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Video Librarian

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IN THIS ISSUE

Spring & Arnaud | Colliding Dreams | The Magicians | Saudi Arabia Uncovered | Rising Tides | Trump and Libraries

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Spring & Arnaud

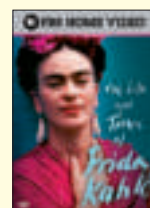
★★★★1/2
(2013) 67 min. DVD:
\$24.95. First Run
Features (avail. from most distributors).



Filmmakers Katherine Knight and Marcia Connolly here serve up an affectionate portrait of Canadian artists Spring Hurlbut and Arnaud Maggs, who had lived together for a quarter-century when this documentary was shot during the months preceding Maggs's death at the age of 86. In charming interview segments, both artists recall meeting on Maggs's 60th birthday, when Hurlbut was 35. The pair differed in terms of preferred media. Maggs worked as a graphic designer and commercial photographer until he was 47, after which his work became more overtly artistic, with photographs that were more focused on unusual objects, and he often presented many nearly-identical stills (including some of himself) in grid-like arrangements. Hurlbut prepared sculptural compositions using found materials to emphasize themes of birth and death; more recently she has employed film and photography to focus on the disposition of cremated ashes. Both Maggs and Hurlbut speak warmly about their relationship—personal and professional—as Knight and Connolly follow the pair: captur-

ing their routine at their home and studio in Toronto, time spent at their rural cottage in France (and in nearby flea markets where they search for interesting materials they might use), and visits to galleries that are preparing exhibitions showcasing their work. As much a gently romantic remembrance of the couple's devotion to one another as it is an astute introduction to their accomplishments, *Spring & Arnaud* is a handsomely-made tribute to two people whose mutual support of one another was matched only by their creative joy. Extras include a visual memorial for Maggs, and featurettes exploring particular aspects of Spring and Arnaud's work. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

History has witnessed many great artist couples, including one of the most famous pairings: Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, whose story is related in *The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo* (VL Online-11/05). Other notables include Alfred Stieglitz and Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner and Jackson Pollock, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, and Charles and Ray Eames.



Cover photo: Arnaud Maggs.

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STEVE McQUEEN: THE MAN & LE MANS

By 1970, Steve McQueen ruled Hollywood. He was the "King of Cool" and the world's most notorious ladies' man. Hot off the back of classics like "The Thomas Crown Affair" and "Bullitt," the racing fanatic began production of his passion project, "Le Mans," centered on the 24-hour car race in France. But the infamously troubled production was plagued with financial troubles, on-set rivalries and the star's own personal issues. This documentary film interweaves stunning, newly-discovered footage and McQueen's private recordings with original interviews to reveal the true story of how this cinema legend would risk everything in pursuit of his dream. Official Selection of the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

Run Time: 102 minutes

Year of Production: 2015

Director: Gabriel Clarke, John McKenna

Actors: Steve McQueen, Chad McQueen, John Sturges

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THE LAST MAN ON THE MOON

Follow 'Dub' Lawrence, a former sheriff who established and trained his rural state's first SWAT team, as he states the facts about increasingly militarized American police and explains how the SWAT team he trained killed his son-in-law during a controversial standoff. Driven by an obsessed sense of mission, Dub uses his own investigation skills to find the truth in this - and other - officer-involved shootings in his community, while taking on larger questions about the changing face of police officers nationwide.

Run Time: 95 minutes

Year of Production: 2014

Director: Mark Craig

Actors: Captain Eugene Carron, Alan Brown, Charles Duke

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A FASTER HORSE

Follow 'Dub' Lawrence, a former sheriff who established and trained his rural state's first SWAT team, as he states the facts about increasingly militarized American police and explains how the SWAT team he trained killed his son-in-law during a controversial standoff. Driven by an obsessed sense of mission, Dub uses his own investigation skills to find the truth in this - and other - officer-involved shootings in his community, while taking on larger questions about the changing face of police officers nationwide.

Run Time: 85 minutes

Year of Production: 2015

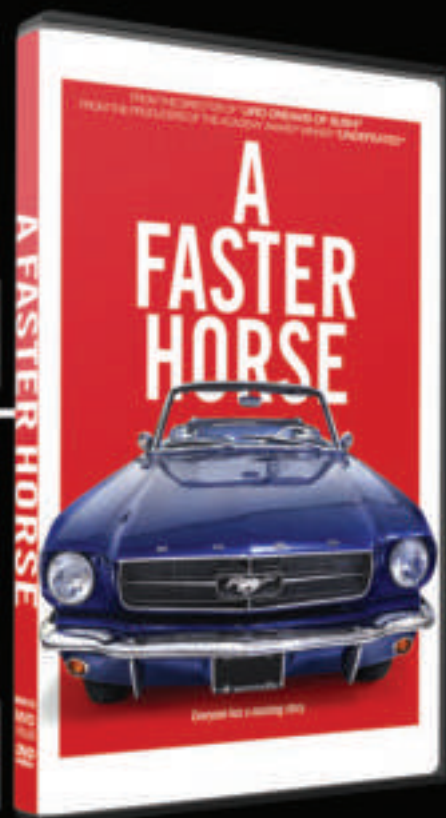
Director: David Galb

Actors: Edsel Ford II, Gale Balderman, Jack Tebbach

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GORED

Follow 'Duke' Lawrence, a former sheriff who established and trained his rural state's first SWAT team, as he states the facts about increasingly militarized American police and explains how the SWAT team he trained killed his son-in-law during a controversial standoff. Driven by an obsessed sense of mission, Duke uses his own investigation skills to find the truth in this - and other - officer-involved shootings in his community, while taking on larger questions about the changing face of peace officers nationwide.

Run Time: 90 minutes

Year of Production: 2013

Director: Michael Rasmussen, Shawn Rasmussen

Actors: Elise Couture, Michael Reed, India Pearl

MVD8716D UPC: 760137871699

SRP: \$19.95

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PEACE OFFICER

Follow 'Duke' Lawrence, a former sheriff who established and trained his rural state's first SWAT team, as he states the facts about increasingly militarized American police and explains how the SWAT team he trained killed his son-in-law during a controversial standoff. Driven by an obsessed sense of mission, Duke uses his own investigation skills to find the truth in this - and other - officer-involved shootings in his community, while taking on larger questions about the changing face of peace officers nationwide.

Run Time: 90 minutes

Year of Production: 2015

Director: Michael Rasmussen, Shawn Rasmussen

Actors: Elise Couture, Michael Reed, India Pearl

MVD8720D UPC: 760137872092

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THE INHABITANTS

In this haunting ghost story, a young couple gets more than they bargained for when they renovate a neglected bed and breakfast in New England. After a series of disturbing events, the husband begins to suspect that something evil is lurking within the walls of this old house, and whatever it is has set its sights on his wife. Now he must fight to uncover the inn's dark secret before this malicious spirit consumes everything he loves.

Run Time: 90 minutes

Year of Production: 2015

Director: Michael Rasmussen, Shawn Rasmussen

Actors: Elise Couture, Michael Reed, India Pearl

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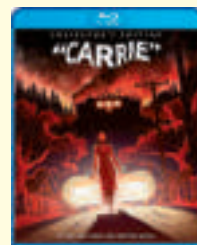
Del Toro, Altman, Linklater Headline Criterion October Slate

Guillermo del Toro is at the center of Criterion's October slate, which features an October 10 release of a new standalone edition of the haunting, Oscar-winning 2006 fantasy epic *Pan's Labyrinth* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95). Also newly available on October 10 is *Trilogía de Guillermo del Toro* (DVD: 5 discs, \$99.95; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$99.95), which includes digitally restored editions of three of the writer-director's fabulist Spanish-language films: *Cronos* (1993), *The Devil's Backbone* (2001), and *Pan's Labyrinth*. Slated for October 18 is Richard Linklater's one-of-a-kind chronicle of childhood and adolescence, 2014's *Boyhood* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), starring Ethan Hawke and Patricia Arquette. Also coming October 18 is Robert Altman's star-studded adaptation of Raymond Carver stories, 1993's *Short Cuts* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.95), which interweaves the stories of 22 characters in contemporary Los Angeles, and stars Tim Robbins, Julianne Moore, Robert Downey Jr., and Jack Lemmon. Arriving October 25 is Luis García Berlanga's darkly comedic and fiercely subversive 1963 political satire *The Executioner* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), which follows an undertaker who marries an executioner's daughter and reluctantly takes over her father's job so the family can keep their government-allotted apartment. Also available on October 25 is Ermanno Olmi's Palme d'Or-winning 1978 Bergmanesque language drama *The Tree of Wooden Clogs* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), a sensual elegy that faithfully captures the rhythms of a now-lost way of life as seen in rural Italy at the turn of the 20th century.

Stephen King's "Carrie" Celebrates 40th Anniversary with October 11 Release from Scream Factory

Based on the bestselling novel by horror master Stephen King, *Carrie: Collector's Edition* (Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$24.95) will be released on October 11 as part of Shout! Factory's Scream Factory line. Directed by Brian De Palma, this 1976 film forever changed the landscape of horror films, and launched many cast members into stardom. At the film's cen-

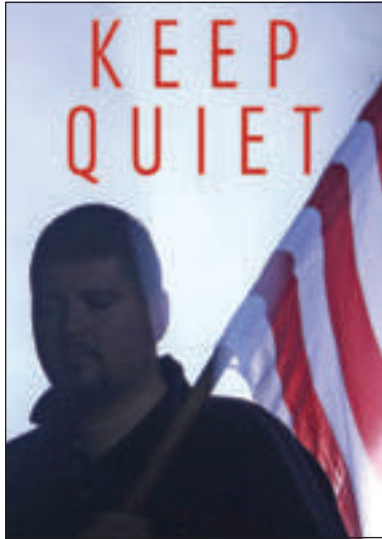
ter is Carrie (Sissy Spacek), a high school loner with no confidence, no friends...and no idea about the extent of her secret powers of telekinesis. But when her psychotic mother and sadistic classmates finally go too far, the once-shy teen becomes an unrestrained, vengeance-seeking powerhouse who, with the help of her "special gift," causes all hell to break loose in a famed cinematic frenzy of blood, fire, and brimstone. Garnering Academy Award nominations for Spacek and film veteran Piper Laurie, *Carrie* also features the first major film roles for John Travolta, Nancy Allen, William Katt, and Amy Irving. Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the film with a brand new 4K scan, bonus features will include new cast and crew interviews, a "Horror's Hallowed Grounds" location featurette, archival interviews, a look at "Carrie: The Musical," and a photo gallery.



"In Search of Lost Films" by Video Librarian Contributor Phil Hall Now Available from BearManor Media

Investigating the fact that an extraordinary number of important films are believed to be lost forever, *Video Librarian* contributor Phil Hall's latest book, *In Search of Lost Films* (BearManor Media), is newly available, priced at \$29.95 (hardcover) and \$19.95 (paperback). From the early days of silent movies to as late as the 1970s, groundbreaking works of significant historical and artistic importance are now gone, a tragedy involving cinema icons including Orson Welles, Stanley Kubrick, Alfred Hitchcock, Oscar Micheaux, and Vincente Minnelli. Film critic and journalist Hall details the circumstances that resulted in these productions being erased from history. Hall's three-decade cinema/media career includes work as a film journalist, critic, publicist, distributor, festival programmer, and actor. He is the author of six books, including *The History of Independent Cinema* and *The Greatest Bad Movies of All Time*, and his film-related writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *New York Daily News*, *Hartford Courant*, *Wired*, *Film Threat*, and *Video Librarian*.

Best Sellers & New Releases from KINOLORBEREDU.COM



KEEP QUIET

As vice-president of Hungary's far-right extremist party, Csanad Szegedi espoused anti-Semitic rhetoric and Holocaust denials, and founded the Hungarian Guard, a now-banned militia inspired by a pro-Nazi group complicit in the murder of thousands of Jews during WWII. But his life was soon upended when Szegedi's maternal grandparents were revealed to be Jewish and his beloved grandmother an Auschwitz survivor who had hidden her faith, fearing further persecution. *Keep Quiet* depicts Szegedi's three-year journey to embrace his newfound religion. But is his transformation genuine? Or does he simply have nowhere else to turn?

"Expect plenty of spirited arguments to break out after screenings of [Keep Quiet]." -Hollywood Reporter

Classroom rights: \$149 With PPR: \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499



HUMAN

The product of over 2,000 interviews recorded in 60 countries, this unique and thrilling collection of stories and images leads inexorably to the core of what it means to be human. Stories full of love and happiness, hatred and violence, from everyday experiences to accounts of the most unbelievable lives, share a rare sincerity and underline what is universal. Intercut with never-before-seen aerial images accompanied by soaring music, *Human* has already been acclaimed by hundreds of thousands of viewers – a deeply engaging work which allows us to embrace our own strengths and frailties and to reflect on the meaning of our existence.

"Marvelous images and heartfelt human testimonies..." -Variety

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HIERONYMUS BOSCH: TOUCHED BY THE DEVIL

The late-medieval artist Hieronymus Bosch caused uproar 500 years ago with his fantastical and unique paintings. In preparation for a contemporary exhibition of his work, a team of sedate Dutch art historians crisscrosses the globe to unravel Bosch's secrets, and to borrow his works. As they shuttle between world-class museums, they encounter a seemingly impenetrable tangle of red tape, ego, and conflicting interests in this witty and illuminating documentary about ancient art and modern preservation.

"The diabolical visions of Bosch remain beguiling and more popular than ever." -New York Times

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IXCANUL

The brilliant debut by Guatemalan filmmaker Jayro Bustamante is a mesmerizing fusion of fact and fable, a dreamlike depiction of the daily lives of Kaqchikel-speaking Mayans on a coffee plantation at the base of an active volcano. Immersing us in its characters' customs and beliefs, *Ixcánul* chronicles with unblinking realism, a disappearing tradition and a disappearing people.

"A powerful and highly accomplished debut deserving recognition. Moreover, with its social realist focus on Guatemala's contemporary Mayan population, it offers a portrait of a largely unseen community refreshingly free of exoticism (the remarkable unprofessional cast helped co-write the script)." -Filmmaker Magazine

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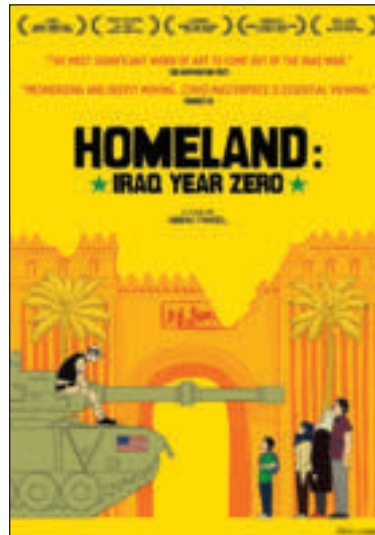
HOOLIGAN SPARROW

Ye Haiyan (a.k.a Hooligan Sparrow) is labeled a troublemaker by the Chinese government – someone who embarrasses the state with public protests, for example, involving the human rights of sex workers. In this tense and entertaining documentary, she travels to Hainan Province to protest a case in which the sexual mistreatment of elementary school students by their principal goes unprosecuted. And in the darkly twisted world of Chinese politics, it is Sparrow who faces intimidation, harassment and even prison for her activities.

"...deserves as wide an audience as possible."

-Cinevue

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HOMELAND: IRAQ YEAR ZERO

In his epic and engaging documentary of life in Baghdad before and after the US invasion of 2003, Iraqi filmmaker Abbas Fahdel acquaints us with a moving portrait of his own family and friends as they struggle in the advent and the uncertain aftermath of war. Displaying courage, grace and even humor after decades of deprivation through conflict, international sanctions, and totalitarian government, their optimism is all the more heart-breaking as they prepare for possible devastation, then witness the descent of their country into chaos.

"...demands both patience and empathy...worth every second." -Variety

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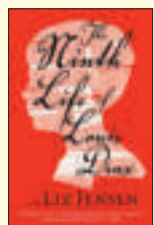
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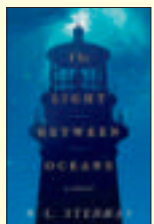
The following films based on books are slated to open during September and October. Movie release dates are subject to change.

Coming in September

The 9th Life of Louis Drax (Sept. 2) is based on the 2004 novel by Liz Jensen. Directed by Alexandre Aja, the supernatural thriller stars Jamie Dornan, Sarah Gadon, Oliver Platt, and Aiden Longworth as accident-prone boy Louis Drax.



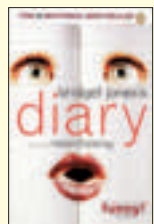
The Light Between Oceans (Sept. 2) is based on author M.L. Stedman's 2012 bestselling novel set on a tiny island with a lighthouse. Directed by Derek Cianfrance, the film stars Michael Fassbender, Alicia Vikander, and Rachel Weisz.



Sully (Sept. 9) is based on water-landing hero pilot Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger's biographical 2009 book *Highest Duty*. Directed by Clint Eastwood, the drama stars Tom Hanks, Aaron Eckhart, and Laura Linney.



Bridget Jones's Baby (Sept. 16) is the third film in a trilogy based on Helen Fielding's wildly popular character, who was introduced in her 1988 novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Directed by Sharon Maguire, the romantic comedy stars Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth, and Patrick Dempsey.



Snowden (Sept. 16) is based on the books *The Snowden Files* (2014) by Luke Harding and *Time of the Octopus* (2015) by Anatoly Kucherena. Directed by Oliver Stone, the film stars Shailene Woodley, Melissa Leo, and Joseph Gordon-Levitt as whistleblower Edward Snowden.



The Dressmaker (Sept. 23) is based on Australian author Rosalie Ham's 2000 gothic novel. Directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse, the revenge dramedy stars Kate Winslet, Judy Davis, Liam Hemsworth, and Hugo Weaving.



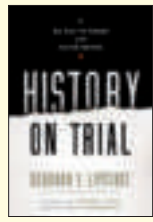
Goat (Sept. 23) is adapted from author Brad Land's 2004 memoir. Directed by Andrew Neel, the fraternity drama stars Ben Schnetzer as Land, along with Nick Jonas and James Franco.



The Queen of Katwe (Sept. 23) is adapted from Tim Crothers's 2012 nonfiction book. Directed by Mira Nair, the film stars David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong'o, and Madina Nalwanga as Ugandan chess prodigy Phiona Mutesi.



Denial (Sept. 30) is based on Deborah E. Lipstadt's 2005 nonfiction book *History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier*. Directed by Mick Jackson, the drama stars Rachel Weisz, Tom Wilkinson, and Timothy Spall.



Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children (Sept. 30) is based on the 2011 debut novel in Ransom Riggs's *New York Times* bestselling series. Directed by Tim Burton, the adventure fantasy stars Asa Butterfield, Eva Green, Chris O'Dowd, and Terence Stamp.

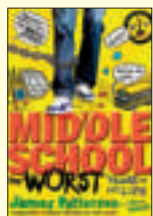


Coming in October

The Girl on the Train (Oct. 7) is based on Paula Hawkins's 2015 bestselling psychological thriller. Directed by Tate Taylor, the film stars Emily Blunt, Rebecca Fergusson, and Luke Evans.



Middle School: The Worst Years of My Life (Oct. 7) is based on the 2011 YA novel by James Patterson and Chris Tebbetts. Directed by Steve Carr, the family comedy stars Griffin Gluck, Lauren Graham, and Rob Riggle.



Certain Women (Oct. 14) is adapted from Maile Meloy's 2009 short story collection *Both Ways Is the Only Way I Want It*. Directed by Kelly Reichardt, the female-centric film stars Michelle Williams, Kristen Stewart, and Laura Dern.



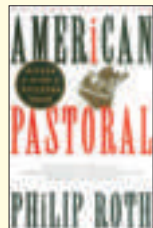
Jack Reacher: Never Go Back (Oct. 21) is adapted from Lee Child's 2013 novel in his bestselling action thriller series. Directed by Edward Zwick, the film stars Cobie Smulders, Robert Knepper, and Tom Cruise, reprising his role as Reacher.



A Monster Calls (Oct. 21) is based on Patrick Ness's 2011 children's fantasy novel. Directed by J. A. Bayona, this Spanish-British drama stars Lewis MacDougall, Liam Neeson, and Sigourney Weaver.



American Pastoral (Oct. 28) is based on the bestselling 1997 novel by Philip Roth. The directorial debut of costar Ewan MacGregor, the drama also features Jennifer Connelly, Dakota Fanning, and David Strathairn.



Inferno (Oct. 28) is based on the 2013 sequel to author Dan Brown's *Angels & Demons*. Directed by Ron Howard, the film stars Tom Hanks, reprising his role as genius professor Robert Langdon, and also features Felicity Jones, Omar Sy, and Ben Foster.



Looking Ahead

Coming in November is **Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them**, based on J.K. Rowling's 2001 *Harry Potter* companion book. Directed by David Yates, the film stars Eddie Redmayne as Newt Scamander.



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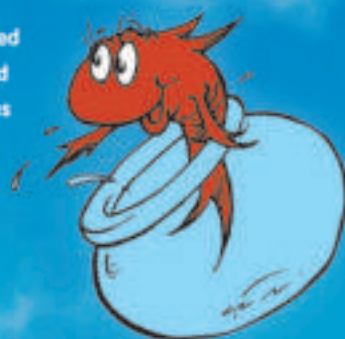
NEW!

Final cover art may differ from image shown.

The Cat in the Hat takes Nick and Sally on a Halloween ride filled with howlers and shockers and scary fandangles, big laughs and music and fun from all angles! Their fright-filled adventure takes them deep into the Oooky-ma-kooky Closet where Nick and Sally discover the very best Halloween costumes ever.



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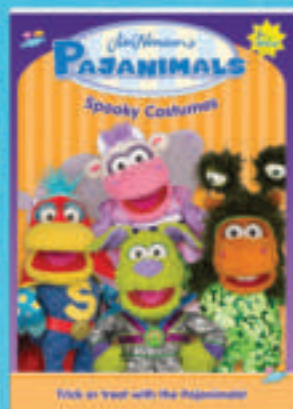
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Mixed Media features new release information on upcoming video games and TV series on DVD/Blu-ray, as well as notable older titles that are re-priced or new to DVD/Blu-ray.

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

F1 2016 (Codemasters, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). This official racing simulation video game of the 2016 FIA Formula One World Championship features the full 2016 season calendar of 21 tracks, including the brand new Baku circuit in Azerbaijan.



September 4—September 10

Just Sing (Ubisoft, PS4/XOne: \$29.99, Rated: E10+). In this singing game, players can create their own music videos using their smartphones while performing from a tracklist that includes smash hits from Sia, Justin Bieber, Meghan Trainor, and others.

September 11—September 17

NASCAR Heat Evolution (Dusenberry Martin Racing, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). In this racing simulation game, players can compete as their favorite NASCAR Sprint Cup Series drivers across all 23 licensed NASCAR tracks.



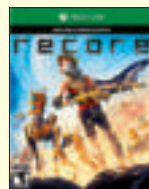
NBA 2K17 (2K, PS3/PS4/X360/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). In this basketball simulation game, players can go through the complete NBA season, or take control of an entire NBA franchise.

NHL 17 (EA, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). The latest iteration of this popular hockey simulator delivers new features in the single-player modes, as well as new ways to compete as a team.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2017 (Konami, PS3/PS4/X360/XOne: \$39.99-\$59.99, Rat-

ed: E). This year's version of the soccer simulation game focuses on new gameplay features and presentation elements.

ReCore (Microsoft, XOne: \$39.99, Rated: T). In this third-person action-adventure game, players step into the role of Joule Adams, one of the last remaining humans on a planet controlled by robotic foes bent on destruction, who is aided by her courageous group of robot companions.



September 25—October 1

FIFA 17 (EA, PS3/PS4/X360/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). This latest entry in the popular soccer simulation franchise features a new game engine and a narrative mode in which players take on the role of the Premier League's next rising star, Alex Hunter.

Forza Horizon 3 (Microsoft, XOne: \$59.99, Rated: E). In this new Forza racing simulation game, players participate in Horizon Festival and explore Australia in over 350 cars.

XCOM 2 (2K, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: T). In this third-person, turn-based, top-down action game, players face incredible odds while trying to rebuild XCOM in hopes of igniting a global resistance to reclaim the world and save humanity.

October 2—October 8

Atari Flashback Classics: Vol. 1 (Atari, PS4/XOne: \$19.99, Rated: E). This collection of 50 remastered classic Atari games includes *Asteroids*, *Breakout*, *Missile Command*, *Sky Diver*, *Super Breakout*, and more. Also newly available is **Atari Flashback Classics: Vol. 2**.

Mafia III (2K, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this third-person action game set in 1968 in a reimagined New Orleans, players step into the shoes of Lincoln Clay, a Vietnam veteran set on escaping a criminal past.



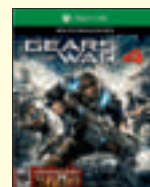
Paper Mario: Color Splash (Nintendo, WiiU: \$59.99, Rated: E). In this third-person action-adventure game, a mystery is afoot on Prism Island and only Paper Mario can solve it by restoring the island's vanishing

colors with his new Paint Hammer and a set of powerful Battle Cards.

October 9—October 15

Dragon Quest Builders (Square Enix, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). In this third-person action-adventure game set in the *Dragon Quest* universe (and featuring a building mechanic), players set out to return the power of creation to the people of Alefgard and overthrow the evil Dragonlord once and for all.

Gears of War 4 (Microsoft, XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this third-person shooter from the popular franchise—set 25 years after the events of *Gears of War 3*—players step into the combat boots of JD Fenix, who must embrace his father's legacy and battle a terrifying new enemy.



WWE 2K17 (2K, PS3/PS4/X360/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: T). The latest WWE wrestling simulation game focuses on core gameplay, with visual and audio improvements, as well as new game modes.

October 16—October 22

Battlefield 1 (EA, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: RP). This latest addition to the blockbuster first-person action-shooter series is set during World War 1, with players fighting epic battles in a besieged French city, the heavily defended mountain forts in the Italian Alps, and in the deserts of Arabia.



Skylanders Imaginators (Activision, PS3/PS4/X360/WiiU/XOne: \$74.99, Rated: E10+). The latest entry in the popular third-person toys-to-life franchise features over 30 new interactive Skylanders to collect in an adventure to save Skylands.

October 23—October 29

ATV Renegades (Nighthawk, PS4/XOne: \$29.99, Rated: RP). In this nitro-charged ATV racing experience, players tackle tracks in the USA, Thailand, England, Russia, Canada, and Mexico.

Dragon Ball: Xenoverse 2 (Bandai Namco, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: RP). Drawing from the highly popular *Dragon Ball* universe, this fighting game sequel

BOND / NEW RELEASES

EDUCATION



GOD KNOWS WHERE I AM

Documentary | Psychology |
Policy Issues | Art | Mental Health

Following a woman's mysterious death in an abandoned New Hampshire farmhouse, an intimate yet deeply troubling account of severe bipolar psychosis and mental illness is unveiled in this sharply produced documentary. Using poignant excerpts from the journal that was found with her body, Oscar-winning Jedd Wider and Todd Wider artfully examine the failure of our healthcare system to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

"Beautiful, evocative, and ultimately heartbreaking." - The Atlantic

Directed by Jedd and Todd Wider

Running Time: 101 Minutes



AN ART THAT NATURE MAKES

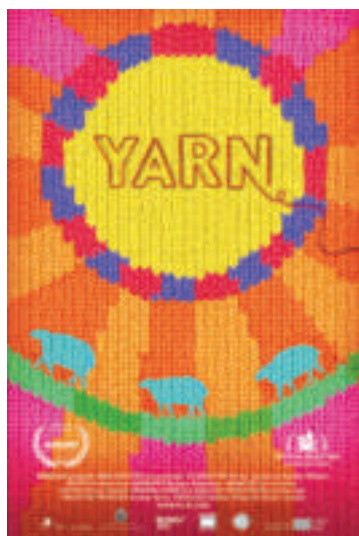
Documentary | Art | Art History |
Photography | Natural Sciences

Finding unexpected beauty in the discarded and decayed, photographer Rosamond Purcell has developed an oeuvre of work that has garnered international acclaim. AN ART THAT NATURE MAKES details Purcell's fascination with the natural world – from a mastodon tooth to a hydrocephalic skull – offering insight into her unique way of recontextualizing objects both ordinary and strange into breathtaking imagery.

"What kind of genius is Rosamond Purcell? Is she an artist? A scholar? A documentarian? A living cabinet of wonders? Her originality defies category..." - Jonathan Safran Foer, Author

Directed by Molly Bernstein

Running Time: 75 Mins



YARN

Documentary | Art | Women's Studies |
Art History

Meet the artists who are redefining the tradition of knit and crochet, bringing yarn out of the house and into the world. Reinventing our relationship with this colorful tradition, YARN weaves together wool graffiti artists, circus performers, and structural designers into a visually-striking look at the women who are making a creative stance while building one of modern art's hottest trends.

"Both entertaining and illuminating" - Slate

Directed by Una Lorenzen

Running Time: 76 Minutes



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Art | Theatre Studies | Shakespeare |
English Literature

From director Julie Taymor comes a Shakespeare adaptation like none other. Rich with Taymor's trademark imagination, this immersive experience breathtakingly brings Shakespeare's beloved A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM to life as never seen before.

"For Ms. Taymor, the sky is not the limit. It's a supple canvas to be stretched and bent to the whims of the imagination." - The New York Times

Directed by Julie Taymor

Running Time: 143 Minutes



8-BIT GENERATION: THE COMMODORE WARS

Documentary | Technology | Computer
Sciences

Spearheading the personal technology revolution and combatting giants like Apple and IBM, Commodore became a household name by changing the way in which we interact, create and play with computers. 8-BIT GENERATION: THE COMMODORE WARS dives into the home computer explosion and Commodore's key role in shaping the future in which we now live.

Directed By Tomaso Walliser

Running Time: 100 Minutes



DEEP WEB

Documentary | Criminology | Human
Rights | Cybersecurity

DEEP WEB gives the inside story of one of the most important digital crime sagas of the century -- the arrest of Ross Ulbricht, the entrepreneur convicted of being 'Dread Pirate Roberts,' creator and operator of online black market Silk Road. As the only film with exclusive access to the Ulbricht family, DEEP WEB explores how the brightest minds and thought leaders are now caught in the crosshairs in the battle for control of a future inextricably linked to technology, with our digital rights hanging in the balance.

"Deep Web provides myriad topics for classroom discussion. Highly Recommended." - EMRO

Directed by Alex Winter

Running Time: 90 Minutes

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PRICING:

PPR \$350

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Public Library \$149

continues to pit Goku against his most fierce enemies.

Just Dance 2017 (Ubisoft, PS3/PS4/X360/WiiU/XOne, \$39.99-\$49.99, Rated: E10+) In this latest version of the popular dancing game franchise, players will cut the rug to dozens of songs including Justin Bieber's "Sorry", "Cheap Thrills" by Sia, and "Daddy" by Psy.

The Last Guardian (Sony, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: T). In this eagerly anticipated third-person adventure game from the creator of *Ico* and *Shadow of the Colossus*, players control a young boy who discovers a mysterious creature, forming a deep, unbreakable bond as the unlikely pair journey through towering, treacherous ruins filled with unknown dangers.

Titanfall 2 (EA, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: RP). This highly-anticipated sequel to the popular multiplayer first-person shooter—in which players pilot a giant mech robot—will include a single-player campaign.

World of Final Fantasy (Square Enix, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: E10+). In this third-person RPG set in the *Final Fantasy* universe, players take control of twin siblings Lann and Reyne, who navigate the perilous world of Grymoire while collecting, raising, and battling iconic monsters.

TV on DVD/Blu-ray

Available Now

Blunt Talk (Starz, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98). Executive produced by Seth MacFarlane, this 2015 debut season of the Starz-aired comedy series follows a British newscaster (Patrick Stewart) trying to make it in the business in Los Angeles.

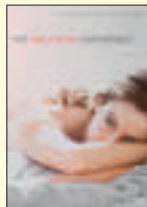
Criminal Minds: Season 11 (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). The members of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit face personal and professional dilemmas in this 2015-16 11th season of the crime drama series starring Joe Mantegna, Shemar Moore, Aisha Tyler, and Matthew Gray Gubler.

Elementary: The Fourth Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). This 2015-16



fourth season of the contemporary NYC-set series inspired by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's iconic sleuth character stars Jonny Lee Miller as Sherlock Holmes and Lucy Liu as his companion Dr. Joan Watson.

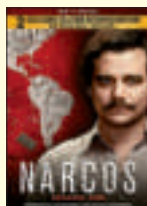
The Girlfriend Experience (Starz, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99). Riley Keogh stars as a law student and intern who turns to work as an escort in this 2016 debut season of the Starz-produced drama series based on executive producer Steven Soderbergh's 2009 feature film.



Hell on Wheels: Season 5, Volume 1 (Entertainment One, DVD: 2 discs, \$30.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$38.99). Anson Mount stars as former Confederate soldier Cullen Bohannon in this first volume of episodes from the 2015-16 fifth and final season of the period Western series aired on AMC.

Mom: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.99). Anna Faris stars as a single mother who raises her family with her mother (Allison Janney) as the two addicts adjust to the AA lifestyle in this 2015-16 third season of the comedy series.

Narcos: Season One (Lionsgate, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$29.98). The trials and triumphs of infamous Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar (Wagner Moura) are spotlighted in this 2015 first season of the Netflix series, also featuring Richard T. Jones and Luis Guzmán.



NCIS: The Thirteenth Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). Senior special agent Gibbs (Mark Harmon) struggles after a life-threatening shooting in this 2015-16 13th season of the popular military police procedural series.

NCIS Los Angeles: Season 7 (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). LL Cool J and Chris O'Donnell are back in this 2015-16 seventh season of the action crime series spin-off set in the City of Angels.

The Night Manager (Sony, DVD: 2 discs, \$35.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$45.99). Based on the 1993 novel by John Le Carré, this BBC One- and AMC-aired six-part espionage thriller miniseries stars Tom Hiddleston, Hugh Laurie, and Olivia Colman.

The Strain: The Complete Second Season (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Based on novels by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan, this 2015 sophomore season of the FX-aired horror drama stars Corey Stoll, Mía Maestro, and Sean Astin.

September 6

American Crime Story: The People v. O.J. Simpson (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Nominated for 22 Emmy Awards, this 2016 miniseries based on Jeffrey Toobin's bestselling book *The Run of His Life: The People v. O.J. Simpson* stars Cuba Gooding Jr., John Travolta, Sarah Paulson, David Schwimmer, and Courtney B. Vance.



The Flash: The Complete Second Season (Warner, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$54.98). A forensic investigator assistant turned super-powered meta-human hero (Grant Gustin) uses his superfast abilities to go up against criminals in this 2015-16 sophomore season of the DC Comics-based series.

Rectify: The Complete Third Season (Anchor Bay, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98). This 2015 third season of the SundanceTV original series chronicling the readjustment of an ex-death row inmate stars Aden Young, Abigail Spencer, and Luke Kirby.

South Park: The Complete Nineteenth Season (Paramount, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$42.99). Matt Stone and Trey Parker's long-running animated series' 2015 19th season includes the Caitlyn Jenner episode "Stunning and Brave" and Trump spoof "Where My Country Gone?"

Supernatural: The Complete Eleventh Season (Warner, DVD: 6 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$54.98). The supernatural escapades of the Winchester brothers (Jared Padalecki and Jensen Ackles) continue in this 2015-16 11th season of the horror fantasy series.



September 13

The Big Bang Theory: The Complete Ninth Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99). The smart smartass pals are back in this 2015-16 ninth season of the Emmy and Golden





FIRST RUN FEATURES PRESENTS



TALENT HAS HUNGER

83 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917063D
STREET DATE: SEPTEMBER 13

An inspiring film about the power of music to consume, enhance, and propel lives, *Talent Has Hunger* focuses on master cello teacher Paul Katz, who helps to build self-esteem and a cultural and aesthetic character that will be profoundly important throughout his students' lives.

"This illuminating celebration of music and the art of teaching is like a musical Hoop Dreams!" -Boston Globe

"Full of wisdom, warmth and compassion." -Yo-Yo Ma



ENTER THE FAUN

68 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917070D
STREET DATE: SEPTEMBER 13

In *Enter the Faun*, a veteran choreographer and a young actor with cerebral palsy collaborate to offer astonishing proof that each and every body is capable of miraculous transformation. Challenging the boundaries of medicine and art as well as the limitations associated with disability, the film is "a remarkable story, and will be of great interest not just to dance enthusiasts but to those whose lives are touched by cerebral palsy." (*The Hollywood Reporter*).

"Not only revelatory, but profoundly moving." -Deborah Jowitt, Dance Critic



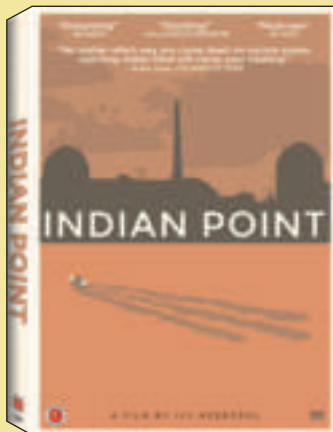
LAST CAB TO DARWIN

123 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917194D
STREET DATE: OCTOBER 4

In this Australian drama, Rex is a cab driver who has never left the small town of Broken Hill in his life. When he discovers he doesn't have long to live, Rex decides to drive through the heart of the country to Darwin, where he's heard he will be able to die on his own terms; but along the way he discovers that before you can end your life you've got to live it, and to live it you've got to learn to share it.

"Smartly directed, this sweet-hearted film packs an emotional punch."

-The New York Times



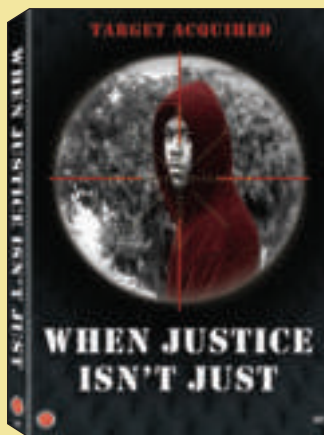
INDIAN POINT

94 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917124D
STREET DATE: OCTOBER 25

Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant looms just 35 miles from Times Square. With over 50 million people living in close proximity to the aging facility, its continued operation has stoked controversy and fear in the surrounding community. Ivy Meeropol's documentary explores the IP plant as well as the issues surrounding nuclear energy, offering a startling reality check for our uncertain nuclear future.

"Rigorously balanced...and disturbing." -Newsday

"Expert and evenhanded." -LA Times



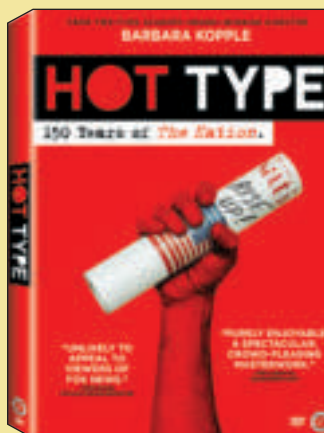
WHEN JUSTICE ISN'T JUST

42 minutes, color, \$19.95, FRF 917087D
STREET DATE: SEPTEMBER 13

Directed by Oscar-nominated David Massey, this dynamic documentary explores why so many unarmed black people have been targeted and killed by police officers. The filmmakers talk to legal experts, activists and law enforcement officials who discuss the inequality within our criminal justice system and confront the crucial question of how to prevent more violence, including Black on Black deaths.

"It was a pleasure participating in this thought-provoking documentary."

-Dr. Melina Abdullah, Black Lives Matter



HOT TYPE: 150 YEARS OF THE NATION

92 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917100D
STREET DATE: OCTOBER 4

Directed by two-time Academy Award Winner Barbara Kopple, *Hot Type* is a vivid look at America's oldest continuously published weekly magazine.

Featuring Rev. William Barber II, Rachel Maddow, Bill Moyers, Victor Navasky, Katrina vanden Heuvel, Ben Jealous, Amy Wilentz, Eric Alterman, Rick Perlstein, Betsy Reed and more.

"Purely enjoyable! A spectacular, crowd-pleasing masterwork."

-Matt Fagerholm, rogettebert.com



ARGENTINA

85 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917117D
STREET DATE: OCTOBER 4

Poetic, riveting and moving, three-time Academy Award nominee Carlos Saura's latest foray into the music and dance of Argentina delves into the heart of the nation's stunning cultural heritage - from traditional styles to modern.

"Passionately political, sexy and ecstatic!" -National Public Radio

"Wonderful songs and dances...a fine introduction to Argentina's traditional music and dance." -The New York Times

"CRITIC'S PICK! Hidden pleasures." -Village Voice



AMONG THE BELIEVERS

84 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 917131D
STREET DATE: OCTOBER 25

Firebrand cleric Abdul Aziz Ghazi, an ISIS supporter and Taliban ally, is waging jihad against the Pakistani government with the aim of imposing Shariah law. His primary weapon is his expanding network of Islamic seminaries for children as young as four. The film follows Aziz's personal quest and charts the lives of two of his students who are pawns in his ideological war.

"A superb documentary, at once deeply scary and thoroughly enlightening."

-AM New York

"Incredible access...a must-see." -Entertainment Weekly

Globe-winning sitcom that features guest appearances by Keith Carradine, Michael Rapaport, Bob Newhart, and Stephen Hawking.

Chicago P.D.: Season Three (Universal, DVD: 6 discs, \$44.98). A Chicago intelligence unit squares off against a vicious kingpin in this 2015-16 third season of the crime-drama series starring Jason Beghe, Jon Seda, and Sophia Bush.

The Doctor Blake Mysteries: Season Two (BBC, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). After reuniting with his long-lost daughter in Singapore, police surgeon Dr. Lucien Blake (Craig McLachlan) helps solve crimes in this 2014 second season of the Australian 1950s-set period drama.



Empire: The Complete Second Season (Fox, DVD: 5 discs, \$39.98). The rise and fall and rise of hip-hop mogul Lucius Lyon (Terrence Howard) is showcased in this 2015-16 sophomore season of the music industry drama that features guest appearances by Marisa Tomei, Timbaland, Rosie O'Donnell, Lenny Kravitz, and Jennifer Hudson.

Father Brown: Season 3, Part 2 (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99). The village of Kempleford provides the backdrop for intuitive priest Father Brown's (Mark Williams) crime-solving adventures in this 2016 third season of the BBC One series based on the stories by G.K. Chesterton.

Hawaii Five-0: The Sixth Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). Starring Scott Caan and Alex O'Loughlin, this 2015-16 sixth season of the police procedural drama features guest appearances by Carol Burnett and Michael Imperioli.

Law & Order—Special Victims Unit: Year Seventeen '15/'16 Season (Universal, DVD: 5 discs, \$59.98). A crossover episode with *Chicago P.D.* is featured in this 2015-16 17th season of the long-running crime series, featuring guest stars Whoopi Goldberg and Brad Garrett.

Longmire: The Complete Fourth Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.98). The grand opening of a reservation casino causes trouble for Sheriff Longmire (Robert Taylor) in this 2015 fourth season of the series, newly picked up by Netflix.



Madam Secretary: Season 2 (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). Secretary of State Elizabeth McCord (Téa Leoni) balances her personal life with important national responsibilities in this 2015-16 second season of the political drama series.



Newhart: The Complete Sixth Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.95). Bob Newhart and Mary Frann star in this 1987-88 sixth season of the sitcom, which features guest appearances by José Ferrer and Julie Brown.

Quantico: The Complete First Season (Buena Vista, DVD: 5 discs, \$39.99). A traitor hides in the midst of a group of elite recruits at the FBI's titular base in this 2015-16 debut season of the suspense thriller series starring Priyanka Chopra, Josh Hopkins, and Anjanae Ellis.

Scorpion: Season Two (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$59.98). Based on the life of contemporary Irish computer expert Walter O'Brien, this 2015-16 second season of the action-drama series stars Elyes Gabel, Katharine McPhee, Robert Patrick, and Eddie Kaye Thomas.



Suspects: Series Three & Four (Acorn, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99). Three investigators (Damien Molony, Clare-Hope Ashitey, and Fay Ripley) tackle crimes in present-day London in the 2015 third and fourth seasons of this unscripted Channel 5-aided police procedural series.

September 20

2 Broke Girls: The Complete Fifth Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.98). Sassy waitresses Max and Caroline (Kat Dennings and Beth Behrs) continue to work on building their dessert business and they visit Hollywood in this 2015-16 fifth season of the raunchy sitcom, which also features Jennifer Coolidge and Garrett Morris.

Blue Bloods: The Sixth Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). Starring Tom Selleck, Donnie Wahlberg, and Bridget Moynahan, this 2015-16 sixth season continues to follow the dangerous careers of the justice-minded Reagan family in New York City.

Criminal Minds—Beyond Borders: The First Season (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$55.98). Focusing on American cases taking place on international soil, this 2016 first season of the spin-off from the police procedural franchise stars Gary Sinise, Tyler James Williams, and Alana De La Garza.

The Good Wife: The Final Season (Paramount, DVD: 6 discs, \$55.98). Stalwart attorney Alicia Florrick (Juliana Margulies) struggles with both personal and professional decisions in this 2015-16 seventh and final season of the political drama, which features guest appearances by Amy Irving, Mamee Gummer, and John Benjamin Hickey.



Gunsmoke: The Twelfth Season, Volume 1 (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.99). Featuring guest stars including Martin Landau, Bette Davis, and Jon Voight, this first volume from the 1966-67 12th season of the beloved Western series follows Marshal Matt Dillon (James Arness) as he protects the townspeople of Dodge City. Also newly available at the same price is **Gunsmoke: The Twelfth Season, Volume 2**.

Midsomer Murders: Series 18 (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Death-bed body snatchers are near the top of the list of worries in this 2016 18th series, set in the often-deadly titular English village, starring Neil Dudgeon, Gwilym Lee, and Fiona Dolman.



Modern Family: The Complete Season 7 (Fox, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). The three core families engage in more domestic antics in this 2015-16 seventh season of the Emmy and Golden Globe-winning sitcom, featuring guest appearances by Catherine O'Hara, Ernie Hudson, and Shelley Long.

The Originals: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 5 discs, \$44.98). Supernatural brothers Klaus and Elijah (Joseph Morgan and Daniel Gillies) are estranged but must deal with their newfound witch sister (Riley Voelkel) in this 2015-16 third season of *The Vampire Diaries* spin-off.

September 27

The Catch: The Complete First Season (Buena Vista, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99). A Los

PTS

PUBLIC
TELEVISION
SYNDICATION



Janson Media manages the syndication of programming to public television stations in the United States.

This unique distribution model must be financed by program underwriters or sponsors (just as the production was financed) seeking to reach the widest possible audience of U.S. public television viewers. Underwriters may be corporate or not-for-profit. Syndication to PBS member stations is a complex business which combines station relations, publicity campaigns, carriage tracking, production and legal consulting, and, needless to say, seasoned professionals experienced in the arcane world of U.S. public television. As a respected presenter and program supplier, Janson Media is an experienced player in the management of public television syndication campaigns. If you have a quality project with national appeal, want to reach the coveted, highly-educated PBS demographic, and access to financing for such a project, please contact us.



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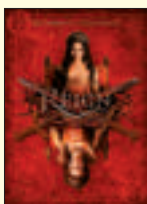
Angeles private investigator (Mireille Enos) goes after her fraudulent ex-fiancé (Peter Krause) in this 2016 first season of the mystery series.

Grimm: Season Five (Universal, DVD: 5 discs, \$59.98; Blu-ray: 5 discs, \$69.98). From a maternal beheading to fathering a baby with an enemy, things are definitely grim for Oregon homicide cop Nick (David Giuntoli) in this 2015-16 fifth season of the police procedural fantasy hybrid.

Indian Summers: The Complete Second Season (PBS, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$59.99). Set during the British Raj at an exclusive club at Simla in the foothills of the Himalayas, this 2016 second series of the *Masterpiece* socialite drama series stars Julie Walters, Henry Lloyd-Hughes, Nikesh Patel, and Jemima West.

Jericho (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$59.99). Set in a shanty town in the Yorkshire Dales during the 1870s, this 2016 eight-episode period miniseries stars Jessica Raine, Hans Matheson, and Clarke Peters.

