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## Michael Giltz

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## DVDs: Good Greek

Posted March 25, 2008 | 02:23 PM (EST)

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What's wrong with "good?" Every movie that comes out is hyped as "the best movie of the year" or "the funniest comedy in ages." Every TV show is "the best show on television" or "the best comedy since Seinfeld." Every book is a masterpiece; every CD is *Blonde on Blonde* or *Sgt. Pepper* and every blog is "the fastest growing blog on the Internet." Conversely, if something is not brilliant, it's bad, awful, terrible, and a disgrace to humanity.

Well, the ABC Family drama *Greek* (\$29.99; ABC Family) is...good. That's not faint praise. Heck, most TV shows don't come within spitting distance of "good." It's funny, well-acted and just a little bit smarter than you expect from what is basically a prime-time soap. Rusty (Jacob Zachar) is a dorky college freshman looking to pledge a frat and just happens to settle on the one led by his older sister's ex-boyfriend Cappie (the scene-stealing Scott M. Foster who is very appealing and by "appealing" I mean extremely smart and sexy).

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Frankly, Rusty's sister Casey (Spencer Grammer, daughter of Kelsey) has the least-interesting storyline on *Greek*, which just began Season Two this week (a repeat airs late Wednesday night and new episodes are on Mondays at 8 p.m.). She's torn between the super-cool Cappie and Evan (Jake Dorman), the rich boyfriend who cheated on Casey. Gee, I wonder

which guy deserves her. It's a lot more fun to spend time with Rusty, his Christian roommate, his fellow pledge involved in a clandestine gay relationship with another frat boy and Rusty's geeky but cute and very talkative gal-pal.

No re-invention of the wheel here. But a very strong cast elevates the material from "guilty pleasure" to simply "pleasure." And that's good enough for me.

Also out this week: *The Kite Runner* (\$29.99; DreamWorks), a faithful adaptation of the mega-selling novel that was decently written but so melodramatic it put most telenovelas to shame and

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that just didn't work onscreen; *The Mist* (\$32.95; Dimension/Genius), a Frank Darabont horror flick from a Stephen King novella that has ardent supporters; fans of it should enjoy *Them* (\$24.98; Dark Sky Films), a French-Romanian suspenser about a couple in the woods terrorized one night by shadowy outsiders that will probably be remade poorly by Hollywood within a week or two; *Southland Tales* (\$24.96; Sony), director Richard Kelly's noble failure follow-up to *Donnie Darko*; *Diva Dolorosa* (\$29.99; Zeitgeist), a hypnotic compendium of scraps of footage from old silent Italian melodramas that is an operatic companion piece to *Decasia*; *Mike Douglas: Moments & Memories* (\$19.99; SRO/Kultur), an unacceptably brief (less than two hours) clip job from the 20+ year career of a TV legend -- with the massive archive he must have, a one-disc release in this era of boxed sets just won't cut it; similarly, why waste our time with *NBA's Greatest Rivalries & Upsets Volume One* (\$24.98; Warner Bros.), which is a scant 80 minutes long; *Midsomer Murders* is a long-running British mystery series that has grown very long in the tooth, as evidenced by *Set 10* (\$49.99; Acorn) in which the towns of Midsomer County are drenched yet again in...murder but the salad days of *Midsomer Murders: The Early Cases* (\$159.99; Acorn) captures the fine show before it all became a bit silly; *War Made Easy* (\$19.95; Disinfo) is a brisk documentary narrated by Sean Penn showing how the wars may change but the methods of selling them to a passive public barely change at all; the spirit of Ralph Bakshi lives on in the vulgar, animated sci-fi spoof *Tripping The Rift: The Movie* (\$26.98; Anchor Bay); *Robyn Hitchcock -- Sex, Food, Death...and Insects* (\$24.95; A&E), an eccentricly named documentary about the eccentric British songwriter; *The Catherine Tate Show Series Two* (\$29.99; SRO/Kultur), sketch comedy for those who can't wait for the return of Tracey Ullman; *Hooks To The Left* (\$29.95; Water Bearer), a film about gay hustlers which is surely the first feature film shot solely on cellphone cameras; Pras of the Fugees lives anonymously as a homeless person in downtown LA for nine days in *Skid Row* (\$24.98; Screen Media), a documentary shot with surveillance cameras to give glimpse into the miserable life of the growing homeless population; *Party Of Five Third Season* (\$39.95; Sony) finds the handsome but doomed Salinger clan continually beset by more woes than Job; *Othello* (\$24.99; Kultur), shows Eamonn Walker deeply jealous but I love it best for capturing the wonderful space of Shakespeare's Globe in London; *Bionic Woman Volume One* (\$29.98; Universal), which seemed like a good idea but wasn't and couldn't even inspire a reissue of the original series and *The Six Million Dollar Man: Walk The Line Extended Cut* (\$26.98; Fox), one of those poor excuses for a DVD reissue with loads of extras and padded footage -- it should at least contain the acclaimed original theatrical version as well; *Wings: The Sixth Season* (\$39.98; Paramount), which proves even an exceptional cast can keep a modest comedy afloat only for so long; *Sliders Season Four* (\$59.98; Universal) continued the fan favorite series on the SciFi channel to diminishing returns proving that sometimes you should leave well enough alone; and finally pity poor Yul Brynner, a fine actor who because of his heritage and appearance was constantly reduced to appearing in noble warrior epics like the three middling releases out this week -- *Kings of the Sun*, *Solomon and Sheba* and the unfortunately named *Taras Bulba* (\$19.98 each; Fox). Brynner deserved better and rarely got it.

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I agree, most educators will tell you that when working with children you want to tell them they are doing a GOOD JOB so they understand what is expected of them. Telling kids they are perfect, or excellent, leads them to conclude the goal is to be perfect all the time and so they develop stress and anxiety trying to be perfect when it is just not necessary.

As far as marketing movies goes most people are not going to see all of the movies and between work and home may only have time to see a few. The "Marketeers" are trying to convince you if you only see one movie this year see mine (because if you don't I am in big trouble).

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