



Michael Giltz, ContributorBookFilter creator

DVDs: Sing Out For "Sing Street," "Everybody Wants Some!!" Choose -- Batman Or Superman? And More

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Too often, people use the instant access of streaming services and on-demand to simply watch whatever widely advertised, not-that-good movie was playing in the cinema just a few weeks ago. "That looks alright," you say to yourselves, settling for something that might be OK. At best. Why not be a little adventurous and search out movies and TV shows that aren't maybe decent but actually might be good or even great? Start right here.



BLU-RAY + DVD + DIGITAL HD

Everybody Wants Some!!

From Writer/Director *RICHARD LINKLATER*



Here For A Good Time. Not A Long Time.

DVD + DIGITAL HD

JAKE GYLLENHAAL

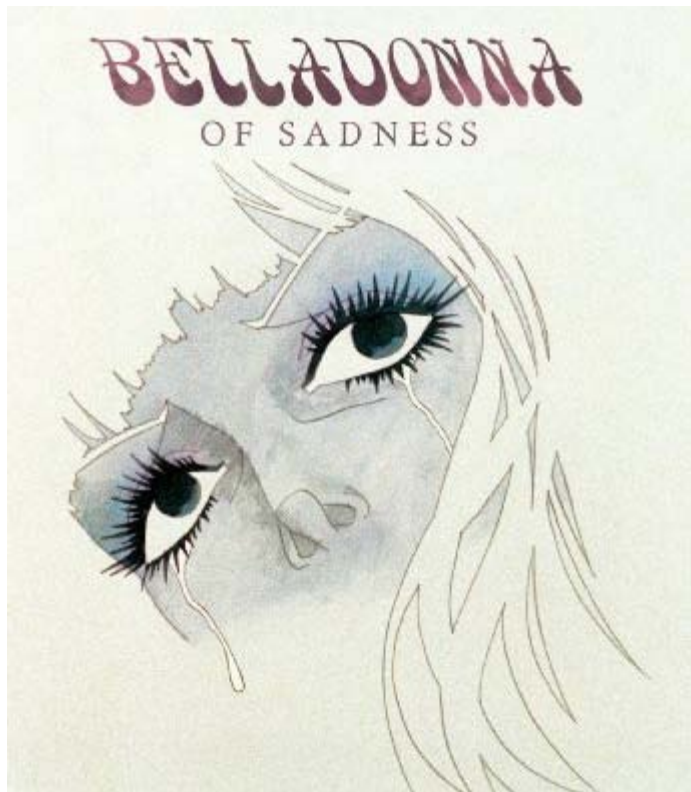
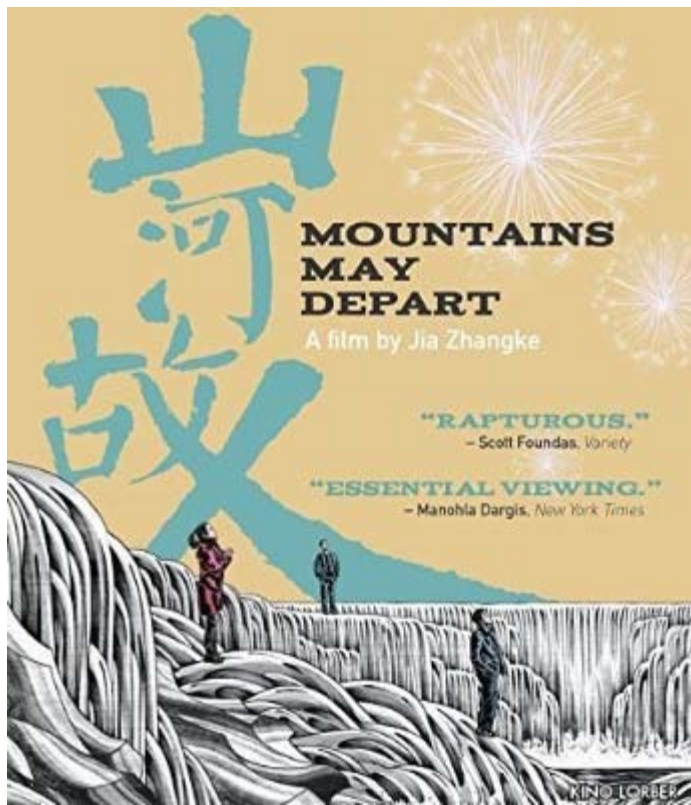
NAOMI WATTS

