



APRIL 5, 2009

- HOME
- POLITICS
- MEDIA
- BUSINESS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- LIVING
- STYLE
- GREEN
- WORLD
- CHICAGO
- COMEDY 23/6
- VIDEO
- BLOGGER INDEX
- ARCHIVE
- Twitter: Follow Us
- Get Email Alerts
- Make HuffPost Your HomePage



Madonna Jets Out Of Malawi



More in Entertainment: 'Fast' Rakes In \$72.5M... Madonna Tot's Dad Found... Farrah's Son Arrested...



Farrah Fawcett Is Hospitalized



Michael Giltz | BIO | I'M A FAN OF THIS BLOGGER

DVDs: Despair Triumphs at the Movies

Posted August 21, 2007 | 10:31 PM (EST)

Breaking Entertainment News



Despair travels well, which may be one reason German director Michael Haneke has gradually built an art house following around the world. *The Films Of Michael Haneke* (\$99.95; Kino) collects seven of his movies (though not the apocalyptic puzzler *The Time of The Wolf* from 2003). You get his "glaciation trilogy" about the poisonous effect of the violence spoon fed via television (is it okay to watch it on TV anyway?), the mordant *Funny Games*, Frankz Kafka's *The Castle* (an inevitable project for him), *Code Unknown* and his masterpiece *The Piano Teacher*.

Email ▶
Print ▶

Be the First to Submit This Story to Digg ▶

It's best to watch *Piano Teacher* without any knowledge of Haneke. The less you know about his transgressive ways, the more surprised you'll be by Isabel Huppert's tightly wound instructor and the ruggedly handsome student she falls into a masochistic relationship with.

Maybe "despair" isn't quite the right word for playwright and director David Mamet. But surely Mamet is never astonished when life throws him a curve ball, as amply demonstrated in the coldly clever *House of Games* (\$39.95; Criterion) his directorial debut 20 years ago about a therapist (Lindsay Crouse) who just knows she can't be conned by a con man (Joe Mantegna). Mamet is certainly the rare playwright to enjoy such an accomplished career in film.

If you're despairing over contemporary life, one time-honored way of attacking it is science fiction -- throw current events into the future, tweak them ever so slightly and hope that somebody realizes you're satirizing the present in hopes of changing the future. Certainly the wittiest parts of *Robocop* (\$22.98; FOX) are the frenzied news breaks and over-the-top commercials. They still seem absurd...but not so far-fetched. Peter Weller still imbues his mechanistic hero with a soul, but it's director Paul Verhoeven's revelation that we're losing ours that really stays with you.

When the world seems dirty and filthy and sad and cruel, why waste time with despair when you could do something about it? That's the cheerful approach of *Dexter: The First Season* (\$39.98; Showtime), the well-adjusted forensic specialist who does a little community service as a discriminating serial killer. The only despair felt here is over actor Michael C. Hall not getting an

NEIL YOUNG
FORK IN THE ROAD
HIS LATEST ALBUM FEATURES 10 NEW SONGS

AVAILABLE
APRIL 7

CLICK HERE TO EXPERIENCE THE ALBUM
NELLYOUNG.COM

Popular Stories on HuffPost

- Fashion Face-Off! Michelle Obama And Carla Bruni-Sarkozy Finally Meet In France (VIDEO, PHOTOS, POLL)
*Video, poll and slideshow
- Levi Johnston Talks Safe Sex With Tyra Banks (VIDEO)
UPDATE 8:30pm: People.com is reporting that Sarah Palin has issued...
- Oscar de la Renta Slams Michelle Obama's Buckingham Outfit As Major Designers Feel Ignored
While Michelle Obama has made lesser...
- Verena von Pfetten 7 Lessons To Be Learned From Carla Bruni
So here's the thing. There's no shortage of articles dedicated to that certain je ne...
- Huff TV Arianna Discusses Michelle Obama's "Fantastic" Style On CBS'

Emmy nomination for Best Actor.

Compared to Dexter, *House: Season Three* (\$59.98; Universal) is a big softie. The show is tilting a bit too much towards the private lives of all the characters (save the workplace sexual shenanigans for *Grey's Anatomy*). But Hugh Laurie keeps the soapiness in check and his bark is still wonderfully omni-present and darn near just as bad as his bite.

