

January-February 2015

Video Librarian

VOL. 30 ■ THE VIDEO REVIEW MAGAZINE FOR LIBRARIES ■ NO. 1



IN THIS ISSUE

2014 Best Docs | Boyhood | Nuclear Nation | Corpus Christi | How We Got to Now | Les Blank: Always for Pleasure

scene & heard

**BAKER & TAYLOR'S SPECIALIZED A/V TEAM OFFERS
ALL THE PRODUCTS, SERVICES AND EXPERTISE TO
FULFILL YOUR LIBRARY PATRONS' NEEDS.**

*Learn more about Baker & Taylor's
Scene & Heard team:*

ELITE

Helpful personnel focused exclusively on A/V products and customized services to meet continued patron demand

PROFICIENT

Qualified entertainment content buyers ensure frontlist and backlist titles are available and delivered on time

DEVOTED

Nationwide team of A/V processing staff ready to prepare your movie and music products to your shelf-ready specifications

SKILLED

Supportive Sales Representatives with an average of 15 years industry experience

KNOWLEDGEABLE

Full-time staff of A/V catalogers, backed by their MLS degree and more than 43 years of media cataloging expertise

800-775-2600 x2050
AVInfo@baker-taylor.com
www.baker-taylor.com



 **BAKER & TAYLOR**
the future delivered

Video Librarian

Publisher/Editor: Randy Pitman
Associate Editor: Jazza Williams-Wood
Copy Editor: Kathleen L. Florio
Editorial Assistant: Chris Pitman
Graphic Designer: Carol Kaufman
Marketing Director: Anne Williams

Contributing Writers

Kathleen C. Fennessy, *Reviewer*,
Amazon.com
Susan Granger, *SSG Syndicate*
Donald Liebensohn, *Reviewer*,
Entertainment Weekly, Amazon.com
Maureen Puffer-Rothenberg, *Librarian*,
Valdosta State University, GA
Stephen Rees, *Librarian, formerly with*
Bucks Co. Free Library, Levittown, PA
Frank Swietek, *Associate Professor*
of History, University of Dallas, TX

Additional Contributors:

Sean Axmaker
 Carson Block
 Charles Cassady
 Ted Fry
 Fran Gardner
 Phil Hall
 Tom Keogh
 Michael Sandlin

Video Librarian (ISSN: 0887-6851) is published bi-monthly by *Video Librarian*, 3435 NE Nine Boulder Dr., Poulsbo, WA 98370. Subscriptions: \$64 for one year in the United States; \$69 (US) in Canada (includes GST); \$86 elsewhere. Address all correspondence to *Video Librarian*, 3435 NE Nine Boulder Dr., Poulsbo, WA 98370. Periodicals Postage Paid at Poulsbo, WA and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Video Librarian*, 3435 NE Nine Boulder Dr., Poulsbo, WA 98370. Copyright © 2015 by Randy Pitman. All rights reserved.

Telephone/Fax/E-mail
Subscriptions: (800) 692-2270
Editorial: (360) 626-1259
Advertising: (800) 265-7965
Fax: (360) 626-1260
E-mail: vidlib@videoliberalian.com
Web: www.videoliberalian.com

Spotlight Review

Boyhood ★★★★★

Paramount, 164 min.,
 R, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99,
 Jan. 6



Director Richard Linklater filmed this extraordinary coming-of-age saga over 12 consecutive years, following his star—6-year-old Ellar Coltrane—to the age of 18. Mason (Coltrane) is first seen in East Texas, playing with neighborhood kids and squabbling with his older sister, Samantha (Linklater's daughter Lorelei). At the end of this segment, the family moves to Houston, which means a new home, new school, and new friends. Mason's dad (Ethan Hawke) and mom (Patricia Arquette) are divorced, but Mason hopes they will reunite. However, that's not going to happen, and their lovers come and go. Problem is: whenever mom finds a new man, she marries him—and one (Marco Perella) turns out to be an abusive alcoholic. By age 15, Coltrane the actor has become less stiff on-camera, delivering a wryly humorous and far more self-assured performance, as we watch him literally mature before our eyes. Linklater continues to epitomize the independent American filmmaker (regardless of his more mainstream entries such as *School of Rock*): from *Dazed and Confused* to his amaz-

ing Ethan Hawke/Julie Delpy trilogy (*Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset*, *Before Midnight*), he has consistently marched to his own drumbeat. Presented in a linear fashion, *Boyhood* is an episodic, naturalistic film, somewhat reminiscent of the groundbreaking *Up* documentary series from director Michael Apted, who has made eight films recording the lives of a group of Brits from the age of 7 to 56. Already picking up festival and film critics association awards for Best Picture, *Boyhood* has also been nominated for five Golden Globes and will very likely be a major Oscar contender. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Granger)

Breaking Glass Pictures is releasing *21 Years: Richard Linklater* (DVD: \$19.99) on January 13. Directed by Michael Dunaway and Tara Wood, this documentary profile of the director of *Boyhood* features candid conversations with Ethan Hawke, Julie Delpy, Jack Black, Keanu Reeves, Matthew McConaughey, Zac Efron, and others. DVD extras include interview outtakes and behind the scenes footage.



Cover photo: Ellar Coltrane in Richard Linklater's *Boyhood*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Video Newsbriefs	6	Relationships & Sexuality	79
Books Into Movies	8	Food & Spirits	79
Mixed Media	10	Beauty & Fashion	80
Video Movies	16	Business & Economics	80
TV on Video	54	Computers & Technology	81
2014 Best Documentaries	64	Sports, Games & Recreation	81
Key to Star Ratings	68	The Arts	81
Video Reviews	68	History & Current Events	83
Children's	68	Travel & Geography	85
Psychology & Self-Help	70	Biography	87
Religion & Philosophy	70	Series Update	90
Social & Political Issues	71	Japanese Anime	91
Teen Issues	74	Music/Dance	93
Law & Crime	74	Distributor Addresses	98
Nature, Math & Science	75	Title Index	100
Health & Fitness	77	Advertiser Directory	100
Childbirth & Parenting	78	Final Frame	102

New Releases from PASSION RIVER FILMS



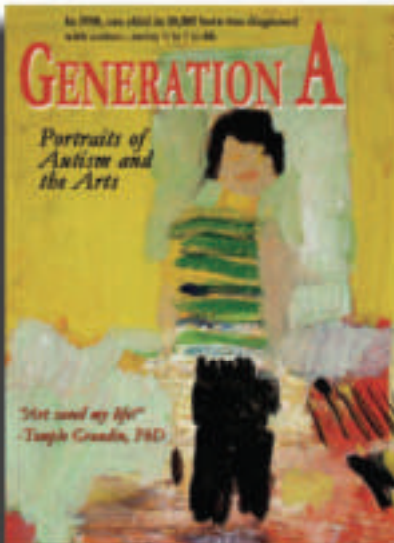
SPARK: A BURNING MAN STORY



"SOME OF THE MOST LUSCIOUS BURNING MAN IMAGES" - Seattle Weekly
"AN OASIS OF CREATIVITY...BE THANKFUL FOR SPARK!" - New York Times
"COMPELLING! FANTASTIC ARTISTIC IMAGERY" - The Arizona Republic
"I WAS COMPLETELY INSPIRED" - The Huffington Post

Each summer, 60,000 people from around the world gather in the Nevada desert for Burning Man, the famous week-long art and music festival that has become a cultural revolution. SPARK goes behind the scenes with Burning Man organizers, originators and attendees, uncovering the festival's roots and revealing a year of unprecedented challenges and growth.

90 min. | 2013 | CC | UPC: 823857175826 | SRP: \$24.99 | PPR: \$199
 Performing and Visual Arts, Sociology, Subculture, Music | **Order Now!**



GENERATION A: PORTRAITS OF AUTISM AND THE ARTS

**Starring TIME's "100
Most Important People
in the World",
DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN**

Examine creative art,
dance and music thera-
pies designed to help
youth on the autism spec-
trum reach their highest
potential.

62 min. | 2014
 SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$199
 UPC: 091037723925
 Disability, Arts, Health

Exclusively for Libraries | Order Now!



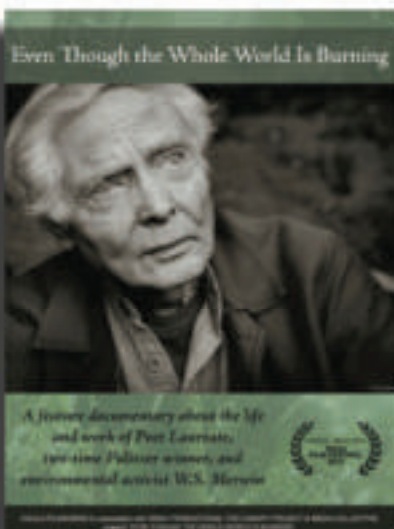
TAKE BACK YOUR POWER
**Including a special
features interview clip
with Edward Snowden**

**Bonuses: 100+ min. of
extra footage and
solutions primer**

Uncover shocking evidence
of in-home surveillance,
increased utility bills, health
risks, environmental harm,
and hacking vulnerability
caused by the rollout of
untested smart meters.

88 min. | 2014
 SRP: \$24.95 | PPR: \$199
 UPC: 888295087766
 Technology, Health

Order Now!



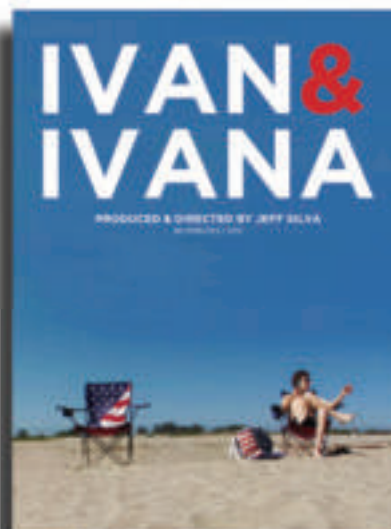
EVEN THOUGH THE WHOLE WORLD IS BURNING

**"A WONDERFUL
FILM ABOUT LIFE,
LANGUAGE, AND THE
NATURAL WORLD"
- Jeffrey Brown, PBS**

Pulitzer Prize winner and
U.S. Poet Laureate W.S.
Merwin shares his life's
work in poetry and envi-
ronmental activism for
the first time on film.

82 min. | 2014
 SRP: \$49.95 | PPR: \$199
 UPC: 013964695458
 Literature, Environment

Exclusively for Libraries | Order Now!



IVAN AND IVANA

**"AN UNFILTERED LOOK
AT THE U.S. ECONOMIC
MELTDOWN." - Variety**
**"THE AMERICAN DREAM
TURNS INTO A REAL
NIGHTMARE" - Le Mag**

After the Kosovo War, a
young couple immigrates
to the U.S. to rebuild their
lives, arriving in the midst of
an economic crash.

80 Min. | 2011
 SRP: \$49.95 | PPR: \$199
 UPC: 091037723918
 Immigration, Cultural Studies

Exclusively for Libraries | Order Now!



Order online at edu.passionriver.com or contact your favorite distributor.
 Passion River Films email: orders@passionriver.com phone: 732-321-0711

New Releases from PASSION RIVER FILMS

ABOVE ALL ELSE



"DEVASTATING...BEAUTIFULLY SHOT"
- Austin Chronicle

"INSPIRING, DRAMATIC, TIMELY"
- The Hollywood Reporter

ONE OF INDIEWIRE'S "TEN MOST ANTICIPATED FILMS..."

From Executive Producer Daryl Hannah, ABOVE ALL ELSE is a timely, intimate portrait of Texas landowners on the front line of the fight against the Keystone XL pipeline. Risking financial ruin and personal safety, these people's stories are a window into how social change happens in America.

95 min. | 2014 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$249
Environment, Climate Change, Oil, Activism
Exclusively for libraries, not available for retail | Order Now!

SPANISH LAKE



"HOW FERGUSON BECAME FERGUSON. REVELATORY AND URGENTLY RELEVANT"

- Village Voice

"A FIRESTARTER"

- IndieWire

"A THOUGHTFUL, EVEN-HANDED ACCOUNT"

- The Boston Globe

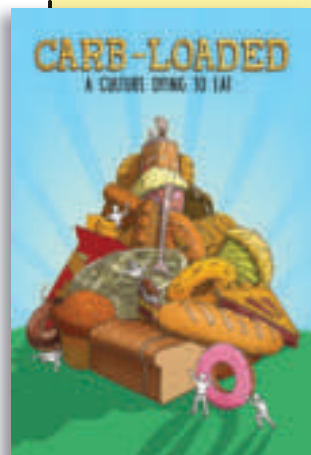
"A PORTRAIT OF AMERICA"

- The Washington Post

SPANISH LAKE is a controversial look at white flight, race and politics in the area of Spanish Lake, Missouri, a post WW2 suburb five miles from Ferguson. A timely and shocking film in the aftermath of the Mike Brown shooting and Ferguson riots receiving international news coverage.

78 min. | 2014 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$249
Sociology, Community Planning and Policy, Race, American Studies
Exclusively for libraries, not available for retail | Order Now!

CARB-LOADED: A CULTURE DYING TO EAT



"COOL...WATCH WITH YOUR KIDS"

- Cheese with Everything

"A MOST ENTERTAINING AND NUTRITIONAL FILM"

- The Reel Dad

"HIGHLY RECOMMENDED AND REQUIRED VIEWING"

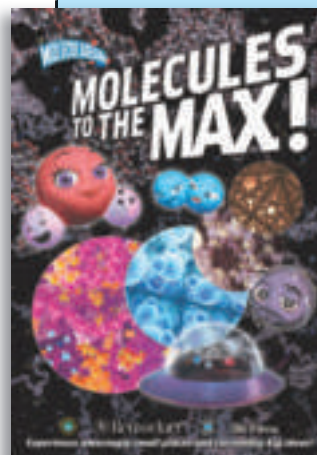
- Red Carpet Crash

FEATURING INTERVIEWS WITH 30+ NUTRITION EXPERTS

Lathe Poland doesn't fit the classic picture of an adult onset diabetes sufferer. So he was shocked to learn he had Type 2 diabetes. In CARB-LOADED: A CULTURE DYING TO EAT, Poland sets out to uncover why America's modern food culture is killing us and discovers that much of what we know about healthy eating is based on myths and fifty-year-old science.

74 min. | 2014 | SRP: \$24.95 | PPR: \$249
Food Science, Nutrition, K-12, Animation | Order Now!

MOLECULES TO THE MAX!



AS SEEN IN IMAX® THEATRES

"WE WANT TO EXCITE CHILDREN ABOUT THE WORLD OF SCIENCE"

- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

"TESTED HIGH AS A DELIGHT FOR FAMILIES, TEACHERS AND KIDS"

- Big Movie Zone

"MEMORABLE, ENTERTAINING, AND ENGAGING"

- Nanowerk

Travel to nanospace to boldly go where only atoms have gone before! Aboard the Molecularium, the most fantastic ship in the universe, you will fly through the crystalline structure of a snowflake, blast through the far reaches of space, and discover the molecular machinery of a living cell.

43 min. | 2014 | SRP: \$59.95 | PPR: \$249
Science, K-12, Animation
Exclusively for libraries, not available for retail | Order Now!



Order online at edu.passionriver.com or contact your favorite distributor.
Passion River Films Email: Orders@passionriver.com Phone: 732-321-0711

"Magical"
-The New York Times

TRASH DANCE

SOMETIMES INSPIRATION IS FOUND
IN THE MOST UNUSUAL PLACES...



**"Sublime...
thrilling, exuberant...
a small miracle."**
-The Washington Post




**"Trash Dance captures
the human spirit of dance."**
-The Houston Chronicle



A choreographer finds beauty and grace in garbage trucks, and against the odds, rallies reluctant city trash collectors to perform an extraordinary dance spectacle. On an abandoned airport runway, two dozen sanitation workers—and their trucks—inspire an audience of thousands.

Dance, Labor Studies, Sustainability, Environmental Studies, Art, Creativity Studies, Ethnic Studies, Performance

\$299. DVD - DVD w/PPR
\$399. DVD - DVD w/streaming
\$499. DVD - DSL w/PPR

trashdancemovie.com

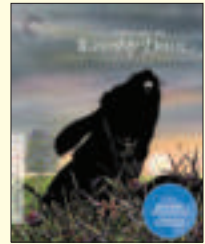
"Downton Abbey" Fifth Season Slated for January 27 Release from PBS

PBS Distribution has announced the upcoming release of *Downton Abbey: Season 5* (DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$54.99), coming January 27. Aired on *Masterpiece*, this Emmy, Golden Globe, and Screen Actors Guild award-winning series from writer-creator Julian Fellowes picks up the plot threads left dangling from last season, including Lady Mary's courtship contest, Lady Edith's trials as a secret single mom, Thomas's scheming against Bates, Robert's battles against modernity, and Tom's quest to be true to his ideals, all sprinkled with Violet's one-line zingers. The 2014 fifth season features returning stars Maggie Smith, Hugh Bonneville, Michelle Dockery, Elizabeth McGovern, Jim Carter, and others, who are joined by guest stars Harriet Walter, reprising her role as Lady Shackleton, and Peter Egan, who returns as Lord Flintshire, together with completely new characters played by Richard E. Grant, Anna Chancellor, and Rade Sherbedgia. And on January 4, PBS is releasing *Masterpiece: The Manners of Downton Abbey* (DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99). Presented by historical adviser Alistair Bruce, this program goes behind-the-scenes of the popular drama to explore the period's mores and manners.

Criterion's February Releases Include "Don't Look Now," "Satyricon," and "Watership Down"

Criterion's February slate kicks off February 3 with Jean-Luc Godard's 1980 dissection of love and freedom *Every Man for Himself* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), which explores the sexual and professional lives of a television producer (Jacques Dutronc), his ex-girlfriend (Nathalie Baye), and a prostitute (Isabelle Huppert) in a meditative story about work, relationships, and freedom. Coming February 10 is Jean Renoir's 1936 bittersweet romance *A Day in the Country* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), based on a story by Guy de Maupassant, about a city family's picnic in the French countryside where the mother and grown daughter are romanced by two local men. Also arriving February 10 is Nicolas Roeg's 1973 cult classic *Don't Look Now* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), adapted from a story by Daphne du Maurier, starring Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie as

a married couple on an extended trip to Venice that turns increasingly dangerous. Slated for February 17 is Yasujiro Ozu's 1962 final film *An Autumn Afternoon* (Blu-ray: \$39.95),



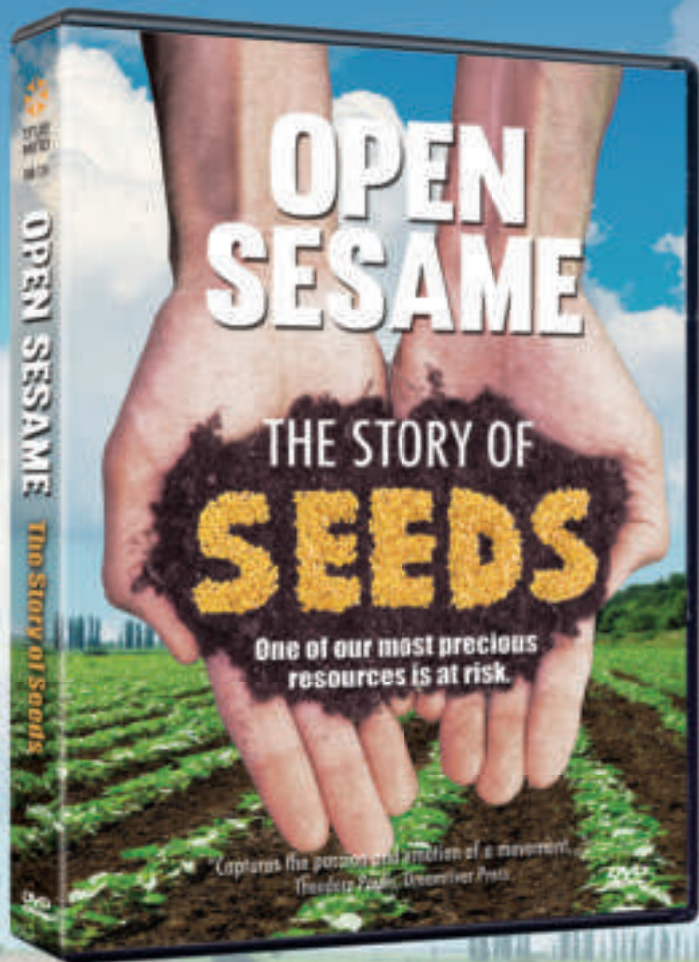
a gently heartbreaking story about a widower's (Chishu Ryu) dignified resignation to modern social shifts when his grown daughter leaves home. Coming February 24 is Federico Fellini's Oscar-nominated 1969 Roman satire *Fellini Satyricon* (DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95), a controversial film—loosely adapted from Petronius's classical work—about sexual licentiousness, godless violence, and eye-catching grotesquerie, following two young men through a landscape of pagan excess. Also scheduled for February 24 is Martin Rosen's 1978 *Watership Down* (DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95), a faithful big-screen animated adaptation of Richard Adams's classic British dystopian novel about a community of rabbits seeking safety after their warren comes under terrible threat, featuring the voices of John Hurt, Ralph Richardson, and Denholm Elliott.

Studio Ghibli Doc "The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness" Coming January 27 from Cinedigm

Offering a behind-the-scenes look at Japan's Studio Ghibli, *The Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* (DVD: \$29.95) will bow January 27 from GKIDS, in conjunction with Cinedigm. Directed by Mami Sunada, the documentary serves up a fascinating profile of the enigmatic and successful animation center, founded in 1985 by directors Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, and producer Toshio Suzuki. The historic studio has produced some of the world's most successful films, including the Oscar-winner *Spirited Away* (the highest-grossing Japanese film of all time), *Princess Mononoke*, and the Oscar-nominee *The Wind Rises*. Shot over the course of a year, the film follows the studio as it rushes to complete two films, Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises* and Takahata's *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya*, delivering a "fly on the wall" glimpse of this celebrated animation studio. Bonus features include "The Kingdom According to Ushiko" featurette.

As essential to life as the air we breathe...

Open Sesame illuminates what is at stake and what can be done to protect the source of nearly all our food.



"...seeks to shed light on the dire implications of seed privatization."
— FOODTANK

"unlocks the door to the magical, powerful, and perilous world of seeds. It will open hearts and minds. I hope everyone sees it."

— CLAIRE HOPE CUMMINGS, author of *Uncertain Peril, Genetic Engineering and the Future of Seeds*.

EXPERTS INCLUDE

Vandana Shiva, Author, Environmentalist
William Woys Weaver, Author, Food Historian
Bill McDorman, Co-founder of SaveSeed.org, Educator
Gary Nabhan, Agricultural Ecologist, Ethnobotanist
Diane Ott Whealy, Co Founder of Seed Saver Exchange
Ken Greene, Founder, Hudson Valley Seed Library

(2014) TMR-DV-124 / SRP \$24.98

NATIONAL RELEASE: FEB. 17, 2015

UPC: 826262012496 ISBN: 9781939517333

ENGLISH / COLOR / 82 MINUTES + 27 MINS BONUS

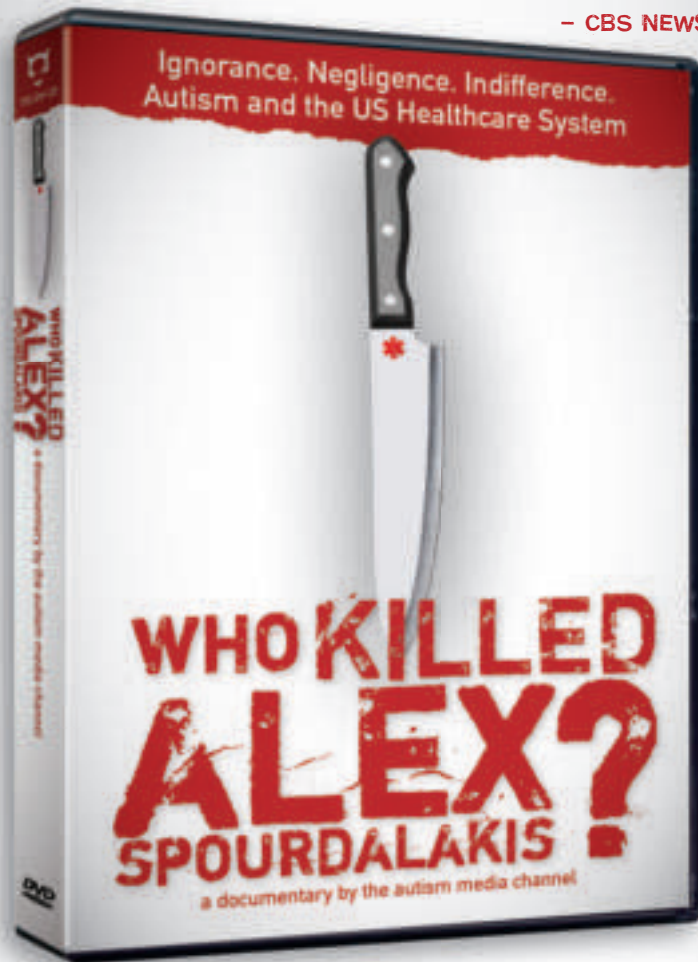
 **truemind**
www.truemind.tv



"A RARE AND VISUAL PRELUDE TO MURDER"

AS IT FOLLOWS THE TIRELESS STRUGGLES OF ALEX'S ALLEGED KILLERS BATTLING A SYSTEM THEY FELT WAS ILL-EQUIPPED TO HELP AUTISTIC CHILDREN."

— CBS NEWS



This unprecedented documentary captures the events that precipitated the alleged murder of Chicago teen Alex Spourdalakis. Filmed in the months leading up to his death, the film shows what and who actually contributed to it. Helpless and beyond exhausted, overwhelmed by Alex's suffering, his mother and Godmother plotted his death.

Alex's tragedy tells a story of our time: the systemic failure of the US healthcare system to treat autism as a medical disease rather than a psychiatric oddity.



(2014) / TDC-DV-125 / SRP \$19.98

NATIONAL RELEASE: JANUARY 13, 2015

UPC: 826262012595 / ISBN: 978-1-939517-34-0

COLOR / 66 MINUTES + 17 MINUTES BONUS

 **www.disinfo.com**
disinformation®



TDC
 ENTERTAINMENT


www.disinfo.com/store

ORDER FROM



ANTHONY-MASTERTSON PRODUCTIONS

TERRA FIRMA



A FILM ABOUT WOMEN, WAR, AND HEALING


Three women combat veterans speak in real terms about the psychological impacts of war and their own road to recovery—planting seeds and raising food.

"Highlights three victories over PTSD. Highly recommended." —Library Journal

"The subjects here speak in honest, articulate voices. Recommended"

★★★ —Video Librarian

"A thoughtful and inspiring film. Recommended." —Booklist Online



www.terrafirmafilm.com

GROW!



A DOCUMENTARY FILM THAT CAPTURES THE ENERGY, PASSION AND INDEPENDENCE OF A FRESH CROP OF YOUNG FARMERS

"The passion these young people have for the earth and it's bounty are contagious. Recommended." ★★★★★ —Video Librarian

"Beautifully photographed, skillfully edited. Recommended for anyone with an interest in the sustainable agriculture movement." —Library Journal

"An all-around pleasant film to watch. Recommended for discussions about the future of agriculture, organic foods, and environmental issues." —Educational Media Reviews Online



www.growmovie.net

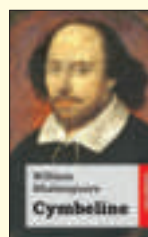
The following films based on books are slated to open during January and February. Movie release dates are subject to change.

Coming in January

The World Made Straight (Jan. 9) is based on the 2006 Southern gothic novel by Ron Rash. Directed by David Burris, the film stars Jeremy Irvine, Noah Wyle, Minka Kelly, and Haley Joel Osment.



Cymbeline (Jan. 23) is an adaptation of the romantic tragedy by William Shakespeare. Directed by Michael Almereyda, this contemporary update stars Ethan Hawke, Ed Harris, John Leguizamo, Penn Badgley, and Milla Jovovich.



Mortdecai (Jan. 23) is filmmaker David Koepf's adaptation of Kyril Bonfiglioli's comic thriller trilogy (written between 1973-79). Featuring Gwyneth Paltrow, Ewan McGregor, and Jeff Goldblum, the film stars Johnny Depp as titular aristocratic art dealer Charles Mortdecai.



Coming in February

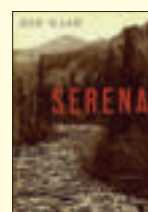
Seventh Son (Feb. 6) is inspired by Joseph Delaney's 2004 *The Spook's Apprentice*, the first novel in his dark fantasy YA series *The Wardstone Chronicles*. Directed by Sergei Bodrov, the film stars Julianne Moore, Jeff Bridges, Alicia Vikander, and Ben Barnes.



Fifty Shades of Grey (Feb. 13) is based on the 2011 first novel in author E.L. James's popular erotic romance series. Directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson, the highly-anticipated film stars Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan, Marcia Gay Harden, Jennifer Ehle, and Max Martini.



Serena (Feb. 26) is based on the 2008 *New York Times* bestseller from author Ron Rash. Directed by Susanne Bier, the Depression-era timber-business drama stars Jennifer Lawrence, Bradley Cooper, and Rhys Ifans.

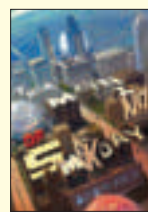


Looking Ahead

Coming in March is **In the Heart of the Sea**, adapted from Nathaniel Philbrick's 2000 National Book Award-winning nonfiction 19th-century whaling story. Directed by Ron Howard, the film stars Chris Hemsworth, Cillian Murphy, and Ben Whishaw.



Also slated for March is **Home**, based on Adam Rex's 2007 children's novel *The True Meaning of Smekday*. Directed by Tim Johnson, this animated buddy comedy features the voices of Rihanna, Jim Parsons, Steve Martin, and Jennifer Lopez.



Also arriving in March is **Insurgent**, based on the 2012 second novel in Veronica Roth's dystopian sci-fi YA trilogy. Directed by Robert Schwentke, the film stars Shailene Woodley, Theo James, Kate Winslet, and Ray Stevenson.



Slated for April is **The Longest Ride**, based on bestselling romance author Nicholas Sparks's 2012 novel. Directed by George Tillman, Jr., the film stars Britt Robertson, Scott Eastwood, and Alan Alda.



Also coming in April is **The Moon and the Sun**, adapted from the 1997 sci-fi/alternate history romance by Vonda N. McIntyre. Directed by Sean McNamara, the film stars Pierce Brosnan, William Hurt, Kaya Scodelario, and Benjamin Walker.



KINOLORBEREDU.COM

"CAN I STREAM IT FOR JUST ONE SEMESTER?"

"YES. ON CINEDU."

cin edu

The new streaming service from Kino Lorber EDU is just what you've been looking for...if you've been looking for ridiculously simple, short-term streaming with no strings attached.

For just \$200 per title, CINEDU provides you with a stable, embeddable link and a password - just place it into a classroom or media management system and you're done. With nothing to download, nothing to encode, and nothing in the way of management fees, nothing could be easier.

And CINEDU streaming is a great value because there are no minutes or clicks to measure - our one-time, affordable fee provides unlimited streaming, including PPR, for up to six months.

Visit the CINEDU site now at cinedu.com to see what you've been missing, and find out how easy streaming can be.

CINEDU.com

For information about exhibition, public performance rights or streaming, please go to www.kinolorberedu.com or call (212) 629-6880

A **KINO LORBER** COMPANY
i n c o r p o r a t e d

WEBJUNKIE

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

Guilty Gear Xrd -SIGN- (Aksys, PS3/PS4: \$49.99-\$59.99, Rated: T). This fifth entry in the unique fighting game series has been completely redesigned to present extreme battles with 3D animation.

Kingdom Hearts HD 2.5 ReMIX (Square Enix, PS3: \$39.99, Rated: E10+). Featuring HD remakes of *Kingdom Hearts II Final Mix* and *Kingdom Hearts Birth by Sleep Final Mix*, as well as remastered cinematics from *Kingdom Hearts Re:coded*, this collection from the beloved Square/Disney third-person action role-playing series features Mickey, Donald, Goofy, and others.



January 18—January 24

Saints Row IV: Re-Elected (Deep Silver, PS4/XOne: \$49.99, Rated: M). Remastered for next-gen consoles, this fourth entry in the zany third-person action shooter franchise finds the Saints transported by aliens to a bizarre simulated Earth, where they must fight to free humanity from head alien Zinyak's mental grasp. The release will include all of the downloadable content as well as the upcoming expansion pack *Gat Out of Hell*.

January 25—January 31

Dying Light (Warner, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this first-person, action-survival-horror game set in a vast and dangerous open world, players traverse an expansive urban environment overrun by a vicious outbreak, scavenging the world for supplies to craft weapons to defend against the growing infected population.



Dynasty Warriors 8: Empires (Tecmo Koei, PS4/XOne: \$49.99, Rated: RP). In this third-person action game, players can select from 83 unique characters, stepping into the roles of historical military and political figures trying to gain control over the warring Three Kingdoms of China.

February 8—February 14

Evolve (2K, PS4/XOne: \$59.99, Rated: M). From the creators of *Left 4 Dead*, this first-person multi-player shooter set on the planet Shear (where neither flora nor fauna are friendly) pits four player hunters against a single, player-controlled monster.



Kirby and the Rainbow Curse (Nintendo, WiiU: \$59.99, Rated: RP). Following the classic 2005 Nintendo DS title *Kirby: Canvas Curse*, this entry in the third-person platforming series finds players guiding Kirby through colorful levels, and will also feature four-player co-op.

February 15—February 21

Dead or Alive 5: Last Round (Tecmo Koei, PS4/XOne: \$39.99, Rated: M). This popular fighting franchise makes its next-gen debut in this latest entry that marries DOA's signature style with MMA fighting techniques, presented in smooth and striking animations.

Dragon Ball: Xenoverse (Bandai Namco, PS3/PS4/X360/XOne: \$49.99-\$59.99, Rated: RP). The *Dragon Ball* universe comes to next-gen systems in this newest franchise entry of the popular fighting game pitting Goku against his most fierce enemies.

The Order: 1886 (Sony, PS4: \$59.99, Rated: M). In this story-driven, third-person action-adventure game, players take on the role of Galahad, a member of an elite order of Knights, who joins a centuries-old war against a powerful threat in an alternate history tale set in Victorian-era London.



February 22—February 28

Tokyo Twilight Ghost Hunters (Aksys, PS3: \$39.99, Rated: RP). Players join a group of teenage ghost hunters to exorcise evil spirits in this strategy adventure game that mixes a choose-your-own-adventure type

storyline with RPG mechanics and card battle mini-games.

TV on DVD/Blu-ray

Available Now

Banshee: The Complete Second Season (HBO, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$49.99). An ex-convict turned Amish-community sheriff (Antony Starr) goes up against the town kingpin (Ulrich Thomsen) in this 2014 sophomore season of the Cinemax-aided action drama series.



Doctor Who: The Complete Eighth Series (BBC, DVD: 5 discs, \$79.98; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$99.98). Peter Capaldi is introduced as the Twelfth Doctor in this 2014 eighth season of the long-running cult sci-fi time-travel series.

The Exes: Seasons 1 & 2 (Paramount, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98). Three divorced roommates (Donald Faison, David Alan Basche, Wayne Knight) are aided by their attorney and landlord (Kristen Johnston) in this compilation from the 2011-12 first and second seasons of the TV Land series.

The Strain: The Complete First Season (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99). Aired on FX, this horror drama virus outbreak series based on novels by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan stars Corey Stoll, David Bradley, Mía Maestro, and Sean Astin.



Top Gear USA: The Complete Season 4 (BBC, DVD: 5 discs, \$24.98). Adam Ferrara, Tanner Foust, and Rutledge Wood present this 2013 fourth season of the American version of Britain's popular auto aficionado series, with guest stars including Dolph Lundgren.

Under the Dome: Season 2 (Paramount, DVD: 4 discs, \$59.99; Blu-ray: 4 discs, \$74.99). Based on the bestselling book by Stephen King, this 2014 sophomore season of the horror mystery series following a community trapped under a strange dome barrier stars Mike Vogel, Rachelle Lefevre, and Eddie Cahill.

White Collar: The Complete Fifth Season (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98). This

Explore the Documentaries

Filmmakers Library



Behind the Awards!



Best Kept Secret: Aging Out with Autism

Peabody Award 2013, Sundance Documentary Fund Grant 2012

What happens to special education students when they are forced to leave the security of public school? This documentary explores this question by following teacher Janet Mino and her class of autistic high school students over the year and a half before graduation. During this 18 month period, Mino puts in endless hours advocating for her students, fighting to find them a place in the adult world—a job or rare placement in a recreational center—so they do not end up sitting at home, institutionalized, or on the streets. But will her efforts be enough? *85 min. 2013.*

Official Selection
Video Librarian
Best Documentaries
2014

Finding Vivian Maier

"Absorbing, touching, and satisfyingly enjoyable." —New York Times

"A moving tribute to Maier's art." —The New Yorker

Finding Vivian Maier delves into the recent discovery of the groundbreaking photographer Vivian Maier, who for years had been wholly unknown to the art world, but has since taken it by storm. It follows John Maloof, an amateur historian who bought over 100,000 negatives of Maier's work by chance at an auction, as he crusades to put this prolific photographer in the history books.

In this documentary, Maier's strange and riveting life and art are revealed through never-before-seen photographs, films, and interviews with dozens of people who thought they knew her. Through a retrospective look at Maier's life, Maloof creates a stunning film that provides firsthand insight into the mind of an almost-forgotten genius. *83 min. 2014.*



Dancing in Jaffa

Tribeca Film Festival 2013, Denver Jewish Film Festival Best Documentary 2013

Dancing in Jaffa follows internationally renowned ballroom dancer Pierre Dulaine as he leads an educational program to bring Jewish and Palestinian children together through the power of dance. Over a ten week period, Dulaine teaches the ten-year-olds respect and acceptance, struggling every step of the way to overcome cultural barriers. *90 min. 2013.*



The Whole Gritty City

"Sensitive, intelligent, and inspirational." —NPR

"Gritty City is glorious." —David Simon, The Wire

The Whole Gritty City plunges viewers into post-Katrina New Orleans, where school marching bands are often the only respite that students have from violence. The film follows a cast of savvy students as their band directors get them ready to perform in the Mardi Gras parades. The directors serve as role models for the children, teaching them life lessons about survival and success. *89 min. 2013.*

Tap or Die

San Francisco Dance Film Festival 2014, Dance on Camera at Lincoln Center 2014

Tap or Die traces the cultural roots of tap dancing and showcases it's reemergence on the cutting edge of the performing arts by following the behind-the-scenes creation of the *Imagine Tap!* musical revue. *62 min. 2013.*



The Undocumented

"This is a lament for lives lost, told with a sensitivity that should transcend politics." —New York Times

Chronicling the high rate of deaths among immigrants illegally crossing the border between Mexico and the U.S., this film reveals the ongoing impact of immigration laws on immigrants themselves. It provides interviews with Border Patrol agents, medical investigators, and immigrant families. *88 min. 2013.*

Elaine Stritch: Shoot Me

Chicago International Film Festival Audience Award 2013

This bold, hilarious, and poignant documentary reveals the life of the Tony and Emmy Award-winner Elaine Stritch both on and off the stage. It provides rare archival footage and candid reflections about her life, punctuated with words from her loyal friends, including James Gandolfini, Tina Fey, and Alec Baldwin. *81 min. 2013.*

Adelante/Forward

Canada International Film Festival Rising Star Award 2014

Adelante showcases an Irish Catholic church that attracts the patronage of Mexican immigrants. With a personal glimpse at the lives of the vibrant community members, the film shows how churchgoers from various backgrounds have forged heartfelt bonds of friendship and understanding. *50 min. 2014.*

Explore these and thousands more
docs at www.academicvideostore.com

@FLibraryOnline

Filmmakers Library
AN IMPRINT OF ALEXANDER STREET PRESS

2013-14 fifth season of the USA Network drama features guest appearances by Richard Thomas and Željko Ivanek.

Wolfblood: Season Two (Cinedigm, DVD: 2 discs, \$14.95). Produced by the BBC and aired on the Disney Channel, this 2013 sophomore season of the fantasy series follows a teen schoolgirl (Aimee Kelly) whose family is part-human and part-wolf.

Zane Grey Theatre: The Complete Third Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.95). Based on novels and stories by Zane Grey, this 1958-59 sophomore season of the Western anthology series narrated by Dick Powell features Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Ryan, James Coburn, and Rita Moreno.



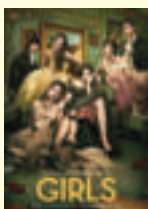
January 6

Archer: The Complete Fifth Season (Fox, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.98). Super spy Sterling Archer (voiced by H. Jon Benjamin) and his team are back in this wild 2014 fifth season of the FX-aired animated action series.

Black Sails: The Complete First Season (Anchor Bay, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Set in 1715, this 2014 debut season of the Starz-aired prequel to *Treasure Island* from executive producer Michael Bay stars Toby Stephens, Hannah New, and Luke Arnold.

The Bridge: The Complete Season 2 (Fox, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98). Detectives from both the U.S. and Mexico sides of the border join forces to stop criminals in this 2014 sophomore season of the FX-aired action series starring Diane Kruger and Demián Bichir.

Girls: The Complete Third Season (HBO, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99). This 2014 third season of the Golden Globe-winning NYC-set dramedy series following twentysomething writer Hannah (Lena Dunham) and her friends features guest appearances by Gaby Hoffmann, Colin Quinn, and Louise Lasser.



Glee: The Complete Fifth Season (Fox, DVD: 6 discs, \$39.98). This 2013-14 penultimate fifth season of the Emmy and Golden Globe-winning musical dramedy

series features guest appearances by Demi Lovato, Gwyneth Paltrow, and Shirley MacLaine.

Looking: The Complete First Season (HBO, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.98). Three thirtysomething pals (Jonathan Groff, Frankie J. Álvarez, and Murray Bartlett) navigate gay life in San Francisco in this 2014 first season of the HBO comedy-drama series.

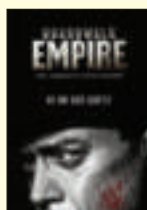


Midsomer Murders, Series 12 (Acorn, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.99). Real estate agents must really clean up in crime-ridden Midsomer County, as evidenced in this 12th compilation of episodes, including "The Dogleg Murders," "The Black Book" and "Secrets and Spies." Also newly available at the same price is **Midsomer Murders, Series 13**.

January 13

The Big House: The Complete Series (Olive, DVD: \$29.95). Comedian Kevin Hart stars as a spoiled Malibu brat who moves in with his working class Philadelphia relatives in this short-lived 2004 sitcom that also features Faizon Love and Keith David.

Boardwalk Empire: The Complete Fifth Season (HBO, DVD: 3 discs, \$59.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$79.98). Set six years after last season, this 2014 final season of the acclaimed Prohibition-era drama series stars Steve Buscemi in a Screen Actors Guild and Golden Globe award-winning role as political boss Nucky Thompson.



Dallas: The Complete Third Season (Warner, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98). This 2014 third and final season follows the ups and downs of the wealthy Ewing oil clan, and includes guest appearances by Judith Light, AnnaLynne McCord, and Steven Weber.

Episodes: The Third Season (Showtime, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.98). Matt LeBlanc stars as a skewed version of himself who is handled by a married British writing team (Stephen Mangan and Tamsin Greig) in this 2014 third season of the Showtime-aired comedy series.

The Facts of Life: The Complete Series (Shout! Factory, DVD: 26 discs, \$199.99). Boarding school housemother Mrs. Garrett

(Charlotte Rae) tries to reel in her boisterous girls (Kim Fields, Nancy McKeon, Lisa Whelchel, and Mindy Cohn) for much of this long-running 1979-88 dramatic sitcom, which also featured Molly Ringwald and George Clooney.

House of Lies: The Third Season (Showtime, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98). Inspired by Martin Kihn's book, subtitled "How Management Consultants Steal Your Watch and Then Tell You the Time," this 2014 third season of the Golden Globe-winning series stars Don Cheadle and Kristen Bell.

NYPD Blue: Season 08 (Shout! Factory, DVD: 5 discs, \$34.99). This 2001 eighth season of the acclaimed cop drama series stars Dennis Franz, Rick Schroder, Kim Delaney, and Esai Morales.

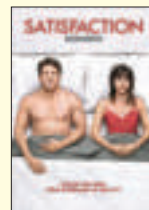


Stingray: The Complete Series—50th Anniversary Edition (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs, \$34.99). Created by Supermarionation producers Gerry and Sylvia Anderson, this 1964-65 British children's series follows the underwater escapades of the elite World Aquanaut Security Patrol.

January 20

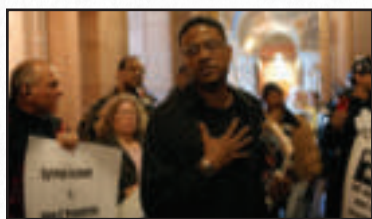
Little House on the Prairie: Season Four—Deluxe Remastered Edition (Lionsgate, DVD: 5 discs, \$21.98; Blu-ray: 5 discs, \$24.99). Based on the beloved pioneer books by Laura Ingalls Wilder, this 1977-78 fourth season of the popular family series is newly available in a re-mastered high-definition set.

Satisfaction: Season One (Universal, DVD: 2 discs, \$44.98). Aired on the USA Network, this 2014 first season of the original drama series follows a couple (Matt Passmore, Stephanie Szostak) whose love life is damaged by relations with a prostitute.



Welcome Back, Kotter: The Complete Second Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.95). Based on creator and star Gabe Kaplan's own high school experiences, a teacher is here assigned the remedial class he once attended himself in this 1976-77 sophomore season of the Emmy-nominated sitcom, also starring John Travolta and Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs.

Wolfblood: Season Three (Cinedigm,



Junior, a young father trying to turn his life around after years of heroin addiction, joins forces with a group of fellow hepatitis-C-infected former injection drug users in the Bronx to fight the disease in their community. Knitting personal narratives together with a profile of innovative programs at a methadone clinic, the film explores the concept of storytelling as an instrument of change and gives a powerful voice to marginalized members of society. Ultimately a very personal story of redemption and hope, "The Fix" puts a human face on addiction and disease with sensitivity and grace.

Director's Statement

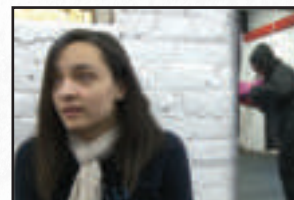
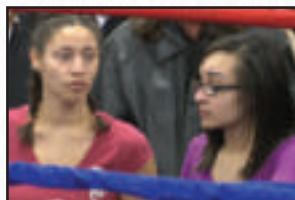
When I began production at the methadone clinic in the Bronx, I knew I wanted to tell a very personal story about addiction and disease. Aware that I could not predict the directions my subjects' lives might take, I was nonetheless committed to following them whatever their course. When I met Junior, for instance, he was only recently clean from heroin and, statistically speaking, likely to relapse within the year. In the end, I was blown away by the determination of the people that I filmed, awed by their courageous fight and willingness to share their painful journey on camera. The story I found is one of hope and redemption, and I'm proud to tell it. As a chronic, relapsing disease that takes and destroys lives, addiction lends itself to media representation that is dark and demoralizing. While tragedies are all too often the outcome of this horrible disease, they are not the only stories to be told. This is a story of possibility.

LENGTH: 52 Minutes • MRSP: \$19.95 • CATALOG #20584 • UPC #: 6-4603205849-9 • PRICE WITH PPR: \$295 • PRICE WITH DSL: \$495 • PRICE WITH PPR AND DSL: \$595

INSPIRATIONAL



Whether in a boxing ring or hospital, Devonne Canady has always been a fighter, either as the underdog or for the underdog. In this Justin Ervin directed documentary, we follow the former. Watch Devonne, an Olympic boxing gold medalist/pediatric nurse/boxing coach as she mentors two inner city teenagers, Emily and Zaneta, through her non-profit gym Elephant in the Room Boxing Club. Issues arise when one of the teen's absence from the boxing gym and from school is attributed to her growing personal demons. This passion to fight for others prompts Devonne to help get the troubled teen back on the right track and eventually face the elephant in the room.



LENGTH: 60 Minutes • MRSP: \$19.95 • CATALOG #20569 • UPC #: 6-4603205699-0 • PRICE WITH PPR: \$295 • PRICE WITH DSL: \$495 • PRICE WITH PPR AND DSL: \$595

AVAILABLE FROM ALL MAJOR DISTRIBUTORS
www.janson.com • info@janson.com
 Become a fan on Facebook
www.facebook.com/jansonmedia



View trailers online:
www.janson.com
www.youtube.com/jansonmedia

DVD: 2 discs, \$14.95). Produced by the BBC and aired stateside on the Disney Channel, this 2014 third season of the BAFTA-nominated fantasy series follows a part-human/part-wolf character (Bobby Lockwood) struggling to gain new allies in the supernatural world.

January 27

Downton Abbey: Season 5 (PBS, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$54.99). Starring Hugh Bonneville, Michelle Dockery, and Elizabeth McGovern, the acclaimed international hit period drama is back in this 2014 fifth season following the wealthy Crawley dynasty and their staff during the Roaring Twenties.

Maison Close: Season One (Music Box, DVD: 3 discs, \$34.95; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.95). Valérie Karsenti, Anne Charrier, and Jemima West star in this 2010 first season of the French-language costume drama series set in a 19th-century Parisian brothel.



February 3

The Bob Newhart Show: Season Five (Shout! Factory, DVD: 3 discs, \$24.98). Golden Globe and Emmy winner Bob Newhart stars as a friendly neighborhood psychiatrist in this 1976-77 fifth season of the classic sitcom. Also newly available at the same price is **The Bob Newhart Show: The Final Season**.

The Saint, Set 2 (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99). Based on the Simon Templar book series by Leslie Charteris, this action-packed compilation includes three movies starring Simon Dutton: "Wrong Number," "The Big Bang," and "The Software Murders."



February 10

Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons: The Complete Series (Shout! Factory, DVD: 4 discs, \$29.99). Set in 2068, this 1967-68 Supermarionation series from Gerry and Sylvia Anderson focuses on the Spectrum defense team's epic battle against the villainous Mysterons.

Hart to Hart: The Complete Fourth Season (Shout! Factory, DVD: 6 discs,

\$39.98). Husband and wife detectives Jonathan and Jennifer Hart (Robert Wagner, Stefanie Powers) are back solving crimes in this penultimate 1982-83 fourth season of the action series.

Nurse Jackie: Season Six (Showtime, DVD: 3 discs, \$29.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$29.98). This 2014 sixth season of the black comedy series continues to chronicle the life of a hard-working drug-addicted NYC emergency room nurse (Emmy-winner Edie Falco).

Olive Kitteridge (HBO, DVD: 2 discs, \$39.98, Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$49.99). Based on Elizabeth Strout's Pulitzer Prize-winning 2008 novel, this four-part miniseries set in a gossip-riddled New England town stars Frances McDormand, Richard Jenkins, Zoe Kazan, and Bill Murray.



February 17

Game of Thrones: The Complete Fourth Season (HBO, DVD: 5 discs, \$59.99; Blu-ray: 5 discs, \$79.98). This much-anticipated 2014 fourth season based on the best-selling fantasy series by George R.R. Martin stars Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Peter Dinklage, Kit Harington, and Lena Headey.



February 24

Midsomer Murders, Set 25 (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99). Also featuring the 100th episode, this compilation from the crime-drama series includes "The Christmas Haunting," "Let Us Prey," "Wild Harvest," "The Flying Club," and "The Killings of Copenhagen."

Serangoon Road (Acorn, DVD: 3 discs, \$49.99). Set in 1960s Singapore, this 2013 detective mystery—the first original drama series from HBO Asia—stars Don Hany and Joan Chen.

Looking Ahead

In March, look for the debut season of **A Place to Call Home**, the third seasons of **CHiPs** and **Longmire**, and the 32nd volume of **Mystery Science Theater 3000**.

Re-priced or New to DVD/Blu-ray

America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference (PBS, DVD: \$24.99 [\$54.99 w/PPR]). The story of American immigrant Kurt Klein's efforts to rescue his family from Hitler's Germany is at the center of director Martin Ostrow's 1994 PBS-aided *American Experience* documentary (VL-9/94 ★★), which looks at U.S. government efforts to suppress information regarding the "Final Solution."



How to Look at a Painting (Athena, DVD: 2 discs, \$49.99). Based on the same-titled book by New Zealand presenter and curator Justin Paton, this 2009-11 series takes viewers on a museum and artist workshop tour designed to aid in art appreciation. Bonus features include the documentary "What Is Beauty?," profiles of select artists, and a booklet.

Los Angeles Plays Itself (Cinema Guild, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95). Directed by Thom Andersen, this 2003 documentary (re-mastered in 2013) looks at differences between the real and reel history of the City of Angels. Extras include Andersen's short film "The Tony Longo Trilogy," and a booklet.

Shalom Sesame: The Complete Series (SISU, DVD: 6 discs, \$99.95, web: sisuent.com). Featuring 12 programs from the 1986-90 Jewish-themed spin-off of the popular children's series *Sesame Street*, this compilation includes the episodes *Welcome to Israel*, *Chanukah: The Missing Menorah* (VL-11/10 ★★), *Grover Learns Hebrew*, *Countdown to Shavuot*, and more. Extras include bonus clips and sing-alongs. Also newly available are the documentaries **Who Shot My Father?** and **Zubin Mehta: Zubin and I**, priced at \$24.95 each.

Tosca's Kiss (Icarus, DVD: \$24.98). Presented by Dustin Hoffman, director Daniel Schmid's 1984 documentary goes inside the "Casa di Riposo," also known as the world's first nursing home for retired opera singers, founded by composer Giuseppe Verdi. Bonus features include a photo gallery. Also newly available at the same price are **One Day Pina Asked...** and **On Strike!** Chris Marker & The Medvedkin Group.



COMPELLING NEW DVDS FROM VISION VIDEO



Once We Were Slaves

Two thousand years ago, two Jewish prisoners await their fate in a Jerusalem jail cell. One, a lifelong criminal and a rebel against the Roman occupation, is resigned to his death. The other, a lifelong rabbinical student and peacemaker, refuses to accept his fate. As the afternoon progresses, their history is revealed, a history that leads them to a shocking encounter with a mysterious man who changes their lives forever. This short film presents the crucifixion from a unique perspective. Drama, 27 minutes.

DVD - #501625D, \$9.99, UPC 7 27985 01625 2



The Third Day

On the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, eyewitnesses reported that they found an empty tomb and had an encounter with a living, breathing Jesus. What proof do we have that the resurrection really happened? This intriguing documentary digs deep into the biblical and historical accounts and explores these questions: Did the disciples steal the body? Did they hallucinate and only imagine they had met the risen Jesus, or did they create a myth in order to keep the movement going? Scholars take a hard look and offer honest, thought-provoking answers. Documentary, includes 55- and 30-minute versions.

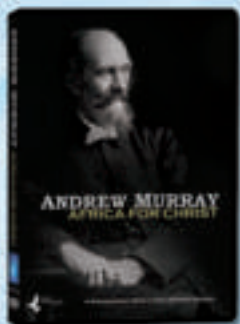
DVD - #501501D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01501 9



In the Footsteps of St. Peter with David Suchet

Join beloved actor David Suchet (PBS's *Poirot* series) as he embarks on an epic journey in search of the Apostle Peter. In this major two-part documentary series produced for the BBC, Suchet explores how a humble fisherman, known for his stubborn and impetuous personality, became a leading figure in the early church. The series follows the biblical account and other historical sources to reveal the extraordinary life of one of the most important figures in church history. Documentary, 135 minutes.

DVD - #501580D, \$19.99, UPC 7 27985 01580 4



Andrew Murray

Andrew Murray (1828-1917) was a South African minister, writer, and revivalist. For more than six decades he served with the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, preaching, teaching, and writing more than 200 books and pamphlets. Murray became a key figure in the 1860 religious revival that spread across South Africa's Cape Colony, and he established The Missionary Institute, a school that trained and sent missionaries into the interior of Africa. Shot on location in South Africa, this documentary tells the story of Andrew Murray's life and mission and provides insight into his provocative teaching. Documentary, 53 minutes.

DVD - #501599D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01599 6



Tomorrow Comes

In the early 1950s, missionaries John and Madge Wood, along with their young sons, went to serve in Ometepec, Mexico. Tragically, their time was cut short when John and Madge's plane crashed in the remote mountains. They left behind the five young boys, ages four to fourteen. Fifty years after the death of their parents, the Wood family gathered in Ometepec, Mexico to celebrate their parents' legacy. This film is the unforgettable story of their reunion as they not only play and laugh together, but also discover how deeply their parents' love impacted their community and their own family for generations to come. Documentary, 40 minutes.

DVD - #501600D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01600 9

★★★★

Nov/Dec 2014
issue of
Video Librarian



The Desperate: A Ray of Light in the Face of Tyranny

On a rainy night in a concentration camp, a ruthless Nazi general is forced to plead with a condemned Jewish doctor to save his dying son. With nothing left to lose, the doctor refuses to aid his hated enemies. But when he is offered his freedom in exchange, he is faced with an unthinkable moral dilemma. *The Desperate* offers a provocative reflection on the relationship between justice and mercy. Winner of multiple awards including Best Short Film by the Hollywood Film Festival. Drama, 32 minutes.

DVD - #501583D, \$14.99, UPC 7 27985 01583 5



Vision Video
PO Box 540
Worcester, PA 19490
1-800-523-0226 • 610-584-3500
Fax: 610-584-6643
E-mail: info@visionvideo.com
Web: www.visionvideo.com

OUR UNCONDITIONAL GUARANTEE:

If, for any reason, a product does not meet your expectations, return it to us, and we will exchange it or give you a refund. All DVDs are guaranteed against any defects. Available from Baker and Taylor, Midwest Tape, or directly from Vision Video.

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

Abuse of Weakness

★★★

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

As with 1996's *Perfect Love*, director Catherine Breillat has also based *Abuse of Weakness* on a true story—this time from her own life. Writer-filmmaker Maud (Isabelle Huppert) wakes to find herself paralyzed on one side from a stroke. Working with speech and movement specialists, Maud's recovery is slow. While recuperating, she catches an interview with Vilko, a con-man (rapper Kool Shen) who has just emerged from prison, and she decides to cast him in her next film. Surprisingly, he agrees, and the pair spend time together, but Maud acts as if she's looking for an adventure more than a collaborator, and Vilko seems to be more interested in a distraction than a job. Since Vilko feels intellectually inferior to Maud, he brags about his ill-gotten gains, and—although he's married—implies that he finds her attractive. Soon, Maud is writing him checks and adding him as a co-author to her next book. Relatives warn Maud to dump him, but she just laughs (Maud laughs a lot). Vilko may be abusing Maud's weakness, but she has no one to blame but herself. In contrast to some of Breillat's more shocking movies (such as 1999's *Romance*), the sexual content here is kept to a minimum, but *Abuse of Weakness* ranks as one of contemporary cinema's more self-lacerating films. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)



As the Light Goes Out ★★½

Well Go USA, 116 min., in Cantonese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

This uneven, yet sporadically thrilling Hong Kong action film about imperiled firefighters follows a close-knit squad (Nicholas Tse, Shawn Yue, Andy On) at a busy fire

station who are called to a scary, decrepit power station on Christmas Eve, where eerily wafting smoke foreshadows the cataclysm to come. Director Derek Kwok's *As the Light Goes Out* interweaves lots of convoluted subplots, making it sometimes difficult to track the thorny histories between lead characters as the narrative repeatedly breaks down into talky interruptions with repeated emphasis on loyalty, honor, sacrifice, and bonding among the men. But the action sequences are suspenseful as the men heroically struggle in the maze-like burning building, thanks to hair-raising stunts and digital effects, including the spooky smoke that seems to take on its own persona. Likely to appeal to fans of *Chicago Fire*, this is a strong optional purchase. (T. Fry)



Ballin' at the Graveyard

★★★

Virgil, 83 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.99

Anyone making a documentary about basketball inevitably runs into comparisons with the classic *Hoop Dreams*. This nonfiction feature by Basil Anastassiou and Paul Kentoffio takes a different approach to the subject, moving beyond the often-elusive world of pursuing NBA careers to focus on pickup basketball in predominantly African-American urban centers. In this case, the central location is Washington Park in Albany, NY, nicknamed "The Graveyard" because the park was once a cemetery. Co-director Anastassiou, himself a pickup game player, serves as both narrator and participant in the action, which is rough and rude, not only lacking the finesse of pro ball action, but also featuring players who are not shy about delivering scatological diatribes at high decibel levels. While *Ballin' at the Graveyard* certainly entertains the viewer by capturing the sweaty fury of the pickup game, the film also follows players back to their daily lives, where they are serious about their respective family and work responsibilities. *Ballin' at the Graveyard* is wonderfully filmed and edited, and the men featured here are charismatic. An often vibrant and engaging sports and social documentary, this is recommended. (P. Hall)



Borgman ★★½

Cinedigm, 113 min., in Dutch & English w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

This nightmarish psychodrama from the Netherlands is part horror film and part dark fable. The Borgman of the title is both a devil and a perverse

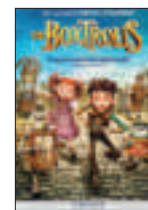


guardian angel in the guise of a homeless man (Jan Bijvoet)—living in an underground cave in the forest—who emerges to stir the poison in the lives of a middle-class family inhabiting a modern glass-and-steel home in the woods. With the help of an ominous network of shadowy associates, Borgman manipulates the members of the family to create tensions within. Bystanders are even murdered to tighten the conspiratorial web, and some kind of surgery is performed on the three children of the family that turns them into loyal followers. What starts out as a strange tale of demented social retribution takes a left turn into ambiguous malevolence with hints of a supernatural backstory. Dutch director Alex van Warmerdam's *Borgman* is a black-hearted social satire that attacks affluence and complacency with an unforgiving and inexplicable brutality—a film more disturbing than scary, especially since motivations remain opaque here. Likely to be too alienating for many viewers, but possibly appealing to those who appreciate challenging cinema, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

The Boxtrolls ★★★

Universal, 97 min., PG, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Jan. 20

Set in the Dickensian city of Cheesebridge, the grotesque, somewhat convoluted story of this animated film revolves around an orphaned 11-year-old (voiced by Isaac Hempstead-Wright) who was lovingly raised by tiny, timid creatures called Boxtrolls, which dwell beneath the cobblestone streets, speak unintelligibly, and wear cardboard boxes that double as hiding places. The boy wears a box labeled Eggs that also gives him his name. The Boxtrolls are terrified of an aspiring aristocrat, Archibald Snatcher (Ben Kingsley), who is determined to capture every single one of them so that he can qualify for a coveted White Hat. Envious, socially ambitious Snatcher has convinced Cheesebridge's gullible citizens that Boxtrolls are dangerous, which is obviously not true. And then one day Eggs ventures out and is spotted by snobbish Lord Portley-Rind's daughter, Winnie (Elle Fanning), who is curious about who he is and where he comes from. Adapted from Alan Snow's novel *Here Be Monsters!*, the film features inventive, imaginative visuals coupled with surprisingly sophisticated humor. The impressive voice cast also includes Simon Pegg, Jared Harris, Toni Collette, Tracy Morgan, and Nick Frost. A spooky, surreal, emotionally resonant steampunk fantasy that will appeal to kids and adults, this is recommended. (S. Granger)



Calvary ★★★

Fox, 100 min., R, DVD: \$26.99, Blu-ray: \$27.99

Set in a small village on the windswept

Exclusive New Releases from **BOND/360**



This May Be the Last Time

music · Native American culture

THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME traces the journey of award-winning filmmaker Sterlin Harjo as he interweaves the tale of a mysterious death with the rich history of the powerful hymns that have united Native American communities in times of worship, joy, and hope.

RUN TIME: 93 MINUTES
UPC: 6 16892 24964 1

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



Sign Painters

art & design

Hand-painted signs are a product of a fascinating 150-year-old American history. What was once a common job has now become a highly specialized trade, a unique craft struggling with technological advances. SIGN PAINTERS stylistically explores this unacknowledged art form.

RUN TIME: 80 MINUTES
Available January 27, 2015
Contact hello@bondinfluence.com to pre-order

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



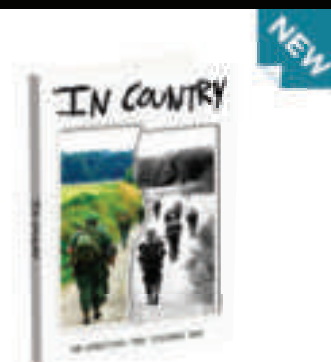
Dogs on the Inside

rehabilitation · animal rights

DOGS ON THE INSIDE follows prison inmates as they learn to care for a group of neglected dogs while preparing for a new life outside. This heart-warming story shows the resiliency of dogs' trust and the generosity of the human spirit in the unlikely of places.

RUN TIME: 67 MINUTES
Available February 24, 2015
Contact hello@bondinfluence.com to pre-order

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



In Country

reenactments · Vietnam War · ptsd

To many, the idea of Civil War reenactment is a familiar concept. But the men of Delta 2/5(R) recreate the battles of a far more charged conflict: the Vietnam War. IN COUNTRY blurs fantasy with trauma, deftly asking: what compels these men to meticulously bring this controversial war back to life?

RUN TIME: 80 MINUTES
Available April, 2015
Contact hello@bondinfluence.com to pre-order

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



Documented

immigration · journalism

In 2011, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas outed himself as an undocumented immigrant in the New York Times Magazine. DOCUMENTED chronicles his journey to America, his struggle for immigration reform, and his journey to reconnect with his mother.

RUN TIME: 90 MINUTES
UPC: 0 91037 50710 5

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



NOW: In The Wings on a World Stage

theater · fine arts · Shakespeare

With over 200 performances across 3 continents, Kevin Spacey, Sam Mendes and The Bridge Project company reveal some of the most intimate moments behind their staging of Shakespeare's classic tragedy, *Richard III*.

RUN TIME: 93 MINUTES
UPC: 0 91037 50737 2

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



Breastmilk

parenting · health · feminism

BREASTMILK is an unflinchingly provocative and humorous exploration into how the next generation gets fed—simultaneously uncovering the most surprising, and the most concealed, aspects of what it means to have milk.

RUN TIME: 91 MINUTES
UPC: 0 91037 50689 4

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL



Advanced Style

fashion · photography · aging

Directed by Lina Plioplyte, and based on Ari Seth Cohen's blog of the same name, ADVANCED STYLE paints intimate and colorful portraits of independent, stylish women aged 62 to 95 who are challenging conventional ideas about beauty and aging.