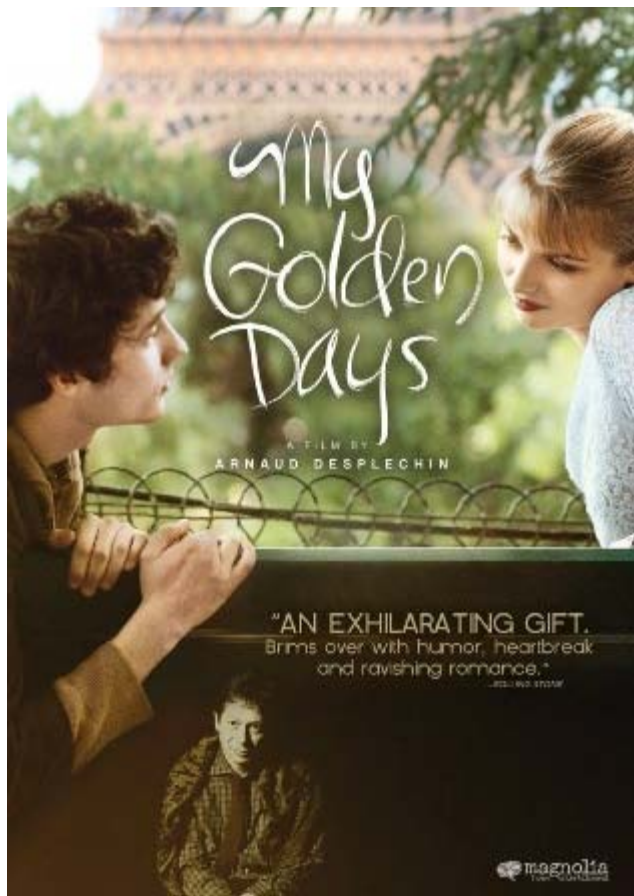
DEMOLITION



DEMOLITION

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF WILD AND THE DALLAS BUYERS CLUB





SING STREET (\$34.99 BluRay; Anchor Bay)

EVERYBODY WANTS SOME!! (\$39.99 BluRay; Paramount)

DEMOLITION (\$39.99 BluRay; 20th Century Fox)

MOUNTAINS MAY DEPART (\$34.95 BluRay; Kino Lorber)

BELLADONNA OF SADNESS (\$39.99 BluRay; Cinelicious Pics)

MY GOLDEN DAYS (\$26.97 DVD; Magnolia Home Entertainment)

Let's kick things off with a gem: a new film from the director of *Once* that actually recaptures the charm of *Once*, mostly by not trying to duplicate *Once*. (I'm looking at you, *Begin Again*.) In this case, *Sing Street* is more *Commitments* anyway, the story of some lads who try to put together a band amidst the punkish new wave of early 1980s Ireland. A coming of age tale, a the-joy-of-making-music revelation, a romance, a comedy. A delight.

Meanwhile, director Richard Linklater has really hit a new creative stride. First came his many years in the making home movie *Boyhood*. Now comes *Everybody Wants Some!!*, a "spiritual sequel" to his best film *Dazed & Confused*. That captured the last day of school in the summer of 1976. This one captures the first day of college in 1980, or more exactly, the lazy, weekend before the first day of college when people are moving into their dorms, making new friends and eagerly waiting for all the sex and drugs and excitement that college is supposed to offer. Linklater has a great ensemble here composed of guys who room together in a big sprawling house and all play on the baseball team. It's hilariously funny, casually believable, marvelously acted and unfolds with such disarming ease you really feel like it's the weekend before classes begin and you've got all the freedom in the world. Not much happens and it's just great. I loved it when I saw it and like it even more on a second viewing. I can't wait to see it again and really there's so much to say (the marvelous actors, the

dialogue, the recreation of an era before smart phones and the internet) but I'll start with this: see it.

Demolition is exactly the sort of movie you might just toss on because you saw it advertised and hey, it stars Jake Gyllenhaal and he's good. In fact, it never actually transcends the heavy symbolism of a suddenly widowed young man who literally apart his home and life so he can be reawakened. It helps when you're befriended by an adorable kid. Nonetheless, Gyllenhaal is such a good actor he actually deserves your support in checking him out in whatever he tackles. He's got bold taste (Broadway! art films!) and I'm always eager to see what he's done now, even if I suspect it might be a misfire.

