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Video Librarian

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To Walk Invisible: The Brontë Sisters | All Governments Lie | The Great War | Strike A Pose | Keep Quiet | Rachel Carson

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Spotlight Review

To Walk Invisible: The Brontë Sisters

★★★★

PBS, 120 min., not rated,
DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray:
\$34.99



The most significant period (1845-48) in the lives of 19th-century British authors Anne, Charlotte, and Emily Brontë—when they were driven by both financial need and creative impulses to publish their first novels under assumed names—is brilliantly dramatized by writer-director Sally Wainwright in this gritty BBC telefilm, which was broadcast stateside on PBS's *Masterpiece* series. While *To Walk Invisible* does portray the sisters—along with their doomed brother Branwell—as youngsters who used their imaginations to create elaborate fantasy worlds, the central focus is on how as adults they reacted to Branwell's sad decline into alcoholism and its impact on their cleric father, turning to writing as a means of sustaining the family, and perhaps saving their brother from himself. The combination here of expert writing and powerful acting superbly captures the differences between the women—the stern aggression of Emily (Chloe Pirrie), the simmering pugnacity of Charlotte (Finn Atkins),

and the delicate reticence of Anne (Charlie Murphy)—while also portraying Branwell (Adam Nagaitis) and their father Patrick (Jonathan Pryce) with a touching degree of sympathy, given the obvious flaws of both men. In addition to the drama surrounding Branwell's troubles, the narrative explores the almost comical difficulties that the sisters confronted in trying to protect their “intellectual property” interests while also preserving their anonymity after their novels became wildly popular. The film ends with brief written captions covering their later lives (which, in the case of Emily and Anne, amounted to only a few months, and not much longer for Charlotte). Featuring striking Yorkshire locations, convincing performances, and great attention to detail, this is an outstanding drama that is unlike most romanticized biographical movies about authors—and is all the better for it. Extras include the behind-the-scenes featurette “An Authentic Look” and the historical segment “The Brontë Story.” Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (F. Swietek)

Cover Photo: © BBC/Gary Moyes.

Note: *Video Librarian* editor Randy Pitman is on vacation. His “Final Frame” column will return in the next issue.

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**DARK
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FILMS**

NEW RELEASE!



**BREAKING POINT:
THE WAR FOR DEMOCRACY
IN UKRAINE**

*From Academy Award Winning
Director Mark Jonathan Harris*

Just days after the revolution in Ukraine, the country was invaded by Russia. Ukrainians of all backgrounds rallied to the country's defense, in the process creating a new sense of Ukrainian nationhood. *Breaking Point: The War for Democracy in Ukraine* is the dramatic and inspiring portrait of people willing to give up their private, normal lives to unite in a collective effort to bring the rule of law and democracy to their country.

Run time: 98 minutes
English Subtitles, Closed Captioned

"Mark Jonathan Harris and Oles Sanin's astonishing documentary presents edge-of-your-seat, you-are-there footage as thousands of protesters in Kiev gather. . . . to demand the removal of pro-Putin Ukraine president Viktor Yanukovich. . . . Highly recommended."

—T. Keogh, Video Librarian Magazine



Order the DVD, PPR, and streaming rights at:

www.darkhollowfilms.com

Video Newsbriefs

"Sid & Nancy," "Hopscotch," "Meantime" on Criterion August Slate

The Criterion Collection's August releases lead off August 8 with Hollywood master Michael Curtiz's unsung 1950 classic *The Breaking Point* (DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95), a white-knuckle adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's charter-boat thriller *To Have and Have Not* that stars John Garfield and Patricia Neal. Coming August 15 is British filmmaker Ronald Neame's 1980 cat-and-mouse spy comedy *Hopscotch* (DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95), starring Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson in a nimble tale of international intrigue based on Brian Garfield's bestselling novel. Also arriving August 15 is a new 2K restoration of Mike Leigh's 1984 drama *Meantime* (DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95), a slow-burning depiction of economic degradation in Thatcher's England that stars Tim Roth and Gary Oldman. Slated for August 22 is filmmaker Sacha Guitry's 1951 late-career black comedy *La poison* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), the writer-director's first collaboration with wildly expressive performer Michel Simon in a quintessential depiction of a marriage gone sour between a village gardener (Simon) and his wife (Germaine Reuver)—who now plan how to do away with each other. Also coming August 22 is a new 4K digital restoration of Alex Cox's 1986 crash-and-burn punk romance *Sid & Nancy* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), which re-imagines the affair between Sex Pistols bassist Sid Vicious (Gary Oldman) and his girlfriend, Nancy Spungen (Chloe Webb).

Ken Burns' "The Vietnam War" Series Arrives September 19 from PBS

PBS Distribution has announced the upcoming release of a highly anticipated new documentary series directed by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, *The Vietnam War* (DVD: 10 discs, \$99.99; Blu-ray: 10 discs, \$129.99), which will bow September 19. Ten years in the making, the series will feature testimony from nearly 100 witnesses, including Americans who fought in the war and others who opposed it, as well as Vietnamese combatants and civilians. Written by Geoffrey C. Ward, the epic documentary series will include rarely seen, digitally re-mastered archival footage from sources around the globe;

photographs taken by some of the most celebrated photojournalists of the 20th century; historic television broadcasts; evocative home movies; and revelatory audio recordings from inside the Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon administrations. With original music by composer Trent Reznor and Yo-Yo Ma, among others, *The Vietnam War* will also feature extras including additional footage, a 45-minute preview program, and more. A companion book—written by Ward, with an introduction by Burns and Novick—will be published by Alfred A. Knopf, Burns's longtime publisher, on September 5.



"Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In" Complete Set Now Available from Time Life

Named by *TV Guide* as one of the "50 Greatest TV Shows of All Time," *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In: The Complete Series* (DVD: 38 discs, \$249.95) is now available exclusively from Time Life (www.TimeLife.com/Laughin). Serving up a fast-moving barrage of rapid-fire one-liners, ongoing sketches, musical numbers, and hilarious social and political satire, the show was an instant hit following its NBC primetime debut in 1968. Hosted by Dan Rowan and Dick Martin, the unique variety series—a psychedelic take-off of a '60s-style happening—perfectly captured the spirit of an era while also launching the careers of many a comic actor and writer, and introducing hip catchphrases like "Sock it to me!", "You bet your sweet bippy!", and "Here come da judge!" The comic regulars included Goldie Hawn's giggly blonde, Lily Tomlin's snorting telephone operator, Judy Carne's "Sock-It-To-Me" girl, Jo Anne Worley's anti-chicken-joke militant, Ruth Buzzi's perpetually-frustrated spinster, and Arte Johnson's "verry interesting" German soldier, to name a few. Over six seasons, the off-the-wall NBC staple would become a pop culture phenomenon and the #1 rated show during the 1968-69 and 1969-70 television seasons. Never before available in its entirety in any format, the set includes all 140 original broadcast episodes plus the pilot, bonus featurettes and interviews, and a 32-page collectible book featuring liner notes from producer/creator George Schlatter.

Heat Up Summer with PBS!

From thrilling dramas to insightful documentaries, PBS has something for everyone!



MY MOTHER AND OTHER STRANGERS

Londoner Rose Coyne is the only "stranger" in her rural Northern Ireland town until 4,000 Americans arrive at the nearby WWII airbase. When she finds herself drawn to young Captain Dreyfuss, will Rose risk her family for forbidden love?



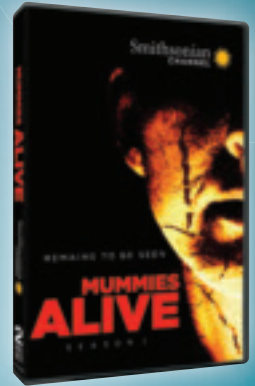
FOOD: DELICIOUS SCIENCE

Dr. Michael Mosley and botanist James Wong celebrate the physics, chemistry, and biology inside every bite of your next meal. Take a global culinary adventure to reveal the science that keeps our food healthy, delicious, and crave-worthy.



THE TUNNEL: SABOTAGE, SEASON 2

Elise (Clémence Poésy) and Karl (Stephen Dillane) are reunited to investigate the abduction of a French couple from the Eurotunnel, leaving behind their young daughter. The case is complicated by a plane crash in the Channel, killing all on board.



MUMMIES ALIVE

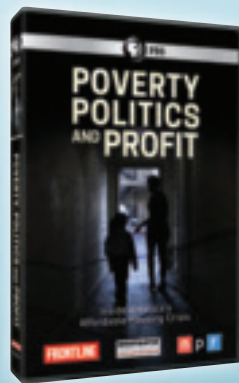
Mummies are turning up in the most unexpected places. Most are in astonishingly good condition with great stories to tell. Discover their secrets and get a look into lost civilizations.

FOUR NEW POWER-PACKED FRONTLINE TITLES



AMERICAN PATRIOT

The Bundy family's fight against the U.S. government.



POVERTY, POLITICS, AND PROFIT

Investigate the billions of dollars spent on housing the poor and why so few get the help they need.



THE FISH ON MY PLATE

Author Paul Greenberg spends a year eating fish, investigating ocean health, and his own.



SECOND CHANCE KIDS

Can juveniles who have been imprisoned for murder get a second chance?

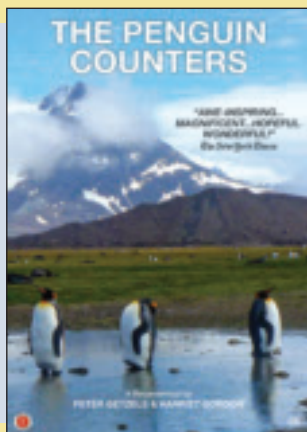
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PBS | Educational Media | Find these and other great DVDs at shopPBS.org/teachershop



FIRST RUN FEATURES PRESENTS



THE PENGUIN COUNTERS

68 minutes, color, \$19.95, FRF 917407

STREET DATE: JULY 11

Armed with low-tech gear and high-minded notions that penguin populations hold the key to human survival, Ron Naveen lays bare his 30 year love affair with the world's most pristine scientific laboratory: Antarctica. *The Penguin Counters* follows Ron and his ragtag team of field biologists to one of the harshest corners of the planet, where they track the impact of climate change and ocean health on penguin populations.

From the tip of Argentina to the ominous Deception Island, the film is a treacherous yet uplifting journey by a 21st century Dr. Doolittle, who dreams of conserving this stunning, fragile region for future generations.

"Stunning...engrossing! Eye-popping scenery and wildlife at one of the world's most remote destinations." -Earth Island Journal

"AWE-INSPIRING, MAGNIFICENT..."

"...WONDERFUL!"

- The New York Times



VINCE GIORDANO

THERE'S A FUTURE IN THE PAST

90 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917391

STREET DATE: JULY 11

What does it take to keep Jazz Age music going strong in the 21st century? Two words: Vince Giordano – a bandleader, musician, historian, scholar, collector, and NYC institution. For nearly 40 years, Vince Giordano and The Nighthawks have brought the joyful syncopation of the 1920s and '30s to life with their virtuosity and vintage musical instruments.

This beautifully crafted documentary offers an intimate and energetic portrait of a truly devoted musician and preservationist, taking us behind the scenes of the recording of HBO's Grammy award-winning *Boardwalk Empire* soundtrack, and alongside Giordano as he shares his passion for hot jazz with a new generation of music and swing-dance fans.

"CRITIC'S PICK! The next best thing to dancing on air." - The New York Times

"ILLUMINATING! Packed with sizzling performances." - The Los Angeles Times



THE SUMMER OF ALL MY PARENTS

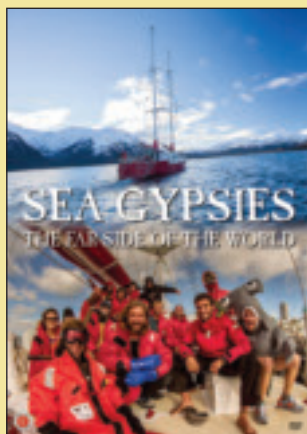
97 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917421D

STREET DATE: AUGUST 8

14-year-old Laura and her older sister Joséphine spend the summer holidays shuttling between their divorced parents – secretly pregnant Mom and bachelor Dad. But when Joséphine falls for a hunk and winds up in the wrong crowd, Laura turns out to be more responsible than the adults who spend their time 'educating' her.

"The cast is impeccable, the script is innovative, the tone is right, and the humor and music are joyful!"

-Paris-Montmartre Magazine



SEA GYPSIES

THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD

77 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917438D

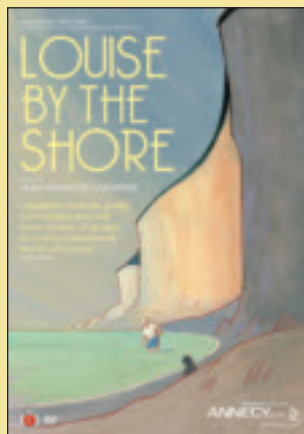
STREET DATE: AUGUST 8

The vessel is *Infinity*, a 120-foot hand-built sailboat, crewed by a band of miscreants. The journey, an 8,000 mile Pacific crossing from New Zealand to Patagonia, with a stop in Antarctica – a mad voyage of reckless adventure just for the thrill of it.

Along the way the crew will battle hurricanes of ice and tear every sail they have. At the heart of this dramatic sailing adventure is a quest for awe and a sense of wonder with the raw power of the natural world.

"It will move and inspire you!"

-National Geographic Explorer



LOUISE BY THE SHORE

75 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917414D

STREET DATE: AUGUST 8

On the last day of summer at a seaside town, 75-year-old Louise misses the last train out and finds the town utterly deserted. Days, weeks, months pass in this dreamlike interlude as Louise, like a modern-day *Crusoe*, learns to fend for herself, her solitude interrupted only by memories of her past.

Evoking *The Twilight Zone* and Impressionist watercolors, this lovely, imaginative film is an "animation for adults" only in the sense of its mature and reflective sensibility.

"A richly layered work, awash with poetry. Will move viewers of all ages." -Cineuropa



GERMANS & JEWS

76 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917445D

STREET DATE: SEPTEMBER 12

Today, Europe's fastest growing Jewish population is in Berlin. Considered one of the most democratic societies in the world, Germany has assumed the position of moral leader of Europe. This development couldn't have been imagined in 1945.

Through personal stories *Germans & Jews* explores Germany's transformation as a society, from silence about the Holocaust to facing it head on. Unexpectedly, a nuanced story of reconciliation emerges.

"Incisive...sharp insights. A real cause for hope, despite history." -The New York Times

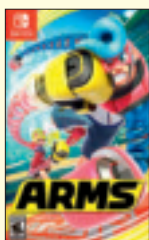
Mixed Media features new release information on upcoming video games and TV series on DVD/Blu-ray, as well as notable older titles that are re-priced or new to DVD/Blu-ray.

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.

Available Now

ARMS (Nintendo, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). In this fighting game using Nintendo Switch motion controllers, players choose a fighting champion, and then equip extendable arms for battle.



The Surge (Focus, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this challenging third-person sci-fi action-RPG from the creators of *Lords of the Fallen*, players explore and fight through a dystopian wasteland overrun by malfunctioning machines and fearsome enemies.

July 9—July 15

Final Fantasy XII: The Zodiac Age (Square Enix, PS4: \$49.99, Rated: T). This high-definition remaster of the classic 2006 third-person fantasy-RPG game takes players on a grand adventure in the dangerous world of Ivalice.



July 16—July 22

Splatoon 2 (Nintendo, Switch: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). The squid-like Inklings return in this colorful and chaotic, family-friendly, third-person action-shooter sequel in which players splat ink and claim turf.

July 30—August 5

Shadow Tactics: Blades of the Shogun (Kalypso, PS4/XOne: \$49.99, Rated: M). In this third-person top-down tactical stealth game set in Japan's Edo period, players can be one of five characters with their own

unique skill sets as they face seemingly impossible challenges.

August 6—August 12

Mega Man Legacy Collection 2 (Capcom, PS4/XOne: \$19.99, Rated: E10+). The first *Mega Man Legacy Collection* focused on Mega Man's original third-person side-scrolling 8-bit adventures, while this second set compiles *Mega Man 7, 8, 9, and 10*, which appeared on platforms ranging from the Super Nintendo to the Xbox 360.



August 13—August 19

Agents of Mayhem (Deep Silver, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). From the makers of the *Saints Row* series, this third-person action superhero game pits agents of the titular group against the evil members of the LEGION organization in South Korea's bustling capital city of Seoul.

August 20—August 26

F1 2017 (Codemasters, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). This official racing simulation game of the 2017 FIA Formula One World Championship features the full 2017 season calendar and the option to drive classic iconic cars.

Madden NFL 18 (EA, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: RP). The latest release in the most popular football franchise series features "Play Now Live!", which allows players to cue up the best real-world NFL match-ups each week.



Uncharted: The Lost Legacy (Naughty Dog, PS4: \$39.99, Rated: RP). Set during the year prior to the events of *Uncharted 4*, this add-on third-person action-adventure side story finds Chloe and Nadine teaming up in search of an ancient treasure in India.

August 27—September 2

Everybody's Golf (Sony, PS4: \$39.99, Rated: E). This golf simulation game featuring a simple three-button click system will appeal to both *Hot Shot Golf* fans and new players.

Warriors All-Stars (Koei Tecmo, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: RP). This third-person

action-adventure game features a wide selection of fan-favorite characters including Ryu Hayabusa from *Ninja Gaiden* and Kasumi from *Dead or Alive*.

Yakuza Kiwami (Sega, PS4: \$29.99, Rated: M). This remake of the original PS2-era third-person action game puts players in the role of Kazuma Kiryu, who must fight his way up through the ranks of the Yakuza.

TV on DVD/Blu-ray

Available Now

Bones: The Final Chapter (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). This 2017 12th and final season wraps up the escapades of crime-solving couple Bones and Booth (Emily Deschanel and David Boreanaz).

Grimm: Season Six (Universal, DVD: 4 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.98). Oregon homicide cop Nick (David Guntoli) must protect the city of Portland from a villainous new mayor (Sasha Roiz) in this 2017 sixth season of the police procedural fantasy hybrid series.



Incorporated (Paramount, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). Co-executive produced by Ben Affleck and Matt Damon, this Syfy-aired futuristic corporate drama series starring Sean Teale, Julia Ormond, and Dennis Haysbert only ran for one 2016-17 season.

The Jamie Foxx Show: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99). This 1998-99 third season of the sitcom starring Jamie Foxx as a Hollywood hopeful features guest appearances by Jo Marie Payton and Gerald Levert.

Power: The Complete Third Season (Anchor Bay, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Co-produced by Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, this 2016 third season of the Manhattan nightclub drama stars Omari Hardwick, Naturi Naughton, and Lela Loren.



Prison Break: Event Series (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$39.99). This 2017 event series is essentially the de facto fifth season of the 2005-09 drama series

Best Sellers & New Releases from KINOLORBEREDU.COM



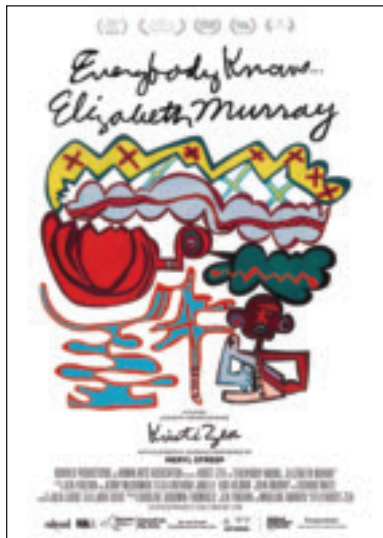
OBIT.

At a time when the free press is under threat, OBIT. takes a rare look inside one of the United States' foremost journalistic institutions, *The New York Times*. The steadfast writers of the paper's Obituaries section approach their work with journalistic rigor and narrative flair, each day depositing the details of a handful of extraordinary lives into the cultural memory. Going beyond the byline and into the minds of those chronicling the recently deceased, OBIT. is ultimately a celebration of life that conveys the central role journalism plays in capturing and reporting vital pieces of our history.

"A must-see. Breathes new life into the obituary."

-Jim Slotek, *Toronto Sun*

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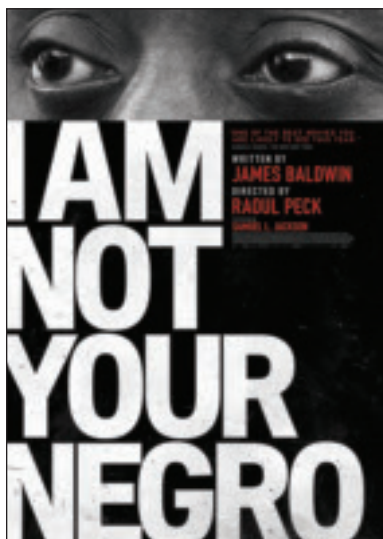
EVERYBODY KNOWS... ELIZABETH MURRAY

An intimate portrait of the groundbreaking artist Elizabeth Murray who made an indelible imprint on contemporary art as one of the great painters of our time. In 2005, Murray was the fifth woman to be celebrated with a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. This film explores her remarkable journey from an impoverished childhood to artistic maverick. Narrated by Meryl Streep.

"Shows the great variety of Murray's always vivid, colorful work, and culminates with a triumph not just for Murray but also, as the film takes pains to point out, for women in American art: a retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art."

-Glenn Kenny, *The New York Times*

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I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO is an examination of racism in America through the lens of James Baldwin's unfinished book, *Remember The House*. Intended as an account of the lives of Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, Jr., each of whom James Baldwin personally knew, only a 30-page manuscript of the book was ever completed. Combining Baldwin's manuscript with footage of depictions of African-Americans throughout American history, I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO uses Baldwin's words to illuminate the pervasiveness of American racism and the efforts to curtail it.

**2017 Academy Award®
Nominee for Best
Documentary Feature**

With PPR: \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499



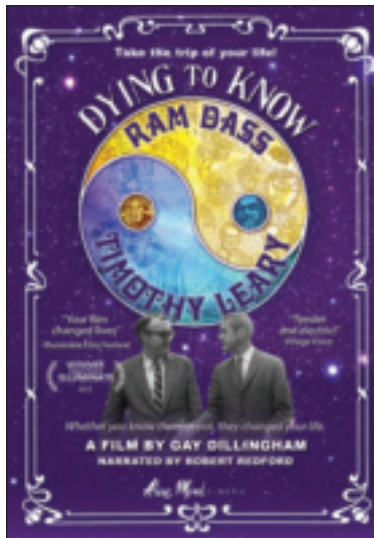
RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD

This revelatory documentary brings to light the overlooked influence of Indigenous people on popular music in North America. Focusing on music icons like Link Wray, Jimi Hendrix, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Charley Patton, Robbie Robertson, and Randy Castillo, RUMBLE: THE INDIANS WHO ROCKED THE WORLD shows how these pioneering Native American musicians helped shape the soundtracks of our lives. RUMBLE features interviews with musicians, historians, and experts including: Buddy Guy, Steven Van Zandt, Tony Bennett, Martin Scorsese, Steven Tyler, George Clinton, Iggy Pop, Marky Ramone (The Ramones), Robert Trujillo (Metallica), Slash (Guns 'N' Roses) and more.

"Revelatory in almost every sense. Astoundingly rich and resonant."

-Justin Lowe, *The Hollywood Reporter*

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DYING TO KNOW

In the early 1960s Harvard psychology professors Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert began probing the edges of consciousness through their experiments with psychedelics. Leary became a missionary for mind altering drugs, igniting a global counter-culture movement and Alpert journeyed to the East to become Ram Dass, a spiritual teacher for a new generation and the author of the book "Be Here Now." Now, nearly 50 years later, a new documentary incorporates 80 years of rare footage and never before seen interviews and re-assesses their lives through the lens of their work, successes and failures, collaboration, and remarkable journey through life. Narrated by Robert Redford.

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DAWSON CITY: FROZEN TIME

Located just south of the Arctic Circle, Dawson City was settled in 1896 and became the center of the Canadian Gold Rush. It was also the final stop for a distribution chain that sent prints and newsreels to the Yukon. The films were seldom, if ever, returned. The now-famous Dawson City Collection was uncovered in 1978 when a bulldozer working its way through a parking lot dug up a horde of film cans. Director Bill Morrison draws on these permafrost-protected, rare silent films and newsreels, pairing them with archival footage, interviews, historical photographs, and score by Sigur Rós collaborator Alex Somers.

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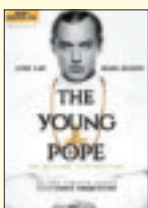
starring Wentworth Miller and Dominic Purcell.

South Park: The Complete Twentieth Season (Paramount, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99). This 2016 20th season of Trey Parker and Matt Stone's long-running Comedy Central animated series includes the episodes "Member Berries," "Skank Hunt," and "Wieners Out."

The Strain: Season 3 (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). Based on the vampire horror novel trilogy by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan, this 2016 third season of the FX series stars Corey Stoll and David Bradley.

Workaholics: The Final Season (Paramount, DVD: 2 discs, \$19.99). Co-workers and roommates (Adam Devine, Blake Anderson, Anders Holm) wrap things up in this 2017 seventh and final season of the Comedy Central-aired series.

The Young Pope (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Directed by Paolo Sorrentino, this dramatic series starring Diane Keaton and James Cromwell tells the fictional story of Lenny Belardo (Jude Law), aka Pius XIII, the first-ever American Pope.



July 11

Class: Series One (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$35.99). A spin-off from *Doctor Who*, the 2016 debut season of this sci-fi drama follows students dealing with the effects of time travel, aliens, and teen life at Coal Hill Academy.

The Magicians: Season Two (Universal, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$44.98). Based on the 2009 fantasy novel by Lev Grossman, this 2017 sophomore season of the Syfy-aired series set at a magical college stars Jason Ralph, Stella Maeve, Hale Appleman, and Olivia Taylor Dudley.

Prime Suspect Tennison (PBS, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99). This 2017 debut season of the prequel to the long-running *Prime Suspect* series follows Jane Tennison (Stefanie Martini) as she comes up in the ranks as a North London police recruit in 1973.



The Missing: Season 2 (Anchor Bay, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98). This 2016 second

season of the crime drama series following the mystery of a missing German girl stars David Morrissey, Keeley Hawes, and Roger Allam.

The Tunnel—Sabotage: The Complete Second Season (PBS, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Clémence Poésy and Stephen Dillane are back as French and English investigators who reunite to tackle a new crime committed in the Eurotunnel in this 2016 second season of the remake of the Scandinavian series *The Bridge*.



Underground: Season Two (Sony, DVD: 3 discs, \$30.99). Aired on WGN America, this 2017 second and final season of the short-lived pre-Civil War period drama stars Jurnee Smollett-Bell and Aldis Hodge.

July 18

The 100: The Complete Fourth Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.98). The survivors of a post-apocalyptic trauma begin to turn against each other in this 2017 fourth season of the sci-fi series starring Eliza Taylor and Paige Turco.

The Expanse: Season Two (Universal, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Based on novels by James S. A. Corey, this 2017 second season of the series centered on colonizing the solar system stars Shohreh Aghdashloo, Thomas Jane, and Steven Strait.



Grantchester: The Complete Third Season (PBS, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). This 2017 third season of the drama series based on James Runcie's *Grantchester Mysteries* books reunites a small village priest (James Norton) and a DCI (Robson Green) who join together to solve crimes.

Teen Wolf: Season 6, Part 1 (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). The pack finishes up their last days of high school and an ally is lost in this first set of episodes from the 2016-17 sixth and final season of the MTV-aired supernatural drama.

July 25

Diff'rent Strokes: The Complete Sixth Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 3 discs, \$19.95). Black teens Arnold and Willis

(Gary Coleman and Todd Bridges) enjoy life with their white adoptive family in this 1983-84 sixth season of the sitcom, which features guest appearances by Mr. T, Janet Jackson, David Hasselhoff, and Milton Berle.

Emerald City: Season One (Universal, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.98). Twenty-something nurse Dorothy Gale (Adria Arjona) is transported to the whimsical Land of Oz in this short-lived 2017 fantasy series that also stars Joely Richardson and Vincent D'Onofrio.



Girls: The Final Season (HBO, DVD: 2 discs, \$24.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$34.98). Brooklyn friends tie up loose ends in this 2017 sixth and final season of Lena Dunham's acclaimed HBO drama.

Pretty Little Liars: The Seventh and Final Season (Warner, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.99). Picking up five years after the previous finale, this 2016-17 seventh and final season of the Freeform-aired drama series stars Troian Bellisario, Ashley Benson, Tyler Blackburn, and Lucy Hale.



August 1

Big Little Lies (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Created by David E. Kelley, this 2017 black comedy HBO-aired miniseries centers on the murderous secrets of mothers of first-grade students, and stars Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, and Shailene Woodley.

Crashing: The Complete First Season (HBO, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.98). Co-executive produced by Judd Apatow, this 2017 first season about a down-and-out standup comic (Pete Holmes) also features Artie Lange, T.J. Miller, and Sarah Silverman.

Remember Me (PBS, DVD: \$34.99). This 2014 three-part mystery serial focusing on a Yorkshire retiree (Michael Palin) who is the common denominator for various strange happenings also stars Jodie Comer and Julia Sawalha.

August 8

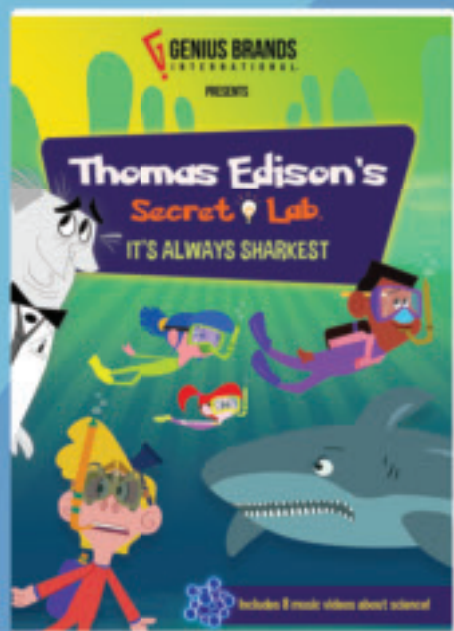
Blindspot: The Complete Second Season (Warner, DVD: 5 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray:



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4 discs, \$44.98). An FBI team and a tattooed amnesiac work together to solve crimes in this 2016-17 sophomore season starring Jaimie Alexander, Sullivan Stapleton, and Audrey Esparza.

Cinematic Titanic: The Complete Collection (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.95). In 2007, five of the original cast/writers of *Mystery Science Theatre 3000*—Joel Hodgson, Trace Beaulieu, J. Elvis Weinstein, Mary Jo Pehl, and Frank Conniff—launched a six-year comedic tour with a critically acclaimed live show, and all 12 movies riffed by the troupe are collected here.



August 15

Billions: Season Two (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$42.99). A U.S. Attorney (Paul Giamatti) looks to bust a shady hedge fund manager (Damian Lewis) in this 2017 second season of the Showtime-aired drama series.

Bull: Season One (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99). Michael Weatherly stars as the head of a jury consulting group in this 2016-17 debut season based on the early years of executive producer Dr. Phil and also featuring Freddy Rodríguez and Geneva Carr.



DC's Legends of Tomorrow: The Complete Second Season (Warner, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$44.98). The titular crime-fighting team travel through history in this 2016-17 second season of the DC action series starring Victor Garber, Brandon Routh, and Arthur Darvill.

Murdoch Mysteries: Season 10 (Acorn, DVD: 5 discs, \$59.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$59.99). This 2016-17 10th season featuring Toronto detective William Murdoch (Yannick Bisson) and his crew includes the two-part opener "Great Balls of Fire."

NCIS: New Orleans—The Third Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99). Scott Bakula, C.C.H. Pounder, and Lucas Black are back in this Louisiana-set spin-off of the long-running series built around cases involving military personnel.

Police Story: Season Two (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs, \$34.99). This 1974-75 second season from the LAPD-set anthol-

ogy series includes guest appearances by James Farentino, Tina Louise, Frankie Avalon, Jackie Cooper, Shelley Fabares, and Lloyd Bridges.

Rhoda: The Final Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 2 discs, \$22.98). Valerie Harper's stint as buoyant divorcée Rhoda Morgenstern comes to an end with this 1978 fifth and final season of the *Mary Tyler Moore Show* spin-off.

Riverdale: The Complete First Season (Warner, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$39.99). The titular *Archie Comics* safe haven is the setting for a dramatic retelling in this 2017 debut season that stars Cole Sprouse, Lili Reinhart, Luke Perry, and K.J. Apa as Archie Andrews.



August 22

800 Words: Season 2, Volume 2 (Acorn, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99). A widower newspaper columnist tries to heal his family in a wacky small town in this 2016-17 second set from the sophomore season of the dramedy series starring Erik Thomson and Melina Vidler.

Brooklyn Nine-Nine: Season Four (Universal, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). The crazy employees of an NYC precinct are back with this 2016-17 fourth season that includes guest appearances by Maya Rudolph and Eric Roberts.

Dominion Creek: Series Two (Acorn, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99). The next set of challenges for an Irish family searching for riches during the 1890s Gold Rush in America is presented in this 2017 second season starring Owen McDonnell, Dara Devaney, and Seán T. Ó Meallaigh.

Just Shoot Me: The Complete Series (Shout! Factory, DVD: 19 discs, \$79.98). This 1997-2003 Emmy-nominated ensemble comedy series following the staff of a fashion magazine stars Laura San Giacomo, David Spade, Wendie Malick, and George Segal.



Lucifer: The Complete Second Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.98). An L.A. detective (Lauren German) and the human personification of the Devil (Tom Ellis) balance a growing personal attraction with crime-solving in this 2016-17 second

season of the supernatural crime series.

Supergirl: The Complete Second Season (Warner, DVD: 5 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$54.98). Superman's cousin Kara Zor-El (Melissa Benoist) uses her powers to help the people of National City in this 2016-17 second season of the action series that also stars Mehdad Brooks and Chyler Leigh.



August 29

Chicago Fire: Season Five (Universal, DVD: 6 discs, \$44.98). This 2016-17 fifth season following the workers of Chicago Firehouse 51 features various high-tension storylines and stars Jesse Spencer, Taylor Kinney, and Monica Raymund.

Chicago Med: Season Two (Universal, DVD: 6 discs, \$44.98). The ER department of Gaffney Chicago Medical Center is the setting of this 2016-17 second season of the Dick Wolf drama spin-off featuring Nick Gehlfuss, Yaya DaCosta, and Torrey DeVitto.

Delicious: Series One (Acorn, DVD: \$34.99). Acclaimed chef Leo (Iain Glen) is caught between his friendly ex and current wife (Dawn French and Emilia Fox) in this 2016-17 first series of episodes from the culinary Britcom.

Gotham: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$54.98). The secrets behind the criminal Court of the Owls set the stage for this 2016-17 third season of the DC Comics-based crime-drama that stars Ben McKenzie, Donal Logue, and David Mazouz.



The Originals: The Complete Fourth Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.98). An ancient vampire family reigns supreme in contemporary New Orleans in this 2017 fourth season of the supernatural *Vampire Diaries* spin-off that stars Joseph Morgan and Claire Holt.

Looking Ahead

Slated for September is the debut season of **Lethal Weapon**, the third season of **The Flash**, the fifth season of **Arrow**, and the 12th season of **Supernatural**. Coming in October is the second season of **Humans**.

