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**Michael Giltz**

Posted October 25, 2008 | 04:46 PM (EST)

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## DVDs: The Man In Black Is Back



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One of the nice things about the collapse of the record industry is that the few remaining people at the major labels pay more and more attention to their catalogs. *Johnny Cash At Folsom Prison Legacy Edition* (\$39.98; Columbia) is a great example. The live album is of course the defining moment in Cash's career and turned him from a country star into an icon with broad appeal. (Selling three million copies will do that.) This boxed set includes a CD devoted to each set plus a feature length documentary about Cash and the making of the album. The animated illustrations

used during song clips aren't wildly interesting but most of this film featuring interviews with fellow musicians, friends, family and Cash himself make clear what a landmark this moment was. The story of the inmate Cash befriended and tried to help is heartbreaking and it's good to be reminded again of the ironic fact that "Folsom Prison Blues" was ripped off wholesale from a Gordon Jenkins tune. (They play a good chunk of the original here.) Extras on the DVD include Marty Stuart talking about the last song Cash wrote and their final moments together which showed Cash as amusingly gruff and funny as ever, a radio interview with Roseanne Cash and more that push the DVD over the two hour mark. That's a heck of an "extra" for what's supposed to be a CD release. You can dive into many albums if you want to check out Johnny Cash, including a dozen or so hits compilations. The Johnny Cash Christmas Specials (\$49.98; Shout) show Cash turning from a country star into a Mount Rushmore icon of America thanks to TV and his comforting, modest embrace of fame). But you need the Sun singles, the brilliant final albums on American he recorded up to his dying breath. And you need *Johnny Cash At Folsom Prison*. One packaging caveat: I wish this weren't in the longbox packaging and was in the compact size of a regular CD. I don't know anyone who prefers this size (about as tall as an lp, much thicker and half as wide.) They seem more lavish but end up just being a pain.)

If you loved *Walk The Line* and love animals, you might be intrigued by *Earthlings* (\$19.99), a documentary film about the cruel treatment of animals narrated by Joaquin Phoenix and with

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music by Moby.

What's your favorite song or album by the Man in Black? I'm always blown away by how strange "Walk The Line" is when you really pay attention to it. And the gospel album *My Mother's Hymnbook* has been getting more play than any other for a few years now.

**BOND, JAMES BOND** -- With *Quantum Of Solace* opening Nov 14 in the US (and given pretty mixed to negative reviews by [Variety](#) and [Hollywood Reporter](#)), it's no surprise the movie is being used as an excuse to put out more Bond DVDs. The Daniel Craig-starrer *Casino Royale Collector's Edition* (\$29.95; Sony) has three discs and seven hours of new extras. On the one hand, this isn't the movie with a trailer for the sequel slapped onto it. On the other hand, these extras should have been included in the first place given the massive worldwide success of the film. But if you don't own it yet, dig in. Also out is the goofy 1967 *Casino Royale Collector's Edition* (\$19.98; MGM), which spoofed the Bond films with glee (Woody Allen's appearance is perfect). I just wish the extras included a CD of the legendary score by Burt Bacharach. Finally, on BluRay there's been a clutch of films put out and loaded with extras, all of them \$34.98 and looking smashing. The selection feels pretty random: three Sean Connery movies (*Dr. No*, *From Russia With Love*, *Thunderball*), two Roger Moore (*Live and Let Die*, *For Your Eyes Only*), and one Pierce Brosnan (*Die Another Day*). At least they're being sold individually and not as a boxed set. The only boxed sets they should sell are complete collections of the films by each Bond. Naturally, the most recent movie looks smashing in BluRay but these are all presented with care.

**DOCUMENTARIES** -- *Sex & Justice: Anita Hill Vs. Clarence Thomas* (\$24.95; First Run) is fine as far as it goes. This 77 minute documentary has Gloria Steinem intro'ing footage from the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas when Hill was thrust into the spotlight with her story of sexual harassment. The footage is inherently compelling and analysts could have a field day breaking down the postures and demeanor of Hill (who is composed and thoughtful) and Thomas (who is jittery and tense). Steinem - presented awkwardly at a desk on a bare soundstage) -- provides crucial info, like the fact that Hill passed a lie detector test. And it's good to be reminded how boorishly so many of the senators questioning her behaved as well as the fact that she had shared her concerns with friends and associates at the time. But it's simply too brief to be satisfying -- at the very least, we expect a lot more footage to be included as an extra and it would be helpful to place the events of 1991 in more context than this 1993 film can provide. *Gunnin' For That #1 Spot* (\$29.95; Oscilloscope) is a good first film by Beastie Boy Adam Yauch that documents the day in 2006 when the top 24 high school basketball players showed their stuff on a Harlem court. A great soundtrack, of course, a good feel for capturing these kids as people under enormous pressure and a love of the game that's infectious even for people like me who never got beyond a casual game of "horse" when they were little. *To The Limit* (\$29.95; First Run) is an ok look at two brothers recklessly committed to mountain climbing and to conquering one famous climb at Yosemite. Gorgeous scenery, but it really only becomes involving an hour in when injury delays them and the brothers open up about their complicated partnership/rivalry. *ESPN Ultimate NASCAR: The Families* (\$16.95; ESPN/Genius) is a 91 minute look at the main NASCAR dynasties the Allisons, Earnhardts and the Pettys, with bonus footage of a key race by every one of 'em. *Sold Out: A Threeevening with Kevin Smith* (\$19.98; Weinstein) captures the filmmaker in a live appearance that combines stand-up and stories from filmmaking in a two-disc set jammed with five hours of material that fans will eat up. *On The Rumba River* (\$24.95; First Run) is a warm-hearted look at the comeback of Congolese superstar Wendo as he searches for the musicians he used to play with and (best of all) sings his music.