The entire career of Chinese director Jia Zhangke is one long, "how the heck did he get THAT made" puzzle. With *Mountains May Depart* he tackles decades of recent Chinese history, pointedly suggesting much has been lost in the struggle to leap to the front of capitalism. It's gorgeous, smart, quiet, beautifully acted, pure art house cinema and one has to wonder: how the heck did he get THIS made? Usually with world cinema you are just catching up with an artist already acclaimed in his homeland. But with Zhangke, we've probably seen more of his work than 99.99% of the Chinese population, more's the pity.

The lost Japanese animated film *Belladonna of Sadness* is simply not my cup of tea and it took me a few weeks to actually watch the entire film. Definitely for adults (and not in the juvenile "adult" manner of Ralph Bakshi), it features a brutal rape coupled with a revenge fantasy worthy of the blaxploitation films popular at the time. I want to recognize its boldness since so much of animated film is resolutely stuck in family film and fantasy mode. It's beautifully crafted and the entire crazy history of the film is well captured in the extras. And I'm definitely going to track down its crazy good soundtrack. One for the adventurous. PS I'm not quite being fair to Bakshi, but you know what I mean.

And here's another gem about boys on the cusp of being men. *My Golden Days* is a winner from French director Arnaud Desplechin. It's a poignant string of flashbacks involving childhood, a student trip to the USSR, life at college and most of all Esther, the one that got away. It's talky and discursive as only the French can be and filled with winning performances, led by Quentin Dolmaire as the young hero. If you're not prone to French cinema, I don't think this will win you over. But if you are, it's a must see.





BATMAN V SUPERMAN (\$35.99 BluRay; Warner Home Entertainment)

THE BOSS (\$34.98 BluRay; Universal Studios Home Entertainment)

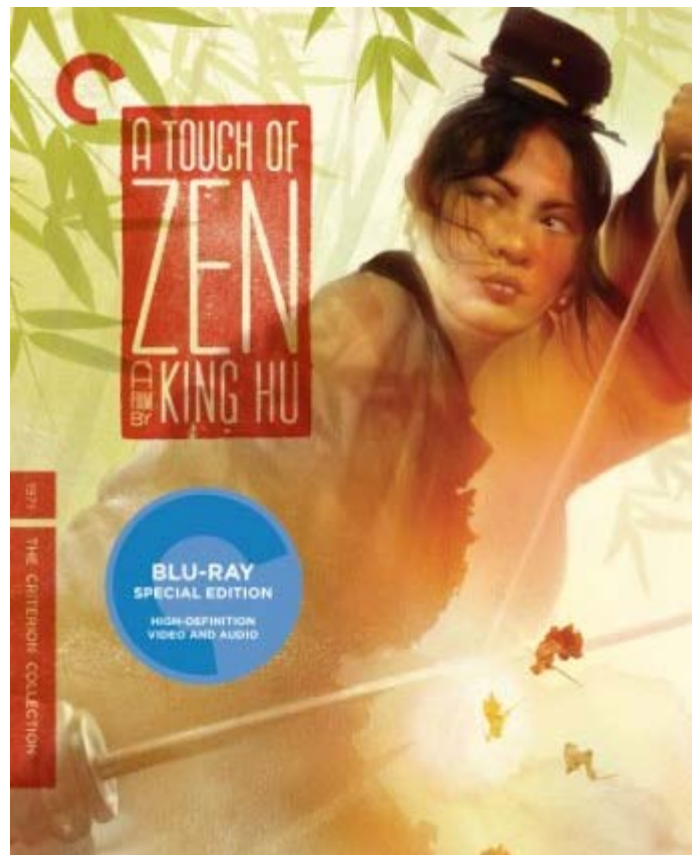
BARBERSHOP: THE NEXT CUT (\$29.98 BluRay; Warner Home Video)