RUN TIME: 72 MINUTES
UPC: 0 91037 50727 3

\$24.99 SRP | PPR AVAIL

BOND/ 360

About Bond/360

BOND/360 is an innovative film distribution company that collaborates with the industry's most cutting-edge and forward-thinking filmmakers to release films that address the most popular topics in today's zeitgeist. For more information, contact hello@bondinfluence.com

coastline of Ireland, this subtly provocative thriller begins when good-hearted cleric Father James (Brendan Gleeson) is threatened in the confessional booth. A bitter parishioner—sexually abused years ago by a pedophile priest who has since died—is determined to wreak revenge by murdering the man of the cloth in exactly seven days, telling him: “I’m going to kill you because you’ve done nothing wrong.” Over the next week, weary Father James wrestles not only with the concept of his own mortality but also the declining influence of the Catholic Church in contemporary society, as he confronts various members of the rural community, gruffly making amends and meeting with disparate suspects, including a sinister atheistic doctor (Aidan Gillen), a rich despairing businessman (Dylan Moran), and a vulgar butcher (Chris O’Dowd), whose promiscuous wife (Orla O’Rourke) is having an affair with an immigrant auto mechanic (Isaach de Bankolé). Father James advises a jailed serial rapist/killer (Domhnall Gleeson, Brendan’s real-life son) and is scorned by a policeman (Gary Lydon) and male prostitute (Owen Sharpe). It seems that his only benign acquaintances are an elderly American author (M. Emmet Walsh) and a philosophical French widow (Marie-Josée Croze). A widower before he became a priest, Father James also tries to counsel his confused, suicidal daughter (Kelly Reilly), who views his joining the priesthood as abandonment. Gleeson’s fine performance propels this elliptical, ticking-clock psychodrama from writer-director John Michael McDonagh. An intense and compassionate cerebral thriller revolving around the complicated concept of forgiveness, this is recommended. (S. Granger)



Cannibal ★★★

Film Movement, 117 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Based on a novel by Humberto Arenal, *Cannibal*—despite its title—isn’t exactly a conventional horror film. Antonio de la Torre stars as Carlos, a stolid tailor whose solitary life in Granada is only occasionally interrupted by women he eventually butchers and eats (said butchery is relatively bloodless, occurring off-camera). When an attractive massage therapist named Alexandra (Olimpia Melinte) moves into Carlos’s apartment building, he tries to keep her at arm’s length despite her efforts to attract him (and his own growing desire for her). But he winds up killing Alexandra, after which her sister, Nina (also played by Melinte), shows up in search of her and in desperate financial trouble. Carlos finds himself in an untenable situation: guilt-ridden



while also falling in love with Nina. Director Manuel Martín Cuenca compresses all of the dark and passionate forces at work here into a tight space where Carlos maintains his isolation, clamping down on his fear of emotions through cannibalism until Nina finally touches a human spark in him. Although it may sound distasteful, *Cannibal* is actually an intriguing character study. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Child of God ★★1/2

Well Go USA, 105 min., R, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

Based on Cormac McCarthy’s titular 1973 novel, *Child of God* is set during the 1960s in Tennessee, where Lester Ballard (Scott Haze), a violent, mentally disturbed man, is thrown off the family homestead and becomes a reclusive scavenger, scouring the forest for game. Lester is also a voyeur who likes to watch men and women making love in cars, striking paydirt when he discovers a couple who are dead from carbon monoxide poisoning: Lester takes the woman’s corpse to his shed to serve as his permanent “lover.” But after that body is burned, Lester winds up resorting to murder to procure a new one, and eventually he attracts the attention of the local law, along with a bloodthirsty mob. This portrait of a man sinking deeper and deeper into depravity—including necrophilia—is hardly an uplifting story. And yet, McCarthy suggests, Ballard is also—like all of us—a child of God, so how should he be treated? Neither the book nor the film, directed by James Franco, offers an easy answer; both are designed to force us to reach our own conclusions—not a task that many will relish. Franco refuses to soften McCarthy’s depiction of Ballard’s ugliness while also trying not to repel audiences from the onset. It’s a difficult juggling act that results in an ambitious but uneven film, marked by a wild, ferocious performance from Haze. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



A Coffee in Berlin ★★★

Music Box, 85 min., in German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

Tom Schilling stars as twentysomething Niko, a Berliner having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day: an ATM has seized Niko’s debit card, a neighbor unloads all of his emotional problems on him, Niko’s father cuts him loose from financial support, and a former classmate he once humiliated for being fat is now a svelte performer who harbors repressed anger. Buffeted by all of these uncontrollable forces, Niko haplessly moves from one nutty scenario to the next, barely able to control anything. No wonder,



really: Niko secretly dropped out of school two years prior and can find no meaning or purpose for his life. Schilling is very good in this black-and-white, Woody Allen-esque comedy from filmmaker Jan Ole Gerster that is full of wacky side characters and culminates in a random encounter that will unexpectedly lead to a powerful epiphany. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Coherence ★★★

Oscilloscope, 88 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99, Jan. 20

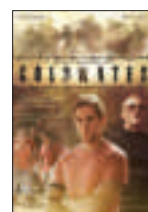
Set at a countryside home, this metaphysical thriller follows a casual gathering of eight friends that coincides with a comet passing overhead in the night sky. As the evening begins, Emily (Emily Baldoni), a ballet dancer who inadvertently jettisoned her best chance for a career, is upset that Laurie (Lauren Maher)—the flirtatious, former girlfriend of Emily’s boyfriend, Kevin (Maury Sterling)—is joining them for dinner as the guest of Amir (Alex Manugian). Also on hand are Mike (Nicholas Brendon), an actor who worked on TV’s spooky *Roswell*, and his wife Lee (Lorene Scafaria), along with Hugh (Hugo Armstrong) and Beth (Elizabeth Gracen). When the astronomic anomaly coincides with a loss of electricity, these people react differently, but all are intrigued by a house two blocks down the street that seems to have lights. Various expeditions occur—until they discover that it replicates the house they’re in, with alternate versions of themselves enjoying a dinner party. Not surprisingly, this ignites rampant paranoia as everyone’s concept of reality is challenged. Cleverly written and directed by James Ward Byrkit, this low-budget contemporary mindbender plays like an extended *Twilight Zone* episode. Recommended. (S. Granger)



Coldwater ★★

Breaking Glass, 104 min., not rated, DVD: \$21.99

Brutal and largely by-the-numbers as far as juvenile-incarceration films go, director Vincent Grashaw’s *Coldwater* attempts to shed light on the controversial U.S. industry built around harsh boot camps for troubled minors. Unfortunately, the drama rarely rises above B-movie level, with shallow characters and frequent scenes of sadism. The redeeming element here is the powerful lead performance by P.J. Boudousque as an angry teen named Brad, who is deeply wounded by the deaths of two important people in his life and troubled by his mother’s plans to bring a boyfriend into their home. Upset by her son’s drug use and rebelliousness, mom arranges for Brad to be hauled off to a remote camp that is run by a cruel, cigar-chomping, booz-



ing former marine colonel (James C. Burns) and his staff of thugs. Beatings and other atrocities are daily occurrences, although the second half of the film finds Brad adapted to the point where the colonel takes him on as an assistant, leading to a moral dilemma and a fateful decision. An optional purchase. (T. Keogh)

Come Morning ★★1/2

Monarch, 80 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$26.95

Derrick Sims's feature is set in rural Arkansas, circa 1973, where the elderly Frank (Michael Ray Davis) and his young grandson known as D (Thor Wahlestedt) set out on a hunting trip late one afternoon. While deep in the woods, they track down what they believe is a deer that they shot, but instead they wound up killing their neighbor Marion Mitchell (Thomas Moore). Due to a long-running feud over land rights between Frank and Marion, Frank assures D that it would be a mistake to inform the police of the accident. Instead, the grandfather and grandson conspire to hide Marion's body in the woods. Perhaps not surprisingly, this action sets off a chain of events that lead to an escalation in violence and fear. *Come Morning*, which boasts wonderfully eerie cinematography, is an ultra-low-budget production that makes intelligent use of exterior locations to build a sense of paranoia and guilt. Less successful is the somewhat predictable story and uneven acting, which can range from overstated to amateurish. Still, this indie effort should be considered a strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)



Corpus Christi ★★1/2

Breaking Glass, 78 min., not rated, DVD: \$17.99

This moving documentary from filmmakers Nic Arnzen and James Brandon follows the remarkable story of a small-town, limited-run theatrical revival that became a timely, international phenomenon. Here, playwright Terrence McNally's *Corpus Christi*—a passion play about a gay Jesus that met stiff resistance and loud protests when it was first staged off-Broadway in New York in 1998—becomes a provocative if unlikely choice for a chamber production at a Texas church in 2006. Although the play instantly draws the ire of Christian fundamentalists who object to McNally's portrait of Jesus as a gay redeemer of social outcasts, the original six-day run extends into years of touring, striking a chord with local supporters as well as curious audiences in large American and European cities. Along the way, the cast and director find that *Corpus Christi* becomes a touchstone for universal LGBT-rights issues (e.g., equal



marriage) that have found greater traction in recent years. Meanwhile, the actors connect ever more deeply with the material and with McNally's vision of a Jesus who can take away the painful stigma of a marginalized, martyred people. McNally is a strong presence here, but the story really belongs to the less-than-famous regional talents from Texas whose dedication found a wider cultural resonance at exactly the right historical moment. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Dear White People

★★★

Lionsgate, 94 min., R, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.99, Feb. 3

Mixing keen observations about the racial divide in today's America with some curiously simplistic conventions, writer-director Justin Simien's artsy debut is both thought-provoking and cheekily entertaining. The setting is Winchester U, a fictional Ivy League college where the students are divided into cliques within cliques. The focus is on the black contingent, mostly living in a single dorm presided over by the Dean's son, Troy Fairbanks (Brandon P. Bell), who is dating the white daughter (Brittany Curran) of the President. And that's one reason why he's challenged as resident head by his ex-girlfriend, Sam White (Tessa Thompson), a mixed-race activist who uses a campus radio broadcast to discomfit her white classmates (she's also having a fling with a sweet-natured white guy). There are other black voices on campus as well, including that of Coleandra "Coco" Conners (Teyonah Parris), a style-conscious girl seeking to win social-media primacy by emphasizing looks and gossip, and laidback gay Lionel Higgins (Tyler James Williams), who is recruited by the campus paper to report on African-American issues. Everything comes to a head at a frat boy bash with a blackface theme that ends in a mini-riot. *Dear White People* deals with the relationship between the races in today's purportedly post-racial America, but it's also about young people struggling to define themselves beyond racial labeling. Simien's writing is often sharp and the characterizations sly in this film that plays like an updated version of Spike Lee's *School Daze*. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



The Dog ★★

Cinedigm, 100 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Sidney Lumet's 1975 drama *Dog Day Afternoon* landed Al Pacino an Oscar nomination for his portrayal of John Wojtowicz, whose inept 1972 attempt to rob a Brooklyn bank to pay for his lover's sex-change operation turned into a widely-publicized standoff with police in the street. In the hands of Lumet



and Pacino, Wojtowicz was certainly a very volatile guy, but as Allison Berg and Frank Keraudren's documentary *The Dog* shows, the real article was even wilder. Through interviews conducted with Wojtowicz himself over four years—supplemented with reams of archival material—the filmmakers construct a biography of a man who's not exactly admirable but is definitely fascinating. After covering his childhood (including footage of his engagingly frank mother, Terry), stint in Vietnam, first marriage (heterosexual, as wife Carmen testifies), and early conservative leanings as a Goldwater Republican, the story turns to Wojtowicz's coming out, role in the early Gay Pride movement, and relationship and surreptitious early same-sex wedding with Ernest Aron, who would eventually become Liz Eden (Eden discusses Wojtowicz in archival footage). Wojtowicz happily talks here about the robbery and the divergences from the truth in Lumet's film, while also leading Berg and Keraudren on trips to important locations in his life. Physically weak but still combative in his final interviews in 2006 after being diagnosed with cancer, Wojtowicz comes across as a compelling but poignant figure who was intent to the very end on controlling his own legend. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Dormant Beauty ★★

Kino, 110 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

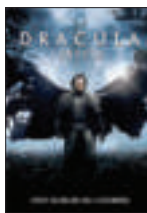
An Italian drama based on real-life events, *Dormant Beauty* was inspired by the much ballyhooed 2009 case of Eluana Engarolo, a woman who was eventually taken off life support after being in a coma for some 17 years. Well-respected director Marco Bellocchio throws caution to the wind here, ambitiously attempting to interweave three narrative threads around the hot-button issue of legalized euthanasia in the strict Catholic heart of Italy. Bellocchio refuses to take a straightforward stance, instead letting his major characters represent the macrocosmic critical viewpoints in this case. The strictly religious side of the argument is embodied by well-known actress Divina Madre (Isabelle Huppert) who just so happens to have a daughter on life support herself and refuses to resume her career until her daughter either dies or comes out of her coma. Another major thread sees prominent politician Uliano Beffardi (Toni Servillo) struggling with his conscience over whether to vote for or against a euthanasia bill. And a third parallel narrative features a young pro-life woman falling in love with a pro-euthanasia demonstrator and a reputable doctor falling for a suicidal drug addict. Although even a talent like Bellocchio can't quite make these seemingly disparate characters and situations completely coalesce, he does



manage to succeed at painting a larger and somewhat disturbing portrait of a cynical, depressed contemporary Italy caught between political corruption and religious dogmatism. Recommended. (M. Sandlin)

Dracula Untold ★★

Universal, 93 min., PG-13,
DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$34.98, Feb. 3



In this origin story set during the 15th century, Vlad (Luke Evans)—who was brutally conscripted into the Turkish army as a young boy—rules the kingdom of Transylvania. Vlad is determined that his beloved wife (Sarah Gadon) and young son (Art Parkinson) will live in peace. But when the emissary of Sultan Mehmed II (Dominic Cooper) arrives to demand 1,000 Romanian boys (including Vlad's son), as slave-soldiers, Vlad grows desperate. Realizing his vulnerability, Vlad turns to a ghoulish, mountain-dwelling demon (Charles Dance), who in a Faustian deal empowers Vlad with superhuman strength and a vampire's abilities for three days. If Vlad can resist drinking human blood during that time, he will revert to mortal form; if not, he's condemned forever (you already know which way that goes). Director Gary Shore's *Dracula Untold* serves up a tragic prequel to Bram Stoker's 1897 classic novel, attempting to humanize Vlad—also known as the Impaler, because he skewered his victims. Evans initially effectively reflects Vlad's nobility and willingness to sacrifice himself for his family and people, but once Vlad becomes Count Dracula, all subtlety is lost amidst computer-generated bats and other special effects, along with weird horror, bloodlust, and carnage. Sadly, in this visually murky vampire fantasy, there is no humor to be found, even when several characters incongruously utter the contemporary word, "Okay." I suppose it's damning with faint praise to say that it doesn't totally suck, but this is optional, at best. (S. Granger)

Drive Hard ★

Image, 96 min., not rated,
DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$34.98

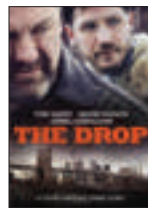


Australian director Brian Trenchard-Smith's idiotic heist clunker revolves around Peter Roberts (Thomas Jane), a former racecar driver now working as a driving instructor, and Simon Keller (John Cusack), a fellow American who ostensibly hires Peter in order to learn how to navigate the opposite side of the road driving in Queensland. But, of course, that's not the real reason: Simon needs a getaway driver to help him escape when he pulls off an audacious bank heist that nets \$9 million in bearer bonds. So that's what kidnapped Peter is forced to do—at gunpoint. As the pair are doggedly

pursued by state and federal law enforcement officers, along with the bank's unscrupulous henchmen, they banter back and forth, with Simon offering frantic, henpecked Peter marital advice on how to handle his nagging wife (Yesse Spence), who wants him to take a more lucrative office job. Along the way, there are also unfortunate encounters with a foulmouthed, pistol-packing old lady; a bevy of bikers at a bar; and an ill-fated, trigger-happy convenience-store clerk. The cliché-filled dialogue is insipid and dull, but the chaotic action footage is even more tedious in this wannabe crime-caper comedy that runs out of gas quickly. Not recommended. (S. Granger)

The Drop ★★★

Fox, 107 min., R, DVD:
\$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.99, Jan.
20



In wintry Brooklyn, Bob Saginowsky (Tom Hardy) bartends at the working-class neighborhood tavern run by his Cousin Marv (James Gandolfini, in his final screen role), which is also used as a drop spot for money picked up "after hours" by the local Chechen mob. When two masked gunmen rob the dingy bar of \$5,000, the Chechens demand to know who's responsible—and Bob, who discovers an abused puppy in a trash can, doesn't have a clue. With the help of neighborly Nadia (Noomi Rapace), Bob nurses the tiny pit-bull, which he names Rocco, back to health, until menacing psychopath Eric Deeds (Matthias Schoenaerts) claims the dog. And all of this is leading up to Super Bowl Sunday, the biggest drop of the year. Adapted by Dennis Lehane from his short story "Animal Rescue," filmmaker Michaël R. Roskam's *The Drop* serves up a gritty, neo-noir character study of Bob, a pensive cipher who rarely says anything beyond what is absolutely necessary, particularly when questioned by Detective Torres (John Ortiz), who is curious about why Bob avoids taking Communion at the nearby Catholic church. Slowly, Hardy peels away the layers of his complicated character, revealing the subtext beneath the mild-mannered, soft-spoken exterior. A suspenseful urban crime drama, this is recommended. (S. Granger)

Exhibition ★★★

Kino Lorber, 104 min., not
rated, DVD: \$29.95



Former Slits guitarist Viv Albertine stars in this portrait of an upper-echelon creative-class London couple who, after spending 20 years in the same house, are forced to upend their routine lives and sell out. Director Joanna Hogg's *Exhibition* is an interesting experiment in minimalism, even down to the characters' names: Albertine plays "D," a hypersensitive

introvert who is also paradoxically a successful avant-garde performance artist, while her husband, "H" (Liam Gillick), is a nebbish writer of some distinction. Both spend almost all of their time at home in what can only be called a bizarre semi-somnambulant state, speaking to one another via intercom and only seeming to physically connect at night in bed, where their sexual communication is just as weird and somewhat dysfunctional as their verbal communication. Serving up a measured deliberation on the alienated relationship between city dwellers and the quickly changing urban spaces in which they live, *Exhibition* bravely forgoes any sort of musical soundtrack, instead emphasizing the buzzes, bangs, hums, clangs, rattles, and siren wails that add to (or perhaps mirror) the dissonance in the quietly warped lives of these slightly off-kilter characters. Recommended. (M. Sandlin)

The Expendables 3 ★★

Lionsgate, 126 min., PG-13,
DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$39.99



This latest installment in Sylvester Stallone's murder-and-mayhem franchise is filled with beefy heroes, a multitude of chase sequences, and an endless barrage of bullets. *The Expendables 3* opens with a helicopter-versus-train battle in which Barney Ross (Stallone) and what's left of his crew help knife expert Doctor Death (Wesley Snipes) escape from incarceration. Barney needs Doc to aid in thwarting an arms deal in Somalia. But their mission fizzles when they discover that the bigwig brokering the deal is Conrad Stonebanks (Mel Gibson), a former rogue Expendable who Barney thought he'd killed. Determined to take down sociopathic Stonebanks, Barney dismisses his former crew (Dolph Lundgren, Randy Couture, Terry Crews, Jason Statham, Jet Li) and—with the help of Bonaparte (Kelsey Grammer)—hires younger, more agile, and tech-savvy newbies (Kellan Lutz, Antonio Banderas, Glen Powell, mixed-martial-arts champ Ronda Rousey, boxer Victor Ortiz). Aided by competitor Trench (Arnold Schwarzenegger) and joined by Agent Drummer (Harrison Ford)—who wants Stonebanks to stand trial for war crimes at The Hague—they're off to do the CIA's dirty work once again. Naturally, things don't go exactly as planned. Director Patrick Hughes's film is a formulaic soldiers-of-fortune story in which Stallone employs his usual three expressions (sorrowful, strained, and sneering), leaving it up to loquacious Banderas to somewhat enliven the tedium here. Optional. (S. Granger)

Fed Up ★★★

Anchor Bay, 99 min., PG, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray:
\$29.99

Director Stephanie Soechtig's polemic

COHEN MEDIA GROUP PRESENTS

**STREET DATE:
JANUARY 20, 2015**

**SRP:
\$24.98 / \$29.98**

As May's wedding approaches, she finds herself confronting her family's turbulent past. Written, Directed and starring award-winning filmmaker Cherien Dabis (AMREEKA), also starring which world-premiered at Sundance and won the prestigious FIPRESCI award in Cannes.



**STREET DATE:
JANUARY 13, 2015**

**SRP:
\$29.98 / \$39.98**

Based on the short stories of Curzio Malaparte, THE SKIN is Liliana (THE NIGHT PORTER) Cavani's controversial look at the aftermath of the German occupation of Italy during WWII and the equally difficult results of life during the Allied liberation. Marcello Mastroianni stars as writer Malaparte, who chronicled the desperate measures taken by his countrymen in order to survive. Burt Lancaster co-stars as the liberating American General unable to understand the devastation around him.

Available at
amazon

COHEN MEDIA GROUP

COHEN FILM COLLECTION

COHENMEDIA.NET

e one

Available on
iTunes

against food-industry giants (and their lobbyists) aims to be the *Inconvenient Truth* of nutrition. Broadcast journalist and narrator Katie Couric notes how story after story about America's obesity epidemic and fitness craze seemed to make no difference in ballooning weight statistics. The real scoop: fat, constantly blamed in processed-food ad campaigns, is not the true culprit in a looming health crisis. Rather, sugar, cheese and their euphemistic equivalents ("high-fructose corn syrup") have been insidiously dumped into aggressively marketed foods—including "low fat" and health-food products—with the politically-powerful food manufacturing corporations able to successfully keep percentages off the mandatory ingredients labels. In an ideal world, one speaker says, sugary junk-food items (especially beverage sodas) would have advisory warnings and social stigma attached to them like cigarettes. In irony-laden, rapid-edit style, *Fed Up* delivers the bad news that rampant diabetes and fat-related health issues will likely soon overtax healthcare. The film also (somewhat manipulatively) follows four pained, chunky children who are unable to shed the pounds no matter what they try (one eventually opts for a gastric bypass operation). Experts interviewed include author Michael Pollan, columnist Mark Bittman, and President Bill Clinton, who regrets that his administration dropped the ball on unhealthy school lunches. Recommended. (C. Cassidy)



Fifi Howls With Happiness ★★★1/2

Music Box, 102 min., in Farsi w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

This strange, poetic documentary sets out to discover the whereabouts of legendary Iranian painter/visual artist-turned-expat/recluse Bahman Mohassess, a once-prominent art star in Iran who allegedly quit working as an artist after the 1979 revolution, and even destroyed most of his work. Young filmmaker Mitra Farahani heads for Rome looking for Mohassess, who has allegedly been living in Italy for years. Although Farahani doesn't divulge exactly how she found him, she is able to get Mohassess to open up on camera. As it turns out, Mohassess's still-extant works of art continue to sell at auction for hundreds of thousands of euros. Mohassess is a congenial and eloquent interviewee, if also predictably scathing and bitter when speaking of the current art world and global politics in general. But the dramatic tension ramps up beyond simple Q&A when two wealthy Iranian artists and art collectors visit Mohassess to discuss a potential €150,000 euro deal to create an original work—for the



first time in decades—with the assumption that it would be the masterpiece of a lifetime. But Mohassess is almost 80 and not in the best of health; once the ball gets rolling on this final project, the question naturally arises as to whether this grand old creative genius will be up to the task of pulling off a colossal career apotheosis. A fascinating portrait of the artist, this is highly recommended. (M. Sandlin)

Finding Fela! ★★★

Kino Lorber, 120 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95, Jan. 13

Oscar-winning director Alex Gibney's *Finding Fela!* profiles Nigerian music superstar Fela Kuti (1938-1997), using as a structuring device Bill T. Jones's off-Broadway production *Fela!*, which introduced Kuti to new listeners some 12 years after his death. Gibney divides the narrative between archival material, behind-the-scenes footage, and new interviews. Kuti's son, Femi, talks about his father's time in London, where he studied classical music by day and jazz by night. Jones says he chose to build a musical around Kuti because of the latter's contradictions. As he puts it, Kuti was both a synthesizer and a visionary, whose songs—which combined funk and highlife—inspired dancing even while railing against government corruption and police brutality (in the stage production, Kuti is played by Sahr Ngaujah, who doesn't look much like his real-life counterpart, but performs key tracks with the requisite vigor). Drummer Questlove (the Roots) also praises Kuti's musical director, Tony Allen, who would become a star in his own right. As Kuti's fame grew, he built a compound for his friends, associates, and 27 wives. This all-inclusive environment, however, left his children feeling like faces in the crowd. As Jones points out, Kuti sprang from powerful female ancestors, yet he believed that women should defer to him (he also succumbed to the charms of a guru who looks like a huckster in hindsight). Gibney concludes by looking at Kuti's final years; dying of AIDS, he refused to either acknowledge the disease or seek treatment. For better and for worse, Kuti never compromised his beliefs. A powerful profile of a key figure in African music, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)



A Five Star Life ★★★

Music Box, 82 min., in Italian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Margherita Buy stars in this Italian comedy as Irene, a professional "mystery guest" who turns up incognito at five-star hotels around the world, where she checks everything from



the temperature of room-service soup to wait-staff courtesy to the presence of dust bunnies under beds. She reports her findings to an authoritative guidebook, but just like George Clooney's roaming hatchet man in *Up in the Air*, Irene has no real place roots nor a family of her own or much of anything in her life that allows for intimacy. The story follows Irene on a succession of hotel visits and little adventures that are interrupted only by her occasional duties as an aunt to two little nieces, her frequent dust-ups with a hypercritical younger sister, and her awkward relationship with a former lover who happens to be her best (and only) friend. Buy is terrific in the lead, and director Maria Sole Tognazzi brings a brisk, wry sensibility to this film that begins as light fare but ends on a profound note about human choices and destiny. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Fluffy Movie ★★★

Universal, 101 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98

Filmed at the SAP Center in San Jose, Mexican-American comedian Gabriel "Fluffy" Iglesias regales an audience with routines that are less a series of jokes than several long, well-told humorous stories. Think: Garrison Keillor, with salsa. A dramatized prologue (look for Jacqueline Obradors and Tommy Chong) depicts Iglesias's origins as the result of an impromptu romantic liaison between an abused, unhappy wife and a mariachi singer. At a VHS-era video store, adolescent Gabriel tricks his mom into letting him rent the raunchy comedy-concert feature *Eddie Murphy: Raw*, which inspires Iglesias to embark on his standup career. Unlike the notorious R-rated *Raw*, however, Fluffy's brand of monologue here is far milder, hardly even deserving of the PG-13 rating. The once king-sized comic explains his recent drastic weight loss following treatment at an obesity clinic. He also takes us on a wittily observed tour of India, where he finds himself unexpectedly having to play to the tastes of a mixed Hindu and German crowd. And a bit about family life and fathering leads to a recounting of his efforts to reunite his long-parted birth parents, if only for a single photo opportunity. An engaging performance from a talented comic, this is recommended. (C. Cassidy)



For a Woman ★★★

Film Movement, 110 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

This semi-autobiographical romantic drama from filmmaker Diana Kurys explores a marriage that is formed and complicated by politics. In a framing device that takes place after her



mother's death in 1980, daughter Anne (Sylvie Testud) goes through the late woman's belongings with her older sister, Tania (Julie Ferrier), discovering photographs and letters that she hadn't seen before. The scenario flashes back to 1945 when mother Léna (Mélanie Thierry) gives birth to Tania. Léna's Ukrainian husband, Michel (Benoît Magimel), who saved her from a concentration camp, runs a Lyon menswear shop. Due to the war, Michel lost touch with his family, believing that his brother died until the day that Jean (Nicolas Duvauchelle) suddenly appears from out of the blue. Michel hasn't seen him for so long that he wonders if Jean might be an imposter or a traitor, but the latter keeps his secrets to himself, although his ideas help the store become successful. Jean also encourages Léna to pursue interests outside the home, which goes against Michel's traditional concepts of domesticity. While the men become reacquainted, Léna befriends Madeleine (Clotilde Hesme), a married woman involved in an affair. Léna tells Madeleine that she would never cheat on Michel, but Jean sees her more clearly than her devoted—if controlling—husband, leading to a triangle that turns dangerous when Jean's activist history catches up with him. A fine cast prevents the story here from drowning in suds, even if the personal

often trumps the political. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Frank ★★½

Magnolia, 95 min., R, DVD: \$26.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

Michael Fassbender stars as the title character in this quirky comedy—exploring the fragility of both art and the human psyche—that is often quite funny, but also features an underlying layer of deep melancholy. Enigmatic Frank is the lead singer-songwriter of an avant-garde British band whose highly unorthodox songs are pretty much designed to clear any venue. The group's oddity is accentuated by the fact that Frank sports a giant mask—a papier-mâché head (not unlike the one in the Jack in the Box commercials) that he doesn't just wear onstage, but constantly (even when he's in the shower). Frank's story is told from the perspective of Jon (Domhnall Gleeson), a nerdy young man recruited as a keyboardist, who goes with the band on an extended retreat to record an album. Obsessed with securing proper recognition for Frank, Jon manages to get the group a slot at the SXSW festival, but the trip to America leads to a crisis that not only unmasks Frank but also threatens to destroy him. A delightfully

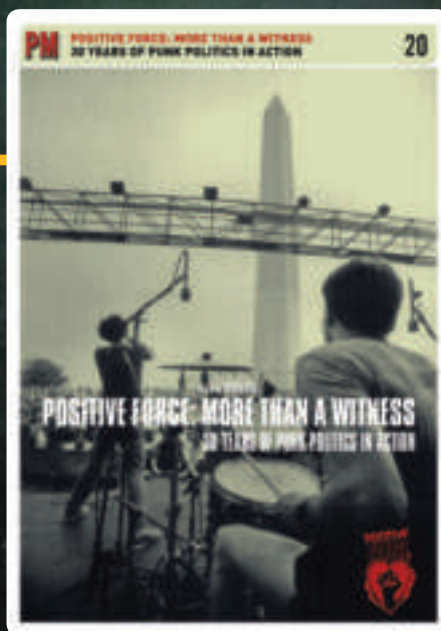


unusual tale, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Frontera ★★½

Magnolia, 103 min., PG-13, DVD: \$26.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

Writer-director Michael Berry's sometimes heavy-handed film stars Ed Harris as a grieving widower who sets aside his own pain to find out the truth about his wife's death. Harris plays Roy, the retired sheriff of an Arizona border county, whose wife is killed during an encounter with Miguel (Michael Peña), a Mexican crossing into the country illegally. Miguel is being accused of the crime by the current sheriff, but Roy is unconvinced, initiating an investigation of his own that leads to a different culprit—a teen who was trying to frighten Miguel by shooting at him, one who also happens to have important family ties. Roy will also become involved in helping to rescue Miguel's pregnant wife (Eva Longoria), who is victimized by the lustful coyote she paid to bring her across the border in order to aid her husband. Unfortunately, *Frontera* insistently hammers home its message about the violence that is fed by mindless prejudice, and the need for good people to stand up against it. But it benefits from both a gritty



**WRESTLING
WITH SATAN** DVD
Pound. Pummel. Preach.

**POSITIVE FORCE:
MORE THAN A WITNESS;**
30 YEARS OF PUNK
POLITICS IN ACTION DVD
Celebrating 30 years of the
DC-based Positive Force
includes performances
from Fugazi, Anti-Flag,
Bikini Kill and more.

PRE-ORDER NOW AT **MVDvisual.com** & MAJOR RETAILERS
A DIVISION OF MVD ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

visual style that makes aesthetic use of the barren locations, and honest, unforced performances that offset the more preachy script elements. Thanks especially to Harris, this is a dramatically arresting if also uneven film. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Gabrielle ★★★

Entertainment One, 104 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$24.98

Writer-director Louise Archambault's Canadian drama is one of the mere handful of films in which mentally-challenged protagonists are portrayed by actors with real-life developmental disabilities. The title character, 22-year-old Gabrielle Desrochers (Gabrielle Marion-Rivard) has Williams syndrome and lives in a group home, but is high-functioning enough to work a non-taxing office job and sing in a popular choir of similarly disabled vocalists. But Gabrielle is still severely emotionally reliant on her sister Sophie (Méissa Désormeaux-Poulin), and two life crises bewilder and threaten to overwhelm her. First, put-upon Sophie finally reveals her intent to leave the country and join her lover teaching children in India. And, secondly, Gabrielle is being deliberately kept away from her boyfriend and choir mate, Martin (Alexandre Landry), whose mother fears—with reason—that the pair's relationship, left unguarded, will move from puppy love to sexual activity. Archambault does not resolve all of these conflicts in a nice little package, nor is she afraid to make her heroine reckless and prone to disastrous choices, but she takes the story here to a satisfying conclusion. French-Canadian singer-songwriter Robert Charlebois plays himself, further adding to the docu-dramatic realism in this often charming but also tough tale. Recommended. (C. Cassidy)



Get On Up ★★★

Universal, 139 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Jan. 6

Tate Taylor's unconventional James Brown biopic chronicles the chaotic life of the Godfather of Soul in fractured chronological order. *Get On Up* begins with a 1998 incident that led to Brown's arrest following a high-speed police chase and then cuts to sequences from his childhood in a shack in the backwoods of South Carolina. Abused by his father (Lennie James) and deserted by his mother (Viola Davis), Brown was left in the care of a paternal aunt (Octavia Spencer). During these jumbled flashbacks, Brown breaks the so-called fourth wall, addressing the audience to express his innermost feelings. Growing into a life of petty crime, Brown (Chadwick Boseman) is arrested in Georgia for stealing



a man's suit from a car. Singing at a gospel concert for penitentiary inmates, Brown's talent impresses Bobby Byrd (Nelsan Ellis), frontman for the Famous Flames, and Brown eventually meets promoter Ben Bart (Dan Aykroyd), setting him on the path to create music history. *Get On Up*'s biggest strength is Boseman's performance as he energetically re-creates Brown's strut, swagger, and rubber-legged shimmy, including those spectacular splits. But Taylor does have difficulties making the contradictions in Brown's personal life palatable (including roughing up his wives). Known as the hardest working man in show business, Brown was totally self-made, influencing a generation of hip-hop R&B singer-dancers (including Michael Jackson, Prince, Usher, and Chris Brown), but his ego was colossal, his temper tantrums legendary, and he suffered from drug-addled paranoia. Recommended. (S. Granger)

The Giver ★★★

Anchor Bay, 97 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99

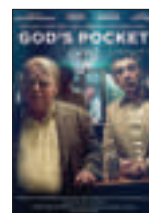
Published in 1993, Lois Lowry's Newbery Medal-winning YA novel is a touching, dystopian fantasy, centered on a 12-year-old boy. Had it been filmed back then, *The Giver* would have preceded similar films such as *Ender's Game*, *Divergent*, and the *Hunger Games* franchise; today, it comes across as just another bland, teen-centric futuristic story set in a utopian, post-apocalyptic society. The Community is classless, climate-controlled, and conflict-free—an isolated world minus poverty, famine, and all other suffering. Choice is unknown; to achieve sameness is everyone's goal. Tranquility reigns, enforced by precise language, which means that people are constantly apologizing and saying, "I accept your apology." Ritually graduating from childhood and receiving his lifetime job assignment, Jonas (Brenton Thwaites) is chosen by the Chief Elder (Meryl Streep) to be the next Receiver, who will be taught by the titular Giver (Jeff Bridges), a tormented soul holding the collective cultural memories. As Jonas learns about the pain of love and war, and the ecstasy of art and music, he becomes determined to "free" not only his family (including Alexander Skarsgård and Katie Holmes) but also one special girl (Odeya Rush). In director Phillip Noyce's disappointing screen adaption, the protagonist has been transformed from a child into a young adult, diluting the impact of the ethical/moral conflicts and loss-of-innocence theme while allowing for a sweetly plausible romance and vaguely religious overtones. Aside from Bridges and Streep, the cast is nondescript, delivering strangely stilted, unmemorable performances. An optional purchase. (S. Granger)



God's Pocket ★★★

MPI, 89 min., R, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

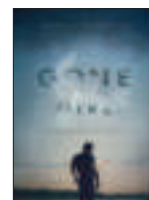
The late Philip Seymour Hoffman produced and stars in this sardonic tragic-comedy adapted from a novel by Pete Dexter and directed by John Slattery. Hoffman plays the permanently crestfallen Mickey, a meat vendor and small-time crook in God's Pocket, a seedy working-class slum in some unspecified Eastern seaboard area circa 1980. Married to neighborhood siren Jeanie (Christina Hendricks), Mickey has never quite gained acceptance from the loutish locals. When his druggie psycho stepson, Leon (Caleb Landry Jones), is "accidentally" killed at his construction job (actually bludgeoned to death by a fed-up co-worker), Mickey strives to give Leon a proper funeral, although he can't afford it and his every attempt to make things right goes badly awry. Meanwhile, an alcoholic newspaper columnist (Richard Jenkins) starts probing into Leon's suspicious demise and also becomes smitten with Jeanie. An excellent cast of born scene-stealers (John Turturro, Joyce Van Patten, etc.) spice up the vignette-heavy plot featuring a series of Really Bad Ideas and poor life choices that unfold like a slow-motion accident scene from which one can't look away. Recommended. (C. Cassidy)



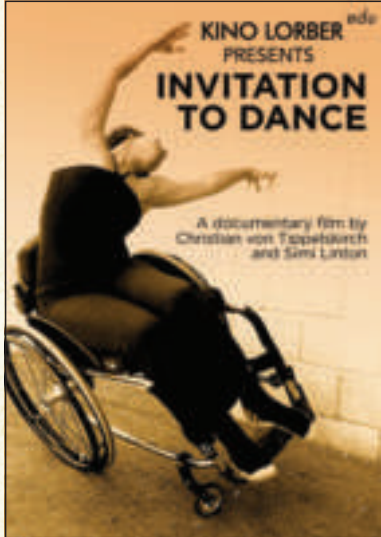
Gone Girl ★★★1/2

Fox, 149 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.99, Jan. 13

Built from Gillian Flynn's savvy, streamlined screen adaptation of her 2012 best-selling novel, director David Fincher's Hitchcockian thriller revolving around a married couple is full of bizarre twists and turns. Ben Affleck is totally convincing as bewildered Nick Dunne, whose beautiful wife, Amy (Rosamund Pike), inexplicably disappears on the morning of their fifth anniversary. Seeking solace with his twin sister (Carrie Coon) with whom he owns a local bar, Nick grimly struggles to figure out what might have happened, along with Missouri Detective Rhonda Boney (Kim Dickens). All he knows is that he came home to find a smashed coffee table and his wife missing. As the dogged investigation proceeds, details about perfectionist Amy's past and the fragile state of her marriage to Nick are revealed—with everything pointing to his guilt—particularly after Amy's parents arrive from New York. As partners in this dark, tension-filled rumination on contemporary marriage, Affleck is amiably opaque, while Pike is inscrutably enigmatic. Tyler Perry scores as the slick defense attorney who takes Nick's case, coaching him on how to manipulate the media. And Neil Patrick Harris is solid



Best Sellers & New Releases from KINO LORBER.EDU.COM



INVITATION TO DANCE

In 1971, Simi Linton was seriously injured in a horrific car crash that caused a permanent disability. Upon returning to college, she encountered discrimination she couldn't have imagined before she began using a wheelchair. Determined to fight the status quo, she gradually became a powerful and effective international advocate for the rights of disabled people to lead lives filled with opportunity, love, sexuality...and dance.

"Anyone interested in understanding the breadth of human experience should watch this film." -Julia Pinover Kupiec, Disability Rights Advocates

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



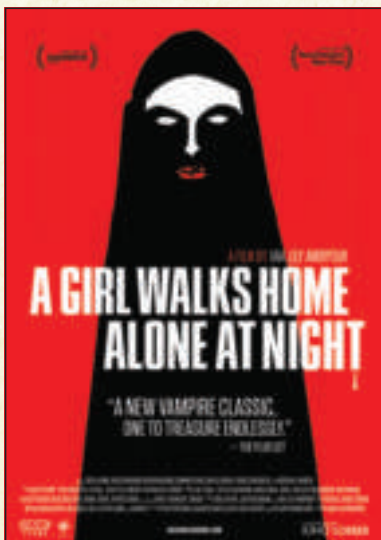
CONCERNING VIOLENCE

This potent, arresting, and surprisingly emotional film artfully elucidates Frantz Fanon's psychiatric and psychological analysis of the dehumanizing effects of colonization on the individual and the nation. Directed by Göran Hugo Olsson (*Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975*). Includes a video introduction by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

"Armed with a legitimacy as startling as its content, it is a superbly executed document of a pivotal, inevitable era in 20th-century history."

-Ed Gibbs, sbs.com.au

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



A GIRL WALKS HOME ALONE AT NIGHT

The first Iranian Vampire Western ever made, Ana Lily Amirpour's debut basks in the sheer pleasure of pulp. A joyful mash-up of genre, archetype, and iconography, its prolific influences span spaghetti westerns, graphic novels, horror films, and the Iranian New Wave.

"The biggest honest-to-God discovery of 2014."

-Andrew O'Hehir, Salon.com

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



THE BRIDGE

Director Eric Steel and his crew spent an entire year focusing on the Golden Gate Bridge. Running cameras for almost every daylight minute, they documented nearly two dozen suicides and a great many unrealized attempts. In addition, the director captured nearly 100 hours of incredibly frank, deeply personal, often heart-wrenching interviews with the families and friends of the departed, as well as with several of the attempters themselves. THE BRIDGE is a visual and visceral journey into one of life's gravest taboos, offering glimpses into the darkest, and possibly most impenetrable corners of the human mind.

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



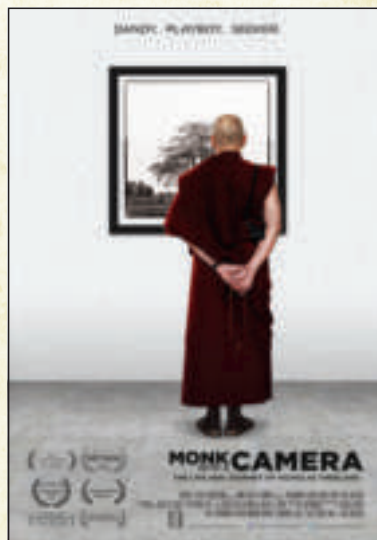
PURGATORIO

This provocative essay film re-imagines the Mexico/U.S. border as a mythical place comparable to Dante's purgatory. By capturing a stunning mosaic of compelling characters and broken landscapes, the filmmaker reflects on the flaws of human nature and the powerful absurdities of the modern world. An unusual border film, in the auteur tradition of camerastyle, PURGATORIO ultimately becomes a fable of humanity, an epic and visceral experience with powerful and lingering images.

"A searing, horrifying,...starkly beautiful documentary ode to the netherworlds surrounding the U.S.-Mexico barrier."

-Andrew Barker, Variety

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



MONK WITH A CAMERA

He's the grandson of a legendary Vogue editor, and trained in photography by Irving Penn, but promising young photographer Nicky Vreeland's glamorous life changed drastically in 1979, upon meeting a Tibetan master, one of the teachers of the Dalai Lama. Shortly thereafter, his inspiration led him to a monastery in India, where he studied Buddhism for fourteen years. Since that time, he's abstained from photography...until his monastic community needed to raise money to rebuild their home.

"...a built-in mix of retro celebrity and spiritual appeal."

-Variety

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200

For information about exhibition, public performance rights or streaming, please go to www.kinolorberedu.com or call (212) 629-6880

A **KINO LORBER** COMPANY
incorporated

as Amy's snide, suspiciously creepy ex-boyfriend. A mind-bending whodunit, this is highly recommended. (S. Granger)

Good People ★★

Millennium, 91 min., R, DVD: \$28.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

In Danish director Henrik Ruben Genz's modern noir, a couple falls afoul of some nasty thugs. James Franco and Kate Hudson star as Tom and Anna Wright, financially strapped Americans who emigrate to England after Tom inherits a house. Unfortunately, the place is pretty much a shambles, so they rent a rundown row home while Tom is busy renovating, and to make ends meet they take in a boarder. The plot kicks in when the tenant overdoses, leaving behind a stash of money that the Wrights hope to keep for themselves. Unfortunately, however, the loot is from a robbery, and before long an exceptionally vicious gangster shows up looking for it, as does the French drug-dealer from whom it was stolen, and a police inspector with a personal reason for wanting to bring the crooks to justice. Eventually, all of the main characters—as well as quite a few peripheral ones—will assemble to face off against one another in a protracted battle featuring a variety of weapons: not only firearms, but also knives, clubs, and tools, including the almost obligatory nail gun. But even though Genz choreographs the action cleanly, *Good People* is a mostly sedate and familiar genre film. Optional. (F. Swietek)



The Green Prince ★★★

Music Box, 101 min., in English & Hebrew w/English subtitles, PG-13, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95, Jan. 20

Filmmaker Nadav Schirman's documentary combines dramatic re-creations, archival film, and interviews to tell the story of Mosab Hassan Yousef, the son of Palestinian Hamas leader Sheikh Hassan Yousef. The oldest child, Mosab saw his father repeatedly arrested and imprisoned for long stretches, and he came to hate Israelis. Eventually taken into custody himself and brutally treated by both Israeli security and Hamas leaders (who were suspicious that he had been recruited as a spy), young Mosab's shock and disgust actually led him to become a mole for Israel's intelligence agency, Shin Bet. With a handler named Gonen Ben Yitzhak and a perfect position as Sheikh Yousef's right-hand man and gatekeeper, Mosab brought his own agenda to the mission: doing what he could to further a truce between Israel and Palestine—which was not quite what Shin Bet wanted. Here, Yitzhak speaks of his frustration with Mosab's defiance of certain orders, but also of how he



gradually became sympathetic to Mosab's goals. A real-life tale that plays very much like a spy adventure—with danger, betrayal, close calls, and forged alliances—*The Green Prince* also displays hope that someday peace between Israel and Palestine might come. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Happy Christmas ★★

Paramount, 82 min., R, DVD: \$19.99

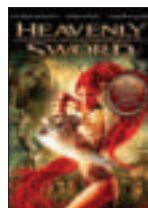
As a pioneer of mumblecore, director Joe Swanberg lets the filmmaking process simply unfold collaboratively, using no script but rather a vague thematic arc that the actors fill with improvised dialogue and interaction. In *Happy Christmas*, recently dumped Jenny (Anna Kendrick) takes refuge with her brother Jeff and his wife Kelly (Swanberg and Melanie Lynskey) for the holidays. Jenny is an irresponsible flake, and Jeff is a dedicated family man, so there's conflict from the get-go. And that only builds with Jenny's flighty regard for her two-year-old nephew (Swanberg's scenery-chewing real-life son, Jude) and subsequent hook-up with hunky babysitter/drug dealer Kevin (Mark Webber). The action hinges purely on talk, talk, talk, but the ensemble cast never clicks in ways that seem real or particularly interesting. Family issues are the crux, but this is not a family film—it's also not very Christmas-y (although Lena Dunham brings a bit of humor to the party). *Happy Christmas* carries such an overall vibe of low expectations and low emotional reward, that this will likely appeal only to devoted mumblecore fans. Optional, at best. (T. Fry)



Heavenly Sword ★★1/2

Cinedigm, 85 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.95, Blu-ray: \$19.98

A Sony PlayStation 3 video game inspired this quasi-Asiatic CGI-animated combat fantasy, mostly devoted to what gamers call "boss" fights, pitting a sword-slashing protagonist against a series of ever-more-invincible rivals. In this case, the hero is a heroine, Nariko, who is something of a family outcast due to her gender but secretly well-trained in martial arts. Her clan guards a blade that is supposedly of divine origin. Like Tolkien's One Ring, the *Heavenly Sword* can grant unlimited power, but it also controls and enslaves its wielder—although little is made of that fact during the capture-the-sword chase plot with Nariko, her crossbow-wielding kid sister, and pursuing creature armies of the evil King Bohan. While the story is essentially repetitious, the deaths of a few key characters offer twists that some viewers might not see coming, and the film does boast an especially vibrant color palette. Certainly not the lamest of game-to-



film narratives, this should be considered a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassady)

The Hero of Color City

★★1/2

Magnolia, 77 min., G, DVD: \$26.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98

Clearly inspired by *Toy Story*, this bland animated tale is centered on a little boy's crayons, which come to life after he goes to sleep each night. Jumping into their box, the crayons are transported to Color City, where a rainbow river rejuvenates them and a spa sharpens their tips. One evening, Yellow (voiced by Christina Ricci), who's afraid of everything, is pursued into the box by two of the boy's unfinished drawings, a mute king and a big-mouth insect (Craig Ferguson). Once in Color City, these unfinished villains dam up the river in order to color themselves to completion, which prompts Yellow and a number of her crayon pals to undertake a mission to unclog the waters and save their home. Along the way, they meet other unfinished drawings who become their allies (even the supposed monsters here turn out to be not so much malicious as misunderstood). Unfortunately, little is either distinctive or imaginative about *The Hero of Color City*, which features a derivative story, mediocre animation, merely adequate voice acting, and puerile humor (mostly groan-inducing puns and a smattering of flatulence gags). Also served up are a few nondescript songs with banal lyrics. Still, the film's empowering messages about overcoming one's fears, learning not to judge others by appearances, and working together are solid and this will likely appeal to very young viewers. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

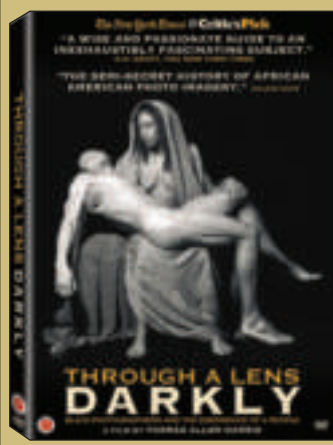


Himizu ★★1/2

Olive, 130 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

Derived from a same-titled graphic novel (literally meaning "mole"), shock-tactic filmmaker Sion Sono's *Himizu* ultimately delivers a sort-of affirmation of resilience and rebellion via loosely-plotted elements featuring Japanese Behaving Badly. Young Yuichi Sumida (Shota Sometani) and his family lost everything in a 2011 tsunami (the same one that triggered the Fukushima nuclear disaster, a sub-theme). Now subsisting in a riverbank shanty community, renting out small boats, the 14-year-old attends a junior high school where he is disdained, and yearns to live an "ordinary" life—driven to despairing madness by a drunk father's abuse and his mother's abandonment. Meanwhile, manic, poetry-loving classmate Keiko (Fumi Nikaido), whose own middle-class parents urge her to commit suicide for her





THROUGH A LENS DARKLY

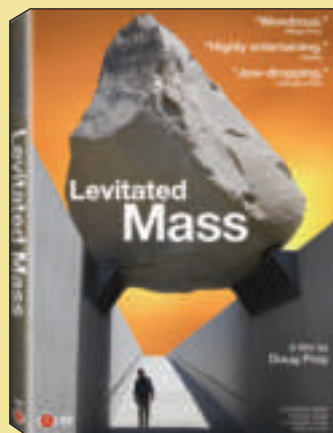
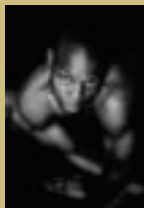
92 minutes, color, \$27.95, FRF 916387D
STREET DATE: FEBRUARY 10

The first documentary to explore the American family photo album through the eyes of black photographers, this acclaimed film directed by Thomas Allen Harris probes the recesses of American history to discover images that have been suppressed, forgotten and lost.

"Extraordinary...a deep, rich dive into the history of African American photography."
-Time Magazine

"One of the most important and necessary documentaries of the year." -Indiewire

"Powerful...marvelous...amazing archival footage." -This Week in NY



LEVITATED MASS

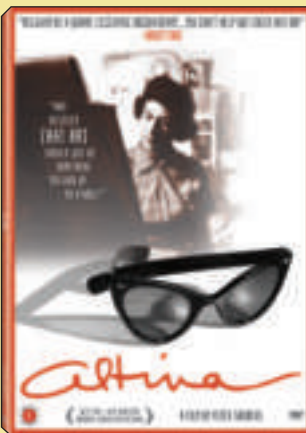
89 minutes, color, \$27.95, FRF 916318D
STREET DATE: DECEMBER 16

The amazing story of a 340-ton rock and its 105 mile journey from a desert quarry through the streets of Los Angeles.

Doug Pray's documentary also explores Michael Heizer, the controversial artist who conceived the monolithic artwork.

"Capturing amazement and much more besides, Doug Pray's sneakily compelling documentary...explores Michael Heizer's revolutionary vision." -New York Times

"Illuminating, engaging and unexpected."
-Los Angeles Times



ALTINA

89 minutes, color, \$27.95, FRF 916325D
STREET DATE: DECEMBER 16

A provocative look at a bold, trendsetting woman who was far ahead of her time.

The daughter of a tobacco tycoon and descendant of Sephardic Jews, Altina Schinasi was also an artist, an Oscar-nominated filmmaker, and the inventor of the glamorous Harlequin 'cat's-eye' eyeglasses. Her fascinating life is captured in this delightful film.

"A delightful, quirky, eccentric documentary." -Vanity Fair

"An absorbing look at wealth, privilege, creativity and progressive thinking...an evocative time capsule." -Los Angeles Times



THE PLEASURES OF BEING OUT OF STEP

86 minutes, color, \$27.95, FRF 916332D
STREET DATE: JANUARY 6

Nat Hentoff is one of the enduring voices of the last 65 years, a writer who championed jazz and helped give birth to alternative journalism in America.

This jazzy documentary explores Hentoff's surprising history and his provocative ideas about liberty, identity and free expression.

"Vivid! Rich in the sounds and sights of legendary cultural figures, from Lenny Bruce and Malcolm X to Bob Dylan and Coleman Hawkins." -Variety



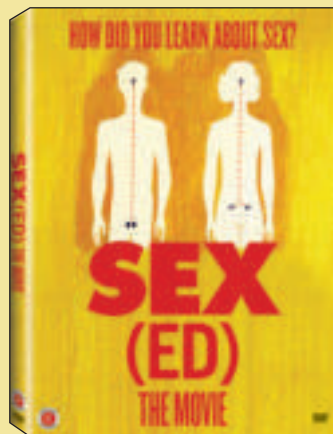
A WILL FOR THE WOODS

94 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 916356D
STREET DATE: JANUARY 6

This documentary about the burgeoning 'green burial' movement focuses on the story of Clark Wang, who is determined that his final resting place will benefit the earth. Clark, in the final stages of his fight against lymphoma, decides to use his own green burial to help protect a local woods.

"Moving and inspiring! 'A Will For the Woods' is about a life of purpose and a death with meaning."
-Nell Minow, The Huffington Post

"This movie will open your eyes to a new way of thinking." -San Francisco Chronicle



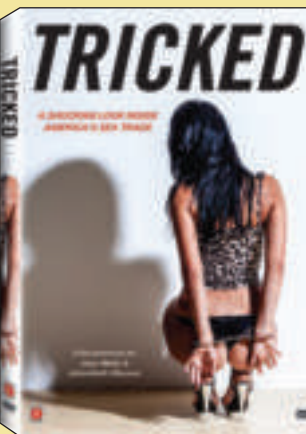
SEX(ED): THE MOVIE

76 minutes, color, \$24.95, FRF 916370D
STREET DATE: FEBRUARY 3

An entertaining, illuminating documentary about the history of sex education from the early 1900s to the present. Using clips from an astounding array of sex ed films, the film captures what it was like for the kids and as well for those doing the educating - usually with moral agendas front and center.

"Equal parts film history and social history, the film celebrates the importance of sexuality in being human." -The Herald-Sun

"Entertaining clips...surprising links. An essential conversation-starter."
-Slant Magazine



TRICKED

75 minutes, color, \$27.95, FRF 916363D
STREET DATE: FEBRUARY 3

Modern-day slavery is alive and well in the U.S., as thousands of victims are trafficked across the country to satisfy America's \$3-billion-a-year sex trafficking industry.

Meet the pimps, the johns, the police, the parents and the victims of the thriving sex trade in this daring documentary that uncovers one of America's darkest secrets.

"Heartbreaking." -New York Times

"Truly hair-raising." -Village Voice

"This film should be shown in stadiums across America. Everyone should see it."
-Anthony Favale, Inspector, Vice, NYPD

misbehavior, latches onto Yuichi, becoming his unwanted champion/girlfriend/stalker. Yuichi's downward spiral seems headed for a vengeful, *Taxi Driver*-style rampage of self-destruction, but the episodes of violence here (real and imaginary) wind up going in a different direction. Oddly set to a soundtrack of Western classical music, *Himizu* will likely confound North American audiences with its more obscure cultural references, but fans of Sono will appreciate. A strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Horns ★★1/2

Anchor Bay, 120 min., R, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.99, Jan. 6

Harry Potter embraces the dark side—involuntarily and temporarily—in Alexandre Aja's adaptation of the 2010 novel by Joe Hill (son of Stephen King). Daniel Radcliffe stars in this horror comedy as Ig, a pariah widely believed to have murdered his long-time girlfriend (Juno Temple). Flashbacks chronicle how the pair met as children, and eventually embarked on romance, until she dumped him on the night he was planning to propose—the same night she died. After cursing God and giving in to temptation with a local barmaid, Ig finds demonic horns literally growing from his forehead that bring a dark power: people confess their darkest desires to him, asking for permission to give in to them. Ig decides to use his power to identify the real killer, but may not be able to manage that without turning fully devilish, a fate that seems increasingly likely as the horns grow, since he begins to attract snakes, and starts carrying a pitchfork. Obviously, *Horns* features an oddball premise, but since it never establishes how—or when—Ig's demonic abilities will work, the result is an anything goes vibe. Also, the whodunit aspect of the plot is a mess, with suspicion thrown on virtually every other character (although the guilty party will likely be obvious to most fairly early on). Ultimately, this is a near-miss, a supernatural romantic mystery that is ambitious but also jumbled. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



Housebound ★★1/2

Xrator, 112 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$20.99 (Amazon exclusive, www.amazon.com)

Horror comedies often have a hard time balancing the chills and laughs, but New Zealand writer-director Gerard Johnstone's debut feature—which suggests that you can go home again, but perhaps shouldn't—juggles the scary and humorous elements very skillfully. Kylie (Morgana O'Reilly) is an angry young woman sentenced to eight months of home detention follow-

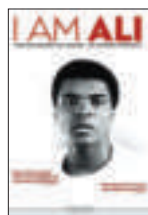


ing a botched ATM robbery. Not long after moving back in with her chatterbox mother (Rima Te Wiata), Kylie begins hearing strange noises, and she enlists the help of the security man assigned to keep tabs on her electronic ankle bracelet to investigate—a search that eventually leads to an unsolved murder that took place in the house years earlier, and to a reclusive neighbor whose ramshackle abode was once home to a troubled boy who disappeared soon after the crime was committed. But Kylie's court-appointed psychologist tells everyone that Kylie is just suffering from emotional stress and shouldn't be taken too seriously. *Housebound* builds tension through excellent performances, especially from O'Reilly and Te Wiata, as well as astute editing (also by Johnstone), while offering some genuine shocks, many from clever plot twists. Aside from a final confrontation sequence pitting Kylie against an unlikely villain that goes on a bit too long, this is a surprisingly engaging movie that marks Johnstone as a genre filmmaker of real talent. Highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

I Am Ali ★★★

Universal, 112 min., PG, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$26.98

He was always "the greatest" in his own mind. So, too, for the millions worldwide captivated by his wit, pride, charisma, and media savvy. In a boxing career that exploded after his 1960 win at the Olympics, Muhammad Ali often behaved like a bully and a braggart both in and out of the boxing ring. He lit firestorms of adulation and outrage with his athletic prowess and knack for inflaming passions on hot-button social issues du jour. This absorbing (if also sometimes disjointed) portrait is firmly in the "greatest" camp, filled with unctuous interviews of Ali's family and friends, and remarkably intimate glimpses into his private life. None of the many Ali documentaries have reached this far into his ascent from scrawny kid to three-time World Heavyweight Champion. Director Clare Lewins was given access to home movies and audio recordings that Ali made of conversations with his wife, children, and loyal associates. Along with the talking head segments and copious archival footage—much of it rarely seen—*I Am Ali* provides a fascinating overview of Ali's varied engagements with politics, publicity, race, religion, the law, and the people closest to him. Although fawning, this is still one of the better entries in the pantheon of Ali bio-docs. Recommended. (T. Fry)



I Am Yours ★★1/2

Film Movment, 100 min., in Norwegian, Urdu & Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

This debut feature film from director Iram

Haq centers on Mina (Amrita Acharia), a divorced Pakistani-Norwegian woman who has joint custody of her son with her ex-husband. Mina yearns to establish a career as an actress—much to the chagrin of her Old World mother (who is a little too eager to see Mina abandon her career dreams for either a new marriage or a reconciliation with her ex) and indifference of her former mate (who is distracted with a new girlfriend). Mina's life takes a dramatic turn at an Oslo film festival when she meets Swedish film director Jesper (Ola Rapace), and the pair share an immediate attraction. Jesper would seem to be the right man for Mina, both personally and professionally, but their union would require her to go to Sweden and relinquish joint custody of her son. Worse, Jesper is not particularly interested in Mina's son being a focal point of any relationship he may wish to pursue. In lesser hands, this material could easily descend into cliché, but Haq's screenplay and direction are uncommonly mature, backed by deeply textured performances from Acharia and Rapace. Norway's entry in last year's Best Foreign Language Film Oscar competition, this is highly recommended. (P. Hall)



In Bloom ★★★

Big World, 102 min., in Georgian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Set in 1992 in Tbilisi, capital of a newly independent Georgia that was long part of the Soviet Union, this coming-of-age drama takes place amidst an atmosphere of confusion, anger, and violence that threatens potential explosiveness everywhere: in homes, on breadlines, and within a classroom. Armed vigilantes roam the streets doing whatever they want. Sectarian conflict is bubbling up. A distant battle on the Black Sea with neighboring Abkhazia is going badly for Georgia. Yet co-directors Nana Ekvimishvili (a Georgian for whom this story has autobiographical elements) and Simon Gross concentrate on the ripple effects of the national tension throughout everyday life in Tbilisi, particularly for 14-year-old best friends Eka (Lika Babluani) and Natia (Mariam Bokeria), who endure adult angst and cruelty as best they can, and find comfort in each other's company—although both they and we know that they will eventually grow up to be as desperate and/or vitriolic as the grownups in their lives. But for now the pair are learning to fight back against their fate with rebelliousness, and (in a terrific scene) a bold assertion of Eka's flowering spirit through a spontaneous folk dance. An understated film that benefits from the



natural lead performances by non-actors, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)

James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge

★★★1/2

Millennium, 91 min., PG,
DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray/DVD
Combo: \$24.99



As director of the two highest grossing movies ever (*Titanic* and *Avatar*), James Cameron has the clout and wealth to pursue both of his dreams: exploring the ocean floor and the fantasy realms inside his head. *James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge* chronicles Cameron's record-making trip to Challenger Deep, the deepest known spot on Earth. Cameron is a celebrated polymath—and no one celebrates that fact more than Cameron himself—and he leads the team as designer and pilot of the *Deepsea Challenger* vessel, which dove nearly seven miles into the Mariana Trench on March 26, 2012. Although this documentary flopped during its brief 3D theatrical run, its combination of enthralling imagery and ideas make it similar to Cameron's earlier IMAX and TV underwater reality adventures. The film suffers from some forced, scripted, cornball emotion (a young actor portrays James as a boy obsessed with cardboard subs and Jacques Cousteau), but eventually delivers an authentic emotional wallop. Cameron's uncontained ego and tyrannical management style are on full display here, but science buffs may be able to overlook the vanity project aspect and enjoy the thrilling discovery of the unknown. A strong optional purchase. (T. Fry)

K2: Siren of the Himalayas ★★★1/2

First Run, 75 min., not rated,
DVD: \$24.95

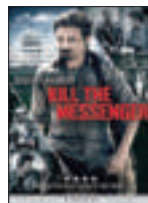


Filmmaker Dave Ohlson's extraordinary documentary follows a 2009 expedition to reach the peak of K2—the world's tallest mountain—in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of a 1909 attempt by Italian climbers. The contemporary international team features some of the world's most experienced climbers, including former National Geographic "Explorer of the Year" Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner. Ohlson points out that, as of 2009, only 302 people had successfully reached K2's summit (and of those, 31 died during descent). So it's no wonder that the team's efforts become increasingly difficult and deadly, especially during a final push toward a summit that seems so close, yet so far away. Ohlson is there for every step of the way, at one point even giving us a seemingly impossible viewpoint from the highest terrestrial heights. The 2009 footage is interspersed with archival photographs and narrated journal entries from the 1909 climb,

and Kaltenbrunner and her fellow climbers also speak at length during interviews. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Kill the Messenger ★★

Universal, 112 min., R, DVD:
\$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo:
\$34.98, Feb. 10



Based on the true story of an investigative reporter at the *San Jose Mercury News*, this suspenseful political thriller follows the trials and tribulations of truth-seeking whistleblower Gary Webb (Jeremy Renner), whose 1996 discovery of the CIA's covert role in arming the Nicaraguan Contras and spreading urban addiction to

crack cocaine so alarmed government officials that they made him the target of a virulent smear campaign. While working for a small California newspaper, Webb is contacted by the seductive girlfriend (Paz Vega) of a drug trafficker. She's furious that the government seized her boyfriend's property before he went to trial and, after he was acquitted, refused to give it back. She wants Webb to expose this heinous practice and, as enticement, she gives Webb a transcript of the Grand Jury testimony of a major drug smuggler (Yul Vazquez) recruited by the DEA. When Webb tracks down the drug kingpin (Andy García) in prison in Managua, he learns the truth—but it's off-the-record. As Webb pursues one unsubstantiated insinua-

"Excellent... Ekvtimishvili infuses the aching soul of old Russia deep in the film's bones, the anger of a violent, yet fragile independence in its face."
—Betsy Sharkey, *Los Angeles Times*

"ELECTRIFYINGLY WELL-MADE!"
—Bilge Ebiri, *Vulture.com*

63rd
Forum

TO WATCH

NOW AVAILABLE!

WINNER
BERLINALE
C.I.C.A.E. AWARD

WINNER
HONG KONG
CINEFEST

WINNER
TAMARIZO
CINEFEST

WINNER
MONTREA
CINEFEST

IN BLOOM

Directed by NANA EKVIMISHVILI and SIMON GROSS

NEW ON DVD FROM BIGWORLD PICTURES

★★★★★ Sublime!"
—Keith Uhlich, *Time Out New York*

A SUMMER'S TALE

NOW AVAILABLE!

"Worth the wait!"
—Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

"Superbly sensual... Brazil's Marcelo Gomes leaps to the front rank of South American filmmakers with his sophomore feature..."
—Neil Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*

ONCE UPON A TIME VERÔNICA

A FILM BY MARCELO GOMES

COMING FEB. 3RD!

