish. *Episode Six:* How do those who have come out of the Amish reconcile their past to their new lives? Documentary, 255 minutes total.

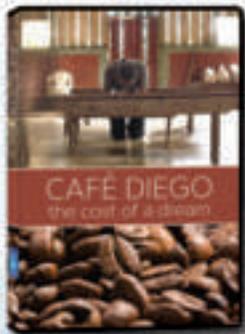
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## Harriet Tubman: They Called Her Moses

Harriet Tubman is a familiar and revered name in American history. But many are unfamiliar with the details of her remarkable story, the depth of her character, and the inner motivations that drove her. Discover the real Harriet Tubman in this compelling documentary narrated by Alfrelynn Roberts. It features expert interviews with leading scholars and includes early 20th century audio recordings of African-American spirituals sung by former slaves. Documentary, 55 minutes.

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## Café Diego: The Cost of a Dream

*Café Diego: The Cost of a Dream* is a documentary that follows the life of a Nicaraguan coffee farmer named Diego Chavarria. It is a story of great hardship, faith, risk, poverty, and perseverance. It is a story about being faithful with what we have and believing God has a dream that is bigger than our own. Documentary, 30 minutes.

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## The Animated Bible Series Episode 1: The Creation

*The Animated Bible Series*, currently in production, is the world's first visual narrative of the entire Bible with a unique graphic-novel style depiction of its stories. *Episode 1: The Creation* highlights Genesis chapter 1-3 revealing the creation, the fall of man, God's judgment on mankind and on the crafty serpent, the banishing of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden and the tree of life, and the promise of future redemption. Animated, 23 minutes.

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## The Chosen: A Story of the First Christmas

Simon, a disabled shepherd, struggles to keep pace with his counterparts, yet he diligently seeks to understand the ancient prophecies about the promised Messiah. Simon's weakness makes him a pariah among his people, especially the leader of the synagogue who is disgusted by his imperfection. Simon seems doomed to a life of pain and struggle as an outsider until a miraculous revelation allows him to be part of the greatest moment in history. Drama, 22 minutes.

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This section features reviews of current and classic studio, independent, and foreign feature films. Each review includes pricing information, as well as running time, rating, subtitling information, and street dates for yet-to-be-released titles. Most titles reviewed here are widely available through most distributors.

- ★★★★ = Excellent
- ★★★ = Good
- ★★ = Fair
- ★ = Poor

## Current Films

### 14 Cameras ★1/2

Gravitas Ventures, 88 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99

Extreme voyeurism was the subject of Victor Zarcov's *13 Cameras*, a low-budget thriller centering on creepy landlord Gerald (Neville Archambault), who spied on his tenants and often directly intervened in their lives. This sequel directed by Seth Fuller and Scott Hussion expands on the concept, not merely by adding another camera but also needless subplots. Gerald is now an entrepreneur who rents out a baker's dozen of camera-equipped homes, footage from which he sends out to paying customers on the dark web. He also has his own perverted interests, keeping Claire (Brianna Moncrief), the pregnant housewife from the first movie, imprisoned in an underground chamber, and adding recent tenant Sarah (Chelsea Edmundson). Meanwhile, Gerald also deals with a new family of renters: a couple, their son and daughter, and the latter's best friend. Much of the movie is given over to boring footage of this family that is enlivened only when one of Gerald's customers decides to make an unwelcome visit and Gerald must protect them. A thoroughly unnecessary and disappointing sequel, marked by poor writing, slipshod plotting, amateur acting, and flat direction, *14 Cameras* ends with the promise—or threat—of yet another installment. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)



### Alpha ★★★

Sony, 96 min., PG-13, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99, Nov. 13

Set in Europe more than 20,000 years ago during the last Ice Age, *Alpha* is a fable about how a caveman first bonded with a wolf. Preparing for the annual



Great Hunt, Chief Tau (Johannes Haukur Johannesson) is concerned about his sensitive teenage son, Keda (Kodi Smit-McPhee), who hasn't quite mastered all the necessary skills. As his mother Rho (Natassia Malthe) says, "Keda leads with his heart, not his spear." Joining other tribesmen, they stampede a bison herd, driving them over a cliff, so that the carcasses can be butchered and hauled back as food for the winter. But one beast turns and rushes his attackers, catching Keda on its horns and tossing him into the air. Knocked unconscious, Keda lands on a narrow ledge that is too steep for a rescue. When Keda regains consciousness, a flash flood enables him to swim to safety, only to be attacked by voracious wolves. After stabbing the leader of the pack, dubbed Alpha, Keda takes pity on the injured animal, nursing its wounds, and offering water. But after killing a rabbit for sustenance, Keda firmly establishes dominance, insisting, "You have to wait your turn." Wandering through the vast wilderness, Keda and Alpha encounter many perils and predators, becoming co-dependent as they trek home through blizzards, relying on Keda's hand tattoo of the Big Dipper constellation to point them in the right direction. A magnificently photographed survivalist adventure story charting the first bond between man and wolf (who would later become dog), director Albert Hughes's *Alpha* is recommended. (S. Granger)

### Ant-Man and The Wasp

★★★★  
Disney, 118 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

After assisting Captain America and disobeying the Sokovia Accords, goofball Scott Lang (Paul Rudd)—aka Ant-Man—has been under house arrest for two years, devising elaborate games to play with his 10-year-old daughter Cassie (Abby Ryder Fortson) while his cronies (Michael Peña, David Dastmalchian, Tip "T.I." Harris) run their security-consultant business. Meanwhile, Scott's mentor, Dr. Hank Pym (Michael Douglas), has discovered that his long-lost miniaturized wife Janet van Dyne (Michelle Pfeiffer) has been trapped for 30 years in the sub-atomic Quantum Realm. So Hank and his skeptical daughter Hope (Evangeline Lilly)—aka The Wasp—smuggle Scott out of the house to help rescue Janet because he once mind-melded with her and their "quantum" psychic connection remains ("Do you guys just put the word 'quantum' in front of everything?" Scott inquires). While mutating in size, Scott and Hope arouse the ire of several villains, including the shimmering Ghost (Hannah John-Kamen)—aka Ava Starr—who along with disgruntled former colleague Dr. Bill Foster (Laurence Fishburne) covets Dr. Pym's surreal, futuristic technology, as



does black-marketer Sonny Burch (Walton Goggins). All are doggedly pursued through the treacherous streets of San Francisco by persistent F.B.I./S.H.I.E.L.D agent Jimmy Woo (Randall Park). Directed by Peyton Reed, this is the first Marvel Comics universe movie to feature a female superhero's name in the title. Recommended. (S. Granger)

### Big Fish & Begonia

★★★★  
Shout! Factory, 105 min., PG-13, DVD: \$16.99, Blu-ray: \$26.99

The most successful animated feature made in China to date is a gentle, dreamy fantasy that mixes Chinese fables and folklore with magical imagery reminiscent of Japan's Studio Ghibli. The story follows a young woman named Chun from a race of beings who live beneath the ocean and are the guardians of human souls and the laws of nature. While experiencing the world above (in the form of a red dolphin), she is saved by a human boy who dies in the process, and she bargains away her own life to a greedy god to bring the boy back to life, defying the rules of her world. Made over the course of a decade-plus, *Big Fish & Begonia* mixes hand-drawn, anime-style animation with CGI elements and effects (notably for magic). The plot and backstory can be a bit confusing but the beauty and poetry of the imagery as the dolphins swim across the ocean and float through the sky, coupled with the emotional journey of Chun and of Qui (another boy, who sacrifices himself for Chun), as well as the magnificent scope of the supernatural scenes as Chun channels her power to save her own world, ultimately triumph over the opaque narrative. A coming-of-age tale painted on an epic animated canvas that approaches the visual creativity and emotional storytelling of Japan's animation master Hayao Miyazaki and raises the bar for Chinese animated cinema, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



### BlackKkKlansman

★★★★  
Universal, 135 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$34.99, Nov. 6

Opening with a Civil War scene from *Gone with the Wind* and closing with footage from the Charlottesville riots, Spike Lee's "crazy, outrageous, incredible true story" centers on the historical figure of Ron Stallworth (John David Washington), who in the 1970s became the first African American detective in the Colorado Springs Police Department, and wanted to go undercover. His chance comes when he's assigned to surreptitiously record a speech by former Black Panther leader Stokely Carmichael (Corey Hawkins), aka African nationalist Kwame



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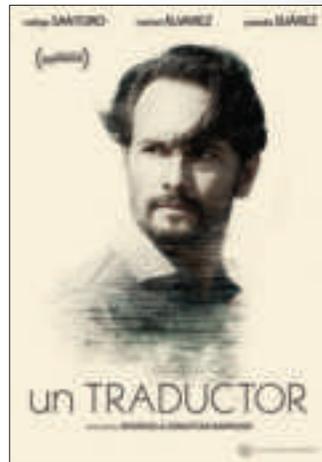
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This candid documentary follows Coby, a transgender Midwest man, who faces difficult decisions and prejudice, while changing the mindset of his family and friends in the process.

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A Russian Literature professor (Rodrigo Santoro of HBO's *Westworld*) is ordered to work as a translator for child victims of Chernobyl when they are sent to Cuba for medical treatment.

**UN TRADUCTOR (AVAILABLE 12/11)**

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In the final chapter of Takeshi Kitano's acclaimed *Outrage* film series, former yakuza boss Otomo must return to Japan to settle the score once and for all with the Hanabishi.

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This acclaimed adaptation of Nobel prize winner Naguib Mahfuz's novel, explores the converging stories of a diverse group of individuals inside Mexico City and stars Salma Hayek.

**MIDAQ ALLEY\***

Latin American, LGBTQ, Drama, Classics  
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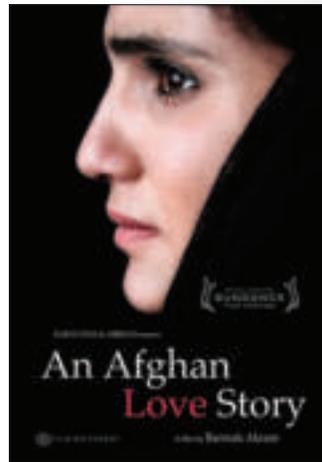
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Jorgelina's summer vacation spent in the countryside with her friend Mario sets both on a road to adolescent self-discovery and, ultimately, acceptance of the mysteries of sexuality.

**LA BOYITA**

Latin American, Coming of Age, Drama  
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After Wajma discovers she is pregnant and word of her sexual indiscretion spreads, her father must decide between his right to uphold his honor and his devotion to his daughter.

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The feature-length compilation of the Sissi film trilogy, depicting the marriage between Austrian Emperor Franz Josef and Bavarian Princess Elisabeth, as portrayed by Romy Schneider.

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ture. After making friends with righteous Colorado State Black Student Union leader Patrice Dumas (Laura Harrier), Stallworth picks up the phone and calls the local Ku Klux Klan to ask about joining. When a meeting is arranged, Stallworth enlists Jewish colleague Flip Zimmerman (Adam Driver) to pose as him. In order to be convincing, Flip hangs out with Klan members at the local pool hall, spewing racial slurs. When KKK leader David Duke (Topher Grace), visits Colorado Springs, Stallworth is ordered to be his bodyguard during a screening of D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, celebrating the Klan. Based on Stallworth's 2014 book *Black Klansman*, the film juxtaposes overt, institutional '70s bigotry with the racist behavior of some Americans since Donald Trump was elected President. Both visually dazzling and emotionally cathartic, this is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Granger)

### Bleeding Steel ★★

Lionsgate, 110 min., in Mandarin & English w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$21.99



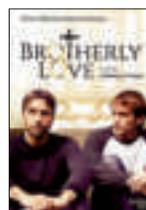
Now 64, Jackie Chan remains a charismatic actor with some impressive moves that he puts on display in this colorful but silly sci-fi/action thriller from writer-director Leo Zhang. Chan plays Special Forces officer Lin Dong, whose duty takes him from his dying young daughter to protect a bioengineering scientist. Thirteen years later, Lin watches over a Chinese college girl who has unnatural healing abilities and nightmares that hold the secrets of bioengineered blood capable of creating an army of super soldier "bioroids." Chan plays the sober, serious hero while young costar Show Lo carries the comedy as Leeson, a mysterious young hacker who joins Lin's mission to save the girl. The confusing plot involves secret identities, a sci-fi author who inadvertently reveals classified material in his new novel, and a race to find the lost formula. Although Chan is no longer able to execute the gymnastic martial arts moves and dangerous stunts of his prime, his team is still one of the best at staging and executing ambitious and memorable set pieces (here including a fight on the fins of the Sydney Opera House and a final battle in a high-tech villain's lair that seems straight out of a classic James Bond movie). But mostly this is a busy, sloppy, and at times goofy action spectacle with lazy sci-fi flourishes and unnecessary characters. Chan fans may enjoy, but this is not one of his best. Optional. (S. Axmaker)

### Brotherly Love ★★

Breaking Glass, 119 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

The gay comedy-drama *Brotherly Love*, adapted from John Gordon Sinclair's 2012 novel *Seventy Times Seven*, arrives at an odd moment in the real world. In the debate

over underlying reasons for rampant pedophilia in the Catholic clergy, some higher-ups in the church hierarchy put the blame squarely on "homosexual culture" in seminaries and monasteries. In *Brotherly Love*, a gay underground does indeed exist among young monks (they appear to be Franciscan who haven't taken final vows. Vito (writer-director-actor Anthony J. Caruso) parties, hangs out at a gay bar, and flirts with men he meets, sticking to the letter of the chastity rule. But when his adviser suggests that he needs a change of pace, Vito agrees to spend a summer helping out at an AIDS care center in Austin. There he meets Gabe (Derek Babb), a handsome, well-built landscaper with puppyish charm. Not only is it pretty clear what's going to happen from this point on, but Caruso is a somewhat wooden director behind the camera, robbing the narrative of what should have been an emotional roller coaster. The best moment almost falls outside the plot: a conversation between Vito and an old Hollywood screenwriter who has AIDS—it is an unexpected scene that delivers a fleeting spark of life and surprise that the film otherwise lacks. Optional. (T. Keogh)



### The Cakemaker ★★★

Strand, 105 min., in English, Hebrew & German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$27.99, Nov. 6



In a story that sounds like something out of the canon of ironic 20th-century melodramas by director Douglas Sirk (*Magnificent Obsession*, *All That Heaven Allows*), filmmaker Ofir Raul Graizer's *The Cakemaker* finds Thomas (Tim Kalkhof), a strapping blonde Berliner who bakes pastries in a cozy cafe, becoming romantically involved with Oren (Roy Miller), a city planner from Jerusalem who visits Berlin on business each month. Oren is married and has a 6-year-old son in Israel. As his relationship with Thomas intensifies, both men become comfortable with the idea of having an affair that brings them together only a few days per month. But then Thomas learns that Oren has been killed in an accident back home. Yearning to somehow stay connected to his former lover, Thomas travels to Jerusalem, where he seeks out Oren's widow, Anat (Sarah Adler), and (without revealing his true identity) helps her reopen her own cafe. As the boundaries of their own relationship expands, the question of what each of the major characters secretly wants is deftly explored. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

### Christopher Robin ★★★

Disney, 104 min., PG, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Nov. 6

This sweet, sentimental, feel-good family

film bears only a superficial resemblance to 2017's *Goodbye Christopher Robin*, which was about the resentful, real-life son of A.A. Milne. As this live-action/CGI-animated story begins, young Christopher Robin (Orton O'Brien) is in the Hundred Acre Wood, bidding farewell to his friends—Pooh Bear, Piglet, Eeyore, Rabbit, Owl, Kanga and Baby Roo—before departing for boarding school. Years pass and Christopher goes off to war, marries Evelyn (Hayley Atwell), settles in London, and has a lovely daughter, Madeline (Bronte Carmichael). And that is essentially the prologue. Now middle-aged Christopher Robin (Ewan McGregor) works as an efficiency manager for a luggage company that is losing money, so he's forced to cancel an eagerly anticipated visit to the family cottage in Sussex. The angst of disappointing Evelyn and Madeline precipitates an emotional crisis, during which Pooh Bear magically appears in a London park, seeking Christopher's help in finding their missing animal friends. Along the way, Christopher rediscovers what is really important in life and reconnects with his family. Director Marc Foster deftly mixes real-life actors with CGI while adeptly utilizing the voices of Jim Cummings, Brad Garrett, and Toby Jones, among others. Recommended. (S. Granger)



### Crazy Rich Asians

★★★

Warner, 120 min., PG-13, DVD: \$28.98, DVD/Blu-ray Combo: \$35.99, Nov. 20



When Nick Young (Henry Golding) asks Rachel Chu (Constance Wu) to fly to Singapore for his best friend's wedding, she has no idea what lies ahead. Unbeknownst to Rachel, Nick is Singapore's richest, most eligible bachelor. And no one, least of all Nick's icy mother (Michelle Yeoh) and imperious grandmother (Lisa Lu), understands why he's chosen this NYU economics professor, a Chinese-American raised by a working-class mother. Unsuspecting Rachel is immediately confronted by a sybaritic wonderland of extravagant wealth and undermined by catty, status-conscious rivals for Nick's affection. Rachel's only confidante is sassy Peik Lin Goh (hip-hop's Awkwafina), her college pal who lives with her ostentatious, nouveau-riche Singapore parents (Ken Jeong/Koh Chieng Mun). And even though Nick's glamorous sister, elegant Astrid (Gemma Chan), empathizes with Rachel's dilemma, she's dealing with her own marital complications. Based on Kevin Kwan's 2013 bestseller and aptly directed by Jon M. Chu, *Crazy Rich Asians* is an enchanting romantic comedy that shatters Asian stereotypes. Recommended. (S. Granger)

## The Death of Superman

★★★

Warner, 81 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.99



This animated DC Universe movie, based on the 1993 landmark comic book, is the 32nd film in the series of direct-to-video animated features (and a remake of an earlier animated original: *Superman: Doomsday*, a looser, less ambitious adaptation). *The Death of Superman* pits Superman (voiced by Jerry O'Connell) against the alien killing machine Doomsday after the latter has defeated the Justice League and Lex Luthor (Rainn Wilson). Familiar voices return to play Batman (Jason O'Mara), Wonder Woman (Rosario Dawson), Green Lantern (Nathan Fillion), and The Flash (Christopher Gorham), who all have memorable scenes. As in the comics, Clark Kent reveals the truth to Lois Lane (Rebecca Romijn) just before going into the longest sustained fight sequence in the animated DCU, which directors Jake Castorena and Sam Liu make interesting with dramatic imagery and inventive twists. The film ends with the death of Superman, as promised, but the story is not over (as the epilogue teases), and will be concluded in 2019 with *Reign of*

*the Supermen*. One of the best of the animated DCU features to date, sure to appeal to fans of the series and the original comic books, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

## Dog Days ★1/2

Fox, 113 min., PG, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99, Nov. 20



Ken Marino's bland ensemble rom-com shamelessly resorts to repeated shots of canines, babies, and older kids staring at the camera to pluck at viewers' heartstrings. Ambitious morning TV host Elizabeth (Nina Dobrev) is forced to team up with Jimmy (Tone Bell), a charming ex-football player; since his dog brings out the best in her depressed one, the owners inch toward romance. Pretty barista Tara (Vanessa Hudgens) takes in a stray and then must decide between two suitors—handsome vet Dr. Mike (Michael Cassidy), who treats the emaciated pup, or goofy but lovable Garrett (Jon Bass), who runs a rescue kennel for homeless canines. An elderly man (Ron Cephas Jones) loses his late wife's dog, and is aided by a pizza-delivery boy (Finn Wolfhard). An anxious couple (Eva Longoria, Rob Corddry) adopts a darling little girl (Elizabeth

Caro), but their attempts to bond run into a brick wall until she falls in love with a stray pug. And a slacker musician (Adam Pally) is compelled to dog-sit for his sister (Jessica St. Clair), while she and her husband (Thomas Lennon) deal with their twin newborns. All of these dog-driven plots come together in a big finale involving a money-raising concert to benefit the doggie shelter. While there are a few bright moments, most of *Dog Days* is as dreary as the title suggests. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

## Down a Dark Hall ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 96 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$21.99



An agreeably creepy ambience combines with an increasingly silly plot in Rodrigo Cortés's supernatural thriller, adapted from a 1974 YA horror novel by Lois Duncan. The setting is a sinister school called Blackwood, where troubled Kit (AnnaSophia Robb) is sent by her mother and stepfather. Kit is one of only five girls in residence—all problem kids—including fragile Sierra (Rosie Day), nervous Izzy (Isabelle Fuhrman), submissive Ashley (Taylor Russell), and belligerent Veronica (Victoria Moroles). All will be taught painting by the

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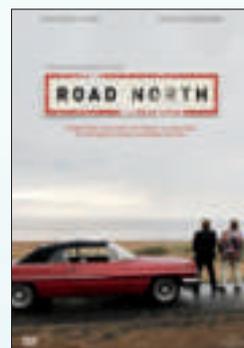
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imperious headmistress Madame Duret (Uma Thurman, camping it up outlandishly), music by her son Jules (Noah Silver), writing by Professor Sinclair (Jodhi May), and math by Professor Farley (Pip Torrens), while fearsome Miss Olonsky (Rebecca Front) enforces discipline. The instruction appears to be hugely successful: soon Sierra is painting lush canvases, Ashley is producing impressive poetry, Izzy is solving impenetrable math problems, and Kit is demonstrating hitherto unknown talent at the piano, even composing challenging works. But their productivity is marked by a manic, frenzied quality, and the girls are spooked by ghostly apparitions. How the girls are managing such extraordinary feats is finally revealed in a fiery conclusion. *Down a Dark Hall* happily depends more on style than gore, but it also grows more absurd along the way. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

### **Eighth Grade** ★★½

Lionsgate, 94 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99



Capturing the effects of social media on suburban adolescence, filmmaker Bo Burnham's perceptive dramedy focuses on one angst-ridden girl's last week in middle school. Shy, lonely 13-year-old Kayla Day (Elsie Fisher) spends most of her waking hours on her iPhone. She's either checking out Instagram/Snapchat or making YouTube videos, offering advice to a non-existent audience. "You have to put yourself out there," she says, "but where is 'there'?" Although Kayla claims to be "funny and cool and talkative," her classmates just voted her "most quiet." Awkwardly vulnerable and painfully insecure, Kayla yearns to be popular and attract the attention of one particular boy (Luke Prael) in her class. The highlight of Kayla's existence comes when she's paired with exuberant Olivia (Emily Robinson) on the day that middle-schoolers "shadow" a high-schooler. When Olivia kindly invites her to join pals at the mall that night, Kayla's content to just sit and watch, listening to their prattle. But as Olivia's friend (Daniel Zolghadri) drives Kayla home, he challenges her to a game of Truth or Dare, and mortified Kayla realizes that she's way out of her depth. During this emotionally agonizing period of her life, Kayla is cared for by her loving single dad (Josh Hamilton), who does his best to adjust to her inexplicable mood swings. Perhaps the 21st-century takeaway is that while social media increases anxiety, you must learn to control it, instead of letting it overwhelm your self-esteem. Highly recommended. (S. Granger)

### **The Escape** ★★

MPI, 101 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Filmmaker Dominic Savage's drama dissects the disintegrating marriage of a suburban British couple. Tara (Gemma Arterton)

is a stay-at-home mother to three small children who feels stifled by her existence. She is increasingly distant and irritated with her overworked husband (Dominic Cooper), who belittles her notion of enrolling in an art course in London. After retreating into a state of numbness, Tara impulsively buys a one-way ticket to Paris and walks out on her family. Her initial foray around the French capital in pursuit of the art classics that she has read about in books leads to a rendezvous with a Parisian who reveals belatedly that he is also married with children. But a chance encounter with a wise older woman (Marthe Keller) forces Tara to re-examine her priorities and commitments. Savage's screenplay is strangely evasive about the roots of Tara's crisis, and the film's abrupt shift to Paris only opens the door to too many convenient clichés thrown in Tara's path. Arterton gamely tries to plumb the internal conflict of her character, but she comes across as more selfish than self-discovering. Optional. (P. Hall)



### **Freaky Friday** ★★½

Disney, 90 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99



Did the world really need a fourth *Freaky Friday*, following the delightful 1976 original, a 1995 TV-movie, and a solid 2003 remake? This new iteration of the body-switching comedy inspired by Mary Rodgers's titular 1972 YA novel is squarely aimed at 'tween (and younger) viewers of the cable Disney Channel, presented as a musical version that has all the hallmarks of the Disney TV brand, but is ultimately shriller and more generally unsatisfying than its predecessors. The story remains the same: rebellious teen Ellie (Cozi Zuehlsoff) is struggling with the imminent wedding of her widower mom, Katherine (Heidi Blickenstaff). Some hocus-pocus causes them to switch bodies, forcing Ellie to go through a day of wedding planning as Katherine, and Katherine to attend high school as Ellie. Each comes to sympathize with the day-to-day pressures on the other. Some of the more delightful Disney TV trademarks pop up, particularly the occasional dark note (a flirtation in biology class over dissected frogs is especially perverse and fun). But while the chuckles nicely balance the sentimentality, and Disney once again deserves praise for its diversity in casting, this is the least of the filmed versions. Still, given the popularity of Disney Channel movies, this should also be considered a strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)

### **Filmworker** ★★½

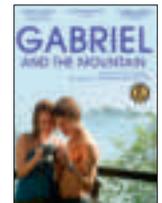
Kino Lorber, 93 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99



The title of this documentary on Leon Vitali, the British actor who became Stanley Kubrick's personal assistant for over 20 years, comes from the job description that Vitali wrote on his travel documents: filmworker. At the beginning of a successful career on stage and screen (both big and small), Vitali landed a major role in Stanley Kubrick's *Barry Lyndon* (1975) and became fascinated by Kubrick's working methods. When Kubrick invited Vitali to help him cast the boy in *The Shining*, he embraced the opportunity and then spent the next two decades as Kubrick's right hand, doing everything from scouting locations to historical research to coaching actors on the set. Filmmaker Tony Zierra is clearly fascinated by Vitali's devotion to Kubrick during his lifetime, a relationship that was often thankless and came at the expense of Vitali's acting career. But Vitali remains proud of his role in helping Kubrick bring his visions to the screen and in overseeing the legacy of Kubrick's work since his death. This portrait of one man's service to a genius pays tribute to his "sacrifice" without delving too deeply into the often-dysfunctional relationship between the two or exploring Vitali's life outside of Kubrick's orbit. Interviewees including Ryan O'Neal, Danny Lloyd, Matthew Modine, R. Lee Ermey, and Stellan Skarsgård, among others, share their memories of Vitali's work on the films. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

### **Gabriel and the Mountain** ★★★

Strand, 132 min., in Portuguese, English & French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99

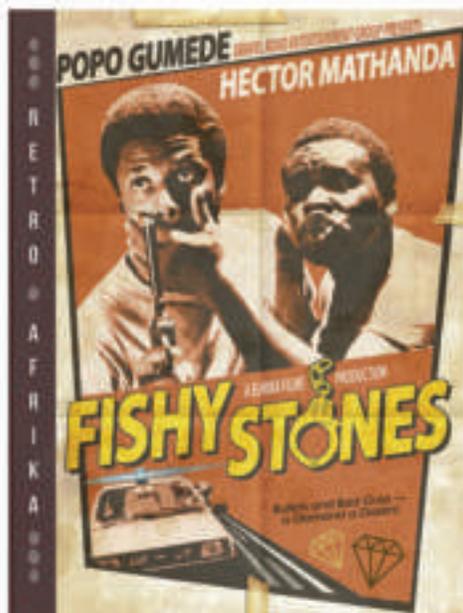


Brazilian director Feliipe Barbosa's second feature is an unusual hybrid of documentary and drama, re-creating the last 10 weeks in the life of his prep school classmate Gabriel Buchmann, who was traveling through Africa in 2009 before starting studies at UCLA—and died alone, at the foot of Mount Mulanje, which he had just climbed (his body was not discovered for 19 days). Barbosa went to great lengths to find locals who Buchmann interacted with during his journey through Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi, and then had the non-professionals re-enact their conversations with actor João Pedro Zappa (playing Gabriel) in the places they occurred. Barbosa also re-created the time that Buchmann spent with his girlfriend Cristina (Caroline Abras), who shared one leg of the trip with him. The portrait the director draws of his friend is mostly very affectionate: Zappa has a broad smile and open-hearted manner, and he captures the easygoing rapport that Gabriel developed with the locals. At the same

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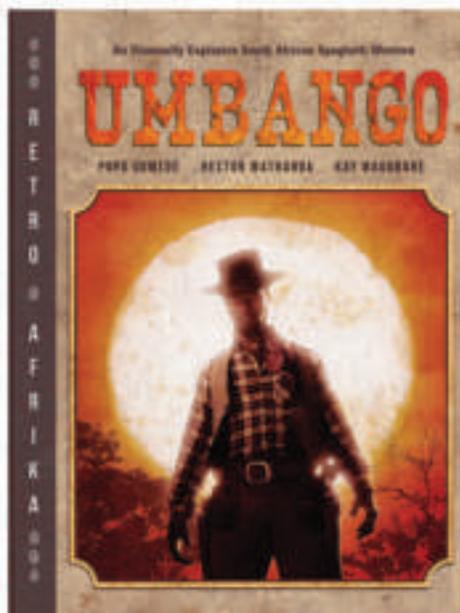
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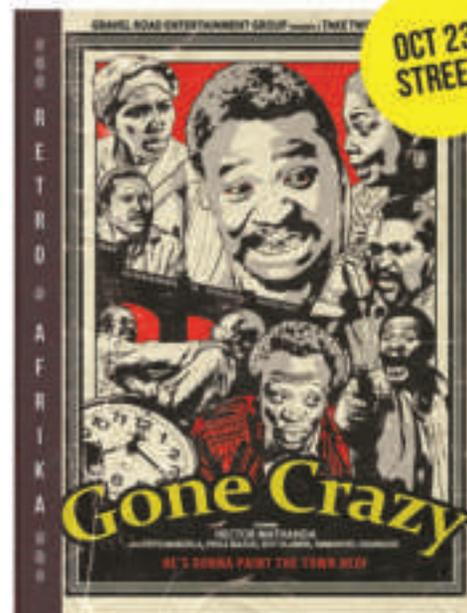
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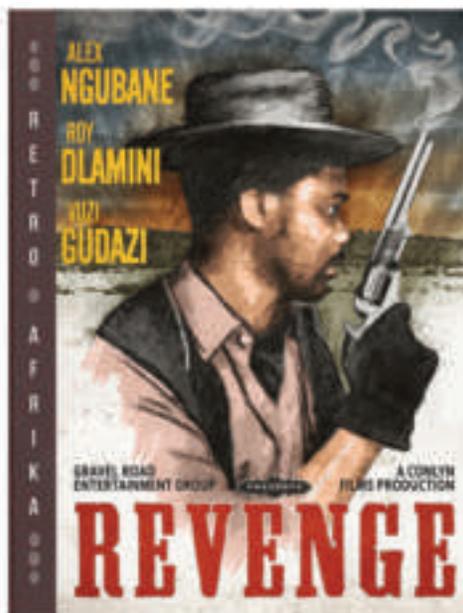
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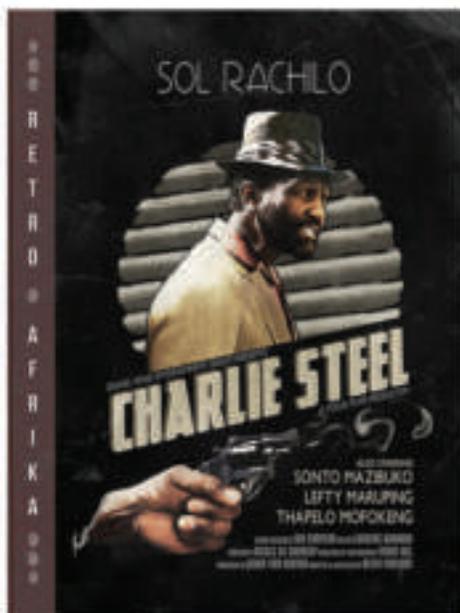
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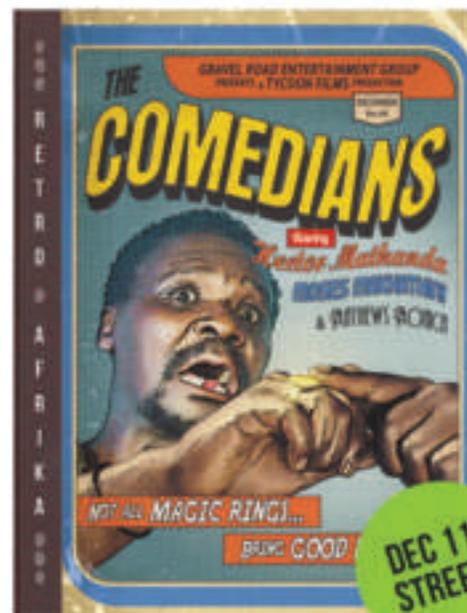
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time Buchmann is not presented as a plaster saint; he has a temper, argues with one of his guides and Cristina, and refuses to take advice, indicating an arrogant streak that might have played a role in his death (he was warned not to climb Mulanje with so little daylight remaining, but ignored it). Reinforced with Buchmann's actual photographs, excerpts from his letters, and reminiscences about him, this is both an intriguing travelogue and a fascinating character study. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

## Generation Wealth

★★★1/2

Lionsgate, 105 min., R, DVD: \$19.99

Lauren Greenfield's documentary reminds viewers that money can't buy happiness, but she expands on that theme to question the value of any obsessive interest, using her own devotion to photography—which has lessened time spent with her family—as an example. Much of *Generation Wealth* portrays the absurdity of a single-minded lust for monetary success, celebrity, and possessions. Greenfield checks in with David and Jacqueline Siegel—the couple shown building a grotesquely large mansion in the director's previous film *The Queen of Versailles*—who are offered as a perfect example of profligate materialism, and Florian Homm, a German wheeler-dealer who made a fortune before being charged with violations of financial regulations that forced him into hiding before he was caught and convicted. Homm expounds profusely on the error of his ways, especially concerning the subsequent estrangement from his son. Greenfield also revisits some of the rich young people she photographed two decades ago for a 1997 book, finding that the opulence they flaunted then has hardly guaranteed them either success or happiness. Eventually, Greenfield turns the camera on herself to consider whether by placing such emphasis on her work she too has ignored what is really important in life. That observation seems to be a bit of a stretch—particularly if one applies it broadly to history's greatest geniuses—but her multifaceted portrait of unfettered greed and excess is often compelling, even if it leads to some doubtful conclusions. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



## Ghost Stories ★★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 98 min., not rated, DVD: \$16.99, Blu-ray: \$22.99

Adapted from their London stage hit, Jeremy Dyson and Andy Nyman's film is a horror anthology consisting of three creepy tales of supernatural occurrences that are connected by a wraparound narrative involving Philip Goodman (Ny-



man), a self-styled debunker of fake mediums. In the first, Goodman interviews a belligerent man (Paul Whitehouse) who was visited by an apparition from his tragic past when serving as a security guard at a derelict asylum. The second story introduces Goodman to a near-hysterical young fellow (Alex Lawther), who relates a terrifying car trip through the woods, during which he was attacked by a strange creature. Finally, Goodman talks with a smug, condescending businessman (Martin Freeman), who describes how a poltergeist invaded the nursery that he and his wife prepared for their expected child. Flashbacks reveal what drives Goodman—an unhappy childhood with a rigorous father—and those personal issues come to the fore in the last act as he must relive a traumatic episode from his adolescence. The final twist tying everything together is pretty lame, but the movie does offer some genuinely scary moments and features a good deal of eccentric humor. *Ghost Stories* is no classic, but it does provide some real chills. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