Reign: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.99). This 2015-16 third season of the historical romantic drama introduces the court of Elizabeth I (Rachel Skarsten), and also features Mary, Queen of Scots (Adelaide Kane), and Catherine de' Medici (Megan Follows).



Ripper Street: Season Four (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$34.98). Detective Inspector Reid (Matthew Macfadyen) comes out of retirement to clear up the murder of a rabbi in this 2016 fourth season of the 19th-century mystery series set in London's East End.

October 4

American Horror Story: Hotel—The Complete Fifth Season (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.98). The 2015-16 fifth incarnation of the popular FX-aided horror anthology series takes place at a haunted hotel and stars Kathy Bates, Sarah Paulson, Evan Peters, Chloë Sevigny, Angela Bassett, and Lady Gaga.



Banshee: Final Season (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Aired on Cinemax, this 2016 fourth and final season draws to a close the suspenseful schemes of ex-convict-turned-sheriff Lucas Hood (Antony Starr) in this series that costars Eliza Dushku and Ulrich Thomsen.

Penny Dreadful: The Final Season (Paramount, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Victorian-era London demons and historical characters abound in this 2016 third and final season of the horror drama series featuring Eva Green, Josh Hartnett, Reeve Carney, Timothy Dalton, Rory Kinnear, and Patti LuPone.

Preacher: Season One (Sony, DVD: 3 discs, \$45.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$65.99). Based on the comic book series and co-developed by Seth Rogen, this 2016 first season of the AMC-aided black comedy series stars Dominic Cooper, Joseph Gilgun, Ruth Negga, and W. Earl Brown.



Prey: Series 1 & 2 (BBC, DVD: 2 discs, \$19.98). A detective constable (John Simm) wants to clear his name, and a prison officer (Philip Glenister) finds himself questioning the rules in this two-season 2014-15 miniseries.

October 11

Feed the Beast: Season One (Lionsgate, DVD or Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$29.98). Based on a Danish TV series, this AMC-aided crime-drama set in the world of New York restaurants stars David Schwimmer, Jim Sturgess, and Lorenza Izzo.



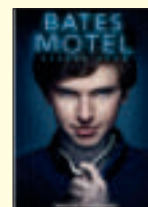
Good Witch: Season Two (Cinedigm, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.99). A spin-off of Hallmark made-for-TV-movies, this 2016 second season of the magical series following an enchantress (Catherine Bell) and her gifted daughter (Bailee Madison) also features James Denton, Rhys Matthew Bond, and Kylee Evans.

Mike & Molly: The Sixth and Final Season (Warner, DVD: 2 discs, \$24.98). Overweight Chicago couple Mike and Molly (Billy Gardell and Melissa McCarthy) are excited about starting their own family in this truncated 2016 sixth and final season of the sitcom.

The Musketeers: The Complete Third Season (BBC, DVD: 3 discs, \$34.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$39.99). King Louis XIII's hardworking bodyguards face loyalty issues in this 2016 third season of the BBC historical action series starring Tom Burke, Santiago Cabrera, and Peter Capaldi.

October 18

Bates Motel: Season Four (Universal, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.98). Troubled young Norman Bates (Freddie Highmore) sinks further into madness in this penultimate 2016 fourth season of the psychological horror series—inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*—that also stars Vera Farmiga and Max Thieriot.



Looking Ahead

Slated for November are the first seasons of *The Living and the Dead* and *Rev*, the third season of *Lou Grant*, the sixth seasons of *Game of Thrones* and *Sisters*, the 11th season of *NYPD Blue*, and the 18th season of *Silent Witness*. Slated for December are the first seasons of *The Bureau* and *Undercover*, the fourth season of *Father Brown*, and the fifth season of *Death in Paradise*.

Re-priced or New to DVD/Blu-ray

Flight of the Butterflies (Shout! Factory, Blu-ray: \$19.99). Filmed for IMAX theaters, Mike Snee's 2012 documentary on the migration of the monarch butterfly is narrated by Megan Follows. Extras include a message from former Mexican President Felipe de Jesús Calderón Fournier, a "making-of" featurette, and an image gallery. Also newly available at the same price is *Rocky Mountain Express*.



Ray Harryhausen: Special Effects Titan (Arrow, DVD: 2 discs, \$14.95; Blu-ray: \$19.95). The career of legendary special-effects genius Ray Harryhausen (1920-2013) is the subject of Gilles Penso's 2011 documentary, which includes interviews with filmmakers Peter Jackson, Terry Gilliam, Guillermo del Toro, and Steven Spielberg. Extras include a filmmaker audio commentary, deleted scenes, Q&As, and interview outtakes.

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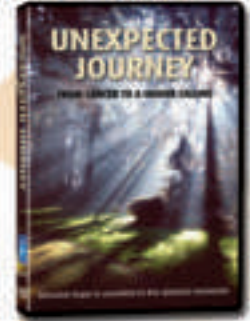
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Torchlighters: Martin Luther

In a world ruled by a corrupt and greedy church, all it took was one little nail, one well-written scroll, and one sharp-tongued monk to turn everything upside-down! Martin Luther's 95 Theses 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? This fifteenth episode in the children's Torchlighters series commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Reformation! Animated, 30 minutes.

#501682D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01682 5



Unexpected Journey

Walk hand-in-hand with four different cancer patients and survivors who discover new meaning and purpose to their lives as they face the unknown future during their battles. From hearing the news from their physician, to going through chemotherapy, to battling the different fears and emotions, these individuals testify how their faith plays a major role in giving them hope as they travel an *Unexpected Journey*. Documentary, 34 minutes.

#501687D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01687 0



Cody High: A Life Remodeled Project

Cody High focuses on the efforts of Detroit's impoverished Cody Rouge community to remove blight and create a safe environment for students at the local schools, including the hundreds of students who attend Cody High School. Residents and volunteers, in partnership with Life Remodeled, remodeled three schools and 25 homes and tore down 254 vacant houses, bringing beauty back to 303 blocks of Detroit. Documentary, 78 minutes.

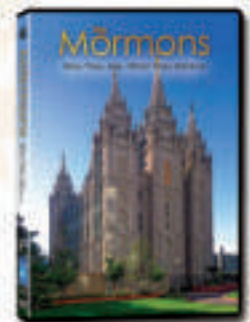
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Regrets, Reality, Restoration

Hear the heartfelt stories of people who have experienced profound regret over their actions. Drug addiction and alcohol abuse, abandoning one's faith, poor ethical choices, terminal accidents—these are the stories of the people you will meet in this program. As distraught as these individuals had become, see what—even in their most tormented moments—brought forgiveness and restoration to their anguished pasts. Four-part documentary, 63 minutes.

#501678D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01678 8



The Mormons

This documentary examines the group's origins, the meaning of its rituals, the prominence of the temple, and more. Former Mormons share how their decision to exit the group was a bewildering and disillusioning experience. Once out, many found themselves cut off and ostracized by their families, ready to abandon religious faith altogether. Insider narratives and expert commentary add depth and authenticity to this revealing study. Six-part documentary, 99 minutes.

#501640D, \$19.99, UPC 7 27985 01640 5



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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

13 Cameras ★★½

Kino Lorber, 89 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Voyeurism is the subject of Victor Zarcov's slow-burning thriller, a tale of home invasion by electronic surveillance that adds a few twists to a rather simple plot. The boogeyman here is Gerald (Neville Archambault), a seedy, unkempt guy who rents an attractive if isolated Southern California house to yuppie couple Ryan (PJ McCabe) and Claire (Brianna Moncrief). Gerald spies on their every move via a battery of tiny cameras, deriving sexual pleasure from what he sees, but the couple's apparent happiness turns out to be deceptive: Ryan is having an affair with his pretty assistant Hannah (Sarah Baldwin), who is growing impatient over Ryan's reluctance to dump his pregnant wife. As the situation continues to develop, Gerald feels the need to intervene—with violent results, as the film begins to seriously strain credulity (including the cliché of cell phones that stubbornly refuse to function precisely when they're most needed). Some compensation lies in the fine performances, and even when the final act veers off the tracks, the gore quotient—compared to most of today's horror films—is remarkably restrained. Generating some genuine chills but also suffering from implausible moments, this is a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



600 Miles ★★½

Lionsgate, 84 min., R, DVD: \$19.98

Mexican film producer Gabriel Ripstein's first work as a director is a taut and imaginative thriller starring Tim Roth as an ATF agent whose efforts to stop the illegal flow of weapons across the border goes badly

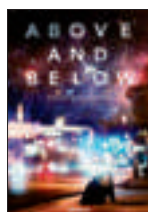


awry, resulting in his being kidnapped by a young Mexican smuggler (Kristyan Ferrer). The mileage in the title refers to the journey that the two take as the smuggler shepherds his bound captive deep into Mexico's cartel country for delivery to his crime bosses. During the trip, the two men slowly begin to find some degree of camaraderie, although the lengthy trek becomes increasingly tense as there appears to be little evidence that the agent will be able to escape or that his captor will have a significant change of heart. *600 Miles* presents a harsh emotional odyssey that is fueled both by Ripstein's imaginative direction—the bulk of the action is set inside an SUV—and extraordinary performances by Roth as a man uncertain of his fate and Ferrer as a would-be thug who may not be the right person for his dirty job. Mexico's Oscar entry for Best Foreign Language film, this powerful and timely drama is highly recommended. (P. Hall)

Above and Below ★★★

Oscilloscope, 119 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99

Clearly inspired by the films of Errol Morris, director Nicolas Steiner's documentary *Above and Below* serves up a profile of five people living "off the grid" in contemporary America. Army veteran Dave Reese has turned an abandoned military bunker deep in the California desert into a ramshackle house—outfitted with solar power—where he lives a solitary existence, tinkering with his vehicles, watching the sunrise, and ruminating on various things. Another vet, April Davis, has joined the Mars Desert Research Station in Utah, where volunteers simulate manned expeditions to the Red Planet in preparation for the real thing. Meanwhile, Rich Ethredge and Cindy Goodwin, two homeless people who have become an affectionate married couple, live below the streets in the drainage tunnels beneath Las Vegas, and are relatively content with their lot. Also living there is Edward Cardenas, aka "Lalo the Godfather," an undocumented immigrant who has become the unofficial "mayor" of the underground community. The five talk some about their past—Dave regrets the fact that he has never seen his granddaughter and describes his failed marriages, while April recalls the horrors of her army service, and Rick and Cindy reminisce about folks who formerly lived with them in the tunnels. Mostly, however, Steiner simply observes these damaged individuals struggling to survive on the edge. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Adventures in Babysitting ★★½

Walt Disney, 94 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99

A lot has changed since the original *Adventures in Babysitting* from 1987. The young

characters who found themselves unwittingly caught up in misadventures on a night in the big city—all while under the failed supervision of a hapless babysitter (Elisabeth Shue)—now have counterparts with cell phones and digital cameras who listen to G-rated rap music in this tame 2016 remake. A typical Disney Channel movie for 'twins, the new *Adventures* centers on an unlikely alliance between rival high school girls with night-and-day differences. Jenny (Sabrina Carpenter) is a rigid, rule-following, ultra-responsible teen vying for the same internship as Lola (Sofia Carson), a looser, moody artist type who is given to casual irresponsibility. The girls dislike each other from the start, but they end up working parallel babysitting gigs and are inevitably thrown together—along with their charges—winding up lost and broke in an urban core setting. Chased by a couple of *Home Alone*-like dopey villains, the minors find themselves in some slapstick chases, all while keeping a step ahead of parents and getting Jenny prepped in time to meet a boy she likes. It's all good fun, although actual wit is in short supply, which is a shame, since filmmaker John Schultz's often paint-by-numbers effort could have used a little anarchy. A strong optional purchase (T. Keogh)

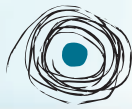


Alice Through the Looking Glass ★★

Walt Disney, 113 min., PG, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Oct. 18

Bearing little resemblance to Lewis Carroll's literary sequel, this live-action fantasy begins in 1874 with Alice Kingsleigh (Mia Wasikowska) as an intrepid sea captain, cleverly evading pirates (almost as though she'd been taught by Capt. Jack Sparrow). Arriving home in London, Alice must choose between losing her late father's merchant vessel or leaving her widowed mother homeless. Familial business dealings grow tedious until the familiar blue butterfly (voiced by Alan Rickman) leads Alice through a large mirror...aka Looking Glass. Back in Underland, Alice finds the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) deeply depressed, mourning the loss of his Hightopp family. If she can travel back through the "Sea of Time," Alice might be able to save them, but that involves stealing the whirling Chronosphere belonging to Time (mustache-twirling Sacha Baron Cohen). As part of her quest, Alice discovers how a sinister childhood deception triggered the huge-headed Red Queen's (Helena Bonham Carter) petulant anger toward her own sister, the White Queen (Anne Hathaway). While screenwriter Linda Woolverton endeavored to create backstories for many of Carroll's clas-





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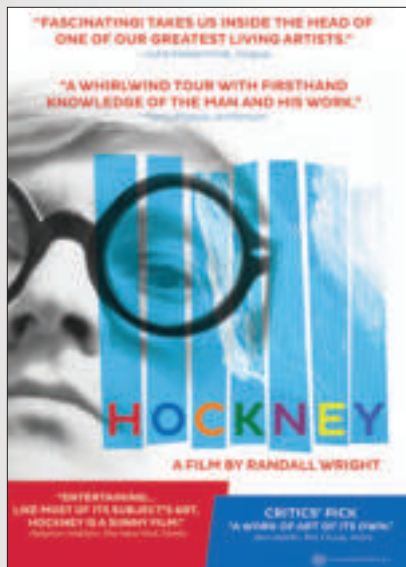


Schneider, a hit man, discovers his target, Ramon Bax, has more than a few surprises up his sleeve in the latest film from director Alex van Warmerdam (*Borgman*).

SCHNEIDER VS. BAX (AVAILABLE OCTOBER 4)

DVD only: \$24.95 / PPR: \$200
DRL: \$499 / PPR + DRL: \$599
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Roberto Minervini's follow-up to his "Texas Trilogy" presents an unnerving portrait of bayou nihilism, portraying Louisianian junkies and a militia in all their contradictions.

THE OTHER SIDE (NOW AVAILABLE)

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sis characters—with a nod to Victorian-era feminism—director James Bobin injects too many steampunk distractions into an already implausible and incoherent plot. A confusing, expensive extravaganza that makes for a disappointing sequel, this is an optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Altered Minds ★★

Gravitas Ventures, 93 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99



One doesn't have to look far to find fault with this ill-conceived, unbearably maudlin psychological "thriller" (the title of which gives away the central secret of the film). Clearly the movie's hopes for success are pinned on the presence of venerable veteran actor Judd Hirsch, who plays dying Nobel prize-winning ex-CIA psychiatrist Nathaniel Shellner, a proud man who just wants to live out the rest of his days watching Chaplin movies with his doting wife while spinning yarns about the Cold War. The trouble begins when he invites his children—three of whom are adoptees (and all four profoundly unlikeable)—to the house for one last get-together. Shellner's adopted son Tommy is a mentally unstable horror novelist who comes to the gathering with tormented visions that he, along with the other adopted siblings, were acquired by their father to be subjects for his top-secret *Manchurian Candidate*-style mind-control experiments. Tommy's psychic breaks eventually have a ripple effect that ends up driving his siblings to dredge up long-latent subconscious bugbears. The cast's one-note histrionics, which sadly obscure Hirsch's gutsy performance, are disappointing enough. However, it's director Michael Z. Wechsler's inability to build tension from scene to scene or sustain any control over the imaginative but convoluted script that dooms this well-meaning movie in the end. Optional. (M. Sandlin)

The Angry Birds Movie ★★

Sony, 97 min., PG, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$38.99

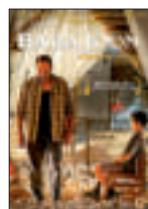


Directed by Fergal Reilly and Clay Kaytis, this animated film inspired by the mega-popular app-based video game serves up a birds vs. pigs tale. After he fails to deliver a "hatchday" treat—an act of rebellion against the happy camaraderie of Bird Island—Red the sardonic Cardinal (voiced by Jason Sudeikis) is sentenced to anger-management classes conducted by Matilda (Maya Rudolph), a calm, free-range chicken who urges her students to therapeutically "paint your pain." Other rebellious misfits include Chuck (Josh Gad), the manic yellow canary; hulking Terence (Sean Penn); and the literally

explosive blackbird Bomb (Danny McBride). Their ire is aroused when a pair of seemingly friendly singing-and-dancing green pigs—Leonard (Bill Hader) and sidekick Ross (Tony Hale)—come ashore, snort around, and steal the birds' precious eggs to take home for a feast. Furious Red and his feathered friends consult the once-mighty Eagle (Peter Dinklage) and Judge Peckinpah (Keegan-Michael Key). Vengeance is paramount as the angry flightless birds head to Pig Island, where they devise a giant slingshot to catapult themselves at the oinking porkers in order to rescue their unborn chicks. Amidst the fast-paced, cartoony fun, the usual bathroom humor, puns, and pop culture visual gags abound. Unfortunately, it's not interactive. Optional. (S. Granger)

Baba Joon ★★★

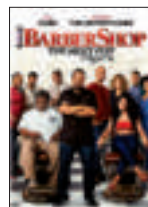
Strand, 92 min., in Farsi w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



This tender story about the potential tyranny of male legacies finds Yitzhak (Navid Negahban), the head of an Iranian family living in Israel, vexed by his young son, Moti (Asher Avrahami), who refuses to learn his dad's turkey farming trade. Although Yitzhak loves Moti very much, he pressures the headstrong boy to do the unpleasant tasks that Yitzhak himself despises. Even though his back is in constant pain and his heart is full of misery over his work, Yitzhak feels compelled to maintain a tradition that was literally beaten into him and his brother, Darius (David Fariborz Daaan), by their own cruel father. Exhausted, Yitzhak refuses to see that Moti is just like he once was: rebellious and determined to lead his own life. Moti's mother (Viss Elliot Safavi) tries her best to mitigate, but it takes a visit from Darius—now a dandified ex-pat living in the U.S.—to crack open the frozen relationship between man and boy while revisiting the old nightmare behind it. Writer-director Yuval Delshad does a splendidly understated job of revealing the contradictions in these complicated characters, showing just enough hints of real love and understanding between battles to give viewers hope. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Barbershop: The Next Cut ★★½

Warner, 112 min., PG-13, DVD: \$28.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98



It's been about a dozen years since we last visited Calvin's Barbershop on Chicago's South Side. Calvin Palmer (Ice Cube) and his longtime cohorts, including Eddie (Cedric the Entertainer) and Terri (Eve), are still hard at work, but there have been some major additions, including Calvin's teenage son Jalen (Michael Rainey

Jr.), Calvin's best friend Rashad (Common), dorky Jerrod (Lamorne Morris), son-of-Indian-immigrants Raja (Utkarsh Ambudkar), enterprising One-Stop (J.B. Smoove), and outspoken Dante (Deon Cole). Most notable, however, is that the male bastion has gone co-ed. The ladies' salon is managed by Angie (Regina Hall), who is joined by savvy Bree (Margot Bingham) and saucy Draya (Nicki Minaj), the latter's buttocks apparently a fascinating target for cinematographer Greg Gardiner. Functioning as the community's social meeting-place, the barbershop/salon is where the timely issue of senseless, gang-affiliated neighborhood shootings is thrashed out. With the urgent threat of an ominous "enclosure" soon to be voted on by the city council, the crew decides to promote a 48-hour cease-fire—offering free haircuts, weaves, and styling for the weekend. On the lighter side, there's the inevitable war-of-the-sexes, with predictable gossip, squabbling about infidelity, and riffing on gender stereotypes. Directed by Malcolm D. Lee, this third installment in the long-running franchise is a strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Bitter Honey ★★★½

Passion River, 81 min., in Indonesian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



UCLA anthropologist-filmmaker Robert Lemelson—director of an ongoing film series about facets of Indonesian culture—here examines the atavistic tradition of polygamy on Bali, an island where a patriarchal Hindu faith predominates and the subjugation of women is often masked in the eyes of naïve Western visitors enchanted with the popular tourist site. Lemelson interviewed women living in three polygamous marriages (some were entrapped into the situation) with men ranging in social status from a relative of the Balinese royal dynasty to a neighborhood boss in the cockfighting circles. While wives are initially cheery and deny any jealousy or bad feelings, subsequent visits over years reveal truths about domestic abuse while grown sons vow they will not repeat their fathers' vices. In a clever dramatic device, a running shadow-puppet performance illustrates the ills of polygamy in folk-PSA fashion. A fascinating exposé of trouble in paradise, this is highly recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Bridgend ★★★

KimStim, 104 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99



Bridgend is a fictional drama inspired by real-life events in Bridgend, a rural county in South Wales where the mines have closed and unemployment has cast a pall over the community. At least 79 suicides were reported

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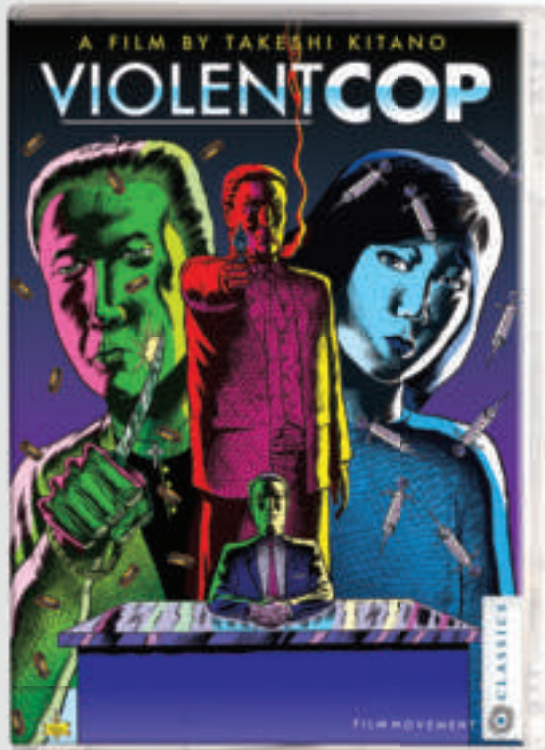
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ONCE WERE WARRIORS (NOW AVAILABLE)

"Social realism with a savage kick"
—Janet Maslin, *The New York Times*

Amidst the mean streets of Auckland, Beth (Rena Owen) lives under the constant threat of violence from her alcoholic husband, Jake (Temuera Morrison), in Lee Tamahori's box office triumph.

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VIOLENT COP (AVAILABLE OCT 11)

"Sharp, shocking...packs a punch"
—Lawrence Van Gelder, *The New York Times*

Japanese auteur "Beat" Takeshi Kitano plays Detective Azuma, a hostile cop investigating a drug-related murder, who ruthlessly seeks vengeance after his sister is kidnapped by a sadistic gangster.

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DRL: \$499 / PPR + DRL: \$599
Classics, Asian, Thriller
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BOILING POINT (AVAILABLE OCT 11)

"Offers considerable moment to moment amazement"

—J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

In Takeshi Kitano's acclaimed second feature a quiet gas station attendant runs into trouble when he travels to Okinawa looking for revenge after the local yakuza threaten and capture his baseball coach.

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Classics, Asian, Thriller
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in this small county, most of them teenagers (usually by hanging) with no notes or explanation. Danish documentary filmmaker Jeppe Rønde spent years getting to know the kids in the area but instead of making a documentary, he crafted this impressionistic, empathetic response to their experiences. Hannah Murray stars as Sarah, the young daughter of a cop (Steven Waddington) sent to help investigate the suicides. Sara is the new girl in town and she soon falls in with a pack of kids who gather in the woods and party in the pubs. While the sense of community draws her, Sara is also weighed down by the hopelessness among the teens and the oppressive emotional toll of the suicides on the survivors. Rønde shot the film on location in the Welsh valleys and the atmosphere of the landscape pervades the film: gloomy, isolated, and swallowed up in fog, the area is beautiful but also cut off from the rest of the world. Rønde offers no answers or explanations in this thoughtful and sensitive film, which is unsettling but also true to the historical reality. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Bronze ★★1/2
Sony, 100 min., R, DVD:
\$19.99, Blu-ray: \$25.99



Like a piece of hard candy with a very soft center, Bryan Buckley's directorial feature debut serves up yet another comedy about a nasty, self-centered person who experiences redemption in the third act. Melissa Rauch, who also wrote the script, stars as Hope Ann Gregory, an American gymnast who finished her set at the 2004 Olympics even after seriously injuring her ankle, winning the bronze medal. Ever since, Hope has cashed in on her brief moment of fame in her small Ohio town, parading around in her team outfit while vulgarly demanding special treatment from everyone, especially her mailman dad (Gary Cole), whom she browbeats endlessly. Hope learns that her former coach has bequeathed her half a million dollars if she will train Maggie (Haley Lu Richardson), a local lass with championship potential. Caught between greed and the desire to maintain her status as the sole celebrity in town, Hope takes on the task but deliberately tries to sabotage Maggie's chances. Hope's attitude gradually changes, however, after she becomes reacquainted with the sweet manager of the local gym (Thomas Middleditch). And she is also being challenged by an old rival, gold medalist Lance (Sebastian Stan), who is a threat to her windfall. Although the premise is promising, the execution is shrill, with Rauch delivering a one-note performance that relies on a stream of foul language for laughs. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Captain America: Civil War ★★1/2

Walt Disney, 147 min., PG-13,
DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$32.99,
Sept. 13



POW! This action-packed installment of the *Captain America* saga should really be dubbed *Avengers 2.5*, with its plethora of superheroes in conflict with one another. Responding to public protests after an alarming amount of casualties, Secretary of State Thaddeus Ross (William Hurt) proposes the Sokovia Accords, which would limit the superhero vigilantes' autonomy under international law. Captain America (Chris Evans) opposes this threat to their independence, joined by his buddy Falcon (Anthony Mackie), Ant-Man (Paul Rudd), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), and Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen). Somewhat surprisingly, Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.) accedes to Ross's proposal, along with Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), War Machine (Don Cheadle), Vision (Paul Bettany), and a newcomer, African Prince T'Challa (Chadwick Boseman), aka Black Panther. The star of their team turns out to be Stark's youngest recruit, an eager-to-please, adolescent Spider-Man (Tom Holland). As for villains, there's sneering, scheming Zemo (Daniel Brühl), along with their old S.H.I.E.L.D. adversary Crossbones (Frank Grillo). Directed by brothers Anthony and Joe Russo, *Captain America* does offer a subtly sobering commentary on the carnage accidentally inflicted by the U.S. in the Middle East, but it's also a repetitive and overstuffed superhero slog, as the Marvel cinematic universe marches on. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Circle ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 86 min., not rated,
DVD: \$24.95



With *Circle*, rookie writers-directors Aaron Hann and Mario Miscione have fashioned an austere feature debut that attempts to ambitiously combine a classic collective murder mystery (think Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*) with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in what is little more than a low-budget filmed stage play festooned with low-grade CGI effects. This hyper-minimalist survival of the fittest scenario opens with a multi-ethnic group of 50 people standing in a room with only a foggy notion of how they got there. They stand, unable to move, before a contraption that looks like a giant 1970s video game console—and zaps people dead with lightning-like energy. It isn't long before the realization sets in that they've all been chosen to participate in some deadly experiments conducted by ill-humored aliens. But are they being executed in any kind of systematic way? The group's more thoughtful souls work out

that they are actually killing each another by silent voting. And this is the point where the filmmakers make a half-baked attempt at exploring people's prejudices, as racism, classism, and predictable social Darwinist attitudes quickly become apparent. While *Circle*'s psychological trickery is suspenseful at times, the acting is unfortunately subpar. Still, the interesting concept makes this a strong optional purchase. (M. Sandlin)

Colliding Dreams

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 135 min., in
English, Hebrew & Arabic w/
English subtitles, not rated,
DVD: \$29.95, Sept. 20



Filmmakers Joseph Dorman and Oren Rudavsky's documentary presents the story of Zionism, from the pogroms in the late 1880s that led some Jews to leave Eastern Europe for a new life in Palestine, up to the present day. Archival photos, film footage, and interviews with scholars, rabbis, and former members of the Knesset provide historical and religious context, while man-on-the-street interviews with Jews and Muslims in Tel Aviv and the West Bank supply a hard dose of reality. The cumulative effect produces multi-faceted, often contradictory, and very personal definitions of Zionism, which is called affirming, positive, powerful, messianic, oppressive, or fascistic. It's either a movement that offers stability to Judaism, or one that must end; opinions shift depending upon who is being interviewed and where they live in the region. But the filmmakers don't take sides, giving all perspectives equal screen time. *Colliding Dreams* is both a great primer on Zionism for the layperson and an excellent introduction to the complicated political and religious history of the Middle East. Highly recommended. (P. Morehart)

The Conjuring 2 ★★1/2

Warner, 134 min., R, DVD:
\$28.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98, Sept.
13



Renowned Connecticut demonologists Ed and Lorraine Warren (Patrick Wilson, Vera Farmiga) return with another supernatural case, this time set in England, circa 1977. After their Amityville debacle, clairvoyant Lorraine insists that they take a break, but while working on that notorious investigation at the Lutz home on Long Island, NY, Lorraine had a profoundly disturbing vision of a horrifying nun. When the Catholic Church requests their assessment of a paranormal situation in Great Britain, the pair respond to the evangelical summons, packing their Bible and traveling to North London, where a working-class family has been driven from their home by poltergeists. Peggy Hodgson (Frances

O'Connor) is a single mother, raising her four children in crumbling public housing in the borough of Enfield, where her youngest daughter (Madison Wolfe) is tormented by angry undead spirits. The Hodgson family's plight fails to elicit sympathy from their neighbors, and a parapsychologist (Franka Potente) is aggressively doubtful, despite support from an amateur researcher (Simon McBurney). Based on the notorious Enfield Poltergeist case, director James Wan's sequel is yet another haunted house tale with solid jump-scares and demonic surprises. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Criminal ★1/2

Lionsgate, 113 min., R, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



In this astronomically silly film, Ryan Reynolds plays Bill Pope, a CIA agent with unique knowledge about how to thwart a terrorist's plan to blow up the world. Unfortunately, he's murdered, so his boss enlists a scientist (Tommy Lee Jones) to implant Pope's memories into the brain of brutal, antisocial prison inmate Jericho Stewart (Kevin Costner), who escapes after his own persona begins to struggle with Pope's inside his head. Feelings of compassion, even love, start to overtake Stewart as he deals with the agent's widow (Gal Gadot) and child. Stewart also exhibits a sense of duty, assuming Pope's mission to save mankind. Lots of fights, car crashes, and gun battles ensue, culminating in a final standoff in which the fate of the world hangs in the balance. Costner is unable to pull off the tough-guy role here, but it's unlikely that any actor could have made this ludicrous plot remotely plausible. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

Dark Horse ★★★

Sony, 86 min., PG, DVD: \$30.99



Louise Osmond's uplifting, rags-to-riches equine documentary shows how sometimes ordinary gals-and-guys can not only compete but win at the elitist "sport of kings." The story begins when middle-aged Janet Vokes, a barmaid in a South Wales workingman's pub, gets an over-the-rainbow notion to breed a steeplechase racehorse. Knowing that she'll need financial support, she rallies her friends and neighbors, including local tax adviser Howard Davies, who helps her form a "syndicate." Together, they raise the money necessary to buy Rewbell, a brood mare, and locate a promising yet inexpensive stud, Bien Bien. And then they patiently wait for the resulting scrappy foal—named Dream Alliance—to be trained. While the horse's first races against thoroughbreds aren't spectacular, he does eventually become a serious contender, fin-

ishing second in Newbury's Hennessy Gold Cup, and then actually winning the Perth Cup. What could be an insurmountable problem occurs when Dream Alliance severs a tendon, and the owners must decide whether to put him down or fork over more of their hard-earned cash for expensive surgery. An inspiring sports documentary, this is recommended. (S. Granger)

The Dark Horse

★★★★1/2

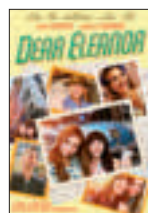
Broad Green, 124 min., R, DVD: \$26.99



New Zealand filmmaker James Napier Robertson serves up an intelligent dramatization of the life of Genesis "Gen" Potini (subject of the 2003 documentary *Dark Horse*), a Maori speed-chess player who died in 2011. The film opens with Gen's (Cliff Curtis) release from a mental hospital into the care of his older brother Ariki (Wayne Hapi), who is part of a violent motorcycle gang. Ariki is father to a teenage son named Mana (James Rolleston), who Ariki is eager to have join the gang. Gen, who has a gift for chess, has begun volunteering as a chess mentor in a club for disadvantaged Maori youth, where his leadership role is strong enough to propel young players to a national championship. When Mana begins to show more interest in his uncle's chess club than in his father's bikers, this creates more problems for this already dysfunctional family. A sincere and moving true-life story that benefits from strong performances, this is highly recommended. (P. Hall)

Dear Eleanor ★★★

Sony, 89 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.99



Set in 1962, *Dear Eleanor* centers on San Joaquin Valley girl Ellie (Liana Liberato), whose mother dies in a car accident on the same day as Marilyn Monroe. Ellie's best friends, Max (Isabelle Fuhrman) and Billy (Joel Courtney), decide to write a letter to Eleanor Roosevelt, because Ellie's mother revered the former first lady. And then Billy sends a forged letter from Roosevelt inviting Ellie to visit New York. Ellie and Max take her up on the offer, with 15-year-old Ellie taking her father's car along with a pocketful of cash from selling her mother's piano. While the girls are staying in cheap motel rooms, Ellie's dad (Luke Wilson) joins forces with Billy to track them down, although this isn't the kind of film where anything too bad will happen. The girls meet a friendly local (Ione Skye) who gives them a place to stay, and her son (Patrick Schwarzenegger) shares a cigarette and kiss with Ellie. While traveling through the Southwest, they also pick up Max's Aunt Daisy (Jessica Alba), an aspiring showgirl, and

infamous prison escapee Frank Morris (Josh Lucas), who shares their love of classic movies. Even though this upbeat cross-country road trip takes place during troubled times (including the Cuban Missile Crisis), director Kevin Connolly keeps the tone light, never straying too far from the endearing friendship between Ellie and Max. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Demolition ★★★

Fox, 101 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



While bickering in their car, wealthy Wall Street investment banker Davis Mitchell (Jake Gyllenhaal) and his wife, Julia (Heather Lind), are blindsided in a horrific crash. Julia dies, but all Davis can think about is the package of peanut M&Ms that got stuck in the hospital's vending machine. So he channels his numbing grief into writing the first in a series of confrontational letters to Champion Vending Machines, while heeding the advice—far too literally—of his anguished father-in-law (Chris Cooper). "Repairing a human heart is like repairing an automobile," Davis is told, "You have to take it apart—and examine everything. Then you can put it back together." Which means that when the refrigerator leaks, Davis bashes it apart. The same goes for the cappuccino machine, a creaky bathroom door, a light fixture, and an office computer. Eventually, Davis joins a wrecking crew, wielding a sledgehammer. Meanwhile, Karen Moreno (Naomi Watts), the vending machine company's customer service representative, realizes that this widower's angst runs far deeper than a bag of candy, so she impulsively calls him, and a weird relationship develops between the two troubled souls. Director Jean-Marc Vallée and Gyllenhaal present Davis's cryptic, almost sociopathic lack of empathy with clumsy dark comedy, but despite their efforts, the film just doesn't quite work. Optional. (S. Granger)

Destination: Planet Negro! ★★★1/2

Passion River, 98 min., not rated, DVD: \$59.95



What begins as a hilarious parody of a low-low-budget 1950s sci-fi potboiler evolves into a solid satire about the mixed report card on racial equality in contemporary America. A council of African-American scientists and other great black thinkers (including George Washington Carver and W.E.B. Du Bois) convenes in 1939 to discuss a radical proposition: namely, forget the uphill battle for racial justice and simply pile every black citizen of the U.S. into rocket ships headed for Mars, where a new society can be formed. But when an advance team comprised of tweedy Dr. Warrington

Avery (Kevin Willmott, who wrote and directed), his beautiful astronomer daughter Beneatha (Danielle Cooper), and cocky pilot Captain Race Johnson (Tosin Morohunfola) take off for the Red Planet, they wind up passing through a wormhole and land in today's urban America. Naturally, the trio are alarmed by some odd sights (young black guys with sagging pants are obviously starving; earbuds must be how slaves are being programmed by their masters). But the time travelers also struggle with more serious inconsistencies, such as why an African-American woman can get a faculty position at an integrated, major university, yet still fear for her life during a traffic stop by a white cop. *Destination: Planet Negro!* is a very funny film that doesn't stray too far from old sci-fi tropes and character clichés, but it also carries a sharp satirical bite that resonates deeply today. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Dresser ★★★

Anchor Bay, 109 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Ronald Harwood's 1980 play *The Dresser*, a backstage drama centered on a small traveling theater company working in England's provinces during WWII, is built on two strong roles for mature actors: Sir, a veteran Shakespearean thespian who runs the troupe, and his longtime dresser Norman. It was made into a celebrated 1983 film, in which Albert Finney and Tom Courtenay both earned Oscar nominations for their performances. This 2015 BBC production faithfully sticks to the original play, which takes place entirely backstage during the span of an evening's performance (the 1983 film added scenes outside the theater). Anthony Hopkins plays Sir, who is slipping into senility, while Ian McKellen is Norman, who prompts Sir's lines and prepares him for the evening performance of *King Lear* (fittingly about a grand old character with signs of dementia). Norman is protective and doting, like a son or even a wife, and Sir relies on Norman without really acknowledging him. Director Richard Eyre, a veteran of stage and screen, creates an intimate film, drawing fine performances from the entire cast, especially the two leads: Hopkins, who begins as a befogged, doddering old man and comes to a self-aware clarity of his own fragile health, and McKellen, who is chatty, cajoling, and sometimes catty as the working-class chap among the veteran cast and crew who are resigned to this second-rate company and living under the shadow of Sir's commanding performances. Emily Watson costars as Sir's miserable wife in this actors' showcase that also serves as a bittersweet tribute to the theater. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Electra Woman and Dyna Girl ★★

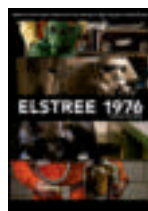
Sony, 81 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.99



YouTube comedy stars Grace Helbig and Hannah Hart head up the cast of this tongue-in-cheek feature-length revival/spoof of the superhero series produced for Saturday morning TV by Sid and Marty Krofft in the 1970s. Our heroes are childhood best friends with homemade costumes who keep their hometown of Akron, OH, safe between trips to the convenience store. When YouTube footage of their take-down of a couple of robbers goes viral, the top agent of Creative Masked Management invites them out to Los Angeles. In a world where supervillains have all been vanquished, it's now all about endorsement deals, so the tale becomes a classic story of success breaking up the band: Electra Woman (Helbig) is elevated to star status and grows addicted to celebrity, while Dyna Girl (Hart) resists the lure to sell out—until the arrival of a new supervillain reminds them of why they became heroes in the first place. Inexpensively produced, this looks and plays like an ambitious YouTube skit with a bigger budget and longer running time. The conventional tale serves as a framework on which to hang commentary on comic book superhero clichés and web celebrity, delivered with a mix of campy situations and dry, deadpan delivery. Unfortunately, there is not enough narrative momentum here to sustain a full movie, although there may be interest from fans of the YouTube celebrities. Optional. (S. Axmaker)

Elstree 1976 ★★★

MVD, 101 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$37.99



Not your typical *Star Wars* documentary made for adoring fans, *Elstree 1976* is a more earthbound story about the numerous bit players and heavily-costumed supporting actors who appeared in George Lucas's franchise-launching *Star Wars*. A parade of grey-haired, sometimes frail individuals—who were part of the film's alien bar scene, or among the Empire's army of Stormtroopers—share their sometimes mixed feelings about appearing in the beloved classic. Actor David Prowse stuffed his massive frame into Darth Vader's costume and walked with persuasive command throughout the original trilogy (a stuntman handled the fighting). Prowse says that he didn't know his voice would be eliminated and replaced by that of James Earl Jones. In the decades since, grasping for his proper place in the *Star Wars* firmament, Prowse has shared his ill feelings with producing company Lucasfilm, and is not invited to official conventions. Jeremy Bulloch, who had a few moments in the trilogy as bounty hunter

Boba Fett, is more sanguine about his legacy, seeing it as a brief but memorable chapter in a respected acting career lasting 50 years. And then there's Angus MacInnes, still facially recognizable as X-Wing fighter Gold Leader, who is a bit miffed that he comes lower in the *Star Wars* cast member pecking order, after some whose faces were hidden behind layers of rubber. But most of the film focuses on those who briefly register on camera as the back of a head or a Stormtrooper with a line or two. Oddly, some of them feel a little guilty about participating in conventions and getting paid to satisfy *Star Wars* completists. Filmmaker Jon Spira creates here a solid portrait of a group of people who had no idea in 1976 that they would become semi-celebrities—and are somewhat uncomfortable with it. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Endgame ★★★

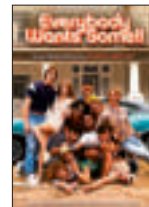
Shout! Factory, 90 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$22.98



Filmmaker Carmen Maron's family-friendly *Endgame* takes inspiration from the Brownsville, TX, chess team that took their state by storm, centering on bright 12-year-old Jose (Rico Rodriguez), who inherited a passion for chess from his late grandfather, a Mexican champion. Jose and his abuelita (Ivonne Coll) play matches regularly, and she also keeps him supplied with taquitos and other treats. Jose's teacher, Mr. Alvarado (Efren Ramirez)—a fellow enthusiast—forms a chess team in order to give his disadvantaged students coping skills. Jose and his best friend, Dani (Alina Herrera), an undocumented immigrant, join the team, but Jose's single mother, Karla (Justina Machado), would rather cheer on his soccer player brother, Miguel (Xavier Gonzalez). When tragedy strikes, Karla spends more time mourning Miguel than looking after Jose. But with the encouragement of his abuelita and his principal (Jon Gries), Jose gives his all during the chess tournaments, culminating in the state finals in Dallas against more experienced competitors. A fine film about Latino youth pushing past barriers, both academic and psychological, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Everybody Wants Some!! ★★★

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



Writer-director Richard Linklater follows up his masterful *Boyhood* with a gleeful throwback to his early hit *Dazed and Confused*, the cult classic about a bunch of kids celebrating their last day of high school in 1976. Here, a bunch of college guys—the baseball team on a fictional Texas campus—enjoy themselves just before the start of the

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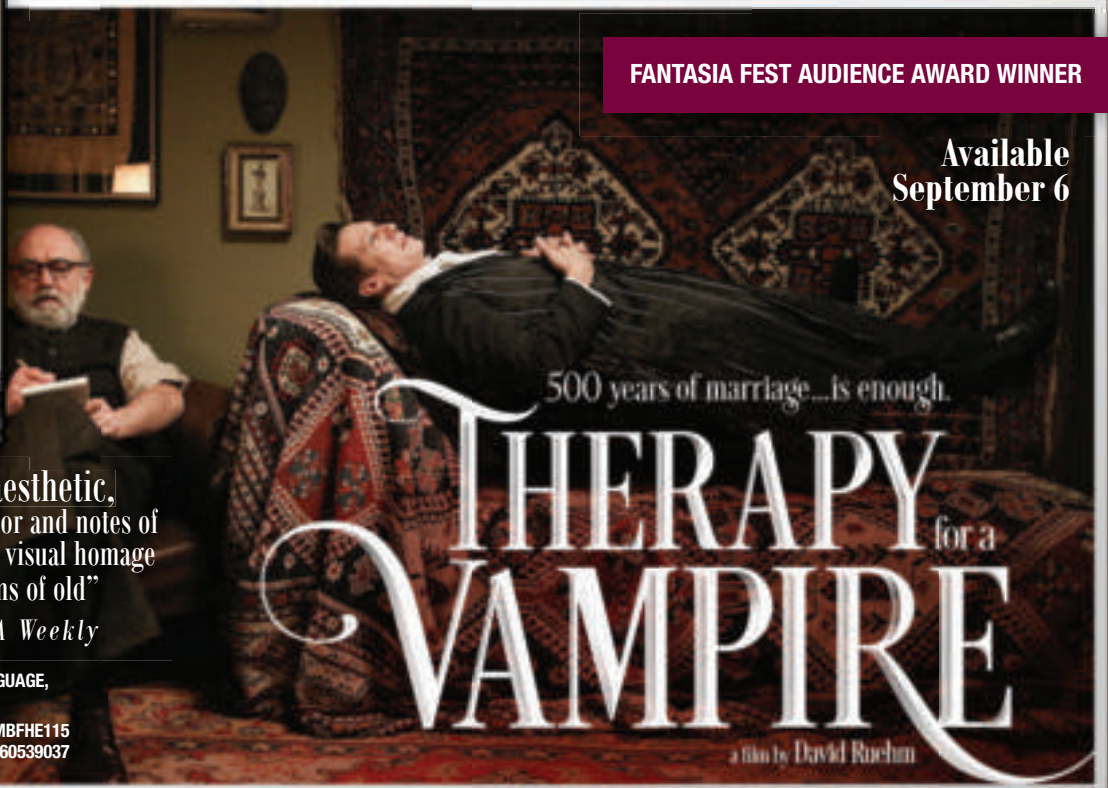
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1980 fall semester. Although it's an ensemble piece showcasing a raft of engaging young actors, *Everybody Wants Some!!* ultimately focuses on Jake (Blake Jenner), a freshman pitcher who quickly develops a sense of camaraderie with his disparate teammates while also finding prospective romance with an artsy drama major (Zoey Deutch). For much of the film, the guys just amble about from bar to bar and party to party, engaging in genial, mildly raunchy conversation while period pop music is featured on the soundtrack. There are occasional moments of "drama"—a brief barroom brawl, for instance—but overall the attitude is one of bemused (if also casually sexist) joviality. Linklater captures small, ostensibly insignificant moments of the past with an easygoing authenticity in this film that plays like a cinematic keg party—loose, informal, and ragged—but reminds older viewers of what it was like to be young and full of possibility. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

The Fear of 13 ★★½

First Run, 95 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95

Director David Singleton's documentary allows longtime death-row inmate Nick Yarris to skillfully recount his own unique history of endurance and redemption in a Pennsylvania state prison with the clarity and dramatic pacing of a gifted storyteller. Delivering a refreshing minimum of dramatic re-enactment and only one talking head (i.e., Yarris), *The Fear of 13* makes the most of one man's real-life *Shawshank Redemption*-type story. In fact, one of the few directorial manipulations here is that the brain-twisting intricacies of the "crime" that landed Yarris on death row are withheld until later in the movie, allowing viewers to first become familiar with Yarris and his central plight—his negotiations for an expedited execution date—and learn how and why he was driven to extremes. But while this is a stranger-than-fiction tale that has more turns than most big-budget fictional thrillers, there's also an inspirational self-discovery/existential side to Yarris's confessional account that is just as riveting. The chronicle of how Yarris came to serve a life-plus-105-year-sentence is every bit as incredible as the means by which that brutal term is eventually challenged. Highly recommended. (M. Sandlin)



Fever ★★½

Artsploitation, 81 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

In sharp contrast to the spate of hyper-violent gun-play flicks coming out of France in the last few years, *Fever* is a subtle murder mystery offering a more abstract and intellectualized take.