BigWorldPictures.org

tion after another, scooping major newspapers like the *Los Angeles Times*, his obsessive sleuthing unsettles his editor (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) and publisher (Oliver Platt), while also jeopardizing his relationship with his long-suffering wife (Rosemary DeWitt) and children. Based on Nick Schou's *Kill the Messenger*, together with Webb's memoir, *Dark Alliances*, the film is unfortunately predictable and suffers from heavy-handed direction by Michael Cuesta. Optional. (S. Granger)

Lady Valor: The Kristen Beck Story ★★½

Wolfe, 84 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95



A powerful, moving documentary from CNN Films, *Lady Valor* addresses one reality that the military would just as soon ignore: namely, that transgendered people have served with distinction in the Armed Forces. Kristin Beck spent more than a decade as a decorated Navy SEAL, some of those years embarking on dangerous missions in Iraq. Known as Chris Beck back then, Kristin is regarded by fellow SEALs (several of them on camera) as a fierce warrior who was constantly thrown into danger. Now back home in the U.S. and living more as a woman than a man (she sees herself as somewhere between the two genders), Kristin travels the country giving motivational speeches while trying to stay connected with her roots in the service. She often feels isolated, however, so it's a relief to see her visit family in her hometown, where her father, two siblings, and several old friends remain loving and supportive (Kristin's mother and two other siblings refused to be involved in the film). On the other hand, Kristin's rejection by her former wife and two young sons is a source of agony. Although Kristin remains in the foreground of filmmakers Mark Herzog and Sandrine Orabona's *Lady Valor*, the film also introduces a number of transgendered vets going through similar experiences. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Last of the Unjust

★★★★

Cohen, 2 discs, 220 min., in French & German w/English subtitles, PG-13, DVD: \$39.98, Blu-ray: \$49.98



Among the extensive material that did not make the final cut in Claude Lanzmann's landmark 1985 Holocaust documentary *Shoah* (VL-10/87) was a series of interviews Lanzmann conducted in 1975 with Benjamin Murmelstein, the third Jewish elder of the "model ghetto"—or more accurately concentration camp—that the Nazis established at Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia, and the only one to survive. In *The Last of the Unjust*, Lanzmann has edited substantial portions

of their conversations into a fascinating and compelling film, which also features newly shot footage of the former Theresienstadt—as well as scenes of Lanzmann reading from contemporary sources and later accounts, artwork painted by inmates, and clips from a Nazi propaganda film—to present a history of the camp and its horrors. Central to the narrative, of course, is the testimony of Murmelstein, a man reviled by many as a power-hungry collaborator who instead portrays himself as a wily strategist who used his skills at manipulation while he was a rabbi in Vienna to arrange for the emigration of as many Jews as possible, and then after being sent to the camp tried to secure the best possible conditions for the inmates there. Murmelstein offers a scathing indictment of Nazi kingpin Adolf Eichmann (who Murmelstein was forced to deal with), but while Lanzmann presses his subject about the self-serving nature of his apologia, in the end what emerges is a portrait of a shrewd, calculating man who may be shading the truth but was not the accommodating puppet claimed by his most severe critics. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (F. Swietek)

The Last Sentence

★★★

Music Box, 126 min., in Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95



Swedish filmmaker Jan Troell's biographical drama recounts crusading Swedish newspaperman Torgny Segerstedt's (Jesper Christensen) final (and most notorious) years. Segerstedt wrote virulent editorial broadsides against Hitler and the Nazis during the 1930s (which ran counter to Sweden's official policy of neutrality) and he demanded government action when the Soviet Union invaded Finland—taking uncompromising stands that made him an anathema to the Swedish ruling establishment. Meanwhile, his personal life included high-profile extramarital affairs, including one with the wife of a best friend. With historical hindsight, we know of course that Sweden did remain neutral throughout WWII, making *The Last Sentence* not so much a dynamic portrait of a courageous journalist who made a difference but rather a melancholy look at one who strove mightily, yet remained impotent (in more than one way, it's hinted) in his efforts to alter the course of history. Based on a biography by Kenne Fant, this beautifully-lensed dramatic bio-pic is recommended. (C. Cassady)

The Last Supper ★★½

Cinedigm, 116 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$14.95

The English title of Lu Chuan's historical epic refers to the so-called Feast at Hong

Gate of 206 BC, where Lord Xiang Yu (Daniel Wu) planned to assassinate Liu Bang (Liu Ye), a peasant leader who was Yu's partner in rebellion against the Qin dynasty. But Liu escaped and would—several years



later—defeat Lord Yu's army to become the first emperor of the Han dynasty. This episode is part of a long flashback recalled by the frenzied autocrat Liu on his deathbed many years later, as his wife systematically removes all those who might obstruct her consolidation of power or interfere with recording the circumstances of her husband's rise in any but the best possible light. *The Last Supper* not only offers a spectacular account of the transition from the Qin to the Han, but comments on how history can be written—and rewritten—to meet the needs of rulers (perhaps an oblique reference to contemporary Chinese affairs). The treatment here is highly theatrical, with oversized performances, especially by Ye, and extravagant set-pieces incorporating battles and a few executions staged in wildly stylized fashion. While the film is a visual feast, its emotional dryness, deliberate pacing, and modest amount of action will likely disappoint genre fans. But as a depiction of how absolute power can corrupt absolutely (and of how a person's misdeeds can come back to haunt him), this artistically crafted film may appeal to viewers who appreciate something more challenging than standard martial-arts fare. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

LFO ★

Dark Sky, 98 min., in Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98

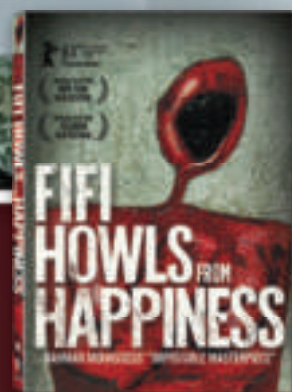
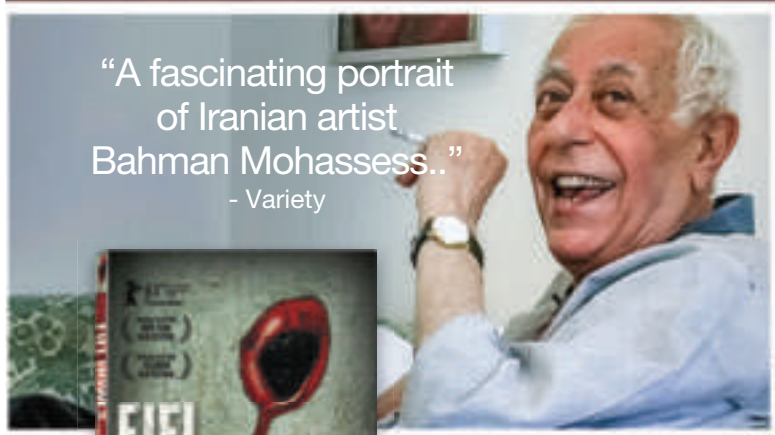


An annoying Swedish comedy, *LFO* centers on an amateur scientist named Robert (Patrik Karlsson), who might have murdered his wife (Ahnna Rasch). Tinkering with sound waves, Robert discovers a frequency that will put people into a hypnotic state and make them open to suggestion. A megalomaniac, Robert considers the world-changing possibilities of this new technology, but instead uses it to manipulate his neighbors, an attractive young couple named Simon (Per Löfberg) and Linn (Izabella Jo Tschig). Soon, Robert is having sex with Linn and reducing Simon to a passive child, while the ghost of his dead wife (or at least a manifestation of Robert's guilt) haunts him. Meanwhile, various strangers come knocking, suspicious of his activities. Writer-director Antonio Tublén manages to create a feature-length film out of this thin premise, but only at the price of padding the script with endless, tiresome variations on what is essentially a glorified sketch idea. Not recommended. (T. Keogh)

BEST OF 2014 DOCUMENTARIES

**MUSIC
BOX
FILMS**

"A fascinating portrait
of Iranian artist
Bahman Mohassess.."
- Variety



Available Now

FIFI HOWLS FROM HAPPINESS
RUN TIME: 102 MINS

DVD \$29.95^{SRP}
MBFHE085 UPC: 741360538641

Available January 20

THE GREEN PRINCE
RUN TIME: 101 MINS

DVD \$29.95^{SRP}
MBFHE089 UPC: 741360538665

Blu-ray Disc \$34.95^{SRP}
MBFHE089 UPC: 741360538672



"Sustains the tension of
a well-executed thriller."

- The New York Times

Fiery...Essential.
An impassioned call
to conscience."
- Entertainment Weekly



Available February 17

WATCHERS OF THE SKY
RUN TIME: 121 MINS

DVD \$29.95^{SRP}
MBFHE091 UPC: 741360538696

Available February 24

CODE BLACK
RUN TIME: 80 MINS

DVD \$29.95^{SRP}
MBFHE092 UPC: 741360538689



"Riveting! Personal, Vital
and Revelatory."

- Los Angeles Times

Contact your distributor.

www.musicboxfilms.com

Life After Beth ★★1/2

Lionsgate, 89 min., R, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.99

Writer-director Jeff Baena's zombie comedy boasts a strong cast, with Dane DeHaan starring as Zach, newly devastated by the death of his girlfriend, Beth (Aubrey Plaza). Zach shares his grief with Beth's parents, Maury and Geenie (John C. Reilly and Molly Shannon), while his own father and mother (Paul Reiser and Cheryl Hines) are less understanding, and his brother (Matthew Gray Gubler) is positively contemptuous. But then Maury and Geenie suddenly cut off ties with Zach and he soon discovers why: Beth has returned from the dead, and mom and dad are intent on protecting her from prying eyes. Although he worries that she might be a zombie (Maury prefers to think of her as resurrected), Zach is so overjoyed at Beth's reappearance that he heedlessly resumes their romance—until she begins displaying unmistakable signs of undead behavior. As Beth grows progressively worse, other dearly departed start showing up too, with increasingly ravenous needs, and before long the community degenerates into a general apocalypse. Meanwhile, Zach meets another girl (Anna Kendrick) who might provide the affection that Beth no longer can. The actors squeeze every bit of humor possible out of the situations here, but ultimately *Life After Beth* comes across as more frantic than funny. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



A Life in Dirty Movies

★★★

Film Movement, 80 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95

Joe Sarno (1921-2010) was one of the most respected filmmakers in a disreputable genre. With his wife and collaborator Peggy, Sarno made movies during the 1960s and early 1970s that explored adult sexuality and morality under the guise of sexploitation (with titles such as *Sin in the Suburbs* and *The Love Merchant*). Sarno earned the name "the Ingmar Bergman of 42nd Street" for his carefully composed images, European sensibility, and focus on women characters taking charge of their own sexuality, but he was no longer able to make his kind of femme-centered, elegantly-produced movies after being displaced by the rise of the X-rated film industry. Director Wiktor Ericsson's documentary offers a survey of Sarno's career but the real focus is on the couple themselves—who were together and still in love after more than 40 years—and on Sarno's late attempt at a comeback. Somewhat disingenuously, Ericsson completely ignores the 15-year stretch when Sarno made X-rated films under a number of pseudonyms, but *A Life in Dirty Movies* remains compelling for its



story of the Sarnos' long partnership, Joe's desire to keep making films, and Peggy's determination to support his dreams and legacy even as she acknowledges that he is completely out of step with the times. Featuring interviews with filmmaker John Waters and sex educator Annie Sprinkle, this unrated documentary includes explicit nudity and softcore sex scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Lilting ★★★

Strand, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Feb. 10

Two people from different cultures find common ground in debut director Hong Khaou's delicate chamber drama. In the wake of tragedy, Richard (Ben Whishaw), a young Londoner, seeks out Junn (Pei-pei Cheng), a Cambodian-Chinese widow. Richard has lost his partner and Junn has lost her son, but the two have never met, and Junn fails to make the connection—possibly because she can't accept the fact that her only son was gay. Flashbacks reveal that Kai (Andrew Leung), who died in a traffic accident, never came out to his mother (she knew about Richard, but Kai told her he was just a friend). Furthermore, Junn doesn't speak English, so Richard hires Vann (Naomi Christie), a translator, to help him bridge the gap. Initially, Vann accompanies Richard to the retirement home to facilitate a potential romance between Junn and Alan (Peter Bowles), a British widower who doesn't speak Chinese, but the end goal is to really talk to Junn about her son. Although Richard presents himself as selfless, his relentless drive for connection feels more like an attempt to deal with his own loss than to comfort a grieving mother. Still, it's hard to argue with Khaou's message that it's better to know the truth about our loved ones and that mourning alone can be a very lonely business. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)



Lines of Wellington

★★★1/2

Film Movement, 152 min., in English, Portuguese & French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Chilean director Raúl Ruiz's final film is a sprawling account of an episode in the Peninsular War, when Portuguese resistance forces joined with British troops under Arthur Wellesley—then Viscount Wellington—to oppose Napoleon's attempt to conquer Iberia. Ruiz was deep into pre-production when he died in 2011, and the project was taken over by his wife (and long-time editor) Valeria Sarmiento, who has the directing credit here. The story is set in 1810-11, when Wellesley defeated French Marshal Masséna at Buçaco



and then repaired to the so-called Lines of Torres Vedras, a defensive system he'd secretly been constructing around Lisbon. After reaching the fortifications and finding them impregnable, Masséna was forced to withdraw. The military maneuvering here merely serves as backdrop to a host of vignettes about soldiers and refugees—British, Portuguese, and French—being buffeted about in the confusion. Romantic episodes are juxtaposed with others set in hospitals tending to the wounded, homes where families try to live normally during a time of crisis, and Wellington's camp, where the general—played as a snooty martinet by John Malkovich—berates a painter he has commissioned to record his battlefield exploits (at one point he also gives the artist the recipe for Beef Wellington). While some of the plot threads are mildly interesting, and the cinematography boasts lovely compositions, this is a rather slow tapestry of human suffering and bravery encumbered by heavy narration, and apart from the grandstanding Malkovich, even the best-known actors (including Catherine Deneuve and Isabelle Huppert) disappear in the muddle. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Love Is Strange ★★★

Sony, 94 min., R, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99, Jan. 13

John Lithgow and Alfred Molina deliver touching performances as Ben and George, respectively, an elderly Manhattan couple who tie the matrimonial knot after almost four decades of living together. The gentle, bittersweet story begins on their wedding day, with friends and family gathering 'round to wish them well. But then George is immediately fired as music director at a Catholic school because of diocesan rules, and since 71-year-old Ben is a retired painter, the newlyweds can no longer afford the mortgage on their cozy West Village co-op. Searching for a smaller, less expensive apartment and dealing with the complications of urban bureaucracy, the couple are temporarily forced to bunk separately. Melancholy, pragmatic George moves in with two, much younger, gay NYPD cops (Cheyenne Jackson, Manny Perez), while loquacious Ben lands in the Brooklyn apartment occupied by a filmmaker nephew (Darren Burrows), his novelist wife (Marisa Tomei), and their angst-riddled teenage son (Charlie Tahan). It's a humiliating dilemma because, as George astutely says: "When you live with people, you know them better than you care to." Director Ira Sachs explores the subject of intergenerational differences and loneliness here at a leisurely pace, and while the soundtrack (leaning heavily on Chopin etudes) is occasionally intrusive, the film works thanks to Lithgow and Molina, whose



characters' affectionately tender commitment seems unbounded. Recommended. (S. Granger)

Lucky Them ★★1/2

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

It's not often that indie darling Toni Collette is upstaged, but in the hip yet also sentiment-drenched *Lucky Them*, star Thomas Haden Church's awkwardly brilliant performance as an eccentric millionaire and amateur documentary filmmaker shines brighter. In a scenario that sounds more like 1994 than 2014, Collette plays struggling rock journalist Ellie Klug, who writes for some sort of mid-level music magazine in a scrubbed-up post-grunge Seattle. Klug is a middle-aged burnout and near-alcoholic who walks around with a perpetual pout on her emaciated face and seems resentful of the fact that her straight-edged editor (played by Oliver Platt) wants her to do a story that people will actually want to read. Faced with imminent joblessness, Klug agrees to write about the mysterious icon Matthew Smith (also her ex-boyfriend) who vanished into thin air a few years previously. While hopping from one mediocre musician's bed to another for empty sexual encounters,



she finally meets Charlie (Church), an independently wealthy filmmaker who wants to make a documentary about Ellie's half-cocked quest to find Smith. Unfortunately, the stellar acting by Church can't save what is essentially a one-dimensional movie bereft of dramatic innovation and inspiration. Optional. (M. Sandlin)

Lucy ★★★

Universal, 89 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Jan. 20



Starting with a provocative (if inaccurate) premise—namely, that humans use only 10% of their brain capacity—filmmaker Luc Besson's eerie, inventive adventure centers on a naïve young American named Lucy (Scarlett Johansson), who is tricked into delivering a mysterious briefcase to a Taiwanese crime boss (Choi Min-Sik) and winds up becoming one of his drug mules. An incident in which Lucy is repeatedly kicked in the gut causes a leakage from a narcotic known as CPH4 that has been surgically inserted in her abdomen—suddenly making Lucy superhuman. Determined not only to wreak revenge on her captors but also to acquire more and more knowledge, she contacts a neuroscientist

(Morgan Freeman) who is lecturing in Paris. Combining eye-catching CGI graphics with fragmented, episodic storytelling, Besson serves up a creative, fast-paced, blood-splattered escapade inspired by, among other films, *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *The Matrix*, as well as the 1974 discovery of the fossilized skeleton of man's earliest ancestor, nicknamed "Lucy." Having played Black Widow in Marvel's *Avenger* movies, Johansson is completely believable as the telekinetic Lucy, who can intercept electromagnetic signals and communicate via satellites. In addition to delivering popcorn-flick-action, *Lucy* also touches on deep philosophical questions: Does time truly exist? Why are we really here? Is our essence immortal? Recommended. (S. Granger)

Manuscripts Don't Burn

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 126 min., in Persian w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95



This starkly realistic, clandestinely-made, Iranian quasi-thriller from long-respected director Mohammed Rasoulof (who is officially banned from making films) takes an unflinching look at the intolerance of free expression in his country. *Manuscripts Don't*

A LOVE TRIANGLE. DISABILITY RIGHTS. DIDGERIDOO MASTER.



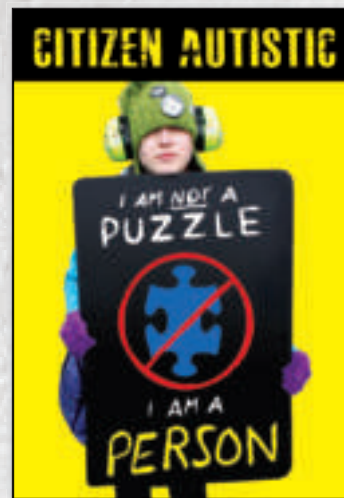
IN BETWEEN SONGS

A film about the Aboriginal Galpu clan, led by didgeridoo master Djalu Gurruwiwi, which struggles to preserve its way of life against harsh environmental pressures in Australia. DVD \$19.95/PPR \$150



FRENCH AFFAIRS

Astrid, a professional therapist, starts having an affair with her patient Céline's husband. However, when Céline learns of the affair from Astrid's discontent son, she must decide how to deal with the betrayal. In French with English Subtitles. DVD \$19.95



CITIZEN AUTISTIC

Citizen Autistic exposes the Autism Speaks controversies, which includes using propaganda to raise funds for disease research rather than providing disability services. DVD \$19.95/PPR \$150

Cinema Libre Studio is a leader in the distribution of social issue narrative & nonfiction films. Since 2003, the studio has released over 150 titles and remains at the forefront of the independent film movement.

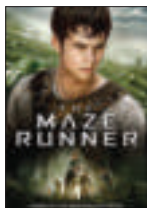


www.cinematlibrestudio.com

Burn centers on two hit men (no cast or crew members are listed in the credits, aside from Rasoulof) who make their living by harassing, torturing, and often killing particularly outspoken writers or artists whom their cold, calculating boss would like to see silenced. This is not your typical Westernized action fare—with violence steadily increasing to reach a bloody climactic crescendo—but a more subtle and original approach, placing more emphasis on the everyday lives of people under repressive theocratic regimes and exploring how easily violence, politics, religion, and family life can all become tragically interwoven in sinister form in modern-day Iran. The killings here were actually based on a spate of anti-dissident violence that transpired in Iran in the 1980s. *Manuscripts Don't Burn* is a thinking person's action thriller: with suggestion and interior drama taking precedence over explosions and jarring plot twists and turns. And Rasoulof coolly delivers judgment not on his hapless main characters but rather on the repressive society in which they are forced to function. Highly recommended. (M. Sandlin)

The Maze Runner ★★

Fox, 113 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



This screen adaptation of James Dashner's post-apocalyptic YA adventure novel serves up yet another dystopian survival thriller. Thomas (Dylan O'Brien) wakes up with no memory of his past, and finds himself deposited in an idyllic Glade with about 50 other teenage boys who have formed their own highly organized, structured society. The Glade is surrounded by a massive concrete wall with a single opening: a huge door that leads to a vast, multi-sectioned, ever-changing maze through which the boys are expected to run each day. Being trapped in the labyrinth is usually fatal, since menacing, biomechanical, spider-like creatures called Grievers roam at night; yet, a Griever's sting can also bring back memories from the past. Alby (Aml Ameen) is the runners' leader, while Gally (Will Poulter) is the scowling, security-minded bully. Minho (Ki Hong Lee) is a veteran runner, along with second-in-command Newt (Thomas Brodie-Sangster) and chubby Chuck (Blake Cooper). When Teresa (Kaya Scodelario) is suddenly brought to their encampment, Thomas discovers that the two share a telepathic link. Can they find their way out? And what's the purpose of W.C.K.D., the mysterious organization led by Ava Paige (Patricia Clarkson) that has trapped them in this bizarre, coming-of-age social experiment? Frantic and also all-too-familiar, *The Maze Runner* explores themes including friendship, ingenuity, bravery, and persistence, but—of course—offers no resolution, only a set-up

for the upcoming sequel, *The Scorch Trials*. An optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Men, Women & Children ★★

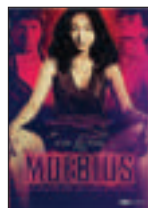
Paramount, 119 min., R, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99, Jan. 13



Jason Reitman's film is a ponderously didactic ensemble drama that is so determined to deliver its message about setting aside electronic devices in order to personally connect with one another that it doesn't bother to create credible characters, situations, or dialogue. *Men, Women & Children* is built around interlocking plot threads. In one, unhappy suburban married couple Don (Adam Sandler) and Helen (Rosemary DeWitt) reach out for companionship via the Internet while their teen son, Chris (Travis Tope), becomes so addicted to online porn that he can't respond to the allure of sultry classmate Hannah (Olivia Crocicchia), a cheerleader whose mother, Donna (Judy Greer), helps her to post revealing photos on the web to jumpstart an acting career. Meanwhile, Patricia (Jennifer Garner) obsessively monitors her daughter Brandy's (Kaitlyn Dever) online connections, but the girl nevertheless starts a clandestine romance with Tim (Ansel Elgort), a sensitive guy who has quit the football team in order to play an interactive Internet war game. Finally, we have a tale involving Allison (Elena Kampouris), an anorexic girl so besotted with another jock that she goes to bed with him. All the stories take a dark turn, emphasizing the alienation arising from overreliance on electronics at the expense of human contact. And just in case you don't get the message, a ludicrous framing device presents shots of the Voyager spacecraft hurtling through space while the voice of Emma Thompson points out how insignificant Earth is in the cosmic scheme of things and suggests that we all ought to be kinder to one another. Banality posing as profundity, this glum and glibly admonitory film is not recommended. (F. Swietek)

Moebius ★1/2

RAM Releasing, 88 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Definitely not for the faint-hearted, South Korean director Kim ki-duk's *Moebius* tells a wordless (though not soundless, as there are plenty of grunts and groans) tale featuring unnamed characters that begins with a ferocious fight between a man (Jo Jae-hyeon) and his wife (Lee Eun-woo), who has discovered her husband's infidelity. She attacks him with a knife, but he manages to escape to his mistress, a local shopkeeper (also played by Lee Eun-woo), after which the frustrated and frenzied wife

not only castrates her teenage son but also devours his bloody penis before running away. And that's only the beginning of a scenario featuring gang rape, genital transplants, incest, and suicide. *Moebius* is clearly intended to be an extremely dark comedy about bourgeois sexual mores, but its heavy-handed approach and ugly visual style (with lots of woozy handheld camera shots and extreme close-ups) makes it more of an endurance test. A crude attempt at provocation, this is a real disappointment from the director who once gave us such exceptional films as *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter...and Spring* and *3-Iron*. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

Mona Lisa Is Missing ★★★

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



In 1911, Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* was stolen from the Louvre in Paris and would remain unseen for two years while police fruitlessly searched for it. Vincenzo Peruggia, an Italian expatriate working in France, was eventually arrested when he tried to sell the painting to an art dealer in Florence. Tried and convicted of the theft, Peruggia only served a few months in jail, ultimately returning to France, where he started a family. In *Mona Lisa Is Missing*, filmmaker Joe Medeiros—a TV writer who became fascinated with the case decades ago—tries to resolve lingering questions. Was Peruggia the real perpetrator? What were his motives? Did he have accomplices? The film follows Medeiros and his long-suffering wife as they traipse through Italy and France searching for clues, with Joe amiably commenting on the progress of the investigation like a standup comedian doing a routine. The most poignant part of the journey involves the Medeiros' visits with Peruggia's 84-year-old daughter, who barely knew her father but continues to revere him as an Italian patriot who sought to return the painting to its native land. Medeiros builds a persuasive case for the conclusion that he comes to in this genial combination of travelogue and detective story that also looks at how the theft turned the *Mona Lisa* into the world's most famous painting. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Mr. Pip ★★★

Freestyle, 115 min., PG-13, DVD: \$14.99



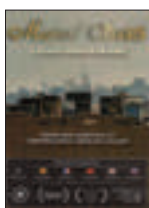
Hugh Laurie stars as a teacher charged with instructing aboriginal children on an isolated island in Papua New Guinea in this ham-fisted, emotionally manipulative, and often downright cringe-worthy adaptation of Lloyd Jones's 2006 novel. Laurie plays Mr. Watts, a mysterious, mixed-up Englishman and the only non-native on Bougainville

Island during the civil war unfolding in the early 1990's. Watts charms the children with his passion for Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*, especially young Matilda (Xzannjah Matsi), who conjures fantasy versions starring Papuan villagers of some of the book's famous scenes. The novel's character of Mr. Pip is a fanciful touchstone for Matilda, but later becomes dangerously real for soldiers who believe that this Pip person is a rebel leader hiding on the island. Directed by Andrew Adamson, the film's mixture of historical drama and inspirational uplift ultimately feels phony and contrived, and while Laurie is a charming actor, that's not enough to make *Mr. Pip* a satisfying outing for either mainstream viewers or the art house crowd. Optional, at best. (T. Fry)

Musical Chairs ★★

Dream Dance Films, 104 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.95 (avail. from www.amazon.com)

Independent filmmaker Susan Seidelman's sentiment is in the right place, even though she never gets into the groove with this shallow, schmaltzy tale about disabled dancers. Energetic Armando (E.J. Bonilla) was born to dance. Despite his meddling mother's (Priscilla Lopez) efforts to have him take over the family restaurant business in the Bronx and marry their Puerto Rican neighbor (Angelica Zambrana), Armando would rather dance to the music. Armando works as a janitor/substitute teacher at the dance studio where his adored WASP-y Mia (Leah Pipes) is an instructor. When a traumatic automobile accident leaves Mia paralyzed from the waist down, Armando stays by her side, not only starting a wheelchair ballroom dancing program at her rehab center but also helping her get ready to compete in New York's first wheelchair ballroom dancing tournament—to be held in only three months. Seidelman does her best with screenwriter Marty Madden's predictably melodramatic plot, but the supporting characters are trite and stereotypical: the obnoxious Iraq War veteran, angry goth girl, and sassy transsexual who becomes involved with one of Armando's older Latino relatives. An optional purchase. (S. Granger)



My Old Lady ★★★

Universal, 108 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$26.98, Jan. 27

Prolific septuagenarian playwright Israel Horowitz makes his feature film directing debut with this adaptation of his own 2002 play about a thrice-divorced, almost-60-year-old, New York recovering alcoholic who inherits an apartment in Paris from his late estranged father. When Mathias Gold (Kevin Kline) arrives in France,



however, he discovers that the dilapidated, two-story abode with its own walled garden is occupied by Madame Mathilde Girard (Maggie Smith), a tart, 92-year-old Englishwoman, who has lived there for decades, along with her caustic, protective daughter (Kristin Scott Thomas). Because of a bizarre French real estate custom called "viager," Mathilde can legally stay there as long as she lives, collecting monthly payments from the rightful owner (like a reverse mortgage). Penniless Mathias was planning to support himself by selling the place, provoking quite the dilemma for all concerned, particularly when long-buried family secrets are unearthed. Complicating matters, a sleazy French real-estate developer wants to transform the entire complex into a luxury hotel. Combining droll humor with dialogue-heavy melodrama, *My Old Lady* is an engaging, cross-cultural comedic drama. Recommended. (S. Granger)

My Straight Son ★★½

TLA Releasing, 114 min., in Spanish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99

Miguel Ferrari's award-winning film focuses on Diego (Guillermo García), a successful Venezuelan fashion photographer, who lives with his partner, Fabrizio (Sócrates Serrano), a prominent surgeon. Diego's happy, if somewhat shallow, lifestyle is abruptly altered when Fabrizio is brutally assaulted by homophobic thugs and hospitalized in a coma. Complicating matters is the arrival from Spain of Armando (Ignacio Montes), Diego's teenage son, who is less than happy to discover that his father is gay. The problem with *My Straight Son* is that it often feels like a pair of very different films unevenly grafted together, with results that seesaw wildly between genuinely emotional drama and connect-the-dots melodrama. The storyline involving Diego's struggles to cope with the attack on Fabrizio is truly moving, as Diego's friends create a circle of compassion during a period of great personal grief, but the estranged father-son relationship narrative is thoroughly predictable and badly written. Still, García shines, delivering a deeply poignant performance of a man traumatized by a horrendous crime. A strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)



Next Year Jerusalem ★★★

First Run, 72 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95

A lovely documentary, *Next Year Jerusalem* follows members of a sometimes-invisible population—senior citizens in nursing homes—who do something extraordinary. Proving that there are no age barriers to adventures and new experiences, a group of seniors at a U.S.



retirement home makes a long trek to Israel along with a handful of nursing staff, where they visit historic sites, are entertained by schoolchildren, drink wine and converse with locals, and go floating in the buoyant waters of the salty Dead Sea. Before any of that happens, however, filmmaker David Gaynes gets to know these tourists back in their familiar digs, giving viewers a chance to learn something about their individual histories. Serving up a solid reminder that people in their 80s and 90s deserve better than to be warehoused and forgotten, this inspirational film is recommended. (T. Keogh)

The November Man ★★

Fox, 108 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.99

Beginning in 2008 in Montenegro on the shores of Lake Geneva, *The November Man* finds retired CIA agent Peter Devereaux (Pierce Brosnan) being recruited back into service by his former handler, John Hanley (Bill Smitrovich). But a glitch in the mission sees Devereaux reluctantly pitted against his own trigger-happy protégé, David Mason (Luke Bracey), while also attempting to protect Alice Fournier (Olga Kurylenko), a relief agency worker in Belgrade who has evidence that could jeopardize the ambitions of a misogynistic, Putin-like politician named Federov (Lazar Ristovski)—the man next in line for the Russian presidency. As this curiously convoluted espionage plot unfolds (involving the Russia-Chechnya conflict), the principals' paths cross with a number of others, including a former CIA double-agent with whom Devereaux once had a significant romantic relationship, a bumbling *New York Times* reporter, and a ruthless Russian assassin. Generically adapted and updated from Bill Granger's 1986 novel *There Are No Spies*, and formulaically directed by Roger Donaldson, the film has Brosnan uttering too many ridiculous lines ("Don't put your faith in me. I promise I'll disappoint you."). An uninvolved saga of international intrigue starring the former James Bond, this is an optional purchase. (S. Granger)



Nuclear Nation ★★½

First Run, 96 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.95

A haunting, disturbing film about the fallout of nuclear disaster, filmmaker Atsushi Funahashi's documentary *Nuclear Nation* was shot approximately one year after 2011's headline-making 8.9 magnitude earthquake that hit Japan and caused a huge tsunami. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was damaged in the devastation, releasing radiation and leading to the evacuation of almost 200,000

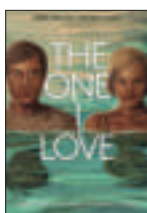


people. The film looks at the lives of a number of these refugees as they carry on at a makeshift shelter in a former high school, awaiting developments that will determine their future. Frustration and anxiety grow as these people, who know that they have been exposed to possibly lethal levels of radiation, wonder why the government is taking so long to assess their health. Here, middle-class Japanese families contend with boxed foods and sleeping on floors, often reminiscing about loved ones who died in the disaster. Funahashi also films official meetings in which the nuclear power lobby is clearly and inextricably linked to authorities who exhibit greater concern over shoring up a failing industry than helping ordinary people who lost everything to it. Highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

The One I Love ★★★

Anchor Bay, 91 min., R, DVD or Blu-ray: \$29.99

Ethan and Sophie (Mark Duplass and Elisabeth Moss) are a couple with marital problems who are sent by their therapist (Ted Danson) to a secluded retreat to test out their feelings: a beautiful house on a large estate, featuring an adjoining guesthouse that will become the crux of mysteries that arise during their stay. Namely, the place might be occupied by another couple who could pose a threat to Ethan and Sophie. To reveal more would spoil the delicious twists of filmmaker Charlie McDowell's (son of Malcolm) small-scale *Twilight Zone*-inspired film that raises some intriguing questions about the vagaries of modern relationships, along the way employing a nice mixture of humor and seriousness. Although it uses a slight, even ludicrous conceit, it does so in an intelligent and sophisticated way that should be left to each viewer to discover and appreciate. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Ouija ★★

Universal, 90 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98, Feb. 3

Is it simply a board game, or a tool to communicate with the supernatural world? That's been the question facing players since ouija was first introduced in 1890 by Charles Kennard and Elijah Bond at their Kennard Novelty Company. According to folklore, when they asked the board what it should be named, it spelled out O-U-I-J-A, then G-O-O-D-L-U-C-K. Now, it's become the basis for this psychological horror thriller. The plot revolves around teenagers Laine (Olivia Cooke) and Debbie (Shelley Hennig), best friends since childhood. One of the cardinal ouija board rules is that no one should play alone, so Laine is shocked to learn that this



is just what Debbie was doing when she hung herself using a string of Christmas lights. Driven to find out what happened, grieving Laine recruits her younger sister (Ana Coto), her boyfriend (Daren Kagasoff), and two pals (Bianca A. Santos, Douglas Smith) for a séance using the antique ouija board that Debbie discovered in her attic. Sure enough, they end up making contact with a malevolent spirit, after which they track down a former resident of Debbie's home, Paulina (Lin Shaye), who is now confined to a mental institution. Husband-and-wife team Stiles White and Juliet Snowden crafted the screenplay together, with White making his directorial debut (with the full support of game manufacturer Hasbro). Although aiming for spooky and scary, *Ouija* unfortunately relies on cheap jump scares and loud noises, resulting in a disappointing boo-movie. Optional. (S. Granger)

The Pleasures of Being Out of Step ★★★

First Run, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$27.95, Jan. 6

Few writers have been more versatile, more controversial, and more unpredictable than Nat Hentoff. David L. Lewis's documentary offers a sharp, invigorating profile of Hentoff, detailing his impact on the worlds of popular culture and politics. Born in 1925 and raised in Boston, Hentoff developed an early love for jazz, and he leveraged his passion for the music and his considerable communication skills into a radio hosting gig while still a teenager. His first career peak as the editor of the jazz publication *Down Beat* helped bring a wider popular appreciation of jazz to the public, while also enabling a generation of creative artists to reach new audiences. (An attempt to carry over jazz to television was short-lived, but featured some brilliant performances, including a rare turn by late-life Billie Holiday.) Hentoff brought his love of jazz to a column in New York's provocative weekly *The Village Voice*, where he began to expand his writing, championing political causes that many of the newspaper's loyal readers found objectionable (including his opposition to abortion and his advocacy of First Amendment principles for neo-Nazis seeking to march in a predominantly Jewish town). While Hentoff doesn't really elaborate here at greater depth on his political ideas, the film nonetheless serves as a winning tribute to an iconoclastic writer who continues to make a profound impact on his readership and the world of journalism. Recommended. (P. Hall)



Pride ★★★1/2

Sony, 120 min., R, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99

The British coal miners' strike of 1984-85 serves as the inspiration behind the fact-

based *Pride*, which despite the bleak historical context is also a feel-good movie that centers on the unlikely partnership that developed between the out-of-work miners and London's gay and lesbian community, who collected funds to support them even though the two groups seemed to have little in common—except that both felt abused by the conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. Directed by Matthew Warchus, the script cannily personalizes the tale by focusing on a small coterie of fundraising city activists and the strikers in a small town in South Wales, who together develop a relationship that is eventually transformed into a warm friendship, ultimately leading in turn to the Miners' Union throwing its weight behind a movement to add the promotion of gay rights to the platform of the Labour Party. Like similar historical films, *Pride* conflates characters and adds some fictional figures—notably Joe (George MacKay), a closeted young man who misleads his reactionary parents about what he's doing in order to join the LGSM (Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners)—but also boasts a strong veteran cast that includes Bill Nighy, Imelda Staunton, Dominic West, and Paddy Considine. *Pride* deals with serious matters—not only Thatcher's union-busting but also the arrival of the AIDS epidemic—but still emerges as a warm and uplifting crowd-pleaser. Highly recommended. (F. Swietek)



Red Nights ★1/2

Breaking Glass, 98 min., in French, English & Chinese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$21.99

A garish exercise in empty style that links together eroticism and torture in a barely coherent plot, filmmakers Julien Carbon and Laurent Courtiaud's *Red Nights* centers on several characters who are fighting over an antique box—or, more accurately, what it contains: a jade skull filled with a poison that paralyzes its victim while exponentially increasing his sensory experiences. This is the invention, we're informed in periodic excerpts from a Chinese opera, of an executioner to a Chinese emperor who eventually used it on himself. The box is stolen by statuesque (and murderous) French blonde Catherine (Frédérique Bel), who intends to sell it, but it's appropriated by Carrie (Carrie Ng), a sadistic perfumer who uses the skull to increase the pleasure she derives from torturing young women with a wide array of implements (including jade claws), chains, and pulleys. Carrie's lover is also the director-star of the opera dramatizing the skull's provenance. Meanwhile, a thuggish crime lord who also enjoys hurting people comes looking for the box with his gang of minions.



The borderline nonsensical *Red Nights* is built from a series of oddly stilted and sometimes gruesome but visually lush scenes, which seem intended to mimic the style of Italian gialli but never quite manage to achieve the hallucinatory effect of the best of them. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

Running From Crazy

★★

Virgil, 102 min., not rated,
DVD: \$14.99

A well-intended but ultimately overbearing documentary in a confessional mode, *Running From Crazy* focuses on actress Mariel Hemingway's life-long quest to come to terms with mental illness in her famous family. The granddaughter of Ernest Hemingway and a once-ubiquitous screen performer in the late 1970s and 1980s, Mariel—now a middle-aged mom of two daughters, one being Dree Hemingway, a successful model/actress—spends much of her time as an activist for making mental health resources available to depressed and suicidal people. Hemingway admits that she has struggled with these issues herself, and reflects on the number of suicides and psychological breakdowns that have claimed members of her family, including Ernest and her sister, Margaux (a celebrity model and actress who died of an overdose of phenobarbital in 1996). Another sister, Joan, also appears to be struggling with her own demons. The connect-the-dots approach detailing the psychological burdens of various Hemingways is disturbing and sometimes powerful, but the film—executive-produced by Oprah Winfrey—goes on far too long with endless rounds of introspection and dialogue re-exploring the same themes. Optional. (T. Keogh)



Satellite ★★

Indiepix, 100 min., not rated,
DVD: \$24.95

Originally released to little acclaim in theaters in 2006, this milquetoast Gen-Y hipster version of *Bonnie and Clyde* from filmmaker Jeff Winner is now available on home video. *Satellite* is a cringe-worthy, improbable story of pseudo-rebellious yuppie romance centering on bland workaday Bloomberg-era NYC protagonists Kevin (Karl Geary) and Ro (Stephanie Szostak), who instantly fall in love. When the pair decide to quit their jobs and go on a cross-country crime spree, it comes across as stagey adolescent scofflaw behavior: two spoiled kids mindlessly acting on a series of silly dares. This is not anarchic Baader-Meinhof territory we're talking about, nor anything as radical as *Thelma & Louise's* road trip-cum-Freudian death wish. The dialogue's unrelenting humorlessness only adds to an



increasing sense of just how seriously we're supposed to take the two main protagonists and their ambitions to live above the law. But, amazingly, these characters are even more boring and annoying as criminals than they were while working quotidian 9-5 jobs. Not a necessary purchase. (M. Sandlin)

The Search for Simon

★★★

MVD, 96 min., not rated,
DVD: \$12.95

British actor-director Martin Gooch made and stars in this broad comedy about a middle-aged loser named David Jones, who has eschewed mature adulthood for a childlike quest to find Simon, a younger brother allegedly kidnapped by aliens when the boys were young. Jobless and living on lottery winnings, the gullible David spends thousands on pointless trips to UFO hotspots and purchasing extraterrestrial "artifacts" from international hucksters. Meanwhile, David is reviled by mainstream nerds in the role-playing game community and is being exploited by a therapist who wants to write about him for her next book. David's one friend, the tormented Bob (Simon Birks), and a would-be girlfriend (Sophie Aldred), are exasperated, while his alcoholic mother (Carol Cleveland, beloved presence in many Monty Python sketches) is simply waiting for her son to accept the real truth about Simon. A fast-paced film that plays like an extended sketch, *The Search for Simon* is good, silly fun. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



Siddharth ★★★

Zeitgeist, 97 min., in Hindi
w/English subtitles, not rated,
DVD: \$29.99

Riveting but sorrowful, *Siddharth* tells a peripatetic tale about a New Delhi father, Mahendra (Rajesh Tailang), who sends his 12-year-old son, Siddharth, to work for a month at a distant factory. Expecting the boy to return in time for a seasonal celebration, Mahendra and his wife and daughter are distressed when he doesn't arrive and his whereabouts cannot be traced. *Siddharth* is a kind of procedural in which Mahendra rallies with great difficulty the means to embark on a search for his son, encountering obstacles along the way. Chided by police for sending Siddharth into child labor, Mahendra learns that kids are often abducted in such situations, and he receives little help while trying to scour Punjab and Mumbai in an increasingly fruitless effort. Filmmaker Richie Mehta's carefully paced drama explores the consequences of economic helplessness in a society where the vulnerable are easily ensnared. Anchored by Tailang's powerful, heartbreaking performance, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



★★★ 1/2 - Video Librarian
Highly Recommended
Detroit Unleaded

"Smart, Funny and Sweet."
-USA Today



A fresh take on boy-meets-girl comedy set in a gas station in Detroit; where a steady stream of unforgettable and often hilarious customers flow through. When a gorgeous "up-do girl" named Najlah comes to deliver phone cards, Sami quickly falls for her in an under-the-counter romance from behind the bulletproof glass.



Detroit Unleaded artfully delves into Arab-American culture as well as the community that surrounds it. This film elicits cultural, psychological, and socioeconomic discussions perfect for Arab-American/Middle-East studies, Immigrant Studies, Urban Sociology, Linguistics and Gender and Communications topics.

"Beautifully shot and superbly acted, this movie will definitely leave you smiling."

Kathleen Gilbert, Victoria Film Commissioner

92 m, NR, Color, DVD, \$24.99, Closed Captioned
detroitunleaded.com, Amazon & Midwest Tape
PPR available contact@detroitunleaded.com
Gas Afterhours, LLC - (517) 930-3715
UPC/672487102289 Includes Bonus Features

Sidewalk Singer ★★★

Vision Video, 103 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99

End it all or begin again? That's the central question running throughout this Christian musical drama centering on Kris Kivi (Alan Maki), a 59-year-old man earning a living as a guitar-playing busker after his wife and children are killed in a car accident (that he survived) and he loses his job to the recession. Written by novelist, pastor, and lead actor Maki, and directed by Jeff Thomas, the story finds Kivi walking a narrow line of faith in the face of strong doubt, given what has befallen him. In addition to being harassed by a street gang, Kivi faces prejudice from local church members after a young minister (Joshua Haze) befriends him and invites him to sing for the congregation. Repentance and redemption will eventually win out, but far from offering a glossy view of the struggles of faith, this movie unflinchingly looks at the effort it takes to reach a point where belief can transcend the sometimes inexplicable tribulations of human existence. An authentic and honest film that focuses on grace and forgiveness in the face of weakness, injustice, and random (but devastating) events, this is recommended. (C. Block)



The Skeleton Twins ★★★1/2

Lionsgate, 93 min., R, DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.99

Is it possible for twins to attempt suicide on the same day? After filmmaker Craig Johnson establishes this credibility-straining premise, *The Skeleton Twins* quickly finds its darkly comic groove. Kristin Wiig plays Maggie, a dental assistant living in upstate New York with the kindly Lance (Luke Wilson), while fellow SNL alum Bill Hader plays Milo, Maggie's gay actor brother in Los Angeles. Since his agent dropped him, Milo has been working as a waiter. When a breakup lands him in the hospital with slashed wrists, Maggie invites him to stay with her and Lance. Even if Wiig and Hader don't look like fraternal twins, they have a solid onscreen rapport in the biting dialogue that the duo employ to mask their pain and in the goofy moments they share when not stewing over old grievances. As a teenager, Milo entered into a liaison with harmful repercussions, and Maggie has been keeping a secret from Lance, leading her to sublimate her frustration in an affair with a scuba instructor (Boyd Holbrook). Although Hader's deft segue to drama has earned praise, the real revelation here is Ty Burrell as Rich, a figure from the siblings' past. For all of the secrets that Maggie and Milo have been keeping, at least they're trying to be true to themselves, but Rich has been living the



kind of lie that destroys lives. Burrell serves up a subtle performance sure to evade award recognition, but it's the messy core of this deceptively tidy film. Highly recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Southern Baptist Sissies ★★★

Breaking Glass, 139 min., not rated, DVD: \$21.99

Del Shores wrote and directed this popular play, filmed here before a live audience. The story begins in a church where a preacher (Newell Alexander) rails against homosexuality as Mark (Emerson Collins), a gay parishioner, imagines possible responses. As Mark tells the audience, he grew up in Texas as the son of a deacon. At Calvary Christian, Mark meets three other "sissies" like himself: Andrew (Matthew Scott Montgomery), Benny (William Belli), and T.J. (Luke Stratte-McClure), who follow him in sharing stories and recreating moments from their youth. When they were teenagers, Mark fell for T.J., but T.J. rejected him and renounced homosexuality. Benny, a drag performer, just wants to live life on his own terms, while Andrew is trying to reconcile his faith with his desires. Shores punctuates the narrative with conversations between mothers and sons, and mothers and the preacher. Serving as a sort of tragicomic Greek chorus, Dale Dickey and Leslie Jordan play Odette and Preston (aka "Peanut"), two former Southern Baptists who drink, smoke, and add their stories to the mix. "How did we end up like this," Peanut wonders at one point, "old, drunk, and pitiful"? (At times, Dickey and Jordan break themselves up, but this works more often than not.) Themes that bind the observations and recollections together include shame, insecurity, and denial, although the wisecracks and some musical sequences prevent the proceedings from wallowing in the dark for too long. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)



Space Station 76 ★★

Sony, 95 min., R, DVD: \$26.99

A retro-futuristic farce set in the 1970s, the melodramatic plot here—think: "lust in space"—unspools aboard an interplanetary space station called Omega 76, where newly-appointed assistant captain Jessica Marlowe (Liv Tyler) has just arrived. While attempting to work with brazenly chauvinistic captain Glenn (Patrick Wilson), she discovers that he was besotted with her predecessor (who departed under mysterious circumstances). Also aboard are self-absorbed, pill-popping Misty (Marisa Coughlan) and her neglected daughter, Sunshine (Kylie Rogers), whose father is Ted (Matt Bomer), a frustrated, pot-smoking engineer with a pros-



thetic hand. And there's new mother Donna (Kali Rocha), who is coping with an infant, while husband Steve (Jerry O'Connell) is having an affair with Misty. Unfortunately, little of this is actually funny, despite (or perhaps because of) the efforts of five screenwriters, although director Jack Plotnick does elicit solid performances from the experienced ensemble. Sci-fi junkies will spot Keir Dullea (2001: A Space Odyssey) in a cameo and *Star Wars* fans will recognize an R2D2-like psycho-babbling droid that dispenses Valium, but aside from genre diehards, few are likely to appreciate this misfire. Not a necessary purchase. (S. Granger)

The Strange Color of Your Body's Tears ★1/2

Strand, 102 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Blu-ray: \$32.99

Sometimes homage degenerates into parody, which is what happens in this wildly flamboyant attempt by Belgian-based directors Hélène Cattet and Bruno Forzani to replicate the tone of the Italian giallo films from visionaries such as Dario Argento. The nominal plot revolves around attempts made by a man named Dan (Klaus Tange) to discover how and why his beautiful wife Edwige (Ursula Bedena) disappeared from their locked apartment while he was away on a business trip, but anyone trying to follow along will need an advanced degree in garish surrealism. The directors' apparent purpose is simply to ratchet up the giallo style to previously unimaginable levels, employing quick cuts (with knives and pieces of glass as well as editing machines), split screens, sudden splashes of color, and weirdly suggestive inserts in such profusion that the viewer will likely grow numbed by all the visual hubbub. Genre fans might get a rush, but this actually does a disservice to the giallo classics that admittedly sported lurid and ridiculous plots but still ultimately made sense in an absurd way (while also serving up visual acrobatics that sported a cultivated touch). The moral here is that ostentatiously mimicking something is not the same as celebrating it. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)



Summer of Blood ★★1/2

MPI, 86 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.98

Onur Tukel, the painter-filmmaker who wrote, directed, and starred in this low-budget comedy, is a sort of laidback version of Woody Allen, an articulate neurotic who is utterly self-centered, inevitably seeing every situation (even tragedies befalling others) in terms of the effect it will have on him. The first half of *Summer of Blood*—in which Erik Sparrow (Tukel) not only breaks up with his



longtime girlfriend when she proposes (and then immediately regrets the decision after his attempts to date other women crash and burn), but also suffers through his dull work routine—is very amusing, thanks to Tukel's deadpan portrayal of an obnoxious ass. But it oddly becomes much less interesting after Erik is bitten by a vampire and becomes a member of the undead. It's not just that the "vampire comedy" genre is overcrowded (and frankly anemic), but following the bite, the film never really manages to come to life again. The ironic twist (only in the undead state can Erik really care about other people) doesn't gain traction, and the ending is both flat and pretty tasteless. Optional. (F. Swietek)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles ★★

Paramount, 101 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.99



Big Hollywood spectacle filmmaker Michael Bay here reboots the titular long-running franchise centering on heroic anthropomorphic turtles skilled in the martial arts, which started out as an underground comic and morphed into a worldwide phenomenon. Mixing CGI and live-action, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* once again tells the origins story of a quartet of wise-cracking terrapins named after artists, who are raised in the New York sewers by Splinter, a rat serving as their sensei, and wind up battling against a ninja-themed crime syndicate led by the gruesome Shredder—a malcontent in league with a villainous scientist. The plot is obviously inane, but more problematic is the level of violence here, which is more suitable to an R-rated action flick (the constant stream of jocular bickering among the turtles while they're performing gymnastic moves and engaging in swordplay doesn't mitigate the carnage). As in any Bay film, the effects are cutting-edge and seamlessly integrated into the live-action footage, but the overall result has little value other than as a technical exercise. Featuring Megan Fox, Will Arnett, and Whoopi Goldberg, the loud, frenetic, and exhausting *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is too nasty for younger children, but audiences went cowabunga in theaters—underscoring Bay's belief that you will never go broke banking on the childish mentality of the modern movie-going public. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)

This Is Where I Leave You ★★

Warner, 103 min., R, DVD: \$28.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$35.99



Boasting a star-studded cast, this dysfunctional family dramedy finds adult siblings forcibly being reunited to mourn

their recently deceased father, leading—predictably—to old tensions flaring up amidst rampant regrets. Shortly after Judd Altman (Jason Bateman) discovers his wife (Abigail Spencer) in bed with his boss (Dax Shepard), he's informed that his father has died and he's expected to sit shiva (the Jewish tradition of observing a seven-day period of grieving) at their home in Westchester County, NY. Trying to hide his own problems, Judd finds himself embroiled with his sister-in-law (Kathryn Hahn), who is married to his older brother (Corey Stoll) and desperately trying to get pregnant. Meanwhile, his stoner younger brother (Adam Driver) shows up with a much-older girlfriend (Connie Britton), who looks startlingly like Hilary (Jane Fonda), the family's WASP-y matriarch, a renowned child psychologist. Judd's only confidante is his bossy sister (Tina Fey), who is still guiltily conflicted about her past relationship with a brain-injured neighbor (Timothy Olyphant). And to compound Judd's melancholic confusion, he is suddenly confronted with the romantic availability of a former flame (Rose Byrne). Adapted by Jonathan Tropper from his fine and rueful bestselling novel, the film version as directed by Shawn Levy struggles to rise above a sitcom full of sappy stereotypes. An optional purchase. (S. Granger)

To Be Takei ★★

Anchor Bay, 93 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.98, Jan. 6



Jennifer Kroot's upbeat docu-portrait takes viewers on an enjoyable ride alongside supporting actor George Takei, aka Lt. Sulu, navigator of the Federation starship *Enterprise* in the classic 1960s sci-fi series *Star Trek*. Takei's off-screen life has warp-speeded him to the forefront of activism; after long being coy about his sexuality, Takei finally declared himself openly gay and in a long-term relationship. As a Japanese-American boy in the wake of Pearl Harbor, Takei was imprisoned, alongside thousands of other Japanese-Americans citizens, in the notorious U.S. government internment camps of the 1940s. As an Asiatic actor in the Hollywood of yesteryear, he had to take on roles that were often demeaning stereotypes—the capable crew member Sulu being an exception that made him a hero to many ethnic viewers. Kroot presents the multi-faceted, humorous, ever-optimistic Takei as he campaigns for homosexual rights (offering his own name as a euphemism for "gay" in Bible Belt territories), appears regularly on shock-jock Howard Stern's show, helps launch a stage musical about the internment camps, and gets to "roast" sci-fi icon William Shatner, portrayed unflatteringly in Takei's published memoirs (Shatner himself claims he barely knows the man). Also featuring Leonard Nimoy, Nichelle Nichols, and Walter Koenig,

this crowd-pleasing film is recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Touch of the Light ★★

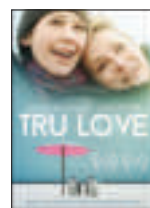
Well Go USA, 110 min., in Mandarin w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.98



Real-life blind pianist Huang Yu-siang plays himself in this biopic, Taiwan's entry in the 2012 Academy Award competition for Best Foreign Language Film. *Touch of the Light* follows Huang's journey from a rural village to a Taipei university, where he enrolls to study music. Despite the fretting of his overprotective mother, Huang settles into the new environment, gaining the friendship of a wacky roommate and the love of aspiring dancer Xiao Jie (Sandrine Pinna). Their romance and respective creative goals inevitably drive the story to a piano recital climax for Huang, while also charting Jie's efforts to achieve her dance dreams. While Huang gives a credible performance and Pinna offers a star quality turn, the film feels formulaic despite being fact-based, and the love story is ridiculously chaste for a current feature film. Optional. (P. Hall)

Tru Love ★★★

Wolfe, 87 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95



A complicated romance is at the center of co-director Kate Johnston's *Tru Love*, a lesbian love story about a 37-year-old commitment-phobe named Tru (co-director Shauna MacDonald) who falls for Alice (Kate Trotter), a 60-year-old mother of a woman named Suzanne (Christine Horne), with whom Tru shared a one-night stand. The cross-currents of conflicted emotion are strong here as recent widow Alice, who is visiting busy corporate lawyer Suzanne, befriends the sexually restless Tru and finds herself drawn to the younger woman. An appalled Suzanne puts up obstacles to this new relationship, in part due to her own confusion about the night she spent with Tru. But love manages to find a way and the entire experience proves liberating for each of the characters. *Tru Love's* strength lies in its trio of key performances, led by Trotter's glowing turn as a woman haunted by her late husband's memory who unexpectedly discovers another part of herself. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Unauthorized Saved by the Bell Story ★★

Lionsgate, 90 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.98

This extremely corny Lifetime-aided look behind-the-scenes of the 1989-93 campy teen sitcom *Saved by the Bell* is executive produced by (obviously still bitter) former child actor Dustin Diamond, who was featured on the series as nerdy group scapegoat

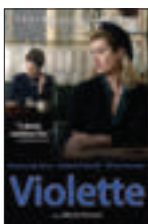
"Screech." Looking at the show's origins—it actually started off as a comedy vehicle for Hayley Mills as the titular teacher on the original show *Good Morning, Miss Bliss*—this TV movie touches on cast interactions and adjustments to fame, but heavily focuses on Diamond's (Sam Kindseth) whiny point-of-view. Coming from someone who as a 7-year-old religiously watched the series, I can say with authority that even back then no one gave a glittery neon leg-warmer about Screech; it was all about hunks Mark-Paul Gosselaar (here played by Dylan Everett) and Mario Lopez (Julian Works). Jabs at former costars (Elizabeth Berkley's starring role as a stripper in *Showgirls* is, of course, snidely mentioned) get boring quickly. Overall, *SBTB* superfans (and who else would watch this?) learn nothing new, although the soundtrack featuring period staples such as Bell Biv DeVoe and Sir Mix-a-Lot is pretty fresh. Not a necessary purchase. (J. Williams-Wood)



Violette ★★1/2

Adopt, 138 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95

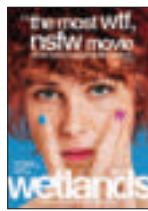
Violette Leduc was an acclaimed and controversial French author who, encouraged by Simone de Beauvoir, began writing after WWII, earning the respect of such literary greats as Jean Genet and Jean-Paul Sartre for her frank and vivid memoirs. Emmanuelle Devos plays the author in Martin Provost's *Violette*, which begins during the Nazi occupation and follows Leduc for two decades up through her breakthrough success with the bestselling *La Bâtarde*. Violette pours her emotions and experiences out on the page at the urging of de Beauvoir (Sandrine Kiberlain), who championed Violette's work, introduced her to a literary circle, and at times even supported her financially. Like Provost's earlier *Seraphine*, this handsome biographical drama takes on a revered but troubled French artist who came out of poverty and neglect to rise to fame. *Violette*, however, is more about the writer's mother issues, anxieties over money, obsessive crushes, and fear of being unwanted and undesirable than about her art or inspiration. On the one hand, Provost name-drops literary greats in post-World War II Paris without exploring their work or their creative influences on Violette, but he also recreates the culture of post-war Paris with great texture and coaxes superb performances from both Devos and Kiberlain. Still, apart from speeches delivered by de Beauvoir, *Violette* never quite gets to the heart of why Leduc was such an important voice in her generation. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



Wetlands ★★★

Strand, 109 min., in German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99, Blu-ray: \$32.99, Jan. 13

Based on Charlotte Roche's bestselling 2008 novel, German director David Wnendt's *Wetlands* puts a feminist spin on the gross-out comedy in a story that centers on 18-year-old sensation junkie Helen (the truly fearless Carla Juri), whose divorced mother (Meret Becker) taught her to keep her body scrupulously clean. Flashbacks contrast the behavior of her fastidious mother with that of her hedonistic father (Axel Milberg). In Helen's opening narration, she sets the tone, "For as long as I can remember, I've had hemorrhoids," a condition that will lead to greater problems later. She also sexually experiments with vegetables and rubs her posterior on public toilet seats; in fact, when it comes to her private parts, there isn't anything Helen won't try. Her best friend, Corinna (Marlen Kruse), also engages in unusual sexual practices, although Wnendt keeps the tone light by way of a playful soundtrack and animated sequences. But for all of Helen's rebelliousness, the skateboarding punk-rock is still a kid at heart who longs for her parents to get back together, failing to see that the two have nothing in common. When she injures herself shaving a delicate area, Helen ends up in the hospital, where she befriends Robin (Christoph Letkowski), a nurse who finds her more entertaining than his uptight girlfriend. The sexually-explicit *Wetlands* is not an easy film to watch, but this is a strikingly original and bold movie and is therefore recommended for more adventurous collections. (K. Fennessy)



What Is Cinema? ★★★

Cohen, 80 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98

Documentary filmmaker Chuck Workman is best known for his clip reels and lovely montage sequences featured at the Academy Awards broadcasts. His feature documentary *What Is Cinema?*, which takes its name from a seminal work of film theory written by Andre Bazin, is as much essay as film history. Not surprisingly, there is no one answer to the question in this exploration of the many forms that cinema can take and the different approaches adopted by filmmakers. Workman interviews directors such as David Lynch, Mike Leigh, Costa-Gavras, Kelly Reichardt, and Jonas Mekas, and features clips from over 100 works by auteurs ranging from Alfred Hitchcock and Akira Kurosawa to Chantal Akerman and Bill Viola, putting documentary, avant-garde, and experimental filmmaking on an equal footing with Hollywood classics, independent film, and foreign



cinema. The film's strength is Workman's talent for bringing in a great breadth of clips across genres, countries, and styles to illustrate ideas and examples offered by his commentators. This idiosyncratic production is too short to be comprehensive, serving as an introduction rather than a film primer or a history lesson, but it's ultimately a loving celebration of the possibilities of cinema and the creative contributions of directors in all genres. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Whiplash ★★★

Sony, 107 min., R, DVD: \$30.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99, Feb. 3

Writer-director Damien Chazelle draws on his memories as a music student to create this compelling coming-of-age drama about a prodigy with the ambition of becoming a celebrated jazz drummer, the next Buddy Rich or Gene Krupa. Nineteen-year-old Andrew (Miles Teller) is a first-year student at a prestigious Manhattan musical conservatory. Obsessively driven to succeed, partly due to his ineffectual father's (Paul Reiser) failed writing career, Andrew impresses everyone, particularly embittered instructor Terence Fletcher (J.K. Simmons), whose abortive career has made him resentful of kids with potential. Fletcher is an impatient, sadistic perfectionist who not only bullies and belittles his pupils but also pits them against one another in ruthless competitions for places in the elite jazz band. So Andrew must contend with both a fellow newcomer (Austin Stowell) and an upperclassman (Nate Lang), while Fletcher cruelly accuses him of being a "retard," "pansy ass" and "tonal catastrophe." Citing tough love, sociopathic Fletcher's excuse is that his job is "to push people beyond what was expected of them." Succumbing to Fletcher's monstrous imperatives, Andrew relinquishes all semblance of a normal life. Likeable Teller makes a career leap here, while veteran character actor J.K. Simmons delivers a flawless, award-winning performance. Abusive yet electrifying, *Whiplash* is an absorbing tale of artistic sacrifice. Recommended. (S. Granger)



White Bird in a Blizzard ★★★

Magnolia, 91 min., R, DVD: \$26.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98, Jan. 20

For those tuned in to his unique wavelength, every Gregg Araki film (including *The Doom Generation* and *Mysterious Skin*) has its pleasures. Despite some tonal inconsistencies, *White Bird in a Blizzard*, based on Laura Kasischke's novel, is no exception. In her third adapted film of 2014, after *Divergent* and *The Fault in Our Stars*, Shailene Woodley plays Kat, a suburban teenager with a malapropism-



Breaking Glass Pictures Presents A World of Independent Films



\$19.99 SRP
AVAILABLE JANUARY 13TH

21 YEARS: RICHARD LINKLATER

A look at the creative mind behind the critically acclaimed *Boyhood*.

It's been said that the first 21 years defines the career of an artist. Few directors have single-handedly shaken up the film establishment like the godfather of indie, Richard Linklater. From the groundbreaking *SLACKER* to his innovative *BOYHOOD*, Linklater has just reached the 21-year mark and has unapologetically carved his signature into American pop culture. This compelling documentary takes you on a behind the scenes tour into Linklater's style, skills, and motivation via his friends, actors, and other directors.

FEATURING
MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY, ZAC EFRON
JACK BLACK, KEANU REEVES, KEVIN SMITH
ETHAN HAWKE, BILLY BOB THORNTON, JULIE DELPY

"...great clips and good insight... as loose and cool as an Austin night out."
-New York Daily News

Fresh African-American Dramas with an Edge



AVAILABLE
FEB. 17TH
\$24.99 SRP

Vanessa Simmons ("Project Runway: Threads") plays Alexis Burns, a naïve entertainment reporter living in Hollywood. Things become chaotic when she is assigned to produce a special segment exposing the decadent lifestyles of her celebrity friends.



NOW
AVAILABLE
\$24.99 SRP

The Skinny is a sharply scripted comedy about a group of four young black gay men and their lesbian best friend. They arrange to meet up in New York City one year after their graduation from Brown University.



NOW
AVAILABLE
\$24.99 SRP

Eric, Alexis, Cullen and Janae are all single and unsatisfied living their monochromatic lives. The contentious, first time meeting between on-line chat buddies, Eric and Alexis, brings about a torrent of emotion as they all meet up for a night on the town.