## Godard Mon Amour

★★★

Cohen, 107 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99

Louis Garrel is well-cast as French New Wave icon and legendary filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard in this film by Michel Hazanavicius. *Godard Mon Amour* is based on the 2015 autobiographical novel *Un An Après* by the late Anne Wiazemsky, Godard's wife and muse during the last half of the 1960s, and it covers the period when Godard moved into more aggressively political subjects and struggled to challenge the traditional conventions of filmmaking with a meaningful revolutionary alternative. But the film is less about the artist than the man himself as seen from the perspective of his dewy, bubbly young wife (Stacy Martin), a woman almost 20 years his junior. Godard was something of a conundrum: a self-conscious cinematic genius who cut ties with old friends for failing to be revolutionary, a political filmmaker whose treatment of women on screen ranged from the admirable to the exploitative, and an outsider in France who embraced oppressed people around the world yet has a history of troubling anti-Semitic remarks. Hazanavicius (who directed the Oscar-winning *The Artist*) is neither a deep thinker nor a cinematic firebrand and he fails to connect with Godard's struggle or even his art, but he is adept at parody and pastiche and his style here is closer to the whimsy and playfulness of Francois Truffaut, finding humor in Godard's contradictions and his desperation to be taken seriously by the young students leading the May 1968 protests. Ultimately, this is a pleasingly irreverent portrait



of the cinematic legend. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

## Goldstone ★★★1/2

Lightyear, 110 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99

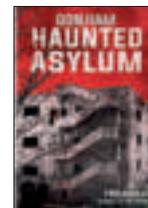
A superb thriller set in an otherworldly desert outpost in Australia, *Goldstone* is a simmering drama about the intersection of corruption and the lives of dispossessed or otherwise victimized people. Aaron Pedersen is outstanding as a federal cop named Jay Swan, a broken-down indigenous middle-aged drunkard who—despite a messed-up life—has his detective wits about him and isn't afraid to say what he thinks. Turning up in Goldstone to investigate a missing young woman, Jay collides with local cop Josh Waters (Alex Russell), who is younger than Jay and white. At the center of the drama is a not-terribly-secret conspiracy by the mayor (Jacki Weaver) and a mining company to dig on land reserved for aboriginal people. A band of goons serve as enforcers, keeping resistance at bay (sometimes with lethal intent). While Josh is not on the take or directly benefiting from the mayor's illegal machinations, he goes along to get along, bristling when Jay suggests that Josh is nonetheless complicit. A related subplot about trafficked Chinese women adds to the general monstrosity of the town, a frontier outpost comprised of clusters of trailers and portable offices (the kind seen at construction sites). Writer-director Ivan Sen patiently lays all the pieces of this puzzle out while skillfully taking viewers towards the thrilling climax. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)



## Gonjiam: Haunted Asylum ★★

Well Go USA, 95 min., in Korean w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99

Although the cycle of found-footage horror movies that began with *The Blair Witch Project* has largely run out of steam, Korean writer-director Jung Bum-shik tries to revitalize the formula with this tale of a bunch of young adults who venture into a long-shuttered mental institution in order to reveal its hidden secrets on a live-streaming website. The place is believed to be cursed (rumors abound about torture, suicide, and mysterious disappearances), especially the legendary locked and bolted Room 402, which is reputed to be the facility's ultimate chamber of horrors. After a long prologue in which the various team members are introduced and the site host—called The Captain (Wi Ha-joon)—takes his place in a tent to monitor the group's progress via a maze of monitors, the story follows the adventurers from floor to floor, pausing periodically when their instruments record



some supposedly supernatural presence (eerie messages and photographs appear on walls). Every once in a while someone will yell "It's so creepy!", telling viewers how to react to grainy footage that is presented with whip-lash editing and screwy camera angles. After some predictable twists—the electricity goes out and some events are being manipulated to boost viewership—the team reaches Room 402, open the door, and all hell breaks loose. Viewers have seen all of this before in terms of both style and substance, and the fact that the characters are such irritating twists doesn't much help. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

**The Great Game** ★★1/2

*Icarus, 100 min., in French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$26.99*

The great game of the title of this 2015 French drama is politics, specifically the use of propaganda as a political tool. Pierre (Melvil Poupaud), an out-of-work writer and disillusioned leftist, is hired by a powerful political fixer named Joseph Paskin (the great André Dussollier) to ghostwrite an incendiary political tract. It's all part of a campaign to discredit a government minister and Pierre becomes



a pawn in a political war that comes back on the apolitical Pierre, who hides out in the commune where his ex-wife still lives. The first act of filmmaker Nicolas Pariser's debut feature is a dense, compelling political thriller filled with fascinating discussions of how modern propaganda works to both highlight and obscure messages (echoing the discussion of recent election interference in the U.S.). And then it winds down into a series of long conversations between Pierre and new love interest Laura (Clémence Poésy), who is committed to her commune work and the possibility of a different way of living, centering on philosophy, social politics, commitment, and the choices we make. Paskin is by far the most interesting character but the film focuses on the largely passive Pierre and how he reacts to the blowback of his actions. An interesting drama that loses steam along the way, this is still a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

**The Guardians** ★★★

*Music Box, 135 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95*

Director Xavier Beauvois's *The Guardians*, set on the French homefront during World War I, is adapted from Ernest Pérochon's 1924 novel. When her sons Georges (Cyril

Descours) and Constant (Nicolas Giraud) are sent off to fight in the trenches, Hortense Sandrail (Nathalie Baye) is left to run the family farm along with her daughter Solange (Laura Smet), whose husband Clovis (Olivier Rabourdin) is also away. Finding the work too much to handle by themselves, Hortense hires an orphan, Francine (Iris Bry), to help, and when Georges returns on leave, he becomes attracted to Francine. Hortense disapproves, and after rumors begin to circulate about not only Francine but Solange as well, she fires the girl. While this narrative might sound melodramatic—there are also inevitable visits by officials to convey news of deaths at the front—Beauvois stages even the most emotional scenes with quiet, unhurried grace, accentuated by lush widescreen camerawork that makes the images look museum-ready. Encompassing the period from 1915 to 1919, the film beautifully visualizes the modernization of French rural life, illustrating how manual labor in the fields was gradually replaced by farm machinery, just as warfare was being transformed to devastating effect. Ending with an homage to Stanley Kubrick's classic *Paths of Glory*, this potent World War I film is recommended. (F. Swietek)



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AGONY

UPC: 845637002788      SRP: \$24.95

A young woman is murdered, her body dismembered, its parts dumped across Vienna. Two suspects emerge without a clear motive: Christian, a law student who sells concessions part-time at a movie theatre, and Alex, an image-obsessed rapper/boxer. Each young man is trapped in his expectations, set against the abstraction of a violent postmodern news-scape. One of them goes berserk and becomes a killer. Amounting to much more than a slasher movie, AGONY is a split-narrative character study: two distinct male millennial personalities whose stories do not overlap inhabit two distinct Viennas. Poignant questions of machismo and sexual identity are deftly brought to light. Based on the true story of a shocking murder. (German w/English subtitles. 2017)

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## The Happytime Murders



Universal, 92 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Dec. 4

This crude and vulgar serial-homicide thriller involves the puppet cast of a beloved '80s children's TV show who are being murdered one-by-one, prompting a disgraced LAPD detective-turned-private eye puppet to investigate. Phil Phillips (voiced by Muppet vet Bill Barretta) is hired by femme fatale Sandra White (Dorien Davies) to stop the killings, which he is eager to do, since one of the stars was Phil's brother Larry (Victor Yerrid) and the show's only human actress, Jenny (Elizabeth Banks), was once Phil's lover. Complicating matters is Phil's troubled relationship with his former LAPD partner, Det. Connie Edwards (Melissa McCarthy), who—after being seriously injured during the incident that destroyed Phil's career—underwent emergency abdominal surgery in which she received a puppet liver. As a result, Connie has developed a serious sugar addiction, prompting her to gulp huge quantities of maple syrup. The highly reputable Sesame Workshop sued STX Entertainment's "deliberate effort to appropriate its SESAME STREET trademark, and its trusted brand and goodwill, to promote their R-rated movie," objecting to the tagline "NO SESAME, ALL STREET" in this film featuring profane, drug-using, misogynistic, violent, copulating, and even ejaculating puppets (the case was dismissed). Directed by Muppets creator Jim Henson's son Brian, *The Happytime Murders* is simply not funny, except for comedienne Maya Rudolph as Phil's lovelorn secretary. Not recommended. (S. Granger)



## Homestate ★★★

Dreamscape, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

A ne'er-do-well drifter hitchhikes his way to his sister's family and is charitably taken in but made less welcome by her disapproving husband. Sound familiar? Maybe so, but the formula is refreshed in this smart and often surprising comedy-drama about hairline fractures in a nuclear family cracking open—all because of a visitor. Blaise Miller (who co-wrote the screenplay with writer-director-actor David Hickey) plays Josh, who has had a rugged few days making his way to his sister Crystal (Shaneyne Ferrell), her spouse Harvey (Hickey), and their middle-school daughter, Pearl (Grace Love). Bent on giving Josh shelter and incorporating him into family rituals, Crystal unwittingly intensifies Harvey's stress and hidden estrangement from her and Pearl. It's not so much that Josh is in the way (he's staying in their backyard camper so is not under foot), but that he personifies Harvey's

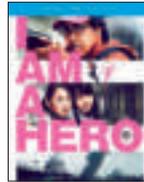


anxiety and sense of isolation while the latter is desperately building a new business. Josh displaces Harvey as the man in Pearl's life, and seems like a reliable mentor. But a river of secrets and lies runs beneath the superficial easiness of this seemingly ideal home. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

## I Am a Hero ★★★

Funimation, 127 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99

The zombie apocalypse arrives in Japan with a bang in Shinsuke Sato's adaptation of Kengo Hanazawa's manga series, a horror-comedy tale in which a virus has struck Tokyo, turning people into ferocious cannibals. Sad-sack Hideo Suzuki (Yō Ōizumi), a failed would-be comic artist, has just been tossed out by his disgusted girlfriend, but he happens to be carrying his prize possession—a shotgun (a rarity in a society that is pretty much firearm-free). Although Hideo is reluctant to use it (one of his endearingly silly qualities is his adherence to the restrictions of the government-issued certificate of ownership), the weapon acts as a balance to his natural cowardice, even as others try to wrest it away from him. Hideo links up with a somber but spunky schoolgirl (Kasumi Arimura) to make their way to the top of Mount Fuji, a place—according to news reports—where the virus has no effect, but they stop at an isolated shopping mall harboring a group of survivors, and here Hideo will eventually display his marksmanship in final battles against both human rivals and attacking zombies. *I Am a Hero* differs from other entries in the zombie pack in both its sense of humor and unusual creature effects, which depict the ravenous horde as fast-moving contortionists rather than hulking slowpokes. Add a heaping helping of gore, and Sato's movie becomes a wild, exuberant genre ride. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



## Incredibles 2 ★★★

Disney, 111 min., PG, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Nov. 6

Fourteen years after the original, director Brad Bird's digitally animated superhero franchise has a super sequel revolving around the Parr family. Bob, Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson), is the traditional strong and protective patriarch, while Helen (Holly Hunter) is his flexible wife—aka Elastigirl. Violet (Sarah Vowell) is their angst-laden teenage daughter, Dash (Huck Milner) is a rowdy, impulsive younger brother, and Jack-Jack (Eli Fucile) is the baby. The family's best friend is Lucius Best—aka Frozone (Samuel L. Jackson). This story begins where the last movie left off, with superheroes being forbidden from saving lives. So after they dispense with

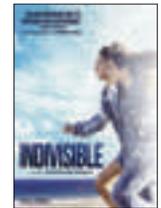


destructive, drill-riding Underminer (John Ratzenberger), the family is unceremoniously banished from suburbia and forced to live in a cheap motel. To their rescue comes savvy telecommunications entrepreneur Winston Deavor (Bob Odenkirk) and his cynical sister Evelyn (Catherine Keener), who convince Elastigirl to kick off a campaign to reinstate superheroes. Feeling empowered, Elastigirl's first crime-fighting target is a mysterious, masked villain known as Screenslaver, who uses TV to hypnotize and brainwash the masses, turning them into mindless zombies. Meanwhile, Bob is predictably uncomfortable playing Mr. Mom: he finds Dash's "new math" homework baffling and is exhausted trying to wrangle three rambunctious kids. A male chauvinist, Bob is jealous that his wife is getting all the action and attention. During Mom's absence, Jack-Jack suddenly exhibits his own unique superpowers, and more complications arise when unmasked Violet is spied in her superhero costume by a boy at school. Imaginative, inventive, and featuring a terrific retro-futuristic design, this fun family film is recommended. (S. Granger)

## Indivisible ★★★

Kino Lorber, 104 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

Identical twins Angela and Marianna Fontana play conjoined twins Viola and Daisy, a novelty singing act in the impoverished, highly religious culture of southern Italy. They are the family breadwinners, managed by their father, who writes their songs, shapes their image, and hustles new gigs, including a partnership with an ambitious priest who wants to use the girls to promote a new church. And then Daisy learns that, contrary to what their father has told them all their lives, the pair can be safely separated and lead normal lives, so they run off to find the money needed for the operation. Filmmaker Edoardo De Angelis's meandering film is like a mercenary fable, with the girls as innocents used by authority figures for their own ends, sentenced to a life of being literally joined at the hip to profit off novelty. The girls have very different personalities and don't even agree on the surgery (the religious Viola embraces their connection while the headstrong Daisy wants a solo life to experience travel and sex), but they are devoted to one another. *Indivisible* explores issues of objectification, exploitation, and autonomy in a world of superstition, hardship, and chauvinistic control, and while the metaphors are obvious the film is also effective, largely thanks to the performances of the Fontana twins, who convey the sisterly love that connects them beyond flesh and bone. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



## A Kid Like Jake ★★

Shout! Factory, 89 min., R, DVD: \$16.99, Blu-ray: \$22.99

Originating as an off-Broadway play in which the titular character never appears, this family drama set in Brooklyn revolves around lawyer-turned-stay-at-home mom Alex (Claire Danes) and her therapist husband Greg (Jim Parsons), who are perplexed and defensive when their 4-year-old son, Jake (Leo James Davis), expresses a preference for dressing in Disney princess costumes and playing with so-called girls' toys. Desperate to transfer Jake from a city elementary school to a private educational institution and seeking scholarship aid, they face one roadblock after another during crucial admissions interviews. Fortunately, they're counseled by observant friend Judy (Octavia Spencer), director of the pre-school that Jake currently attends, who suggests that they emphasize Jake's "gender nonconforming play," hinting that it might be a diversity ploy that will work to their advantage. Although Jake's best friend (Rhys Bhatia), the son of Alex's BFF Amal (Priyanka Chopra), accepts Jake as he is, other kids have begun to bully him, calling Jake "flag," a mispronunciation of the word "fag." Frantic Alex steadfastly refuses to place a label on Jake's developmental behavior, yet analytical Greg seems ready to recognize his son as transgender, and a rupture begins to grow between them. Along the way, director Silas Howard's film detours into unnecessary subplots involving one of Greg's patients (Amy Landecker), and Alex's abrasive mother (Ann Dowd). Optional. (S. Granger)



## Kin ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 102 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.99, Nov. 20

Jonathan and Josh Baker's debut feature, an expansion of their short film *Bag Man*, begins as a dysfunctional family drama but soon morphs into first a gangster picture and then an overwrought revenge tale that is also a road movie with a strong coming-of-age component before finally transforming into a full-fledged sci-fi flick. *Kin* starts with young Eli (Myles Tritt) stumbling upon a futuristic weapon that responds to his touch. Simultaneously, his older half-brother (Jack Reynor), just out of prison, shows up at the Detroit home that Eli shares with his hard-working adoptive dad Hal (Dennis Quaid), looking for money to pay off a debt to gonzo crime lord Taylor (James Franco). Hal winds up dead and the brothers take off for the West Coast, pursued not only by Taylor and his gang, but also the cops and a couple of soldiers from some other dimension on stolen motorcycles. Along the way, a sweet-natured exotic dancer named



Milly (Zoë Kravitz) joins the boys on the lam. A guest star eventually shows up to explain what makes Eli special—and set the stage for a sequel that will probably never occur. *Kin* throws pretty much everything but the kitchen sink into the plot, but it displays imagination, and features a fine cast. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

## La Madre, El Hijo Y La Abuela ★★★

IndiePix, 88 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

An intimate story about a pop-up family and finding love where you least expect it, this debut feature by Benjamin Brunet centers on young photographer Cristobal (Gonzalo Aburto), who returns to the ruins of his hometown in Chile, which was devastated by a volcano some years before. Finding the site of his family home, Cristobal sorts through the debris of his childhood, and later takes photos of other abandoned structures that he finds in the village. Eventually, Cristobal encounters Ana (Ana Gallegos Mattei), a hardened, middle-aged tobacconist living with her elderly mother, Maria (María Muñoz), who is ill but refuses to seek treatment. From here, Brunet proceeds to tell the story of a familial bond that arises between Cristobal and the women, as he becomes the surrogate son Ana needs (since her real son can't be bothered to drop by for a visit) and a sympathetic sounding board for Maria. For his part, Cristobal—who has only recently learned he was adopted—becomes immersed in the affections and support of mother and grandmother figures. Brunet presents the story in three chapters from the point of view of each character, offering different subjective angles, changing tones, and varying emotional colors. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



## The Landing ★★1/2

Random Media, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.95, Blu-ray: \$24.95

A found-footage 2011 movie called *Apollo 18* posited that the famous moon landing originally scheduled by NASA for 1973—but cancelled—actually did occur and ended disastrously. This mockumentary by David and Mark Dodson uses the same premise, but while in *Apollo 18* the crew was attacked by aliens, here the craft malfunctions and Commander Bo Cunningham (Don Hannah) must attempt a manual landing, which takes them not to the Pacific but rather the inhospitable desert region of China, where the other two astronauts die mysteriously, leaving Cunningham as the sole survivor. He quickly becomes the focus of conspiracy theories contending that he stage-managed the entire episode



to kill his fellow crewmen. The Dodsons have expanded their identically-named 1995 short film about the men's time in the desert, adding an extended interview with the older Cunningham (again played by Hannah), and comments from others, including relatives of Cunningham and the dead men, a congressman who headed the original investigation of the incident, and various conspiracy theorists and debunkers, along with archival stills and footage that bring an aura of historical authenticity to the Watergate-era backdrop. The result is a canny fabrication that ridicules today's penchant for coming up with ridiculous explanations to explain past events, but one so skillfully put together that it could fool many viewers. Still, in the end, this is essentially a stunt, although admittedly a clever one. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

## Lost Child ★★★

Breaking Glass, 101 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Fern (Leven Ramin), a newly-discharged soldier suffering from PTSD, reluctantly returns to her roots in the Ozarks following the death of her addict father. With little intention of sticking around, Fern nevertheless moves into her late dad's ramshackle house, which looks like a mansion compared to neighboring dumps. Heavily drinking and smoking Fern is also looking for her younger brother, Billy (Taylor John Smith), who is full of rage toward her. Fern is ready to leave but then she encounters Cecil (Landon Edwards), a young guarded boy living alone in the woods. The mysterious Cecil soon attaches himself to Fern, who is wholly unprepared to be a surrogate mother. But as a supernaturally-tinged myth about the boy takes root in the community, Fern is challenged to learn the truth or surrender Cecil to an uncertain fate. Co-writer/director Ramaa Mosley's *Lost Child* never tips all the way into either horror or psychological drama, keeping a fine balance in this tale marked by a strong sense of place, an honest look at human wreckage, and a welcome belief in redemption. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



## Lou Andreas-Salomé: The Audacity to be Free ★★★

Cinema Libre, 113 min., in German, Italian & Russian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Novelist and psychoanalyst Lou Andreas-Salomé (1861-1937) was a woman ahead of her time. In documentarian Cordula Kablitz-Post's attractive feature film debut a framing device finds the 72-year-old (Nicole Heesters) dictating her memoirs to ardent admirer Ernst Pfeiffer (Matthias Lier) in



1933, while the primary narrative illustrates her past. In transitions between time periods, she appears to walk through old photographs and postcards. As a girl growing up in St. Petersburg, Lou longed to partake in the same activities as boys. Before her father (Peter Simonischek) died, he encouraged Lou to do whatever she wanted, from climbing trees to studying philosophy (Lou's mother was more traditional). Once 16-year-old Lou (Liv Lisa Fries) found a tutor, she applied herself to her studies, but after he proposed, she rejected his offer and "renounced all erotic experiences." Lou (now played by Katharina Lorenz) went on to study religion and philosophy in Zurich, but took a break when she developed bronchitis. Instead, she studied with her friends, Paul Rée and Friedrich Nietzsche, even after she rejected their respective proposals. Although she had an affair with poet Rainer Marie Rilke, who changed her mind about sex, she married literature scholar Friedrich Carl Andreas for practical reasons. Her first few novels met with a receptive audience, although she had to write under a man's name since her publisher didn't think they would sell otherwise. She then turned to psychoanalysis after meeting Sigmund Freud. "I was never able to make compromises," she tells Pfeiffer, who would become the executor of her estate, in a statement that nicely sums up the complex, underappreciated life that Kablitz-Post depicts with such care. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

### Mambo Cool ★★

IndiePix, 62 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95



Chris Gude's film is labeled as an "experimental documentary," but while *Mambo Cool* does feature non-professional actors and real locations, most of it is obviously scripted and staged, with cinematography so arty and pretentious that it only increases the feeling of pervasive artificiality. Gude, who trained as an anthropologist and worked for a time in Medellín, Colombia, trains his camera on that city's dark underbelly, where a parade of impoverished denizens trade drugs and sad stories. Also prominent are rats scurrying along alleyways—mirrors of the hapless humans who share the streets (a shot of a rat in a cage is clearly intended to suggest that the people are also trapped), as well as prolonged close-ups of cocaine being cut and mixed, and related paraphernalia being carefully arranged. But there is one form of release the film openly celebrates: the mambo, into which the characters break with abandon, showing off their individualistic moves and talking about their "salsa." *Mambo Cool* boasts some striking (if also affected) images, as well as an atmospheric score by David Oquendo, but overall the fleeting glimpses it offers of

troubled souls trying to survive in an inhospitable world prove to be more depressing than enlightening. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

### Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again ★★★

Universal, 114 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98



The original 2008 *Mamma Mia!* revolved around Meryl Streep as Donna, the adventurous, high-spirited 1970s hippie who didn't know which of her three lovers fathered her daughter Sophie (Amanda Seyfried). *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* reveals in the first scene that Donna is dead, leaving a huge void that not even a last-minute, flamboyant appearance by Cher can fill. And since most of the Swedish pop group ABBA's best songs were used in the first film, the soundtrack is filled with reprises of "I Have a Dream" and lesser known tunes such as "When I Kissed the Teacher" and "Andante, Andante." The story is divided into two sections, with one concerning Sophie's preparations to reopen the picturesque hotel founded by her oft-lamented mother, despite having a serious domestic dispute with her husband (Dominic Cooper) who is considering a lucrative job in Manhattan. Sophie is comforted by one (Pierce Brosnan) of her possible fathers, although the other two (Colin Firth, Skellan Skarsgård) are otherwise occupied. Also on hand are Donna's irrepressible bandmates (Christine Baranski, Julie Walters) and a suave hotel manager (Andy Garcia). The second story is a prequel, an extended flashback set 25 years earlier when energetic flower child Donna (Lily James) fled to an idyllic Greek island and became enamored with younger, unconvincing versions of the three potential fathers (Josh Dylan, Hugh Skinner, Jeremy Irvine). Discarding all semblance of cohesion and reality, both casts meet and mesh during splashy "Super Trouper" and infectious "Dancing Queen" end credits which, thankfully, include a campy glimpse of Streep. Sloppily written and frantically directed by Ol Parker, this is a disjointed, confusing, and ultimately redundant music video. Optional. (S. Granger)

### The Misandrists ★★★

Strand, 91 min., in English & German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.99



Bruce LaBruce's queer comedy *The Misandrists* pits a binary notion of sex and sexual politics for women (i.e., straight but oppressed by men vs. lesbian and radically separatist) against a more nuanced reality of gender-fluidity and inclusiveness. It does so with a campy flair that makes one laugh without diluting the seriousness of

the story's subtext about tolerance and true rebellion. The narrative focuses on a school for young women that is largely cloistered and run by radical females dedicated to the destruction of global patriarchy. Lesson plans and everything else at the school are merely fronts for anti-male propaganda and revisionist thinking about everything from reproduction to pornography (the ersatz nuns who run the school plan to finance their revolution with funds from lesbian porn films shot on campus and featuring the students). The status quo is shaken when transgender student Isolde (Kita Updike) rescues a wounded male anti-capitalist and hides him at the school, sparking an ideological battle. LaBruce brings a comic archness to the proceedings, including a cheery turn by Susanne Sachsse as a headmistress who resembles a bewigged stripper more than an administrator. Also delightful are the ambiguous conversations between the girls, which suggests that their mad orthodoxy about men rings a little hollow even for them. With the caveat that the film features explicit sexuality and a graphic vaginoplasty, this is a funny satire with a timely bite. Recommended for more adventurous collections. (T. Keogh)

### Mission Impossible: Fallout ★★★1/2

Paramount, 147 min., PG-13, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Dec. 4



After 22 years, this sixth installment of the escapist spy fantasy continues to deliver sheer fun, thanks to the charming, charismatic lead performance by Tom Cruise. It begins as IMF Agent Ethan Hunt (Cruise) receives an assignment to take out the Apostles, an evil syndicate of international anarchists determined to detonate nuclear bombs in Jerusalem, Mecca, and the Vatican. At Hunt's side are loyal teammates Luther (Ving Rhames) and Benji (Simon Pegg). Also on hand are IMF boss Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin), CIA director Erika Sloan (Angela Bassett), and her henchman, August Walker (Henry Cavill). After capturing radical Solomon Lane (Sean Harris), their challenge is to obtain the plutonium cores from an arms dealer known as White Widow (Vanessa Kirby) and find the mysterious John Lark, who wrote a nihilistic manifesto claiming that "the greater the suffering, the greater the peace." Along the way, they are joined by intrepid MI6 secret agent Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) and Ethan's estranged wife Julia (Michelle Monaghan). Written and directed by Christopher McQuarrie, the film delivers a number of dazzling stunts, with Cruise racing the wrong way 'round the Arc de Triomphe on a BMW RnineT motorcycle with 70 stunt drivers in pursuit, climbing onto an open helicopter in midflight, and dangling off the side of a cliff. And for the opening HALO



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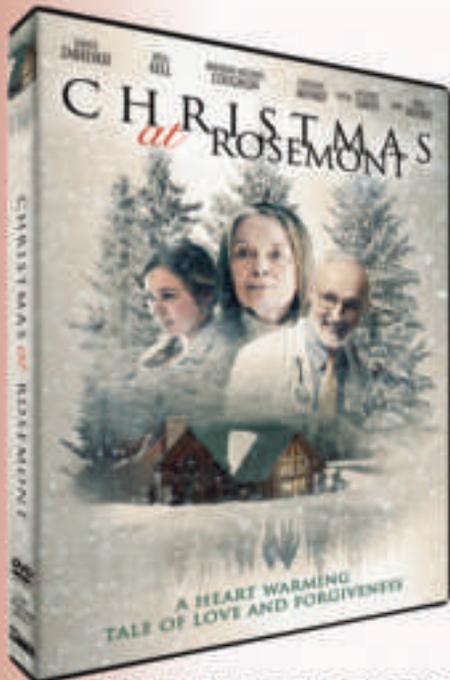
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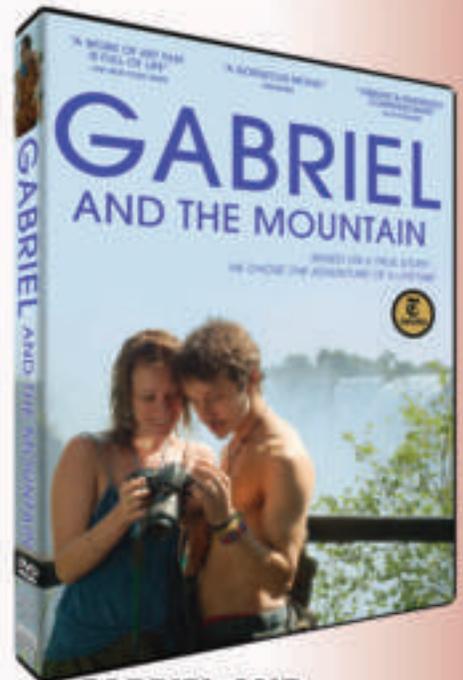


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 131 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated  
 In Portuguese, English and French with English subtitles

(high-altitude, low-opening) skydive over Paris, Cruise jumped more than 100 times from a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III at 25,000 feet. A box-office and critical hit, *Mission Impossible: Fallout* serves up an intense action-adventure thrill ride. (Full disclosure: my son, Don Granger, is an executive producer.) Highly recommended. (S. Granger)

### Mountain ★★★

Greenwich, 74 min., PG, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Eye-popping visuals are the chief selling point of Jennifer Peedom's documentary celebrating the majesty of high peaks while expressing healthy skepticism about human impact on mountains. Willem Dafoe narrates, drawing from Robert Macfarlane's ruminative 2003 book *Mountains of the Mind*, backed by original music from the Australian Chamber Orchestra and excerpts from works by various classical composers. After some establishing shots of rock-climbers scaling sheer cliffs, the film notes that until the last century, mountains were considered dangerous obstacles to be avoided. In the early 1900s attitudes changed, with the challenge of conquering the peaks beckoning adventurers. Tourists followed, indulging in sports such as skiing, snowboarding, mountain bicycling, and flying in wingsuits. Others tested themselves with feats like tightrope-walking from peak to peak in a dare against death. Scenes of climbers who form long lines at Everest are contrasted with shots of life in a serene mountaintop monastery to emphasize how the environment is being altered for the worse by human activity. Featuring extraordinary footage credited to scores of cameramen shooting across the globe, *Mountain* is definitely a visually exciting experience. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

### My Life with James Dean ★★★

Breaking Glass, 108 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



Somewhat reminiscent of Bill Forsyth's beloved *Local Hero*, this charming fish-out-of-water comedy by writer-director Dominique Choisy amusingly depicts how a trip through the Norman byways to show his eponymous film changes the life of young director Géraud Champreux (Johnny Rasse). Géraud's first stop is a modest seaside town filled with quirky characters. Although Sylvia (Nathalie Richard) has invited him to screen his artily homoerotic *My Life with James Dean* in her cinema, she fails to meet him at the bus stop, and doesn't even show up for the screening—which only one person attends—because she is in the midst of a tumultuous breakup with her long-time lover (Marie

Vernalde), who is considering going off with a businessman. Boyish projectionist Balthazar (Mickaël Pelissier), however, is so moved by the film that he impulsively professes his love for Géraud, who puts the kid off while trying to resurrect his relationship with the movie's leading man (Tancredi Volpert). Meanwhile, Gladys (Juliette Damiens), the cynical clerk at the hotel, becomes involved in the wryly funny goings-on, as does Balthazar's virile father (Bertrand Belin). The result is rather like a cheeky cinematic roundelay, in which the various characters chase after one another—often in the wrong combinations—as Géraud and Sylvia take his film from one small town to another while trying to work out their individual romantic problems. An entertaining and light-as-a-soufflé confection, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

### Next Time I'll Aim for the Heart ★★★

Icarus, 111 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$26.99



Director Cédric Anger, a former *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic, draws from official documents for this cool-eyed portrait of a real-life serial killer. Guillaume Canet, in a tightly-wound performance, plays Alain Lamare, here renamed Franck, a gendarme who stalked women in provincial France in the late 1970s. With his side-parted hair and predilection for driving at night, he looks for all the world like *Taxi Driver's* Travis Bickle and even shares character traits. As far as Franck is concerned, his victims deserve the harm he inflicts because they take risks such as hitchhiking and biking after dark. He hits one with his car and afterward writes an anonymous letter to the gendarmie, proclaiming, "I am a killer. And as such, I intend to kill." Relatively polite (although not exactly friendly) to the people in his life, he's surly to strangers, especially when drinking. His parents wonder why he's single, although he has little time for romance, what with all the ice baths, flagellation, and other forms of self-harm. Eventually, he warms up to his attractive laundress, Sophie (Ana Girardot), but the town's other women remain vulnerable. Sophie is also keeping a secret herself. Although there are several close calls, Franck keeps finding ways to evade detection until he discovers the limits of his cleverness. Despite the despicable nature of his crimes, Anger and Canet conspire to make Franck ever-so-slightly sympathetic, obfuscating rather than elucidating his pathology, which remains a mystery. Recommended. (K. Femmessy)

### The Paper Store ★★★1/2

Dreamscape, 98 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Driven by virtuoso performances from its three lead actors, *The Paper Store* is an engrossing and sometimes explosive drama about

navigating academia. Based on a play by Katharine Clark Gray (who adapted it for the screen with her husband, Nicholas Gray, the film's director), the sharp-edged story finds college dropout Annalee (Stef Dawson) cynically exploiting her own keen intellect and writing talent by ghostwriting papers for college undergraduates. As an outsider looking in at higher education she can't afford, Annalee blows up regularly when confronting the debatable subject matter of the assignments she covers. When she takes on a job for a graduate student, Sigurd (Penn Badgley), who is pursuing his masters' degree in media studies, the lines between employment and romantic attachment blur. Annalee proves a high-maintenance lover, hollering and complaining about popular culture while Sigurd is a capable foil. When a hidden agenda emerges that results in both characters being confronted by an adjunct professor (Richard Kind), the moral quandaries grow exponentially and the question of what constitutes cheating becomes inevitable. What keeps viewers riveted by this talky story—which is full of drive-by references to classroom fodder about filmmakers, pop stars, and *The Simpsons*—are the penetrating, intuitive performances of Dawson, Badgley, and Kind. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)



### Papillon ★★

Universal, 134 min., R, DVD: \$22.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99, Nov. 6



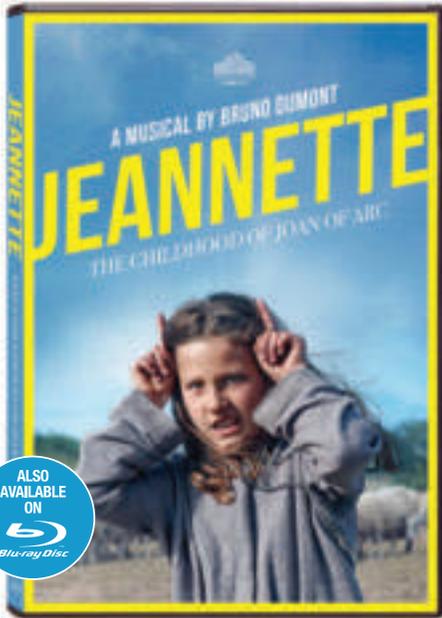
Those who saw Franklin Schaffner's 1973 adaptation of Henri Charrière's bestselling autobiographical books (*Papillon*, *Banco*)—starring Steve McQueen and Dustin Hoffman—are likely to feel acute disappointment early on in this decidedly mediocre version. In Paris in the early 1930s, Charrière (Charlie Hunnam) is a reckless safecracker who is framed for murder and shipped off to a notorious penal colony on the remote island of French Guiana, located on the north Atlantic coast of South America. Leaving Marseilles, Charrière offers to "protect" delicate, diminutive currency counterfeiter Louis Dega (Rami Malek), who has money stashed away. Called "Papillon" for the butterfly tattooed on his chest, Charrière repeatedly plots the pair's escape, despite warnings by sadistic Warden Barrot (Yorick Van Wageningen) and eventual incarceration on Devil's Island, site of a former leper colony. Although flight from the rocky, palm-covered, disease-infested island was considered impossible—since the surrounding sea was infested with piranhas and sharks—the stubbornly determined Charrière would eventually succeed after surviving for years in solitary confinement. Helmed by Danish director Michael Noer, this remake