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Martin Luther didn't mean to spark the Reformation with his 95 Theses, but his realization that salvation comes through faith and not works ignited the revolution that changed the world. As Pope Leo X hounds and fights him at every turn, will Luther have the courage to stand strong—even to death? Find out with the fifteenth episode of the *Torchlighters* for children ages eight and up. Animated, 30 minutes.

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★★★
★★★★^{1/2}

A Man Named Martin, Parts 1 and 2

Part 1 examines the life and teaching of this great reformer who stood against unbiblical teaching, refusing to back down even when threatened. Documentary, 80 minutes.

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Part 2 examines the oft-times unethical teachings and doctrines of the late Medieval Church and how Luther addressed them. Documentary, 65 minutes.

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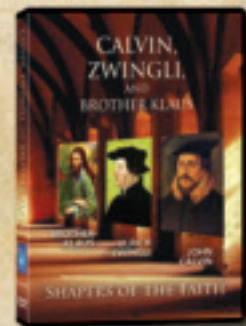


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Knox

Renegade. Reformer. Revolutionary. Five centuries after his birth, the influence of John Knox can still be felt across his native Scotland and throughout the world. Presented by Scottish actor Phillip Todd, *Knox* takes another look at the life and legacy of one of Christianity's great reformers. Incorporating dramatic animations and interviews with leading experts, the story of John Knox is brought to you as you've never seen it before. Documentary, 77 minutes.

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Calvin, Zwingli, and Br. Klaus: Shapers of the Faith

John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and Brother Klaus (Niklaus von Flüe) were three very different men who shaped the Christian faith in Switzerland. John Calvin was an intellectual giant of the Reformation, Ulrich Zwingli was a humble priest who brought reform to the church and died in battle, and Brother Klaus was a mystic who left everything to seek God in the wilderness. In comparing and contrasting these three figures, we see how the practice of the faith changed in Switzerland in the late Middle Ages. Docu-drama, 60 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

Actor Martinez ★★1/2

Breaking Glass, 75 min., not rated, DVD: \$21.99

Ostensibly a ménage of behind-the-scenes footage and raw film from a fictionalized documentary chronicling the life of small-time Denver actor Arthur Martinez, Mike Ott and Nathan Silver's meta-film-within-a-film is an alternatively intriguing and off-putting exploration into the deceptive art of performance. Martinez, who like the other cast members seems to be playing a version of himself here, makes for an interesting and challenging choice for a documentarian's subject, at turns withdrawn, selfish, and given to talking in maddening circles about his craft while conversely displaying occasional moments of compassion. Ott and Silver also appear as "themselves," driving the conflict of the "plot" by holding a casting call for Arthur's onscreen girlfriend (Lindsay Burdge), a woman they intentionally try to model after Arthur's ex-wife in a bid to provoke some emotional honesty from their subject. But in an industry built upon constant fabrication and obfuscation, how can these filmmakers possibly get anywhere close to the truth? Narrative traditionalists are likely to balk at trying to navigate the film's constant digressions and questioning of reality, but those willing to take a journey into a land of experimental disorientation will find this refreshingly challenging and not without its beguiling moments. A strong optional purchase. (J. Cruz)



The Age of Shadows ★★

Warner, 140 min., in Korean w/English subtitles or English-dubbed, not rated, DVD: \$17.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$19.99

South Korean director Kim Jee-woon's sprawling spy thriller, set in the under-

ground resistance during the Japanese occupation of Korea in the 1920s, is inspired by a real-life bombing in Seoul in 1923, but the plot is complete fantasy, a double agent cloak-and-dagger tale of loyalty, betrayal, shifting allegiances, feints, blackmail, and all sorts of unexpected twists. Song Kang-ho stars as a Korean-born police detective working for the occupying Japanese police to root out the resistance and he engages in a cat-and-mouse game with a cagey agent (Gong Yoo) who is on a mission to bomb a major Japanese stronghold. The story travels from Seoul to Shanghai and back, and features a superbly directed sequence on a train as the Japanese police search for the Korean resistance agents. Song's conflicted officer—the most interesting character in a cast of driven Koreans fighting for liberation and sadistic Japanese occupiers who torture and kill Korean suspects—keeps audiences guessing where his allegiances ultimately lie, right up to the satisfying climax. South Korea's submission for the Academy Awards, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Alena ★★1/2

KimStim, 83 min., in Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99

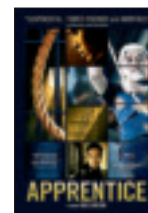
Based on a graphic novel by Kim W. Andersson, Daniel di Grado's film—part psychological thriller, part horror movie—inevitably invites comparisons to Stephen King's *Carrie*. The title character, played by Amalia Holm, is a student from the local public high school who arrives at a posh girls' academy after suffering a terrible traumatic experience that she cannot talk about—even with the therapist who arranged her transfer. Once there, she is bullied by rich mean girl Filippa (Molly Nutley), who despises Alena's low-class background and is jealous of her skill on the lacrosse field, where until now Filippa has been the dominant player. Although befriended by sympathetic classmate Fabienne (Felice Jankel), Alena's real protector is Josefin (Rebecka Nyman), her best friend from public school, who mysteriously appears whenever she is in trouble and deals forcefully with her tormentors. Josefin reacts badly, however, to Alena's new friendship with Fabienne. Di Grado is a stylish filmmaker, but secrets of Alena's past that are meant to come as shocking surprises will be obvious to most viewers long before they are revealed, and Nutley's one-note villainy is so over-the-top that it often seems unintentionally comic rather than frightening. Still, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



Apprentice ★★★

Film Movement, 96 min., in Malay w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

A gripping psychological drama from Singapore, writer-director Boo Junfeng's *Apprentice* begins as an unusual stalker tale but ends up being about implacable destinies. Aiman (Fir Rahman) is a former gang member who found discipline and purpose while in the military. Now a civilian, Aiman has become a guard at a maximum security prison, performing his job with unsmiling efficiency. But soon he begins pursuing a private agenda, studying files in off-limits rooms and intentionally catching the eye of the prison's longtime executioner, Rahim (Wan Hanafi Su), who begins teaching Aiman tricks of the hangman's trade. As the two begin to bond, it's clear that Rahim has been leading a lonely life and suppressing an accrued sense of guilt for killing so many over so long. He welcomes the presence of Aiman, in whom he sees some resemblance to his own younger, once-hopeful self. But Aiman is after something more than mentorship: Rahim executed Aiman's father decades before. What Aiman intends to do about Rahim is something that even Aiman doesn't know, but a cat-and-mouse game ensues between the two as Rahim becomes wise to Aiman's backstory. Junfeng maintains a suspenseful edge, contrasting the clockwork rhythms of Aiman's job with the character's more chaotic private life in this gripping character study. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

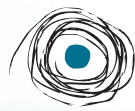


Beauty and the Beast ★★★

Disney, 129 min., PG, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

Director Bill Condon's hybrid live-action/digital remake of the "tale as old as time" boasts sumptuous special effects and enhanced character backstories. Set in rural France in 1740, the story quickly introduces brainy Belle (Emma Watson), whose father (Kevin Kline) has been imprisoned in the Beast's labyrinthine castle. Because he was once a spoiled young prince—spurning pleas for assistance from an old lady witch—the ghostly, horned Beast (Dan Stevens) has been cursed until he can find true love. Eager to escape the confines of her provincial village and unwelcome romantic advances by boorish, boastful Gaston (Luke Evans), Belle offers to exchange places with her beloved father. Belle is immediately welcomed by the Beast's anthropomorphic household (voiced by Emma Thompson, Ewan McGregor, Ian McKellen, Gugu Mbatha-Raw, Audra McDonald, and Stanley Tucci) with a dazzling, Busby Berkeley-like "Be Our Guest" musical number. Watson exudes feisty cleverness,





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AFTER THE STORM

(AVAILABLE 8/15)*

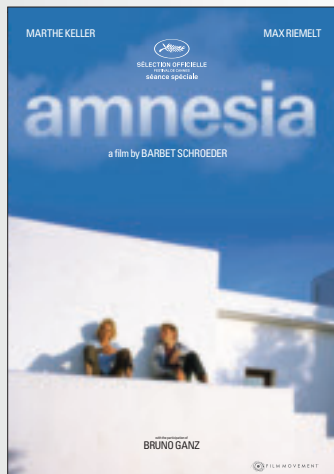
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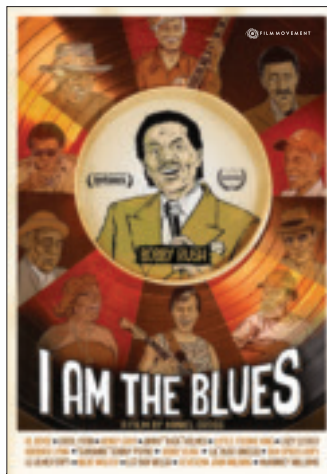
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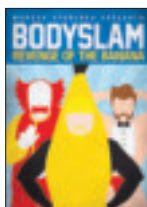
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while Stevens personifies the gruff yet intellectual Beast via "Mova," a facial capture system. Beauty and Beast bond over their shared love of literature here, but too much has been made of Gaston's admiring sidekick LeFou (Josh Gad) being gay; it's a subtle and welcome nuance that reflects contemporary social consciousness, which has been raised since 1991, when Disney's animated version was an Oscar nominee for Best Picture. Four new songs have been added—including the Celine Dion bittersweet ballad "How Does a Moment Last Forever"—in this elegant, nostalgic, and enchanting remake. Recommended. (S. Granger)

Bodyslam: Revenge of the Banana ★★

Virgil, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99



Presented by Morgan Spurlock, filmmakers Ryan Harvie and John Paul Horstmann's *Bodyslam* centers on the Seattle Semi-Pro (SSP) wrestling league, which trains amateurs to perform—in a community theater-like club setting—all of the exaggerated flips, falls, and mock violence that the big boys and girls do on national television. If there is any fun to this, it's in the bizarre costumes and personas—such as mad clown Ronald McFondle (real name Josh Black)—that the wrestlers don before small but enthusiastic crowds. Much of the documentary focuses on the sense of family and community that SSP gives to members, who largely seem to be misfits in search of a secondary identity. Viewers witness a few in their day jobs or riding bikes or doing home chores, ordinary activities that stand in sharp contrast to their work with the SSP. A heightened drama begins about halfway through *Bodyslam* when a rogue SSP wrestler called the Banana (Paul Richards) becomes disgruntled and lodges a complaint with Washington state's sports licensing board. The result is a lot of legal problems for the SSP, including an absurd scene in which a stone-faced cop watches a wrestling match and takes notes. Unfortunately, while the wrestling action is suitably visceral, both the oddball subject and the participants themselves are not particularly captivating. Optional. (T. Keogh)

bwoy ★★

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



Broadway actor Anthony Rapp plays the lead character in writer-director John G. Young's low-budget, fitfully interesting *bwoy*, a story of repressed guilt and desire rolling over into obsession. Rapp is Brad, an unemployed physician who is biding his time as a bill collector for a credit card company. He's also a grieving father whose young son died in a

backyard accident, and he is estranged from his exceptionally patient wife (De'Adre Aziza), surfing the web and looking for ways to make anonymous sexual connections with men. Eventually, Brad finds what he's looking for in Yenny (Jimmy Brooks), a young man living in Jamaica who is 20 years Brad's junior. The two establish a flirtatious rapport, with Yenny taking on the persona of a bad-boy son looking for a paternal lover. Brad becomes increasingly fixated on communicating with Yenny all hours of the day via text messaging and Skype. And, not surprisingly, this makes Brad an ideal mark for a scam that viewers will see coming from a mile away. Optional. (T. Keogh)

Catfight ★★1/2

MPI, 95 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Writer-director Onur Tukel's schematic dark comedy isn't as clever as it pretends to be but still has a few breathtakingly transgressive moments. Said to have been influenced by the Brat Pack era farce *Class*, of all things, the three-act storyline features reunions of two former college frenemies that are marked by vicious physical battles. Veronica (Sandra Oh) is the trophy wife of a government contractor, who is about to get even wealthier with a looming Gulf War-style military action; at a NYC banquet she re-encounters Ashley (Anne Heche), a lesbian artist who specializes in violent imagery, but is forced to cater meals for a living. They wind up in a brutal, drunken brawl that leaves Veronica comatose for two years. Miraculously she revives—only to learn that she is now penniless and her family is destroyed, while Ashley's gruesome canvases (actually completed by her abused assistant) have won her former sparring partner fame and fortune. It's no great surprise what happens when they next meet... A strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

The Chef's Wife

★★★★1/2

Icarus, 91 min., in French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$26.99



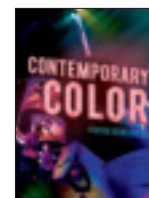
From the school of frothy French comedies comes this enjoyable film pairing two renowned actresses, Karin Viard and Emmanuelle Devos, as not-quite-friends who nevertheless alter one another's destinies. Marithé (Viard) is a career counselor who maintains a distance from her clients' personal lives. But that proves difficult with Carole (Devos), a bored and restless co-owner of a gourmet restaurant, who rushes toward Marithé like a speeding comet, caught up in a professional and personal midlife crisis. Carole's business partner is her moody, dissatisfied husband, Sam (Roschdy Zem), a famous chef. Marithé

tries to keep space between herself and Carole, but something about this unhappy if successful woman awakens Marithé to her own sense of emptiness. *The Chef's Wife* evolves into sophisticated farce as Marithé falls for Sam and begins morphing into Carole's life, just as the latter seriously begins a fresh start. Co-writer and director Anne Le Ny knows that the film's comic energy largely lies in the charged scenes with Viard and Devos, who riff off each other's ever-shifting emotional tones. A handsome-looking film that will also appeal to foodies with its array of mouthwatering dishes, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)

Contemporary Color

★★★★1/2

Oscilloscope, 97 min., PG-13, DVD: \$34.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99, July 11



David Byrne was the driving force behind this 2015 extravaganza presented at Barclays Center in Brooklyn, which featured 10 color guard (or "winter guard") troupes from various East Coast high schools performing elaborate flag-spinning routines set to music composed for the occasion and performed by various artists, including Lucius, Nico Muhly (working with NPR's Ira Glass), Nelly Furtado, St. Vincent, Devonté Hynes, How to Dress Well, Zola Jesus, Ad-Rock & Money Mark, Tune-Yards, and Byrne himself. The combination of exuberant choreography and sometimes wild, sometimes soulful music will likely be as infectious for viewers as it was for the raucously appreciative live audience, not just thanks to the energy of the participants but also because directors Bill and Turner Ross work hard to give the documentary a "you are there" feel, with cameras that swoop and swirl around the stage, and sometimes focus on the jumbotrons. Along the way, interview excerpts with dancers from the squads—as well as fly-on-the-wall backstage footage—are inserted to emphasize the immediacy of the extraordinary "happening." Byrne, meanwhile, is glimpsed prowling the arena, obviously pleased to watch what he sees as a distinctive, underappreciated art form—and a celebration of the diversity that the color guards represent—unfold so vibrantly. An eye-popping spectacle brimming over with youthful high spirits, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Counting for Thunder

★★1/2

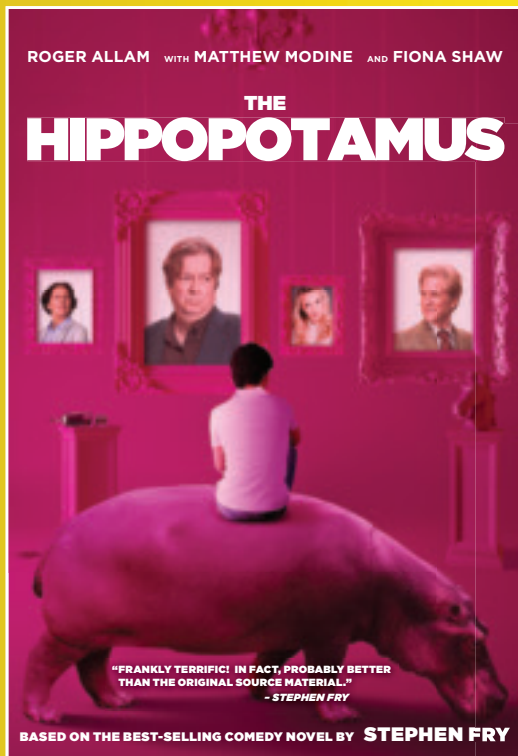
Wolfe, 103 min., not rated, DVD: \$26.99



Actor-turned-writer-director Phillip Irwin Cooper stars in this autobiographical passion project about an aging actor named Phillip (Cooper), who abandons a nowhere career in Los Angeles to return to his Alabama family and help



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his mother, Tina (Mariette Hartley), in her battle with cancer. Phillip returns home as an outsider who left his troubled sister and difficult father, Garrett (John Heard), in a dysfunctional relationship with the sophisticated Tina. Bringing a little New Age/New Medicine wisdom from L.A. with him, Phillip touts the magic of releasing deeply-held secrets, and eating seaweed as a panacea for curbing disease. Tina, who loves Phillip very much, is open to try anything, but the others roll their eyes. Over a two-year period, Tina's health goes up and down, but it is Phillip who does some significant healing, crossing a deep divide between himself and Garrett, while also learning that he can't take meaningful relationships with lovers for granted. Unfortunately, *Counting for Thunder* is full of recycled tropes, although Cooper benefits from outstanding casting, especially Peter Stebbings in the role of an old school chum who sees through Phillip's hollowness but still desires him. The weak link here, ironically, is Cooper's acting, which is full of mannerisms and tics. A strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)

The Daughter ★★★

Kino Lorber, 95 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

Christian (Paul Schneider), the estranged American son of Australian mill owner Henry (Geoffrey Rush), returns Down Under for his father's marriage to his much younger housekeeper (Anna Torv). Christian reconnects with his childhood buddy Oliver (Ewen Leslie), who is now happily married and has a bright teenage daughter, Hedvig (Odessa Young), but Christian figures out a secret that Oliver's wife (Miranda Otto) has kept all these years. As Christian's marriage falls apart back in the U.S., he gives up his sobriety and divulges the secret with a bitter vindictiveness, resulting in tragedy for the only truly innocent person in the whole drama. Although writer-director Simon Stone's *The Daughter* is an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's 1884 play *The Wild Duck*—here transferred to a present-day depressed Australian mill town—viewers do not have to be familiar with the original in order to appreciate Stone's modern take, which serves up a powerful drama featuring vivid characters brought to life in uniformly fine performances, especially from Young as a girl coming of age in a difficult time. Sam Neill costars as Hedvig's grandfather, who rescues injured animals, including Ibsen's titular wild duck. Beautifully shot in rural Australia—capturing both the wild beauty of the countryside and the desolation of the failing economy—the film betrays no evidence of its stage origins. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Frantz ★★★1/2

Music Box, 113 min., in French & German w/English subtitles, PG-13, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

The first half of François Ozon's remarkable *Frantz* is basically a remake of Ernst Lubitsch's 1932 pacifist drama *Broken Lullaby*. Adrien (Pierre Niney), a sad-faced Frenchman, is discovered visiting the grave of Frantz, a young German killed in World War I. Claiming to have been a friend of the dead man, Adrien gradually wins over Frantz's grieving parents (Ernst Stötzner and Marie Gruber) and develops a close relationship with Frantz's fiancée, Anna (Paula Beer), despite the hostility of the townspeople. It will come as no surprise that, as Adrien confesses to Anna, his actual connection to Frantz was very different. Lubitsch's film ended at that point, but Ozon adds a second half in which Adrien returns to France, while Anna, who is obviously in love with Adrien, travels to Paris to look for him, only to discover that things are not quite what she expected. *Frantz* repeats many of Lubitsch's themes—the horror of war, the reality of grief, and the necessity of forgiveness, as well as the notion that well-meaning deception is sometimes preferable to harsh, brutal truth—but Ozon adds layers of ambiguity to the tale. And his sense of style is nicely displayed in both the impeccable period detail and the shifts from black-and-white to color to reflect changes in emotional states. A beautifully crafted, deeply moving film whose ostensibly placid surface opens to reveal powerful undercurrents of pain, hopefulness, and—ultimately—peace, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)



Ghost in the Shell ★★

Paramount, 106 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, July 25

A live-action remake of Mamoru Oshii's 1995 cyberpunk anime classic, based on Masamune Shirow's popular 1989 manga series, this frenetic, dystopian sci-fi thriller favors style over substance. Scarlett Johansson appears to be almost naked, dashing around a futuristic cityscape in a flesh-colored, skintight casing as a cyborg law-enforcement officer known as the "Major." The gimmick is that when she dons this "thermoptic" suit, she is basically invisible. Major Mira Killian is the first of her kind: a military-designed robot with a human brain; she's an integral part of a counter-cyberterrorist task force operating under Chief Daisuke Aramaki (Takeshi Kitano). The group is in pursuit of a villain named Kuze (Michael Carmen Pitt), who has been eliminating Hanka Robotics scientists by hacking into the consciousness of different accomplices to make them commit murder. Kuze's warnings



about the company begin to dovetail with glitches in Major's brain that make her more self-aware and increasingly curious about discovering her true identity, a quest that is only amplified by the insistence of her creator (Juliette Binoche) that memory is irrelevant. Director Rupert Sanders pays homage to the original film, with many scenes coming directly from the comic-book source, but there was an uproar over casting a Caucasian actress in an iconic Japanese story, and the fact is that Johansson is never convincing in her character's struggle to discover her humanity. Optional. (S. Granger)

The Girl from the Brothel ★★

Cinema Libre, 88 min., in English & Khmer w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.99

Too pretty for its own good, *The Girl from the Brothel* delivers a mixed message about the sex trafficking of children in Cambodia (and, by implication, elsewhere). Written, directed by, and starring Ilaria Borrelli, the film clearly condemns the practice, but Borrelli's insistence on spending half the movie framing lush, memorable images of Cambodia's rural beauty is at aesthetic odds with the grim subject matter. Borrelli plays a French photographer named Mia, who discovers her husband having sex with 11-year-old Srey (Setha Monyroth) at a broken-down brothel on a river. Shaken and appalled, Mia collapses into a catatonic swoon at the brothel, exhibiting behavior that eventually begins to look a tad self-indulgent given the horrors experienced by the captive kids. When she finally rallies, Mia takes Srey and two others with her on a mission to return them to their original homes, unaware that brothel children in some cases will be rejected by the family as tainted and shameful. In response, the brothel pimp, various thugs, and crooked cops launch a hunt to bring them all back, forcing the fugitives to stay one step ahead of the bad guys. Despite her heroic actions, Mia is a hard character to like, her altruism at odds with her pouty, petty vindictiveness toward her charges. But the real trouble lies in the heroine's photographer's eye, which essentially captures disturbingly glossy images of a tourist's fantasies about Cambodia that feel out of place in a movie about child sex slaves. Optional. (T. Keogh)



The Girl with All the Gifts ★★★

Lionsgate, 111 min., R, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.99

The zombie genre receives a revitalizing shot in the arm in this engaging adaptation of M.R. Carey's bestselling 2014 sci-fi nov-





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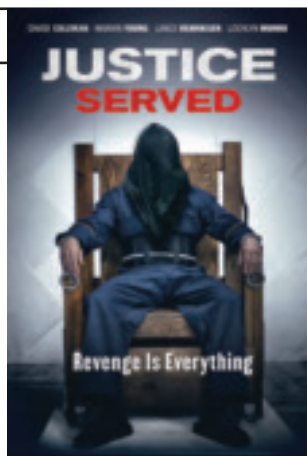
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ROAD MOVIE MAINSTAYS, SOME VERY DARK IRONY
AND BADASS ACTION." - SEARCH MY TRASH

el. In a future where a majority of Earth's population has succumbed to a contagious fungus that attacks the neural centers—reducing humans to cannibalistic ravagers called “hungries”—the British military has undertaken a special project to rehabilitate and teach a group of hybrid children (disease carriers born to human mothers) in order to find a means of curing the plague. One of these children is Melanie (Sennia Nanua), an exceptionally bright adolescent who forms a strong bond with one of the kinder instructors, Helen Justineau (Gemma Arterton). When hungries overwhelm the base, Melanie manages to escape with Helen, strict Sgt. Eddie Parks (Paddy Considine), lead researcher Dr. Caroline Caldwell (Glenn Close), and several others. This ragtag group must put aside their fears and prejudices as they pick their way across a hostile landscape filled with motion-sensing hungries, roving packs of feral children, and massive growths of the fungus spores that just might spell Armageddon for the human race as we know it. Although it sticks to a character schematic seen all too often in end-of-the-world epics, the film keeps a sense of danger and intrigue running high. The two real stars here are newcomer Nanua, and the pulsing tribal chant musical score composed by Cristóbal Tapia de Veer. Recommended. (J. Cruz)

Going in Style ★★1/2

Warner, 96 min., PG-13, DVD: \$28.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$35.99, Aug. 1



In the wake of the 2008 recession, bankers and banks have become popular cinematic villains. Here, three Brooklyn-based seniors suddenly realize that—thanks to a nefarious bank—they are going to be broke and homeless. Joe (Michael Caine) comes up with the idea of an armed robbery after conferring with a sleazy Williamsburg Savings Bank manager (Josh Pais) about his adjustable mortgage that has suddenly tripled, which threatens Joe, his divorced daughter, and his granddaughter with foreclosure and eviction. Along with longtime friends Willie (Morgan Freeman) and Al (Alan Arkin), Joe discovers that the steel company where they've worked for years has outsourced operations to Vietnam and their pensions will be confiscated by the same Williamsburg bank. Suffering renal failure, Willie needs a kidney transplant, and cantankerous Al, a jazz saxophonist, is tired of teaching music to talentless kids, including the son of a saucy grocery store clerk (Ann-Margret). Watching *Dog Day Afternoon* as a cautionary tale, they also seek advice from a professional thief (John Ortiz). After several trial runs, they work out watertight alibis and disguise themselves in rubber masks depicting the Rat Pack (Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr.), unaware that

along the way, they've aroused the suspicions of an FBI agent (Matt Dillon). Directed by Zach Braff, this crime caper is a remake of Martin Brest's superior 1979 movie, which starred George Burns, Art Carney, and Lee Strasberg. A mildly amusing slapstick comedy, full of scrappy banter, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Heidi ★★1/2

Film Movement, 111 min., in German w/English subtitles and English-dubbed, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



Johanna Spyri's 1881 children's classic about a darling Swiss orphan, her gruff but loving grandfather, and her goatherd friend Peter has been adapted for the screen numerous times, most notably as a vehicle for Shirley Temple in 1937. Director Alain Gsponer's new version, starring Anuk Steffen in the title role and Bruno Ganz as her granddad, sticks closely to the original narrative, aside from jettisoning the religiosity (a major element in the book). After bonding with her grandfather and Peter (Quirin Agrippi), Heidi is literally kidnapped by her greedy aunt and deposited with a wealthy urban family as a playmate for their wheelchair-bound daughter, Klara (Isabelle Ottmann). Heidi is taught to read and write, but despite the opulent lifestyle and Klara's friendship, she becomes so homesick that she begins to sleepwalk, and is eventually returned to the Alpine farm she loves. Klara will eventually visit her there and undergo a transformation. Gsponer presents the tale in straightforward fashion, depending on the cast's charm and the lovely locations to win over viewers. In today's environment of frantic family entertainment, children might find themselves a bit bored here, and the artificial-sounding English dubbing sounds ponderous (English subtitles are also provided, although they differ from the dubbed track). Still, this is a reasonably pleasant addition to the already groaning shelf of movies and TV shows based on Spyri's book, so consider it a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Heli ★★★

Strand, 105 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

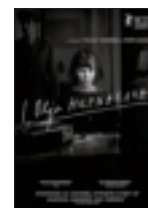


Winner of the director's prize at Cannes in 2013, *Heli* delivers a brutal indictment of daily life in parts of Mexico characterized by drug-related viciousness, a feckless and often corrupt government bureaucracy, and the bland reliability of factory work for a foreign corporation. Navigating through this labyrinth of close-at-hand danger, Heli (Armando Espitia) works the night shift at a car-manufacturing plant, looks after his younger sister and his father,

and tries to improve his chilly relationship with his wife following the birth of their son. Heli's 12-year-old sister, Estela (Andrea Vergera), inadvertently triggers a crisis when her manipulative older boyfriend—who is simultaneously training to be a cop and acting as a drug dealer—stashes drugs in her home without Heli's knowledge. A brutal home invasion soon follows, followed by tremendous risk as Heli attempts to extricate his family from further danger. Filmmaker Amat Escalante captures the stifling world of crime and deceit that can engulf people who are simply trying to live their lives, as well as the unspeakable tortures inflicted by cartels and gangs. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

I, Olga Hepnarova ★★

Strand, 105 min., in Czech w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99, July 25



In July of 1973, a young woman named Olga Hepnarova drove a truck onto a busy sidewalk in Prague and hit 20 people, eight of whom died. Filmmakers Tomas Weinreb and Petr Kazda's Czech film *I, Olga Hepnarova* offers a fictional tale of how her life could have led to such a terrible crime. Olga (Michalina Olszanska) is introduced as a rebellious teen who is seen by her emotionally distant mother as a sinkhole for time and money—i.e., as a problem instead of a daughter. Scenes that are set in boarding school and during an awkward young adulthood reveal an embittered girl-woman who alternately wants to withdraw into herself, explore a demanding sexuality (Olga's few lovers ultimately reject her), and commit suicide. Ultimately, Olga comes across as not sympathetic, but rather icy and merciless, which might be what Weinreb and Kazda are aiming for: a peek into the terrifying mind of a true killer. Still, this film inspired by an early example of vehicular manslaughter feels uncomfortably timely given the recent uptick in these types of attacks. Optional. (T. Keogh)

Kiki, Love to Love ★★1/2

Strand, 102 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



Four couples and a single woman seek sexual satisfaction in strange places in filmmaker Paco León's remake of the 2014 Australian comedy *The Little Death*. Natalia (Natalia de Molina) fantasizes about a convenience store robbery, so her boyfriend, Alex (Alex García), tries to recreate the experience, but things don't go according to plan. Paco (director León) and Ana (Ana Katz) share their mutual disappointments with a therapist. A visit to a sex club fails to reignite the spark, but then Ana finds herself attracted to lesbian barmaid Belén (Belén Cuesta), who Paco believes might offer the

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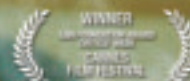
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As Eyal finishes the traditional Jewish week of mourning for his late son, his wife Vicky urges him to return to their routine – but just because the shiva has ended doesn't mean it's life as usual.