Visit us at bgpics.com

spouting boyfriend (Shilo Fernandez). One day, her mother, Eve (Eva Green), disappears without a trace. Her devastated father, Brock (Christopher Meloni), contacts a detective (Thomas Jane), with whom Kat has a fling, but Eve remains lost and Kat goes off to college. Flashbacks, meanwhile, reveal Kat's mother to be a woman jealous of her daughter and resentful of her husband. It's an intriguing setup, and Araki has fun with the 1988–1990 timeline—Joy Division posters, This Mortal Coil T-shirts, etc.—but Green is only 11 years older than Woodley, so she struggles to bring the deeply felt mature performance the film needs to put it over the top, often acting as if she's on the set of a period melodrama, while everyone else comes across more realistically, although Araki may have made that choice to emphasize her alienation. Well worth watching for Woodley's turn as a self-obsessed young woman with more in common with her mother than she would care to admit, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

The Wind Rises ★★½

Walt Disney, 127 min., in Japanese w/English subtitles and English-dubbed, PG-13, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$36.99



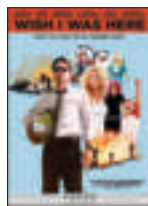
Hayao Miyazaki, director of such magical and imaginative animated features as *Princess Mononoke* and the Oscar-winning *Spirited Away* is arguably Japan's most beloved filmmaker. The Oscar-nominated *The Wind Rises* is his swan song, a personal project inspired by the true story of idealistic engineer Jiro Horikoshi, an aviation pioneer who dreamed of making "beautiful airplanes" but was instead instructed to build a warplane, eventually creating the Zero for use in World War II. Through Jiro, who comes of age in 1920s Japan, viewers experience the 1923 earthquake, the great Tokyo fire, and the crippling depression, as well as the growing militarism that takes hold of the country and the culture (at one point, pacifist Jiro comes close to becoming a victim of Japan's version of the Communist witch-hunt). *The Wind Rises* was both celebrated and criticized in Japan, where some accused the film of whitewashing the militarism that sent the country into World War II. Miyazaki does in fact address the strident militarism here, albeit with a tone of regret and resignation. A modern landmark of hand-drawn animation in an era of computer-animated features, the English dub here features the voices of Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Emily Blunt. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Wish I Was Here ★½

Universal, 107 min., R, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.98

Zach Braff's long-awaited follow-up to his well-received debut *Garden State* starts with bad grammar in the title and goes downhill

from there, ending up as an anemic sitcom leavened with heavy-handed mawkishness. Braff stars as Aidan, a wannabe actor who can barely land an audition but won't give up his dream. His wife (Kate Hudson) is the family breadwinner, and he depends on his father, Gabe (Mandy Patinkin), to finance private yeshiva instruction for their kids. When Gabe falls ill and can no longer foot the tuition tab, Aidan begins homeschooling his son and daughter, although he's singularly ill-equipped for the task. Aidan is also trying to get his reclusive brother, Noah (Josh Gad), to visit Gabe, while also endlessly daydreaming about when he was a kid and imagined himself as a courageous space knight fighting all sorts of evil creatures. Aidan is obviously meant to be a charming, if hapless, schlub, but as played by Braff he comes across as a narcissistic jerk. Braff makes himself the absolute center of this cinematic universe but is incapable of coming up with anything beyond tired gags about swear jars, video games, Comic-Cons, first dates, and test drives in expensive cars. Ultimately, *Wish I Was Here* will make you wish you weren't. Not recommended. (F. Swietek)



Xingu ★★½

Breaking Glass, 103 min., in Portuguese w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$21.99



From the producers of the gripping Brazilian favela drama *City of God* comes this fine historical drama about the Villas-Bôas brothers' quest to protect and preserve the native Indian tribes of Brazil's remote Amazon Rainforest. Set in the early 1940s, *Xingu* centers on the movement known as the "march to the West," which saw white explorers traversing previously untouched parts of the Amazon and confronting the indigenous peoples for the first time. But, as director Cao Hamburger's convincing portrait of the work of the Villas-Bôas brothers—Orlando (Felipe Camarago), Cláudio (João Miguel), and Leonardo (Caio Blat)—illustrates, it's one thing to befriend the indigenous natives, but quite another to keep them free from the damaging influence of civilization. After an initially tense confrontation with the Indian tribes, the Villas-Bôas expedition quickly runs into trouble: no sooner does one of the members catch the flu than an epidemic outbreak occurs among the Indian tribes, eventually taking the life of the tribal leader. Eventually (and inevitably), powerful white property developers get wind of the potentially valuable land that the Indians possess, and soon after there are "mysterious" mass killings of indigenous tribesmen and women. The Villas-Bôas brothers then become determined to carve out a

reservation of sorts for the native Indians. By turns harrowing and inspiring, the story of the Villas-Bôas and their fight to save the native South American Indians is told with a bracingly gritty elegance and humanistic touch. Highly recommended. (M. Sandlin)

You and the Night (Les Rencontres d'après minuit) ★½

Strand, 98 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$24.99



Nice to know that even in these self-consciously postmodern times the French film industry is still capable of making ultra-pretentious "art films" without a shred of irony (unless that is the irony). Writer-director Yann Gonzalez, an acclaimed maker of short subjects, graduates to features with this film inspired by the (mostly lost) work of 1920s writer-scenester Mireille Havet. The setting is a spartan, futuristic apartment that is tenanted by people who we eventually learn comprise a virtually immortal ménage-à-trois, consisting of lovers Ali (Kate Moran) and Matthias (Niels Schneider) and their transgender "maid" (Nicolas Maury)—a "gypsy" sorcerer who cast a spell that keeps them ageless as long as they are devoted to unrestrained passion together. Tonight, the three have called for an "orgy," summoning archetypes for play: "the Stud," "the Slut," "the Star," "the Teen," and the Professor and Mary Ann (just kidding about the last two). Little actual sex transpires; mostly instead we have weird conversations, surreal flashbacks, and romantic angsting. Sample dialogue such as "stab me with your pork sword" might indicate satirical intent, but sadly the joke is chiefly on the viewer. Not recommended. (C. Cassidy)

The Zero Theorem

★★½

Well Go USA, 111 min., R, DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.98, Jan. 20



According to filmmaker Terry Gilliam, this facetious sci-fi fantasy completes the dystopian trilogy that began with *Brazil* (1985) and was followed by *12 Monkeys* (1995). *The Zero Theorem* is set in an unspecified future London where corporate computers run everyone's lives. Reclusive Qohen (Christoph Waltz)—pronounced "koen"—crunches "entities" for Mancom, a technology company. A diligent yet depressed neurotic who refers to himself as "we," Qohen dislikes toiling in an office. Instead, he'd rather stay in the cluttered, burnt-out, baroque church that he calls home, much to the chagrin of his supervisor (David Thewlis). Management (Matt Damon) cryptically agrees to allow Qohen to work wherever he wants—under one condition: that he solve an arcane mathematical formula

called the Zero Theorem, which postulates that everything adds up to nothing (but zero must equal 100%). Perpetually waiting for a phone call from a higher power that will explain the meaning of life, Qohen's endeavors are interrupted by a digital psychiatrist (Tilda Swinton), a seductive coquette (Mélanie Thierry), Management's nerdy son (Lucas Hedges), and two henchmen known as the Clones (Emil Hostina, Pavlic Nemes). Former *Monty Python* animator Gilliam is obsessed with dazzling imagery, while screenwriter Pat Rushin borrows elements from *Waiting for Godot*, *Blade Runner*, *Ecclesiastes* and Franz Kafka's existentialism. The complexity here is superficial, but the steampunk look is pure eye-candy. A strong optional purchase. (S. Granger)

Classic Films

Billion Dollar Brain ★★

Kino Lorber, 111 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

The third and final entry in the 1960s spy film series starring Michael Caine as British MI-5 agent Harry Palmer brings the retired operative back into service after he's hired to deliver a sealed container from England to Helsinki and ends up entangled with: rogue American agent Leo Newbigen (Karl Malden), Col. Stok (Oskar Homolka)—a wily Soviet intelligence officer with a fondness for Harry—and General Midwinter (Ed Begley), a fanatical American oil tycoon who is plotting a conspiracy to destroy the Soviet empire. Where the first two movies eschewed James Bond-like gadgets and grandiosity for a less glamorous portrait of Cold War espionage, this 1967 production—drawn from the same-titled novel by Len Deighton—presents a flamboyant supervillain in Midwinter, a supercomputer that is the size of a football field (the *Billion Dollar Brain* of the title), and a small army launching a secret invasion. Director Ken Russell delivers a lively picture with a satirical edge, but sadly minus the spectacle or ingenuity of a Bond adventure (plus the globetrotting story is at odds with the more realistic sensibility of the source material). Françoise Dorléac (Catherine Deneuve's older sister, appearing in her last role before her tragic death in a car accident) costars as femme fatale Anya. Caine reprised the role of Harry Palmer in a pair of cable features in the 1990s, but this was the final theatrical work in the franchise. Previously released on DVD, *Billion Dollar Brain* has been remastered for DVD and its Blu-ray debut. Optional. (S. Axmayer)

Bloody Mama ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 95 min., R, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Roger Corman, the filmmaker and pro-

ducer often called the "King of the B-movies," directed this 1970 Depression-era gangster flick in the wake of *Bonnie and Clyde*, when rural outlaws and folk anti-heroes were suddenly in vogue. "Any similarity to Kate Barker and her sons is intentional," reads the introductory note—although this portrait takes liberties with history. Shelley Winters delivers a big, broad, blowsy performance as "Ma" Barker, a white-trash matriarch who dotes on her four delinquent boys and abandons her weak husband to lead them on a crime spree. Don Stroud plays oldest son Herman, a sadistic bully, and Robert De Niro costars as younger offspring Lloyd, an idiot junkie with an almost perpetual dazed grin (Robert Walden and Clint Kimbrough round out the quartet as Fred and Arthur Barker, respectively). This is 1970s-style exploitation, with violence and nudity played for spectacle; but Corman also brings a psychological edge and a sexual perversity to the material (Ma isn't averse to incestuous relationships). The period detail is all done on a budget, with a few vintage cars for the robbery and getaway scenes, and the filming makes use of on-location towns and banks. Winters dominates the film, which is both sleazy and fascinating, and one of the more interesting gangster pictures of its era. Costars include Pat Hingle (as a kidnap victim), Bruce Dern (who joins the gang), and Diane Varsi (as Herman's hooker friend). Remastered for DVD and its Blu-ray debut, extras include an archival interview with Corman. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari ★★

Kino Lorber, 77 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

A landmark of German expressionist cinema and arguably the first true horror movie, Robert Weine's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) was one of the most important films of its time, influencing a generation of filmmakers, including Fritz Lang. Werner Krauss stars as the tyrannical title figure, a carnival sideshow barker in cape and top hat who commands the sleeping Cesare (Conrad Veidt), the main attraction, to rise at night and do his bidding—turning Cesare into a literal sleepwalker who is both monster and victim. With his painterly sets of jutting beams, leaning walls, and heavy black lines, director Weine pulled audiences into an aggressively unreal world of theatrical artificiality, presented as a vision of madness and horror through images so vivid that they are still referenced today. Previous editions have suffered from damaged footage, missing frames, and inferior source material; but the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation



undertook a comprehensive digital restoration, using the original camera negative as the primary source (earlier releases were struck from archival prints). The success of the two-year effort is visible in every frame here, restoring the work to its complete, uncut form and featuring unprecedented clarity, stability, and detail. Released on DVD and Blu-ray, extras include the retrospective documentary *Caligari: How Horror Came to Cinema*, an additional musical score (by Paul D. Miller, aka DJ Spooky), and a booklet. Offering the definitive edition of a genre classic, this is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Axmayer)

The Complete Jacques Tati ★★

Criterion, 600 min., in French w/English subtitles, DVD: 12 discs, \$124.95; Blu-ray: 7 discs, \$124.95

The films of the great French actor/filmmaker/stage star Jacques Tati (1907-1982) are notable for their celebrations of silent comedy and pantomime. This boxed set gathers all six features that Tati directed and starred in, as well as seven shorts that he wrote and/or directed, in new digital restorations. Two make their disc debut here: his first movie, *Jour de Fête* (1949), with Tati playing a small-town postman who's inspired to "modernize" his delivery methods; and his final offering, *Parade* (1974), a celebration of circus performers (with Tati as ringmaster) made for Swedish television. In between are his four masterpieces, starting with *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday* (1953), which introduces Tati's gangly signature character in an affectionate, gently satirical slapstick piece set at a beach resort where the cheerfully oblivious bachelor leaves minor disasters in his wake. *Mon Oncle* (1958) drops the distracted gentleman into the modern world of empty consumerism, social status, and electronic gadgets that take on a life of their own. *Playtime* (1967) sends Hulot into Paris, re-imagined by Tati as an impersonal modern city of steel and glass where the streets are packed with commuters, buses, and pedestrians; it's a sublime celebration of individualism in the alienated landscape of urban life. *Traffic* (1971) is built around an automobile show and a new car-camper designed by Hulot with oddball accessories right out of a cartoon. Throughout, Tati's warm humor and inventive comic style transcend the language barrier in these films that will appeal to all ages. Although Criterion previously released *Playtime* on Blu-ray, the rest make their Blu-ray debuts in this boxed set, which is also available on DVD. In addition to alternate versions of three of the films (all created by Tati), extras include archival documentaries on Tati and his movies, new and archival interviews,



visual essays, and a booklet. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. *Axmaker*)

Cotton Comes to Harlem

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 97 min., R, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Esteemed stage and screen actor and famed civil rights leader Ossie Davis made his directorial debut with this 1970 adaptation of Chester Himes's crime novel. Godfrey Cambridge is the wisecracking "Gravedigger Jones" and Raymond St. Jacques plays the more serious "Coffin Ed," tough Harlem police detective partners who go after a black con-man preacher (Calvin Lockhart) and the white gunmen who robbed him of the \$87,000 he had collected for his phony "Back to Africa" movement. Nightclub comic Redd Foxx has a small but central role as Uncle Budd, the neighborhood scrounger who finds the bale of cotton where the stolen cash was stashed. Coffin Ed and Gravedigger Jones were the first black cop buddy team in the movies and they play the kind of tough, rule-breaking mavericks that was standard for depiction of white cops at the time. Davis, who was one of the first African-American filmmakers to direct a Hollywood studio film, updates the original story from the '50s to the era of black power and black pride of the late '60s, shooting the film on the streets of Harlem, which lends it a gritty yet also colorful sense of place. Unfortunately, the film slips into familiar clichés and stereotypes along the way and Davis plays it more for comedy than urban action. A sometimes confusing crime caper free-for-all that is largely sustained by Cambridge and St. Jacques, who give their characters personalities and passions absent in the script, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. *Axmaker*)

The Death Kiss ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 71 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Bela Lugosi reunited with two of his *Dracula* costars, David Manners and Edward Van Sloan, in this 1932 low-budget production, but instead of a horror movie, *The Death Kiss* is a murder mystery set in a film studio. The opening scene is particularly clever: a killing in a nightclub turns out to be a scene being shot on a soundstage, but the "victim" is, in fact, dead—murdered in plain sight before the entire company. Lugosi has a supporting role as studio manager Joseph Steiner, who tries to keep a lid on the news before a scandal threatens the teetering fortunes of the struggling studio, while Manners takes the lead as Franklyn Drew, a junior screenwriter turned amateur sleuth, outthinking the slow-witted detective assigned to the case. Lugosi appears in only a few scenes, as does Van Sloan, who plays

director Tom Avery, and both become prime suspects in the investigation. As a mystery, *The Death Kiss* plays it purely by the numbers, and Edwin L. Marin's direction is basically functional; but the behind-the-scenes angle is unique, and the gimmick of hand-painted color for gunfire flashes and other select effects bring some added novelty. A minor but entertaining cult movie, this has been handsomely remastered for DVD and Blu-ray from an archival print preserved by the Library of Congress, with extras including an audio commentary by film historian Richard Harland Smith. A strong optional purchase. (S. *Axmaker*)

Desperately Seeking Susan ★★★

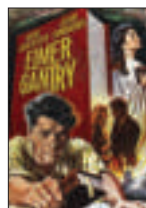
Kino Lorber, 104 min., PG-13, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Memorable for giving Madonna her first starring role—as Susan, a free spirit dressed in thrift-store-chic fashions who connects with her musician boyfriend through personal ads in the local weekly papers—this modern bohemian take on the classic screwball comedy (complete with amnesia, mistaken identity, and stolen treasure treated as secondhand jewelry) also offers a great time capsule of 1980s New York. Rosanna Arquette made her breakthrough here as Roberta Glass, a suburban romantic in an unfulfilling marriage who loses her memory and ends up falling in love with a handsome young movie projectionist named Dez (Aidan Quinn), who thinks that she's Susan. Director Susan Seidelman had been an indie filmmaker in New York when she was offered the film, and she injected it with a lively Greenwich Village street culture and a supporting cast of distinctive local performers not yet known to the rest of America, including John Turturro, Giancarlo Esposito, Ann Magnuson, and Richard Edson. Madonna was not a superstar when shooting began but was a hit recording artist by the time the film bowed in 1985, and the soundtrack features her classic song "Into the Groove." Thirty years later, *Desperately Seeking Susan* is still colorful, buoyant, and full of personality. Re-released on DVD and bowing on Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by director Seidelman and the producers, and an alternate ending. Recommended. (S. *Axmaker*)

Elmer Gantry ★★★

Kino Lorber, 146 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Burt Lancaster won his only Oscar for his 1960 performance as the wide-smiling, glad-handing, soul-saving charlatan Elmer Gantry, a salesman who turns his gift for preaching into a career

behind the pulpit. Climbing aboard the barnstorming evangelical tour of revivalist Sister Sharon Falconer (Jean Simmons), a true believer (in the Aimee Semple McPherson mold), Gantry declaims, invokes, and sermonizes his way to the top until Lulu Bains (Oscar-winner Shirley Jones), a former flame turned prostitute, threatens to reveal his dark past as a womanizer and a con-man. Lancaster harnesses all of his physical vigor and natural charisma for this role, literally throwing himself into his preaching with the sinuous quality of an acrobat and the sing-song delivery of a gospel singer—even braying like a hound to illustrate the Holy Spirit within him. Gantry is a showman, pure and simple, and while he doesn't fool Sister Sharon, he does give her a few object lessons on playing the crowd. Director Richard Brooks, who also took home an Oscar for his screenplay (adapted from the novel by Sinclair Lewis), creates a rousing drama and provides fine roles for an excellent supporting cast that includes Arthur Kennedy, Dean Jagger, John McIntire, and singer Patti Page. Previously available on DVD, *Elmer Gantry* has been remastered for DVD and a Blu-ray debut. Extras include an interview with Jones. Recommended. (S. *Axmaker*)

Eraserhead ★★★

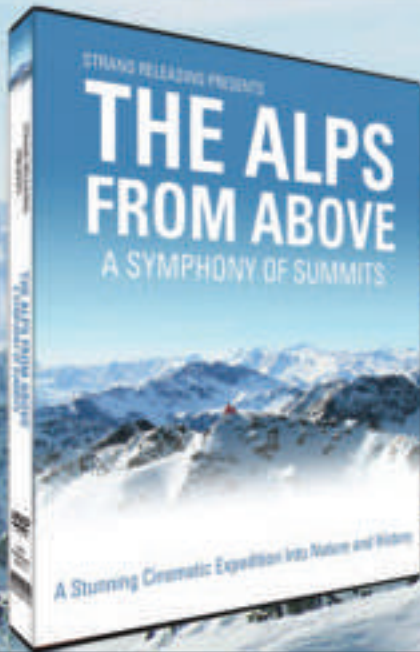
Criterion, 89 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



David Lynch's 1977 feature debut is an utterly unconventional and haunting tale about a dim, doughy factory worker named Henry Spencer (Jack Nance), who is suddenly thrust into marriage and parenthood when his girlfriend, Mary X (Charlotte Stewart), becomes pregnant. After Mary gives birth to a mutated baby that mews and cries without stop, her maternal impulses evaporate and she abandons both husband and child. Meanwhile, the dazed Henry escapes from his bleak and grimy life via dreams and possible hallucinations involving the infant and a woman called the Lady in the Radiator (Laurel Near). One shouldn't expect explanations from Lynch—whose films are more of an experience than a story. There was nothing like *Eraserhead* when it debuted, and it quickly became the quintessential midnight movie. Seen today, it plays like pure, primordial Lynch, with alienated characters stuck in a nightmarish world of industrial slums, all set to a soundtrack of grinding noise. But strange as it seems, Lynch still manages to create a bizarre kind of beauty out of the ugliness, and it was on the strength of his vision here that he was hired to direct *The Elephant Man*. While obviously not for everyone, this provocative black-and-white film remains a cult classic. Lynch personally supervised the remastering for Criterion's DVD and Blu-ray editions, which also feature restorations of

Strand Releasing Proudly Presents

The motion-stabilized Cineflex camera brings razor sharp aerial close-ups and breathtaking panoramic images to life. Filmed exclusively with aerial shots, this unique cinematic expedition from the peaks of Mont Blanc to the Dolomites traces the history and geography of the Alps.



Street date: **Feb. 24, 2015** | Pre-book: **Jan. 27, 2015**
Product # 3417-2 | UPC 7 12267 34172 6 | **SRP: \$19.99**
90 minutes - Not Rated

Starring BEN WHISHAW
("Q" from *SKYFALL*)



"A GREAT FILM"

- EXAMINER

"WONDROUS"

- PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

"CAPTIVATING"

- LOS ANGELES TIMES



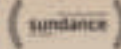
A 2014 Theatrical Release

Street date: **Feb. 10, 2015** | Pre-book: **Jan. 13, 2015**

Product #: 3405-2 | UPC: 7 12267 34052 1 | **SRP: \$27.99**

86 minutes - In English and Mandarin with English subtitles

Color - Widescreen - Not Rated



**"THE YEAR'S MOST
OUTRAGEOUSLY
VIVACIOUS MOVIE!"**
- TIME MAGAZINE

**"TRULY FUNNY,
SUBVERSIVE"**
- NEW YORK POST

An unapologetically subversive
comedy based on the best-selling
novel by Charlotte Roche.

Street date: **1/13/15** | Pre-book: **12/16/14**

DVD Product # 3402-2 | UPC 7 12267 34022 4 | **SRP: \$27.99**

BD Product # 3402-3 | UPC 7 12267 34023 1 | **SRP: \$32.99**

109 minutes - In German with English subtitles
Not Rated: This Film Contains Mature Subject Matter

A 2014 Theatrical Release



Daniel Craig Derek Jacobi Tilda Swinton

**"DIGITALLY RE-MASTERED
ON DVD & BLU-RAY"**

John Maybury's unflinching portrait
of painter Francis Bacon and his
tumultuous love affair with
small-time crook George Dyer

"REQUIRED VIEWING"
- NEW YORK TIMES

★★★★
- SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

"BRILLIANT"
- NEW YORK POST

"A MASTERPIECE"
- GUARDIAN, U.K.

Street date: **1/20/15** | Pre-book: **12/16/14**

DVD Product #: 3420-2 | UPC: 7 12267 34202 0 | **SRP: \$24.99**

BD Product #: 3420-3 | UPC: 7 12267 34203 7 | **SRP: \$27.99**

90 min - Color - Widescreen - Not Rated

six short works by Lynch, the 2001 "making-of" documentary "Eraserhead Stories," new and archival interviews with Lynch and his collaborators, and a booklet. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

F for Fake ★★★1/2

Criterion, 88 min., PG, DVD or Blu-ray: \$39.95

One of Orson Welles's last completed features, 1973's *F for Fake* is ostensibly a portrait of legendary art forger Elmyr de Hory and his biographer Clifford Irving, with the latter turning out to be a phony in his own right when his biography of Howard Hughes was revealed to be a complete fabrication. Welles used footage shot for a documentary about Irving and de Hory as the foundation for this free-form production that rolls fakery, magic, acting, theater, celebrity, and mystery into something unique that is neither documentary nor fiction film—and certainly not a traditional narrative—but is without a doubt a creative and compelling work. Welles is a cinematic magician here, performing his favorite kind of sleight-of-hand—making promises and spinning yarns as he plays games with truth, lies, and stories. The patchwork footage and imperfections are part of the texture, even in this new digital restoration. Released on DVD and Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by Welles's girlfriend and costar Oja Kodar and cinematographer Gary Graver, the 1995 German documentary *Orson Welles: One Man Band* (a survey of Welles's unfinished films featuring work-print clips from *The Deep*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Other Side of the Wind*, and *The Dreamers*, among others), an unreleased nine-minute trailer that Welles made for *F for Fake*, archival material (interviews, TV clips, and documentaries), and a booklet. This release may generate more interest following news that Welles's unfinished *The Other Side of the Wind* is slated to premiere in May to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Welles's birth. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Fedora ★★★

Olive, 114 min., PG, DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Billy Wilder revisits the themes of his classic *Sunset Boulevard* in this 1978 drama about a Greta Garbo-esque Hollywood legend living in self-imposed exile in Corfu and an out-of-fashion producer who tracks her down at the isolated villa of an aging aristocrat. The apparently ageless Fedora (Marthe Keller) still looks young and beautiful but has become unstable and seems to be a kind of prisoner of the Countess Sobryanski (Hildegard Knef). Barry "Dutch" Detweiler (*Sunset Boulevard* star William Holden) eventually discovers the truth behind the legend of Fedora and



her sudden disappearance years before. Made near the end of a productive career of more than 40 years, *Fedora*—based on a novella collected in Tom Tryon's *Crowned Heads*—was Wilder's penultimate film, and in many ways it serves as his tribute to the lost art of classic moviemaking, with the gauzy and glamorous look of an old Hollywood romance and a lush score by Miklós Rózsa. Stylistically a bit out of sync with the 1970s, *Fedora* is ultimately a tragic story of youth, fame, and identity in the culture of celebrity. Newly restored for DVD and its Blu-ray debut, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Great Race ★★★

Warner, 160 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99

Blake Edwards's 1965 epic comedy and tribute to silent-movie serials stars Tony Curtis as chivalrous, chauvinistic hero The Great Leslie, and Jack Lemmon as his dastardly, flamboyantly mustachioed nemesis, Professor Fate, a daredevil who—with the help of his loyal but dim henchman, Maximilian Meen (Peter Falk)—tries to sabotage Leslie at every turn (with consistently disastrous results). The rivals (with Curtis always clad in gleaming white and Lemmon in menacing black) engage in a car race from New York to Paris (they float across from Alaska to Russia on an ice floe), while suffragette newspaperwoman Maggie DuBois (Natalie Wood) joins them, first as a racing competitor and then as a traveling companion. Always a fan of physical comedy and elaborate visual gags, Edwards delivers the slapstick here as self-aware nostalgia, with lavish re-creations (from barnstorming biplanes to an Old West saloon and a Russian castle), Rube Goldberg schemes, and comic brawls, the last of which is a massive cream-pie fight in a castle kitchen. While *The Great Race* doesn't have the star-studded cast of Stanley Kramer's earlier *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*, it is a similarly sprawling madcap epic (running nearly three hours). Bowing on Blu-ray with a beautiful transfer from a restored Technicolor master of the complete Road Show version (also including the original overture, en'tracte, and exit sequences), extras include an archival behind-the-scenes featurette. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Great Train Robbery ★★★

Kino Lorber, 110 min., PG, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

This entertaining heist picture is not a remake of the landmark early silent Western but rather a period piece inspired by the first successful robbery aboard a moving train in England, circa 1855—a feat that author Michael Crichton initially fictionalized in a novel, which he



then adapted and directed for this 1978 thriller. Sean Connery plays Pierce, the gentleman thief who masterminds the crime, with Donald Sutherland and Lesley-Anne Down as his partners, Agar and Miriam, a safecracker/pickpocket and a con artist, respectively. The scheme requires that four keys to a safe transporting gold bullion be lifted and copied (each quest for a key becomes a set piece in its own right), before the three can board the train, execute the theft, and escape while the train is going full throttle down the tracks. Crichton directs what is essentially an old-school caper film with a modern sense of humor, and the three leads play with a light touch, bringing plenty of personality to their roles. But the story unfolds with real suspense and tension, and the period sets and costumes (including Down in sexy Victorian lingerie) contribute to a colorful and enjoyable film that refreshingly relies on wits and sleight of hand rather than the techno-babble and computer-hacker gimmicks of so many modern thrillers. Remastered for DVD and Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by Crichton. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Hangmen Also Die

★★★1/2

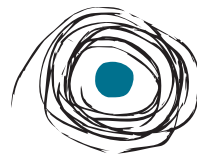
Cohen, 135 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99

Director Fritz Lang collaborated with legendary playwright Bertolt Brecht on this 1943 wartime drama inspired by a real-life historical event: the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich—the brutal Nazi Reichsprotektor of Czechoslovakia (nicknamed "the Hangman")—by the underground Resistance in occupied Europe. Brian Donlevy stars as the assassin, Dr. Franticek Svoboda, who hides out with the Novotny family to escape the Nazi manhunt. When Professor Stephen Novotny (Walter Brennan) is taken hostage by the Nazis in retribution, his daughter Masha (Anna Lee) threatens to turn in Svoboda to save her father's life, which only adds to the tension. The actual killing of Heydrich takes place off-screen in the opening moments, which keeps the focus on the plight of the citizens under the boot of Nazi tyranny, with Lang's message reverberating in every scene that follows: never inform, no matter how many die in reprisal. The sprawling story leans heavily toward propaganda, and the stolid Donlevy is an uninspiring hero; but the mixture of patriotic narrative, detective story, and espionage thriller eventually knits together and pays off in a climactic bit of poetic justice that is oddly satisfying despite the terrific cost in innocent lives. *Hangmen Also Die* has been released on DVD before, but this new edition mastered from a 2013 restoration and presented on DVD and Blu-ray is a marked improvement. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Richard Peña, an interview with

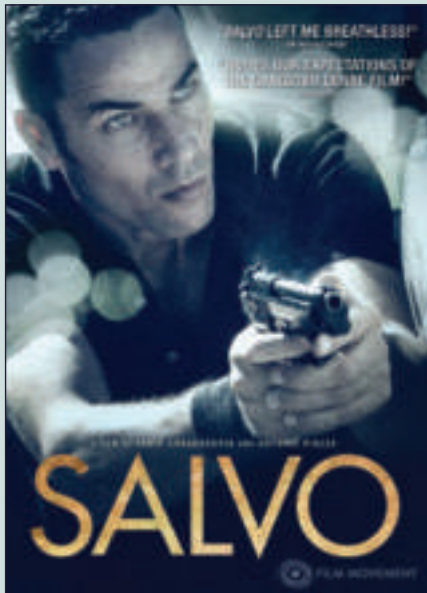


ACCLAIMED NEW RELEASES

FROM



FILM MOVEMENT



SALVO

UPC: 616892187660

DVD only: \$24.95 / PPR: \$200

DRL: \$499 / PPR + DRL: \$599

Disabilities, Italian Language



**"A fascinating film noir,
immaculately made!"**

—Cineuropa

Salvo is a hitman for the Sicilian Mafia, cold and ruthless. When he encounters an innocent blind girl while on assignment, he resolved to spare her life. Soon, their fates become inextricably linked as they navigate their next dangerous steps together.



1,000 TIMES GOOD NIGHT

UPC: 616892188360

DVD only: \$24.95 / PPR: \$200

DRL: \$499 / PPR + DRL: \$599

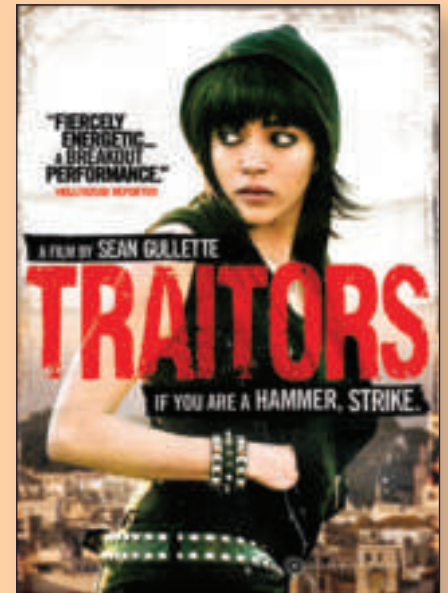
Activism, Human Rights, Photography, Social Justice, War and Peace, Women's Studies



"[A] gripping, emotionally resonant drama... starring French luminary Juliette Binoche."

—Variety

On assignment while photographing a female suicide bomber in Kabul, Rebecca - one of the world's top war photojournalists - gets badly hurt. Back home, another bomb drops as her husband and daughters give her an ultimatum: her work or her family.



TRAITORS

UPC: 857692005147

DVD only: \$150 / PPR: \$350

DRL: \$499 / PPR + DRL: \$599

At-risk Youth, Gender Studies, Human Rights, Middle-Eastern Studies, Music, Poverty, Social Justice, Women's Studies



"A slick and spiky drama... driven by a charismatic performance."

—ScreenDaily

To keep her parents from being evicted and fund her Clash-inspired punk band, Malika takes a job smuggling drugs over the mountains. Her partner in the run is a world-weary veteran drug mule, who unexpectedly wins Malika's sympathy.



**INDIVIDUAL TITLES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE WITH PPR AND DRL.
TO SUBSCRIBE OR LEARN MORE, contact Maxwell Wolkin**

maxwell@filmmovement.com • 212.941.7744 x211 • filmmovement.com/libraries

historian Robert Gerwarth on the real-life Heydrich, a 1942 newsreel, a restoration comparison, and an illustrated essay. While not Lang's best work, this is still a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Iguana ★★1/2

Rare, 88 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.95



Monte Hellman directs this strange, dark portrait of sex and power in a primitive setting, based on Alberto Vázquez-Figueroa's novel *La Iguana*, which in turn was inspired by the real-life tale of a 19th-century sailor who enslaved a group of castaways on an island in the Galapagos. Hellman and screenwriter Steven Gaydos add elements from *The Phantom of the Opera* to this 1988 film, weaving a harsh but beautiful story of a horribly scarred sailor who declares war on mankind to avenge the evils that have been perpetrated on him out of fear and intolerance. Everett McGill plays the angry, defiant Oberlus as a ruthless philosopher-dictator, one moment thoughtful and respectful, the next fierce and vengeful. Maru Valdivielso is Carmen, a free spirit in the constrictive confines of Spanish society—a “monster” herself for her social transgressions—who is captured by Oberlus and made his sexual slave. Michael Madsen costars as Oberlus's first captive turned faithful lieutenant, Sebastián. *Iguana* is a difficult work to define—it's neither an adventure nor a romance, and the character of Oberlus doesn't come across as a heroic figure. Nonetheless, it's compelling and often fascinating, and the stark beauty of the rocky island conveys a dreamy atmosphere more characteristic of a foreign art production than an American drama. This newly remastered Blu-ray edition has been supervised by Hellman and features the uncut version for the first time, along with a video interview with the director, and a booklet. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

It Happened One Night

★★★★

Criterion, 105 min., not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray: \$39.95



This classic 1934 romantic comedy follows reporter Peter Warne (Clark Gable) as he hits the trail in search of runaway heiress Ellie Andrews (Claudette Colbert). A Depression-era crowd pleaser, *It Happened One Night* still shines, with its famous hitchhiking sequence (dueling thumbs, if you will) that pits the know-it-all confidence of Gable against the seductive charms of Colbert, a laugh-out-loud gem of a scene. Sure acting, a sparkling script, and solid direction by Frank Capra are the distinguishing marks of what studio officials considered to be just another

small film (they were amazed at its popularity). Along with *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Silence of the Lambs*, it is the only other film to sweep the top five Oscars: Best Picture, Director, Actor, Actress, and Screenplay. And it reportedly had a negative effect on the men's undershirt industry—when Gable doffs his shirt, there's nothing but bare chest underneath, so suave and debonair male theatergoers of the '30s took the cue, and tossed their T-shirts. A beloved film (updated in Rob Reiner's charming 1985 comedy *The Sure Thing*), *It Happened One Night* receives the red carpet Criterion treatment with a new 4K digital restoration for DVD and its Blu-ray debut, and a bevy of extras including the feature-length 1997 biographical documentary *Frank Capra's American Dream*, a 1982 American Film Institute tribute to Capra, a “Screwball Comedy?” segment with critics Molly Haskell and Phillip Lopate, Capra's 1921 first film silent short “Fultah Fisher's Boarding House,” an archival interview with Capra's son, Frank Capra Jr., and a booklet. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (R. Pitman)

The Killer Shrews ★★1/2

Film Chest, 69 min., not rated, DVD: \$9.99



Special photographic effects wizard Ray Kellogg (*Demetrius and the Gladiators*) directed this 1959 creature feature starring James Best (a ubiquitous presence on TV during the medium's Golden Age) as Captain Thorne Sherman, who delivers supplies to a research laboratory on a remote island. In short order, everything goes wrong: a brewing hurricane strikes, the people at the lab act furtive and mysterious, the head scientist's gorgeous daughter (Ingrid Goude) is bent on keeping Thorne from leaving and—oh, yes—there are a few hundred, toothy, poisonous shrews the size of mastiffs running amok in the surrounding forest, hungry for human flesh. The captain's bad day only gets worse as a macho staffer (*Gunsmoke*'s Ken Curtis, producer of this potboiler)—who is more frightened of the monsters than anyone else—starts throwing his weight around. Made by Kellogg with a certain amount of wink-at-the-audience flair, *The Killer Shrews* is an entertaining public domain B-movie, unfortunately presented here with a disappointing transfer (despite the prominent “digitally transferred” tag on the cover). A strong optional purchase. (T. Keogh)

Les Blank: Always for Pleasure

★★★★

Criterion, 563 min., not rated, DVD: 5 discs, \$124.95; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$124.95

Most people probably know documentary Les Blank (1935-2013)—if they do at all—for his 1982 masterpiece *Burden of Dreams*, a

chronicle of the travails that Werner Herzog faced while making *Fitzcarraldo*. But feature-length films were a rarity for Blank; his real forte lay in his wonderful shorts, 14 of which—made between 1968-1995—are included in this superb collection. Many focus on musicians—bluesmen Lightnin' Hopkins (*The Blues Accordin' to Lightnin' Hopkins*) and Mance Lipscomb (*A Well Spent Life*), zedeco master Clifton Chenier (*Hot Pepper*), country fiddler Tommy Jarrell (*Sprout Wings and Fly*), painter-singer Gerald Gaxiola (*The Maestro: King of the Cowboy Artists*), and Afro-Cuban percussionist Francisco Aguabella (*Sworn to the Drum*); others celebrate food, whether it be garlic (*Garlic Is as Good as Ten Mothers*), Cajun cuisine (*Spend It All*), or Creole cooking (*Yum, Yum, Yum!*); and some concentrate on “happenings,” like Mardi Gras in New Orleans (*Always for Pleasure*), polka parties (*In Heaven There Is No Beer?*), or a 1967 Easter “love-in” in L.A. (*God Respects Us When We Work, But Loves Us When We Dance*). But those divisions are only approximate, since all of Blank's various interests spill over into each film, creating intoxicating, evocative portraits of places and cultures while also offering joyously appreciative tributes to persons, events or regions. And occasionally Blank takes a delightful detour, questioning conventional ideas about beauty, for example, in *Gap-Toothed Women*. At once structurally loose yet so carefully calibrated that they never become amorphous, Blank's films are reflective of the truly singular cinematic vision of a landmark documentary filmmaker. Presented in digitally restored boxed DVD and Blu-ray sets, *Les Blank: Always for Pleasure* features plentiful extras, including outtakes, bonus shorts, comments (from friends, family, and colleagues), appreciations by Herzog and Taylor Hackford, a new interview with Gaxiola, an excerpt from an in-progress documentary about Blank by his son Harrod and Gina Lebrecht, and a lavishly illustrated 57-page booklet. An essential acquisition, this is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (F. Swietek)



Level Five ★★1/2

Icarus, 106 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98



Barely released theatrically in the U.S., French New Wave auteur Chris Marker's haunting 1996 film *Level Five*—a fusion of documentary, essay, and fiction—tackles the director's familiar themes about the connections of history, image, and memory through the passage of time. In no sense a conventional story, the film's narrative spine is a loose tale about a video game developer, Laura (Catherine Belkhodja), whose late partner in life

and work left her with an unfinished project that improbably turns a real-life Japanese tragedy during World War II into a game with different outcomes. Laura's musings on her research into mass deaths during the Battle of Okinawa becomes a bridge for Marker's use of archival materials (including his own 1985 documentary footage about Okinawa) and futuristic, mosaic-like images that digitally overlap, creating an unsettling effect of fixed facts being eclipsed by subjective human recollections. A strange and remarkable late work by the director of the 1962 classic *La Jetée* that now seems more prescient than ever, this is highly recommended. (T. Keogh)

Macbeth ★★1/2

Criterion, 140 min., not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



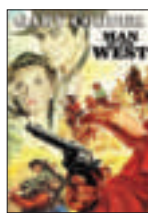
Roman Polanski's 1971 presentation of Shakespeare's classic tragedy, like Orson Welles's version before it, depicts medieval Scotland as a brutish and harsh world; but unlike Welles, Polanski shot his film on location in Great Britain, delivering authentic rocky, windswept landscapes and lonely, rough-hewn castles. Jon Finch plays a rather youngish Macbeth, a loyal soldier tempted by the prophecy of three witches on the heath, who murders his way to the throne, and then tries to hold onto it through violence, terror, and bloody betrayal—abetted by the ever-scheming Lady Macbeth (Francesca Annis). Like all feature-film versions of the play, this one streamlines the text, but at over two hours it is more complete than most, and Polanski (borrowing an idea from Laurence Olivier's *Hamlet*) renders many of the soliloquies as internal monologues that the characters deliver as they move through the castle, keeping the momentum going. Polanski directed this adaptation soon after his wife, Sharon Tate, was murdered by Charles Manson's followers; that may be one reason for the dour tone and grotesque portraits of victims from Macbeth's murderous rampage (only a few deaths are shown onscreen, but the violence of the murders is suggested in the bloody aftermaths). Remastered from a new digital transfer supervised by Polanski, Criterion's DVD and Blu-ray editions feature extras including new and archival "making-of" documentaries, excerpts from archival TV interviews with Polanski and co-writer Kenneth Tynan, and a booklet. One of the most interesting and unforgiving cinematic versions of Shakespeare's classic, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Man of the West ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 100 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Director Anthony Mann and iconic actor Gary Cooper teamed up for this 1958 drama about three train passengers stranded in

the desert following a railway holdup. Cooper stars as Link Jones, who brings his compatriots—sad-eyed prostitute Billie Ellis (Julie London) and garrulous but cowardly banker Sam Beasley (Arthur O'Connell)—into a veritable viper's nest in a desperate gamble. It turns out that Jones, now a respected town elder, was once a member of the outlaw band that robbed them, and he's welcomed back by old gang leader Dock Tobin (Lee J. Cobb) like the prodigal son. The other bandits are not so forgiving, but they humor the old man while plotting to unmask Cooper as a traitor in a battle of wits and wills. Mann's familiar themes of family and betrayal are given a dramatic twist, and he sets the conflict in a spare, desolate landscape featuring an endless horizon of empty track, a lone shack on the arid plains, and a ghost town where a planned bank heist turns out to be a pathetic fantasy. Author Reginald Rose (*12 Angry Men*) wrote the literate if sometimes overly symbolic script, which comes across like a morality play, and John Dehner, Jack Lord, and Royal Dano costar. This is not a conventional Western, but its stark style and dark themes have aged well, and it should be of interest to genre fans. Previously released on DVD, this has been newly remastered in HD for both DVD and a Blu-ray debut. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



Married to the Mob

★★★

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



In 1988, two years after his breakthrough film *Something Wild*, director Jonathan Demme returned with another mix of offbeat humor and dangerous criminals in this colorful gangster comedy starring Michelle Pfeiffer as Angela de Marco, the frustrated wife of mid-level mobster "Cucumber" Frank de Marco (Alec Baldwin). Matthew Modine costars as Mike Downey, a dedicated and rather unconventional FBI agent on the trail of crime boss Tony "The Tiger" Russo (Dean Stockwell). Despite the comic approach, the underlying culture isn't much different from what Martin Scorsese would present in *Goodfellas* a few years later—right down to the colorful names, such as Vinnie the Slug, Nick the Snake, and Al the Worm. When the newly widowed Angela moves out of her Italian neighborhood in Brooklyn and into the multicultural Lower East Side of Manhattan, Russo tracks her down, followed by his jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl)...and the feds. Demme revs things up with outsized characters and tacky fashions that distinctly collide with the freewheeling spirit at Pfeiffer's new home,

which represents a lifestyle that invigorates her in ways the insular mob life never did. *Married to the Mob* never conveys the sense of danger that made *Something Wild* so memorable—even death has a slapstick twist here—but it serves up a charismatic performance from Pfeiffer and lots of charm and good humor to keep things bouncing along. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Mauvais Sang ★★★

Kino Lorber, 119 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



The second feature from French filmmaker Leos Carax is a quirky mix of caper film, sci-fi thriller, and romantic tragedy set in some indeterminate future when an insidious AIDS-like virus is afflicting the young. The 1986 motion picture stars Denis Lavant as Alex, a street hustler, amateur magician, and one-time burglar who is enlisted by over-the-hill gangster Marc (Michel Piccoli) to help engineer an elaborate heist of a new vaccine for the pathogen. A radiant Juliette Binoche is Anna, Marc's much younger mistress, a beauty with whom Alex falls instantly in love. Alex, the lovesick puppy, and Anna, the magical muse, are romantic innocents in a future where Halley's Comet heats up the night sky and a corrupt multinational corporation holds the cure to the viral plague but makes it available only to the wealthy. The heart of *Mauvais Sang* lies in the chemistry between Lavant and Binoche (Carax reunited them for his later movie *Lovers on the Bridge*) and in the cinematic charge that Carax creates in every frame, with luscious blasts of glowing colors, explosive energy, and dynamic style. Newly restored and remastered for DVD and Blu-ray, extras include the new feature-length documentary *Mr. X* on the director, as well as outtakes, and a deleted scene. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Ornette: Made in America ★★★

Milestone/Oscilloscope, 77 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



This 1985 production from director Shirley Clarke, a pioneer in the American independent film movement of the late 1950s and '60s, is a loosely constructed portrait of saxophonist, composer, bandleader, and jazz innovator Ornette Coleman. Clarke began the project in the 1960s, when Coleman was performing in Europe with his 11-year-old son, Denardo (on drums), and that footage is bookended by a 1983 tribute concert in his hometown of Fort Worth, TX, where the local orchestra plays his "Skies of America" symphony, and Coleman performs with his Prime Time band. Clarke also includes

fictionalized sequences depicting Coleman's impoverished childhood (with Demon Marshall and Eugene Tatum portraying Coleman). The result—Clarke's last work—is not a traditional documentary, offering little insight into Coleman's music or his inspirations. Instead, Clarke wanted to find a visual equivalent to her subject's improvisational style, and she uses video techniques to mix images together with rapid cutting to jump from past to present and from one idea to another. Along the way, Coleman discusses his interest in Buckminster Fuller and social justice—painting a picture of an eclectic mind and a dedicated artist—but many music-related questions are left unexplored. Presented on DVD and Blu-ray, extras include video and radio interviews with Clarke, an interview with Denardo Coleman, and an example of Clarke's video work. Likely to be much appreciated by jazz aficionados, this is recommended, overall. (S. Axmayer)

Pete Kelly's Blues ★★½

Warner, 95 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99



Although Jack Webb is best remembered for his iconic creation Sgt. Joe Friday, the no-nonsense hero of the police drama *Dragnet*, he also played a number of other characters on radio, TV, and the big screen, with one of his favorites being jazz cornet player Pete Kelly, whom he portrayed first on the radio in 1951 and then in this 1955 film. Webb directs and stars as Pete, the leader of a Dixieland jazz band in 1927 Kansas City, when speakeasies flourished and mobsters ran the streets. Produced in vibrant Technicolor and CinemaScope, it's a mix of musical melodrama and gangster movie, with struggling musician Pete pursued by well-to-do flapper Ivy (Janet Leigh), while ganglord Fran McCarg (Edmond O'Brien) runs the protection rackets. Webb, a big fan of Dixieland, fills out the narrative with club performances by Pete's band (performed by Matty Matlock's Dixielanders) and vocal numbers by costars Ella Fitzgerald and Peggy Lee (who earned an Oscar nomination for her performance as Rose, an alcoholic torch singer). Webb gives the colorful dialogue the terse, unemotional delivery of Sgt. Friday, and his direction is clean and straightforward—light on atmosphere but full of vivid characters and telling detail. Lee Marvin plays well against type as an easygoing clarinet player, while Andy Devine, best known for comic-relief roles, is a tough cop who wants to shut down McCarg. Bowing on Blu-ray, extras include the vintage Oscar-nominated short "Gadgets Galore," and the classic cartoon "The Hole Idea." A solid, old-fashioned story with great music and loads of period color, this is recommended. (S. Axmayer)

Portrait of Jason

★★★★½

Milestone/Oscilloscope, 108 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95



Shirley Clarke's 1967 stream-of-consciousness character study of Jason Holliday, aka Aaron Payne, is a landmark work of nonfiction and LGBT filmmaking. Ostensibly part of the *cinéma vérité* movement, this offbeat portrait, shot over a single night in a 12-hour session and edited to just under two hours, straddles the line between documentary and performance-art piece. No other person appears in front of the lens but Jason, a gay black man who plays to the camera and the skeleton crew (who are heard throughout but never seen), telling stories and doing impressions as if he's both the host and star of his own one-man show—a would-be nightclub headliner if you will (and it's not clear how much is true and how much is flight of fancy). But between his paroxysms of laughter and endless glasses of vodka, Jason discusses how he grew up poor and outcast and learned to survive as a flamboyant queer in 1960s America. A scruffy, raw production, *Portrait of Jason* finally bows on home video in the U.S. thanks to Milestone Film & Video's systematic restoration of Clarke's filmography. Released on DVD and Blu-ray, this edition, built on materials found through a worldwide search, recovers lost footage and visual detail but leaves intact the gritty 16mm texture that Clarke treasured, along with adult subject matter, frank language, and drug use. Extras include outtakes, archival interviews with Clarke, and the audio-only "The Jason Holliday Comedy Album," a wonderful rarity that makes an excellent companion piece. Highly recommended. (S. Axmayer)

Possessed ★★½

Warner, 108 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$21.99



As Joan Crawford aged out of glamorous roles, she remade herself during the 1940s by portraying tough, driven characters in a series of melodramas that gave her an opportunity to grab the spotlight in highly emotional scenes. In this 1947 film she stars as Louise Howell, a person who appears to be the very model of self-possessed strength and confidence, except for her obsessive love for David Sutton (Van Heflin), a cad bachelor who is happy to play around with her but resists commitment. Louise eventually marries the rich and kind Dean Graham (Raymond Massey), but when Sutton re-enters her life and falls for another, younger woman (Geraldine Brooks)—who just happens to

be Louise's stepdaughter—she spirals into jealousy, paranoia, and emotional instability. Crawford gets to play both the proud and strong and the flamboyantly crazy versions of Louise, sinking into madness and exaggerating her trademark makeup (dark lips and slashes of eyeliner standing out from a powdered face) to resemble something like a kabuki mask. *Possessed*, which was made during the post-war fascination with psychiatry and analysis, plays out in flashback, framed by blandly authoritarian doctors offering simplistic diagnoses for the hysterical Louise after she's found wandering the streets in a state of shock in the opening scenes. German-born director Curtis Bernhardt balances the portrait of high-society affluence and fashionable lifestyle with the shadowy atmosphere of film noir. Debuting on Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by film historian Drew Casper, and a behind-the-scenes featurette. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)

Run Silent, Run Deep

★★★

Kino Lorber, 93 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



One of the great submarine thrillers of all time, 1958's *Run Silent, Run Deep*—based on the same-titled novel by U.S. Navy Cmdr. Edward L. Beach Jr.—forges an interesting character drama out of a familiar situation. Clark Gable plays veteran commander "Rich" Richardson, relegated to desk duty after his sub was blown up by a Japanese destroyer. When another vessel loses its captain, Richardson uses his influence to become skipper, delaying a promised promotion to respected executive officer Lt. Jim Bledsoe (Burt Lancaster). That decision doesn't sit well with the crewmen, who resent the old guy's interference and his endless drilling, and for a while it looks like director Robert Wise is heading into *The Caine Mutiny* territory—at least until Richardson's endgame becomes clear: he wants to get the destroyer that sunk his command and three subsequent submarines. Wise crafts a traditional, no-nonsense film that unfolds at a deliberate pace, with the crew coming together under a vision, while wartime tactics and gamesmanship lead to plenty of action, including lots of hunkering down as depth charges explode in the surrounding waters (the film also features enjoyable miniature work). Solid performances from supporting cast members, including Jack Warden and Don Rickles, back up the two stars colliding onscreen. Previously available on DVD, *Run Silent, Run Deep* has been newly remastered for DVD and Blu-ray. Sure to appeal to fans of classic Hollywood fare, this is recommended. (S. Axmayer)

Milestone Films presents
THE INCREDIBLE AMERICAN INDIAN FEATURE FILM
Newly Restored for its 100th Anniversary!

In the Land of the HEAD HUNTERS

a film by Edward S. Curtis

TWO-DISC DELUXE SET

DVD
UPC: 784148014449
Cat # Mile00144

Blu-Ray
UPC: 784148014456
Cat # MileBD00144

STREET DATE: February 24, 2015



Milestone Films presents
THE LATEST RELEASE FROM PROJECT SHIRLEY

THE CONNECTION

A FILM BY
SHIRLEY CLARKE

"Dancer, bride, runaway wife, radical filmmaker and pioneer - Shirley Clarke is one of the great under told stories of American independent cinema.

***THE CONNECTION* signaled the beginning of a new period in her life, and just maybe it will again bring her the acclaim she has always deserved."**

- Manohla Dargis, *New York Times*



www.projectshirley.com

DVD
UPC: 784148014043
Cat # Mile00140

Blu-Ray
UPC: 784148014050
Cat # MileBD00140

STREET DATE: February 24, 2015

Exclusively Distributed by



For PPR and Streaming
www.milestonefilms.com

Seizure! ★★

Kino Lorber, 91 min., PG,
DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

Notable largely as the directorial debut of Oliver Stone, this bizarre 1974 psycho-thriller is a nightmare horror film starring Jonathan Frid (of the original *Dark Shadows*) as a bestselling horror author whose fictional characters inexplicably break out of his dreams to terrorize family and friends during a weekend in the country. The trio of fantastic figures—Jackal (Henry Judd Baker), a masked executioner in fetish gear; Spider (Hervé Villechaize), a wicked dwarf (whose dialogue is largely incomprehensible); and the Queen of Evil (cult horror actress Martine Beswick)—torment and torture their prisoners, bringing out the worst in many of the shallow victims. The film was funded as one of the many “tax haven” productions shot in Canada, and Stone—like many other young filmmakers—used the opportunity of a low-budget horror film to push against expectations and surprise people. It’s an interesting idea with imaginative twists but the film suffers from unfocused direction, confusing construction, and budget constraints. It does feature a fine cast, however, including cult actress Mary Woronov and one-time movie heartthrob Troy Donahue. Mostly a curiosity piece for viewers who want to see where the Oscar-winning director began (and how much he has evolved), *Seizure!* bows on DVD and Blu-ray in a remastered edition with extras including interviews with costars Woronov and Richard Cox. Optional. (S. Axmayer)



Vatican, and the final round of American spectacles, from Niagara Falls to the Hoover Dam. More pageant than documentary, *Seven Wonders of the World* is a cinematic artifact of sorts, restored from the original negative and presented in “Smilebox” format, which flairs the image on the sides of the frame to mimic a curved movie screen. Presented on DVD and Blu-ray, extras include a documentary on Cinerama composers, as well as behind-the-scenes footage, newsreels, a restoration demonstration, and a booklet featuring a miniature reproduction of the original souvenir program. Likely to be of interest to some film buffs and cultural historians, this is a strong optional purchase. [Note: also newly available is the fourth Cinerama production, 1957’s *Search for Paradise*.] (S. Axmayer)

The Shooting / Ride in the Whirlwind ★★★

Criterion, 163 min., not rated,
DVD: 2 discs, \$29.95; Blu-ray:
\$39.95

Director Monte Hellman and actor Jack Nicholson met while making a pair of war movies for Roger Corman and decided to team up to produce a couple of low-budget Westerns, both released in 1966. *The Shooting*, an almost abstract odyssey through a harsh desert landscape, features Warren Oates as Willett Gashade, a former bounty hunter hired to track a wanted man by a mysterious unnamed woman (Millie Perkins), who toys with Oates’s childlike partner, Coley Boyard (Will Hutchins); Jack Nicholson costars as Billy Spear, a sadistic, black-clad killer. Hellman keeps the audience in the dark about the true nature of the trip as the characters warily eye one another. *Ride in the Whirlwind*, written by Nicholson and only slightly more conventional, is the story of two cowboys, Vern and Wes (Cameron Mitchell and Nicholson), who run from a posse that mistakes them for bank robbers. In contrast to *The Shooting*’s harsh environment and heightening tension, *Ride in the Whirlwind* is set in pastoral forests and advances at a leisurely pace (the pair’s nervous waiting occupies much of the time), employing a naturalistic style. Financed by Corman, both films were well received at European film festivals but got stuck in legal limbo and were eventually sold directly to American TV with no theatrical release. Both were rediscovered in the 1970s—in part thanks to Nicholson’s success—and here receive their due in remastered DVD and Blu-ray editions, with extras including audio commentaries on both films (featuring Hellman and film historians Bill Krohn and Blake Lucas), new cast and crew interviews, a visual essay on Oates, and a booklet. Likely to appeal to fans of Westerns and of early American independent filmmaking, this is recommended. (S. Axmayer)



Sidewalk Stories ★★★

Kino Lorber, 101 min., R, DVD:
\$24.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

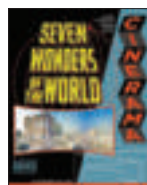
Decades before *The Artist* earned an Academy Award, African-American filmmaker Charles Lane made this more modest silent comedy. Shot on location in New York and set in contemporary times, *Sidewalk Stories* is a low-budget 1989 independent film that delivers social commentary through a unique perspective. Using Charlie Chaplin’s *The Kid* as a starting point, Lane explores the relationship between a homeless, unnamed street artist (Lane), who subsists by sketching portraits of people in the financial district, and a little girl (Lane’s real-life daughter) whose father is murdered—a crime that the sketcher witnesses. Quietly removing her from the scene as the police arrive, the artist takes her into his hovel and has to learn to care for the toddler while searching for her mother, forming the basis for an affectionate comedy. Lane doesn’t mimic silent-movie conventions, nor does he attempt any of Chaplin’s elaborate gags; instead, he offers a wordless story in poetic pantomime, set against a lovingly photographed, down-and-out New York City, all without dialogue or intertitles (Marc Marder fills the soundtrack with a rich and expressive score). Released to strong reviews, *Sidewalk Stories* practically disappeared shortly thereafter. Resurrected and beautifully restored for this 25th anniversary edition, bowing on DVD and Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by and an interview with Lane and Marder, and Lane’s 1977 short film *A Place in Time*. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)



Seven Wonders of the World ★★1/2

Flicker Alley, 106 min., not
rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo:
\$49.95

The third feature to be shot and presented in Cinerama—a process that used three cameras synched up to show a single image across a vast screen—is hosted and presented by journalist Lowell Thomas. Thomas begins his survey with the only surviving wonder of the ancient world—the Great Pyramid of Giza (with the lens lingering on the nearby Sphinx as well)—before launching on a trip around the globe in a converted B-25 to capture other sights, both natural (Victoria Falls, the Grand Canyon, an active volcano in Africa) and man-made (the Angkor Wat temple ruins, the Taj Mahal, the Statue of Liberty), as well as glimpses of cultures worldwide. The 1956 production is a genuine time capsule, with condescending narration that expresses a sense that ancient rituals and cultural differences were signs of naiveté, becoming sober only when it reaches the ancient Holy Land, the



Sundays and Cybèle

★★★1/2

Criterion, 111 min., in French
w/English subtitles, not rated,
DVD: \$24.95, Blu-ray: \$39.95

Winner of the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, the lovely, bittersweet 1962 debut feature from Serge Bourguignon straddles the borders of delicate French poetic realism and French New Wave freshness. Hardy Krüger stars as Pierre, a bomber pilot whose tour of duty in Vietnam has left him emotionally and mentally damaged (today he’d be diagnosed with PTSD). Pierre connects with 12-year-old Cybèle (Patricia Gozzi), who’s been abandoned by her mother and dumped in a Catholic boarding school by her father. Today it’s hard not to see the possible unsavory aspects of a grown, emotionally damaged man secretly spending time with a vulnerable girl who speaks of marrying him someday, especially as Pierre grows more distant from his lover, Madeleine (Nicole Courcel). Certainly some of the characters worry that he may hurt Cybèle, but Bourguignon shows us an innocent



kind of second childhood for Pierre and a surrogate big brother/best friend for Cybèle. Henri Dacæ's black-and-white photography is sublime, featuring autumn and winter landscapes full of people bundled up for the outdoors, and Pierre and Cybèle innocently playing in a beautiful but increasingly cold and bare park. A beloved classic of foreign cinema, Criterion presents the film on DVD and Blu-ray in a superb restored edition, with extras including interviews with Bourguignon and the stars, and the director's Palme d'Or-winning 1960 documentary short *Le Sourire*. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Topkapi ★★★

Kino Lorber, 120 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

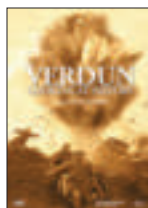
In 1955, blacklisted American filmmaker Jules Dassin directed the French heist drama *Rififi*, one of the greatest caper movies of all time and the inspiration for a slew of imitators. In 1964's *Topkapi*, Dassin spoofs the genre and *Rififi* in particular, right down to the elaborate heist played out in a long, wordless sequence. But where *Rififi* is a gritty film noir shot in shadowy black and white, *Topkapi* is a colorful romp with eccentric characters and comic complications taking place in the sun-kissed beauty of Istanbul. World-traveling adventureress Elizabeth Lipp (Melina Mercouri, Dassin's wife) recruits old friend and criminal mastermind Walter Harper (Maximilian Schell) to help steal a priceless artifact from the Topkapi museum. Walter concocts a near-perfect plan for a group of amateurs with special skills, but their unwary driver, Arthur Simon Simpson (Peter Ustinov), is captured by the local cops and pressured to become a mole for the police. Featuring likable characters, clever gimmicks, and plenty of laughs, *Topkapi* is based on Eric Ambler's *The Light of Day*, a crime novel with a streak of dark humor. Ustinov earned an Oscar as the taxi driver and small-time hustler who is drafted to play a bigger part in the scheme, and the robbery features the then-novel idea of lowering a member of the team from above to avoid the traps and alarms of the heavily secured room—an idea reused in numerous films. Remastered with a fine transfer for DVD and its Blu-ray debut, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Verdun: Looking at History ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 151 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95

Léon Poirier's 1928 silent epic, made to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the end of World War I and dedicated to "all the martyrs of the ugliest passion that is war," offers a sweeping portrait of the Battle of Verdun,



a 10-month siege in which the French held the line against an offensive of overwhelming German forces at the cost of 300,000 soldiers on both sides. Combining human drama and history lesson (complete with detailed statistics and animated maps of troop movements), Poirier grounds the movie in the "everyman" experience by identifying real-life historical figures by name but fictional characters by titles and types: the German Soldier, the Farmer, the Daughter, and so on. Gimmick aside, these are full-blooded, vivid characters. Poirier favors the French experience but refuses to vilify the Germans, who are, like the French Soldier (our central point-of-view figure, played by the great Albert Préjean), simply doing their duty in a terrible ordeal. Although not well-known today, *Verdun* was acclaimed upon its release for its powerful storytelling and amazing re-creations of battle scenes (which Poirier intercut with actual footage from newsreels), but it was quickly eclipsed by the arrival of sound. This DVD is mastered from a restoration by the Cinémathèque de Toulouse and is presented with French intertitles with English subtitles and a fine piano score. Extras include two French-language featurettes (also with English subtitles) and an archival documentary on the battle. A landmark of silent film, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

We Won't Grow Old Together ★★★

Kino Lorber, 106 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95

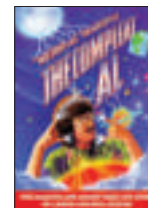
Maurice Pialat, who died in 2003, may not be as well known internationally as some other 20th-century French directors, but his realistic, often brutally harsh films have many admirers. His 1972 second film is strongly autobiographical, serving up a pitiless, sometimes positively savage account of the break-up of a six-year affair between small-time filmmaker Jean (Jean Yanne) and Catherine (Marlène Jobert), a much younger woman from a working-class family. In portraying the dissolution of their relationship, Pialat characteristically slights conventional narrative form, ignoring transitions and even chronology as he presents largely self-contained sequences of fights, happy interludes, and separations, interspersed with scenes of Jean's continuing relationship with his wife, Françoise (Macha Méril), and periodic visits with Catherine's concerned parents. Pialat's style is anything but flashy: most of the scenes play out before a stationary camera. What emerges most of all, however—mainly through Yanne's smug, brittle performance—is a sense of the director's self-loathing attitude towards the man he was. DVD extras include an interview



with Jobert, and an essay by film critic Nick Pinkerton. Not an easy film to watch, but one that is potent, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Weird Al Yankovic: The Compleat Al ★★★

Shout! Factory, 102 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.98



A loosely biographical look at the life and career of Grammy award-winning musician and parodist Alfred "Weird Al" Yankovic that starts off with the artist setting his accordion on fire onstage, this 1985 mockumentary from filmmakers Jay Levey and Robert K. Weiss adds a dash of truth to an amalgam of silly segments. For instance, it's probably safe to assume that Yankovic's mother did not in fact have a job sorting sprinkles at the local Dairy Queen; also, it seems odd that literally every archival photo featuring Al and a woman on a date has the female ashamedly covering her face. Some true stuff: Yankovic, who was born in Lynwood, CA, got his start with a leg up from Dr. Demento, received an architectural degree from Cal Poly—where he was a DJ and recorded his The Knack rip-off "My Bologna" in a bathroom—and obtained special permission from Michael Jackson to cover his work (although the scene depicting the meeting at a creepy castle with a tiger and monkey may be a bit farfetched). Some of the vignettes here fall flat—wacky band auditions, a dress-up montage, an insensitive overview of Yankovic's visit to Japan—but overall Yankovic has the comedic chops to make most of this work. Interspersed throughout are his signature music videos (including the classics "Eat It" and "Like a Surgeon"), choice clips from his MTV show *AL-TV*, and celebrity appearances ranging from Dick Clark to Rick Derringer. A jokey time capsule film spotlighting a talented entertainer who has released 14 studio albums to date, this is recommended. (J. Williams-Wood)

Video Librarian Online

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) during January and February for DVD/Blu-ray-specific comments added to the video movies reviewed here, as well as new reviews, including current films such as *Annabelle*, *Before I Go to Sleep*, *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby*, *The Identical*, *The Judge*, *Laggies*, *Left Behind*, *Nightcrawler*, *Supermensh: The Legend of Shep Gordon*, *A Walk Among Tombstones*, *Wolves*, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*, and much more!