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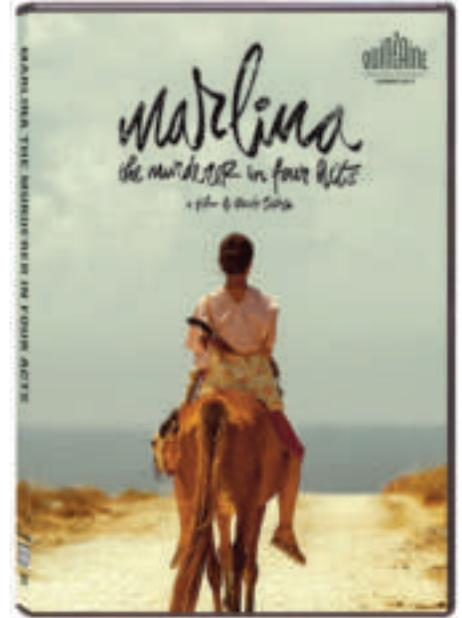
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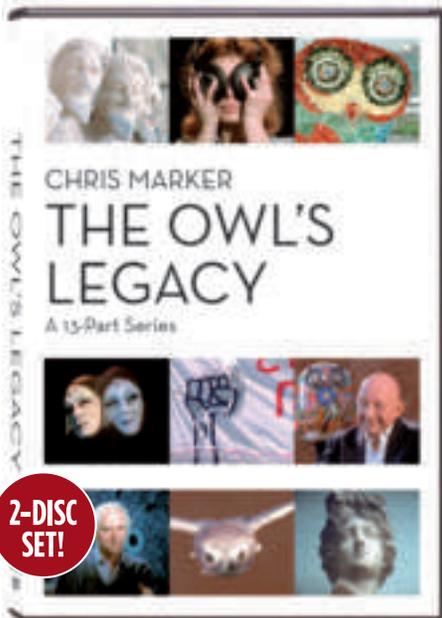
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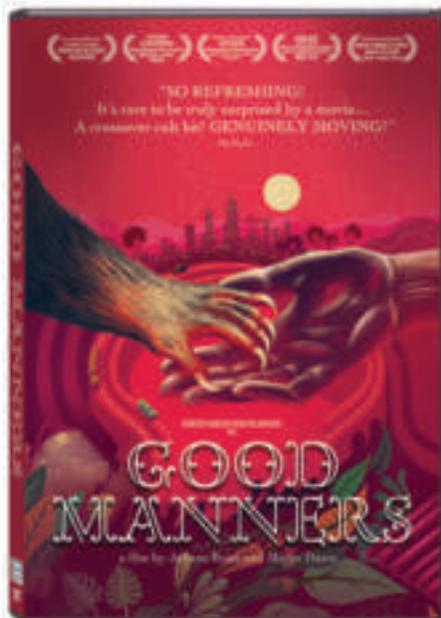
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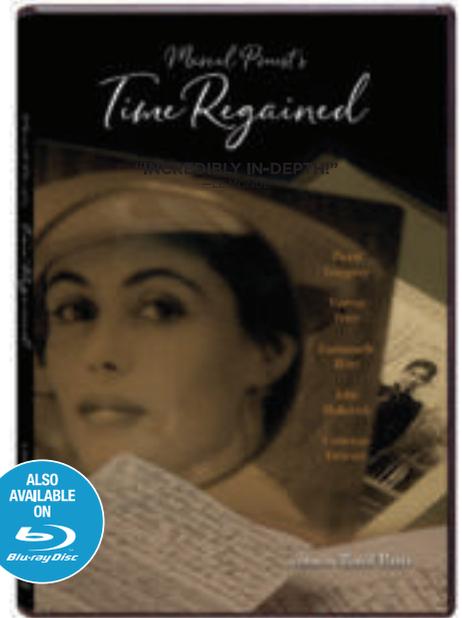
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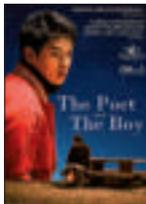


features actors most recognizable from TV in the lead roles: Hunnam (*Sons of Anarchy*) and Malek (*Mr. Robot*). Despite suffering a starvation diet and lack of medical/dental care, Hunnam's teeth remain sparkling white, his body perfectly toned, and his haircut barbershop-fresh. For real drama, watch the original. Optional. (S. Granger)

## The Poet and the Boy

★★★

*Altered Innocence*, 110 min., in Korean w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$21.99



Few movies successfully manage the sometimes hairpin turns of the comedy-drama genre as well as South Korea's *The Poet and the Boy*. Hyon (Yang Ik-june) is a sad sack poet and comic foil who can't get a break. Other members of his poetry group are dismissive of his verse, the students in a writing class he teaches don't listen to a word he says, and a low sperm count (unhappy news to his baby-craving wife) only adds to his profile of a hapless schlub. When a doughnut shop opens across the street from his home, Hyon repeatedly pigs out on boxes of pastries, which naturally swells his belly over time. But the shop has another attraction pulling Hyon in: Seyun (Jung Ga-ram), a young, handsome school dropout working behind the counter. Seyun awakens a repressed gay desire in Hyon, and the film shifts gears to become a tragic tale of impossible timing between men from separate generations. Hyon lovingly tries to help Seyun attain an education and better future, while also coming to terms himself with the next steps in his own destiny. Director Kim Yang-hee proves equally at home with laughter and heartbreak in this well-cast tale of star-crossed loss. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

## Porcupine Lake ★1/2

*Breaking Glass*, 84 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99



Canadian filmmaker Ingrid Veninger helmed this small intimate drama involving two very different teenage girls whose lives intertwine over the course of a summer. Bea (Charlotte Salisbury) is a socially awkward Toronto resident in an unhappy family environment. When her father inherits a diner in a resort area, Bea gets a chance to be away from the city and her overbearing mother. Initially unable to connect with local girls, Bea meets Kate (Lucinda Armstrong Hall), who has a brash personality and turbulent domestic life. Indeed, Kate's mentally disturbed older brother and her endlessly agitated mother seem frighteningly out of place in the placid countryside setting. The girls' friendship begins to blossom beyond comradeship, with Kate helping (and sometimes forcing)

the more naive Bea to discover her true self. Veninger's screenplay unfortunately often feels stilted and incomplete, with the male characters particularly poorly sketched and often cartoonish in their extreme behavior. And while the performances by Salisbury and Hall help elevate the material, the story ultimately falls short. Not a necessary purchase. (P. Hall)

## Puppet Master: The Littlest Reich ★★

RLJE Films, 90 min., not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$29.99



This cheaply-made reboot of the decades-old *Puppet Master* series of horror movies lays the tastelessness on thick in terms of both style and substance, combining a nasty premise with blood-and-guts effects that are both disgustingly over-the-top and decidedly cheesy. Series regular character André Toulon (Udo Kier) is a Nazi who fashioned menacingly mobile, weapon-loaded puppets as a pint-sized means of exterminating Hitler's enemies. Toulon was killed after using his puppets to murder a lesbian couple in Texas, and now a convention of current owners of the puppets—which have become collectors' items—becomes the occasion for Toulon rising from the dead and his critters resuming their vicious work, slaughtering Jews, gypsies, blacks, and gays in ludicrously grisly ways. The heroes are a pair of clerks from a comic-book store, along with a girl one is romancing, together with an inept police detective (Michael Paré), who team up to put Toulon back in the grave and deactivate his murderous marionettes. Most of the film consists of a string of sadistic killings perpetrated by the hideous dolls, achieved with rudimentary visual effects that are more likely to elicit giggles than shudders. Filmmakers Sonny Laguna and Tommy Wiklund's gleefully tawdry movie doesn't damage the franchise, which was ostentatiously junky from the start, but it also certainly doesn't offer any improvement. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

## Skyscraper ★★

Universal, 103 min., PG-13, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



Mash together *Die Hard* with *The Towering Inferno*, add an extra helping of absurdity, and you have filmmaker Rawson Marshall Thurber's live-action cartoon, which provides a massive but also brainless adrenaline rush—and not much else. Dwayne Johnson is Will Sawyer, a top security expert who lost a leg in a SWAT rescue attempt years ago. Will married the military nurse (Neve Campbell) who saw him through rehab, and they now have darling twin kids. The family has come to Hong Kong to take

up residence in The Pearl, the world's tallest building, so that Will can do final checks before its grand opening. Things go awry when an army of thugs invade the building and set it ablaze, trapping Sawyer's family inside, along with the building's owner and his entourage. Naturally, our intrepid hero climbs a construction crane, crashes through a window, and tries to save his wife and kids. As the police watch helplessly, Will's increasingly farfetched feats of derring-do are applauded vociferously by a crowd of observers down on the street, and he eventually identifies the villains responsible for the attack. Hard to believe that such a preposterous lump of action hokum could have been put to paper, let alone given a \$125-million-plus budget, but *Skyscraper* is clearly a big studio production, and Johnson earns his paycheck by gamely embracing this nonsense. Unfortunately, even his likability cannot prevent this disaster movie from being a true disaster. Optional. (F. Swietek)

## Slender Man ★

Sony, 93 min., PG-13, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99



The Internet bogeyman that actually inspired a pair of impressionable 12-year-old girls to try to kill a friend in 2014 comes to the screen in this drearily familiar horror movie. The spooky figure—a tall, dark, faceless creature with long, spindly fingers, who was often depicted as stalking and kidnapping children—is here summoned by four high-school girls (Joey King, Julia Goldani Telles, Jaz Sinclair, and Annalise Basso) when they upload a video, after which they are each targeted. The rules governing just how Slender Man operates are never made very clear, or they seem to be made up as the movie progresses, eventually settling on the creature as some sort of bioelectrical being. Slender Man encases its victims in the trunks of trees, grabbing them with extended branchlike tendrils from its fingers—or at least that is what seems to be happening (the film is so murkily shot and haltingly edited that one cannot always tell what is going on, and many sequences turn out to be the girls' nightmares). The Slender Man figure is presented with some evocative imagery onscreen, but when it turns into a humanoid played by a real actor, the result looks rather silly (although not so ridiculous as the giant wooden spider that it morphs into near the close). A film about the murderous impulse that this Internet figure inspired in real children could have been truly frightening, but director Sylvain White's cookie-cutter horror flick is most definitely not. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

## Sollers Point ★★1/2

Oscilloscope, 102 min., R, DVD: \$34.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99

A young ex-con struggles to put his life in

# BREAKING GLASS PICTURES



## CALL HER GANDA

When Jennifer Laude, a Filipina transwoman, is brutally murdered by a U.S. Marine, three women intimately invested in the case—an activist attorney (Virgie Suárez), a transgender journalist (Meredith Talusan) and Jennifer's mother (Julita "Nanay" Laude)—galvanize a political uprising, pursuing justice and taking on hardened histories of U.S. imperialism.

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**OUTFEST LOS ANGELES**  
SPECIAL MENTION



## LONGING

Ariel, a well-off, childless man, gets a phone call from his college girlfriend. She needs to tell him two very surprising things. First, when they broke up twenty years ago, she was pregnant and went on to have a lovely boy. The second thing will make Ariel explore the hidden aspects of parenthood and change his life forever.

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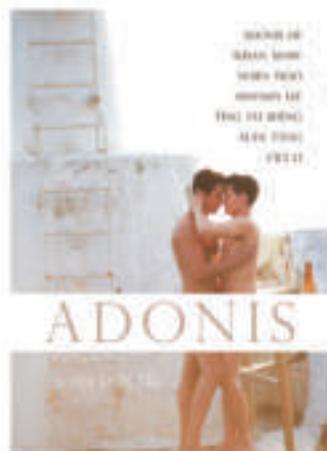


## MY BEST FRIEND

In the beautiful town of Patagonia, Lorenzo, a quiet teenager, befriends Caito, a troubled boy, who his parents decided to host. Caito hardly speaks and wears out his welcome with Lorenzo's parents quickly, but over time the two boys become friends. Before he's forced to relocate again, Caito reveals to Lorenzo the real reason why he had to leave home...

**CANNES CINÉPHILES**  
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## ADONIS

In controversial auteur Scud's newest sexually charged creation, a young star finds himself drawn into the dangerous underground world of male prostitution, offering his services both to men and women. With both devotion and passion, he surrenders his body while also searching for love. But around him hypocrisy reigns and threatens to devour him...

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## WOBBLE PALACE

Days before America's most traumatic election, a couple on the verge of a nervous break-up decide to split their house up over the weekend. Desperate to make new connections, Jane and Eugene find themselves in a series of unpredictable misadventures, sexual escapades, and emotional traumas.

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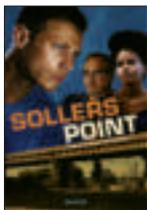


## MARFA GIRL 2

A family living in Marfa, Texas attempts to pull themselves back together after a horrific tragedy. This provocative sequel to Larry Clark's film *Marfa Girl* shows us a group of people ready to escape their current realities - no matter the cost. Gritty, unrelenting and powerful, auteur Clark once again delivers a bleak landscape of sex, drugs and boredom amongst the residents of a dead-end Texas border town.

**FROM ACCLAIMED DIRECTOR**  
**LARRY CLARK**  
(KIDS, KEN PARK, WASSUP ROCKERS)

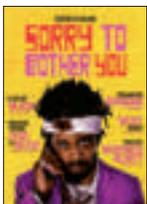
order after being released from prison in Matthew Porterfield's gritty but rather shapeless drama. Keith (McCaul Lombardi) is on probation, living with his alternately sympathetic and exasperated father Carol (Jim Belushi) in the titular Baltimore working-class neighborhood. Some of his old friends prod him to rejoin their drug-selling gang, but he halfheartedly looks into taking a course in air-conditioner repair instead. He also tries (unsuccessfully) to make amends to his erstwhile girlfriend, flirts with a young student, and befriends a high-strung addict who has an abusive boyfriend. Keith has a soulful reunion with his elderly grandmother and enjoys a few brief visits with his sister and her kids, while also talking to a former gang leader who advises him to follow a code of conduct that includes dignity and self-respect. But Keith ultimately fails to resolve the contradictory impulses buffeting him around, and seems as close to reverting to his old life of crime as he is to embarking on a more hopeful path. The performances are excellent (with Belushi in an unexpectedly affecting turn as the frustrated father), and Porterfield expertly captures the atmosphere of a city in economic decline, but *Sollers Point* is also somewhat meandering and episodic. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



### Sorry to Bother You

★★★  
Fox, 100 min., R, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99

Persistent telemarketers have surpassed unscrupulous real-estate developers as contemporary villains. Hip-hop recording artist Boots Riley, frontman of the Coup, makes an ambitious debut as writer-director in this confrontational, absurdist, corporate satire. Set in Oakland, CA, the story centers on Cassius "Cash" Green (Lakeith Stanfield), who gets caught faking credentials for a telemarketing position at RegalView but lands the job anyway. Eager to move out of Uncle Sergio's (Terry Crews) garage and into an apartment with his artsy, activist girlfriend Detroit (Tessa Thompson), Cash struggles on the phone, respecting RegalView's edict: "Stick to the script." But then, heeding the advice of cubicle-mate Langston (Danny Glover), black Cash adopts a "white" voice (dubbed by David Cross), using certain verbal tones, common phrases, and cultural references. Suddenly, Cash closes so many deals that he is promoted upstairs as one of the "Power Callers"—an executive position with an upgrade in wardrobe, automobile, and living conditions. Meanwhile, Squeeze (Steven Yeun), another low-level telemarketer, tries to form a union to improve working conditions, pay, and benefits. Significantly,



the only other employment open to Cash is at the WorryFree factory, where workers sign lifetime, multi-generational contracts in return for guaranteed on-site housing and food—a slavery concept that incites the ire of protest group Left Eye. When Cash is invited to a swanky party hosted by WorryFree's coked-out CEO (Armie Hammer), he's faced with sacrificing his morality/conscience while encountering an insidiously surreal choice. An innovative, politically-charged fable, this is recommended. (S. Granger)

### Speed Walking ★★★

Breaking Glass, 108 min., in Danish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

*Speed Walking* is a tender and often urgent coming-of-age film set in 1976, deftly directed by Niels Arden Oplev (who helmed the Scandinavian adaptation of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*). Martin (Villads Bøye), a 14-year-old Danish boy, is a champion speed walker on his school's team, and he is in that phase of life where discovery can be confusing and painful, with no road map available. With his best pal Kim (Frederik Winther Rasmussen) giving him a little orientation to the mysteries of sex, Martin develops an ambiguous desire for his friend. But pretty Kristine (Kraka Donslund Nielsen) is his real focus. When Martin's mother suddenly dies, rendering his father and older brother barely able to function, the lad has to grow up quickly while clumsily courting Kristine and preparing for his confirmation at a Christian church. The collision of youthful naivete, grief, and ritual overwhelms Martin. Oplev assuredly captures the challenges of a kid taking the first adolescent steps of command over his own destiny. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



### The Spy Who Dumped Me ★★★

Lionsgate, 116 min., R, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

Susanna Fogel's silly screwball comedy caper mostly wastes the prodigious talent of *SNL*'s Kate McKinnon. While a shootout takes place at an open-air market in Vilnius, Lithuania, halfway around the world in Los Angeles, Audrey (Mila Kunis) is celebrating her 30th birthday, having just been dumped—via text—by one of the gunmen, Drew (Justin Theroux), a C.I.A. agent who doesn't want to place Audrey in danger. As Audrey seeks solace with her roommate/BFF Morgan (McKinnon), Drew suddenly crashes through her apartment window, claiming that the fate of the free world depends on delivering a cheap plastic "2nd place" football trophy (containing a USB drive) to someone at a café in Vienna. Determined to complete



Drew's mission by wading knee-deep into dangerous espionage, stoic Audrey and impulsively manic Morgan scamper around Europe on stolen passports—touching down in Vienna, Prague, Paris, and Berlin, and crossing paths with another pair of operatives (Sam Heughan, Hasan Minhaj). Although they call Morgan's suburban parents (Jane Curtin, Paul Reiser) for help, they wind up being drugged, kidnapped, and tortured by a psychotic Russian gymnast (Ivanna Sakhno). The highlight here is the sarcastic sincerity of Morgan's skewering of an icy MI6 chief (Gillian Anderson), but Fogel can't quite pull off the violent, blood-splattered action set pieces in this uneven film. Optional. (S. Granger)

### Streets of Vengeance

★1/2  
Olive, 101 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99

Quentin Tarantino may mine cinematic gold out of homages to yesteryear's trashploitation cinema, but few others can pull it off. Co-helmets Paul Ragsdale and Angelica De Alba's *Streets of Vengeance* re-creates "erotic" action-thriller sleaze that was typical of direct-to-video B-Hollywood back when VHS reigned. The film is bumpered as a mock-airing on a SoCal local-TV weekend late show (hosted by a bikini-clad girl). The plot concerns a murderous male-supremacist cult targeting San Francisco's hottest strippers and bosomy nude models. A would-be target, "feminist" sex starlet Mila (Delawna McKinney), rallies her fellow demi-monde into becoming thong-lingerie vigilantes. Many '80s-retro notes are hit, including Casio-like synth music, *Miami-Vice*-style cinematography, pay phones, bad continuity, community-theater acting, fake gore, and topless shower/clubbing/lesbian fondling montages that come out of nowhere. Yet there is also anachronistic modern slang, online video, and digital technology. Featuring a bevy of past/present adult-movie actresses, this wannabe cult film is not recommended. (C. Cassidy)



### Suffering of Ninko

★★1/2  
IndiePix, 70 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Norihiro Niwatsukino's debut feature is an erotic fable told with enormous visual panache, narrated by Qyoko Kudo in an amusingly deadpan oracular manner. Set during the Edo period, the film centers on Ninko (Masato Tsujioka), a handsome young monk at a remote Buddhist temple who is striving to fulfill the demands of his vocation. Unfortunately, he is irresistible to virtually everyone. That his fellow novices



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**WILD COMBINATION** is director Matt Wolf's visually absorbing portrait of the seminal avant-garde composer, singer-songwriter, cellist, and disco producer Arthur Russell.

ogle him is bad enough, but his trips to the nearby village to beg for alms are even worse: the women fall over themselves to get near him, and riot when another monk is sent in his place. Bemoaning his fate, Ninko leaves the monastery, going into the wilderness to pray and undertake ascetic exercises, but he falls in with a cynical samurai. And the pair are enlisted by a village elder to do battle with a beautiful sorceress who has been systematically seducing the local men and sucking their life away. Niwatsukino invests this bizarre tale with great style: the live-action segments are elegantly staged (although the acting is sometimes amateurish), juxtaposed with elaborate animated sequences that mimic various Japanese art forms in depicting Ninko's dreams and hallucinations, which feature much sexual content. Undoubtedly strange but also fascinating, *Suffering of Ninko's* unique qualities make it a strong optional purchase for more adventurous collections. (F. Swietek)

### Tainted Souls ★★

*Breaking Glass*, 111 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



An ambitious but ultimately inconsequential Italian film, *Tainted Souls* is an overlong ensemble piece interweaving the lives of characters in an old apartment complex outside of Rome. Marcello (Vinicio Marchioni) is a do-nothing bodybuilder who relies on his wife, Chiara (Anna Foglietta), to support the two of them. He's having an affair with downstairs neighbor Walter (Vincenzo Salemme), an author who helps Marcello now and then with debts, including money owed to local cocaine kingpin Carmine (Nuccio Siano). Another neighbor, Mauro (Marizio Tesei), tries to make ends meet by working for Carmine, but intervenes when the latter's crew gives Marcello a beating for not paying his coke bill, after which Mauro and Marcello become unlikely friends. A number of minor characters appear throughout and a time jump of three years forward halfway through the film eliminates some characters and adds others (it's hard to keep track of everybody). The story's anchors, Mauro and Marcello, have undergone changes of fortune, but also magnified their self-destructiveness along the way. The directing team of Matteo Botrugno and Daniele Coluccini bring a strong visual sensibility to the narrative, including a long, uncut shot of Mauro moving around a club. But while one can admire the complicated logistics of this scene, it would have been nice if that extended moment mattered somehow. Optional. (T. Keogh)

### That Summer ★★★

MPI, 80 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

One would not expect that a documentary

about two women living as recluses in a ramshackle estate could spawn both a Broadway musical and an HBO movie, but David and Albert Maysles's classic *Grey Gardens* did precisely that. *That Summer* is a sort-of prequel, filmed three years before the Maysles made their 1975 portrait of Edith Ewing Bouvier Beale ("Big Edie") and her daughter Edith Bouvier Beale ("Little Edie"), the aunt and cousin of Jacqueline Kennedy and her younger sister Lee Radziwill. Radziwill and her friend, photographer Peter Beard, enlisted the brothers as cameramen for a film about her childhood in the Hamptons. Among the locales they visited was Grey Gardens, and while the documentary that Radziwill had in mind never materialized, the Maysles later returned to make their own film about Big and Little Edie. The original 1972 footage of the Beales was long forgotten, but director Göran Olsson has edited it here with recollections by Beard, excerpts from a previous interview with Radziwill, and footage taken at Beard's Montauk house in 1972 featuring guests including Truman Capote and Andy Warhol. *That Summer* is mainly focused on Radziwill's efforts to fix up the house to prevent the Beales from being evicted by local authorities, but there is ample footage of the two Edies talking to Radziwill about the past, bickering with one another, and complaining about their home and lives being invaded. This fascinating complement to *Grey Gardens* leads up to Big Edie's rendition of "September Song"—a perfect close to what has become a multi-chapter saga. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



### Three Identical Strangers ★★★1/2

Universal, 97 min., PG-13, DVD: \$22.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

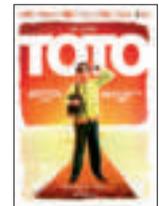


What if on your first day as a college freshman you were greeted by people as if they knew you, girls kissed you, and everyone called you Eddy, although your name was Bobby? That's what happened to 19-year-old Robert Shafran in 1980, who eventually discovered that he was one of identical triplets who had been separated at birth and adopted by three different families. Robert's brother Eddy attended New York's Sullivan County Community College the year before. In New York on July 12, 1961, an unmarried Jewish woman gave birth to triplets and then relinquished the trio to what was considered the top Jewish agency, Louise Wise Services, which placed the babies. Reunited by chance, the brothers—Shafran, David Kellerman, and Edward Galland—became friends, a media sensation, and opened a restaurant. But there is a sinister backstory: the adoptive parents were never told that

their sons had identical siblings and were part of a secret psychological study by Dr. Peter Neubauer, a psychiatrist at the Manhattan Child Development Center. Neubauer, who died in 2008, was an Austrian-Jewish émigré who apparently placed several multiples with adoptive parents of different socioeconomic backgrounds in order to research the question of nature vs. nurture. Working from *New Yorker* journalist Lawrence Wright's investigation, director Tim Wardle utilizes extensive interviews and archival footage to tell this story. And while 10,000 pages of redacted information have already been released, the bulk of Neubauer's twin study will legally remain sealed at Yale University until 2066, despite pleas from former subjects demanding the truth about their backgrounds. An engrossing, often enraging documentary, this is highly recommended. (S. Granger)

### Toto ★1/2

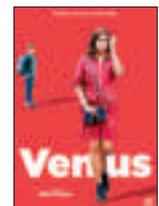
*Passion River*, 115 min., in Tagalog & English w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$59.95



The Philippines comedy-drama *Toto* has a cute opening in which the titular character (Sid Lucero), a hotel service attendant living and working in Manila, wakes up to his own inner joy over American pop culture. Opening a drawer full of sunglasses similar to those worn by his hero, Tom Cruise, Toto dons a pair reminiscent of Cruise's shades in *Jerry Maguire* ("You complete me," Toto tells himself in a mirror). Well, not quite complete. Driven by a dream to find fame and fortune in the U.S., Toto applies for a visa but is turned down. Frustrated and thwarted, he follows a friend's advice about appearing to come from a family of aristocratic bluebloods. In reality, his own father is a bit of a nut and his mother is a complaining crank, so Toto constructs a false family made up of handpicked friends and strangers. The central question becomes how far Toto will go to get what he wants, which sounds interesting on paper, but director John Paul Su turns the film into a series of lurching jokes and unwieldy clashes. Su shoots scenes with an undisciplined whimsicality that not only grates but also seems remote from the high-stakes game that Toto is playing. Not recommended. (T. Keogh)

### Venus ★★★

Wolfe, 95 min., not rated, DVD: \$26.99



Sid (Debargo Sanyal), a first-generation American born to Indian parents, is a transitioning woman who has already leaped some of the tougher hurdles in revealing his gender identity to mom and dad, colleagues, and friends. For her, nothing can change the path

forward. But then 14-year-old Ralph (Jamie Mayers) shows up one day and announces that Sid is his father—the result of a liaison between Sid and one-time best friend Kirsten (Amber Goldfarb). Ralph shrugs off Sid's denials, becoming over time a beloved, buoyant fixture in Sid's life. Deeply curious about Sid's transition, Ralph begins experimenting to see what it feels like to wear women's clothes. And sooner or later, Kirsten will get into this picture, setting up high emotional stakes for everyone. Writer-director Eisha Marjara pours on the humor with Sid's intractable folks (who take a shine to their unexpected grandson) and Ralph's puppyish energy. But there is plenty of drama here, too, as lives are thrown into turmoil. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

### Watch the Sky ★1/2

*Breaking Glass*, 87 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

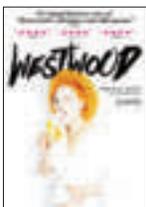
A deliberate though hollow subversion of early-period Steven Spielberg sci-fi, the family movie *Watch the Sky* tees up one familiar narrative device after another and cranks each to the border of irony—although not parody. A young boy named Shawn (Miles Muir) is part isolated brainiac, part UFO nerd, and all grieving son following the death of his mother. His father Steve (Luke Albright) is sheriff of their small town and becoming less tolerant of Shawn's depression-fueled withdrawal from life. Shawn and his indulgent, loving older brother Michael (Karson Kern) set out one day to pasture land where Shawn can conduct an experiment sending a video camera, via balloon, just above the upper atmosphere for glimpses of space. Meanwhile, the mysterious disappearance of a cranky old man leads to an investigation by Steve that seems to point to something unearthly going on (the sudden arrival of zip-mouthed army soldiers certainly suggests that something is up). Steve's path will ultimately intersect with that of his two sons in writer-director Alexander Murillo's homage to Spielberg (complete with soaring music in a John Williams style). In more sure hands, this could have been a brash comedy, but this one falters right up through the wildly unsatisfying end. Not recommended. (T. Keogh)



### Westwood: Punk, Icon, Activist ★★★

MPI, 84 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Lorna Tucker's biographical documentary profiles fashion designer Vivienne Westwood, a countercultural outsider who the establishment eventually had to embrace after her designs, reflective of the 1970s British punk scene, earned her fame and influence (Westwood has twice won the British Designer of the Year Award,



and in 2006 was named a Dame of the British Empire). Tucker introduces Westwood as a spiky septuagenarian who is unwilling to talk about much of her career, including her partnership—in both domestic and business terms—with Malcolm McLaren, manager of the archetypal punk band the Sex Pistols. Tucker combines archival material, on-the-fly footage of Westwood interacting (sometimes contentiously) with her employees, and excerpts from interviews with colleagues, fashion experts, Westwood's son Joseph, and her second husband and close collaborator Andreas Kronthaler to draw a portrait of a strong, self-confident woman who hailed from a working-class background, was employed for a while as a schoolteacher, is largely self-taught in design, and has always marched to her own drummer. That latter characterization also extends to Westwood's political activism, where her views on climate change led to her joining a Greenpeace mission (the film includes clips of Westwood on deck, watching an ice pack crumble into the sea). A final montage finds a beaming Westwood basking in applause after taking to the catwalk following premieres of her collections, capping what amounts to another round of cheers for a woman whose impact on modern fashion is undeniable. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

### Whitney ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 120 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99

Whitney Houston broke more music industry records than any other female singer in history. With more than 200 million album sales worldwide, she was the only artist to chart seven consecutive U.S. #1 singles. But who was Whitney Houston, the woman? Where did she come from? And what torpedoed her career and ultimately her life at age 48 in 2012? Combining never-before-seen home movies, archival footage, and interviews with those who knew her best, documentary filmmaker Kevin Macdonald strives to unravel the mystery behind "The Voice." Beginning at New Hope Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, the documentary notes that Whitney was a shy tomboy who her friends and family called Nippy. Arista Records' mogul/mentor Clive Davis recalls hearing Houston perform for the first time: "You got that spine tingle when you know you're in the presence of genius." The most shocking disclosure is that Houston was a victim of childhood sexual abuse by her cousin, vocalist Dee Dee Warwick, sister of Dionne Warwick. Dee Dee often cared for Houston and her brothers, Michael and Gary, while their mother, Cissy, worked as a backup singer. Whitney's assistant Mary Jones recalls Houston saying, "Mommy don't know the things we went through." Macdonald almost dutifully includes clips from *The Bodyguard*



with Kevin Costner and Houston's famous rendition of the national anthem at Super Bowl XXV. More compelling is a sad segment about Houston's daughter, Bobbi Kristina "Krissey" Brown, who died at age 22. Houston's ex-husband, R&B star Bobby Brown, and former label boss L.A. Reid are obviously uncomfortable here discussing her cocaine addiction/drug abuse. While Macdonald details the arc and highlights (and lowlights) of her life, however, Houston herself remains something of a cipher. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

### The Yellow Birds ★★

Lionsgate, 95 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$21.99

Alexandre Moors's adaptation of Kevin Powers's titular novel follows two young soldiers from Virginia, 18-year-old Murph (Tye Sheridan) and 20-year-old Bartle (Alden Ehrenreich), who are preparing to ship out to Iraq. Ahead of their deployment, they attend a party where Murph's mother (Jennifer Aniston) makes Bartle promise that he will personally deliver news to her if something happens to her son while in combat. This, of course, is a too-obvious signal that tragedy lurks ahead. Not surprisingly, when Bartle returns home without Murph but with an obvious case of PTSD, the question of Murph's fate and Bartle's role in his disappearance lead to flashbacks pointing to a somewhat foregone conclusion. While the film features a strong supporting cast—including Toni Collette as Bartle's volatile mother and Jason Patric as an officer investigating what happened to Murph—the two young leads give strangely unmoving performances, creating an emotional void at the center of the story. Moors does a decent job of re-creating the horrors of the war zone, but is less secure plumbing the psychological issues that can follow. Optional. (P. Hall)



### Classic Films

#### The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez ★★★1/2

Criterion, 106 min., in English & Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95

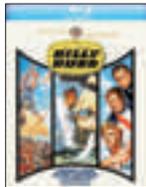
This 1982 independent feature, financed in part by PBS and broadcast on *American Playhouse* before it was released in theaters, is inspired by a ballad and also based on a true story. Edward James Olmos stars as Gregorio Cortez, a Mexican-American farmer in 1901 Texas who goes on the run after a miscommunication ends with a shootout and the killing of an American sheriff, successfully eluding a posse for two weeks in what was the biggest



manhunt in Texas history at that time. Olmos also shepherded the project as a producer and brought director Robert M. Young aboard, whose documentary background helped him shape the film into a quiet, low-key, naturalistic drama that explores themes of race, culture, and prejudice. Bruce McGill plays a reporter accompanying the manhunt whose questions guide the flashback structure, which gives the story both an investigative quality and a *Rashomon* sensibility due to different perspectives on key events. It's a provocative film with superb performances from a cast of excellent character actors, including James Gammon, Brion James, and Barry Corbin. And Young enhances the cultural divide by withholding subtitles in the Spanish language sections, which puts English-speaking audiences in the same position as the Texan characters. Newly remastered in 2K, extras include new interviews with Olmos and historian Chon A. Noriego, a 2016 reunion panel discussion with cast and crew, and an essay by film scholar Charles Ramírez Berg. A film that has not only aged well but feels even more timely today, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### Billy Budd ★★1/2

Warner, 123 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99



Peter Ustinov produced, directed, co-wrote, and starred in this 1962 screen version of Herman Melville's allegorical 1891 novel, adapted in part from the stage play by Louis O. Coxe and Robert H. Chapman. Those stage origins show in this slow, archly serious, heavy-handed drama. Robert Ryan receives top billing as the sadistic master of arms who enjoys punishing and torturing the sailors, Ustinov is the captain who allows the abuse under his command, and Terence Stamp (in his film debut) plays the innocent Billy Budd, a guileless, honest young merchant seaman conscripted into military service. Billy's child-like optimism drives the master of arms to break his spirit to justify his own pessimistic view of humanity. *Billy Budd* is beautifully shot in black-and-white by Oscar-winning cinematographer Robert Krasker, who brings a majestic beauty to scenes shot on working ships and he photographs Stamp with an angelic glow. But Ustinov's direction is stagey, with measured performances and scenes that are framed like a chamber drama as he underlines the themes—the letter of the law versus justice, cruelty versus kindness, the responsibility of power—in long, dialogue-heavy sequences. Melvyn Douglas plays the Danish sailor who serves as a Greek chorus and John Neville and David McCallum also costar. All in all, this is still a well-produced and faithful adaptation, featuring an impressive, Oscar-nominated performance by Stamp. Presented with a new 2K scan, extras include

a 2007 audio commentary by Stamp and filmmaker Steven Soderbergh. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