Finally, film buffs may be ready to despair with the minor up-tick in colorization that's taken place in the last few years. (Don't ask me why -- no matter how good colorization gets, the biggest fans for old black and white movies and TV shows are precisely the same people who hate colorization the most.) The latest example is 1935's adventure tale *She* (\$24.95; Kino), an otherwise marvelous restoration of this tale from the people behind *King Kong*. I don't care if special effects whiz Ray Harryhausen was involved and old movies were sometimes tinted; there's no need to colorize this movie. Of course, they give you both versions, so you can focus on the better-than-ever print in glorious black and white when watching this *Raiders*-like tale of derring do in a subterranean kingdom

Some people prefer a sunny disposition, so if all this despair has you down, there's always the cheery *Ugly Betty Complete First Season* (\$59.99; Buena Vista). If this candy-colored bit of foolishness can't cheer you up, nothing will. Mind you, the show is best when focusing on Betty and her real life. They've got the tone of a telenovela down pat -- they don't need the silly, over-the-top plots as well.

Also out this week: *South Park Complete Tenth Season* (\$49.99; Paramount), a series that hit its stride just a few years ago and is better than ever; *Serenity Collector's Edition* (\$26.98; Universal), the terrifically fun spin-off of the TV series *Firefly* (maybe if we buy enough copies they'll make another movie); 1991's *The Dark Backward Special Edition* (\$14.94; Sony), a comedy about a guy with a third arm that actually deserves to be called a cult classic. *Honor Roll: The Best Of College Football Vol. 1 and 2* (\$19.95 each; ESPN) has one problem: at more than two hours each, they're still too short for the fans who will always want more.

Comments for this post are now closed

Email Print

More in Entertainment...

SNL: Madonna And Angelina In Weekend Update...	Reality Star Jade Goody Buried In Lavish...	Robert De Niro Nanny Sues For \$40,000	Alex Da Silva, Celebrity Choreographer Accused Of...
--	---	--	--

digg™ HuffPost Stories Surging Right Now

Michelle Obama's Clothing Has Sean Hannity All Out Of Sorts

Cenk Uygur: Have We Reached the Tipping Point on Guns?

RICHARD POPLAWSKI, Pittsburgh Gunman, Kills 3 Police Officers

Dr. Rachel Ehrenfeld: Does Iran Harbor Osama bin Laden?

Ads by Google

Blu-Ray Movies On Sale Pay securely. Fast & easy shipping. Huge selection. Order now and save! www.amazon.com

	"Washington Unplugged" Arianna was on CBS' "Washington..."
	Huff TV Arianna Appears on ABC's "This Week" Roundtable With George Stephanopoulos (VIDEO) Arianna was a guest this morning on...
	"BRUNO" TRAILER! Calamity, African Babies, Chase Scenes And More (NSFW VIDEO) IT'S HERE! The trailer for this July's Sacha Baron Cohen...
	NATO Leaders Focus On Afghanistan, But Most Reject Obama's Plea For Troops (SLIDESHOW) STRASBOURG, France — On the eve of the NATO...
	First Lady Fashion At Friday's NATO Concert (PHOTOS) Another night, another fashion opportunity for NATO leaders and their spouses! See...
	Diana Palin, Sarah Palin's Sister-In-Law, Arrested For Breaking Into Home ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Police say Alaska Gov....
	John Oliver Explains The Real Reason You Never Touch The Queen (VIDEO) John Oliver was upset enough to drop his monocle when he...
	Jim Cramer Declares The Depression "Over" (VIDEO) On Thursday's episode of "Mad Money" host Jim Cramer declared that the depression...
	New Jay Leno Show Rejected By NBC Affiliate In Boston BOSTON — Boston's NBC affiliate says it will air a local newscast instead of...
	Ice Bridge Ruptures In Antarctic (VIDEO) An ice bridge linking a shelf of ice the size of Jamaica to two islands in Antarctica has
	Scientists Find Rocket Fuel Chemical In Infant Formula ATLANTA — Traces of a



Comments 9 Pending Comments 0

[FAQ: Comments & Moderation](#) [FAQ: HuffPost Accounts](#)

Want to reply to a comment? Hint: Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to

View Comments: Newest Expand
First All

Apples [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Apples](#) [permalink](#)

Michael, make sure you let us know when that special edition of "It's A Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" is released, especially as I know it's one of your favorite films of '63.

[Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 04:40 PM on 08/22/2007*

Michael Giltz [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Well, "Mad cubed" is out on DVD already, but you may be hinting at the fact that this very long movie -- 161 minutes -- was actually 192 minutes (including an overture) when it originally came out. There was a more complete version on VHS (!) and laserdisc but not complete. Some day soon someone will plunk down the money on restorers will get to work and show us the movie most haven't ever seen and only a few remember from when it first came out. I wouldn't be surprised if the film's rickety but affectionate standing with critics shot up at the LONGER version. Sometimes, more can seem like less when it fixes the pacing. Thanks for reading, Apple.

[Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 11:35 PM on 08/22/2007*

fvarga [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of fvarga](#) [permalink](#)

My god, how many DVD versions of robocop are there? I guess I'll go count on amazon. Here they are in reverse chronological order:

- 1) 20th anniversery edition
- 2) Lenticular cover edition
- 3) el cheapo version (I think this is what I own)
- 4) criterion
- 5) another el cheapo version

also found in 2 different robocop trilogy box sets.

[Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 08:55 AM on 08/22/2007*

Michael Giltz [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz](#) [permalink](#)

Very true. Like so many movies (especially sci-fi movies), Robocop has been repackaged endlessly. Soon they'll put it out on Blu-Ray and /or HD-DVD as well and some poor schmuck will have to buy it all over again. I probably wouldn't have covered this umpteenth reissue if it didn't tie into my despair theme. At least it's not Terminator 2. That's surely the wmost repackaged title of all.

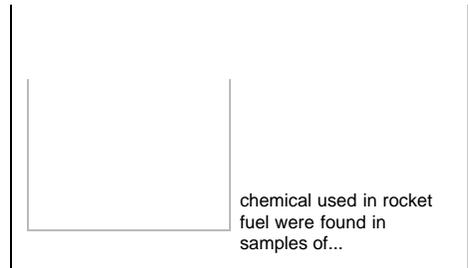
[Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 12:43 PM on 08/22/2007*

fvarga [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of fvarga](#) [permalink](#)

You're too late, I didn't include the blu ray and hd dvd versions available on amazon in my list :p

[Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) *Posted 09:11 AM on 08/23/2007*

CynAnne [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of CynAnne](#) [permalink](#)



HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES

[MORE BIG NEWS PAGES](#)

Books by this author

This Blogger's Books from

A cabin of one's own: New England's MacDowell Colony celebrates 100 years of artistic utopia. And the gay and lesbian artists who prospered there celebrate ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

Affairs to remember: Farley Granger bedded Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters, and Leonard Bernstein. In his autobiography, Include Me Out, Hitchcock's muse ... (The national gay & lesbian newsmagazine)
by Michael Giltz

[Bloggers Index](#) ▶

[Read All Posts by Michael Giltz](#) ▶



... Very entertaining article, Michael. I've seen Haneke's "House of Games", but it was "Funny Games" that invoked a visceral, unpleasant response requiring some shadow-boxing to relieve the emotional distress that movie caused. I've never watched it since, and even though there's an American remake underway (so I've read), I doubt I'll return for a second helping - it affected me that adversely. So did "Irreversible" with Vincent Cassel - one of the very few times I've ever had to pause a movie for emotional 'breathers' (those that have seen it know which two scenes I'm referring to - the attack on Monica Bellucci, and the 'fire hydrant' scene). Now, finding out that "Dexter" is available on DVD cheers me immensely, as I'm behind by several episodes - now I can catch up (on a side note, I'd gladly pay to watch Dexter 'catch up' with those two sadistic creeps from "Funny Games", oh yes indeed I would)..! ;)

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 02:14 AM on 08/22/2007

Michael Giltz See Profile I'm a Fan of Michael Giltz permalink

A Dexter/Haneke cross-over movie? It would be nice payback. Mamet's film is House of Games -- is that also the French name for Haneke's movie known as Cache in the US? That's the movie that is being remade in English -- a truly bizarre idea since it doesn't make sense as a movie outside of the French-Algerian context. I too found Irreversible deeply disturbing, but not offensively so -- a rape scene should be horrific and upsetting. Thanks for reading.

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 12:40 PM on 08/22/2007

CynAnne See Profile I'm a Fan of CynAnne permalink

... I realized I'd confused the two afterward, Michael, and I can only plead the late hour causing my confusion of the titles/directors. By the time I did see, it was too late to change it (that 'Edit Your Post' button we discussed in the other HuffPo thread the other day would be most welcome at times like last night - wink, wink). And I agree with your assessment of Irreversible - I've seen all kinds of 'things that go bump in the night', cinematically speaking, but it's the horror of people who look normal and yet behave like monsters that I find so frightening. I'll take the zombie or sea monster any day over the smiling gentleman standing behind me with a pair of wickedly sharp scissors in his trenchcoat pocket, just waiting for 'his moment' - *shivers*..! ;)

Favorite Flag as abusive Posted 02:50 AM on 08/23/2007

[There are More Comments on this Thread. Click Here To See them All](#)

Comments are closed for this entry

You must be [logged in](#) to reply to this comment. [Log in](#) or