SEPTEMBER 5TH

solution to their problems. Maria (Candela Peña) and Antonio (Luis Callejo) have an active sex life, but she hasn't been able to get pregnant, even though her gynecologist can't find anything wrong. She believes the inability to conceive is tied to a lack of orgasms, but the first time Maria sees Antonio cry, it turns her on, so she keeps him supplied with tear-inducing stimuli. In the most underdeveloped story, Sandra (Alexandra Jiménez), a sign-language interpreter, fears that she will never find a partner who is able to get past her quirks—such as an irresistible attraction to silk fabric. Finally, José Luis (Luis Bermejo), a plastic surgeon, talks more about intimate matters with his assistant, Maite (Maite Sandoval), than with his wheelchair-bound wife, Paloma (Mari Paz Sayago). His solution involves knockout drops and non-consensual sex, which León presents as more amusing than disturbing—casting a pall over the rest of this otherwise engaging film. A strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

Killa ★★★

Kino Lorber, 107 min., in Marathi w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99

A Marathi-language film that confidently takes on the subject of pre-adolescent childhood, director Avinash Arun's *Killa* presents the deceptively simple tale of 11-year-old Chinmay's (Archit Devadhar) itinerant life with his mother (Amruta Subhash)—who has just landed a new job after the death of her husband—as they move to a small coastal town, away from the bustling, populous urban center of Pune. From the opening shot, Arun conveys a palpable visual sense of isolation and alienation from the point of view of fish-out-of-water Chinmay, who must vie for acceptance in a strange new rural environment, slowly but surely coming to grips with the stressful challenges brought on by extreme social change. In one central scene, Chinmay and his new acquaintances take part in a bicycle race to the titular ancient fortress, which is meant to be a bonding activity, but winds up just adding to Chinmay's feelings of being a social outcast. And just as Chinmay and his mother begin to find their footing in the provincial village, their lives will be disrupted by further change. *Killa* is a strangely affecting and bittersweet film, which holds out an inkling of hope for Chinmay's approaching adolescence. Recommended. (M. Sandlin)

Land of Mine ★★★

Sony, 101 min., in German, Danish & English w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$26.99

Writer-director Martin Zandvliet's Oscar-nominated foreign drama centers on

the millions of land mines that the Nazis buried along Denmark's western coast in mistaken anticipation of an Allied invasion. After the war, the Danes decided that German POWs should be conscripted to clear the beaches, and the film dramatizes the three months that a group of teens who were drafted in the war's waning days spent probing a swath of coast, using iron rods to locate and defuse the bombs. Promised safe conduct back to Germany if they survive, the group serves under an initially contemptuous Danish sergeant (Roland Møller) who shows little concern about whether they live or die. Inevitably he experiences a change of heart toward his charges as some perish in accidental explosions, becoming especially protective of the most sensitive boy (Louis Hofmann), who helps rescue a little girl wandering into the minefield. *Land of Mine* is unquestionably manipulative, generating nerve-wracking tension as the fresh-faced, naive young men crisscross the sand, nervously unscrewing detonators. But it works here, thanks to strong acting by Møller and Hofmann. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Life ★★★

Sony, 104 min., R, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

After mission specialist Rory Adams's (Ryan Reynolds) risky retrieval of a damaged capsule containing valuable soil samples from Mars, the crew of the International Space Station's *Pilgrim 7* has reason to celebrate, as astronauts Miranda North (Rebecca Ferguson), David Jordan (Jake Gyllenhaal), Sho Murakami (Hiroyuki Sanada), Ekaterina Golovinka (Olga Dihovichnaya), and Hugh Derry (Ariyon Bakare) are concluding their eight-month exploratory mission. When the science officer isolates a microscopic single-cell organism in a petri dish and feeds it glycerin, it becomes the first proof of extraterrestrial life. Satellite viewers from Earth cheer, and a group of New York children name the specimen "Calvin" after Calvin Coolidge School. Resembling a translucent, star-shaped octopus, Calvin begins to grow, quickly adapting to its environment, becoming stronger and smarter. Before long, Calvin escapes containment, becoming a multi-tentacled predator, extinguishing members of the crew one-by-one, despite their often foolhardy attempts to save one another. Stylishly directed by Daniel Espinosa, with Seamus McGarvey's sweeping cinematography capturing the claustrophobically cramped containment of the eerie space station, and Jon Ekstrand's score enhancing the sinister suspense, *Life's* scientifically plausible futuristic concept

breeds nail-biting horror. (Full disclosure: my son, Don Granger, is executive producer). Recommended. (S. Granger)

The Lost City of Z ★★★1/2

Broad Green, 141 min., PG-13, DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99, July 11

Based on David Grann's 2009 nonfiction bestseller, this sprawling saga chronicles the incredible adventures of status-seeking British soldier Col. Percy Fawcett (Charlie Hunnam), who explored the Amazon River a full century ago. Dispatched in 1906 by the Royal Geographical Society, Fawcett's mission is to map the dangerous, uncharted realms of eastern Bolivia, where it borders with Brazil. Thrashing through the South American rainforest with his Army comrades—Henry Costin (Robert Pattinson) and Arthur Manley (Edward Ashley)—plus guides and porters, Fawcett discovers not only the source of the Rio Verde River but also tribal pottery and carvings that indicate the existence of an ancient city and long-lost civilization hidden somewhere in the dense foliage—and he is determined to find it. Driven by this mystical, near-maniacal obsession, Fawcett endures an excruciating second expedition in 1911, accompanied by scornful James Murray (Angus Macfadyen), who becomes a dangerous liability. Meanwhile, back in England, his dutiful wife (Sienna Miller) and children grow accustomed to Percy's long absences, although eventually, Fawcett's eldest son, Jack (Tom Holland), joins his third expedition in 1925. Reverentially directed by James Gray, *The Lost City of Z* musters surprisingly little emotional involvement, nor does it offer any critique of England's patronizing imperialism. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Millie & the Lords

★★★

Indiepix, 90 min., in English & Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Sisters Jessica and Jennica Carmona co-produced this compelling drama about a mid-1920s Spanish Harlem woman named Millie, whose dead-end life in a part-time job while living under the authoritarian eye of an angry father has left her embittered and hopeless. A closet writer, Millie (Jessica Carmona) yearns to break free, and she finds her voice in an unexpected place: a community center class focused on the history of 1960s-'70s Latino activist group the Young Lords, a real-life organization that fought for community rights and suffered brutal punishment from white authorities. Bonding with fellow students and learning from a former Lord who teaches that revolution is still a possibility, Millie blossoms as a nascent organizer and





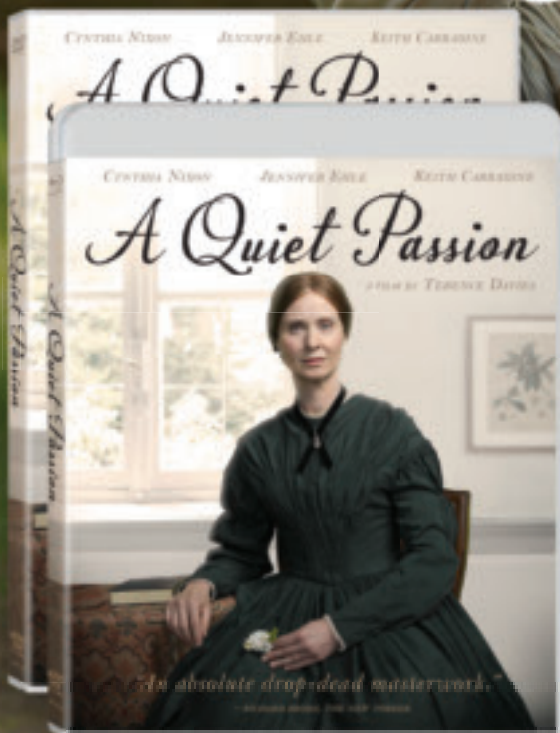
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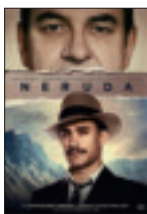
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independent adult. Jennica Carmona wrote and directed this blend of original narrative and documentary elements that offers rich context about the Young Lords (including detailed interviews with past members). Recommended. (T. Keogh)

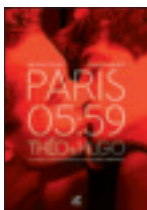
Neruda ★★½
Sony, 108 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$14.99



Pablo Larraín's film about Chilean poet Pablo Neruda serves up an imaginative portrait that, while highly speculative and inventive, stylistically mimics its subject's own work. The film focuses exclusively on the late 1940s, when Neruda (Luis Gnecco) is not only a national icon due to the popularity of his poetry but also an important figure in the Chilean Communist Party. When the president bans Communists from the country, Neruda is forced to flee across the mountains to Argentina. Up to this point, the narrative hews closely to historical reality—even the portrayal of Neruda as a vain, demanding man conscious of his legendary status feels accurate—but Larraín now adds the totally fictional character of police inspector Oscar Peluchonneau (Gael García Bernal), who is assigned to track Neruda down. As played by Bernal in the style of a '40s film noir gumshoe (who also narrates), the cop becomes a Nerudian literary device, consumed by the fear that he might actually be no more than a creation of the poet and destined to play a subordinate role. By the time the two men finally meet in the snow-covered mountains, the supposed biography has become a flamboyant self-portrait of a man who constructed his own mythic persona, told here with the same sort of artifice the poet employed in his poems. A challenging but engrossing film, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Paris 05:59: Théo & Hugo ★★★

Wolfe, 97 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$29.95



The home video release of Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau's film about a gay couple's first meeting begins with a warning about explicit sexual content, which certainly applies to the first quarter of the film, as Théo (Geoffrey Couët) and Hugo (François Nambot) encounter one another amid gyrating naked bodies in a Paris sex club and quickly become very intimate. The sequence, however, is choreographed so artistically that it takes on a dreamlike tone, and the remainder of the film is romantic in a much more subdued manner. The story follows the two men as they spend the night walking and bicycling through the city, telling each other about

their lives and longings. Other characters—a fast food clerk, an old man in a hospital waiting room, a chatty elderly woman on the subway—occasionally intervene, but the emphasis is on how Théo and Hugo grow closer even as they deal with a crisis: the fact that Hugo is HIV-positive and Théo did not use a condom, which sparks an argument and a visit to a clinic for treatment. The excellent script shifts effortlessly from joking banter to serious confrontation, while the natural performances by Couët and Nambot make this a surprisingly touching story about the start of a relationship. Recommended for more adventurous collections. (F. Swietek)

Population Zero ★★★
Virgil, 84 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99



Jeff Staranchuk's script for Adam Levins's mockumentary exploits a legal loophole that was first noted in 2005 by Michigan State University law professor Brian Kalt. Because the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution specifies that jurors in a federal trial must live in both the judicial district and the state in which an alleged crime was committed, a 50-square-mile Idaho stretch of Yellowstone National Park is an area where no jury could legally be empaneled—because it is a) uninhabited, and b) the entire park falls within the Wyoming judicial district. Which means the perpetrator of a crime committed in this small slice of wilderness could not be legally prosecuted. *Population Zero* invents a case involving Dwayne Nelson (Duane Murray), a North Dakota man who supposedly murdered three young campers but went scot-free because the killings occurred in the Idaho section of the park. The story focuses on the investigative efforts of reporter/director Julian T. Pinder. Cunningly mimicking the style of a typical true-crime TV program, the film offers clips from fake news broadcasts and dogged reconstructions of the lives of Nelson and the dead men, along with interviews—with police, prosecutors, and defense attorneys, as well as Nelson's neighbors and the victims' relatives—to raise the question of whether Nelson's act was, as he claimed, an inexplicable psychological breakdown or instead premeditated murder. The answer turns out to be extremely convoluted, but the cast and crew make this journey one that fans of mystery novels will enjoy taking. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Punching Henry ★★½
Well Go USA, 95 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.99

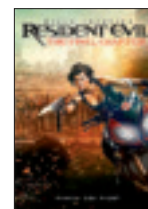


Musical comedy acts are a dime a dozen, although acoustic-guitar-hugging real-life comedian Henry Phillips—the luckless star of filmmaker Gregori

Viens's *Punching Henry*—seems to revel in the loserdom that naturally comes to guys who perform milquetoast comedy songs in dive clubs. Phillips's agent gets a call from a Hollywood insider bigwig (J.K. Simmons), who gets the comedian a shot at a pilot for a TV sitcom. Once Phillips is in L.A., however, his car is stolen, he succumbs to a heckler onstage, he accidentally puts a lit cigarette in his ear during a performance, and he can't get laid—except when his lesbian best friend asks him to inseminate her wife after they decide against in vitro fertilization (but even this task is bungled by unintentional *coitus interruptus*). There is some industry satire here that is more clever than funny: social-media-obsessed studio execs want to sign Phillips not because of his act but due to an amateur YouTube video (the notorious burning ear incident) that has gone viral. Although Phillips wants his musical comedy to speak for itself, the artistic gap between his hackneyed joke songs and the embarrassing slapstick web fame that he decries is not wide enough to make us take Phillips's sudden embrace of dignified integrity seriously. Still, this offbeat indie film that also features Sarah Silverman, Tig Notaro, and Jim Jeffries should be considered a strong optional purchase. (M. Sandlin)

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter ★★★

Sony, 107 min., R, DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99



Despite the promising subtitle, this sixth installment of Paul W.S. Anderson's action franchise based on a popular series of video games ends with heroine Alice bluntly stating that her work is not yet done. Fans who have been following the series since 2002 will find that this entry offers just what they expect: virtually non-stop action choreographed with lots of computer-generated pizzazz, showcasing the athleticism of Anderson's wife Milla Jovovich, who gives leather-clad Alice every bit of the kick-ass punch that the character demands. For newcomers, the film thoughtfully includes a prologue recapping the premise: the Umbrella Corporation has unleashed a virus on the world that turns people into ravenous zombies. Alice and her comrades must fight through hordes of the undead and company security men to reach the corporate headquarters in Raccoon City—or the Hive, as it's called—to confront its villainous CEO (Iain Glen). Alice is aided by an artificial-intelligence program that has the face of a young girl called the Red Queen (Ever Anderson, daughter of Paul and Milla, making the movie a full family affair). *The Final Chapter* is loaded with frantic, garish set pieces, but still manages to feel tired. Palatable only to die-hard fans, this is not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

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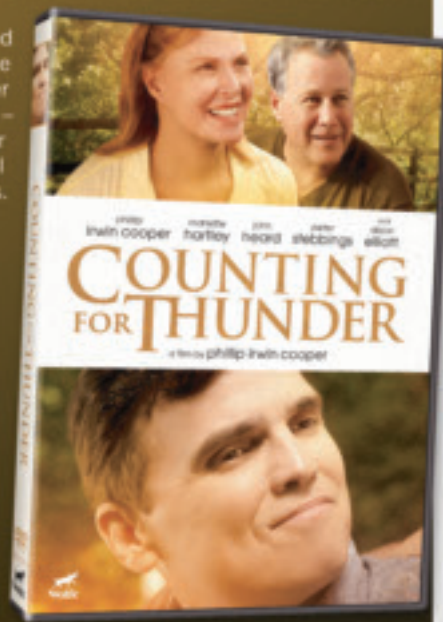
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Suntan ★★★

Strand, 100 min., in Greek w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99

Suntan is hardly the first movie about a fleshy, middle-aged man's desperate attraction to a much younger, beautiful woman. But it is certainly among the most disturbing and explosive films on that theme, with no redemptive lifeline (as in *American Beauty*) for the bewitched (and pathetic) anti-hero. Seemingly repressed family doctor Kostis (Makis Papadimitriou) arrives on the Greek island of Antiparos in time to treat patients during the sunny tourist season. He is assured by a local rake that women will soon be his to conquer, but Kostis seems more interested in shutting down his medical office at 3 p.m. sharp every day and getting a meal at a nearby café. Everything about him is subdued, and his habit of clubbing or drinking in strict moderation makes him seem like a paragon of virtue. But he's actually a time-bomb waiting to be activated, which occurs when he meets Anna (Ellie Tringou), a lovely and whip-smart sensualist in her early 20s. Traveling the island on a motor scooter with her fellow free spirits, Anna does what she wants without inhibition. After treating her for a leg injury, Kostis falls in with her crowd and becomes a tolerated mascot, showing up for the group's youthful gambols on a nude beach with cold beers in hand. After an impulsive sexual encounter between Anna and Kostis, however, the latter becomes demanding and obsessive, inclined toward rage and danger. Co-writer and director Argyris Papadimitropoulos's *Suntan* is a fascinating study of psychological descent into monstrosity, set against a balmy, Eden-like environment. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



an upscale brothel by scamming a European Union development grant. And the ill-tempered, impotent psychopath Begbie (Robert Carlyle) has escaped from prison, determined to wreak revenge. *T2* is a bitterly cynical and somewhat redundant feeling film that also works in some contemporary commentary on urban gentrification, noting the rise of the populist movement that fueled Brexit. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Tommy's Honour ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 110 min., PG, DVD: \$19.98, July 18

Filmmaker Jason Connery's 19th-century drama about golf pioneers centers on Tom Morris, known as Old Tom (Peter Mullan), and his son, Young Tommy (Jack Lowden). Supporting his family of six, Old Tom works as a humble greens-keeper, caddy, and instructor at Scotland's renowned Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, where he's known as a superb competitor and four-time winner of the British Open. So it's not surprising that Young Tom makes his auspicious amateur debut in 1868 at the age of 17. Rebelling against authority, which is epitomized by the United Kingdom's stratified class division, Young Tom is determined to become a professional golfer instead of lugging clubs, teeing up balls, and catering to ill-mannered aristocrats. "Your station in life was set before you were born," chides the club captain (Sam Neill). Inspired by Kevin Cook's titular 2007 nonfiction book, the film captures the rugged magnificence of Scotland's rustic links (which form a stark contrast to today's well-manicured courses). Challenging tradition with innovation, the Morris family embody the generational struggle between a dour, deferential father and a willful, ambitious son, throwing in additional conflict when Young Tom falls in love with a spunky older woman (Ophelia Lovibond) who has a scandalous past. Unfortunately, neither Mullan nor Lowden are real-life golfers, although Connery tries hard to disguise their ineptitude. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)



T2 Trainspotting ★★1/2

Sony, 117 min., R, DVD: \$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99

In 1996, Scottish filmmaker Danny Boyle celebrated sneering, rebellious, drug-drenched youth in *Trainspotting*. In Boyle's sequel, the Leith lads segue into middle age. Re-visiting the same characters 20 years later, *T2* recalls how Mark Renton (Ewan McGregor) ripped off his friends in a lucrative drug deal, apparently taking the money and fleeing to Amsterdam, where he kicked his heroin habit and plunged into respectability, including a failed marriage. When Renton returns to Edinburgh after his mother's death, only the sniveling junkie Spud (Ewen Bremner) welcomes him. Feigning friendship, Simon (Jonny Lee Miller)—aka Sick Boy—is still furious over Renton's betrayal. Attempting to atone for his sins, Renton tries to help Simon and his Bulgarian prostitute partner (Anjela Nedyalkova) turn a decrepit family pub into



The Transfiguration

★★1/2

Strand, 97 min., not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Aug. 8

Amid the current glut of vampire movies, writer-director Michael O'Shea's *The Transfiguration* brings an unusual twist to the tired genre, although his script obviously owes a bit of a debt to George Romero's 1978 cult favorite *Martin*. Milo (Eric Ruffin) is a shy African-American teen who is bullied by thugs in the Queens projects where he lives with his elder brother, a sullen veteran. Milo finds refuge in vampire lore, and—believing himself to be one of

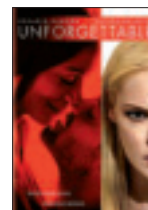


the undead—he kills strangers in order to secure the blood that he thinks he needs for food. Milo's obsession frightens Sophie (Chloe Levine), a girl who befriends Milo even though he dismisses as unrealistic the *Twilight* series, which she likes. Meanwhile, his attempts to frame the gang members who harass him for crimes that he himself commits ultimately dovetails with his conviction that a vampire can only escape his condition by circuitous means. *The Transfiguration* is a low-budget film, slow-moving and visually threadbare, but O'Shea's gritty, naturalistic approach makes its farfetched premise more persuasive than you might expect, and the young Ruffin delivers a quietly intense, understated performance. Likely to appeal more to art house patrons than genre devotees, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (F. Switek)

Unforgettable ★★

Warner, 100 min., R, DVD: \$28.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$35.99, July 25

When David Conover (Geoff Stults) takes up with Julia Banks (Rosario Dawson) after his divorce from Tessa (Katherine Heigl), he has no idea what kind of can of mean-spirited worms he's about to open. As this flimsy psycho-sexual thriller begins, battered Julia is being interrogated as the only suspect in the murder of her abusive ex-boyfriend, Michael Vargas (Simon Kassianides), who she once had a restraining order against. Skip back six months to when Julia left San Francisco to begin a new life in Southern California suburb with her new fiancé David and his young daughter, Lily (Isabella Kai Rice). A former Wall Street hotshot, hunky David has just opened a boutique microbrewery, but when icy, embittered Tessa sees how happy David is with amiable Julia, she is devastated. Her vulnerability is heightened because she has never been able to satisfy the expectations of her rigid, perfectionist mother, Helen (Cheryl Ladd). Julia doesn't use Facebook, which is rather bizarre since she was an editor for an online literary publication in San Francisco, but this omission leaves a portal open for Tessa to cyberstalk Julia, shrewdly creating a fake FB profile and utilizing it to contact Julia's ex, as her devious revenge plot takes shape. "Everyone's got a weird ex, but this Psycho Barbie is something else," warns Julia's best friend (Whitney Cummings). Suffering from an implausibly convoluted script, longtime producer Denise Di Novi's maiden directorial effort is actually fairly forgettable. Optional. (S. Granger)



Utopians ★★★

Breaking Glass, 88 min., in Cantonese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$21.99

Hong Kong writer-director Danny Cheng

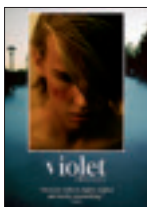
Wan-Cheung—who goes by the professional name “Scud”—serves up a celebration of pan-sexuality in *Utopians*, which features lots of casual nudity and depictions of various sexual activities. In this coming-of-age tale, Hins (Adonis), a college student with a rigidly religious girlfriend, is disturbed by vivid, graphic dreams in which male-on-male sex dominates (as in the film’s garish opening—a hallucinatory episode with a crucifixion motif). Ming (Jackie Chow), one of Hins’s professors, introduces himself to his class as a homosexual, and offers up provocative ideas about utopian sexuality, adopting a *laissez-faire* attitude toward all forms of sexual expression. Hins and Ming will eventually develop a relationship, but it will hardly be exclusive, incorporating bisexuality and group sex. Scud scatters allusions to gay icons Yukio Mishima, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Derek Jarman—to whom he dedicates the film—throughout *Utopians*, which concludes with a melodramatic critique of a Hong Kong statute that criminalizes homosexual relations with anyone under the age of 21. A well-made film with a strong message of tolerance, this is recommended for more adventurous collections. (F. Swietek)



Violet ★★1/2

Altered Innocence, 83 min., in Flemish & Dutch w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$21.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99, July 11

Flemish filmmaker Bas Devos’s laconic and often inscrutable Belgian-Dutch drama *Violet* is a highly mannered work that relies heavily on portentous visuals and minimal dialogue. Buried in the blur is the story of a 15-year-old boy named Jesse (Cesar De Sutter) who witnesses the murder of a friend and does nothing to step in and save him. Viewers mostly experience this action from the emotional distance of several security cameras, and the film’s half-dream aesthetic continues as the young anti-hero deals with the parents and friends of his fallen chum, as well as the ambivalent support of his own parents. When people speak here—a relatively rare occurrence—the film becomes much more interesting and accessible, but the audience is largely left to try to glean the inner lives of characters through the precious and often distorting lens of Devos’s self-conscious (albeit often visually striking) artistry. A strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)



We Are X ★★★★★

Magnolia, 95 min., R, DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

A naïve viewer could be forgiven for wondering if this rock documentary is not, in fact,

a mockumentary. While not overtly funny, the film’s high dramas surrounding the aging Japanese heavy metal rock/progressive band X Japan are so operatic as to border on satire. But X Japan is very much for real, as is the group’s long trail of personal disaster over a 40-year history. *We Are X* isn’t a concert movie, per se, but it does focus on events surrounding a string of recent shows (some in the U.S.), featuring interviews with founding members that are often confessional. If there is a star here, it’s the group’s drummer, Yoshiki, whose relentless speed-pounding on his kit over decades now requires constant shots of cortisone for pain and—no exaggeration—oxygen tanks on stage to revive him when he passes out from exertion. While Yoshiki talks about X Japan’s history and the evolution of his musicianship and songwriting style, it is his backstory as an asthmatic kid who overcame childhood tragedy (his father died when Yoshiki was a young boy) through music that is most compelling. So, too, is his lifelong musical partnership with X Japan vocalist Toshi, a slightly weird figure who left the band for a decade, a period in which he describes himself as “brainwashed.” Other X Japan members who have come and gone and/or died are eulogized here, adding to an overhanging sense of doom. But what’s also clear is the passion felt by fans—old and new—and even if there isn’t a complete song performed here, it’s easy to see why X Japan still excites the crowds. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



Wilson ★★

Fox, 94 min., R, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

Based on Daniel Clowes’s 2010 graphic novel, this dark comedy revolves around an eccentric, middle-aged misanthrope who lives in a shabby apartment with Pepper, his engaging wire fox terrier. Wilson (Woody Harrelson) is prone to befriend and then brusquely criticize strangers when man and dog are out for a walk. After his father dies and his only friend moves away, irascible Wilson—who is far too forthright and honest—makes a half-hearted attempt to socialize, mentioning to a lonely companion (Margo Martindale) that he misses his ex-wife Pippi (Laura Dern), who left him 17 years ago. Leaving Pepper with a sweet-natured dog-sitter (Judy Greer), he re-connects with Pippi, who has conquered her crack addiction and is now working as a waitress. Warily, she informs Wilson that the baby he thought she aborted was actually given up for adoption, and is now a teenager. After some sleuthing, Wilson and Pippi track down 17-year-old Claire (Isabella Amara),



who is living in a nearby suburb with her adoptive parents. Stalking overweight, alienated Claire at the mall, Wilson watches her being bullied by classmates and chooses this bizarre moment to introduce himself, noting: “I’m sure they picked on Copernicus... it’s a badge of honor.” Claire joins Wilson and Pippi for a disastrous weekend trip to visit Pippi’s judgmental sister Polly (Cheryl Hines). Clumsily directed by Craig Johnson, *Wilson* is memorable mostly for Harrelson’s ineffable charm and multi-faceted performance. Optional. (S. Granger)

A Woman, a Part ★★★★★

Strand, 98 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99, July 11

Middle-aged Anna (Maggie Siff) is a successful TV star hitting a burnout phase in her life, health, and career. Rejecting the advice of her manager, she bolts from Hollywood to reconnect with her roots in New York’s fringe theater scene—not so much in search of an acting experience but to find her way back into the familiar fold of a friendship with onetime collaborators Kate (Cara Seymour) and Isaac (John Ortiz). After 20 years, however, that is easier said than done. Confronted with some suspicion, lingering resentments from the past, and desperation (neither Kate nor Isaac are doing well financially or professionally), Anna goes on a bumpy journey of reconciliation with the one-time allies she left behind, and in the process discovers more about her own motivations and the limitations of being an artist in an industry that doesn’t value women of a certain age. Directed by Elisabeth Subrin, *A Woman, a Part* could have easily been numbingly insular, but there is a distinct melancholy here that feels universal, centering on the reckoning of old and new ambitions with the narrowing window of age. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



Worlds Apart ★★★★★

Cinema Libre, 115 min., in English & Greek w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Somewhat like *Babel*, the triptych film *Worlds Apart* by writer-director Christopher Papakaliatis seems to be made up of discrete, unrelated stories with disparate characters—until interconnecting threads begin to appear. The first third of the film, which is set in Athens against a backdrop of contemporary problems including a dissolving middle class and resentment towards Syrian refugees, concerns a sweet romance between a young Syrian immigrant (Tawfeek Barhom) and a local Greek girl (Niki Vakali) he rescues from an assault. Also in the mix—for reasons that



will become clear over time—is a middle-age vigilante expressing his rage over Greece's economic collapse by bashing refugees in the dark, and mounting raids with fellow fascists on gathering spots for Syrians. The second story stars Papakaliatis himself as a department manager in a big corporation going through extreme downsizing. As his character watches colleagues dissolve into fear and even suicidal despair after being laid off, he embarks on a chilly extramarital affair with the Swedish executive (Andrea Osvárt) making all of those cuts. The final tale is of a German scholar (J.K. Simmons) who develops a friendship and romance with an unfulfilled wife and mother (Maria Kavoyianni) yearning for a second chance. As these narratives gradually roll into one, the film transcends its structural gimmick to capture the ripples of Greece's national crisis, which are felt in everything from the high price of cherry tomatoes to outright inhumanity. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Zookeeper's Wife

★★★1/2

Universal, 126 min., PG-13,
DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$34.98, July 4



Based on Diane Ackerman's titular haunting 2007 nonfiction book, *The Zookeeper's Wife* begins on a beautiful day in 1939 at Poland's Warsaw Zoo, where Antonina Zabinska (Jessica Chastain) helps her husband Jan (Johan Heldenbergh) tend the animals, resuscitating a newborn elephant calf who cannot breathe. Suddenly, German aircraft appear overhead and bombs reign down, killing many of the terrified beasts, while others escape to roam the city's streets. Led by Berlin's chief zoologist—sinister Lutz Heck (Daniel Brühl)—the Nazis commandeer the grounds, saving only “prize specimens” for selective breeding, while savagely slaughtering the rest. Meanwhile, within the city, the Jewish population is herded into a ghetto, locked behind barbed wire to starve or, later, be loaded onto boxcars and sent to concentration camps. Appalled at the brutality, Antonina and Jan hatch a defiant plan: since the German soldiers love pork, they'll turn the zoo into a pig farm, feeding the animals the Jews' garbage. While Antonina cares for their dwindling menagerie, Jan drives his truck into the ghetto, hiding Jews by covering them with refuse and smuggling them into his human sanctuary until the Resistance is able to transport them to safety. While Chastain radiates beatific compassion, Angela Workman's perfunctory script is a flaccid, almost antiseptic adaption, although the film is sensitively helmed by New Zealand director Niki Caro (*Whale Rider*). A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Classic Films

36 Hours ★★★

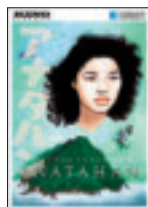
Warner, 115 min., not rated,
DVD: \$17.99, Blu-ray: \$21.99



Psychological warfare gets a twist in this 1965 World War II-espionage mind-game drama starring James Garner as Maj. Jefferson Pike, an Allied intelligence officer with top secret D-Day plans, who is kidnapped by the Nazis and dropped into an elaborate scheme. Rod Taylor costars as Maj. Walter Gerber, an American-born German patriot who masterminds the psy-ops ploy to convince Pike that the war is over and that he's in a mental hospital in U.S.-occupied Germany with amnesia. Gerber plays his “best friend” and therapist in an elaborate piece of living theater, trying to extract the D-Day plans as a mental exercise in Pike's rehabilitation. Eva Marie Saint is a concentration camp prisoner who is offered freedom in exchange for playing a role in the ploy. Director George Seaton adapts the script from Roald Dahl's 1944 short story “Beware of the Dog,” although the premise is better than the dramatic execution. Still, Garner gets the opportunity to shift from his familiar affable, easygoing persona to play a desperate hero who risks his life to protect the invasion plans. Fans of 1960s TV will recognize John Banner (who was the bumbling Sgt. Schultz in *Hogan's Heroes*) and Alan Napier (Alfred in the 1960s *Batman* TV series). An entertaining thriller, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Anatahan ★★★

Kino Lorber, 91 min., in English
& Japanese, not rated, DVD:
\$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.99



Inspired by the true story of Japanese sailors stranded on a deserted island during World War II, *Anatahan* (1953) was the final film completed by American émigré filmmaker Josef von Sternberg. The story takes place almost entirely on Anatahan, a former plantation island in the South Pacific where the 12 Japanese survivors of a shipwreck discover a couple who stayed behind when the island was evacuated. “We were to be here for seven long years,” reports the narrator (Sternberg himself), and as they await their rescue, their discipline breaks down, as desire for Keiko (Akemi Negishi)—the lone woman in this society of men—makes them aggressive and leads to murder. After years of compromised productions, Sternberg had complete control over *Anatahan*, which is based on a novel by Michiro Maruyama (translated and published in English in 1954), and shot entirely in a film studio in Kyoto, Japan, where Sternberg recreated the tropical island jungle as an artificial set (long shots of the island are actually

a painting, and only brief glimpses of the vast ocean and waves crashing on the rocky shore show the “real” world). Apart from the English narration, the dialogue is entirely in Japanese with no subtitles, although the drama is clear from the commentary and imagery. *Anatahan* feels emotionally muted and directed at a remove, like a remembrance of a survivor suffused in regret, and Sternberg cited it as his favorite film. The 1958 director's cut debuts here in a new 2K restoration edition, with extras including the original 1953 version, a “making-of” featurette with the director's son Nicholas von Sternberg, a visual essay by film historian Tag Gallagher, a comparison of the 1953 and 1958 cuts, archival footage, and outtakes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Assassin ★★★

Arrow, 97 min., in Italian w/
English subtitles, not rated, Blu-
ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



Marcello Mastroianni stars as Alfredo Martelli, an unscrupulous antiques dealer and opportunist who is hauled into the police station for questioning but not told what crime he's suspected of committing. As he's asked about his life and recent movements, flashbacks sketch in Martelli's rather loose moral code in business and romance: his business was staked by Adalgisa de Matteis (Micheline Presle)—an older lover—but he is now engaged to a much younger (and not too bright) woman (Cristina Gaioni). After Martelli finally learns that Adalgisa is dead and that he is actually the prime suspect, the police pull out all of the stops to produce a confession. Co-written and directed by Elio Petri, the first act of *The Assassin* (1961) mirrors Kafka's *The Trial* by way of a cop drama, with a suspect kept off balance, but then it shifts into a kind of cat-and-mouse game between charming cad Martelli and Commissario Palumbo (Salvo Randone), the lead detective who is convinced that the slippery, insincere Martelli is a con-man and a murderer—a conviction based on his gut and a little circumstantial evidence. A handsome, smart, and witty satire of cop dramas, anchored by a characteristically charismatic performance by Mastroianni, *The Assassin* is remastered from a new 4K restoration for this Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, which features extras including an introduction by critic Pasquale Iannone, a documentary on co-screenwriter Tonino Guerra, and a booklet. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Behind the Door ★★★

Flicker Alley, 70 min., not rated, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$39.99

This recently reconstructed and restored 1919 World War I drama has a well-earned notorious reputation. Hobart Bosworth plays Captain Krug, an American seaman



A WOMAN, A PART

**Starring Maggie Siff (Billions, Mad Men),
Cara Seymour and John Ortiz (Silver Linings Playbook)**

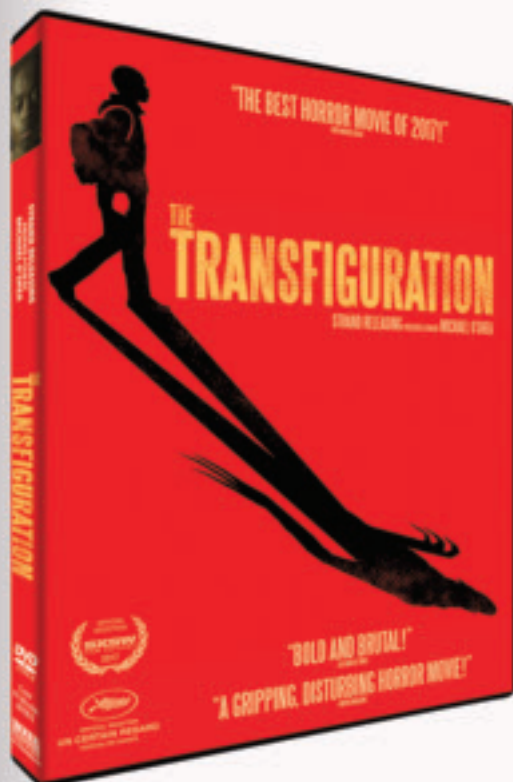
"Expertly executed...poignant and compelling." -ArtForum

Maggie Siff (Showtime's "Billions," AMC's "Mad Men") delivers an acting tour-de-force as Anna Baskin, an exhausted workaholic actress at a crossroads. She abruptly extricates herself from a successful but mind-numbing TV role, returning to a life she left behind with ex-creative partners Isaac (John Ortiz) and Kate (Cara Seymour). From artist and filmmaker Elisabeth Subrin, A WOMAN, A PART "takes on the industry with grace, insight and some big ideas" (IndieWire), an astute critique of the media's portrayal of women and the difficulty of reckoning with change.

Street Date: **July 11, 2017** | SRP: **\$24.99**

DVD # 3709-2 | UPC 7 12267 37092 4

98 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated



THE TRANSFIGURATION **"The best horror movie of 2017!"**

-Birth Movies Death

An official selection at the Cannes Film Festival, writer/director Michael O'Shea's debut feature follows troubled teen Milo who hides behind his fascination with vampire lore. When he meets the equally alienated Sophie, the two form a bond that begins to challenge Milo's dark obsession, blurring his fantasy into reality.

Street Date: **August 8, 2017** | SRP: **\$27.99**

DVD # 3700-2 | UPC 7 12267 37002 3

97 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated

I, OLGA HEPNAROVA

**"An austere, hypnotic story of
madness and murder!" -NY Times**

Olga Hepnarova was a young, lonely lesbian outsider from a coldhearted family who couldn't play the part society desired of her. Alienation eventually drove her over the edge of humanity and leads her to commit a deadly act at only 22-years old.