### Bloody Spear at Mount Fuji ★★★

Arrow, 94 min., in Japanese w/ English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray: \$39.99



A 1955 samurai fable directed by Tomu Uchida, *Bloody Spear at Mount Fuji* tells the story of a master named Kojuro (Eijiro Kataoka), who travels the road to Edo with two servants—Genta (Daisuke Kato) and Genpachi (Chiezo Kataoka)—the latter a spear carrier. Along the way, they encounter all sorts of people and situations: a pilgrim, a policeman looking for a thief, a father intent on selling his daughter into prostitution, and a singer with her child. A young orphaned boy, Jiro (Motoharu Ueki), begins traipsing after Genpachi, finally revealing that he wants to grow up as a spear carrier. Genpachi takes Jiro under his wing, and the road movie is soon enlivened with many comic and dramatic circumstances, including a roadside tea break for three silly nobles who hold up foot traffic, and a grim showdown between Kojuro and a militant band of samurais over a breach in class-conscious decorum. *Bloody Spear at Mount Fuji* is an engaging itinerant tale featuring travelers with diverse motivations, needs, and morals. Extras include audio commentary by Japanese cinema expert Jasper Sharp, interviews, and a discussion of director Uchida by French film critic and programmer Fabrice Arduini. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

### Country ★★★

Kino Lorber, 109 min., PG, DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Jessica Lange produced and starred in this 1984 rural drama centered on the plight of American farms in the 1980s, as food prices dropped, farmers floundered in debt, and the FHA foreclosed on family farms all over the country. Lange plays Jewell Ivy, a wife and mother who runs an Iowa farm that has been in her family for generations along with her husband Gil (Sam Shepard), father Otis (Wilford Brimley), and teenage son Carlisle (Levi L. Knebel). At the government's urging, they took out loans to expand their family spread, but years of falling grain prices have left them financially farther behind, and when a tornado destroys much of their corn crop (and almost kills one of them in the dramatic opening scene), their loan is abruptly called in, which leaves the family no viable options. Jewell is the one who not only holds things together but also organizes the resistance to the foreclosure while Gil retreats into drink as he sees everything slip away. Director Richard Pearce (*Heartland*) displays his gift

for capturing the realism of rural settings and people facing difficult circumstances in this provocative drama that wears its themes on its sleeve and mythologizes family farming but also gives voice to the anxieties of rural America during an era of transformation into agribusiness. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Lee Gambin. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### The Day After ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 2 discs, 127 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Filmmaker Nicholas Meyer's 1983 TV movie wasn't the first film to imagine nuclear war but it was the first American attempt to realistically depict modern nuclear warfare, from the firestorms wiping out millions of people at ground zero to the lingering effects of radiation poisoning and nuclear fallout. Centered in the rural town of Lawrence, KS, the story follows the lives of ordinary men, women, and families during the escalation of Cold War hostilities between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries in Europe. The Lawrence setting is effective for both the message and the drama since it is a college town, a hub in farming country, and is located near a major missile site, making it a target. It is still shocking to see nuclear missiles rocket up into the sky almost an hour into the story. Minutes later, the Soviet bombs detonate in Kansas and the remainder of the film follows the survivors in a world poisoned by fallout. Jason Robards, JoBeth Williams, John Cullum, Steve Guttenberg, Bibi Besch, and John Lithgow star in this film that became a major cultural event—seen by an estimated 100 million viewers—which sparked public discussion about nuclear weapons and the arms race and encouraged government action on an arms treaty with the Soviet Union. *The Day After* remains the highest-rated American TV movie to date, while a slightly longer version was released to theaters in other parts of the world. Both versions are featured here, along with extras including audio commentary by film historian Lee Gambin and comic artist/writer Tristan Jones, and interviews with Meyer and Williams. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### The Day of the Jackal ★★★

Arrow, 107 min., PG, Blu-ray: \$39.99



The titular "Jackal" in this 1973 conspiracy classic is the code name of a professional assassin hired by a cabal of French dissidents in 1963 who plot to assassinate French President Charles de Gaulle. Edward Fox plays the otherwise unnamed assassin, a meticulous professional who reaches out to experts for every tool in his arsenal, from his

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custom-designed sniper rifle to his identity papers and travel documents. While he puts his plan in place, the authorities follow the slimmest clues to uncover the conspiracy and identify this ghost of a killer. The screen adaptation of Frederick Forsyth's bestselling 1967 novel (which was inspired by a real-life assassination attempt) is directed by Oscar-winning Hollywood veteran Fred Zinnemann with a matter-of-fact directness in the manner of a police procedural, making for a dispassionate rather than thrilling film, with everything observed at a remove, bringing an old-fashioned sense of dogged professionalism to both the story and the storytelling. Although the ending is never in doubt (de Gaulle died in 1970 of natural causes), *The Day of the Jackal* remains compelling in its accumulation of detail, although modern viewers raised on rapidly-paced thrillers may find it a bit plodding. Fox is the least showy of big screen assassins, a man with military precision and a personal manner to match: crisp, professional, and confident, but without arrogance. The fictional character inspired a real-life revolutionary to adopt the name Carlos the Jackal. Extras include two rare archival clips from the film set (including an interview with Zinnemann), and a new interview with author Neil Sinyard. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### Gold ★★

Kino Lorber, 124 min., PG, DVD: \$14.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Roger Moore played several roles on TV (*The Saint*, etc.) before becoming James Bond in 1973 for the first of seven film adventures. Whatever Moore's humble beginnings in real life, he came off onscreen as patrician—an aristocrat with a mid-Atlantic accent and unruffled demeanor. Which makes it hard to take him seriously in 1974's *Gold* as Rod Slater, a genteel rascal who woos the ladies and happens to be the rough-and-tumble general manager of a South African goldmine. Moore makes no effort to give the blue-collar character authenticity (aside from leaving his shirt open). The story revolves around an international conspiracy to flood a major goldmine and thereby drive up the value of available gold. Susannah York is largely wasted as Terry Steyner—wife of one of the conspirators (she doesn't know he's a bad guy)—who falls for Slater, despite his aggravating penchant for reverse psychology. Directed by Peter R. Hunt, long associated with the James Bond series as an editor and then as director of 1969's *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, the film is full of quick cuts and rapid action, but it is ultimately more wearisome than exciting. Extras include an audio commentary by film historians Howard S. Berger and Nathaniel Thompson. Optional. (T. Keogh)



### Hocus Pocus ★★1/2

Disney, 96 min., PG, Blu-ray: \$19.99

This 1993 near-misfire from Disney cried out for a more imaginative director than Kenny Ortega (of *High School Musical* fame). But it has a saving grace: a wonderful trio of funny actresses—Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Kathy Najimy, as Salem, MA, sister-witches named the Sandersons, who were put to death in 1693. The mischievous (and not too smart) sisters are accidentally revived 300 years later when a virgin teen boy, Max (Omri Katz), enters their haunted cottage on Halloween night, triggering their return. Magically sapping the youth out of children to keep themselves alive, the Sandersons are on the prowl for kids, and many are on the street in trick-or-treat costumes. Max, his little sister (Thora Birch), and a new girlfriend (Vinessa Shaw) are out to stop them, but have trouble getting anyone to believe their story. Ortega can't seem to capture any real sense of witch magic, but he does encourage Midler, Parker, and Najimy to be loose with quips, singing, and ding-a-ling antics. Extras include cast and crew commentary, deleted scenes, behind-the-scenes secrets, fun facts and trivia, concept art and storyboards, and a vintage featurette. A strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)



### Irma la Douce ★★★

Kino Lorber, 143 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Billy Wilder reunited the stars of his Oscar-winning *The Apartment* for this racy yet sweet 1963 sex comedy. Shirley MacLaine stars as Irma la Douce, a superstar streetwalker in yesteryear Paris, and Jack Lemmon is the rookie gendarme who loses his job when he arrests the local ladies of the evening and their clients (including his boss) and ends up becoming the most successful pimp in Paris—all in the same day. Wilder adapted the hit French stage musical with his regular collaborator I.A.L. Diamond, removing the songs and replacing them with the Wilder slyness and spoofing the sweetness bubbling under the colorful underworld of this Hollywood fantasy of Gay Paree. It's like a farcical remake of *The Apartment* with Lemmon's character pushed to even more extremes as a straight-laced innocent so jealous of his lover's clients that he poses as one himself. Lou Jacobi is earthy yet somehow above it all as the philosophical barman who serves as narrator and master of ceremonies. Pushing the boundaries of bourgeois morality with a mix of ribald suggestion and fairy-tale innocence, *Irma la Douce* was a big hit that earned MacLaine an Oscar nomination. Presented with a new 4K scan, extras include separate audio commentary tracks from film



historians Joseph McBride and Kat Ellinger. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### A Minute to Pray, a Second to Die ★★

Kino Lorber, 99 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

This minor 1968 spaghetti Western stars American actor Alex Cord as Clay McCord, an outlaw on the run who is suffering from epilepsy and hopes to hang up his guns and take up an offer of amnesty from the governor of New Mexico (Robert Ryan). All he has to do is reach the town of Tuscosa before the bounty hunters catch up with him, but Tuscosa is surrounded by killers waiting to pounce on anyone with a price on his head before amnesty can be granted, so McCord heads for an outlaw refuge in the mountains. The film is directed by Franco Giraldi with all the ruthless violence expected from the genre—bounty hunters murder a priest before laying a trap for McCord—but none of the mythic style of Sergio Leone, and Cord lacks the larger-than-life presence of the genre's top leading men. Arthur Kennedy plays the town marshal who is handing out the pardons (a task he does grudgingly), and Nicoletta Machiavelli costars as an outcast woman who cares for Clay, but it is Ryan who dominates the film in his brief scenes, projecting a morality and strength of will in an underplayed performance while the rest of the cast either overacts or strives to be enigmatic. Extras include audio commentary by filmmaker and spaghetti Western fan Alex Cox, and the extended ending found on the international version. Optional. (S. Axmaker)



### O Fantasma ★★

Strand, 92 min., in Portuguese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.99

This 2000 debut feature by provocative Portuguese writer-director João Pedro Rodrigues stars Ricardo Meneses as Sérgio, a young Lisbon sanitation worker whose existence is centered on extreme self-gratification. He does show affection for the department's pet dog, and a pretty co-worker is obviously infatuated with him (even though she's involved with their boss), but Sérgio spends virtually all of his free time seeking out meaningless trysts with men in public restrooms, masturbating in the shower (using auto-asphyxiation to increase pleasure), and stalking a handsome motorcyclist. When the object of his obsession rebuffs him, Sérgio breaks into the man's house dressed in a black latex cat's costume and kidnaps him. After leaving his victim in an alley, Sergio lopes like a feline through the city's streets towards an ending that reeks of emotional nihilism. Largely because of Meneses's blank performance, the



# AWARD-WINNING LGBT MOVIES FROM WOLFE VIDEO

**"Excellent Drama."**

– Variety



Having been gone for three years, closeted advertising executive Adrian returns to his Texas hometown for the holidays during the first wave of the AIDS crisis. Shot on black-and-white super 16mm film, "1985" takes a unique look at a pivotal moment in American history through the prism of empathy, love and family. Starring Cory Michael Smith, Academy Award Nominee Virginia Madsen, Golden Globe Winner Michael Chiklis and Jamie Chung. Directed by Yen Tan ["Pit Stop"].

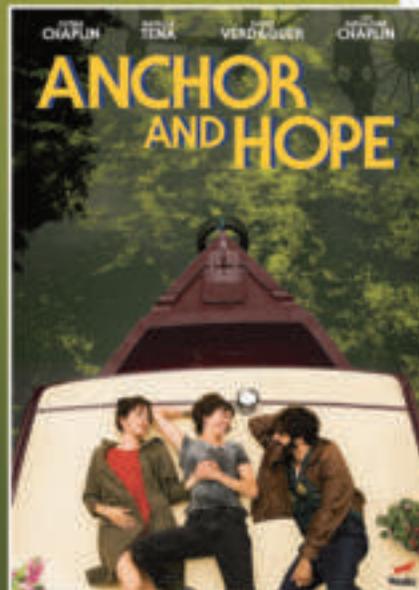


85 MIN / B&W / DVD: WOL5857D • SRP \$26.95 UPC 754703764768  
Blu-ray: WOL5857B • SRP \$29.95 UPC 754703764782  
AVAILABLE: DECEMBER 18TH

**"Beautifully captured..."**

Oona Chaplin is remarkable." – The Playlist

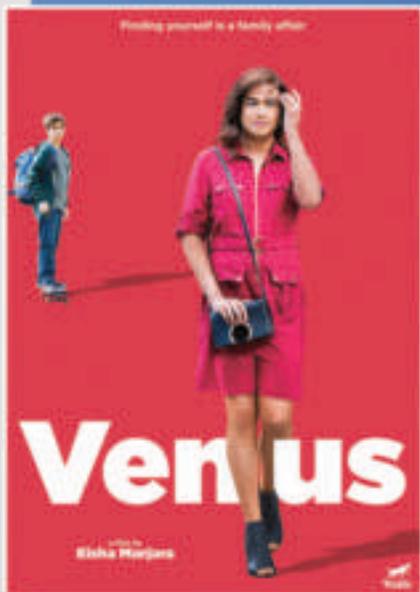
Eva and Kat have a fun and carefree simple life in their London canal boat until Eva, inspired by her mother Germaine, presents Kat with an ultimatum: she wants a child. Kat resists, knowing that it will end the bohemian lifestyle that she's always envisioned with Eva. Starring Oona Chaplin [Game of Thrones], Natalia Tena, David Verdaguer and Geraldine Chaplin [Dr. Zhivago].



113 MIN / COLOR / WOL5855D • SRP \$26.95 UPC 754703764751  
AVAILABLE NOVEMBER 20TH

**"Culture-crossing comedy with a transgender twist."**

– The Georgia Straight



Sid's coming out as a woman has a snowball effect on his conservative Indian parents and the teenage son she discovers that forces everyone out of the closet and to get real. What happens when gender, generations and cultures collide to create a truly modern family?



95 MIN / COLOR / WOL5472D • SRP \$26.95 UPC 754703764720  
AVAILABLE NOW!

**"A forbidden love affair in the locker room."**

– Towleroad

When Leon, joins the soccer team, he shares a flat with keen rival Mario and the scene is set for an unexpected love affair. The path of gay love in this macho world is not easy. This heart-warming roller-coaster of a film, offers a dynamic and realistic picture of how gay professional athletes are still seen as out of step in the 21st century. In German with English subtitles.



124 MIN / COLOR / WOL5856D • SRP \$26.95 UPC 754703764744  
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sexually-explicit *O Fantasma* is as boring as it is unenlightening. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

### The Poetic Trilogy ★★★

Arrow, 2 discs, 232 min., in Persian & English w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$49.99



Mohsen Makhmalbaf, one of the most important and expressive filmmakers of the Iranian New Wave, proclaimed that his 1996 film *Gabbeh* was his first “poetic film,” employing bold, brilliant images and saturated hues. Drawn from the folk culture of the nomadic tribes of southeastern Iran, *Gabbeh* is a richly textured tale of passionate forbidden love told through a narrative woven into a folkloric story carpet known as a “gabbeh.” Makhmalbaf followed that film with *The Silence* (1998), which is about the sensory world of an impoverished blind boy (Tahmineh Normativa). Supporting his mother with a job tuning instruments in a city music shop, the boy has five days to come up with rent money before they are evicted, but he’s also just a kid who loves to get lost in the aural quilt of the city. *The Silence* does for sound what *Gabbeh* did for color: Makhmalbaf isolates and exaggerates sounds, crafting an internal symphony in an impressionistic attempt to recreate the boy’s world. Over a decade later, after leaving Iran, Makhmalbaf made *The Gardener* (2012)—the trilogy’s final film—a documentary tracing the root of the Baha’i faith. Here, Makhmalbaf himself debates religion with his son in a vibrant production shot on location in Israel in the expressionist style of the earlier films. Extras include audio commentary on *Gabbeh* by critic Godfrey Cheshire, new and archival interviews with Makhmalbaf, and a stills gallery. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### Smithereens ★★★

Criterion, 93 min., R, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



One of the defining films of the independent film-making scene that flowered in 1980s New York, this 1982 debut feature by Susan Seidelman follows restless Jersey girl Wren (Susan Berman) as she attempts to become part of the Big Apple’s art scene. With no discernable talent, she promotes herself with xeroxed flyers papered all over the city while ruthlessly using everyone in her circle of friends and acquaintances. While she attracts the attention of Paul (Brad Rijn), a nice guy from Montana who is living out of his van, she tries to attach herself to Eric (real-life punk pioneer Richard Hell), a mercenary punk rocker who is trying to raise money to get to Los Angeles. Seidelman drew from the street culture she discovered as a student from Pennsylvania at NYU for

this self-financed American indie take on *All About Eve*, which is shot on the streets of New York—including scenes at the famed Peppermint Lounge—and energized by DIY aesthetics. *Smithereens* became the first American indie to compete for the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival. Extras include a 2004 audio commentary by Seidelman, new interviews with Seidelman and Berman, two early short films by Seidelman, and an essay by critic Rebecca Bengal. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

### Supergirl ★1/2

Warner, 125 min., not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$21.99



This 1984 big-budget flop stars Helen Slater as Kara, a bored teenager living in the crystalline city of Argo, who ventures out on a mission to planet Earth to save her people. She’s the best thing (in red and blue leotards) in this misguided superhero movie-as-fairy-tale, which pits Kara against a witch (Faye Dunaway). Hart Bochner is the hunky gardener who falls in love with her (thanks to a magical mishap), Marc McClure reprises his role as Jimmy Olsen from the Christopher Reeve *Superman* movies, and Peter Cook, Peter O’Toole, and Mia Farrow costar. Director Jeannot Szwarc has no sense of wonder, little sense of humor (although sardonic sidekick Brenda Vaccaro brings out the self-parodying ham in Dunaway), and none of the technical chops needed to pull off a special-effects spectacle. *Supergirl* is simply silly and sloppy, and would be of interest only to completists. Featuring both the 125-minute international version and a bonus DVD with the 139-minute director’s cut, extras include audio commentary by Szwarc and special project consultant Scott Michael Bosco, and a vintage “making-of” featurette. Not a necessary purchase. (S. Axmaker)

### Trapeze ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 106 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Burt Lancaster stars as former trapeze legend Mike Dribble, who has turned his back on performing after being crippled in a dangerous maneuver. Tony Curtis is rising star Tino, who tracks Mike down to learn from the master in this glossy 1956 big-top melodrama directed by Carol Reed. When Mike sees Tino’s talent in action he comes out of retirement to coach the kid and serve as his catcher as the latter masters the legendary triple somersault. A romantic triangle is formed when Lola (Gina Lollobrigida) seduces Tino and then falls in love with Mike. Lancaster was actually a circus acrobat before turning to acting, and he and Curtis—adorably naïve and earnest as the ambitious, hard-working kid—per-

formed most of their own stunts. Lollobrigida was a major sex symbol in the ‘50s and her hourglass figure is put on display in tights and revealing outfits, both as a hallmark of her character (she is determined to become a circus star at all costs, despite her limited talent) and as cheesecake spectacle for audiences, but there’s no sense of passion in the romantic scenes. British director Reed shot much of the film on location with the Paris-based Cirque d’Hiver, which gives the big-top scenes an authentic sense of professionalism and showmanship, but there’s not much to the simplistic story and the subplot featuring Katy Jurado as an equestrian whose horse is injured is underdeveloped. Still, this is a colorful film, and Lancaster (who also produced) and Curtis exhibit a convincing rapport. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Kat Ellinger. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

### The Trip to Bountiful ★★★

Kino Lorber, 108 min., PG, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



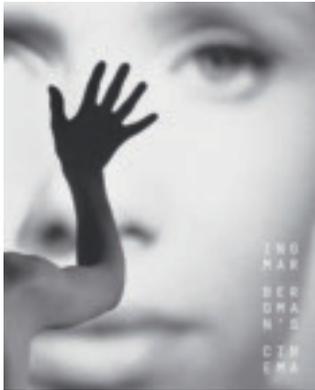
Adapted by Horton Foote from his titular play, 1985’s *The Trip to Bountiful* is given its soul and charm by lead actress Geraldine Page in an Oscar-winning performance for Best Actress. Page plays elderly Mrs. Watts, a widow living in 1947 Houston with her overprotective son (John Heard) and his bullying wife (Carlin Glynn). Yearning to return to her rural, farming roots in Bountiful—a small town near the Texas Gulf Coast—Mrs. Watts is prevented from traveling there by her son and daughter-in-law, who know that Bountiful has been hollowed out by World War II-era conscription and the draw of big cities looking for wartime factory workers. But Watts is unpersuadable, and when she sneaks off to catch a train, she soon learns that there is no longer a stop in Bountiful. Actor-director Peter Masterson gives Page plenty of room to deliver her affecting turn as a determined woman with a dying wish and an array of emotions. Richard Bradford shines as a sheriff who is kind to Watts and helps her find resolution, while Rebecca De Mornay is terrific as her traveling companion. Extras include the 2005 short documentary *Return to Bountiful*. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

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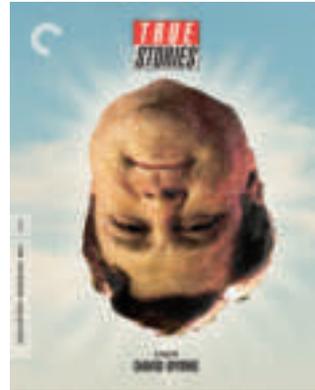
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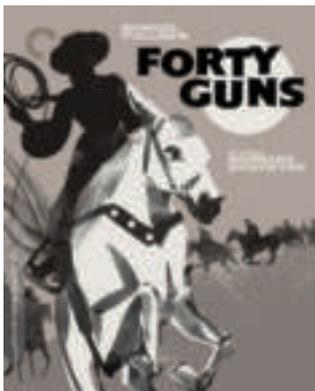
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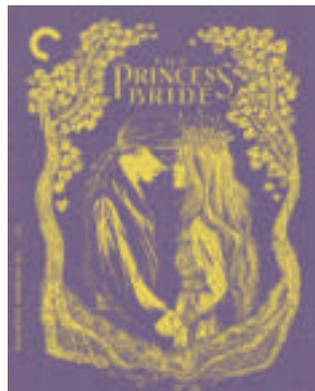
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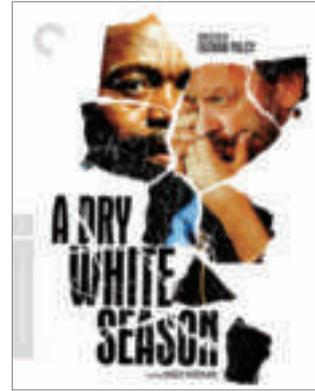
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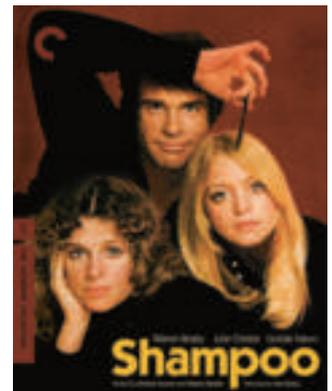
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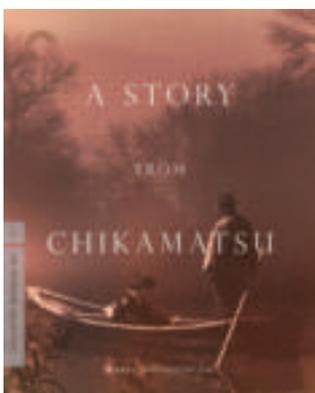
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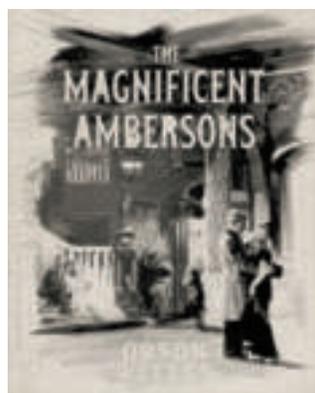
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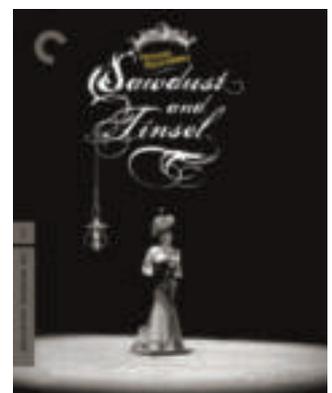
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**Arrow: The Complete Sixth Season** ★★

Warner, 970 min., not rated, DVD: 5 discs, \$44.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$49.99



The longest-running series in the CW network's interconnected superhero universe of DC Comics characters is still the darkest. This season opens with Oliver Queen (Stephen Amell) serving as both mayor and self-appointed vigilante hero Green Arrow to the crime-ridden metropolis of Star City while also raising his son following the death of the boy's mother. The strain takes its toll and his lone-wolf impulses collide with his support team and even threaten his relationship with Felicity (Emily Bett Rickards), the woman he loves, as a new villain rises: hacker genius Cayden James (Michael Emerson), a man whose mission of vengeance imperils the entire city. But that's just the first half of the season and another threat arises when one of Cayden's criminal associates (Kirk Acevedo) takes over to build a new criminal empire—with a plan that involves putting Queen on trial and behind bars. *Arrow* is a series marked by internal conflict and strife and has a visual style to match, with most of the action set at night. Presenting all 23 episodes from the 2018 sixth season, extras include crossover episodes, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and a 2017 Comic-Con panel featurette. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

**The Blacklist: The Complete Fifth Season** ★★

Sony, 5 discs, 946 min., not rated, DVD: \$45.99, Blu-ray: \$55.99



The fifth season of the high-concept thriller starring James Spader as international crime kingpin Raymond "Red" Reddington, who helps the FBI bring the most dangerous criminals in the world to justice with the help of his FBI profiler daughter Liz Keen (Megan Boone), opens with his network dismantled and his fortune gone. It makes this season more fun as Red puts together an eccentric new coalition of associates and pulls off a series of elaborate scams with long-con endgames to rebuild his empire and replenish his coffers with the help of Liz, who enjoys the family business more than she expected. When her husband (Ryan Eggold) is murdered, she returns to the FBI to track down his killers, with the trail leading to a corrupt U.S. Marshal running an international drug ring who has the mysterious suitcase that Red has been desperate to recover. The show delivers top-notch action and visual spectacle, but is ultimately sustained by Spader's mix of charming ruthlessness, personal loyalty, and dark wit. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2017-18 fifth season, extras include episode audio commentaries,

a behind-the-scenes featurette (the Blu-ray release has a bonus featurette), deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

**Bull: Season Two** ★★1/2

Paramount, 6 discs, 954 min., not rated, DVD: \$46.99



Michael Weatherly is back as Dr. Jason Bull, the brilliant but often insufferably arrogant trial consultant who runs Trial Analysis Corporation (TAC), a New York firm that advises legal teams on jury selection and strategy. The show capitalizes on the charm of longtime *NCIS* star Weatherly as a sly, wisecracking genius who reads people through their body language and other cues and acts on his instincts, often without consulting his team (attorney Freddy Rodriguez, neurolinguistics expert Geneva Carr, investigator Jaime Lee Kirchner, hacker Annabelle Attanasio, and witness coach Christopher Jackson). This season takes half-hearted stabs at personal dramas—Bull's drinking gets worse, his second-in-command is taken in by a con artist, his witness coach reveals that he has a daughter—but the focus is on the twists and turns of the trial-of-the-week as the consultant team plays detective and solves cases (and they never seem to take on a guilty client). Brad Garrett guest stars as an underdog attorney hired to represent Bull (who naturally makes a lousy client), and Jill Flint is back as a rival attorney who has a romantic history with Bull. Presenting all 22 episodes from the 2017-18 second season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

**Counterpart: The Complete First Season** ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 3 discs, 547 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99



The talented J.K. Simmons plays dual roles in this clever political thriller featuring a sci-fi twist. Set in modern-day Germany, the Starz-aired *Counterpart* imagines a new Cold War with an Earth from a parallel dimension. Simmons is Howard Silk, a quiet, low-level intelligence agent who becomes privy to the secret when he's introduced to his "Other Side" counterpart, a ruthless, high-ranking field agent who has crossed over through "the tunnel," the sole connection between the worlds. The two sides have evolved along different trajectories since splitting off 30 years ago, maintaining a wary détente and trading inventions and discoveries, but the Other Side has sent deep cover agents to "Earth One" in a plot that puts Silk One's wife (Olivia Williams) in the cross-hairs. Harry Lloyd costars as Peter Quayle, a ranking intelligence official who discovers

that his wife is one of these agents. *Counterpart* is an intelligent, gripping show, with Simmons superb as the two Silks who come to mistrust and even despise one another as they end up swapping identities. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2017-18 debut season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

**The Flash: The Complete Fourth Season** ★★

Warner, 1,096 min., not rated, DVD: 5 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$54.99



The fourth season of the most upbeat and optimistic of CW's DC Comics superhero shows pits Barry Allen, aka The Flash (Grant Gustin), and his team against a new nemesis: Clifford DeVoe, aka The Thinker (Neil Sandilands), a brilliant supervillain who is killing metahumans and absorbing their powers in order to frame Barry for murder. The season opens with Team Flash—Caitlin Snow/Killer Frost (Danielle Panabaker), Cisco/Vibe (Carlos Valdes), Wally/Kid Flash (Keiynan Lonsdale), and Harrison Wells (Tom Cavanagh) under the driven leadership of Barry's fiancée Iris (Candice Patton)—creating a whole new generation of metahumans when they rescue Flash from the Speed Force. New to the team is disgraced detective Ralph Dibny (Hartley Sawyer), an irreverent screw-up who becomes the rubbery Elongated Man and evolves into a hero in his own right during the season. Barry's energetic enthusiasm and emotional investment in his crime-fighting family helps make this bright, colorful, zippy show the most family-friendly superhero series on TV. Presenting all 23 episodes from the 2017-18 fourth season, extras include crossover episodes, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

**The Good Karma Hospital: Series 2** ★★

RLJ, 2 discs, 288 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99



This British medical drama set in an understaffed rural hospital on the coast of Southern India continues with Dr. Ruby Walker (Amrita Acharia), a London doctor doing her internship in a country that is foreign to her despite her Indian ancestry, taking on greater responsibilities, and Dr. Lydia Fonseca (Amanda Redman), the practical administrator and head doctor, keeping the enterprise running. The show touches on poverty, local suspicions regarding Western medicine, and the culture of tourism and often arrogant Western visitors, but otherwise this is a light drama. There are stories of romance, both Ruby's no-strings situation with the local bar owner (Neil Morrissey) and Ruby's growing

relationship with the handsome but aloof Dr. Gabriel Varma (James Floyd), and of family, as Ruby meets the father who abandoned her as an infant. Philip Jackson, who played the widower husband of a dying woman who chose to spend her last days in India, returns to grieve the love of his life. Compiling all six episodes from the 2018 second season, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette. Recommended. (S. *Axmaker*)

### Hillary ★★1/2

PBS, 2 discs, 265 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99

Sir Edmund Hillary was arguably the most famous New Zealander of the 20th century, thanks to his historic conquest of Mount Everest. This New Zealand TV miniseries follows Hillary's initial fascination with the Himalayas while he helped with his father's beekeeping business (and an interlude in the air force during World War II, which allowed him to see more of the world). Hillary and his climbing partner George Lowe plan an audacious route up Everest, but are nearly thwarted by a Swiss expedition that gets to the mountain first. When the Swiss fail, Hillary is joined by Nepalese mountaineer Tenzig Norgay to achieve the most elusive goal in the world. Hillary quickly earned fame and fortune, and also found the courage to propose to his longtime sweetheart Louise. But adjusting to life after Everest is difficult, and Hillary faced an even greater challenge in coping with the 1975 deaths of his wife and daughter in a plane crash. Directed by Danny Mulheron, *Hillary* is a handsomely-crafted production that features a magnificent recreation of the Everest ascent and a subtle lead performance by Andrew Munro. But the series does begin to drag a bit after the summiting of Everest as it chronicles the more mundane aspects of Hillary's life. Compiling all six episodes from 2016, this is a strong optional purchase. (P. *Hall*)



### Keeping Faith ★★★

RLJ, 3 discs, 480 min., not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$49.99

Eve Myles stars as Faith Howells, a lawyer and happily married mother of three who comes back from maternity leave and returns to the Welsh law firm that she founded with her husband Evan (Bradley Freegard), who disappears the very same day. Suddenly the easygoing, fun-loving Faith is stretched to the breaking point, juggling childcare and legal cases with efforts to find her spouse, eventually discovering an entire secret life that he's hidden from her. The firm is on the verge of bankruptcy and Evan was engaged in extramarital affairs and involved with the local crime syndicate. While the police



target her as the prime suspect in his murder (never mind that there's no body), a grateful client with a criminal past (Mark Lewis Jones) appoints himself her protector, looking into Evan's underworld ties and trying to keep criminals and corrupt cops alike from Faith's family. *Keeping Faith* is as much compelling character drama as mystery, with Myles playing a woman on the verge of a breakdown, emotionally frayed and exhausted but still trying to hold her business and family together. An intelligent and involving series, shot in Wales, this is more intimate than most British crime dramas, with themes of family, responsibility, and loyalty, as even Faith's mother-in-law turns against her. Compiling all eight episodes from 2017, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette and character introductions. Recommended. (S. *Axmaker*)

### Lucifer: The Complete Third Season ★★1/2

Warner, 5 discs, 1,140 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99, Blu-ray: \$47.99

The third season of this supernatural fantasy detective series follows the unlikely partnership between LAPD detective Chloe Decker (Lauren German) and nightclub impresario Lucifer Morningstar (Tom Ellis), the flamboyantly arrogant fallen angel who is on a long vacation from Hell and discovers that he enjoys playing detective. Season three opens with Lucifer determined to find out who restored his angel wings (he cut them off long ago) and stole his "devil face." Meanwhile, his brother Amenadiel (D.B. Woodside), an angel originally sent to bring Lucifer back to Hell, loses his own wings and searches for his purpose, and the precinct gets a new captain who, it turns out, is Cain (Tom Welling), the world's first murderer, cursed to live for eternity. Very loosely based on the character created by Neil Gaiman in *Sandman* and the comic book series by Mike Carey, *Lucifer* presents the devil not as a malevolent demon but rather as a fallen angel with Daddy issues, and it treats the dysfunctional relationships of the celestial family in human terms. And there is plenty of whimsical humor in this often silly but usually entertaining crime fantasy, although some communities might find its cheeky treatment of biblical themes objectionable. Compiling all 26 episodes from the 2017-18 third season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, interviews, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. *Axmaker*)



### Modus: Season 1 ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 2 discs, 360 min., in Swedish w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

In the opening scene of this Swedish crime series, autistic pre-teen Stina (Esmeralda Struwe) wanders from her hotel room (her

parents are attending a wedding below) and becomes a witness to murder. Instead of killing this helpless bystander, the killer saves her life, but keeps tabs on her after he discovers that she is the daughter of psychologist and former FBI profiler Inger Johanne Vik (Melinda Kinnaman), a consultant investigating the murders that he is committing. Based on the novels of Finnish crime author Anne Holt, this is prime Scandinavian noir, a dark drama about a brutal conspiracy tied up in hate crimes against gay and lesbian individuals and set in the cold of winter, complicated by a child in peril who is unable to communicate her situation or her anxieties. Henrik Norlén costars as the lead investigator who teams up with Inger professionally and personally. The story has an international reach—all the way to a Texas-based reactionary religious sect and the FBI, although American audiences may find fault with the unconvincing Texas draws. But otherwise the series is beautifully shot and well-acted and should appeal to fans of Scandinavian noir and edgy crime dramas. Presenting all eight episodes from the 2015 first season, this is highly recommended. (S. *Axmaker*)