The film opens with two demented high school buddies, Pierre (Pierre Moure) and Damien (Martin Loizillon), carrying out the (offscreen) murder of a random woman in the Montmartre district of Paris. As it happens, the two adolescents are actually testing a theory they cooked up in their philosophy class: can there be any culpability in a killing that is random and has no motive? (Yes, that sounds ridiculous, but remember this is high school.) Meanwhile, a local woman (Julie-Marie Parmentier) bumps into the two suspicious-looking lads fleeing the aforementioned crime scene, and she instinctively suspects that they are up to no good. Unfortunately, just when viewers would expect the plot to thicken and the suspense to be ramped up, the script descends into incoherence, with the addition of an out-of-the-blue dark historical element appearing like a *deus ex machina* to dampen the murderous pair's future experiments. Under filmmaker Raphaël Neal's direction, crime and punishment become frustratingly dull concepts—and *Fever* ultimately offers no compelling visceral aspects to compensate. Optional. (M. Sandlin)

The First Monday in May ★

Magnolia, 92 min., PG-13, DVD: \$26.98

Andrew Rossi's documentary on the creation of the 2015 "China: Through the Looking Glass" exhibit at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art—and the simultaneous annual Met Gala—may have been conceived as a tribute to good taste and impeccable style, but it comes across as a grueling portrait of self-importance, ego, and vanity. Part of the film is devoted to efforts by Andrew Bolton, curator of the museum's Costume Institute, to mount an exhibit on Chinese-inspired Western fashions. Unfortunately, Bolton and his team are often oblivious to blatant cultural insensitivities—most egregiously in his plan to feature Mao-inspired fashions in a gallery devoted to Buddhist art. Surprisingly, few experts on Chinese fashion and culture are brought in for assistance, and while filmmaker Wong Kar Wai is hired as a consultant, he ends up having relatively little input. While all this is happening, *Vogue* magazine editor-in-chief Anna Wintour plans the Met Gala, a fundraising event that brings out scores of celebrities who vamp on the red carpet in outlandish gowns. Wintour (who was parodied by Meryl Streep in *The Devil Wears Prada*) comes across as unintentionally funny, due to her imperious demeanor. Not a necessary purchase. (P. Hall)



Francoфония ★★½

Music Box, 87 min., in French, Russian & German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

With its single-tracking-shot stroll, Alex-

ander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (VL-9/03) brought a completely unique perspective to St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum. Now, in *Francoфония* he turns his attention to the Louvre in Paris. Sokurov portrays the museum's great collection as not only being representative of the centrality of France to European culture but also serving as a symbol of the fragility of Western cultural heritage—an artistic inheritance that has been created by war and conquest but is also threatened by those same forces. As Sokurov's camera prowls the halls, Napoleon periodically appears to claim credit for establishing the Louvre and filling its vast galleries with artifacts from all over the world (the female embodiment of the French Revolution also shows up repeatedly to shout "Liberty, Equality and Brotherhood!"). Much of the film is devoted to fictionalized scenes depicting Jacques Jaujard, formerly the chief curator, collaborating with art-loving Nazi officer Count Metternich to save the Louvre's holdings from destruction or confiscation. Other sequences show Sokurov skyping with the captain of a ship carrying containers filled with precious artworks while the vessel is trapped in a storm, and also musing in voice-over about how many objects might have been lost in transport to Paris in centuries past. A brief glimpse of ancient friezes from Syria inevitably points up recent destruction during that country's civil war. While this scattershot approach makes *Francoфония* a less all-enveloping experience than *Russian Ark*, it nevertheless casts a hypnotic spell that is characteristic of the director's unconventional style. Highly recommended. (F. Swietek)



Free State of Jones ★★½

Universal, 140 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/Combo: \$34.98, Sept. 20

Set in the chaotic aftermath of the Civil War, this harrowing adventure drama based on a true story examines some ugly truths about the Reconstruction era. First seen as a battlefield medic in 1862, Newton Knight (Matthew McConaughey) is a poor farmer from Jones County, MS, who becomes disillusioned when Confederate soldiers wantonly confiscate his and his neighbors' grain and livestock. So he deserts. After being chased into the swamps, Knight joins up with runaway slaves and, eventually, other white defectors to form a guerrilla army, waging skirmishes against the Confederacy and then, in 1864, proclaiming their rebel stronghold to be the Free State of Jones. But this regional insurrection leads to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, whose hooded members re-assert white supremacy. Writer-director Gary Ross consulted with numerous noted historical



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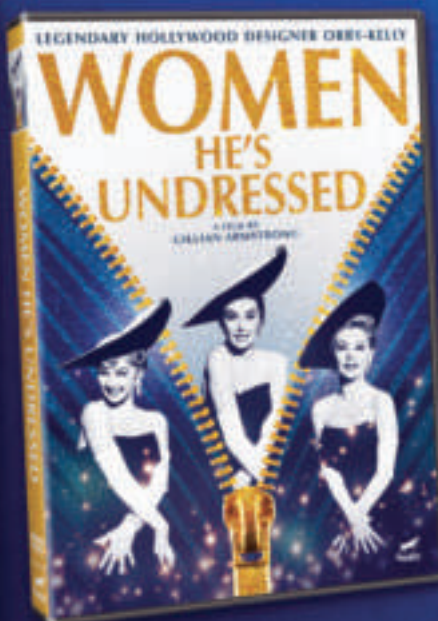
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scholars in order to lend authenticity to this ambitious, well-intentioned drama. Knight epitomizes messianic heroism, teaming up with noble, formerly enslaved Moses (Mahershala Ali)—who deliberately endangers his life by registering newly emancipated black voters—and courageous Rachel (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), a domestic plantation slave. Unfortunately, neither Moses's nor Rachel's perspectives are evident, and the epic structure is confusing because it is intercut with a subplot involving Knight's descendant, Davis Knight (Brian Lee Franklin), who is on trial in 1945 for breaking Mississippi's law against interracial marriage. FYI: Newton eventually fathered five children with Rachel and nine more with his beleaguered wife, Serena (a woefully miscast Keri Russell), with everyone apparently happily living on his 160-acre farm. Uneven but often intriguing, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

From Afar ★★★

Strand, 93 min., in Spanish w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Sept. 6

A chilly, stylistic drama from Venezuela, *From Afar* serves up an oddball relationship story involving two extremely different people who fill a hole in each other's lives, although their partial intimacy is not enough to bridge the social and economic divide between them. Alfredo Castro plays Armando, a closeted gay single man with old, unresolved wounds concerning his father and an addiction to hiring male hustlers to pose semi-nude for him. We meet Armando in one of writer-director Lorenzo Vigas's more interesting visual flourishes, as the camera slowly tracks the middle-aged man (who repairs dentures for a living) wandering through a crowd with an almost sociopathic disregard for the personal space of strangers. Later, he picks up Elder (Luis Silva), a teenage thug with barely human impulses, and what happens is not good: Elder punches out Armando and steals his wallet. Much to Elder's shock, Armando finds him again and asks him back to his place. A startling bond develops between the pair in this portrait of two people stuck in their individual lots in life, with little room to break free. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



Going Away ★★

Cohen, 95 min., in French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98

This strange French drama essentially shoehorns three incomplete stories into a lumpy narrative that never feels unified. Initially, filmmaker Nicole Garcia's *Going Away* appears to be a story about a rudderless substitute teacher named Baptiste (Pierre Rochefort), who gets



stuck with caring for young student Mathias (Mathias Brezot) after the latter's uncaring single father abandons him for a weekend. The script suddenly shifts when the compassionate Baptiste is led by Mathias to meet the child's mother, Sandra (Louise Bourgoin), a hostess at a beachside restaurant a few miles away. Mathias becomes a fringe figure while Baptiste becomes wrapped up in Sandra's problems with a couple of violent creeps looking for the money she owes them. Baptiste begins to exhibit a more morbid, explosive side, which leads to yet another major story development. It turns out that Baptiste is more than he seems; he is, in fact, a wealthy aristocrat from a family of vipers who seriously wronged him. With Sandra and Mathias all but sidelined in the action, the film finally settles in on its most interesting narrative strand, as Baptiste returns home to face his crass siblings and cruel if sympathetic mother (a wonderful, wounded-yet-steely Dominique Sanda). Although the film does feature some powerful moments and thoughtful performances, the storytelling here is scattershot. Optional. (T. Keogh)

Hand Gestures ★★★

Kino Lorber, 76 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Filmmaker Francesco Clerici's nearly wordless Italian documentary centers on the ancient, complicated process of creating bronze sculptures. Working in the historic Fonderia Artistica Battaglia foundry in Milan—where the all-but-lost art of wax casting still flourishes—artist Velasco Vitali and a team of craftsmen labor diligently to complete a sculpture of a dog in repose. While the materials that they use and their step-by-step method are never verbally described, it is fascinating to see the original figure (made of something red and wet) encased in a kind of hard chrysalis, which then serves as the mold for the molten bronze. Many more tasks will follow before the piece is ready for display in this time-consuming process. A charming, often mesmerizing look at a particular type of artistic craftsmanship, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



Hardcore Henry ★1/2

Universal, 97 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$34.98

As a technical exercise, Ilya Naishuller's wacky action movie impresses, but otherwise it's an excruciating and exhausting film full of virtually nonstop slaughter, sex, and sadism. The plot and style ape that of a first-person shooter video game, shot entirely in jerky handheld style from the title character's point-of-view. A destroyed Henry has been reconstructed as a partially human

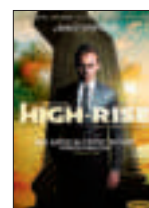


but mostly robotic creature by Estelle (Haley Bennett), who claims to be his wife. Before she can install his voice module, however, her lab is attacked by mad scientist Akan (Danila Kozlovsky), whose goal is—what else?—world domination (or maybe world destruction). With Estelle's help, Henry escapes but Estelle herself is captured. Assisted by the loquacious Jimmy (Sharlto Copley)—who is periodically killed only to reappear in various guises (Jimmy has cloned doppelgangers)—Henry tries to rescue Estelle and foil the villain's plot. On the few occasions that the movie pauses from its frantic, vertiginous avalanche of chases, firefights, explosions, and chintzy CGI confrontations (viewers might want to consider a dose of Dramamine), it's usually to offer a moment of puerile sexism or off-handed homophobia. Despite the often astonishing camerawork, this is a tiresome orgy of blood and bombast. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

High-Rise ★★

Magnolia, 120 min., R, DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

J.G. Ballard's 1975 novel *High-Rise* employed the setting of a massive apartment complex to create an allegory about class warfare, with the elitist wealthy living amidst luxurious amenities on the building's upper floors, while the less financially fortunate are restricted to lower floors and conspicuously poorer services. Unfortunately, filmmaker Ben Wheatley's adaptation places greater emphasis on violence than social commentary. Dr. Robert Laing (Tom Hiddleston) moves into an apartment on the 25th floor of the building—conveniently between the upper and lower regions—and quickly makes the acquaintance of an attractive single mother (Sienna Miller), as well as that of an aggressive filmmaker (Luke Evans) and his pregnant wife (Elisabeth Moss). Laing is also introduced to the building's architect, the appropriately named Mr. Royal (Jeremy Irons), who designed the structure to be a self-contained environment where people need not venture outside. However, this oddball attempt at social engineering goes awry, with grisly crimes being committed as the lower floor tenants rebel against their putrid living conditions by taking aim at their upstairs neighbors. *High-Rise* is a wild, noisy affair that benefits from a distinctive production design that recreates the best and worst of 1970s style (there's also some wonderfully droll hamming by Irons), but in the end Ballard's brilliant dystopian vision is reduced here to an unsubtle, chaotic smackdown. Not a necessary purchase. (P. Hall)



Holding the Man ★★1/2

Strand, 127 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Based on Timothy Conigrave's titular 1995 memoir, published posthumously after

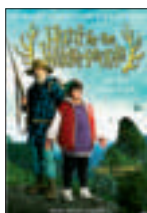
both Conigrave and his longtime lover John Caleo died of AIDS, this heartfelt but uneven adaptation from director Neil Armfield haphazardly jumps through the nearly two decades of their relationship. The story begins with the boys finding one another as classmates in a Melbourne Jesuit high school, and quickly becoming inseparable despite attempts by their families to keep them apart. Moving to Sydney to continue their studies—Tim (Ryan Corr) at a prestigious dramatic academy, John (Craig Stott) in a chiropractic school—the pair remain a couple, despite John's discomfort with Tim's more extroverted lifestyle. Ultimately, both are diagnosed as HIV-positive, and Tim nurses John through his final days before repairing to an island off the Italian coast to write his book. One can't help but be moved by the basic narrative, which is essentially a gay version of *Love Story* that is made more powerful by its foundation in fact. Sequences highlighting the homophobia of the time resonate, and the hospital scenes here skirt the obvious dangers of mawkishness. But Corr and Stott are simply too old to be convincing as 16-year-old boys in the long 1976 section of the film, the dialogue is often stilted, and even veterans like Guy Pearce and Anthony LaPaglia (as the boys' fathers) and Gregory Rush (as Tim's snide drama teacher) have difficulty bringing much nuance to their characters. Although it could have been better, this powerful true-life narrative is—despite flaws—a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



Hunt for the Wilderpeople ★★½

Sony, 101 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.99, Sept. 27

Ricky Baker (Julian Dennison) is a chubby 13-year-old terror who is deposited at a remote farm in the New Zealand bush by a cynical social worker as a last chance of avoiding juvenile detention. Warmly received by chirpily voluble Bella (Rima Te Wiata), but with much less enthusiasm by her grumpy husband Hector (Sam Neill), the sullen boy tries to run away and gets nowhere, but Bella's insistent cajoling ultimately wins him over. When Bella's sudden death sends Ricky fleeing into the wild, Hector follows, and the pair bond while being hunted by scores of police, soldiers, and vigilantes who believe that Hector has kidnapped the kid. Director Taika Waititi's *Hunt for the Wilderpeople* might initially sound like an earnest afterschool special, but it's really a quirky and funny delight, featuring outrageous scenes involving strange folks whom Ricky and Hector bump into during their adventures. Charming off-kilter, this family movie is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)



I, Anna ★★

KimStim, 93 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99

Gabriel Byrne and Charlotte Rampling star in this overextended and rather slight mystery thriller about a single woman named Anna (Rampling), who is linked to the bludgeoning death of a man who took her home from a party. Byrne plays Bernie, a London cop on the case who is drawn to Anna, growing protective even as he tries to sort out the facts. Writer-director Branaby Southcombe (Rampling's real-life son) is guilty of stretching the thin plot to the breaking point. But he does have some fun along the way, turning a frog-green umbrella—repeatedly left in different places by the distracted Anna—into a clue, and getting some Lady Macbeth mileage out of Anna's itchy forearm. Short on story, *I, Anna* largely serves as a vehicle for Rampling's smart performance. An optional purchase. (T. Keogh)



Ingrid Bergman: In Her Own Words ★★

Criterion, 114 min., in Swedish, Italian, English & French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95

Stig Björkman's affectionate documentary profile of Ingrid Bergman combines Bergman's diary entries and letters (read in voiceover by Oscar-winning actress Alicia Vikander) with remembrances from her daughter Isabella Rossellini and other confidants, including actress and director Liv Ullmann. The results play like a rejoinder to those depressing Hollywood-chews-up-actress-and-spits-her-out stories. Before she left Sweden for America, Bergman had already lost her parents and siblings, which might have contributed to her independent spirit. But while she thrived on screen in classics like *Casablanca*, the puritanical press of the 1940s condemned her affair with Italian filmmaker Roberto Rossellini (she also had affairs with Robert Capa and Victor Fleming). But aside from those scandals, there is no dirt here. Viewers will learn that Bergman loved working with Humphrey Bogart, Cary Grant, and Alfred Hitchcock. She also wrote heartfelt letters to directors with whom she wanted to work, such as Ingmar Bergman, who reignited her career with a role in *Interiors*. All told, Bergman had three husbands, four children, and lived in five countries. She won three Oscars, but also received scathing reviews for her more experimental work. In the end, she was a remarkable woman who had no regrets. As she says, "I had a lion inside me that wouldn't keep quiet." Recommended. (K. Fennessy)



The Invitation ★★★

Drafthouse, 100 min., not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99

Filmmaker Karyn Kusama uses a confined space to genuinely creepy effect in this slow-burning psychological thriller. *The Invitation* begins with young couple Will (Logan Marshall-Green) and Kira (Emayatzy Corinealdi) driving to a dinner party at the Hollywood Hills home that Will used to share with his ex-wife Eden (Tammy Blanchard), who is newly remarried to David (Michiel Huisman). Will, Kira, and the remaining guests (some old friends, others strangers) are introduced by their hosts—and a young woman living with them—to a grief-management program called "The Invitation" via a film that shows a woman being euthanized. The death theme escalates as Will is haunted by memories of his young son, who was killed in an accident for which he still blames himself, and another guest admits to being responsible for his wife's death. Gradually, however, Will becomes convinced that Eden, David, and a few others are engaged in some sinister plot. Kusama cleverly ratchets up the suspense, making good use of the isolated locale to incrementally build tension. While the final act is both violent and rather implausible, many viewers will enjoy the clever twist ending. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Jia Zhangke, A Guy from Fenyang ★★★

Kino Lorber, 98 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Brazilian director Walter Salles's portrait of maverick Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke incorporates Jia's signature theme—concerning the heady changes occurring in his country—through the simple but clever expedient of following Jia around his hometown (and other locales) as he talks about the great alterations since he last visited. On these jaunts, Jia is sometimes accompanied by colleagues who add their own recollections, and he occasionally bumps into acquaintances with whom he chats about the old days. This unusual way of providing a selective but informative biographical sketch—complemented by short conversations with Jia's mother and sister (often about Jia's fondly remembered late father)—dovetails with an introduction to Jia's highly personal films. Jia comes across as an affable, modest man from an ostensibly commonplace background, raised by parents who differed from others in their appreciation of literature beyond the Maoist propaganda of the time. The tone in which Jia speaks about the government's refusal to permit his films—widely admired abroad—to be shown in Chinese theatres, is one of melancholic regret rather than anger.

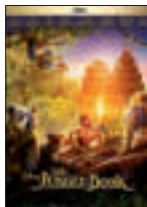


A *Guy from Fenyang* will appeal primarily to cinematic connoisseurs who have embraced Jia's films, but credit must also go to Salles, who displays his own ingenuity by finding an unconventional but effective way of capturing the spirit of the man and his work. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

The Jungle Book

★★★1/2

Walt Disney, 106 min., PG,
DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$39.99



Based on Rudyard Kipling's magical stories and inspired by Disney's 1967 animated classic, this eye-popping, live-action, epic adventure revolves around the man-cub Mowgli (newcomer Neel Sethi). An orphaned toddler, Mowgli was found in India's jungle by the black panther Bagheera (voiced by Ben Kingsley) and raised by a family of wolves, led by Akela (Giancarlo Esposito) and Raksha (Lupita Nyong'o). Observing a truce during the drought, both the predators and prey live in harmony, gathering around the water hole—until the snarling, vengeful Bengal tiger Shere Khan (Idris Elba) comes searching for Mowgli. It seems that Shere Khan was burned and scarred by the "red flower" (aka fire) that was wielded in self-defense by Mowgli's late father. To protect Mowgli, Bagheera decides to return him to his own people. But the journey is filled with danger and diversions, as Mowgli is caught in the chest-crushing coils of the slithering, seductive python Kaa (hissed by Scarlett Johansson), and rescued by honey-hustling bear Baloo (Bill Murray), only to be bullied by King Louis (Christopher Walken), a gigantic orangutan-like ape. Utilizing motion capture, Disney's Imagineering design arm, director Jon Favreau, and cinematographer Bill Pope seamlessly integrate a human actor with photorealistic CGI animals in an exotic environment, while also incorporating two familiar songs: "The Bare Necessities" and "I Wan'na Be Like You." Highly recommended. (S. Granger)

Knight of Cups ★1/2

Broad Green, 117 min., R,
DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Emmanuel Lubezki's cinematography is easily the best thing about Terrence Malick's latest film, which is often beautiful to look at but otherwise comes across as an impressionistic, drearily pretentious portrait of malaise, ennui, and angst. Christian Bale stars as Rick, a burned-out Hollywood screenwriter who wanders around Los Angeles—with a side trip to Vegas to add some visual pizzazz—depressed about the trajectory of his life. In fragmentary sequences presented in random order, Rick tries to reconnect with his trou-

bled brother (Wes Bentley) and grizzled father (Brian Dennehy), who are both tormented by unhappy memories, while also encountering a series of women (played by Cate Blanchett, Natalie Portman, Imogen Poots, Freida Pinto, and Teresa Palmer) who apparently represent different aspects of his psyche. Malick's inspiration appears to have been Fellini's 8½, but *Knight of Cups* utterly lacks Fellini's hallucinatory brilliance. Instead, Malick strains to impose meaning on the chaos with erudite references—to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, to an ancient fable about a prince who falls into a deep slumber while searching for a perfect pearl, and to various tarot cards—but these only come across as desperate. *Knight of Cups* conveys little beyond the banal notion that we are all lost and searching for fulfillment as human beings in a universe of awe and beauty—a message that is repeated over and over again, resulting in more exhaustion than enlightenment. A huge disappointment, this is not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

The Last Diamond

★★★★1/2

Cohen, 108 min., in French
w/English subtitles, R, DVD:
\$24.98



A well-oiled, highly watchable heist drama with a twist, filmmaker Eric Barbier's *The Last Diamond* is a suspense film with a lot of moving parts, but one that also features a wonderfully appealing pair of characters whose relationship anchors everything. Simon (Yvan Attal) is an ex-con and master thief enlisted in a complicated *Mission: Impossible*-like conspiracy to steal a valuable diamond on the eve of its auction. A fairly large gang is organized in order to pull off an elaborate con with Simon, but central to the effort is Simon's success at convincing Julia (Bérénice Bejo), daughter of the gem's late owner, that he was her mother's secret security arm. After gaining Julia's trust, Simon proceeds with the plan—but his feelings for her add an untimely wrinkle. And Simon is in league with some very bad people; although just how bad isn't apparent until late in the game, when loyalties suddenly and necessarily shift. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Love & Friendship

★★★★

Sony, 93 min., PG, DVD:
\$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99, Sept. 6



When Jane Austen was young, she wrote the novella *Lady Susan*—a snappy, snarky satire of 18th-century epistolary novels, written in the form of letters from a hyper-articulate heroine. It's perfectly suited for writer-director Whit Stillman (*Metropolitan*, *Barcelona*), who uses clever captions to introduce his large

dramatis personae of characters from the landed English gentry. The plot revolves around the devious manipulations of beautiful, recently widowed Lady Susan Vernon (Kate Beckinsale). Although she has neither money nor husband, Lady Susan does have a trusted confidante/conspirator: Alicia Johnson (Chloë Sevigny), an American exile married to an imperious aristocrat (Stephen Fry) who threatens to ship her back to the wilds of Connecticut if she sides with "the most accomplished flirt in all England." Arriving at Churchill—the lavish country estate of her late husband's brother Charles (Justin Edwards) and his wary wife Catherine (Emma Greenwell)—scheming Lady Susan immediately beguiles Catherine's wealthy younger brother, Reginald DeCoursey (Xavier Samuel). But before she can explore her own options, narcissistic Lady Susan must marry off her teenage daughter (Morfydd Clark), who spurns an obliging proposal from Sir James Martin (Tom Bennett) just because he's a blithering idiot, or—as they put it—"a bit of a rattle." Diverse emotional entanglements abound (one husband is deliciously dismissed as "too old to be governable, too young to die"), leading to a surprisingly bawdy conclusion. Recommended. (S. Granger)

Mad Tiger ★★★

Film Movement, 82 min., in
English & Japanese w/English
subtitles, not rated, DVD:
\$29.95



A wild documentary that captures the internal tensions in a crazy, anything-goes punk rock band called Peeland-Z, *Mad Tiger* (named for one of the group's songs) tells a story of aging musicians growing up and growing apart. Although Peeland-Z is made up of Japanese players who barely speak English, their base is New York City, where they are a hit with club audiences who come to watch the band (in their color-coded costumes and hair) as they generally get—as Peeland Pink (the only female member) puts it—"stupid" on stage. Performance antics include a squid costume, a unicycle, and band leader Yellow (Kengo Hioki) being tossed about violently on stage and then thrown, like a bowling ball, into a set of pins. Hioki's longtime best friend and foil, Red (Kotaro Tsukada), receives his share of bumps and bruises, too, and even if Peeland-Z's music doesn't amount to much, their sense of abandon is entertaining. Things change after 15 years, however, when Tsukada gets married and wants to leave the band and open his own bar. Behind the passive bassist's decision is a long-simmering frustration with alpha-male Hioki's dominating personality. When another member of Peeland-Z later opts out, and a newcomer quits after one tour, Hioki, now 45, knows something is wrong—and that maybe he's the problem.



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An engaging portrait of an offbeat band, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)

Maggie's Plan ★★

Sony, 99 min., R, DVD: \$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99



Writer-director Rebecca Miller was obviously trying to make a screwball romantic comedy, but *Maggie's Plan*, while tartly erudite, also turns out to be overly tepid. Realizing that her biological clock is ticking, ditsy self-absorbed Maggie Hardin (Greta Gerwig) requests sperm for artificial insemination from Guy (Travis Fimmel), her husky, brainy, former college classmate who's starting a pickle business in Brooklyn. At the same time, she also falls for John Harding (Ethan Hawke), a shaggy college professor/wannabe novelist. Harding is unhappily married to dour, intimidating Danish anthropologist Georgette (Julianne Moore), and they have a couple of young children. Discarding Mr. Pickle, Maggie discovers that she's pregnant, so John leaves Georgette, and marries Maggie. But after a few years, Maggie realizes that she doesn't love John and that he was better off with Georgette. Hence, the plan (which shall go unexplained here). Showing the decidedly un-glamorous lives of Manhattan intellectuals, Miller—the idiosyncratic daughter of playwright Arthur Miller—dwells on pretentious details while acerbically rambling on about arcane academia, using Maggie's best friends (Bill Hader, Maya Rudolph) as a Greek chorus. An optional purchase. (S. Granger)

The Man Who Knew Infinity ★★★

Paramount, 108 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.99



Playing brilliant Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, Dev Patel (*Slumdog Millionaire*) engages the heart as well as the mind. A self-educated clerk from a poor Brahmin family, Ramanujan overcame incredible odds, influencing the later work of Stephen Hawking (whose story was told in *The Theory of Everything*) and Alan Turing (subject of *The Imitation Game*). Although writer-director Matthew Brown strikes a more conventional bio-pic tone, he nevertheless weaves a compelling tale of passion and perseverance. Ramanujan's story begins in 1913 in Madras, where his shipping-house employer suggests that Ramanujan send his complex mathematical theorems to Professor G. H. Hardy (Jeremy Irons) in Cambridge. Encouraged by colleague John Littlewood (Toby Jones), Hardy dispatches an invitation to England. Defying tradition, the timid yet intense Ramanujan leaves

his overly-possessive mother and devoted young wife, traveling 6,000 miles to Trinity College, where he faces not only academic derision but also racial discrimination as clubby faculty members refer to him disdainfully as "Gunga Din." A vegetarian, Ramanujan can't eat the food served in the dorms, so he cooks soups in the fireplace in his quarters, a task that grows increasingly challenging with wartime rationing. Intellectually bonding through discussions of primes and partitions, Ramanujan and Hardy take vastly different approaches to their discipline. A devout Hindu, Ramanujan believes his intuitive knowledge is God's gift, while pragmatic, agnostic Hardy demands rigorous "proofs" to substantiate calculations. Their relationship is at the center of this solid, engaging film that benefits from fine performances by Patel and Irons. Recommended. (S. Granger)

Margarita with a Straw

★★★★1/2

Wolfe, 101 min., in English & Hindi w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95



The young heroine of Shonali Bose's *Margarita with a Straw* is something of a cinematic first: a bisexual exchange student from India with cerebral palsy. As played by Kalki Koechlin, she is one of the most charming and invigorating characters to appear in contemporary indie cinema. Young Laila is a college student in Delhi, encouraged by her parents to be an active part of the daily world. Laila spurns the attention of a disabled classmate and attempts to win the heart of an uninterested band singer. Despondent over the rejection, Laila takes advantage of a very timely scholarship that enables her to study in New York City. Here, in new surroundings, she makes the acquaintance of a blind woman of Indian and Pakistani heritage, and their friendship quickly blossoms into a romantic liaison that catches Laila unprepared. The beauty of Bose's film is that it never delivers any heavy-handed messages regarding disabilities, sexual orientation, or even the immigrant experience. Anchoring this endeavor is the remarkable Koechlin, who offers a fully textured performance as a young woman who refuses to be defined by pre-conceived notions related to her abilities or her sexuality. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)

Me Before You ★★1/2

Warner, 110 min., PG-13, DVD: \$22.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99



Since British novelist Jojo Moyes adapted her own bestseller for the screen, this romantic melodrama directed by Thea Sharrock stays

quite close to the printed page, as it tackles the difficult subject of euthanasia. Debonair London financier Will Traynor (Sam Claflin) is an avid sportsman until a traffic accident leaves him a quadriplegic. Two years later, ensconced in his family's massive country "castle," he is both bitter and in chronic pain. And he needs a caregiving companion. Enter clumsy, timid, kind-hearted 26-year-old Louisa "Lou" Clark (Emilia Clarke, *Game of Thrones*), who desperately needs a job. And, conveniently, the heavy-lifting bathroom/bathing needs are being handled by Will's physical therapist (Stephen Peacocke). Even though Lou's chatty, charming exuberance enlivens Will (who in turn helps Lou to expand her provincial horizons), he seems determined to opt for assisted suicide. And there's not much that his wealthy parents (Charles Dance, Janet McTeer), or Lou's working-class family (Brendan Coyle, Samantha Spiro), can do to make him change his mind. Clarke and Claflin acquit themselves admirably here, although a subplot involving Lou's self-centered boyfriend (Matthew Lewis) falls flat. Devotees of the bittersweet, tear-jerking novel will note that a pivotal scene—explaining Lou's timidity due to a previous sexual assault—was deleted. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

The Mermaid ★★★

Sony, 94 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99



The highest-grossing Chinese film of all time, *The Mermaid* is a strange comic fantasy that mixes slapstick humor, corporate satire, and environmental messages. In this bizarre twist on *The Little Mermaid*, pretty but naïve mermaid Shan (Jelly Lin) is sent to assassinate flamboyant real-estate magnate Liu Xian (Deng Chao), who is killing all of the sea life in the waters around a beautiful island that he wants to turn into an upscale resort. Shan is a sweet, guileless girl who clomps around in a pair of rubber boots to hide her fins (even when clad in designer gowns), and Liu is a tasteless, womanizing egotist garbed in gauche fashions and a fake mustache. Of course they fall in love. Directed by Stephen Chow, whose wacky action comedies *Shaolin Soccer* and *Kung Fu Hustle* were international smashes with successful U.S. releases, *The Mermaid* ping pongs between cartoonish slapstick comedy, crass sexual gags, and bizarre scenes of outlandish violence, including an octopus man who cooks his own tentacles while posing as a master sushi chef. The wild and abrupt tonal shifts may seem odd to American audiences and some of the verbal humor is surely lost in translation, but this funny, fast-moving comedy is stuffed with outrageous visual gags, big personalities, a goofy sense of humor, and an affection for its characters that all translate just fine. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

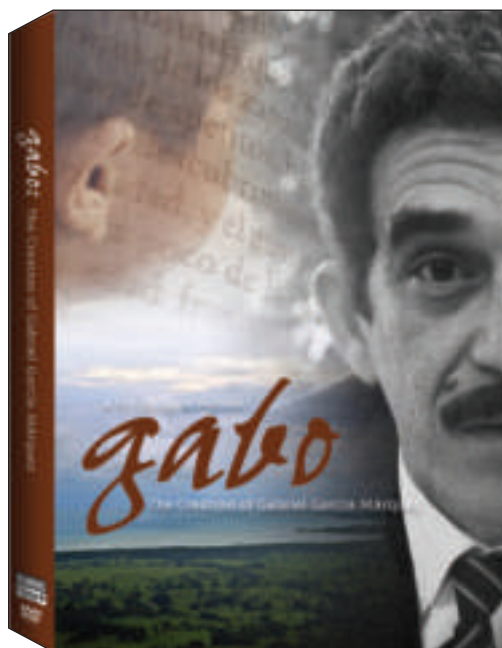
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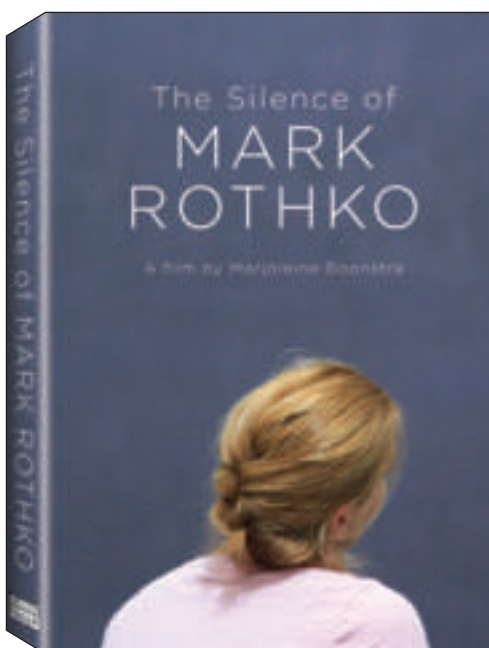


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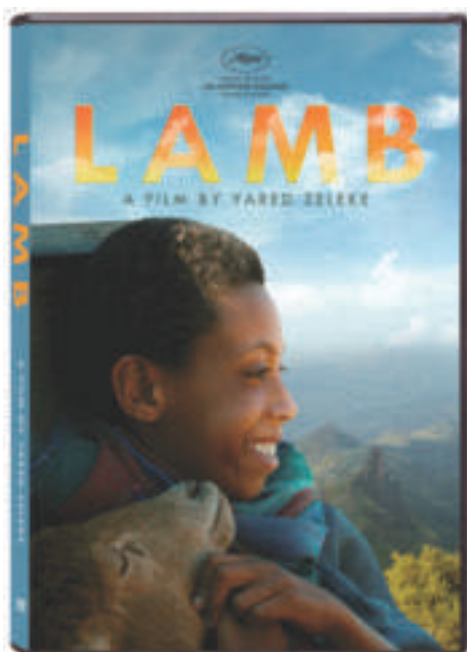


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The Midnight After

★★★1/2

Well Go USA, 121 min., in Cantonese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98

Hong Kong-based filmmaker Fruit Chan here serves up a memorable adaptation of the 2012 Internet novel *Lost on a Red Minibus to Tai Po* written by the pseudonymous Mr. Pizza. A slovenly minibus driver (Lam Suet) is called away from a gambling spree as a last-minute replacement for a late-night shift. Over the course of his route, he picks up 16 passengers representing a diverse stretch of society that ranges from none-too-serious college students to a would-be gangster. Nothing seems out of the ordinary until the minibus enters a tunnel: when it comes out the other end, all traffic has vanished, along with any evidence of human life. Telephone and Internet service has also disappeared, leaving the baffled passengers and their astonished driver with no clue as to what happened. While some students of contemporary Chinese history might see the film as a nasty-funny allegory regarding Hong Kong's uneasy union with the Communist mainland, those more interested in *Twilight Zone*-style storytelling than Asian politics will appreciate this as a fine sinister film. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)

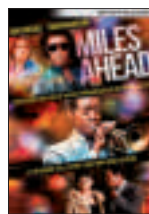


and thought-provoking. Highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Miles Ahead ★★1/2

Sony, 100 min., R, DVD: \$25.99, Blu-ray: \$30.99

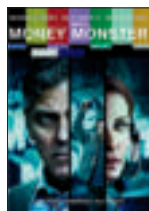
This imaginative but ultimately disappointing biographical film about legendary trumpeter Miles Davis is clearly a labor of love for writer-director-star Don Cheadle, whose obvious intent was to construct the narrative like a jazz improvisation, with wild gyrations—some fact-based, others totally invented—that would somehow cohere into a unified whole. *Miles Ahead* begins with an encounter between Davis—during his late-1970s, reclusive, unproductive period—and a fictional reporter (Ewan McGregor), who together undertake a raucous journey to recover a recent session tape that is lusted after by both the dissolute musician's record label and an unscrupulous promoter. The odyssey will involve face-to-face confrontations, a car chase, and even a shootout, but the important point about the missing recording is that it reveals the reason for Davis's isolation while also pointing toward what eventually would rejuvenate his career. This overarching tale is periodically interrupted with flashbacks, mostly focusing on Davis's marriage to Frances Taylor (Emayatzy Corinealdi), a dancer whose love for Davis was undermined by the latter's extreme possessiveness, as well as his addiction to drugs and alcohol. While one has to admire Cheadle's cinematic ambition—as well as his chameleon-like skill in capturing Davis's personality at different points in his life—the film's freeform mixing of past and present, fact and fiction, often proves to be more frustrating than revealing. Still, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



Money Monster ★★★

Sony, 99 min., R, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99, Sept. 6

This taut, tantalizing, and timely thriller revolves around financial guru/cable-TV show host Lee Gates (George Clooney), who bears more than a passing resemblance to Jim Cramer of CNBC's *Mad Money*. Flanked by hip-hop backup dancers, Lee hands out stock tips, accompanied by silly sound effects. Fed up with his self-promoting shenanigans, Lee's long-suffering director Patty Fenn (Julia Roberts) is seriously considering taking another job across town. When Ibis Clear Capital, a company that Gates has heavily hyped, takes a nosedive—losing \$800 million, while its globetrotting CEO Walt Camby (Dominic West) abruptly cancels a show appearance—Ibis's corporate communications officer, Diane Lester



(Caitriona Balfe), blithely explains the anomaly as “a computer glitch.” Suddenly, Lee's broadcast is hijacked by gun-toting Kyle Budwell (Jack O'Connell), who sneaks into the Manhattan studio, taking Lee and his crew hostage. Budwell, who just lost all of his money (\$60,000) on Ibis, forces fast-talking Lee into an explosive-laden vest, keeping the switch in his hand. Harking back to the outrage of Sidney Lumet's 1976 classic *Network*, Budwell is “mad as hell” and he wants an explanation. Director Jodie Foster astutely acknowledges the ticking clock while slyly delving into the characters' complexity. An edgy and exciting rollercoaster ride driven by the complexities of Wall Street's computerized algorithms and high-frequency trading, this is recommended. (S. Granger)

A Monster with a Thousand Heads ★★★

Music Box, 74 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

A woman battles a heartless insurance company in this tense melodrama. Sonia (Jana Raluy) is a Mexican housewife whose husband Guillermo has been undergoing cancer treatment. An experimental drug is his only hope, but their insurer refuses to approve the cost. After Guillermo suffers a setback, Sonia and her teen son go to the company's headquarters to confront a Dr. Villalba (Hugo Albores), who slips away without seeing Sonia. But she trails him home, where she forces him at gunpoint to admit that it is company policy to deny expensive procedures. She wants him to identify the administrator who can quickly approve her claim. Directed by Rodrigo Pia, *A Monster with a Thousand Heads* often strains credulity as Sonia's efforts grow increasingly complicated, but the grittily naturalistic filming style and bleak humor help smooth over the narrative bumps. Raluy, moreover, gives an excellent performance—alternately commanding and timorous—as a sympathetic Everywoman. Nominated for numerous Ariels (the Mexican Academy Awards)—including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actress—the film plays on a natural antagonism toward companies that exploit people's misery for profit, but by presenting one person's struggle against corporate indifference, it delivers its message in a dramatically affecting way. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Midnight Special

★★★1/2

Warner, 112 min., PG-13, DVD: \$28.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

Writer-director Jeff Nichols's *Midnight Special* begins with news reports about the abduction of 8-year-old Alton (Jaeden Lieberher) from a reclusive religious community by tough-looking Roy (Michael Shannon). Cult leader Calvin (Sam Shepard), who delivers apocalyptic sermons to his followers based on Alton's prophecies, orders his minions to find the boy, but federal forces invade the compound because the sermons reflect some knowledge of top government secrets. The true relationship between Roy and Alton and their connection to Sarah (Kirsten Dunst), a former member of the cult, become additional parts of the puzzle, as does the unusual powers that Alton gradually reveals. Meanwhile Roy, Alton, Sarah, and Roy's friend Lucas (Joel Edgerton) must evade both Calvin's disciples and various law enforcement figures, the latter led by an increasingly sympathetic NSA researcher (Adam Driver). Nichols pulls off several sequences of breakneck action, but they are situated within a slow-burning narrative that remains matter-of-fact—until a grandiose, overlong conclusion. Up until that point, however, *Midnight Special* impresses as a tense, chilling ride that is also challenging



Mountains May Depart ★★★

Kino Lorber, 126 min., in Mandarin & English w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

Jia Zhangke's tripartite film continues the celebrated but controversial Chinese filmmaker's portrayal of the radical changes in his country since the economic reforms

that were initiated in the 1980s. The first chapter, beginning in 1999 at a time of promise, depicts a romantic triangle in which young dance teacher Tao (Zhao Tao) chooses to marry ambitious businessman Jinsheng (Zhang Yi) rather than Liangzi (Liang Jin Dong), the simple coal miner whom she really loves. The union results in the birth of a son, whom Jinsheng names Dollar as proof of his capitalist aspirations. By the second chapter, set in 2014, the marriage has ended in divorce, and Jinsheng, who is now enormously rich, plans a move from Shanghai to Australia, taking along Dollar, who he has spoiled but otherwise neglected. Tao, meanwhile, reconnects briefly with Liangzi, who is suffering from lung cancer and in desperate need of financial help. The final act, taking place in Melbourne, circa 2025, finds teen Dollar (Dong Zijian) increasingly estranged from both his angry, paranoid father and his Chinese heritage (Dollar speaks little Mandarin, and barely remembers his mother). A kindly teacher (Sylvia Chang), who basically functions as a maternal surrogate, tries to help Dollar find his way, but the film suggests that the boy might be part of a lost, rootless generation. The melodramatic



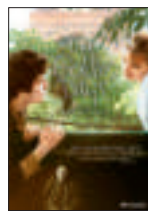
turns of *Mountains May Depart* are not always convincing, but the beauty of the filmmaking coupled with the strong political message animating the story make this a compelling watch. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

My Golden Days

★★★1/2

Magnolia, 124 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$26.99

French director Arnaud Desplechin here chronicles the reckless and rueful behavior of three periods in a man's life. Middle-aged anthropologist Paul (Mathieu Amalric) is wrapping up an assignment in Tajikistan. While his sexy Tajik girlfriend watches him pack, Paul goes into a flashback mode, recalling a trio of important episodes in his life. The first occurs in his childhood, where his home life is in constant turmoil due to his father's deep depressions and his mother's mental instability. Unable to withstand the physical and emotional violence around him, he flees to the home of his great-aunt and her Russian lesbian lover. In the second story, Paul is a teenager on a trip to the Soviet Union, where he creates havoc by giving his passport to a Jewish dissident who then assumes his identity. In the third tale, Paul



is a poor student living in Paris, where he becomes infatuated with a beautiful girl named Esther (Cesar Award-nominated Lou Roy-Lecollinet). *My Golden Days* serves up a warm yet bittersweet meditation on how selective memories of particular life incidents shape a person's existence, with Desplechin's subtle direction and the highly efficient ensemble cast creating a work of gentle style and deep substance. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)

Napoli Napoli Napoli

★★★1/2

Rare, 106 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Maverick American director Abel Ferrara went to Italy in 2009 to make this dispiriting, distinctly noncommercial documentary tour of modern Naples. Forget the "earthy" milieu of vintage Sophia Loren comedies made by Vittorio de Sica; Ferrara's Naples is a drug-plagued, violent, jobless, overpopulated slum. Along the way, Ferrara inserts bits and pieces of scripted narrative—two coked-up hoods carry out the assassination of a third, and a young street-walker goes on her rounds—that largely just feel intrusive. But the majority of the material consists of interviews with addicts, convicts (mostly female), politicians, and prostitutes.



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Polymath Ferrara (appearing over the closing credits playing guitar for an audience of reformed junkies) serves up a fashionably leftist proposition that Naples' traditionally poor but functional Italian community went to hell thanks to occupying American G.I.'s in WWII, with their corrupting wads of dollars, as well as VIP visitor Charles "Lucky" Luciano, who breathed fresh life into the moribund local mafia. Today, the new high-rise public housing looks indistinguishable from the prisons holding various narco-offenders. An oddball combination of gritty travelogue and social commentary, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising ★★

Universal, 93 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Sept. 20

This comedy sequel tackles the provocative question of whether sororities still lack the basic American freedom to party that Greek fraternities have enjoyed for decades. "In the United States, sororities are not allowed to throw parties in their own houses," lectures Phi Lambda's president (Selena Gomez), "Only frats can." So pot-smoking freshman pledge Shelby (Chloë Grace Moretz) starts her own independent sorority, Kappa Nu, recruiting some rebellious misfits, including Beth (Kiersey Clemons) and Nora (Beanie Feldstein). Faced with the challenge of paying \$5,000 in rent, Shelby consults dimwitted, beefcake former fratboy Teddy Sanders (Zac Efron). And the rented Kappa Nu mansion is located next-door to Mac (Seth Rogen) and pregnant-again Kelly Radner (Rose Byrne), who desperately want to move. The Radner home is currently in escrow, and the new owners have 30 days to make random inspections and back out for any reason—but it's impossible to curb the neighboring girls' enthusiastic pranks. Eventually, Mac and Kelly discard diplomacy, calling on Sanders to help them. Directed by Nicholas Stoller, this raw, raunchy re-tread reflects a frustrating, gender-based double standard (the National Panhellenic Conference in reality prohibits drinking in its 26 member sororities, and no alcohol means no parties, unless they are co-hosted with fraternities). But the gross-out gags, ribald humor, and action pieces simply don't work as well as they did in the 2014 original. Optional. (S. Granger)



No Home Movie ★★★

Icarus, 115 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98

This final work from the great Belgian director Chantal Akerman observes her mother's last months alive, offering a dispassionate depiction of a genial octogenarian going about



her daily routine. It strongly evokes Akerman's landmark 1975 film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Commerce Quay, 1080 Brussels*, in which a housewife/sex worker (Delphine Seyrig) is seen in daily rituals, from cooking to cleaning to sexual assignations with strangers (the kitchens in both films even feature similar shiny-tiled walls). Throughout this documentary, mother Natalia eats, reads magazines, and chats with Akerman. Words like "boring" and "exciting" don't quite apply here—the film is both and neither—as Akerman provides a privileged look at their relationship (in Skype sessions Natalia calls her "darling" and "sweetie"). If Natalia doesn't understand her daughter's methods, such as Akerman's predilection for lingering shots of trees bending in the wind or rolling hills seen outside a car window, she nevertheless respects her work. Although Natalia seems healthy, signs of her decline materialize about midway through the documentary, including difficulty eating and a wheezy cough. But this is not a depressing film, as Akerman prioritizes Natalia's life over her death (which takes place offscreen). What one remembers is Natalia saying, "When I see your smile, it makes me happy." After Natalia's death, Akerman suffered her own decline, culminating in her suicide in October 2015. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Now You See Me 2 ★★

Lionsgate, 94 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Sept. 6

While 2013's *Now You See Me* featured intriguing interludes of magic and dazzling stage illusions, most of that is (poof!) gone in this shallow and often incoherent sequel. Once again the focus is on the elusive team of rogue tricksters known as the Four Horsemen, consisting of renowned illusionist J. Daniel Atlas (Jesse Eisenberg), master hypnotist Merritt McKinney (Woody Harrelson), and sleight-of-hand expert Jack Wilder (Dave Franco), with female cohort Henley Reeves (Isla Fisher) being replaced by spunky Lula (Lizzy Caplan), a fake-violence specialist. A year after the original film's spectacular Las Vegas heist, magician/FBI agent Dylan Rhodes (Mark Ruffalo) involves the team in a chase through some kind of pipeline, transporting them from Manhattan to Macau, China, into an ancient magic shop run by Li (Jay Chou) and his grandmother (Tsai Chin). The team is abducted by an unethical tech prodigy, Walter Mabry (Daniel Radcliffe), who is determined to acquire a card-shaped mini-circuit board that would give him access to everyone's private information. Suddenly, the group's old nemesis, malevolent corporate financier Arthur Tressler (Michael Caine), reappears and he's working with McKinney's evil twin brother (also played by Woody Harrelson). Meanwhile, Rhodes tries to uncover what really happened to his Houdini-like



father, who drowned back in 1984, and it is obvious that skeptical Thaddeus Bradley (Morgan Freeman), a professional debunker, knows more than he's willing to reveal. Helmed by Jon M. Chu, this initially flashy caper quickly collapses under the weight of its convoluted misdirection, lacking the urgency and suspense (not to mention the sense of playfulness and flaky fun) of the original. Optional. (S. Granger)

The Nymphets ★★★

Kino Lorber, 75 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95

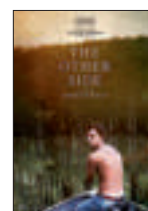
Joe (Kip Pardue), a banker in his mid-30s, feels mighty lucky when cackling, college-age girls Brittany (Anabelle Dexter-Jones) and Allyson (Jordan Lane Price) go home with him after they are bounced from a bar for being underage. Licking his wounds following a nasty separation from his live-in girlfriend, Joe is ready to let his hair down. But his fantasy falls prey to Brittany and Allyson's persistent mind games, as they make him work to prolong lustful fantasies while psychologically zeroing in on his vulnerable issues about age, a boring job, and his relationship failures. Throughout, Brittany and Allyson are manic, giddy, and spooky with their incessant laughter. But eventually Joe will also reach that hysterical pitch and go beyond it. Aided by a strong cast, writer-director Gary Gardner does an admirable job of maintaining the tension and keeping the audience guessing as to where this strange scenario is headed. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

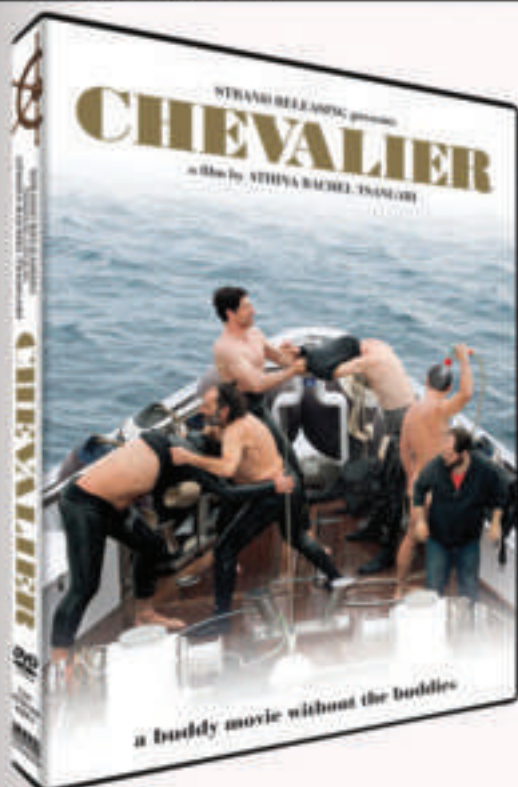


The Other Side ★★★

Film Movement, 92 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Italian filmmaker Roberto Minervini's deeply disturbing cinema vérité documentary is filmed in Louisiana backwater country, where assorted desperadoes and paranoid militia groups live side by side. Most of the film follows the misdeeds of a laconic heroin dealer, Mark, as he breaks into buildings, has sex with a girlfriend, and hangs out (with his elderly mother, and a broken-down drunk named "Uncle Jim"). Mark is also seen shooting up a pregnant stripper with smack just before she heads out to meet customers. Minervini captures this grim parade of images, and if Mark is the least bit uncomfortable over being so closely observed, it doesn't show. Mark disappears from the final quarter of *The Other Side* (he was due to turn himself in to prison), and Minervini finds himself facing far more intimidating circumstances while filming a cluster of paranoid gun nuts training for the day when President Obama declares martial law in Louisiana and comes to steal away their Second Amendment rights.