24: Live Another Day

★★★★

Fox, 522 min., not rated, DVD: 4 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$59.99

The franchise that made “Jack Bauer” the code phrase for patriotism at any price is whittled into an efficient and wholly entertaining narrative in this limited reprise of the massive Fox hit. *24* ended its eight-season run in 2010 on a high (and talk still swirls around the possibility that Kiefer Sutherland and Co. will bring Bauer to the big screen). In the meantime, *Live Another Day* serves up plenty of tension, action, and sometimes-hard-to-believe politics with its hurtling story about terrorists scheming to blow people up. The setting is London, where President James Heller (William Devane) is plunged into crisis when a bunch of military drones go rogue. Emerging like a ghost, Bauer (Sutherland) is instantly on the scene with all of the answers; but he’s also wanted by the Americans, the Russians, and the Chinese. No matter; Bauer whirls through the non-stop action with firearms blazing and his characteristic take-no-prisoners attitude. Along the way, an old romance briefly distracts Bauer, and his beloved tech supporter, Chloe (Mary Lynn Rajsak), still has his back. Vivid new faces include Benjamin Bratt, Michael Wincott, Tate Donovan, and Michelle Fairley, who all bring gravitas to the mayhem. As ever, Bauer remains a cipher and his fate is left unresolved (a perfect setup perhaps for *24: The Movie*). Compiling all 12 episodes from 2014, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, an exclusive storyline extension not aired on TV, and deleted scenes. Recommended. (T. Fry)



The 100: The Complete First Season ★★½

Warner, 3 discs, 544 min., not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98, Blu-ray: \$49.99

Another entry in the canon of young adult literature about imperiled teenagers in a dystopian future, *The 100* (based on novels by Kass Morgan) could have been a movie franchise. The series riffs on the same kind of teens-in-distress—and in heat—themes that fueled *The Hunger Games*, *The Giver*, *The Maze Runner*, and others. The large cast consists of a serviceable group of attractive young people exploring a verdant Earth in the mid-22nd century, 97 years following a nuclear apocalypse. Actually, they are 100 juvenile delinquents who’ve been sent to the surface from a failing “ark” orbiting above to test the planet’s habitability for the 2,000-odd grownups still alive. They don’t remain 100 for long: factions form, order crumbles, people die, and boys and girls fall in love (think *Lord of the Flies* meets *Dawson’s Creek*). It turns out Earth still has a popula-



tion, dubbed Grounders by the 100, and they’re bad (mostly), but not as evil as the Reapers, a mutant species. *The 100* offers lots of action punctuated by misty, meaningful, soap-opera gazes between chiseled and coifed characters, including Eliza Taylor as independent-minded Clarke, Thomas McDonnell as daredevil Finn, and Marie Avgeropoulos and Bob Morley as siblings Octavia and Bellamy. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2014 debut season, extras include episode commentary, a 2013 Comic-Con panel segment, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and deleted scenes. A strong optional purchase. (T. Fry)

Afterlife: Season Two

★★★★

BBC, 2 discs, 370 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98

This unusual supernatural drama enjoyed a popular run for two seasons from 2005-06 on Britain’s ITV. Alison Mundy (Lesley Sharp) is a reluctant medium who can see dead people and winds up helping souls to reconcile their earthly conflicts and pass peacefully to the other side. Alison’s gift often feels like a curse, especially during the second season when the ghost of her mother causes her unbearable anguish. Tortured teenagers, a ghoulish killer, and a mysterious nurse are just some of the other restless spirits Alison encounters. Opposite Alison is Dr. Robert Bridge (Andrew Lincoln), a psychology professor and conflicted skeptic who is writing a book about her. Robert became intrigued with her after she helped him and the ghost of his young, departed son resolve their mutual grief. The eight episodes here continue to explore Alison and Robert’s touching relationship as well as their individual interpersonal struggles involving the simultaneous evolution of her psychic journey and his battle with brain cancer. Sharp is particularly good as the compassionate seer who is deeply disturbed by her “gift.” Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette. Skillfully crafted and delicately creepy, this is recommended. (T. Fry)



Agatha Christie: Marple, Series 6 ★★½

Acorn, 3 discs, 274 min., not rated, DVD: \$49.99

British networks have turned adaptations of Agatha Christie’s works into a cottage industry and are now resorting to remakes and sleights of hand to keep them coming. This set represents the final installment in the six-part 2004–2013 ITV versions of the Miss Marple tales, with Julia McKenzie starring as the spinster sleuth in three 90-minute episodes. Only the first—“A Caribbean Mystery,” in which Marple solves crimes while on vacation—is actually based on a Christie novel featuring Marple. The



second, “Greenshaw’s Folly,” combines two Marple short stories (the titular tale and “The Thumb Mark of Saint Peter”) and finds the demure but steely detective rescuing a young woman from an abusive husband by taking her to a country house where murder intrudes. The final offering, “Endless Night,” is based on Christie’s excellent 1967 mystery—one in which Marple does not appear, although she’s been rather clumsily added here. All three are handsomely produced, but the 1989 BBC-aided *Caribbean Mystery* starring Joan Hickson remains superior simply because Hickson is Marple’s peerless embodiment, while the 1972 film *Endless Night* with Hayley Mills and Hywel Bennett is preferable to the shoehorned Marple version here. Still, taken on their own, these telefilms are mostly enjoyable and likely to be appreciated by those following the series. DVD extras include photo galleries, a “making-of” featurette on “Endless Night,” and a text profile of Homewood House (featured in “Endless Night”). Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Agatha Christie: Poirot, Series 13 ★★½

Acorn, 3 discs, 462 min., not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$59.99

David Suchet completes his quarter-century run as Agatha Christie’s sartorially fastidious Belgian detective in this long-running ITV series that wraps up with a final five feature-length films. Although Poirot has been played by such luminaries as Albert Finney and Peter Ustinov, it’s now hard to imagine anyone but Suchet in the role. So it’s a pity that this set features plots that tend to be far from Christie’s best. The first, *Elephants Can Remember*, is based on a 1972 novel (set here in the 1930s) that links a murder case being investigated by Poirot with another from the past being looked into by his friend, crime writer Ariadne Oliver (Zoë Wanamaker). *The Big Four*, adapted from a very weak 1927 book relocated to the ’30s, is about an international conspiracy of arms sellers who are obstructing attempts to avoid a new world war. *Dead Man’s Folly*, from an old-fashioned 1956 novel, has Poirot investigating a death associated with a “murder game” devised by Oliver, while *The Labours of Hercules* conflates half of the short stories in the 1947 collection of that title into a single narrative, albeit fairly cleverly. Finally, *Curtain*, which Christie wrote in the 1940s but withheld from publication until 1975 (a year before her death) finds Poirot using his own terminal illness to right an injustice. All five have been produced with characteristic visual elegance, and the supporting cast (including Wanamaker) is excellent, reuniting Suchet with Hugh Fraser (as Captain Hastings), Philip Jackson (as Assistant Commissioner Japp), and Pauline Moran (as Miss Lemon). Extras include a recent interview with Suchet, and



MAISON CLOSE

SEASON ONE

A Television series by Jacques Ouaniche

**"WOULD MAKE A VETERAN
OF THE *50 SHADES OF GREY*
SERIES BLUSH"**
- THE TIMES (UK)

"ADDICTIVE!"
- THE GUARDIAN



MAISON CLOSE – SEASON ONE
8 X 55 MINUTE EPISODES



\$34.95 SRP

MBFHE084
741360538627



\$39.95 SRP

MBFHE084 (BD)
741360538634

AVAILABLE
JANUARY 27, 2015

FROM THE DISTRIBUTOR OF INTERNATIONAL
EMMY AWARD-WINNING TITLES **MILLENNIUM**,
GENERATION WAR AND **THE RETURNED**

**MUSIC
BOX
FILMS**

www.musicboxfilms.com

a photo gallery. Sure to appeal to loyal fans of the series, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

The Almighty Johnsons: Season 1 ★★1/2

PBS, 3 discs, 465 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.99, Blu-ray: \$44.99



This New Zealand series mixes family drama, wry comedy, and the supernatural in the form of the four Johnson brothers, who are actually Norse gods on Earth, inheriting their powers and legacies upon their 21st birthday. The narrative begins with the youngest, Axl (Emmett Skilton), discovering that he's the reincarnation of Odin, king of the deities, and that he won't come into his own until he finds and weds Frigg, his queen. Axl's siblings respond to their powers in different ways: Mike (Tim Balme) is the responsible one who refuses to use his gifts of gamesmanship to make money; Anders (Dean O'Gorman) draws on his ability to influence human minds to seduce women and become a PR success; and Ty (Jared Turner) supposedly has control over cold but is a frustrated romantic unable to warm a woman's heart. Keisha Castle-Hughes costars as Axl's roommate and best friend, Gaia. A budget-minded show with few special effects, *The Almighty Johnsons* focuses on human drama and the potentially far-reaching consequences of the foursome's actions. The emergence of Odin could restore them to Asgardian glory, and a rival band is determined to stop his ascension. Appearing on Syfy in the U.S., this release compiles all 10 original uncut episodes from the 2011 debut season, with extras including an episode commentary and a cast interview. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Annie Oakley: The Complete Series ★★1/2

VCI, 11 discs, 2,160 min., not rated, DVD: \$99.99



Hopelessly dated but endearingly hokey, *Annie Oakley* hits the entertainment bulls-eye with her straight shootin', hard-ridin' heroics. Parents (or grandparents) may fondly remember this 1954-57 Gene Autry-produced TV series built around a positive female role model. This set compiles all 81 episodes centered on pigtailed Annie (Gail Davis), a fetching heroine who espouses the virtues of hard work (when a young boy allows that he wishes he could ride like her, Annie responds, "Ride for eight years, eight hours a day"). Western fans will also thrill to early appearances by such beloved character actors as Slim Pickens, Denver Pyle, Alan Hale, Jr., and "Davy Crockett" himself, Fess Parker. Although populated by outlaws, evil ranchers, and scheming cattlemen, the Western action here is kid-friendly.

Brad Johnson, as Deputy Sheriff Lofty Craig, handles the fisticuffs, while Annie handles the firearms, constantly shooting guns out of the hands of bad guys. This might be a hard sell for the young 'uns, but nostalgic Baby Boomers and Western buffs might want to give it a shot. Extras include a featurette on forever-after typecast Davis, the series' original pilot, archival photos, and an episode guide. A strong optional purchase. (D. Liebenson)

Brooklyn Nine-Nine: Season One ★★★

Universal, 3 discs, 475 min., not rated, DVD: \$44.98



Saturday Night Live alumnus Andy Samberg and *Homicide* veteran Andre Braugher go head-to-head in Fox's workplace sitcom set in a New York police squad bullpen. Samberg is maverick resident prankster Detective Jake Peralta (who also happens to have the best arrest percentage in the precinct), and Braugher is the new, no-nonsense man in charge, Capt. Ray Holt, who is determined to transform the class clown. The pair form the backbone of the narrative—flamboyantly energetic Jake versus deadpan Ray—but this is ultimately an ensemble show filled with colorful and eccentric characters, including physically intimidating Terry Crews as Terry Jeffords, a meek family man trying to avoid dangerous assignments; Stephanie Beatriz as hot-tempered Rosa Diaz; Joe Lo Truglio as Charles Boyle, a well-meaning doofus with a crush on Rosa; Chelsea Peretti as smart-mouthed civilian administrator Gina Linetti; and Melissa Fumero as Amy Santiago, the squad's other star—leading to an often literal competition between her and Jake (and inevitable romantic sparks). Uneven at first, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* quickly settles into its rhythm as the actors find their chemistry, and even though the setting is a police station, the show is really about office politics, relationships, and individuals learning to work as a team. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013-14 Golden Globe-winning debut season, extras include deleted scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Cesare Mori ★★1/2

MHz, 2 discs, 200 min., in Italian with English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.95



Cesare Mori (1871-1942) was one of the 20th century's most brutally effective crime fighters, known as "The Iron Prefect" for his harsh approach to destabilizing Mafia control in Sicily. This Italian TV production dramatizes Mori's efforts to thwart criminals by using the Sicilian people as part of a strategy that included setting up roadblocks around villages where

the Mafia had its stronghold. When informed that the community could not access food or water as a result, Mori refused to yield until he gained information from the locals. The plan worked—in a single night, Mori was responsible for the arrest of 300 Mafia hoodlums and other non-Mafia individuals who had terrorized Sicily. Mori's efforts impressed no less a figure than Mussolini, who appointed him to curb the Mafia presence in Palermo; but Mori's uncovering of evidence that linked Mafia chieftains with government officials in Rome ultimately hastened the early decline of his law enforcement career. While it tells an engrossing story, the drama is somewhat undercut by the miscasting of Swiss actor Vincent Pérez in the title role, an actor who is better known as a glamorous leading man than a gritty tough guy. Nevertheless, this is a handsome production that tells an often engrossing story, making it a strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)

Crossbones: Season One

★★★

Universal, 2 discs, 386 min., not rated, DVD: \$44.98

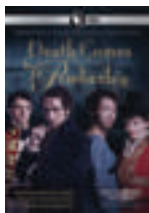


The standard opening home-video warning "Piracy Is Not a Victimless Crime" is somewhat amusing as a prelude to *Crossbones*, NBC's violent, amped-up revision of the mythic story of buccaneer Blackbeard, here portrayed with great gusto by John Malkovich. Having successfully faked his death, pirate Edward Teach, aka Blackbeard, aka "the Commodore," is the crafty lord of a pirate colony on the secret island of Santa Campana in the early 18th century. Ruthless British spy Tom Lowe (Richard Coyle) goes undercover as a ship's surgeon on a mission to assassinate Blackbeard and very nearly succeeds, but backs off at the hint of a secret Spanish plot against England, and joins the Commodore's motley crew to learn more. The result is a dizzying array of false alliances and betrayals with occasional hints of "steampunk" out-of-time technology (a submarine) and mysticism that threaten to take the show into more fantastic *Pirates of the Caribbean* territory but never quite do (although it is rather supernatural that women would look this good on a scurvy, pirate-dominated island). Is Teach a despotic psychopath or an enlightened sort whose outlaw mini-society—minus social classes or slavery—is a functioning, progressive democracy? Interestingly, a pirate-founded nation in the Bahamas is actually historically accurate; the credits claim that this tall tale drew inspiration from Colin Woodard's nonfiction account *The Republic of Pirates*. Presenting all nine episodes from the 2014 debut season (and last, since the show was canceled), extras include deleted scenes. Malkovich fans will appreciate this short-lived swashbuckling series. Recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Death Comes to Pemberley ★★1/2

PBS, 180 min., not rated, DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Combining two genres in which British TV excels—literary costume drama and murder mystery—*Death Comes to Pemberley*, based on the novel by the late P.D. James, is a sequel to *Pride and Prejudice*, set a few years after Austen's classic and centering on a murder in the woods around the manor home of Darcy (Matthew Rhys) and Elizabeth (Anna Maxwell Martin), who are happily married with a growing family. The prime suspect is the untrustworthy and morally dubious Wickham (Matthew Goode), who is married to Elizabeth's sister, Lydia (Jenna Coleman), but remains a rake and a cad. No love is lost between the honorable Darcy and his brother-in-law Wickham, but Darcy nonetheless stands by him and joins the constable (Trevor Eve) in the investigation, while Elizabeth makes her own inquiries. Meanwhile, the loving couple fall out over the future of Darcy's sister, Georgiana (Eleanor Tomlinson); Elizabeth believes she should marry for love, while Darcy insists on a socially appropriate match. A lovely period piece, this thoughtful tribute to Austen's beloved characters succeeds in large part due to excellent casting. The mystery is less involving than the interpersonal drama, which is both true to the spirit of Austen and generous enough to give Wickham—a charming villain in *Pride and Prejudice*—more dimension, with a suggestion that he can evolve. Featuring the uncut British version, this is highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Defiance: Season Two

★★1/2
Universal, 3 discs, not rated, DVD: \$59.98, Blu-ray: \$69.98

This ambitious Syfy original series—set in the future after an alien attack has destroyed Earth's cities and seeded the planet with plants and animals of extraterrestrial origin—returns to find the once-independent city of Defiance (built over the ruins of St. Louis, whose arch still stands) controlled by the authoritarian Earth Republic. Former mayor Amanda Rosewater (Julie Benz) is now running the local saloon, while cowboy lawkeeper Nolan (Grant Bowler) is on the road searching for Irisa (Stephanie Leonidas), his adopted alien daughter. The central storyline concerns the fate of Irisa, who becomes increasingly disconnected from her father and her community as she's transformed into a bloodthirsty messiah who is intended to wipe out the human population. Nolan is determined to save both the world and Irisa without sacrificing either. Meanwhile, power struggles roil the criminal underworld, leading to accommodations made with the Earth



Republic officials running the town. This set also introduces a new character, Pilar (Linda Hamilton), who shifts the power balance. Created by Rockne S. O'Bannon, *Defiance* offers an interesting melting pot of creatures, and the frontier attitude playing out amidst the devastation is interesting. Although popular among sci-fi fans, it's nevertheless not quite inventive enough to attract viewers from across the genre divide. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2014 second season, extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, webisodes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

From Dusk Till Dawn: Season One ★★

Entertainment One, 3 discs, 452 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.98, Blu-ray: \$49.98

Filmmaker Robert Rodriguez adapted his 1996 south-of-the-border vampire feature (scripted by Quentin Tarantino) as the keynote production of his cable TV channel, El Rey, a network geared toward Latino American audiences. The first season essentially expands the film, adding new characters and an elaborate backstory. D.J. Cotrona and Zane Holtz star as the notorious Gecko brothers, Seth and Richie (played by George Clooney and Tarantino in the big-screen original), and the narrative opens with their blood-soaked criminal rampage through Texas on their way to Mexico, as the younger, more violent Richie is assaulted by visions of vampires and demons. Robert Patrick fills the Harvey Keitel role as Jacob Fuller, a widowed preacher taken captive—along with his two teenage children—by the Geckos, and eventually they all cross the border and reach a Mexican strip club, where a nest of Aztec vampires awaits. *From Dusk Till Dawn* revels in the dusty desert setting, outlaw culture, and gory spectacle of gunfights and blood-sucker attacks, but the story takes a long time to get anywhere. Fans of Rodriguez movies such as *El Mariachi* and *Sin City* may approve, but this will likely be too raunchy and gratuitous for discerning horror fans. Still, since El Rey is not carried on all cable and satellite systems, this set may be the only opportunity for many to see the show. Compiling all 10 episodes from the 2014 debut season, extras include audio commentary, behind-the-scenes featurettes, faux commercials, and a Q&A with Rodriguez and cast members. Optional. (S. Axmaker)



Getting On: The Complete First Season

★★1/2
HBO, 180 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray: \$39.98

If your idea of laugh-out-loud comedy is a slew of tasteless gags at the expense



of the elderly, mentally ill, and otherwise infirm, then *Getting On* might be your thing. Another *Office*-style mock-doc that rips off its somewhat less offensive British cousin, *Getting On* follows a failing California extended-care unit and its hapless neurotic employees, who are arguably in worse shape than the ailing oldsters they attempt to care for. Laurie Metcalf stars as Dr. Jenna James, a lonely, ambitious, slightly psychotic MD who hangs around the ward making one failed attempt after another at achieving power and influence. Character actress Alex Borstein plays Dawn, an overweight compulsive eater who's a barely competent nurse. Both Metcalf and Borstein work hard at developing their respective characters, but the series relies too much on poking fun at the geriatric foibles of the ever-revolving cast of in-patients. The "jokes" here center on incontinence, dementia, and general senility-related issues of the poor folks who are unfortunate enough to find themselves at the mercy of the screw-ups that run the place. As with the American version of *The Office*, *Getting On* consistently overreaches for its laughs, mistaking social unease and human neuroses for comedic fodder. Compiling all six episodes from the 2013 debut season, extras include deleted scenes and a gag reel. Some critics found this brilliant (others not), so consider it a strong optional purchase. (M. Sandlin)

The Good Guys: The Complete First Season

★★
Fox, 4 discs, 960 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95

A tongue-in-cheek comedy-action series, *The Good Guys* stars Colin Hanks as Jack Bailey, a meek, self-righteous, by-the-book detective who has alienated the entire department and is stuck in the dead-end property crimes division. Bradley Whitford costars as Dan Stark, a one-time hero who seems to have stepped out of a 1970s police show where rules are broken and heads are busted without worrying about procedure, evidence, or the law. Needless to say, even when they solve cases, the pair leave property damage, angry officials, and potential lawsuits in their wake, thus frustrating any hope for promotion. Creator Matt Nix, who made the colorful *Burn Notice* for USA, here pushes the lighthearted humor of that series into an outright parody of cop-TV clichés. Whitford seems to relish the role of a bull-headed idiot whose words of wisdom have little grounding in reality, and he's the best thing in a show that unfortunately never really finds its balance. Sometimes fun, but more absurd than clever, *The Good Guys* was a flop, lasting only a single season. Compiling all 13 episodes from 2010 as part of 20th Century Fox Cinema Archive's manufacture-on-demand line, this is optional, at best. (S. Axmaker)



Graceland: The Complete Season 2 ★★1/2

Fox, 3 discs, 572 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.95

The first season of the USA series *Graceland*, centering on undercover agents from different organizations who share a beachside manor in Los Angeles, ended with hotshot rookie Mike Warren (Aaron Tveit) learning serious street smarts and practical lessons from his colleagues before returning to Washington, D.C. In this second set, Warren is back to take on a drug-smuggling ring, an investigation that puts the entire team under his command (not without some resentment) and reveals an even bigger conspiracy involving human trafficking and a crooked agent. Daniel Sunjata is Paul Briggs, the FBI veteran who serves as the house big brother, and Vanessa Ferlito, Brandon Jay McLaren, Serinda Swan, and Manny Montana fill out the ensemble as various FBI, DEA, and customs investigators. The household motto may be “no secrets,” but there is suspicion and distrust here, as agents cross the line and start sleeping with each other while also letting assorted deceptions play out. Both stylish and gritty, *Graceland* features a fair amount of action and may appeal to fans of FX crime shows, which it resembles (despite low ratings, the show has been renewed). Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2014 second season as part of 20th Century Fox Cinema Archive’s manufacture-on-demand line, this is a strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)



Grey’s Anatomy: Complete Tenth Season ★★1/2

Buena Vista, 6 discs, 1,085 min., TV-14, DVD: \$45.99

With *Grey’s Anatomy* creator Shonda Rhimes concentrating her attention on *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder*, this 10th season remains watchable, but is less involving. The year opens after a mudslide injures Richard (James Pickens Jr.) and Jackson (Jesse Williams); they survive, but the relationship between Callie (Sara Ramirez) and Arizona (Jessica Capshaw) takes a hit. After his divorce from Cristina (Sandra Oh), Owen (Kevin McKidd) finds a little happiness with fellow doctor Emma (Marguerite Moreau). Meanwhile, Alex (Justin Chambers) reconnects with his estranged father (James Remar), a blues musician with a drug problem. After giving birth the previous year, Meredith (Ellen Pompeo) spends much of her time bickering with Derek (Patrick Dempsey) and Cristina about their changed priorities (the arguments may be believable, but they also grow tiresome). A non-fraternization rule only adds to the tension, complicating the relationships between Alex and Jo (Camilla

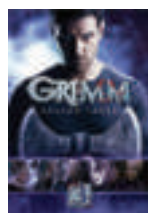


Luddington) and Jackson and April (Sarah Drew). Residents Shane (Gaius Charles), Leah (Tessa Ferrer), and Stephanie (Jerrika Hinton) also figure into various scenarios, but take a backseat to the main players. The biggest surprise arrives at the end when Preston (Isaiah Washington) returns to make Cristina an offer she can’t refuse. Since Grey Sloan Memorial (formerly Seattle Grace) is a teaching hospital, it isn’t all soap opera; other plot points revolve around state-of-the-art tools and procedures, including a 3D printer, a brain-mapping project, and the separation of conjoined twins. Compiling all 24 episodes from 2013–14, extras include an extended episode, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and bloopers. A strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

Grimm: Season Three ★★

Universal, 5 discs, 945 min., not rated, DVD: \$59.98; Blu-ray: \$69.98

A mix of dark fairy tale and modern police procedural, *Grimm* opens the third season with Nick (David Giuntoli), a homicide detective who is also a Grimm (one of a long line of hunters capable of seeing supernatural, shape-shifting creatures called Wesen), being turned into a zombie—but that’s the least of the complications. A royal baby is on the way, initiating a struggle to see who will possess the child; two of Nick’s peace-loving Wesen friends get married; and Nick becomes a mentor to a troubled girl—a young Grimm who doesn’t understand her abilities. *Grimm* plays like an adult *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, with a group of colleagues—including Hank (Russell Hornsby), who’s human, and Monroe (Silas Weir Mitchell), who’s a Wesen—coalescing around Nick, trusting him to lead them and protect them from predators. *Grimm*, like *Once Upon a Time*, remains one of the most popular of the new breed of urban-fantasy shows. Adding to the fun, the series is set and shot in Portland, OR, and it warmly embraces the “Keep Portland Weird” ethos. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013–14 third season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, webisodes, and deleted scenes. Exclusive to the Blu-ray release is an interactive “*Grimm* Guide” to creatures. Recommended. (S. Axmayer)



Hart to Hart: The Complete Third Season ★★

Shout! Factory, 6 discs, 1,164 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.98

Robert Wagner and Stefanie Powers star as self-made millionaire Jonathan Hart and his glamorous wife Jennifer, a former freelance journalist with a flair for adventure. They would seem to have it made,



but in this glitzy mystery series—created by Sidney Sheldon and produced by Aaron Spelling—the fabulously wealthy couple would rather be sleuthing than resting on their laurels in the lap of luxury. This third season sends the pair to Acapulco, Hawaii, and Europe for adventures. Ray Milland guest stars as Jennifer’s father, Stephen, a former intelligence agent for the Allied efforts in World War II whose past comes back to threaten him. The great gravel-voiced character actor Lionel Stander costars as their loyal butler and trusty sidekick, Max, who has a way of getting involved in their escapades. This is silly stuff, overall, a romp with beautiful people flitting through a high-society world filled with murderous types that will likely only appeal to viewers who may be nostalgic for Spelling’s breezy ‘80s TV style. Compiling all 24 episodes from 1981–82, this is optional, at best. (S. Axmayer)

Hemlock Grove: The Complete First Season ★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 3 discs, 720 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$49.95

Although not as popular or well-known as Netflix’s signature offerings, this rural gothic series produced by cult filmmaker Eli Roth served as the Internet streaming service’s entry into the growing genre of supernatural horror shows. The premise is simple: after a teenage girl is brutally murdered, the search for the serial killer stirs up family secrets and strange goings-on. Wealthy and estranged power couple Olivia and Norman Godfrey (Famke Janssen and Dougray Scott) run the town, which also harbors a shady gypsy clan who are the prime suspects—with matriarch Lynda Rumancek (Lili Taylor) playing it close to the vest. The storyline also features the usual high school cliques and collisions. The scions of the two main families, scruffy bad boy Peter Rumancek (Landon Liboiron) and arrogant rich kid Roman Godfrey (Bill Skarsgård), team up to find the murderer, whose unchecked reign of terror is more animalistic than human (as in: werewolf). Roth directs the pilot, but it takes a while for *Hemlock Grove* to find its atmosphere and pace, putting the emphasis on mood until the next shock or gory sequence jolts the story back into the gruesome realm. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 2013 first season, extras include audio commentary on the pilot, and behind-the-scenes featurettes. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmayer)



Homeland: The Complete Third Season ★★1/2

Fox, 616 min., not rated, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99

Showtime’s flagship series continues to veer in unexpected directions during

the third season, which opens in the aftermath of the devastating explosion at Langley, with Brody (Damian Lewis) being the presumed terrorist bomber. Brody ends up in Caracas, left to decay in a slum where his “protectors” get him hooked on heroin, holding him captive like the prisoner he was in Iraq. Saul (Mandy Patinkin), now acting CIA director, finally “rescues” Brody, only to send him on a suicide mission back to Iraq as an assassin. Meanwhile, Carrie (Claire Danes), pregnant with Brody’s child, is left to deconstruct the elaborate plot behind the CIA bombing. With Saul still pushing her as mentor/antagonist, the pair create covert ops that evolve in often shocking, yet plausible ways—a signature ploy that has kept *Homeland* so consistently compelling, as Carrie goes off her meds (and off the rails), Saul’s moral and marital agonies continue, and the mysterious field agent Peter Quinn (Rupert Friend) gains a foothold. With its artful writing and brilliant characterization of individuals torn and tattered by secrets and lies, *Homeland* has become a cultural touchstone that seriously deals with issues related to geopolitical conflict. Compiling all 12 episodes from the 2013 third season, extras include an episode commentary, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and deleted scenes. Highly recommended. (T. Fry)



The Honorable Woman

★★★★1/2

BBC, 3 discs, 468 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.98

The ever-timely Israeli-Palestinian conflict serves as the setting for this eight-part deliberately-paced BBC miniseries that picks up momentum as its complex story unfolds. It takes a bit to warm up to American Maggie Gyllenhaal as Nessa Stein, a British-Israeli woman, but she gradually wins viewer interest as she tries to emerge from the shadow of her father’s legacy. Nessa and her brother saw their Israeli arms manufacturer father assassinated before their eyes. Now, nearly three decades later, they head the family foundation, but have shifted its focus to promoting “equality of opportunity” for the Palestinians. “Terror thrives in poverty,” insists Nessa, newly elected to the House of Lords. But as she is chided during a radio interview, “When it comes to the history of the Middle East, it never ends well for idealists, does it?” It certainly doesn’t end well for the Palestinian she has chosen to work with instead of a suspect family member; the former meets a suspiciously untimely end. Suffice to say that little here is as it seems and everyone harbors secrets. *The*



Honorable Woman is more John Le Carré than *Homeland*, but even though it may be more cerebral, the series also has its share of sudden, shocking deaths and sex. The impeccably cast ensemble includes a handdog Stephen Rea working for MI6, Janet McTeer as his boss, and Eve Best as a duplicitous British Foreign Agent with a connection to Nessa’s brother. Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette. Highly recommended. (D. Liebenson)

In the Flesh: The Complete Season Two

★★★

BBC, 2 discs, 342 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98

This award-winning British answer to the hit American show *The Walking Dead* diverges considerably from its stateside cousin, set in an England where a zombie plague has been tamed with drugs and therapy and the victims (whose affliction is dubbed “partially deceased syndrome,” or PDS) return home to families and attempt to fit back into a society that hasn’t quite come to terms with the living dead, let alone the horrors of their earlier uprising. Central to the narrative are revived teenager Kieran Walker (Luke Newberry), who had committed suicide, and his parents, Steve and Sue (Steve Cooper, Marie Critchley), and sister Jem (Harriet Cains). The second season continues to explore the themes of intolerance, hatred, forgiveness, acceptance, guilt, and depression, while also expanding the story to follow the rise of anti-PDS groups and hate crimes, the creation of laws that discriminate against PDS individuals, and the emergence of a vocal and active PDS pride movement that preaches a “second rising” and inspires some members to revert to their feral ways, leading to a new wave of attacks and fear. The premise makes for intelligent and evocative drama, as well as a potent metaphor for prejudice, while never losing sight of the individuals caught up in the whirlwind. Compiling all six second season episodes broadcast in the U.S. in 2014, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Jeffersons: The Complete Series

★★★★★
Shout! Factory, 33 discs, 4,440 min., not rated, DVD: \$229.99

After five seasons as recurring characters on Norman Lear’s groundbreaking sitcom *All in the Family*, George and Weezy Jefferson moved from the house next to the Bunkers to a “deee-luxe” apartment on Manhattan’s East Side to spin-off this long-running sitcom. Sherman Hemsley is insufferable dry-cleaning mogul George, and Isabel Sanford is the even-tempered Weezy,



living in a high-rise surrounded by very liberal neighbors (Roxie Roker and Franklin Cover as Helen and Tom Willis, Paul Benedict as Brit Harry Bentley) and their opinionated maid, Florence (Marla Gibbs), who became a regular cast member by the third year. Jefferson son Lionel (alternately played by Damon Evans and Mike Evans—no relation) literally marries the girl next door, Helen and Tom’s daughter—in the fourth season, and the fifth run features a classic episode in which George receives an award as a small business owner and then discovers that it’s due to his stature. While not as aggressively topical as *All in the Family*, the show dealt with race and prejudice, and was the first American TV program to feature a black-and-white interracial couple as characters. The series lasted a whopping 11 seasons—longer than *All in the Family*—and this comprehensive set compiles all 253 episodes from 1975-85. Extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, the *All in the Family* episode that sent the Jeffersons to Manhattan, episodes from two spin-off shows, and a booklet with an episode guide and an essay by critic Tom Shales. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Johan Falk: Season One

★★★1/2

MHz, 3 discs, 564 min., in Swedish w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$39.95

This energetic Swedish crime drama centers on the title character, a hardboiled special operations cop who was introduced in a trilogy of films made between 1999-2003. In this compilation of six feature-length episodes from the 2009 first season, Johan Falk (Jakob Eklund) is back in his native Sweden after a long stint at Europol, where he made his bones with ruthless tactics and a keen mind for hunches. Now based in Gothenburg with a crack unit called GSI, his sights are set primarily on organized crime. Falk displays both a brutal hatred of supercriminals and a head-butting personal style with his commanders. He’s also a family man who inevitably brings his work troubles home. Although most of the episodes are generically titled—“Special Operations Group,” “Brothers in Arms,” “National Target,” “Leo Gaut,” “Operation Nightingale,” and “The Outlawed”—the stories move fast, shifting from action and violence to thoughtful dialogue. A real plus here is the character of Frank Wagner, a conflicted informant played with sensitivity and verve by Joel Kinnaman (who shot to American fame as Detective Holder in *The Killing*); Kinnaman’s nuanced scenes with Eklund and various criminal associates offer wonderful foreshadowings of what was to come for this gifted actor. While not exactly must-see-TV, *Johan Falk* is a serviceable entry into the international oeuvre of cop sagas. A strong optional purchase. (T. Fry)



Mad Men: The Final Season, Part 1 ★★½

Lionsgate, 336 min., not rated, DVD: 3 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$39.98



A consistently compelling series centered on a Madison Avenue advertising agency in the 1960s, *Mad Men* has earned four Emmys for Outstanding Drama Series over the years, elevating American Movie Classics into a major player on cable. AMC asked creator Matthew Weiner to extend the final season and split it into two parts, and this first half—set in 1969—charts the efforts made by Don Draper (Jon Hamm) to work his way back into the good graces of the company and repair his relationship with Peggy (Elisabeth Moss), once his protégé and now his boss, after his earlier self-destructive breakdown. Meanwhile, his marriage to Megan (Jessica Paré), an aspiring actress who has moved to California to pursue her career, falls apart. This sequence also spotlights the odyssey of senior partner Roger Sterling (John Slattery), who flirts with counterculture drugs and free love but is forced to step up and become a leader after the death of his partner and mentor, Bertram Cooper (Robert Morse). Smart and perceptive, *Mad Men* uses the prism of history to reflect on contemporary society, and has become as much a part of popular-culture conversation as the earlier *The Sopranos*. Compiling the first seven episodes from 2014, extras include episode commentaries, and historical-related featurettes. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Modern Family: The Complete Fifth Season ★★★

Fox, 3 discs, 516 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.98



As the title suggests, this is a sitcom for our times, centering on an extended family that is nothing if not diverse. Patriarch Jay Pritchett (Ed O'Neill) is divorced and remarried to the considerably younger Gloria (Sofia Vergara), who has an adolescent son, Manny (Rico Rodriguez), and now a new baby as well. Jay's grown daughter, Claire (Julie Bowen), returns to the workforce after years as a stay-at-home mom to Haley (Sarah Hyland), Alex (Ariel Winter), and Luke (Nolan Gould), and she joins Jay at his company. Meanwhile, Jay's son, Mitchell (Jesse Tyler Ferguson), a self-conscious, anxiety-ridden gay man, can finally marry his flamboyant partner, Cameron (Eric Stonestreet). This season opens with same-sex marriage becoming legal in California, and the longtime partners, who have an adopted daughter, Lily (Aubrey Anderson-Emmons), planning to formally ask each other to make their relationship official. Of course, the best-laid plans get sidetracked, but the proposals are exchanged and the

narrative arc builds to the wedding in the two-part finale—an event that, naturally, is fraught with disasters. Along the way are new schools for the kids and trips to Las Vegas and Australia (shot on location). The series won its fifth consecutive Emmy for Outstanding Comedy Series, as well as awards for directing and for supporting actor Ty Burrell (who plays Claire's eager-to-please husband, Phil), and it remains one of TV's most popular shows. Compiling all 24 episodes from the 2013–14 fifth season, extras include an extended episode, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and deleted and alternate scenes. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Mom: The Complete First Season ★★½

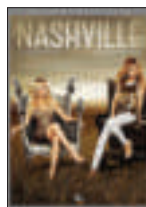
Warner, 3 discs, 459 min., not rated, DCD: \$44.98



This new sitcom centered around three generations of women living in the same household—starring Allison Janney (in an Emmy-winning role) and talented comic actress Anna Faris—hails from Chuck Lorre, creator of *Two and a Half Men* and *The Big Bang Theory*. Like those shows, *Mom* revolves around dysfunctional characters, but uses humor to explore more serious issues. Janney plays Bonnie Plunkett, whose daughter Christy (Faris) is—like Bonnie—a single mom and recovering alcoholic. Representing the next generation is Christy's hard-working teenage daughter, Violet (Sadie Calvano), who finds out that she's pregnant by her sweet but stupid stoner boyfriend, Luke (Spencer Daniels). Over the course of the season, Christy confronts her resentment over Bonnie's failures while struggling with her own sobriety and guilt. Janney gets the more caustic role, slow to take responsibility. As time passes, both deal with the complicated emotions of reconnecting with Christy's absent father (and Bonnie's ex-boyfriend), Alvin (Kevin Pollak). Set in the world of working-class jobs, unemployment, and deadbeat dads, the humor is rooted in failure and humiliation, but the narrative is really about slow steps to self-improvement and family support. Unfortunately, this is not to say that *Mom* is edgy in any way; in fact, it hews rather closely to the Lorre style of insult humor and raunchy one-liners. But it does feature two of the funniest women on TV. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013–14 first season, extras include a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Nashville: The Complete Second Season ★★★

Buena Vista, 5 discs, 948 min., TV-PG, DVD: \$45.99



The second season of ABC's primetime soap alternates between bed hopping and country music

business machinations. The opener finds Rayna (producer Connie Britton) recovering from a car crash, while her young competitor, Juliette (Hayden Panettiere), does her best to act concerned. After a spell behind bars, Deacon (Charles Esten), who was in the car with Rayna, attempts to get his life back in order with a new girlfriend (Christina Chang) and return to performing. When Jeff (Oliver Hudson), the head of Edgehill Records, steals the closeted Will (Chris Carmack) away from Rayna's new label, Highway 65, she concentrates her attentions on the delicate Scarlett (Clare Bowen), Deacon's niece. Gunnar (Sam Palladio), Will's songwriting roommate, also figures into the scenario, with Jeff sending him on the road with country superstar Luke Wheeler (Will Chase), Rayna's new boyfriend. And Gunnar forms a trio with his Bluebird Café colleagues, Zoey (Chaley Rose), Scarlett's best friend, and Avery (Jonathan Jackson), Juliette's guitar player. A new performer enters the scene in the form of Layla (Aubrey Peeples), a reality-show veteran who becomes Will's beard. Aside from Jeff, the other bad guys include Rayna's father, Wyatt (Powers Boothe), who serves time for financial misdeeds, and her ex-husband, Teddy (Eric Close), who marries his mistress (Kimberly Williams-Paisley) and attempts to put a crimp in Deacon's career. With several songs per episode, there's a lot of music here, and most of it is actually quite good (Buddy Miller serves as music producer). Britton may be the weakest singer, but she gives a strong central performance here. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013–14 second season, extras include a music special with the stars performing at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, deleted scenes, and bloopers. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

New Girl: The Complete Season Three ★★½

Fox, 3 discs, 499 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.98



This sitcom starring indie darling Zooey Deschanel as the lone female in a bachelor pad harboring three single men opens its third run with grade-school teacher and bouncy free spirit Jess (Deschanel) and roommate Nick (Jake Johnson), a nice-guy bartender, succumbing to their mutual attraction, which they've been dancing around since the show's early days. Meanwhile, best friend Cece (Hannah Simone) calls off her planned wedding, and another of Jess's roommates, the good-looking idiot Schmidt (Max Greenfield), tries to date Cece and another girl without either finding out. Of course, this isn't going to end well, and the ensuing chronicle of failed romance and the difficulty of maintaining a relationship is handled with both humor and a surprisingly mature take on friendship and love. Damon Wayans Jr., who costarred

in the pilot, returns as Coach, friend to Winston (Lamorne Morris), the former professional athlete struggling to find a new career. In a TV culture rife with eccentric personalities, *New Girl* features some of the quirkiest—naturally dividing viewers—but it's a testament to the writing and the cast chemistry that it mostly works as a whimsical, comically warped show. The characters are likable despite their oddball edges, not because of them, and the series is sweeter and less raunchy than similar fare. Compiling all 23 episodes from the 2013–14 third season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

The Newsroom: The Complete Second Season ★★★

HBO, 3 discs, 540 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$59.99, Blu-ray: \$79.98



Like other Aaron Sorkin productions, this HBO series—set at a cable news channel trying to remain relevant in the partisan culture of 24-hour programming—celebrates intelligence and ingenuity, presenting idealistic professionals with sharp political instincts and poor impulse control—a combination embodied in veteran anchor Will McAvoy (Jeff Daniels). This season turns on a controversial investigative report on the use of chemical weapons by the U.S. military in the Middle East, a storyline that unfolds in flashbacks as network lawyer Rebecca Halliday (Marcia Gay Harden) questions the staff hard after the report is discredited. Unfortunately, however, what might have been a provocative look into the complexity of investigative reporting and journalistic ethics ends up with a simplistic scapegoat. Elsewhere in the narrative arc, assistant producer Jim Harper (John Gallagher Jr.) hits the road to cover Mitt Romney's political campaign; production assistant Maggie Jordan (Alison Pill) takes on an overseas assignment that leaves a serious emotional scar; and other staffers pursue professional leads and personal interests, while Charlie Skinner (Sam Waterston) watches over all as head of the news division. Sorkin's affection for his characters is hard to resist, and those who like his brand of collegial banter and wit will find this to be quite engaging. Compiling all nine episodes from the 2013 second season, extras include episode commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and deleted scenes. Recommended, overall. (S. Axmaker)

NYPD Blue: Season 07 ★★★

Shout! Factory, 6 discs, 960 min., not rated, DVD: \$34.99

The defining cop show of its era, *NYPD Blue* weathered numerous cast changes during its 12-year run, but one constant

throughout was Dennis Franz as Detective Andy Sipowicz, a character who evolved from an alcoholic, bigoted burnout to a mentor and leader, not to mention husband and father. By the time of the seventh season, in which he's paired with his third partner, Danny Sorenson (Rick Schroder), the show had begun to revolve around Sipowicz, and this sequence opens to find him struggling with the death of his wife, which leaves him a widower and single parent. While Sipowicz forges a strong relationship with Sorenson and takes a greater leadership role in the squad, Diane Russell (Kim Delaney) tackles a crooked cop (Scott Cohen) and helps fellow officer Jill Kirkendall (Andrea Thompson) battle her criminal ex-husband. It's the final season for Kirkendall and for Detective Martinez (Nicholas Turturro), the latter replaced by Baldwin Jones (Henry Simmons), a young and dedicated professional who partners with Medavoy (Gordon Clapp). Schroder plays Sorenson as a kid from the streets with a strong sense of justice, but he never managed to break out of the ensemble like Jimmy Smits, and the writers here seem stymied by the challenge of crafting stories for the female characters. The individual cases, however, continue to balance gritty street drama with clever twists, and the strength of Franz and the overall cast chemistry keep the quality consistent. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2000 seventh season, this is recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Pee-wee's Playhouse: The Complete Series

★★★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 8 discs, 1,104 min., not rated, DVD: \$149.99



This Saturday morning kids show created by Paul Reubens was the most imaginative and energetic offering of its kind when it premiered in 1986, and its playfulness and creativity remain top-notch. Originally devised for an adult cabaret production before being turned into the goofy innocent in a boyish suit and bow tie for the hit movie *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, the TV character of Pee-wee is a squeaky, gawking, endlessly whimsical child-man in a land of make-believe, the host of his own psychedelic version of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* in a clubhouse where the toys and furniture have personalities of their own. Each episode is packed with colorful figures, inventive activity, animated interludes, and peals of party screams whenever the word of the day is uttered. Pee-wee's regular buddies include Laurence Fishburne as Cowboy Curtis, S. Epatha Merkerson as Reba the Mail Lady, and William Marshall as the King of Cartoons, who presents clips from surreal animations of the 1930s. Both sophisticated

and simple, the series finds joy in goofy jokes and make-believe while slipping in references for the grown-ups, which earned it fans both young and old. Every installment also sported a lesson, although never at the expense of the fun. Winner of 22 Emmy Awards during its four-year run, this landmark of children's programming has been newly remastered for Blu-ray. Compiling all 45 episodes from 1986–90—plus the 1988 *Pee-wee's Playhouse Christmas Special* (VL Online-12/04), extras include new cast and crew interviews, and behind-the-scenes featurettes. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Penny Dreadful: The Complete First Season

★★★★1/2

Paramount, 3 discs, 435 min., not rated, DVD: \$42.99, Blu-ray: \$48.99



This original Showtime series sports a premise similar to the graphic novel *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*: namely, characters and supernatural beings from 19th-century horror literature exist in the real world. Created by Oscar-nominated screenwriter John Logan, *Penny Dreadful* centers on individuals operating in the London underworld. Sir Malcolm Murray (Timothy Dalton) is searching for his daughter, Mina (Olivia Llewellyn), who's been taken by a vampire (as in the novel *Dracula*); he's helped by Vanessa Ives (Eva Green), a medium with a troubled past and a possible curse upon her. Josh Hartnett is Ethan Chandler, an American who comes to London as part of a Wild West show and hires himself out as a gunman to the team. Assisting is Dr. Victor Frankenstein (Harry Treadaway), whose first experiment has returned to demand a mate, and weaving through all of their stories is the decadent Dorian Gray (Reeve Carney), who woos Vanessa. *Penny Dreadful* boasts excellent production values, strong writing, fine acting, and a moody gothic atmosphere. Serving up tasty adult fare, the show is one of Showtime's most popular productions to date. Compiling all eight episodes from the 2014 debut season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Red Skelton Show: The Early Years—1951-1955 ★★★

Timeless, 11 discs, 2,110 min., not rated, DVD: \$59.98



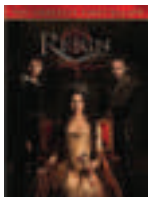
Red Skelton made a highly successful transition from radio to television in 1951 and reigned supreme as America's favorite TV comedian for two decades, playing such characters as goofy bumpkin Clem Kadiddlehopper, Willie Lump Lump, inept Sheriff Deadeye, punch-drunk boxer Cauliflower McPugg, and good-hearted tramp Freddie

the *Freelander* (in classic clown makeup and often performed in pantomime)—all presented within spotlight skits during the half-hour show. Most of the guest stars appeared only briefly, at least in the first couple of seasons, when Milton Berle, Bob Hope, and John Wayne did walk-ons for a bit of banter with Skelton. He was clearly the star, from his opening monologue, to the sketches written around his trademark personas, to the final farewell. Later segments featured more guests (incorporated more fully), as in “Dial ‘B’ for Brush,” with Clem Kadiddlehopper as a traveling salesman in a castle with Bela Lugosi and Lon Chaney Jr.; and “A USO Thanksgiving,” with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis. A piece of TV history (one of the most highly rated programs of its day) and a tribute to a beloved comic, this set will likely be of interest to older viewers and nostalgia buffs. Compiling 90 episodes from the first four seasons (1951–55), extras include the feature-length biographical profile of Skelton *America’s Clown*, a complete dress rehearsal of the episode “Deadeye From Mars,” and a *Look* magazine awards special hosted by Skelton. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Reign: The Complete First Season ★★

Warner, 5 discs, 913 min., not rated, DVD: \$59.98

Although set at the 16th-century French court, this CW series is no history lesson—instead, *Reign* uses the era as a springboard for an imaginative period soap opera overflowing with romances, betrayals, and political machinations, with attempted poisonings and executions prominently featured. The action revolves around Mary (Adelaide Kane), young queen of Scotland, who arrives in France at the court of King Henry II (Alan Van Sprang) in 1557 as the betrothed of his son and heir, Francis (Toby Regbo). But Francis’s illegitimate brother Sebastian (Torrance Coombs) also has eyes for her, and Henry’s wife, Catherine de’ Medici (Megan Follows), plots to manipulate affairs, particularly when prophecies from the seer Nostradamus (Rossif Sutherland) suggest that bad things are coming. International intrigue is also part of the mix, with the English lusting after Scotland, and Henry eager to add England to his realm—using Mary as a pawn to that end (while also growing increasingly unbalanced himself). Meanwhile, a bunch of pagans are seeking human sacrifices for their unholy rituals—and that’s only the tip of the narrative iceberg in this deliciously loony mix of fact and fiction. The combination of attractive young players, lovely costumes, and devilish plot twists makes for a campy series and a guilty pleasure. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013–14 first season, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes and deleted scenes. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Scandal: The Complete Third Season ★★

Buena Vista, 4 discs, 774 min., TV-14, DVD: \$45.99

If the first two seasons of Shonda Rhimes’s twisty soap opera starring Kerry Washington as Olivia Pope—head of a D.C. firm specializing in defusing political crises—were over-the-top, the third goes even further, but remains insanely watchable. The narrative begins with the ramifications of Olivia’s outing as the president’s mistress but quickly gravitates into the skullduggery connected with B613, the ultra-secretive black-ops agency in which Olivia’s father (Joe Morton) is a prime mover—all while her company continues to deal with salacious cases. Later, President Grant (Tony Goldwyn) is challenged for re-election from within his administration, while Olivia’s terrorist mother (Khandi Alexander) is at the center of a bomb plot that threatens to derail the entire election in the cliffhanger finale. No one could ever accuse *Scandal* of subtlety with its rollercoaster ride of outrageous behavior at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue and throughout the rest of the nation’s capital. Compiling all 18 episodes from the 2013–14 third season, extras include an “extended” finale, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (F. Swietek)



Sgt. Bilko—The Phil Silvers Show: The Complete Series

★★★★1/2

Shout! Factory, 20 discs, 2,892 min., not rated, DVD: \$129.99

Phil Silvers enjoyed a solid career as comic relief in Hollywood, but this TV sitcom made him famous. Scheming Master Sgt. Ernie Bilko (Silvers) is the reigning con-man in charge of the motor pool at Fort Baxter in Roseville, KS, where he and his partners-in-hustle, Corporals Rocco Barbella (Harvey Lembeck) and Steve Henshaw (Allan Melvin), target every fresh recruit and every payday bankroll in soldiers’ pockets while playing all the angles to get out of anything that resembles work. Paul Ford is Colonel Hall, the commander who’s fully aware of Bilko’s reputation but is nonetheless his eternal foil, and Joe E. Ross is the gruff but lovable camp cook, Sgt. Rupert Ritzik. The show earned Emmys for Best Comedy Writing and Best Comedy Series for three years of its four-year run, and Silvers went on to play variations on the Bilko character on TV and in the movies throughout the 1960s. Guest stars include Dick Van Dyke, Charlotte Rae, Larry Storch, Alan Alda, Fred Gwynne, Al Lewis, Paul Lynde, and George Kennedy. A landmark of TV comedy and one of the most highly regarded and



influential programs of its era, *Sgt. Bilko* ran for decades in syndication. Compiling all 142 episodes from 1955–59, extras include episode commentaries, the original “lost” pilot, an archival interview with Silvers, TV appearances, and a photo gallery. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Sleepy Hollow: The Complete First Season

★★★

Fox, 561 min., not rated, DVD: 4 discs, \$39.98; Blu-ray: 3 discs, \$49.99

Fox’s spooky horror-fantasy series combines elements from two of Washington Irving’s most famous stories—“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle”—to create a supernatural drama in which Ichabod Crane (Tom Mison), a soldier during the American Revolution, wakes up centuries later on a mission to stop the Headless Horseman, now revived in contemporary times. Nicole Beharie is modern-day policewoman Abbie Mills, who overcomes her skepticism and teams up with Ichabod to thwart the murderer—here presented as Death, one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse—and other demons from invading through the small New England town of Sleepy Hollow. Both characters are haunted by battles with dark forces from the past, which sent Ichabod’s wife into a magical limbo and Abbie’s sister into a mental facility. While it all sounds somber, the series has a clever sense of humor and offers a playful rewrite of American history, with George Washington resorting to supernatural weapons to defend the colonies. Lively storytelling, shadowy atmosphere, and witty writing have already made this a cult favorite. Compiling all 13 episodes from 2013–14, extras include episode commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Sopranos: The Complete Series

★★★★

HBO, 28 discs, 4,980 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$279.98

This brilliant series gave “family crisis” a whole new meaning, brought a renewed sophistication to TV drama, and was HBO’s first must-see—and highest rated ever—original series. Emmy-winner James Gandolfini’s Tony Soprano, a blue-collar mobster living in an upper-middle-class neighborhood, battles panic attacks and assassination attempts as he juggles two families: the first with his wife, Carmela (Emmy-winner Edie Falco), kids Meadow and A.J. (Jamie-Lynn Sigler, Robert Iler), and bitter, emasculating mother, Livia (a brilliant Nancy Marchand, who died after filming the second season); and the second being the New Jersey mob. Lorraine Bracco



is Dr. Jennifer Melfi, the therapist who tries to help Tony balance a comfortable suburban existence and a violent criminal lifestyle. *The Sopranos* quickly became a cultural phenomenon, and creator David Chase ended its six-year run with a finale that evocatively proclaimed that mob life would never afford closure to the Sopranos—a conclusion that thrilled, impressed, frustrated, and enraged viewers, generating endless conversations across the media spectrum. Written with a marvelous ear for language and a sharp sense of character, *The Sopranos* made full use of cable's no-holds-barred opportunities, consistently delivering shocking violence, casual sex, and epithet-laced gangster-speak, while also presenting a modern mob drama with intelligence and insight. Previously released on DVD, all 86 episodes from 1999–2007 have been remastered here for Blu-ray. Extras include an exclusive new documentary on the creation and evolution of the show, roundtable dinners with cast and crew, audio commentaries, behind-the-scenes featurettes, interviews, and deleted scenes. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Axmaker)

True Blood: The Complete Seventh Season ★★★

HBO, 4 discs, 600 min., TV-MA, DVD: \$59.99; Blu-ray: \$79.98

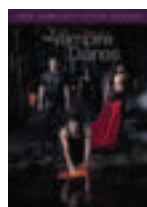
When *True Blood* (developed by *Six Feet Under* creator Alan Ball) premiered on HBO in 2008, the sexy, splashy melodrama about vampires coming out of the shadows and into human society gave the pay-cable network a buzz-worthy hit. Although it eventually slid into increasingly outrageous storylines and the ratings slipped accordingly, the series retained loyal fans to the end. For this seventh and final set, the show ostensibly puts the on-again, off-again romance between the part human-part faerie heroine Sookie (Anna Paquin) and centuries-old vampire Bill Compton (Stephen Moyer) at the center, but it's still really an ensemble effort, with dozens of figures and plenty of complicated relationships—all given their due in this wrap-up. At the same time, the terrible Hep-V plague continues to turn vamps into rabid creatures before finally killing them (an AIDS metaphor for the series), and this season adds the Japanese yakuza syndicate into the mix as everyone scrambles to find an antidote or a vaccination for the disease. This final compilation never reaches the thrilling blend of horror pulp and social metaphor that made the first few runs such a pop-culture fixture, but it does provide closure and even a happy ending for many of its characters. Compiling all 10 episodes from 2014, extras include episode commentaries, and a behind-the-scenes featurette (exclusive to the Blu-ray release is a bonus featurette and an interactive guide). Recommended. S. Axmaker



The Vampire Diaries: The Complete Fifth Season ★★★

Warner, 926 min., not rated, DVD: 5 discs, \$59.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: 9 discs, \$69.98

The cast and creative crew of *The Vampire Diaries* deserve kudos for keeping their fantasy world of undead, witches, and other supernatural friends and foes hurtling forward with no signs of slowing down. This compilation offers more pretty young bodies in various stages of life or death, caught up in torturous romances and dark-versus-light conflicts—or perhaps that should be gray-versus-gray (nuance and murk are more prominent now that the characters have matured a bit). The narrative opens with Elena (Nina Dobrev) cheerily starting college after a passionate summer with vamp boyfriend Damon (Ian Somerhalder), only to be sucked back into ancient gruesome doings, while Stefan (Paul Wesley) is locked in a safe at the bottom of a lake, where he floats in vampire purgatory. In between murderous sprees, the show serves up new viruses and supernatural phenomena, including the appearance of a mysterious subspecies of witches who come to the fore, along with the terrifying prospect of spirit magic being banished from Mystic Falls. The influence of creator Kevin Williamson still haunts the writing and design of this CW hit series aimed at young adults. Compiling all 22 episodes from the 2013–14 fifth season, extras include a 2013 Comic-Con panel segment, behind-the-scenes featurettes, deleted scenes, and a gag reel. Recommended. (T. Fry)



When the Boat Comes In ★★★1/2

BFS, 4 discs, 672 min., not rated, DVD: \$39.98

For those who recall 1970s British TV as primarily featuring the upper crust (most notably *Upstairs, Downstairs*), this grim series centered on the troubles of the working classes in post-World War I Britain will come as a surprise. Set in an economically depressed northern England mining village, *When the Boat Comes In* focuses on former Royal Army sergeant Jack Ford (James Bolam), who marries into the volatile Seaton family and becomes the center of their many dramatic turns of fortune. Wartime victory did not lead to prosperity, and the ossified class structure feeds an “us-versus-them” atmosphere that undercuts any hope for upward mobility. With storylines involving a disastrous labor strike, engaging in crime to make ends meet, illnesses, intense romantic interludes, and corruption, there is no shortage of drama. Fortunately, the narratives avoid lapsing into soap opera clichés thanks to sharp direction by Ronald Wilson and deeply textured scripts that also offer rich in-



sight into the grittier elements of 1920s British history. Character actor Bolam shines in the starring role, anchoring a large ensemble of capable supporting actors. Compiling all 13 episodes from the 1976 first season, this is highly recommended. (P. Hall)

The Wonder Years ★★★1/2

StarVista (avail. from www.time-life.com), 26 discs, 2,645 min., not rated, DVD: \$249.95

As with *Miami Vice* and *Freaks and Geeks*, music was a key component to *The Wonder Years*, which featured a classic rock soundtrack that set the stage and the nostalgic mood for this beloved series taking place in the late 1960s and '70s. So before making the investment in this complete series box set, be assured that Joe Cocker's version of “With a Little Help From My Friends” remains the show's theme song. Not all of the original music could be secured, but it's a wonder that the producers got the bulk of it (100 of the show's 115 episodes are presented here intact). *The Wonder Years*, which ran from 1988 to 1993, has aged beautifully in its portrait of a suburban family coming of age. Fred Savage is a pitch-perfect Everykid as Kevin, with Danica McKellar as Winnie, the quintessential girl next door, and Josh Saviano as Kevin's geekier best friend. At the heart of the show is the narration by Daniel Stern as the adult Kevin, who offers running commentary on his adolescence. Kevin's father (Dan Lauria) is no Ward Cleaver. He's a gruff, “bust my hump” kind of guy who finds it difficult to communicate with his son. As it aged, the series tended to let the music do the heavy emotional lifting, but its earliest seasons are indeed wondrous. The voluminous extras (over 20 hours worth) range from six takes (with commentary) of Kevin and Winnie's first kiss in the pilot episode, to Alley Mills (Kevin's mom) reading the letter she wrote to the producer about the show's finale, along with loads of cast and crew interviews, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and a 2014 cast reunion. Well worth the wait, this is highly recommended. (D. Liebenson)



Video Librarian Online

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) for more reviews during January and February, including: *Accused: Series 1 & 2*, *Bates Motel: Season Two*, *Guardians of the Museum*, *Mister Ed: The Complete Series*, *Sons of Anarchy: Season Six*, *Turks & Caicos*, *WKRP in Cincinnati: The Complete Series*, and much more!



The following list, selected and compiled by Video Librarian staff, honors the best new documentaries reviewed in the magazine and online during 2014. Unless otherwise noted, titles are available from most distributors.

The Address (PBS, 90 min., DVD: \$24.99 [\$54.99 w/PPR from www.teacher.shop.pbs.org]). This inspiring PBS-aided film by famed documentarian Ken Burns chronicles an annual event at the Vermont-based Greenwood School—a specialty institution of last resort for young males with learning/behavioral disorders, including dyslexia and ADHD—in which the students recite the entire Gettysburg Address from memory. (VL-7/14)



After Tiller (Oscilloscope, 88 min., DVD: \$34.99 [\$295 w/PPR from Bullfrog Films, www.bullfrogfilms.com]). Co-directed by Martha Shane and Lana Wilson, this controversial documentary presents a sympathetic, non-sensationalized portrait of Drs. LeRoy Carhart, Susan Robinson, Warren Hern, and Shelley Sella—the last four doctors in America who are publicly willing to terminate pregnancy in the third trimester. (VL-7/14)



American Winter (View Film [www.americanwinterfilm.com]), 90 min., DVD: \$20: individuals; \$100: public libraries; \$300: colleges & universities). The twin blows of job losses and advancing poverty hit several Portland, OR, families hard in filmmaker Joe Gantz's melancholy HBO-aided look at paycheck-to-paycheck despair and reduced circumstances in the wake of 2008's economic crash. (VL-5/14)



Bay of All Saints (Women Make Movies [www.wmm.com]), 74 min., in Portuguese w/English subtitles, DVD: \$89: public libraries; \$350: colleges & universities). Filmed over six years, director Annie Eastman's documen-

tary traces the impact of a World Bank-funded effort to eliminate Bahia's slums, focusing on single mothers who experience a deep loss of community and independence when the government initiates relocation efforts as part of an ecological restoration effort. (VL Online-3/14)



Best Kept Secret (BKS Film [www.amazon.com]), 85 min., DVD: \$17.95 [\$295 w/PPR from Alexander Street Press, www.alexanderstreet.com]). Filmmaker Samantha Buck's documentary—shot over a year and a half at the John F. Kennedy High School for special needs students in Newark, NJ—follows dedicated teacher Janet Mino as she tries to make her severely autistic charges ready for life in the outside world. (VL-3/14)



Bible Quiz (Virgil, 86 min., DVD: \$19.99). Filmmaker Nicole Teeny won the Grand Jury Award at Slamdance for this compelling and sincere documentary about 17-year-old Mikayla Irle, one in a three-person team from her church aiming to compete at the national Bible Quiz championship, who finds her concentration skills challenged due to a growing infatuation with the handsome team captain. (VL-9/14)



Freedom Summer (PBS, 120 min. DVD: \$24.99 [\$54.99 w/PPR from www.teacher.shop.pbs.org]). Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Stanley Nelson brilliantly captures the passion, anguish, and fury of Mississippi's 1964 summer months during the volatile Civil Rights era in this PBS-aided film. (VL-11/14)



The Galapagos Affair: Satan Came to Eden (Zeitgeist, 120 min., DVD: \$29.99). Husband-and-wife filmmakers Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine raise the curtain on an exotic, haunting, and unsolved Depression-era true murder mystery involving a Berlin doctor, his mistress, a gun-wielding Viennese baroness, and others who start a new life on an uninhabited Galapagos Island. (VL-11/14)



Gideon's Army (Third World Newsreel [www.twn.org]), 95 min., DVD: \$80: public

libraries; \$400: colleges & universities). The inequities of America's justice system are highlighted in Dawn Porter's excellent HBO-aided documentary focusing on the work of Georgia public defenders Travis Williams and Brandy Alexander, who strive to mount the best possible defense for their clients despite huge caseloads and meager resources. (VL-7/14)



God Loves Uganda (First Run, 83 min. DVD: \$24.95). Serving up stunning revelations about the ways in which the African nation of Uganda became a hotbed for hatred aimed at gays and lesbians in the last decade, Oscar-winning director Roger Ross Williams's powerful documentary finds that part of the blame lies with American evangelical churches. (VL-7/14)



Hawking (PBS, 90 min., DVD: \$24.99 [\$54.99 w/PPR from www.teacher.shop.pbs.org]). Filmmaker Stephen Finnigan's PBS-aided documentary presents a rare behind-the-scenes look at physicist and author Stephen Hawking's complex and fascinating life story, which includes challenges stemming from his progressive motor neuron disease that has left him confined to a wheelchair, unable to speak, but able to communicate via computer. (VL-7/14)



How to Make Money Selling Drugs (Cinedigm, 96 min., DVD: \$26.95). First-time director Matthew Cooke here presents an invigorating look at the U.S. narcotics industry, focusing on both the dealers who soak up millions in profits and the law enforcement agents who work to put dealers behind bars, including former police officer Barry Cooper, who now advocates against what he defines as illegal police tactics that are used to drive up drug-related arrests. (VL-3/14)



Informant (Music Box, 81 min., DVD: \$29.95). Writer-director Jamie Meltzer's documentary presents a complex and compelling portrait of Austin, TX-based former left-wing activist Brandon Darby, chronicling his radical shift towards becoming an FBI informant



Best Sellers &
New Releases from

KINOLORBEREDU.COM

"BEST DOCUMENTARIES" IN SCIENCE AND SOCIETY



PANDORA'S PROMISE

★★★★★ *Highly recommended.* -Video Librarian

The atomic bomb and meltdowns like Fukushima have made nuclear power synonymous with global disaster. But what if we've got nuclear power wrong? *Pandora's Promise* asks whether the one technology we fear most could save our planet from a climate catastrophe, while providing the energy needed to lift billions of people in the developing world out of poverty.

With PPR \$249 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



SEEDS OF TIME

10,000 years ago the biggest revolution in human history occurred: we began to farm, breeding and domesticating plants that have resulted in the crops we eat today. But the genetic diversity of these domesticated crops, which were developed over millennia, is vanishing and the consequences could be dire. Crop diversity pioneer Cary Fowler aims to safeguard the last place that much of our diversity is left intact: in the world's vulnerable gene banks.

WINNER - BEST FILM • PORTLAND ECOFILM FESTIVAL

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



MORE THAN HONEY

★★★★★ *Highly recommended.* -Video Librarian

Oscar-nominated director Markus Imhoof (*The Boat is Full*) tackles the vexing issue of why bees are facing extinction worldwide. With the tenacity of a man out to solve a world-class mystery, he investigates this global phenomenon, from California to Switzerland, China and Australia. Exquisite macro-photography of the bees (reminiscent of *Microcosmos*) in flight and in their hives reveals a fascinating, complex world in crisis.

Without PPR \$149 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200



GOODBYE GAULEY MOUNTAIN

A rollicking documentary following campaigning 'ecosexuals' Beth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle. Returning home to the Appalachian mountains of West Virginia to protest against the environmentally devastating practice of mountain top removal, they preach their doctrine of "Earth as lover," with its literal embrace of the natural world. As they put their bodies on the line, *Goodbye Gauley Mountain* demonstrates how the fight for environmental justice can be inclusive, sexy and fun, even in the face of environmental tragedy.