### The Walking Dead: The Complete Eighth Season ★★★

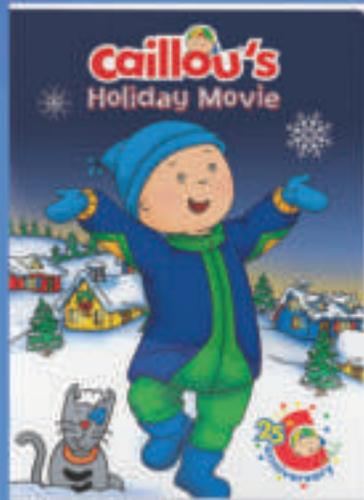
Lionsgate, 5 discs, 805 min., not rated, DVD: \$70.99, Blu-ray: \$80.99

Another of the original cast members of AMC's monster-hit zombie series bites the dust in this 2017-18 season (and is given an extended, heartfelt send-off midway through the run). Otherwise, this season's overall narrative, based on the "All Out War" volumes of Robert Kirkman's long-running comic book series *The Walking Dead*, centers on the decisive battle uniting Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) and his survivors, along with allies from the Alexandria Safe-Zone, the Hilltop Colonists under Maggie Greene (Lauren Cohan), and the Kingdom led by King Ezekiel (Khary Payton)—as well as the Scavengers in the latter stages—against the brutal Savivors, who are directed by the nefarious Negan (Jeffrey Dean Morgan). The conflict allows for plenty of the usual graphic violence, but the writers also make room for numerous sideline stories showcasing the show's regular and subsidiary characters, and the ending opts for an act on Rick's part that underscores his continuing humane inclinations. While obviously not a good starting point for newcomers to the series, die-hard fans will not be disappointed. Presenting all 16 episodes from the 2017-18 eighth season, extras include episode audio commentaries and behind-the-scenes featurettes. Recommended. (F. *Swietek*)

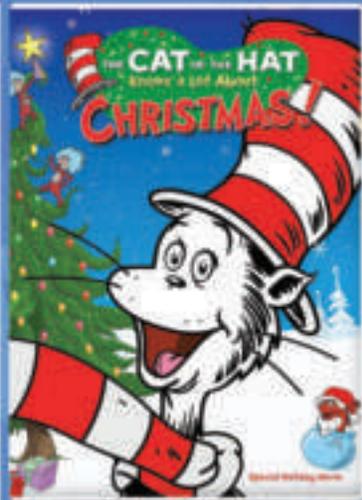




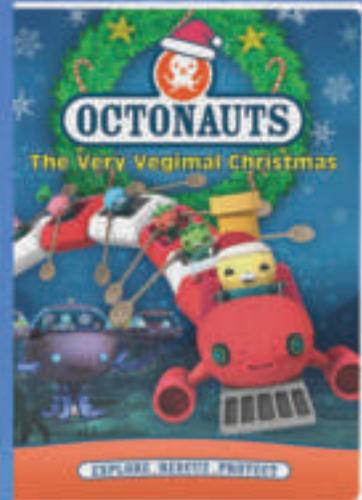
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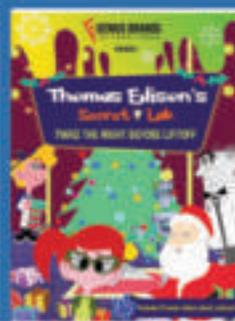


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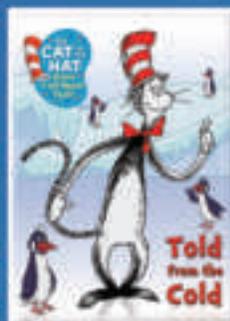
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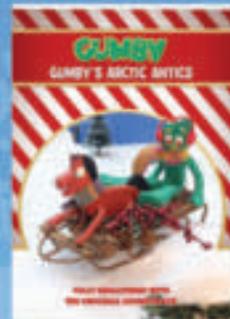
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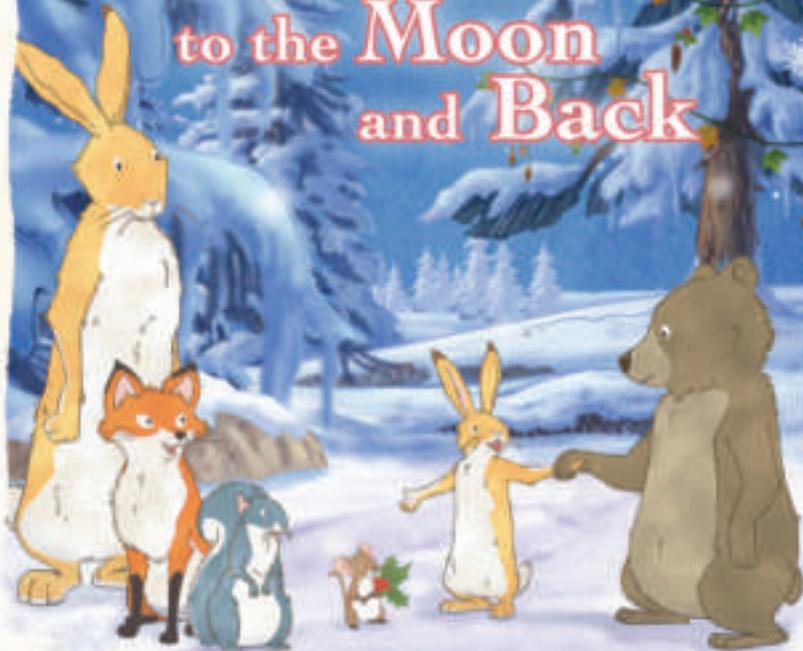
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Ordering information for the titles reviewed in this section can be found in the "Distributor Addresses" listings at the back of the magazine.

★★★★ = Excellent

★★★ = Good

★★ = Fair

★ = Poor

PPR = Public Performance Rights

DRA = Digital Rights Available

Aud = Audience

K = Preschool-Kindergarten

E = Elementary (grades 1-3)

I = Intermediate (grades 4-6)

J = Jr. High (grades 7-8)

H = High School (grades 9-12)

C = Colleges & Universities

P = Public Libraries

## CHILDREN'S

### Lots & Lots of Animal Stories for Kids!

#### Vol. 6: Foxes ★★

(2017) 30 min. DVD: \$12.95 (\$14.95 w/PPR). Marshall Publishing. ISBN: 978-1-936134-74-8.

In this latest entry in the educational series for children, the live-action shots of kids raptly listening to host Danni Donkey sharing animal facts appear to be recycled from other volumes (which is a bit disappointing for anyone watching the programs back-to-back). Here, Miss Danni interacts with various cartoon mammals including an English fox (who reminisces about late nights at the park with Danni when they went to university together), a nocturnal badger with a nod to *Wind in the Willows*, Parisian cathedral bats ("We hang around!") who have "big pointy ears and button noses/always dressed in lovely black clothes-es," and Transylvanian wolves (Danni falsely claims that there has never been a recorded incident of a wolf attacking a human). Also featured are a Catalan Ibez wearing a dress, Lapland reindeer, and a song about confidence, all of which seemed somewhat out of place and not related to foxes. Still, this should be considered an optional purchase for those collecting the series. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

#### The New LiBEARian ★★1/2

(2018) 10 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-97491-4-296.

Narrated by Alison Larkin, this icono-

graphic-animated adaptation of author Alison Donald and illustrator Alex Willmore's 2018 picture book adaptation finds a group of children waiting in the kids' corner for regular librarian Miss Merryweather to show up for story time. But when she is late they embark on a search, following mysterious pawprints in the library while also exercising their imaginations. A desk with shredded books leads to a new librarian, who only wants to "read" them a book about bears—with realistic roaring, growling, and stomping that the kids enjoy. When the real Miss Merryweather shows up—her being late attributed to a volcano erupting in the ancient history section—the story ends with a somewhat flat twist. But given the library theme, this tale—which also includes a read-along option—should be considered a strong optional purchase. Aud: K, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### Scooby-Doo! And the Gourmet Ghost

★★★

(2018) 77 min. DVD: \$19.98. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

At some point, I do expect to see an actual episode in which Fonzie, Scooby, and Shaggy jump a ghost shark, but in the meantime this latest addition to the library of Mystery Inc. animated movies is entertaining. Here, the gang visits Fred's Uncle Bobby, who Fred doesn't realize is celebrity chef Bobby Flay—but forever-hungry foodies Scooby-Doo and Shaggy do and they drool and make fancy requests for herb-crusted lamb chops and Beef Wellington right away. Uncle Bobby has restored the family property—site of a "Red Ghost" threat in the Colonial era that he doesn't like to talk about—into a high-tech cooking arena fantasy camp that also features chefs Giada De Laurentiis and Marcus Samuelsson as versions of themselves. A live TV promotion of the resort is ruined by the Red Ghost in this fan-friendly film featuring common series tropes such as eyes moving

behind a painting, a creepy groundskeeper red herring, a slick real estate developer, Velma's fleeting loss of her glasses ("Can we talk about Lasik?" asks an exasperated Daphne), and chase scenes punctuated by the Great Dane and his BFF's gargantuan appetites. Also including three bonus cartoons, this inventive entry in the long-running series is recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### Unikitty: Sparkle Party—Season One, Part One ★★

(2018) 2 discs. 224 min. DVD: \$18.95. Warner Bros. Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

Based on a character from *The LEGO Movie*, this Cartoon Network series follows the escapades of manic unicorn-cat Unikitty, princess of Unikinddom. Compiling 20 episodes from the 2017-18 debut season, *Sparkle Party* serves up hyperkinetic neon animation and features a metal theme song. The opener, "Spooooky Game," finds Unikitty and her brother Puppypcorn competing in a creepy game night where they and some friends are transported to a cursed world; "Sparkle Matter Matters" features castle scientist Dr. Fox and an experiment gone wrong that adversely affects grey LEGO brick palace caretaker Richard. Richard also gets the short end of the brick in "Kitchen Chaos," as he hurts his back and the gang tries to chip in with cleaning. Also including "Stuck Together" (in which Unikitty taps into her dark side, helping out villainous Master Frown, who does things like stealing bookmarks) and "Unikitty News" (a spoof with network-style segments and commercials), *Unikitty* serves up simplistic storylines (with little in the way of guidance lessons) built around a gratingly obnoxious protagonist. Optional. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### The Very Very Very Long Dog ★★★

(2018) 7 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-97480-2-699.

Author and illustrator Julia Patton's 2017



### Saving Fiona ★★★★★

(2018) 22 min. DVD: \$24.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-97490-1-586.

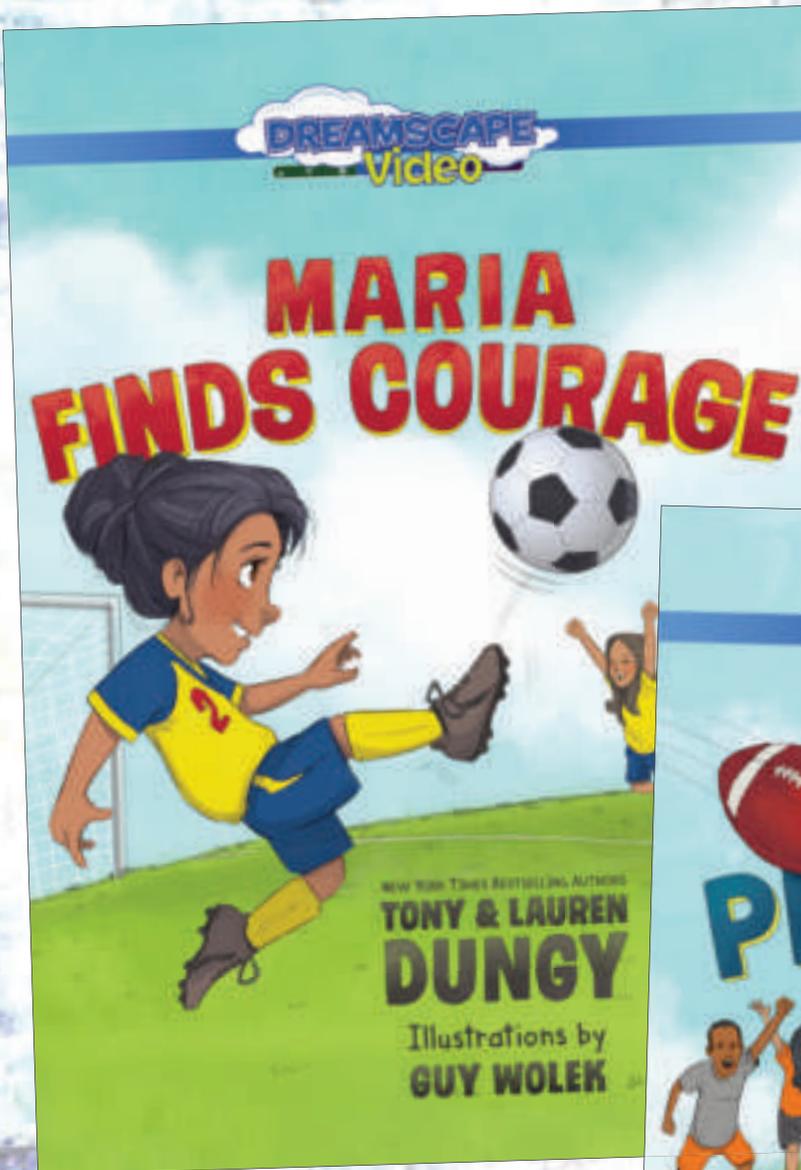
Based on Thane Maynard's titular 2018 children's picture book, which uses real photos to explore the story of a young baby hippo born at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden where Maynard is director, *Saving Fiona* tells an excellent nature story. After the construction of a highly-requested new hippo enclosure with a 100%-rainwater-filtered environment, adult hippos Bibi and Henry were added and "everyone hoped that Bibi and Henry would get along" (wink-wink). In January 2017 their squirming

baby was born prematurely (graphically shown here), and at only 29 pounds was much too weak. Outlining the trial-and-error steps taken by staff to save baby Fiona—named after the *Shrek* character for her wiggly ears—the story chronicles the eventual victory of the specialized caregiving team and Fiona's emergence as a social media star. Also including "Hurray for Hippos" bonus facts, and first birthday party pix of "symbol of hope" Fiona, this informative and heart-tugging adaptation is highly recommended. Editor's Choice. Aud: E, I, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

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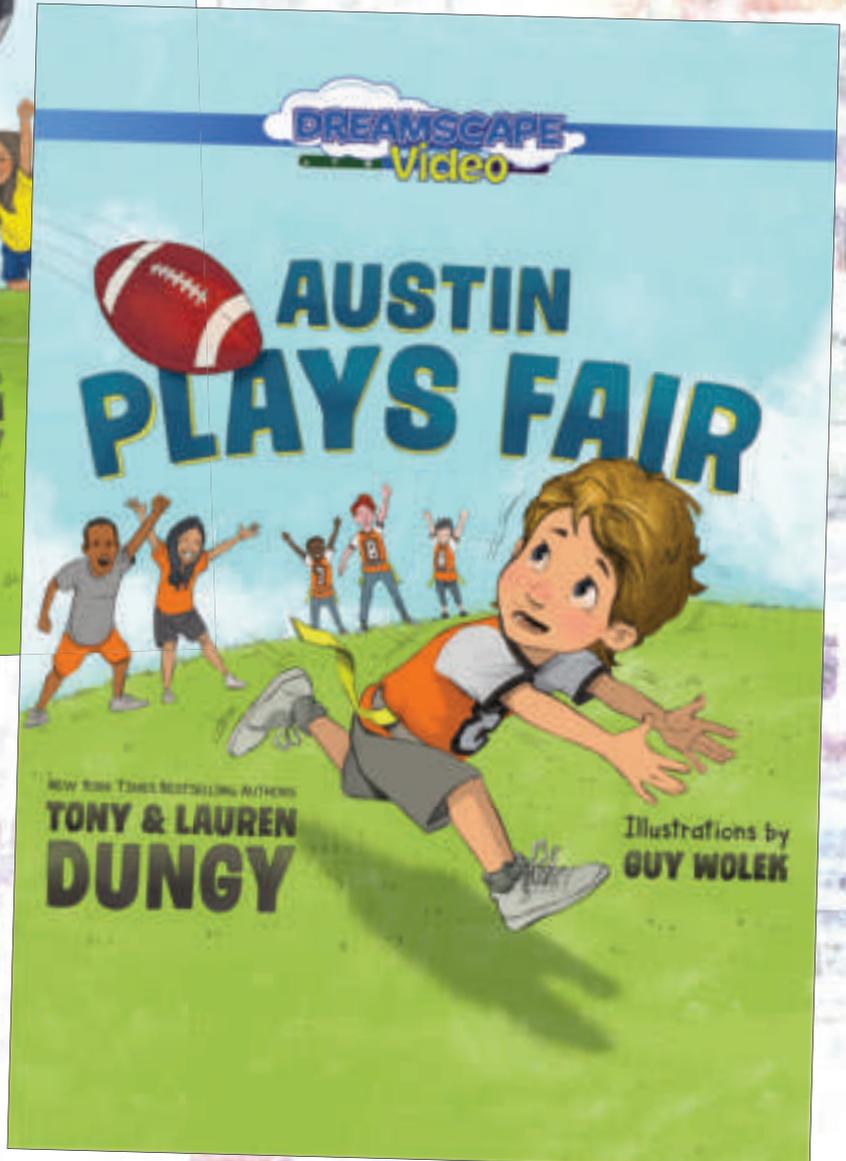
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# 'Tis the Season

## The Chosen: The Story of the First Christmas

★★★  
(2018) 22 min. DVD: \$14.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).



Dallas Jenkins, producer and director of the winning 2010 faith-based feature *What If...* is the talent behind *The Chosen: The Story of the First Christmas*, part of a projected series on the life of Jesus. Buoyed by financial support from a successful crowdfunding campaign, *The Chosen* takes an interesting angle on the Gospels: Christ's time on Earth is witnessed through the eyes of others. This initial episode focuses on a disabled shepherd who is an outcast among other, more prosperous sheep herders. The night that Jesus is born proves to be redemptive for the challenged hero, changing his perception of both himself and the world's possibilities. Jenkins's wise take on the Nativity scene also bucks tradition with a multiethnic cast. A fine rendition of the "first Christmas," this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

## Christmas at Rosemont

★★★  
(2015) 95 min. DVD: \$14.99. Strand Releasing (avail. from most distributors on Dec. 4).



Two people are driving through the Rocky Mountains at night in a blinding snowstorm. What could possibly go wrong? After skidding off the road, Brad (Brendan Michael Coughlin), a professional snowboarder on his way to Colorado to see his fiancée, and Lisa (Ayla Kell), large with child and hitching a ride with Brad to get away from the baby's father, seek shelter in a creepy old hotel that has been out of business for decades. Two elders live there, played by actors who are strongly associated with some weird characters: Josephine (Grace Zabriskie of *Twin Peaks* fame) and Abe (Brad Dourif, voice of "Chucky"). But this is not a setup for a horror film; in fact, the only thing spooky here is the extent to which Josephine is emotionally haunted by a terrible personal loss years ago, a tragedy that compelled her to shut down her hotel, freezing it in time. The out-of-the-blizzard arrival of Craig and Lisa at Christmas ushers in youth, life, and love, especially after the birth of Lisa's infant. Directed by Daniel Petrie Jr., *Christmas at Rosemont* is a handsome-looking film (lots of snow and trees) that can't help but charm as the old

folks begin shaking off the shackles that bind them to the past. An inspiring holiday tale, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

## Holiday Heroes Save Christmas

★★★  
(2018) 18 min. DVD: \$29.99. Dreamscape (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-97492-081-5.



This iconographic-animated adaptation of the 2018 picture book by author Adam Wallace and illustrator Shane Clester features a jingle-jangly soundtrack and a variety of voice actors, including George Newbern and Qarie Marshall, whose characters pitch in for Santa Claus when an illness threatens his special holiday. The story kicks off with cute factoids about Santa and the members of the fantasy "holiday heroes" squad, noting that Santa likes swimming with sharks and is good at bionic burps, the Tooth Fairy's real name is "Esmerelda Floss," the Witch is a broom-flying racing star, the Easter Bunny is a great hip-hop dancer, and the Leprechaun is also known as "Seamus O'Brien." The gang learns of Santa's sickness three days before Christmas and they immediately undertake some crash course training. Of course, when the big night comes, trouble follows—not only with landing the Super Sleighmobile 3000 but also some issues with the heroes using their regular powers in not-so-appropriate ways (Witch turns cookie offerings into spiders; Leprechaun scavenges for loose change). It's fun to see regular holiday characters outside-the-box in a different setting. Recommended. Aud: K, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

## Snow Awesome!

★★★  
(2018) 92 min. DVD: \$9.99. Paramount Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.



This compilation of Nickelodeon-aided programs exudes a festive air with several seasonal episodes. The opening double-length special, *Nella the Princess Knight's* "The Knight Before Christmas," finds Nella and her friends halting their singing and decorating activities when they see Santa being chased down by purple ice dragons who make off with his bag of gifts. With the presents for the town in jeopardy, Nella and company follow the "Frostbite Brothers"—who sound like Bowery Boy knockoffs ("Yowza! Ya got in!")—to their lair and use problem-solving to get the holiday back on track for the people of Castlehaven. From *Sunny Day*, the double-length "Best Christmas Ever" finds hair salon head Sunny

bogged down with a demanding customer but very worried when a sudden snowstorm threatens to keep her apart from her best friend dog sidekick Doodle. Also including the bonus *Nella* story "Let It Snow," as well as three segments from the genie fantasy series *Shimmer and Shine* ("Snow Place We'd Rather Be" takes the trio to an ice palace in search of a Snowflake Gem), this compilation is recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

## New to DVD

**Blaze and the Monster Machines: Blaze Saves Christmas** (Paramount, DVD: \$10.99). Turbo Sled Blaze needs assistance to rescue all the gifts from Snowball Mountain in this holiday-themed addition to the animated series.



**Home for the Holidays** (Universal, DVD: \$14.99). Featuring the voice of Kelly Clarkson and others, this animated holiday movie follows an alien who celebrates human Christmas traditions for the first time.



**A Nashville Christmas** (Sony, DVD: \$6.99). Filmed in Nashville, this holiday-themed musical special includes performances by Emmylou Harris, Wynonna Judd, Pam Tillis, Lorrie Morgan, and others.



**Nature Cat: Winter Dance Party** (PBS, DVD: \$6.99). Backyard adventurer Nature Cat and friends celebrate the winter solstice in this latest addition to the PBS Kids-aided series that features the voices of Taran Killam, Kate McKinnon, and Bobby Moynihan.



**Pat Boone and Family: Christmas & Thanksgiving Specials** (MPI, DVD: \$19.98). Singer Pat Boone and friends—including Bob Hope, Dinah Shore, Rosemary Clooney, and Yogi Bear—are featured in these holiday specials.



children's book is adapted in this iconographic-animated short narrated by Nick Podehl. A sprightly soundtrack backs the wholesome escapades of waggy-tailed dachshund Bartleby, who lives in an old bookstore and wears glasses while he reads. The only bane of Bartleby's existence is his limo-like stretched body, which causes calamities as he walks around town. A trio of kid friends tag along with the canine as his "reckless rear" gets into more trouble, but when he becomes discouraged and cries to stay at home, his pals come up with a solution. Drawn in a comic scribble style with colored pencil, this simple tale about acceptance is recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

## PSYCHOLOGY & SELF-HELP

### Happy ★★★

(2018) 77 min. DVD: \$99; public libraries; \$295 w/PPR; colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

Filmmaker Michael Patrick McKinley's *Happy* tells the story of a man who lost a loved one and was able to overcome his grief and depression through art. Leonard "Porkchop" Zimmerman grew up in Augusta, GA. His parents described him as a joyous, curious, and very active boy who had a talent for art at an early age. After high school, Leonard attended the Savannah College of Art and Design, where he found love with Brian Malone. The pair lived together in Atlanta for several years until Brian died from a severe strain of meningitis, after which Leonard returned home to his family and began sketching as a therapeutic way of expressing his feelings of pain. Leonard joined Artzilla, a local art group, made friends, and began to paint; Leonard signed his name "Porkchop," the nickname given to him by Brian. After

several successful art shows—featuring his robots displaying heartfelt emotions—Leonard decided to begin a "Happy" campaign, painting posters and creating stickers that wound up all over the world. While Leonard recognizes that his recovery will be ongoing, he has also come to realize that he can choose to be happy. An inspirational story, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Root)

## RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

### The Animated Bible Series—Episode 1: The Creation ★★★

(2018) 23 min. DVD: \$12.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

The first installment of an ambitious series of animated graphic-novel-style productions that will tell the entire narrative presented in the Bible, *Creation* offers a visually appealing synopsis of chapters 1-3 of the book of Genesis, as God makes the heavens, earth, waters, plants, and animals, before creating man and woman—humankind's progenitors Adam and Eve. The serpent who tempts the latter to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil is no simple snake as is often represented, but rather a dazzling serpent such as might be portrayed in a comic book, while the Garden of Eden is an eye-popping paradise. Clearly designed to appeal to youth audiences, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

### Art in Smog ★★★

(2018) 76 min. In Mandarin w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99; individuals; \$95; public libraries; \$265; colleges & universities. Immersions25. PPR.

Filmmaker Lydia Chen examines the state of modern art in industrial-powerhouse China via four particular artists (who often blur the lines of instructor, curator-gallery owner, and collector). It is

stated that Chinese modern art is presently in a transition between original visions and imitations of Western trends, with considerable social pressure (credited to Deng Xiaoping's free-market revolution) to attain international success and prestige for the mainland. Artists everywhere may relate to academic Cui Cancan, who hailed from an insular village and could only find fulfillment in cosmopolitan Beijing. Other issues are particular to China, such as the men rebelling against convention and tradition in letting their wives take command of business affairs—or, in the case of the renowned artist Xia Xiaowan, taking a teenaged student protégé (Chen Hui, now a painter in her own right) as his mate. While there are mentions of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, an old comrade who committed suicide, and complaints by Cancan of pressure to officially join the Communist Party, stories of outright dissent and persecution are muted (no mention is made of protest-art, specifically works widely exhibited by artists sympathetic to the Falun Gong sect). Still, while not all-encompassing, *Art in Smog* presents an illuminating snapshot of a developing cultural scene. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

### From Cairo to the Cloud: The World of the Cairo Geniza ★★★1/2

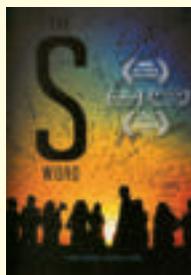
(2018) 92 min. DVD: \$125; public libraries; \$395; colleges & universities. DRA. D-Facto Filmstudio. PPR. Closed captioned.

In 1896, the Romanian-born Cambridge University professor Solomon Schechter came upon an extraordinary discovery: a vast storage room (*geniza*) containing sacred ancient religious texts, manuscripts, and letters within a rundown Cairo synagogue. Filmmaker Michelle Paymar's documentary details how Schechter located this amazing treasure trove, which included many original documents handwritten by the influential physician and philosopher Moses Maimonides, as well as more commonplace correspondence and lists that detailed the ebb and flow of life in medieval Egypt during a period when Jewish, Muslim, and Christian communities existed in peaceful cooperation. While many of the documents were intact, countless others existed in fragmentary states and required endless hours to piece together and decipher (written in Arabic, Greek, and other languages using Hebrew letters). The film also chronicles ongoing efforts to digitize the documents found in Cairo and make them available to scholars studying the history of Egypt's Jewish community. While the subject matter is scholarly, Paymar presents this material in a user-friendly manner that places old Cairo, Schechter's 19th-century academic world, and contemporary historical research into fascinating context. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

### The S Word ★★★1/2

(2017) 93 min. DVD: \$129; high schools & public libraries; \$349; colleges & universities. DRA. Good Docs (avail. from www.gooddocs.net). PPR.

The "S" word is "suicide" in filmmaker Lisa Klein's sensitive documentary. Klein, who lost both her father and brother to suicide, draws intimate confessions out of people who suffer from suicidal depression, as well as individuals who are involved in suicide outreach, prevention, and awareness. Her primary subject, Dese'Rae Stage, is a rock photographer and still-struggling suicide survivor, who embarks on a multimedia gallery project exhibiting portraits of others who have tried to kill themselves. Leah, who is now a psychologist, was the daughter of a schizophrenic mother who was institutionalized and dismissed as a hopeless case as a teenager. Friends and family remember Brandon Toh, a charismatic musician and—sadly ironic—a suicide counselor at a call center, who hanged himself. Military veteran suicides and the lack of suicide-prevention programs for African Americans are also addressed. And a surprise sympathetic cameo comes from conservative media figure Glenn Beck, who spotlights the openly lesbian Stage on his network. Presented in both its full-length version and a one-hour abridged edition, this powerful film about a tragically perennial mental health issue is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



**The Heretic** ★★1/2

(2018) 71 min. DVD: \$350. Bullfrog Films. PPR. SDH captioned. 1-948745-02-X.

Who is Rob Bell, and why do evangelical Christians denounce and condemn him? As viewers learn in filmmaker Andrew Morgan's documentary, the former pastor who co-founded (with his wife) a church in Grand Rapids, MI, gave up his job to become a full-time author and lecturer with a disruptive point-of-view about Jesus and Christianity. Tall, middle-aged, yet also naturally youthful and buoyant, Bell teaches that "somewhere along the way, the Jesus movement was hijacked." It takes a little while to realize that Bell isn't referring to the 1970s take on a peace, love, and hippie-dippy version of Jesus, but rather the cumulative interpretations and perversions of Christ's message over millennia. Christ's whole point in being here, Bell says, was to push the envelope on what it means to be human and explore big questions about our own purpose on Earth. What are we doing here? What is the best way to live? How do we forgive others who wrong us? Bell chastises churches for twisting Christ's real intentions—i.e., showing us how to live fully—into arbitrary rules while wielding power over ordinary people and spreading fear with talk of spending eternity in Hell. None of that matters, Bell preaches, nor does any of it teach us how to approach life with joy and curiosity. Bell's public appearances are protested by people who call him a liar and heretic, but (at least on camera) he lets everything roll off his back and de-stresses through surfing in Southern California. Although eventually one can detect a slight sense of strain behind his boyish grin, Bell is certainly making a mark in a challenging time. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

**More Than My Brain** ★★★

(2018) 54 min. DVD: \$19.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

Presenting a Christian perspective on the greater mysteries of the human brain, this documentary begins with a look at empirical knowledge of how the brain works, and then gradually zooms out to ask questions about how the brain's billions of neurons process identity, choice, personality, and our experiences of God. These areas of metaphysical questioning suggest the limitations of neuroscience—which doesn't concern itself with what a person is thinking—when it comes to what it can tell us about higher functioning. Is the soul a facet of the brain? Are transcendent encounters of God's presence real or are they chemical in nature? Inevitably, the subject of artificial intelligence comes up, with queries about whether computers will one day replicate the rationality of the human brain. All of these subjects are explored in an interdisciplinary fashion by scientists, theologians, and philosophers in this speculative documentary that raises interesting questions about the

nature of human reflection. Presented in both a full-length version and a 38-minute abridgement, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

**My Coffee with Jewish Friends** ★★1/2

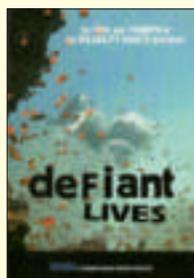
(2017) 97 min. DVD: \$375. DRA. Grasshopper Film. PPR.

Film editor turned director Manfred Kirchheimer acknowledges a debt up front to Louis Malle's *My Dinner with Andre* in his reductionist documentary built around a simple sit-down with Jewish colleagues from the arts (and other disciplines) along with some students to discuss their Judaism (although one interviewee is the son of a Jewish-Christian upbringing). Religion is an early topic, with Kirchheimer himself a onetime convert to Orthodoxy who became an atheist in response to God's silence over the Holocaust. "We don't do God in this house" is a quote from some regarding their upbringing, but prolific cinematographer Tom Hurwitz went from being an ardent non-believer to an observant Jew who regrets his previous cynicism. Others reject faith but embrace Israel as the wellspring of Jewish identity and self-protection. Some Zionists here come across as inhumane (an irony of which they seem well aware) in their blanket condemnation of Arabs and support of West Bank settlers. Musician Walter Hess says he does not want their conversation to devolve into "Orthodox bashing," but his wife Hannah prefers to consider the criticism fanaticism-bashing. In the end, Kirchheimer admits that no firm conclusions are reached, while many opinions seem intractable—which, he says, is very Jewish. Although somewhat scattershot, this snapshot portrait of contemporary opinions on issues related to Judaism should be considered a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

**Breaking Silence** ★★★

(2016) 40 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries; \$350; colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. PPR.

Filmmaker Nadya Ali's documentary gives voice to Muslim women who have experienced sexual assault, including Sarah (by a friend's uncle) when she was eight; Navila (by a cousin) when she was 12 or 13, and Zahra (by five young men) at the age of 15 (her family was visiting South Asia at the time). Once Sarah learned about sexual assault in school, she realized it was what had happened to her and she told a guidance counselor, who made her tell her mother, although neither woman offered much in the way of support. Both advised her to get over it and move on, but the burden didn't start to lift until she told a therapist. For similar reasons, Navila didn't tell her story to anyone for 16 years. "We don't talk about sex in a Muslim Desi household," she explains. Once she spoke up, her mother was sympathetic, but reasoned that something that doesn't kill you makes you stronger. When she was assaulted while pursuing her master's degree, she didn't hesitate to report the incident, but the authorities proved to be more judgmental than helpful. For Zahra, her multi-assault ordeal represented her first sexual experience, which made it even harder to talk about. Instead, Zahra had nightmares, questioned her faith, and lashed out at family members, but the situation improved after she shared her story with a sympathetic female high school teacher. Although Ali wisely keeps the focus on her subjects, she also incorporates the perspective of Imam Khalid Latif, executive director of the Islamic Center at New York University, who takes issue with men who cite

**Defiant Lives** ★★1/2

(2017) 85 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries; \$395; colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. PPR.

Filmmaker Sarah Barton's documentary chronicles the rise of the disabled rights movement, primarily focusing on endeavors in the U.S., U.K., and Australia. Among the demographic groups seeking social and political equality, people with disabilities seem to face some of the greatest struggles. For too many years, those with severe disabilities were warehoused in institutions where the quality of care often ranged from dismal to horrifying. Even worse, those who claimed to advocate on behalf of these individuals often presented their subjects as objects of pity who could not care for themselves and needed the able-bodied to provide for their needs. The most notable example was the annual Muscular Dystrophy Association telethons hosted by Jerry Lewis, although similar telethons for British and Australian TV rivaled Lewis's annual efforts both for tackiness and political incorrectness. People with disabilities also faced challenges in charting a course for their own lives, gaining employment, and enjoying access to public spaces. Barton offers a rich mix of interviews and archival footage from three different continents, noting the similarities faced in overcoming stereotypes and garnering respect in this universal fight that still continues. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

the Quran in defense of sexual assault. For all three women, finding acceptance from their families and mentoring other young women has helped with their healing process. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Femmessy)

**Bullied ★★★**

(2016) 114 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

Over two million kids are bullied every year, both in face-to-face encounters with tormentors and through the more anonymous cruelty of social media. More than 4,000 commit suicide every year, worn down by the abuse coming from all directions, including humiliation, death threats, and the sheer persistence of hate unchecked by conscience or empathy. The multi-part *Bullied* offers no magic bullet to solve this global social problem, but it does talk about what responsible adults can do. Among the interviewees is a well-spoken teen boy who was harassed by anti-gay bullies and got little relief; several high school principals, counselors, and other educators trying to create an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding; and a few parents. Along the way, *Bullied* spotlights meaningful efforts by schools to bring LGBTQ students and others together in demonstrative, warm support of one another, which is heartening to see after so much testimony about unimaginable pain. Recommended. Aud: J, H, P. (T. Keogh)

**Keep Talking ★★★**

(2018) 79 min. DVD: \$24.95 (\$295 w/PPR). Vision Maker Media. Closed captioned.