CHEVALIER

From Athina Rachel Tsangari
Director of *Attenberg* and
Producer of *Dogtooth*

In the middle of the Aegean Sea on a luxury yacht, six men on a fishing trip decide to play a game to deem who among them is the overall "best." This "deliciously goofy" (*The Seattle Times*) deadpan comedy from Athina Rachel Tsangari skewers the modern male ego.

Street Date: Oct 4, 2016 | SRP: \$27.99
DVD # 3608-2 | UPC 7 12267 36082 6
105 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
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WEDDING DOLL

**WINNER! Best Debut Film
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Hagit dreams of love, marriage and freedom from the strict guidance of her mother. She strikes up a relationship with her boss' son at the factory where she works, but when news arrives of it shutting down, it forces Hagit's romantic fantasy and reality to collide.

Street date: Sept 20, 2016 | SRP: \$27.99
DVD # 3604-2 | UPC 7 12267 36042 0
82 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
In Hebrew with English subtitles



FROM AFAR
**WINNER! Best Film
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The "masterly debut feature" (*The New York Times*) from Lorenzo Vigas follows the unexpected intimacy that emerges between wealthy lover Armando and street thug Elder who commits the ultimate act of affection.

Street date: Sept 6, 2016 | SRP: \$27.99
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83 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
In Spanish with English subtitles



FRONT COVER

**Well-written...Touching and
tender romance! -QueerGuru**

An unlikely romance develops between Ryan, a handsome openly gay fashion stylist living in New York, and Ning, a famous Chinese actor in this tender, entertaining look at clashing cultures and love.

Street date: Oct 18, 2016 | SRP: \$27.99
DVD # 3523-2 | UPC 7 12267 35232 7
87 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
In English with SDH subtitles available



THE KIND WORDS

**One of the best films so
far this year! -LA Times**

This quirky and bittersweet comedy follows three Jewish Israeli siblings who go on a road trip to unravel a family secret and discover the truth about their biological father.

Street Date: Nov 1, 2016 | SRP: \$27.99
DVD # 3601-2 | UPC 7 12267 36012 3
118 Minutes - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated
In Hebrew and French with English subtitles

The fringe lunacy on display here would be laughable if these guys didn't seem so dangerous, and if their vile race hatred wasn't so prominent. An unsettling fly-on-the-wall documentary with graphic sex, drug use, and racist language, this unflinching heart-of-darkness journey into a hellish American subculture is recommended, although it is sure to offend many viewers. (T. Keogh)

The Other Side of the Door ★1/2

Fox, 96 min., R, DVD: \$22.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.99



Rampant stupidity and cheap jolts are the key ingredients of Johannes Roberts's old-fashioned fright flick, which is distinguished solely by its Indian setting. *The Other Side of the Door* employs one of the hoariest of horror clichés—the idea that it's not smart to invite the dead back into your life—but situates the action in Mumbai, where American couple Maria (Sarah Wayne Callies) and Michael (Jeremy Sisto) settle to run his antique business. Years later, when Maria's car crashes into a river, she's able to save her daughter Lucy but can't get to her son Oliver. Blaming herself for the boy's death, Maria even threatens suicide until housekeeper Piki (Suchitrea Pillai) tells her of a secluded Hindu temple where one can converse with the departed in order to bring closure. The process requires disinterring the deceased's body, burning it atop a funeral pyre, and taking the ashes to the site, all of which Maria is willing to do for the chance to briefly talk with her son through the temple's locked door. But Maria breaks a prohibition against opening said door, and soon Oliver's spirit returns home, acting like a demanding poltergeist and menacing his sister. The Indian trappings add a bit of color, but this is otherwise a drably predictable story with an ending that unfortunately allows room for a sequel. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

Our Kind of Traitor ★★

Lionsgate, 94 min., R, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.99, Oct. 18



This subtle but stodgy cinematic adaptation of spymaster John Le Carré's 2010 Cold War thriller opens with a tantalizing glimpse of the Bolshoi Ballet, followed by the cold-blooded execution of a family on an icy, snowy road. The action then shifts to Marrakesh, Morocco, where an estranged British couple—Perry (Ewan McGregor), a mild-mannered poetry professor, and his lawyer wife Gail (Naomie Harris)—are dining in a posh café. When Gail leaves to respond to a phone call, Perry is hailed by gregarious Dima (Stellan Skarsgård), a wealthy, flamboyantly-tattooed Russian oligarch,

who urges Perry to join his jovial group at a nearby table. Naïve Perry discovers that Dima, who possesses a photographic memory for numbers, is a money launderer for the Russian Mafia, headed by “The Prince” (Grigoriy Dobrygin), a man who signals his enemies' death warrants by presenting them with an heirloom pistol. Aware that his days are numbered, Dima is desperate to defect with his family—using gullible Perry as a go-between—and seeks the help of British Intelligence, offering up incriminating information about a corrupt Parliament member (Jeremy Northam) who is fronting London's newest bank. MI6's skeptical Hector (Damien Lewis), who has his own motive for pursuing this nefarious MP, arranges asylum for Dima's family. Along with clueless Perry and Gail, they take refuge in a safe house in the Alps, but the Russian gangsters are hot on their trail. Densely scripted by Hossein Amini and methodically directed by Susanna White, it's mostly memorable for Anthony Dod Mantle's stylish cinematography. Optional. (S. Granger)

OUTATIME: Saving the DeLorean Time Machine

★★★1/2

Virgil, 63 min., not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$19.99



Filmmaker Steve Concatelli's amiable but narrowly focused *OUTATIME* presumes that viewers will share a deep abiding fascination for the DeLorean automobile transformed into a time machine in the 1985 Robert Zemeckis/Steven Spielberg classic *Back to the Future*. The cherished prop car was an attraction for years on the Universal Studios Hollywood tour, but was subsequently exposed to the elements and vandalism by souvenir-hungry fans. With milestone anniversaries of the sci-fi/comedy classic looming, a team of fan volunteers led by Joe Walser labored mightily under a deadline to restore the DeLorean to its original condition for a museum installation—complete with accurate blinking lights, obscure aerospace stuff bolted to the chassis, and a controversial as-accurate-as-possible facsimile of the “Mr. Fusion” onboard reactor. More time is spent on the “Mr. Fusion” issue than on the history of the DeLorean Motor Company, principles of car restoration, or even the making of *Back to the Future* (only actress Claudia Wells and co-writer Bob Gale appear from the original talent pool). Even with its admittedly specialized subject, however, the film's fans may want to see. A strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Peace After Marriage ★★1/2

Film Movement, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Standup comedian Ghazi Albuliwi wrote and co-directed (along with Bandar Albuliwi) this comedy in which he stars as struggling 30-year-old actor Arafat, who lives with

his parents in Manhattan and brings no game to the dating scene. Addicted to pornography, Arafat joins a support group, where he meets Kenny (Mark Lukaj), who tries to set him up with dates but then hits on a win-win scheme. Arafat, Kenny decides, should marry a woman in need of a green card, guaranteeing him both sex and money. Complications arise over the fact that the bride-to-be is an Israeli Jew named Michaela (Einat Tubi), which causes major unrest in Arafat's Arab-American community. But the heart wants what it wants, as Albuliwi's obvious filmmaker inspiration, Woody Allen, once said, and Arafat and Michaela soon fall in love. Allen's earliest films inform the sketch-comedy orientation of *Peace After Marriage*'s first third, while *Manhattan*-era Woody takes over for the remainder. There's also something Chaplinesque about Albuliwi, although the film draws most of its comic energy from the constant furor within a Muslim circle of family and neighbors, including Hany Kamal as Arafat's frustrated father and Hiam Abbass as his saintly if no-nonsense mother. While the plot is nothing new, and the comedy is somewhat derivative, this Middle Eastern rom-com set in the West should be considered a strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)



A Perfect Day ★★

MPI, 106 min., R, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98



This retro wartime comedy, set somewhere in the Balkans (presumably Bosnia) in 1995, stars a grizzled, grey Tim Robbins and aging hipster Benicio Del Toro as roguish aid workers “B” and Mambrú, respectively, whose deceptively simple mission is to remove a corpse from a mountain village well so that the region's water supply isn't contaminated. But they are shamefully underequipped and therefore have to tool around the treacherous mountain roads in search of someone who might have a rope with which to extract the body. Spanish director Fernando León de Aranoa wastes no time in suggesting that this is a manly man's world: neophyte female assistant Sophie (Mélanie Thierry) does all of the complaining and worrying about on-the-job procedural matters, while B and Mambrú counter her altruistic nagging with dismissive knee-jerk skepticism. Meanwhile, de Aranoa cranks up an in-your-face hard-rock soundtrack that is so badly contextualized that even the Velvet Underground's brilliant “Venus in Furs” sounds grating and out of place. Scenes that one assumes will be intense—negotiating a hostile military checkpoint or a minefield—just fall flat, as Robbins's and Del Toro's performances don't

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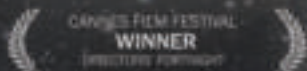
Eleven-year-old tomboy Toni is bewitched by the tight-knit dance team she sees practicing in the same Cincinnati gymnasium where she boxes with her brother. Enamored by the strong community of girls, Toni neglects her boxing, and instead eagerly absorbs the dance routines and drills from a distance.

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exude cool collectedness so much as bored indifference. Finally, the staged ongoing conflict between the bureaucratic U.N. peacekeepers and the anarchist aid workers just feels too inconsequential to produce any real tension here. Optional. (M. Sandlin)

The Perfect Husband

★1/2

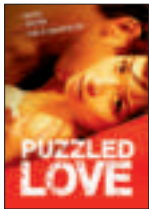
Artsploitation, 85 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Domestic violence meets torture-porn in Italian filmmaker Lucas Pavetto's 2014 thriller, which generates slow-building dread before wallowing in mutilation and bloody savagery filmed in close-up. After a traumatic miscarriage, young wife Viola (Gabriella Wright) accompanies husband Nicola (Bret Roberts) on what is supposed to be a healing, romantic country getaway. Suddenly, however, Nicola erupts in a fit of jealousy, cuffs Viola to a bed, and starts brutalizing her in a harrowing spiral of real-life Punch and Judy. But little hints around the edges—medication not taken, etc.—clue the viewer in that what is being shown is not precisely accurate. Even with the twist, however, *The Perfect Husband* remains an unpleasant film that is full of nasty, morbid carnage. Not recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Puzzled Love ★★★

Film Movement, 74 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

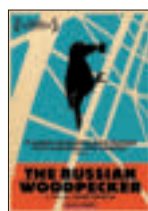


A light, sitcom-ish rom-com, *Puzzled Love* traces the evolution of a love match between two exchange students who are living in Barcelona but destined to head in different directions when their year is up. Sun (Saras Gil) and Lucas (Marcel Borràs) compete for the same rented room and become adversaries in the process. The problem is solved when Lucas is offered a closet space to live in adjacent to Sun's nicer quarters. Soon, the sworn enemies cease hostilities and begin secretly making love despite a house rule prohibiting roommates from hooking up. But their being drawn to one another can't be denied no matter how hard both Sun and Lucas try to sabotage it. Once this relationship settles in, however, the problem of their time limit starts to become an emotional drain. Sun and Lucas know the day will come when their bond must end—unless there's a way out. With its added meta-humor—including an occasional TV-like laugh track and cuts to a ticking clock heading inexorably toward the end of the affair—*Puzzled Love* is an engaging, quirky film with an interesting twist: it's written and directed by 13 filmmakers who each contribute a chapter. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Russian Woodpecker

★★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 81 min., in Russian & English w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95



This offbeat but thought-provoking documentary confronts what could be one of the last nasty secrets of the Cold War while also shedding light on the current ugly conflict between Russia and Ukraine. American director Chad Gracia has found a weirdly compelling protagonist in disheveled bohemian performance artist Fedor Alexandrovich, who spent his childhood in Chernobyl, until the nuclear meltdown in 1986. Now, obsessed with the disaster and convinced that foul play from Moscow was involved, the wide-eyed Ukrainian agitator returns to Chernobyl, where viewers are introduced to the controversial "Duga"—a radio transmitter monstrosity operating adjacent to the Chernobyl reactor. The Duga emits a sound that resembles a woodpecker's tapping (hence the title) and was suspected of sending "mind-control" radio waves to the West back in the Cold War halcyon days. Alexandrovich concocts a wild theory about how the Duga was part of a plot by Moscow to blow up the Chernobyl nuclear reactor and clandestinely finish the Ukrainian genocide that Russia started under Stalin. But just as Alexandrovich's research into this conspiratorial mystery begins to push the boundaries of credibility, his courage flags, as he starts to fear repercussion from pro-Russian thugs. Even though his initial investigation goes disappointingly awry, Alexandrovich redeems himself somewhat by his role in the Ukrainian nationalist Maidan Revolution in 2014. Highly recommended. (M. Sandlin)

Saving Mr. Wu ★★★

Well Go USA, 106 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98



Hong Kong movie star and pop singer Andy Lau plays the titular fictional celebrity whose career echoes Lau's own in *Saving Mr. Wu*, a Chinese crime thriller inspired by a real-life kidnapping of a movie star. While Wu is in Beijing celebrating a new film deal at a casino he is grabbed by a gang of kidnappers posing as cops who give him 18 hours to arrange payment for his release. Writer-director Ding Sheng uses this premise to create a crisp police procedural that opens on the kidnapping, cuts to the interrogation of the lead kidnapper (Qianyu Wang) 15 hours later, and then jumps back to track the timeline of the crime and the police investigation, identifying each scene's exact correlation with the ransom deadline. It's a tight, fast-moving, and entertaining

cop drama that does away with criminal mastermind clichés to show a more realistic portrait of a kidnapping and police investigation (using traffic cams, cell phone tracking, and old-fashioned footwork), albeit one still energized by car chases, flashing sirens, and strike force action. Ruofu Wu, the real-life actor whose 2004 kidnapping inspired the film, plays the no-nonsense officer heading the investigation. An entertaining film that is sure to appeal to fans of smart action drama, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

A Sinner in Mecca

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 79 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95



A Sinner in Mecca chronicles openly gay New York filmmaker Parvez Sharma's 2011 trip to Saudi Arabia for his Hajj pilgrimage—a risky journey, given that authorities labeled Sharma an infidel for his film *A Jihad for Love*, which is about LGBT Muslims. Some time before his trip, Sharma marries his atheist partner, Dan, and the pair honeymoon in India, where Sharma lived until he was 26 years old (Sharma's late poet mother never accepted his homosexuality). But Sharma travels to Mecca alone, and since filming is forbidden, he uses his iPhone. Like other male pilgrims, Sharma wraps himself in white cotton sheeting and starts at Masjid al-Haram, where men and women worship freely together (unlike other Saudi mosques). From there, he moves down the corridor between Al-Safa and Al-Marwah, and then heads toward Mount Arafat. The next part of the pilgrimage involves collecting pebbles to throw at the (symbolic) Devil, followed by a stay at the world's largest tent city, which unfortunately looks more like the world's largest garbage dump (a fellow pilgrim tells Sharma that he's glad they don't allow non-Muslims inside, so the Western world can't see it). Sharma then heads through tunnels that lead to the wall where he throws his pebbles. But unable to secure a goat in Saudi Arabia, he returns to India to complete his Hajj with an animal sacrifice (a difficult sequence to watch). "I have emerged from my Hajj a better Muslim," he concludes, although his experience seems more stressful and dispiriting than joyful and inspiring. Given the highly topical subject matter that addresses both LGBT issues and Saudi culture, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

Song of Lahore ★★★1/2

Broad Green, 82 min., PG, DVD: \$26.99

Song of Lahore begins as a lamentation for Pakistan's music industry, which has struggled against great odds, but the film winds up being a celebration. Saleem Khan, a violinist, learned the trade from his father, who played on film scores. Now Khan can't find instru-

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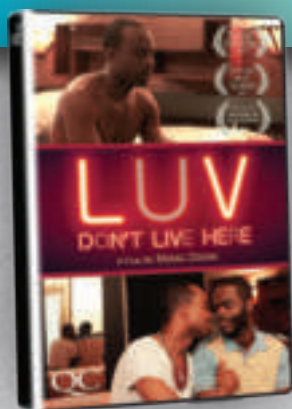
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(German) During a summer trip through Berlin, two friends pick up a hitchhiker. As the newcomer starts to show a romantic interest toward one of them, things between the friends will never be the same.

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ment parts for his violin, because so few people in Lahore play them. As conductor Asad Ali explains, the coup of General Zia-ul-Haq, who attempted to establish an Islamic Republic, marked the beginning of the end. Without films and concerts, musicians turned to manual labor to support their families. In the 2000s, after the dust had settled, Izzat Majeed opened Sachal Studios. But the musicians are still seen as lower caste, and flutist Baqir Abbas's minority status as a Shia Muslim makes his situation even more precarious. The rise of the Taliban further complicated matters, but the players have found ways to persevere. Abbas, who comes from a family of musicians, even makes his own instruments. "When you make it with your hands," he says, "your flute feels more precious than your own soul." While the studio offers solace, the ensemble finds a more receptive audience for their music outside of Pakistan, so they incorporate Western genres, such as jazz, in order to create a global sound. The move pays off when their version of Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" becomes a hit, leading to a gig with New York's Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. The initial rehearsals are a mess, and Wynton Marsalis lets one player go, but the final concert leaves few dry eyes in the house. Highly recommended. (K. Fennessy)



Sweet Bean ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 113 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Japanese filmmaker Naomi Kawase's *Sweet Bean* was the opening presentation at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival's Un Certain Regard competition, a prestigious honor that it richly deserved. The story focuses on Sentaro (Masatoshi Nagase), owner of a small shop that sells "dorayaki"—a Japanese red bean pancake confection. Sentaro advertises for an assistant and is surprised to get a response from Tokue (Kirin Kiki), an elderly lady with somewhat deformed hands. While Sentaro is initially indifferent to Tokue, he quickly comes to respect the quality of the bean paste that she creates for the dorayaki, and sales increase dramatically after she becomes part of his shop. As the film progresses, it is slowly revealed that Sentaro and Tokue have tragic life stories that make them near-pariahs in Japanese society. Benefiting from both intelligent direction and extraordinary chemistry between the two stars, *Sweet Bean* speaks to universal themes about perseverance, as well as distinctively Japanese concerns about conformist behavior. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)



Sworn Virgin ★★★

Strand, 88 min., in Albanian & Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99

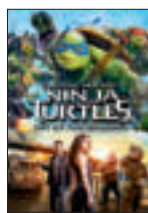
In this adaptation of Elvira Dones's 2007 novel, Italian director Laura Bispuri offers a fascinating look at an obscure custom in rural Albania that allows an unmarried woman to declare herself to be a man (known locally as a *burrnesa*) and enjoy all of the rights that are distinctive to men. There's only one catch: the newly minted "man" must take a vow of eternal virginity. Hana (Alba Rohrwacher) grew up in a small Albanian village where the prospect of a life in near-servitude to a husband has propelled her decision to become a *burrnesa* named Mark. She trades her women's clothing for men's garments and therefore gains wider rights, including property ownership and gun possession. But over time, Mark's life choice becomes emotionally imprisoning rather than liberating. Traveling to Italy to visit her long-estranged sister and family, Mark slowly transitions back to Hana, whose vow of eternal virginity is chipped away at by a newfound fascination with a handsome laborer at a local swimming pool. An offbeat drama driven by a strong central performance from Rohrwacher, this is recommended. (P. Hall)



Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Out of the Shadows ★★

Paramount, 111 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Sept. 20

Chockfull of producer Michael Bay's usual high-octane action, this new addition to the blockbuster franchise finds Leonardo (Pete Ploszek), Raphael (Alan Ritchson), Donatello (Jeremy Howard), and Michelangelo (Noel Fisher) battling villainous Shredder (Brian Tee) and his henchwoman Karai (Brittany Ishibashi). Escaping from a police convoy, Shredder joins forces with mad scientist Dr. Baxter Stockman (Tyler Perry) and two idiotic ex-cons (Gary Anthony Williams, WWE's Stephen "Sheamus" Farrelly) to open a portal to another galaxy, where diabolical Commander Krang (voiced by Brad Garrett) plans global domination, utilizing his Death Star-like Technodrome warship. Tipped off by resolute reporter April O'Neil (Megan Fox) and her cameraman Vern Fenwick (Will Arnett), the heroic, hard-shelled quartet—named after famed Renaissance painters—come out of hiding in the sewers, catching the attention of former corrections officer turned vigilante Casey Jones (Stephen Amell) and skeptical police commissioner Rebecca Vincent (Laura Linney). Director Dave Green does his best to try to captivate the attention of youngsters with yet another retread story about mutant-



heroes-in-a-half-shell who long for a normal life, but he's submarined by an idiotic script. Optional. (S. Granger)

Those People ★★1/2

Wolfe, 89 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Even one-percenters have their problems—just read F. Scott Fitzgerald. Writer-director Joey Kuhn's *Those People* recalls both Fitzgerald and filmmaker Whit Stillman (*Metropolitan*), although the world of privilege and glitter that Kuhn conjures isn't nearly as fun or compelling. The story centers on the romantic ambivalence of Charlie (Jonathan Gordon), a late-20s graduate student and painter preparing for a gallery exhibition. Long in love with his best friend Sebastian (Jason Ralph), who is the dissolute son of a Bernie Madoff-like felon who stole billions from investors, Charlie is also drawn to a classical pianist (Haaz Sleiman). The latter offers Charlie a brighter future, without the hatred, guilt, and paparazzi plaguing Sebastian at every turn over his father's sins. Still, loyalty and the ghost of unfulfilled potential surrounds Sebastian. *Those People* charts Charlie's journey of self-discovery as he explores the waters of each relationship. Kuhn's feel for upper-crust society, wealth, and leisure lacks Stillman's texture, but the characters are believably self-involved, if also vulnerable and sympathetic. A strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)



Traders ★★

Dark Sky, 90 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

This self-consciously hip and dark Irish thriller sports a wild premise that probably sounded good during coffeehouse banter between writers and producers but simply can't generate enough onscreen suspension of disbelief to consistently captivate the viewer. Owing plenty to the more complex social commentary found in 1999's *Fight Club*, directors Rachael Moriarty and Peter Murphy's postmodern winner-take-all gladiatorial tale features an interesting (if also illogical) socioeconomic twist. After a huge financial firm goes under in tough economic times, one laid-off employee named Vernon (John Bradley) comes up with a unique "trading" idea in which two desperate beings are hooked up via the "dark" web to meet at a remote location and fight to the death, with the winner walking away with the loser's life savings. Unfortunately, these *mano a mano* smackdowns feel forced and inauthentic: the sudden ease with which major players here begin squaring off just doesn't come across as an earned conceit, even considering the ratcheted-up post-apocalyptic economic doom



atmosphere. Predictably, the fight scenes are gruesome gore-splattered set pieces, adhering to the 21st-century action-film rulebook of gratuitous video game-style violence taking precedence over character believability. As a morality tale, *Traders* never achieves much beyond a banal sort of “desperate times require desperate measures” critical stance on the increasingly normalized atmosphere of cutthroat competition in the modern workplace. Optional, at best. (M. Sandlin)

Tricked ★★★

Kino Lorber, 89 min., in Dutch w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

The story behind *Tricked*, a 50-minute fictional film directed for Dutch TV by Paul Verhoeven, is as interesting as the story onscreen. Screenwriter Kim van Kooten wrote the first five pages of a script, which introduce the 50th birthday party of a husband, father, and partner in a business—a man named Remco (Peter Blok)—and then invited the public to carry the narrative forward by submitting subsequent scenes, essentially making *Tricked* a crowdsourced film. Producer Rene Mioch then invited Verhoeven to read through the submissions, fashion a complete script from the pieces, and shoot the movie (a professional screenwriter eventually rewrote the resulting patchwork script in order to incorporate ideas throughout). The result is a soap opera with a satirical edge and a blackly comic sense of humor, featuring sexual affairs, backhanded business dealings, a pregnancy, and blackmail. Remco's wife (Ricky Koole) threatens to leave him over his pregnant ex-mistress (Sallie Harmsen), his daughter (Carolien Spoor) is a drunk who is disgusted with dad's philandering, and his son (Robert De Hoog) is a sex-mad slacker. It's a clever script (especially given its unusual development), and Verhoeven and the cast revel in the spectacle of bad behavior and witty twists. Also unusual is the fact that the film opens with a half-hour documentary on the creation and production of the movie, a rather self-congratulatory introduction in which Verhoeven talks about how the process revitalized him creatively. More than simply a clever stunt, *Tricked* is a funny and engaging black comedy, although it's the gimmick that will likely intrigue most viewers. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Warcraft ★1/2

Universal, 123 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99, Sept. 27

Inspired by the massively popular *World of Warcraft*—a long-running PC-based video game—*Warcraft* revolves around a race of gigantic warrior



beasts called Orcs, who flee from their dying homeland of Draenor, after the warlock Gul'dan (Daniel Wu) opens a portal to Azeroth, where they will battle unsuspecting humans, led by war-chieftain Blackhand (Clancy Brown). Only the Orc soldier Durotan (Toby Kebbell) maintains that peace can be achieved through compromise with King Llane (Dominic Cooper) and Lady Taria (Ruth Negga), whose brother is the noble knight Anduin Lothar (Travis Fimmel). Meanwhile, Lothar's son (Burkely Duffield) is determined to impress his father on the battlefield, and Durotan's mate (Anna Galvin) has a baby. Also in the mix are the ascetic Azeroth wizard Medivh (Ben Foster), his young apprentice Khadgar (Ben Schnetzer), and a fanged green-skinned female named Garona (Paula Patton), who claims to be half-Orc/half-human. Drawing on Chris Metzen's branded characters and story, British director/co-writer Duncan Jones (David Bowie's son) overloads the fantasy/sci-fi plot with too many mythical creatures, magical subplots, and visual effects in a curiously campy film that is ultimately too much war and too little craft. Not recommended. (S. Granger)

We Monsters ★★★

First Run, 95 min., in German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.95

A strange tale of destiny shaped by the consequences of a thoughtless deed, filmmaker Sebastian Ko's *We Monsters* serves up a portrait of a world spinning out of control. Paul (Mehdi Nebbou), an underemployed musician and single father, is driving his daughter Sarah (Janina Fautz) to a camp that she doesn't want to attend when they stop to pick up Sarah's school chum, Charlie (Marie Bendig). Pulling onto a shoulder of the road so the girls can run into the woods to relieve themselves, Paul becomes alarmed when the pair don't return. He finds Sarah alone, teetering on the edge of a dam and maintaining that she pushed Charlie down to the rocks below. Paul's sudden instinct to protect Sarah and enlist her in a cover-up soon becomes a black hole that swallows everyone from his ex-wife (Ulrike C. Tscharre) to Charlie's troubled, once abusive father (Ronald Kukulies). An intriguing and disturbing film with a twist, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



The Wedding Doll ★★★

Strand, 82 min., in Hebrew w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Sept. 20

The radiant Hagit (Moran Rosenblatt), 24-year-old protagonist of Israeli filmmaker Nitzan Gilady's *The Wedding Doll*, dreams of getting married. Because of cognitive disabilities, Hagit lives with her



mother, Sara (Assi Levy). For years, Hagit has worked for a family-owned toilet paper company, and in her spare time she makes wedding dolls and studies to become a dress designer. Since she once almost dropped her infant niece, Hagit's brother thinks she would be better off in a group home. In secret, Hagit has been seeing her boss's son, Omri (Roy Asaf), meeting in the off-hours on an outcropping that overlooks the Negev desert. When outsiders make fun of Hagit, Omri defends her, but does not disclose their relationship. She thinks he intends to propose, but his intentions are actually far murkier. Similarly, Hagit's mother has been seeing a man at the hotel where she works, but keeps this from her daughter (Hagit rarely sees her birth father, who moved out of town for work). When Hagit risks losing her job due to a possible factory closure, she begins to look for another, but worries that she won't see Omri again. The dramatic tension increases as Hagit continues to crave independence, while Sara doubts that she can handle it. A fine character study with a strong central performance by Rosenblatt, this is recommended. (K. Fennesy)

Weiner ★★★

MPI, 96 min., R, DVD: \$24.98

Perhaps it's not surprising that in this tumultuous political year, disgraced former New York congressman Anthony Weiner is the topic of a documentary by his ex-chief-of-staff Josh Kriegman. In 2011, Weiner resigned from his seven-term House of Representatives seat because of an infamous sexting scandal. Two years later, ever-ambitious Weiner enters the New York City mayoral race. When then-supporters Kriegman and Elyse Steinberg propose chronicling Weiner's run, they are given unprecedented access, staying with him even when a second wave of sexting revelations break. Central to the salacious story is Weiner's wife, Hillary Clinton's top aide Huma Abedin, a steely, self-possessed woman. “She was very eager to get her life back that I had taken from her,” he confesses, taking full blame for the harm that he caused. But once the campaign gets underway, bawdier transcripts and lewd crotch pictures surface under Weiner's pseudonym “Carlos Danger.” Those revelations, coupled with his abrasive, confrontational volatility, torpedo his chances. As Marshall McLuhan once said, “The name of a man is a numbing blow from which he never recovers.” Since Weiner obviously brought this on himself, one cannot help but feel for Abedin as she endures a second round of public humiliation, retreating to their \$12,000-a-month Park Avenue South apartment. Serving up a compelling trainwreck portrait of a contemporary political suicide, this is recommended. (S. Granger)



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DIRECTED BY EMMANUELLE BERCOT STARRING CATHERINE DENEUVE

STREET DATE: **SEPT. 13, 2016** SRP: **\$24.98 / \$29.98**

Standing Tall was the opening night selection of Cannes 2015. It centers around Malony (Rod Paradot), a boy abandoned by his mother at the age of 6 and who is constantly in and out of juvenile court. Florence (Catherine Deneuve), a children's magistrate nearing retirement, and Yann (Benoît Magimel), a caseworker, follow the boy's journey and try unfailingly to save him.

A SCANDAL IN PARIS AND LURED

TWO FILMS DIRECTED BY DOUGLAS SIRK STARRING GEORGE SANDERS

STREET DATE: **SEPT. 27, 2016** SRP: **\$39.98**

Featuring two rediscovered early classics from Douglas Sirk and restored from 35MM nitrate and safety material. Special features include an audio commentary by film historian Jeremy Arnold, author of "Turner Classic Movies' The Essentials: 52 Must-See Movies and Why They Matter."



DIARY OF A CHAMBERMAID

DIRECTED BY BENOÎT JACQUOT
STARRING LÉA SEYDOUX AND VINCENT LINDON

STREET DATE: **OCT. 4, 2016** SRP: **\$24.98 / \$29.98**

A resentful young Parisian chambermaid (Léa Seydoux) finds herself exiled to a position in the provinces where she immediately chafes against the noxious iron rules of her high-handed bourgeois mistress (Clotilde Mollet), must rebuff the groping advances of Monsieur (Hervé Pierre), and reckon with her fascination with the earthy, brooding gardener Joseph (Vincent Lindon).





**"A TERRIFIC
DEBUT"**

-MANDHLA DARGIS,
THE NEW YORK TIMES

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SELECTION
CANNES
FILM FESTIVAL
2015

OFFICIAL
SELECTION
NEW YORK
FILM FESTIVAL
2015

OFFICIAL
SELECTION
TORONTO
INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
2015

LES COWBOYS

DIRECTORIAL DEBUT OF ACCLAIMED SCREENWRITER THOMAS BIDEgain (A PROPHET AND RUST AND BONE)

STREET DATE:
OCTOBER 11, 2016

SRP:
\$24.98 / \$29.98

When his daughter goes missing from their prairie town east of France, Alain (François Damien) and his young son, Kid (Finnegan Oldfield), embark on a relentless search for her, even though it costs them everything and takes them to some far-off places in what begins to feel like an endless quest.

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★★★1/2

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

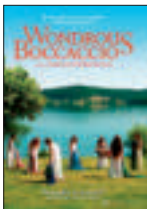


Director Beth Harrington spent 12 years working on this profile of the famed Carter Family, told through the reminiscences of relatives and historians. Harrington landed some prominent participants, most notably Johnny Cash, who passed away a few weeks after their conversation. In between biographical anecdotes, musicians including George Jones, John Prine, and Rhiannon Giddens perform Carter Family songs. Harrington also incorporates animated cut-outs, which lend the proceedings a homespun feel. According to their descendants, the Carters grew up poor in Virginia among relatives who were happy to share what they had. Patriarch A.P. (Alvin Pleasant) had a third grade education and a tremor in his hand that made him self-conscious. Before his music career took off, he worked as a door-to-door fruit tree salesman, which led him to Sara, who became his wife. They formed the Carter Family with her first cousin, Maybelle, and as their reputation grew the Victor Talking Machine Company began to release their records. A.P. also became a song collector, which necessitated months on the road and contributed to his divorce from Sara, but the band only grew with the addition of their daughters, Helen, Anita, and June (the original trio last performed in 1953). Johnny Cash remembers hearing them on border radio station XERA, where they became stars. By that time he had met June, and even though both were married to others, Cash predicted that he would wed her, which he did a few years later. About June's mother, Cash says, "Maybelle Carter was the greatest star." Harrington ends her chronicle with a look at the ways that descendants have preserved the Carter Family legacy. Highly recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Wondrous Boccaccio

★★★

Film Movement, 120 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95



Paolo and Vittorio Taviani's version of Boccaccio's *The Decameron*—a successor to fellow Italian auteur Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1971 adaptation—opens in 1348 as the Black Plague holds Florence in its grip. The city buries the dead in mass graves, while survivors struggle to go on with their lives. To escape the grim scene, 10 young friends—three men and seven women—move to a house in Tuscany where they share stories to pass the time (the large cast includes rising star Riccardo Scamarcio of *The Best of Youth*). In the first tale, after a woman appears to die, her husband's caretakers leave her body inside an

abandoned church where an admirer revives her through his love. When the man invites the husband to a gathering at his home, the wife must choose whether to stay with her savior or return to her husband. In the next story, two art students play a trick on a slow classmate—making him believe that a black river rock will render him invisible—while encouraging the townspeople to play along, which leads the man to run amok. In the third story, a daughter returns to her father's home after her husband's death, but when she falls for his protégé, the possessive duke risks losing her forever. Other tales involve lusty nuns and lovesick falconers, and while none are as unhinged as Pasolini's tales, they're all equally involving. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

X-Men: Apocalypse ★★

Fox, 144 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99, Oct. 4



Helming his fourth *X-Men* movie, Bryan Singer once again steers Marvel's colorful mutants through another adventure, this one set 10 years after 2014's *Days of Future Past*. This time, the supervillain is Apocalypse (Oscar Isaac), supposedly the world's first and most powerful mutant, known as invincible/immortal En Sabah Nur, who ruled ancient Egypt, circa 3600 B.C., before he was entombed in an immense pyramid—awakening in 1983 at the height of the Cold War in the Reagan era. After hibernating for 5,500 years, the petulant Pharaoh is not a happy camper. Vowing to "wipe clean this world," he solicits disillusioned Magneto (Michael Fassbender), Archangel (Ben Hardy), Psylocke (Olivia Munn), and Storm (Alexandra Shipp) into becoming his legendary "four horsemen." Working with Beast (Nicholas Hoult) and CIA agent Moira MacTaggart (Rose Byrne), Mystique (Jennifer Lawrence) enlists rejuvenated Professor X (James McAvoy), who supplies younger versions of psychic Jean Grey (Sophie Turner) and laser-eyed Cyclops (Tye Sheridan) from his School, along with Nightcrawler (Kodi Smit-McPhee), Quicksilver (Evan Peters), and Jubilee (Lana Condor). Singer desperately tries to blend a mediocre multitude of mutants, multiple time-shifts, and semi-coherent plotlines with loads of remarkable CGI, but there's no character development here, which means no emotional investment. Still, this will surely be popular. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Classic Films

99 River Street ★★

Kino Lorber, 83 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.95

An underrated classic of the film noir genre, *99 River Street* (1953) stars John Payne as Ernie Driscoll, a former boxer now working

as a cab driver and saving up to buy a gas station. His wife Pauline (Peggie Castle) has turned her back on Ernie in favor of sleazy thief Victor Rawlins (Brad Dexter) and a chance at a fortune in stolen jewels—setting up her husband as the fall guy. Evelyn Keyes costars as a still-idealistic young actress who pulls Ernie into her world of make-believe and then redeems herself by using her talents (and putting herself on the line) to save him from the frame-up. Directed by Phil Karlson, this fine urban noir set in an anonymous city takes place entirely at night and is shot on studio sets that serve as city streets, waterfront docks, corner coffee shops, cheap bars, boxing gyms, and taxi garages. Karlson also makes brilliant use of the boxing ring play-by-play of the superb opening scene, which comes back as both a tormenting memory and triumphant commentary during the climax. Newly remastered for Blu-ray—a significant upgrade from the previous DVD release—with extras including audio commentary by film noir historian Eddie Muller, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Bad Influence ★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 99 min., R, Blu-ray: \$19.99



Rob Lowe is the titular bad influence in this thriller by director Curtis Hanson, playing Alex, a seductive thief, con-man, and killer who becomes the devil on the shoulder of meek financial analyst Michael (James Spader), continually pushing the latter to become more aggressive. At first, this does wonders for Michael's love life (he hooks up with Lisa Zane at a bar) and career (he turns the tables on a rival who has been bullying him with dirty tricks at work), but it eventually spins out of control when Alex and Michael go on a crime spree of petty robberies and they brutally beat Michael's nemesis. When Michael tries to walk away, Alex frames him for murder (a sex tape plays a central role here—a timely reference to the notorious sex tape scandal that tarnished Lowe's public image). *Bad Influence* is a reasonably satisfying thriller, but also a minor film in the careers of Hanson, Lowe, and Spader. Extras include a new interview with screenwriter David Koepp. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Belladonna of Sadness

★★★1/2

Cinelicious, 87 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, Blu-ray: \$39.99



In 1973, the United States wasn't quite ready for *Belladonna of Sadness*, Eiichi Yamamoto's erotic animated adaptation of French historian Jules Michelet's 1862 book *La Sorcière* (known

in the West as *Satanism and Witchcraft*). Although there is movement here that builds to a stroboscopic crescendo towards the end, Yamamoto largely relies on animator Kuni Fukai's static, richly-hued watercolors and oil paintings to tell the story of Jeanne (voiced by Aiko Nagayama), a beautiful weaver in a feudal village. Fukai's influences include art nouveau illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, surreal cartoonist Mœbius, and pop artist Peter Max (particularly his work for *Yellow Submarine*). The Skeletor-like local lord (Masaya Takahashi) won't allow Jeanne and her husband Jean (Katsuyuki Ito) to live in peace until they pay off a debt, but the lord is happy in the meantime to cruelly use her body as a play toy, a plot development that leads to some of the most disturbing, if also highly stylized, imagery in the film. When a penis-shaped imp (Tatsuya Nakadai) drops by to offer Jeanne assistance, she doesn't resist, ultimately learning to harness the dark arts, and gaining wealth, power, and the confidence to walk around naked. Masahiko Satoh's score—a thrilling mélange of free jazz and psychedelia—nicely punctuates the narrative of this film in which the sexual politics may be dodgy but the artistry is impossible to deny. Making its long-awaited U.S. debut in a beautifully restored edition (featuring eight minutes of footage cut from the original), ex-

tras include new interviews with Yamamoto, Fukai, and Satoh, and an illustrated booklet. Highly recommended, with the caveat that the film features sexually graphic imagery. (K. Fennessy)

The Best Intentions

★★★1/2

Film Movement, 181 min., in Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99



The theatrical distillation of a 1992 Scandinavian TV miniseries, *The Best Intentions* was made from a screenplay written by Swedish film icon Ingmar Bergman after his 1988 retirement from active cinema. Featuring a cast of Norse thespian royalty (including Max von Sydow, Ghita Nørby, and Lena Endre), the story is a veiled fictionalization of Bergman's parents' lives before his birth (derived from letters and family memories). The narrative describes the star-crossed and turbulent affair of struggling seminarian Henrik (Samuel Fröler), a proudly poor aspiring priest with a strong sense of social justice, and Anna (Pernilla August, who married director Bille August during filming), a daughter of the aristocracy. Disapproving mothers and the vast gulf between their worlds—along with Henrik's one-sided,

inflexible nature—threaten more than once to break the relationship. Those familiar with the Bergman canon will recognize his major themes here, including the silence of God in the face of suffering. Extras include Bergman's 1984 wordless short film "Karin's Face," a collage composed from Bergman's old family album that allows for compare/contrast opportunities with the movie itself, as well as an essay by film historian Peter Cowie. Recommended. (C. Cassady)

Cornbread, Earl and Me

★★★

Olive, 96 min., PG, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

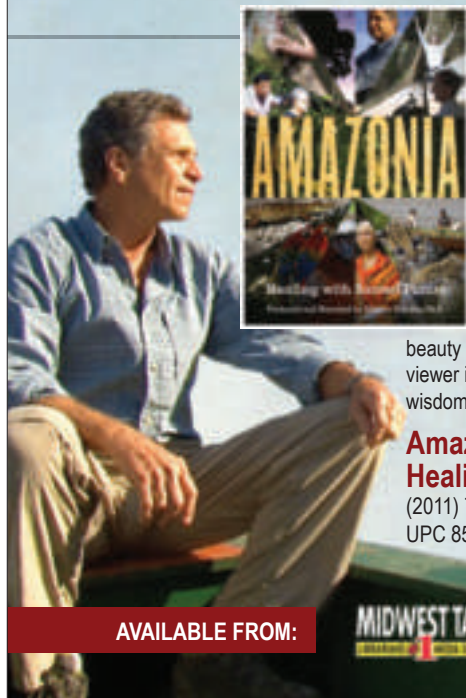


Director Joe Manduke and screenwriter Leonard Lamensdorf probably could not have predicted that 1975's *Cornbread, Earl and Me* would prove to be just as relevant four decades after its release. In his feature debut, Laurence Fishburne plays Wilford, a Chicago kid who looks up to older teen Cornbread (real-life NBA player Keith Wilkes). Drawing from Ronald Fair's 1966 novel *Hog Butcher*, Manduke sketches in the contours of an inner-city block where everybody knows everybody, such as numbers runner One-Eye (Antonio Fargas). Wilford and his friend Earl (Tierre Turner)

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"Perhaps more than any westerner, (Alberto Villoldo) has mastered the ancient art of 'seeing,' which gives more direct insight into the true causes of disease than can be revealed through all the technological advances of Western medicine."

—David Siegfried, *Booklist*



Amazonia chronicles the work of the master shamans of Peru's Madre de Dios River. Here, Dr. Villoldo explains the process and theory of the powerful brew made by the shamans known as Ayahuasca and shows us how it is truly used in the visionary and transformative work of the indigenous healers. Shot completely in High Definition, the power and beauty of the virgin jungle transports the viewer into the Amazonia and shares the wisdom of its healers.

**Amazonia:
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(2011) 70 min. DVD: \$19.98
UPC 857326006267

Shaman, Healer, Sage tells the story of Alberto Villoldo, Ph.D., an extraordinary man who gave up a promising career in the United States as a psychologist and medical anthropologist to study the healing practices of the Amazon and Inka shamans. In this spectacular documentary, Dr. Villoldo shows us how our minds create aging and disease in the body and, together with extended bonus exercises, how we can start the course to reverse the process.