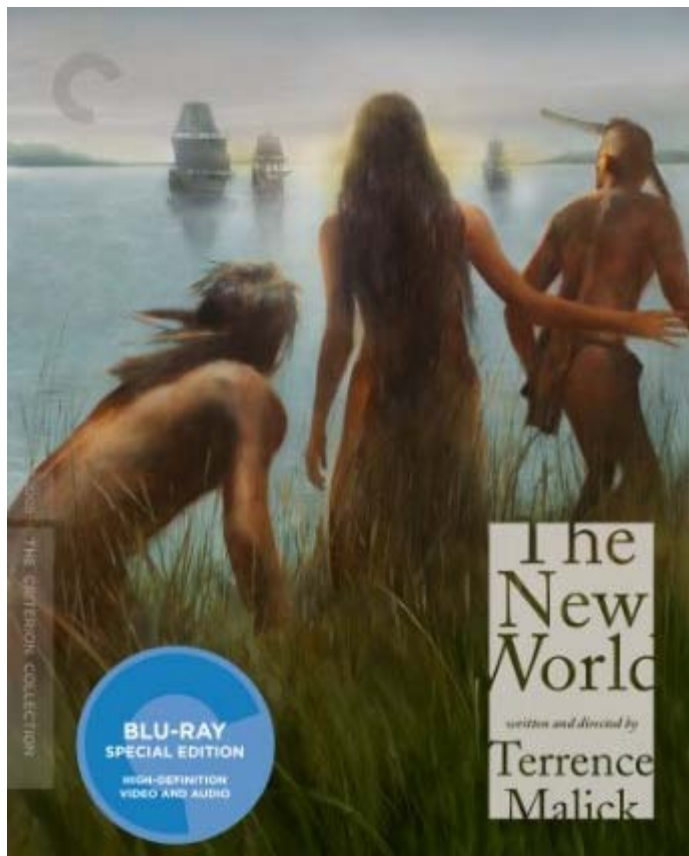
The one aspect I really enjoyed about *Batman V Superman* was the one aspect everyone mocked: the super serious tone. Hey, with the darker than dark *Batman* films and the fact that Marvel has the market on snark cornered, I thought it was smart of DC to realize their wheelhouse is a sober serious nature. This isn't fun and games; it's the fate of the world! But everyone mocked it as pompous and now the trailer for *Justice League* has jokes and jabs a plenty. Oh well. I'm not surprised the movie itself was a bust since I've never really cared for the films of Zack Snyder (the campy homoeroticism of *300* aside). And I'm a little torn: the visuals are best enjoyed on the big screen (at home the editing becomes even more absurd) but its the bounteous extras that offer your best entertainment value. And don't worry about the DC universe. Between *Suicide Squad* and the pitch perfect trailer for *Wonder Woman*, they'll be just fine. Here's hoping they take their mission seriously.

Oh Melissa McCarthy, how I loved you in *Gilmore Girls*. I'm thrilled you graciously agreed to do a cameo though bummed your character (such a key ingredient to the show's success) won't be more fully present. It's a shame you don't seem to have a lot of love for that experience since it's still FAR AND AWAY the best role of your career. You seem to be the new John Belushi, but where he went from dumb slob roles to increasingly nuanced characters you've gone in the opposite direction from Sookie to slobs. Your movies swivel back and forth from dumb and successful to dumb and not so successful. (Though I don't think a single movie has actually lost anyone money yet.) *The Boss* falls in the latter camp but I'm still waiting for you to remember how much fun it was to actually act as a character, rather than go for the sort of extended sketches that wouldn't even cut it on *SNL*. *The Boss* is exactly what you *shouldn't* be doing. Catch your breath, dive into a pile of scripts and find yourself a great supporting role in a really good film by a really good director. You've cashed

in now start making some art.

As for the latest *Barbershop*, it's definitely too little too late, but harmless fun nonetheless. What took them so long? And since they waited so long, why does it feel tossed off? A rare misstep for Ice Cube.