The historical mistreatment of indigenous peoples is heartbreaking, particularly in the way that native cultures are drummed out through suppression and punishment. Filmmaker Karen Lynn Weinberg's documentary explores the tragic consequences of past U.S. policies toward a specific group of indigenous people in Alaska, but also holds out signs of hope. The film focuses on the efforts of four Native women from Alaska who are desperately trying to keep alive an old, vanishing language called Alutiiq. When they begin their mission to save Alutiiq, only 40 community elders remain who still speak it fluently—a testament to the success of policies to eradicate it (one Native man says that parents were given the choice of speaking only English at home or shipping off their kids to boarding schools, where children were hit for speaking Alutiiq). The women set out to teach a new generation the importance of saving their culture, although not in a typical classroom setting: linking Alutiiq with other aspects of cultural identity, these teachers employ dance, music, and stories. In time, many of the kids come to embrace Alutiiq strongly, identifying with this once lost but now resurrected heritage. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

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### Little Stones ★★★

(2017) 87 min. In English, Portuguese, Bengali, French, Swahili, Pulaar, Wolof & German. DVD: \$50 (\$125 w/PPR): public libraries; \$295 w/PPR: colleges & universities. DRA. *Collective Eye Films*. Closed captioned.

Sophia Kruz takes the title of her documentary from a saying by suffragist Alice Paul about the women's movement being like the stones that make up a mosaic. Fatou Diatta, aka Sister Fa, uses hip-hop to shed light on the cultural practice of female genital mutilation. On a radio show, she explains that she moved from Dakar to Berlin to be with her Austrian husband, but her travel schedule contributes to their separation during the film. Panmela Castro, a graffiti artist in Rio de Janeiro, describes Brazilian street culture as a macho scene, but she has earned the respect of her male compatriots, bringing other women along with her. Panmela's independence stands in stark contrast to a past dominated by domestic abuse, but since Brazil had not yet enacted domestic violence legislation, her ex-husband never faced any legal ramifications. Sohini Chakraborty, a dance movement therapist in Kolkata, believes that dance can prove helpful to victims of sexual abuse. Over the past 10 years, she has trained five students to become instructors themselves. Anna Taylor, who founded the clothing company Judith & James, works exclusively with seamstresses in Nairobi. Although she hails from Little Rock, AR, she spent much of her youth in Kenya, inspiring her to create job opportunities for women in the area. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, executive director of United Nations Women, believes that art is an empowering mechanism, because it is universal. While the profiled women have had to make personal sacrifices during their careers, they have all found ways to help other women through their art. An inspiring documentary, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

### Paying the Price for Peace ★★1/2

(2016) 96 min. In English & Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$19.95. *Cinema Libre Studio* (avail. from most distributors).

Filmmaker Bo Boudart's documentary focuses on the activism of S. Brian Willson, a Vietnam War veteran who vowed to dedicate his post-military life to anti-war activism. Willson gained public prominence in the mid-1980s while protesting the Reagan administration's backing of the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. He was part of a 40-day hunger strike by World War II and Vietnam veterans against the government's efforts in Central America, generating attention that ultimately helped persuade Congress to cut off funding to the Contras. In 1987, Willson was part of a group of protestors who tried to block a rail shipment of arms to the Contras from the Concord Naval Weapons Station outside of San Diego—a train that protestors tried to

stop but it did not halt and Willson was run over, losing both of his legs. After being fitted with prosthetic limbs, Willson continued to be a prominent presence in anti-war protests around the country. While Willson is a charismatic and often intense personality, the film strays to incorporate interviews with prominent figures who have been featured in other activism-focused documentaries, including Daniel Ellsberg, Martin Sheen, Alice Walker, Phil Donahue, and Cindy Sheehan. While their input is articulate, they also keep Willson offscreen for too long. Extras include a featurette following Willson on a 2014 trip to Nicaragua. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

### Sauti (Voice) ★★★

(2017) 73 min. DVD: \$35: public libraries; \$250: community colleges; \$325: universities. *NeeNee Productions*. PPR.

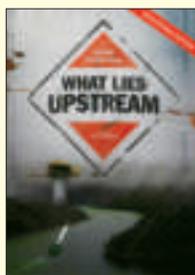
In *Sauti*—which means “voice” in Swahili—Gayle Nosal profiles five young women who came to Uganda's Kyangwali Refugee Camp as children. Now approaching adulthood, they are working to make their dreams for a better life a reality. The quintet—Favourite, Peninah, Beatrice, Betty, and Napona—come from various troubled countries (Rwanda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo) and differing circumstances (some are orphans, while others arrived with relatives they must help care for). All, however, face the challenge of completing their secondary education in the camp and passing the required examination that will allow them to continue their studies. Made between 2013 and 2016, the documentary employs on-the-fly footage and substantial interview segments, along with the girls'

drawings and written thoughts, to capture their triumphs and disappointments as they struggle to overcome illness, seek resettlement in other countries (including the United States and Australia) with opportunities to study, and strive to make the rest of the world aware of the plight of refugees. The joint portrait affectingly conveys the resilience that these young women have shown under terrible hardships, while also serving as a testament to the camp volunteers who work to make a positive difference in the lives of those fleeing war and poverty. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### Shadow Nation ★★★

(2017) 67 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). *Dreamscape Media*. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker-guitarist George Lynch's *Shadow Nation* combines a tour film with a documentary about Lynch's interest in Native American history. Lynch (Dokken, Lynch Mob), seen with ever-present cigarette at hand, serves as onscreen host. During a tour though the West, he and band mates from his 2015 CD *Shadow Train*—Vinnie Nicastro, Gabe Rosales, Gregg Analla, and Donnie Dickman—speak to people they meet along the way (when Vinnie has to drop out, Jimmy D'Anda steps in). Lynch also speaks with fellow musicians, including Serj Tankian of System of a Down, and historians such as Noam Chomsky. The journey begins in the farming community of Pagueate, NM, where Ritchie Anderson, a Navajo, talks about the pride he takes in four years of sobriety. In Borrego Pass, Navajo activist Clayton Benally notes the neighbors and livestock afflicted by birth defects and cancer due to uranium poisoning from the nearby mines. Although



### What Lies Upstream ★★★1/2

(2017) 85 min. DVD: \$95: high schools & public libraries; \$350 w/PPR: colleges & universities. DRA. *Ro\*co Films Educational*. Closed captioned.

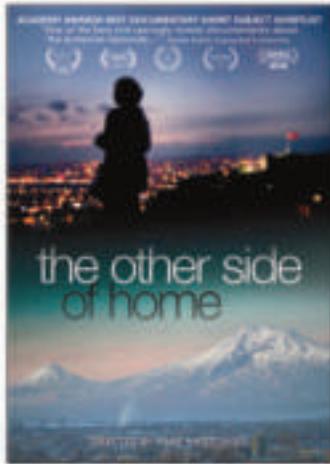
Aired on PBS's *Independent Lens* series, this extremely troubling docu-exposé from filmmaker/onscreen investigator Cullen Hoback extrapolates from one pollution scandal to suggest an enormous health risk in the American water supply. In 2014, inhabitants of the Elk River watershed in rural West Virginia found their water tainted by a foul chemical leaking from a ruptured holding tank. After initial quick EPA responses and alarming verdicts from doctors, the regulation that would have supposedly remedied such disasters was stymied by powerful corporate lobbyists and the coal-mining state's conservative mindset that put jobs/big business ahead of any other considerations. What is alarming, according to Hoback, is that West Virginia on the whole actually has a better clean-water record than many other regions of the U.S. Bad science, redacted reports, EPA cover-ups, and bought-off legislators are the rule not the exception—including during the Obama administration—and the subsequent lead-poisoning disaster in Flint, MI, may be just a portent of worse to come. The foregone conclusion here is the appointment of (now disgraced and former) EPA chief Scott Pruitt within the administration of Donald Trump, whose open hostility to the EPA—and by extension, the environment—is mirrored by many state and local conservatives. All of the ingredients are in place for a ticking toxic time bomb of major consequences. Presented in both its full-length version and a 60-minute abridgement, this documentary serving up a powerful health warning is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



# NEW RELEASES

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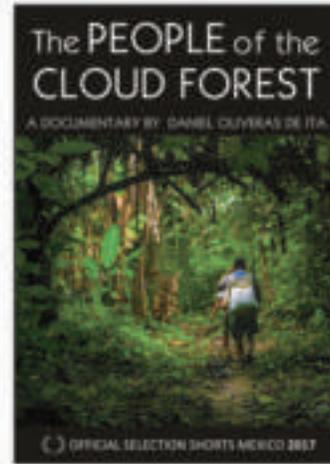


**Selected Shortlist - Academy Awards Best Documentary Short Subject**

The story of a Turkish woman who struggles to come to terms with her conflicted identity when she finds out that her great grandmother was a survivor of the Armenian Genocide.

40 mins; DVD \$29.95; PPR \$250; UPC: 6-82086-16015-3

### Latin America, Environment, Indigenous Studies

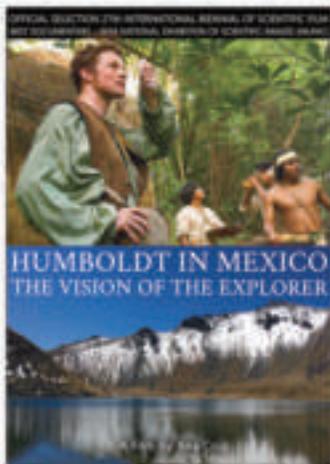


**Official Selection 2017 Mexico Shorts**

An intimate look at the indigenous Chinantec people of Mexico and their relationship with the environment.

19 mins; DVD \$19.95; PPR \$150; UPC: 6-82086-16016-0

### Latin America, Science, History



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Alexander von Humboldt completely changed our understanding of nature. This documentary reveals the fantastic life of this explorer, scientist and naturalist.

82 mins; DVD \$29.95; PPR \$250; UPC: 6-82086-16017-7

### Latin America, Indigenous Studies, Human Rights

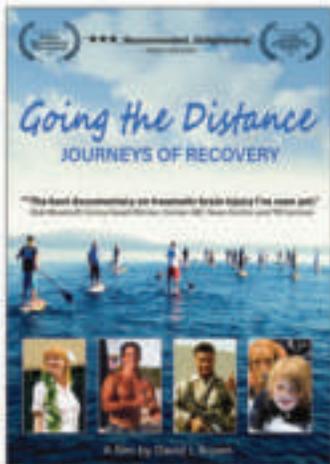


"...a compelling you-are-there look and feel, this powerful documentary is recommended."  
- Video Librarian

When organized crime appeared in the Mexican town of Ostula, the entire community decided to combat the drug cartel.

72 mins; DVD \$29.95; PPR \$250; UPC: 6-82086-16014-6

### Health, Rehabilitation, Disability Studies

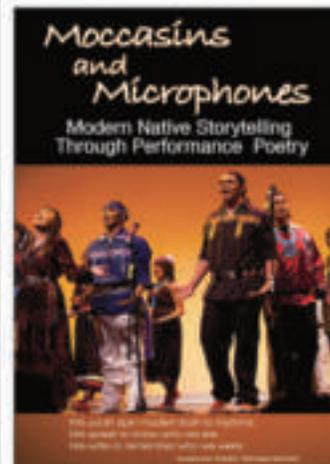


**"The best documentary on traumatic brain injury I've seen yet"** – Bob Woodruff, Former ABC News Anchor and TBI Survivor

When organized crime appeared in the Mexican town of Ostula, the entire community decided to combat the drug cartel.

60 mins; DVD \$29.95; PPR \$250; UPC: 6-82086-16013-9

### Native American, Education, Arts



**"...strongly recommended for school libraries; its inspirational tone will prove its worth..."**  
– Library Journal

Travel with the Santa Fee Indian School Spoken Word Team as they present a theater production of their finest poems woven with traditional and contemporary song and dance.

43 mins; DVD \$29.95; PPR \$150; UPC: 6-82086-16012-2

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Lynch acknowledges oppositional political beliefs, he also meets with rocker Ted Nugent, who expressed sympathy for Native Americans in the 1987 song "Great White Buffalo." Since then, Nugent has transformed into a blowhard who believes that laziness rather than structural inequities explains the inability of some Americans to get ahead in life. Lynch has a more productive conversation with Santee Sioux poet and singer John Trudell, who speaks about the U.S. government's history of broken treaties, which is followed by a visit to Alcatraz Island where Native Americans made a stand for better living conditions in 1969. While it sometimes feels like two tangentially related projects combined into one, Lynch's desire to interest rock fans in Native American history is worthy. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

### Whipping Zombie ★★★

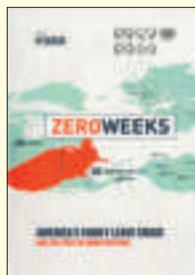
(2017) 30 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries; \$250; colleges & universities, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$300. The Cinema Guild. DRA. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 0-7815-1573-4.

Cinematography takes precedence over narrative in Italian visual artist Yuri Ancarani's impressionistic ethnographic documentary revolving around a Haitian ritual that is called "kale zombi" or whipping zombie. After an unidentified narrator sets the scene, Ancarani lets scenes play out devoid of subtitles or conventional score: goats explore a colorful cemetery, crustaceans amble along a littered beach, a woman pours water over a boy's head, shirtless men hammer patterns into metal plates, and flames rise up out of an oil can (the flattened oil cans provide material for exquisite metal pieces). Ancarani then turns to dancers, none of whom act or dress like the zombies of popular entertainment, and whose moves vary from person to person while drumming and the occasional chant accompany every routine. In one instance, a man whips another, mostly around the arms and the posterior; the former looks like a vicious combatant attacking a hapless victim, since the latter makes no attempt to protect himself. In another instance, two participants whip each other while jumping up and down; this pair appear to be more equally matched, although male aggression pervades every configuration. Gradually, the drumming, whipping, and hammering combine to create a symphony of percussion as Ancarani cuts from scene to scene. At times, he slows things down in order to focus on the faces of specific participants and audience members, and while it isn't obvious at first, it eventually becomes clear that the dancers stand in for masters and slaves who are collectively reliving and exorcising the trauma of the island's slave trade past. A unique, troubling film, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

### Who Benefits from the Camps? The Refugee Crisis ★★★1/2

(2017) 52 min. DVD: \$225. DRA. Film Ideas. PPR.

Filmmakers Nicolas Autheman and Del-



### Zero Weeks ★★★

(2017) 86 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries; \$295; colleges & universities. DRA. The Video Project. PPR. Closed captioned.

The United States is the only so-called developed country that does not offer paid family leave. President Clinton signed into effect an unpaid Family and Medical Leave Act allowing individuals 12 weeks of unpaid leave, but many cannot afford to go without pay for that long, and businesses with under 50 employees are not required to obey this law. Filmmaker Ky Dickens's documentary *Zero Weeks* takes a candid look at the struggles that individuals face when having a sick relative to attend to, a new baby to care for, or if they get sick themselves. In Maryland a young mother is forced to quit her daycare job—with little hope of returning—to care for her new baby. In Georgia a couple experience the premature loss of twins; sadly, the father can only take six days to care for his grief-stricken wife. In Washington, D.C., a mother must deal with the effects of breast cancer radiation while also caring for her young daughter. Unable to afford to go on disability—which pays less than her job—the mother returns to work after each treatment with the strain evident on her face. Doctors admit that what is best for the patient often runs up against current economic realities. Other policy experts, along with activist Ellen Bravo, argue that paid family leave is good for business, as companies are able to retain more people for the long run. A few states now offer paid family leave (including Washington, D.C., and New York) and it's clear from the film that there is widespread support among the populace. A thought-provoking documentary about a pressing social issue, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Root)

phine Prunault's documentary—originally broadcast on French TV as *Refugees: A Market Under Influence*—serves up a bizarre report on the world's refugee camps, arguing that they partially serve as profit centers for enterprising international companies. The film focuses on efforts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to bring modern technology to the camps, even hosting a trade show in which corporations display everything from biometric software to an IKEA-produced refugee residence. A lengthy segment centers on a Cayman Islands-registered Jordanian company that created an eye-recognition program used by Syrian refugees who shop in a fully-stocked supermarket inside a refugee camp in Jordan. While the stakeholders involved insist their efforts are purely humanitarian and that any profit margin is extraordinarily miniscule, their activities can give the impression that there is a greater push on maintaining the camps—where more than 12 million people live—rather than solving world crises and working to bring the refugees back to safety and security in their homelands. An interesting documentary about the intersection of global capitalism and the socioeconomic aspects of the world's refugee crises, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

## TEEN ISSUES

### Life Beyond Getting High: Rehab ★★★

(2017) 30 min. DVD: \$64.95. DRA. TMW Media Group. PPR. Closed captioned.

Substance dependence and treatment are

the focus of this new addition to the *Teens in Treatment* series (see review of *The Warning Signs of Addiction* in VL-9/18). Looking at the consequences of drug use—including criminal charges and physical effects ("the sick part of my brain tells me that I can control something when I can't"), *Life Beyond Getting High* examines the causes of drug or alcohol addiction (such as anxiety or panic attacks and family or peer group behaviors), various types of treatment, and multi-systematic therapies that are available. Also touched on are healthy coping skills as well as acknowledging that relapse can still be part of the eventual path to success. Several addicts and professionals (none of whom are named) offer comments on rising above this "cycle of pain." A cautionary program that could inspire someone to get needed help, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

## LAW & CRIME

### Circle Up ★★★1/2

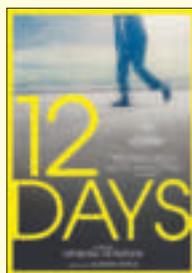
(2017) 69 min. DVD: \$150; high schools & public libraries; \$325; colleges & universities. New Day Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Julie Mallozzi's documentary centers on Janet Connors, a Dorchester, MA, mother whose young adult son Joel was murdered. Four men were arrested and tried; three were convicted and sentenced to 10 years in prison, while the fourth—who may have been the one responsible for physically taking Joel's life—went free when the jury found him not guilty based on reasonable doubt. Connors dealt with her grief and anger through reaching out to others who lost loved

## 12 Days ★★★1/2

(2017) 3 discs. 87 min. In French w/English subtitles. DVD: \$36.98. Icarus Films Home Video.

A 2013 French law mandates that anyone involuntarily committed for mental health treatment in the country must have a hearing before a judge after 12 days to determine whether their confinement should be extended. Filmmaker Raymond Depardon's documentary, shot at the Le Vinatier psychiatric hospital near Lyon, offers a glimpse of the process in a series of sessions before several of the so-called "judges of liberties and detention," who converse with patients and study their psychiatric reports before making decisions (appeals of which are always permitted). The camera also prowls the institution's hallways and grounds, occasionally providing glimpses of residents walking about (or capturing the sounds of screaming behind closed doors). The proceedings are fascinating, as the judges—who repeatedly point out they are not physicians—prod patients to discuss why they, for example, attacked strangers on the street or attempted suicide. Almost invariably the patients ask to be released, claiming either that their motives have been misunderstood, or their personal crises are over, or they would benefit more from outpatient services elsewhere. In virtually every case, however, the decision goes against them; in one case, a judge observes, a man loudly objected to being persecuted and asked to return to live with his father, who he later killed. *12 Days* offers a poignant portrayal of psychologically damaged people and one society's efforts to provide humane treatment. Also included here are two more feature-length documentaries by Depardon: *Journal de France* (2012) and *France (Les Habitants)* (2015). Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



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ones in violent deaths. *Circle Up* follows her as she participates in counseling groups and delivers lectures in high schools on coping with the murder of a family member. Connors attempted to contact and form a connection with one of the three men sent to prison for Joel's death, but their bond of communication seems uneasy, and the ex-convict (who does not allow himself to be shown on camera) appears uncomfortable with Connors's outreach. Connors's desire to help others who have similarly suffered is cathartic and altruistic, and this film does a fine job of detailing her crusade to bring understanding and hope to those facing the cruelest imaginable loss. Extras include a short film about Connors. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

sensitive dependent ecosystems. Filmmaker Britton Caillouette's *Blue Heart* calls attention to these dire plans for making a lot of money by plundering and ruining another natural resource. The location footage is beautiful as cameras follow the path of the Vjosa and its multiple tributaries. The grandeur of this natural treasure is awe-inspiring and the man-made problems evoke outrage. A stirring environmental documentary on the fight to save the Vjosa, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

## Cielo ★★★

(2018) 78 min. In English, Spanish & French w/English subtitles. DVD: \$349. DRA. Juno Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

The wonders of the heavens are breathtakingly captured in Alison McAlpine's visually stunning documentary filmed at and around the observatories in the Atacama Desert of Northern Chile, where the clearness of the air and absence of artificial light make for an unimpeded view of the sky. *Cielo* uses time-lapse photography, along with some special effects, to convey the majesty of the star-filled night and shimmering magnificence of the sun and the moon during the day. McAlpine juxtaposes these visuals with her own voiceover ruminations as well as excerpts from interviews of people living in the area. The astronomers' descriptions of their work are interesting, but the locals are even more fascinating. Among those musing on the mysteries of the skies are an elderly couple who debate the shape of the earth and the laws of gravity, a man who associates one particular star with the spirit of his deceased daughter, and various miners, ranchers, and

## NATURE, MATH & SCIENCE

### Blue Heart ★★★

(2018) 43 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$250 w/PPR from [edu.passionriver.com](http://edu.passionriver.com)). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

The last wild river in Europe, the Vjosa begins in the Pindus mountains of Greece, flows into Albania, and makes its way through the Balkan mountains before spilling into the Adriatic. From the river's broad basin, tributaries branch off in multiple directions, helping to sustain life. Energy companies and global banks want to build nearly 3,000 dams across the river network—adding to the 1,200 that either exist now or are being constructed—and environmental activists argue that all those dams will dry out the river regions, destroying wildlife and habitats, as well as

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algae-collectors. McAlpine resists adding any larger social or political context (which some will consider a strength and others a weakness), but her crystalline views of the sky are absolutely awe-inspiring. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### Decoding the Weather Machine ★★★

(2018) 120 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0479-7.

Each year in the recent past has found Earth wracked by more frequent, severe, and destructive storms, hurricanes, and wildfires. Filmmaker Doug Hamilton's PBS-aired NOVA documentary investigates changes in the world's "climate machine." Experts draw cores from Antarctica's glaciers, revealing escalating carbon dioxide levels in the compressed ice sheets, which date back thousands of years, while marine biologists study seashells and ancient mud found on deep ocean floors. The goal is to take a snapshot of today's climate versus the past, and the not-surprising conclusion is that fossil fuel burning is affecting the world's temperatures and heat distribution. However, the real alarm is just how fast the Earth's climate is changing. Coral reefs are dying, sea levels are rising, and low-lying areas like Norfolk, VA, and the Marshall Islands are threatened. In the near future, Miami could find itself underwater, creating massive population disruption and national security threats. As the film explains, current options are to suffer, adapt, or mitigate. Proposed alleviating ideas include reducing carbon dioxide emissions, "carbon capture" and recycling, increased planting of trees, and "no till" field farming. Sadly, we are gripped by an astonishing inertia on the political level. As scientists, including the conservative and former climate change skeptic meteorologist Paul Douglas notes, delays will only increase costs and make solutions more difficult. Although the world might well survive, life on Earth would radically change. Issuing a timely environmental warning, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

### Erdos 100 Plus ★★1/2

(2018) 180 min. DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95; individuals; DVD: \$129.95, Blu-ray: \$134.95 w/PPR; institutions. Zala Films. ISBN: 978-0-9855347-3-8 (dvd).

Paul Erdos (1913-1996), a recognized pioneer in probabilistic number theory and discrete mathematics, was also known for his peripatetic lifestyle. His nearly constant travels—with all of his belongings packed in a single suitcase—included visits to 500-plus colleagues, and he was the most prolific mathematician of his time, with more than 1,500 publications to his credit. Documentarian George Paul Csicsery, who made an excellent film about Erdos called *N is a Number* (VL-11/04), also helmed *Erdo 100* (2013)—a half-hour portrait celebrating the centenary of Erdos's birth—which includes

reminiscences and testimonials from peers. In this anthology, *Erdo 100* is accompanied by four substantial interviews that Csicsery conducted with Erdos between 1988-91, as well as four 2018 featurettes on particular elements of Erdos's work ("On Erdos-Bacon Numbers," "The Rise of Combinatorics," "Large Gaps Between Primes," and "A Brief History of the Probabilistic Method"). The final film in this collection, *Something New Every Day* (2015), centers on Ronald Graham, Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at the University of California San Diego—a major force in discrete mathematics and a friend and admirer of Erdos. Taken together, Csicsery's films offer a profile of a man not only devoted to his discipline but also one who encouraged younger members to tackle math's most difficult problems. But unlike *N is a Number*, this will be of interest primarily to specialists rather than a general audience. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### Natural Born Rebels ★★★1/2

(2018) 160 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0473-5.

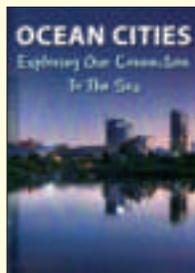
One constant in the animal kingdom is the search for food, while a close second is the goal of increasing the odds of species survival by finding the right mate. To achieve these ends, animals use problem-solving, shared information, brute force, and even cannibalism. Filmmakers Hannah Gibson and Joanne Ashman's three-part PBS-aired *Nature* documentary explains the "hunger wars," which often lead to a life of stealth and crime. Macaque monkeys thrive in urban environments by brazenly stealing from

vendor carts or swiping a carelessly placed human lunch. On Christmas Island, coconut crabs pilfer anything resembling food, even boosting a hat or pistol. Mountain pikas, a small cousin of the rabbit, feather their nests with hay or grass stolen from a neighbor's nesting holes. Pygmy falcons employ a "protection racket," discouraging other predators who would attack other bird's nests, while casually claiming a few chicks for themselves. Dexterity and a keen sense of smell increase the chance of survival, although the fur and feces of the slow-moving three-toed sloth offer a smelly but tempting haven for breeding moths. Peacocks use a strategy of "fans, feathers, and flamboyance," while the female praying mantis devours the male after mating. Monkeys of Gibraltar engage in an elaborate baby-stealing plot as an improbable way of reducing conflict, but hyena pups are known to kill siblings and mothers allow starvation to promote survival of the fittest. Underscoring the fact that the natural world is an unforgiving place, this documentary features fascinating footage, informative commentary, and—when appropriate—welcome humor. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

### Searching for the Gold Spot: The Wild After Wildfire ★★★

(2017) 30 min. DVD: \$39; public libraries; \$79; high schools; \$149; colleges & universities. DRA. Green Planet Films. PPR. SDH captioned.

While ever-enlarging wildfires have become a fact of life in modern America, plenty of evidence suggests that our policies toward forest maintenance and fires is shortsighted. Filmmaker Maya Rani Khosla's documenta-



### Ocean Cities ★★★1/2

(2018) 56 min. DVD: \$39; public libraries; \$89; high schools; \$195; colleges & universities. DRA. Green Planet Films. PPR. SDH captioned.

Co-directed by Chuck Davis and University of Virginia professor Tim Beatley, *Ocean Cities* follows the latter as he visits cities situated on the ocean shore in both America and abroad. Part one looks at the community connection to the sea by focusing on Baltimore's Inner Harbor, where several initiatives are drawing urbanites to the waterfront for kayaking, clean-up, and the promotion of a healthy harbor. Using hydro power from the river's current along with solar energy, "Mr. Trash Wheel" sits in the river and pulls trash up on its moving belts. And in Miami, students from Title I schools take day trips to explore ocean life in Biscayne Bay. In part two, Beatley examines sustainable seafood at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, where non-profit groups are convincing restaurant owners and individuals to source food that is not harmful to the ocean environment. Part three looks at rising sea levels and efforts to plan for a future that could witness an elevation of over four feet this century. In Miami, new pumps, larger storm drains, and elevated streets have been constructed, while in nearby Coral Gables the mayor is identifying what is critical for the city to save. Part four looks at new ways of constructing water drainage systems and buildings. In Rotterdam, for example, multiple-use design involves amphitheater structures, underground parking, and other concrete pool-like areas that will allow for water collection when necessary. And in Amsterdam, floating houses have been built using concrete hulls filled with water. A timely look at the challenges facing coastal cities in an era of climate change, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Root)

ry takes viewers on a tour of forest land in the Sierra Nevada, the Cascades, and other mountain ranges, as experts illustrate how fire is an essential part of nature's self-management. When a fire burns vegetation, the door opens to a section of forest reinventing itself. Beetles and woodpeckers carve out new homes in charred trees and logs, beginning a new cycle of biodiversity. And the same is true for new growth in trees, brush, and plants, as well as animals that thrive in a nascent, up-and-coming forest. But instead of letting nature take its course, current policies allow loggers to clearcut trees, both before and after wildfires, leaving huge unproductive holes in the forest—an unsuitable habitat for wildlife that would have survived and even flourished in a torched environment. At the same time, the encroachment of homes onto wildlands that require regeneration is a major contributing factor to loss. A timely documentary, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

## HEALTH & FITNESS

### **Cholesterol: The Great Bluff** ★★1/2

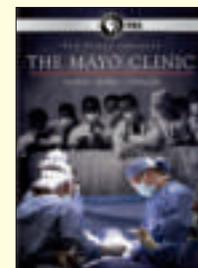
(2016) 82 min. In French & English w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.98 (\$390 w/PPR from [www.icarusfilms.com](http://www.icarusfilms.com)). Icarus Films Home Video (available from most distributors). Closed captioned.

As the title indicates, Anne Georget's documentary challenges the assumption common in medical circles that high levels of LDL cholesterol are the major factor in cardiovascular disease, which she believes has led doctors to overprescribe statins—a practice that drug companies happily encourage in order to keep profits high. She traces the origin of current theory to the prevalence of heart disease in the 1950s, focusing in particular on the heart attack that President Eisenhower suffered in 1955, which fostered a change in diet, especially a reduction in the consumption of fatty foods, to reduce risk. This led to the development and heavy promotion of low-fat food alternatives, and eventually the wide use of statins as a preventative medicine. Georget marshals an array of experts—many French, some American—who cite studies undermining the notion that high “bad” cholesterol is the main factor behind cardiovascular disease. Included as an extra, Georget's companion film *Branding Illness* expands on *The Great Bluff* by arguing that pharmaceutical companies are not really in the business of making medicines to treat actual illnesses, but instead use advertising to publicize the widespread existence of nebulous “conditions” in order to encourage people to seek out relief—which their products promise to provide. For American audiences the ideas that Georget presents, which run counter to medical orthodoxy, will be provocative, but her experts—who include doctors and

### **The Mayo Clinic: Faith-Hope-Science** ★★1/2

(2018) 115 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR), Blu-ray: \$29.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0515-2 (dvd), 978-1-5317-0788-0 (blu-ray).

Ken Burns combines a history lesson with contemporary testimonials in this PBS-aired documentary about the world-famous medical center in Rochester, MN, which traces its roots back to humble beginnings in 1883 when a tornado struck the area. Dr. William Worrall Mayo led the relief effort along with his doctor sons Will and Charlie, enlisting Sister Mary Alfred Moes, Mother Superior of the local Franciscan community, to open rooms in her convent to patients. Moes then proposed that they join forces to found a hospital, which a vision told her would become renowned throughout the world. Using a wide range of archival materials—including footage of a visit by President Franklin Roosevelt—Burns and co-directors Erik Ewers and Christopher Loren Ewers follow the history of the facility over the generations, with stars like Tom Hanks voicing the words of principal players while Peter Coyote serves as general narrator. Emphasis is placed on the technological advances that the Mayo Clinic has spearheaded over the decades, as well as the intensely collaborative ethos of its physicians, who work on salary. Interspersed with the historical narrative is praise from patients. Some are famous—the Dalai Lama, Tom Brokaw, the late John McCain—while others have unusual stories, including a father who brought his toddler daughter in for treatment of a brain tumor with proton-beam therapy, and a violinist whose hand tremor is resolved through experimental brain stimulation that he controls with a phone-sized device (the film also emphasizes that miraculous cures are, of course, not always achieved). Extras include deleted scenes and a behind-the-scenes music video. Offering a skillful tribute to a remarkable institution, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)



researchers as well as journalists and academics—deserve a hearing. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### **Fentanyl: The Deadliest Opioid** ★★★

(2018) 18 min. DVD: \$149.95 (study guide included). Human Relations Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62706-107-0.

Another entry in Human Relations Media's opioid-related programs (see *The Opioids Epidemic: How I Became a Heroin Addict* in VL-1/17 and *Opioids: Addiction, Overdose and Death* in VL-1/18), this latest title looks at the synthetic painkiller fentanyl. Originally designed as an anesthetic for cancer patients and end-of-life care, fentanyl is many times more dangerous than heroin or morphine (both of which can be derived naturally from opium) and is different from semi-synthetic opioids such as Percocet and Oxycodone in that inexperienced street dealers now cut their regular drugs with fentanyl for profit (since it's cheaper). Comments from a knowledgeable host, relevant diagrams, and clips from news and law enforcement footage are combined with interviews of affected family members. Also covered is an even more hazardous companion drug called carfentanil (which is used on elephants). The bottom line: fentanyl kills and can be added to common street drugs without the end user's knowledge. Recommended. Aud: J, H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### **The Heart of Nuba** ★★★

(2018) 85 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$95: public libraries; \$395: colleges & universities. DRA. Tugg. PPR.

The Darfur catastrophe in Sudan was

brought to the world's attention in a humanitarian information campaign that featured many celebrities. But another in the nearby Nuba Mountains of the country's South Kordofan province is less well-known. Filmmaker Kenneth A. Carlson's documentary puts the spotlight on the war that Omar al-Bashir's government is waging (largely by air) on tribes in the region through a portrait of Tom Catena, an American at the Mother of Mercy Hospital who is the sole doctor providing medical treatment to the area population (estimated at nearly one million). Carlson provides a sketch of Catena's life—including his childhood in upstate New York and outstanding football career at Brown University—together with observations from parents and siblings as he follows Catena home for a rare visit. Most of the film, however, is shot in Sudan with Catena, who indefatigably attends to patients suffering from illness and injury, talks about his commitment to service, admits his personal loneliness, and takes shelter in foxholes along with others who cluster around the facility when government planes bomb the countryside. Catena's seemingly endless energy is inspiring, as is his upbeat attitude, which darkens only when he bemoans the world's indifference to brutality being inflicted on the innocent residents of the region by a criminal regime, simply because of area mineral riches. The encomia heaped upon Catena by colleagues and supporters in interview excerpts here seem to be quite richly deserved. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### Qi Gong for Headaches ★★★1/2

(2018) 36 min. DVD: \$29.95. YMAA Publication Center.