WINNER, SPIRIT OF ACTION PRIZE, SANTA CRUZ FILM FESTIVAL

Without PPR \$149 • With PPR \$349 • DSL Streaming \$499 • Single-semester streaming \$200

For information about exhibition, public performance rights or streaming, please go to www.kinolorberedu.com or call (212) 629-6880

A KINO LORBER COMPANY
incorporated

and Tea Party conservative. (VL-1/14)

Let the Fire Burn (Zeitgeist, 95 min., DVD: \$29.95). Relying on comprehensive archival material, filmmaker Jason Osder's searing documentary uses news footage to recreate a horrific episode in American race-relations history in 1985, when Philadelphia authorities laid siege to and bombed the stronghold of a radical Afro-centric group called MOVE. (VL-5/14)

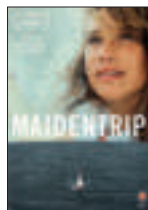


Life According to Sam (HBO, 95 min. DVD: \$19.98). On the long-list for an Academy Award for Best Documentary, Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine's wrenching and inspiring HBO-aired film centers on Sam Berns, a 16-year-old with the rare fatal disease progeria, which rapidly ages the body, giving young people the physical appearance and accompanying ailments of old age. (VL-7/14)



Maidentrip (First Run, 82 min., DVD: \$24.95). Sixteen-year-old Laura Dekker made

headlines in 2012, becoming the youngest person to sail around the world alone, a story chronicled in director Jillian Schlesinger's documentary, which draws on Dekker's remarkable video journal of her near-two-year adventure. (VL-9/14)



Menstrual Man (Coup Communications [www.sale.menstrualman.com/education], 63 min., in English, Hindi & Tamil w/English subtitles, DVD: \$195). Director Amit Virmani's often humorous documentary honors Arunachalam Muruganatham, a grassroots inventor-businessman who sidestepped extreme cultural taboos in India in his dogged quest to mass-produce and distribute affordable sanitary pads. (VL-7/14)



More Than Honey (Kino Lorber, 91 min., DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95 [\$349 w/PPR from www.kinolorberedu.com]). Centering on the mysterious disappearance of the honeybee worldwide, Swiss director Markus Imhoof's eye-popping documentary is an intimate and artistic film, offering close-up views of the amazing world of the hive. (VL-1/14)



Muscle Shoals (Magnolia, 111 min., DVD: \$13.98, Blu-ray: \$16.98). Greg "Freddy" Camalier's documentary tells the story of how the distinctive music sound tied to the little Alabama town of Muscle Shoals was originally created by record producer Rick Hall, who brought black and white players together—and ultimately laid the foundation for some of the most memorable music of the 1960s and '70s. (VL-5/14)



Pandora's Promise (Kino Lorber, 86 min. DVD: \$29.95 [\$250 w/PPR from www.kinolorberedu.com]). In a media marketplace saturated with anti-nuke documentaries, director Robert Stone's provocative film offers a very different take on atomic energy, featuring pro-nuke comments from authors Gwyneth Cravens, Richard Rhodes, and *Whole Earth Catalog* founder Stewart Brand. (VL-1/14)



Trash Dance (Panther Creek Pictures [www.trashdancemovie.com], 68 min., DVD: \$21.95: individuals; \$59: high schools & public libraries; \$299: colleges & universities). Garbage collection literally becomes art in Andrew Garrison's documentary following the year-long creation of a performance piece built around sanitation workers, created by determined Austin, TX, choreographer Allison Orr, who teams up with the city's Solid Waste Services Department. (VL-1/14)



The Unknown Known (Anchor Bay, 103 min., DVD: \$24.98, Blu-ray: \$29.99). Documentarian Errol Morris's latest work spotlights Bush administration Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in an incisive interview—backed with extensive archival material—that deftly explores national self-deception in a time of war. (VL Online-7/14)



An Unreal Dream: The Michael Morton Story (First Run, 92 min., DVD: \$24.95). Director Al Reinert's documentary traces the case of a Texas man wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife and subsequently imprisoned for a quarter-century before being exonerated by evidence that the prosecution failed to share with Morton's lawyers. (VL-5/14)



Valentine Road (Cin-edigm, 88 min., DVD: \$29.95 [\$295 w/PPR from Bullfrog Films, www.bullfrogfilms.com]). Filmmaker Marta Cunningham's riveting documentary investigates the media circus aftermath of a 2008 school shooting at an Oxnard, CA, junior high school, where an openly gay student was fatally wounded by a fellow classmate he had teased. (VL-9/14)



We Always Lie to Strangers (Virgil, 108 min., DVD: \$19.99). For five years, filmmakers AJ Schnack and David Wilson followed show-biz folk in upstart entertainment capital Branson, MO, delivering an almost anthropological view of the lives of the players performing in the live-entertainment venues. (VL-9/14)



STREAMING

NOW

Action!
Library Media Service
www.ActionLibraryMedia.com

AFTER TILLER

A FILM BY
MARTHA SHANE AND LANA WILSON

AVAILABLE
NOW

2014
Video Librarian

★ Best Documentaries ★

"A ROUSING
PORTRAIT OF
COURAGE AND
RESILIENCE."

- FILM COMMENT

CAT# OSC-054
UPC-896602002548
SRP: DVD \$34.99

NEW RELEASES FROM OSCILLOSCOPE LABORATORIES

ONE OF THE TOP GROSSING
DOCUMENTARIES OF 2014



"A CROWD-PLEASING
CHARACTER STUDY THAT
DOUBLES AS AN
ART-WORLD
DETECTIVE STORY."

- WALL STREET JOURNAL

STREET:
JANUARY 27



OSCILLOSCOPE
www.oscilloscope.net

CAT # OSC-057
UPC- 857490005035
SRP: \$34.99

"JOINS PRIMER AND TIMECRIMES AS
ONE OF THE BEST TIME
BENDING SCIENCE FICTION MOVIES OF
THE PAST 10 YEARS."

-INDIEWIRE

STREET:
JANUARY 20



CAT # OSC-059
UPC- 857490005059
SRP: \$34.99

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

Betsy's Kindergarten Adventures, Volume 6 ★★

(2011) 120 min. DVD: \$19.95. Polka Dot Productions (dist. by Janson Media). ISBN: 978-1-56839-462-6.

Kindergarten student Betsy (voiced by Daveigh Chase) and pals are back in this sixth volume of the charming series, which begins with a "Manners Please" look at mealtime etiquette. Busybody friend Molly (Vicki Lewis) is decidedly overzealous about a class tea party, and Billy (Nancy Cartwright) sports some rude habits; fortunately, cafeteria worker Mrs. Chefwell provides helpful hints for the gang (and Betsy is impressed that there are so many social rules to remember). "Mystery at Lakeshore Farms" follows the students on a field trip to Principal Warner's (Tom Bosley) farmer brother's spread, which includes a "critter roundup" that highlights the kids' newfound skills in sorting and classifying. Also including "Big and Little," "Computer Fun," "Making Instruments," "Dinosaur Dynasty," "Treasure Hunt" (involving directions, using a compass, and a neighbor with a helpful metal detector), and "Betsy in Charge" (the kids of Mrs. O'Connor's—voiced by Sally Struthers—class learn to work together when tasked with handling grown-ups jobs at school), this latest addition is recommended. Aud: K, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Brave Girl: Clara and the Shirtwaist Maker's Strike of 1909 ★★★

(2014) 9 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62923-831-9.

This iconographic-animated adaptation of the 2013 picture book written by Michelle Markel and illustrated by Melissa Sweet tells the story of Clara Lemlich, a Ukrainian-born young woman who emigrated to America and ultimately led the 1909 so-called "Uprising of the 20,000," a general strike by women working in garment-making sweatshops. Cheerfully drawn (despite the often grim subject matter), *Brave Girl* traces Clara's transformation from being a poorly-paid seamstress—literally locked inside a factory from dawn till dusk—to becoming an outspoken organizer of laborers in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, which was dominated by men. Along the way, Clara endured beatings, arrests, broken bones, starvation, and more. Narrated by Lesa Lockford, this is a fine introduction to a compelling historical figure, offering a stirring example of what one person can do when inspired. Recommended. Aud: E, P. (T. Keogh)

Lucky Ducklings ★★

(2014) 9 min. DVD: \$59.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-0-545-66117-1.

Subtitled "A True Rescue Story," this adaptation of author Eva Moore and illustrator Nancy Carpenter's 2013 picture book features narration by Tavia Gilbert. Starting in a sunlit green park, squeaky ducklings Pippin, Bippin, Dippin, Tippin, and...Little Joe follow Mother Duck into town, where the siblings fall into a storm drain. Luckily, someone sees what happens and puts a call into the fire department for help, leading to a rescue witnessed by the excited townspeople and a distressed Mama Duck. Featuring a text segment on the real story, which took place in June 2000 in Montauk, NY, this is a surprisingly lackluster tale, even with the numerous "cliffhangers" that "...could have been the end of the story...but it wasn't."

Optional. Aud: K, E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

My Little Pony—Classic TV Collection: The Complete Series ★★

(1986) 4 discs. 720 min. DVD: \$29.95. Shout! Factory (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Looking back at *My Little Pony*, which first aired in 1986, I have fond memories of plastic pastel toys, suspenseful storylines, and a running joke with my Mom (one evil main character tells her witch daughters, "Don't call me MOTHER! Call me HYDIA!"). This 65-episode set from 1986-87 kicks off with the 10-part opener "The End of Flutter Valley," which follows various residents of Ponyland, some of whom are traveling to Flutter Valley for a celebration. The bulk of the storyline stems from the bumbling hijinks of the villains ("Help! It's the witches from the Volcano of Gloom!")—generally portrayed as slovenly or overweight—who engage in endless rounds of capturing and re-capturing the ponies. Featuring glittery songs with tortured lyrics ("We love watching flowers wilt...hey, watch out, the ketchup spilt"), a few helpful human characters from the other side of the rainbow, and cute baby-voiced creatures (voice superstars Russi Taylor, Tress MacNeille, and Nancy "Bart Simpson" Cartwright are notable here), the lame '80s-style animation is slightly better by the time the show reaches its two-part series finale, "Escape from Catrina" (featuring Tammy Grimes as the titular feline villainess). Although I was a big fan, I was also only 4-years-old (critical skills not yet fully developed). Deeply nostalgic viewers might appreciate this, but contemporary kids who watch current incarnations of *My Little Pony* likely will not. Optional. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Rock 'N Learn: Learn a Language

★★★1/2

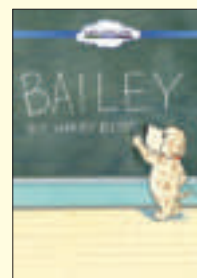
(2014) 37 min. DVD: \$19.99. Rock 'N Learn. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-934312-16-2.

Offering a great way to introduce children

Bailey ★★1/2

(2014) 7 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62923-953-8.

Narrated by Kirby Heyborne, this iconographic-animated program based on the 2011 picture book by *New Yorker* magazine cartoonist and author-illustrator Harry Bliss finds the titular elementary-school-aged dog waking up and performing his customary 100 brush strokes for grooming. But then Bailey gets distracted by an awesome stick, and is almost late for the bus (in which he—naturally—hangs his head out the window). "Try not to lick anyone today," suggests the principal. From eating his own homework to doing a report on FDR's famous pet Fala, Bailey enjoys a dog's life as he goes about the school day his own way (especially helping to dig the school garden) while amusing the other students and staff. Also featuring a read-along option, this charming story is highly recommended. [Note: *Bailey at the Museum* is also newly available.] Aud: K, P. (J. Williams-Wood)



NOW ON VIDEO!

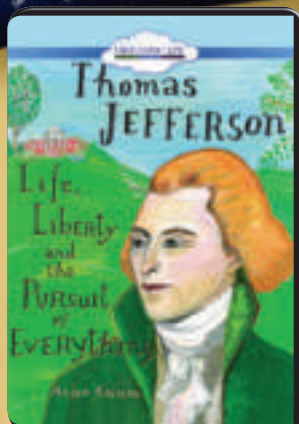
Starred Review. “An inspiring introduction to Collins that will speak to little dreamers everywhere.” – *Booklist*

A Dance Like Starlight
ISBN 9781633794481

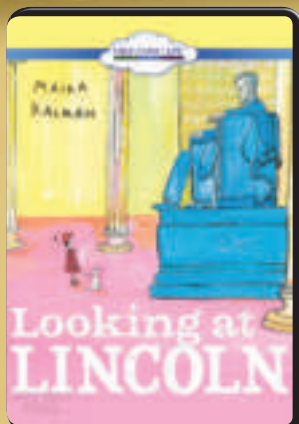


Also available

**PERFECT FOR
PRESIDENTS' DAY!**



ISBN 9781633796188



ISBN 9781633796119



ISBN 9781633794450

ORDER TODAY!

Available at

MIDWEST TAPE
LIBRARIANS #1 MEDIA SOURCE

Follett

hoopla OverDrive

DREAMSCAPE
dreamscapeab.com

Getting to Know Jon Scieszka ★★½

(2013) 26 min. DVD: \$39.95 (study guide included). Weston Woods Studios. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 0-545-57040-9.

This delightful portrait of children's book author Jon Scieszka begins with Scieszka's visit with a group of second-grade kids at a library (where he pretends to be a guy named "Bob" introducing the real writer). The author of *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, *Knucklehead: Tall Tales and Almost True Stories of Growing Up* and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Fairytales*, Scieszka—a certificated teacher—is an entertaining and committed force for the promotion of reading and education for today's youngsters. Here he weighs in on the difficulty of getting boys to read (his solution: offer more male voices in book selections, e.g., as with Roald Dahl) and the challenges of making math and science fun. Scieszka also talks about his life growing up in Flint, MI, with five brothers and how he shifted gears as a developing adult fiction author to writing children's books, all based on his experiences in the classroom. Scieszka makes fun of himself for not doing anything visually interesting when he's writing at a keyboard, and he's remarkably frank about raising a son who, he believes, has never actually read one of his books. Including a read-along option and a bonus featurette with comments from some of Scieszka's friends, this fine portrait of a beloved children's author is highly recommended. Aud: E, P. (T. Keogh)



to different languages while also focusing on key non-English words and phrases, this entry from the long-running *Rock 'N Learn* series takes viewers on an animated tour of a fun, futuristic house, pointing out everyday objects, numbers, and colors in—depending on the option chosen from the menu—English, German, Italian, Mandarin, Chinese, and Spanish, with the same range of available subtitles. After a while, adjectives and verbs are added to the simple nouns, creating short sentences (e.g., "Go up the stairs.") and word combinations ("seven red balloons"). Youngsters will appreciate the cartoon characters (giggling kids, a mischievous armadillo), who are charming in any language. Highly recommended. Aud: K, E, P. (T. Keogh)

Separate Is Never Equal ★★

(2014) 16 min. DVD: \$38.99. Dreamscape Media. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62923-689-6.

Narrated by Adriana Sananes, this iconic-graphic-animated adaptation of the 2014 picture book by author and illustrator Duncan Tonatiuh looks at the 1946 civil rights school battle *Mendez vs. Westminster* (which took place nearly a decade before *Brown v. Board of Education*). *Separate Is Never Equal* follows young Sylvia Mendez, the daughter of a California field-working Mexican citizen father and Puerto Rican mother (who later holds down the family farm of asparagus, chiles, and tomatoes once the lawsuit is underway). Sylvia and her siblings are denied entry to a prosperous nearby Orange County public school because of their darker skin, and when Sylvia's dad objects to school officials, "no one would give him a satisfactory answer." Mr. Mendez works to gather signatures to file a petition for equality for all of the children (although some neighbors don't want to rock the boat). Covering both the subsequent trial

(in which education professionals practically lied about the supposed lack of basic aptitude, language skills, and even cleanliness of the Hispanic children) and the aftermath (the NAACP and other group organizations became involved), this inspirational program reminds viewers that "when you fight for justice, others will follow." DVD extras include a read-along option and an audio segment with notes on the history of the case and Sylvia Mendez's later life. Recommended. Aud: E, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

VeggieTales: Beauty and the Beet ★★

(2014) 45 min. DVD: \$14.98. Big Idea Productions (avail. from most distributors).

This latest entry in the long-running Christian children's series serves up an extremely loose interpretation of the classic fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*. After the Veggie Tones family band cleans up at the Greensburg talent show, the group tours vegetable-themed locales such as Spinachusettes, Squashington, Oklahoma, and Caulifornia—all leading up to a big show at the famed Vegetable Square Garden. Pressing ahead through a treacherous snowstorm on their tour bus, the band finds themselves trapped at the near-empty Beet's Alpine Suites. Although some staff members are thrilled to see the Veggie Tones, crotchety owner Finnigan J. Beet III is not impressed and wants the cash-strapped musicians to earn their keep while waiting for the roads to be cleared...perhaps by helping save the reputation of the lagging resort by sprucing up their floor show? Centering on the bond between lead singer sweet potato daughter Mirabelle (voiced by *American Idol* contestant Kellie Pickler) and the not-so-bad-on-the-inside Beet, the story features several twangy tunes with a theme set to 1 John 4:11, which

focuses on loving one another. Recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

PSYCHOLOGY & SELF-HELP

Alive Inside ★★

(2014) 78 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

You might think a documentary set in modern hospital-style nursing homes would be depressing. Not so with Michael Rossato-Bennett's *Alive Inside*, which celebrates the salutary impact of music on patients afflicted with dementia. At the story's center is New York social worker Dan Cohen, who raises funds to provide nursing homes with iPods for distribution to residents suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of mental debilitation. Cohen's investigations revealed that even residents who were almost completely uncommunicative could be rejuvenated by hearing the songs they loved. But while the project's cost would amount to far less than many prescribed medications, Cohen found that bureaucratic red tape was an insurmountable obstacle, so he began seeking donations to fund Music and Memory, which has provided iPods to nursing homes in a growing number of states. *Alive Inside* captures amazing sequences of people responding almost miraculously to the sound of music—an apparently somnolent man becomes voluble in response to what he hears through the headphones, while a woman abandons her walker and begins dancing, as does an elderly veteran strapped into a wheelchair. And a woman who is still living in her own home reacts excitedly as her playlist is added to the device. All of this material is joyously inspiring, even if the accompanying narration is frequently banal and cliché-ridden. Still, despite its shortcomings, the film provides a welcome glimpse of an alternative/additional treatment for the ever-growing number of older Americans suffering from dementia. Extras include a director's audio commentary, deleted scenes, a Q&A with Cohen, and an interview with Rossato-Bennett. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

Daughters of Dolma ★★½

(2011) 70 min. DVD: \$149 (\$349 w/PPR). DRA. Kino Lorber Edu.

Daughters of Dolma centers on how the lives of young Tibetan Buddhist nuns in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley blend the old (ancient rituals, religious study) and the new (horror movies, Facebook). The documentary looks at three generations inside the walls of remote religious institutions, but filmmaker Adam

Miklos focuses primarily on four women who describe how they feel about living in nunneries—sometimes far from home, and struggling to get along amongst themselves. Recognizing that the cloistered life is “looser” than in the past—in the sense that strict behavioral rules are no longer enforced—some still feel constrained by gender roles. Although much better educated than their predecessors—the Dalai Lama decreed that women may earn doctoral degrees—some remain ambivalent about their opportunities as compared to those of Buddhist monks. Miklos interviews his subjects in informal settings—individually and in groups—and interweaves their comments together with extended scenes of everyday activities. The four here chose religious life; in fact, it’s not unusual for Tibetan families to count at least one nun or monk among their children. Girls as young as 5-years-old are routinely sent away to train for a spiritual existence; parents know that their daughters will receive a liberal education, and hope they will be successful at their vocation if they begin at a very young age—although a monk managing one nunnery says that karma is the real determinant. Offering an up-close look at a typically secluded lifestyle, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

The Third Day ★★

(2014) 55 min. DVD: \$14.99. Vision Video.

Jesus’s resurrection from the dead following his crucifixion forms the basis for Christianity. *The Third Day* recounts the final days of Jesus Christ—including his resurrection and ascension into heaven, which fulfilled prophecy from the Old Testament in the Bible. Combining dramatic re-enactments with commentary from modern scholars, the last days of Jesus are reconstructed from biblical and alternate historical documentation, offering multiple perspectives on the condemnation, crucifixion, and (for some) perplexing events that happened afterward, including—according to various accounts—an empty tomb (under guard by Roman soldiers) and eyewitness testimonies of his physical presence. For Christians, of course, this is a matter of faith: those who believe will stand resolute, while skeptics will continue to demand proof that may in fact be lost in the sands of time. Regardless, this documentary explores the perspectives of the apostles of Christ and ancient historians to bring a somewhat objective frame to questions that have become increasingly subjective over the years. Recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)

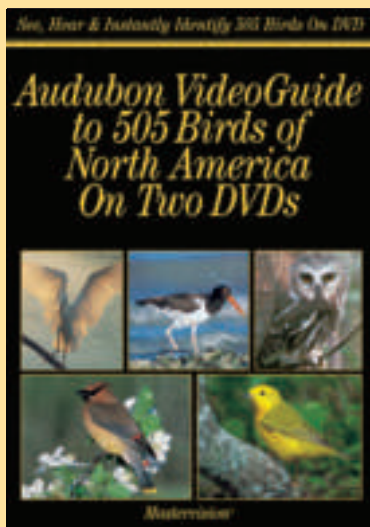
SOCIAL & POLITICAL ISSUES

Black Ice ★★

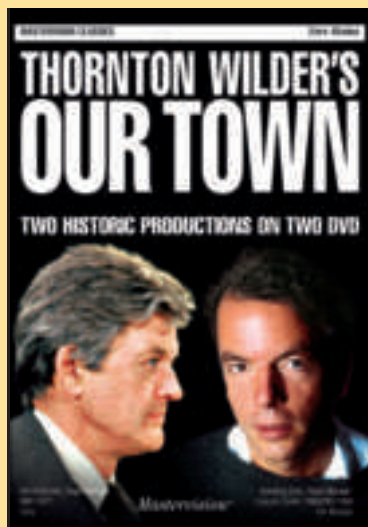
(2014) 52 min. DVD: \$295. DRA. Filmmakers Library (dist. by Alexander Street Press). PPR.

In autumn 2013, the Greenpeace ship *Arctic Sunrise*—sailing under a Dutch flag—was seized by the Russian coast guard during an attempted protest centered on an offshore oil drilling rig operated by giant Russian energy firm Gazprom in the Barents Sea. The 30 activists and crew onboard were charged with piracy and threatened with prison terms of up to 15 years, until foreign pressure—including a ruling by the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea—led to an amnesty initiated by President Vladimir Putin, who was anxious to resolve the matter before the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. Filmmaker Maarten van Rouveroy’s *Black Ice* recounts this politically-charged episode, combining footage taken at sea by the Greenpeace protesters (as well as film shot at detention centers and courtrooms in Russia), overlaid comments from Greenpeace activists, news reports (including official statements and demonstrations against the Russian action), and audio recordings of the communications between the parties involved during

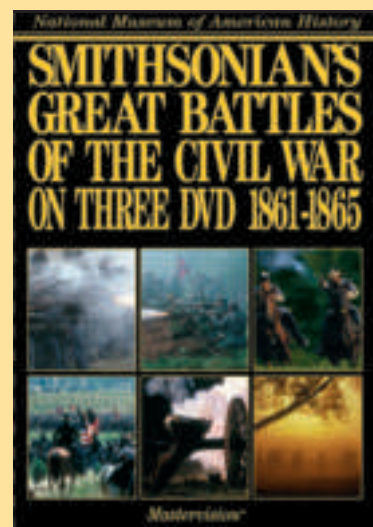
For complete information visit mastervision.com
Distributed by Baker&Taylor and Ingram or call 212-879-0448



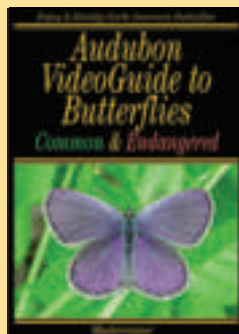
\$69.95
6 hours



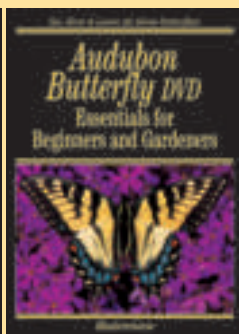
\$59.95
3h 45m



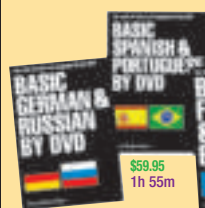
\$69.95 9 hours



\$39.95 2h 40m



\$39.95 2h 30m



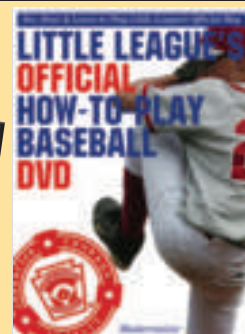
\$59.95
2h 30m



\$59.95
2h 40m



\$59.95
3 hours



\$29.95 1 hour

the initial face-off. Naturally, the story is told from the perspective of Greenpeace, but even casual observers will conclude that the Russian reaction to the provocation was patently excessive, and a postscript noting that Arctic exploration continues (with a potential for devastating accidents) is obviously designed to encourage continued support for Greenpeace's efforts. An interesting study of contemporary geopolitical brinksmanship, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Concerning Violence ★★

(2014) 89 min. DVD: \$149 (\$349 w/PPR). DRA. Kino Lorber Edu.

Martinique-born psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, a 1961 nonfiction classic study of decolonization that has served as an inspiration to revolutionary movements throughout the world over the last half-century, is the focal point for Göran Olsson's documentary. Fanon, who died at the age of 36 in the same week that his book was published (and promptly banned and confiscated by the French government), was primarily active in the resistance movement in Algeria, but his general dissection of the brutal effects of colonialism on subject peoples coupled with his call for the use of all means necessary to end colonial rule wherever it persisted wound up having wider implications. Olsson presents excerpts from *The Wretched of the Earth* (read by singer Lauryn Hill, with especially provocative phrases superimposed in print on the screen), which accompany news footage from Swedish television archives about labor protests and attacks on government positions in various African locales, including Angola, Mozambique, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, Tanzania, and Burkina Faso. The technique is mostly successful here, although the relative lack of historical context can be disorienting, and a few peculiar digressions—such as a long section on a missionary couple—may seem strange. Some will certainly be disturbed by the implication that decolonization must inevitably involve violence against oppressors, but this is a challenging, thought-provoking film that should spur discussion. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Elena ★★1/2

(2012) 42 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$248. Icarus Films. PPR.

"Elena" is the name of an apartment building in Havana, Cuba, which—like thousands of others in the city—has had no upkeep or repairs in more than 25 years. Tenants live with crumbling walls, seeping raw sewage, exposed electrical wires, and holes in their floors—all of which they here show to Cuban filmmaker Marcelo Martín. The documentary describes how official bureaucracy and lack of funding have stranded people in untenable conditions. In 1988, the government demolished bathrooms and kitchens in a number of

units but never rebuilt them. Many occupants moved to shelters while waiting for repairs but went home again following a decade with no signs of progress. In 2009, a brigade of construction workers arrived on the scene, but in interviews the builders talk about incomplete paperwork and missing materials, while Martín's camera captures numerous examples of shoddy work. Eventually, the remodeling activity—such as it is—comes to a halt. Promises that renovations will soon resume are not kept, and residents continue to deal with improvised "solutions"—such as makeshift toilets and cooking facilities that they've cobbled together in rooms that are literally falling apart. They and their neighbors rattle off the names of "shameless or just incompetent" provincial agencies that they've telephoned or written to, to no avail (Martín makes and records a few calls himself and gets the same runaround). A heartbreaking portrait of a structure and its inhabitants on the verge of collapse, *Elena* is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

Forced Confessions ★★1/2

(2013) 58 min. DVD: \$390. Icarus Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

According to filmmaker Maziar Bahari's documentary, since the 1979 overthrow of the Shah, Iran's religious and political leaders have employed forced confessions—made by tortured individuals—as a medium for communicating to the outside world. Their basic message: Iran's government is being targeted by the West with lies and sabotage, and the CIA and other agencies are recruiting Iranian students, journalists, academics, and others as spies. *Forced Confessions* introduces several people who endured terrible experiences and ultimately yielded to painful pressure to denounce themselves. Among them we meet Faraj Sarkohi, an author who was arrested for writing in a style other than "Islamic Realism"; Ali Afshari, a student activist who held out under torture and threats of rape until his interrogators made threats against his

mother; and Siamak Pourzand (1931-2011), a journalist who was tortured up to 12 hours a night. All speak on camera about the horrors they underwent and the fallout of the false confessions which they made publicly. Offering a disturbing look at what life in Iran has been like for those who dare to speak out, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Freeload ★★★

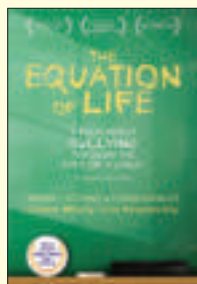
(2014) 65 min. DVD: \$16.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Here's a surprising observation: well into the 21st century—now more than a dozen years after 9/11 made America more security-conscious—contemporary hobos are still "riding the rails," traveling the country in train freight cars. Filmmaker Daniel Skaggs goes through considerable discomfort as he accompanies several rail riders—all young, barely out of high school—whose homeless survival is tied to freight-hopping, disembarking here and there to beg for food and money (one guy turns up annually in North Dakota for seasonal work at a sugar beet factory). If any of this sounds romanticized or like a timeless John Steinbeck scenario, the reality more closely resembles a hellish experience, full of danger, want, filth, and injury. Skaggs, sans judgment, lets his subjects speak for themselves, and they often exhibit surprising idealism about thwarting conformity and maintaining personal freedom. But there is also an air of mental illness surrounding several of these individuals, and their constant mobility sadly ensures that they will fall through the cracks of any meaningful help offered by the health community. Presenting a sometimes startling, decidedly disturbing report of real people living very much on the fringes of civilization in America, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

InRealLife ★★1/2

(2013) 86 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Concerned parents will find their worst



The Equation of Life ★★★

(2013) 32 min. DVD: \$16.98. Shelter Island/TDC (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 978-1-939517-28-9.

Eleven-year-old filmmaker Gerry Orz directed and stars in this drama about bullying, playing a new kid at school who is instantly targeted by a bigger boy suffering from severe emotional trauma at home. Orz's character, Adam, endures the pain in an effort to spare both his sister and his lesbian parents any extra trouble. But as life becomes more miserable, Adam's thoughts turn to retaliation. Tragedy ensues, leaving the survivors to sort out what happened and how so much horror could have been avoided in the first place. Orz's short film plays a bit like an after-school TV special, ending with a vision of what life could have been like for these characters if love and kindness had been the norm for all involved. DVD extras include "Days of Silence" (Orz's early version of his film) and clips of Orz addressing the California State Senate. Sure to spark discussion among young viewers, this is recommended. Aud: E, I, P. (T. Keogh)

fears about the dangers posed by the Internet to their children confirmed by English filmmaker Beeban Kidron's documentary, which combines a brief history of the web (and an explanation of how it works) with case studies of the ways it is used by young people, starting with a portrait of two boys confessing their addiction to porn and ending on a more hopeful note with a closeted gay teen who finds a romantic partner through a chat room. In between are stories about a girl so devoted to her missing BlackBerry that she will pay to retrieve it with sex, and a boy who commits suicide after being subjected to cyberbullying—among others. The salient point, underscored by a number of talking-head interviewees (including WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange), is that the Internet is a for-profit enterprise controlled by powerful corporations that are skilled in getting people addicted. Unfortunately, the film tends to lose its focus amidst an avalanche of facts and digressions, such as a segment on a video blogger who employs his satirical skills to become a successful online celebrity. And its penchant for using buzzwords like “scary” and “traumatic”—not to mention referring to Google’s reach as “the devil in the room” (accompanied by sinister music)—veers more toward alarmist screed than thoughtful analysis. Still, there is useful information here, along with some poignant moments, making this hot-topic doc a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Into the Gyre ★★★

(2012) 44 min. DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99 (DVD or Blu-ray: \$199.99 w/PPR: institutions). 590films.

Concern over ocean pollution often focuses on major disasters such as oil spills, but this documentary by Scott Elliott reminds us of less newsworthy sources of damage, like bits of plastic discarded on land that find their way to the sea via various routes. *Into the Gyre* follows a federally funded expedition aboard the SSV *Corwith Cramer*—a 135-foot brigantine sailing ship operated by the Massachusetts-based Sea Education Association—to the Sargasso Sea east of Bermuda, an area formed by the North Atlantic Gyre where circular currents and still waters allow for the accumulation of debris from great distances. The locale offers a “worst scenario” snapshot of a wider phenomenon. Over the course of 35 days in 2010, a crew of 34 sailors, scientists, and volunteer researchers mapped, collected, and counted the plastic found at the site—both on and below the surface. Next, they brought samples of fragments back to shore for scientific examination, which revealed that the recuperative properties of the ocean were already at work—microbes found on many pieces would, over time, break down the plastics and render them less harmful. But experts warn that the sheer quantity of material is likely to overwhelm whatever relief



Uranium Drive-In ★★★

(2013) 70 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Naturita, CO, was once a thriving community, largely due to uranium mines that provided plenty of jobs and good incomes. But when the mines closed, the economy collapsed, and residents found themselves struggling merely to survive. Which is why, as filmmaker Suzan Beraza's documentary illustrates, Naturita's town council jumped at a feeler from the Energy Fuels corporation to resume mining operations and build a mill to process the ore. *Uranium Drive-In* captures the citizenry's general enthusiasm for the project, although some—such as a former miner who lost his legs to radiation poisoning—see it as dangerous. And the proposal brings opposition from an environmental group, the Sheep Mountain Alliance, which points to other locales that are now deserted due to toxic soil, along with claims that potential pollution of the groundwater could lead to contamination downstream as far as California. As is often the case, the arguments here take on the character of a class conflict, as locals perceive the well-to-do environmentalists as interlopers who don't understand their desperation (and treat them condescendingly, to boot). Ultimately, the dispute is settled by outside forces: the falling price of uranium causes the company to rescind its promises. But there's a sort of hopeful ending as citizens begin establishing new businesses in order to revive Naturita's fortunes. Beraza presents this story in an evenhanded fashion, drawing on interviews with people on both sides. DVD extras include deleted scenes, a text bio of Beraza, and a resource guide. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

the seas can afford, unless efforts are made to stem the flow. Combining footage from the expedition, interviews with participants, and observations from scientists performing data analysis, *Into the Gyre* is an accessible and compelling cautionary documentary on a pressing environmental problem. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Our School ★★★1/2

(2011) 94 min. DVD: \$99: high schools & public libraries; \$354: colleges & universities. New Day Films. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-57448-486-1.

Across Europe, filmmaker Mona Nicoara informs us, Roma—or Gypsy—children often find themselves assigned to segregated schools or those designated for “special needs” students. Nicoara offers a microcosmic perspective on the situation by focusing on Targu Lapus, a rural Transylvanian village that receives a grant from the European Union to integrate Roma children into schools hitherto reserved for Romanians. The filmmaker zeroes in on three Roma kids who live in a virtual ghetto on the town's outskirts—8-year-old Alin, 12-year-old Benjamin, and 16-year-old Dana, following them from 2006 to 2010 in a story that begins with hopefulness but heads toward despair. The youngsters do attend an integrated school, but are treated condescendingly by teachers and administrators (whose prejudice is revealed in less guarded moments). Without preparation, the Roma children are unable to make many friends among their Romanian classmates. Meanwhile, the mayor talks a good game about equal treatment, but the funds for the integration effort are eventually diverted to rebuild a dilapidated school in the Roma district, meant for those said to

require “special attention”—a euphemism that obviously signals the reintroduction of segregation. A dejected Alin isn't far off when he defines “special” as “crazy”—from the Romanian perspective—and it's hardly surprising that Benjamin and his parents wind up resigned to a bleak future, or that Dana decides to abandon her education and get married instead. A poignant, perceptive documentary that points up the need for a change in heart as well as policy, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights ★★★1/2

(2013) 81 min. DVD: \$89: public libraries; \$350: colleges & universities. Women Make Movies. PPR.

Reflections Unheard collects interviews with female civil rights leaders about sexism within the Black Power movement and their alienation from the second wave of feminism in the 1960s. Filmmaker Nevline Nnaji punctuates appearances by Gwendolyn Simmons (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), Deborah Singletary (National Black Feminist Organization), Rosemary Mealy and Barbara Easley-Cox (both of the Black Panther Party), and several others, with period footage from meetings, news/talk shows, and speeches (Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, activist Angela Davis, and poet Nikki Giovanni are among those featured in the clips). The various commentaries paint a picture of black male activists in the 1960s promoting traditional views of gender roles and patriarchal structures that would reinforce their primacy as breadwinners and decision makers. In this view, men hoped to regain—through their activism—what they had lost through slavery and discrimination, an aim that would

Years of Living Dangerously ★★½

(2014) 5 discs. 540 min. DVD: \$55.99. Showtime Networks (avail. from www.amazon.com). SDH captioned.

Formidable star power fuels this nine-part Showtime-aired series on climate change and global warming. Harrison Ford visits Indonesia, where corrupt, greedy government officials consent to the slashing and burning of forests to allow for the harvesting of paper and palm oil. Former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (one of the series producers) joins the firefighting “hot shots” who confront wildfires, which are now a year-round hazard. Don Cheadle looks at the effects of drought on small Western towns. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman illustrates how water shortages contributed to the Syrian Civil War, unrest in Yemen, and the frustrations voiced in the “Arab Spring.” But in spite of all this, many people—particularly conservative evangelicals—feel that humans have little or no role in global warming, while lobbyists even make claims that climate change is beneficial. *Years of Living Dangerously* also covers natural gas fracking (pros and cons), wind power, and the increasing number and severity of heat waves—a “silent killer” of old and young alike. Perhaps the most compelling segment here is hosted by Michael C. Hall (*Dexter*), who visits Bangladesh’s Dhaka—the world’s fastest growing city—where huge numbers flock as they are pushed out the country’s low-lying land by rising sea levels. The series ominously notes that the fate of Bangladesh may eventually confront all of us. Despite the on-camera presence of Matt Damon, Jessica Alba, America Ferrera, and others, this is not a Hollywood elitist piece, but rather a hard-hitting, thought-provoking documentary series featuring interviews with President Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry, and several scientists calling for action who say that “we must use this time wisely.” DVD extras include over three hours of bonus material. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)



be defeated if black women took jobs and instead perpetuated a matriarchal culture. The second argumentative thread here deals with the elitism of the white feminist movement (entertainer Helen Reddy, in an archival interview, is among those acknowledging as much), which many saw as being dominated by middle-class concerns that were far removed from day-to-day challenges such as economic survival, feeding families, shielding welfare recipients from retailers’ overcharging, and seeking employment protections for predominantly black female jobs such as housecleaning. Bringing historical context to important issues that continue to resonate in contemporary society, *Reflections Unheard* is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

Spanish Lake ★★½

(2014) 78 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$299 w/PPR). *Passion River*.

Spanish Lake is an unincorporated area of greater St. Louis, MO (not far from racial flashpoint Ferguson), with a significant history in the development of America’s Westward Expansion (Lewis and Clark spent some time there, and the region served as a base in the 18th and 19th centuries for subsequent journeys into Oregon territory). Filmmaker Phillip Andrew Morton’s fascinating documentary *Spanish Lake*, centering on the ebb and flow of class and racial politics in America as seen through the prism of one troubled community chronicles the history of what happened in the area during the 20th century and beyond. A case study in white

flight from middle-class neighborhoods and the mishandling of federal programs meant to provide low-rent or no-rent housing for low-income families, Spanish Lake earlier thrived for decades as a farming haven followed by the postwar development of suburban neighborhoods. But the creation of HUD-financed housing projects that were poorly maintained and inadequately policed inevitably resulted in crime and decay, setting off decades of escalating problems in the community—from trouble in schools to weird capital developments (the Church of Scientology opened a major operation)—leading to smoldering resentment felt by the people who moved away and then saw their old homes fall apart. The film is careful not to paint a completely grim picture in broad strokes—many nice homes and fine families are found in Spanish Lake neighborhoods—but the convergence of economic, racial, and sociological phenomena in the area says much about the fault lines that continue to undermine the American Dream. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Utopia ★★½

(2013) 2 discs. 112 min. DVD: \$325. *Secret Country Films* (dist. by Bullfrog Films). PPR. SDH captioned. ISBN: 1-94154-508-4.

Australian-born crusader-journalist/documentarian John Pilger (co-directing here with Alan Lowery) turns a damning lens (as he has several times in the past) on his native country and its shameful treatment of the original Aborigine inhabitants, many of whom still dwell in shantytown squalor on

the outskirts of fantastically beautiful and prosperous (white) resort communities. Pilger here lays a charge of harsh mistreatment, bordering on ethnic cleansing (Aborigines were imprisoned in far greater percentages than were South African natives during the Apartheid era). Moreover, says Pilger, the recent conservative government of Prime Minister John Howard waged a deliberate “history wars” campaign to methodically delete Aboriginal sufferings from the annals (one wishes Pilger had more proof of this particular accusation). Pilger’s indictments culminate in a shocker that is unfamiliar to most American viewers: the 21st-century Australian military invasion of one of the largest Aboriginal settlements, ostensibly to smash a child-sexual-abuse “crime wave” that turned out to be nonexistent. Not so coincidentally, mining corporations found themselves free to exploit sacred ancestral lands. A troubling, eye-opening condemnation of Australia’s own particular version of Apartheid, *Utopia* is presented in a double-disc set, with extras including more than four hours of bonus interviews featuring indigenous activists and supporters, and a booklet. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

TEEN ISSUES

The Overdose Epidemic: What Can Be Done to Stop It? ★★½

(2015) 20 min. DVD: \$149.95 (teacher’s guide included). *Human Relations Media*. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62706-047-9.

This cautionary documentary addresses the epidemic of drug overdoses in America (citing 40,000 in 2013 alone) that is largely taking a toll on high school kids using barbiturates, synthetic narcotics, methamphetamine, and heroin. The stories of kids telling themselves that their drug use is just an occasional recreational activity are all-too-common, as are the results: sudden respiratory illness, unconsciousness, and heart failure. Several young former addicts speak about their experiences here, as do first responders, parents, emergency room doctors, and others. The psychological and emotional impact of death or permanent disability on families and health professionals is also explored. A powerful youth guidance film on a sadly perennial topic, this is highly recommended. Aud: J, H, P. (T. Keogh)

LAW & CRIME

Happy Valley ★★½

(2014) 98 min. DVD: \$179; high schools & public libraries; \$349; colleges & universities. DRA. Good Docs (avail. from www.gooddocs.net). PPR.

Produced by the A&E cable network, film-

maker Amir Bar-Lev's documentary details the sexual-abuse scandal that rocked the campus of Pennsylvania State University in November 2011. The investigation led to the firing of the most successful college football coach in history, Joe Paterno (who, in a double shocker, suddenly died of cancer in two months) and life imprisonment for the convicted perpetrator, assistant coach Jerry Sandusky. Bar-Lev approaches the case less as a straightforward *Court TV* chronicle and more as an ethnographic portrait of a community shaken to its roots, with a chorus of eyewitnesses/interviewees that include Sandusky's adopted son. Penn State was a gridiron-monomaniac mini-society in which, as one observer says, Paterno was basically God, while his protégé Sandusky could be equated with Jesus Christ. If there is any sense of injustice here, it is not meant to exonerate Sandusky (who appears in an adoring, pre-scandal network-TV profile, surrounded by young boys), but rather to suggest that the anti-Paterno backlash went overboard, with laborers tearing down a campus monument to Coach Joe, while sports authorities strike his unmatched string of wins from the records. The tragedy, we're told, is that Paterno "ran a clean program," especially by money-crazed modern college-sports standards, and did not deserve

his legacy to be vengefully erased. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Killing Time ★★½

(2014) 55 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries & high schools; \$395: colleges & universities. The Cinema Guild. PPR. ISBN: 0-7815-1482-1.

Dutch filmmaker Jaap van Hoewijk's documentary centers on two families who await the execution of a convicted murderer. In 1998, Elroy Chester sexually assaulted two sisters and fatally shot their uncle. After 15 years on death row, Elroy finally faces execution by lethal injection in Huntsville, TX, on June 12, 2013. As the film's title suggests, both Chester's family and the rape victims and their families here spend grueling hours waiting for the scheduled execution time. Also on hand are anti-death-penalty protestors ready for yet another public demonstration, as well as the inevitable gaggle of reporters and TV camera crews on hand to document the attendant street theater. But, strangely, as the countdown to Elroy's execution comes closer, a curious lack of intensity settles in. The emotional damage caused by Chester's crimes does not reawaken old wounds among his surviving victims and their family—who have moved on with their lives and are simply waiting for long-overdue closure—and Chester's kin seem ruefully resigned to his

upcoming death. Neither pro nor con on the issue of capital punishment, *Killing Time* is remarkable for capturing the honest reactions to the execution of a convicted murderer—a going-through-the-motions process that seems to ultimately benefit no one. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

NATURE, MATH & SCIENCE

America's Animal Astronaut Heroes

★★★½

(2014) 76 min. DVD: \$19.95; individuals; \$11: libraries. Communications Concepts. PPR.

This entertaining and enlightening documentary hosted by Billy Specht, former education director at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, heralds the contributions of various animals sent into space long before their human counterparts dared to make that venture. Fruit flies, aboard a German V-2 rocket captured by the U.S., were the first creatures to break free of the bonds of Earth, in 1947. A year later, a V-2 transported Albert, a rhesus monkey, who made history as the pioneer mammalian astronaut. Vintage footage here shows additional missions involving chimps, dogs, and, eventually, humans, while science lessons are interspersed throughout,

HUNGER IN AMERICA

Narrated by James Denton



50 million Americans go to bed hungry every night.

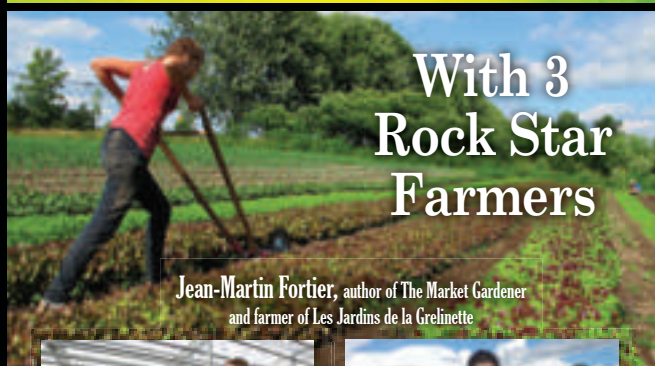
THIS IS THEIR STORY

52 MINS | CLOSED CAPTIONED

 **Green Planet Films**
www.greenplanetfilms.org

New Farms, Big Success

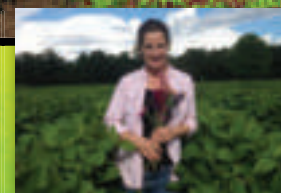
With 3 Rock Star Farmers



Jean-Martin Fortier, author of *The Market Gardener* and farmer of Les Jardins de la Grelinette



Lauren Rathmell
Greenhouse Manager, Lufa Farms



Kristin Kimball
author of *The Dirty Life* and farmer of Essex Farm

52 MINS | CLOSED CAPTIONED

P.O. Box 247 | Corte Madera, CA 94976 | 415-377-5471 | sales@greenplanetfilms.org
DVDs: GPF, Midwest Tape, AV Cafe, Follett. Digital: Kanopy, FMG, ASP, Overdrive

covering topics such as radiation, gravity, atmospheric pressure, and rapid acceleration (which gives the fun animal stories greater context). Viewers also gain insight into the glacial flow of top-secret documents—even years later, photographic evidence of some projects has not been released—and the film also addresses the space race/Cold War between the U.S. and Russia. Specht's experience as an educator is evident as he adopts a lay-friendly approach to complex subjects, while interviews with colleagues help broaden the insights here. Although intended for kids, this is likely to have wider appeal. Especially given the relative lack of titles in this subject area and the very low library price, this is highly recommended. Aud: E, I, J, P. (C. Block)

Forms of Energy ★★½

(2013) 13 min. DVD: \$129.95. DRA. VEA (dist. by Films Media Group). PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-0-81609-682-4.

This quick and fun tutorial about the various types of energy found in nature has an appealing host: a boy who is trying to use his grandfather's old boxcar. As he researches the different kinds of energy involved in propelling the handmade vehicle, the boy learns about the various energy types: kinetic (movement), potential (stored, as in muscles), electrical (e.g., batteries, atomic particles moving quickly), radium (light, solar, radio), sound (vibrations), elastic (balls, bungee cords), gravitational (the bigger the object, the greater the gravitational pull), and chemical. Along the way, viewers will learn how energy is converted from one form to another: the stored energy in arm muscles, for example, is released to hit a ball with a racket (transference of kinetic energy), which in turn makes a sound. On a grander scale, solar energy fuels plant life, which in turn provides energy in converted forms for a wide range of uses. An accessible science lesson featuring clear examples and plenty of relevant vocabulary, this is highly recommended. Aud: I, J, H, P. (T. Keogh)

Martin Clunes's Wild Life ★★

(2013) 2 discs. 278 min. DVD: \$39.99. Athena (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62172-185-7.

British actor Martin Clunes has achieved international fame as the comically dyspeptic title character of the TV series *Doc Martin*, who has a decided lack of enthusiasm for dogs. In real life, however, Clunes harbors a deep love for animals, evidenced in this five-documentary compilation. *A Man and His Dogs* (2008) traces the history of the human-canine relationship; *Heavy Horsepower* (2013) focuses on equine labor; *Man to Manta* (2011) explores the manta ray's habitats in the Maldives; *The Lemurs of Madagascar* (2012) details animal conservation efforts in the island nation; and *A Lion Called Mugie* (2014) pairs

Clunes with an orphaned lion at Kenya's Kora National Reserve (immortalized in the book and film *Born Free*). As nature documentaries go, these are fairly standard issue, but the selling point here is Clunes, who is both marvelously charming and genuinely enthusiastic about his subjects. DVD extras include a viewer's guide and photo galleries. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Particle Fever ★★★★★

(2013) 99 min. DVD: \$95: high schools & public libraries; \$295 w/PPR: colleges & universities. DRA. Ro*co Films Educational.

A joyous celebration of intellectual achievement, filmmaker Mark Levinson's *Particle Fever* takes viewers on a behind-the-scenes tour of the biggest machine ever built: the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN in Geneva. Approximately 3,000 scientists and engineers (many hailing from nations that normally hate and oppose each other) worked together on the historic, pure-science effort to create conditions under which it would be possible to view and assess the Higgs boson, aka the "God Particle," a crucial building-block (about a thousandth the size of a proton) in the origin of the universe. The physicists—including luminary David E. Kaplan—come across as quirky, creative, funny and real, never lapsing into the comic-book geek stereotypes of *The Big Bang Theory* as they navigate technical snafus, mount a 2007 media extravaganza for the first test-fire

of the LHC (later, they regret the hoopla as unfortunate showboating and a misleading PR stunt), and hunt for the Higgs boson. Veteran Hollywood editor Walter Murch can be credited for shaping this material into a strong narrative that makes sublime science comprehensible to the layperson. Sure to appeal to those who enjoyed *Cosmos*, this is highly recommended. Editor's Choice. Aud: H, C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Science at the Top of the World ★★

(2012) 44 min. DVD: \$295. DRA. National Film Board of Canada. PPR. Closed captioned.

The impact of global warming on the environment of the Canadian Arctic is the subject of Patrick McGowan's documentary, which briefly depicts the efforts of researchers to record and analyze changes in the region's ecosystem. *Science at the Top of the World* describes how Parks Canada (the agency in charge of the country's national parks), the Canadian Space Agency, and the Canadian Centre for Remote Sensing are working together and using a variety of methods—satellite observation from space, as well as data collection on the ground through both personal fieldwork and automated devices—to track the alterations that are occurring and assess how they might be moderated or reversed. The traditional knowledge of Inuit residents is also welcomed in the effort to understand what's happening. The production avoids polemical shrillness, instead adopting a



Sex in the Wild ★★

(2014) 2 discs. 240 min. DVD: \$29.99 (\$59.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-062-5.

Mating in the animal kingdom is driven by an intense biological instinct to ensure the survival of the species. Males charge ahead thanks to testosterone, while females seek the best genes for their offspring. This four-part PBS-aired documentary series features anatomist Joy Reidenberg and veterinarian Mark Evans, who here study the decidedly unromantic but necessary rituals of four distinctive mammals. Elephants are noted for having an extremely long gestation period (22 months)—one of the longest in the animal world—and females can remain fertile until 60 years of age. Males jostle for mating rights—a "pandemonium" pitting the would-be dominant male against rival bulls—and once selected, the lucky guy then faces an "obstacle course" in the actual physical act of mating. Once the calf is born, the young elephant matures quickly, but must stay near the mother to avoid predators (other females also join in protecting the infant). Compared to elephants, the orangutan's pregnancy is more like that of humans, with the notable exception that childbirth and infant rearing usually takes place high in treetop canopies, again to avoid predators. Dominant males morph into what is called here the "Incredible Hulk," marked by increased size and enlarged cheeks, a trait that is attractive to females. The alpha male emits a scent powerful enough to actually suppress the sexual maturity of rivals. Kangaroos, on the other hand, have an extremely short gestation period, protecting the young in a pouch, and later helping offspring adjust to the harsh, arid conditions in the Australian outback. Males sometimes engage in kickboxing matches with rivals, and will sometimes stage sneaky surprise attacks while males and females are copulating. Dolphins are renowned for their abundant sexual activity, with a female sampling several mates in quick succession, while whales are "sexual commuters," traveling thousands of miles between feeding and breeding grounds. Offering an unblinking, frank, and informative look at animal sexuality, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)

restrained, conversational style that allows those involved in the research to articulate their findings, while still conveying the unmistakable message that climate change is having a major effect in the Arctic, and that human activity plays a significant role in the process. Presented in both English and French versions on the disc, this is recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Where Have All the Elephants Gone? Poaching in Tanzania and Kenya ★★½
(2013) 27 min. DVD: \$129.95. DRA. Films Media Group. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-61753-951-0.

Foreign correspondent Eric Campbell teams up with wildlife ranger Sean Willmore here to document the rampant killing of elephants in Kenya and Tanzania—an estimated 60 a day in Tanzania alone—and the illicit ivory trade that feeds the voracious appetite in China and elsewhere for items fashioned from the animals' tusks. The opening scene is heartrending, as an exhausted orphan collapses after searching in vain for its mother—quite possibly among the latest victims. The camera also records the efforts of unarmed patrols that are largely helpless in stopping the poaching and slaughter. Posing as traders, the filmmakers convince some contacts to show them their stash of illegal goods, offering more proof (if any was needed) of this horrendous practice. Many of the sequences in this documentary appear to have been patched together from other sources (and may be found, for example, on YouTube). Although not an in-depth investigative report, this short documentary does highlight the ongoing plight of the world's elephants, a situation most strikingly expressed by Dame Daphne Sheldrick at her sanctuary in Kenya, who sadly predicts that they may be totally eliminated within 20 years. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Gardner)

HEALTH & FITNESS

Citizen Autistic ★★★
(2014) 68 min. DVD: \$19.95. Cinema Libre Studio (avail. from most distributors).

An eye-opening documentary about conflict within the autism research and treatment community, *Citizen Autistic* largely focuses on a war of words between a longtime non-profit group called Autism Speaks and the non-traditional Autistic Self Advocacy Network. Although other players are involved in this ongoing drama—including scientists, autistic individuals, and family members—filmmaker William Davenport devotes most of the running time here to exploring the fault lines between 1) the standard approach to autism that views the condition as a mental illness treatable by

institutions and professionals, and 2) the activist demands of people with autism who want to be seen as capable of running their own lives. Davenport's sympathies clearly tilt toward the latter, and indeed spokespersons for the Autistic Self Advocacy Network here make a strong case that they are doing just fine, noting that they would prefer to see research dollars being spent not on bloated, self-congratulatory charities but rather on improving communication technologies to aid autistic people. Members of Autism Speaks are afforded a chance for rebuttal, but the overall argument made here is that independence is best. Likely to spur discussion, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Leslie Sansone—Just Walk: Mix + Match Walk Blasters ★★★½
(2014) 106 min. DVD: \$14.98. Anchor Bay Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Providing all of the elements of a thorough workout with an option to mix-and-match segments, this latest entry in ebullient instructor Leslie Sansone's *Just Walk* series features 10 different mini-walks that can be customized into a personalized routine. *Walk Blasters* incorporates Sansone's core steps for her signature walk-at-home regimen, including sidesteps, kicks, and knee-lifts. One of three pre-planned routines, the "Total Body Walk" segment incorporates five of

outcast
FILMS

Delivering fresh, compelling documentaries into classrooms and libraries

The Film at the Center of the Sea Level Rise Debate

★★★ VIDEO LIBRARIAN

"...features an impressive array of interviewees on all sides of the issue"

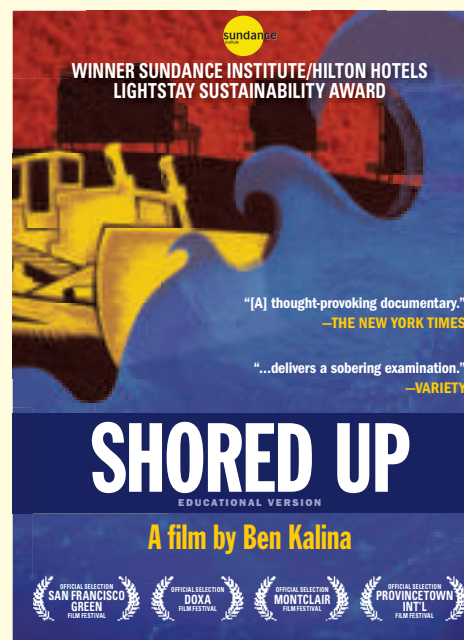
Recommended BOOKLIST

"...thought-provoking video sparks discussion..."

"...an engaging, and moving, adventure...does a remarkable job of portraying the complex relationship between humans and the environment, and most notably, the social, economic, and ecological issues embedded within this relationship.

—JEFFERY HILL,
Professor of Environmental Studies,
UNC Wilmington

MORE THAN
300
SCREENINGS
WORLD WIDE



84' | COLOR | USA, 2013 | CLOSED CAPTIONS

DVD extras include interviews with filmmaker Ben Kalina and editor Marc D'Agostino, as well as 3 bonus scenes.

DVD w/ PPR: \$295 | Home Use: \$24.99
Digital Rights Available

Explore the Virtual Classroom For "Shored Up" Only At Our Website

Interact with students, teachers and the filmmaker in post viewing dialogue on the environmental science, economic effects and social impact of our eroding coastlines. Find resources, news articles, and a comprehensive study guide with lessons tied to specific film chapters.

For additional information and to place your order please visit outcast-films.com.

[facebook.com/outcast-films](https://www.facebook.com/outcast-films)

[@outcastfilms](https://twitter.com/outcastfilms)

outcast
FILMS

DARK HOLLOW FILMS
BRINGING INDEPENDENT
ARTS AND VISIONS
TO THE CLASSROOM

DREAM: AN AMERICAN STORY
Chronicles the national conversation about the DREAM Act, immigration and immigration reform.



"This revelatory film is highly recommended."
-Video Librarian

BRINGING KING TO CHINA
A cross-cultural dialogue about the relevance of MLK's philosophy of peace, civil rights and non-violence in America and China.



"...a fascinating and thought-provoking film. Highly recommended."
-Video Librarian

OFF THE FLOOR
What does it take to overcome gender bias and share an artistic vision with the world?



"An engaging documentary... Recommended."
-Video Librarian

To purchase these and other great docs, visit:
darkhollowfilms.com



Rodney Yee's Complete Yoga for Beginners ★★½
(2014) 80 min. DVD: \$14.98. Gaia (avail. from most distributors).

Yoga master Rodney Yee here presents four routines—"Basics," "Flexibility," "Energy," and "Relaxation"—backed with soothing music in a spare but attractive indoor setting. The lithe and graceful yet also powerful Yee moves through the exercises with ease, making them look almost effortless. In accompanying narration, Yee sometimes acknowledges that a particular pose might be difficult, and despite the title, any of these 20-minute practices will be a challenge for those who do not already have some measure of flexibility and stamina. Yee is in constant motion here—even savasana, the relaxing "corpse pose" that usually lasts for a considerable time, is held for only a few moments. But viewers who can pace themselves will benefit from Yee's calmly voiced, clearly defined expert instruction. Extras include a bonus "Yoga Express" digital download. Sure to be popular, given Yee's longstanding recognition, this is highly recommended. Aud: P. (F. Gardner)

the mini-walks, including the "Light Walk" warm-up, "Upper Body Blast," "Lower Body Blast," "Tummy Trimmer," and cool-down "Flexibility Walk." Reminding viewers not to stress about perfect choreography, Sansone also offers her top 10 "Healthy Lifestyle Tips," some of which are good ("Keep your spirit fed"), some that could use more explanation ("Lower your standards"), and some that make you feel like you're being chastised (on breakfast: "Don't you skip it!"). Featuring a bouncy soundtrack and easy-to-follow moves, this addition to the popular fitness series is highly recommended. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)

When I Walk ★★★

(2013) 84 min. DVD: \$29.95 (\$299 w/PPR). Passion River. Closed captioned.

At the age of 25, New York filmmaker Jason DaSilva found out he had multiple sclerosis. Accustomed to traveling the world to make documentaries, he turned the camera on himself to record the next seven years. Although a positive thinker by nature, DaSilva is also a realist. As he puts it, MS "isn't fatal and it isn't contagious, but there's no cure or even treatment." DaSilva's mother worries that the focused filming will make him feel worse about his life, but he insists that he finds it helpful. Their clear-eyed conversations represent a key aspect of *When I Walk*, which also features photographs and home movies depicting DaSilva expressing his creativity through music, dance, and visual art (he's a particularly talented cartoonist). During the production, DaSilva travels to India to work on another project, but vision problems lead him to abandon it. Later, he travels to Lourdes on the advice of his Catholic grandmother, but finds no benefit (and none from an experimental procedure). DaSilva's social life also suffers as he moves from a cane to a walker to a motorized scooter. At a support group, he meets Alice, whose mother has MS. The pair hit it off, but when he asks her what she'll do when he can no longer feed

himself, she doesn't know how to respond. In time, however, they do decide to marry and the remainder of the film reflects their joys and challenges as newlyweds (Alice even helps Jason complete this film). An upbeat but also honest story of one man's struggles with a debilitating disease, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

CHILDBIRTH & PARENTING

Breastmilk ★★★

(2014) 85 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$295 w/PPR). Aleph Pictures (avail. from www.breastmilkthemovie.com).

New mothers representing a diverse sample in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and marital status share their experiences with breastfeeding in this intimate documentary from filmmaker Dana Ben-Ari, who spent over a year with the women and their partners—through pregnancy, birth, and beyond. Colleen and Lindsay are both opposed to bottle feeding, but like many other women they are unable to breastfeed immediately after birth, so some degree of compromise becomes necessary. For support, Lindsay participates in a La Leche League group, but another subject, Karin, says she doesn't have time for meetings on top of her other commitments. Chrystle, a student, uses formula to supplement breastfeeding, since she has to return to school, although she notes that her baby responds better to breast milk. Karin, whose baby was born premature, uses a supplement in addition to breast milk on the advice of her doctor, but isn't convinced that it's really necessary. Karin also gets a breast pump, but is alarmed by the \$300 cost. After returning to work, Barbara uses a pump during her breaks, and experiences no issues with the process (or the cost). Emily and Luki, a lesbian couple from Australia, see no need for a pump; if anything, they think that American mothers are overly concerned about milk production. Several subjects also

talk about sex during breastfeeding, a topic that generally receives less attention than sex during pregnancy (even the fetish genre of lactation pornography merits a brief mention here). Other speakers include author Fiona Giles (*Fresh Milk: The Secret Life of Breasts*) and Dr. Jack Newman (of the International Breastfeeding Centre). Sure to be popular, this engaging and informative documentary is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

RELATIONSHIPS & SEXUALITY

Risky Business: Inside America's Adult Film Industry ★★1/2

(2013) 102 min. DVD: \$19.99. *Shorts and Sandals Entertainment.*

Offering neither a historical perspective nor a focus on individual X-rated legends, filmmaker David Mech's *Risky Business* interviews denizens of the porn-film hotspot of Miami, FL. With the exception of a few actresses who enjoy the nonstop intercourse and promiscuous bad-girl mystique, everyone here is in it for the money (especially during the Great Recession; one starlet says she could not meet living expenses at her earlier CPA firm). Nonetheless, talent scouts and directors here say that women in particular are often damaged and abused when they enter the field, embarking on a career that seldom improves their lives (men interviewed say they cope with the baggage). Although STDs are rampant in entry-level amateur productions, professional sex-film studios are said to effectively police themselves against HIV, and some even adopt a condoms-only policy (viewer tastes notwithstanding). Although business insiders warn that government interference will only increase health hazards, they do call for legislation ending job discrimination against former porn players who have left the field. With its personal stories, *Risky Business* doesn't offer much of a sense of the behind-the-scenes production/distribution practices of the \$13 billion smut empire (the low-budget presentation remains Miami-based, with not even a mention of the bally-hoed Adult Video News annual expo in Las Vegas). Bare breasts abound, but the editing avoids any hardcore visuals. Not a thorough everything-you've-wanted-to-know-about-porn-but-were-afraid-the-librarian-would-see-you-Google-it presentation, but one that does answer some questions about porn star issues, this is a strong optional purchase for more liberal-minded collections. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

What's the T? ★★★

(2014) 68 min. DVD: \$14.95. *Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).*

An interesting documentary about five transgender women getting on with the business of life, *What's the T?* is a fitfully in-

sightful film that is also too easily diverted by gossipy minutiae. At its best, however, Cecilio Asuncion's doc sheds light on its subjects as the latter move through their days—going to work (or seeking it), taking classes, getting together with friends, clubbing, and discussing a life without children or (in several cases) the lack of support and understanding of families. As with any random group of strangers, Asuncion's quintet vary widely in terms of vision, goals, and responsibilities, with some coming across as more committed than others to causes beyond themselves. Despite its limitations, *What's the T?* will help general audiences achieve a better understanding of transgender people, while transgender youth will have an opportunity to witness transgender adults fully integrated into the world. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

FOOD & SPIRITS

Against the Grain: The Year Mother Nature Struck Back ★★★

(2012) 44 min. DVD: \$19.95 (\$199.99 w/PPR). *Against the Grain Productions (dist. by Dreamscape Media).*

Filmmaker Harold Weitzberg offers a close-up look at the perils of modern American agriculture in this profile centering on farm families in Missouri during the disastrous year of 2011, a time when Mother Nature scourged the Midwest with drought, tornadoes, and flooding. Much acreage in Missouri was flooded when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers blew up a levee to save the city of Cairo, IL, while landowners elsewhere stood helplessly by as weeks of hot, dry weather reduced acres of corn to shriveled stocks with stunted, unusable cobs. *Against the Grain* focuses primarily on the multigenerational Hughes clan—Lincoln and Trinnade, their three young sons, and Lincoln's parents. Following their day-to-day lives and challenges, the film captures the anxiety and frustration that build up when weather simply will not cooperate, threatening the survival of a multimillion-dollar enterprise—which is, in many cases, what the so-called “family farm” is these days. In the end, one family whose equipment was destroyed by a tornado decides to rebuild, while the Hughes—now mired in debt—agree to soldier on. A sobering look at the new face of farming—changed so much in the last several generations that few would recognize it—this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Gardner)

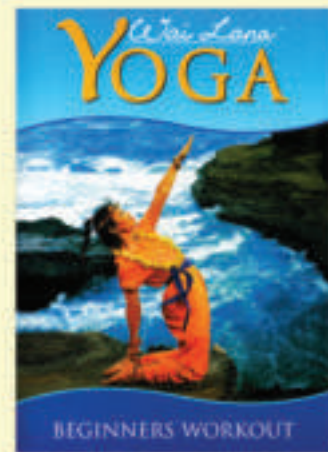
Planet Food: The Story of Tea ★★★

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.95. *Globe Trekker (avail. from most distributors).* PPR. ISBN: 1-937103-25-5.