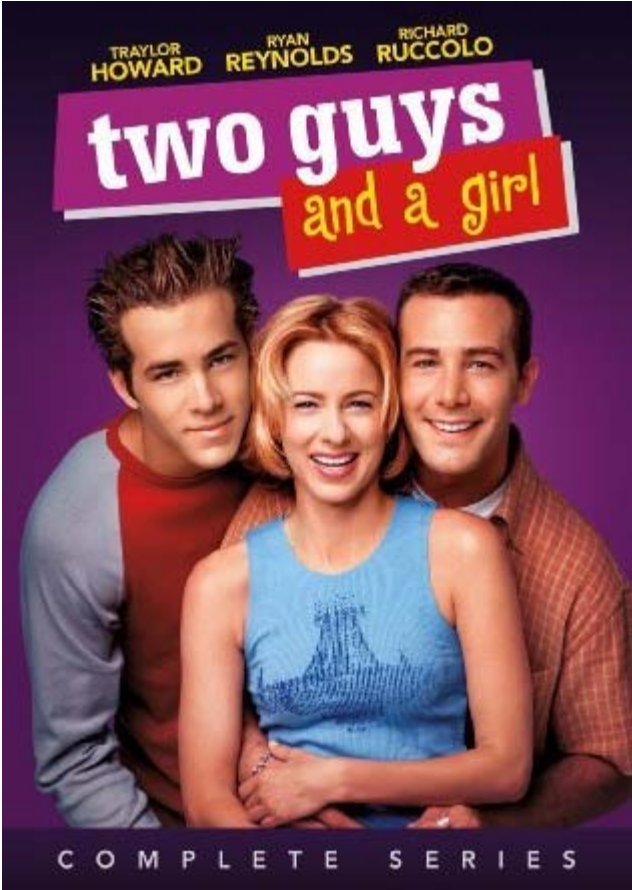
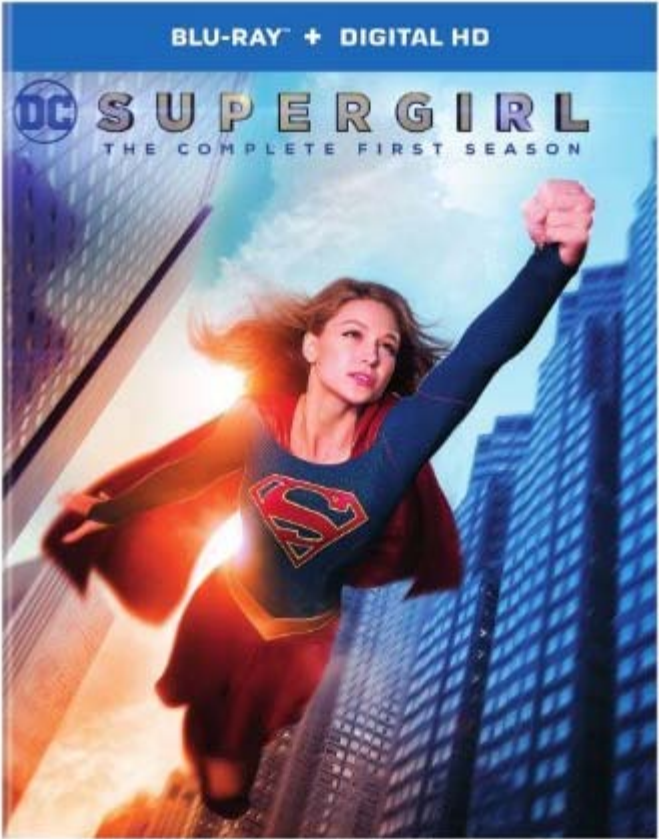


A TOUCH OF ZEN (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion Collection)

THE NEW WORLD (\$39.95 BluRay; Criterion Collection)

When I saw *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* for the first time, it was as pure joy for me, a thunderbolt out of the blue like *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* and precious few other movies. Of course, it was in debt to earlier great films (like *Raiders*) and it's been a pleasure to be schooled in the wuxia genre of martial arts movies. Surely at the top of list of influential forebears is *A Touch Of Zen*, a terrific film that also features great performances, great action of almost unparalleled excitement and high drama. This Criterion edition features a newly restored print, some great background and the 180 minute version. It's essential cinema, which makes it sound like homework. It's also tremendous fun and Criterion does it proud.

Director Terrence Malick has gone from enigmatically unproductive to darn near prolific. With *To The Wonder* and *Knight Of Cups*, this ever-increasing rate of production has begun to seem...unhelpful. But as recently as *Tree Of Life*, he's been at the top of his game. Case in point: *The New World*. While acclaimed, it fell between the triumphant *The Thin Red Line* and the marvelous *Tree*. But like the best playwrights and increasingly the best directors, Malick has taken advantage of BluRay releases and special editions to refine his vision. Unlike Coppola and most others, his new director's cuts have proven to actually be improvements. I found this telling of the clash between immigrants and the native peoples to be gob-smackingly good when it first came out. But that theatrical release was already different and shorter from the cut that appeared at film festivals. And then came a genuinely new draft with the Special Edition that fell somewhere in between. Happily, Criterion offers all three versions on this disc. Start with the final one that Malick approves of because it's a stunner, replete with his usual Kubrickian skill at combining visuals and music to overwhelming effect.