Street date: **July 25, 2017** | SRP: **\$27.99**

DVD #: 3705-2 | UPC: 7 12267 37052 8

105 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
In Czech with English subtitles



of German ancestry who left the sea for the love of a woman—a banker's daughter named Alice (Jane Novak)—but he enlists when war is declared. Alice stows aboard his ship, which is torpedoed by a German submarine, after which she is taken prisoner while Krug vows to take revenge on the sadistic commander (Wallace Beery) who leaves him to drown. The film both confronts the anti-German sentiment in America during the war in its portrait of Krug as a brave and committed American and it embraces the stereotype of the bloodthirsty German “Hun” with Beery’s U-boat captain, who preys upon the helpless Alice, tossing her to his sex-starved men to be raped and murdered. Krug eventually takes his vengeance offscreen, but the intertitles leave no doubt about the transgressive nature of his revenge: “I told him if I ever caught him I’d skin him alive. But he died before I finished.” A minor classic with a brutal edge, *Behind the Door* features a vivid performance by Bosworth as a stalwart hero driven to violence, and strong direction by filmmaker Irvin Willat. This Blu-ray/DVD Combo set presents the new restoration (with missing footage reconstructed using film stills) along with an alternate, re-edited Russian version—both with a lovely score by Stephen Horne—and extras that include an interview with silent film historian Kevin Brownlow, a restoration featurette, outtakes, a gallery of stills and artwork, and a booklet with photos and essays. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)



Dead or Alive Trilogy

★★★

Arrow, 291 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99



The titular gonzo gangster trilogy from Takashi Miike, Japan’s master of action movie madness, is remastered for this complete collection. In the original *Dead or Alive* (1999), Miike whips the usual tired yakuza clichés into a brutal, bloody meringue, as a small-time hood (Riki Takeuchi)—a sneering tough in black leather and a retro pompadour—tries to muscle in on the Tokyo heroin trade while a morally bankrupt cop (Sho Aikawa) takes him on. The furious opening montage could be its own film—with mob hits, heists, strip shows, a sodomy assassination, and the gut-busting murder of a noodle-gobbling thug—and the finale boasts apocalyptic dimensions. Takeuchi and Aikawa return as different characters in the two sequels. In *Dead or Alive 2: Birds* (2000), Aikawa plays a mob assassin who discovers that his rival (Takeuchi) is his childhood best buddy, after which the pair team up to take on their former gangster

bosses. *Dead or Alive: Final* (2002) leaps 300 years ahead into a dystopian *Blade Runner*-esque future where Aikawa plays a genetically engineered soldier who joins the rebellion against a maniacal mayor and Takeuchi is a tough militia cop (their climactic collision is unlike any action film clash you’ve ever seen). The *Dead or Alive* films make no logical narrative sense but explode onscreen in bizarre flights of audacity that cemented Miike’s reputation as a cult filmmaker. Presented in a Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, extras include audio commentary by Miike biographer Tom Mes, archival and new cast and crew interviews, and archival behind-the-scenes featurettes. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)

The Handmaid’s Tale

★★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 109 min., R, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99



This 1990 screen adaptation of Margaret Atwood’s dystopian novel stars Natasha Richardson as Kate, a wife and mother living in a dystopian future where most women have been rendered infertile under a theocratic dictatorship. Fertile women are held captive, indoctrinated with a twisted religion, and made to bear the children of powerful men while becoming servants to their infertile wives. After Kate is separated from her daughter, she is assigned to a powerful military commander (Robert Duvall) whose wife (Faye Dunaway) is wary of her husband’s attraction to young handmaids. Aiden Quinn costars as the groundskeeper and chauffeur, a wily character who seduces Kate and introduces her to the rebellion. *The Handmaid’s Tale* is more metaphorical than realistic, a caricature of a modern Fascist takeover (the fictional country is called Gilead) that also serves up a commentary on the oppression of women by a hypocritical patriarchy. Women are officially considered sacred vessels of life but treated like sexual objects and property, and the men revel in the decadence that they ban. Playwright Harold Pinter wrote the script, while Volker Schlöndorff directs, giving the film an emotionally cool quality and a color scheme drained of bright colors except for the scarlet robes of the handmaids, but this is ultimately more of an intellectual exercise than a dynamic drama. Ironically, the fact that this landmark feminist novel was brought to the screen by men may explain the passionless production. Debuting on Blu-ray to coincide with the acclaimed new TV adaptation aired on Hulu, this is a strong optional purchase, particularly given the increased interest in Atwood’s novel since Trump’s election. (S. Axmayer)

The Jacques Rivette Collection

★★★1/2
Arrow, 6 discs, 415 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$99.95

Jacques Rivette is less well known than his

fellow New Wave filmmakers Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, and Eric Rohmer, but his career was just as resilient and interesting. The three films in this collection, never before released on home video in the U.S., present Rivette at his most idiosyncratic, with the first two being examples of the director’s love of fabulism—creating worlds of myth and fantasy within a familiar material world. *Norôit* (1976), starring Geraldine Chaplin as a woman on a mission of vengeance against a vicious pirate queen (Bernadette Lafont), is a Jacobean drama that reworks the early 17th-century play *The Revenger’s Tragedy* into a femme-centric pirate movie. *Duelle* (1976) begins as a murder mystery about a hotel clerk (Hermine Karagheuz) searching for a missing man and ends up as a battle between two capricious gods (a Sun spirit played by Bulle Ogier and an earthier Moon spirit played by Juliet Berto) searching for a magical stone. Both are odd films in which figuring out the stories and the motivations are part of the mystery. Rivette made two more films before he suffered from nervous exhaustion and took a break, returning with *Merry-Go-Round* (1981), which reworked ideas from the earlier films into a modern mystery of conspiracies, secrets, and a scavenger hunt of sorts, with Maria Schneider and Joe Dallesandro sent scurrying after clues to a dead man and the fortune he left behind. These surreal, enigmatic films are minor Rivette, of interest largely to aficionados, but they receive red carpet treatment here with new restorations and extras that include interviews with film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum, Rivette, and actors, as well as a book with writings on the films. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)



Ludwig

★★★1/2
Arrow, 4 discs, 257 min., in Italian & English w/English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$49.99



Helmut Berger stars as 19th-century King Ludwig II, the notorious “mad king” of Bavaria, in Luchino Visconti’s melancholy 1973 study of madness and decadence. *Ludwig* is an epic production, following the life of the king who was crowned in 1864 at the age of 19 and then isolated himself from the world as he focused interest on the arts—including a sponsorship of composer Richard Wagner (Trevor Howard) that ends in scandal—and built castles while withdrawing into his fantasy fairy-tale kingdom during his decline. At the same time, he essentially ignored matters of state, which finally drove the government to call a tribunal and have him deposed as mentally unfit. Romy Schneider costars as his cousin, who psychologically leverages

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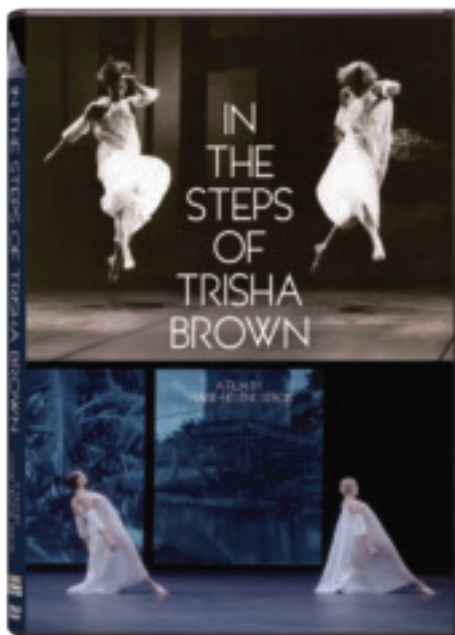
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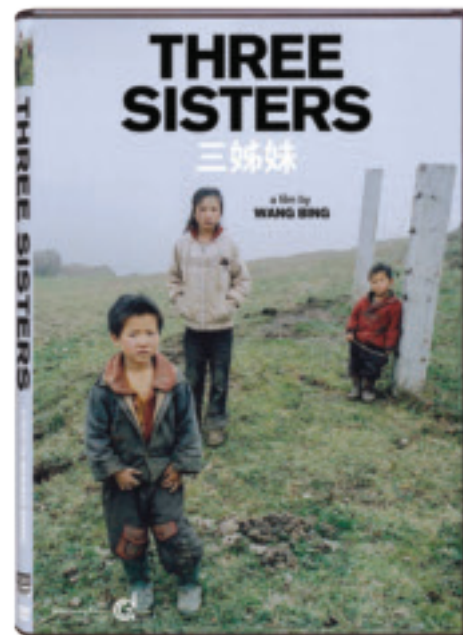
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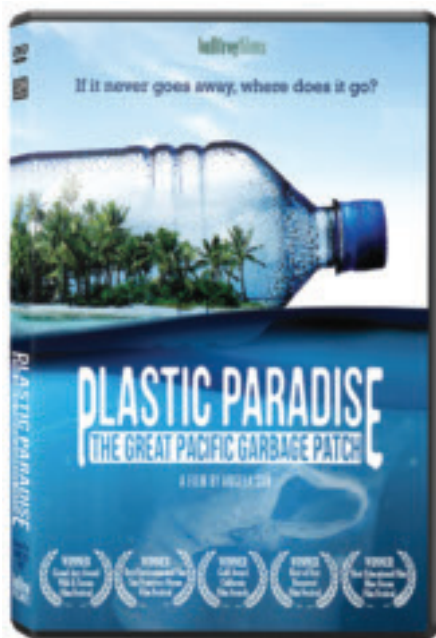
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Ludwig's attraction to her. *Ludwig* is not a traditional historical epic; Visconti favors intimate scenes that reveal the troubled nature of his main character over big set pieces marking historical turning points, and he structures the film in long, often dreamlike flashbacks. A lavish production, this is the third film in Visconti's unofficial "German trilogy" (following *The Damned* and *Death in Venice*), and running at nearly four hours it is sometimes lugubrious and self-indulgent, but always beautiful. Winner of the David di Donatello Awards (Italy's equivalent to the Oscar) for Best Film and Best Director, *Ludwig* makes its high-def debut in this Blu-ray/DVD Combo set that features both the 235-minute director's cut and a longer five-part TV version, along with extras including archival documentaries, new and archival cast and crew interviews, and a booklet. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Marjorie Morningstar

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 128 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Based on the famous 1955 novel by Herman Wouk, this occasionally stirring 1958 melodrama is worth viewing for the engrossing performances of its central players alone. Marjorie Morgenstern (Natalie Wood) is the 18-year-old daughter of a prosperous Jewish family living in Manhattan's Upper West Side whose intelligence and worldly desires keep her from settling down with the affluent boy her parents have arranged for her to marry. Instead, Marjorie has an affair with older composer Noel Airman (Gene Kelly) during her stint as a dramatic counselor at a summer camp. Their love is as rocky as it is fiery, with the requisite push/pull dynamic occurring like clockwork between the aimless Noel, who sees himself as a failure for being unable to stage his pet musical, and the determined Marjorie, who is attempting to recognize her own worth as an actress while simultaneously trying to rehabilitate her damaged lover and navigate the turgid waters of sex and domesticity in the modern age. Although the narrative doesn't offer much in the way of surprise, Wood and Kelly are both captivating, with Wood bringing warmth to a character that can come across as the archetype of the blessed chaste virgin, and Kelly shining in a number of scenes that show him as a pitiful lost soul underneath all of the superficial charm. And Max Steiner's lush theme music has the power to move the viewer even when the film itself does not. A strong optional purchase. (J. Cruz)

The Migrants ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 90 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99

A quality CBS-TV movie, this Emmy-winning 1974 drama scripted by Lanford Wilson

from a story by Tennessee Williams focuses on the Barlows, a clan of modern-day migrant workers who follow a longstanding annual routine of picking and packaging produce, traveling in caravans from the South to the North. Son Lyle (Ron Howard) scrimps and saves in order to buy the family out of their running debts to their straw boss. But while near Cincinnati, Lyle meets a town girl (Howard's own *American Graffiti* costar Cindy Williams) who inspires the boy to try striking out on his own, breaking the cycle that seems to keep him trapped in rootlessness and poverty. Cloris Leachman and Ed Lauter are the Barlow parents, while Sissy Spacek plays their daughter. Directed by Tom Gries, *The Migrants* is a classic TV movie, one that will be a revelation for viewers who only associate Howard with *Happy Days* or as a director of Hollywood blockbusters. Highly recommended. (C. Cassady)



The Optimists ★★★

Kino Lorber, 110 min., PG, DVD: \$14.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

This loosely plotted 1973 feature film from director Anthony Simmons—adapting his own 1964 novel *The Optimists of Nine Elms*—features comic actor Peter Sellers as Sam, who was once a headlining comic entertainer in the vanished London music-hall scene. Now, Sam ekes out a living as a street musician. Two Cockney children (Donna Mullane and John Chaffey) befriend the curmudgeonly showman and plan to give Sam's ailing old dog a fitting burial in the landmark Victorian-era pet cemetery that is tucked into Hyde Park (the film has many London sights that most tourists never see). *Oliver* composer Lionel Bart contributed the songs and music for this bittersweet, working-class sleeper, in which Sellers avoids Inspector Clouseau-like pratfalls and slapstick in favor of comedy with a more delicate appeal. Recommended. (C. Cassady)



Panther Girl of the Kongo ★★★1/2

Olive, 168 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

One of the very last of the storied Republic Pictures cliffhanger serials, *Panther Girl of the Kongo* debuted in 1955 as a loose follow-up to the same studio's 1941 Edgar Rice Burroughs adaptation *Jungle Girl*. The title character is a leggy buckskin-clad adventuress (Phyllis Coates, whose stunt double does some impressive acrobatic vine-swinging) who is determined to get on film the "devil beasts" that are suddenly terrorizing her section of Africa.



The "claw monsters" are actually common crustaceans, turned into giants by a local evil scientist to scare intruders away from a diamond mine. The scientist's henchmen fight running battles with the good guys, amid interpolations of loads of stock footage and *Jungle Girl* clips. Trick scenes of crawfish filmed in close-up amidst dollhouse-sized props aren't the best serial f/x, but they're not the worst either; much the same could be said for the characterizations of the "African" natives who are friend and foe alike to the Panther Girl. The innocent, naïve charm here partially compensates for the weak/clunky plot and budget-minded antics. A strong optional purchase. (C. Cassady)

Property Is No Longer a Theft ★★★

Arrow, 126 min., in Italian w/ English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

Elio Petri spent his career making smart and witty films that engaged with the social and political issues of his day and featured a satirical edge. *Property Is No Longer a Theft* (1973) is one of Petri's most aggressive commentaries on capitalism, privilege, and power in 1970s Italy, told through a comic revenge tale. When Total (Flavio Bucci), a bank clerk who is allergic to paper money, is refused a loan because he has no collateral, he quits his job and declares war on the Butcher (Ugo Tognazzi)—the bank's star customer—by robbing his personal items: a knife, his mistress's jewelry, and his mistress (Daria Nicolodi) herself. "I'm a Mandrakian Marxist," he proclaims. "I only steal what I need." The Butcher uses the thefts to cover insurance fraud but then realizes that his empire of illegal businesses could be exposed if the police catch the robber. There is no attempt at realism here: the Butcher's shop has the sleek glamour of a jewelry store, an anti-theft exhibition features devices out of a James Bond movie, Total looks through police mug shots to recruit a seasoned thief for his latest plan, and in between sequences the characters address the camera for brief, often comic commentaries on socioeconomics. Remastered from a new 4K restoration for this Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, extras include new interviews with Bucci, producer Claudio Mancini, and makeup artist Pierantonio Maccacchi. Likely to appeal to fans of offbeat and brainy foreign cinema, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Ride the High Country

★★★1/2

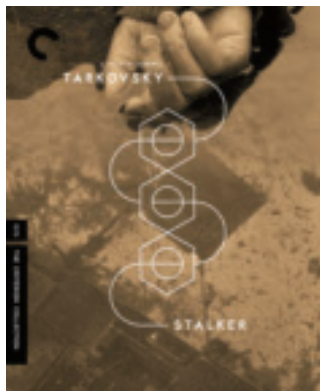
Warner, 94 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99

Filmmaker Sam Peckinpah's 1962 second feature (and first unqualified masterpiece) is a laconic tale about the end of the frontier that both celebrates and de-





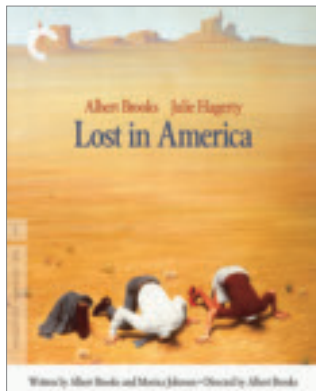
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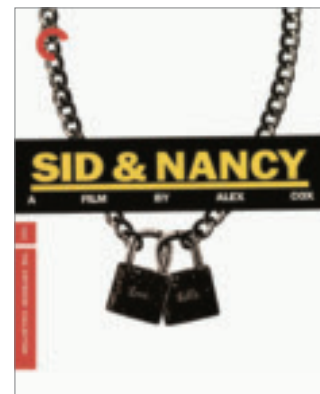
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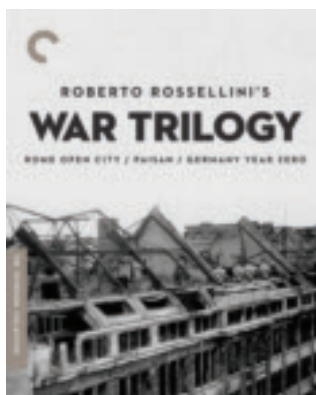
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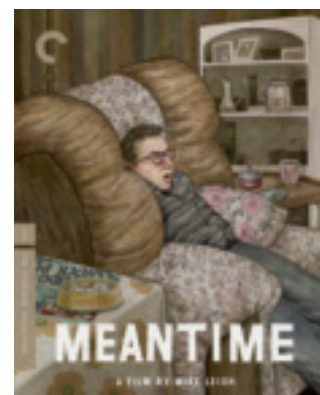
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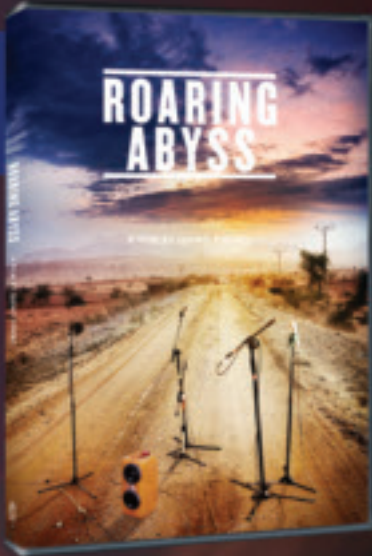
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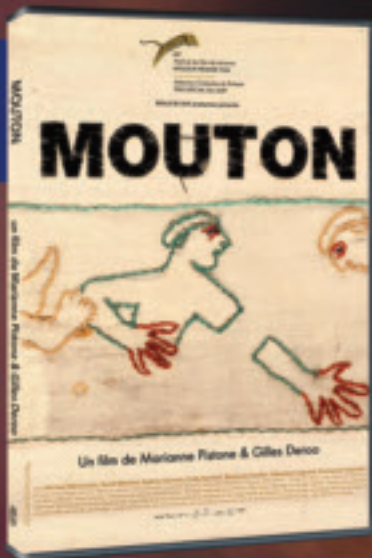


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Canada, 2008

"The rise of neo-
liberalism, and [the
argument] against it."
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RT: 160 min
SRP: \$24.95
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constructs the romantic view of Old West nobility and heroism. Peckinpah casts two veteran hands of the genre—Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea—as longtime friends and lawmen in their sunset years at the turn of the 20th century. McCrea is former marshal and straight shooter Steve Judd, who just wants to complete one last job—transporting and guarding a shipment of gold from a mountain mine to the company office. And Scott is Gil Westrum, now reduced to playing a sharpshooter in a sideshow, who signs on as Judd's backup but schemes to steal the gold for himself. Mariette Hartley costars and Peckinpah fills the supporting cast with actors who would go on to become his familiar stock company, including R.G. Armstrong, L.Q. Jones, and Warren Oates. *Ride the High Country* has a hard edge but none of the savage violence that would define the director's later films, and the finale anticipates *The Wild Bunch*—albeit in a more old-school vein—with the tired elders standing up to a scruffy gang one last time to give themselves a shot at redemption. This role marked the end of the trail for Scott, who retired, and it was the final leading turn for McCrea. A lovely Western that is also an American classic, *Ride the High Country* makes its Blu-ray debut, remastered from a gorgeous new 2K scan, with extras including audio commentary by a handful of Peckinpah biographers/documentarians, and a behind-the-scenes featurette. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Scar ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 72 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Originally released under the title *Hollow Triumph*, this 1948 film noir plays on the theme of doubles with romantic European émigré Paul Henreid starring in two roles: as criminal mastermind John Muller, a medical school dropout who exits prison with a scheme to rob a casino owned by a vindictive mob boss, and as Dr. Bartok, a chilly psychiatrist who is Muller's exact double except for the jagged scar running down Bartok's cheek. The heist inevitably goes bad and Muller goes into hiding, hatching a plan to kill the doctor and put his medical training to use by taking over the doc's identity—complete with a scar carved into his cheek. Henreid produced this independent production and worked closely with Hungarian-born director Steve Sekely on the tone and style. *The Scar* is a low-budget film noir that has a couple of clever twists, some marvelous nocturnal Los Angeles locations shot by the great noir stylist John Alton, and a confident Joan Bennett in a supporting role as a savvy single woman who has no illusions about dating the seductive but shady Muller. It's an enjoyable but minor film noir that spawned one of the greatest lines in the genre: "It's a bitter little



world." Newly remastered for its high-def debut (and clearly superior to earlier DVD editions), extras include audio commentary by film historian Imogen Sara Smith. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Story of Sin ★★

Arrow, 130 min., in Polish w/ English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

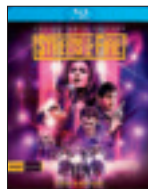
Set in turn-of-the-20th-century Warsaw, this sexy 1975 drama by animator-turned-erotic-filmmaker Walerian Borowczyk—adapted from a novel by Polish author Stefan Zeromski—follows Ewa (Grazyna Dlugolecka), a beautiful and religious young virgin who gives in to carnal temptation when a handsome young boarder (Jerzy Zelnik) moves into her parents' home. While he's trying to obtain a divorce from his wife back in Italy, he introduces Ewa to the joy of sex and they embark on a passionate affair. Ending up pregnant, Ewa follows her lover back to Italy, where she finds that he has moved on, after which she falls into questionable company as she plots her vengeance. Although less sexually explicit than Borowczyk's more notorious films (such as *The Beast*, made the same year), *Story of Sin* does feature copious nudity and erotic imagery set against a ravishing backdrop of period elegance, shot in a languid manner that sometimes drags while contrasting with Ewa's spiral into degradation. The film also satirizes piety and morality as the innocent Ewa is seduced and betrayed by a series of men and is forced to turn mercenary and opportunistic in order to survive. A minor cult film, *Story of Sin* is presented here in a newly remastered Blu-ray/DVD Combo release, with extras including an introduction by poster designer Andrzej Klimowski, three newly restored animated shorts by Borowczyk, new interviews with Dlugolecka and others, and a booklet. Not a necessary purchase. (S. Axmaker)



Streets of Fire ★★

Shout! Factory, 2 discs, 93 min., PG, Blu-ray: \$34.99

A self-described "rock and roll fable" from "another time, another place," Walter Hill's 1984 *Streets of Fire* is a mix of Western, motorcycle movie, and film noir done up in comic book style. Michael Paré plays soldier of fortune hero Tom Cody, who rides with a small posse into the lawless territory of a biker gang led by the villainous Raven (Willem Dafoe) in order to rescue a kidnapped rock star (Diane Lane), who was once his lover. Rick Moranis costars as the sneering manager who clashes with Tom over the woman they both love. *Streets of Fire* plays out in a fantasy version of a 1950s city, an urban neighborhood of diners and brick storefronts gathered under



the rumble of an elevated train. The film's attitude and style are set during an exhilarating opening sequence that is edited to a driving rock and roll beat. The plot is simple and the characters are archetypes—the sullen loner hero, the smart-talking sidekick (Amy Madigan, in a role originally written for a man), the glamorous heroine with the look of a femme fatale and the tough assurance of a survivor, the smiling villain who makes the fight personal—but Hill makes the familiar tropes interesting by creatively mixing genres and stirring in a soundtrack of rock songs and a guitar-based score by Ry Cooder. Bowing on Blu-ray in a newly remastered edition, extras include behind-the-scenes documentaries and featurettes, music videos, and a stills gallery. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Theatre of Mr. & Mrs. Kabal ★★★

Olive, 78 min., in French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Polish-born Walerian Borowczyk may be best known for his erotic (some would say pornographic) live-action movies (such as *The Beast*) made between 1968 and his death in 2006. From the mid-1950s to the late '60s, however, Borowczyk's specialty was animation, culminating in this 1967 feature-length oddity featuring a series of surrealistic vignettes representing a day in the life of the title couple. The cut-out and hand-drawn segments are occasionally mixed with filmed scenes, including an opening gag in which Borowczyk himself appears in person to plead with Mrs. Kabal to act natural. That in itself is a joke, since she is actually a mechanical construct who, after choosing her own head, communicates in beeps and gurgles that require subtitles to decipher. In stilted black-and-white drawings she lords it over a mute, pipsqueak husband who spends much of his time peering through binoculars at beautiful women (filmed in live-action), only to have his enjoyment ruined by a surly bearded man who bursts into every scene. Nevertheless, Mr. Kabal is a devoted mate: in one scene he shrinks himself to enter his wife's metal body when she falls ill from eating butterflies (after he watches a live-action documentary about the internal workings of the human body as preparation). A dark, bizarre take on married life, *Theatre of Mr. & Mrs. Kabal* will definitely not appeal to everyone, but those interested in the history of animation will find it fascinating. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



The Valley of Gwangi ★★1/2

Warner, 95 min., G, Blu-ray: \$21.99

It's cowboys vs. dinosaurs in this entertaining 1969 adventure tale from producer and special effects legend Ray Harryhausen. The basic premise here combines elements of *The*

Lost World and *King Kong*, with a prehistoric realm preserved in a hidden valley in the American southwest desert at the turn of the 20th century. James Franciscus stars as a charismatic entrepreneur who comes to a failing Wild West show with the intent to poach talent and is accused of stealing their new attraction—a tiny prehistoric horse thought long extinct—which was actually abducted by gypsies who wanted to return it to a secret region. The missing horse is tracked back to this land that time forgot, and a fierce allosaurus (called a Gwangi by the gypsies) is captured as the new star attraction. Harryhausen's creature animation is blended beautifully with the live-action cowboys on horseback as they try to lasso the titular lizard in an impressive sequence, topped only by the inevitable escape from its cage during the big show. It's a simple story that features typical Hollywood degrading clichés of gypsy characters. But the visuals dazzle, Franciscus is a magnetic leading man, the score by Jerome Moross is grand, and the sight of cowboys battling a dinosaur is irresistible. Although not one of Harryhausen's most famous films, it is a fun minor cult classic. Bowing on Blu-ray with extras including a behind-the-scenes featurette, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)



The Vampire Bat ★★1/2
Film Detective, 63 min., not rated, DVD: \$12.99, Blu-ray: \$19.99

Frank R. Strayer's 1933 film features a bewildering mixture of horror, mystery and low comedy. The setting is a small German village where a series of murders have taken place involving vampire-type punctures on the neck and the draining of victims' blood. The superstitious villagers suspect that a local half-wit with a fondness for bats is the culprit, but the real villain is not that difficult to unmask. After all, when you have Lionel Atwill playing a mad scientist, it quickly becomes obvious that his laboratory is not being used for therapeutic research. The low-budget Majestic Pictures studio tried to give this production an A-list pedigree, bringing in Melvyn Douglas to play a police inspector investigating the case and Fay Wray as Atwill's lab assistant, while also recycling the elaborate sets from James Whale's *Frankenstein* and *The Old Dark House*. Unfortunately, the acting is often too broad, especially the over-the-top antics of Maude Eburne as Wray's outrageously hypochondriac aunt and Dwight Frye as the creepy simpleton accused of being the killer. Still, the visual quality of this digitally remastered and restored version is greatly superior to the shabby public domain prints that have circulated for years, and this edition includes the



rarely seen segment in which the villagers' torches are boldly hand-colored in fiery hues. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Sam Sherman, and a featurette with Douglas's eldest son, Gregory Hesselberg. A strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)

The Wheeler Dealers

★★1/2
 Warner, 105 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$21.99

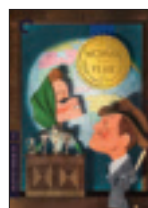
James Garner is perfectly cast as Texas oilman Henry Tyroon, who heads to New York City to raise money when his newly-drilled wells all come up dry, and Lee Remick costars as Molly Thatcher, an aspiring stockbroker trying to chip away at the glass ceiling in an all-male firm, in director Arthur Hiller's 1963 romantic comedy about a savvy good old boy courting Wall Street and New York high society. Henry is close to being a con-man, but he's less interested in money than in putting together deals in which everyone makes a profit. Henry is also very much taken with Molly, a modern woman with a frank attitude toward sex (the films plays like a Doris Day/Rock Hudson 1960s sex comedy with a Texas drawl). Henry shows the bigwigs that he's no rube as he cuts through the hype with appropriately folksy aphorisms, which turns out to be a put-on of its own kind. For a film that at least pretends to confront women's rights and equanimity in the workplace, *The Wheeler Dealers* certainly falls back on sexist assumptions and romantic clichés. But it is also entertaining, thanks to Garner's grinning charm, Remick's modernity, and a supporting cast of comic actors that include Jim Backus as a Wall Street boss, Louis Nye as a bohemian artist, John Astin as a financial prosecutor, and Phil Harris, Chill Wills, and Pat Harrington Jr. as a trio of Texas investors who try to play cupid for Henry. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)



Woman of the Year

★★★★★
 Criterion, 114 min., not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95

Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy were paired for the first time in director George Stevens's incisive 1942 portrait of a two-career marriage (long before these were common). Tracy plays Sam Craig, a laidback sportswriter who falls for social and political journalist Tess Harding (Hepburn), who lives and breathes her work. With a little juggling, workaholic Tess is able to squeeze in a few moments to marry Sam, but she also entertains guests on their wedding night. The marriage takes a nosedive as Tess's star continues to rise, and Sam is pushed to the periphery of her life. When the breakup finally comes, Tess

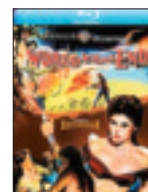


decides that her marriage is more important. While this decision might disappoint some modern viewers, Tess's triumphant return does feature one of cinema's great comic sequences as Tess—a virtual illiterate in the kitchen—tries to make breakfast for Sam, with disastrously funny results. Hepburn was nominated for Best Actress, and Ring Lardner, Jr. picked up an Oscar for his witty and biting script. Making its high-def debut in a handsome Criterion Collection edition, extras include George Stevens, Jr.'s (the director's son) 1984 documentary *George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey*, the 1986 documentary *The Spencer Tracy Legacy: A Tribute by Katharine Hepburn*, new and archival interviews, and an essay by film critic Stephanie Zacharek. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (R. Pitman)

World Without End ★★

Warner, 80 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99

A team of four astronauts on a mission to Mars loses contact with Earth and crash lands on a mystery planet. "We could be anywhere," confesses their navigator, but the discovery of gravestones confirms what the familiar scrub wilderness of Southern California hints at: this is Earth, hundreds of years in the future. The group are attacked by brutish, one-eyed cavemen in animal skins and by giant spiders (charmingly cheesy rubber puppets) mutated from a nuclear war, and they find the civilized but timid remnants of humankind living underground. This dying society is populated by beautiful young women clad in revealing outfits (designed by pin-up artist Alberto Vargas) and impotent, frail men, which creates sparks between the women and the virile astronauts (especially Hugh Marlowe and Rod Taylor, who doffs his shirt for a little beefcake). Although Allied Artists produced this 1956 film in CinemaScope and Technicolor, it's basically a low-budget feature with cheap and recycled special effects, purely functional direction by B-movie veteran Edward Bernds, and a plot that shamelessly lifts ideas from H.G. Wells's classic novel *The Time Machine*. A minor, often dull example of 1950s sci-fi, this is not a necessary purchase. (S. Axmayer)



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Animal Kingdom: The Complete First Season

★★★★

Warner, 500 min., not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.99



Ellen Barkin plays Smurf Cody, the controlling matriarch of a Southern California crime family that includes her four sons, in this American TV adaptation of David Michôd's titular Australian crime drama. Relocated to the California coast surfing culture, the series opens with teenage Joshua, nicknamed J (Finn Cole), taken in by his grandmother Smurf (whom he hasn't seen in 12 years) following the drug overdose death of his mother. She slowly introduces him to the family business: namely, knocking off banks, jewelry stores, and other big-money targets. Baz (Scott Speedman) leads the crew of brothers, which includes the hyperactive Craig (Ben Robson), the surf-bum Deran (Jake Weary)—who hides a secret gay life from the family—and the angry, unstable Pope (Shawn Hatosy), who gets out of prison just as J is settling in. The culture of machismo and alpha male competitiveness is nurtured by Smurf, who fixes snacks and family meals as the siblings plot their next scores, maintaining her control through mind games, emotional manipulation, and restricted access to the money. It's a gritty crime show in the bright California surf and sun, full of sex and violence, and reckless, raw characters with few redeeming qualities but plenty of explosive energy. And it provides a showcase for Barkin to create a steely character with a savage edge. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and deleted scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Archer: The Complete Season Seven

★★★★

Fox, 2 discs, 218 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98



After a failed stint running a drug cartel, the disgraced spies at the center of the primitively animated, FX-aired *Archer* are transformed into the Figgis Agency, a group of L.A. private investigators headed up by Cyril Figgis (voiced by Chris Parnell). Top op Sterling Archer (H. Jon Benjamin) has mad spy skills, but is also a socially inept alcoholic who is poor at relationships, possibly due to the influence of his cold heartless mother, Malory (Jessica Walter). The new season opens with a two-parter in which lush Archer, his Amazonian girlfriend Lana (Aisha Tyler), and gay, snarky Ray (show creator/writer Adam Reed) break into a mansion to retrieve a sensitive disc belonging to middle-aged screen siren Veronica Deane. But the disc turns out to be a MacGuffin, although Deane—who Archer naturally

has the hots for—becomes a central figure in the season's overriding narrative arc, which concludes with a *Sunset Boulevard*-style cliffhanger involving a swimming pool and a floating and apparently dead Archer (no spoiler alert: this is also shown in the season's opening episode). Along for the ride are the rest of the office crazies: Pam (Amber Nash), the queen of inappropriate remarks; the rather creepy Cheryl (Judy Greer); and the decidedly creepier Dr. Krieger (Lucky Yates)—as well as returning guests Barry the cyborg (Dave Willis) and CIA agent Slater (Christian Slater). The humor here is often hit and miss (*Archer* pushes the envelope as one of the nastiest shows on TV), but the good laughs are really good laughs. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 seventh season, extras include a live *Archer* episode reading, and a series of shorts in which Archer reviews various James Bond films. Recommended. (R. Pitman)

The Bureau: Season 2

★★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 3 discs, 520 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99



The second season of the French TV spy drama about a clandestine branch of the DGSE (the French answer to the CIA) that handles deep cover agents begins with legendary agent Malotru (Mathieu Kassovitz)—now Deputy Director of the division—betraying the DGSE to the CIA in order to save his Syrian lover (Zineb Triki). While he puts the mission of Phénomène (Sara Giraudeau), a newly-trained undercover agent in Iran, in danger to satisfy the CIA, another team focuses on a French ISIS jihadist who has been executing prisoners and posting the killings on the web. This series, which continues the gripping storytelling and unexpected twists of the first season while delving deeper into the characters, is built on practical technology and real world situations (with none of the fantasy of action-heavy American spy thrillers), focusing on the long, drawn-out process of intelligence gathering and communication. Details matter here and can mean the difference between life and death. Even with numerous stories playing out, Malotru remains the hub of the show, tackling moral quandaries with an impassive face that betrays no emotion (Kassovitz's performance is superb and at times heartbreaking) while he also pours out his sins in a secret journal. One of the most acclaimed shows on French TV, *The Bureau* airs in the U.S. on the Sundance Now streaming service. Fans of John le Carré's spy stories who appreciate smart, challenging storytelling will be drawn to this. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 second season, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Divorce: The Complete First Season

★★★★

HBO, 2 discs, 300 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99



HBO's second series starring Sarah Jessica Parker has not been welcomed with the same degree of enthusiasm as her first (*Sex and the City*), but Sharon Horgan's dark comedy about a marital breakup is a better than average show. The major strength of *Divorce* lies in the chemistry between Parker, playing Frances, the high-strung wife who abruptly announces that she wants a divorce during a friend's disastrous birthday party, and Thomas Haden Church as her husband Robert, whose glumly bovine exterior masks a smugly sarcastic streak that explodes when he discovers that Frances has been having an affair with a college professor (Jemaine Clement). Some secondary characters are drawn very broadly—Molly Shannon and Tracy Letts come on too strong as the couple whose party sets off the separation, as do the cutthroat lawyers (Jeffrey DeMunn, Dean Winters, and J. Smith-Cameron). On the other hand, the writing dealing with the central couple's teen children (Sterling Jerins and Charlie Kilgore) is sensitive and perceptive, and the plot threads touching on the parents' professional lives (plans to revive his failing business ultimately fall short, while her dream of ditching a well-paying but unfulfilling job to open an art gallery is suddenly shattered) are incisively drawn. The narrative follows a canny arc as Frances and Robert's attitudes shift from searching for ways to end things amicably to essentially embracing what threatens to become an all-out war—setting the stage for what promises to be an eventful second season. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include episode commentaries. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Home Fires: The Complete Second Season

★★★1/2

PBS, 2 discs, 360 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99, Blu-ray: \$49.99