**Shaman,
Healer, Sage**
(2013) 64 min.
DVD: \$19.98
UPC 857326006250



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like to watch Cornbread play ball, but they've only got two weeks to learn all they can before the latter heads off to college. One rainy afternoon, however, cops mistake Cornbread for an armed rape suspect and shoot him dead, and instead of standing around helplessly, the neighbors yell and scrap with the police. Cornbread's parents file a civil suit, but police investigators intimidate every witness, and at the inquest everyone swears that they didn't see anything—except for one brave soul. While this feels a bit like wish fulfillment, the film also illustrates how one ordinary citizen can make a difference, especially when he has an advocate like Moses Gunn as an attorney on his side. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Dark Passage ★★★1/2

Warner, 106 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99



Humphrey Bogart stars as Vincent Parry, an innocent man sitting on death row for the murder of his wife. In the opening minutes of filmmaker Delmer Dave's 1947 noir drama *Dark Passage*, Parry escapes from San Quentin to try to clear his name, but his face isn't even seen through the first act of the film. Instead, viewers witness his escape almost entirely through his eyes, a first-person account with the voice of Bogart guiding our point of view—until he emerges from plastic surgery with his face covered in bandages (a temporary situation; the bandages come off to reveal the scuffed face of Bogart soon enough). Lauren Bacall costars as Irene Jansen, the Good Samaritan who aids Parry's escape, while Agnes Moorehead is wickedly nasty as a conniving, acid-tongued busybody who once had designs on Parry but then turned vicious when he married another woman. *Dark Passage* plays like a glossy chamber piece of film noir, set mostly during the daytime in well-lit apartments and out on the streets in hard daylight, and while the plot is something of a stretch, this is still a compelling yarn that boasts great chemistry between Bogie and Bacall (this is the third of four films they made together) and excellent use of San Francisco locations. Extras include a "making-of" featurette and a vintage Bogart-related Bugs Bunny cartoon. A beloved Hollywood classic, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmayer)

The Daughter of Dawn

★★★

Oscilloscope, 87 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

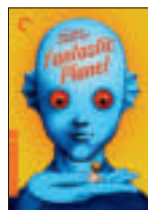


Produced in the Wichita Mountains of Oklahoma Wildlife Refuge in 1920, director Norbert A. Myles's *The Daughter of Dawn* is a fictional drama of tribal life cast entirely with Native Americans, mostly drawn from the Kiowa and Comanche

tribes. The story revolves around a romantic triangle—Kiowa warrior Black Wolf (Jack Sankey-Doty) is in love with the daughter (Esther LeBarre) of the chief but she loves White Eagle (White Parker), so a test of courage is undertaken to win her hand. The principals also face conflict with the nearby Comanche tribe, which is sending raiding parties into Kiowa territory and kidnapping women for brides. Although not a documentary, *The Daughter of Dawn* does feature culturally accurate costumes, dances, and rituals, and it captures the distinctive beauty of the Wichita Mountains before the encroachment of Western civilization. The film disappeared soon after its premiere in 1920 and was thought lost until the Oklahoma Historical Society acquired a collector's print and spent years restoring the film, which was added to the Library of Congress National Film Registry in 2013. Both an entertaining adventure and a unique piece of American cultural history, this will be of special interest to Native American collections. Extras include featurettes produced by the Oklahoma Historical Society on the history and rediscovery of the film. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)

Fantastic Planet ★★★

Criterion, 72 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



French filmmaker René Laloux's legendary 1973 animated feature centers on the oppressed (and very human-like) Oms, living in a world ruled by blue-skinned giants called Draags, who treat the diminutive Oms as pets at best and vermin at worst. More fantasy than sci-fi, this strange, metaphorical tale plays out in a world as psychedelic as *Yellow Submarine* but far more predatory, as Laloux creates a culture in which intellect is disconnected from morality and sensual decadence rules. The animation and storytelling are actually oddly static, but the weird, lush landscapes, bright pop-art colors, and bizarre imagery (designed by famed French illustrator Roland Topor) combine to create an alien world of wonder and terror. And it's hard not to see the fight against oppression here reflected in America's civil rights struggle, as well as the French occupation in Algeria, the apartheid system in South Africa, and (when injustice takes a turn to wholesale annihilation of the "inferior" race) the Holocaust itself. Based on the 1957 novel *Oms en Série* by Stefan Wul, *Fantastic Planet* won a Grand Prix award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1973. Newly restored, this handsome Criterion edition features extras including two early animated shorts by Laloux, a 2009 documentary on Laloux, a 1974 French TV episode on Torpor, a 1973 interview with Torpor, and an essay by film critic Michael Brooke. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)

Gold ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 117 min., in German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



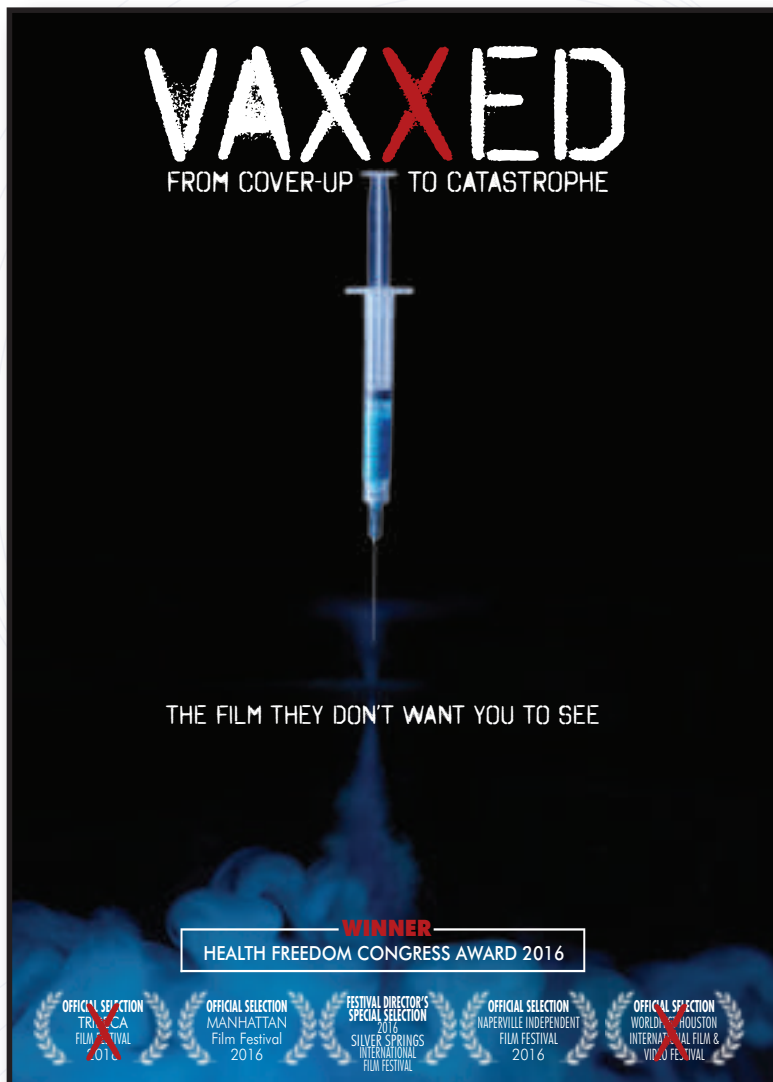
Gold (1934), a German sci-fi drama produced under the direction of Nazi propaganda leader Josef Goebbels, uses the premise of an experimental alchemical process that turns lead into gold to explore the evils of greed and power brought on by capitalism. Hans Albers stars as Dr. Werner Holk, an ethical German scientist who survives a lab explosion that kills his mentor. The equipment was sabotaged by Scottish industrialist John Wills (Michael Bohnen), who hires Holk to work on a parallel experiment (with plans stolen from Germany) in his lab built in an enormous mineshaft carved out beneath the ocean floor. Brigitte Helm costars as Wills's daughter, a captivating woman who has little respect for her rapacious, emotionally chilly father. Art director Otto Hunte and cinematographer Günther Rittau, who worked on *Metropolis* and other Fritz Lang silent classics, here create a giant electrical reactor in an underground laboratory, giving *Gold* a large sense of scale and spectacle. Director Karl Hartl explores themes with a nationalistic perspective, as the moral German Holk protects the interests of the common man against the destructive greed of the Scottish Wills. Of more historic interest as a rare example of sci-fi under the Nazis than as a compelling drama, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)

Iphigenia ★★1/2

Olive, 130 min., not rated, in Greek w/English subtitles, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



The late Michael Cacoyannis, best known for his 1964 classic *Zorba the Greek*, was one of Greece's greatest filmmakers. His 1977 *Iphigenia* was the third in a trilogy of features—following 1962's *Electra* and 1971's *The Trojan Women*—adapted from the work of classic Greek dramatist Euripides. Based on the tragedy *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the story finds troubled King Agamemnon (Costas Kazakos) being told by an oracle that he must sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia (Tatiana Papamoukou) to appease the gods and remove a curse that is preventing the king's ships from sailing into war with Troy. This scenario turns Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra (played by the legendary Irene Papas) against him, and the rest, as they say, is history. Although eliminating the chorus, Cacoyannis otherwise stays true to the source, presenting a full-on period drama in grand yet gritty fashion (including a grisly animal slaughter sequence). While the film's large scale sometimes threatens to overpower the deeper anti-war message, it's still easy to see why *Iphigenia* earned an Academy Award



VAXXED: FROM COVER-UP TO CATASTROPHE

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- Robert De Niro on 'Today'

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- Senator Ben Allen, co-author of California's mandatory vaccination bill SB277

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- David Avocado Wolfe, Author, Nutritionist, Health & Environmental Activist

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PPR: \$500

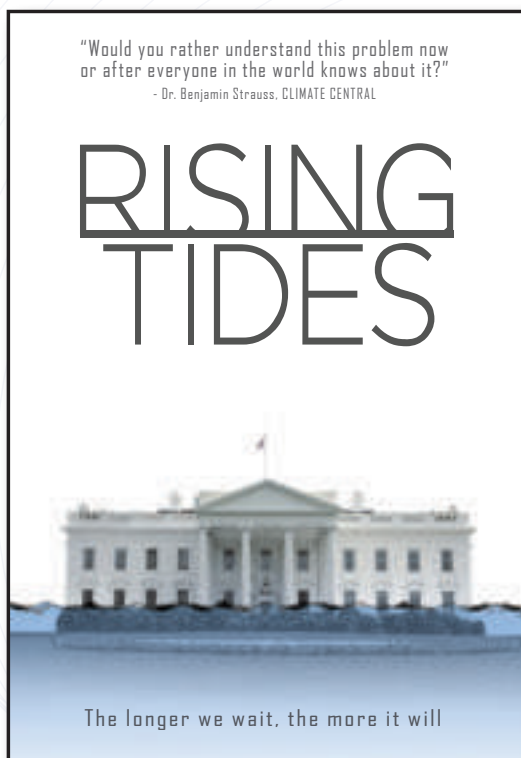
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Glen Dunzweiler was faced with the threat of becoming homeless. Suddenly, a life that seemed reserved only for drug addicts and the mentally ill felt closer than he had ever imagined. This realization led him to question what it is to be out on the streets. To find the answer, Glen travels the country to meet with America's homeless while living as close as he can to the real thing.

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UPC: 881394122123

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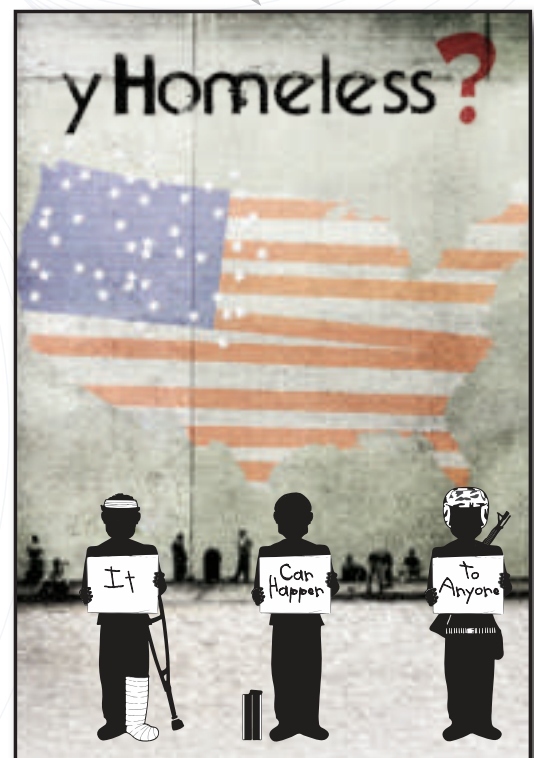
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nomination for Best Foreign Language film. Highly recommended. (P. Morehart)

La Chienne ★★★1/2

Criterion, 96 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95



French director Jean Renoir's second sound film is also his first masterpiece. Adapted from a 1930 novel by Georges de La Fouchardière, *La Chienne* (1931) tells the story of a romantic triangle that is as much human comedy as tragedy. Maurice (Michel Simon), a henpecked cashier and weekend painter, falls for a bruised prostitute named Lulu (Janie Marèse). Passing himself off as a professional artist, Maurice supports Lulu in exchange for her favors. Meanwhile, Lulu is hopelessly in love with her abusive pimp Dédé (Georges Flamant), who forces her to keep up the arrangement with Maurice as long as the latter keeps paying out. When Dédé's gambling debts get out of hand, Lulu and Dédé pass off Maurice's paintings as Lulu's, creating a minor sensation in the art world of Paris. Of course, the situation is doomed from the beginning—Maurice has been embezzling to sustain his lifestyle and Lulu stays with him only because Dédé demands it—and the truth comes out with fatal consequences. Renoir frames the film with a Punch and Judy-like puppet show (which proclaims that the film has "no moral message"), and his humanistic approach has an ironic edge that is fitting for a story with such willfully oblivious characters. Handsomely remastered from a new 4K digital restoration, extras include a 1961 intro by Renoir, a new restoration of Renoir's debut sound film *On purge bébé* (1931) a 1967 French documentary on Renoir, and an interview with Renoir scholar Christopher Faulkner. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Pioneers of African-American Cinema

★★★★

Kino Lorber, 5 discs, 1,227 min., not rated, DVD: \$79.95, Blu-ray: \$99.95



The wonderful legacy of African-American filmmaking is largely unknown to even the most passionate film buffs. This landmark boxed set marks the first serious effort devoted to collecting and preserving feature films and shorts produced for black audiences, mostly made by African-American filmmakers, between 1915 and 1946. Independent director-producer Oscar Micheaux, the most prolific black filmmaker of his day, directly confronted race and racism in such movies as *Within Our Gates* (1920), which broaches the then-taboo subjects of miscegenation and lynching; *The Symbol of the Unconquered* (1920), Micheaux's response to *Birth of a Na-*

tion; and *Birthright* (1938). This compilation includes nine features and one short from Micheaux, including his most famous film *Body and Soul* (1925), starring Paul Robeson in his film debut. Also included here are two feature films and a short by actor-director Spencer Williams, including his hugely successful directorial debut *The Blood of Jesus* (1941). The scope of the set embraces drama, slapstick comedy, music, adventure, and documentary, with the latter represented by Zora Neale Hurston's landmark ethnographic films chronicling life in rural African-American communities. Other highlights include *The Flying Ace* (1926), with its black aviator hero; *The Bronze Buckaroo* (1939), featuring longtime Duke Ellington singer Herb Jeffries as a singing cowboy; and the amateur films of African-American evangelists James and Eloyce Gist, whose allegorical dramas combine religious and folklore imagery with messages of faith. Arguably the most historically important home video release of the past few years, this excellent collection (the Blu-ray edition includes four exclusive shorts) features extras including numerous interviews with historians and archivists, as well as an 80-page booklet. Highly recommended. Editor's Choice. (S. Axmaker)

The Return of a Man Called Horse ★★★1/2

Olive, 126 min., PG, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



In what we'd now dismiss as just another example of corny "white savior" historical revisionism, this 1976 sequel to 1970's *A Man Called Horse* finds Richard Harris reprising his role as the English gentleman turned honorary Sioux Indian tribesman John "Horse" Morgan. In the midst of a whopper of an existential crisis, Morgan leaves England again for the American West in order to lend his martial talents to his old buddies in the Yellow Hand tribe. This endlessly persecuted people now find themselves being stripped of their land and possessions by a greedy, murderous gang of U.S. government-backed trappers led by Zenas Morre (Geoffrey Lewis). But the Yellow Hand chief is now less than enthusiastic about having Morgan around; so he orders his people to reject the Englishman's gifts of guns, clothing, and other accouterments that symbolize paleface oppression. Morgan is confronted with the choice of either abandoning the tribe he loves or offering the people "his suffering" in solidarity: this means old "Horse" is subjected to an agonizing trial period of ritualistic mind-altering mumbo jumbo and self-torturing induction rites. Although the climactic clash between the native warriors—led by Morgan—and the enforcers of U.S. Manifest Destiny is an impressively choreographed melee (rendered even more voluptuous with this new HD transfer)—the

overall pacing of the film drags, and Harris's "Horse" is too self-possessed to come off as truly heroic. Still, consider this a strong optional purchase. (M. Sandlin)

Rich Kids ★★★

Olive, 97 min., PG, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



A small, intimate comedy, 1979's *Rich Kids* was produced by Robert Altman (during the height of his late 1970s creative push) and famed theatre and film producer George W. George (whose wife Judith Ross penned the screenplay). Directed by Robert M. Young, and featuring John Lithgow, Olympia Dukakis, and Paul Dooley, it's hard to fathom today why this interesting little film so quickly fell into obscurity. *Rich Kids* follows two pre-teens from affluent New York City families as they navigate life's uncertainties, particularly parental marital strife and their own burgeoning sexual awakenings. Franny (Trini Alvarado) is the new kid in school, an awkward situation only compounded by her parents' disintegrating marriage. Franny finds a sympathetic friend in Jamie (Jeremy Levy), a boy whose mom and dad divorced years prior. Together, the pair form a bond that is intellectual, innocently romantic, and much more adult than what is taking place in their respective homes. Overall, *Rich Kids* feels like a Woody Allen coming-of-age film, but less cynical. Recommended. (P. Morehart)

She Wore a Yellow Ribbon ★★★

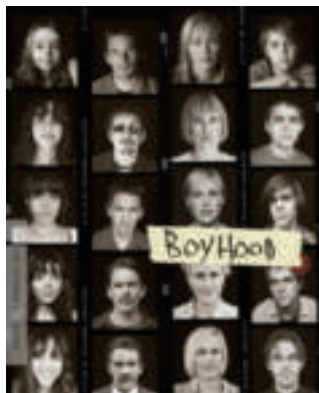
Warner, 103 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99



The second film in John Ford's celebrated "Cavalry Trilogy," 1949's *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* stars John Wayne as Cavalry Captain Nathan Brittles, a veteran officer who is only weeks away from retirement. Set in the days following Custer's defeat at Little Big Horn (which Ford symbolically played out in *Fort Apache*)—a time when there is considerable restlessness among young warriors of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes—the story follows Brittles, who is asked to escort a friend's wife (Mildred Natwick) and her niece (Joanne Dru) to safety. The Ford stock company is assembled to play officers young (Ben Johnson, in his first major role, and Harry Carey Jr.) and old (Victor McLaglen), with John Agar cast as the romantic lead who vies for the attentions of the niece. Wayne plays the graying grand old man of the American cavalry with measured grace and creaky vulnerability, displaying an acting range previously unseen in his films for Ford. Especially moving is a scene in which Brittles's men present him with a watch and he fumbles with his glasses to read the inscription while holding back his tears. *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* is also a



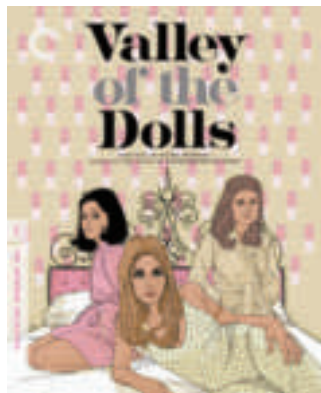
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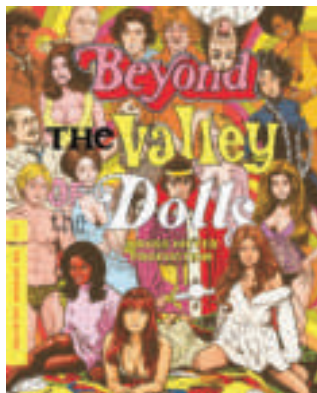
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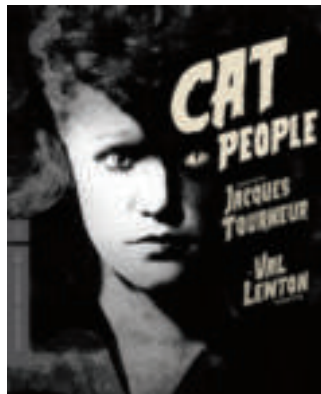
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film about the courage required to prevent war rather than engage in it, making this one of the most peaceful of Ford's Westerns. The Technicolor photography by Winton C. Hoch won an Oscar and adds a glow to the nostalgic atmosphere of this classic American film. Newly restored and remastered, extras include Ford's home movies shot on location. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Silk Stockings ★★★

Warner, 117 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99

Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse star in this 1957 musical remake of the Gretha Garbo classic *Ninotchka* (1939), with Astaire playing American filmmaker Steve Canfield, who is trying to win the heart of culturally repressed Russian beauty Ninotchka Yushman (Charisse). A classic MGM musical featuring songs by the legendary Cole Porter, highlights include Astaire and Janis Paige singing "Stereophonic Sound," the Astaire/Charisse song and dance combo "Fated to Be Mated/All of You," and the Russian-flavored extravaganza "The Red Blues." Throughout, dancing legends Astaire and Charisse characteristically shine, performing exquisite choreography by Eugene Loring and Hermes Pan. Presented in Cinemascope with a 4K restoration, extras include a 2003 Turner Classic Movies "making-of" featurette, and a pair of vintage musical shorts. Recommended. (R. Pitman)



Susan Slept Here

★★★1/2

Warner, 98 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$17.99

Frank Tashlin's films resemble cartoons come to life (it's no surprise that he began his showbiz career directing animated shorts). His 1954 romantic comedy *Susan Slept Here* is made in the same mold, kicking off on Christmas Eve in Hollywood, when thirtysomething playboy screenwriter Mark Christopher (Dick Powell) is left—through a preposterous set of circumstances—in charge of a 17-year-old delinquent named Susan (perfectly played by Debbie Reynolds). They antagonize each other and fight, but Mark develops a soft spot for his troubled ward. So much so, in fact, that he takes drastic measures to keep her from juvenile detention: zipping her off to Las Vegas where they are married. Their vows makes waves—both in Hollywood circles and with Mark's girlfriend (Anne Francis)—when the news hits the local newspaper's gossip column. The situation grows even more complicated when Susan falls in love with her temporary "husband." *Susan Slept Here* is a hyper, colorful film with nonstop gags and farcical action, and Powell and Reynolds have a strong comedic rapport. Of course, despite the humor, watching the



film with contemporary eyes it's hard not to see the creepy and blatant misogyny, sexism, and pedophilia. But this '50s classic comedy is still undeniably entertaining. Recommended. (P. Morehart)

The Taking of Pelham One Two Three ★★★

Kino Lorber, 104 min., R, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

The original 1974 thriller *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* doesn't carry the Oscar-winning classic status of *Dog Day Afternoon* or *The French Connection*, but this ingenious crime caper/hostage drama based on the 1973 novel by John Godey remains one of the great New York crime films of the 1970s. Walter Matthau stars as Zachary Garber, the Everyman head of the transit police who takes charge after a subway car is hijacked and the passengers are held hostage by an armed gang led by soldier of fortune and heist mastermind Bernard Ryder (Robert Shaw), who runs his team like a Special Forces platoon. This is an era before cell phones and wi-fi, so Garber is at the center of communications, negotiating with both the gang and the city to have the ransom money delivered before the baddies start executing hostages. Director Joseph Sargent meets the challenge of the story's sprawl—over multiple locations, with characters connected through phone calls, radio signals, and subway communications lines. And his use of location shooting and street crowds makes New York City a character in its own right. Martin Balsam and Héctor Elizondo costar as members of the gang, while Jerry Stiller and Doris Roberts have small but distinctive roles, and the imposing Julius Harris is solid as a police inspector. Remade in 2009 with Denzel Washington and John Travolta, the original is still something of a cult film for fans of thrillers and action cinema. Newly remastered with extras including audio commentary by actor Pat Healy and film historian Jim Healy, and new cast and crew interviews, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



A Touch of Zen ★★★1/2

Criterion, 180 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95

A masterpiece of Hong Kong cinema, filmmaker King Hu's 1971 romantic chivalry adventure is best known to American audiences as one of the films that inspired Ang Lee's Oscar-winning *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. This story of an honorable scholar named Gu (Shih Chun) who helps a noblewoman (Hsu Feng) on the run from the forces of a corrupt eunuch begins as a conspiracy drama, adds an ingenious game of tricks and traps sprung in the dark, and transforms



through floating, leaping, airborne fights into one of the most beautiful martial arts movies ever made. The promised touch of Zen is introduced by a brotherhood of monks who are dedicated to defending the innocent with nothing but their bare hands against swords. The acrobatics are more balletic and graceful than athletic: the heroes jump (with the help of hidden trampolines) and somersault through the air, leap up trees and over walls, dance on the leaves of branches, and land as if floating like a feather to the ground. Hu accomplishes all of this through smart editing and camerawork—long before the advent of digital effects—along with a dramatic sense of dynamic composition. Presented with a 4K restoration, this handsome Criterion release features extras including a 2012 documentary on Hu, cast and crew interviews, and a booklet with an essay by film scholar David Bordwell. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Where's Poppa? ★★★

Kino Lorber, 82 min., R, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Almost a decade before comedy legend Carl Reiner directed the timelessly silly Steve Martin vehicle *The Jerk*, he helmed the demented dark 1970 comedy *Where's Poppa?*, starring the versatile George Segal as NYC lawyer Gordon Hocheiser, who lives with and attempts to care for his senile 87-year-old mother (Ruth Gordon). But Hocheiser is so fed up with his mother's bonkers behavior that he one day decides to try and scare her to death by barging into her room dressed in a gorilla costume. When this plan is foiled, his only recourse is to hire an incompetent in-home caregiver (Trish Van Devere), who turns out to be a little nuts herself. Soon, however, Hocheiser realizes that he's in love with the bumbling new helper. But when his mom's crazed behavior threatens to alienate his new squeeze, he considers the previously unthinkable: placing his mother in an old folks' home. *Where's Poppa?* generates enough sick humor to make *Blazing Saddles* blush: casual rape jokes, gags at the expense of the elderly and infirm, insensitive handling of racial stereotypes, to name but a few. Still, it has earned its status as a minor cult classic. Extras include an alternate ending. Recommended. (M. Sandlin)



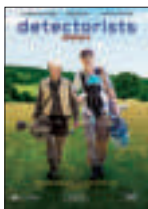
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Detectorists: Series 2

★★★

Acorn, 2 discs, 178 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99



This lovely British comedy created by and starring Mackenzie Crook is the polar opposite of the original *The Office*, the sardonic comedy that launched Crook as the oblivious Gareth. Set in a club of metal detector enthusiasts in a small town in the English countryside, the show stars Crook as Andy, a husband and new father with an archaeology degree but no prospects, and Toby Jones as his best friend Lance, who discovers that he is also a father when he is contacted by the teenage daughter he never knew. The second season is loosely built around the efforts of the Danebury Metal Detecting Club to help a young German man uncover a World War II plane wreck that his grandfather was aboard, although a little research finds suspicious inconsistencies in his story and reveals a secretive meeting with a rival group (the competitive detectorists that they nickname Paul and Art, after Simon and Garfunkel). The first season won the BAFTA award for Best Situation Comedy and the second lets the supporting cast expand their characters and stories, from Andy's schoolteacher wife (Rachael Stirling), who yearns for a change, to comic moments in the field with fellow detectorists. Overall, this is a delightful series with offbeat character-based humor, presented with a genuine warmth that is rare in modern TV comedy. Compiling all six episodes from the 2015 second season, extras include a Christmas special, a behind-the-scenes featurette, and a photo gallery. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses

★★★

Universal, 379 min., not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99



This 2016 follow-up to the original 2012 BBC mini-series *The Hollow Crown* covers the Wars of the Roses through three of Shakespeare's history plays: *Henry VI, Parts 1 & 2* and *Richard III*, edited down to focus on the battle for the British throne. These are darker dramas, full of betrayals and treachery, culminating in the murderous rise to power of Richard III, played as a borderline psychotic by Benedict Cumberbatch in a performance filled with twitchy asides and nervous tics. Cumberbatch's flamboyance steals the show from the more conventional dramatics of the superb cast, which includes Judi Dench, Hugh Bonneville, Sally Hawkins, Adrian Dunbar, Keeley Hawes, and Sophie Okonedo (haunting as the mad deposed queen), and separates the final installment from the somewhat plodding

theatrics of the first two plays. Like the 2012 series, this six-hour production aims for a lavish feature-film look rather than stylized stage sets—shooting in castles, courtyards, and villages, and mounting battles on fields that are full of extras in armor. And even though the plays are truncated here, they remain faithful in spirit to Shakespeare's presentation of British history as a violent, bloody struggle with little honor and many victims falling to the greed of monarchs. Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette and deleted scenes. Sure to be of interest to fans of British TV and historical drama—not to mention Cumberbatch—this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

House of Cards: The Complete Fourth Season

★★★

Sony, 4 discs, 646 min., not rated, DVD: \$55.99, Blu-ray: \$65.99



The fourth season of this Netflix original series starring Kevin Spacey as a ruthlessly ambitious politician who schemes, manipulates, blackmails, and murders his way into the White House opens with (unelected) American President Frank Underwood (Spacey) at loggerheads with First Lady Claire (Robin Wright), his equally ambitious and coldly calculating wife. Claire threatens to walk out on Frank to start her own political career, and Frank stymies her at every turn in order to keep her by his side as he runs for his party's nomination in the next election. But when Frank hovers between life and death after an assassination attempt, Claire takes over the hardball negotiations with Russia over an oil embargo. When Frank recovers, he sets in motion a scheme to make Claire his running mate by holding an open primary and arranging a "spontaneous" groundswell of support for her. Meanwhile, a reporter digs into the scandals that Frank has buried, and Frank's Republican rival (Joel Kinnaman) proves to be as ruthless as Frank at manipulating politicians and sabotaging government plans. This season features a presidential election, an oil crisis, a showdown with a Putin-like Russian prime minister, a military crisis involving an ISIS-like terrorist group, and plenty of backroom dealings, broken promises, and political backstabbing. *House of Cards* remains entertaining, yet the stories imagined by the writers can't quite compete with the real-life political sideshow of the current election season. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2016 fourth season, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Janet King—Series 1: The Enemy Within

★★★

Acorn, 3 discs, 474 min., not rated, DVD: \$49.99

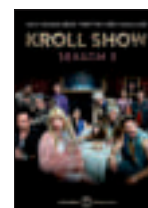
This dense, complex, and compelling Australian legal drama stars Marta Dusseldorp as Janet King, a Senior Crown Prosecutor who

returns to work from maternity leave and immediately becomes embroiled in a controversial case involving a high-ranking senior police officer tangled up in international child pornography. She butts heads with the Chief Superintendent (Vince Colosimo) over a murder case that lacks conclusive evidence (she is proven correct by new evidence) and then finds herself targeted by a vindictive judge—and her family terrorized by a car bomb—when her investigation into the pornography ring leads back to Australian police and judicial officials. In a clever dramatic turn, King bends the rules to take charge of a case that she is too personally involved in to be objective, demanding police action on her hunches and theories—the very behavior she criticized in others earlier. Meanwhile, the show delves into office politics and professional sabotage in the workplace, the collision of prosecutors and the police over the prosecution of crimes, and the media obsession over unverified scandals, all the while King balances work with her new responsibilities as a mother of twins. Intelligent and inventive, *Janet King* plays more like a miniseries (with its interwoven cases) than a traditional legal drama. Presenting all eight episodes from the 2014 first season, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette and a photo gallery. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

**Kroll Show: Season 3**

★★★

Paramount, 2 discs, 231 min., not rated, DVD: \$26.98



The final season of Comedy Central's sketch comedy series *Kroll Show*, starring Dave Kroll as multiple characters, continues the basic premise of previous years—namely, lampooning television itself, especially the reality TV genre, although he sometimes takes aim at sacred cows. Among the latter is the satire "Chairs," a parody of the long-running sitcom *Cheers*, featuring a Boston-based bar that looks remarkably similar to the one in the beloved NBC show, tended by a former sports star (in this case basketball legend Larry Bird). "Pawnsylvania" is Kroll's take on the weirdly popular pawnshop reality programs, here starring two hapless proprietors who seem to get taken a lot by people with something to sell. A couple of recurring sketches, "Gigolo H-O-R-S-E" and "Rich Dicks," are shrug-worthy, but much better is "Karaoke Bullies," in which a long-haired, past-his-prime rock singer tries taking down mean girls who dominate karaoke microphones. Best of all is a spoof on a late night New Age cable program (sporting obligatory cheesy graphics), with Kroll playing the show's clueless host, asking probing questions of guests about "the lizard people"

who supposedly live among us (a related sketch finds Kroll in a Julian Assange-like role, leading hacktivists in a takedown of the lizard people and rapper Macklemore). Guest stars include Jenny Slate, Henry Rollins, John Mulaney, and A Martinez. Compiling all 11 episodes from the 2015 third and last season, extras include bonus sketches. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Last Panthers

★★★

Acorn, 2 discs, 307 min., not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$39.99

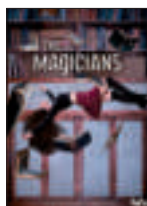
The last Panthers of the title are members of the infamous international network of jewel thieves formed by criminals and soldiers of fortune from the former Yugoslavia. While the "Pink Panthers" are real, this TV miniseries is fiction, a sprawling story that opens on a jewel heist in the French port city of Marseilles where the gang executes a daring daylight robbery but accidentally kills a little girl during the getaway (a first for a group that pointedly does not kill anyone in their heists). While they flee to Serbia to try to sell diamonds that have become too hot to handle, British insurance investigator Naomi Franckom (Samantha Morton) tracks their movements, and driven French-Algerian cop Khalil Rachidi (Tahar Rahim) in Marseilles goes rogue to shake up the underworld of his city and trace the guns used by the gang. What begins as a crime thriller quickly gets tangled up in international politics, corporate corruption, criminal conflicts, and personal stories that reach back to the war in Bosnia, where Franckom served with U.N. peacekeeping forces. That's where she was recruited by her boss and mentor Tom Kendle (John Hurt), a man who keeps his endgame hidden from his investigators. *The Last Panthers* is an intelligent, dense, demanding series that hopscotches all over Europe. Presenting all six episodes of this 2015 miniseries, which aired stateside on Sundance TV, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Magicians: Season One

★★★
Universal, 572 min., not rated, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$44.99

Lev Grossman's bestselling 2009 novel *The Magicians* (and its two sequels) offered an ingenious melding of elements from the *Harry Potter* and *Chronicles of Narnia* series with a real-world setting where troubled, anxious, and sometimes petty young adults discover that they have the potential to master magic. In this Syfy-aired adaptation, the main characters attend Brakebills, an exclusive academy that is basi-



cally an American graduate school of magic, complete with all the drinking, drugs, and sex of real college. Best friends Quentin Coldwater (Jason Ralph) and Julia Wicker (Stella Maeve) are invited to take the entrance exam; Quentin is accepted and joins a kind of co-ed frat of flamboyant students, but Julia is rejected and she bands with a reckless group of rogue magicians (where she discovers just how deadly magic can be). All learn that the *Fillory and Further* fantasy adventure books they read as children were actually based on truth—only tamed and sanitized for young minds. Now, a dark, dangerous power known as "The Beast" is coming to kill them, forcing everyone to work together. Part of the fun of the series is how it challenges the idealized portraits of other YA heroes and heroines, presenting characters who are plagued by the same bad decisions, hormonally-charged emotions, and selfishness and pettiness of real college kids on their own for the first time. Presenting all 13 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Mystery Science Theater 3000: Volume Two

★★★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 4 discs, 360 min., not rated, DVD: \$44.99

Shout! Factory's *Mystery Science Theater 3000: Volume Two* is not a chronological re-release of episodes from the classic cult-TV show (1988-1999), but rather a DVD reissue of MST3K episodes in the order that they appeared on VHS (on the Rhino label). This four-episode set featuring snark commentary from series creator Joel Hodgson and his robot companions—who are imprisoned on a space station—kicks off with *Cave Dwellers*, a re-titling of the 1984 Italian sword-and-sorcery cheapie *Ator: The Blade Master*, followed by *Pod People*, an English-dub remix of the 1983 Franco-Spanish *E.T.* imitator *Extra Terrestrial Visitors*. The film's mix of bad pop music, pseudo-Spielberg wonder, and lamentable monster suits sports added resonance in 2016 for the nickname given its long-nosed alien: "Trumpy." Later, host replacement Mike Nelson takes over for a deserved roasting of 1979's *Angels' Revenge* (aka *Angels' Brigade*), a campy rip-off of the *Charlie's Angels* formula, only with seven beautiful—if not particularly thespian-gifted—women fighting drug-dealing bad guys, whose legions include Jack Palance, Jim Backus, and Peter Lawford. Last up is a feature-length collection of short subjects with the troupe spoofing clunky 1950s classroom films dealing with personal grooming, chicken farming, and wood shop, among other topics. Highly recommended. (C. Cassidy)



Outsiders: Season One

★★★

Sony, 4 discs, 593 min., not rated, DVD: \$45.99

Those still bemoaning the end of *Sons of Anarchy* will find a fit alternative in this WGN America-aired series about the Farrell family, a clan in Kentucky's Appalachian Mountains who have lived for generations according to their own traditions, free of society's rules. Their independence is threatened when a mining company eyes a rich vein of coal beneath the family's communal compound, setting up a potentially violent conflict between the Farrells and the economically struggling local town that has long tolerated the group's lawless ways but now moves, despite the reluctance of Sheriff Houghton (Thomas M. Wright), to evict them: lock, stock, and still. An internal power struggle is also brewing between the family's elderly matriarch, Lady Ray (Phyllis Somerville), and her eldest son, vicious Big Foster (David Morse)—a confrontation heightened when Foster's cousin Asa (Joe Anderson), a black sheep who deserted to the outside world years before, returns to the mountain and becomes a rival for leadership. Asa also resumes his romance with his onetime lover G'Winveer (Gillian Alexy), although she is now involved with Big Foster's son, Lil (Ryan Hurst). Subplots proliferate as young Hasil Farrell (Kyle Gallner) falls for a townie and introduces the clan's dangerously potent brand of moonshine to the locals, while further rifts among the family lead to an insurrection on the mountaintop that closes the season on an ambiguous note when an assault on the Farrell compound threatens to erupt into a full-scale war. Created by Peter Mattei, *Outsiders* is essentially a gritty potboiler with more than a hint of exploitation, but it boasts a good cast, an atmospheric feel, and has the makings of a guilty pleasure. Presenting all 13 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and deleted scenes. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Person of Interest: The Fifth and Final Season

★★★

Warner, 3 discs, 566 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99, Blu-ray: \$44.99

The fifth and final season of this high-concept action thriller brings the long-running story to a satisfying end. Former CIA operative John Reese (Jim Caviezel) and computer genius billionaire Harold Finch (Michael Emerson)—along with their team (renegade hacker Amy Acker and NYPD detective Kevin Chapman)—have gone underground with what's left of "The Machine," an elaborate computer surveillance program that has



developed an artificial intelligence. They are hunted by a powerful rival program that is killing people it views as a threat to its goal of world peace, but the group continues to respond to “the numbers” (which point them to people in trouble) and to look for captured team member Shaw (Sarah Shahi as a former CIA assassin). Not everyone survives in this compelling series that grapples with the issues of surveillance and privacy, as well as the responsibility of gatekeepers. It’s a crime drama, action thriller, and sci-fi parable all rolled into one, featuring strong characters and a genuine moral center. Although once highly-rated, the show lost viewers as the story became increasingly complex, and this final 2016 season was reduced to 13 episodes. Extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Shannara Chronicles: Season One

★★★1/2

Paramount, 3 discs, 410 min., not rated, DVD: \$21.99

Based on the epic fantasy series by novelist Terry Brooks, the MTV-produced *The Shannara Chronicles* attempts to present a sweeping adventure fantasy in the *Lord of the Rings* vein (like Jackson’s trilogy, the show is also shot in New Zealand), only with a limited budget and a cast of attractive young heroes and heroines. The source books conjure up a Tolkien-esque fantasy world of humans, elves, trolls, and gnomes, with prophecies, magic, and heroes fated to go on epic quests. In this series, a half-elf outcast (Austin Butler) with magical Elfstones, a royal elf princess (Poppy Drayton), and a human thief (Ivana Baquero) are tossed together to overcome their differences and save a dying tree that protects the world from demons who want to destroy every race on Earth. The first episode throws magical words and lore at the audience as a Druid (Manu Bennett) arrives to warn the Elf King (John Rhys-Davies) of the demon uprising, kicking off the action. Unfortunately, the show plays like a 1990s cable fantasy series revived in the era of *Game of Thrones*, relying on clichés espoused by young stars who have limited talent and charm. And despite the gorgeous New Zealand locations and CGI enhancements, the series lacks a requisite sense of scope. Still, given the popularity of the novels and the current interest in fantasy TV shows, this may find an audience among teens and young adults. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and a brief interview with Brooks. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Underground: Season One ★★★

Sony, 3 discs, 452 min., not rated, DVD: \$45.99

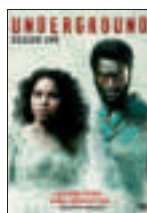
Produced for WGN America, *Underground* is a historical drama about the creation

of the Underground Railroad that helped enslaved blacks in their bids for freedom. Aldis Hodge stars as Noah, who has grown up as a slave working the fields of a Southern plantation and acts the loyal servant while plotting a break for the North, and Jurnee Smollett-Bell is Rosalee, who works in the manor house and becomes a target for sexual assault. Noah and Rosalee form the core of the group that Noah leads through dangerous territory—guided by a map written in cryptic verse—while the reputation of their “Macon 7” spreads through the South and they are tracked by bounty hunters who are after the ever-growing reward. The large ensemble cast includes Christopher Meloni as a bounty hunter who simply sees the situation as a well-paying job, and Marc Blucas and Jessica De Gouw as an idealistic couple who help the “passengers.” *Underground* is an escape drama with the expected tension, action, and drama, but it’s also about the lives of enslaved African Americans living a brutal existence as “property,” and the series addresses both the politics of slavery and cultural racism. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 debut season, extras include episode commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and a gag reel. With the recent selection of Colson Whitehead’s *The Underground Railroad* for Oprah’s Book Club, there is likely to be even greater interest in this release. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Vinyl: The Complete First Season ★★★

HBO, 4 discs, 660 min., not rated, DVD: \$49.99, Blu-ray: \$59.99

This flamboyant drama set in the American music industry of the early 1970s—created for HBO by Martin Scorsese (who directs the pilot episode) and Mick Jagger, along with *Boardwalk Empire* co-creator Terence Winter—features a superb cast, led by Bobby Cannavale as Richie Finestra, head of a failing record company, and Olivia Wilde as his exasperated wife Devon. Richie goes on a drug- and alcohol-fueled binge and comes out re-energized, ready to sign exciting new acts emerging from the punk, hip-hop, and disco cultures of New York City. But he loses his family in the process. Ray Romano, Juno Temple, and James Jagger (Mick’s son) are among the costars of this series that interweaves real-life music figures and historical events (many in flashback) throughout the fictional narrative—with actors standing in for David Bowie, Velvet Underground, the New York Dolls, Led Zeppelin, Alice Cooper, Andy Warhol, and others. Unfortunately, the story turns into a compendium of flamboyant fashions, ‘70s excess, and show business cli-



chés in this series that features a murder and a cover-up, shady deals and backstabbing, and plenty of sex, booze, and cocaine. Although technically impressive—and featuring great music—*Vinyl* doesn’t offer much insight into the music industry or rock lifestyle that hasn’t been done before (and better). Facing low viewership and poor reviews, HBO wound up cancelling the show. Presenting all 10 episodes from the 2016 first and only season, extras include audio commentaries with cast and crew, and behind-the-scenes featurettes. Optional. (S. Axmaker)

The X-Files: The Event Series ★★★1/2

Fox, 264 min., not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$19.99; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$29.99

This much-hyped revival of *The X-Files* reunites David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson as FBI agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, working together again for the first time in more than 15 years, thanks to the efforts of FBI Assistant Director Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and a TV journalist (Joel McHale) who has evidence of government complicity in alien abductions. This brief six-episode 2016 “event series” plays like a digest version of a season of the original show. It’s bookended by a vast conspiracy involving alien DNA implanted in unwitting human subjects, features a very funny episode about a “were-monster” written by fan favorite Darin Morgan, and introduces a pair of young agents (played by Lauren Ambrose and Robbie Amell) whose opposing personalities and mix of science and skepticism mirror the partnership of Mulder and Scully. Creator Chris Carter tries to cram so much into the abbreviated format that he sacrifices character and cleverness along the way, and the final episode ends on a cliffhanger of apocalyptic dimensions (although there is no confirmation whether another series will follow). Many fans were disappointed but watched anyway just for another taste of the Mulder/Scully chemistry, but this is unlikely to interest anyone who is not already devoted to the series. Extras include episode commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



Video Librarian Online

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) for more reviews during September and October, including: *Birds of a Feather: Set 1*, *Colony: Season One*, *Confirmation*, *Jack Irish: Season 1*, *The Knick: The Complete Second Season*, *Naked and Afraid XL: Season 1*, *Suspects: Series One & Two*, *Two Guys and a Girl: Complete Series*, 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

Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras ★★★

(2016) 24 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-520-01142-4.

Narrated by Armando Duran, this iconographic-animated adaptation of author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh's 2015 picture book provides intricate details about the Day of the Dead "calavera" skulls that were made popular by Mexican printmaker and engraver José Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913). The son of a baker who had eight kids, Posada had an older brother—a teacher—who encouraged José to enroll at an art academy, where he learned skills such as lithography. The artist's big break came with his mocking cartoons of local politicians in *The Bumblebee* newspaper. *Funny Bones* looks at Posada's marriage, migration to Mexico City after a devastating flood, and etching techniques that led to his best-known work: the calavera, including the "La Catrina" female dandy skulls used during holiday festivals. Contrasting his festive works with his critically aggressive Mexican Revolution conflict art, the program notes that Posada's fame primarily came from historians and artists such as Diego Rivera who recognized him after his death. Featuring a read-along option and a bonus author's note, this portrait of the life and times of a little-known artist is recommended. Aud: E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

It's a Big World, Little Pig! ★★★1/2

(2016) 9 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-68262-935-2.

Gold medal-winning Olympic figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi likely drew on some of her own personal experiences for her 2012 picture book illustrated by Tim Bowers. In this fun iconographic adaptation, narrated by Susie Berneis, ice-skating pig Poppy is invited to journey from her New "Pork" City home to the World Games competition in Paris. Spurred by encouragement from her family and best friend ("You go, girl!"), Poppy heads for the City of Light, where she meets a variety of other animal contestants who instead of being cutthroat are all very nice and helpful to Poppy. Along the way, Poppy learns various terms in different languages, enjoys new cuisine, and compares costumes with a newfound support system of friends, noting that "Everyone smiles in the same language." The cute and colorful characters all shine in this delightful tale that paints everyone as winners. Featuring a read-along option, this is highly recommended. [Note: also newly available is *Dream Big, Little Pig!*, based on a 2011 book by Yamaguchi and Bowers.] Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Jim Henson's Doozers: Catch a Ride!

★★★★1/2

(2016) 90 min. DVD: \$9.99. NCircle Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Youngsters are bound to get a bit excited over the possibilities of engineering while watching this sprightly animated series. At the show's center is the Pod Squad, a quartet of three-inch tall characters called Doozers (two girls, two boys) who constantly turn

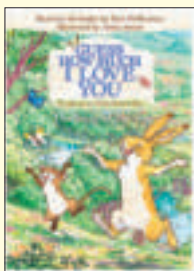
ideas into working inventions. In "Doozer Derby," the crew wants to compete in a hand-made cart race but can't decide what qualities their vehicle should have to win. The answers come when they go on a walk and examine nature's designs, including how a caterpillar moves over bumps, and the way a butterfly's wings lend it speed and agility. In "Up, Up and Away," the team competes in a blimp race but encounters problems with the machine they've devised, ultimately getting out of their jam through improvisation and cooperation. In "Jetpack Away," a super-charged jet pack flies around out of control, and the team must figure out how to catch it (a glimpse of a spider's web provides another clue from the natural world). And in "A Windy Wonder," the Pod Squad build a powerful wind machine with no particular purpose in mind, eventually coming up with a novel idea for how to use it. An entertaining compilation that encourages problem-solving, this is highly recommended. Aud: K, P. (T. Keogh)

LEGO Scooby-Doo!: Haunted Hollywood

★★★

(2016) 75 min. DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.98. Warner Home Video (avail. from most distributors).