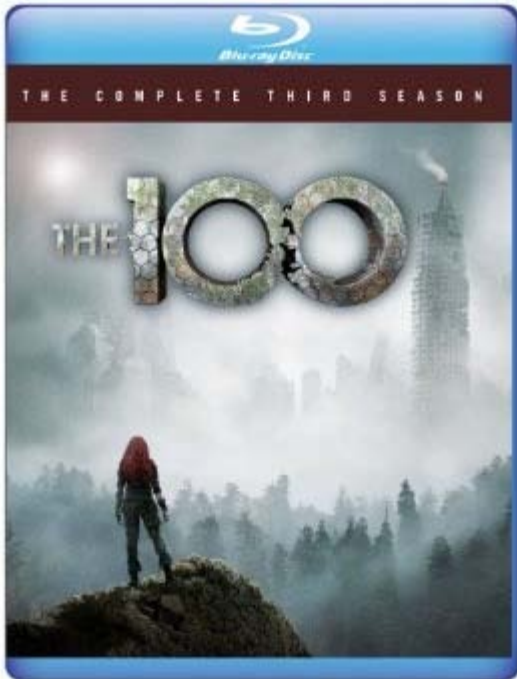


BLU-RAY™ + DIGITAL HD™

THE MAGICIANS

SEASON ONE

Syfy





- SUPERGIRL: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON** (\$54.97 BluRay; Warner Home Video)
- TWO GUYS AND A GIRL: THE COMPLETE SERIES** (\$79.97 DVD; Shout! Factory)
- THE MAGICIANS SEASON 1** (\$44.98 BluRay; Universal Studios Home Entertainment)
- THE 100 COMPLETE THIRD SEASON** (\$39.98 BluRay; Warner Archive Collection)
- PERSON OF INTEREST: FIFTH AND FINAL SEASON** (\$44.98 BluRay; Warner Home Video)

Supergirl hasn't even begun yet. Sure, you've got season one in your hot little hands. But it's switching from CBS to the CW and that will probably be to the show's benefit. They never quite found the right tone and being nestled amongst the younger shows of that weblet can only encourage Supergirl to stamp itself on a character that has been around for decades but never really had a defining pop cultural version a la Christopher Reeves in Superman. At the very least, they can do a cross-over episode with Crazy Ex-Girlfriend and let Jeremy Jordan sing!

Two Girls and A Girl (And a Pizza Place, but apparently we're supposed to forget about that) went four seasons and 81 episodes without ever coming even close to finding an identity, so *Supergirl* shouldn't feel bad if it takes them two years. Best remembered for launching Ryan Reynolds, it also gave a key early break to Nathan Fillion, not to mention Traylor Howard, who went on to be Monk's second yet lesser sidekick. Other than that...well, it really is pretty anonymous comedy, generic and forgettable yet passable entertainment if you're a huge fan of any of the actors or are flipping the channels and want to be diverted for a few minutes.

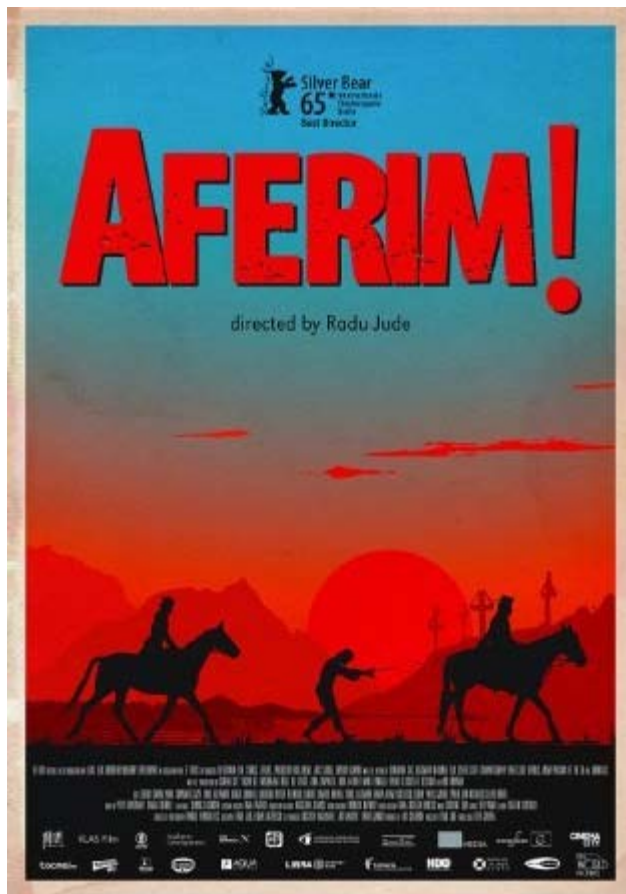
The Magicians has just begun its run. Based on the novels of Lev Grossman, I have hopes for it. Not high hopes exactly. But the books initially were so excited by their twist: what if you really were a teenager who suddenly found out the fantasy world of your favorite books were real? Wouldn't you curse and want to have sex with magical creatures and basically behave like unruly teens often do, but with wands? The first book