The second season of this British drama about life in the rural community of Cheshire during the early years of World War II slips into a more conventional period drama mode. The focus still lies on the women on the home front and in particular the leaders of the Women's Institute, a social organization that takes an active role in organizing civilian support for the war effort. Frances (Samantha Bond) takes over her husband's business after his death and discovers that he had a mistress and a child; Pat (Claire Rushbrook) has an affair with a Czech officer after her bullying husband comes back from the

front and continues his cruel behavior; and haughty aristocrat Joyce (Francesca Annis) returns from her vacation home exhibiting humility, compassion, and commitment that she previously lacked. Along the way, there's romance, affairs, secrets, destructive gossip, black market crime, bigotry, and all sorts of trials that both create divisions and bring the women closer together. The war comes home when German bombers hit the village, and the first casualties return, injured in mind, body, or both. The familiar stories and journeys of the characters don't break any new dramatic ground or challenge any historical preconceptions, but *Home Fires* does underscore a rousing display of communal support as class divisions and personal conflicts are set aside for the war effort. Aired on PBS's *Masterpiece* series, the show was cancelled after the six episodes of this 2016 second season. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Orange Is the New Black: Season Four ★★★★★

Lionsgate, 778 min., not rated, DVD: 4 discs, \$34.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$34.99



The fourth season of the hit Netflix series opens with a jailbreak, of sorts—there's a hole in the fence and the inmates go swimming in a nearby river—and Alex (Laura Prepon) turning the tables on a hitman hired to kill her, which leaves a dead body to get rid of. *Orange Is the New Black* initially focused on Piper (Taylor Schilling), a middle-class drug runner sent to a minimum security prison on a plea deal, but the narrative has since expanded across the entire prison population and now she is just another character in an ensemble comedy-drama, which continues to get bigger now that a new influx of inmates hits the overcrowded facility. This is the result of a private prison contractor trying to squeeze out the maximum profit, and the stories here come out of the cutbacks and complications as Caputo (Nick Sandow), the well-meaning new warden, struggles with budget slashes and corporate demands. Racial tensions also continue to simmer; a new head of guards (Brad William Henke) instills a brutal sense of obedience through harassment and abuse; and Blair Brown costars as a Martha Stewart-type. This season takes a swerve into tragedy when a nonviolent protest ends in the death of an inmate, and it once again ends on a cliffhanger. The series remains one of the most popular on Netflix, with high quality writing and storytelling that is built around an entertaining cast of characters. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2016 third season, extras include episode commentaries, a set tour, and a gag reel. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Silicon Valley: The Complete Third Season ★★★★★

HBO, 2 discs, 300 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99



The third season of HBO's satire of software start-ups begins with Richard (Thomas Middleditch), a genius software developer with terrible social skills and no mind for business, demoted to chief technology officer in his own company, Pied Piper, while the new CEO (Stephen Tobolowsky) charts a new direction. The problem is that this fresh path has nothing to do with the possibilities of the software, so Richard and his friends go behind the CEO's back to develop their own ideas. Meanwhile, their corporate nemesis, Gavin Belson (Matt Ross) at the Google-like Hooli, faces a disastrous new launch; self-proclaimed mentor Erlich (T.J. Miller) manages to blow through the millions of dollars that the lovable but dim Big Head (Josh Brener) received when he was let go from Hooli; and Pied Piper is offered for sale when the top shareholders lose faith in Richard's disastrous track record as a businessman...just as Dinesh (Kumail Nanjiani) finds a promising new application for Richard's technology. The humor of this Mike Judge-created savvy take on the 21st-century version of the American Dream revolves around the techies' arrested-adolescence-driven behavior in an ostensibly grown-up world of business plans and public relations. Compiling all 10 episodes of the 2016 third season, extras include deleted scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Veep: The Complete Fifth Season ★★★★★

HBO, 2 discs, 285 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99



The fifth season of the Emmy-winning political comedy begins with President Selina Meyer (Julia Louis-Dreyfus)—the comically ineffectual and self-defeating Vice President who was elevated to the Oval Office after the prez's resignation—facing a tie in the Electoral College in the Presidential election, contesting a recount in a close state tally, and rallying support in Congress when the election is thrown to the Senate. Created by British satirist Armando Iannucci, *Veep* is a savage satire of American politics that serves up a hilarious portrait of political dysfunction and the people who feed the chaos. David Mandel takes over as showrunner this season and makes Selina even more mercenary and self-involved as she deals with the death of her mother and the attempts made by her daughter (Sarah Sutherland) to repair their own relationship. One of Selina's only redeeming features is her loyalty to Amy (Anna Chlumsky), her longtime political

aide. While there is nothing inspirational about this shallow politician whose drive for office is guided only by ego and power, Emyy-winner Louis-Dreyfus makes her a riveting political monster. But the show's real strength lies in its ensemble cast, who exhibit an easy, improvisational quality that makes everything look like it's been captured by a stray documentary camera. Season five makes no direct references to the current political circus (it ran during the 2016 election campaign), but it is one of the few running political satires able to provide surprises that at least approach the craziness of the current reality we live in. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 fifth season, extras include select episode commentaries and deleted scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Witness for the Prosecution ★★★★★

Acorn, 122 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99, Apr. 25



This 2016 version of the classic Agatha Christie drama returns to the original 1925 short story to create a telefilm that is very different from the famous play and film versions. *The Witness for the Prosecution* is set in post-World War I London, where Leonard Vole (Billy Howle), a former soldier struggling to get by, is taken as a lover by a rich woman (Kim Cattrall) and is arrested for her murder. Toby Jones plays barrister John Mayhew, also a former soldier, who believes the key to Vole's defense lies in the testimony of Romaine (Andrea Riseborough), an Austrian showgirl who lives with Vole as his common-law wife—until she turns on him and testifies for the prosecution. Just when it looks like her testimony will destroy his chances, evidence that undercuts both her story and her credibility surfaces. This production, a collaboration between Acorn (majority owner of the Agatha Christie estate) and the BBC, upends expectations with a grim, serious tone and a story that surprises audiences with a very different third act. Directed by Julian Jarrold, the film contrasts the decadence of the wealthy few with the desperation and poverty of the rest of the nation. And unlike the witty, brilliant barrister played by Charles Laughton in the great 1957 film, Jones's Mayhew gets no respect from his boss and struggles in an unhappy marriage. Extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and interviews. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

VideoLibrarianOnline

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) for more reviews during July and August, including: *Code of a Killer*, *Ice: Season One*, *Kingdom: Seasons One and Two*, *Legend of Bruce Lee: Volume Two*, *Rake: Series 1*, and much more!

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

All About Allergies ★★★

(2017) 70 min. DVD: \$6.99. PBS Distribution (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 978-1-5317-0153-6.

Exploring the topic of allergies in a kid-friendly manner, this compilation includes five stories featuring popular characters from PBS Kids shows. Two of the episodes are from the *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* spin-off *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*. "Daniel's Allergy" incorporates interactive segments ("Can you open your mouth and say ahhhh?") as the titular tiger cub learns about his newfound allergy to peaches and is counseled to tell an adult if he feels sick after trying something new. The follow-up "Allergies at School" mentions Daniel's new allergy as the class gathers to celebrate 100 days of school with a picnic. Based on the books by Marc Brown, the *Arthur* segment "Binky Goes Nuts" follows aardvark Arthur's rabbit pal, whose peanut allergy flares up, sending him to the library (yay!) to do more research. Also including the math-based *Peg + Cat*'s "The Allergy Problem" (the dynamic duo worry that Peg is allergic to her feline friend) and the phonics program *WordWorld*'s "Achoo!" (Sheep, Dog, and other friends try to find out why Pig is such a sneezy mess), this is easily recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Duck on a Bike ★★★1/2

(2017) 8 min. DVD: \$59.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-33818-702-1.

Featuring both English and Spanish narration (by Walter Mayes and Jorge Reyes, respectively), this animated adaptation of author and illustrator David Shannon's 2002 picture book is backed by a twangy soundtrack from Jack Sundrud and Rusty Young. Duck runs off with a child's bike at his farm and melodramatically rides around, showing off for the other creatures. Cow thinks he's silly, Sheep predicts Duck is going to get hurt, Dog is impressed, Horse knows Duck is still not as fast as him, and Goat muses "I'd like to eat that bike," among other animal opinions. And when a passel of dirt-kicking biking children leave their bicycles unattended, the rest of the animal gang might not be able to help themselves. Presented with optional read-along subtitles, this funny and fun short is highly recommended. [Note: Also newly available is an animated adaptation of Shannon's 2016 companion story *Duck on a Tractor*.] Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Elena and the Secret of Avalor: The Magic Within ★★1/2

(2017) 109 min. DVD: \$19.99. Buena Vista Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

First there was Sofia, as in *Sofia the First*, a Disney Junior animated series featuring the studio's first Hispanic princess, a commoner whose mother married a king. And that begat *Elena of Avalor*. Some marketing-savvy Disney exec got the brilliant idea to bring these two young heroines together in a crossover movie that tells Elena's backstory about how she became trapped in the amulet worn by Sofia and how Sofia was charged to help free her. Jane Fonda is the voice of the sorceress Shuriki, who presumably killed Elena's royal parents (a deed discreetly shrouded in sinister green smoke). Shuriki's attempt to do likewise

to Elena winds up with the young princess trapped in an amulet for 40 years. And so it is off to Avalor for Sofia and her royal family, where Shuriki rules and magic (other than the sorceress's own) is forbidden. As fans of the series know, Sofia is a plucky and resourceful role model. And in typical Disney fashion, there are catchy, empowering tunes, talking and flying animals, and positive (albeit rote) messages about the importance of family, friends, and perseverance when all seems lost. But the animation is strictly basic cable. Extras include four bonus episodes and a music video. A strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (D. Liebenow)

How a House is Built ★★★

(2016) 9 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-52004-576-4.

This iconographic-animated adaptation of nonfiction children's wunderkind Gail Gibbons's 1990 book uses clean lines and simple diagrams and descriptions to illustrate how a house is built. Identifying various styles of homes (including log cabin, stone, and adobe), the program focuses on a frame house, detailing the jobs of the various workers (such as the general contractor, surveyor, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters, and others). Including sound effects such as machinery and hammering, as well as onscreen vocabulary for the step-by-step processes ("the foundation will support the weight of the house"), the short also briefly looks at shelters of the past (including cave, igloo, and teepee). Offering a solid overview of the topic, this short—narrated by Jon Bennett, with optional read-along subtitles—is recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Kuu Kuu Harajuku: Music, Baby! ★★1/2

(2017) 154 min. DVD: \$14.98. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Executive produced by No Doubt singer and *The Voice* judge Gwen Stefani—who also



How to Catch the Tooth Fairy ★★★

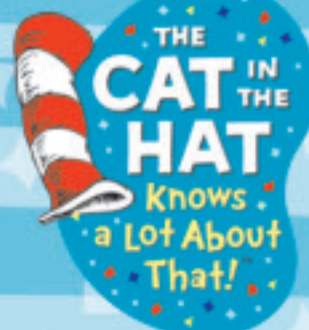
(2017) 5 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-52006-943-2.

Narrated by Elizabeth Cottle, this iconographic-animated adaptation of the 2016 picture book by author Adam Wallace and illustrator Andy Elkerton follows the titular whimsical creature—clad in a hip aviator hat and glasses—as she goes about her nightly tasks, averaging a pickup of around 300,000 teeth an evening. Against a twinkly backdrop of rich fairy-tale colors, the pink-haired, flying-toothbrush-riding T.F. is seen here getting out of various scrapes due to traps that are set by children who hope to catch a glimpse of the sprite. Along with the usual dangers of being mired in drool, cotton candy, and floss, the T.F. faces a Venus flytrap and a Rube Goldberg-style contraption. Part of the creators' *How to Catch...* series—which also includes *How to Catch an Elf*, *How to Catch a Leprechaun*, and *How to Catch the Easter Bunny*, all available on video from Dreamscape Media—this fun short that also features read-along subtitles is recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)



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sings the theme song—this volume from the Nickelodeon-aided animated series includes seven two-part episodes. The series follows the pastel exploits of girl band HJ5, a group of five little ladies who go by the names of Love, Angel, Music, Baby, and G (not so subtle, Gwen) and are rarely seen actually singing but are often involved in shenanigans related to their performing gigs. “Totally Teen Genie” finds the gang trying to support inept group manager Rudie Roads and coming across a snotty genie who might help them win a “Golden Hoodie Award.” “Angel’s Flight” focuses on a party for awesome record producer Twisty T’s triplet nieces and nephews, during which some in the group entertain the youngsters and others chase a large surprise cake across the town of Harajuku City. “Music, Baby” portrays a rebellion against a Nazi-esque Ministry of No-Fun-Land, and “Wanted: Audience” includes an alien watermelon and notably absent crowd for a sold-out show. Also featured are “Drums of Doom” (involving a three-fingered magician from a creepy traveling carnival) and “Adventures in Housesitting” (offering more hijinks at Twisty T’s place). Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette. A silly and sometimes fun series designed to sell toy dolls, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Two Friends ★★★

(2017) 7 min. DVD: \$59.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-33816-200-4.

Based on the 2016 picture book by author Dean Robbins and co-illustrator husband-and-wife team Sean Qualls and Selina Alko, this iconographic-animated adaptation envisions a visit between friends—activists Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass. The story is set in snowy Rochester, NY,

where Douglass rides up in a creaky buggy and Anthony prepares tea and cake. Presented as paper-doll-looking characters, the two figures talk about shared obstacles: both were denied education (in Anthony’s case, “girls didn’t need to know about important subjects”) and endured oppression. Both also were committed to the goal of helping others learn about rights (“so many minds to change...”). Narrated by Dion Graham—with snippets of actual quotes from Anthony and Douglass—this simple portrait (featuring optional read-along subtitles) of two titans who fought for the rights of women and African Americans is recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

PSYCHOLOGY & SELF-HELP

As One ★★★

(2014) 82 min. In English & Arabic w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.95. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Another entry in the growing list of upbeat documentaries about tackling autism with creative forms of engagement, filmmaker Hana Makki’s sprightly *As One* was produced in the United Arab Emirates and focuses on that nation’s autistic kids. Actually, the “Autism Project” at the center of the film brings in autistic children from all over the world to work together in putting on a musical. The film traces developments over 12 weeks as the boys and girls meet the music director, choreographer, and other artists in the mix. The rehearsals look more like herding cats than making any distinct progress, but the children’s parents along with interviewed experts take note of the gradual, positive signs suggesting that the repetition of tasks

involving movement and music are really helping. While the ultimate performance for friends and family borders on chaos, the kids bask in the attention. Less compelling than the similarly-themed *Autism: The Musical* (VL-7/08), this is still recommended, overall. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Becoming Johanna ★★★

(2016) 27 min. DVD: \$95: high schools & public libraries; \$225: colleges & universities. New Day Films. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-57448-421-2.

Jonathan Skurnick’s documentary starts out as a film about a transgender girl and her mother, but ends up somewhere else. Sixteen-year-old Johanna, who lives in the Los Angeles area, introduces herself by saying, “Biologically, I’m a boy, but I’m a girl—I’m going to be a girl.” Initially, Johanna told her mother she was gay because of her attraction to boys, but she knew there was more to it than that. As a child, she played with dolls and role-played as a girl. By her teens, she had come out as transgender. Her relationship with her Guatemalan-born mother here devolves to the point that Johanna ends up in a mental hospital for three days, an experience that she finds traumatic. Afterward, there’s a physical altercation with her mother and Johanna moves in with a foster family. She also transfers from a public high school, where she is not allowed to use the girls’ restroom, to a school for at-risk youth. While her foster family offers support, Johanna clashes with her new principal, Deb Smith, and an English teacher who remembers that she would swear and miss deadlines. But Smith refuses to give up on her, and Johanna’s attitude and grades improve. During the two years Skurnick follows her, Johanna attends a support group, models for a calendar, prepares to change her name, considers sexual-reassignment surgery, and graduates from high school. By the end, she has a boyfriend, and says “I’m in a good place.” It remains to be seen whether she and her mother will ever reconcile, but this sympathetic documentary shows how much of a difference mentors can make in the lives of transgender youth. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

White Rage ★★★

(2016) 72 min. In English & Finnish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$300. DRA. Film Platform (avail. from www.filmplatform.net). PPR.

In this quasi-documentary, Finnish filmmaker Arto Halonen imaginatively investigates the link between bullying and acts of horrific school violence. *White Rage*’s centerpiece is running narration by an unseen man named Lauri, who describes how the treatment he received from his father at home and classmates at school resulted in what—as now a social scientist himself researching the origins of human aggression—Lauri calls “white rage,” or a long-simmering lust for

The Loud House: Season 1, Volume 1 ★★★1/2

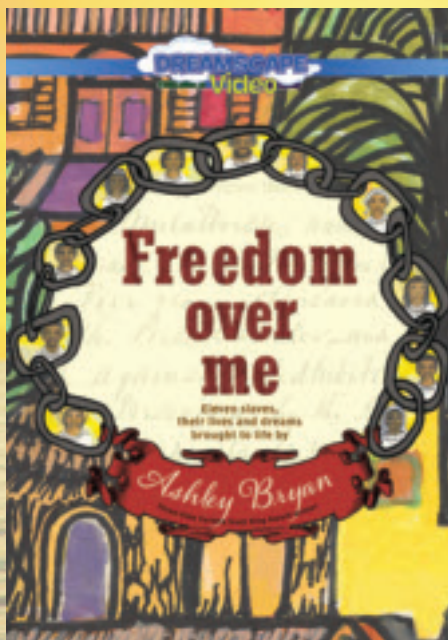
(2016) 2 discs. 305 min. DVD: \$16.99. Paramount Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

This adorable Nickelodeon series boasts a nifty premise: protagonist white-haired ‘tween Lincoln Loud—the lone boy in a houseful of 10 dissimilar sisters—spends much of his time negotiating for a place in the hierarchy and playing to each girl’s particularities. “Left in the Dark” finds Lincoln wrestling for TV time for his favorite show—trying to distract his sisters with everything from a tea party, to a helium football, to a zit—and then turning heroic to protect them during a power outage. In “Get the Message,” Lincoln’s teen sis Lori breaks his special gaming glasses, prompting Lincoln to leave a nasty cell phone message for her—which he must try to erase after he discovers that she’s more thoughtful than he realizes. Other episodes in this 26-story first volume from the 2016 debut season include “Picture Perfect” (a mini-tearjerker with Lincoln ticking everyone off while trying to mold them for a family photo anniversary gift), “Undie Pressure” (a silly tale in which the siblings make the most of a rainy day and bet on who can avoid their most annoying habits), “For Bros About to Rock” (Linc’s musical sis Luna is overbearing at her brother’s first concert), and “It’s a Loud Loud Loud Loud House” (featuring a treasure hunt put together by the Loud parents to keep the kids from fighting). A sweet series with solid lessons about accepting siblings and enjoying family life, this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

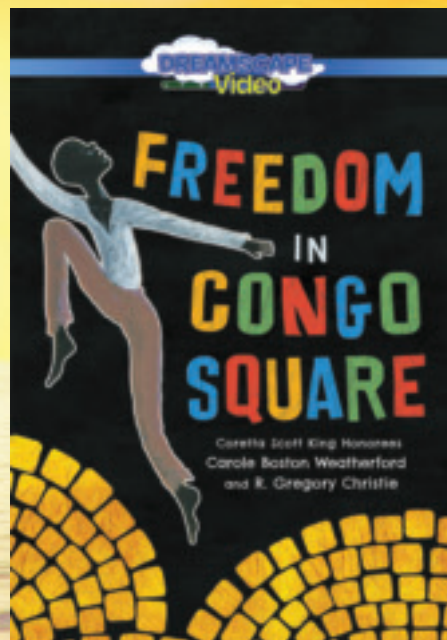


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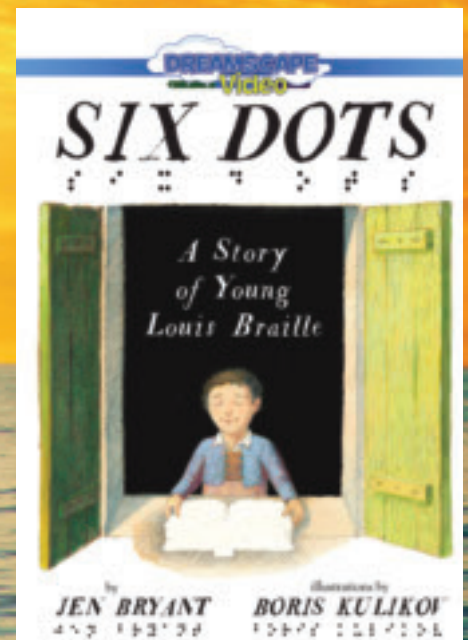
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revenge. Lauri says that “white rage” can not only eventually explode in school shootings but also might explain the mindset of young men seduced into joining terrorist groups. Interwoven with Lauri’s self-revelations (which are accompanied by dreamlike recreations) are references to the perpetrators of Finland’s two school shootings at Jokela in 2007 and Kauhajoki in 2008, which are shown through similarly subtle recreations but also via more brusque news reports. Also included are allusions to tragedies elsewhere, from Columbine in the U.S. to Utøya in Norway. *White Rage* is technically a documentary that presents a sociological argument positing a long train of mistreatment lying at the root of terrible acts, but it does so in a style that can best be described as semi-phantasmagorical. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Future of the Church ★★★

(2017) 93 min. DVD: \$19.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

In the documentary *Future of the Church*, filmmaker Steven Siwek spends three years traveling around the U.S., interviewing pastors from various Christian denominations and asking how the American church (in the broadest sense of the term) will survive in the future and what it will look like. Siwek’s quest was inspired by the time he spent as part of a similar study for ExxonMobil, which was trying to answer questions about the possible outcomes of the company’s investment

in infrastructure decades from now. Siwek brings the same approach to interviews about church infrastructure: what will happen to all those buildings and properties, and what will keep them relevant in years ahead. The viewer senses right away that Siwek is on the wrong track with these questions, and indeed he continues to distract himself with secondary issues while numerous pastors give him pieces of the answers he seeks. Eventually, Siwek wises up, going back to the Bible to find the answers. An inspirational documentary that will likely appeal to Christian audiences, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

John Hus: A Journey of No Return

★★★

(2017) 51 min. DVD: \$14.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

After John Wycliffe, a founder of the Protestant Reformation that criticized the Catholic Church for corruption, John Hus (aka Jan Hus)—who was burned at the stake in 1415—is the most significant figure in the movement during the century before Martin Luther. *A Journey of No Return* could have offered a dry history lesson on Hus’s writings, teachings, and his extraordinary legacy in Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), which would ultimately stave off multiple crusades sent by Rome to put down the “Hussites” following Hus’s martyrdom. But filmmaker Lubomír Hlavsa’s docudrama instead puts a uniquely human face on the story, beginning at a rather late chapter in the life of Hus (played here by Vladimír Javorský), during a series of imprisonments preceding trials that would declare him a heretic and wind

up sentencing him to death. An Inquisitor named Allio, sent to witness the proceedings, is instead swayed by Hus that the Church has strayed from Holy Scripture. The two men form a friendship that is sustained throughout Hus’s sufferings, which gives comfort to both. A subplot about Allio’s relationship with a prostitute adds a little warmth, if also a bit of a Hollywood touch. But the gritty settings—with rain, mud, shadows, and blazing torches—certainly give the film an elemental authenticity that matches the grim narrative. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

EDUCATION

Cultivating Kids ★★★

(2016) 23 min. DVD: \$195. Bullfrog Films. PPR. SDH captioned. ISBN: 1-941545-65-3.

Filmmakers Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin’s documentary focuses on a program on South Whidbey Island in Washington state where the classroom is literally a garden. Students from kindergarten through high school learn the entire process of growing organic veggies, as well as get a literal taste of the fruits of their labor. The curriculum is science-rich—including soil composition, effects of sun and moisture, and other aspects that fit neatly into current STEM initiatives. And much of it is just plain fun, such as when a teacher tells students, “These kale plants are old and we need to plant other things here. Guess what you get to do? Pull them.”—which produces squeals of delight in the kids. The food here not only ends up in students’ mouths in the field but also on the lunch plates of the school district: tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, beans, onions—and yes, kale (the kids love their “kale tacos”), which are all part of what looks like a healthy and delicious lunch experience for students. With experiential learning gaining increasing traction nationwide, this short film offers a unique look at a successful school garden program. Recommended. Aud: I, J, H, P. (C. Block)

On the Way to School ★★★

(2013) 77 min. In French w/English subtitles. DVD: \$26.98. Icarus Films Home Video (available from most distributors).

We’ve all heard running jokes about our elders walking for miles to school through snow drifts and other discomforts. Filmmaker Pascal Plisson’s documentary illustrates how for some children in different parts of the world, making their way to classroom instruction is indeed a long and daunting process. In Kenya, a boy named Jackson and his sister are warned by their father to steer clear of dangerous elephant herds as they stumble over nine miles to get to school (at one point, the siblings choose to circle around giraffes). In Morocco, determined Zahira struggles over mountainous terrain for more than 13

Wings of an Eagle ★★★

(2017) 98 min. DVD: \$14.99. DRA. Vision Video (avail. from most distributors).

A feature-length documentary about a middle-aged, Canadian singer-songwriter in the Christian music genre might sound like something aimed at a niche audience. But however one feels about the tunes and ministering lyrics of Steve Bell, *Wings of an Eagle* delivers an interesting primer on several aspects of the music business that should draw secular as well as faith-based viewers. Despite recording over a dozen albums, exhibiting outstanding musicianship (he’s a whiz on acoustic guitar), having a singing voice reminiscent of the Eagles’ Timothy B. Schmit, and winning two Juno Awards—among other career achievements—Bell has never broken into the mainstream. It’s not for want of trying: Bell has had teams of hardworking marketers, record label executives, managers, and others striving to push him uphill. But market forces, industry manipulators (well-paid “consultants” who make and break stars), perceptions, and sheer bad luck have consistently pulled Bell back to his roots as an itinerant performer to small audiences in church halls. After all of his up-and-down success, Bell still acts as his own roadie, setting up and breaking down his concert gear. The film also looks at Bell’s life: his childhood in a family band supporting the mission of his chaplain father, early days in a late-1970s band, marriage to a childhood sweetheart, and process of transforming into a Christian-music artist. Here, opportunity comes knocking when Bell gets the chance to perform in concert at CBS Studios at the request of the company’s president. Ultimately, as one peer puts it, if success for Bell can be measured in the amount of light that he’s brought into the world, then he’s a giant. A fine inspirational portrait, this is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)



miles to arrive at her classes. Over in India, the disabled Samuel is pushed to school in a wheelchair by his brothers for almost 90 minutes. And in Argentina, young Carlito and his sister ride a horse for 11 miles over Patagonian backdrops to see their teachers. The visually exotic *On the Way to School* records a day in the life of these youngsters as they push through their exhausting treks in order to get an education. But in some ways, the film feels a bit dubious—like those classic Disney nature films in which the raw material of life is tweaked to tell a glorified version of the facts. Here, camera placement, multiple angles, and cued action all blur the line between fact and narrative. Yet it's hard not to be stirred by the commitment of these little travelers to get to their desks on time. Recommended, overall. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

LAW & CRIME

June Bride: Redemption of a Yakuza

★★★

(2015) 80 min. DVD: \$24.99: individuals, \$99: high schools & public libraries; \$349: colleges & universities. First Pond Entertainment. PPR.

Tatsuya Shindo, the charismatic subject of filmmaker Derek Shimoda's stylish docu-

mentary, details his journey to respectability after years as a member of the yakuza (i.e., the Japanese mob). In *June Bride*—the title comes from the bar-turned-church where Tatsuya preaches the gospel—Tatsuya recalls that he first turned to crime as a teenager, disappointing his mother so thoroughly that she confesses, "This might sound harsh, but I thought of killing him and myself." Tatsuya sold drugs and then became an addict. After spending time in prison, he found God, went to seminary school, and now strives to help other ex-cons get their lives together. At first no one attended his church, but now he has 20 members. He aims to make them feel welcome and productive, courtesies that Japanese society often denies ex-cons (some establishments even feature signs that read, "No tattoos, no yakuza"). Tatsuya also speaks at schools and prisons and provides temporary housing for some of the men while they look for work. He regrets that his criminal past kept him away from his daughter for years, but after the latter had a falling out with her mother, she moved in with Tatsuya, and the two seem to get along well. Shimoda also profiles seven of Tatsuya's parishioners, some of whom land jobs, while others do not (and one returns to prison). *June Bride* makes clear that it's hard to be ex-yakuza—but not impossible. Featuring artful cinematography,

inventive editing, and a dreamy score from Cibo Matto's Miho Hatori, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

They Call Us Monsters ★★★

(2016) 82 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$399 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Ben Lear, son of legendary TV producer and leading Hollywood liberal Norman Lear, directed this unsettling documentary about juveniles charged as adults for felonies they committed as young as 11 years of age. After a general introduction to the controversial subject, including footage of children clearly confused by the legal system and hard-right politicians spewing thoughtless rhetoric, the film focuses on a handful of teen boys locked up in a Sylmar, CA, juvenile hall. Jarad is a puppyish-looking prisoner whose ongoing trial proceedings concern his shooting of a girl who is now wheelchair-bound. Antonio is surprised to learn that he is being released and he vows to make something of his life—until he finds himself mired once again in the same desperate situation at home that led to earlier troubles. And Juan is a young father who will not likely get a chance to raise his son, since he will be deported following completion of his term. Together, their stories form the core of *They Call Us Monsters*, and

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while Lear is hardly blind to the damage that each has done to others, he clearly favors the spirit behind legal efforts to create paths toward release for some minors. A thought-provoking film, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

SOCIAL & POLITICAL ISSUES

All the Difference ★★½

(2017) 83 min. DVD: \$50 (\$125 w/PPR): public libraries; DVD or Blu-ray: \$195 w/PPR: colleges & universities. DRA. Collective Eye Films. Closed captioned.

Oscar-nominated filmmaker Tod Lending's PBS-aired P.O.V. documentary chronicles five years in the lives of South Side Chicago teens Robert Henderson and Krishaun Branch as they graduate from Urban Prep Charter Academy and pursue higher education. Raised by his grandmother—after she took in seven children when their mother was killed by their father—Robert wants to be a doctor, but his grades fall short and he must redirect his studies at Lake Forest College. Krishaun's mother worried about his possible gang affiliation but his turnaround led him to want to major in sociology at Tennessee's Fisk University with the hopes of becoming a U.S. Marshal. Over the years, both young men experience financial difficulties, shifts in studies and extracurricular activities (Krishaun isn't accepted through the frat process), race issues on campus (Robert is very aware of the lack of diversity at his school), relationships, and added responsibilities—all leading up to their second graduations and updates that tug at the heart strings. Offering an inspiring look at the positive results that can come from hard work and a good support group despite the considerable socioeconomic barriers for young black men, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Becoming More Visible ★★½

(2016) 73 min. DVD: \$89: public libraries & high schools; \$250: colleges & universities. DRA. The Video Project. PPR. Closed captioned.

Director Pamela French's *Becoming More Visible*, a documentary focusing on the transgender experience, bounces back and forth between four engaging participants who live in New York City. Born in Bangladesh, Katharine hides her secret from her parents but has received support from a teacher (who gave her a first dress); here, there's an intimately uncomfortable translated exchange between Katherine and her mother (as well as a little brother who when asked if he minds about the transition says, "Not really...they wanted a girl," but maybe not "that kind"). Sean's upbringing in a rural area served as backdrop for being called a "tomboy." His supportive mom struggles with administering the shots that Sean uses to help his transition. Over



All Governments Lie ★★★

(2016) 91 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Subtitled "Truth, Deception, and the Spirit of I.F. Stone," the title of filmmaker Fred Peabody's timely documentary comes from independent journalist I.F. Stone (1907-1989), author of the influential newsletter *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, who simply pronounced that "all governments lie." Co-executive produced by Oliver Stone, this film pays tribute to I.F. Stone's brand of investigative reporting, spotlighting the work of some who are following in the writer's footsteps, including Ralph Nader, *Rolling Stone* feature writer Matt Taibbi, *Democracy Now!* host Amy Goodman, Glenn Greenwald (who broke the Edward Snowden story), reporter John Carlos Frey (*The Texas Observer*), *Young Turks* host Cenk Uygur, filmmaker Jeremy Scahill (*Dirty Wars*), and all-around provocateur Michael Moore. While Richard Nixon, George Bush, Colin Powell, and LBJ are all seen in clips telling whoppers, the film's most prominent (and prescient) example of contemporary fibbing is then-candidate Donald Trump (Taibbi, in particular, has written scathing—and often raucous—high-octane takedowns of Trump). *All Governments Lie* is a bit scattershot, bouncing between Trump coverage, Frey's exposé of a mass burial of illegal migrants in south Texas, Uygur's short stint on MSNBC, and Scahill working on a piece about German involvement in U.S. drone operations, among other stories (along the way, various other figures praise Stone's trailblazing work, including Noam Chomsky). But the film successfully makes its overriding point: all governments lie—the Obama administration as well as the Trump administration—and with mainstream media somewhat tied to corporate interests, independent journalism similar to I.F. Stone's is critical to American democracy. Also featuring extended interviews, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (R. Pitman)

the course of the film, larger than life bipolar Olivia stops taking her antipsychotics, wants to drop hints to her family, and is bullied by a group of disrespectful schoolchildren. Urban chic Morgin is fully transitioned, and her story includes homelessness, drugs, foster care, and trouble with maintaining her new genitalia. Also featuring archival photos and home movies, along with commentary from experts including author Andrew Solomon, this intimate look at transgendered young adults is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Disturbing the Peace ★★★

(2016) 87 min. In English, Arabic & Hebrew w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$19.99. Virgil Films (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Filmmakers Stephen Apkon and Andrew Young's documentary looks at Combatants for Peace, a sociopolitical advocacy group created by Israelis and Palestinians, which pushes for a nonviolent reconciliation that has eluded Middle East leaders for decades. The movement's most prominent figures detail the life-altering emotional events that made them turn away from violence as members of the Israeli Defense Force and the Palestinian intifadas. The film also provides a quick overview of historical events that shaped the contemporary Holy Land, and examines the difficulties faced by Palestinians who live under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank. Combatants for Peace attempts to offer a platform where Israelis and Palestinians can speak to each other about

the concerns and hopes carried by each side, but it has united warring factions in one unfortunate way: both the wider Israeli and Palestinian populations are not supportive of its goals. *Disturbing the Peace* offers a rueful assessment of the major challenges to ending the friction in the Middle East, while still holding out hope that the goal is not impossible. Recommended. [Note: this is also available with public performance rights for \$350 from Bullfrog Films, www.bullfrogfilms.com.] Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

I Am, Or How Jack Became Black ★★½

(2017) 97 min. DVD: \$19.99 (\$300 w/PPR), Blu-ray: \$24.99 (\$310 w/PPR). Man of Steele Productions (avail. from www.IAmDocFilm.com). PPR. Closed captioned.