No matter the reason—from body tension to overindulging in drink or screen time—this latest program in instructor Lee Holden's *Qi Gong* series looks to provide a natural remedy for headaches. A gorgeous mountain backdrop sets the scene for Holden's assured moves and overlaid narration in this program that includes both full and short versions of routines that are suggested not only for urgent headaches but also as a prevention tool. From breathing techniques to soothe the nervous system, to massaging acupressure points at the base of the skull, jaw, and temples, *Qi Gong for Headaches* includes relaxing moves such as "spreading the feathers" and "releasing the stones." Holden's genuine appreciation for his art is near palpable (and, after watching, I think my head already feels better). Highly recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### Qi Gong for High Blood Pressure ★★★

(2018) 44 min. DVD: \$29.95. YMAA Publication Center.

Featuring full, extended, and short routines, this recent addition to instructor Lee Holden's extensive *Qi Gong* series features the host standing in a riverbed in the Redwood Forest while demonstrating moves designed to alleviate high blood pressure. After suggesting that viewers check their blood pressure before and after the program, Holden presents moves that include "water waves," "the boa" ("like a snake shedding its skin"), "swimming dragon" (which kind of looks like a Beyoncé move), "repulse the monkey," and "pulling the sky down in six directions." Focusing on the positive side effects of released stress—including pain reduction, better sleep, and improved mood—this gentle workout is recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

### Tai Chi Fusion: Iron ★★★1/2

(2018) 60 min. DVD: \$29.95. YMAA Publication Center. ISBN: 978-1-59439-582-6.

Instructor David-Dorian Ross combines tai chi movements with resistance training in *Tai Chi Fusion: Iron*. Although tai chi offers a comprehensive exercise program, Ross feels that weight training is especially important for muscle retention as people age. Here, Ross encourages viewers to be mindful while alternating between tai chi movements and work with weighted wooden stix (sticks), which are 3-to-4 pounds and contain a core of steel. As in other programs, Ross emphasizes going slow, being attentive to breathing, and letting yourself enjoy the slow flowing movements. Rather than memorizing the forms, Ross suggests that viewers should simply follow his moves with proper breathing. *Iron* features a short warm-up, two separate workouts (with moves including "the single whip," "playing the peapod," "chasing the snake," "taming

the wild mane," and "lifting the moon"), and a cool-down. During the workouts, Ross describes each form as he demonstrates and is accompanied by C.J. McPhee, who also performs the movements. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Root)

### Your Health: A Sacred Matter ★★★

(2017) 116 min. DVD: \$29.95: individuals; \$99.95: institutions. Auteur Productions. PPR.

The relationship between religious faith and medical treatment is explored in Gerald Krell's documentary, which begins and concludes with ceremonies: the White Coat Ceremony at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, marking the official entry of medical students into training, and the graduation celebration at the George Washington University School of Medicine, in which the Hippocratic Oath is recited. In between, *Your Health* is divided into two parts, the first concentrating on the need for sensitivity on the part of physicians dealing with patients of different (or no) faith systems, while also discussing studies suggesting that religious belief can be a positive factor in encouraging hope in time of illness. The section concludes with the question of whether clergy should take a greater role in the religious component of treatment, following a pediatric chaplain in her rounds to provide insight. The second part begins with a historical sketch of the development of hospital facilities in America—many started by religious denominations—and discusses the importance of culturally sensitive care, using as examples a Navajo medical practitioner and the expectations of Muslim patients. It then turns to the role of caregivers, spotlighting an innovative program in parish-nursing while also looking at the particular demands of hospice care and rehabilitative practice. While the wide range of subjects makes for some awkward tran-

sitions, overall *Your Health: A Sacred Matter* offers a broad and quite well-balanced survey on a significant subject. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

## FOOD & SPIRITS

### The Oyster Farmers ★★★

(2017) 70 min. DVD: \$39: public libraries; \$89: high schools; \$195: colleges & universities. DR. Green Planet Films. PPR. SDH captioned.

Filmmaker Corinne C. Ruff's encouraging documentary shows what can happen when a dying industry gets smart about cultivating as well as harvesting nature's products. *The Oyster Farmers* looks at the resurgence of Eastern oysters off the Northeastern seaboard of the United States, where over-exploitation (beginning in the 19th century), raw sewage, destruction of habitat, and other human-made problems began to wipe out once-plentiful oysters as far back as the 1920s. With a particular focus on Barnegat Bay on the New Jersey coast, which was once full of oysters, the film reveals how few beds remain for "baymen" to scoop up the briny delicacy (it takes two years for an oyster to be mature enough to be consumed in a matter of seconds). But a new generation of so-called oyster farmers are as concerned about ensuring the longevity of their trade as they are about making a profit. Thanks to no-brainer techniques such as recycling empty oyster shells back into the water (to fortify oyster beds with nutrients) and restricting access to harvesting waters, the Eastern oyster now has an opportunity to rebound. Shot with great energy (the camera is often out on narrow, crowded boats capturing baymen, baywomen, and their obligatory boat dogs in action), the film effectively captures the



### The Story of Spice ★★★1/2

(2017) 49 min. DVD: \$16.95: individuals; \$26.95 w/PPR: institutions. Pilot Film & Television Productions.

This latest addition to Globe Trekker's well-produced *The Story of...* series focuses on the origins, history, and contemporary usage of spices. Celebrating these flavor-adders that "flatter our senses," host Judith Jones and other Trekkers travel the globe, exploring the spice phenomenon that has its roots in Alexander the Great's 327 A.D. Indian military campaign, which left his Macedonian soldiers with newly seasoned taste buds. Commentary from experts such as historian author John Key and horticulturalist

Joe Archer from London's Kew Gardens add informative background, while maps are used to outline the spice wars and trade routes involving super-producers such as India (responsible for 3/4ths of the world's spice) and Mexico (which has more than 300 varieties of chili peppers). Also covered are ancillary facets of spices, such as their medicinal properties (including the use of star anise in China). And, of course, there's food: several Trekkers meet up with aficionado chefs for heady concoctions including a Lamb Rogan Josh at Chor Bizarre in New Delhi, spicy chicken at Mama's Jerk Station in London, and fish and chips with Ireland-based Green Saffron spice company head Arun Kapil. Serving up a mouthwatering primer on a precious commodity, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

hard forward-looking work of oyster farming. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

## BEAUTY & FASHION

### Badass Beauty Queen: The Story of Anastasia Lin ★★1/2

(2018) 65 min. DVD: \$99; public libraries; \$295 w/PPR; colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

As the title of Theresa Kowall-Shipp's documentary profile makes clear, Anastasia Lin, Miss World Canada 2015, is no ordinary beauty queen. Lin's father, who lives in China, is a staunch Communist, and she remembers singing pro-Communist songs in school, which she now sees as a form of brainwashing. After her parents divorced, Lin and her mother moved to Toronto where she got involved with Falun Gong, a group banned by China, and sought out acting roles in films about Chinese persecution. Inspired by Iranian-Canadian activist Nazanin Afshin-Jam, who was Miss World Canada 2003, Lin became a pageant contestant to speak out about religious freedom. At first, the Chinese government celebrates her win, but when they find out about her politics, they make her father's life miserable. After the 2015 Miss World pageant moves from Australia to China, she looks forward to speaking out, but then she is barred from entering the country. She spends the rest of the year giving speeches around the world. In 2016, Lin re-enters the pageant to speak out about involuntary organ harvesting. But since the London-based Miss World organization receives support from Chinese sponsors, Lin loses her dressmaker, although a local designer steps in to offer his services. When the pageant forbids her from speaking to the press, word gets out, and a compromise is struck. But by then, the fix is in, and she doesn't fare as well as the year before. Unfortunately, by focusing so intently on Lin, the abuses at the heart of her protest receive short shrift in Kowall-Shipp's film, although China's distrust of Western media may have complicated her efforts in that regard. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

## COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY

### Computer Science: The Importance of Coding ★★★

(2018) 18 min. DVD: \$44.95. DRA. TMW Media Group. PPR. Closed captioned.

The invention of the smartphone and its effects on travel, manufacturing, entertainment, and finance are touted in this primer on coding and the demand for programmers in the contemporary job market. *Computer Science: The Importance of Coding*, an entry in the

*Show Me Science: Advanced—Technology* series, traces history related to coding, including its weaving industry origins in the 1800s with Joseph Jacquard's loom cards, the 1890 U.S. census, IBM, the rise of bit sequentials, byte strings, the 1960 first ASCII code, and other programming and compiling languages up to the present. Exploring the building blocks of system, architectural, and application programming languages, the film features encouraging remarks from moguls Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg, and touches on further topics such as "white hat" and "black hat" hackers, non-profit "Hour of Code" learning opportunities, the high-pay technological future, and unique job choices available in the field. Recommended. Aud: J, H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

## SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

### Between Land and Sea ★★1/2

(2018) 94 min. DVD: \$24.95. Film Movement (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Ross Whitaker's documentary on a year in the Irish surfing mecca of Lahinch should be required viewing for anyone interested in studying cinematography. The camerawork by Whitaker, Kev L. Smith, and Brian Moore is simply stunning, with striking views of majestic yet also tumultuous coastline and breathtaking presentations of amazing surfers riding extraordinary waves. Unfortunately, the glorious camerawork covering the aquatic feats of man and nature is stuck in a lackadaisical narrative following the surfers who descend on Lahinch and travel along the Irish coast in search of the perfect wave. Viewers do get a glimpse into their lives away from the beach—one is a freelance mining engineer married to a designer soap maker,

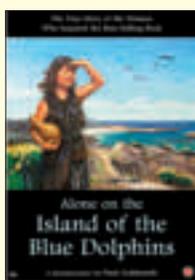
another walked away from professional surfing to raise his family on an organic potato farm—but these individuals tend to be most interesting when they are standing on a surfboard. Surfing icon Shane Dorian turns up briefly, but is never directly interviewed. A fantastic-looking if also somewhat meandering surfing documentary, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

## THE ARTS

### Fire & Ashes: The Making of the Ballet RAKU ★★★1/2

(2017) 64 min. DVD: \$149 (\$349 w/PPR). DRA. Juno Films. Closed captioned.

Yuri Possokhov's 2011 ballet *RAKU* takes its title from a style of Japanese pottery characterized by a firing technique in which items are removed from the kiln red-hot (and sometimes placed in a container of combustible material to cool). But its plot was inspired by a 1950 incident in which a novice monk burned down Kyoto's famed Zen Buddhist Temple of the Golden Pavilion. Gary Wang's libretto pushes the action back to the feudal period and turns the story into a tragic romance that opens with a princess and her husband dancing a *pas de deux* before he goes off to battle accompanied by four warriors. While he is away, the princess is violated by a monk, who then sets the temple ablaze as the soldiers return with the ashes of the dead prince. Shirley Sun's 2017 film consists of two parts. The first follows preparations by Possokhov, composer Shinji Eshima, and the chief dancers of the San Francisco Ballet—Yuan Tan (the Princess), Damian Smith (the Prince), and Pascal Molat (the Monk)—that include discussions and rehearsal footage.



### Alone on the Island of the Blue Dolphins ★★★

(2018) 53 min. DVD: \$19.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

Every November hundreds of thousands of 4th-graders read Scott O'Dell's Newbery Medal winning 1960 children's novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins*. Filmmaker Paul Goldsmith's documentary focuses on the real-life figure behind the book: the "Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island"—later Anglicized to "Juana Maria"—who was thought to be left behind on a remote California island and lived alone for nearly 20 years after she (according to various suppositions) missed the boat when her tribe was shipped to the mainland. Different romanticized stories of the "female Robinson Crusoe" are touched on here, including an archaeological examination of her homemade tools (such as a water jug and hairpin). Several experts chime in, as well as author Sara L. Schwebel (who edited a critical edition of O'Dell's book and says he probably "stretched the truth") and Chumash elder Ernestine De Soto, who suggests that Juana Maria would likely have fared better living with a native family instead of "discoverer" and expedition leader George Nidever (Juana Maria only lived for seven weeks after being taken from the island). Extras include additional related short films. A thought-provoking look behind a classic children's novel, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

The second presents the full ballet, which received a mixed critical reception when it premiered, but has since been performed by a number of companies. With its fine combination of background information and elegant finished production, Sun's film makes a strong case for *RAkU*. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

### Full Circle: The Birth, Death & Rebirth of Circle of Dust ★★★

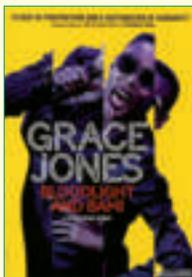
(2018) 2 discs. 213 min. DVD: \$22.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

*Full Circle* looks at the career of New York industrial metal band Circle of Dust through the eyes of leader Klayton. Musician Bret Autrey describes their story as "everything that possibly can go wrong does go wrong." Initially, Klay seems happy to have moved on ("I was over Circle of Dust") as he shows the camera crew around his Michigan home, which includes t-shirts, flyers, and other mementos that he didn't set on fire. Klay, who credits his love of music to his grandfather, started out by playing drums in the fashion of thrash metal favorites such as Metallica and Anthrax. From drums, he segued to guitars and sequencing. After R.E.X. Records signed Klay, they released his 1992 debut, at which point he brought in other players, including drummer Jason Tilton, for touring purposes. When R.E.X. got a distribution deal with Relativity, Circle of Dust was able to reach more listeners, but then the label filed for bankruptcy. Klay would continue to experience similar setbacks over the years, leading him to pull the plug in 1998. But then he bought back his material in 2015, and got a second chance to remix, remaster, and re-release the Circle of Dust catalog on his own terms, which led to new music in 2016. Although some interviews were shot in person, others were conducted via Skype, which isn't aesthetically ideal but seems in keeping with the band's scrappy career. Extras include featurettes, bootleg VHS concert performance footage, and music videos. As much a tribute to Klay's tenacity as his talent, this is recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

### Neil Gaiman: Dream Dangerously ★★★1/2

(2018) 74 min. Blu-ray: \$29.99. BRINK (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 0-7815-1588-2.

Neil Gaiman's 2013 signing tour serves as a framing device for Patrick Meaney's lively (if also somewhat superficial) look at the author's career. According to manager Cat Mihos, Gaiman signed so many books that he would lose feeling in his hand, so he takes to icing it after long days, but clearly values the closer-than-usual relationship with his readers. Although he's now based in the United States, the tour includes a trip to Portsmouth, England, where he grew up. Gaiman doesn't remember a time when he didn't want to be a writer. Childhood



### Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami ★★★

(2018) 120 min. In English & French w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95 (\$349 w/PPR from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Sophie Fiennes spent a decade working on this observational profile of the indomitable singer Grace Jones. Although this isn't a conventional concert film, Fiennes builds the documentary around full-length stage performances of songs, eschewing archival film and video clips in favor of present-day material. Jones, who recently turned 70, is as imposing as ever. Onstage, the actress-musician-model wears high heels, velvet corsets, sequin jackets, and glittery lace and feathered hats by Philip Treacy. When she isn't performing, Jones spends time in the studio, plays dates in Europe, and visits family members in Jamaica. While working on her last album, 2008's *Hurricane*, she grows exasperated when Sly and Robbie, the production duo who helped shape her classic '80s Island albums, pull a disappearing act. She also argues with the producers of a French TV program who insist on surrounding her with scantily clad dancers. Jones has a much less stressful relationship with her band member son, Paulo, who becomes a father during filming. Throughout, her accent changes depending on the locale, from British to Jamaican to French (her ex-husband, photographer Jean-Paul Goude, is French). Fiennes captures Jones in candid moments (many revolving around the artful application of makeup) but offers little in the way of facts and figures about her career. Still, the filmmaker's unfettered access allows for an intimate profile of the day-to-day life of an icon. Extras include two audio commentaries featuring Jones, Fiennes, and others, and a Q&A with Jones. Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

friend Geoff Notkin recalls the pair making comics, a practice their teachers treated with disdain. In his younger days, Gaiman also played in a punk band, which may have factored into his relationship with cabaret-punk musician Amanda Palmer, an occasional collaborator. Once Gaiman decided that he wanted to write professionally, nothing was going to stop him, and Meaney looks at signature works such as *Violent Cases* and *Sandman*. From comics, Gaiman segued to novels with the Terry Pratchett collaboration *Good Omens* (Pratchett, who appears here, passed away in 2015). About the U.S., the author of the bestsellers *American Gods*, *The Graveyard Book*, and *Coraline* muses, "I thought I understood America, and then I moved out to America, and went, 'This place is weird,'" but the weirdness continues to feed his creativity. *Dream Dangerously* also features notable fans and collaborators including Grant Morrison, George R.R. Martin, Bill Hader, and Michael Sheen, who stars in the upcoming adaptation of *Good Omens*. By the end of the three-month tour, Gaiman estimates that he has signed books for 150,000 people...and now he just wants to write. A strong optional purchase. [Note: this is also available for \$99.95: public libraries and \$295: colleges and universities with public performance rights from The Cinema Guild, www.cinemaguild.com.] Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

### Revolution: New Art for a New World

★★★

(2018) 85 min. DVD: \$24.95. Film Movement (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution inspired a

burst of creativity in Russian art that was soon suppressed by the doctrine of socialist realism dictated by Joseph Stalin. The meteoric rise and sudden fall of this artistic experimentation that was unleashed by the dream of remaking the world is the subject of Margy Kinmonth's documentary, which also celebrates works that have survived and reveals the fate of their creators through interviews, especially with descendants. Kinmonth establishes the historical context through archival materials, beginning with Viktor Bulla's photograph of Provisional Government troops firing on demonstrators in July before turning to Lenin's October coup and the new regime's employment of art as a means of communicating with a largely illiterate population. Innovative artwork, often abstract in nature, was initially encouraged, represented by the geometric paintings of Wassily Kandinsky and the enigmatic "Black Square" canvases of Suprematist Kazimir Malevich. But support for such works collapsed with Stalin, who demanded depictions of happy Soviet workers. Although some artists, including Marc Chagall, emigrated while they still could, others were ostracized, sent to the gulag, or executed, with many of their works destroyed (although some were secreted away and are now being unearthed). Kinmonth focuses on painting, and to a lesser extent photography, architecture, and cinema, and while her narration is rather flat and her use of dramatic re-creations sometimes falters, overall this is a fine introduction to an important episode in the development of modern art. Extras include additional footage. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

## Serenade for Haiti ★★

(2016) 70 min. In Haitian Creole & French w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$129: high schools & public libraries; \$349: colleges & universities. DRA. Good Docs (avail. from [www.gooddocs.net](http://www.gooddocs.net)). PPR.

Director Owsley Brown's documentary begins in 2007, four years before the earthquake that would devastate Haiti. After establishing the particulars of Port-au-Prince's Sainte Trinité Music School and introducing several of the students and teachers, he returns twice over the next seven years to check in. Built in 1913, the school has been providing children with a musical education since the 1950s. Many students hail from low-income households, like 9-year-old Marc Valens Louis Charles, whose home lacks electricity. A large number also come from one-parent households as a result of political violence. Brown films the students singing in the choir, taking drum lessons, and playing in the band. School director Father David César, percussion department head Pierre Jean Jeoboham, and cello teacher Bernadette Stella Williams all began as students themselves. Once the quake hit, the school was destroyed and six teachers died. Altogether, approximately 300,000 Haitians perished and 1.5 million were displaced. During the rebuilding process, teachers continue to teach and students sing and play in makeshift classrooms. When Brown catches up with 13-year-old Marc, the boy says that he feels alive when he's on stage. As the film comes to an end, the school has been rebuilt, the music continues, and now-16-year-old Marc looks forward to passing on his knowledge to the next generation. Although Brown doesn't push the analogy too hard, Sainte Trinité obviously symbolizes Haiti itself, working to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds while preserving its best qualities, including a passion for musical expression. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

## Tania Libre ★★

(2017) 73 min. In English & Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$145: high schools & public libraries; \$395: colleges & universities. DRA. PRAGDA. PPR.

Art and politics entwine in filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson's *Tania Libre*, which draws on a controversial performance piece to open a window into an artist's career. In 2014, Tania Bruguera set out to restage a 2009 work in which she gave participants an uncensored platform to discuss freedom in Cuba. Two hours before the performance, she was arrested, faced criminal charges, and had her passport revoked. During her detention, activists around the world staged protests on her behalf. The filmmaker catches up with Bruguera upon her release as she travels to New York to meet with Dr. Frank Ochberg, a psychiatrist specializing in PTSD. Much of the film consists of a conversation between the two. In order to build a case against her, Bruguera tells Ochberg, the government

described her as a traitor or dissident rather than an artist. "Truth," Dr. Ochberg notes, "is the enemy of the dictator." The director also looks at previous Bruguera projects, including 2009's *Tatlin's Whisper #6* and 2012's *Surplus Value*, while Ochberg helps Bruguera to see how much she had in common with her late father, a member of the secret police who helped to bring Fidel Castro to power. Despite their political differences, he was proud of his daughter's courage. *Tania Libre* is book-ended with readings by Tilda Swinton from Bruguera's 2012 manifesto on art. "Artists," she says, "not only have the right to dissent, but the duty to do so." A provocative portrait of the artist, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

## HISTORY & CURRENT EVENTS

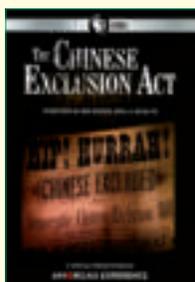
### Bitter Rivals: Iran and Saudi Arabia

★★★

(2018) 180 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0445-2.

Since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, that country and Saudi Arabia have dueled for control, reflecting not only a centuries-old schism between the Shiites (Iran) and the Sunnis (Saudi Arabia), but also the waging of a battle over the future of Islam and of the Middle East—a conflict that has boiled over in bloody proxy wars in neighboring nations.

In this PBS-aided *Frontline* documentary, correspondent Martin Smith reports on the longstanding war between these Islamic adversaries. With their sacred shrines in Mecca and Medina, the Saudis view themselves as the proper guardians of Islam, while scorning Shia Islam as illegitimate. Iran's ayatollahs despise Middle Eastern monarchies and curse the Saudis as pro-Western American puppets. For almost 40 years the two sides have squared off over issues including terrorist funding in Lebanon and Syria, Saddam Hussein's expansionist aims, and Syria's brutal crackdown on insurgents. In the early '80s, Iran fought Iraq in a war that threatened to spill over into nearby countries, introducing new terror tactics and technology. Atrocities were committed on both sides, with Iraq's use of chemical weapons, and Iran's deployment of boy soldiers as young as 10 as human shields. When tribal war recently broke out in Yemen, Iran backed the ruling regime, while the Saudis took the unusual step of bombing the country using U.S. supplied weapons, killing many women and children (civilian populations in conflicted countries are coldly calculated as mere collateral damage). As one official notes, "When elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers." This two-part documentary combines testimony from government officials on both sides with plenty of graphic footage and descriptions of the carnage. Sadly, no solutions are offered, and no end seems to be in sight. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)



### The Chinese Exclusion Act ★★1/2

(2017) 160 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0488-9.

In 1882, a few years before the installation of the Statue of Liberty, President Chester A. Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which decreed that Chinese people could not become American citizens, while also placing draconian limits on Chinese immigration to America. This was the first time a people had been singled out for exclusion by name, and the act remained in force for 60 years. Directed by Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu, this PBS-aided *American Experience* documentary describes the origins and effects of the law, which was the result of long-simmering resentment by labor organizations and immigrant groups in California, who were aided by ambitious politicians. In addition to outright prejudice against the "heathen Chinese," who were often depicted as subhuman and incapable of being assimilated, people feared that an influx of Chinese would depress wages. The Chinese originally came seeking opportunities in California's gold fields and later worked as builders of the transcontinental railroad. Immigrants were initially protected by the terms of an 1849 treaty that was passed as a way of securing favorable terms for America's trade with China. Gradually, however, depictions of Chinese as servile coolies led to restrictions and petty exclusions and later to killings (including lynchings), home burnings, and ever more strict limits on Chinese protection under the law (even banding together in Chinatowns couldn't guarantee safety). Denied access to voting booths, Chinese immigrants sought relief from the courts, with only limited success. Only with the coming of WWII, shifting alliances, and changing attitudes, was the prejudicial law finally repealed. The film features insights from historians and contemporary Chinese-Americans, as well as readings from vintage diaries and Chinese letters to newspapers. Extras include additional scenes. A timely documentary as the immigration debate continues to rage, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

## Blackout in Puerto Rico ★★

(2018) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0512-1.

With 155 mph winds and 20 inches of rain, 2017's Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, cutting off power and leaving the island like a "war zone," with little water, food, or medical supplies. Puerto Rico's rescue efforts were hampered by logistical challenges (its island location and distance from the U.S. mainland) and bureaucratic delays (resources were stretched thin after earlier hurricanes in Florida and Texas), but perhaps most of all by the fact that Puerto Rico was poorly prepared, with an aging infrastructure and a debt-laden economy. Almost a year after Maria, correspondent Laura Sullivan returns to the island in this PBS-aired *Frontline* documentary directed by Rick Young. The island has long been known as the "poorhouse of the Caribbean," with power plants suffering from a lack of maintenance, and an economy crippled by debt, borrowing, government bailouts, and Wall Street financing that some have compared to a Ponzi scheme. Once the storm hit, there was a slow, inadequate response, and even essential items like roof tarps to keep the rain out were in short supply. Sullivan interviews long-suffering residents, local government officials, and some FEMA personnel and Wall Street figures. President Trump (who quite inaccurately rated his administration's response with an A-plus grade) and other top officials are conspicuously absent. Perhaps the biggest problem here is Puerto Rico being viewed as part of America's imperialist past, and therefore not truly American, which is wrong on a number of levels. A timely documentary that offers a sobering warning of what can happen in our era of climate change, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

## First Civilizations ★★

(2018) 2 discs. 220 min. DVD: \$29.99 (\$59.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0501-5.

Can war help advance civilization? Surprisingly, this four-part PBS documentary series says "yes." *First Civilizations* surveys the roles of war, religion, the growth of cities, and expansion of trade in driving human destiny. For most of humankind's time on Earth, no armies, churches, or non-nomadic communities existed. After early hunter-gatherers discovered that they could produce food by farming, they also quickly learned that being tied to one place meant that villages and cropland had to be defended. Before long, a class of haves and have-nots sprang up as powerful individuals took the greater share in return for promises of protection. Using early civilizations in Egypt and Mexico as examples, the series illustrates how "destructive creation" has played a role in developing weapons and technology. Religion created a shared narrative, rituals, ceremonies, sacred

spaces, and a means of establishing legitimacy for leaders. And cities have become our "collective brain" and "engine of invention," satisfying the human need to be sociable and learn from each other. Drawing on examples from ancient Iraq and modern Tokyo, the documentary shows that cities create specialization and fosters the rise of ruling elites, who have the challenge of providing for the common good. Finally, trade requires trust, which results in the free flow of ideas, shared prosperity, and peace. No civilization lasts forever, as is demonstrated here with the decline of the Indus Valley, which was doomed by disease, climate change, and the loss of social cohesion. Offering a clear explanation of why and how civilizations rise, fall, or undergo significant upheaval and change, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

## Hannibal in the Alps ★★1/2

(2018) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0497-1.

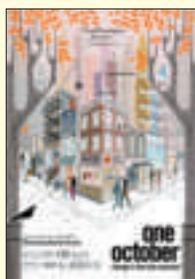
Filmmaker Giulia Clark's documentary—part of the PBS-aired series *Secrets of the Dead*—attempts to resolve an issue that has bedeviled historians for centuries: namely, what route did Hannibal take in 218 B.C. when he led his Carthaginian army of 38,000 infantry, 8,000 cavalry, and 38 elephants across the French Alps for a surprise attack on the Roman Empire in the Second Punic War? There were no surviving records of the account from campaign participants, and the earliest write-up—by the historian Polybius years after the spectacular mountain march—failed to include specific geographical details on how Hannibal pulled off this military feat. This film argues that Hannibal could have taken one of four potential routes, with the most evidence pointing to what might have actually been the most dangerous option, across icy and rocky terrain. Although no fossils or artifacts from the Carthaginians' campaign has been found, sampling of bacterial soil points to signs that this route might have seen an abnormally large amount of equine

traffic at one time. Still, it is astonishing to imagine that an army traveling with horses and elephants could have maneuvered along treacherously narrow paths while fighting off the cold, loss of supplies, and attacks from local tribes who were not happy to see this North African military caravan marching through their land. Serving up a fascinating mix of ancient history, modern geology, and travelogue-worthy cinematography, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (P. Hall)

## The Jazz Ambassadors ★★

(2018) 90 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0500-8.

During the Cold War, jazz musicians represented more than a musical style when they played outside of the United States. Through photographs, performance footage, and interviews with authors and historians, Hugo Berkeley's PBS-aired documentary examines a State Department initiative in which jazz musicians doubled as diplomats. Combined with its history of segregation, America in the days following the murder of 15-year-old Emmett Till attracted international criticism. New York Congressman Adam Clayton Powell Jr., husband of pianist Hazel Scott, felt that sending mixed-race bands out into the world would help present a more positive image. Powell recommended Dizzy Gillespie as the first jazz musician to continue the work Powell began at 1955's Afro-Asian Conference. Although Gillespie's politics leaned to the left, his popularity assuaged any governmental concerns. Drummer Charlie Persip and arranger Quincy Jones remember their seven-country tour through the Middle East with fondness, with the exception of a few close calls with snake charmers in Pakistan and student protests in Greece. Louis Armstrong, the next ambassador, visited the Gold Coast (the future Ghana) where he performed in front of 1,000 people. Although he lost out on a trip to the U.S.S.R. over his criticism of President Eisenhower's handling of school desegregation in Little Rock, he later visited



## One October ★★1/2

(2017) 56 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$299 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Some people ask others a lot of questions out of genuine interest in the lives and narratives of fellow humans. One such curious listener is Clay Pigeon, an Iowan transplanted to New York City, where he works as a radio personality with a calming voice, performing free-form monologues. In this documentary, Pigeon and filmmaker Rachel Shuman take to the streets of New York with a microphone. Pigeon converses with passersby, asking probing, personal questions with an easygoing sincerity that causes people to become increasingly frank. Shuman also roams beyond Manhattan, capturing the diversity and mixed cultures of all the boroughs. What's most interesting here is the timeframe: *One October* was shot a month before the 2008 election of Barack Obama, a time when hope was in the air. What emerges are sometimes electrifying moments from a pivotal time in America when the country was not so obviously divided. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

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Presented October 10, 2018, Indianapolis, IN



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**Sacred Water**

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Director  
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Finalist  
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This Morning,  
This Evening**

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Director  
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Finalist  
**This is Home:  
A Refugee Story**

Distributor  
**Bullfrog Films**

Director  
**Alexandra Shiva**

14 African nations. Other jazz ambassadors included Dave Brubeck, Benny Goodman, and Duke Ellington. After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, the program largely came to an end. *The Jazz Ambassadors* takes an interesting look at a little-known, decades-old program that arose to alleviate problems with the U.S. image—ones that are still ongoing. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

## Navajo Code Talkers of World War II

★★★

(2018) 68 min. DVD: \$19.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

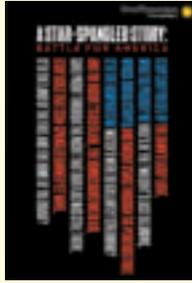
The handful of Navajo war veterans who participated in filmmaker George Colburn's documentary were not especially keen to do so, as it meant returning to the islands of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Saipan, and Guam, which were conquered by the U.S. and its allies during World War II at the cost of many lives and much bloodshed. Still, the Native American vets were lured back with the aim of helping their young family members and military personnel understand what happened in those battles, and how Navajo code talk was so crucial to the overall war effort. The story of the code is itself fascinating, especially given that these men, along with many other indigenous Native Americans, were forced to give up their native language in school and speak English only. So it was more than ironic that the U.S. government asked them to enlist in the military and use their unwritten Navajo language to create an indecipherable code that the enemy could never break. The small group of vets spend a fair amount of time talking about their subsequent lives and the ghosts that continue to haunt them from their war years, and the family members accompanying them on this trip are grateful for the opportunity to hear these stories that are so hard to tell. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

## One October: A Nightmare in Las Vegas

★★★

(2018) 95 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

The massacre of 58 people and shooting injuries of hundreds more at an outdoor music festival in Las Vegas on October 1, 2017, is the grim subject of this documentary by former reporter Charlie Minn. Taking a painstakingly thorough approach, Minn reconstructs the shocking events that left thousands fearing for their lives and also spurred acts of heroism, compassion, and self-sacrifice. Drawing on an abundance of video footage shot on smartphones by festivalgoers and others, *One October* shows how the standing audience initially reacted to the pop-pop-pop of the murderer's weapons, as he fired away from a 32nd-floor room at the nearby Mandalay Bay resort. Gradually, the images become more horrifying as bodies



## A Star-Spangled Story: Battle for America ★★★1/2

(2014) 51 min. DVD: \$19.99. Smithsonian Channel (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0483-4.

Before the War of 1812, the Stars and Stripes flag was more of a military emblem than a national symbol, but that changed in 1814 when British warships bombarded Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor. Filmmaker Molly Hermann's Smithsonian Channel-aired documentary recounts the almost chance series of events that changed American history and helped unite the young nation. This now obscure conflict came to a head after Britain's war with France, aggravated by England's seizure of

American sailors at sea, Britain's designs on Canada, attempts to block America's westward expansion, and (likely) a desire to settle old scores from the American Revolutionary War. The best remembered event was when British troops invaded Washington D.C., torched the Library of Congress and other federal buildings, and then sacked and tried to burn the White House. America was not prepared for the invasion, and when England set its sights on Baltimore, a young lawyer named Francis Scott Key—who was on board a British warship attempting to secure the release of an American prisoner—became an eyewitness to a fierce nighttime shell bombardment of Fort McHenry. The next morning the tattered flag still flew over the fort and, in a burst of patriotism and inspiration, Key composed the poem "Defence of Fort M'Henry" (aka "The Star-Spangled Banner"). Surprisingly, that flag (missing some pieces) survives in a light-and-temperature controlled environment at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. The documentary describes the 1812 war, and how the flag was designed and later preserved, while singer Renee Fleming explains her feelings performing this notoriously difficult song. Most importantly, the film surveys the flag's role in boosting the nation's morale, as in the cases of the Iwo Jima flag-raising and the view of the American flag as it was hoisted over the ruins of the World Trade Center after 9/11. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

are scattered on the festival grounds, such as on the scene of a battle. People look for cover and take chances trying to run to cover, while police and concert security attempt to shepherd people to safety. Minn interviews a number of survivors about what they thought and felt and did in that situation, and some remarkable stories emerge. Less positive are the film's final chapters, which delve into what appears to be a failure by Las Vegas police to respond more quickly to an active shooter despite knowing from hotel security the precise location of the killer's room. And there is much to suggest that MGM—owner of the Mandalay and the festival grounds—quickly went into bunker mode, obscuring and repressing information that could bring legal exposure. Given MGM's recent, despicable legal maneuvers to sue victims of the shootings as a preemptive strike against any lawsuit, it's not surprising to learn of the company's misdeeds. A powerful recounting of a terrible, tragic event in recent history, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

## The Other Side of Eden: Stories of a Virginia Lynching ★★★1/2

(2018) 57 min. DVD: \$29.95: individuals; \$49.95: public libraries; \$249: colleges & universities. Davenport Films. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-88852-239-6.

Directed by Tom Davenport, along with Shawn Nicholls and Dylan Nicholls, this unsettling documentary reconstructs terrible events that occurred in and around Markham, VA, in 1932, when a 39-year-old African-American man named Shedrick

Thompson murdered the white patriarch of an estate called Edenhurst. The victim, Henry Baxley Sr., was beaten to death, and his wife, Mamie Baxley, was dragged away to a nearby forest, raped, and left for dead (but survived). The reasons for Thompson's viciousness remain unclear to this day, although there has always been speculation that Thompson, a World War I veteran, was angered by Mamie scolding him over his treatment of his own wife, who cooked for the Baxleys. A massive manhunt followed the violence, and two months later Thompson was found lynched and decomposing. In a rush to provide a legal cover-up, the county coroner declared Thompson's death a suicide, although an abundance of gruesome evidence suggested otherwise. The fascinating part of this film lies in the story's telling, which is largely related through passed-along lore from descendants of the Baxleys and Thompsons, as well as from amateur historians who have assiduously chased down the facts for years. A fascinating documentary about heinous crimes whose legacy still appear to hang over this Virginia community, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

## The Other Side of Everything ★★★1/2

(2017) 104 min. In Serbian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$398. Icarus Films. PPR.