didn't really transcend the naughty appeal of watching a Harry Potter-like character take the piss out of that conceit. But by the third book, Grossman dug deeper -- if you were given access to a fantasy world a la Narnia as a child and then denied entry once you hit adulthood, well that might really and truly mess you up. Here's hoping the series can accomplish a similar trajectory.

The 100 is in the middle of its run and the show about young folk stranded to die on a dystopian earth has catapulted into genuine cult hit thanks to a similar tactic. They came up with a high concept show but then took seriously the ramifications of kill or be killed and how that should impact real people. Despite a poorly thought out culling of some key characters, the show could bid for real greatness in its fourth season. Catch up.

As for the just concluded *Person Of Interest*, it gets a little tricky. The show worked best as a procedural, letting each week's paranoid conspiracy/adventure play out with a beginning and middle and end, anchored by Michael Emerson's compelling billionaire. But everyone in TV land is convinced that only shows with arcs and complicated storylines are "real" art so they got more and more and more entangled in their own crazy super-plot. But THEN the show was told they were cancelled and needed to wind it up. And that gave them focus. Instead of spinning an increasingly absurd plot a la *Orphan Black*, they came up with an end game and barreled towards it. Sometimes, you do the wrong thing and it pays off anyway. Hmm, much like developing an all-powerful artificial intelligence that starts to develop a mind of its own....





GREEN ROOM (\$24.99 BluRay; Lionsgate)

AFERIM! (\$34.95 BluRay; Big World Pictures)

The death of Anton Yelchin is tragic and here's one more reminder. He stars in *Green Room*, this down and dirty little B movie about a punk band who are hunted down by neo-Nazi skinheads after witnessing a murder. (And they thought critics were tough.) Yelchin is with the band, Patrick Stewart is with the thugs and the movie is a genuine pleasure: visceral, exciting, frightening and yet anchored by performances by the two leads and the rest of the cast to make the horrific situation even more unnerving.

Aferim! is surely far afield from *Green Room*. *Aferim!* is a Romanian film nominated for the Best Foreign Film Oscar by its country. Perhaps because it doesn't match the template of most recent Romanian critical darlings it was overlooked. (It's a period film and lacks many other hallmarks of what we think of when we speak about Romanian cinema.) And yet, this story is about a "cop" in the 1800s hired to hunt down a gypsy slave who ran away after having an affair with the wife of his "owner." (I could also put "gypsy" in quotes since this dismissive term should really be Romany. Slaves aren't known for being given polite names by their brutal captors, however.) It's harsh, plays like an old school Western (sort of) and features so much suspicion and hatred of the "other" (the Romany are just the start) that ultimately it does have a little more in common with *Green Room* after all. Both films are vastly entertaining and make much out of fear and anger that fuels daily life in a world that seems unfair, especially to the once-powerful who resent when the world tries to be a little fair to the people they once kept underfoot. Neither film made much of an impression at the box office and both are worth your time, though perhaps only Quentin Tarantino and hardcore cineastes will watch both. If either is in a genre that appeals, jump.