Initially, Eli Steele's documentary appears to be about the dilemmas faced by mixed-race Americans like himself and his children, who must cope with a social system that only operates in clear-cut racial distinctions. But there is an Ayn Rand-ian hyper-individualistic, anti-affirmative action message at the heart of the film. What the doc plays down is that Steele is a chip off the old block of his ultra-conservative father, Shelby Steele, an academic known for his anti-affirmative-action stances. Steele is willing to jeopardize his children's academic future by refusing to tick routine racial identification boxes on primary school enrollment forms due to his personal conviction that the U.S. should be a post-racial meritocratic society. Interviews are presented with folks on both sides of

this hot-button issue, and Steele makes some effort not to appear politically biased—the film definitely suggests that conservatives are just as good at playing the “race” card as liberals. But there is still an undeniable political slant, and while the film highlights how the Trayvon Martin murder case was unfairly portrayed as a white vs. black media issue, there is an eerie silence here about the rise in racially-motivated police violence in the U.S. toward the black community. And the suggestion that the so-called racial ordering of the U.S. education and welfare system will lead to the kind of society that produced Nazi extermination camps in WWII smacks of Alex Jones-style libertarian paranoia at its worst. Still, the subject matter alone makes this a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (M. Sandlin)

Leaving Africa ★★★

(2015) 84 min. In English, Finnish & Luganda w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$300. DRA. Film Platform (avail. from www.filmplatform.net). PPR.

Filmmaker Iiris Härmä's documentary focuses on two women struggling to achieve social change in today's Uganda. Ritta, a 66-year-old Finnish doctor has lived in Uganda for over a quarter-century, and Kata is a 63-year-old local with whom Ritta shares a home and runs the nonprofit COCAWE, which aims to provide sex education curriculums to rural villages. Ritta and Kata run into continuous obstacles: both Christian and Muslim leaders are appalled at the COCAWE mission, while many Ugandan men are baffled over the concept of gender equality. The women face a serious challenge when they are anonymously and falsely accused of being lesbians who are trying to impose a homosexual political agenda on the country, which

results in Uganda's parliament moving to shut down their work. And Ritta has bittersweet emotions over her plans to retire from social work and return to Finland—even though her bonds to her homeland have grown thin. A powerful portrait of a pair of strong-willed women trying to create positive social change in an extremely negative environment, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Nana Dijo: Irresolute Radiography of Black Consciousness ★★★

(2015) 40 min. In Spanish & English w/English subtitles. DVD: \$80: public libraries; \$300: colleges & universities. DRA. Third World Newsreel. PPR.

This documentary made by the musicians Bocafoja and Cambiowashere considers race relations and the acceptance of the African diaspora within contemporary Latin American and Hispanic American cultures. *Nana Dijo* presents interviews conducted in Argentina, Honduras, Mexico, Uruguay, and the U.S. with people who claim African heritage. Many of the subjects either reject or deflect the notion of being black because of a single ancestor with African roots—one woman evasively refers to a “dark” grandmother but will not self-identify as having a connection to the African diaspora. Many bitterly recall racist remarks or treatment that was aimed at them or their loved ones, with one man angrily relating a childhood incident when his family was denied service in a Las Vegas ice cream parlor. The wider view presented in *Nana Dijo* is the not-so-subtle attempt to eradicate a sense of blackness from the Latino culture, which stems from the Spanish colonial era. It is a fascinating subject, and the black-and-white cinematography here reinforces the monochromatic view of racial identity, but the filmmakers curiously fail

to identify people onscreen, which makes it hard to weigh the degrees of difference experienced by residents of the five countries in the spotlight. Regardless, this is a bold and often disturbing view of race in today's Latino world. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

A New High ★★★

(2015) 100 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$299 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

The last thing you might expect to see in a documentary about homelessness is spectacular images from the 14,400-foot summit of Mount Rainier in Washington state. But *A New High* offers no ordinary overview of contemporary urban displacement as it tells the story of a special program offered at the Union Gospel Mission, a longtime shelter for the city's homeless men. Run by an ex-Army Ranger named Mike Johnson, the project invites residents of UGM, and from a similar facility for women, to participate in a year of training to climb Mt. Rainier—a daunting task even for experienced mountaineers. Filmmaker Samuel Miron captures various aspects of preparation for the climb, including rappelling off freeway onramps, laboring up stairs, and a trial hike up nearby Mt. Hood. Along the way, a number of participants drop out, driven away by the rigor of the endeavor or succumbing to addiction or other issues. For those who manage to stick with it, however, the climb and the conquest of Rainier become a symbol of enormous personal success and courage. The message of self-empowerment is persuasive in this gorgeous but often harrowing travelogue of a dangerous trek. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Remembering “The Normal Heart” Controversy in Springfield, Missouri

★★★1/2

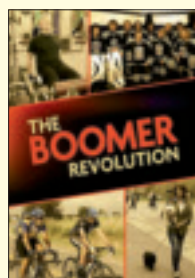
(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$20. As We Are Productions. PPR.

While AIDS continues to be a major health issue today, the disease itself is no longer a serious flashpoint for social controversy. That was not the case in 1989 when Larry Kramer's stage play *The Normal Heart*—which depicts the early days of the AIDS epidemic in New York City—was performed at Southwest Missouri State University. Some were outraged, while others rushed to a defense of freedom of speech in an era when the disease was mistakenly referred to as “gay cancer.” Then state legislator Jean Dixon formed “Citizens Demanding Standards” to protest the use of public funds (via university funding) to perform the play, trying to shut it down through direct request, media, and political pressure. The university refused to bow to censorship demands. Community tensions ran at fever pitch—with protests on both sides of the issue, heated public and private debates, harassing phone calls, and

The Boomer Revolution ★★★

(2017) 43 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

Enjoying a life expectancy some 25 years longer than that of their parents, baby boomers (the flood of children born in post-WWII North America) are hitting retirement age. And, like all things boomer, this ain't your grandparent's golden years. Among other pursuits, continuing physical competition is a hallmark of boomers—even in their senior years—as evidenced here, for example, in the Canadian Master's Swimming Championships. In the past, swimmers over 50 would see few others in their age group, but now more than half of the competitors are 45-65 years old. And it's not just swimming: all sports, including road and mountain biking, skiing, and even women's hockey now feature boomers, and the growing pace is expected to continue for the next 20 years. The sheer number of boomers is also shaking the advertising industry (boomers account for two-thirds of consumer spending in the U.S.), with many marketers following boomers from their youth up through their golden years (gold in the sense of the trillions of dollars that boomers either spend or leave to their families). The boomer's approach to life can be traced back to the influence of Dr. Benjamin Spock, who in his writings encouraged parents to encourage self-esteem and independence in their children. Boomers will certainly enjoy this tribute, while their children and grandchildren may learn more about where our next generation of seniors came from, and where they are headed. Recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)



Keep Quiet ★★½

(2015) 96 min. In Hungarian & English w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.95 (avail. from most distributors), \$349 w/PPR (avail. from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber.

At the center of filmmakers Sam Blair and Joseph Martin's documentary lies the amazing transformation of Hungarian politician Csanad Szegedi, but his personal journey also leads to a broader consideration here of his country's recent political history and present-day racial attitudes. Szegedi was an important leader in the nationalist (and definitely anti-Semitic) Jobbik political party, as well as a founding member of its paramilitary wing; he was even elected to the European Parliament. In 2012, however, rumors began to circulate that he had Jewish ancestry, which his maternal grandmother later confirmed. In fact, she was a survivor of Auschwitz, and she says that she refrained from telling Szegedi about his lineage because of hostility that persisted in Hungary after the war, even though she was pained by his political choices. Ostracized from Jobbik, he turned to sympathetic Rabbi Baruch Oberlander, leader of Chabad Lubavitch in Budapest, for instruction, and he now lives as an Orthodox Jew, seeking forgiveness for his past actions and testifying publicly about his life experience. Szegedi's story reveals the strong strain of anti-Semitism that remains in Hungarian right-wing political circles—where he is treated as a pariah. But, somewhat ironically, the virulently anti-Semitic position he took while in Jobbik also makes him suspect to many fellow Jews, some of whom denounce him as a charlatan during a speech in Canada. Interviews with Szegedi and Oberlander, along with the man who "outed" Szegedi, are interspersed with archival footage and film of Szegedi with his grandmother and mother, as well as of his visit to Auschwitz. Telling a powerful personal and political story, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



even suspected arson of one play supporter's home. This documentary from filmmakers Dax Bedell and Patricia Moore offers a compelling look at this historical battle over community notions of decency, freedom of speech, religion, lifestyles, and human rights. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Block)

The Ruins of Lifta ★★★

(2016) 77 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

In an earlier documentary called *Hiding and Seeking* (VL-3/05) that Menachem Daum made with filmmaker Oren Rudavsky, the Orthodox Jew from Brooklyn took his sons to Poland to track down the elderly gentile couple who had saved their grandfather from the Nazis. Daum continues his crusade for mutual understanding in this equally powerful follow-up by the duo, which centers on the ruins of the Arab village Lifta—located on the outskirts of Jerusalem—that was depopulated during the 1948 war, and now offers the only remaining evidence of the previous Palestinian presence in the area. Daum interviews Yacoub Odeh, a gentlemanly Palestinian among those evicted from Lifta, who now leads a group protesting a plan to bulldoze Lifta and build luxury homes. Odeh's glowing reminiscences about Lifta—a place where Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived in amity—are contrasted with the recollections of Jews who argue it was a center of resistance that heroic Zionists (including Daum's own uncle) helped clear of dangerous fighters, highlighting the chasm that separates Jewish

and Palestinian conceptions of their mutual history. Daum tries to bridge the gap by bringing Odeh together with Holocaust survivor Dasha Rittenberg for a walk through the ruins, but as that visit and Daum's interviews with other Jews and Palestinians demonstrate, the opposing positions are so hardened that altering them even slightly is difficult (Daum is occasionally dismissed as either misguided or naïve for even attempting to do so). In the end, however, these kinds of small but stubborn efforts still offer a chance of inching towards a solution to what seems intractable hostility in the Middle East. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Song from the Forest ★★★

(2016) 96 min. DVD: \$24.99: individuals, \$99: high schools & public libraries; \$349: colleges & universities. First Pond Entertainment. PPR.

Filmmaker Michael Obert's impressionistic documentary centers on the dramatic alteration in the life of late American musicologist Louis Sarno (1954-2017), brought about by the siren call of the music of the Bayaka, a tribe in the Central African Republic. As a young man Sarno heard a Bayakan piece on the radio and felt compelled to track it to its source. After encountering the tribe, Sarno remained with them for three decades, recording an estimated 1,000 hours of their music while also becoming a much-respected member of their community, noted particularly for his medical knowledge. Sarno also married a native woman by whom he had a son named Samedi, who he promised to take

for a visit to America. That trip becomes the focus of the second half of the film, as Sarno reconnects with his brother Steven and with old friends such as film director Jim Jarmusch (a college classmate), while the boy is introduced to the wonders of New York City and the Jersey Shore. Featuring a soundtrack that offers a taste of Bayakan music but also the Renaissance polyphony that Sarno particularly loved, the beautifully filmed *Song from the Forest* presents an almost too-idyllic depiction of the Bayakan lifestyle that, as Sarno himself observed, seems doomed to soon disappear, not least due to environmental degradation affecting their territory. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Victory Day ★★★

(2015) 30 min. DVD: \$99.95: public libraries & high schools; \$325: colleges & universities. Grasshopper Film. PPR.

Alina Rudnitskaya's documentary focuses on the challenges faced by six LGBT Moscow couples living in a Russian society that is increasingly hostile to the concept of gay rights. The couples are interviewed in their claustrophobic apartments against the backdrop of the annual Victory Day WWII celebrations that fill Moscow's streets with military parade festivities. Each couple speaks briefly about how they met, followed by detailed descriptions of the difficulties they contend with, both in maintaining their individual identities and in the maintenance of their relationships. One woman speaks of losing her job due to homophobic attitudes, while a male couple recall being harassed on the subway after kissing in public. The 2013 legislation forbidding "propaganda" that supports "non-traditional sexual relations among minors" is repeatedly cited as fueling homophobic attitudes, and the film includes footage of an LGBT rally that is broken up by a violent mob. While the film cannot plumb the full spectrum of each couple's experiences in a mere half-hour, it does offer a compelling overview of the courage exhibited by ordinary people in the face of intolerance. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Vieques: An Endless Battle ★★★

(2016) 68 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$80: public libraries; \$300: colleges & universities. DRA. Third World Newsreel. PPR.

Filmmaker Juan C. Dávila's insightful documentary examines a decades-long struggle by the people living on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques to regain control of the land from the federal government. The root of the problem began in 1941 when the U.S. Navy took over two-thirds of the island ahead of World War II. After the war, the Navy stayed on, using Vieques for troop training and bombing exercises. Over the years, protest percolated among locals, but Puerto Rico's government consistently sided with Washington regarding the military

presence. The 1999 death of a civilian Puerto Rican security guard during a bombing mishap sparked a more aggressive campaign of civil disobedience—and several violent protests—that gained global attention. After many prominent celebrities and activists traveled to Vieques to join the protests, the federal government began to cave in and the Navy eventually withdrew in 2003. But the Navy failed to clean up much of the damage left behind (including lots of unexploded bombs), and the federal government abruptly declared much of the island a National Wildlife Sanctuary under the control of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, thus denying residents access to these lands. *Vieques* explores how Puerto Ricans have faced second-class citizenship in their own land, while also questioning whether Puerto Rico's leaders have the best interests of the people in mind. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

NATURE, MATH & SCIENCE

Mars ★★1/2

(2017) 3 discs. 283 min. DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98. Fox Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

Blending sci-fi and sci-fact, this six-part

National Geographic miniseries from executive producers Brian Grazer and Ron Howard juxtaposes a dramatic narrative centered on a problem-plagued manned mission to colonize the Red Planet with interviews from experts who talk about the challenging technical aspects of such a complicated venture. The 2016 interviews—with NASA officials and talking heads ranging from Apollo 13 commander James Lovell and celebrity science guy Neil deGrasse Tyson to novelist Andy Weir (author of *The Martian*) and entrepreneur Elon Musk—are genuinely informative, even if the series embraces Musk's company SpaceX with excessive enthusiasm. But the fictional Mars trip—while impressive from a purely visual perspective—is hobbled by sketchy characterization, stilted acting, leaden dialogue, and melodramatic plot turns, beginning with the death of the mission commander during a landing in 2033 and extending into 2037, when a devastating tragedy in the struggling colony threatens to derail the entire project (until a shocking discovery promises to revitalize it). *Mars* is a handsome, ambitious production, but its hybrid structure ultimately works against it. Extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, as well as cast and crew interviews. A strong optional purchase. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Polar Bear Town ★★★

(2015) 2 discs. 300 min. DVD: \$29.99. Smithsonian Channel (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-931-4.

For two months every winter, the small town of Churchill in Manitoba, Canada, is transformed, becoming the "polar bear capital of the world." The bears and their cubs have been driven off the thinning sea ice—their preferred hunting spot for seals—putting them into direct contact and conflict with humans, as the bears try to forage for food scraps before returning to the ice. This Smithsonian Channel-aired six-episode series portrays life in "polar bear town," where the bears present risks and opportunities for the locals. Polar bears can be deadly, and with their bulk and speed (the latter clocked at 35 miles per hour), things can go wrong fast (a local was attacked after returning home from a late night party). The series presents guides who struggle to earn a living showing tourists and photographers bear sites, which is a complex and risky procedure, as mother bears are fiercely protective of their cubs, guarding them not only from humans, but also from rogue predator bears, who have been known to kill a cub when hungry enough. One local rescues endangered Eskimo dogs, which coexist in an uneasy, watchful truce with the

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bears who come to feed on scraps and leavings (the shelter owner feeds the dogs with money raised from tourists who come to see and photograph the scene). One of the most interesting segments concerns Halloween night, where everyone is on guard, both for the safety of trick-or-treating children and the bears (any marauding bear must be destroyed). Other topics include the "polar bear jail," a cooling-off facility where roving bears are housed for 30 days before being returned to the wild, and the "polar bear paparazzi" who crowd in to see the bears on release day. Featuring some crossover material with *The Great Polar Feast* (VL Online-10/16), this series offers a binge-worthy blend of nature facts and human and animal interest stories. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (S. Rees)

Silent River ★★★

(2014) 25 min. In Spanish & English w/English subtitles. DVD: \$50; public libraries; \$150; colleges & universities. EPF Media. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-930545-88-5.

There is something weirdly beautiful in the sight of white foam piled high, floating along the briskly moving Santiago River, which flows on the outskirts of Guadalajara, Mexico. But you would not want to get near the stuff: it's created by one or more of the approximately 1,000 toxic chemicals that are daily dumped by the 300 American and Japanese brand-name businesses (IBM, Levi's, Honda, Hershey) that have been exploiting cheap labor and porous environmental regulations for 40 years (and particularly since NAFTA). The river—a grand sight seen from the sky, and once an important trade lifeline

for a small local community—has become a de facto canal for industry pollution, so bad that cancer is rampant among riverside dwellers (and a boy who accidentally fell into the river while playing a few years ago died days later of arsenic poisoning). *Silent River* documents these issues, taking a darker turn when the story focuses on pro-river activists whose lives are threatened for taking a stand. The film follows the travails of one family driven out of town and living incognito, who ultimately decide to go back and face the fight. Filmmakers Jason Jaacks and Steve Fisher offer a comprehensive account of the Santiago River's devastation and the courage of those fighting back. But they are also good reporters, making sure to add the voices of the town's mayor and a spokesperson for economic development. Spotlighting an alarming example of the consequences of lax environmental regulations, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

HEALTH & FITNESS

Before I Kick the Bucket ★★★

(2016) 59 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

Rowena Kincaid, the 39-year-old subject of Jody Cusack's documentary, has a sunny demeanor but a short time left to live. Diagnosed with Stage 4 breast cancer, Kincaid worked as a BBC Wales weather presenter prior to her diagnosis. Afterward, she posts her story on social media in hopes of hearing from others

in the same situation. Kincaid first meets with Mark, a 27-year-old doctor who survived skin cancer when he was a child, only to have it return in terminal form. Mark calls it his worst nightmare, but when she catches up with him sometime later, he states that he's "living with cancer" rather than dying from it. She also meets with 23-year-old Beth who has inoperable brain tumors, and Tim, a husband and father with cystic fibrosis. Now over 40, Tim knows that the end could come at any time, so he lives each day as if it was his last. Although Kincaid has the support of her sister, she isn't married and doesn't have children. Before she became ill, her life revolved around her job. Now, in between meeting people and her chemotherapy routine, she socializes with friends (her social circle is helping her to check off items on her bucket list). Kincaid also plans her funeral and ponders whether she wants to be buried or cremated. Her condition fluctuates, but she makes it to 40, which is the biggest item on her bucket list. Cusack's documentary aired in 2015; Kincaid died the following year after having raised thousands of dollars for cancer research. An inspirational portrait, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

Chemical Highs: Flakka and the Rise of Synthetic Drugs ★★★

(2016) 17 min. DVD: \$149.95 (teacher's guide included). Human Relations Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62706-055-4.

Produced in cooperation with Florida-based JC's Recovery House and the Broward County Sheriff's Office, this program focuses on the synthetic drug known as "Flakka." Described by a user as "kinda like crack on steroids, almost," Flakka (aka "gravel") originated in China, mimics the effects of other hard drugs, and can be smoked, snorted, shot, or swallowed. The addictive properties of Flakka combined with its relative ease to manufacture and very cheap price make the drug a nightmare for law enforcement and health workers—including JC's director Ray Rapaglia and Dr. Michael Estreich, who deal with related violence, seizures, and other detrimental effects. The program includes diagrams that illustrate the potential damage to the brain and body, as well as news footage, startling YouTube clips of people on Flakka, comments from past users, and—unfortunately—lame dramatic vignettes of actors shivering, grabbing their hair, and doing fake drug deals. Still, this is an eye-opening look at a scary drug. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

A Dark Room ★★★

(2016) 52 min. DVD: \$159. National Film Board of Canada. PPR.

Concussions in the world of professional football have been at the center of numerous recent documentaries, as well as the feature film *Concussion* starring Will Smith, but

Saving Jamaica Bay ★★★

(2017) 77 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$250 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Long known as New York's dumping ground, Jamaica Bay is portrayed as something more beneficial in David Sigal's documentary. As narrator Susan Sarandon states, it's home to one of the country's busiest airports, JFK, and the "secluded marshes favored by the Mob." Although cleanup efforts have been taking place, much remains to be done. Dan Mundy, the president of Jamaica Bay Ecowatchers, grew up in the area. Since retiring from the New York City Fire Department, he has devoted his life to conservation. Both he and his son, Dan, are particularly concerned about the expansion of the airport and the erosion of marshes that are protecting the coastline, which has been a victim of devastation by severe storms. Dan is the vice president of Ecowatchers, and he describes Jamaica Bay as being 10 times the size of Central Park. Don Riepe, another local resident, has been involved with cleanup efforts for 30 years, helping to organize groups of people—sometimes as many as 200-300—to work shifts. The return of the osprey, which has thrived since the ban of DDT, represents a positive development, although U.S. Fish & Wildlife agents have occasionally had to cull birds due to overpopulation (Riepe has also noticed an increase in snowy owls). And then comes 2012's Hurricane Sandy—during the filming—devastating the homes of Riepe and the Mundys. As Riepe notes, "We have so many people living along the coast now that it is a recipe for disaster." The men rebuild their homes, while also working harder than ever to improve and safeguard their region. As Dan puts it, "We're staying. We're not going anywhere," which bodes well for Jamaica Bay. An inspirational portrait of regional environmental activism, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)



Alzheimer's: Every Minute Counts ★★½

(2017) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0021-8.

Filmmaker Elizabeth Arledge's PBS-aided documentary offers an urgent snapshot of the impact that Alzheimer's disease has on the national economy and individual families. According to the medical professionals interviewed here, the near-future costs of Alzheimer's care threaten to bankrupt both Medicare and Medicaid while rivaling the Department of Defense's budget for the sheer level of spending. Largely this is because medical researchers have achieved no breakthrough in Alzheimer's treatments—unlike heart disease, cancer, or HIV/AIDS, nobody survives the disease once it begins to take its lethal toll. But related federal spending on research is much smaller when compared to other medical categories. Putting a human face on this situation with stories of the devastating effects that Alzheimer's has on families, the documentary follows one Missouri woman who needed to sell her business and become a full-time caregiver to her mother, whose failing health is detailed here. Another profile concerns a Florida man who places his Alzheimer's-stricken mother in a care facility. Although she is treated very well, the mother is not happy in her new surroundings, and her son is panicked that the costs of her care will deplete the family's savings. A powerful film about a heartrending medical crisis, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)



filmmaker Joseph Recupero's *A Dark Room* reminds viewers of what a brutal sport ice hockey can be on the human brain. Players routinely take blows to the head via physical contact with other players, collisions with the ice, and even being hit by flying pucks. Psychiatrists studying the role of sports concussions on long-term brain health tell us that the culture of hockey is still dominated by a tough-it-out mentality that understates the severity of concussions and links injury with weakness. The fact is that many players attempt to carry on in practices and competition despite dizziness, nausea, cognitive dysfunction, and other psychological problems, sometimes leading to drug abuse, alcoholism, and suicide. The film interviews several players who gave up the sport following repeat concussions, as well as the father of a deceased player who had arranged for his brain to be donated to research. Fortunately, there is some positive news here about research that will more accurately measure brain injuries than simply relying on patient reporting. A powerful look at a subject of growing concern, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

Love, Sweat & Tears ★★½

(2017) 82 min. DVD: \$29.95 (avail. from most distributors on Aug. 22), \$349 w/PPR (avail. from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber.

Filmmaker Scott Jacobs's *Love, Sweat & Tears* takes a breezy approach to the subject of menopause, a condition affecting as many as 60 million American women at any given time. The use of portentous music and spooky graphics during the opening credits suggests a horror film, but Jacobs soon segues to an infomercial-meets-daytime-talk-show vibe with celebrity participants such as Jenny

McCarthy and the late Joan Rivers. Regardless, more information about menopause can only be a good thing. The true driving force behind the documentary, Dr. Pamela Dee Gaudry, conducts the interviews, provides the data, and sets the tone. Dr. Dee started out in OB-GYN before transitioning to become a menopause care specialist. She describes the change of life as "no periods for 12 straight months," although the age of onset varies. For most women, perimenopause begins in the 40s, while menopause itself starts in the 50s. Other specialists include Dr. Mary Jane Minkin, sex therapist Mary Jo Rapini, and psychiatrist Madeleine Castellanos. The doctors agree with Dr. Dee that medical schools don't pay as much attention to menopause as they should, which leaves patients without the support they need (and, as Minkin notes, more women go through menopause than pregnancy). The symptoms under discussion include hot flashes, lack of sleep, and issues with intimacy, while potential alleviators include sex toys, vaginal cream, and hormone replacement therapy. To spice things up, Jacobs also employs on-the-street interviews, dramatic re-enactments, and animated sequences. It's a bit of a hodgepodge, but there's useful information here, making this a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

Magnificent Burden ★★½

(2016) 87 min. DVD: \$99: public libraries & high schools; \$350 w/PPR: colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

Filmmaker Rob Nelson profiles a most unlikely activist-crusader: California's Taylor Stein, who is described as a former Manhattan nightlife mainstay in the Paris Hilton mode—a spoiled, hard-drinking heiress

and curvy fixture in the gossip pages. But the responsibilities of single parenthood with her daughter reportedly reformed her. When Stein then adopted a second child, a boy named Ren (who turned out to be a "black-market baby," cuing an entire sidebar), she discovered that he had ASM, a cruel, congenital degenerative spinal disease. In a narrative spanning several years, Stein becomes one of many frightened mothers and fathers hoping to qualify for clinical trials of possible drug treatments. She brings her larger-than-life personality to Washington D.C. to campaign for more urgency on behalf of the FDA, and she circulates among ASM parental support groups and events. An inspiring and often heartrending real-life drama, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

A Matter of Time ★★★

(2016) 85 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Canadian singer-songwriter Kathryn Calder is at the center of this touching documentary. Fans of the popular rock band The New Pornographers will recognize her as a key member of the group who brings distinctive vocals and songwriting flair to the ensemble. In this documentary by Casey Cohen, we see Calder during a period of crisis, when her mother, Lynn, is diagnosed with ALS—otherwise known as Lou Gehrig's disease—and given a short period of time to live. Calder elects to take a hiatus from the band and care for Lynn (whom we never see on camera), creating a deepened relationship between mother and daughter while also spurring reflection that leads Calder to new chapters in music-making. Cohen surrounds this core story with an abundance of context, including a detailed history of Calder's rise to prominence (leaving behind some disgruntled early collaborators), her personal life (with family, friends, and a lover), and a detailed explanation of ALS (footage of the famous farewell tribute to baseball legend Gehrig is also included here). Most interesting is a story thread about Calder recording a solo album in her mother's living room between episodes of caring for Lynn. A powerful, intimate film, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

No Matter Where ★★★

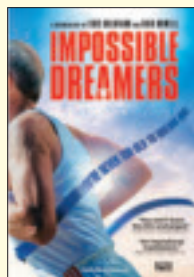
(2016) 76 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Barry Simmons's documentary argues that over 20,000 people in the U.S. die each year because hospitals and medical centers lack the technological infrastructure to instantly share patient data between different institutions. As a solution, the film touts the creation of a Health Information Exchange, a new high-tech fix that will allow doctors anywhere to pull up a patient's charts and history from any medical location

Impossible Dreamers ★★1/2

(2016) 75 min. DVD: \$16.99, Blu-ray: \$19.99. Gravitas Ventures (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

The image of seniors heading into decline after a certain age is thoroughly thrashed in this excellent documentary by filmmakers Eric Goldfarb and Erik Howell that focuses on elders who keep themselves healthy by constantly moving. In an age where meds of all stripes are peddled for health woes, *Impossible Dreamers* underscores the healing and rejuvenating power of pedaling (and walking, jogging, swimming, playing tennis, golfing, and other activities) as a common-sense alternative. Especially inspiring here is octogenarian Doc Cheek, who is (as his students call him) a “dope-ass professor” of critical thinking at Fresno State University who is just as concerned about getting off the starting block as he races the 100-yard dash as he is about his students. As he puts it, unlike some seniors “I don’t sit around talking about my [health ills]; I talk about being cutting edge in what I’m doing.” Doc’s story is echoed throughout as many senior athletes discuss how they approach—and are in control of—their own health in their golden years. There are some serious competitors featured here (as in record-breaking serious), but the message reaches across varying levels of physical abilities and skills: moving keeps us all young, so keep on truckin’. Highly recommended. [Note: this is also available with public performance rights for public libraries for \$129 and for colleges and universities for \$249 from Better World Film Group at www.impossibledreamers.org.] Aud: P. (C. Block)



to be open about their sexual orientation. But much of the stress involves mothers who are either concerned for their daughters’ safety or are impatient they are not yet married with children. Gumnit follows a number of women through daily activities without any incident, but these sequences feel more like a travelogue featuring average women going about quotidian activities without attracting attention, let alone generating derision. An uneven but often interesting portrait of lesbian life in Thailand, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

FOOD & SPIRITS

Seed: The Untold Story ★★1/2

(2016) 94 min. DVD: \$50 (\$125 w/PPR); public libraries; \$295 w/PPR: colleges & universities. DRA. Collective Eye Films. Closed captioned.

Filmmakers Taggart Siegel and Jon Betz’s documentary about contemporary agriculture points out that 94 percent of seed varieties have disappeared during the last century, while financially and politically dominant biotech chemical companies such as Dow and Monsanto have taken near-complete control over the nation’s seed supply. *Seed* argues that industrial farming has created environmental hazards while also threatening the health of the population through genetically modified foods and the pesticides used to keep crops free from insects. The film profiles efforts made by small farms to remain independent of corporate encroachment, and it features numerous interviews with experts—including, somewhat surprisingly, primatologist Dr. Jane Goodall—who comment on this state of affairs. Featuring an imaginative visual style and carefully layered storytelling that does not dumb down the complex subject, *Seed* is presented here both in its full-length version and an hour-long abridged edition. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (P. Hall)

in the country. *No Matter Where* insists that the Health Information Exchange is the successor to the Union Pacific Railroad and the Interstate Highway System in terms of connecting the nation along a new and vital path, drawing on comments from healthcare and technology advocates. It is a compelling argument, but Simmons unwisely overuses cutesy animated effects that are supposed to depict several of the experts in the film as well as the narrator, British actress Caroline Jane—an approach that trivializes the subject rather than enhancing its seriousness. Still, this is an important topic that deserves widespread attention. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Painted Nails ★★★

(2016) 58 min. DVD: \$350. DigAll Media. PPR. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-63587-952-0.

Filmmakers Erica Jordan and Dianne Griffin’s documentary centers on Van Hoang, a shy Vietnamese nail salon owner in San Francisco who becomes an accidental activist. Van and her husband, Triet, an airbrush artist, moved to the U.S. from Saigon in hopes of a better life. At their salon, New York Nail, they work long days and take little time off, but have a loyal, working-class clientele who value the services they provide. Nonetheless, Van envisions a different life for her daughter, one free from the toxic chemicals of her trade, which calls for a face mask when applying acrylic nails. Van testifies on behalf of the Healthy Nail Salon Recognition Ordinance to encourage safer products. She also worries that she may have to raise her prices if she upgrades her inventory, but knows the health risks are too serious to ignore. The Bay Area group Asian Health Services selects Van to travel to Washington D.C. to speak before

Congress in favor of 2013’s Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act. During her remarks, Van notes frequent headaches, persistent coughing, and two miscarriages. Fortunately, her doctor doesn’t detect any problems with her latest pregnancy, which results in a healthy baby boy. The filmmakers, who originally planned to make a documentary about salon customers, also interview several New York Nail regulars. As one puts it, “Women want to get pampered. They want to be treated like a queen for a day.” In profiling one particular professional who provides that service, Jordan and Griffin also shed light on a health and safety issue that warrants more attention. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Femmessy)

RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY

Visible Silence ★★1/2

(2015) 43 min. In English & Thai w/English subtitles. DVD: \$320. DRA. Documentary Educational Resources. PPR. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Ruth Gumnit’s documentary offers insight into Thailand’s lesbian community. According to *Visible Silence*, lesbians in Thailand can be divided into two categories: “toms” (short for tomboys) who wear boyish haircuts and prefer masculine clothing, and “dees” (the origin of the nickname is unclear), who play up their feminine persona while enjoying the romantic company of the tough-looking toms. Thailand’s traditionally conservative Buddhist society is nowhere near as tolerant as Western countries in regard to LGBT rights, and the women interviewed experience some degree of struggle in trying

BEAUTY & FASHION

Guido Models ★★1/2

(2015) 68 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$99; high schools & public libraries; \$425: colleges & universities. PRAGDA. PPR.

Guido Fuentes, who lives in Buenos Aires, is a one-man design firm and modeling agency. From his humble apartment in the low-income district of Villa 31, the Bolivian immigrant designs dresses and puts on fashion shows at public markets and town squares. He calls his line Guido Models and through his shows he aims to present Villa 31 in a positive light. As he sees it, “Success for one means success for all of us.” His efforts have earned him appearances on the radio, TV, and now in this documentary by filmmaker Julieta Sans.

In the film, he sketches designs, shops for fabric, stitches garments by hand, and teaches his models how to walk down a runway. Sans also follows Guido's two favorite models, Sonia León and Delia Cáceres, as they attend school, get tattoos, and spend time with their families. The trio take a trip to Bolivia, where Guido recruits local models through a free workshop and stages a fashion show. It's clear that moneymaking isn't Guido's primary aim, but Sans fails to include any financial information about how he earns income or whether he pays his models. She also avoids any clues to his personal life, including his age and educational background (he appears to be single, but there's no mention of his marital status or sexual orientation). Unintentionally or not, this paucity of detail shifts the focus from Guido to Sonia and Delia, who emerge as more fully-rounded individuals. An uneven but often interesting documentary, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Generation Startup ★★1/2

(2016) 93 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$95; public libraries & high schools; \$395: colleges & universities. DRA. Tugg. PPR.

How do you instill a spirit of entrepreneurship in young Americans at a time when the not-so-far-distant bursting of the dot.com bubble might lead them to choose safer, more conventional paths? Venture for America is a non-profit that places recent college grads with startups, aiming to stimulate innovation while also helping embryonic businesses flourish and contribute to the revitalization of various cities. Filmmakers Cynthia Wade and Cheryl Miller Houser's documentary focuses on six recruits who join (or in some

cases create) startups located in Detroit. Johns Hopkins engineering grad Labib is assigned to a company looking to design phones and tablets for commercial clients; Cornell alum Avery joins an operation founded by fellow subject Brian that will produce and market pasta made from chickpeas; MIT-trained Dextina has returned to her hometown to work at a firm that offers aid to other small local startups; Gonzaga-trained Kate joins an office providing tech training for other potential entrepreneurs, particularly women; and Wesleyan grad Max leads a group called Castle, which wants to write software for property managers. All six subjects are likable and the ups-and-downs of their work experience is interesting, but Dextina and Labib are especially fascinating: Dextina describes sacrifices made by her mother, a single parent from Guyana, while Labib's hard-pressed parents fret over his decision to sacrifice more lucrative opportunities for a far riskier route. With its emphasis on successful ventures in an environment where most actually fail, *Generation Startup* sometimes feels like a PSA for Ventures for America, but it can serve as encouragement for young dreamers. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY

In Limbo ★★1/2

(2015) 85 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries & high schools; \$375: colleges & universities. Grasshopper Film. PPR.