A century of Serbian history is sketched from a highly personal perspective in Mila Turajlic's absorbing documentary, which focuses on her mother Srbijanka and the Belgrade apartment their family has resided in

since it was purchased by Mila's great-grandfather in the early 1900s. In 1947, the apartment was divided up by Marshal Josip Broz Tito's Communist regime into separate units, and in 2017 a locked door still divided Srbijanka's rooms from another where an elderly woman named Nada lived (Nada is briefly interviewed for a census, describing herself as a "true proletariat"; her death occasions prying the door open at last). The film uses feisty Srbijanka's career to sketch Serbia's recent history. As a professor at the University of Belgrade, Srbijanka became an outspoken member of the opposition to Slobodan Milošević, the country's notorious president during the 1990s. After he was forced from power in 2000, she served as Deputy Minister of Higher Education in the new government formed by the Democratic Party of Serbia. Today she sees the nation sliding once more into nationalistic authoritarianism, and while she is celebrated in some circles for her past activism in pursuit of democracy, she now urges the younger generation to take up the torch even as her own thoughts about the future turn increasingly pessimistic (when receiving an award, she wryly observes that she is being honored for her failures). At once an intimate portrait of an admirable woman and a broader look at a troubled land, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

## TRAVEL & GEOGRAPHY

### Rwanda: The Royal Tour ★★★1/2

(2018) 55 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0485-8.

In 1994, the world was shocked by Rwanda's genocidal tribal wars, which resulted in the loss of almost a million lives, while also decimating the country's economy and natural resources. Almost 25 years later, travel expert Peter Greenberg joins Rwanda's President Paul Kagame in filmmaker John Feist's PBS-aired travelogue filmed in Africa's "land of 1,000 hills," now transformed into a modern and prosperous land of adventure tourism. After Kagame describes the war, his role as a guerilla leader, efforts to reconstruct the country, and his hopes for the future, the two men explore the country's numerous attractions, including encounters with the rare and endangered mountain gorillas, jet-skiing on Lake Kivu, and motorbiking to visit tea plantations, waterfalls, and safari territories. Wildlife also suffered badly in the recent war, but the country now emphasizes the economic values of tourism over poaching, including observing wildlife from a long suspension bridge or ziplining high over jungle canopies. At a colorful urban market, one can

shop while a street vendor custom-designs a ready-made shirt. To sample Rwanda's artistic heritage, the pair visit an exhibit of native art at a modern Rwanda public library. *Rwanda: The Royal Tour* consistently offers unusual sights, including rare longhorn cows grazing at Kagame's country estate (where Greenberg joins the president in a game of tennis). A fascinating look at a once deeply-torn African country, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

## BIOGRAPHY

### Larger Than Life: The Kevyn Aucoin Story ★★★

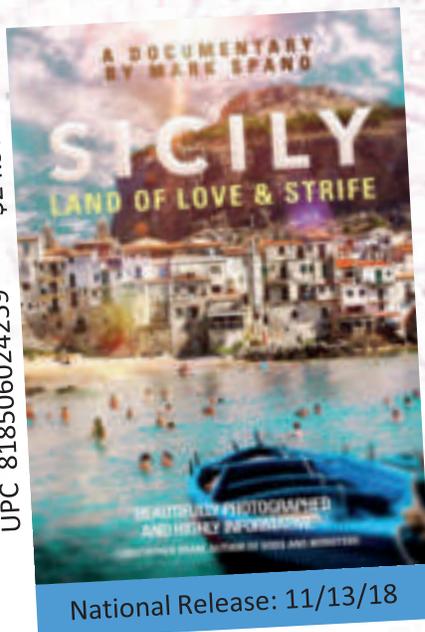
(2018) 103 min. DVD: \$24.95 (\$350 w/PPR from [edu.passionriver.com](http://edu.passionriver.com)). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Fashion documentaries existed before 1995's *Unzipped*, Douglas Kieve's fizzy profile of fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi, but that was the point at which they exploded in popularity. The difference with *Larger Than Life*, a portrait of Kevyn Aucoin (1962-2002), is that documentaries about makeup designers are much rarer. By the age of 11, Aucoin set out to build his life around women. While growing up

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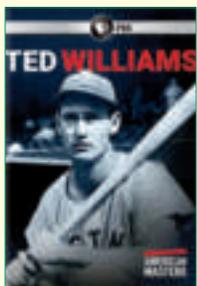
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### Ted Williams ★★★1/2

(2018) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0605-0.

Ted Williams, nicknamed “The Splendid Splinter,” was a larger than life figure, quick to anger and one to hold grudges, conducting lengthy feuds with reporters, yet also a man with a perfect swing who made an art and science of hitting. Filmmaker Rick Davis’s PBS-aired *American Masters* documentary, narrated by Jon Hamm, reveals a man dogged by doubts, raised in poverty by indifferent parents, and conflicted over his Mexican-American background. Baseball was where he pursued perfection, particularly long ball hitting, which he emphasized almost to the exclusion of other aspects of the game. Coming to the majors in 1939, within a couple seasons Williams would achieve a mighty season batting average of over .400, a record that still stands almost eight decades later (and may never be broken). His records would be even more impressive had he not served as a Marine pilot in WWII and Korea. Although he somewhat resented his absence from the playing field, Williams served with distinction, and made a seamless return to baseball both times. He could be harsh and profane with fans, wives, and family, but his softer side came out when he was fly fishing or helping children’s charities. Baseball experts like Bob Costas along with Williams’s daughter recall the man, and Williams appears in vintage film clips, offering mostly mellow reflections. A surreal postscript is the possible life after life tale of the cryonic freezing of Williams’s body. Extras include additional scenes. A fascinating portrait of an unforgettable character, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

in Louisiana, he collected Barbra Streisand ephemera and drew pictures of Diana Ross and other stylish icons. His adoptive father, a baseball coach, wasn’t happy about it, nor were his teachers and classmates. Everyone assumed he was gay, which in fact he was. After moving to New York in the 1980s, Aucoin worked on porn shoots and used his connections to segue to high fashion. Paulina Porizkova and other top models praise his transformative talents, while collaborators cite his control freak tendencies. Makeup artist Tiffany Bartok’s directorial debut takes direct aim at readers of *Vogue* (although it also includes recording artists such as Cher and Tori Amos). Bartok revels in the glamour, the dish, and recognition for an art so omnipresent that it’s easy to take for granted. Aucoin wielded paints and powders in an era not yet overtaken by Botox and other marvels of our quick-fix age, making this film both an elegy for a man and a world that no longer exists. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

### Weinstein ★★

(2018) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0608-1.

Filmmakers Jane McMullen and Leo Telling’s drily proper PBS-aired *Frontline* documentary feels unintentionally humorous in its summary of lurid sexual harassment charges brought against Hollywood mega-producer Harvey Weinstein (perhaps one should render unto TMZ what belongs on TMZ). Before his Oscar-strewn career flourished, Harvey Weinstein entered moviedom via the grotty 1980 slasher flick *The Burning*, shot in upstate NY, where a female PA complained about Weinstein’s

awkward advances toward women. More actresses and crew members (including Gwyneth Paltrow, in Weinstein’s A-list *Shakespeare in Love*) have been rumored to be victims of grotesque and unwanted seductions (the producer materializing in a bathrobe and demanding a “massage” being a serial *modus operandi*). *Blade Runner* star Sean Young claims that a resentful Weinstein helped torpedo her career. The documentary charges that Hollywood’s power structure and corrupt values drew a curtain of silence around Weinstein’s alleged depredations (Weinstein’s role as a major Democratic Party fundraiser is only briefly acknowledged), with the full scope of the scandal being cinema’s worst-kept secret until a *New Yorker* investigation by Ronan Farrow was published in 2017. Left out of this inquest is any larger picture of the “Me Too” movement that came in the wake of the Weinstein scandal. Current only to early 2018, this too-staid treatment of a tawdry subject, this is an optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

## Video Librarian Online

Visit Video Librarian Online ([www.videolibrarian.com](http://www.videolibrarian.com)) for more reviews during November and December, including: *The Coolest Guy Movie Ever*, *Going to War*, *Hollywood Beauty Salon*, *King of Stage: The Woodie King Jr. Story*, *Myanmar’s Killing Fields*, *One Day in Aleppo*, *The Red Soul*, *Trafficked in America*, *Triple Divide [Redacted]*, and much more!

## Series Update

The following titles are new additions to series previously recommended. Titles are available from most distributors unless otherwise noted.

Produced by the Smithsonian Channel and available from PBS, the latest addition to *The Real Story* series is **The Real Story: The Da Vinci Code** (45 min., DVD: \$14.99), which features comments by code breakers, Renaissance experts, and religious professors who examine controversial elements in Dan Brown’s 2003 thriller *The Da Vinci Code* and the 2006 feature film. See review of *The Real Story: Saving Private Ryan* in VL-3/18.

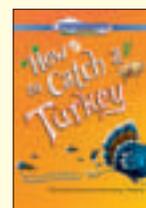


Also available from PBS Distribution is **Art in the Twenty-First Century: Season Nine** (165 min., DVD: \$24.99), the 2018 latest season of the PBS-aired Peabody Award-winning art education series, featuring artists from Johannesburg, Berlin, and the San Francisco Bay Area. See review of *Art: 21—Art in the Twenty-First Century, Seasons One & Two* in VL Online-3/04.

Recently released by Paramount Home Media Distribution is **SpongeBob SquarePants: The Legend of Boo-kini Bottom** (23 min., DVD: \$14.99), an all-new stop-motion animated Halloween special based on the long-running Nickelodeon animated series. See review of *It’s a SpongeBob Christmas!* in VL-11/13.

Dreamscape has just released **Click, Clack, Quack to School** (10 min., DVD: \$38.99), an adaptation of the 2018 children’s picture book by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin that follows barnyard creatures on a visit to a school—unknownst to their owner Farmer Brown. See review of *Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type* in VL-3/02.

Also newly available from Dreamscape is **How to Catch a Turkey** (9 min., DVD: \$38.99), a holiday-themed iconographic-animated adaptation of the 2018 picture book from the *How to Catch* series by author Adam Wallace and illustrator Andy Elkerton. See review of *How to Catch the Tooth Fairy* in VL-7/17.



## Armed Girl's Machiavellism: Complete Collection

★★★1/2  
(2017) 2 discs. 325 min. Blu-ray: \$69.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



This lurid classroom “harem” actioner (derived from manga) is tongue-in-cheek, but the Tarantino-lite approach eventually starts to drag. Aichi Coexistence Academy was once an all-girl high school. After going co-ed, the scandalized girl students learned super-sword-fighting in order to defend themselves (there is also a giant trained bear on patrol). Now, the boys who are admitted are actually troublemakers being punished. Flirtatious and cocky new transfer Fudou Nomura possesses legendary martial-arts skills himself, pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior while painfully winning the respect and friendship of his new she-demon peers. Confusing secret identities, conspiracies, and big doses of fan-service cleavage dominate the narrative, while a naked swordfight (complete nudity is blocked from view, like an Austin Powers gag) takes up an entire episode. Longstanding anime fans will get a kick out of the kooky mock-seriousness and S&M-tinged bloody violence, but *Prison School* (VL-3/17) did this sort of raunch-com better. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a dual-language Blu-ray edition, rated TV-14, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

## Battle Girl High School: Complete Collection

★★★  
(2017) 2 discs. 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



In what feels like a cut-and-paste job from various lookalike superpowered-schoolgirl Japanimation franchises, viewers may wait for some kind of hint that this is a parody of genre clichés, but it never comes. Based on a video game, the premise of this future-set series is that mysterious biomechanoid “Irousu” monsters have conquered Earth, only to be tentatively beaten back by the Hoshimori, a sisterhood of adolescent female warriors. At a special high school for the adolescent Hoshimori, young ladies learn teamwork, monster-fighting transformations, culture-festival activities, and even pitch in to help a few Hoshimori who moonlight after class as “idol” singing stars between monster battles. A little bit of interest is generated in the closing episodes, which reveal a new, more human-like nemesis, but there is very little here that hasn't been seen already (including occasional visits to the beach or hot springs for fan-service cleavage). Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a Blu-ray edition, in Japanese with English subtitles, rated TV-

14, this is an optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

## Black Clover: Season 1, Part 1 ★★★

(2017) 4 discs. 250 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$54.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



This anime series takes place in a quasi-medieval past where the orphaned twin teenage brothers Asta and Yuno live in the Clover Kingdom. Here, everyone can perform magic using personalized spell books known as Grimoires. Yuno is the more introverted of the pair and possesses a Grimoire with a rare four-leaf clover cover, while Asta is the more aggressive and physically powerful (but less magically talented) brother. The siblings each want to become the Wizard King and they engage in a friendly competitive process termed the Magic Knight exam, but their lowly social status earns scorn from the more affluent candidates. Yuno's abilities, in particular, arouse jealousy from the nobles in his classes, who cannot fathom how a commoner can be so talented. They also encounter Noelle Silva—a daughter in a wealthy clan—who is eager to further her magic studies. The series feels like a mix of Harry Potter adventures with a slight touch of Tolkien and doses of sometimes heavy social commentary, although the characters are appealing. Presenting the first 12 episodes from the 2017 debut season in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-14, extras include select episode commentaries, a cast and crew roundtable discussion, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and “Clover Clips” animated shorts. Recommended. [Note: *Black Clover: Season 1, Part 2* is slated for release on Nov. 6.] (P. Hall)

## A Centaur's Life ★★1/2

(2017) 4 discs. 300 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$64.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



This peculiar anime takes place in an alternative world where many different species co-exist as human-animal hybrids, including cat-people, goat-people, bird-folk (resembling angels, complete with halos) and dragon-people (more or less winged demons). Dealing with each other in a multicultural school setting is a challenge for girl centaur Himeno, who is a novelty even to her classmates (Himeno and some girlfriends inspect each other's privates, non-explicitly). The largely plotless and lighthearted tone turns dark, bizarre, and positively Lovecraftian in latter episodes: the mermaid-people (females being abundantly bare-breasted for the sake of fan service) find their sea god Tagon impersonated in a strategy by a mysterious race of Antarctic snake people; a jungle tribe of frogmen are revealed to be insular and

warlike religious fanatics; and flashbacks divulge horrors of a WWII/Holocaust-like conflict that once raged between fascistic centaurs and two-legged species that they deemed inferior. *A Centaur's Life* is a wildly uneven series, albeit one that belongs in the something-you-don't-see-everyday category. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-MA, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

## Eureka Seven Hi-Evolution 1 ★★

(2017) 93 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



The classic 50-episode mecha anime series *Eureka Seven* has been reconfigured into a feature film trilogy. Viewers with no previous knowledge of the series may find much of the action confusing, while even die-hard fans might be a little surprised. This opening 2017 film begins with a half-hour sequence that wasn't in the original series: military researcher Adroc Thurston and his two mecha pilots are involved in an experiment that spins dangerously out of control, forcing Adroc to sacrifice his life in order to save the world. This incident becomes known as the “Summer of Love,” laying the foundation for the series' focus on Renton, the teenage son of Adroc, who leaves his adoptive parents' home to have his own adventures involving the female alien known as Eureka. The film slices and dices material from the series into its storyline, shuffling some aspects of the tale into a confusing new order while keeping the original 4:3 aspect ratio from the TV broadcast for the Renton-Eureka storyline—which is visually jarring after the stylish cinematic opening segment. Presented in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo edition, rated TV-14, extras include an interview with the filmmakers and music videos. Completist fans may appreciate this, but it is otherwise not a necessary purchase. (P. Hall)

## Frame Arms Girl: The Complete Collection

★★★  
(2016) 2 discs. 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



Movies and TV series made to promote toys are ubiquitous in Japan as well as the United States. The Frame Arms Girl model kits are an offshoot of the Frame Arms mecha robot figurines sold by Japan's Kotobukiya company—robot girl action figures that can be equipped with armor and weapons conveying their special powers in battle. The toy line was turned into a manga series by Tsuneo Tsuneshi in 2016, which then

served as the basis for this anime adaptation, in which a young girl named Ao Gennai is unexpectedly sent a prototype of a new figurine called Gourai that she is tasked with helping to develop her fighting technique and to understand humans. Other Frame Arms Girls show up to challenge Gourai and share their experiences, while Ao inevitably learns important life lessons from her interaction with the gals. The animation is pastel bright but oddly ineffectual, especially since the battle sequences are for the most part indifferently presented. Overall, this is a peculiar but not very satisfying series, although it fulfills its basic function as a merchandising gambit. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a Blu-ray edition, in Japanese with English subtitles, rated TV-14, this is not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

### In Another World With My Smartphone ★★

(2017) 4 discs. 300 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$64.98. Fanimation (avail. from most distributors).



This anime property began life as an online novel that was later spun off into manga adaptations. Unfortunately, its promising opening merely leads to a fairly standard “harem” fantasy-comedy. God (the traditional bearded old guy) summons 15-year-old Touya Mochizuki to apologize for accidentally killing the boy (offscreen) with a lightning bolt. God makes restitution by bodily resurrecting the teen, but even the deity cannot return Touya to his former reality. Instead, Touya goes to a mystic world that is an amalgamation of many cultures (including a lazy copy of Japan’s feudal Tokugawa Era). Magic works here, God grants Touya superior powers, and he has his prized smartphone (which, despite the billing, figures little in the antics). Soon, Touya is a fortune-hunter, undertaking magic errands with seven fetching girls, who ultimately all vie to be his bride. Breast gags and swimsuit episodes begin to replace adventure as the series goes slumming, with wrap-up segments addressing how Touya will handle his excess of fiancées (plus a beautiful robot girl who insists on appearing before him undressed below the waist). Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-14, extras include episode commentaries. Optional. (C. Cassidy)

### Long Riders! Complete Collection ★★★

(2016) 2 discs. 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



In her first year at university, Ami Kurata admires her friend Aoi’s bicycle and the freedom it brings but feels

too clumsy to try riding herself. Aoi encourages Ami to buy a cute folding bike, which changes both of their lives. *Long Riders!* could be accurately titled “How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bike.” With no real plot, the story follows Ami over the course of a year as she gains proficiency and confidence in bicycling. Along the way she and Aoi join three other female cyclists, who are eager to help Ami and welcome her to the cycling life. While they inevitably form a team, this isn’t a typical sports anime with an eye toward competition and the big win. The girls do hope to race in Paris someday, but right now they are happy to simply bike together. With no real drama, high stakes, or personality clashes, *Long Riders!* relies on building positive thinking (with a hint of crush) coupled with the occasional dash of didacticism (bike maintenance and the monetary and physical costs of cycling are often touched on). Based on a long-running manga, this is a laidback and loving paean to biking with friends. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2016 in a Blu-ray edition, in Japanese with English subtitles, rated TV-14, this is recommended. Aud: P. (L. Martincik)

### Mind Game ★★1/2

(2004) 103 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$22.99. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.



Anime often boasts wild plots and bizarre imagery, but this 2004 cult feature from director Masaaki Yuasa outdoes itself in both areas. After an initial mad montage under the opening credits, *Mind Game* settles into a wacky story about Nishi, a nerdy would-be manga artist pining for his childhood crush Myon. When Nishi unwisely intervenes to protect her from a couple of thugs, he is shot in the butt and the bullet goes all the way up through his head, after which the dead Nishi winds up facing a kaleidoscopic, whimsical God. Nishi escapes from the afterlife by running furiously away from the light, emerging as a reckless risk-taker who takes off with Myon and her older sister in the gangster’s car, only to be swallowed—vehicle and all—by a whale. Here they meet an old man who has been living inside the belly of the beast for 30 years, and this extended Jonah (or is it Pinocchio?) segment includes colorful psychedelic dance numbers and many food-preparation scenes. Eventually, they all escape into the “real” world for the final act. This weird summary barely scratches the surface of *Mind Game*, which employs radical shifts in pacing and pictorial styles, sudden flashbacks from major and minor characters, and scads of sexual imagery to create a constantly surprising, expressionistic world that is truly unique—a sort of head-trip “Nishi in Wonderland.” Presented in a Blu-ray/DVD Combo edition, in Japanese with English subtitles, and not

rated (but clearly for adult audiences), extras include select scene commentary from Yuasa, a feature-length animatic storyboard, and production artwork galleries. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

### Vatican Miracle Examiner: Complete Collection ★★1/2

(2017) 2 discs. 325 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



Based on Rin Fujiki’s light novel series and the manga adaptation by Eiji Kaneda, this anime series is a bit of a curiosity in that it is a Japanese story about a Western religious institution, the Roman Catholic Church. The protagonists are two young priests, Josef Kou Hiraga and Roberto Nicholas, who travel the world to analyze purportedly miraculous events for possible papal action, assisted occasionally by a master computer hacker who is now a prisoner working for the Vatican. The series encompasses three arcs that ultimately link together. The first, set in Mexico, involves the reported pregnancy of a nun by immaculate conception, which morphs into a murder investigation and then a case of demonic possession that turns out to have bizarre historical implications. The second takes the men to Africa, where the incorruptibility of a priest’s corpse might provide a basis for sanctification, although this leads to a psychological crisis for Roberto and points toward a larger threat that is taken up in the third arc, which is set in an Italian village where a number of extraordinary events ultimately result in the discovery of a secret organization that has long been engaged in efforts to achieve immortality for its members. Integrated with these narratives are plot threads involving the men’s private lives, especially the fate of Hiraga’s younger brother Ryota, who is suffering from terminal cancer and confined to a wheelchair. Marked by very dark visuals and a somber tone, *Vatican Miracle Examiner* has the virtue of novelty but is also likely too odd to be of larger interest. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2017 in a Blu-ray edition, in Japanese with English subtitles, rated TV-MA, extras include a bonus OVA episode. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

### More Pokémon

The latest entry in the long-running *Pokémon* anime franchise, *Pokémon—The Series: Sun & Moon* (Viz, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99) is a 43-episode boxed set that follows Ash Ketchum on what begins as a summer vacation in the tropical Alola region but soon turns into the next exciting chapter in Ketchum’s dream quest to become a Pokémon Master.



**Joni Mitchell: Both Sides Now—Live at the Isle of Wight Festival 1970**

★★★★1/2

(2017) 132 min. DVD: \$17.99, Blu-ray: \$21.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Documentary filmmaker Murray Lerner died in 2017 at age 90. Just before passing, he readied this release capturing Joni Mitchell's troubled set at the disastrous Isle of Wight Festival in 1970—the third and last folk-and-rock music festival there, which drew more than a half-million fans to a multi-day concert extravaganza. By 1970, residents of the Isle of Wight were no longer tolerant of the annual hippie invasion on rented farmland, and local government set out to make the producers, artists, and audience feel uncomfortable and unwanted. The result was growing discord within the pop-up city that arrived to camp out and hear a remarkable slate of top musicians and singer-songwriters. Almost 30 years later, Lerner began drawing from his extensive footage of the 1970 festival, releasing several DVD and Blu-ray discs featuring the live sets of individual artists, including Jimi Hendrix, the Who, the Doors, the Moody Blues, and Leonard Cohen. In this 11-song set from Joni Mitchell, viewers will witness the tension, caught in the distraught looks on Mitchell's face and in her emotional plea to the audience to respect the performers (who had become convenient targets of the crowd's noisy wrath). But of course what truly shines is the music of Mitchell, who was then in the early years of her brand of enchanted, romantic, and sometimes confessional folk songs. Fans will appreciate this set, which includes some of her greatest hits: "Chelsea Morning," "Big Yellow Taxi," "Woodstock," and the titular classic. Viewers have the option of watching the concert itself, or with clips of Mitchell from 2003 commenting on what happened during her appearance. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

**Le Comte Ory** ★★★★★1/2

(2015) 142 min. In French w/ English subtitles. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.99. Naxos (avail. from most distributors).



Rossini's penultimate opera, written a year before he abruptly retired at the age of 37, has never attained the popularity of his best-known works, but it offers a remarkable blend of sophistication, sensuality, bawdiness, and warmth. The title character is a womanizing nobleman disguised as a holy hermit in order to seduce Countess Adèle, who has sworn to be faithful to her husband, a long-absent Crusader. Ory's page Isolier is himself in love with the countess, and plans

to sneak into her castle disguised as a nun—a scheme the count adopts after his hermit imposture is exposed. The return of the Crusaders dashes the hopes of both, although in this 2015 production from the Malmö Opera the knights suddenly drop dead of their wounds upon arrival, leaving the countess free to take a new husband as the curtain falls. There are a few other oddities in Linda Mallik's staging, but for the most part her choices are witty, and the sets and costumes are eye-catching. Conductor Tobias Ringborg leads a scintillating reading of the score, and the vocalism is excellent, with Leonardo Ferrando's high tenor and gift for farce perfect for Count Ory, Erika Miklósa charming as Adèle, and Daniela Pini engaging in the trousers role of Isolier. Lars Arvidson exhibits a rather woolly tone as Ory's tutor, but apart from him the solo and choral work is expert. Overall, this is a first-rate version of a very enjoyable and too often overlooked example of Rossini at his bubbly best. Presented in PCM stereo, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

**The US Festival: 1982 The US Generation**

★★★★

(2018) 96 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).



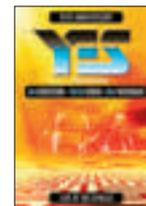
Glenn Aveni's documentary recounts the steps that Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak took to put together the US Festival, a three-day "Woodstock of the '80s." Woz remembers growing up on Americana music, but felt that major festivals never gave the form its due (although he also incorporated punk and new wave). Inexperienced in concert promotion, Woz hired people he trusted, gave them \$2 million, and formed Unuson, short for Unite Us in Song. As the Grateful Dead's Mickey Hart puts it, "He had the vision and the money." Unuson President Dr. Peter Ellis adds that Steve Jobs wasn't happy about it, but Woz had no interest in making US an Apple event. When he selected a San Bernardino location that lacked a natural amphitheater, Woz spent \$10 million to carve one out of a hill. He also hired veteran concert promoter Bill Graham, who clashed with the Unuson people, but proved invaluable. Marky Ramone (the Ramones), Mick Fleetwood (Fleetwood Mac), and other artists add to the commentary alongside full-length performances, including the B-52's with "Strobe Light" and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers playing "Refugee," as well as songs by The Cars, The Police, and Santana. Despite the oppressive heat, staffers kept concertgoers hydrated with water bottles and sprinklers. Woz hoped for a peaceful weekend, and that appears to be how things played out. If Woz lost several million dollars, he expresses no regrets in Aveni's upbeat film. Presented in Dolby Digital stereo, extras include audio commentary by Aveni,

and interview outtakes. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

**Yes: Live at the Apollo**

★★★

(2017) 120 min. DVD: \$15.98, Blu-ray: \$21.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



The schizophrenic nature of this 50th anniversary concert (one of two different Yes lineups launching celebratory tours) filmed live at England's O2 Apollo Manchester theatre is reflected in the 12-song split: six hail from the classic Yes era (1969-78) and six from the '80s Yes period (specifically 1983-91), the latter dominated by songwriter/guitarist Trevor Rabin. *Yes: Live at the Apollo* features only two members from the classic Yes days: still-angelic-voiced lead singer Jon Anderson and literally-surrounded-by-keyboards Rick Wakeman (guitarist Steve Howe and drummer Alan White play for the other Yes, original drummer Bill Bruford is retired, and bass legend Chris Squire passed away in 2015). The pair are joined by Rabin, Lee Pomeroy on bass, and Louis Molino III on drums for a set that seesaws back and forth between Yes's early prog rock classics ("I've Seen All Good People," "And You & I," "Long Distance Runaround," "Heart of the Sunrise") and '80s pop ("Hold On," "Rhythm of Love," "Changes"), closing appropriately with the biggest hits from the two respective periods of Yes: "Roundabout" and "Owner of a Lonely Heart." Musically, the band sounds very good (although classic Yes fans will wince at Rabin's choppy guitar—channeling U2's Edge—on "Long Distance Runaround"), led by Anderson's amazingly strong voice, Wakeman's nimble fingers, and Rabin's blistering fretwork. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

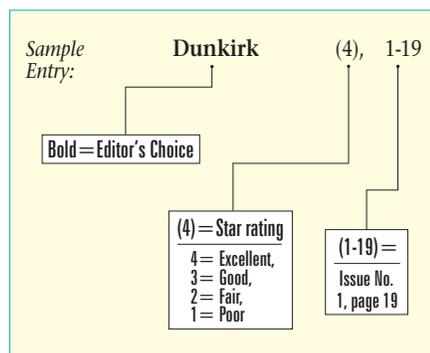
**Rock On**

Following up on their *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Concert* (VL-7/18), which compiled the 2014-17 Rock & Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremonies in their entirety, Time Life has released *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Concert: Encore* (DVD: 4 discs, \$34.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99), featuring the 2010-13 ceremonies. Inductee performers include Genesis, The Stooges, ABBA, Dr. John, Darlene Love, Alice Cooper, Tom Waits, Leon Russell, Freddie King, Donovan, Beastie Boys, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Randy Newman, Albert King, Heart, Quincy Jones, Public Enemy, and Rush.



## Using the Index

*Video Librarian's* Index is arranged by both title and subject, and covers all of the titles reviewed in Volume 33, Issues 1-6 (calendar year 2018). Each entry in the index includes title, star rating, issue number, and page number. Titles which were deemed to be Editor's Choice titles are highlighted in bold. For example, the entry **Dunkirk** (4), 1-19 is interpreted thus: the bold listing signifies an Editor's Choice title which received four stars (4), and was reviewed in Vol. 33, No. 1 on page 19 (1-19). A graphic example is shown below.



## T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

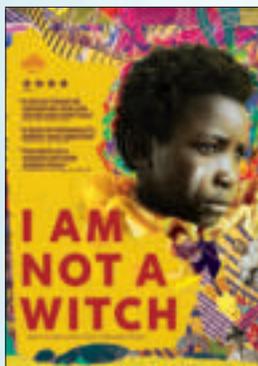
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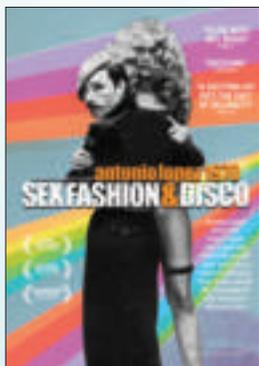
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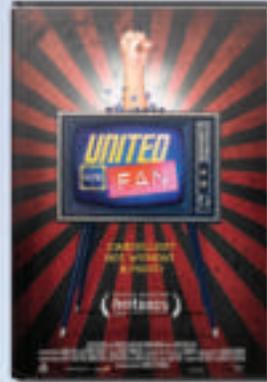
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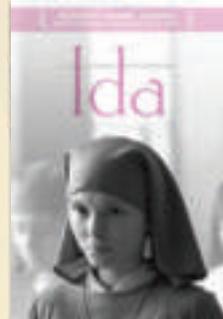
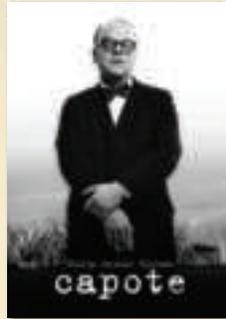
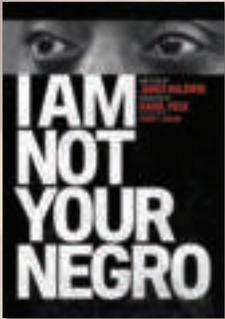


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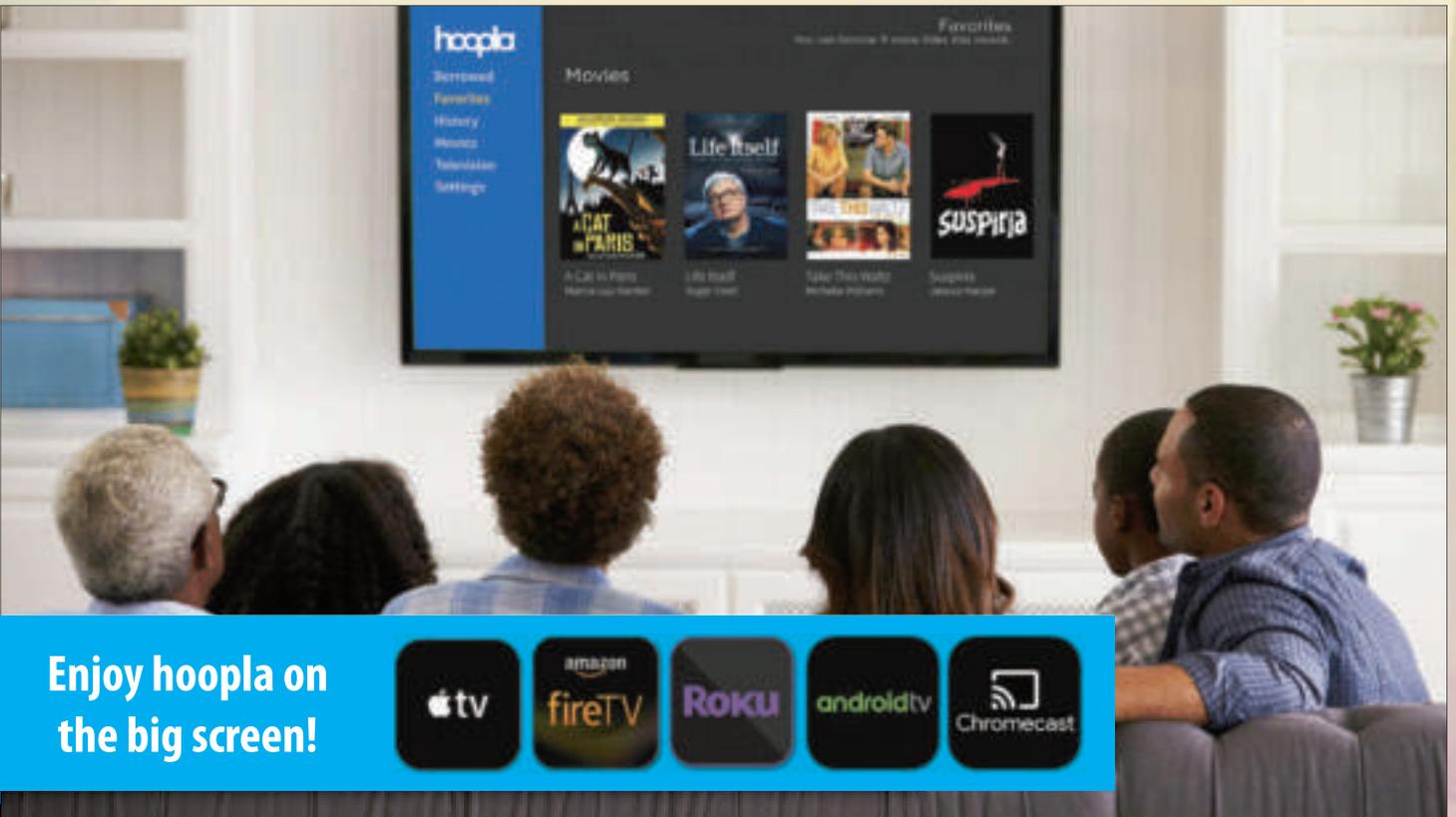
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