The Mystery Inc. crew is back again, this time cashing in on the popularity of the LEGO animation franchise. In *LEGO Scooby-Doo! Haunted Hollywood*, talking dog Scooby and bohemian best buddy Shaggy win a trip to Brickton Studios after crushing the competition in a hamburger-eating contest. Along with Fred, Velma, and Daphne, the crime-solving team lands smack-dab in the middle of a stereotypical mystery, here revolving around the cash-strapped studio's



Guess How Much I Love You: The Song of Spring ★★★1/2

(2016) 80 min. DVD: \$9.99. NCircle Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

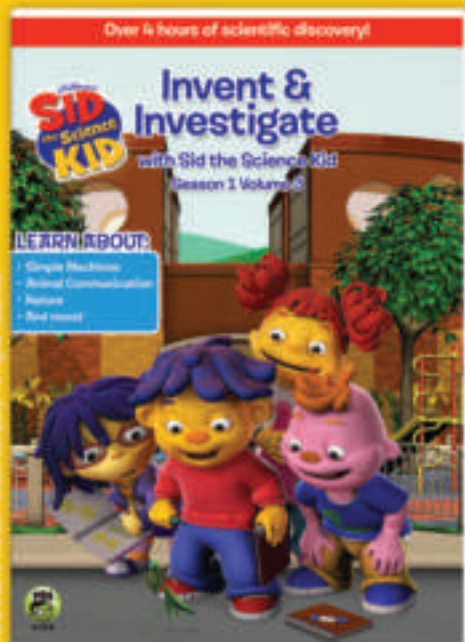
Inspired by the bestselling 1994 children's picture book, *Guess How Much I Love You*, written by Sam McBratney and illustrated by Anita Jeram, *The Song of Spring* serves up a handful of episodes that are typically sweet and full of life lessons, anchored in McBratney's original concept of a young forest critter named Little Nutbrown Hare having a running dialogue with his adoring father, Big Nutbrown Hare. Along with his best friend, Little Field Mouse, the carefree Little Nutbrown Hare learns much about nature and a few things about responsibility. In "Little Green Worm," the duo become fascinated by a caterpillar, but later wonder where it has gone. Big Nutbrown Hare explains that the "worm" (as the boys mistakenly call it) wrapped itself in a chrysalis and has emerged as a beautiful butterfly. "Too Big, Too Small" is a cute piece in which Little Nutbrown Hare realizes that everything in his physical environment seems to appear smaller: rocks, logs, and the distance between stones to hop on in the stream. His dad shows him how his own growth is both inevitable and good. "The Lucky Egg" is a particularly good tale in which the little bunny and mouse find a lone egg on the ground and help a mama bluebird adopt and care for it. When the egg hatches to reveal an owl chick, no one knows what it is. And in "Busy as a Bee," son offers to help father hunt for berries and carrots, but then falls down on the job, getting distracted by temptations to play. A fine compilation, this is highly recommended. Aud: K, P. (T. Keogh)

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Last Stop on Market Street ★★★★★

(2016) 10 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-52001-135-6.

This iconographic-animated adaptation of the 2016 Newbery, Caldecott Honor, and Coretta Scott King Honor picture book by author Matt de la Peña and illustrator Christian Robinson features simply-drawn dot-eyed characters. The story follows young CJ and his spirited grandmother as they make their weekly post-church Sunday pilgrimage across town on the bus. Young CJ wonders why they don't have a car, while Nana smoothly distracts the boy with observations about thirsty trees, while calling the bus a chariot that "breathes fire"—one that is filled with colorful characters, including a curler-bedecked old lady with butterflies in a jar, and a man with a guitar whose music inspires CJ ("the sound gave him the feeling of magic"). Even as they pass boarded-up windows and witness graffiti on their way to help out at a soup kitchen, Granny offers up some poignant advice to the young man: "Sometimes, when you're surrounded by dirt...you're a better witness for what's beautiful." Also featuring a read-along option, this sweet slice-of-life tale is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)



beleaguered films in production and a creepy glowing-head horseman bent on sabotage. Naturally, the gang will become involved in the filming while trying to uncover the identity of costumed troublemaker(s) behind the shenanigans. Featuring LEGO-style characters, a variety of different sound-stage backdrops, and corny songs, this is a well-produced entry (with a voice cameo by Cassandra "Elvira" Peterson in a familiar role) in the long-running series. Extras include bonus featurettes and vintage cartoons. Recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Mack & Moxy: The Great Helpee Heroes

★★★1/2

(2016) 75 min. DVD: \$9.99. NCircle Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Mack & Moxy, which does more than just entertain with fluff, is designed to get children thinking about bigger picture concepts in the community and around the globe. An airy mountaintop lair serves as headquarters for live-action costumed blue moose-like Mack and pink fox-like Moxy, who are alerted by their robot when a distant "Great Helpee" creature is about to hatch. A guiding adult Admirable (here alternately played by Josh Duhamel, Kal Penn, and Eva LaRue) offers up advice and tips along the way, while a new young person trooper helper joins in when the friends are transported to HelpeeLand, after which the program shifts to animation. In each episode, the gang search for the Helpee egg before villain Shelfish Sheldon (voiced by Hank Azaria) gets there first, after which they deposit the orb in the "hatching tree," return home with a happy Helpee, and recap the lesson of the day with live-action vignettes, a sing-along, and more information. The humanitarian-themed episodes focus on different causes: "A Friend Who Reads is a Friend Indeed" touts reading to little ones and promotes Save the Children;

"Always Be Prepared" focuses on an emergency fire escape plan and the American Red Cross; "Feeding Rainbow" adds color to the life of a listless undernourished zebra and highlights Feeding America; and "A Ty-Gr-rrr's Tale" spotlights animal extinction and the World Wildlife Federation. Sporting the tagline "raising the next generation of great humanitarians," this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Odd Squad: The O Games ★★★★★

(2016) 75 min. DVD: \$12.99. PBS Video (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 978-1-62789-639-9.

This Canadian-American live-action TV series for kids (airing on PBS in the U.S.) serves up a delightful pastiche of paranormal entertainment (with a layer of gizmo giddiness) while sneaking in basic math and science principles. The titular Odd Squad is an agency run by kids to investigate strange and often comic phenomena, such as a car that turns adult passengers into children, and a cello that sounds like a brass instrument. Agents Olive (Dalila Bela) and Otto (Filip Geljo) are the pint-size sleuths who wield various fix-it machines. But sometimes they're mystified by a case, and have to pay a visit to the Math Room, where a talking computer helps them to see how their problems can be solved, usually through number patterns or measuring differences between things. Of the five episodes compiled here, the titular "O Games" is actually the worst, a confusing clunker. But other episodes shine, including "Bad Luck Bears," in which a basketball team is plagued by balls that zip around chaotically under their own power (Olive and Otto discover that the players are affected by the number 13). In "Not So Splash," the Odd Squad's tyrannical boss becomes irritated when her favorite swimming pool is covered in snow and ice during a hot summer. And the funny "Skip Day" concerns an outbreak of craziness

when people—including Olive—keep skipping steps in various tasks, requiring Otto to hit the Math Room to try to uncover the pattern. A high-energy series full of random weirdness and off-the-wall performances, this is recommended. Aud: E, P. (T. Keogh)

Steven Universe: The Return ★★★★★

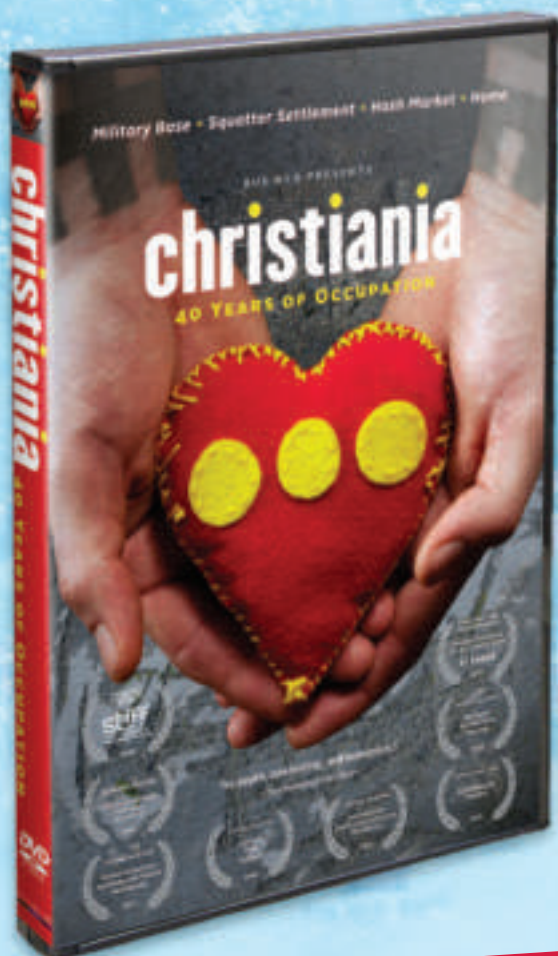
(2015) 132 min. DVD: \$14.98. Warner Home Video (avail. from most distributors).

Compiling 12 episodes from the animated series airing on Cartoon Network, *Steven Universe* centers on the Gems—out-of-this-world superheroes—and their half-human/half-Gem ally, a boy named Steven. Up first are "Mirror Gem" and "Ocean Gem," a two-part story in which Steven gets hold of a hand-mirror that talks to him via replayed images, leading to a revelation that an angry Ocean Gem exists and has stolen Earth's waters. "Space Race" finds Steven lobbying the team to get out into space, while in "Warp Tour" the Gems doubt that Steven actually saw some kind of sentient being outside the interdimensional stream in which they travel. "Alone Together" is about the consequences of a physical and mental fusion of Steven and his little friend Connie. Not everything is explained here, and often story threads are left unfinished, but the Gems remain funny and persuasively powerful, telling Steven just enough to give him some answers about where they come from. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

Tom and Jerry: Back to Oz ★1/2

(2016) 81 min. DVD: \$19.98. Warner Home Video (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

This shotgun fusion of *The Wizard of Oz* with Tom and Jerry animated mayhem is both ridiculous and awkward. The premise of this animated movie finds Dorothy back in Kansas with her family, the farmhands, Toto, and...the always feuding Tom and Jerry. Dorothy has the ruby slippers, but also a boatload of trouble: creditors are ready to seize the farm's animal assets unless Uncle Henry and Aunt Em can pay what they owe in 24 hours. Meanwhile, one of those scary flying monkeys has turned up to steal the ruby slippers, and the Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and Scarecrow have also crossed over from Oz to enlist Dorothy in a fight against a new villain called the Gnome King. Can they get from Kansas back to the Emerald City to save the day? Well, it turns out that the Wizard is just down the road. While the Oz material makes sense, the Tom and Jerry shenanigans are from a different entertainment universe altogether, and the film frequently stops in its tracks for them to chase each other, throw pitchforks, and generally play out their endless war—which has nothing to do with Oz. Extras include an alternate version (with a sepia-tone opening), and sing-along music videos. Not recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)



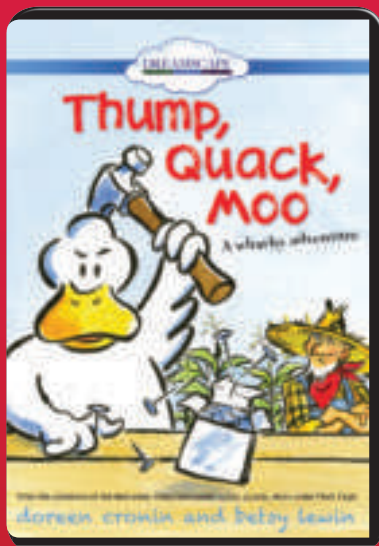
The Last Free City?

Christiania, also known as Freetown Christiania, is a self-proclaimed autonomous neighborhood in Copenhagen. For decades, Freetown has existed as a testimony to an alternative way of life, where hash was sold openly and squatters' shacks jostled comfortably with architect-designed eco-sheds. The young people who moved in truly believed they could create rewarding lives for themselves and their children built on freedom, imagination, and community.

Available September 20, 2016

857326006441 \$24.99

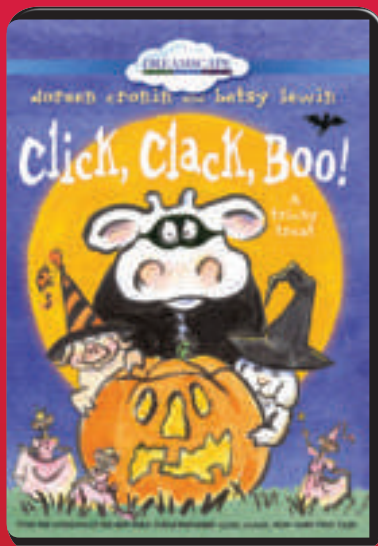
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DREAMSCAPE

Wabbit: Season One, Part One ★★

(2015) 2 discs. 296 min. DVD: \$19.98. Warner Home Video (avail. from most distributors).

There are three things to like about this reboot of the animated *Looney Tunes* universe. First, the title. Second, Bugs and company are not computer-animated like their Disney counterparts. Third, this series is a welcome return to the classic characters' Termite Terrace roots, meaning that each episode contains two Bugs Bunny cartoons (as opposed to *Tiny Toon Adventures*, in which the core Warner Bros. cartoon characters were teachers to the next generation). But after that, it's all downhill. Whereas the vintage cartoons are timeless, these new frantic but not very funny shorts make the mistake of setting the mayhem squarely in the contemporary world. Do we really need a cartoon in which Yosemite Sam tries to buy a cell phone from Bugs? Or another in which Bugs is pitted against ninjas? Familiar characters have also been given personality do-overs: Wile E. Coyote is now Bugs's know-it-all neighbor, and the Tasmanian Devil is an accountant repressing his wild side. There are sporadic laughs to be found in the 26 episodes from 2015-16 featured here, but it's painful—and this may be unfair, coming from a Baby Boomer—to think of this as a child's introduction to Bugs Bunny. Optional. Aud: P. (D. Liebenson)

You and Me ★★1/2

(2015) 6 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-68141-248-1.

Illustrator Peter H. Reynolds's classic pen-and-watercolor artwork takes center stage in this iconographic-animated adaptation of author Susan Verde's 2015 picture book. Narrated by Elizabeth Cottle, the story centers on comic anthropomorphic cats who are total BFFs, paid tribute to with a rhyming tale that explores the origins of the pals' friendship and posits various "what ifs" had the two not met ("What if I had slept in? Covers pulled up to my chin."). Giddy about their "perfect timing...all the stars aligning," the friends enjoy activities including visiting a carnival photo booth, and scooter-riding. An unremarkable tale that nevertheless underscores the joys of friendship, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

You Are (Not) Small ★★

(2016) 5 min. DVD: \$59.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-0-54593-828-0.

Winner of the 2015 Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, this animated adaptation of husband and wife author Anna Kang and illustrator Christopher Weyant's 2014 picture book features narration by Weyant, Michael Crouch, and Emily Eiden. In this simply drawn ink-and-watercolor story, a large orangey bear-like creature tells a littler purplish bear-like creature "You are small," which earns the retort "I am not small, you



Randolph Caldecott: The Man Who Could Not Stop Drawing ★★★

(2016) 35 min. DVD: \$59.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-0-545-87920-0.

Based on the 2013 book by Leonard S. Marcus, this biographical portrait narrated by Gemma Dawson sheds light on the life and career of English artist and illustrator Randolph Caldecott, namesake of the acclaimed annual medals for distinguished American children's picture books. Born the third of seven children in 1846 in Chester, England, Caldecott attended the King's School, where he doodled in his book margins. Described as good-looking and easygoing, Caldecott's work as a bank clerk left plenty of time for his art, leading to painting classes and social clubs that served as a springboard for his illustrations in the *London News* and later work on travel guidebooks and as a correspondent. Talented at depicting movement in his art, the diligently hardworking Caldecott joined forces with authors such as Washington Irving and, most famously, color printer Edmund Evans, with whom he created his first picture books. Touching on Caldecott's marriage and lifelong bouts of poor health, as well as his influences on future icons including Beatrix Potter, this is a solid tribute to a man who had a major impact on the history of children's literature. Recommended. Aud: E, I, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

are big." Orange and Purple soon realize that having similarly-sized friends doesn't make for concrete evidence on either side. And the arrival of a parachuting pink smaller bear-like creature and an absolutely enormous blue one (viewers can only see its legs) add a twist—although the group eventually finds universal common ground. Bonus features include a read-along option, and a featurette with Kang and Weyant. Recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

PSYCHOLOGY & SELF-HELP

How to Dance in Ohio ★★★

(2015) 89 min. DVD: \$29.95 (avail. from most distributors), \$349 w/PPR (avail. from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber. Closed captioned.

Alexandra Shiva's disability-empowerment documentary joins a number of documentaries on autism and Asperger's syndrome, although the spotlight here is on females. A Columbus, OH, clinic run by Dr. Emilio Amigo arranges for a group of teenage girls on the higher-functioning end of the spectrum to focus their uncertain social skills on preparing for a school formal dance. Cameras follow Marideth (16), Caroline (19), and Jessica (22) in their therapy sessions, at home with families, or together as they navigate the challenges of choosing their own dates, finding appropriate dresses, and overcoming their apprehension, while gearing up for a coming-of-age ritual that even daunts "normal" (whatever that means) awkward adolescents. The fact that these young ladies are college age with parents who worry about their daughters' ability to sustain themselves in jobs or on campus brings up larger issues that are somewhat beyond the scope of this film, but still somewhat neatly distilled in the momentous trial of a seemingly

minor rite of passage. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Memory Hackers ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-626-9.

Would you like to remember everything that happened to you every day in your life? Some people have that gift, which is dubbed "highly superior autobiographical memory." Filmmaker Anna Lee Strachan's PBS-aided NOVA documentary notes that "memory is the key to our identity," yet it remains one of the biggest mysteries in science today. Memories are changeable and dynamic, can be stored in different parts of the brain, and long-term memories are critical in defining who we are. For years, it was thought that memory was like a book in a library, which could be pulled from the shelves, examined, and then returned to its proper place (aging would sometimes cause the "book" to get lost on the shelves). However, new technology suggests that the brain operates more like a computer, in which recalling a memory is similar to opening a file. The mere act of remembering can alter an memory, and memories can be unreliable, causing people to misunderstand and misinterpret what they think they remember. These false memories have major implications for our criminal justice system. Doctors have recently used new insights to edit people's bad memories and worst fears, currently more along the lines of phobias regarding spiders and snakes, but with possible future implications for fighting addictions or post-traumatic stress disorder. Memory is an evolutionary skill that allows us to "time travel to the past," but as one young memory master says, remembering everything includes all of the bad stuff that most of us would prefer to forget. Drawing on cutting-edge research, this exploration of

how memory works is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

George for Real ★★★

(2015) 55 min. DVD: \$9.99. CTA (dist. by Vision Video).

The founder and guiding light since the 1950s of a global Christian ministry called Operation Mobilization is given loving tribute in this documentary. George Verwer, who was inspired to devote his life to God after seeing Billy Graham at Madison Square Garden in 1955, is an outspoken proponent of radical discipleship (in which Christians try to live and act as Jesus did—including rejecting materialism and “turning the other cheek”). Today, he continues to be an inspiration to some and a figure of controversy to others with his uncompromising views on the Christian faith. Operation Mobilization spring from Verwer’s convictions that every person should hear the Gospel at least once, and it started with Verwer’s trip from his native New Jersey with friends and a vanload of literature to spread the gospel in Mexico. Currently, the organization numbers nearly 7,000 and has a global reach. Although in recent years Verwer has passed leadership duties on to others, he remains actively involved in direct ministry efforts. Now a senior, the clear-speaking and passionate Verwer continues to be an inspiration to others. Recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)

In the Name of the Temple ★★★

(2016) 52 min. DVD: \$59; public libraries & high schools; \$279 w/PPR: colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

Filmmaker Charles Enderlin, a Middle

East correspondent for a French TV channel, looks at Israeli expansion into the West Bank, linking it to the rise of a fundamentalist and messianic arm of Judaism that rose in the wake of the Six-Day War in June 1967, when Israeli forces occupied the Temple Mount in Jerusalem—a holy site for both Muslims and Jews—for the first time in 2,000 years. Some religious leaders in Israel viewed the occupation as a divine sign, whipping up nationalism and fundamentalism to expand the Jewish state. That expansion would include extending and building new Jewish settlements in Palestinian territory in the West Bank, and called for construction of a new temple on the Temple Mount, destroying the mosque Haram esh-Sharif (as Temple Mount is known to Muslims) in the process. Enderlin attempts to stay above the fray as he details the war, occupation of the Temple Mount, post-war religious fervor, West Bank expansion, conciliatory work of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (and his eventual assassination by a right-wing zealot), and the efforts of those hoping to construct a new temple (as well as opponents). Combining archival and contemporary footage with interviews of Jewish and Islamic leaders (as well as people who fought in the war), this is a fascinating study, although perhaps a bit too short for the complicated subject. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Morehart)

Unexpected Journey: From Cancer to a Higher Calling ★★★

(2016) 34 min. DVD: \$19.99. Vision Video.

Four Christian cancer survivors are at the center of filmmaker Don Albert’s documentary, which explores the heightening of faith and sense of purpose that often accompanies the onset of disease. Varied individuals open up about their histories battling cancer, talk

about where they were found support, and discuss the ways in which they struggled to reconcile their love of God with seemingly pointless suffering. In each case, the survivors passed through stages of fear, sorrow, and anger before accepting that their trials offered an opportunity to put themselves in God’s hands and be carried to the titular higher calling. One woman completed her music education and mastered the oboe, hoping to bring joy and be a voice for God, while others turned their attention to helping people with cancer. Cutting back and forth between interviews while also interspersing comments from the subjects’ healthcare providers and relatives, this inspiring documentary full of hope and love is recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

SOCIAL & POLITICAL ISSUES

American DREAMers ★★★

(2015) 88 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$200; public libraries & high schools; \$350; colleges & universities. DRA. Tugg. PPR.

With immigration policy taking center stage in the current presidential campaign, filmmakers Jenniffer Castillo and Saray Deiseil’s *American DREAMers* is a timely documentary about the plight of the undocumented in America. It follows a 3,000-mile walk that a group of seven people—Veronica Gomez, Jonatan Martinez, Raymi Gutierrez, Javier Hernandez, Jose Sandoval, Nico Gonzalez, and Alex Aldana—made from San Francisco to Washington, D.C., in 2012 to advocate for the passage of the so-called Dream Act, which would have allowed those brought to the country as children to remain and become eligible for legal status. Since most of the marchers fell into that category, their participation could actually have put them at risk of deportation. The film is a homespun affair that mixes footage from their difficult trek—including a sit-in at the Denver office of the Obama re-election campaign, encouraging the president to take executive action in the absence of legislative change—and excerpts from later interviews with the marchers. The documentary also recounts Obama’s 2012 decision to order an amendment of then-current practice by establishing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), which provides a two-year postponement of deportation proceedings for young people who qualify—although not their parents. Even though this 2015 film does not include coverage of recent court actions that have stymied Obama’s effort to expand DACA, it personalizes an issue that is too often treated in an abstract manner, and thereby helps humanize the strident political debate over immigration. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Torchlighters: The Martin Luther Story ★★★

(2016) 30 min. DVD: \$19.99. Vision Video.

The story of the German theologian and monk who became a key figure in the Protestant Reformation of the early 16th-century is told in this animated film from the acclaimed *Torchlighters* series. Martin Luther’s life was full of drama, as he engaged in an escalating war of words with the Church of Rome and Pope Leo X, while also stirring up ordinary Germans who were tired of being frightened by warnings of purgatorial suffering (and swindled with offers to buy indulgences). Luther dangerously refused to retract his allegedly heretical writings, which placed both his freedom and life in jeopardy. Presented as a brawny, square-jawed hero (not quite matching the softer images of him in paintings), this Luther is an expansive teacher, confident intellectual, and persistent advocate of a decentralized Christianity in which sinners are given to understand that redemption comes from God’s love, not papal power. Luther is no firebrand superhero: he looks grim and burdened while famously nailing his “Ninety-Five Theses” to the door of a church, and when blindsided by an extreme threat if he fails to denounce his voluminous and popular writings at odds with Rome, he appears vulnerable and frightened. In other words, while this is a cartoon biography, Luther is not a two-dimensional character, but rather a deeply committed human figure. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)



The Black Jacket ★★★

(2016) 95 min. DVD: \$19.99. Virgil Films (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Although rough-looking, filmmaker Ryan Simon's cinema vérité-style *The Black Jacket* is a persuasive documentary that centers on the interventionist philosophy of former Black Panther Aquil Basheer, who has been working to curb gang violence in L.A.'s South Central since 1969. Basheer, atypically dressed in a suit and tie, receives a \$25,000 California Peace Prize in recognition of his contributions to society, and the L.A. city council formally adopts his nonprofit Professional Community Intervention Training Institute as the city's go-to program for solutions to gang violence. But the bulk of the film doesn't focus on Basheer's work with gangs (in fact, the camera tends to point downward when an encounter with an actual gang member occurs). Instead, Simon concentrates on the multi-week training course that Basheer and his staff provide well-screened community volunteers, teaching de-escalation and intervention techniques to use in confrontational situations. Simon follows a couple of individual students from one class in order to gauge the impact of the training on people's hearts and minds. Basheer was recently invited to speak before the United Nations in Geneva, a testament to the effectiveness of his methods. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

East Jerusalem West Jerusalem ★★★

(2016) 84 min. In English & Hebrew w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.95. Film Movement (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Co-directors Erez Miller and Henrique Cymerman capture an eight-day recording session in which Israeli and Palestinian musicians came together in solidarity. Israeli singer-songwriter David Broza spearheaded the 2013 gathering, which resulted in the album *East Jerusalem/West Jerusalem*. Broza was born in Haifa, but grew up in Madrid, returning to Israel at the age of 19 to serve his mandatory military service. In the army, Broza spent most of his time playing music, but his firsthand experience with armed conflict in the first Lebanon War of 1982 encouraged him to shift specifically towards protest music. While recording, Broza shares vocal duties with producer Steve Earle, Israeli-Palestinian Mira Awad, and Palestinian Muhammad Mughrabi (a member of the hip-hop group G-Town). Mughrabi, who grew up in a refugee camp as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War, feels isolated from both Israelis and Palestinians. "I don't know what I am," he says with a resigned smile. Other players include Palestinian guitarist Issa Freij, Israeli drummer Alon Nadel, Israeli-Palestinian oud player Elias Wakileh, and Israeli percussionist Gadi Seri. Awad believes that the differences in inflection between Arabic and Hebrew actually reinforce cultural misunderstandings. "In a weird way," she notes, "English—of the

British colonies—has become the bridging language between Arabs and Jews." The group's repertoire, a mix of old and new songs, incorporates all three languages, with the most recognizable tunes including Earle's "Jerusalem" and Nick Lowe's "(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love, and Understanding." The vibe here is so relaxed that it comes as a surprise to hear right-wing youth yelling anti-Arab slogans on the streets during Jerusalem Day. But Broza's project serves as a hopeful sign that such sentiments may someday become outdated. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

Ni Aquí, Ni Allá (Neither Here, Nor There) ★★★

(2014) 24 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$89; public libraries, \$250; colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. PPR.

Filmmaker Gabriela Bortolamedi's documentary focuses on a family of undocumented immigrants in the San Joaquin Valley, with voiceover narration provided by the oldest daughter and her unnamed parents. Twenty-year-old Blanca, who speaks primarily in English, says that she was six when the family moved from Mexico in 2000. Her father had high hopes regarding their financial fortunes, but he and his wife are manual laborers, and money is in short supply (she also has a younger sister). Since her father works in lawn maintenance, he has to pay for the seeds that he uses to plant grass, but this can be difficult as clients don't always reimburse him in a timely manner. Both parents

have been encouraging Blanca's ambitions to become a doctor. Because they don't speak English, she helps them communicate with clients through regular cell phone exchanges. With their help, she's able to live in Berkeley while attending college, but the downside is that sometimes her parents barely have enough money left over for groceries. When things get tight, Blanca says, they alternate between a week of rice and a week of beans. She visits them as often as she can, but worries because authorities could deport them at any time. Blanca's parents expect her to support them when she's older, but instead of considering this expectation a burden, Blanca plans to buy them a house someday. A timely portrait of a hard-working undocumented family trying to attain the American Dream, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

Oil & Water ★★★1/2

(2014) 78 min. In English, Spanish & Cofán w/English subtitles. DVD: \$295. Stir It Up Productions (dist. by Bullfrog Films). PPR. SDH captioned. ISBN: 1-94154-516-5.

Filmmakers Francine Strickwerda and Laurel Spellman Smith tackle the sad state of crude-oil pollution on the upper Amazon River in Ecuador, centering on two culture-crossed eco-activists whose unusual backstories give viewers hope that the next generation will help atone for the last. Hugo Lucitante was an adolescent member of the Cofán tribe who garnered world attention by addressing the United Nations about petroleum spills that despoiled his ancestral



Saudi Arabia Uncovered ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-684-9.

Saudi Arabia is a "kingdom at a crossroads." For decades, the oil-rich nation has been ruled by the ultra-conservative royal House of Saud under the strict system known as Sharia law. Now, however, a crash in oil prices has exposed generational and religious divisions, and led to widespread poverty. Filmmaker James Jones's PBS-aided *Frontline* documentary takes viewers on an undercover tour of today's Saudi Arabia, using concealed cameras operated by Saudi dissidents (critics whose voices and identities are distorted and cloaked, as they would pay a steep price if discovered). Public floggings are common, as are more severe punishments such as stoning and execution. Religious police have been known to pull patrons out of cafés, forcing them to attend prayer services. Although the royal family makes half-hearted attempts to rein in these zealots, the abuses continue. Great inequality of wealth stresses Saudi society, and its rulers feel threatened by archenemy Iran, as well as the demands for reform that surfaced in the wake of the Arab Spring. Above all, Saudi rulers want stability, and conservative religious schools have been formed as a means of control. Unfortunately, anti-Western, anti-Semitic rhetoric has also encouraged fanaticism and terror (a majority of the 9/11 hijackers were from Saudi Arabia) in a nation where even bloggers and female automobile drivers are perceived as a threat. Although the West's need for Saudi oil has diminished, the country is a necessary, if also repressive, ally within an increasingly violent and chaotic Middle East. No easy solutions are in sight, and controversies about the pace of change and the role of women will likely continue to dominate the country's future. Offering a solid overview of contemporary Saudi Arabia, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

lands. As a consequence, Hugo was sponsored by an American woman to attend school in Seattle, where he received a Western-style education that he could then use to help his people. Graduating (in full tribal regalia), Hugo also married an American girl named Sadie, and the young couple go back and forth between a U.S. existence and living in the rainforest (Sadie adapts well to the hunter/gatherer routine). Meanwhile, David Poritz, who was a precocious schoolboy, also started fighting early for Ecuador's Amazon, ultimately founding a fair-trade NGO that tries to work positively in cooperating with energy multinationals (chiefly Chevron). Both heroes' paths cross during the eight-year narrative arc, during which the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil-rig blowout in the Gulf of Mexico occurs. Presenting both the full-length film and a 55-minute abridged version, this inspiring eco-activist true tale is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Sex, Lies and Tabloids! ★★★

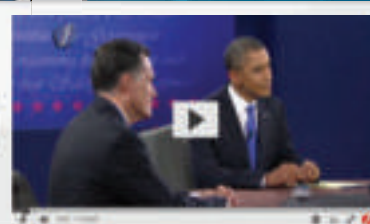
(2015) 52 min. DVD: \$390. Icarus Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

A more interesting documentary than the titillating title might suggest, filmmaker Jean-Baptiste Périé's *Sex, Lies and Tabloids!* is indeed about the surge of tabloid newspaper culture that emerged in Britain and the U.S. beginning in the 1970s. But the film is largely told from the insider perspective of writers and editors—from London's *The Sun* and *News of the World*, and America's *New York Post*, *The Star*, and *National Enquirer*—who were on the frontlines, putting out daily papers full of juicy stories about celebrities, sports figures, and politicians. Tabloid reporters and paparazzi might well be leeches, but the interviewees (all male) here turn out to be interesting individuals who were passionate about their jobs, had fun, and clearly remember how things worked at those publications before it all changed. The film begins with the seismic shift that Rupert Murdoch brought to Fleet Street tabloids, focusing on scandals, soccer, and nudity, the latter a staple at *The Sun* with its infamous "Page 3 girls." The point, says one former writer, was to give a reader something comfortable and entertaining to read instead of what "fuddy-duddies" said he should read. Trade secrets are also explained, including the extreme exploitation of the always-newsworthy Princess Diana's every move. In the U.S., the emphasis on celebrity gossip changed with the trial of O.J. Simpson, which blurred the line between exploitation and actual reporting, while also forcing the mainstream press to become more tabloid-like. The gruesome death of Diana and public outrage aimed at tabloids for their ghoulish coverage of the tragedy marked the beginning of the industry's decline, as tabloids have since waned in popularity (at least in print). Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



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Tender ★★★

(2013) 73 min. DVD: \$320. DRA. Documentary Educational Resources. PPR.

Filmmaker Lynette Wallworth presents a warm and memorable view of an Australian community's distinctive consideration of matters involving life and death. In the New South Wales town of Port Kembla, the local council decides to create their own nonprofit funeral business, an unlikely endeavor spurred by concerns over the rising costs of funerals, coupled with the perceived indifference that many feel funeral homes exhibit toward grieving clients. After organizing the Community Funerals Steering Committee, the council researches uncomfortable subjects, including whether it is more appropriate to keep the deceased's body at home or store it at a funeral parlor. But the philosophical and organizational aspects of this venture are interrupted when the council's caretaker is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Following this sad development, *Tender* chronicles how the council members assist their beloved caretaker during the final stretches of his life. A touching and sincere film about end-of-life issues, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Yoani's Trip ★★★

(2014) 70 min. In Portuguese & Spanish w/ English subtitles. DVD: \$89; high schools & public libraries; \$350; colleges & universities. PRAGDA. PPR.

In 2013, a change to Cuban passport laws enabled controversial blogger Yoani Sánchez to leave her country for a trip abroad (she was previously rejected 20 times). Filmmakers Peppe Siffredi and Raphael Bottino's documentary follows Sánchez on a February 2013 trip to Brazil, where she is greeted with a mix of praise and hostility. Sánchez's schedule is packed with media interviews and guest appearances at special events, but she is constantly shadowed by angry protestors who call her a traitor to both her country and the spirit of the Castro revolution. Sánchez appears to be mostly amused by her detractors—it is never entirely clear who is organizing their efforts—and her presence in Brazil is overwhelmingly greeted with positive feedback from the reporters, government officials, and students she encounters. While the film offers disturbing insights into the extreme measures used by the Cuban government to censor and limit Internet access for its people, Sánchez's power as a writer is presented mostly by reputation. Relatively little of the writing from her famous "Generation Y" blog is offered (her relatively mild criticism of the Castro regime and the problems facing Cubans seems rather tame by the roughhouse standards of American blogging). What *Yoani's Trip* does highlight, however, is the continued lack of free expression in Cuba. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

TEEN ISSUES

Ten Ways to Stay Safe on the Internet

★★★1/2

(2016) 22 min. DVD: \$149.95 (teacher's guide included). Human Relations Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62706-079-0.

Hosted by two young people named Victoria and Nick, and featuring interviews with peers, this guidance program covers essential Internet safety strategies, offering direct language that is sure to hit home with the target audience ("Imagine a bathroom with no door—or a bedroom with no curtains. There's no such thing as privacy on the Internet."). The tips covered here include the sterling advice of not having the same password for different accounts (a sensitive subject for many but key to keeping accounts protected), texting and driving (don't), texting and walking (don't), and "sexting" (don't). Not only is the latter a bad idea in general, but many teens don't realize that provocative pictures of anyone under the age of 18 can be considered child pornography (several high-profile cases are mentioned here). While much of this is common sense, some points are less well-known, such as the fact that metadata attached by default to most photos shows the geographic coordinates where the photos were taken (which can reveal more information than intended when photos are posted to the Internet). Also offered are suggestions on managing privacy settings and a discussion of the risks of certain apps claiming that photos disappear instantly—not always the case. A

solid, helpful guide to increasing one's safety on the Internet, this is highly recommended. Aud: J, H, C, P. (C. Block)

LAW & CRIME

First Degree ★★★1/2

(2015) 27 min. DVD: \$295. DRA. Alexander Street Press. PPR.

Two-time Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Roger Weisberg (*Sound and Fury, Why Can't We Be a Family Again?*) directed this intriguing documentary short on efforts by New York's notorious Sing Sing Prison to reduce recidivism through higher education. A primary force in this endeavor is Sean Pica, who first came to Sing Sing as a 16-year-old convict, earned his bachelor's degree while incarcerated and later returned to run the prison's education program in conjunction with Mercy College. Also interviewed is Jermaine Archer, a former drug dealer and convicted murderer who is banking on his degree to help facilitate a successful reintegration with the outside world. The film records a graduation ceremony within the prison, with legendary singer/actor Harry Belafonte serving as the commencement speaker, offering an upbeat pep talk for the unlikely student body. The documentary also details how the program provides job-hunting consultation involving work-appropriate clothing, resumé writing, and interview training (one graduate, Clarence Maclin, directly benefits from learning these skills, gaining work as a social worker counseling juvenile offenders). Most important here is the observation that invest-



Dream/Killer ★★★

(2015) 109 min. DVD: \$29.95 (avail. from most distributors), \$390 w/ PPR (avail. from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber. Closed captioned.

Andrew Jenks's documentary is one of a growing number of films and miniseries (including *The Thin Blue Line*, the *Paradise Lost* trilogy, and *Making a Murderer*) about individuals who may have been wrongly incarcerated, often as a result of police and prosecutorial misconduct. *Dream/Killer* recounts the case of Ryan Ferguson, a young Missouri man who was convicted (on the basis of eyewitness testimony) in 2005 of the 2001 murder of a newspaper reporter and then sentenced to 40 years in prison. Ferguson was freed only in 2013 after newly-discovered facts were submitted to the court of appeals and witnesses recanted, most notably the man who claimed to have been with Ferguson during the killing and had pled guilty himself. Interviews with Ferguson and news footage of the original trial provide context, but the story is told primarily through the recollections of Ferguson's father, Bill, who refused to accept the verdict, doggedly collected exculpatory evidence, mounted what was virtually a one-man publicity campaign to win public support for his cause, and engaged the help of Kathleen Zellner, a high-profile attorney with a record of success in exoneration appeals. Zellner here speaks eloquently about how the legal system is stacked against overturning verdicts—even when the evidence of wrongful conviction is overwhelming. Making a compelling argument for better justice in the legal system (the prosecutor in the original trial remains a judge in Missouri despite abundant indications that he acted improperly), this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

ment in education proves to be cost-effective: recidivism among graduates of the Sing Sing program is miniscule. Unfortunately, funding for this type of program has been shrinking over the years while the U.S. prison population has been ballooning. A moving tribute to the power of education, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

NATURE, MATH & SCIENCE

The Creeping Garden ★★½

(2015) 82 min. DVD: \$99.95: public libraries & high schools; \$350: colleges & universities. The Cinema Guild. PPR. ISBN: 0-7815-1533-5.

Filmmakers Tim Grabham and Jasper Sharp's documentary begins with grainy archival footage of a 1973 news report on a phenomenon with sci-fi overtones: the appearance in Dallas backyards of mysterious, bulbous blobs—with reporter John Chancellor concluding that the frightening growths were simply fungus. But that's not quite right: they were slime mold, a perfectly natural phenomenon that is also very creepy, in which single-cell organisms feed on bacteria clustered on decomposing matter to form glossy shapes that grow and even move. Grabham and Sharp use the conventions of horror movies—a weird score, artful camerawork, evocative lighting—to investigate the phenomenon, following hobbyist Mark Pragnell (who roams the forest searching for molds), and visiting a museum where a huge collection of molds has been stored and meticulously catalogued. The filmmakers also introduce people who have devised odd ways of mimicking the mold's workings, including a researcher who has constructed a disembodied robot head that changes expressions due to the inner movements of the organism, a musician who connects a keyboard to mold cultures to produce a kind of music, and an artist who encourages volunteers to join together with yellow ropes and imitate the mold's motions. The employment of time-lapse sequences leads to an engaging digression on the invention of this popular photographic technique and its use in a groundbreaking short on slime molds as long ago as 1931. Finally, a scientist opines that if all the myriad species of slime mold were eliminated from the planet, we might never notice, as slime mold has no known environmental function. A haunting odd-ball documentary, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Dugong and Din ★★★

(2016) 50 min. DVD: \$39.95. DRA. Film Ideas. PPR.

This Animal Planet-aired documentary calls attention to endangered marine life through a look at the relationship between

an island boy and a sea creature. Eight-year-old Din, son of a fisherman, lives on the island of Mantanani (pop. 200) in the South China Sea. Din's people rely on the sea for their livelihood, but fishing hauls have been decreasing in recent years. When he's supposed to be at school, Din takes his canoe into the bay to commune with nature. One day he encounters a dugong (or seacow), and although initially wary, soon realizes that the 7-year-old male just wants to play. Narrated by actor Sean Pertwee, the film notes that dugongs are plant-eating mammals with poor eyesight but excellent hearing. Unlike their cousin, the manatee, dugongs can't survive in fresh water (since they have tusks, dugongs are also connected

to elephants). Din's mentor, a boat builder, tells Din that dugongs date back thousands of years, and usually travel in packs. While grazing for sea grass for hours at a time, dugongs dislodge residue that helps to feed smaller animals. As Din spends more time with the dugong, they develop a rapport, although the latter's survival is also threatened by illegal fish bombing—explosions that also destroy coral beds, and make fishing more difficult for net-wielding islanders, such as Din's father. Just as the dugong disappears, Din's truancy catches up with him, but a happy ending awaits following the capture of the fish bombers and the return of fish to the bay. Recommended. Aud: E, I, P. (K. Fennessy)

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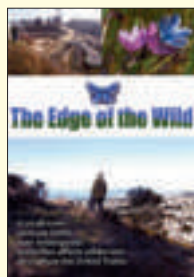
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The Edge of the Wild ★★½

(2015) 60 min. DVD: \$39: public libraries; \$69: high schools; \$159: colleges & universities. DRA. Green Planet Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Gail Mallinson's thought-provoking documentary offers a case study of the struggle to preserve critical habitat for endangered species when there are powerful business interests dead set against the effort. Not far from San Francisco, near the city of Brisbane, lies what is left of San Bruno Mountain, once a haven for the dwindling Mission blue butterfly and other species that were drawn to lupine and other native plants. At the center of this film is longtime activist Michele Salmon, who has lived all her life in Brisbane and whose father helped (as a member of the city council) to protect San Bruno from development back in the 1960s. When Richard Nixon signed the Endangered Species Act into law, Salmon and others believed it was a permanent solution that would block construction projects on the mountain, especially since the Mission blue butterfly was on the list of endangered species. But in 1982, Ronald Reagan amended the act, giving developers room to build on critical habitat if they set aside some land for the original ecosystem to thrive. Unfortunately, the giant loophole here is that no standard for such a set-aside exists, and there is no official follow-up or enforcement of the requirement. The impact on San Bruno has been severe, as development arrived in two waves while Salmon and her fellow activists were unable to stop the process. San Bruno is now a wreck, environmentally speaking, with a set-aside tract of land that is full of non-native plants but no longer supports the Mission blue butterfly, or much else. Even though there is some hope at the end, *The Edge of the Wild* is a disturbing cautionary tale about how deep-pocketed developers are able to bulldoze nature with impunity. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)



Fish Wars ★★★

(2016) 50 min. DVD: \$195. DRA. Film Ideas. PPR.

Broadcast on the National Geographic Channel, filmmaker Frank Smith's documentary focuses on the impact that overfishing and environmental degradation have had on the "coral triangle"—the region of the Asian South Pacific encompassing the waters off Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. The triangle is home to three-quarters of all known coral species in the world and more than 6,000 species of marine life in all. But the world's ravenous appetite for fish (coupled with destructive fishing methods) has radically reduced numbers, while climate change has led to widespread bleaching of the reefs and a severe decline in coral cover, ultimately threatening the region's ecosystem. Footage of fish markets where decreasing catches—often dominated by still immature fish—are a common sight testifies to the extent of the problem. *Fish Wars* argues that the solution must be two-fold, consisting of both enforcement and restoration. The camera follows patrol boats as they track down vessels from other countries that are operating illegally in the area (and arrest their crews), while also capturing the progress of a reef rejuvenation program undertaken by the World Wildlife Fund that has established what amounts to an underwater preserve. This successful project has replenished the coral cover, providing food for the schools of small fish that are, in turn, eaten by the tuna that are a major component of the local fishing industry on which so many families depend for their livelihood. *Fish Wars* offers a compelling look

at an environmental issue that carries serious ramifications, not just for South Asia but also the entire world. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Great White Lies ★★★

(2014) 50 min. DVD: \$39: public libraries & high schools; \$149: colleges & universities. DRA. Green Planet Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Skyler Thomas's *Great White Lies* makes an emphatic argument that sharks—particularly tiger sharks and great whites—are being needlessly and stupidly slaughtered in Australia and South Africa. The problem stems from the shark's undeserved reputation as a killing machine (thanks to Steven Spielberg), coupled with the cluelessness of Australia's environmental ministry, which perpetuates myths about sharks so that the government can take a get-tough approach—largely in order to appease the tourist industry. Experts interviewed here say that shark-culling policies are pointless and damaging: sharks constantly travel, so no matter how many are killed today, more will appear off the coast tomorrow. Sharks are also a crucial part of the ecosystem, so their removal has a significant impact on other animals and plant life. One might not want a great white for a pet, but there is arresting footage here of divers treating sharks like puppies—and the sharks responding well. And the gruesome images of what people do to eliminate sharks makes one wonder who the real monsters are. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Last Man on the Moon ★★★

(2014) 97 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$75: public libraries & high schools; \$350: colleges & universities. DRA. Tugg. PPR.

Carrying echoes of *The Right Stuff* and *Space Cowboys*, Mark Craig's documentary focuses on NASA astronaut Gene Cernan, while at the same time offering an historical overview of the entire U.S. space program. As the title indicates, Cernan was the last man to leave his footprints on the lunar surface when he commanded the Apollo 17 mission in December 1972. In extensive interviews, Cernan recalls his days as a Navy test pilot, recruitment into the astronaut program, role in the troubled 1966 Gemini 9A mission, piloting of the lunar module in 1969's Apollo 10 flight (a "test run" for the first moon landing later that year), and finally his command of Apollo 17. He speaks movingly of the loss of colleagues in the tragic accidents that periodically befell NASA's efforts, and acknowledges in hindsight the selfishness of his commitment to his job, which played a major role in the dissolution of his first marriage and led him to neglect his young daughter (although he did famously scrawl her initials onto the moon's surface). Cernan's recollections are accompanied by a wide array of archival footage and stills, as well as new (and some vintage) comments from colleagues, family, and friends. The camera also captures footage of the 80-year-old Cernan talking to audiences about his exploits. *Last Man on the Moon* successfully conveys the euphoria and hope that the space program inspired—coming at a moment when American leadership was being challenged by the Soviet Union—but it also reminds us of the human cost involved, even as it suggests that we have lost some of that restless (albeit occasionally reckless) spirit that characterized the Apollo missions. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Raising the Dinosaur Giant ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-615-3.