French filmmaker Antoine Viviani's artsy, abstruse reflection on data technology and the Internet—and where it is taking us—calls to mind the mondo-digital documentaries of Lara Lee (*Synthetic Pleasures*, VL-7/97), but is even more freeform, layered with digital optical effects that threaten to overwhelm the

non-narrative visual essay entirely. Philosophical questions are raised regarding the meaning of identity and even human memory (everything can now be recorded objectively as uploaded bits and bytes, so to whom do those memories belong?). Meandering narration (in English) proposes that the Internet is a self-aware, sentient organism. One intriguing segment that unfortunately gets short shrift involves a certain Paul Miller, who—with his employer's permission—is spending a year offline. Miller says he is feeling normal, but lacking instant-information access that was formerly just a click or keypad away, he also feels less smart than everybody else. While this is an intriguing subject, the too-artsy approach works against the material. A better, similarly-themed documentary is Werner Herzog's *Lo and Behold* (VL-11/16). A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

The Free Man ★★1/2

(2017) 84 min. DVD: \$19.98. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Filmmaker Toa Fraser's documentary focuses on Jossi Wells, a freestyle skier who represented New Zealand at the 2014 Winter Olympics. Wells teams up with the Flying Frenchies, a group of athletes who stage astonishing performance stunts at extreme altitudes—and only occasionally wear safety harnesses. Wells's experience is framed as both a celebration of physical daring and as an existential debate on what it means to jettison fears and become a truly free person in a world ruled by limitations (Wells joins the Flying Frenchies after surviving a serious skiing accident). To its credit, the film offers a dazzling view of the extreme sports team at work and play high atop the French Alps, and one can't help but be impressed with their ability to seemingly defy gravity for the sake of applause and admiration—one segment features a tightrope walk across a wire suspended between two hot air balloons that is utterly breathtaking to behold. But the film also tends to get bogged down in endless philosophical ruminations on what it means to be truly living. Extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Speed Sisters ★★★

(2016) 80 min. In English & Arabic w/English subtitles. DVD: \$19.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Vroom vroom! The five women of the "Speed Sisters" Middle Eastern racecar team show off their fancy motor skills and share their lives in this documentary from director Amber Fares. *Speed Sisters* focuses on the ladies' varied backgrounds ("I noticed her

Concrete Love ★★1/2

(2015) 88 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Swiss filmmaker Maurizius Staerkle-Drux's documentary serves up a portrait of the Böhms, a three-generation family of German architects. Gottfried Böhm, the son of master church builder Dominkus Böhm, is widely regarded as his country's leading architect, while his wife Elisabeth is a significant architect in her own right. The film opens with Elisabeth's illness and her husband's semi-retirement—Gottfried is still present at his firm, but his sons Stephen, Peter, and Paul handle the company's business dealings. A relatively serene family existence is put to the challenge as Elisabeth's health fails, creating significant emotional and professional challenges for her husband and sons. Gottfried looks back on his career and the difficulties of moving out of his father's shadow to create a distinctive style to match the post-World War II mood. His sons each have their own problems relating to thorny projects that are not going smoothly. *Concrete Love* deftly mixes insightful commentary on the business of building design and construction together with meditative segments on the fragility of life and the power of love. Serving up a family history, a study of contemporary architecture, and a tribute to the creative spirit, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)



talent since the day she stole the car when she was 11 years old!"), as well as family support (or non-support), and relationships (romance issues and wedding preparations are involved here). Viewers are often reminded of the rough West Bank wartime conditions of the Israeli occupation, with constant fighting, curfews, and stringent ID checks. At one point, as the women head to practice near the Qalandia military checkpoint, a team member is hit with a teargas shot (although, as another says with bravado, "Why would I stop practicing because of Israeli soldiers?"). Chronicling two racing seasons, Fares follows the women as they work on their vehicles and race against each other, with onscreen commentary and footage shot inside and outside the cars. A poignant slice-of-life portrait touching on competitive sports, stereotypes about femininity, and Middle East conflict, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

THE ARTS

Almost There ★★★

(2015) 85 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries & high schools; \$350: colleges & universities. The Cinema Guild. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 0-7815-1550-5.

Filmmakers Dan Rybicky and Aaron Wickenden discovered Peter Anton by accident as the latter was drawing portraits of passersby during an Indiana pierogi festival. Upon closer examination of Anton's work, the filmmakers believed that they had stumbled upon a major under-the-radar presence in the realm of outsider art. Anton turned out to be very far under the radar: he lived in poverty in a dilapidated home in East Chicago, IN, that lacked heat and electricity. In fact, Anton's creative output—paintings and autobiographical scrapbooks—were in danger of being destroyed by the hazardous conditions in his home. While working on a biographical documentary about Anton's life, the filmmakers worked to preserve and restore much of his work and arrange for a solo exhibit at a Chicago gallery. But the last-second discovery of a serious criminal charge in Anton's past nearly derails both the exhibit and the film project. *Almost There* offers a fascinating lesson in what happens when nonfiction filmmakers become too closely entwined with their subjects. And, to be blunt, the filmmakers are clearly exploiting Anton long before any serious effort is made to rescue him from his miserable living conditions. A provocative and often disturbing production, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Dare to Drum ★★★

(2016) 85 min. DVD: \$149 (\$349 w/PPR). DRA. Kino Lorber Edu.

Dare to Drum captures a collaboration

between a Dallas drum collective and Stewart Copeland, drummer for The Police. The members of D'Drum, including director John Bryant, originally got together for the fun of it. Since then, they've scoured the world looking for unusual instruments, such as the Hungarian cimbalom, and they have developed a reputation for delivering electric live performances, which leads to a 2007 commission to perform a new work with an orchestra. Bryant is a music professor at Southern Methodist University, Doug Howard (who also teaches) and Ron Snider are percussionists with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Ed Smith teaches Balinese gamelan at the University of North Texas, and Jamal Mohamed directs the World Music Ensemble at SMU. The musicians are excited to learn that they will be working with Copeland—fresh off a two-year reunion tour with his old band—who begins by playing and sampling D'Drum's instruments in order to incorporate sounds into his concerto. Copeland and the group continue to trade ideas for the next couple of years and then in 2009 they have instruments made to record and perform the piece. In 2011, the group prepares for the world premiere with conductor Jaap van Sweden and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Copeland praises D'Drum's chemistry, noting, "A drummer never feels crowded out. He feels empowered by all the other rhythm going around." Although an ice storm hits the city before the big day, the show goes on and is met with a sustained standing ovation. Extras include the full performance of the concerto. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

I Think You're Totally Wrong: A Quarrel

★★★

(2014) 87 min. DVD: \$24.99; individuals, \$99: high schools & public libraries; \$349: colleges & universities. DRA. First Pond Entertainment. PPR.

Two writers meet for a feature-length argument in James Franco's *My Dinner with Andre*-inspired documentary. Seattle novelist David Shields describes former student Caleb Powell as someone who actively dislikes his work. As Shields puts it, "He's one of the most quarrelsome guys I've ever met." Shields first contacted Powell in 2010 about collaborating on a 2015 book in which they argued about life and art, and this film is an extension of that project. Judging only by appearances, these bald, white, middle-aged men have more in common than not. Nonetheless, Powell is a stay-at-home dad with three kids, while Shields's prodigious output hasn't left any time for children. Throughout the film, Franco uses split screens to depict their arguing, whether in a car, a cabin, or while walking around a lake. If Powell is more combative, Shields is more pedantic, correcting Powell when he mispronounces Jackson Pollock's surname or accidentally uses the word "attention" instead of "tension." Shields also makes a joke about Powell's sexual orientation, which backfires when Powell points out that his wife's first husband was gay (not him). Mostly, they argue about the differences between popular art and fine art. Powell wants to make a difference through his work, while he believes that Shields would rather flatter the intelligence of his audience. The way Shields sees it, Powell initiates projects through the chaos of life while he does



Saving Banksy ★★★

(2017) 69 min. DVD: \$24.95 (\$250 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Filmmaker Colin M. Day's documentary follows the efforts of Brian Greif, a local TV executive and passionate devotee of street art, to not only preserve one of the large murals that anonymous British provocateur Banksy surreptitiously plastered on building walls during a 2010 visit to San Francisco, but also to find a permanent home for it in a museum. The object of Greif's obsession is "Haight Street Rat," which depicted one of Banksy's signature rodents, wearing a Che Guevara hat and holding a can of spray paint. Situated on the wooden wall of a Victorian hotel, the piece would ordinarily have been quickly painted over by city crews in accordance with municipal policies on unauthorized graffiti. Part of Day's fast-paced film features Greif's recollections of his negotiations with the building owner, which ultimately resulted in permission for him to remove the mural piece by piece and store it in his apartment closet. It then documents his frustration in trying to find a museum willing to accept the mural for public display, followed by a purchase offer from Stephan Keszler, a dealer who has built a thriving business taking down street art and selling it to collectors at high prices. Punctuating the story are interviews with other noted graffiti artists—including Ben Eine, RISK, and Anthony Lister—who offer stinging opinions of Keszler and other profiteers, but also question the propriety of attempts to preserve intentionally ephemeral art. *Saving Banksy* tells an engaging personal story while also raising major issues about the contemporary art trade. Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

so through the cathedral of art. Franco enters the fray on three different occasions to serve as a mediator, but for the most part, this is just two guys arguing about art and life, and that turns out to be pretty interesting. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

King Lear ★★☆☆

(2016) 181 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).

It is practically a professional ritual for distinguished Shakespearean actors of a certain age to assume the title role in the Bard's great tragedy about an elderly king who unwisely doles out his realm to his three daughters on the basis of their professions of love, only to learn that actions speak louder than words. This 2016 Royal Shakespeare Company production gave Sir Antony Sher, then 67, the opportunity to take on the dramatic equivalent of scaling Everest. On the whole his is an impressive Lear, particularly in terms of diction and projection: his treatment of the verse is precise, and even during diatribes he never degenerates into mere ranting. At the same time, however, there is a studied, slightly affected tone to his approach that keeps this portrayal from reaching a shatteringly poignant level. Sher is surrounded by a supporting cast that ranges from the remarkable (Paapa Essiedu's Edmund, David Troughton's Gloucester) to the merely competent (Natalie Simpson's Cordelia, Graham Turner's Fool), while Gregory Doran's staging, which sometimes situates the king in a transparent cubicle and swathes him in mounds of fur, is often more forced than revelatory. Although this represents a signal achievement for one of the most accomplished Shakespearean actors of our time, it ultimately fails to match the impact of either Trevor Nunn's RSC production with Ian McKellen (VL Online-7/09) or Richard Eyre's Royal National Theatre version starring Ian Holm (VL-1/05). Extras include an audio commentary by Doran, an interview with Sher, a behind-the-scenes featurette, and a cast gallery. Recommended, overall. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

La Rueda de La Vida (The Wheel of Life) ★★☆☆

(2016) 15 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$49: high schools & public libraries; \$150: colleges & universities. PatchWorks Films. PPR.

Filmmakers Marcia Jarmel and Ken Schneider's brief but delightful documentary tells the story of Joaquin Roche "El Oso" Rodríguez, one of the founders of Cuban salsa dancing, or Casino de Rueda. A bright and positive 70-year-old, El Oso ("the Bear") takes viewers on a well-choreographed tour of his native Havana, underscoring the populist, street-level nature of Casino dance and explaining how it evolved in pre-Castro Cuba because non-whites were not allowed into clubs. With the advent of rock 'n' roll (some elders here recall the huge impact of Bill Ha-



Strike a Pose ★★☆☆

(2016) 85 min. DVD: \$29.95. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Most who saw the 1991 documentary *Truth or Dare*, which followed the on-and-offstage culture of Madonna's "Blond Ambition" tour, will likely recall the male dancers who threw themselves into the fierce choreography, spotlighting vibrant male sexuality at the peak of the AIDS crisis. Filmmakers Ester Gould and Reijer Zwaan's *Strike a Pose* reflects back on that sensational and sometimes controversial tour, catching up with six of those surviving dancers today (we also learn about a seventh member, Gabriel Trupin, who died of AIDS in 1995). The result is an entertaining and insightful look at these iconic performers a quarter-century after their brief time in the limelight, with some surprising details about the aftermath of "Blond Ambition." Madonna herself does not appear here, except through a generous sampling of footage from *Truth or Dare*, and the documentary largely consists of a series of interviews with the former dancers, who have (to varying degrees) aged fairly well, some having dealt with drugs and alcohol, and a couple coping with being HIV positive. Familiar faces Luis Camacho and Jose Gutierrez (veterans of the vogue-ing scene that Madonna celebrated in song), hip-hop dancer Oliver Crumes III (the only heterosexual in the group), and Carlton Wilborn are among those we hear from and see reunite for an evening of—what else—a game of *Truth or Dare*. More surprising is word of the lawsuits that three of these dancers brought against Madonna following "Blond Ambition." Not every memory here is a happy one. Extras include additional interviews. Recommended. [Note: this is also available with public performance rights for \$349 from Bond Educator, www.bondeducator.com]. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

ley's "Rock Around the Clock"), Casino—in which dancers form a wheel, revolving together while still dancing with a partner—was solidified as a social and cultural phenomenon. Rodríguez is not only full of memories, but as a very fit and healthy septuagenarian he continues to dance today. The film ends with a look at Casino dancing in the streets all around the world, from Malaysia to Germany to China. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

HISTORY & CURRENT EVENTS

Agents of Change ★★☆☆

(2016) 66 min. DVD: \$49.95: public libraries & high schools; \$295: colleges & universities. California Newsreel. PPR. SDH captioned.

The 1960s were a period of unrest on U.S. college campuses that was primarily spurred by opposition to the Vietnam War but also involved demands for substantive change in American society. This documentary by Frank Dawson and Abby Ginzberg focuses on an issue that arose from the more general Civil Rights movement—the adequacy of university admissions policies and curricula. *Agents of Change* contrasts how officials responded to student strikes at San Francisco State and Cornell in New York at the close of the decade as pushes were made for increased enrollment of African Americans and other minorities, along with the establishment of Black and Ethnic Studies programs. In California, newly-appointed university president S.I. Hayakawa, encouraged by Governor Ronald Reagan, responded with harsh tactics that

resulted in arrests and convictions. In New York, on the other hand, administrators opted for negotiation rather than confrontation, a tactic that avoided violence but also drew criticism. Dawson and Ginzberg combine archival footage of the events on each campus with excerpts from present-day interviews with some who participated in the demonstrations (a few were sentenced to prison terms) and former administrators. The film also points out how these events in the '60s laid the groundwork for current campus movements related to equal treatment and curricular development. A solid historical appreciation of the origins of the student fight for meaningful changes on college campuses, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Half-Life in Fukushima ★★1/2

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$375. Grasshopper Film. PPR.

The 2011 nuclear plant disaster in Fukushima, Japan, resulted in a 20-kilometer "exclusion zone" around the facility that people are prohibited from entering without official permission while cleanup crews continue their slow, laborious work. The title of Mark Olexa and Francesca Scalisi's documentary refers to the length of time that the dangerous radiation will persist in the area, but also describes the life of a farmer named Naoto, one of few locals who have not evacuated the region. Living just outside the zone with his elderly father in the increasingly forlorn hope that the cleanup will eventually allow them to return to their land, Naoto periodically drives through the deserted streets of his hometown, where prerecorded messages fill

The Great War ★★½

(2017) 3 discs. 360 min. DVD: \$34.99 (\$64.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0142-0.

Although he was not associated with this three-part, six-hour PBS documentary series, the template established by Ken Burns is evident here in the combination of archival material, sober narration (delivered by Oliver Platt), and commentary from noted historians that aims to both inform and entertain. The title is actually overly expansive: *The Great War* does not cover the entirety of World War I, concentrating instead on America's role in the conflict—which explains why it was broadcast not in 2014, a hundred years after the war's outbreak, but rather in 2017, the centennial of the U.S. entrance. The first episode centers on the isolationist attitude that dominated in America prior to 1917—along with a prevailing anti-immigrant bias—followed by a look at the extraordinary hostility that abruptly arose against those deemed insufficiently patriotic once the nation had declared war on Germany, as the government set up what amounted to concentration camps and sent dissidents to prison. Other subjects accorded special attention are the massive propaganda campaign that the administration developed to promote the war effort, the continuing drive for female suffrage, and the impact that military service in Europe had on African-American soldiers, who were accustomed to ingrained racism back home. President Woodrow Wilson emerges as a tragic figure, a man of high principle whose domestic policies became increasingly repressive and whose dreams of creating a new world order after the war were thwarted not only by opposition from European leaders and congressional critics but also by his own refusal to compromise. Also featuring revealing anecdotes and insightful character sketches, *The Great War* offers an enlightening, engrossing, and very timely history lesson. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)



the air advising former residents to take care when visiting their erstwhile homes. Sometimes Naoto goes to a decrepit barn where he practices driving golf balls into the overgrown fields or he simply observes the flora and fauna (in one scene he enters a deserted karaoke bar). Naoto's narration serves as an elegy to what he has lost, while shots of debris abandoned during the rush to escape and tubs stacked high with contaminated soil offer mute testimony to the scale of destruction. While the filmmakers do not directly address the dangers of nuclear power, that message seems obvious here. *Half-Life in Fukushima* is slow and repetitive, but its nightmarish portrait of a once-thriving community that has literally been snuffed out carries substantial cumulative power. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Million Dollar Princesses: The Complete Series ★★★

(2015) 2 discs. 360 min. DVD: \$29.99. Smithsonian Channel (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-932-1.

During America's Gilded Age, Manhattan and other cities were home to New York's nouveau riche, who were often scorned by the "Knickerbocker class," i.e., old-money aristocrats who found these upstart retailers and industrialists to be both loud and crude. Ambitious parents looked to Europe in a "cash for class" scheme, offering money and dowries to down on their luck noblemen in exchange for a title. Although these American "princesses" rarely found love, many married

and then stayed on to make a contribution to society, politics, and history. Actress Elizabeth McGovern hosts this Smithsonian Channel-aired six-part series, which looks at some of the 200 American heiresses who married European nobility. The American women weren't always well educated, but they knew how to dress and make conversation, entertain, and entrance potential suitors. Jennie Churchill helped shore up her husband's fortune, founding a dynasty that included Winston Churchill, that stalwart defender of the British homeland during the dark days of WWII. An heiress to the Singer Sewing Machine empire became a patron of the arts. In the 1930s, American divorcee Wallis Warfield Simpson sparked an abdication crisis, when King Edward VIII declared it impossible to reign "without the woman I love." (Churchill, among others, later declared that the nation owed Wallis a debt of gratitude for removing the weak, possibly pro-German king from the throne before WWII.) Other episodes track the familiar story of Philadelphia-born movie star Grace Kelly's marriage to the Prince of Monaco, as well as a "poor little rich girl" Woolworth heir Barbara Hutton, who married seven times, but never found love, and Kennedy clan member Kathleen (known as "Kick"), who married outside her faith and died in a plane crash. From Peggy Guggenheim's role as "queen of culture" and art collector, to an American founder of the English country house look, these women all made lasting contributions. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. Rees)

Ninth Floor ★★★

(2015) 81 min. DVD: \$250. National Film Board of Canada. PPR.

This startling documentary from filmmaker Mina Shum sheds light on a disturbing chapter of Canadian history. In 1969, several hundred students at the Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University) in Montreal occupied the school's computer lab following a failed, yearlong effort by black students to be taken seriously over charges of racism leveled at a white biology professor. *Ninth Floor* (the title refers to the floor in a building where occupiers gathered) combines new interviews with former students (and others present at the time) coupled with plentiful archival footage to construct a mosaic examining the antecedents and consequences of what would turn into a violent episode. Whatever the validity of the original charges against that professor, it seems clear that the university dragged its feet in conducting a proper hearing, causing friction between the complainants and two black professors who were on the original investigatory board. Following more delays, a sit-in commenced that was interpreted as unlawful confinement of an official, which grew into an occupation of the computer lab, erupting at one point into the destruction of property and the surreal sight of punched cards from a Fortran computer program raining from windows like paper hail. Shum is very good at piecing together the timeline of these incidents, although her approach is often over-stylized (such as a panning shot of a telephone cord while we listen in on a call). Charges that Montreal police started a potentially lethal fire that drove students off the ninth floor aren't proved here but seem to have some merit. What is most unsettling is testimony concerning the sheer terror of students and cops alike, as many whites on the street below chanted racist slogans. A powerful revisiting of an ugly racial incident, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Oklahoma City ★★½

(2017) 101 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0143-7.

At 9:02 a.m. on April 19, 1995, a van packed with explosives detonated in front of the Murrah Federal building in Oklahoma City, shearing off the front of the structure and killing 168 people, including 19 children in a daycare facility in what remains the worst homegrown domestic terror attack on record. Directed by Barak Goodman, this PBS-aired *American Experience* documentary serves up a graphic cautionary tale of how hate can quickly escalate into tragedy. The story begins in the 1980s, with an anti-Semitic white separatist militia known as "the Order," who financed their activities—including the killing of a controversial liberal radio talk show host—with a series of bank robberies. After the leaders were killed or captured, a

sympathizer named Randy Weaver found himself besieged at Ruby Ridge, ID, which resulted in the deaths of Weaver's wife and son. Shortly after, in 1992, David Koresh and his Branch Davidian cult faced off with agents of the federal bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms in Waco, TX, in a botched raid that left dead four agents and several Davidians. Watching from a distance at Waco was Timothy McVeigh, a Gulf War veteran who left the army with no job prospects, a passion for guns and gun rights, and a growing obsession that the federal government was the enemy. Although not a militia member, McVeigh fed his resentments by reading William Luther Pierce's 1978 novel *The Turner Diaries*, centering on a right-wing bomb plot against FBI headquarters. After the bloody conclusion of the Waco siege on April 19, 1993, McVeigh set his plan into action, slowly acquiring bomb-making materials, converting automatic weapons, and casing possible attack sites. Viewing this as an act of self-defense, McVeigh visited gun shows, bought into anti-government conspiracy theories, and hoped to achieve a massive casualty body count as revenge for Waco. The documentary interviews survivors, first responders, and government officials, while McVeigh (who was executed in 2001) is heard in recordings explaining his plan, and expressing no remorse for the innocent lives taken. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

TRAVEL & GEOGRAPHY

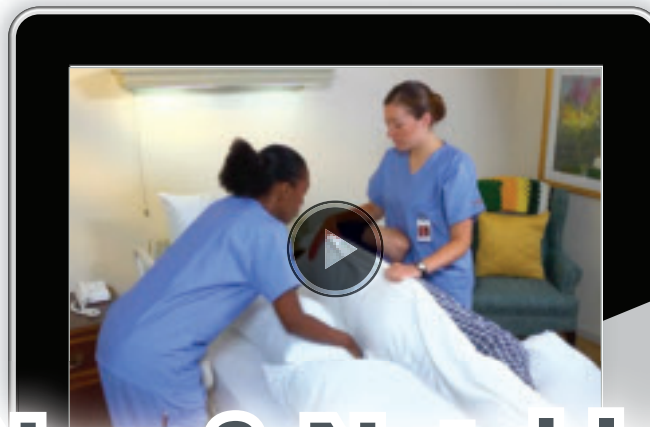
Discoveries...America National Parks: Great Basin ★★★

(2017) 56 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.95. DRA. Bennett-Watt HD Productions. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-60490-211-2 (dvd), 978-1-60490-234-1 (blu-ray).

Subtitled "Caves, Trains & Wide Open Spaces," the latest entry in filmmakers Jim and Kelly Watt's high-def filmed *Discoveries...America National Parks* series takes viewers to the Great Basin—a vast, 200,000-plus square mile area of the Western United States' high desert region. With its boundaries stretching over most of Nevada, and parts of Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and a slice of eastern California, the Great Basin covers more than 20 percent of U.S. land. What makes it a basin? Instead of waterways draining into the ocean, all of the water in the Great Basin drains into itself—with moisture either working back into the soil, or evaporating under the hot sun. The Great Basin National Heritage Area is featured here, which preserves what is considered the classic Western landscape, and includes what is termed America's loneliest road—U.S. Route 50, which has a 350-mile stretch with only six towns (meaning 60-100 miles between gas stations and munchie stops). Within the Heritage Area lies Great Basin National Park, a microcosm of the Great Basin, with groves

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of indigenous bristlecone pines (some dating back more than 4,000 years) and the spectacular Lehman Caves (formed from marble and limestone 550 million years ago), among other notable features. A majestic travelogue sure to appeal to armchair travelers, this is recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)

BIOGRAPHY

Eva Hesse ★★★

(2015) 108 min. DVD: \$249. DRA. Zeitgeist Films. PPR.

Filmmaker Marcie Begleiter revisits the vibrant 1960s NYC art world with this biography of German-American Eva Hesse (1936-1970), who made her name as an acclaimed abstract/experimental artist before dying young. A Hamburg-born German Jew and child refugee who was haunted by the absence of a mentally-ill mother who committed suicide, Eva was determined to excel at art school. Discarding the rules, she created three-dimensional works that combined elements of sculpture and flat renderings. Hesse avoided the trends of pop art, op art, and harsh minimalism to create “plastic art” using polymers, fiberglass, and industrial materials, which won her plaudits in the male-dom-



Rachel Carson ★★★1/2

(2017) 120 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-62789-781-5.

Few books can be said to have changed the world, but when Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was published in 1962, it launched an environmental revolution, the effects of which are still being felt today. Narrated by Oliver Platt, filmmaker Michelle Ferrari's PBS-aided *American Experience* documentary examines Carson's relatively short life (1907-1964), mostly spent out of the public spotlight. Carson, who was always close to her mother, inherited her love of nature. She grew up in a time when people had faith that science would make life better with “miracle substances” while humankind mastered and subdued the natural world. DDT, a pesticide used during World War II and in the 1950s, was hailed for its role in eradicating diseases such as typhus and malaria, as well as killing pests that destroyed or limited crop yields needed to feed a hungry world. Unfortunately, there was little testing on the side effects of these chemicals. Carson felt that nature, animals, and humans were all interconnected. After graduating from college, she landed a job as a government wildlife biologist, but her passion was always for writing. She submitted freelance pieces to *Reader's Digest* and other magazines, winning a National Book Award for her 1951 bestseller *The Sea Around Us*, which was praised for its poetic language. After realizing her dream of buying a home on Maine's coast, she became lifelong friends and soulmates with teacher Dorothy Freeman and her husband. Against the advice of Dorothy and others, Carson became consumed by the “indiscriminate” use of pesticides, and began writing *Silent Spring*, during which she was diagnosed with breast cancer and struggled to finish the book as her health declined. Following publication, many called Carson an anti-business Communist, but the book led to important legislation and reforms. A stirring tribute to Carson as a prescient critic of the hidden costs of progress, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

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inated Manhattan gallery realm before a brain tumor took her life. Interviewees here include sculptor (and ex-husband) Tom Doyle and author Gioia Timpanelli. While some viewers may be bewildered by Hesse's tubes, wires, and crinkled sheets, actress Selma Blair's narration (reading the artist's own journals) effectively brings this heroine to life. Also touching on themes of feminism and Judaism in addition to modern art, this biographical portrait is recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Near Normal Man ★★★1/2

(2016) 28 min. DVD: \$295. DRA. Filmmakers Library (dist. by Alexander Street Press). PPR.

Filmmaker Charlene Y. Stern presents a bracing interview with her father, 95-year-old Holocaust survivor Ben Stern. Framed off-center in a static camera shot, the elderly Stern speaks with simple eloquence about the experience of being rounded up with other Polish Jews after the Nazi invasion of 1939 and then enduring life in the ghetto followed by a succession of concentration camps before emerging as one of the few survivors liberated by American troops in 1945. Stern's wartime recollections, accompanied by archival footage and family photographs, are extraordinarily moving—especially when he remembers the loss of his grandparents, parents, and siblings—but also historically pointed, as in his recounting of an episode involving Josef Mengele. The film continues into the postwar years, when Stern married

another camp survivor and moved with her to America, settling in Skokie, IL, a suburb of Chicago with a predominantly Jewish population. In 1977, Stern helped organize a local effort to pass an ordinance preventing a march through the town by a neo-Nazi group, a law that was overturned in the courts. In a particularly wrenching moment, Stern admits to acquiring a gun that he could use in the event the marchers turned violent in the face of a counter-demonstration the townspeople were planning (he destroyed the weapon after the march was cancelled). Daughter Charlene's film celebrates the courage and tenacity of her father, whose first-person narration—like the writings of the late Elie Wiesel—offers searing testimony regarding the horrors perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

President Trump ★★★1/2

(2017) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0036-2.

In the 2016 election real-estate developer and self-proclaimed “outsider” Donald Trump ran for President, vowing to “make America great again.” Filmmaker Michael Kirk's PBS-aided *Frontline* documentary (shown shortly before Trump's inauguration) looks at Trump's upbringing, personality, business deals, divorces, and more, all leading up to his stunning upset victory. Trump is depicted as reflecting the cool, aloof personality of his father, who believed in the “racehorse theory,” which divides the world between winners and

losers. Always wanting to please his father, young Trump found himself shipped off to a military boarding school that was characterized by hazing, barracks humor, and a *Playboy* view of women and life. In business, Trump quickly set his sights on Manhattan as his ticket out of Queens, NY, and towards a life of success. Entering a mentored relationship with notorious lawyer Roy Cohn, Trump adopted a “never settle, take no prisoners” view of life. Perfecting the art of the deal, Trump espoused the philosophy of “truthful hyperbole,” and noted that all publicity is good publicity (Trump has always enjoyed being in the spotlight). The documentary covers Trump’s high profile marriages and divorces, lawsuits, bankruptcies, and his comeback through branding (slapping his name on buildings and products), followed by his long-running *Apprentice* TV series. Also examined here is Trump’s relationship with former President Barack Obama, most notably the birther controversy and his seething resentment at what he felt was Obama’s public humiliation of him at a White House Correspondents’ Dinner (Trump has few friends, and above all dreads being ridiculed and shamed). Unfortunately, there is almost no coverage of Trump’s 2016 campaign, a major shortcoming since much of the material here was already presented in the superior PBS documentary *The Choice: 2016* (VL-3/17). Still, the title alone should make this a strong optional purchase. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

Underfire: The Untold Story of PFC. Tony Vaccaro ★★☆☆

(2016) 70 min. DVD: \$99: public libraries & high schools; \$350 w/PPR: colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

Filmmaker Max Lewkowicz’s HBO-aired documentary serves up a profile of nonagenarian photographer Tony Vaccaro, who as a young infantryman in WWII witnessed the D-Day landing, the Battle of the Bulge, and VE Day without becoming a casualty—a feat in itself. Vaccaro was also an enthusiastic shutterbug who, after being rejected for a photographer position by the Army Signal Corps, became determined to capture the war himself via an Argus 3C amateur-level (but compact and tough) 35mm camera. Here, the elder Vaccaro retraces his footsteps through Europe, while his thousands of images—which, unlike official Army pictures, are not posed or propaganda—tell harrowing tales of death, destruction, narrow escapes, and resilience at close quarters. Pulitzer-winning war photographers (and author-historian Alex Kershaw) evaluate the portfolio, commenting that as a member of a proverbial “band of brothers” Vaccaro had access to and intimacy with his comrades in situations where an outsider would not have been tolerated. Vaccaro himself is a thoughtful and transfixing storyteller, one long haunted by choices he made and the invisible wounds of warfare. Blending artistic appreciation with military

history, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Van Gogh’s Ear ★★☆☆

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-993-2.

Depressed, almost friendless, and haunted by feelings of sexual inadequacy, Vincent van Gogh slashed one of his ears in December 1888, only months before committing suicide. Filmmaker Jack MacInnes’s PBS-aired documentary from the *Secrets of the Dead* series examines van Gogh’s self-mutilation, along with the turbulent but productive last months of his life. Bolstered by the patronage of his brother Theo, Vincent moved to the Arles region of southern France, attracted by the moderate climate, colorful Spanish heritage of the region, and hopes of establishing a mutually supportive “artistic brotherhood” there. Van Gogh was inspired by the fields and sunflowers of Arles, but it remained an insular place, with some neighbors scorning Vincent as that “redheaded madman.” The impoverished artist was always driven by a need to make money. With his brother’s help, artist Paul Gauguin moved in with van Gogh, but this proved to be something of a disastrous case of clashing personalities. In short order, van Gogh found that Theo planned to be married. Afraid of losing Theo’s financial support, he also learned that Gauguin had decided to move out. Maddened by this “betrayal,” van Gogh cut off his ear, delivering it to a woman in a local brothel. Modern day local resident Bernadette Murphy has spent decades studying van Gogh’s breakdown—scouring archives and census rolls, as well as visiting surviving landmarks in the Arles region. While contradictions abound, there is now agreement about the extent of Vincent’s injuries, although the reasons for his self-harm still remain in the realm of speculation. Surprisingly, the film does not cover van Gogh’s suicide (recent research has even cast doubt on whether it was suicide or injuries suffered after being assaulted by local toughs). Also featuring trips with Murphy to the world-famous Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, this documentary effectively explores an intriguing artistic and medical mystery. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

Video Librarian Online

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) for more reviews during July and August, including: *After Spring, Before the Flood, City in the Sky, Gun Runners, Hell Below, I Am the Ambassador, La Laguna, Maiko: Dancing Child, Martin Clunes’ Islands of Australia, Nada’s Revolution, The Race Underground, Snowbound: Animals of Winter, Table Songs of Kakheti, Visitor’s Day*, and much more!

Series Update

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

Dreamscape Media’s latest title from bestselling author Anne Perry’s series offering tips and advice for aspiring writers is **Put Your Heart on the Page: Developing Your Characters** (66 min., DVD: \$24.99 [\$199.99 w/PPR]). See review of *Anne Perry: Put Your Heart on the Page* in VL-11/14.



Aired on the National Geographic Channel, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment’s **Years of Living Dangerously: Season 2** (409 min., DVD: 3 discs, \$14.98)—from the nonfiction global warming series—features segments by David Letterman, Jack Black, Sigourney Weaver, Don Cheadle, and Arnold Schwarzenegger. See review of *Years of Living Dangerously* in VL-1/15.

Paramount is releasing **Bubble Guppies: Super Guppies** (114 min., DVD: \$14.99), the latest title in Nickelodeon’s animated preschool series about the underwater-dwelling Bubble Guppies. See review of *Bubble Guppies* in VL-7/12.

Newly available from Warner Bros. Home Entertainment is **Peanuts by Schulz: Go Team Go!** (140 min., DVD: 2 discs, \$18.95), based on Charles M. Schulz’s comic strip, featuring 19 sports-themed shorts. See review of *Peanuts by Schulz: Snoopy Tales* in VL-3/17.

Three Points Publishing is releasing the latest in artist and host Jeff Miracola’s art instruction series, **Jeff Miracola’s Fantasy Art Workshop: Oil Painting Techniques** (399 min., DVD: 4 discs, \$49.95), which covers topics including thumbnail drawing, color study, and basic supplies for beginners. See review of *Jeff Miracola’s Fantasy Art Workshop: Acrylic Painting Techniques* in VL Online-10/16. Available from: Three Points Publishing, P.O. Box 210861, Milwaukee, WI 53221; tel: 414-426-3805; web: threepointspublishing.com.



Ajin: Demi-Human

★★★

(2016) 325 min. DVD: 4 discs, \$59.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$69.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).