The Story of Tea, the latest entry in the *Planet Food* series, explores the origins of tea and surrounding customs that have evolved over the centuries. Various youthful hosts

DVD PICKS

Sponsored by BayView Entertainment



WAI LANA YOGA EASY SERIES: BEGINNER'S WORKOUT BAY2065 \$19.99

Wai Lana (star of her own hit PBS-TV series) is here to guide you with her **Beginner's Workout**. Set to a backdrop of calming ocean waves, Wai Lana's yoga poses are gentle, easy, and safe to practice and offer wonderful results in the following areas: loosening stiff joints and muscles; releasing shoulder tension; strengthening and toning your abs; firming your thighs and buttocks; calming your nerves; experiencing deep relaxation.



EUROPE'S SECRET ARMIES: RESISTANCE D4984 \$24.99

This deluxe two-DVD set – almost 5 hours in length – is a detailed look at the men and women who resisted the Nazi invasions into their respective countries. The stirring stories of these brave individuals are told through stunning archival footage, accurate re-creations of key moments, and interviews with actual resistance fighters.

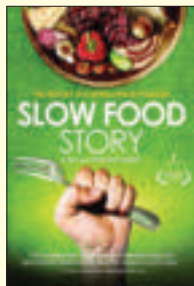


Order from your distributor or
call BayView at 201-488-6110
WWW.BAYVIEWENTERTAINMENT.COM

Slow Food Story ★★★

(2013) 74 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$26.99. Icarus Films Home Video (avail. from most distributors).

Centering on the international movement against fast food started by Carlo Petrini in 1986, Stefano Sardo's brisk documentary serves up an almost hagiographic biography of Petrini through a breezily edited compilation of archival footage, reminiscences (by family, colleagues, friends, and journalists), and animated transitions. After covering Petrini's childhood in the Piedmont town of Bra and his early forays into left-wing politics, *Slow Food Story* recounts Petrini's development of the non-profit food and wine association called Agricola in the early '80s, and its subsequent evolution into the Slow Food Movement, which was spurred by Petrini's involvement in a protest against the construction of a McDonald's near Rome's Spanish Steps. Generally, the idea behind the movement is to promote regional cuisine by encouraging local production of ingredients in conformity with existing ecological conditions. Although Petrini isn't directly interviewed, the film features periodic excerpts of his speeches before adoring crowds, during which he delivers aphorisms on reconsidering how we prepare and consume food, as well as on the dangers of globalized food production. Questions often raised about Petrini's ideas—sometimes decried as elitist or financially impractical—go unaddressed here, and it should be noted that the English subtitles are in an unusually small typeface that when situated against white backgrounds are virtually unreadable. Still, anyone interested in the Slow Food Movement—now boasting over 100,000 active adherents in more than 100 countries—will find Sardo's documentary to be a good introduction. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



visit countries including Britain, Sri Lanka, Japan, Malaysia, China, and Bangladesh, looking at the cultivation and culture of tea. The documentary assumes a lighthearted tone, with the correspondents sometimes making light of what they're covering, as when one of them says "it's only tea, folks" in a dismissive manner when noting the \$300-an-ounce price of pu-erh, a rare, sublime variety that is fermented and aged. In another sequence, a woman visits a plantation, gaily tossing leaves into the air with smiling workers who otherwise labor long hours at the back-breaking task of harvesting. Other reporters sip along with English connoisseurs and investigate the elaborate rituals that are part of Japanese and Chinese tea ceremonies. Although often flip in tone, this is still a solid primer for those unfamiliar with the various types of tea and how it is drunk around the world. Recommended. Aud: P. (F. Gardner)

Superlife—Genetic Manipulation: Super Foods ★★★

(2014) 52 min. DVD: \$195. DRA. Film Ideas. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-60572-771-4.

This documentary about manipulated life forms does not delve into the controversies surrounding genetically modified organisms (plants and animals), but rather serves up a straightforward exploration of developments aimed at producing more food in less time with the aim of better feeding the world's growing population. The program looks at the evolution of Belgian Blue cattle, hulking creatures that are bred without the hormone that stops muscles growth, and viewers will visit a number of related venues: ranches, artificial insemination centers, butcher shops,

and restaurants where happy diners enjoy juicy steaks. Among other developments covered here are high-fructose corn syrup (corn is dubbed the "king of grains," and 85 percent of the U.S. crop is reportedly genetically modified); hens that are adapted to become egg-laying machines with no maternal instincts, walking away from freshly laid eggs when freed from their confining cages; grapes that are modified to enhance disease resistance; and cross-bred tuna. Viewers will even see a brief sequence about meat made in a test tube. Farmers, ranchers, scientists, and consumers are among those who offer observations here about the food being produced and eaten. Many fine documentaries have been made expressing outrage over animal welfare and GMOs; this documentary is worthwhile in that it approaches these issues from a different perspective. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Gardner)

BEAUTY & FASHION

Boobs ★★★

(2014) 87 min. DVD: \$24.99. Garden Thieves Pictures (avail. from www.amazon.com).

A revealing and somewhat disheartening documentary revolving around one woman's experience with breast augmentation, co-directors Stone Roberts and Jon Bulette's *Boobs* centers on model Precious Muir, who at times seems savvy about the modeling business, but at others, shockingly naive. Hailing from England, Muir—who lives with her boyfriend, Guy, in New York—is told that she "looks young." Believing that a boob job

will make her appear older and sexier, Muir takes out a line of credit to pay for the \$8,000 procedure. Guy thinks she looks fine, but supports her dream of appearing in *Playboy*. Roberts and Bulette follow Muir through the surgical process that takes her from B cup to D cup (Muir has no problem with nudity, so nothing is left to the imagination here). Because she's petite, her surgeon uses narrow implants, but afterwards, Muir has regrets due to the accompanying pain, nausea, and shelf-like look of her new bust. Life goes on: Muir celebrates her 25th birthday, plans a wedding, and pays for a photo shoot to submit to *Playboy*, but remains unhappy with her implants, so she undergoes a second procedure to achieve a more natural look. The directors don't indicate the cost, but her efforts ultimately lead to a trip to the Playboy Mansion, which helps to justify her ordeal. Still, towards the end, Muir experiences setbacks that may or may not relate to her augmentation. An interesting documentary dealing with a number of issues related to body image and the media, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

The Great Vacation Squeeze ★★★1/2

(2013) 27 min. DVD: \$195. John de Graaf (dist. by Bullfrog Films). PPR. SDH captioned. ISBN: 1-94154-500-9.

Produced for public television, John de Graaf's documentary examines the brevity of the American vacation. Compared to the rest of the developed world, Americans don't receive as much time off, which amounts to several weeks for Europeans, who live longer and spend less on healthcare. A speaker in Sweden cites a law guaranteeing five weeks off, while a German interviewee tops that with six. The U.S. situation hasn't always been so dire, but vacation times have been shrinking for years. Historically, the idea of a governmental mandate regarding vacations has attracted supporters—including John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt—but never caught on, due to opposition from corporate interests. Doctors, including cardiologist Sarah Speck, testify to the benefits of time off to relieve stress. De Graaf also speaks with families vacationing in Yosemite National Park. As one camper puts it, "These are life experiences the kids won't ever forget," but another camper worries that if his employer does not miss him when he's away for two weeks, he might not be missed at all. Keeping vacation time short, he says, represents "job security." Park rangers also note that visitors don't stay as long as they once did. Travel guide Rick Steves adds, "It seems like we've lost track of what life is all about." Steves now offers shorter trips, since fewer customers are signing on for 22-day excursions.

While there are no startling revelations here, it's hard to argue with the notion that a healthier workforce benefits society as a

whole—to say nothing of the individual worker. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

COMPUTERS & TECHNOLOGY

How We Got to Now ★★½

(2014) 2 discs. 360 min. DVD: \$34.99 (\$64.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-036-6.

Polymath author Steven Johnson hosts this six-part series (a companion book was also released) celebrating “unsung heroes” of yesteryear whose ideas and inventions laid the groundwork for many of the facets of modern living that we take for granted today. The exuberantly boyish Johnson kicks off the initial episode “Clean” with a look at a chain of hygienic events that began in Chicago, circa the mid-19th century, when the streets were paved with something decidedly less glamorous and distinctly more odorous than gold. Unable to dig beneath the city, Ellis S. Chesbrough hit upon an alternative for creating an underground sewer system: raise the buildings, using jacks. Chicago’s sewer system was a smashing success, except for the fact that the waste emptied into Lake Michigan—source of the Windy City residents’ drinking water, solving one problem but leading to another. In a kind of six degrees of Thomas Edison way, Johnson traces the continuing story of “clean”—from John L. Leal’s bold unauthorized dosing of the water supply in Jersey City with chlorine (which is lethal in the wrong amounts, but wound up cleaning the water) to Annie Murray’s marketing of a new product called Clorox that would herald the birth of one of the biggest consumer industries in history. Throughout the series, Johnson travels the world, exploring the connections between seemingly disparate occurrences, such as how the invention of the mirror gave rise to the first “selfies” by Renaissance artists. Some of these are a bit of a stretch: the link between Hollywood Golden Age actress Hedy Lamarr and the development of secure wireless communications seems tangential (albeit entertaining), but for the most part, Johnson’s invigorating survey of how we got to now takes viewers on an intriguing, mind-expanding journey. Also featuring the segments “Time,” “Glass,” “Light,” “Cold,” and “Sound,” extras include an interview with Johnson. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (R. Pitman)



Cyber-Seniors ★★★

(2014) 75 min. DVD: \$59.95 (avail. Feb. 10), \$325 w/PPR. Passion River.

An inspiring documentary about senior citizens finding a new interest in life via the Internet, filmmaker Saffron Cassaday’s *Cyber-Seniors*—filmed in a large retirement facility—tracks the results of a project matching tech-savvy young people with a much older generation who are still relying on landline telephones for occasional contact with distant family members and friends. The millennials teach the elders about computer basics, e-mail, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, and search engines, and before long the seniors discover that the world (thanks to the virtual) is now much more accessible. Suddenly, communication opens up with grown children and grandchildren, long-ago intimates are found via Google, and instant messaging brings an immediacy to exchanges that letters never could. The documentary is capped by a friendly competition among residents to produce the best YouTube video, with winners celebrated at a big dinner. The delight these seniors experience using all these new tools is palpable in this feel-good film. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

SPORTS, GAMES & RECREATION

Desert Runners ★★½

(2014) 95 min. DVD: \$19.99. Smush Media (avail. from www.amazon.com).

Executive-produced by ultra-marathon runner Dean Karnazes, *Desert Runners* tracks participants in one of the most grueling athletic competitions conceivable—a quartet of on-foot treks across hundreds of miles of the Earth’s most extreme environments: the Atacama desert/salt flats of Chile, the Gobi Desert in China, the Sahara, and—lastly—Antarctica (a very small patch of the polar continent is reserved for recreational visitors). A growing number of runners are determined to conquer all four deserts in the same year, a feat known as a “Grand Slam.” Director Jennifer Steinman follows four amateurs aspiring to achieve a Grand Slam, including a middle-aged Irish novice runner (who sings Tom Lehrer’s “Masochism Tango” prior to embarking) and an almost caricatured-macho British ex-soldier and security expert, who is running in memory of his late wife, a cancer victim. While the personalities

are colorful, the ensuing drama never feels forced or exploitative, even when the Gobi segment is overshadowed by the death of a runner, and one of Steinman’s subjects suffers a traumatic assault in North Africa. DVD extras include an interview with Karnazes and a behind-the-scenes featurette. Not just for sports enthusiasts, this documentary is highly recommended. Aud: P. (C. Cassidy)

THE ARTS

Bending Sticks: The Sculpture of Patrick Dougherty ★★★

(2013) 54 min. DVD: \$25; individuals; \$89; high schools & public libraries; \$199; colleges & universities. PenKen Productions. PPR.

North Carolina sculptor Patrick Dougherty stands out from his peers primarily due to his chosen medium: Dougherty collects sticks and branches, which he then bends into intricate interwoven shapes, creating impressive works (many of massive size and density) that are now found in major art collections. Filmmakers Penelope Maunsell and Kenny Dalsheimer’s documentary looks at the great patience and planning that goes into these labor-of-love sculptures. Dougherty works with a team of assistants in the harvesting of the sticks and branches (some fairly heavy), which are subjected to an extremely intensive decontamination effort to ensure that there are no insects residing within the gathered wood (an earlier installation was dismantled after Dougherty failed to identify a nest of praying mantises, which made a surprise appearance in the midst of a gallery exhibition). And then begins the art of twisting and turning the wood into distinctive patterns without breaking or splintering, which requires extreme care. An intriguing profile of an iconoclastic creative artist (also available on Blu-ray at higher prices), this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Billy Crystal: 700 Sundays ★★★

(2014) 134 min. DVD: \$19.98. HBO Home Entertainment (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Billy Crystal’s one-man Broadway show—adapted from his autobiography and first performed in 2004—is titled after the number of Sundays he spent with his father—who died when Crystal was 15. In fact, *700 Sundays* serves as both a tribute to his father, a New York City record store owner and jazz promoter and producer whose relationships brought Crystal into contact with Billie Holiday and Eddie Condon (among many others)—and Crystal’s personal remembrance of growing up in Manhattan as an aspiring entertainer in an extended Jewish family. Leaning heavily on sentiment and nostalgia for a long bygone era, the production is staged on a simple set that recreates the façade of a ‘50s-era family

home, where the 65-year-old Crystal tells stories for the audience, bouncing through his early life with impressions of eccentric family members and re-creations of his own early attempts at tap dancing, telling jokes, and attempting sports as an undersized kid in a big world. This old-school Catskills humor is full of Yiddish interjections and instances of Crystal mugging it up, but—to be fair—he knows how to work an audience. Recorded for HBO during its Broadway revival in early 2014, this DVD release is an extended version of what was shown on cable. Recommended. Aud: P. (S. *Axmaker*)

The Desperate ★★★

(2014) 32 min. DVD: \$14.99. *Tolerance Through Knowledge* (dist. by Vision Video).

Based on a true story, this dramatic short film stars veteran character actor Peter Mark Richman as Dr. Blumenthal, a renowned Jewish surgeon incarcerated at a death camp during World War II. When the son of Nazi commander General Von Ulbricht (Greg Mullavey) is seriously wounded and lies dying in an infirmary, Blumenthal is tapped to save the young man's life. Blumenthal initially refuses, resisting Ulbricht's efforts at pleading, bullying, bargaining, and more, but eventually yields to his own conscience as a man of healing. Ulbricht winds up being reduced to making the cowardly I'm-just-following-orders excuse for his participation in the Holocaust, while Blumenthal is suddenly seen by the German as an actual human being. It's nice to see Richman—a constant presence on series television in the 1960s and '70s—playing a substantial role late in his career. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. *Keogh*)

Jay Johnson: The Two & Only! ★★★

(2012) 114 min. DVD: \$19.95. *Music Video Distributors* (avail. from most distributors).

Ventriloquist Jay Johnson's Broadway show (winner of a 2007 Tony Award)—presented here in a 2012 performance from Thalian Hall in Wilmington, NC—finds the former *Soap* star surrounded onstage by suitcases filled with puppets as he presents a history of his vocation while also demonstrating his expertise. The word “ventriloquism,” Johnson explains, hails from the Latin for “to talk through your belly.” During the 1700s, the skill became associated with puppets and achieved some popularity, despite detractors who saw ventriloquism as a form of witchcraft or demonic possession (a notion furthered by the fact that some practitioners were simply grifters who supposedly removed curses for a price). Johnson's chronology also touches on the Oracle of Delphi, *The Wizard of Oz*, Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, Shari Lewis and Lamb Chop, and the radio show *Big Jon and Sparkie*, which served as an inspiration for his own act. Through practice, Johnson honed his abilities—using his little sister as his “permanent captive audi-

ence”—moving on to perform for audiences in Texas and California before transitioning to television. Johnson explains how the term “dummy” came into usage, joking that his performing companions prefer to be called Wooden Americans—companions including Amigo, a sensitive boa constrictor; Nethernore, an excitable vulture; and Bob, Johnson's sarcastic *Soap* costar. All in all, this is a pretty ingenious and entertaining show. Recommended. Aud: P. (K. *Fennessy*)

Me, the Vinyl and the Rest of the World

★★★

(2010) 72 min. In Brazilian Portuguese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$80: public libraries & high schools; \$300: colleges & universities. DRA. Third World Newsreel. PPR.

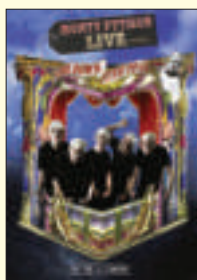
Brazil, which helped change the face of popular music with samba and bossa nova, also lays claim to a thriving hip-hop scene. In this lively film, directors Karina Ades and Lila Rodrigues document a São Paulo DJ contest that has been held since 1997, with the winner traveling to London to compete in the world championship. Contestants here explain how they got started: some work in metal shops and office buildings, while others spend their time spinning records at parties. Because the expenses for mixers and record needles add up, the men share resources (unfortunately, there are no female contestants). For DJ Erick Jay, his dad's Michael Jackson and Stevie Wonder records gave him the raw learning materials, but he would wait until his father wasn't around—lest his vinyl-scratching cause alarm. DJ Basim started out as a B-boy who would spin records to provide other break dancers with a soundtrack, but they kept encouraging his efforts, so he turned his ambitions from the

dance floor to a set of turntables. DJ Sleep, who originally called himself DJ Nap, says his nickname comes from his tendency to nod out “in inappropriate places” (he doesn't seem to be aware that this condition has a name, i.e. narcolepsy). Ades and Rodrigues give everyone a chance to share their skills behind the decks on-camera—and there's plenty of talent to go around. DJ Max sums things up for the lot—whether they spin on the side or as a full-time career—saying, “You have to sacrifice a lot. You really have to love it.” An engaging documentary with solid beats, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. *Fennessy*)

Royal Paintbox: Artists of the Royal Family ★★★

(2013) 71 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-044-1.

Although the news is often met with surprise, prominent political figures have indulged in artistic endeavors on the side throughout modern history, from Winston Churchill to George W. Bush to Prince Charles, as we learn in filmmaker Margy Kinmonth's engaging PBS-aired documentary. The artistic inclinations of the Prince of Wales are at the center here: Charles shows off some of his watercolors and talks about how much he appreciates the meditative side of the undertaking (he even discloses that since his time when on tour is so limited, he takes along a painter as part of his entourage to produce a canvas or two recording the journey). Charles also acts as host in presenting sketches and paintings from the archives that display the talents of other royals, including Queen Victoria and her husband, Prince Albert, as well as the architectural drawings



Monty Python Live (Mostly): One Down, Five to Go

★★★★1/2

(2014) 160 min. DVD: \$19.98, Blu-ray: \$24.98. *Eagle Vision* (avail. from most distributors).

The surviving members of Monty Python's Flying Circus (Graham Chapman died in 1989) have aged, but “The Liberty Bell” march that serves as the troupe's theme song never gets old, and hearing it performed live before a rapturous audience here is a thrill. John Cleese, Eric Idle, Michael Palin, Terry Jones, and Terry Gilliam are well past their “When I'm 64” years, but they rose to the occasion for a series of once-(more)-in-a-lifetime reunion shows on July 20, 2014 in the U.K. Unlike the Marx Brothers in *Love Happy* or Laurel and Hardy in *Atoll K*, the Pythons have improved with age. They are in real life the ages of their fictional Four Yorkshiremen, a quartet of wealthy codgers who try to one-up each other on their impoverished childhoods, just one of the “greatest hits” here given a last hurrah. Some may carp that there is scant new material, but if you only have the Pythons for presumably the last time, you want to see “The Lumberjack Song,” “Argument Clinic,” and “Parrot Sketch.” A new song might be amusing, but you'd much rather hear an especially spirited “Always Look on the Bright Side of Life,” which inevitably closes the show. Python muse Carol Cleveland is thankfully present—she's still a goer. (Know what I mean? Know what I mean? Nudge-nudge.) Extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Bottom line: say no more; highly recommended. Aud: P. (D. *Liebenson*)

Wagner's Jews ★★½

(2013) 55 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors).

Richard Wagner's strident anti-Semitism and Adolf Hitler's fervent embrace of Wagner's music have been the subjects of other documentaries (most recently, *Wagner & Me*, reviewed in VL-7/13), but filmmaker Hilan Warshaw takes a different tack, concentrating on Jews who were among Wagner's most enthusiastic supporters and collaborators during his lifetime. *Wagner's Jews* combines narration, artwork, location footage, dramatic re-enactments, musical examples, and interviews with such distinguished experts as conductor Zubin Mehta (who sparked controversy in 1981 by programming an excerpt from *Tristan und Isolde* as an encore for the Israeli Philharmonic in Tel Aviv despite an unofficial ban on public performance of works by Wagner) and Leon Botstein, president of Bard College and a noted conductor himself. Warshaw concludes that Jews often represented the largest segment of Wagner's audience simply because they were among the cultural elite of the time, and therefore most likely to champion new music. Warshaw also profiles such figures as Joseph Rubinstein, a Russian pianist so enthralled by Wagner that he committed suicide when the composer died; Karl Tausig, a Polish virtuoso who helped finance concerts that promoted Wagner; and Hermann Levi, a rabbi's son who became the chief conductor at newly built Bayreuth and remained devoted to Wagner despite a dispute over whether he had to be baptized before leading the premiere of *Parsifal*. DVD extras include extended interviews, a deleted scene, a Q&A with Warshaw, and a performance of Rubinstein's rarely heard piano version of themes from *Parsifal*. Serving up a fascinating study of the uneasy association between art and ideology, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)



of King George III, whose supposed madness the Prince touches on with a rare show of irritation. Charles also discusses works in other media, such as the elaborate embroidery of Mary Queen of Scots in the 16th century, and the mezzotints (a particularly precise form of printmaking) of Rupert of the Rhine in the 17th. Additional commentary on the artwork and its makers is offered by Sarah Armstrong-Jones, daughter of Princess Margaret and a painter herself, as well as popular authors including Antonia Fraser and Marina Warner. DVD extras include bonus scenes. Sure to appeal to Anglophiles, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

HISTORY & CURRENT EVENTS

Dick Cavett's Watergate ★★½

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$52.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-102-8.

Believe it or not, there really was a time when talk show hosts tackled weighty issues of national importance. On the 40th anniversary of President Nixon's resignation, this PBS-aired documentary from filmmaker John Scheinfeld finds Dick Cavett taking a look back at Watergate, which escalated from break in, to "caper," to national scandal during 1972-74. As the debacle unfolds, Cavett interviews in archival clips figures including Sen. Edward Kennedy, Barry Goldwater, and investigative reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein (and even Walter Cronkite). The emerging narrative sees the Nixon White House as consumed

by a lust for power and harboring a sense of entitlement, even as Nixon himself—during the height of anti-Vietnam War protests—becomes increasingly isolated and bent on using the presidency for personal revenge. Cavett singles out a few heroes, including "remarkable truth teller" White House counsel John Dean, Senator Howard Baker, and rumpled, folksy "country lawyer" Sam Ervin (shown, but not seen in interviews here). As the documentary notes, Watergate was like watching a slow-motion train wreck, as the ensuing cover-up came unraveled following the revelation of White House taping devices that showed both Nixon's vindictive personality and his clear criminal intent to sidetrack the investigation, ultimately sealing his doom with the threat of impeachment, followed by official resignation. The program also offers a few surprises, including outtakes that depict a surprisingly jovial Nixon minutes before his resignation speech, and the views of many that—in hindsight—Gerald Ford's pardon of Nixon was a heroic act, sparing the nation years of divisive trials. Cavett brings all of this together crisply with characteristic wit. Serving up a valuable history lesson, this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

La Palabra en el Bosque (The Word in the Woods) ★★½

(2012) 56 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$169.95. DRA. Films Media Group. PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62290-016-9.

In the early 1970s, people living in the remote rural area of Morazán, El Salvador, suffered from extraordinary poverty and

were intimidated by a brutal military-political regime. Salvation came to many in a distinctive reinterpretation of Jesus Christ's ministry that would become known as liberation theology. Under the pretext of coordinating Bible studies, the priests and lay-clergy at the heart of this movement encouraged an unprecedented sense of cooperation among the Morazán residents, creating a social and economic harmony that was quickly seen as a political threat to the ruling elite. But instead of turning the other cheek in the face of oppression, the newly unified Morazan residents joined together against attempted military crackdowns, an effort that became part of a larger conflict that would plunge El Salvador into a 12-year civil war. This documentary interviews many surviving eyewitnesses to this bold stand against government repression, men and women whose vibrant stories offer insight into the great struggles that the Salvadoran people endured for too many years. Serving up a solid overview of an important chapter in Central American history, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Life Is Strange ★★½

(2014) 53 min. DVD: \$24.99. Dreamscape Media (\$199 w/PPR).

This powerful, often intimate documentary is a work of collective memory exploring the lives of European Jews before and during the Holocaust. Jewish interviewees who were children in the 1930s and '40s recall the communities in which they lived with parents, grandparents, and neighbors, where they celebrated Sabbaths together, studied the Torah, and ate well. Not all memories of this time are rosy: several here speak of harsh treatment at the hands of teachers, or remember the unfairness of the sexes being segregated at school and in certain services. But all of these concerns were wiped away with the arrival of the Nazis and the beginning of the campaign to eliminate Jews. Survivors talk about being thrown out of their homes and businesses, shut away in ghettos, and transported to concentration camps, where they were separated from loved ones (often forever). Along the way, viewers will hear stories of heroism and sacrifice as well as unspeakable cruelty and loss. The final third of filmmaker Isaac Hertz's *Life Is Strange* focuses on the aftermath of World War II, when the interviewees—including former Israeli president Shimon Peres, Nobel laureates Walter Kohn and Robert Aumann, and children's book author Uri Orlev—rebuilt their lives. DVD extras include deleted scenes. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (T. Keogh)

Ocean Keeper ★★½

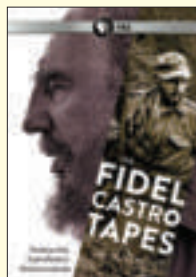
(2012) 27 min. DVD: \$19.99: individuals; \$65: public libraries; \$80: high schools; \$160: colleges & universities. Pure Newt. PPR.

Eileen Olivieri Torpey's PBS-aired documentary short chronicles the maritime

The Fidel Castro Tapes ★★½

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-096-0.

Although nominally retired, Fidel Castro still dominates the island country of Cuba. This PBS-aired documentary from filmmaker Tom Jennings presents rare and forgotten news footage illustrating Fidel's rise to power, as he challenged the corrupt Batista regime. The news reports note that during the 1950s Cuba was a "playground for Americans," with large sugar and other corporate American interests enjoying vast holdings in the poverty-stricken country. Initially, Batista didn't take the insurgent threat seriously, especially after Castro launched a failed uprising in 1953. Many viewers will be surprised to hear Castro interviewed from jungle hideouts, speaking in heavily accented English (he would later use Spanish almost exclusively). Fidel is addressed as "Dr. Castro," due to several advanced degrees and a privileged upper class background. After the New Year's revolution in 1959 that overthrew Batista, Castro played coy, saying that he was a believer in democracy (he's even shown laying a wreath at the Lincoln Memorial during a U.S. visit). Although many supported Castro as a populist, they quickly became disillusioned after his mock trials and firing squads. The documentary covers the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion, and the 1962 missile crisis, which infuriated Castro when President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev cut a deal to remove missiles from the island. Historically, Castro has always seemed to delight in provoking America, sending hordes of refugees—scornfully labeled "worms and parasites"—in the 1980 Mariel boatlift to America. The end of the Cold War led to a "special period" of belt tightening, some reforms, and Fidel's increasing frailty as he aged. Castro, who over time has lost little of his revolutionary zeal, defiantly declared that "history will absolve me." Time will tell, but this film certainly offers an intriguing look back at the Castro era. Highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)



Featuring excellent archival materials and photographs—particularly film footage of horse-drawn wagons and other reminders that Fort Lewis arrived just before the modern age—this is highly recommended, especially for regional libraries. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Reporting on the Times: The New York Times and the Holocaust ★★

(2013) 18 min. DVD: \$295. DRA. Filmmakers Library (dist. by Alexander Street Press). PPR.

Award-winning student filmmaker Emily Harrold's documentary short is based on Laurel Leff's book *Buried by the Times*, which claims that *The New York Times* intentionally downplayed coverage of the Holocaust during World War II. Between 1939 and 1945, only 26 articles related to the Holocaust received front-page placement, and the rest were largely buried within the newspaper. *Reporting on the Times* argues that the *Times* intentionally employed anodyne language to obscure the severity of the Nazi atrocities being committed because the newspaper's Jewish publisher, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, feared that an overt emphasis on Nazi crimes against Europe's Jews would spur an anti-Semitic backlash in the United States. A few ex-*Times* reporters are interviewed, who tsk-tsk their former employer for being a bad citizen, but no one from the current editorial executive offices appears onscreen to confirm the depiction of Sulzberger as a self-loathing Jew. Also not mentioned is the fact that the *Times'* post-1941 coverage from Europe was not generated by correspondents in occupied countries, but from reports smuggled out and not easily confirmed. In fairness to the paper, it would not have been responsible to run prominent stories that lacked eyewitness affirmation, and it wasn't until the confiscation of Nazi photographic and motion picture evidence after the liberation that the ghastly truth was revealed. Was the *Times* any more guilty than others of not doing enough to call attention to the Holocaust while World War II was raging, or is this a sterling example of hindsight-driven revisionist history? Too brief to make a convincing case, this is an optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Stolen Education ★★★

(2014) 67 min. DVD: \$89; public libraries & high schools; \$195; colleges & universities. DRA. The Video Project. PPR. Closed captioned.

In the aftermath of the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, some Texas schools tried circumventing the order to desegregate by isolating Mexican-American children from their peers through a policy that kept them in first grade for three years. The 1956 case *Hernandez et al. v. Driscoll Consolidated Independent School District* put an end to that particular practice, but its impact on the Civil Rights movement has been long forgotten. Dr. Enrique Alemán

history of East Hampton. Before the government established the U.S. Life-Saving Service (USLSS) in 1848, coastal citizens would volunteer to help the survivors of shipwrecks (who were mainly fishermen and whalers). Afterward, some 280 life-saving stations sprung up across the country. Torpey focuses on the Amagansett Station, which was built on the South Shore of Long Island in 1902. According to Richard Barons, executive director of the East Hampton Historical Society, locals would often stop by to socialize, making the station an ersatz meeting place or community center. The Coast Guard eventually took over the USLSS, occupying the structure until 1944. Retired Captain Milton Miller recalls serving there in 1942 when a Nazi U-Boat ran aground carrying four saboteurs who were planning to blow up power stations. John Cullen, a fellow guardsman, reported the incident to his superiors, and the plan was derailed. After the Coast Guard left, the decommissioned station stood fallow for 22 years until author Joel Carmichael bought it for a dollar (otherwise, it would have faced the wrecking ball) and moved it several blocks to serve as a summer home. The documentary begins and ends with the efforts of his children to return the station to its original location in order to preserve it as a historical landmark. In an interview, Torpey says that she hopes their actions spur others to make similar moves on behalf of the 129 remaining life-saving

stations, 10 of which qualify as endangered. Recommended, especially for regional collections. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

Passing the Torch: The Building of Fort Lewis 1916-1939 ★★½

(2013) 20 min. DVD: \$69; public libraries & high schools; \$150; colleges & universities. Stourwater Pictures. PPR.

This capsule history of Washington state's Fort Lewis begins with its inception in the early 20th century when Tacoma-area businessmen saw an opportunity to reap financial benefits for the city by offering a large tract of land to the U.S. federal government. The birth of "Camp Lewis" soon saw an influx of "cowboy soldiers," i.e., uniformed men familiar with horses and other beasts of burden that were necessary to run such an outpost. Many of these men improved their reading and writing skills here in preparation for battle, which relied on clear communication. With America's entrance into World War I, Fort Lewis's well-trained soldiers were sent overseas, but in the aftermath of the so-called Great War, the facility gradually fell into disrepair. Tacoma officials and residents were alarmed at the fort's decay, but an enormous push by the U.S. Army to construct roads and buildings succeeded in short order, creating an infrastructure that still largely exists today, along with the same traditions designed to build skills and camaraderie and create community for military families.

Losing Iraq ★★★

(2014) 90 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-140-0.

After expending an enormous amount of blood and money since the war in Iraq began in 2003, the U.S. military completed operations in 2011, hopeful that they were leaving behind a stable government and a competent, well trained Iraqi army. But as of the early summer of 2014, the army was on the run from the radical Islamic group ISIS, and the country seemed to be falling apart. What happened? Filmmaker Michael Kirk's PBS-aired *Frontline* documentary looks at how initial encouraging signs after the fall of Saddam Hussein quickly gave way to chaos, looting, and a growing insurgency. American officials didn't have adequate plans for securing the country, and the decision to dismantle the Iraqi army left a lot of disgruntled and well-armed men jobless and out on the street. A reporter interviewed here describes the U.S. embassy in Baghdad's relatively safe "green zone" as an "emerald city" (as in "Oz"), walled off from both reality and the rest of the country. Old religions and ethnic rivalries between Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds quickly resurfaced, and al-Qaeda engaged in bombing rival mosques to inflame the population, also targeting embassies and markets as it sought to prove that the government couldn't protect the people. The Bush administration, after enjoying a brief "mission accomplished" moment, vacillated between "war tourism" (staying on bases, only engaging the enemy when necessary) and a more aggressive posture with the "surge," along with a move to win Sunnis over to the government's side (the "Sunni awakening.") Unfortunately, the inexperienced Shia Iraqi President Nouri al-Maliki stoked sectarian divisions by firmly embracing Shiites while excluding other groups. Bush's mistakes were compounded by Obama's disengaged posture and the announcement of withdrawal timetables that encouraged radicals. Featuring testimony from reporters and government officials, *Losing Iraq* offers a depressing portrait of America's bipartisan failure that has yet to fully play out (the film was produced before the current air war against ISIS). Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)



Jr., the son of one of the students involved in the Hernandez case, co-directed this documentary examining the circumstances surrounding this sad chapter in Lone Star state history, detailing how the Texas schools used racism and fear to wreck the lives of a number of intelligent Mexican-American children, and how the stigma of this policy continues to haunt many today in Texan communities (including Alemán's family). Also noted here is the work of American G.I. Forum, the organization of Mexican-American veterans that coordinated the Hernandez litigation. Since few photographs of the individuals involved in the Hernandez case exist, *Stolen Education* is forced to rely heavily on oral records—which occasionally makes for a rather talky production—but this is otherwise a solid remembrance of a significant chapter in Hispanic history that deserves attention. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

TRAVEL & GEOGRAPHY

Central Japan ★★★

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.95. Globe Trekker (avail. from most distributors). PPR. ISBN: 1-937103-24-8.

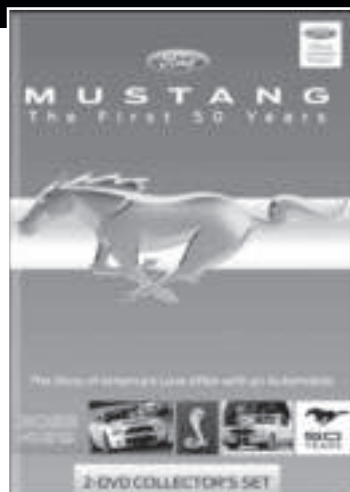
Globe Trekker host Megan McCormick explores Central Japan in this informa-

New Commemorative 2-DVD Set Celebrates Mustang's First 50 Years

"Packed with hot shot visuals and a turbo-charged narrative, this is a great ride that will surely appeal to car buffs." Highly recommended. Editor's Choice ★★★★★
Video Librarian

"The quality of the Mustang DVD is superb and the sound and visuals are exquisite. This is definitely a DVD you will want for your library."
The Hollywood Examiner

"This DVD shows how the Mustang became an icon and does it with flair and showmanship. What a sweet ride down memory lane."
YAP Movie Reviews



This all-new, Ford-licensed 2-DVD set charts the amazing story of the Mustang from the early years, through the launch in 1964 – the most successful in automotive history – to how the Mustang changed through six generations (1964-2015).

Total running time: 2 hour, 38 minutes

Acquired in HD and wide screen.

See trailer at – tmbv.com – click on "Mustang"

Available from most major distributors



TM Books & Video • Box 9228, Michigan City, IN 46361
(219) 879-2822 • (800) 892-2822 • www.tmbv.com



Ford Motor Company Trademarks and Trade Dress used under license to Key Enterprises, Inc.

Discoveries...America National Parks

Mount Rushmore

Redwood, Wild Cave, Jewel Cave & Mount Rushmore
South Dakota

NEW!

Discoveries... America National Parks

40+ titles, \$24.⁹⁵ / New titles monthly

Previously released:

Grand Canyon	Yellowstone
AZ Footprints	Dry Tortugas
Of The Ancients	Arches, Canyonlands
Lyndon B. Johnson	& Natural Bridges
Japanese American	New Orleans Jazz
Incarceration	Hawaii
Mount Rainier	Wrangell-St Elias
& Mount St Helens	Cuyahoga Valley
Mount Rushmore	Yosemite
FL Everglades	Glacier &
& Biscayne	Craters Of The Moon
San Antonio Missions	Katmai, Lake Clark
	& Alagnak

200+ DVD titles / Also available in Blu-ray

Bennett-Watt HD Productions, Inc.
Ph: 800-327-2893 • Ph: 425-392-3935
Email: Info@Bennett-Watt.com

www.Bennett-Watt.com

GET WISE TO PORTION SIZE

Get Wise to Portion Size DVD

Item #300054 | Price: \$79.95 | Grade 6 - Adult

In *Get Wise to Portion Size*, viewers **learn more about why portion size matters and how to eat the right amount.** Short segments and an interview with a registered dietitian explain the issues with portion sizes such as, why portion size matters, tips for eating out, and tips for eating at home.

18 Minutes, Closed Captioned
UPC #846742005275

Learning ZoneXpress™
1.888.455.7003
learningzonexpress.com

tive episode from the popular public television-aired travel series. McCormick starts in Kyoto, where she visits historic sites, watches religious processions, and learns about geishas, who she describes as cultural preservationists rather than ladies of the evening (which is sometimes the inaccurate Western perception of the vocation). She even undergoes a geisha transformation herself at Toho Studios. Since Shintoism and Buddhism are locally prevalent, she tries out Zen meditation, as well as traditional foods such as deep-fried sparrow. In Osaka, she visits one of 20 cat cafés, popular among citizens who would like to own pets but live in buildings with animal restrictions (McCormick pays 1,000 yen for an hour of tea and feline companionship). Afterwards, she visits the KidZania theme park where children take on adult roles such as banker, police officer, and firefighter (not sure if American children would rally quite as enthusiastically around the idea of working as a form of entertainment). In Iga-Ueno, she learns about ninjas—originally paid mercenaries who spied and killed on behalf of feudal warlords. In Sekigahara and Himeji, she observes battle re-enactments and on Sado Island she bikes, fishes, and tries out the instruments at Kodo's world-renowned drum school. Throughout, McCormick's wide-eyed enthusiasm never flags, doing her best to stave off Ugly American stereotypes by observing local customs, speaking the language whenever she can, and trying any number of local delicacies, from fried octopus (which she enjoys) to raw abalone (not so much). Recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)

Discoveries...America National Parks: San Antonio Missions ★★½

(2014) 50 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.95. Bennett-Watt HD Productions. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-60490-176-4 (dvd), 978-1-60490-199-3 (blu-ray).

This new entry in filmmakers Jim and Kelly Watt's high-def filmed *Discoveries...America National Parks* series recounts Spain's role in the history of areas that are now part of the United States, focusing on the missions, missionaries, and indigenous populations in Texas. Narration provides an overview, while park rangers, historians, and others offer specific information on the highlighted sites, including San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, comprising Missions Concepción, San José, San Juan Capistrano, and Espada—all established by Catholic religious orders in the mid-to-late 1700s to not only spread Catholicism among the native peoples, but also make them productive contributors to Spain's growing colonial empire and economic wealth. Also covered are the Alamo, famed as a battleground for the independence of the Republic of Texas; Presidio La Bahia, site of a massacre of Texans that sparked additional support for the cause against Mexico; El Camino Real de los Tejas, the historic roadway that would foster frontier settlements; and the popular and beautiful San Antonio River Walk. Viewers will also see artisans involved in preservation and restoration efforts, reminding us of the ongoing work that is required to keep history alive and accessible. The combination of impressive visuals and engaging insights here makes for a winning travelogue. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (C. Block)

Discoveries...America National Parks: Glacier & Craters of the Moon ★★½

(2013) 50 min. DVD or Blu-ray: \$24.95. Bennett-Watt HD Productions. PPR. ISBN: 978-1-60490-166-5 (dvd), 978-1-60490-190-0 (blu-ray).

This travelogue in Jim and Kelly Watt's visually rich *Discoveries...America National Parks* series takes viewers to sites in Montana and Idaho, beginning with the latter state's 10,000-year-old volcanic site Craters of the Moon. Here, visitors will witness a wide variety of interesting features: iron-rich basalt in rare configurations, cinder cones of porous lava, blue glass formed in the heat of a lava flow, and life's resilience as evidenced in the plants and animals that have adapted to the tough terrain. Next comes the Hagerman Fossil Beds in southern Idaho, boasting some of the richest, pre-Ice Age fossil deposits in the world, including the bones of zebra-like early horses, mastodons, camel-like creatures, and giant scary beavers. Also in Idaho are the City of Rocks National Reserve, a magical place with tall spires that draw rock climbers and photographers; and the Nez Perce National Historical Park, which focuses on the Nez Perce people and their history (including Chief Joseph's war with the U.S. government over land grabs). Over in Montana, viewers will travel to Glacier National Park, the crown jewel of national parks with 1,600 square miles of absolutely stunning mountains; and the beautiful Grant-Kohrs Ranch Historic Site, which celebrates a 19th-century cattle empire—an icon of past glory days. Sure to appeal to armchair travelers, this high-def filmed tour is highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)



BIOGRAPHY

Al Capone: Icon ★★★

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-122-6.

An unlikely figure to become one of America's most infamous, feared mob bosses, Al Capone descended from a family of pasta makers in a small Italian town, although his father became a barber in America. This PBS-aired documentary profiles the man who dominated and personified gangsta style during Chicago's Roaring Twenties. Like many immigrants, young Al pursued the American Dream, but quickly fell into a life of petty thievery, running with gangs in New York's "Five Points," and working as a bouncer in a saloon, where he acquired the nickname "Scarface Al" after a fellow hood slashed him during a brawl. When events required him to make a quick exit for Chicago, Capone was able to take advantage of the opportunities opened up by Prohibition—smuggling and distributing alcohol, while also promoting attendant vices (it helped that police and politicians accepted bribes). Hoodlums like Capone eagerly sought celebrity status, bragging that they simply provided what the public craved. In the emerging tabloid culture, Capone became the kingpin after mob boss Johnny Torrio fled the country and "retired," following a failed mob hit. Historian interviewees here describe the world of speakeasies, which not only allowed jazz to flourish, but also permitted a certain amount of mingling between black and white customers. When the Depression hit, Capone played the role of Robin Hood, financing a few soup kitchens, although experts claim his generosity was exaggerated. By this time, Capone's ego was growing out of control, and the famous 1929 St. Valentine's Day Massacre turned out to be the beginning of his end, as federal authorities vowed to "get" Capone (he was finally convicted of tax evasion). While in prison, Capone lived the good life for awhile, until he was sent to Alcatraz. Eventually declining into dementia from venereal disease contracted in his earlier days, Capone was paroled and died in 1947. Although the documentary covers familiar territory (and overuses the term "icon"), it's also a slickly-paced and solid biographical profile. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)

Altina ★★★

(2013) 89 min. DVD: \$27.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

In a life spanning nearly the entire 20th century, Altina Schinasi played many roles. Born in 1907, the youngest daughter of a Jewish-Turkish mogul who invented pre-rolled cigarettes, Schinasi enjoyed a privileged New York childhood but later defied convention by striking out on her own—di-

AWARD-WINNING

Streaming Video

FOR ALL LIBRARIES



→ CLASSROOM VIDEO

HIGH SCHOOLS

→ FILMS ON DEMAND

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

→ ACCESS VIDEO

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

21,000 FULL-LENGTH VIDEOS

372,000 VIDEO CLIPS

800 PRODUCERS

35 SUBJECT AREAS

300+ MILLION VIEWS

13+ MILLION USERS

> Free Trial! www.Infobase.com/TrialAD15

 Infobase

Facts On File | Chelsea House | Bloom's | Ferguson's | The World Almanac* | Films Media Group | Learn360

1-800-322-8755 • OnlineSales@InfobaseLearning.com

Cooper & Hemingway: The True Gen ★★½

(2014) 138 min. DVD: \$59.95 (\$299 w/PPR). Passion River. Closed captioned.

Hollywood idol Gary Cooper was cast as the lead in a slightly bowdlerized 1932 Paramount adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and wound up becoming a lifelong friend of the iconic author, despite their superficial differences in politics and temperaments. According to writer-director John Mulholland, the easygoing, quiet, well-liked, and modest Cooper and the tempestuous, fiercely competitive Hemingway (who had famous feuds with fellow writers but evidently considered the actor no personal threat) helped define American manhood in their era and brought out the best in each other. "Coop" was the one person who could drop in unannounced on the Hemingway homestead, or correct "Papa" on his boorish behavior. Weeks after Cooper's death from cancer in 1961, the ailing Hemingway shot himself. Mulholland's meaty saga of the lives of these two icons—who had long planned a cinematic project together but never managed to bring one to the cameras—nicely meshes film and literary criticism with gossip, and assumes viewer familiarity with, for instance, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *High Noon*. Occasionally, the narrative gets tangled up in film minutiae, verging on the nerdish (Indiana Jones is Cooper-inspired? Really?), and the documentary—like later Hemingway—might have benefited from tighter editing. But it is especially passionate about restoring both Hemingway and Cooper to the artists' pantheon from which detractors (mostly feminists in Hemingway's case; "method" actors in Cooper's) have often tried to demote them. Narrated by Sam Waterston, the roll-call of on-camera interviewees who have since died is an A-list itself: Charlton Heston, Elmore Leonard, Budd Schulberg, Patricia Neal, Robert Stack, George Plimpton, and producer David Brown. DVD extras include deleted scenes and text production notes. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



vorcing her first husband and becoming (as a single mother with two young sons) a designer of display windows for Fifth Avenue stores, while also studying art with George Grosz. She's perhaps best known for designing the Harlequin eyeglass frames that became a fashion standard, but her sculptures called "chairacters"—mixing human forms with furniture—are equally imaginative. Schinasi was also a filmmaker, producing an Oscar-nominated documentary on Grosz, as well as assisting her son Denis Sanders on his Oscar-winning short *A Time Out of War*. And she was an activist, aiding Jews in escaping the Holocaust, hiding friends who were being hounded by Senator Joe McCarthy, and working with Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks in the early days of the Civil Rights movement. Directed by Schinasi's grandson, Peter Sanders, *Altina* is clearly a labor of love, emphasizing Schinasi's personal life. In addition to excerpts from interviews that Schinasi gave in the 1990s, the film features extensive recollections by Schinasi's son Terry, as well as her two surviving husbands (the last, Celestino Miranda, tearfully recalls her death in 1999), backed with reams of archival material that is skillfully stitched together. Extras include the bonus featurette "Reflections on Altina" (with comments from friends and relatives), and an art and photo gallery. An informative, genuinely touching portrait of a remarkable woman, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way

★★★★½

(2014) 86 min. DVD: \$89: public libraries & high schools; \$295: colleges & universities. DRA. The Video Project. PPR. Closed captioned.

In 1984, Geraldine Ferraro (1935–2011) became the first woman to run on a major American political party's presidential ticket. As the Democratic nominee for vice president and running mate to Walter Mondale, she broke ground for her gender in politics, but filmmaker Donna Zaccaro argues that she also faced unprecedented attacks aimed at her ethical and moral fitness as a candidate. *Paving the Way* traces Ferraro's story, from her childhood, education, and marriage up through her early career as a Queens prosecuting attorney specializing in child-abuse cases and sex crimes, followed by three terms in the House of Representatives. Focusing on the 1984 campaign, the film illustrates the political savvy and persona that made Ferraro a success; she was known for her Italian-American working-class background and her ability to work well with Congressional Republicans. But Ferraro's 1984 effort was hampered by assertions—alleged here to have been spearheaded by Nancy Reagan—of improprieties in her and her husband's finances and by pro-life demonstrations and admonitions from Catholic leaders who felt her pro-choice stance betrayed her faith. Footage from the Democratic convention and her debate with then Vice President George H.W. Bush highlight her political

skills and the excitement generated by her candidacy. An extensive interview conducted with Ferraro after her 1998 cancer diagnosis is interwoven with news footage and family comments, along with remarks from journalists and political figures including Bill and Hillary Clinton, George H.W. and Barbara Bush, Mondale, Madeleine Albright, and Nancy Pelosi. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

Inheritance ★★½

(2012) 27 min. In English & Farsi w/English subtitles. DVD: \$20 (\$150 w/PPR). Center for Asian American Media.

Filmmaker Aggie Ebrahimi Bazaz, an American woman of Iranian descent, also narrates this account of her family's life in the United States. In the 1970s, her mother, Parastoo, married an engineer with ties to the U.S. After moving abroad, the couple had a son, but when the regime changed, they moved back to Iran, where Aggie was born. In 1988, Parastoo and her children settled in America, expecting the father to join them, but he never did. Instead, he returned his wife's dowry to her family and took up with another woman. From what Bazaz can determine, he started other families, and didn't stay with any of them for very long, but she has no theories about his serial abandonment (he also appears to have cheated on Parastoo during their marriage). Throughout, Bazaz peppers her mother with questions, because she believes that her father's absence has contributed to her difficulty in establishing relationships, but Parastoo doesn't want to live in the past. Regardless, she's saved every remnant of her marriage, from letters to home movies. While an interesting story lies at the center here, Bazaz undercuts the emotional potential by consistently focusing the camera on hands and backs instead of faces, which feels both distancing and distracting. Still, *Inheritance* does have value as a psychological study of an inquisitive daughter and an unsentimental mother. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

JFK: The Private President ★★½

(2013) 53 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

"It's not what you are, it's what people think you are," said Joseph Kennedy Sr., father of John F. Kennedy, commenting on the significance of image in American politics. The difference between image and reality is at the heart of filmmaker Kathrin Seelmann-Eggebert's *JFK: The Private President*, which serves up archival footage—both public and personal—that underscores what life was actually like for the late president and his family during his 35 months in the White House. No new dark secrets or scandals are revealed here: Kennedy's extramarital affairs are touched

on and we hear the familiar speculation that he might have had a sexually-transmitted disease that impacted First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy's difficult pregnancies. Rather, the emphasis here is more on Kennedy's role as a family man, finding time for his two children and for gathering with the extended Kennedy clan on weekends. Along the way, it also looks at his many medical problems, including the chronic back pain for which he was secretly taking up to a dozen medications. The personal ripple effect of national issues—especially the Cuban Missile Crisis—on the families of JFK and his brother, attorney general Robert Kennedy, are also examined. Home movies of Kennedy at play and in relaxation, particularly the last such footage before his assassination, are touching. Sure to appeal to history buffs and Kennedy dynasty followers, this personal look inside the world of Camelot is highly recommended. Aud: C, P (T. Keogh)

Looking for Johnny: The Legend of Johnny Thunders ★★★

(2014) 98 min. DVD: \$16.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

The talented and troubled Johnny Thunders is profiled in filmmaker Danny Garcia's

oral history-style documentary, which spends almost as much time on its subject's drug abuse as his music career (not that there was much of an option). Thunders began life in Queens in 1952 as Johnny Genzale, growing up to become a rabid music fan, playing guitar in high school bands, and—in 1971—joining the legendary glam rock group the New York Dolls. Richard Lloyd (Television) and Lenny Kaye (Patti Smith Group) talk about the self-serious music scene in the early '70s, which benefited from the anything-goes fun that the Dolls provided. Although known for being late and sloppy, the band managed to find an enthusiastic audience, but never completely recovered from the drug-related death of 21-year-old drummer Billy Murcia. With replacement player Jerry Nolan, the Dolls secured a record deal, but bad luck and worse decisions bedeviled them. After their breakup, Thunders formed other bands, including the Heartbreakers and Gang War, but he worked best as a solo artist (band mates Richard Hell and Wayne Kramer are notable here by their absence). Although Thunders recorded classic songs, including "Chinese Rocks" and "You Can't Put Your Arms Around a Memory," his

personal life was a disheveled affair with short-lived moments of sobriety and stability; he even drove his children away, which only led to greater drug use, and an early death in 1991. Also featuring archival audio of Thunders and late manager Malcolm McLaren, DVD extras include a behind-the-scenes featurette, deleted scenes, and bonus performances. A solid profile, this is recommended. Aud: P. (K. Fennesy)

Secretariat's Jockey Ron Turcotte ★★★

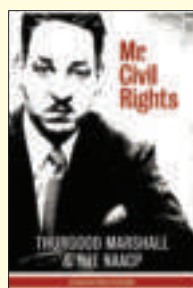
(2013) 75 min. DVD: \$195. DRA. National Film Board of Canada. PPR. Closed captioned.

In 1973, Canadian-born jockey Ron Turcotte made history, guiding Secretariat to consecutive victories in the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness, and the Belmont Stakes—scoring the first Triple Crown in thoroughbred racing after a 25-year gap. Five years later, his career came to an abrupt end when a fall from a horse during a race left him a paraplegic. Phil Comeau's documentary catches up with Turcotte in 2012, as the latter visits the tracks hosting that year's Triple Crown events, meeting with jockeys and trainers. Turcotte also chats with Penny Chenery, owner of Secretariat, and with former jockeys Jean Cruguet and Steve Cauthen, who won the Triple Crown in 1977 and 1978, respectively (no Triple Crown winner has emerged since Cauthen's triumph). Horse racing enthusiasts will certainly enjoy Turcotte's stories—backed by wonderful archival footage—about his illustrious professional life, which included more than 3,000 victories. Oddly, no mention is made of Turcotte's career in the interval between the Secretariat tour de force and the 1978 accident, and Turcotte occasionally seems to exhibit a grudgingly polite tolerance of Comeau's camera. Regardless, this is a handsome tribute to one of the sport's true legends. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Mr. Civil Rights: Thurgood Marshall & The NAACP ★★★

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-086-1.

In 1915, when D.W. Griffith's Civil War epic *The Birth of a Nation* debuted—depicting the Ku Klux Klan as a heroic force—Jim Crow segregation laws were firmly entrenched in the South and much of the North. Blacks had no political representation and could not vote in the South, where only a relatively small number of black lawyers served, mostly working on routine matters such as wills and estate inheritance. This was the world in which a young Baltimore-raised Thurgood Marshall grew up. *Mr. Civil Rights*, aired on PBS, illustrates how Marshall and a small number of NAACP activists took on the issue of segregation, case by case, culminating in the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which struck down the doctrine of "separate but equal" laid down in the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision. Unable to attend a Maryland university law school due to his race, Marshall enrolled at Howard University, where he was mentored by Charles Hamilton Houston, who believed that the court system was the only true avenue for change for blacks. Houston, Marshall, and others would try to stand the law on its head, demanding that truly equal schools and other public buildings be made available to all. In a motor tour of the Deep South, Marshall found that black schools were little more than tarpaper shacks—with no electricity or running water—where students used old textbooks and were taught by poorly paid and trained teachers. Such visits were often perilous: in one instance, when Marshall had to slip into town hidden in a hearse, he was pursued by police, and even threatened with lynching. The documentary chronicles the NAACP's strategy to make lawyers "social engineers" and agents for change, detailing how Marshall's legal work helped lay the foundations for the 1965 Voting Rights Act, among other measures, but the main goal was always equal education opportunities. Supreme Court justices John Paul Stevens and Elena Kagan, along with civil rights leaders including Vernon Jordan, here recall Marshall as a gifted raconteur, who blended humor with passion for the cause. Although the program reveals little of Marshall's private life and doesn't cover his later career as a Supreme Court justice, it does a solid job of detailing Marshall's role in key developments during the fight for civil rights. DVD extras include a conversation with Stevens and Kagan. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (S. Rees)



Sol LeWitt ★★★

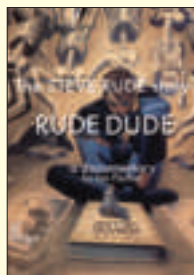
(2012) 72 min. DVD: \$24.98 (avail. from most distributors), \$398 w/PPR (avail. from www. icarusfilms.com). Icarus Films Home Video. Closed captioned.

Filmmaker Chris Teerink approaches the career of the influential conceptual artist with the same avoidance of convention and self-promotion that subject Solomon "Sol" LeWitt brought to his own career. LeWitt, who died in 2007, resolutely avoided the public eye, refusing even to attend openings of his work; since many of his pieces were constructed at a considerable remove—via lists of specific instructions to museum staff members who did the actual labor—his physical touch was often not even actually involved in the result. Teerink shows admirable respect for LeWitt's desire for privacy: although he includes excerpts of interviews with friends, colleagues, and

Rude Dude ★★★1/2

(2014) 86 min. DVD: \$24.99. Garden Thieves Pictures (avail. from www.amazon.com).

Wisconsin-born Steve Rude—who assumed the nickname “The Dude” long before Jeff Bridges in *The Big Lebowski*—is an artist and painter famed for his “classical” style in superhero comics, co-creating the cult-y avenger Nexus in 1981 before eventually moving on from independent comics to the majors at Marvel, DC, and Dark Horse. But the Arizona-based Rude also suffers from bipolar disorder, has had run-ins with police and airport security (the latter leading him to sue the state of Tennessee), and has harbored fantasies about suicide. Unable to make deadlines, Rude here decides to avoid comics publishers and becomes a strictly fine-arts and commission painter, a decision which plunges his long-suffering wife and family into a financial Phantom Zone (a Superman reference). In an accompanying audio commentary, filmmaker Ian Fischer says he didn’t want to make a slick comics-fan documentary that looked like an infomercial for the medium (he also adds that Rude isn’t currently speaking to him). Indeed, the rough-edged portrait here of a big, physical, talented, mercurial artist who is also his own worst super-foe is as much a study in mental illness as it is a gossip tour of the comics-industry backwaters, where creators pay tribute to *The Hercules*’ artist Alex Toth, and the cheapie imprints and third-string heroes of their youths. Interviewees include Alex Ross, Dave Gibbons, and Neal Adams (but you won’t see Stan Lee). In addition to Fischer’s commentary track (with composer Ross Williams), the disc also features a second commentary with Mike Baron, co-creator of Nexus. A disturbing portrait of a troubled artist, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



commentators, as well as clips from a rare 1974 radio interview with LeWitt, the director rightly concentrates on the art. A centerpiece here follows the installation of one of the 1,000-plus wall paintings that LeWitt fashioned over his lifetime—a three-mile-long spiral down the cupola of a museum in Maastricht, Netherlands, requiring the labor of eight museum assistants working on scaffolds for a month. Another segment tours a permanent retrospective that fills three stories of an old factory at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Offering a deepened understanding and appreciation of the artist’s work and underlying philosophy, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Tony Palmer’s 1973 Film About Hugh Hefner: The Founder and Editor of Playboy ★★★

(2012) 53 min. DVD: \$18.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Longtime documentary filmmaker Tony Palmer’s early-1970s portrait of *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner paints its subject more as a manic Willy Wonka of hedonism than a cultural visionary. Palmer does not exactly follow Hefner through his busy life as a micro-managing editor of a popular men’s magazine; in fact, Hefner is rarely seen here outside his bedroom, let alone his five-acre Los Angeles estate with its famous mansion, infamous grotto, and menagerie of exotic animals. Ensnared on his circular bed and wearing silk pajamas, the CEO of a then-impressive *Playboy* em-

pire of publishing, nightclubs, and theaters appears to be running his global ship, with one or another girlfriend never more than arm’s-length away. When he does get out, Hefner is largely intent on playing board games and entertaining friends, or climbing aboard his jet to...visit his other estate in Chicago. Hefner’s bubble existence looks more disconcerting in retrospect given the paragon of male work-play he was selling at the time as an ideal balance for 20th-century urban adults. Much of the film finds Hefner talking about how publishing came into his life during his school days and how he and a happy few founded *Playboy* on little (borrowed) money. Featuring *Playboy*-style nudity galore, Hefner clearly enjoys his spectacular success in this consistently interesting archival profile. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

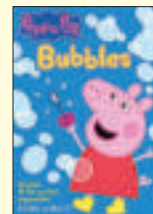
VideoLibrarianOnline

Visit Video Librarian Online (www.videolibrarian.com) for more reviews during January and February, including: *The Art of Observing Life*, *Dance Off the Inches*, *Hip Hop Jam*, *Enemy of the Reich*, *The Noor Inayat Khan Story*, *Fabulous Frogs*, *Feminist Stories From Women’s Liberation*, *Last Heroes of D-Day*, *One Last Hug*, *Three Days at Grief Camp*, *Richard Lewis: Bundle of Nerves*, *Secrets of Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, *Very Extremely Dangerous*, and much more!

Series Update

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

Newly available from Entertainment One is **Peppa Pig: Bubbles** (70 min., DVD: \$14.99), the latest story compilation from the British Academy Children’s Award-winning animated series—aired stateside on Nick Jr.—starring adorable piggy Peppa. See review of *Peppa Pig: My Birthday Party* in VL-5/14.



Peg + Cat: Pirates Ahoy! And Other Really Big Problems (85 min., DVD: \$12.99) is the newest entry in the PBS Kids series featuring sweet youngster Peg and her feline friend Cat, who use their math skills to tackle mini-crises. See review of *Peg + Cat: Chickens on the Loose and Other Really Big Problems* in VL-11/14.

Recently released by PBS Home Video is **Craft in America: Service** (60 min., DVD: \$19.99), the latest episode of the Peabody Award-winning series, here focusing on the history of craftwork in the military, from the origination of the Army Arts and Crafts program to works by contemporary soldiers and veterans. See review of *Craft in America: Messages* in VL-11/11.

Massachusetts-based artist Mark Marderosian shows kids how to draw in two new programs from his public access TV program, available from Shelter Island and TDC Entertainment: **Drawing with Mark: Take Flight! / As the Wheels Turn** (90 min., DVD: \$14.98) and **Drawing with Mark: Let’s Go to the Zoo! / Zoo Stories** (60 min., DVD: \$14.98). See review of *Drawing with Mark: Good to Grow / Life on the Farm* in VL-5/14.

PBS Home Video has recently released **Makers, Volume Two** (360 min., DVD: 2 discs, \$34.99), the second entry in the acclaimed documentary series focusing on the contributions of women in the areas of war, space, comedy, business, Hollywood, and politics. See review of *Makers: Women Who Make America* in VL-9/13.



Blood Lad: The Complete Series ★★ ★ 1/2

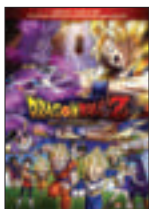
(2013) 240 min. DVD: 2 discs, \$44.98; Blu-ray/DVD Combo: 4 discs, \$69.99. Viz Media (avail. from most distributors).



Although initially this series seems to be covering very familiar territory—boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy fights to win girl back—there are differences: the young man, Staz, is a vampire; the young woman, Fuyumi, is a human who was fatally devoured by a carnivorous plant; and Staz's attempt to win her back means transforming her from a ghost into a living being. Staz is a delightfully unique anti-hero main character who starts off as something of a slacker before embarking on zany adventures through the demon and human worlds in his quest to reunite with Fuyumi. Zombies and werewolves also figure in this mix, which involves a combination of traditional anime violence and some wonderfully warped humor. To its credit, *Blood Lad*, adapted from the same-titled manga, never telegraphs viewers as to where the off-kilter plot is going. Compiling all 10 episodes from 2013 in separate DVD and Blu-ray/DVD Combo dual-language sets, rated TV-14, extras include a bonus OVA, a 96-page booklet (with a brand new manga chapter), English-dub outtakes, and an interactive art gallery. Highly recommended. (P. Hall)

DragonBall Z: Battle of Gods ★★ ★

(2014) 105 min. DVD: \$29.98; Blu-ray/DVD Combo: 3 discs, \$34.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 1-4210-2967-7 (dvd), 1-4210-2968-5 (Blu-ray).



The long-running *DragonBall* franchise encompasses comics, video games, TV shows, and movies, all loosely centered on the "Saiyan" alien martial-artist Goku, who came to Earth as a bad guy but has turned out to be the planet's defender—surrounded now by decades' worth of extended family, allies, and other talking-animal-ninja types. Since Goku—whose main ambition is to be the best martial-arts champion anywhere—has vanquished escalating foes and even attained the status of "Super Saiyan" for BIG fights, where can the series go next? Up against a god, of course, as fans will discover in this 2013 anime feature film that finds a prolonged period of peace threatened by the awakening of the strongest creature in the universe: an Egyptian-cat-style god named Beerus the Destroyer, who can annihilate whole star systems for the mildest offense. When Beerus, following years of catnapping, learns that something called a Super Saiyan has dueling successfully against all opponents, he is led to seek out Goku for a decisive contest. Accompanied by a factotum, the god crashes a lavish birthday party on

Planet 877 (Earth). How Goku approaches the practical matter of boosting his powers into god mode is handled satisfactorily, but it's Beerus who makes this material work—he's a doomsday-level menace who isn't cruel or sadistic and might even be a fun guy to hang out with—until he destroys your planet. Featuring both the theatrical and extended versions in separate dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-PG, Blu-ray extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Sure to be appreciated by fans, this is recommended. (C. Cassady)

Ghost in the Shell—Arise: Borders 1 & 2 ★★ ★ 1/2

(2014) 4 discs. 114 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$39.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 1-4210-2937-5.



Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* is an expansive franchise—incorporating manga, anime movies, and TV series—following the seemingly endless adventures of Public Security Section 9, a highly effective counter-cyberterrorist organization operating in 2027. *Arise* offers a pair of 50-minute episodes—referred to as "borders," for no obvious reason—from an OVA reboot. In the first episode, the bombing assassination of an arms dealer results in a criminal investigation by the hacker cyborg Motoko Kusanagi and a trio of law enforcement officers, one of whom suspects that Motoko is actually a criminal mole. In the second piece, Motoko has difficulty accepting the authority of a new superior and winds up in a conflict with a rival pair of investigators who are trying to solve a thorny crime. While this is a somewhat underwhelming spin on a well-worn property, diehard fans may enjoy another go-round of Motoko's take-charge attitude, but overall these prequel episodes (set two years before the acclaimed feature film) rank as among the less remarkable *Ghost in the Shell* productions. Presented in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-MA, extras include an audio commentary and panel discussions. A strong optional purchase. (P. Hall)

Golden Time: Collection 1 ★★ ★

(2013) 2 discs. 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: \$49.98, Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



A romantic dramedy derived from manga comics, *Golden Time* is set at a Tokyo law college, where guileless student Tada Banri is looking forward to a new life—literally. Tada suffered a head injury the night of his high school graduation and is a blank-slate amnesiac, with no memory of his past (a minor paranormal note crops up with a ghost version of the earlier Tada,

watching sadly as the world goes on without him). After befriendng new college classmate Mitsuo, Tada finds out that Mitsuo is trying to escape from Kaga, an obsessed childhood girlfriend. Although she's rich and beautiful, Kaga is seen by Mitsuo as a stalker who has enrolled at the school in order to continue trailing him. Despite Mitsuo's warning, good-hearted Tada starts up a relationship with the friendless Kaga, who soon transfers her infatuation to him, just as Tada discovers that another girl at the university is his forgotten first love. The frequent break-ups, make-ups, declarations of love, and "let's just be friends" developments could be insufferable but turn out to be fairly entertaining. Also, this is that rare teen anime in which student characters are actually shown in class—at least briefly—although bizarre clubs and cliques tend to predominate (including an amusing bit with Kaga and Tada accidentally recruiting themselves into a religious cult). Compiling the first 12 episodes from 2013 in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is recommended. [Note: *Golden Time: Collection 2* is slated for release on Feb. 3.] (C. Cassady)

Hal: The Movie ★★ ★ 1/2

(2013) 60 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.98. Funimation (avail. from most distributors). ISBN: 1-4210-2930-8.



Ranking near the top of the list of sad anime tear-jerkers, 2013's *Hal* is set in a subtly envisioned future world where intelligent robots are trained to act as caregivers. When a young man named Hal dies in an airplane explosion, his girlfriend Kurumi is broken-hearted, left to face a joyless and solitary existence. But science comes to the rescue in the form of an ultra-lifelike humanoid who steps in as a lookalike of the deceased in order to help the grieving survivor move on. At first Kurumi rebuffs the friendly and polite "Hal," but eventually she begins to relent and share his company. In the process, however, the new Hal—who is naturally mistaken in the street for his earlier self—learns uncomfortable facts that indicate the relationship with Kurumi was less than idyllic. A last-act whip-lash twist throws the entire narrative into a wholly different light (and cranks up the pathos), even as it leaves some nagging questions. A beautifully imagined film bowing in a dual-language Blu-ray/DVD Combo set, rated TV-14, extras include commentary with the American voiceover actors, and "making-of" featurettes. Highly recommended. (C. Cassady)

Kinmoza! Complete Collection ★★ ★ 1/2

(2013) 300 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).

A charming and intelligent series about

cross-cultural friendships, this anime series centers on Shinobu Omiya, who several years earlier was a middle-school exchange student in England, and now is welcoming Alice, the daughter of her English host family, as the latter arrives in Japan to study. Although happy about the reunion, Shinobu is uncertain whether Alice will fit in with her best friends, Yoko and Aya. Complicating matters is Karen, a half-Japanese/half-English student, who also turns up in their school and initially faces problems assimilating but is eventually accepted. *Kinmoza!* calmly addresses mini-crises that are all too frequent during adolescence in stories that are sweet with cute animation. Compiling all 12 episodes from 2013 in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14 and presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this engaging production is highly recommended. (P. Hall)



Love Lab: Complete Collection ★★1/2

(2013) 325 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 3 discs, \$49.98, Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



A bouncy but also lightweight classroom comedy based on shojo manga, *Love Lab's* endearing attribute is that the series (despite its suggestive title) avoids fan-service raunch. Romance is restricted at the all-female Fujisaki Girls Academy, so student council insiders start a secret Love Lab, where they regularly practice coquetry techniques, including when to act clumsy, whether to swoon, how to facilitate windblown hair, and whatever else they think will attract boys (who are almost never around) or get dates (which none of the girls have experienced). The twist is that through their obsessing about males, the young ladies form stronger friendships with each other (minus any lesbian innuendo). "Huggy," a body pillow bearing the poorly drawn image of a cute boy, is a prop for much of the antic behavior (kind of like the corpse in *Weekend at Bernie's*), but unfortunately he drifts out of the narrative, which instead centers on snoopy student journalists who threaten to reveal the Love Lab's secrets and the hidden shame of founder Riko. Sprinkled throughout are sly references to other manga/anime titles such as *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Golgo 13*. Compiling all 13 episodes from 2013 in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-14, presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this oddball but often amusing series is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

My Mental Choices Are Completely Interfering With My School Romantic Comedy: Complete Collection

★★★

(2013) 275 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$49.98, Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



Virgin hero Kanade is the sole male in the "Reject Five"—the least popular, un-dateable quintet in high school. Worse, Kanade has started hearing voices and seeing game-show-like graphics demanding that he choose between undesirable options, which usually lead to public humiliation. The voice rings his cell phone and declares itself to be none other than God (assuming that God behaves and looks like a young-ish phone prankster). Kanade is informed that he has a "curse" called Absolute Choice, the remedy for which lies in a series of truth-or-dare style challenges dictated by the deity—most involving his female classmates (and a sexy, angel-like girl called Chocolat, who suddenly moves in with Kanade)—that usually result in the hapless teen looking like a "perv" before classroom peers. After a rollicking opening, the gimmick tends to wear thin, repetitiously serving up harem-comedy situations, twerking, boob gropes, and panty gags. "This is turning into a bad joke," Kanade aptly complains at one point. The plot (thin at best) wraps up in 10 episodes, with a superfluous 11th installment finding the gang transposed into the universe of a popular video game. Based on comics, this 2013 series is presented in separate DVD and Blu-ray editions in Japanese with English subtitles, rated TV-14. A disappointing anime entry, this is optional, at best. (C. Cassidy)

Natsuyuki Rendezvous: Complete Collection

★★★1/2

(2012) 275 min. In Japanese w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$49.98; Blu-ray: \$59.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



A rare anime featuring adult characters and emotions rather than adolescents or teens, this comics-derived series serves up a slow-jam bluesy paranormal love triangle. Mopey loner Hazuki develops a crush on winsome florist Rokka, an older woman. Working part-time in Rokka's shop, Hazuki is tortured by his feelings for his manager, who in turn is also interested in Hazuki, but there's a complication: the lingering ghost of Rokka's husband, Atsushi, a cancer casualty who died three years ago. Only Hazuki can see and hear Atsushi, who refuses to move on and leave Rokka

and the shop behind. Meanwhile, Rokka idolizes her late husband's memory, even though her marriage to the sickly, prickly ikebana master was hardly a bed of roses (he attempted to divorce her on his deathbed). Things take a twist midway, when Atsushi succeeds in possessing Hazuki's body to reunite with a startled Rokka, whilst the living rival is banished to a netherworld of Atsushi's mind. Despite the promising premise, this is all rather too leisurely, although there is something to be said for an anime tale that resolves without an epic magic/martial-arts bout. Compiling all 11 episodes from 2012 in separate Blu-ray and DVD editions, rated TV-14, presented in Japanese with English subtitles, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Sunday Without God: Complete Collection

★★★1/2

(2013) 325 min. DVD: 3 discs, \$59.98, Blu-ray: 2 discs, \$69.98. Sentai Filmworks (avail. from most distributors).



In this anime series, life suddenly and bizarrely changes: people stop dying (or rather, when they "die," they continue to live as sentient, slow-decaying corpses—not mindless zombies), no more children are born, and a few individuals find their wishes abruptly granted. All of this is interpreted as God abandoning the world, either from lack of interest or admission of failure. Perhaps in a final gesture of divine mercy, the "gravekeeper" appears, a breed of shovel-wielding para-humans who alone can dig holes in which the deceased can finally lie at rest. A little girl named Ai is a gravekeeper (even though she can't possibly be younger than the "abandonment" 15 years ago, and as gravekeeper she shouldn't have the emotions that she does). An encounter with a gun-wielding albino (who may be her father) propels sheltered Ai through various sorties: to a progressive all-dead city, and a fortress-like academy that imprisons children with super-powers, and a town trapped in a pocket universe where time repeats every year. This moody, enigmatic saga (derived from comics and a series of novels) annoyingly backslides into some too-familiar anime clichés—inappropriate cutesiness and fan-service communal-bathing and breast fetishism—but still manages to maintain an aura of mystery, even if it also feels like a bunch of semi-developed, weird situations strung on a loose framework of unending end-times, with no firm resolution. Presenting all 12 episodes from 2013 in separately available dual-language DVD and Blu-ray editions, rated TV-MA, this is a strong optional purchase. (C. Cassidy)

Alabama & Friends at the Ryman ★★½

(2013) 120 min. DVD: \$14.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

In this 2013 concert from Nashville's Ryman Auditorium, platinum-selling trio Alabama (who have been together for 40 years) play a mix of hits and new songs with guest stars Jason Aldean, Trisha Yearwood, Luke Bryan, the Eli Young Band, Florida Georgia Line, and Jamey Johnson. Band members Teddy Gentry (bass), Randy Owen (guitar, vocals), and Jeff Cook (fluorescent green guitar and fiddle) bring in additional players on guitar, mandolin, keyboards, and drums for this 17-song set serving up traditional country with a side of rock and a sprinkling of talk. Kicking off with their 1984 hit "If You're Gonna Play in Texas (You Gotta Have a Fiddle in the Band)," Alabama plays audience favorites including "Song of the South," "Born Country," and "The Closer You Get." Yearwood, the most seasoned performer, sings the ballad "Forever's as Far as I'll Go," while Florida Georgia Line takes things in the opposite direction with the rollicking "I'm in a Hurry (and Don't Know Why)," and the show ends with "My Home's in Alabama," featuring Johnson on lead vocals. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. Sure to be popular with fans, this is recommended. (K. Femmessy)



Arabella ★★½

(2014) 163 min. In German w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).

Even the finest singers outgrow signature roles, as viewers will discover in this 2014 Salzburg Festival production of Richard Strauss's 1933 opera (his last collaboration with librettist Hugo von Hofmannsthal). A lyrical comedy, *Arabella* centers on the title character—the older of two sisters in an impoverished family—whose younger sibling, Zdenka, has had to pose as a boy until Arabella can wed a wealthy husband. But although she's ardently wooed by Matteo, the strapping soldier who Zdenka secretly loves, Arabella resists his advances and instead falls for handsome stranger Mandryka, who is equally smitten. But complications arise when Mandryka learns of love letters to Matteo written by Zdenka in Arabella's name, and it's only after this confusion is resolved that the two couples—Arabella and Mandryka, Zdenka and Matteo—can be united. The production boasts fine singing from Hanna-Elisabeth Müller (Zdenka) and Daniel Behle (Matteo), as well as sumptuous orchestral playing by the Staatskapelle Dresden under Christian



Thielemann. And the sets and costumes—updated from the 1860s to the early 20th century—are generally attractive. But Renée Fleming looks too old for the part of Arabella and her voice lacks its former richness, while Thomas Hampson's worn baritone is even less suited to Mandryka. Despite lush visuals and clear sound, this is still inferior to the 2012 Wiener Staatsoper version (VL-1/13). Presented in DTS-HD 5.0 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, and DTS 5.1 and PCM stereo on DVD, this is a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Deep Purple with Orchestra: Live in Verona ★★½

(2011) 96 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Although I was a big fan of classic rock band Deep Purple in the early '70s, I am frankly amazed at their continuing popularity some 40-plus years later: the group's bona fide hits number a total of two—and one's a cover ("Hush"). The other—perennial rock anthem "Smoke on the Water"—is the eight-minute-plus milked closer for this 2011 engagement that finds DP backed by an orchestra in fair Verona's renowned Roman amphitheatre. Fans will no doubt notice (and perhaps not care) that this is essentially identical to *Deep Purple with Orchestra: Live at Montreux 2011* (VL-3/12): same lineup, same 19-song (counting the "overture") set list played in exactly the same order with the Neue Philharmonie of Frankfurt under conductor Stephen Bentley-Klein. One of the signature strengths of Deep Purple is singer Ian Gillan's soaring vocals, which start off here on "Highway Star" being decidedly weak and strained. By the time the band reaches "Woman from Tokyo"—five songs later—Gillan's pipes have warmed up somewhat, but this is still a fairly tepid echo of the man who sang the lead in the original *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Gillan is backed by Ian Paice on drums, Roger Glover on bass, Don Airey on keyboards, and Steve Morse on guitar (the latter pair replacing original members Jon Lord and Ritchie Blackmore). The orchestra appears to be having a good time (no doubt "Space Truckin'" is a far cry from their standard fare) and they never overwhelm the band, which serves up a fair amount of noodling (extreme proficiency notwithstanding) from Morse and Airey (who shows off his classical chops in an extended solo). Fans will appreciate favorites from the DP catalog, including "Maybe I'm a Leo," "Lazy," and "No One Came," but collections already owning the Montreux release can safely pass. 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 a strong optional purchase. (R. Pitman)



Don Giovanni ★★½

(2011) 174 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$24.99; Blu-ray: \$24.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).

The opening scene of Pier Luigi Pizzi's 2011 Sferisterio Opera Festival production of *Don Giovanni* makes it clear that this is not your grandfather's Mozart: Ildebrando D'Arcangelo's Don Giovanni admires his buff, shirtless torso and even sneaks in a few push-ups before engaging in ribald horseplay with his valet Leporello. And from there, *Don Giovanni* continues to place a heavy emphasis on eroticizing the actions of its libertine anti-hero, with fondling and caressing and even some obvious bisexual play. Granted, opera purists may not approve of this excessive focus on the crassly carnal appetite of the title character, but it forces a bold and modern reconsideration of this classic 18th-century opera. D'Arcangelo is the fuel for this machine, bringing a raw physicality to the role; his brute physical and emotional force exudes animal magnetism as his reckless character seduces and abandons (and, when necessary, murders) unsuspecting victims. Andrea Concetti is solid as Leporello, as is the rest of the supporting cast. Pizzi's staging is stark, with D'Arcangelo's red suit standing out like satanic tailoring, while an unmade bed continuously returns as a central prop to display the amorous aristocrat's misadventures. Musically, the Fondazione Orchestra Regionale delle Marche sparkles under the capable baton of Riccardo Frizza. Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is highly recommended. (P. Hall)



Don Giovanni ★★½

(2014) 182 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).

Kasper Holten's 2014 Royal Opera House production of Mozart's masterpiece centering on the lascivious Don Juan and his eventual downfall boasts many positive elements. Although Mariusz Kwiecien lacks the quintessential devil-may-care dash, he's in fine voice as the Don, and most of the other singers also shine (with the exception of Antonio Poli, who is a weak Ottavio). Nicola Luisotti conducts a propulsive reading of the score, marred only by some curious modernisms in the continuo playing. And Holten's mounting is intriguing, situating the action within Giovanni's psyche and making his female victims more manipulative than usual—choices that necessitate an impressive multi-level set, as well as rear-stage projections. Unfortunately, however, Holten's psychological interpretation has led him to make a severe cut in the second-act finale,



omitting the sextet following the Don's descent to hell. Nineteenth-century productions frequently made the same excision in the misguided belief that the ensemble was too frivolous, but a modern staging should not follow their example. Presented in DTS 5.1 and Dolby Digital stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include an audio commentary by Holten and set designer Es Devlin, an introduction to the opera, a behind-the-scenes featurette, and a cast gallery. With so many excellent complete versions of *Don Giovanni* to choose from—including Pizzi's 2011 mounting (reviewed on pg. 93)—this truncated release can only be considered an optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Elena ★★½

(2013) 2 discs. 177 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: \$44.99. Ricercar (dist. by Naxos of America).



The resurrection of the operas of Francesco Cavalli (1602–1676) continues with *Elena*—centering on Helen of Troy—which has not been produced in full form since its 1659 Venetian premiere. As is evident in this staging by Jean-Yves Ruf at the 2013 Aix-en-Provence Festival, the libretto is hardly Homeric: here, the courtship of Helen by Menelaus finds the latter disguising himself as an Amazon called Elisa in order to get closer to the object of his desire. The imposture is apparently convincing, since Elisa attracts Helen's father, King Tyndareus, who becomes infatuated with "her." Meanwhile, Theseus (not Paris) plans to abduct Helen—which requires him to dump his lover, Hippolyta. As if that weren't enough, others also have designs on Elisa and Helen, and the entire crazy business is portrayed as the work of goddesses Juno, Athena, and Venus, who are quarreling about which of them should receive the golden apple denoting supreme beauty. *Elena* mixes comedy with passionate drama, a combination that comes off splendidly in this simply mounted production. The young singers are uniformly excellent, with countertenor Valer Barna-Sabados the standout as Menelaus, accompanied with spirit and feeling by the original-instrument group Cappella Mediterranea under the baton of Leonardo García Alarcón. Presented in stereo, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Eric Clapton: Planes, Trains and Eric ★★½

(2014) 156 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Planes, Trains and Eric won't hold as much appeal for casual fans as for Clapton diehards, since

instead of a career overview, this scrapbook-style diary focuses on the 69-year-old's tour through Japan, Singapore, Bahrain, and Dubai. Clapton has told his band mates that he plans to stop touring when he turns 70. They include Steve Gadd (drums), Chris Stainton (keyboards), Paul Carrack (Hammond organ), Nathan East (bass), and Michelle John and Shar White (backing vocals), who in separate interviews say that he should reconsider (it seems likely that Clapton will continue to play a few dates on occasion, while avoiding the marathons of his past). While visiting Japan, his favorite tour stop, Clapton receives an award in recognition of his 200th performance at Budokan, a venue he has played more than any other non-Japanese artist. Since he gets to travel with his family and a personal chef who accompanies him from Tokyo to Bahrain—carrying suitcases filled with sirloin and rice—one can imagine that he might want to continue. The musical portion of the program incorporates rehearsal and sound check footage, along with 13 full-length live songs, with Clapton updating the arrangements for a few tracks, like "Tears in Heaven," which takes on a reggae rhythm, and "Cocaine," faster and funkier here than in the recorded version. Other fan favorites include "Layla," "I Shot the Sheriff," "Crossroads," "Wonderful Tonight," and "High Time We Went." Presented in DTS 5.0, Dolby Digital 5.0 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.0 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include a pair of bonus music tracks. A strong optional purchase. (K. Fennessy)

Freak Jazz, Movie Madness and Another Mothers: Frank Zappa—1969-1973 ★★½

(2014) 157 min. DVD: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).



This documentary focuses on the second incarnation of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention. Zappa assembled the players as much for their flexibility as their talent, since his work embraced blues, jazz, rock, classical, doo-wop, and comedy. The players included Mark Vollman and Howard Kaylan from the Turtles (vocals), Aynsley Dunbar (drums), Ian Underwood (saxophone, keyboards), and George Duke (keyboards). According to Zappa biographer Billy James, the original band made significant progress in 1968, but Zappa's interest in improvised jazz had a significant bearing on his decision to start fresh. Underwood, who played on *Hot Rats*, describes the new music as "difficult," while Underwood, Dunbar, and Vollman each recall the steps that led to their joining the group. In the case of Dunbar, a session musician, Zappa made a few trips to London in order to recruit him. Initially, Zappa called the new ensemble Hot Rats before reverting to the Mothers name. According to Duke, who

passed away in 2013, Zappa "liked things that didn't fit." Dunbar, Underwood, and Duke all had their doubts about Vollman and Kaylan, but the pair won them over with their humor and skill. Although critics gave records such as *Chunga's Revenge* and *Fillmore East—June 1971* mixed reviews, the Mothers did well on the touring circuit, although Zappa's habit of recording their conversations for material irked his band mates. Director Tom O'Dell also looks here at related projects released during the same period, including Zappa's *Burnt Weeny Sandwich*, violinist Jean-Luc Ponty's collection of Zappa covers, and Zappa's 1971 feature film *200 Motels*. Presented in stereo, this interesting documentary about an iconoclastic American musician and his band is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Genesis: Three Sides Live ★★

(1981) 84 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Filmed live in 1981 on the band's North American tour in support of *Abacab*, this concert interwoven with behind-the-scenes clips and interviews captures the three-man prog-rock-evolving-into-pop band several years before they hit mainstream megasuccess with 1986's landmark *Invisible Touch*. Shot a mere three months after the birth of MTV, *Genesis: Three Sides Live* finds singer/drummer Phil Collins quickly abandoning his drum kit to work the stage, mugging his way through a number of unnecessary interpretative slapstick gestures that actually ruin otherwise poignant songs such as "Misunderstanding" and "Turn It On Again" (and when the pasty Brit doffs his shirt and performs bare-chested clad in track pants and oh-so-'80s wristbands, no one is likely to mistake him for Mick Jagger). The other two official Genesis members—Tony Banks on keyboards and Mike Rutherford on guitar and bass—are joined by Daryl Stuermer (guitar/bass) and Chester Thompson (drums). Fully 10 of the 12 songs featured here hail from 1980's *Duke* and 1981's *Abacab* (early prog-rock-Peter-Gabriel-era fans go home), and several are fine tunes, including "Behind the Lines," "Duchess," "No Reply at All," "Me & Sarah Jane," and "Man on the Corner." Unfortunately, some of the songs are also truncated—interrupted by superficial radio station interviews and a long-running chat with interviewer Hugh Fielder that all comes across like basic promo fluff. Visually, the program appears in old-style 4:3 full-screen, although the audio is reasonably sharp. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include audio-only tracks of seven songs. Optional, at best. (R. Pitman)

I Capuleti e i Montecchi

★★★

(2014) 135 min. DVD: \$34.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. EuroArts (dist. by Naxos of America).



Although a triumph in its day, the popularity of Vincenzo Bellini's 1830 opera about Romeo and Juliet has since waned—perhaps because it is not based on Shakespeare but rather earlier versions of the tale, opening with the star-crossed pair already in love but kept apart by the fact that Romeo has killed Giulietta's brother and her father has consequently betrothed the distraught girl to Tebaldo. Divergence from the familiar makes this 2014 production from the San Francisco Opera quite welcome, particularly since musically it is extremely strong, with Joyce DiDonato spectacular in the trousers role of Romeo and Nicole Cabell her equal as Giulietta (their duets exhibit extraordinarily beautiful vocalism). The supporting cast is also excellent, with tenor Saimir Pirgu an outstanding Tebaldo, while Riccardo Frizza conducts the house orchestra in a lush, sensitive reading of the score. Unfortunately, the physical production suffers somewhat, with Vincent Lemaire's strange sets featuring stairs that impede easy movement, a sink that Giulietta must stand in while delivering an aria, and saddles hanging from wires for no particular reason. Christian Lacroix's costumes are no better, with the chorus in drab suits and stovepipe hats and Giulietta wearing what looks like a cocktail dress. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include interviews with DiDonato and Cabell. Based on the superb singing, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson: Thick as a Brick Live in Iceland

★★★

(2014) 144 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$19.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



This Icelandic show brings a 40-year-in-the-making project to life. Filmed at Reykjavik's Harpa concert hall, the performance begins with Jethro Tull's 1972 concept album *Thick as a Brick* and ends with its 2012 sequel, *Thick as a Brick 2*. Tull founding member Ian Anderson, who plays flute and parlor guitar, fronts a five-piece band featuring John O' Hara (keyboards, piano, accordion), Florian Opahle (guitar), David Goodier (bass), Scott Hammond (drums), and Ryan O'Donnell (vocals). Short video segments with Anderson playing a fictional therapist bracket each section. The first part features the single long title track, while the second serves up 15 pieces performed in the

same prog-folk style. Although Anderson's conversational tenor hasn't deepened with age, he does strain a bit at times, so the addition of a younger vocalist with a similar style works well here (in the liner notes, Anderson explains that it also allows him to make more instrumental contributions). Regardless, a cleaner mix would have brought more of the lyrics to light. During the concert, Anderson also takes a call, delivers a weather report, and encourages the men in the audience to get regular prostate exams. Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include a two-song performance from the 2012 Montreux Jazz Festival, a blues jam with Montreux founder Claude Nobs, and an interview with Anderson, who says that the show is "80% heavily arranged and performed," but that he also leaves "areas for improvisation." Anderson also talks about the original *Thick as a Brick*, a parody with autobiographical elements that revolves around a fictional character named Gerald Bostock. Recommended. (K. Fennessy)

L'histoire du soldat

★★★

(1988) 51 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).



Igor Stravinsky's peculiar 1918 work, which adds narration, melodrama, and dance to an eclectic score—a series of numbers influenced by jazz and folk music—is given a highly imaginative interpretation in this 1988 staging by Jiri Kylián and the Netherlands Dans Theater. The plot, derived from a Russian fairytale, centers on a soldier on leave who agrees to trade his violin to the devil in return for a book that will bring him wealth and success. Worldly goods prove unsatisfying, however, and the man contrives to lose his fortune to the devil in order to win back his fiddle, which he uses to revive a beautiful princess and exhaust the Prince of Darkness with dances—including a tango and a waltz. None of his stratagems, however, can restore his former happiness or save him from the cost of his unwise bargain. While hewing to the basic narrative, Kylián takes a rather free visual approach, adding characters at will, employing cinematic editing techniques, and serving up a few special effects (mostly involving lighting). His dancers—especially Nacho Duato as the soldier and Aryeh Weiner as the devil—meet his considerable choreographic demands with aplomb, while the accompanying orchestral septet plays Stravinsky's score with bite and dash. Although the image can be a bit blurry, and the sound is occasionally muffled, this release is certainly preferable to Michael Birkett's 1964 production *The Soldier's Tale* starring Robert Helpmann (VL-11/13). Presented in PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Lac ★★★1/2

(2013) 93 min. DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).



Jean-Christophe Maillot's *Lac*—subtitled "After Swan Lake"—captured here in a 2013 studio production filmed at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco, edits and rearranges Tchaikovsky's familiar ballet score (nicely played by the St. Louis Symphony under Leonard Slatkin) but tells a radically different story from the traditional one. Reshaped with the help of novelist Jean Rouaud, *Lac* begins with a dreamlike film in which the young prince, on a hunting trip with his father, watches in horror as the girl he loves is abducted by the wicked Black Queen. Years later, he is still haunted by the event but his mother pressures him to wed. Suddenly, two possible brides appear—a demure white swan and an aggressive black one—and he is torn between them while his mother and the Black Queen struggle to control his choice. Not surprisingly, all does not end happily. Maillot's choreography blends classical and modern elements, while the performance by Les Ballets de Monte Carlo is exceptional, with Stephan Bourgond superb as the prince and Anja Behrend and April Ball matching him as the white and black swans. The costumes by Philippe Guillotel—mostly in blacks, whites, and grays but with occasional snatches of color—are an important aspect of the overall visual effect, which is heightened by director Denis Caïozzi's cinematic editing. Presented in DTS 5.1 (DTS-HD 5.1 on the Blu-ray release) and LPCM stereo, extras include a cast gallery. For ballet lovers with an adventurous bent, this elegant, provocative take on an old chestnut is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

The Language of the Unknown: A Film About the Wayne Shorter Quartet ★★★

(2014) 150 min. DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).



Saxophone player Wayne Shorter, who got his start playing with Art Blakely and Miles Davis, takes center stage in Guido Lukoschek's documentary *The Language of the Unknown*. The Blue Note Recording artist—now a soft-spoken 81-year-old—is seen in interview clips that are combined with excerpts from a live performance in Paris. Pianist Herbie Hancock, who played with Shorter in Miles Davis's second quintet, says he considered Shorter a hero even before they met due to the adventurousness of his recorded work. Brian Blade, who plays drums in Shorter's quartet, points out specific recordings that made

an impression, such as Miles Davis's *Live at the Plugged Nickel*. Shorter's current wife, Carolina, mentions the death of Shorter's second wife, Ana Maria (in the TWA Flight 800 tragedy). A longtime Buddhist, Shorter vowed to honor her memory by becoming a happier man. Shorter attributes the success of his current combo, which includes pianist Danilo Pérez and bassist John Patitucci, to their ability to work together as a group rather than as individual players angling for attention. Also included here is the 93-minute 2012 Paris concert presented in a set that easily lives up to Shorter's democratic philosophy, since his sidemen function as equals more than supporting players. It's a fine performance all around, with the subtle and surprising "She Moves Through the Fair" a definite highlight. Presented in PCM stereo on DVD and Blu-ray, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

Mefistofele ★★½

(2013) 145 min. In Italian w/English subtitles. DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99. EuroArts/Unitel Classica (dist. by Naxos of America).



Verdi librettist Arrigo Boito sought recognition as a composer in his own right, but his only completed opera, *Mefistofele*, was a failure at its 1868 premiere, and he never finished another. *Mefistofele* serves up an episodic take on the Faust legend in which the Devil wagers with God that he can win the soul of a scholar. Although the Devil initially appears successful, the philosopher Faust hesitates after witnessing the plight of the lovely Margherita, who refuses to submit to Mefistofele's blandishments, and despite a romantic interlude with none other than Helen of Troy, Faust will eventually turn to Heaven and be saved. Although never a first-tier staple in the repertory, *Mefistofele* can still shine, as it does in this 2013 San Francisco Opera production featuring the lavish sets and costumes of Robert Carsen's 1988 version, revived by Laurie Feldman. The vocalism is splendid, with Ildar Abdrazakov masterful in the title role and Ramón Vargas and Patricia Racette equally fine as Faust and Margherita/Helen, while the San Francisco Opera Orchestra responds with vigor under the guidance of Nicola Luisotti. *Mefistofele* may never rival Gounod's *Faust* in popularity, but this release is a sterling showcase, comparable to the touchstone Samuel Ramey mounting (VL-1/91) in overall quality while representing a significant improvement in visual and sonic terms (as in the Ramey staging, this one also features some fleeting nudity in Act II). Presented in DTS 5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1, and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is highly recommended. (F. Swietek)

Money for Nothing: A History of the Music Video ★★★

(2014) 78 min. DVD: \$19.99. Virgil Films (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.



Filmmaker Jamin Bricker's fast-paced and thoroughly engrossing documentary draws from screenwriter Saul Austerlitz's book *Money for Nothing* to examine the way that music videos have combined elements of art and commerce. After a brief overview of iconic videos from the 1980s up through today, Bricker looks back to 1927's *The Jazz Singer*, in which dialogue arrived in tandem with music. In the ensuing decades, elaborately staged musicals and animated spectacles (such as *Fantasia*) would appear that inspired the look of late-20th-century music videos, although narrator Michael Charles Roman waxes more than a little hyperbolic when he asks, "Who knew that Walt Disney unintentionally created MTV?" Other influences include the movies and TV shows of Elvis Presley, the Beatles, and the Monkees, which led to the quirky underground and ambitious art-rock videos of the 1970s, from the Residents to Queen. Once MTV appeared in 1981, everybody got in on the action, notably Duran Duran and Michael Jackson who starred in extravagant productions, such as John Landis's 14-minute "Thriller" video. Less extroverted performers shifted the focus from themselves to models or cartoon characters, while superstars like Madonna used their clout to push against racial and sexual taboos. Still others, such as the Talking Heads and the Replacements, would use the form to sell their music while simultaneously questioning the practice. As Bricker moves through the years, he also examines the gender politics of heavy metal, the aesthetics of modern-rock, and the iconography of hip-hop, finishing up with a look at a few of the video directors who became noted feature filmmakers, including Spike Jonze and David Fincher. Presented in 5.1 surround sound, this is recommended. (K. Fennessy)

A Nutcracker ★★½

(2014) 70 min. DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).



Advertised as a hip-hop take on the Christmas perennial, Boubala Landrille Tchouda's *A Nutcracker* (featuring his Compagnie Malka) uses portions of Tchaikovsky's 1892 score (supplemented with a few percussive interludes by Yvan Talbot), but goes beyond a simple reworking of the famous ballet to re-imagine E.T.A. Hoffmann's original 1816 story as a coming-of-age piece in

which a young, tousle-haired girl faces a choice between the safety of home and the dangers lurking outside. Clara (Sonia Delbost-Henry) finds herself amidst a sea of colorfully wrapped boxes offered by her protector (Hichem Sérir Abdallah), from which a company of brightly clad dancers emerge. But also entering her world is a handsome but sinister stranger (Rémi Autechaud) to whom she's drawn. Tchouda has incorporated hip-hop moves, but the general influence of modern dance is also apparent, and the serpentine motions that he has contrived for Autechaud—who executes them brilliantly—are especially effective. So long as one doesn't come to *A Nutcracker* with expectations of a traditional family extravaganza (aside from the presents and a few other strategically placed cubes, the stage is bare) or a coherent narrative (one episode in which Clara and her fellow performers drop down in unison to scrub the floor seems totally meaningless), Tchouda's creation can be appreciated for its canny mixture of youthful exuberance and dark undercurrents. Presented in PCM stereo, this is a strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

The Nutcracker ★★★

(2012) 102 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. C Major (dist. by Naxos of America).



Anyone looking for a traditional staging of Tchaikovsky's Christmas ballet will be pleased with this 2012 performance by the Wiener Staatsballett, in which company director Manuel Legris re-created the version that his mentor, Rudolf Nureyev, choreographed for Paris in 1985. Here, much of the action takes place in young Clara's dream, with characters played by her friends and family members, *Wizard of Oz*-style. Students of the Staatsoper's Ballet Academy fill many of the parts, not only in the opening party sequence but in the battle between the Nutcracker and his army against the forces of the Mouse King, and while their dancing is hardly flawless, their exuberance is well high irresistible. The more seasoned soloists are uniformly excellent, with Liudmila Kononova a beautiful Clara and Vladimir Shiskov doing expert double-duty as both Drosselmeyer and the Prince; and the pas de deux sequences of Act II are all carried off with aplomb. The Orchester der Wiener Staatsoper plays with charm and delicacy under the baton of Paul Connelly, and the production benefits from Nicholas Georgiadis's rich and colorful sets and costumes. While this isn't quite the equal of Peter Wright's staging for the Royal Ballet (VL-3/11), it ranks a close second among recent releases. Presented in DTS 5.0 (DTS-HD 5.0 on the Blu-ray release) and PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)

Platée ★★★

(2002) 150 min. In French w/English subtitles. Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).

Jean-Philippe Rameau specialized in *tragédie lyrique* but goes all-out for the laughs in this 1745 opera about Platée, an extraordinarily ugly nymph whom Jupiter pretends to fall in love with as part of a scheme to teach his wife, Juno, the foolishness of her jealousy. *Platée* is still pretty funny in this 2002 production from the Opera National de Paris, even if Laurent Pelly's staging sometimes goes overboard with slapstick touches (having characters prance about in underwear, for instance), and the set—basically a largely unadorned section of the theater—is uninspired (although the addition of foliage as the plot proceeds gives it increasing color). The modern dress at the beginning is also rather dull, but the suits and dresses gradually become brighter too, and the costumes for Platée and her woodland companions—including a chorus of dancing frogs—are amusing. Musically, the performance is fairly strong, with Marc Minkowski ensuring that the original-instrument group Les Musiciens du Louvre tease out the echoes of outdoor sounds, and tenor Paul Agnew is absolutely brilliant, both vocally and in acting terms, in the “drag” title role. Some of the other singers strain over the baroque filigree—Vincent Le Texier's Jupiter sounds overtaxed, as does Doris Lamprecht's Juno—but overall this is a satisfying presentation of a Rameau rarity that was first performed to celebrate the wedding of the dauphin to a Spanish princess who was (like the nymph) considered fairly homely. Presented in PCM stereo, this is recommended. (F. Swietek)



Rolling Stones from the Vault: Hampton Coliseum (Live in 1981) ★★★

(1981) 150 min. DVD: \$14.98, Blu-ray: \$17.98. Eagle Rock Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).

Opening with the camera panning up and around the body of a nude woman painted with the call signs of rock radio stations that play the Rolling Stones, this history-making 1981 concert—notable for being the first-ever music pay-per-view event—finds Britain's legendary bad boys delivering an epic 25-song set before an appreciative Virginia crowd at the Hampton Coliseum. Quintessential rock 'n' roll peripatetic frontman Mick Jagger delivers his usual full Jane Fonda-workout level funky-chicken-choreography moves while running around a massive track, backed by guitar heroes Keith Richards and Ron Wood, stone-faced Bill Wyman on bass, and Charlie Watts's blues rock drumbeat.



Joining the band are Ian Stewart on piano, Ian McLagan on keyboards, and sax legends Ernie Watts and the late great Bobby Keys (whose signature horn work on “Brown Sugar” is a highlight here). Filmed on December 18 (Richards's birthday—briefly celebrated here), the band serves up a mix of '60s, '70s, and early '80s hits, including “Under My Thumb,” “Shattered,” “Beast of Burden,” “Miss You,” “Tumbling Dice,” “Honky Tonk Women,” “Start Me Up,” “Jumpin' Jack Flash,” and the show closer “(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction.” Also featured are two wonderful covers: The Temptations' “Just My Imagination” and Smokey Robinson and The Miracles' “Going to a Go-Go.” Directed by Hal Ashby, the visuals here suffer from the '80s shot-on-video look (complete with the usual lighting flare arcs and fuzzy image), but the audio—newly mixed by sound engineer extraordinaire Bob Clearmountain—is amazingly rich. Presented in DTS-5.1, Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and LPCM stereo on Blu-ray, this is recommended. (R. Pitman)

Rusalka ★★★

(2012) 152 min. DVD: 2 discs, \$39.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99. EuroArts (dist. by Naxos of America).

Antonín Dvořák's 1901 opera is basically a Czech version of *The Little Mermaid*...with a tragic ending. The titular heroine is a naïve water nymph who is magically made human for the love of a handsome prince, but must give up her voice in the process, but when he proves unfaithful, both die. In this 2012 staging at Brussels' Théâtre Royale de la Monnaie, however, Stefan Herheim has decided to recast the fairy tale as a nightmare about the objectification of women. Here, *Rusalka* (Myrto Papathanasiu) is a world-wide prostitute looking to improve her life but apparently incapable of creating a self-identity apart from her relationships with men. It's a concept that—like Martin Kušej's 2010 Munich production (VL-9/12), which shifted the theme toward child abuse—radically alters the character of the work while also requiring action that is at odds with the original libretto. Visually, however, this is carried out spectacularly, with the stage transformed into a realistic-looking rain-swept street in the red-light district of some unidentified city. And musically the performance is strong, with Adam Fischer and the company orchestra giving a rich, affectionate reading of Dvořák's lovely score and Papathanasiu providing sterling vocalism, most notably in the gorgeous aria to the moon that is the opera's indisputable showstopper. Those preferring a more traditional approach are directed to the Paris production (VL-7/04) featuring Renée Fleming. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray,



extras include a “making-of” featurette. Recommended, overall. (F. Swietek)

A Swan Lake ★★1/2

(2014) 98 min. DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99. Arthaus Musik (dist. by Naxos of America).

Alexander Ekman's *A Swan Lake*—inspired by Tchaikovsky's famous ballet—is a strange enterprise employing highly imaginative staging and a score by Mikael Karlsson. The first act is part play and part dance, centering on the failure of the initial 1877 performance of Tchaikovsky's work. Featuring spoken dialogue and snatches of Tchaikovsky's music, this section comically portrays a composer trying to mount a musical about swans in the face of doubts from his producer. The second act, set 137 years later—today—turns the stage into a virtual lake in which a flock of swans skitter about with beach balls, yellow rubber ducks fall from the sky, and a black swan meets a white one, with unfortunate results that are made worse when a diva appears with a hairdryer. This hubbub is performed to a jazzy score lacking even a vestige of Tchaikovsky's music. A third act, set 437 years later, consists of one brief joke. The Norwegian National Ballet and National Opera Orchestra (conducted by Per Kristian Skaland) perform enthusiastically, and the sets, costumes, and lighting design are spectacular. In the end, however, this admittedly intriguing piece is so overstuffed and garish that the introductory montage of past performances of *Swan Lake* makes one wistful for a more traditional performance of Tchaikovsky's warhorse. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and PCM stereo on DVD, and DTS-HD 5.1 and PCM stereo on Blu-ray, extras include behind-the-scenes featurettes. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)



Coming Soon

Look for these reviews in the next issue:

Austin City Limits Celebrates 40 Years (PBS, DVD: \$24.99). Celebrating four decades of the public television music series, this special performance features Willie Nelson, the Foo Fighters, Bonnie Raitt, Lyle Lovett, and others.



Bob Marley: Uprising Live! (Eagle Rock, DVD: \$14.98). Showcasing Bob Marley and the Wailers, this June 1980 concert performance features songs including “I Shot the Sheriff,” “No Woman, No Cry,” and “Jamming.”



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.

590films

67 West St., 4th Fl.
Brooklyn, NY 11222
Tel: (917) 601-1911
Web: intotheygre.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

Center for Asian American Media

145 Ninth St., Ste. 350
San Francisco, CA 94103
Tel: (415) 552-9550
Web: asianamericanmedia.org

The Cinema Guild

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

Communications Concepts

7980 North Atlantic Ave.
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920
Tel: (321) 783-5232
Web: cciflorida.com

Dreamscape Media

6940 Hall St.
Holland, OH 43528
Tel: (877) 983-7326
Web: dreamscapeab.com

Entertainment One

22 Harbor Park Dr.
Port Washington, NY 11050
Tel: (516) 484-1000
Web: us.eonefilms.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

Films Media Group

132 West 31st St., 17th Fl.
New York, NY 10001
Tel: (800) 322-8755
Web: films.com

First Run Features

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

Human Relations Media

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

Icarus Films

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

Janson Media

118 Main St.
Tappan, NY 10983
Tel: (845) 359-8488
Web: janson.com

Kino Lorber Edu

333 W. 39th St., Ste. 503
New York, NY 10018
Tel: (212) 629-6880
Web: kinolorberedu.com

National Film Board of Canada

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

Naxos of America

1810 Columbia Ave., Ste. 28
Franklin, TN 37064
Tel: (615) 771-9393
Web: naxos.com

New Day Films

190 Route 17M
Harriman, NY 10926
Tel: (888) 367-9154
Web: newday.com

Passion River

154 Mt. Bethel Rd.
Warren, NJ 07059
Tel: (732) 321-0711
Web: passionriver.com

PBS Video

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

PenKen Productions

718 Shepherd St.
Durham, NC 27701
Tel: (919) 688-1449
Web: bendingsticksthefilm.com

Pure Newt

118 Mesa Verde St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Tel: (505) 501-3290
Web: oceankeeperthemovie.com

Ro*co Films Educational

80 Liberty Ship Way, Ste. 8
Sausalito, CA 94965
Tel: (415) 332-6471
Web: rocoeducational.com

Rock 'N Learn

P.O. Box 3595
Conroe, TX 77305
Tel: (800) 348-8445
Web: rocknlearn.com

Shelter Island/TDC

220 E. 23rd St., Ste. 405
New York, NY 10010
Tel: (917) 402-0460
Web: www.shelterisland.net

Shorts and Sandals Entertainment

2901 Clint Moore Rd. #319
Boca Raton, FL 33496
Tel: (561) 351-5763
Web: riskybusinessthemovie.com

Stourwater Pictures

11431 Miller Rd. NE
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
Tel: (206) 780-6928
Web: stourwater.com

Third World Newsreel

545 Eighth Ave., 5th Fl., Ste. 550
New York, NY 10018
Tel: (212) 947-9277
Web: twm.org

The Video Project

P.O. Box 411376
San Francisco, CA 94141
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 W. 29th St., Ste. 1200
New York, NY 10001
Tel: (212) 925-0606
Web: wmm.com

Zeitgeist Films

247 Centre St., 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10013
Tel: (800) 509-0448
Web: zeitgeistfilms.com



MASTERPIECE: DOWNTON ABBEY SEASON 5

Season 5 of the international hit finds the Crawley family and the staff struggling with responsibilities and choices as they adjust to life in the Roaring Twenties. The beloved ensemble cast includes Dame Maggie Smith, Elizabeth McGovern, Hugh Bonneville, Michelle Dockery, Jim Carter, Joanne Froggatt, and a host of others.

525 minutes on 3 discs

DVD \$49.99 ISBN# 841887021715

Blu-ray \$54.99 ISBN# 841887021722



© Carnival Film & Television Limited 2015 for MASTERPIECE

The Manners of Downton Abbey

Join Alastair Bruce, historical advisor to Downton Abbey, as he reveals the secrets of how the aristocratic set dined and dressed, how they married and made money, how they interacted with the servants, and above all why they behaved as they did in 1900s Britain. Includes revealing interviews with leading cast members, including Hugh Bonneville, Michelle Dockery, Elizabeth McGovern, Joanne Froggatt, and many others!

60 minutes

DVD \$24.99

ISBN# 9781627891974



The Jewel in the Crown Remastered Anniversary Edition

The Jewel in the Crown was hailed by critics as one of the most thoughtful and important TV dramas ever. This sweeping 14-part adaptation of Paul Scott's 'Raj Quartet' is the story of the men and women of both ruling and ruled classes of WWII India, trying amidst the turmoil to come to terms with the drastic changes taking place around them, knowing that their lives will never be the same again.

740 minutes on 5 discs

DVD \$39.99

ISBN# 9781627891660



The Sixties

The 1960s was the decade America transformed from a country of conformity to a land of political, cultural, and social liberation. The events of that ten-year period reshaped America to such an extent that it still remains an epoch of fascination today and every step of the way, television helped frame and enable that change. The Sixties weaves together the events and personalities that influenced and dominated the 1960s in America, sketching a portrait of this decade that is entertaining and illuminating.

511 minutes on 3 Discs

DVD \$69.99

ISBN# 9781627892056



Arthur: Fountain Abbey

Based on the books by Marc Brown, join eight-year-old Arthur Read and friends as they learn about family history, doing the right thing, and much more! In Fountain Abbey, Muffy's devastated when she learns her great, great grandmother Mary Alice wasn't royalty, but a common maid. The indignity! However, Mary Alice's old diary reveals a more interesting story. Also includes: Arthur Calls It; Whip.Mix.Blend; and Staycation.

45 minutes

DVD \$6.99

ISBN# 9781627891646



Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler

In this landmark series, New York Times best-selling author Bruce Feiler travels with American pilgrims on six historic pilgrimages. They set out from the ordinary and seek the extraordinary on journeys to spectacular places: Lourdes, France; southern Japan; Jerusalem; Mecca; the Ganges in India; and Nigeria. Unprecedented in scope, Sacred Journeys with Bruce Feiler will forever change how you view your own spiritual journey.

360 minutes on 2 discs

DVD \$34.99

ISBN# 9781627891042



Shakespeare Uncovered, Series 2

In each episode, a major Shakespearean actor or director explores and reveals the world and works of William Shakespeare and the still-potent impact they have today. The presenters have spent their lives with Shakespeare's work and relate not only to the stories of the plays themselves, but also how they came to be written, how they have been performed, and how they have survived over 400 years.

360 minutes

DVD \$34.99

ISBN# 9781627892377



© 2015 PBS

To purchase these and other award winning DVDs,
visit shopPBS.org/teachershop or other authorized distributor sites.

Thank you! Your purchase supports PBS.

Title Index

24: Live Another Day	54
100: Complete First Season	54
Abuse of Weakness	16
Afterlife: Season Two	79
Against the Grain: Year Mother Nature Struck Back	54
Agatha Christie: Marple, Series 6	54
Agatha Christie: Poirot, Series 13	54
Al Capone: Icon	87
Alabama & Friends at the Ryman	93
Alive Inside	70
Almighty Johnsons: Season 1	56
Altina	87
America's Animal Astronaut Heroes	75
Annie Oakley: Complete Series	56
Arabella	93
As the Light Goes Out	16
Bailey	68
Ballin' at the Graveyard	16
Bending Sticks	81
Betsy's Kindergarten Adventures, Vol. 6	68
Billy Crystal: 700 Sundays	81
Black Ice	71
Blood Lad: The Complete Series	91
Bloody Mama	43
Boobs	80
Borgman	16
Boxtrolls, The	16
Boyhood	3
Brave Girl	68
Breastmilk	78
Brooklyn Nine-Nine: Season One	56
Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The	43
Calvary	16
Cannibal	18
Central Japan	85
Cesare Mori	56
Child of God	18
Citizen Autistic	77
Coffee in Berlin, A	18
Coherence	18
Coldwater	18
Come Morning	19
Complete Jacques Tati, The	43
Concerning Violence	72
Cooper & Hemingway: True Gen	88
Corpus Christi	19
Cotton Comes to Harlem	44
Crossbones: Season One	56
Cyber-Seniors	81
Daughters of Dolma	70
Dear White People	19
Death Comes to Pemberley	57
Death Kiss, The	44
Deep Purple with Orchestra	93
Defiance: Season Two	57
Desert Runners	81
Desperate, The	82
Desperately Seeking Susan	44
Dick Cavett's Watergate	83
Discoveries... America National Parks: Glacier & Craters of the Moon	86
Discoveries... America National Parks: San Antonio Missions	86
Dog, The	19
Dollar Brain	43
Don Giovanni	93
Don Giovanni	93

Advertiser Directory

Action! Library Media Service	66
Alexander Street Press	11
Anthony-Masterson Productions	8
Baker & Taylor Entertainment	2
BayView Entertainment	79
Bennett-Watt HD Productions	86
Big World Pictures	29
Bond/360	17
Breaking Glass Pictures	41
Cinema Libre Studio	33
Criterion	101
Dark Hollow Films	78
Dreamscape	69
Entertainment One	21
Film Movement	47
Films Media Group	87
First Run Features	27
Gas Afterhours	37
Green Planet Films	75
Janson Media	13
Kino Lorber Education	9, 25, 65
Learning ZoneXpress	86
Mastervision	71
Midwest Tape	104
Mostly Movies	102
Music Box Films	31, 55
MVD Entertainment	23
Oscilloscope Pictures	51, 67
Outcast Films	77
Panther Creek Pictures	6
Passion River Films	4, 5
PBS Video	99
Strand Releasing	45
TDC Entertainment	7
TM Books & Video	85
Vision Video	15
Zeitgeist Films	103

Dormant Beauty	19
Dracula Untold	20
DragonBall Z: Battle of Gods	91
Drive Hard	20
Drop, The	20
Elena	72
Elena	94
Elmer Gantry	44
Equation of Life, The	72
Eraserhead	44
Eric Clapton: Planes, Trains and Eric	94
Exhibition	20
Expendables 3, The	20
F for Fake	46
Fed Up	20
Fedora	46
Fidel Castro Tapes, The	84
Fifi Howls With Happiness	22
Finding Fela!	22
Five Star Life, A	22
Fluffy Movie, The	22
For a Woman	22
Forced Confessions	72
Forms of Energy	76
Frank	23
Freak Jazz, Movie Madness and Another Mothers: Frank Zappa	94
Freeoad	72
From Dusk Till Dawn: Season One	57
Frontera	23
Gabrielle	24
Genesis: Three Sides Live	94
Geraldine Ferraro: Paving the Way	88
Get On Up	24
Getting On: Complete First Season	57
Getting to Know Jon Scieszka	70
Ghost in the Shell—Arise: Borders 1 & 2	91
Giver, The	24
God's Pocket	24
Golden Time: Collection 1	91
Gone Girl	24
Good Guys: Complete First Season	57
Good People	26
Graceland: Complete Season 2	58
Great Race, The	46
Great Train Robbery, The	46
Great Vacation Squeeze, The	80
Green Prince, The	26
Grey's Anatomy: Complete Tenth Season	58
Grimm: Season Three	58
Hal: The Movie	91
Hangmen Also Die	46
Happy Christmas	26
Happy Valley	74
Hart to Hart: Complete Third Season	58
Heavenly Sword	26
Hemlock Grove: Complete First Season	58
Hero of Color City, The	26
Himizu	26
Homeland: Complete Third Season	58
Honorable Woman, The	59
Horns	28
Housebound	28
How We Got to Now	81
I Am Ali	28
I Am Yours	28
I Capuletti e I Montecchi	95
Iguana	28
In Bloom	28
In the Flesh: Complete Season Two	59
Inheritance	88
InRealLife	72
Into the Gyre	73
It Happened One Night	48
James Cameron's Deepsea Challenge	29
Jay Johnson: The Two & Only!	82
Jeffersons: Complete Series	59
Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson: Thick as a Brick	95
JFK: The Private President	88
Johan Falk: Season One	59
K2: Siren of the Himalayas	29
Kill the Messenger	29
Killer Shrews, The	48
Killing Time	75
Kinmoza! Complete Collection	91
L'histoire du soldat	95
La Palabra en el Bosque (The Word in the Woods)	83
Lac	95
Lady Valor: The Kristen Beck Story	30
Language of the Unknown	95
Last of the Unjust, The	30
Last Sentence, The	30
Last Supper, The	30
Les Blank: Always for Pleasure	48
Leslie Sansone—Just Walk: Mix + Match Walk Blasters	77
Level Five	48
LFO	30
Life After Beth	32
Life in Dirty Movies, A	32
Life Is Strange	83
Lilting	32
Lines of Wellington	32
Looking for Johnny: Legend of Johnny Thunders	89
Losing Iraq	85
Love Is Strange	82
Love Lab: Complete Collection	68
Lucky Ducklings	68
Lucky Them	33
Lucy...	33
Macbeth	49
Mad Men: Final Season, Part 1	60
Man of the West	49
Manuscripts Don't Burn	33
Married to the Mob	49
Martin Clunes's Wild Life	76
Mauvais Sang	49
Maze Runner, The	34
Me, the Vinyl and the Rest of the World	82
Mefistofele	96

Men, Women & Children	34
Modern Family: Complete Fifth Season	60
Moebius	34
Mom: Complete First Season	60
Mona Lisa Is Missing	34
Money for Nothing: History of the Music Video	96
Monty Python Live (Mostly): One Down, Five to Go	82
Mr. Civil Rights: Thurgood Marshall & The NAACP	89
Mr. Pip	34
Musical Chairs	35
My Little Pony—Classic TV Collection	68
My Mental Choices Are Completely Interfering With My School	92
Romantic Comedy	92
My Old Lady	35
My Straight Son	35
Nashville: Complete Second Season	60
Natsuyuki Rendezvous: Complete Collection	92
New Girl: Complete Season Three	60
Newsroom: Complete Second Season	61
Next Year Jerusalem	35
November Man, The	35
Nuclear Nation	35
Nutcracker, A	96
Nutcracker, The	96
NYPD Blue: Season 07	61
Ocean Keeper	83
One I Love, The	36
Ornette: Made in America	49
Ouija	36
Our School	73
Overdose Epidemic	74
Particle Fever	76
Passing the Torch: The Building of Fort Lewis 1916-1939	84
Pee-wee's Playhouse: Complete Series	61
Penny Dreadful: Complete First Season	61
Pete Kelly's Blues	50
Planet Food: The Story of Tea	79
Platée	97
Pleasures of Being Out of Step, The	36
Portrait of Jason	50
Possessed	50
Pride	36
Red Nights	36
Red Skelton Show: Early Years—1951-1955	61
Reflections Unheard: Black Women in Civil Rights	73
Reign: Complete First Season	62
Reporting on the Times: The New York Times and the Holocaust	84
Risky Business: Inside America's Adult Film Industry	79
Rock 'N Learn: Learn a Language	68
Rodney Yee's Complete Yoga for Beginners	78
Rolling Stones from the Vault: Hampton Coliseum	97
Royal Paintbox: Artists of the Royal Family	82
Rude Dude	90
Run Silent, Run Deep	50
Running From Crazy	37
Rusalka	97
Satellite	37
Scandal: Complete Third Season	62
Science at the Top of the World	76
Search for Simon, The	37
Secretariat's Jockey Ron Turcotte	89
Seizure!	52
Separate Is Never Equal	52
Seven Wonders of the World	76
Sex in the Wild	76
Sgt. Bilko—Phil Silvers Show: Complete Series	62
Shooting / Ride in the Whirlwind	52
Siddharth	37
Sidewalk Singer	38
Sidewalk Stories	52
Skeleton Twins, The	38
Sleepy Hollow: Complete First Season	62
Slow Food Story	80
Sol LeWitt	89
Sopranos: Complete Series	62
Southern Baptist Sissies	38
Space Station 76	38
Spanish Lake	74
Stolen Education	84
Strange Color of Your Body's Tears, The	38
Summer of Blood	38
Sunday Without God: Complete Collection	92
Sundays and Cybele	52
Superlife—Genetic Manipulation: Super Foods	80
Swan Lake, A	39
Tesagee Mutant Ninja Turtles	39
Third Day, The	71
This Is Where I Leave You	39
To Be Takei	39
Tony Palmer's 1973 Film About Hugh Hefner	90
Topkapi	53
Touch of the Light	39
Tru Love	39
True Blood: Complete Seventh Season	63
Unauthorized Saved by the Bell Story, The	39
Uranium Drive-In	73
Utopia	74
Vampire Diaries: Complete Fifth Season	63
VeggieTales: Beauty and the Beet	70
Verdun: Looking at History	53
Violette	40
Wagner's Jews	83
We Won't Grow Old Together	53
Weird Al Yankovic: The Compleat Al	53
Wetlands	40
What Is Cinema?	40
What's the T?	79
When I Walk	78
When the Boat Comes In	63
Where Have All the Elephants Gone?	77
Whiplash	40
White Bird in a Blizzard	40
Wind Rises, The	42
Wish I Was Here	42
Wonder Years, The	63
Xingu	42
Years of Living Dangerously	74
You and the Night (Les Rencontres d'après minuit)	42
Zero Theorem, The	42



MUST-HAVES FROM THE CRITERION COLLECTION



MY WINNIPEG

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-946-7

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-945-0



LA CIÉNAGA

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-942-9

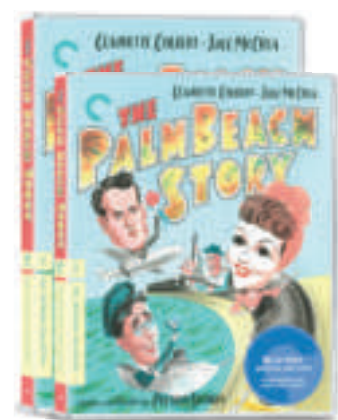
BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-941-2



THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-940-5

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-939-9



THE PALM BEACH STORY

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-944-3

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-943-6



DON'T LOOK NOW

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-952-8

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-951-1



WATERSHIP DOWN

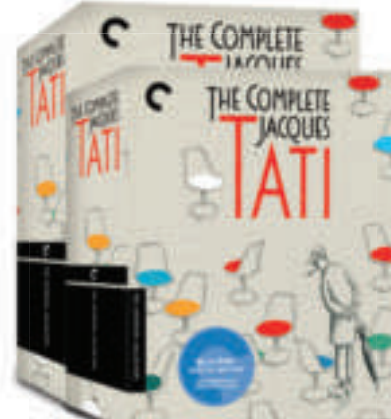
DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-956-6

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-955-9



AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON

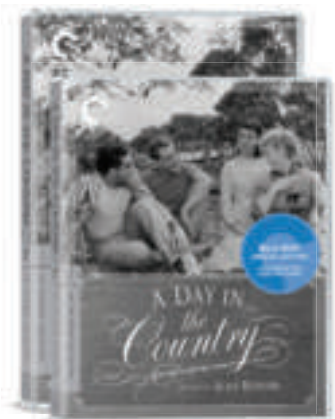
BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-957-3



THE COMPLETE JACQUES TATI

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$124.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-905-4

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$124.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-904-7



A DAY IN THE COUNTRY

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-954-2

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-953-5



EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-948-1

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-947-4



FELLINI SATYRICON

DVD EDITION • SRP: \$29.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-950-4

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-949-8



THE SWORD OF DOOM

BLU-RAY EDITION • SRP: \$39.95
ISBN: 978-1-60465-938-2



WWW.CRITERION.COM

AVAILABLE AT



BAKER & TAYLOR

the future delivered

Visit www.baker-taylor.com/criterioncollection for the complete Criterion Collection.

Happy Anniversaries

2015 not only marks the beginning of *Video Librarian's* 30th year, but we're also celebrating the 10th anniversary of our annual "Best Docs" list (see pg. 64), adding another 25 titles to an honored roll call of 250 (all are found in annotated lists online in the "Resources" section of Video Librarian Plus!, www.videolibrarian.com).

Each year, *Video Librarian* staff set their eyeballs to Malcolm-McDowell-Clockwork-Orange mode and watch hours and hours of telly—viewing more than 200 documentaries between July and October (of course, unlike Malcolm, we're enjoying ourselves).

Our "Best Documentaries" lists mix higher-profile films (including *Blackfish*, *The Cove*, *Grizzly Man*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Inside Job*, *The Invisible War*, *Man on Wire*, *March of the Penguins*, *Murderball*, *No End in Sight*, *Project Nim*, *Searching for Sugarman*, *Sicko*, *Taxi to the Dark Side*, *Waiting for Superman*, *Wordplay*, and *Young @ Heart*) with lesser-known titles (such as *51 Birch Street*, *Big Enough*, *The City Dark*, *Dear Zachary*, *Four Seasons Lodge*, *The Hobart Shakespeareans*, *The House I Live In*, *The Learning*, *A Life Without Pain*, *Monster Camp*, *Nursery University*, *The Revisionaries*, *Sister*

Helen, Somm, and *Sunset Story*).

Once again, the list features stories of fascinating individuals.

Chief among these is Sam Berns—in Sean Fine and Andrea Nix Fine's emotional and inspiring *Life According to Sam*—a 16-year-old high-performing student born with the rare rapid-aging disease progeria, but determined to play in the school band. And there's Allison Orr, an Austin choreographer who works with the unlikely of collaborators—the city's Solid Waste Services Department—in director Andrew Garrison's wonderful *Trash Dance*. And one of my favorite figures is Arunachalam Muruganantham, a grassroots businessman in India who fought incredible obstacles (both his wife and his mother left him) while trying to mass-produce and distribute affordable sanitary pads, as chronicled in director Amit Virmani's often humorous *Menstrual Man*.

Major documentary filmmakers also made our list with excellent works. Ken Burns deservedly won much praise for his sweeping multi-biography *The Roosevelts*, but we were more struck by his modest effort *The Address*, in which male students (with learning/behavioral disorders, including dyslexia and ADHD) are tasked with reciting Lincoln's entire Gettysburg Address from memory. And the always provocative Errol Morris returned

with another gem: *The Unknown Known*, starring former Bush administration Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, a fascinating man who is apparently capable of extraordinary self-deception.

Some of these documentaries will make you mad (such as Jason Osder's searing film *Let the Fire Burn*, recreating a horrific 1985 episode when Philadelphia authorities bombed the headquarters of the radical Afro-centric group MOVE), others will make you think (if *Whole Earth Catalog* founder Stewart Brand is pro-nuclear-power—as viewers discover in Robert Stone's *Pandora's Promise*—maybe this isn't a slam-dunk issue, after all), and a couple are just plain what-the-hell-weird (check out *The Galapagos Affair: Satan Came to Eden* from husband-and-wife filmmakers Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine, which revisits an unsolved Depression-era true murder mystery featuring a zany cast of characters on an uninhabited Galapagos Island).

Bottom line: we're excited about this year's list, and happy that—thanks to the wonderful conduit of libraries—many people will be able to share in these incredibly rich viewing experiences.

Randy Pitman



A rare insight into the Burmese elephants and their handlers – the oozies.

This beautiful film travels with a group of scientists through a country of astonishing pagodas, sweeping plains and fabulously untouched forests.

"Of Oozies and Elephants" reveals the emotional bond between man and animal that permeates Burmese culture. A bond that has saved Burmese forests from destruction and may yet save the elephants from extinction.

Run time 89 minutes
Release date 1.20.15
UPC 8-57063-00504-2
16 x 9 Stereo \$24.98 SRP

NEW FROM ZEITGEIST FILMS

Siddharth

A film by Richie Mehta



**“CRITIC’S PICK! TOUCHING...
a cleareyed neorealist film in the
tradition of Satyajit Ray!”**

—Stephen Holden, THE NEW YORK TIMES



**“MOVINGLY HANDLED...
Engrossing, multi-layered... A small gem.
Excellent script and superb performances!”**

—Jay Weissberg, VARIETY

Siddharth is the spellbinding and gorgeously wrought tale of one father's journey across India in search of his son. Mehendra is a chain-wallah, eking out a living fixing zippers on the bustling streets of New Delhi. To ease his financial woes, he sends twelve-year-old Siddharth to work in a distant factory. When the boy doesn't come home for the Diwali holiday, Mehendra and his wife Suman slowly begin to suspect that he was kidnapped by child traffickers. With few resources and no connections, Mehendra desperately travels to Punjab and Mumbai with the hope that whoever took Siddharth might return him unharmed. A powerful family drama both heart-rending and suspenseful, *Siddharth* has won multiple international awards and was an Official Selection of the Human Rights Watch.

2014 THEATRICAL RELEASE

DVD SRP \$29.99 • CAT NO. Z1165 • UPC 795975116534

AVAILABLE NOW

AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 3



“Dancing on the wilder shores of burlesque...these confrontational comedians are experts at merging shock and showmanship.”

— Jeannette Catsoulis, THE NEW YORK TIMES

EXPOSED A FILM BY BETH B

Pioneering New York “No Wave” underground filmmaker and visual artist Beth B takes us into the 21st century underground and reveals a secret world where cutting-edge performers are taking hold of a taboo art form, Burlesque, and driving it to extremes that most people have never seen. It's satire. It's parody. It's a populist blend of art and entertainment that gives new meaning to the word “transgression.” Above all, it is mind-blowing fun and a fascinating depiction of personal liberation through art.

DVD SRP \$24.99 • CAT NO. B002 • UPC 700261400266

To order call 212-274-1989
or contact your distributor

ZEITGEIST FILMS

orders@zeitgeistfilms.com
www.zeitgeistfilms.com

enjoy



Instantly circulate free digital movies, music, and more,
24/7 to your library patrons

The beauty of the **hoopla** platform is that it allows your patrons to **enjoy** everything **hoopla** has to offer 24/7, wherever they are, while doing whatever they want to do. Rather than have to make time in life to watch a movie, listen to music, or more—make **hoopla** the patron digital **experience** that lets them **explore** and **enjoy** these things while living their lives their way.

To learn how **hoopla** digital is attracting new cardholders and increasing circulation rates among public libraries, call or visit:



US: 800.875.2785
Canada: 866.698.2231
library.hoopladigital.com

hoopla®