In Patagonia, on the southern tip of South America, a huge thigh bone that is some eight feet long has been discovered—a rare find that belonged to a dinosaur known as the Titanosaur, possibly the largest animal ever to walk the Earth. This PBS/BBC production directed by Charlotte Scott and hosted by Sir David Attenborough, takes a look at this immense creature that lived in the Cretaceous period, ate plants, grew swiftly in its early years, and possibly lived up to 50 years. The Titanosaur, which had an elongated neck and a heart up to six feet in circumference, weighed about 70 tons—equal to at least 10 elephants. The documentary draws comparisons with modern animals, including elephants, giraffes, ostriches, and Komodo dragons. Like the modern day "dragons," the dinosaur could swing its back tail for

efficient movement in spite of its fearsome size, although this plant-eating giant was probably no great threat (unless it stepped on you). Of course, it did have to contend with other prehistoric predators. Researchers here assemble a team of skeleton builders who work to bring this gigantic prehistoric creature to life. Providing a fascinating picture of this little-known giant that is sure to appeal to modern fans of “bigger, better, more teeth” *Jurassic Park* dinosaurs, this is recommended. Aud: J, H, C, P. (S. Rees)

Sky Line ★★★

(2015) 74 min. DVD: \$24.95. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Sci-fi author Arthur C. Clarke began talking about a space elevator back in the 1960s, and wrote a 1979 novel, *The Fountains of Paradise*, about the effort to create one. In reality, people are actively working on this concept, largely as a means of getting humans off the Earth without involving rockets (with all of their attendant costs and environmental damage). Filmmakers Miguel Drake McLaughlin and Jonny Leahan's documentary *Sky Line* interviews some of these individuals, including Dr. Bradley Edwards and his collaborators, although none quite make a case for the elevator being more than just a quixotic idea. The film raises the question of whether the elevator is simply a magnet for dreamers wasting time and money (in some cases, elevator enthusiasts have invested their own money and resources into an invention that no one seems to believe in, and lost everything), or is it something that will likely happen in the future (young scientists working on the problem have concluded that

they will never see the elevator in their lifetimes). Humans are accustomed to the idea that a great invention can take generations to be realized, but will this one be worth the wait? Extras include deleted scenes. A thought-provoking film about a somewhat oddball space project, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

Space Men ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-675-7.

Before astronauts, there were “space men”—brave souls who, at the dawn of the space age, used high altitude balloons to venture into the upper reaches where Earth's atmosphere meets the lowest levels of outer space, testing the physical and psychological endurance of humans. Directed by Amanda Pollak and narrated by Michael Murphy, this PBS-aided *American Experience* documentary describes the “self-inflicted madness” of balloon flights that rose up to 100,000 feet above Earth, with fliers being monitored by dedicated aviation medicine physicians. On the ground, fliers were subjected to punishing tests of G-force acceleration and deceleration, including abrupt stops at high speeds, which resulted in shattered teeth and broken bones. Funding for these programs was sporadic, and manned space flights weren't really considered necessary, or even respectable. In fact, the public, Congress, and the military showed little interest until things changed overnight in 1957, when the Russians threw down the space race gauntlet by launching the satellite Sputnik. Almost immediately, the United States would begin a catch-up plan with the Mercury program.

Humpback Whales ★★★

(2015) 40 min. Blu-ray: \$19.99. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

Narrated by Ewan McGregor, with a bouncy score built around the American Authors' hit song “Best Day of My Life,” the latest MacGillivray Freeman IMAX big screen adventure focuses on majestic humpback whales. Filmed off the coasts of Alaska, Hawaii, and the islands of Tonga, *Humpback Whales* serves up a thumbnail history of whaling's devastating effect on these marine mammoths, which led to a ban on the killing of whales that is embraced by most nations (Japan, Norway, and Iceland being exceptions), along with numerous factual tidbits related to size (adults can be over 50 ft. long and weigh 40 tons), longevity (up to 80 years-plus), and migratory patterns (as far as 5,000 miles one-way). Interspersed throughout are segments featuring various individuals and scientists, ranging from a Tongan islander who works to help preserve humpback whales (his grandfather hunted the whales), to Roger Payne, a noted sound ecologist who began studying the famed songs of the humpback whales back in the 1970s. The visuals are characteristically excellent, featuring numerous shots of these majestic creatures breaching and landing with a mighty crash (a sequence trying to present baby humpbacks as cute is less successful, for the simple reason that whales lack discernable facial expressions). Sure to appeal to nature lovers, this beautifully-lensed, informative documentary that serves up a compelling plea for conservation is presented in a standard Blu-ray edition, as well as a two-disc set that features 4K UHD and 3D Blu-ray versions along with the standard Blu-ray. Extras include a “making-of” featurette. Recommended. Aud: I, J, H, P. (R. Pitman)



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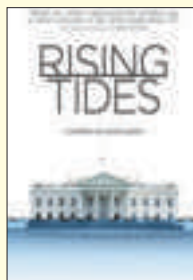


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Rising Tides ★★★

(2016) 89 min. DVD: \$19.95. Cinema Libre Studio (avail. from most distributors).

While sudden, devastating hurricanes such as Katrina and Sandy receive a lot of attention, filmmakers Jason Auerbach and Scott Duthie's documentary *Rising Tides* makes clear that rising tide levels are causing phenomenal havoc on a slower timetable. Katrina obviously did a tremendous amount of damage to Louisiana, but 16 square miles of the state's tidal lands are eroding every year due to encroaching tides. The same is true of North Carolina, southern California, and Florida ("ground zero" in erosion says one environmental scientist here) in the U.S., while France and the Philippines are among other countries that are facing potential disaster. Although Earth's history has been marked by periods in which oceans rose and fell, the current situation is believed to be the direct result of human activity that has spurred climate change and the melting of glaciers. Yet there is a distinct lack of political will to address the environmental problem in any aggressive way, and the construction of dams and artificial breakers off coasts (to smooth out waters in ports) ultimately displace shorelines, which are then washed away by tides. Shocking footage of multi-million dollar homes collapsing on shores in Miami and elsewhere offer startling testimony to the power of rising tides, and yet such homes continue to be built. Homeowners watching their investments literally disappear are counting on temporary solutions that unfortunately leave their own troublesome ecological footprint, such as sand nourishment and the deployment of "sandbags" full of synthetic materials that break open and get into the ocean. *Rising Tides* does touch on some inventive reprieves—which are not the same as solutions—but as long as corporations or private enterprises can continue to make loads of money from the status quo, little is likely to change. Also featuring bonus interviews and a photo gallery, this timely cautionary documentary is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)



Unfortunately, visionaries and heroic fliers like Dr. John Paul Stapp and Joseph Kittinger would never receive the acclaim of the "Mercury 7" astronauts. Combining rare footage with testimony from surviving early space men, this is an engaging look at pioneering high-altitude flight, with incongruous images of men hurtling through space in something resembling a glorified phone booth. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

HEALTH & FITNESS

Easy Yoga for Diabetes ★★★

(2015) 78 min. DVD: \$19.99 (\$34.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-62789-555-2.

Part of her *Yoga for the Rest of Us* series, yoga practitioner Peggy Cappy's *Easy Yoga for Diabetes* features an instructional workout and a core informational program (which is listed as an hour-long bonus). The documentary extra—featuring a variety of testimonials from people who have diabetes or are pre-diabetic, as well as comments from *Yoga and Diabetes* co-author Dr. Lisa Nelson—focuses on the benefits of yoga and various preventative measures related to diet, weight, and exercise. In the workout routine, set in an airy hall, Cappy—along with Annie B. Kay and Rudy Peirce of the Kripalu Center—demonstrate regular, modified, and super-modified moves (with chair, strap, and padding options)

that include stretching warm-ups designed to increase circulation; sequences targeting hips, back, and thighs; poses including child's pose, sphinx, and two cobra poses; and three "flow" sequences and a "Body Scan Relaxation" final meditation. Bonus features include additional workout segments. Sure to be popular, this is recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

How Addiction Hijacks the Brain

★★★1/2

(2016) 24 min. DVD: \$149.95 (teacher's guide included). Human Relations Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62706-090-5.

Offering a scholarly, balanced, and empathetic look at the effects of drug and alcohol addiction, this guidance program hosted by Master of Public Health Francisco Ramirez combines comments from experts—including Leslie Walker of Seattle Children's Hospital, Stephen Devey of the Feinstein Institute, and Global Appraisal of Individual Need's Michael Dennis—with stories of real-life recovering addicts, backed by detailed graphics and vocabulary examining the structure of the brain and its chemistry. Viewers learn about key concepts related to tolerance and dependence as the program notes the detriments of addiction on both the personal ("You really don't have it under control, and then you start to lose everything") and physical levels. Bonus features include a PDF teacher's guide. Highly recommended. Aud: J, H, C, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

The Return ★★★

(2015) 31 min. DVD: \$19.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Leslye Abbey's *The Return* essentially takes viewers inside a N'deup healing ceremony that is performed in a community in Senegal. The traditional ritual—taught by one generation of healers to the next—determines the intent of a person's "Rab," which is a spirit that sticks with someone over the course of a lifetime, but might have evil intentions. If such is the case, the person is likely to become ill or disturbed at some point. The subsequent ceremony—a complicated affair involving the wrapping of a victim in sheets, coupled with drumming, dancing, and the killing of a chicken—is a lengthy process with the aim of driving the bad Rab out. At some point, the victim emerges from beneath his or her wraps and begins a trance-like dance. An interview with the healer offers explanation as all parts of the ceremony are put into context. Offering an interesting ethnographic peek into an intriguing cultural practice, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Unprescribed: Prescription for Addiction

★★★

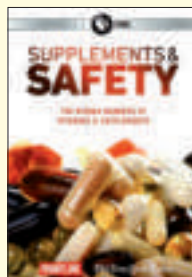
(2014) 59 min. DVD: \$29.99 (\$199.99 w/PPR). Dreamscape Media. Closed captioned.

According to filmmaker Edgy Lee's revealing and frightening documentary on the misuse of prescription drugs—barbiturates, amphetamines, and especially opioids (Vicodin, OxyContin)—the number of prescription-medicine overdoses in the U.S. doubled between 2004 and 2011, and have since only escalated. Victims come from all different demographics (related to age, gender, income, race, and education). What accounts for this shocking phenomenon? *Unprescribed*, which was largely shot in the tourist mecca state of Hawaii, digs deep into the issue and finds plenty of reasons. First is the easy availability of prescription drugs, including opioids, in a culture where the initial instinct (also shared by many doctors) is to treat a problem—pain, sleeplessness, etc.—with a pill. Second is a thriving black market in pills, particularly among young adults, a group that has been especially reckless with prescription drugs. Third is the problem of prescription opioids being not all that chemically different from heroin, and therefore serving as a gateway drug to an illegal substance that is in plentiful supply. Numerous interviews with recovering addicts put a human face on all of the data and testimonies presented to a Senate committee, and various ideas to help prevent some overdose deaths (such as a "good Samaritan" law that would protect a fellow addict who calls in an overdose) are aired. But the key to ending the epidemic, according to the Obama administration, is to help Americans understand how overuse and illegal acquisition of prescription drugs quickly becomes a slippery slope. With the much publicized

Supplements & Safety ★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-578-1.

Half of all Americans take a health supplement every day, feeding a multibillion dollar industry that churns out some 85,000 dietary supplements. This PBS-aided *Frontline* documentary, directed by Neil Docherty and hosted by Gillian Findlay, reviews the often unsubstantiated and contradictory claims for vitamins and supplements, a market that is dominated by powerful myths and wishful thinking. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) largely maintains a hands-off policy, intervening only when new elements are added to the pills, or in the case of blatant falsehoods ("cures cancer!"). Critics charge that the FDA is slow to act on complaints, and is unnecessarily lenient, perhaps due to a "revolving door" system for former government officials, manufacturers, and lobbyists, who shuffle between industry positions. One of the most heated issues concerns product labeling, questioning whether they are accurate about what is in the pills, and whether consumers are receiving adequate warnings about hazards? Cases have been documented in which pills have been laced with anabolic steroids (caused by careless manufacturing), resulting in breast enlargement in males, and excessive facial hair growth in females. In some instances, pills have caused permanent liver damage, requiring a liver transplant. Experts claim that too many customers trust ads that tout magic pills—a throwback to the era of snake oil salesmen—including popular products such as fish oil, which is said to be effective in preventing heart disease, but the actual contents of commercially available capsules varies considerably. Not surprisingly, many industry leaders and advocates in the media declined to be interviewed here. Offering a thought-provoking look at a widely misunderstood topic, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)



recent death of Prince due to prescription drug overdose, this is a timely documentary on a pressing social issue. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

CHILDBIRTH & PARENTING

Building Strong Families ★★

(2015) 52 min. DVD: \$79.95 (downloadable teacher's guide available). Learning ZoneXpress. PPR. Closed captioned.

The family that works on it together... stays together? Yes, according to this title that follows one family's path to building and reinforcing healthy and strong relationships. Michelle and David Neujahr are parenting experts who here offer their perspectives, along with comments from their children (now all young adults). Divided into several sections—including "Establish Rules," "Define Your Family," "Spend Time Together," "Be Positive," and "Support One Another"—the program's strong theme is that the paths towards achieving family goals can and should vary. Viewers are advised to create a goal statement for the family—defining what the family is and wants to be, what each individual desires, and what everyone's role should be in getting there. Perhaps the best part of the process is not planning and dreaming, but rather the interactions and bonding that can happen when discussing key questions. The concept of self-care is also given attention, including encouraging

parents not to forget about their own health, time with friends, and romantic traditions (including regular "date nights"). While the information is solid, and both mom and dad are parenting experts, it might have been nice to observe a more diverse range of families in order to see how others employ the principles offered here. Even so, this is still a fine guidance program that could provide tools to help enrich the lives of viewers with families. Recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)

RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY

Chance to Dress ★★

(2015) 40 min. DVD: \$49: public libraries; \$149: community colleges; \$199: colleges & universities. New Day Films. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-57448-412-0.

MIT professor and geologist Dr. John Southard, the subject of Alice Dungen Bouvrie's non-judgmental documentary, doesn't see cross-dressing as some sort of shameful secret. His wife, Rev. Jean Southard, says he informed her about it early in their marriage, but she already had some idea (although she's a Presbyterian minister, he's an atheist). John's deceased first wife was more tolerant than actually supportive. Despite a relatively stable home life, John recalls that he was a shy and anxious child, but suffered no major trauma. The desire to cross-dress manifested in his teens, but he kept it quiet, especially after his father caught him in the act and expressed disapproval. Since he isn't transgen-

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der, he also does not identify as a woman, but he does attend a social group for cross-dressers. Most of the time, John dresses as a man, but when he does wear women's clothing, he refers to himself as Tephra, a geological term involving volcanic ash. To John, it isn't about being different people, but rather different modes of the same person. Jean believes that he appears more relaxed as Tephra. Dr. John Grotzinger, chief scientist of the Curiosity Mars mission—and a friend—counts himself among the few professional colleagues to have met Tephra. Grotzinger describes John as brilliant, noting that he proposed the idea that water once flowed across the surface of Mars, years before scientists were able to prove it. John's comfort in talking about himself, combined with the support of his social circle, could well help other cross-dressers find self-acceptance. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

El Canto del Colibri ★★★½

(2015) 53 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$25; individuals; \$100: public libraries; \$295: colleges & universities. Frameline Distribution. PPR.

Director Marco Castro-Bojorquez's *El Canto del Colibri* (which translates as "song of the hummingbird") examines relationships between immigrant Latino fathers living in the

United States and their LGBTQ children. Men who hail from a variety of Latin American countries relate their experiences as fathers of gay children here in honest, emotional interviews (one senses that many are sharing these intimate details for the first time). They speak of learning about their offspring's homosexuality, with some confessing to initial trepidation and a struggle to understand, while others embraced their kids from the outset. All are now fiercely supportive and protective, wanting their children to live happy and full lives—a point that leads to discussions of machismo, religion, and other beliefs in the Latino community that could stand in the way of those goals. Interviews with the children provide an interesting counterpoint to the fathers' testimonies, revealing the other side of a very personal struggle. But ultimately both generations come together in this powerful documentary about healing, understanding, and love. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Morehart)

Trans Lives Matter! Justice for Islan Nettles ★★★

(2013) 7 min. DVD: \$80: public libraries; \$250: colleges & universities. DRA. Third World Newsreel. PPR.

In August 2013, a transgender woman named Islan Nettles was beaten to death in

front of a police precinct in Harlem, NYC. Nigerian filmmaker Seyi Adebajo documented a vigil that was held several days after Nettles's death in Jackie Robinson Park, not far from the murder site. This documentary short primarily relies on still photographs taken of the event, images that brilliantly embody the pain, anger, and solidarity felt by vigil attendees. For the most part, the occasion is orderly and respectful, although at one point a woman loudly protests the comments being made by a gay black male speaker at the gathering—and here the film switches from still photography to a video recording of the tumult created by the protestor's anger. While the brief film offers relatively little detail on Nettles's life and the circumstances surrounding her death, it is an effective, thought-provoking piece, which was part of a larger multimedia exhibit presented at New York's Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

FOOD & SPIRITS

Foodies ★★★

(2014) 98 min. In English, Chinese, Japanese, Lithuanian & Swedish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.95. Kino Lorber (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Food films often spark a viewer's appetite, but that isn't necessarily the case with the documentary *Foodies*. By the time a master chef is holding a grilled beetle between two chopsticks while explaining that a mushroom growing in the insect's gut and excreted through its nose is a pricey delicacy, you know that you're in truly rarified culinary territory. But somebody has to try out the more arcane dishes of the world and write about them, and those lucky souls would be the food bloggers at the center of this film directed by Thomas Jackson, Charlotte Landelius, and Henrik Stockare. Early on, the documentary sets a pattern that includes traipsing after these critics as they jet around the world and eat (and take pictures of food), a formula that becomes so redundant that not even the significant differences of nationality, race, age, and gender between these bloggers give viewers a varied experience. While many dishes appear to be interesting, nothing is shot in a particularly mouthwatering way. *Foodies* is well traveled, hopping between continents and countries, but the most compelling visual material involves some of the stranger places that critics eat, including a parking garage, and a grim building somewhere in Lithuania on a winter night. A few moments of tension arise when some chefs question the value of food writers, and it's interesting that certain restaurants give bloggers such a hard-sell that it borders on imposing. But as a film, *Foodies* loses its flavor long before it's over. Optional. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

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BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

Dress and Groom for Career Success

★★★1/2

(2016) 27 min. DVD: \$149. *IIST Career Solutions*. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-63332-140-3.

How you dress makes an impression in a job interview situation. Here, several hiring managers offer their personal takes on how to dress for success. A theme running throughout is that job seekers should want hiring committees and managers to remember their skills and personality—not have unfavorable impressions about the way they dressed for the interview. Dramatic scenarios are used to demonstrate some of the “dos” and “don’ts” of dressing for interviews for both males and females. Many are familiar (dress conservatively—never provocatively; dress for the job you want, not the one you have; look to the workplace for clues on acceptable dress), but all are presented in a clear and concise manner that is sure to benefit job seekers. Dress, grooming, and self-confidence are linked—simply put, when we look good, we feel good. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (C. Block)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

In Football We Trust ★★★1/2

(2016) 87 min. DVD: \$19.95: individuals, \$75: public libraries, \$395: colleges & universities; Blu-ray: \$25: individuals, \$90: public libraries, \$410: colleges & universities. IFWT Productions (avail. from www.infootballwetrustmovie.com). PPR.


Some 240,000 Samoans and Tongans live in the United States. They are 28 times more likely to play professional football than any other ethnic group. Utah serves as the epicenter of the Polynesian pipeline to the NFL. These statistics and facts opening the documentary *In Football We Trust* provide a quick snapshot of a world in which tradition, family, religion, and potential are all linked by sport. Shot over the course of four years, the film follows four Polynesian-American high school students in Salt Lake City who pin their hopes and dreams on football. For these kids, some of whom live in homes fractured by poverty and gang violence, the sport offers salvation—opening a way to college via scholarship, hopefully followed by a career playing in the NFL. But the pressure to succeed is intense, often leading to strife at both home and school. Filmmakers Tony Vainuku and Erika Cohn capture amazing serendipitous moments that might have been ripped straight from a fictional screenplay: a drug controversy, a gun arrest, lost scholarships, a crippling injury—but despite the drama, a faith in the sport and its power remains. Religion also plays an important




The Fantasy Sports Gamble ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-637-5.


An increasingly popular diversion, the controversial fantasy sports betting world—dominated by DraftKings and FanDuel—continues to attract and reel in players, who wager on fantasy teams comprised of real players. Ironically, fantasy sports was energized by legislation in Congress that sought to discourage Internet gambling, but exempted fantasy sports, which supporters claim is a game of skill conducted for its entertainment value, and therefore is not subject to government regulation. This PBS-aided *Frontline* documentary, hosted by *New York Times* reporter Walt Bogdanich and directed by Frank Koughan, notes that fantasy sports is unthinkable without the Internet, adding that while the pastime was once seasonal, today's competition involves daily events. Critics say that it's an underground world of unrestricted gambling with no truth in advertising or age verification of players. Plagued by corrupt insider dealing, with huge sums of money being won and lost, it's a form of “crack cocaine for gamblers.” Fantasy sports targets an audience of risk-taking males under 30, with claims of being easy to win, although evidence shows that 89 percent of players lose. Some professional sports leagues support and profit from the activity, and much of the data is stored in shadowy offshore sites, where the idea of tracking responsible parties is likened to chasing a ghost (many businesses declined to be interviewed). The film interviews some big winners, who use their skills in poker to outwit the small fish, and also talks to big losers, who they say were seduced by fantasy sports' slick, misleading, and ever-present advertising. Although the report could have provided more information on how fantasy sports actually works, it effectively draws attention to a problematic practice. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)




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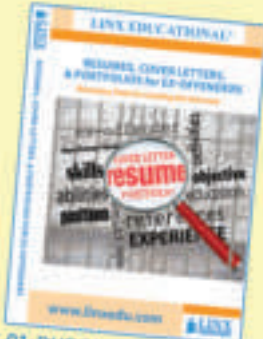
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role in the lives of two of the athletes, who weigh embarking on a Mormon mission immediately after high school (a two-year commitment) against playing college football. Along the way, Vainuku and Cohn also interject commentary from former pro football players of Polynesian descent who once walked in the same shoes as these kids, and here provide an interesting history of Pacific Islanders in pro and college-level football in the U.S. A fine sports documentary with a wider ethnographic perspective, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Morehart)

THE ARTS

Before the Last Curtain ★★½

(2014) 86 min. In English & French w/English subtitles. DVD: \$300. DRA. Film Platform (avail. from www.filmplatform.net). PPR.

German filmmaker Thomas Wallner presents a highly stylized documentary about older LGBT performers whose worlds are divided by relatively quotidian offstage lives and flamboyant onstage personas. *Before the Last Curtain* centers on members of a production of Belgian choreographer Alain Platel's *Gardenia*, featuring a cast of seemingly larger-than-life drag queens and transgender entertainers. While the *Gardenia* segments are rich with a Bob Fosse-worthy swirl of energy and color, the material on the daily lives of the performers is often bleak and unsettling. One of the cast works as a janitor in a brothel, while another ponders his isolation from the wider world and glumly imagines how long it would take anyone to realize he is missing should he die alone in his apartment. Wallner gains enough trust from the performers for them to offer in-depth detail on the social and emotional hardships they faced growing up, as well as their experiences of growing old in a world that, until fairly recently, was often hostile to anyone identified as being LGBT. *Before the Last Curtain* celebrates art, offers a meditation on the fears of aging, and examines personal challenges faced by members of the LGBT community. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

The Merchant of Venice ★★½

(2015) 132 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).

Polly Findlay's 2015 Royal Shakespeare Company staging of the Bard's controversial play at Stratford-Upon-Avon casts the spotlight on the title businessman—Antonio, who borrows money from the Jew Shylock in order to aid his friend Bassanio in his quest to win the fair Portia. In her audio commentary, Findlay emphasizes the view—a minority one among Shakespeare scholars—that the friendship between Antonio and Bassanio is “unambiguously a romantic relationship,” and she makes that clear by having the two

passionately kiss in the first scene. That viewpoint dominates Jamie Ballard's performance as Antonio, who is presented not as a proud, stalwart man but rather as a lovesick guy who wails in fear in the courtroom when Shylock prepares to cut the contractual pound of flesh from his chest. This approach also colors the character of Patsy Ferran's Portia, who even as she defends Antonio against Shylock in the guise of a lawyer, is taken aback by her fiancé's open show of affection for the merchant. In this setting, moneylender Shylock, who often dominates the play, comes across as a rather bland figure, particularly as underplayed by Makram J. Khoury. Ferran and Jacob Fortune-Lloyd, as Bassanio, are more vital presences. Unfortunately, the comedy-relief bits fall flat (especially those involving strained interaction with audience members), and Johannes Schütz's set, a stark golden wall with a stage that's bare aside from a large silver ball swinging like a pendulum (presumably as a sort of countdown clock) adds little (ditto for Anette Guther's eclectic costumes and the occasional music choruses). In sum, this is rather disappointing overall, but does feature some intriguing interpretive ideas. Other extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and a cast gallery. A strong optional purchase. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Shoulder the Lion ★★½

(2015) 74 min. DVD: \$29.99; individuals: \$325; institutions. DRA. Outcast Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

Married filmmakers Patryk and Erinnisse Rebisz's stylish and powerful documentary *Shoulder the Lion* centers on three individuals who cope with the onset of disabilities that disrupt their artistic aims. Irish musician

Graham Sharpe develops tinnitus at the very moment that his rock band is poised to take off, forcing him to quit playing electric guitar and performing. Photographer Alice Wingwall, who is enjoying a thriving career, gradually goes blind due to retinal disease. And Katie Dallam, whose story inspired Clint Eastwood's film *Million Dollar Baby*, was a poet and educational psychology student when her opponent in a boxing ring beat her head so badly that she was in a coma for weeks, left unable to speak or otherwise function for some time. But in each case, these individuals found a way to redefine their passions and purpose. Sharpe could no longer play, but he initiated and produced an annual music festival drawing thousands of people. Yes, he'd rather be on stage than solving logistical problems behind the scenes, but Sharpe knows that he is making a large contribution to music culture. Wingwall, while unable to see through her camera's viewfinder, still shoots images that are driven by the ideas that have always informed her art—only now she comes up with a visual concept and holds the camera while someone else maneuvers her hands to frame a shot. Dallam, having struggled her way back to speaking and walking, has turned to painting as a release for her emotions and avenue for her ideas. While the film sometimes suffers from strained artiness (slow motion and a pointless formalism to many shots), the people and stories are quite compelling, reminding viewers that oftentimes a loss will open the door to a different opportunity. Extras include audio commentary by the directors, and a behind-the-scenes slideshow. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



Henry V ★★½

(2015) 162 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).

Shakespeare's 1598 history play about the titular young 15th-century English king—focusing on events surrounding the Battle of Agincourt during the Hundred Years' War—has been the subject of well-regarded films by Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh, as well as numerous excellent stage productions. Add to the list this 2015 performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford-Upon-Avon, which completes the trilogy begun by director Gregory Doran with his superb *Henry IV Parts I & II* (VL-7/15). Alex Hassell, who embodied the hedonism of Prince Hal in the earlier installments, here makes the transition to purposeful monarch upon the death of his father. Hassell doesn't boast the résumé of Olivier or Branagh, and his reading of the famous St. Crispin's Day speech doesn't match their rhetorical fervor, but his more boyish interpretation is no less compelling, and the rest of the large cast is excellent mostly across the board. One might find Robert Gilbert's very effete French Dauphin a bit too broad, but Oliver Ford Davies—looking grandfatherly in a simple modern cardigan—brings particular gravitas to the Chorus. The costuming is otherwise in period style, while a small band provides music for the scene transitions. Overall, this is a robust staging of one of the Bard's most popular plays, and while it won't efface memories of earlier stellar versions, it certainly earns its place alongside them. Extras include audio commentary by Doran, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and a cast gallery. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

The Next Big Thing ★★★

(2014) 57 min. DVD: \$24.98 (\$398 w/PPR from www.icarusfilms.com). Icarus Films Home Video (available from most distributors). Closed captioned.

In this fast-moving documentary, filmmaker Frank van den Engel analyzes what he views as a malignant nexus between art and commerce that has developed in the modern age. Engel argues that an investment mentality has so completely enveloped the contemporary art world that, as interviewee Michael Hort says, "It isn't about the art anymore—it's really about the aura and the value." Artists have become celebrities, their work snapped up at absurdly high prices by untutored buyers (even if it's of dubious merit) in hopes of reselling at a quick profit. Prestigious auctions have become staged events, with guaranteed base prices protecting an artist's standing as a moneymaker. Artists accept subsidies from collectors who then purchase their work. And museums are increasingly dependent on individuals who fund public exhibition halls to house their collections. Engel strings together auction footage and sequences of exhibits being assembled in a montage, adding numerous excerpts from interviews with museum curators, gallery owners, art critics, and collectors, as well as artists like Chuck Close, Jack Whitten, and Adrian Ghenie. *The Next Big Thing* certainly demonstrates that the world of modern art has been tainted by speculation among the super-rich. But the reality is that patronage has played a role in artistic endeavor since the time of Pericles and Phidias, and many interviewees bemoaning the present-day "art bubble" have axes to grind: Hort is a "top 200 collector" criticizing rival bidders, and Ghenie complains about not receiving any of the proceeds after a buyer made a handsome profit by flipping one of his paintings. Still, this is a compelling portrait of a very real phenomenon in the contemporary art world. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



The Silence of Mark Rothko ★★★

(2014) 52 min. DVD: \$24.98 (\$390 w/PPR from www.icarusfilms.com). Icarus Films Home Video (available from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Although it includes ample examples presented in loving montages, the paintings of Mark Rothko (1903-1970) are not—despite the title—simply left to speak for themselves in Marjoleine Boonstra's documentary. *The Silence of Mark Rothko* also features excerpts from the artist's writings (read by his son Christopher, who occasionally offers his own recollections), commentary from biographer Annie Cohen-Solal, and observations by Franz Kaiser—curator of the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague—as he carefully arranges an exhibition of Rothko's work, as well as on-the-street interviews with people in the New York neighborhood where his studio was located. Although Rothko is often pigeonholed as an "abstract expressionist," the painter rejected such categorization, and Boonstra persuasively argues for a broader view, taking into account Rothko's fascination with the mythic and his desire to connect in a deeply personal way. The documentary also emphasizes Rothko's eventual embrace of environmental art, leading to a collection of works that were specifically designed to generate an all-encompassing ambiance in a specific locale. The experience of the contemplative frescoes of Fra Angelico in Florence led Rothko to accept a commission to create paintings for what has come to be called the Rothko Chapel in Houston—a small, windowless structure whose interior atmosphere

Rothko hoped would engender a feeling of transcendence that he longed to share with others. Offering a diligent, multi-layered exploration of Rothko's career, this perceptive portrait of an important American painter is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

HISTORY & CURRENT EVENTS

1916: The Irish Rebellion ★★★1/2

(2016) 180 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-674-0.

This three-part PBS-aided documentary explores the 1916 Easter Rising, a bold but doomed armed insurrection that attempted to end British rule over Ireland and establish an independent republic. Directors Ruán Magan and Pat Collins assemble an extraordinary tapestry of rarely-seen archival footage and still photographs to document the rebellion, along with a wealth of interviews featuring distinguished experts in Irish history. The film traces the long history of British rule over Ireland and compares the Irish fight for freedom with similar revolutions in the United States and France. It also offers an in-depth consideration of Easter Rising leaders including Roger Casement, whose anti-colonial passion was rooted in his experiences with the chaos that Belgian colonial forces wreaked in the Congo, and John Devoy, whose republicanism ideals were shaped during his years in the United States. While the Easter Rising was a failure—and



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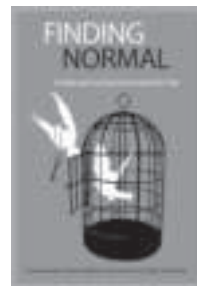


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ill-appreciated in Britain, which was in the midst of fighting World War I—it was also one of the first major freedom movements of the 20th century. Narrated by Liam Neeson, this informative and engaging historical series is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (P. Hall)

The Babushkas of Chernobyl ★★☆☆1/2

(2015) 72 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries & high schools; \$250: colleges & universities. DRA. The Video Project. PPR. Closed captioned.

Thirty years after the Chernobyl catastrophe, the 1,000-square-mile dead zone surrounding the wrecked nuclear power plant remains one of the most highly radioactive places in the world. While this section of Ukraine is guarded by the military and is off-limits to most civilians, it is still home to roughly 100 elderly women who refuse to leave. Filmmakers Holly Morris and Ann Bogart here present an extraordinary portrait of resilience in the face of calamity, following the eponymous babushkas as they happily go about their lives in small homes in the woods around Chernobyl: fishing in a stream, collecting rainwater, growing fruits and vegetables in their gardens, and making their own wine. Military scientists bring them bread while recording radioactivity levels, and government welfare workers deliver pension payments—four months late, due to Ukraine's political instability—as well as bags of food. Most of the women appear to be in vibrant physical and emotional health, despite contamination of the water and soil, although one woman is evacuated after a painful fall leaves her incapacitated. The film also follows the clandestine antics of young rogues who call themselves "Stalkers" and slip into the dead zone to visit its abandoned structures. A compelling portrait of a stubborn people persevering in a dangerous and inhospitable setting, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Fall Seven Times, Get Up Eight: The Japanese War Brides ★★☆☆

(2015) 26 min. DVD: \$60; public libraries; \$200: colleges & universities. DRA. Third World Newsreel. PPR.

Filmmakers Lucy Craft, Karen Kasmauski, and Kathryn Tolbert are also journalists whose fathers were U.S. service members stationed in post-World War II Japan and whose mothers were among the tens of thousands of so-called "Japanese war brides." The three mothers frankly acknowledge that they did not marry strictly for romantic reasons, but also because they were eager to leave the economic chaos of Japan in favor of the chance of a better life across the Pacific. The challenges faced by the women in their new country were significant: from their spouses' unhappy families, to a frequently hostile society that did not embrace mixed-race marriages, to the women's struggles to assimilate behavioral patterns expected of American women

during this era. Although initially opposed to these marriages, the military realized it was unable to prevent them and eventually helped educate the Japanese women about living in America—albeit with lessons on baking cakes and wearing makeup. Although too short to offer a deep examination of the subject, this film does present an intriguing glimpse into an interesting aspect of post-WWII history. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Rabin, The Last Day ★★☆☆1/2

(2015) 156 min. In Hebrew w/English subtitles. DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95 (avail. from most distributors), \$349 w/PPR (avail. from www.kinolorberedu.com). DRA. Kino Lorber.

Although its tone is more melancholy than frenetic, a good deal of Oliver Stone-like activism permeates Amos Gitai's film about the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir, a nationalist zealot who opposed the government's embrace of the peace initiative represented by the Oslo Accords. Gitai employs a combination of archival footage, dramatic recreations (some highly speculative), and interviews (including one with Rabin's close ally Shimon Peres) to capture the mood of the country at the time—essentially an atmosphere of shrill division in which Rabin's opponents accused him of treason, called him a Nazi, and even issued death threats. Gradually, the film turns its focus to the work of the Shamgar commission's investigation of the assassination. Into the re-creations of the commission's deliberations, Gitai inserts flashbacks—suggested by some secret testimony—showing conversations among right-wing religious leaders that would justify killing Rabin on the basis of *din rodef*, a supposedly biblical injunction that permits

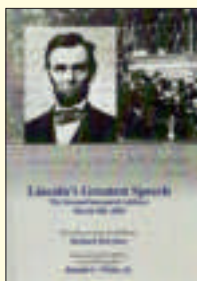
the execution of someone endangering the survival of the Jews, which Rabin was accused of due to surrendering land to the Palestinians. Here, *The Last Day* steers into the realm of conspiracy theory, not only implying that Amir might have acted in league with larger forces, but also that the commission might have suppressed—or chosen to overlook—evidence of this fact. Even if the viewer chooses to ignore the controversial implications, Gitai's film powerfully argues that the malignant political atmosphere of Israel, circa 1995, encouraged an act of violence that has colored the nation's policies ever since. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

TRAVEL & GEOGRAPHY

Discoveries... America National Parks: Independence Hall, Liberty Bell and Historic Pennsylvania ★★☆☆1/2

(2016) 53 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.95. DRA. Bennett-Watt HD Productions. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-60490-207-5 (dvd), 978-1-60490-230-3 (blu-ray).

The latest entry in filmmakers Jim and Kelly Watt's high-def filmed *Discoveries...* *America National Parks* takes viewers on a journey to the cradle of liberty, with a visit to Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park, home to Independence Hall, where the American colonies declared their freedom from British rule, and the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution were signed. The handsome series of buildings at the park—including the original site of the Supreme Court and first federal bank—includes structures that were designed to look like ancient Greek architecture, as well as comforting brick edifices. Quick stops



Lincoln's Greatest Speech ★★☆☆1/2

(2015) 40 min. DVD: \$29.95 (\$149.95 w/PPR). DRA. Action! Library Media Service. ISBN: 978-0-9971015-0-8.

Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural speech, dated March 4, 1865, is delivered here by actor Richard Dreyfuss and closely analyzed by bestselling Lincoln biographer Ronald C. White. Taking Lincoln's 700-word address one sentence or paragraph at a time, White makes viewers appreciate once again how America's 16th president set the tone for national civility and reconciliation with his rhetorical nuances and inclusive language. White makes the excellent point that many people at the inauguration were disappointed when they didn't hear a victory speech crowing about the South's defeat in the recently-concluded Civil War. But Lincoln's measured, calming language, which invoked common principles for the entire nation, was clearly the more healing approach. Which is not to say that Lincoln didn't include some tough talk: he called out slavery as a national evil and denounced the recklessness of those who would go to war with their brothers to defend that evil. But he did not speak in terms of geographical or cultural division in America (he did not refer to the "South," but rather a "part" of the country going rogue). White also highlights some of Lincoln's gifts as a writer-orator, such as his use of alliteration and his repetition of certain words. Directed by Ken Kebow, this illuminating documentary also features a separate conversation with White and Dreyfuss. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

are made at Edgar Allan Poe's house, where he spent six happy years, and the Thaddeus Kosciuszko National Memorial, a site established by Thomas Jefferson as tribute to a Polish volunteer in the Revolutionary War. The Valley Forge National Historical Park honors George Washington's winter encampment, where many were lost to starvation and disease. The Johnstown Flood National Memorial remembers those who died in the 1889 disaster after a substandard dam broke open and wiped out Johnstown. A number of archival photographs of the devastation are on display, and a special exhibition highlights the role of the Red Cross in bringing aid and relief. The Flight 93 National Memorial speaks for itself, with little narration concerning the 40 victims who lost their lives while thwarting hijackers on 9/11. Finally, the Gettysburg National Military Park is a full 10 acres dedicated to the turning point battle in the Civil War, where over 50,000 men died during three days of bloody conflict. Sure to appeal to both armchair travelers and history buffs, this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

BIOGRAPHY

Beyond My Grandfather Allende ★★★

(2015) 98 min. DVD: \$398. Icarus Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

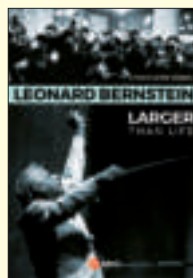
The public career of Salvador Allende, the avowed socialist president of Chile who was

overthrown in a 1973 military coup supported by the CIA, has been explored in many documentaries (including notable works by Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzmán). Here, Allende's personal side is investigated by his granddaughter Marcia Tambutti Allende, who along with other family members lived in exile in Mexico during the tenure of General Pinochet. Tambutti's haphazardly constructed film takes the form of a dogged search as she prods surviving relatives, who are initially reluctant to recall painful memories. Tambutti's aged frail grandmother Hortensia, mother Isabel (not the novelist Isabel Allende, who is also related to Salvador Allende), as well as several cousins and a few close colleagues, are among those who eventually not only open up about "Chico," as they affectionately called Allende, but also bring out stacks of old photographs and even some reels of home movies that offer revealing glimpses into his domestic life. The portrait that emerges is generally positive, but not completely—Allende was an intensely political man who sometimes neglected his family in pursuit of office, and his wife put up with his extramarital affairs. Memories of Allende's daughter Beatriz, or "Tati," who committed suicide in Cuba four years after his death, also continue to haunt many of the interviewees. Along the way, Tambutti provides context through archival footage of Allende's political career and the coup of 1973, as well as coverage of attitudes toward Allende in contemporary Chile (including

Leonard Bernstein: Larger Than Life ★★★½

(2015) 76 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).

Georg Wübbolt's documentary serves up a warm-hearted tribute to Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990), the longtime maestro of the New York Philharmonic, offering a cinematic love letter that brooks no criticism, with Bernstein's heavy drinking, chain smoking, and penchant for partying dismissed as integral to the personality of a genius who excelled as conductor, composer, teacher, friend, and musical ambassador to the world. Employing archival footage and stills, along with excerpts from interviews with Bernstein, his children, and numerous colleagues and friends (including Stephen Sondheim and Christoph Eschenbach), the film covers Bernstein's studies at Harvard, where his meeting with the Philharmonic's Dimitri Mitropoulos led to his decision to become a conductor, and follows up with Bernstein's breakthrough work at Tanglewood, where he encountered another great influence, the Boston Symphony's Serge Koussevitzky. *Larger Than Life* also emphasizes Bernstein's close friendship with Aaron Copland, which stimulated not only his embrace of American music on the podium but also his own compositions in popular Broadway hits such as *Candide* and *West Side Story*. Special emphasis is naturally placed on Bernstein's educational outreach through TV appearances (on *Omnibus* and the Philharmonic's *Young People's Concerts*), as well as his advocacy for the symphonies of Gustav Mahler, which had been on the periphery of the repertory. The documentary does a splendid job of capturing Bernstein's gregariousness and seemingly boundless enthusiasm, while also underscoring his absolute commitment to the cause of music and the extraordinary energy with which he communicated that devotion—which only makes the physical decline of his last years all the more poignant. Extras include extended interviews with conductors Kent Nagano, Marin Alsop, and Gustavo Dudamel. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



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Yalom's Cure ★★½

(2014) 74 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Filmmaker Sabine Gisiger's documentary profile on the life and work of psychotherapist and author Irvin D. Yalom explores the subject's major legacy: existential therapy. Along the way, the film looks at Yalom's relationship with his Polish immigrant parents, specifically the passivity of his father and harsh dominance of his mother (Yalom says he did not speak to her from ages 15 to 17). Yalom talks about finding shelter in a neighborhood library where he read every biography on the shelves, and recalls how college and medical school were a great challenge, given the focus that was required of his free-roaming curiosity. Yalom describes his required 700 hours spent in analysis (as part of his education in psychiatry) as an experience in learning what not to do with a patient, and his early work with cancer patients as a training ground for his emphasis on self-knowledge, honesty, and acceptance of mortality and isolation as drivers in life. Yalom—who was 80 at the time of filming (he's now 85), and is a professor emeritus of psychiatry at Stanford—also discusses his longtime marriage to writer Marilyn Yalom, who is also interviewed, along with the couple's four grown children and various grandkids. Most intriguing is Yalom's discussion of his work, centering on the need to illuminate the darkest corners in an individual's life, the inability to understand someone else if we do not understand ourselves, and the challenge of grappling with such core existential concepts as freedom and meaning. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



the 2011 exhumation of his body to determine the cause of death). But it is especially valuable for the light it sheds on Allende the man. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Feelings Are Facts: The Life of Yvonne Rainer ★★★

(2015) 2 discs. 82 min. DVD: \$350. Jack Walsh LLC (avail. from www.feelingsarefacts.com). Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-944783-24-2.

Yvonne Rainer is both an innovative choreographer and a rule-breaking filmmaker. Jack Walsh's documentary incisively treats both aspects of her career (even if the structure is somewhat odd, withholding material about her childhood and youth until midway through). The first section deals chronologically with Rainer's work in ballet, using archival footage and photos—along with excerpts from interviews with Rainer herself, as well as friends and collaborators—to illustrate how she revolutionized modern dance by adding "pedestrian" moves (walking, running, etc.) to the ballet lexicon. Rainer also co-founded the Judson Dance Theater, which became a leader in postmodern ballet, and she issued a famous "No Manifesto" against conventional approaches, even those adopted by earlier groundbreakers such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. After an interlude dealing with Rainer's early years, Walsh resumes a chronological approach by turning to her work in film beginning in the 1970s, employing archival clips and interview excerpts that emphasize the feminist slant and nonchalant approach to narrative that characterized her work (including 1972's *Lives of Performers* and 1985's *The Man Who Envied Women*). The documentary ultimately winds up at Rainer's

more recent return to dance, including her 2008 *Spiraling Down* (a complete performance of which is one of the disc extras). *Feelings Are Facts* is a fine introduction to the career of a significant figure in contemporary dance, one whose cinematic work may be less influential but is still of interest to devotees of modern avant-garde and feminist film. Extras include expanded interviews. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Golden Gate Girls ★★★

(2014) 90 min. In Chinese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$89; public libraries, \$395: colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. PPR.

Director S. Louisa Wei first became acquainted with the work of filmmaker Esther Eng in 2001. In this documentary, Wei sets out to learn more about this Asian-American cinematic pioneer who worked in Hong Kong and the United States. With the help of San Francisco pharmacist James Wong, who purchased Eng's photo archives, Wei visits the Chinatown apartment building where Esther grew up, and meets the latter's younger sister, Sally. She and Esther were two of 10 children who read and wrote Cantonese. Esther's love of movies blossomed when she worked at a local theater, where she took inspiration from Anna May Wong, the only Chinese actress to make a mark in the American films of the silent era. In 1935, Eng made her first feature, *Heartaches*, which did so well in Hong Kong that she got an offer to make films there. Eng went on to direct five, starting with 1937's *National Heroine*. Historian Judith Mayne compares Eng to Dorothy Arzner in the way that she worked in a man's field, dressed in a masculine style, and had relationships with

women. Eng left Hong Kong due to the war with Japan. In 1941, she helmed *Golden Gate Girl*, which featured an infant Bruce Lee (critic Law Kar believes it was his first film). Upon her father's death, Eng took over his film importing business and started a production company. Later, she moved to New York and became a restaurateur, living there until her death in 1970. Although there is little discussion about the quality of Eng's films, Wei has done right by this largely forgotten figure who deserves a place at the table with Arzner and Ida Lupino. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

The Nasty Terrible T-Kid 170: Julius

Cavero ★★½

(2016) 49 min. DVD: \$24.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Julius Cavero narrates Carly Starr Brullo Niles's documentary about Cavero's life as a graffiti artist. Cavero, who is of Peruvian descent, grew up in the Bronx, and can't imagine living anywhere else. He views what he does as art, and does not understand the point of simply spray-painting one's name in block letters, which he considers just tagging. Cavero, who liked to draw when he was a kid, got into graffiti in the 1970s when he saw other youths decorating a subway train. Around the same time, he joined a gang after they threatened to beat him up, but then left when he realized they had no interest in his welfare. Graffiti kept Cavero out of violent criminal activity, and he defends his work from claims of vandalism, saying that as a member of the public why shouldn't he put his stamp on public property? This is a rather dubious argument, logic-wise, but Niles features commentary from British rapper Goldie, *Style Wars* director Henry Chalfant, and others who agree. As Chalfant puts it, "I think he's one of the warriors. He's totally relevant in this world today." Unfortunately, Niles used Skype for these interviews, so the sound and visual quality approximate vintage VHS tape. Nonetheless, Cavero has also been involved with commercial projects, including gallery shows and installations throughout Europe. The director follows Cavero on these trips, in addition to tagging along for some late-night graffiti expeditions. Although Cavero mentions a stint in prison for drug possession and a battle with addiction, there isn't much information here about his personal life, other than mention of a daughter. While greater detail might have made this a more involving portrait, it should still be considered a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

The Professor: Tai Chi's Journey West

★★★

(2016) 72 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

The 1960s were a time of experimentation and exploration in America. So it wasn't

particularly unusual for a 63-year-old Tai Chi master from Taiwan to move his family during that anything-goes decade to Manhattan, where he taught the form to martial arts students, young radicals, and hippies. Filmmaker Barry Strugatz's *The Professor: Tai Chi's Journey West* tells the story of that master, Cheng Man-Ching (1902-1975), who in his Canal Street studio distilled over 100 form positions down to 37 essentials and shared them with devotees. The documentary features abundant archival footage of Cheng teaching and demonstrating how to control the flow of energy, with the short and slight instructor almost magically pushing much larger opponents up and back several feet by turning back their own energy. Many of the students seen in those almost 50-year-old images are interviewed, speaking with awe of and fondness for Cheng, who withstood criticism from other martial arts teachers for sharing Tai Chi's secrets with Westerners. Cheng also seems to have broken decorum by becoming a personal and caring presence in the lives of his students (some of Cheng's family members stage a warm reunion with students here). Extras include Cheng performing short-form Tai Chi, and an interview with Harvard Medical School's Peter M. Wayne. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Regarding Susan Sontag ★★

(2014) 100 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries, \$395; colleges & universities. *Women Make Movies*. PPR.