**KIDS** -- *Looney Tunes Golden Collection Volume 6* (\$64.98; Warner Bros.) is a great example of the remarkable compilations pouring out on DVD that we are (happily) taking for granted. In the past, most of these shorts would be available haphazardly at all, mostly on Saturday mornings. But here are WW II shorts, Bosko and Buddy, rarities, extras looking at Mel Blanc, commentaries, isolated music-only tracks, tv specials and more. Amazing. *The Naked Brothers Band Season 2* (\$26.98; Paramount) captures this loosey-goosey sitcom as it hits its stride comedically and musically in ten new episodes. *Go Diego Go: It's A Bug's World* (\$16.99; Paramount) pulls together four animal-themed episodes. And *Pinky Dinky Doo: Polka Dot Pox* (\$14.93; Genius) is imagination-inspiring animated stories from some of the people behind Sesame Street. Think *Blue's Clues* with a guinea pig instead of a dog.

**BLU-RAY** -- I strongly believe Blu-Ray should be priced the same as regular DVDs. With DVD sales plateauing, Blu-Ray is a great way to offer more value for the money, not a way to jack up

"Washington Unplugged"

Arianna was on CBS' "Washington..."

**Alex Leo** The "Real Housewives Of New York City" Flowchart Of Hate

I'm a little embarrassed to love this show as much as...

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IT'S HERE! The trailer for this July's Sacha Baron Cohen...

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John Oliver was upset enough to drop his monocle when he...

Obama Teases Reporter From India During Press Conference (VIDEO)

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Least Wasteful Cities In America (SLIDESHOW)

It's great to love the city you live in, and better to

prices. Still, you can't help admitting that they are a significant improvement in picture quality. *Sweeney Todd* (\$39.99; DreamWorks) shows off the production design of Tim Burton's film to smashing effect. And since that's the only part of the film worth lingering over, it's a good thing. *Jewel: The Essential Live Songbook* (\$34.99; Koch) contains four more versions of songs than the regular DVD and a sense of closeness and intimacy that's amazing. And then there's *Young Frankenstein* (\$39.98; Fox), which costs an unconscionable two and a half times as much as the special edition put out on regular DVD at \$14.98 just two years ago. This is one of the all-time great comedies and probably the only film Brooks took so much care with when it came to cinematography and production design. All of which makes it a crushing disappointment that more care wasn't taken with the transfer. Yes, the original film mimics classic horror movies, but it is gorgeous to look at. I'm not quite sure why this edition is SO grainy (a common occurrence with older movies) but surely a better print of the original remastered with care would look beautiful instead of distracting.

**ETC.** -- *Missing* (\$39.95; Criterion) is the Costa-Gavras thriller set in Chile and based on a true story, presented with care by Criterion, which includes archival footage from Cannes and interviews today with the real people involved in this tragedy. How sad that the machinations of the US government which seemed so shocking and unconscionable back in 1982 now barely raise an eyebrow. *Kiss Of The Spider Woman* (\$34.98 or \$39.98 on Blu-Ray) is the Oscar-winning film starring William Hurt and Raul Julia, complete with a 108 minute documentary about the tortuous path to the big screen the novel took. (Not to mention the even unlikelier twist of becoming a Broadway musical). Hurt's performance I feared would seem dated but he was too honest and specific in his role for that to happen. Javier Bardem is a similarly honest actor and his remarkable skill is on full display in this little seen drama *Mondays in the Sun* (\$29.98; Lionsgate) about Spanish shipyard workers who are unemployed. And Criterion's Eclipse label continues to mine archives for notable movies that might never see the light of day otherwise, such as the boxed set *Kenji Mizoguchi's Fallen Women* (\$59.95; Eclipse), which contains four movies from the 30s to the 50s dealing with women fighting to survive from a switchboard operator who agrees to have an affair with her boss so she can support her father to prostitutes who wonder what will become of them once their livelihood is outlawed. *The Incredible Hulk* (\$34.98; Universal) has Edward Norton trying to reboot the franchise, but this version is so indifferent it made me long for the frustrating, quirky, oddball Ang Lee version that didn't work either but at least had an attitude. And Jim Belushi's *According To Jim First Season* (\$39.98; Lionsgate/ABC) has the amiable schlub always happily aware of how lucky he was to land a wife like Courtney Thorne-Smith.

Again, what's your favorite song or album by the Man in Black? I'm always blown away by how strange "Walk The Line" is when you really pay attention to it. And the gospel album *My Mother's Hymnbook* has been getting more play than any other for a few years now.

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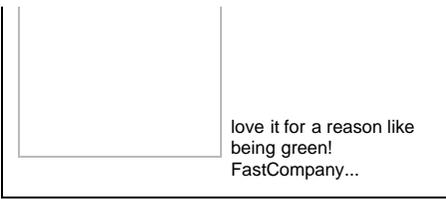
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Is there a documentary that accompanies the album? Just wondering since I found this link from a music doc. site (<http://www.musicfilmweb.com>)

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

Ballad of a Teenage Queen is my personal fave of Mr. Cash's incredible catalog.

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

I love all Cash's songs, but of his later work, I can't get enough of his American Recordings, especially "When the Man Comes Around". I sincerely believe that Cash was a prophet of God, and people who profess to be Christians (are you listening, Sarah Palin?) would do well to pay attention to what he had to say.

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