Based on anime adaptation from Gamon Sakurai's manga about a breed of immortal beings who appear to be human but have the ability to continuously regenerate, the titular Ajin can immobilize enemies with their screams and they manifest powerful spectral entities called "black ghosts," which are normally invisible to all but their own kind. These supernatural powers come in handy because the Ajin have been declared dangerous by the government and must now defend themselves against both ordinary people who are seduced by rewards offered for identifying Ajin and agents who aim to confine them in torturous testing facilities. Kei Nagai is a teen who discovers that he is an Ajin when he emerges unscathed after being run down by a truck. Kei must go on the run, targeted by both government agents and Sato, the leader of an Ajin resistance group who considers the boy insufficiently dedicated to their cause. Compiling all 13 episodes from 2016 in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-MA, extras include a bonus feature film (covering the same ground as the series), and a featurette on the animatic storyboarding process. An exciting *Fugitive*-style series with a surprisingly dark, cynical tone and striking animation, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)



Amagi Brilliant Park: Complete Collection

★★★

(2014) 350 min. DVD: 3 discs, \$59.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$69.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).

A novel series and consequent manga adaptations inspired this consistently amusing comedy-fantasy. Seiya Kanie is a former child-star actor now attending high school who is headstrong and brash—qualities that ultimately lead to his being forced by mystery-girl classmate Isuzu to visit a dreary local amusement park that is in need of help. Amagi Brilliant Park's dispirited costumed mascot-characters and malfunctioning animatrons are actually not fakes but rather genuine magical creatures. In fact, the theme park is a disguised haven for fairy-tale-like beings, and if Amagi Brilliant Park goes out of business, the loss of sustaining human emotions will cause the denizens to die—including the park's languishing, sylph-like princess. Seiya accepts the challenge of hyping and rehabbing the place, inspiring and disciplining the bizarre staff (many of them cute-animal-shaped humanoids who sometimes talk dirty, have bad attitudes, and



bemoan their divorces) while also dealing with incursions by questionable magic folk. The mild sexual innuendo (and scantily-clad fairies) supply some fan-service, but seldom to excess. Presenting all 13 episodes from 2014 plus a 2015 OVA in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, this is recommended. (C. Cassidy)

The Betrayal Knows My Name: The Complete Series

★★★1/2

(2010) 4 discs. 600 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$59.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).

The central focus of this anime series is Yuki Sakurai, a teenager who was abandoned by his mother during his infancy and raised in an orphanage. Yuki has the ability to read a person's emotions through touch, but this creates lots of angst for the sensitive youth. Yuki finds himself befriended by the handsome yet mysterious Luka, who is revealed to be a member of a demonic breed known as Duras. Luka had known Yuki in previous lifetimes, but does not immediately reveal the fact of their previous incarnations to Yuki. From this foundation, the series goes on a wild and wholly unpredictable odyssey involving reincarnation, demonic battles, schoolgirls in trouble, long-lost siblings, and pending apocalypse. And there is a spooky edifice that is appropriately named the Twilight Mansion, where all sorts of craziness is going on. The bewildering swirl of plots, themes, and frequently inane characters makes for something of an endurance test, and by the halfway point one is tempted to just ignore the story and enjoy the very stylish animation and imaginative spurts of violent action. Compiling all 24 episodes from 2010 in a DVD edition, rated TV-14, and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is a strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)

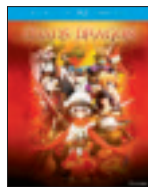


Chaos Dragon: The Complete Series

★★★

(2015) 4 discs. 300 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$64.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).

A Japanese role-playing game—the Nippon equivalent of *Dungeons & Dragons*, if you will—inspired this TV series featuring a rich pantheon of strange fantasy characters. The central figure is Ibuki, a boy prince of Nil Kamui, an island nation conquered by the arrogant Kouran empire. Nil Kamui was supposedly being protected through strategic political alliances—as well as a guardian deity, the monstrous Red Dragon. But the human allies turn out to be unreliable, and the reptilian god has gone rogue, indiscriminately laying swaths of destruction. Ibuki renounces his



throne in an attempt to prevent violence by occupiers, but further bullying by the sadistic Kouran forces him to join rebels and make a pact with the dragon: Ibuki will be able to fight with immense power, but at the cost of heartbreaking human sacrifice (key characters die regularly). Others—including a sort of steampunk cyborg—are also hunting for the Red Dragon and the source of its magic and madness. Featuring stylized bloodshed and peek-a-boo nudity, this epic tale boasting an imaginative array of weapons and warriors will likely find favor with anime fans. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2015 in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-MA, extras include a music video. Recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Gatchaman II: Complete Collection

★★★★1/2

(1978) 9 discs. 1,300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$79.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).

Old-school anime lovers will savor this 1978 series, which continues the adventures of the Science Ninja Team in their original uncut format. *Gatchaman II* begins two years after the initial series, with the nefarious Leader X leading a grisly attack on a cruise ship. One of the survivors is a child, who is captured by Leader X, scientifically mutated into an adult and renamed Gel Sadra, and installed as head of the terrorist group Galactor. The Science Ninja Team is called on to fight Galactor, with new member Hawk Getz recruited to take the place of Joe Condor, who ended the first series on his deathbed. But (spoiler alert) Getz is really a Galactor spy and Joe actually survived with the help of a former Galactor scientist. And that's just a couple of the wacky plot twists in this kaleidoscopic 52-episode story arc. A wonderful treasure from a bygone era—with its lineup of superheroes wearing avian-inspired costumes—*Gatchaman II* is presented in a DVD set, rated TV-PG, and in Japanese with English subtitles. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)

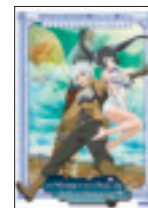


Is It Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?: Complete Collection

★★★1/2

(2015) 325 min. DVD: 3 discs, \$59.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$69.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).

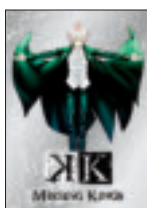
In the medieval-esque city of Orario, humans interact with gods from ancient mythology, and a sprawling, multi-level "dungeon" holds various monsters for the dangerous training of a select few to become heroes, with most of the latter enjoying the magic-endowing sponsorship of various gods, in an arrangement called "Familia." Young Bell Cranel, although he is an undersized



and unlikely candidate, has just such an alliance (and sexy co-habiting relationship) with the shapely, petite goddess Hestia. Even though Bell must be rescued repeatedly when he gets in over his head during boss-monster fights (typically by Valkyrie-like female hero Ais Wallenstein), other deities (Freya, Loki, Hermes, etc.) and attractive adventurers take an interest in the “rookie,” sparking Hestia’s jealousy. The narrative occasionally reaches greater depth than just one monster battle after another (plus lots of fan service), although not quite enough to make this truly worthwhile. Compiling all 13 episodes from 2015 in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-MA, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassady)

K: Missing Kings ★★

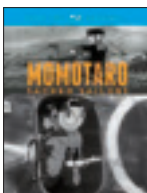
(2015) 75 min. DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99. Viz Media (avail. from most distributors).



A strikingly animated theatrical feature, *K: Missing Kings* is a follow-up to a paranormal/sci-fi animated TV series, although viewers not up to speed on *K* the serial (also recently released stateside on home video) may need psychic powers themselves to figure out what is going on in the one-year-later timeline. The setting is a futuristic Japan where young warriors represent seven different color-coded clans allied to Kings—i.e., humans who have inherited incredible super-being abilities. The mysterious assassination of a King in the original serial sent shock waves through the clans and inspired war in their shadowy subculture. Here, characters return, some in search of the King gone missing in the climax of the first go-round, while others seek to kidnap and exploit a magical girl named Anna for their own clans. Presented in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray/DVD Combo editions, rated TV-14, this is a negligible title except for collections already owning the original *K*. Optional. (C. Cassady)

Momotaro, Sacred Sailors ★★★

(1945) 90 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



Anime aficionados should appreciate this lovingly restored release of Mitsuyo Seo’s 1945 film, the first-ever feature-length example of the genre. But be forewarned: this is a piece of fairly crude wartime propaganda, commissioned by the Imperial Japanese Navy as a recruitment tool, in which a bear, a monkey, a bird, and a puppy train for combat under the leadership of Japanese folk hero Momotaro,

who represents the nation. After spending time with their families, the quartet become paratroopers sent on a special mission: to take control of a British fort on an occupied island. Their surprise attack is successful—one enemy soldier who immediately gives up is Popeye the Sailor, dropping his signature can of spinach—and Momotaro demands that the sniveling general surrender at once, while back home children are seen pretending to parachute onto the American mainland. Made when Japan’s fortunes were looking decidedly bleak, the film’s upbeat tone is certainly ironic, but its Disney-esque artistry is undeniable, as is its purpose both to educate (often through simple children’s songs) and indoctrinate. Presented in a Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated PG, in Japanese with English subtitles, extras include Kenzo Masaoka’s 1943 animated film *Spider and Tulip*. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

My Hero Academia: Season One ★★½

(2016) 4 discs. 325 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$49.99. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



The debut season of this anime series introduces viewers to middle-school student Izuku Midoriya, who is living in a world where superheroes have special powers known as “quirks.” Naturally, Izuku longs to be a superhero, but he has no super abilities. One day, Izuku is saved from an assault by All Might, the world’s greatest superhero, and when Izuku later proves his heroism by rushing in to save a schoolmate, All Might decides to pass his quirk on to Izuku. But All Might is also concerned that Izuku is not physically or emotionally ready for this new power. Thus, Izuku must undergo extensive training before being enrolled in a special high school for young superheroes. The concept of *My Hero Academia* is cute, and the series does boast a goofy charm, but ultimately the plots become predictable and the story trajectory seems stuck in endless variations of how misfit Izuku will be able to save the day. Presenting all 13 episodes from the 2016 first season in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-14, extras include “Inside the Episode” segments, and Anime Expo 2016 events (interviews, a panel discussion, and artist sketches). A strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)

Ocean Waves ★★★

(2017) 76 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98. Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Produced by the legendary Studio Ghibli in 1993, *Ocean Waves* offers a wistful remembrance of high school days, framed as a flashback by Taku, a college student returning home from Tokyo. Taku recalls his best

friend Yutaka and a transfer student named Rikako, the latter a girl who seems poised and sophisticated to the boys in Kochi but snobbish and unfriendly to the local girls. What could be a simple romantic melodrama turns out to be delicate portrait of the turbulent emotions under the surface of the social landscape of high school, with jealousies and frustrations, as well as the anxieties of home life that Taku never discusses. The story here is told in a gentle, naturalistic style (even the emotional outbursts are relatively subdued) that is both simple and graceful. Presented in separate DVD and Blu-ray/DVD Combo editions, rated PG-13, in Japanese with English subtitles, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, and a bonus animated short (exclusive to the Blu-ray release is a feature-length gallery of artwork and layouts that are set to the film soundtrack). Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Phantasy Star Online 2: The Animation, Complete Collection

★★½

(2016) 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 3 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



Anime—and Hollywood movies, for that matter—based on video games commonly just dramatize the game premise, for good or (usually) ill. This series takes a post-modern approach, admitting up front the existence of the popular Sega space-fighting game *Phantasy Star*. In a near-future Japan, schoolboy Itsuki’s grades suffer because he indulges in *PSO2* on the web too often. But he is pleasantly surprised when no-nonsense female class president Rina actually orders him to play more. It turns out that inside the game’s virtual reality, Rina is secretly a mighty “mecha” avatar. For awhile things transpire like a non-paranormal homeroom comedy, but the arrival of a sexy “transfer student” with super powers who is clueless over human customs (she joins a scandalized Itsuki nude in the hot-springs bath) hints that the creatures from the game are, in fact, real—and crossing over to Earth, including the monstrous villain “Darkers.” Loaded with familiar gameplay characters, it’s a toss-up whether this is a big fat Sega promo or an entertaining standalone, although it certainly boasts a clever teen-sitcom vibe—before being overwhelmed by battle sequences. Compiling all 12 episodes from 2016 in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, in Japanese with English subtitles, extras include commentary by Japanese voiceover actors during a short highlight reel. A strong optional purchase. (C. Cassady)

Sailor Moon R: The Movie ★★★1/2

(2014) 90 min. DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99. Viz Media (avail. from most distributors).



This 1993 anime feature was originally released in the U.S. in 2000 in an edited version under the title *Sailor Moon R: The Movie: The Promise of the Rose*. In this adventure from the popular franchise, Mamoru Chiba is reunited with his childhood friend Fiore, an alien to whom he once gave a rose as a present. As an adult, Fiore searched for Mamoru to repay the long-ago kindness with a floral gift. However, the Xenian flower that Fiore presents comes with a deadly power that can drain life from humans. But this is nothing personal against Mamoru, who was one of the few humans to show Fiore kindness during his difficult childhood—his parents were killed in an automobile accident, and he had to leave Earth due to his inability to assimilate with its atmosphere. Luckily, Usagi Tsukino (aka Sailor Moon) and her Sailor Guardians are on hand to save humanity from intergalactic botanical mayhem. A sweet story with several surprising plot twists, *Sailor Moon R: The Movie* is presented in a dual-language DVD edition, rated TV-14, with extras including the bonus short “Make Up! Sailor Guardians.” Recommended. (P. Hall)

Scrapped Princess: The Complete Series ★★★

(2003) 7 discs, 600 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$64.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



Adapted from a YA light novel series by Ichiro Sakaki, *Scrapped Princess* centers on Pacifica Casull, a princess prophesied to be the “poison that will destroy the world” if she survives to reach her 16th birthday. Although believed to have been killed as an infant—due to the curse—Pacifica was actually rescued (thanks to a change of heart by her would-be executioner) and then adopted by a peasant family. After being discovered, Pacifica must go on the run, pursued by both soldiers of the realm and the followers of a religious cult, but protected by her adoptive siblings: Shannon, a master swordsman, and Raquel, a powerful sorceress. As the journey continues, the trio encounter various other characters—some friendly, others hostile, and a few both—while partial revelations are made about the world around them and what it is about Pacifica that might be so dangerous. Featuring vibrant animation, strong characterizations, and an engaging narrative, *Scrapped Princess* is a classic series well deserving of revival. Presenting all 24 episodes from 2003 in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-14, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Sekai Ichi Hatsukoi: Seasons 1 & 2 + OVAs ★★

(2011) 4 discs, 650 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$59.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



This anime series is part of the yaoi genre of gay male love stories created by women and (at least in Japan) marketed to a female audience. Ritsu Onodera is a young literary editor who finds himself in a job editing manga at a publishing company. His new boss, Masamune Takano, is unpleasant and Onodera considers quitting, but decides to ride out the situation and prove his worth. Onodera later learns that Takano's surname was originally Saga—it was changed following his parents' divorce—and that they both attended the same high school. This knowledge brings back difficult memories for the two, because they were briefly in love during their youth, until a misunderstanding ended their friendship. Takano's increasingly aggressive pursuit of Onodera to rekindle their teenage relationship and the latter's mixed feelings over this new attention creates workplace tension. *Sekai Ichi Hatsukoi* might have been more effective as a standalone feature film, but the 24-episode storyline drags on endlessly, featuring numerous supporting characters who often dilute and derail the central drama. Compiling all 24 episodes from the 2011 first and second seasons in a DVD edition, rated TV-MA, in Japanese with English subtitles, extras include bonus OVAs. Optional. (P. Hall)

Shimoneta: A Boring World Where the Concept of Dirty Jokes Doesn't Exist ★★★

(2015) 4 discs, 300 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$64.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



Shimoneta mainly operates on the level of the *American Pie* sex comedies, although it is notably smarter with its high-energy jabs at Big Brother repression. The series is set in a near-future Japan where the digitization of all literature means that pornography can be censored by a new puritanical leadership armed with surveillance tech that even tracks and bans lewd language and hand gestures. It's now 16 years after the “Law for Public Order and Morals in Healthy Child-Raising” was enacted, and Japanese teens don't even know where babies come from. “Blue Snow,” a foulmouthed agitator with panties over her face, is a “dirty joke terrorist” who illegally restores raunch and sexual awareness. In reality, she's Ayame, a seemingly demure schoolgirl who blackmails Tanukichi Okuma, a prudish classmate from a scandalous family, into joining her growing rebel cell called “SOX.” Bewildered Tanukichi is subjected to

non-stop double-entendres, contraband girly magazines, phallic symbols, and sex-toy R&D. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2015 in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-MA, extras include episode commentaries, and a “Moms Watch *Shimoneta*” featurette in which real mothers are shocked by the show's content. Definitely aimed at older viewers, this very rude blast of anti-censorship fun is recommended. (C. Cassidy)

STARMYU: Season One ★★★

(2015) 4 discs, 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$54.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors).



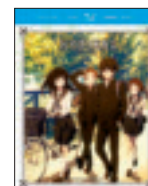
When Yuta Hoshitani sees a beautiful high school boy dancing in the rain, he wants to meet him. To fulfill this dream he enrolls in the music school Ayanagi Academy, where he is probably the least experienced but most earnest and optimistic of the students. Senior Kao Council member Otori places Hoshitani on a team with four other misfits, where he'll prove to be the glue that pulls the underdog group together, overcoming their own weaknesses, other teams, and Kao Council politics. None of the characters are groundbreaking—including the shy motherly friend, the rude but warm Kabuki star, the cold-shouldered talent with family issues, and the quiet mysterious guy—but watching them all come together as a team is heartening. Boasting good animation and eye-catching design-work, bolstered by interesting dance numbers, *STARMYU* is almost entirely male—the exception being twin sisters who save Team Otori's bacon—but the yaoi romance undertones are in the background for the most part. Compiling all 12 episodes from 2015 in a Blu-ray/DVD Combo edition, rated TV-14, in Japanese with English subtitles, this is recommended. (L. Martincik)

Coming Soon

Gatchaman Fighter (Sentai, DVD: 9 discs, \$79.98). The battle against Leader X continues with the emergence of the evil Leader Z as the Gatchaman crew gains fresh allies and new weapons in this 48-episode series.



Hyouka: Part One (Funimation, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: 4 discs, \$59.98). In this first set of episodes from the romantic mystery anime series, skeptical high schooler Houtarou Oreki meets kind and intelligent Eru Chitanda in a literature club.



Carousel ★★★1/2

(2013) 130 min. DVD: \$19.99. PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-5317-0041-6.

While many audio recordings exist of Rodgers and Hammerstein's gorgeous 1945 musical drama, the only DVD option available until now was the 1956 film starring Gordon MacRae as Billy Bigelow, the tough carnival barker who tries, unsuccessfully, to change his ways after marrying pretty young mill worker Julie Jordan, played by Shirley Jones. Although the movie is remarkably faithful to the play—Billy is killed in a robbery attempt and allowed to return to Earth to help his troubled daughter—and beautifully sung, this 2013 concert performance from New York's Lincoln Center offers a strong alternative. Even with just a few sticks of furniture positioned in front of the onstage orchestra, the cast are able to bring their characters vividly to life with magnificent vocalism, especially from Kelli O'Hare as Julie, Stephanie Blythe as her cousin Nettie, Jessie Mueller as her flighty friend Carrie, Jason Danieley as Carrie's finicky beau Enoch Snow, and Shuler Hensley as villainous Jigger Craigin. Nathan Gunn, the operatic baritone who plays Billy, is a fine actor, but his vocal performance—especially in Bigelow's famous "Soliloquy"—is a trifle stiff. A similar heaviness pervades the playing of the New York Philharmonic, which under Rob Fisher offers a gorgeous rendition of the opening "Carousel Waltz" but even with a slimmed-down 71 players can still sound a bit beefy elsewhere. Also featuring bonus segments with show highlights, this production—presented in stereo—can still be highly recommended. (F. Swietek)



Romeo & Juliet ★★★

(2015) 128 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).

Shakespeare's timeless tale about doomed young lovers caught in the middle of clan warfare in Renaissance Verona has been a staple of the San Francisco Ballet since artistic director Helgi Tomasson's acclaimed production premiered in 1994. Thomas Grimm's film of the 2015 revival is a worthy addition to the Lincoln Center at the Movies' "Great American Dance" series. This *Romeo & Juliet* features a judiciously trimmed version of the classic 1935 score by Sergei Prokofiev, robustly played under Martin West's baton. Tomasson's choreography is more classical than innovative, but boasts moments of brilliance—particularly during the final scenes of Act III, which offer a shattering conclusion to the melancholy tale (Martino Pistone's staging of the swordfights is also quite exciting). Maria Kochetkova is a winsome Juliet, Davit Karapetyan is a



virile Romeo, and Pascal Molat as Mercutio makes an especially strong impression among the excellent supporting cast. Jens-Jacob Worsaae's sets and costumes favor muted colors but remain elegant. Overall, this is an estimable production that is competitive with the Royal Ballet's mounting of Kenneth MacMillan's version (VL-9/13). Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Shake the Dust ★★★

(2015) 83 min. DVD: \$29.95. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

As with similar breakdancing documentaries, *Shake the Dust* offers testimony to the self-esteem and sense of escape that hip-hop dance affords some impoverished younger people, only here in different parts of the world. Filmmaker Adam Sjöberg takes an enthusiastic tour of four developing countries (Colombia, Uganda, Yemen, and Cambodia) where he finds communities of kids who entertain one another (and happy passersby) by breakdancing wherever there happens to be an available surface, whether it's the dusty ground of a crumbling building or a corner in some public square. The quality of dance may vary greatly from one person to the next, but the cultural and political accessibility of hip-hop and street dancing extends to all comers—so even though the best dancers are widely admired as local legends, everyone who enters the center of the circle to spin and tumble is a star. Sjöberg talks to extremely well-spoken youngsters (often speaking in English) who explain what breakdancing means and how it helps fill out the narrative of a life characterized by feelings of hopelessness or more dangerous temptations. While Sjöberg gives viewers the big picture during the first half-hour, he subsequently focuses on individual stories of adversity and triumph, such as that of a Ugandan boy who danced at his mother's funeral. Executive-produced by rapper Nas, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



Simple Minds: Acoustic in Concert ★★★1/2

(2016) 88 min. DVD: \$19.99 (audio CD included). Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Coinciding with the release of their 2016 *Acoustic* CD, the Scottish band Simple Minds deliver a 16-song set at London's Hackney Empire for a BBC Radio 2 concert. Popular during the late '70s/early '80s, the New Wave synth-pop group features two remaining original members—lead vocalist Jim Kerr and guitarist Charlie Burchill—who are here backed by percussionist Cherisse Osei,



bassist Ged Grimes, guitarist Gordy Goudie, and vocalists Sarah Brown and Catherine Davies. The mellifluous Kerr is the only older member who looks his age, sporting close-cropped gray hair, which—ageism charges, notwithstanding—makes him stand out as an older performing young music; in fact, the once heavily propulsive driving sound feels much more sedated here without the synthesizers. Drawing primarily from a trio of hit '80s LPs—*New Gold Dream* (81-82-83-84), *Sparkle in the Rain*, and *Once Upon a Time*—the band first really engages the audience with the fifth track "Waterfront" (a more stately song to begin with), eventually followed by the favorites "Speed Your Love to Me," "Promised You a Miracle," "Alive and Kicking," and the mega-hit "Don't You (Forget About Me)." But the set's highlight is the closing number: guest guitarist/vocalist Steve Harley singing "Make Me Smile (Come Up and See Me)"—which is not even a Simple Minds song. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, extras include a bonus audio CD. A strong optional purchase. (R. Pitman)

The Who: Live at Isle of Wight Festival 2004 ★★★

(2016) 132 min. DVD: \$24.98 (2 audio CDs included), Blu-ray: \$29.98 (2 audio CDs included). Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Returning to the Isle of Wight 34 years after their electrifying 1970 performance minus two members (drummer Keith Moon and bassist John Entwistle, the latter dying in 2002), The Who's remaining original power duo—vocalist Roger Daltrey and guitarist-songwriter Pete Townshend—serve up a generous 23-song set before a festival audience. Featuring drummer Zak Starkey, keyboardist John "Rabbit" Bundrick, bassist Pino Palladino, and backup guitarist Simon Townshend (Pete's brother), the band plays one hit after another, kicking off with the early standards "I Can't Explain," "Substitute," and "Anyway, Anyhow, Anywhere" before delivering classics from *Who's Next* ("Baba O'Riley," "Behind Blue Eyes," "Bargain"), as well as the hard-rocking "Who Are You." The last two-thirds of the concert leans heavily on selections from the rock operas *Tommy* and *Quadrophenia*—including "Love Reign O'er Me," "5:15," "Pinball Wizard," and "Amazing Journey"—along with the all-time favorites "Won't Get Fooled Again" and "Magic Bus." The Who are less physical here—Daltrey does less mic twirling and Townshend no longer runs and slides on his knees across the stage—but musically the group sounds good, albeit not quite as unrestrained. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include two bonus audio CDs. Recommended. (R. Pitman)

Contact information for distributors of titles reviewed in this issue are listed below. Some titles must be ordered direct, while others are available from a wide variety of distributors.

Alexander Street Press
3212 Duke St.
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: (800) 889-5937
Web: academicvideostore.com

As We Are Productions
3429 E. Sheffield Ct.
Springfield MO 65802
Web: rememberingthenormalheart.com

Bennett-Watt HD Productions
13021 244th Ave. SE
Issaquah, WA 98027
Tel: (800) 327-2893
Web: bennett-watt.com

Bond Educator
1841 Broadway, Ste. 508
New York, NY 10023
Tel: (212) 354-2650
Web: bondeducator.com

Bullfrog Films
P.O. Box 149
Oley, PA 19547
Tel: (800) 543-3764
Web: bullfrogfilms.com

California Newsreel
P.O. Box 3400
Lancaster, PA 17601
Tel: (877) 811-7495
Web: newsreel.org

The Cinema Guild
115 W. 30th St., Ste. 800
New York, NY 10001
Tel: (800) 723-5522
Web: cinemaguild.com

Collective Eye Films
2305 SE Yamhill St., Ste. 101
Portland, OR 97214
Tel: (503) 232-5345
Web: collectiveeye.org

DigAll Media
15 Seal Rock Dr.
San Francisco, CA 94121
Tel: (415) 999-6425
Web: digallmedia.org

Documentary Educational Resources
101 Morse St.
Watertown, MA 02472
Tel: (800) 569-6621
Web: der.org

Dreamscape Media
1417 Timberwolf Dr.
Holland, OH 43528
Tel: (877) 983-7326
Web: dreamscapeab.com

EPF Media
324 S. Beverly Dr., PMB 437
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
Tel: (310) 839-1500
Web: epfmedia.com

Film Movement
109 West 27th St., Ste. 9B
New York, NY 10001
Tel: (866) 937-3456
Web: filmmovement.com

First Pond Entertainment
3532 Sawtelle Blvd., #2
Los Angeles, CA 90066
Tel: (213) 545-6851
Web: firstpond.com

First Run Features
630 Ninth Ave., Ste. 1213
New York, NY 10036
Tel: (800) 229-8575
Web: firstrunfeatures.com

Grasshopper Film
12 East 32nd St., 4th Fl.
New York, NY 10016
Tel: (646) 586-3060
Web: grasshopperfilm.com

Green Planet Films
P.O. Box 247
Corte Madera, CA 94976
Tel: (415) 377-5471
Web: greenplanetfilms.org

Human Relations Media
41 Kensico Dr.
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549
Tel: (800) 431-2050
Web: hrmvideo.com

Icarus Films
32 Court St., 21st Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Tel: (800) 876-1710
Web: icarusfilms.com

Kino Lorber Edu
333 W. 39th St., Ste. 503
New York, NY 10018
Tel: (800) 562-3330
Web: kinolorberedu.com

Music Box Films
173 N. Morgan St.
Chicago, IL 60607
Tel: (312) 241-1320
Web: musicboxfilms.com

National Film Board of Canada
P.O. Box 6100, Centre-Ville Station
Montreal, Quebec H3C 3H5 CANADA
Tel: (800) 542-2164
Web: nfb.ca

Naxos of America
1810 Columbia Ave., Ste. 28
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Web: naxos.com

New Day Films
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Blooming Grove, NY 10914
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Web: newday.com

Passion River
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Warren, NJ 07059
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Web: passionriver.com

PatchWorks Films
663 7th Ave.
San Francisco, CA 94118
Tel: (415) 387-5912
Web: patchworksfilms.net

PBS Video
2100 Crystal Dr.
Arlington, VA 22202
Tel: (800) 344-3337
Web: pbs.org

PRAGDA
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Brooklyn, NY 11249
Tel: (718) 473-0647
Web: pragda.com

Seventh Art Releasing
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Los Angeles, CA 90042
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Web: 7thart.com

Third World Newsreel
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Web: twn.org

Tugg
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The Video Project
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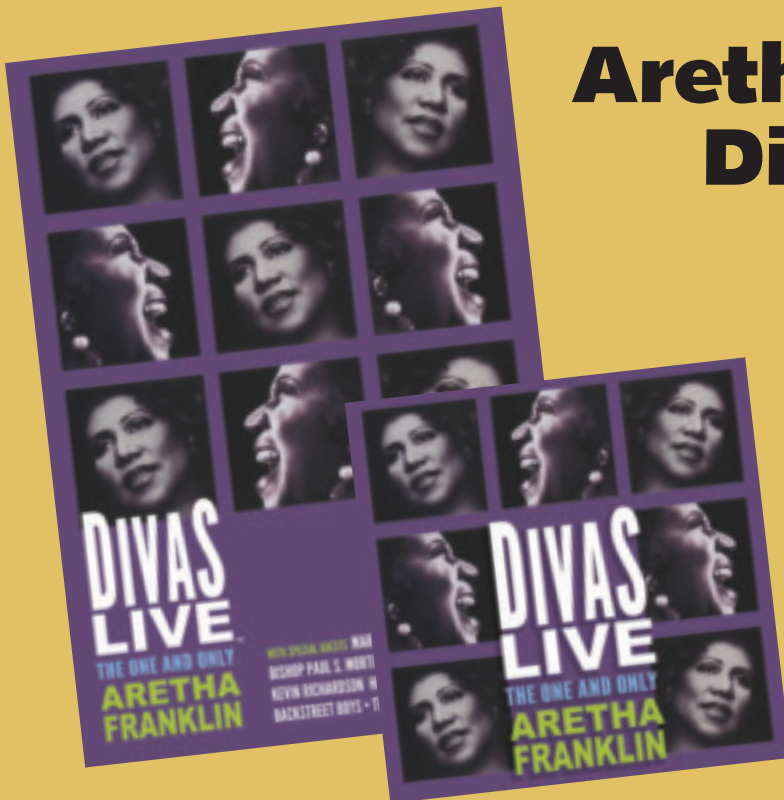
Weston Woods Studios
90 Old Sherman Tpke.
Danbury, CT 06816
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Web: westonwoods.scholastic.com

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This all-star tribute recorded live at Radio City Music Hall pays tribute to one of this country's national treasures — the undisputed Queen of Soul.

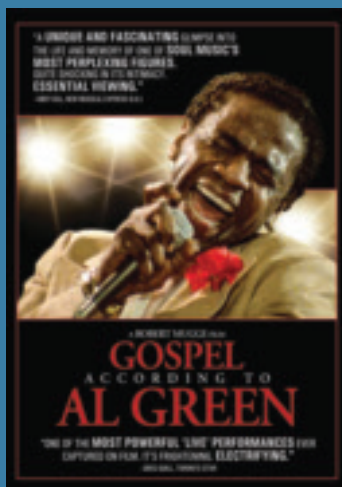
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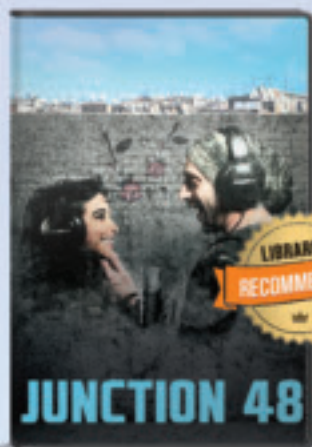
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"POWERFUL!"

Los Angeles Times

Does for the Israeli city of Lod what "8 Mile" aimed to do for the suburbs of Detroit."

The New York Times

"COMPELLING!"

SLANT

Kareem leads an aimless life between odd jobs and hanging out with his buddies in a crime-ridden Arab ghetto. A family tragedy brings him closer to his singer girlfriend, Manar, and motivates him to do something more with his life. When Kareem and his group finally get a chance to perform in a Tel Aviv hip-hop club, the star potential of the 'first Arab rapper' is quickly noticed. Kareem and the group use music to express their tough life as Palestinian youth. But the road to success is never easy. Kareem and his group must face violent nationalistic Jewish rappers, government-imposed gentrification and troubled drug-dealing friends.

Narrative | Drama | Foreign | Rap | Romance | Religion | Politics | Middle East
97 min. | UPC: 888608666930 | SRP: \$24.95 | PPR: \$299.00 | Closed Captioned



TO BE A MISS THE CULT AND CULTURE OF BEAUTY IN VENEZUELA

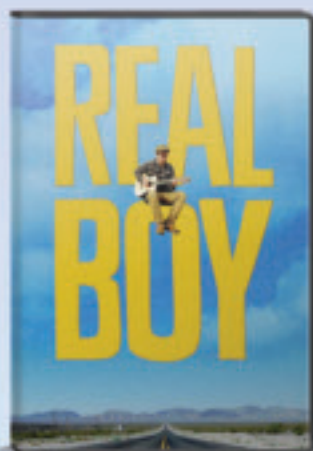


"...succeeds in turning your attention away from Venezuela's wins and shifts it to what looks like a factory of women in bikinis."

GMA

In a country famous for its success in international beauty pageants, three young women are fighting to participate in their nation's most celebrated cultural institution. Women must endure grueling diets, consent to intensive plastic surgery, and find the resources necessary to transform themselves from ordinary citizens into famous and illustrious Misses. *TO BE A MISS* is a character-driven documentary that takes the viewer through the inner workings of Venezuela's renowned beauty factory, revealing the risks and rewards associated with this multi-billion dollar industry while exposing what nationalism, personal ambition, and the influence of mass media has meant for women in the country.

Documentary | Women & Gender Studies | Latin American Studies | Cultural Studies
84 min. | UPC: 602573364529 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$299.00
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REAL BOY

"Charming, funny & insightful throughout"

Chicago Tribune

"a heartfelt and open look at Bennett's life as a transgender youth in modern America."

app.com

"A heartwarming tale of mentorship and chosen families."



20+ Film Festival Awards & Honors!



REAL BOY is an intimate story of a family in transition. As 19-year-old Bennett Wallace navigates sobriety, adolescence, and the evolution of his gender identity, his mother makes her own transformation from resistance to acceptance of her trans son. Along the way, both mother and son find support in their communities, reminding us that families are not only given, but chosen.

Documentary | LGBT | Gender Studies | Family Studies
72 min. | UPC: 602573246368 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$325.00
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KINGS, QUEENS & IN-BETWEENS

"An optimistic scene-setter for newbies and drag fans alike."

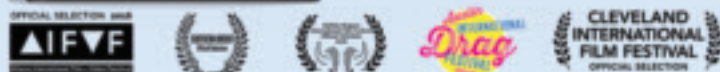
Hollywood Reporter

"...an undeniably worthy gallery of portraits of courage"

FILM JOURNAL

"A worthwhile look into the surprisingly vibrant drag world of Columbus, Ohio, revealing a diversity and celebration of difference you might not expect from the American Midwest."

- Tim Isaac, Big Gay Picture Show



Through the compelling stories of 8 performers in the thriving drag scene of Columbus, Ohio, *Kings, Queens, & In-Betweens* dives into the next frontier – the often misunderstood topic of "gender" itself. With humor and pathos, *Kings, Queens & In-between*s makes a complex subject approachable for mainstream audiences – inviting viewers into a conversation about the distinct differences between gender, sex, and sexuality that has not been represented in film before.

Documentary | LGBT | Gender Studies | Politics
90 min. | UPC: 602573246320 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$299.00 | Closed Captioned
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