Filmmaker Nancy Kates's HBO-aired documentary brings Susan Sontag (1933-2004) to life in all her myriad complexities, combining interview clips with the author and readings by actress Patricia Clarkson of Sontag's letters and written works. Instead of beginning in childhood, Kates skips ahead to Sontag's high school years, during which she wrote poetry and studied philosophy. Judith Sontag Cohen remembers that classmates teased her older sister over their Jewish surname, Rosenblatt, until their widowed mother remarried and the family name changed. Sontag graduated at 15 and moved on to Berkeley. By 1951, she was married and had a child, but remained as committed to writing as ever. When she received a fellowship to study at Oxford, Sontag left her son, David, with her in-laws. After a year abroad, where she had an affair with a woman, Sontag returned to the States and got a divorce. She went on to teach at Columbia and launched her career as a novelist. Although her first book was met with tepid reviews, her essay "Notes on 'Camp'" made her a literary celebrity. Lesbians were drawn to Sontag's work, but also found her refusal to come out disappointing, although Sontag had no problem aligning herself with the feminist movement. Over the years, she would have relationships with famous figures, including artist Jasper Johns and actress Nicole Stéphane. She would also survive her first brush with cancer, inspiring her best-

known book, *Illness as Metaphor*. Until her death in 2004, Sontag would concentrate on film directing, fiction writing, and her relationship with photographer Annie Leibovitz. A solid portrait of a legendary figure in the literary world, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

The Secrets of Saint John Paul ★★★

(2016) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-706-8.

Pope John Paul II has officially been declared a saint, but filmmaker Richard Denton's PBS-aired documentary—written and hosted by Edward Stourton—reminds viewers that he was also a man. In the mid-1970s, Polish bishop Karol Wojtyla entered into a correspondence with a married Polish-American woman named Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, who was collaborating with the future Pope on a book. Wojtyla always had a relaxed relationship with women, and his friendship with Anna-Teresa resounded on an intellectual and emotional level. Wojtyla was invited to Anna-Teresa's Vermont farm, where the rugged, virile Pole relished the opportunity to commune with nature in an informal setting. In 1978, Wojtyla's world changed forever, when he was elected Pope after the shocking death and brief papal reign of John Paul I. However, this did not end his correspondence with Anna-Teresa, who he considered a "gift from God." Nobody here suggests that their relationship was physical; rather, the friendship filled John Paul II's deep need to connect with another person on a human level—away from the watchful eyes of the Vatican bureaucracy. The documentary covers John Paul II's confrontation with Communism, a 1981 assassination attempt, and his increasingly fragile health after being afflicted with Parkinson's disease. His relationship with Anna-Teresa continued until his death, but her role has been minimized, apparently because of the Vatican's fear that it might impede the late Pope's path to sainthood. Unfortunately, due to copyright reasons, the 400 privately held letters cannot be quoted, which leaves a void at the heart of the film. While not the complete story, this is still likely to be of interest to many and is recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)

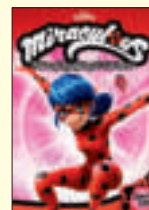
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Series Update

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

Newly available from Shout! Factory is **Miraculous—Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir: Spots On!** (132 min., DVD: \$14.98), which compiles episodes from the cheeky, action-packed English-language version of a French anime-style series that follows awkward Parisian teen Marinette and her crush pal Adrien, who solve problems as their titular superhero alter egos. See review of *Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir* in VL-7/16.



PAW Patrol: Sports Day (92 min., DVD: \$14.98) is the newest compilation from the Paramount Home Media Distribution and Nickelodeon-aired animated series that features the titular rescue dog team in athletic-activity-themed episodes. See review of *PAW Patrol* in VL-7/14.

Also recently released by Paramount is the computer-animated **Blaze and the Monster Machines: Fired Up!** (88 min., DVD: \$14.98), which features the titular mechanical protagonist morphing into various modes of transportation to help save the day. See review of *Blaze of Glory: A Mini-Movie* in VL-5/15.

PBS Distribution and PBS Kids have released **Jim Henson's Dinosaur Train: Under the Volcano** (120 min., DVD: \$9.99), the latest addition to the educational animated series from the Jim Henson Company, which follows the Nature Trackers dinosaur friends as they use scientific observation techniques to explore a volcano named "Old Smokey." See review of *Jim Henson's Dinosaur Train: Dinosaurs Under the Sea* in VL-1/11.

Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment is releasing **Peppa Pig: Sunny Vacation** (60 min., DVD: \$14.98), the latest entry from the British preschool series—aired stateside on Nick Jr.—following sweet young piglet Peppa. See review of *Peppa Pig: My Birthday Party* in VL-5/14.



And Yet the Town Moves: Complete Collection

★★★

(2010) 2 discs. 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$49.98; Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



Hotori Arashiyama works in a wannabe maid café (cosplay restaurants found mainly in Japan). Despite her friend Toshiko's attempts to class the place up, it's basically a small neighborhood café that serves coffee (no tea) and has a comfortably worn-down atmosphere. Hotori herself isn't great maid material, being inherently clumsy and more inclined toward happy curiosity and goofiness than scrupulous service. In school, Hotori frustrates her well-meaning math teacher and is oblivious to the amorous feelings of a classmate, but she is also a good friend and sibling. And that is more than enough: *And Yet the Town Moves*, which is based on the manga by Masakazu Ishiguro, relies heavily on slice-of-life character interactions rather than plot, while serving up very little fan service. Relishing in strange and delightful humor, the show is deeply invested in a sense of everyday living, capturing small touches related to home, school, and work life that offer ample grounding for the series, even when space aliens and ghosts make brief appearances. Sometimes subtle, often clever, and overall gently subversive, the show successfully establishes something beyond the usual high school comedy and cute-girl drama. Compiling all 12 episodes from the 2010 series, rated TV-PG, and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is recommended. (L. Martincik)

Bodacious Space Pirates: Abyss of Hyperspace

★★

(2014) 93 min. DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



This is a 2014 theatrical-feature spin-off of a popular book/manga/cartoon franchise, more literally known in Japan as *Miniskirt Space Pirates*. Although the film sports lavish animation, viewers who are not already familiar with the background are in for a stormy voyage, as a veritable navy of characters are introduced with no quarter given to newcomers watching. Heroine Marika is a high-schooler of the far future who has inherited a space pirate ship, the *Bentenmaru*. Although too young to fully go out privateering, Marika still gets to take the vessel for spins on do-gooder missions with a number of piratical old family allies (one, a frightful-looking but friendly *Terminator*-esque cyborg). And this leads them to stumble across a fugitive boy with a parrot-shaped transforming robot and a mysterious legacy

from his lost scientist-father (think treasure map) that promises a valuable secret at the "bottom" of hyperspace (it's a conceit that hyperspace here is a fluid medium, complete with water pressure). Frantic, furious, and confusing, this toss-off would be of interest only to banner-waving fans of the franchise. Available in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is optional, at best. (C. Cassidy)

Hakuoki—Demon of the Fleeting Blossom: Wild Dance of Kyoto

★★1/2

(2013) 95 min. DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



This feature-length 2013 animated film serves up a compacted retelling of the 12-episode first season of the TV series *Shinsengumi-Kitan*, which was spun off from Idea Factory's historically-based series of video games that added supernatural elements to the true story of a rebellion that occurred in Kyoto during the 1860s. During a struggle between the Shinsengumi (the forces supporting the Shogunate) and vampire-like warriors called Rasetsu or Furies, Chizuru Yukimura—a girl disguised as a boy—makes her way to the city, searching for her long-absent father. Although she is taken under the protection of the Shinsengumi, it is eventually revealed that Chizuru's scientist father is playing a continuing role in the rise of the Rasetsu (through his development of the so-called Water of Life), while Chizuru herself is connected to a deadly sect called the Oni, or Devils, who have designs on her. Like the series, the film concludes on an open-ended note, although a sequel is already on tap. While it features atmospheric animation and some exciting fight sequences, the story's characters—at least in this truncated format—never rise above formula. Still, this will likely appeal to devotees of the games. Presented in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, this is a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Only Yesterday

★★★★1/2

(2016) 120 min. DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98. Universal Studios Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.



This animated 1991 feature film from Studio Ghibli and director Isao Takahata (*Grave of the Fireflies*, *The Tale of the Princess Kaguya*) received its belated U.S. premiere in 2016. Adapted from the manga by Hotaru Okamoto, *Only Yesterday* tells an introspective story about a 27-year-old woman who escapes her office job by spending the summer picking safflowers

on a farm in the country, where she befriends a fellow fieldworker. The textures and sights send her mind rolling back to the fifth grade when, as the youngest of three daughters, she recalls growing up with two older sisters. The film is set in the early '80s, with flashbacks reaching back to the 1960s, yet it is both remarkably contemporary and beautifully timeless—forget the Beatles references and the absence of cell phones and this could be, as the title suggests, only yesterday. Exploring the experiences of the grown woman and the memories of her younger self, the images here carry a tone of serenity even during moments of anxiety and despair. An unconventional anime entry, *Only Yesterday* is a subtle, nuanced, complex drama that only appears to be simple thanks to the mastery of Takahata's storytelling. It's a gift to finally have this film available to American audiences. Presented in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray/DVD Combo editions, rated PG, extras includes behind-the-scenes featurettes and an interview with the English dub team (the Blu-ray/DVD Combo release also includes feature-length animated storyboards). Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Waiting in the Summer: Complete Collection

★★1/2

(2012) 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 3 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



J. J. Abrams's space-monster flick *Super 8* (along with a touch of *Men in Black*) seems to have inspired this sci-fi anime serial, which is otherwise familiar stuff, having the very mild novelty of appearing to take place in a Japan whose technology is a mix of the pre- and early digital. Orphan teen Kaito is testing his inherited 8mm movie camera's night sensitivity when he witnesses the crash-landing of a spaceship piloted by Ichika, a fetching red-haired alien girl who is trying to learn about humanity. Ichika enrolls at Kaito's school as a "transfer student," and then moves in with the boy during summer break (he has dazed-UFO-contactee awareness of her E.T. nature but doesn't tell anyone about it). The newcomer's provocative presence stirs jealousy and gossip amongst Kaito's classroom friends, who are also excited at the prospect of shooting a backyard 8mm sci-fi film. And they decide to cast Ichika as an alien visitor. Meanwhile, she worries about her growing attraction to Kaito and the fact that she must ultimately depart after her rescue party arrives. The original 2012 12-episode series is followed by a 13th OVA chapter (a where-are-they-now? set two years later). Available in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Alan Jackson: Keepin' It Country, Live at Red Rocks ★★

(2015) 106 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



In this concert filmed at Colorado's Red Rocks—the last stop on a 2015 tour—country star Alan Jackson celebrates 25 years in the music business, sharing highlights from his biography during the 26-song set. Jackson moved from Georgia to Nashville to launch his career, releasing his debut *Here in the Real World* in 1990. Unlike his singles, which took awhile to catch on, Jackson's album became a hit, like most of his follow-ups, including 2015's *Angels and Alcohol*. Here, he receives strong accompaniment from veteran players on steel guitar, piano, bass, and drums, as well as the youthful-looking Ryan Joseph on fiddle (the Philadelphia musician is also the only non-Southerner). Jackson has a feel for what will please his audience, smoothly alternating between old and new, up-tempo (“Don't Rock the Jukebox”) and down-tempo (“Here in the Real World”). During the instrumental passages, he mingles with the drizzle-splattered crowd (they even sing along with Tom T. Hall's “Little Bitty”), tossing guitar picks and t-shirts while signing as many items as he can. Jackson's voice is in fine form and his band shines at every turn, making this a treat for Jackson fans. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Arlo Guthrie: Alice's Restaurant—50th Anniversary Concert ★★

(2015) 98 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR), Blu-ray: \$29.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-491-3 (dvd), 978-1-62789-492-0 (blu-ray).



With his son Abe on keyboards as part of his able backup band, folk singer Arlo Guthrie hits the stage of the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield, MA, for this May 2015 concert, performing a 14-song set that features as much talkin' as it does singin'. Which is OK, because Guthrie is a mighty fine raconteur who has honed his story repertoire over the years. The first third is fairly slow, kicking off with “The Motorcycle Song,” a solid rendition of “St. James Infirmary,” and the humorous kid's song “Me and My Goose” (spoiler alert: feathered pal ends up on dinner plate), coupled with some tongue-in-cheek whining about self-esteem-centered politically correct children's programming. The energy rises with the rockin' “Coming Into Los Angeles,” followed by the titular *piece de resistance*: the full-length musical monologue

epic “Alice's Restaurant,” which chronicles young Arlo's run-in with the law after illegally dumping trash on Thanksgiving day when the dump in Stockbridge, MA, was closed (an incident later adapted into a 1969 film directed by Arthur Penn). Guthrie also shares poignant stories about his legendary father, Woody, and his late wife, Jackie, who died of cancer in 2012. Guthrie, who shifts between guitar and keyboards (with some harmonica thrown in) also performs the classic “This Land Is Your Land,” as well as two songs with lyrics penned by the elder Guthrie (“I Hear You Sing Again” and “My Peace”), and his own only Top 40 hit, “City of New Orleans” (which he thanks Johnny Cash for turning down). Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, extras include a “Garbage Trail Walk” featurette spotlighting key sites in the “Alice's Restaurant” saga. Sure to appeal to Baby Boomers and others with an interest in tales from the late 1960s and early '70s, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead ★★

(2016) 110 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$24.95. MVD Entertainment Group (avail. from most distributors).



Director Wes Orshoski uses the Damned's 35th anniversary tour in 2011 as a framing device to recount the group's tumultuous history. Drummer Chris Millar (aka Rat Scabies) and bassist Ray Burns (aka Captain Sensible) met while cleaning bathrooms in the same London concert hall. Once they joined forces with singer Dave Vanian and guitarist Brian James, the first incarnation of the band was complete. Although they emerged at the same time as the Sex Pistols and the Clash, they were the first to release a record. Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders notes that the Damned could actually play their instruments, while Clem Burke and Chris Stein of Blondie praise their live shows, where anything could happen. Their debut, 1977's *Damned Damned Damned*, caused a sensation, but there were already signs of trouble since Burns and Vanian liked to play pranks, while James, who wrote most of the material, found that sort of thing childish. After their second album, *Music for Pleasure*, James left, so Burns switched to guitar. The conveyor belt of bass players didn't dent their popularity, but due to royalty disputes, Burns and Vanian are the only original members left. Miller and James have been playing concerts together, but the twain may never meet again. Orshoski also incorporates comments from famous fans who debate whether the move from punk to pop and goth was a good idea or not. Extras include extended interviews, mostly with the ever-volatile Burns. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Don Quixote ★★1/2

(2014) 120 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).



In Ludwig Minkus's cheerily inconsequential 1869 ballet, very loosely based on Miguel de Cervantes's 1605 masterpiece—the primary focus is on an impecunious barber named Basilio, who romances lovely lass Kitri, although her father wants to marry her off to a wealthy suitor. Don Quixote and Sancho Panza show up as comic figures to assist Basilio. *Don Quixote* was recently spotlighted in a 2013 performance (VL-7/14) by London's Royal Ballet, although in that production Minkus's score was adapted and re-orchestrated by conductor Martin Yates, and the choreography was based on Marius Petipa's original. By contrast, this 2014 version from Milan's La Scala features John Lanchbery's reworking of the score and the choreography that Rudolf Nureyev devised for the 1973 Australian Ballet mounting in which he danced Basilio. In either form, the ballet is a charming confection, and both productions are opulent, with colorful costumes and striking sets. And in each case the chief performers—here Leonid Sarafanov (Basilio), Natalia Osipova (Kitri), Giuseppe Conte (Don Quixote), and Gianluca Schiavoni (Sancho Panza)—as well as the company corps, are excellent. This version also benefits from crisp orchestral work and energetic conducting by Alexander Titov. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is highly recommended, especially for those who do not already own the 2013 London Royal Ballet version. (F. Swietek)

Elektra ★★

(2014) 108 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).



Opera has always been an exercise in spectacle along with music and drama, but today's visual effects are frequently given priority over content. Such is the case with this 2014 production of Richard Strauss's 1909 one-act piece derived from Sophocles's titular tragedy. The plot is simple: Elektra tries to persuade her sister Chrysothemis and brother Orest to help her kill their mother Klytämnestra and her lover Aegisth, who together murdered the siblings' father Agamemnon upon the latter's return home from the Trojan War. *Elektra* is a powerful, concise work that can benefit from a very stark staging. Here, however, it is presented by NorrlandsOperan in a huge outdoor area—actually a parking lot—in Umeå, Sweden, with staging by the Catalan theatre collective La Fura dels Baus that features lakes of blood-red liquid, and huge, crane-operated giants (the singers

are sometimes inserted into their chests), while Aegisth (Magnus Kyhle) makes his appearance in a red, 1950s-style auto. The costumes are equally peculiar: Orest (Thomas Lander) wears what appears to be a glistening silver miner's outfit, while Elektra (Ingela Brimberg)—decked out in a ghastly fright wig—is encumbered with a long red umbilical cord that she chops off in the finale. The musical side of the production is solid, if hardly exceptional, with generally acceptable vocalism by the principals—who also include Ingrid Tobiasson as Klytämnestra and Susanna Levenon as Chrysothemis—and passionate playing by the unseen orchestra under the baton of Rumon Gamba. But due to director Carus Padrisa's offbeat concept and bizarre visuals, more traditional versions from the 2010 Baden-Baden Festival (VL-5/11), the 2010 Salzburg Festival (VL-9/14), and the 2013 Aix-en-Provence Festival (VL-11/14) are preferable. Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is not recommended. (F. Swietek)

Fidelio ★★ ★

(2004) 128 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD or Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).

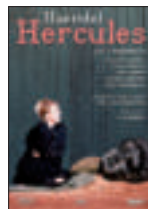


This 2004 Zurich production of Beethoven's only opera is worth noting for a variety of reasons. One is the conducting by the late Nikolaus Harnoncourt (1929-2016), an early music specialist who always brought idiosyncratic insights to later works. Here, most of his tempi are substantially slower than usual, but he periodically speeds up to a nearly frantic pace, and overall his reading is intensely coiled as the company orchestra follows his lead with utter conviction. Another point of strength is the excellent singing (aside from one exception). Camilla Nylund is a silvery soprano as Leonore, the ever-faithful wife who has disguised herself as a boy, Fidelio, in order to enter the service of Rocco, jailer of the fortress where her husband Florestan (ringing tenor Jonas Kaufmann) is being held as a political prisoner. Of the remaining principals, only Alfred Muff disappoints as Pizarro, the tyrannical governor who intends to kill Florestan if Leonore cannot intervene; his unfocused, wobbly baritone diminishes the villainy that should mark the role. There is ample compensation, however, in the firm bass of László Polgár as Rocco and the charming contributions of Elizabeth Rae Magnuson as his daughter Marzelline and Christoph Strehl as her suitor Jaquino. Rolf Glittenberg's spare set design is prosaic, but his wife Marianne Glittenberg's costumes add some dash, and Jacob Schlossstein's lighting design creates a moody atmosphere. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1, DTS

5.1, and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Hercules ★★ ★

(2004) 190 min. DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99. Blu-ray: \$39.99. Bel Air Classiques (dist. by Naxos of America).



Handel called his 1745 work on the death of the Greek demigod "a musical drama," and while he left stage directions for performances, the work has usually been treated as an oratorio rather than an opera. But that is not the case with this 2004 production from the Opéra National de Paris, in which Hercules (William Shimell) returns home—following a long absence—with a captive princess, Iole (Ingela Bohlin). His wife Dejanira (Joyce DiDonato), convinced that her husband has been unfaithful, plots to win Hercules back using a blood-soaked cloak, but the garment winds up killing him instead. Although his death drives her mad, there is joy in Hercules's reception in Olympus as a god, as well as in the union of Iole and Hercules's son Hyllus (Toby Spence). One might imagine that this scenario would offer great opportunity for action, but Luc Bondy's direction takes a more static approach, with the characters—dressed in rather drab modern garb—mostly wandering about on a largely bare stage (aside from a few monumental statues) as they sing. Nevertheless, the score is amazingly rich, and the principals manage the florid vocalism with extraordinary skill, masterfully backed by the chorus and the original-instrument orchestra of Les Arts Florissants under the vivid leadership of William Christie, who teases out all of the music's drama and pathos. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

I Due Foscari ★★ ★

(2014) 122 min. DVD: \$29.99. Blu-ray: \$39.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).



The major selling point of this 2014 production of Giuseppe Verdi's 1844 opera, staged at London's Royal Opera House, is clearly the presence of veteran superstar Plácido Domingo as Francesco Foscari, the aging doge of Venice, who struggles with a false accusation of murder lodged against his son Jacopo (Francesco Meli), while his daughter-in-law Lucrezia (Maria Agresta) agonizes over her husband's fate. Domingo, who has switched from tenor to baritone roles in recent years, still demonstrates remarkable vocal prowess and dramatic skill at the age of 73, even if some of the lowest notes are a bit thin, and conductor Antonio Pappano provides a virile yet sensitive reading of the

score in support. The younger principals also impress, with Meli exhibiting a ringing tenor despite having to sing while locked in a cage or trussed up, and Agresta catching the urgency of Lucrezia's pleas even when Thaddeus Strassberger's staging requires her to lapse into madness. And Maurizio Muraro adds an appropriately menacing tone as the villain who schemes to destroy the Foscari. As a dramatization of the conflict between legal propriety and familial devotion, *I Due Foscari*—the sixth of Verdi's operas, written when the composer was barely 30—is a fairly rudimentary affair, but the music shows the development of the idiom that would lead to Verdi's first unquestionable masterpieces. While this mounting suffers somewhat from unimaginative sets and costumes, the musical virtues here are more than sufficient compensation for any visual limitations, especially as it offers an opportunity to hear one of the late-20th century's greatest singers in the twilight of a remarkable career. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and LPCM stereo, extras include an introduction, an interview with Pappano, and a cast gallery. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

La Bohème ★★ ★

(2014) 123 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$24.99. Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).



One might have expected octogenarian film director Ettore Scola to bring some unconventional ideas to his staging of one of the world's most popular operas at the 2014 Puccini Festival at Torre del Lago in Italy, but this production proves to be scrupulously traditional, presenting the story of the doomed love between penniless poet Rodolfo and seamstress Mimi as an unabashedly sentimental tearjerker. Against a backdrop of elaborate sets and costumes, the musical performance is, with only a few caveats, very fine. The orchestra plays vigorously for conductor Valerio Galli, the chorus is excellent, and the principals are all accomplished, with Daniela Dessi spinning lovely long phrases as Mimi, and Fabio Armiliato as Rodolfo delivering a quality tenor (although he seems reluctant to sing much below forte). As the secondary couple, Alida Berti makes a seductive Musetta and Alessandro Luongo a virile Marcello. Unfortunately, the opera is performed on an outdoor stage where the acoustics lack resonance, resulting in a soundscape that is clear but also dry—even bordering at times on shrill. But even if this doesn't earn a place among the finest versions of this much-filmed warhorse—such as the Opera Australia staging (VL-9/12)—the sound issue is not severe enough to ruin an otherwise praiseworthy production. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

La Rondine ★★★

(2015) 105 min. DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.99. Delos (dist. by Naxos of America).

Puccini's uncharacteristic 1917 opera was initially conceived as a Straussian-style operetta for Vienna, but the intervention of World War I led the composer to rework it into a more typically Italianate form. But the transformation wasn't entirely successful, and *La Rondine* soon fell into a relative obscurity that is only now changing with revivals such as this 2015 production from the Deutsche Oper Berlin. The plot is basically *La Traviata* without the elder Germont: courtesan Magda throws over her wealthy lover Rambaldo for naïve young Ruggero, but she ultimately leaves him—either to die or resume her former life, depending on the version being followed—because she fears that her checkered past will doom their relationship. Singer-turned-director Rolando Villazón brings some fresh ideas to the staging, but they are not always good: he moves the action from the 1850s to the 1920s, allowing some flapper girls to shake things up in the second act restaurant scene, and has a trio of masked men in cream-colored suits perpetually surrounding Magda, representing the men in her past. Still, this is a more than serviceable mounting, with attractive sets and costumes. The company orchestra and chorus perform well for Roberto Rizzi Brignoli, and the vocalism is strong, with Dinara Alieva a lovely, sweet-sounding Magda and Charles Castronovo an ardent Ruggero. *La Rondine* is hardly top-drawer Puccini, but it deserves a listen, and this release is at least on par with earlier Italian stagings from Venice (VL-1/09) and Torre del Lago (VL-9/09). Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)



Les Contes d'Hoffmann

★★★1/2

(2015) 174 min. In French w/ English subtitles, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).

Christoph Marthaler's wacky 2014 Madrid production of Offenbach's final opera (VL-1/16) looks positively staid compared to this Stefan Herheim mounting at the 2015 Bregenz Festival. Quite properly described as an adaptation and staged at the Festspielhaus rather than on the Festival's huge outdoor lakeside platform, this version follows no standard reconstruction of the unfinished score—not only picking and choosing among the musical numbers but also shuffling them around to make what the composer himself called an *opéra fantastique* even more bizarre. This staging retains the basic story—about the failed loves of the poet



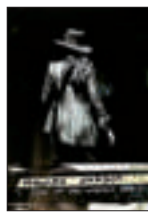
Hoffmann (for the mechanical doll Olympia, the consumptive singer Antonia, and the courtesan Giulietta)—but uses the narrative as a springboard for a wild phantasmagoria dealing not only with self-delusion but gender identity. Characters change from male to female and back again with dizzying speed—men are constantly showing up in drag—and few of the principals of either sex escape from playing long scenes in female undergarments (some are also occasionally replaced with life-sized mannequins, or simply trade roles). Meanwhile, an Offenbach stand-in attempts to preside over the extravagant goings-on, sometimes wielding a conductor's baton. The point that Herheim is trying to make with all the hubbub isn't terribly clear, but the result is certainly eye-catching, while the music is a notch above the Madrid production—featuring energetic playing from the Vienna Symphony under Johannes Debus, and strong singing by Daniel Johansson (Hoffmann), Michael Volle (as the succession of villains who foil him), Kerstin Avemo (Olympia/Giulietta), Mandy Fredrich (Antonia/Giulietta), and Rachel Frenkel (as Hoffmann's muse Nicklausse). Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Melody Gardot: Live at the Olympia Paris

★★★

(2015) 102 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Philadelphia jazz-pop singer Melody Gardot keeps things languid and sultry in this 2015 concert at Paris's Olympia music hall. For most of the show, she talks and sings in English, but adds more French towards the end of her 11-song set. Although her voice isn't quite as distinctive, Gardot recalls Nina Simone and Laura Nyro in the way that she sings, scats, and whispers in a vibrato-laden lower register. Here, she draws primarily from *The Absence* (2012) and the Larry Klein-produced *Currency of Man* (2015), which marks her second go-round with the Joni Mitchell producer. Combined with the saxophones, trumpet, and double bass, her performance conjures up a smoky, late-night vibe, with a healthy amount of blues and soul in her repertoire. Throughout, she seems to be dressed to evade detection, with a black leather suit, sunglasses, and a hat atop the scarf around her head. The glasses aren't a fashion statement, but rather a necessity due to light sensitivity (a condition that arose after a near-fatal car accident when she was 19). Song highlights include the Ethiopian jazz-tinged "Same to You" and the Philly soul-inspired "She Don't Know," which allows the seven-piece backing band the opportunity to stretch their musical muscles. Gardot may not tour often, but she knows how to



please her fans with her music and banter. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray. This is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

The Rolling Stones: Totally Stripped ★★1/2

(2016) 91 min. DVD: \$21.98 (audio CD included), Blu-ray: \$29.98 (audio CD included). Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

In 1995, the Rolling Stones went to Tokyo to record *Stripped*—an album of stripped-down though not "unplugged" versions of several of their songs and covers—and then continued with a tour that mixed arena concerts with three smaller venue gigs in Amsterdam, Paris, and London. This release features both a live CD (with tunes from the aforementioned trio of comparatively intimate performances) and a behind-the-scenes documentary that mixes interview segments (with band and crew members) and stirring live renditions from the Tokyo recording session and the small shows. Unfortunately, the sound bites (which tend to be promo bland) are often intercut with the much more interesting songs, which include "Wild Horses," "Jumpin' Jack Flash" (with Jack Nicholson in the Paris audience), "Gimme Shelter," "Honky Tonk Women," "Tumblin' Dice" (a wonderful backstage warm-up performance), and excellent covers of Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away" and Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone." Bassist Bill Wyman had left the band, so Darryl Jones joins the core group of lead singer Mick Jagger, guitarists Keith Richards and Ron Wood, and drummer Charlie Watts, backed by, among others, Chuck Leavall on keyboards, Bobby Keys on sax, and Lisa Fischer on background vocals. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this will likely be of more interest to Stones completists than general audiences, especially since the 4:3 standard aspect documentary is marred by the constant interruptions during songs. A strong optional purchase. (R. Pitman)



Double Dragons

Eagle Rock Entertainment has released a new combo set featuring Grammy award-winning artists Imagine Dragons, captured live in concert July 2015 in Toronto, Canada. *Imagine Dragons: Smoke + Mirrors Live* (DVD/CD: \$19.98, Blu-ray/CD: \$24.98) presents the band in concert performing an 18-song set (with medleys) that includes their mega-hit "Radioactive," along with a bonus 13-track audio CD.



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.

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3450 E. Spring St., Ste. 208
Long Beach, CA 90806
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Web: actionlibrarymedia.com

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

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

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

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

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

Film Ideas
308 N. Wolf Rd.
Wheeling, IL 60090
Tel: (800) 475-3456
Web: filmideas.com

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

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

Frameline Distribution
145 Ninth St., Ste. 300
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: (415) 703-8650
Web: frameline.org

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

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

Icarus Films
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Brooklyn, NY 11201
Tel: (800) 876-1710
Web: icarusfilms.com

JIST Career Solutions
875 Montreal Way
St. Paul, MN 55102
Tel: (800) 328-1452
Web: jist.com

Kino Lorber Edu
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New York, NY 10018
Tel: (212) 629-6880
Web: kinolorberedu.com

Learning ZoneXpress
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Tel: (888) 455-7003
Web: learningzonexpress.com

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

Naxos of America
1810 Columbia Ave., Ste. 28
Franklin, TN 37064
Tel: (615) 771-9393
Web: naxos.com

New Day Films
P.O. Box 165
Blooming Grove, NY 10914
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Web: newday.com

Outcast Films
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Web: outcast-films.com

PBS Video
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Arlington, VA 22202
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Web: pbs.org

PRAGDA
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Web: 7thart.com

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New York, NY 10018
Tel: (212) 947-9277
Web: twn.org

Tugg
4210 Spicewood Springs Rd.
Austin, TX 78759
Tel: (855) 321-8844
Web: edu.tugg.com

The Video Project
145 Ninth St., Ste. 102
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: (800) 475-2638
Web: videoproject.com

Vision Video
P.O. Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490
Tel: (800) 523-0226
Web: visionvideo.com

Weston Woods Studios
90 Old Sherman Tpke.
Danbury, CT 06816
Tel: (800) 243-5020
Web: westonwoods.scholastic.com

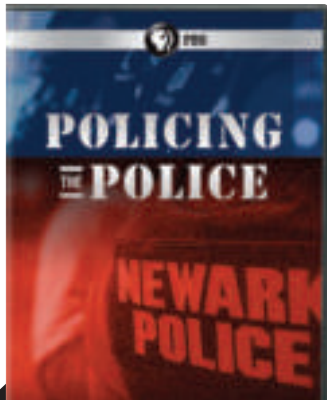
Women Make Movies
115 West 29th St., Ste. 1200
New York, NY 10001
Tel: (212) 925-0606
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Documentaries & More

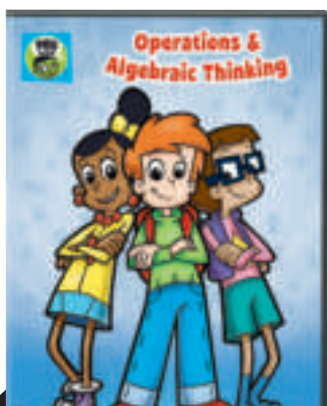
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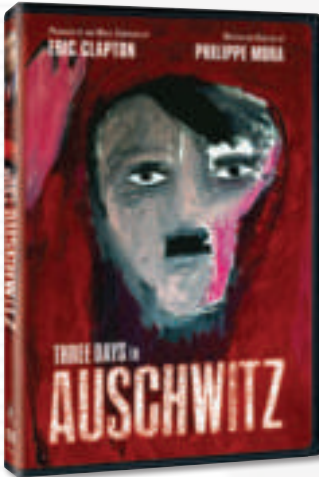
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DOCUMENTARY / HISTORY



THREE DAYS IN AUSCHWITZ

Award-winning film director Philippe Mora and music legend Eric Clapton team up to tell the life and death of Mora's family at the hands of the Nazis in Auschwitz. Mora combines art and interviews with Clapton's score in this personal journey.

FEATURING: **Philippe Mora** and celebrated contemporary artist **Mirka Mora**

VF-1047 UPC# 881394124226
SRP: \$14.95, 58 Min
STREET DATE: 9/6/2016

HISTORICAL / CINEMA / POP CULTURE

THE MAN WHO SAVED BEN HUR

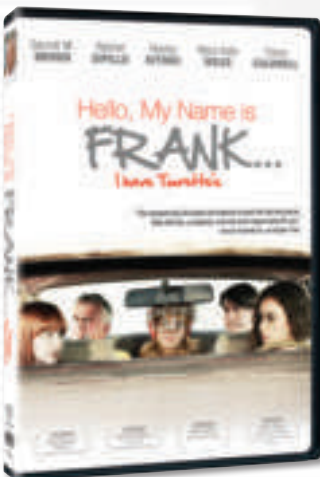
Follow one man's quest to learn more about his 89-year-old cousin, Johnny Alarimo, only to discover that Johnny spent a dazzling career behind the scenes in Hollywood's Golden Age of Film as an assistant director on *Ben Hur* (1959). Alarimo shows us his private collection of set photographs, recounts the time he went to the Isle of Capri with Rock Hudson, and shares fascinating stories about his close friends Elizabeth Taylor and Sandra Dee.

STARRING: **John Alarimo, Joe Forte, Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, Sandra Dee.**
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: **Joe Forte**

VF-1043 UPC# 881394123724
SRP: \$19.95, 60 Min
STREET DATE: 7/26/2016



MEDICAL STUDY / TOURETTE'S



HELLO, MY NAME IS FRANK

A cross-generational coming-of-age story of three teenage girls and a socially awkward man with Tourette's disorder who bond over a cross-country road trip. They learn love and family can be found in unexpected places.

STARRING: **Garrett M. Brown** (*Kick-Ass, Uncle Buck*), **Rachel DiPillo** (*Chicago Med, Jane the Virgin*), **Hayley Kiyoko** (*CSI: Cyber, Insidious 3, Jem and the Holograms*), **Mary Kate Wiles** (*Lizzie Bennet Diaries*), **Travis Caldwell** (*Criminal Minds*)

VF-1045 UPC# 881394124028
SRP: \$14.95, 109 Min
STREET DATE: 8/16/16

MUSIC / POP CULTURE

BOWIE: THE MAN WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

An inside look at David Bowie, one of the most creative and influential rock artists of all time. Featuring exclusive contributions from those who worked with David Bowie and archive interviews with the man himself.

FEATURING: **Suzie Ronson, Laurence Myers, Mick Rock, 'Whispering' Bob Harris, Kris Needs and Dana Gillespie**, as well as archive interviews with the great man himself.

VF-1048 UPC# 881394124325
SRP: \$14.95, 75 Min
STREET DATE: 9/13/16



NATURE / SPORTS / BIOLOGY



ON A LONG BREATH

SIX OCEANS, SIX MINUTES,
FREE DIVING AT ALL COSTS
OXYGEN IS OVERRATED

Imagine six minutes without breath, slipping below the ocean's surface with world champion free-diver Pierre Frola as he interacts with sperm whales, swims with a giant moray eel and meets a tiger shark face to face. Over 51 days, Frola explores the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea, offering a firsthand glimpse into Earth's underwater mysteries.

STARRING: **Pierre Frola** (World Champion Free-diver)
DIRECTED BY: **Philippe Gerard**

VF-1041 UPC# 881394123229
SRP: \$19.95, 52 Min
STREET DATE: 6/7/16

ECOLOGY / ADVENTURE

ACROSS THE ICE: THE GREENLAND VICTORY MARCH

Internationally acclaimed polar explorer Sebastian Copeland and expedition partner Eric McNair Landray, set a Guinness world record kite skiing the 2300 kilometer-length of Greenland's south-north axis, braving storms, crevasses, exhaustion and complete isolation. This is the story of that journey, showing viewers the extreme lengths man will go to conquer this wild, beautiful and untamed terrain.

DIRECTED BY: **Sebastian Copeland**
DVD VF-1049 UPC# 881394124523
SRP: \$19.95, 90 Min
STREET DATE: 10/11/16





Trump and Libraries

Donald Trump has been in the news an awful lot lately—as in 24/7, with fresh stories sometimes appearing hourly. Forget the Kim Kardashian-Taylor Swift-Kanye West dustup; the regular stars of tabloids and pop culture media are bit players compared to the One (Former) Reality Star to Rule Them All.

Most of us would not ordinarily give two hoots about what the current Lord of the Media is up to, except for one rather crucial detail: he is the Republican candidate for President of the United States.

As of this present chaotic moment (which could dramatically change before this issue even hits mailboxes), Trump trails Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in the polls by a considerable margin. But in the next few months anything could happen (Google “October surprise”), especially given the fact that Russian hackers and WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange are actively trying to sabotage the upcoming election in favor of Trump.

What would a Trump presidency mean for libraries?

That question is impossible to definitively answer.

One camp says that a Trump presidency will look like vice presidential candidate Mike Pence, since Trump has no actual interest in governing, but only wants to win. (Comedian Bill Maher had a wonderful bit in which he imagined a newly elected Trump stepping into the White House and observing—à la Bette Davis—“What a dump!”, before decamping to more elegant lodgings.)

But others argue that Trump is too much of a narcissist to not try to put his own ideological stamp—whatever that might be—on the American political landscape. And it is this possibility that should worry librarians, who are the stewards of one of the major cornerstones of democracy: libraries, whose mandate includes offering a wide array of resources to help build an informed populace across the entire socioeconomic spectrum.

Trump does not appear to have much respect for the people we call our patrons: he routinely denigrates Americans by gender (women), race (Mexicans), and religion (Muslims). And while he hasn’t gone so far as to advocate burning books, his actions and comments smack of censorship, whether he is denying press credentials to mainstream media, or threatening to change the libel laws in order to punish those who are

critical of his views.

It’s interesting to compare Trump with another wealthy capitalist: Andrew Carnegie. Carnegie, a dirt-poor Scottish immigrant with a passion for reading, was a philanthropist who used his fortune to build public libraries across America. Donald Trump, who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, has built casinos, resorts, and golf courses, while—judging from the limited records available—giving very little to charity.

And Trump has absolutely no passion for reading, or expanding his knowledge of the world. According to some close to him, Trump may not have read a single book in his adult life.

For all of these reasons and more, *Video Librarian* is for the first time in its 30-year-plus history publicly endorsing a candidate for president: Hillary Clinton.

The alternative is a dangerous demagogue who is not only proud of his ignorance but scoffs at the fundamental ideals of democracy that librarians hold so dear.

To Donald Trump, a library is just another piece of real estate, nothing more.

Randy Pitman

“AN EXTRAORDINARILY VALUABLE FILM.”

ROBERT JAY LIFTON. *THE NAZI DOCTORS*



Doctors of the Dark Side

★★★★☆

Producer-director-psychologist Martha Davis is on a mission in this somber, angry, yet absolutely non-hysterical documentary, to expose “torture doctors” within the American medical and psychiatric establishment who formalized techniques of “enhanced interrogation,” such as sleep deprivation and waterboarding, on behalf of the Pentagon and CIA. Doctors who, moreover, were actually present for paperwork and monitoring during the infamous prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib and similar ordeals at Guantanamo Bay—often involving detainees who proved to be innocent. Narrated by actress Mercedes Ruehl, *Doctors of the Dark Side* argues that this ugly collaboration represents one of modern American medicine’s most shameful episodes, as noir-ish tableaux with actors depict/suggest the methodologies for mental and physical torments (with disclaimers that the reality is commonly worse). Some military officers, whistleblowers, and doctors earn praise for not going along with torture, but we are told that harsh policies continue as much under Obama as the Bush-Cheney administration. Although military lawyers and activists appear as interviewees, the shadowy architects of enhanced interrogation—not surprisingly—do not. Davis outs them anyway, using courtroom drawings when photos are unavailable. DVD extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. A deeply troubling documentary, this is highly recommended.

Video Librarian, May/June, 2013 Aud: C, P. (C. Cassady)

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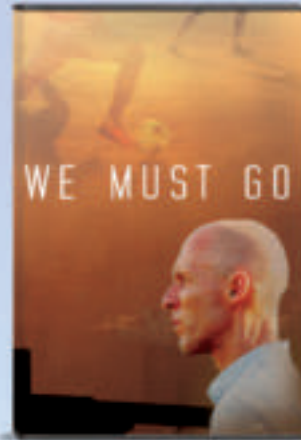
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- The Huffington Post



With over 300 million firearms, the U.S. holds the highest rate of gun ownership per capita in the world. Meanwhile, with each gun-related tragedy, the question remains whether to regulate or to arm. Increasing demand, illegal distribution and emerging 3D technologies threaten to upend the traditional debate of gun control. As discussed in interviews from Austin to Grand Rapids, Denver to New York City, *No Control* seeks to address the efficacy of gun laws and the ongoing debate between personal freedom and public safety in a candid discussion of one of the most complex, contentious issues in American history.

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"We Must Go is the rally cry of a country"

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We Must Go is a feature documentary chronicling the journey of the Egyptian National Soccer team and coach Bob Bradley as they fight to reach the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Egypt has one of the richest football histories in all of Africa, but despite its continental success, the team hasn't reached soccer's ultimate stage in 24 years. Now The Pharaohs and their American coach, as unlikely a pairing as there ever was, have the chance to do more than realize their shared dream of World Cup qualification -- they can unite a bitterly divided nation.

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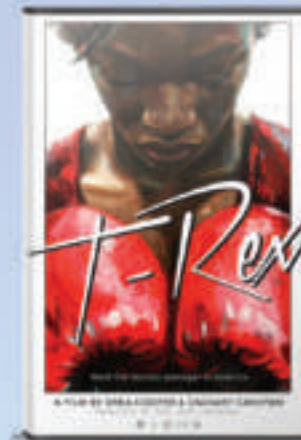
- Image Comics

"...a fascinating look at an eccentric man who was geekdom's king for a day."

- Chudd.com

In the winter of 2003 commercial director Sandy Collora and some of his friends set out to make a low-budget short film for his demo reel. What they wound up actually doing was making one of the most elaborate, most watched, most talked about and most controversial short films ever made: *Batman: Dead End*. Considering the amount of press and admiration *Batman: Dead End* garnered, everybody expected it to quickly propel director Sandy Collora into the Hollywood stratosphere, but instead his career failed to launch. *Behind The Mask: The Batman Dead End Story* is an incisive look at the making of the short film, and what it takes to make it as a Hollywood A-lister.

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"T-Rex fights like a girl.
And that's worth gold."

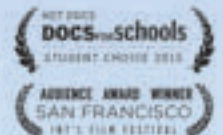
The New York Times
Critics Pick

"I dare you not to love this film."

- Documentary Magazine

"A remarkably unfiltered sports portrait"

- The Wall Street Journal



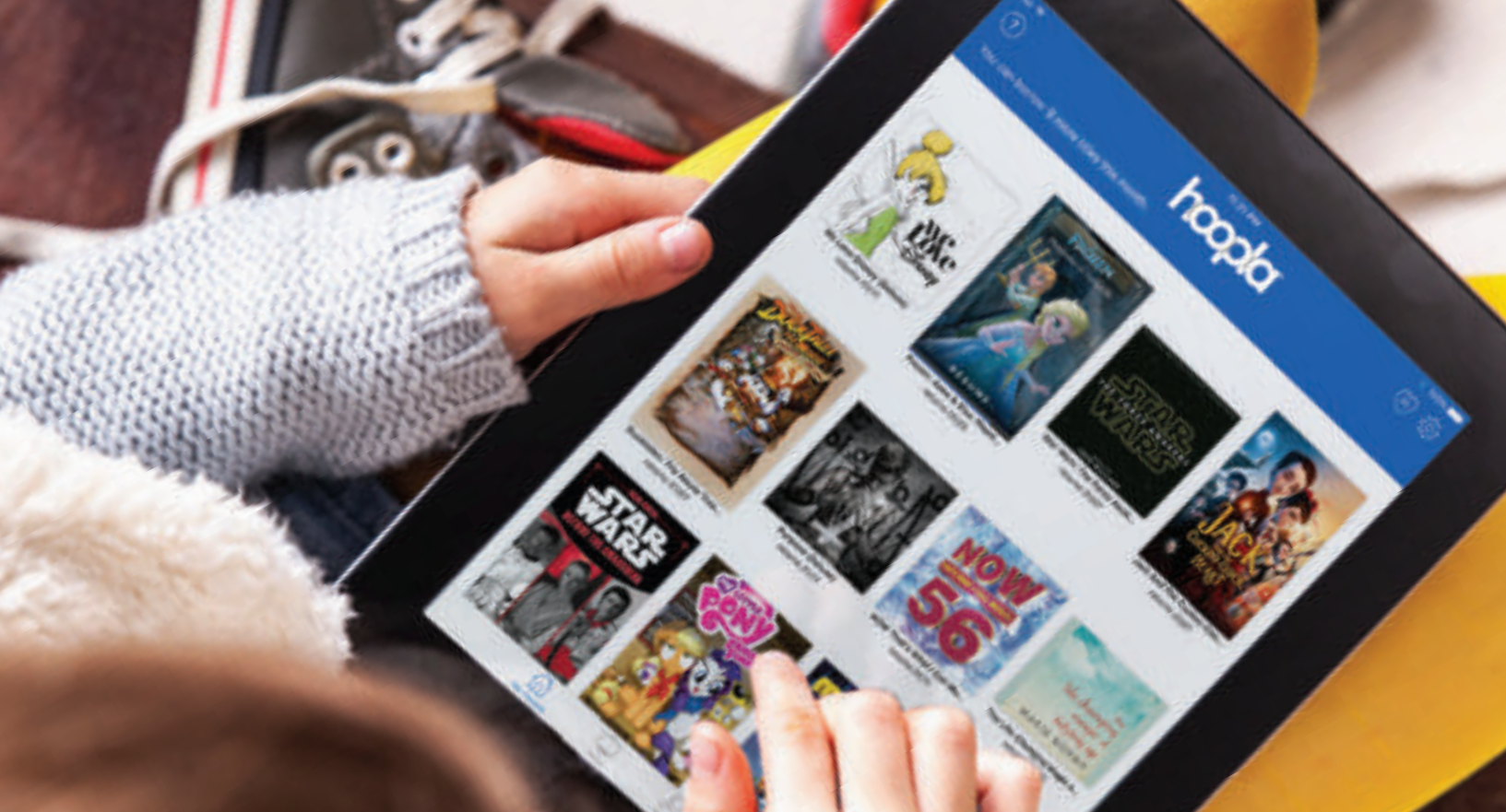
T-Rex is an intimate coming-of-age story about a new kind of American heroine. For the first time ever, women's boxing is included in the 2012 Olympics. Fighting for gold from the U.S. is Claressa "T-Rex" Shields, just 17 years old, and by far the youngest competitor. From the streets of Flint, Michigan, Claressa is undefeated and utterly confident. Her fierceness extends beyond the ring. She desperately wants to take her family to a better, safer place and winning gold could be her only chance.

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