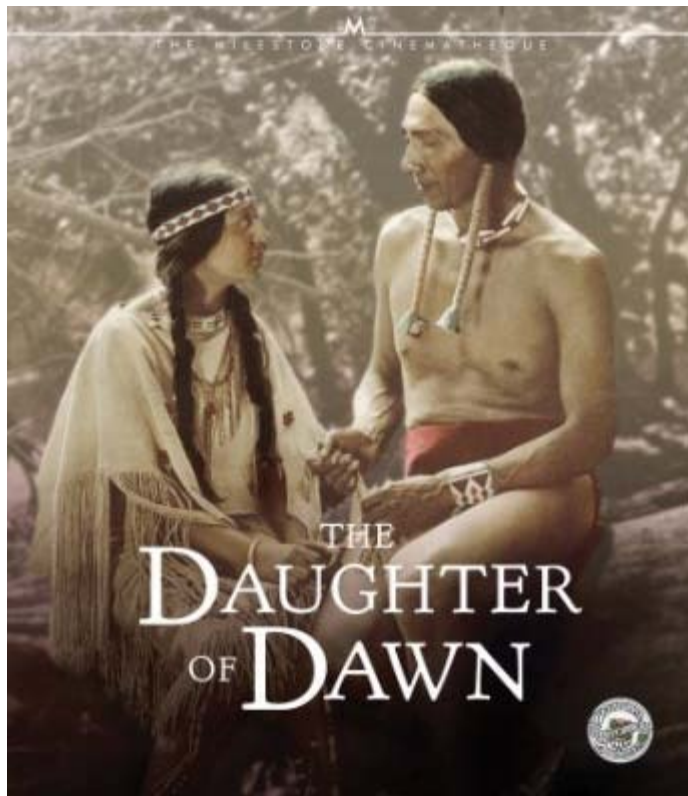
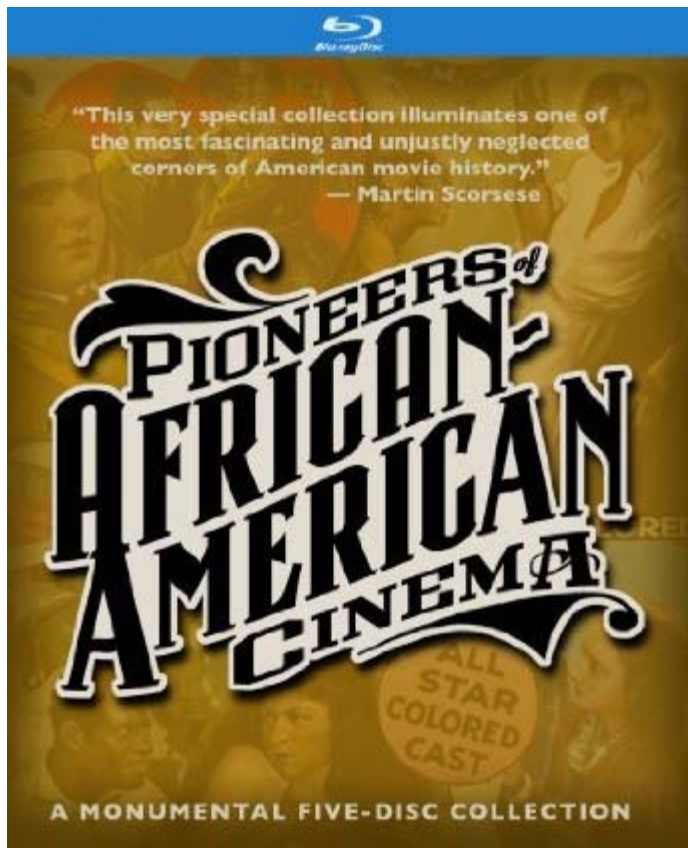
VERA SETS 1-5 (\$149.99 DVD; Acorn Media)

VERA SET 6 (\$59.99; Acorn Media)

JACK IRISH SEASON 1 (\$39.99 BluRay; Acorn Media)

Does the UK feature ANY Detective Chief Inspectors who aren't a mess in their personal life but brilliant and their jobs? Brenda Blethyn stars as Vera Stanhope, who fits that mold to a t. Happily, the show is based on an ongoing series of novels by the excellent writer Ann Cleeves. That gives Vera (and *Vera*) more depth and specificity than usual from TV. Each season contains four feature length mysteries and to date each of the six novels has been adapted. (Cleeves will surely write more.) I still miss her first sidekick (has a later sidekick ever improved on the original?) but Kenny Doughty is doing fine work in the stead of David Leon. Cush Jumbo should be used more, but this is Blethyn's show and she does wonderful work here. This isn't a classic, but it's solid meat and potatoes crime drama of the character-based sort the British do so well.

Very similarly, Australia has on tap the show *Jack Irish*, about a lawyer turned private investigator and debt collector. With that trajectory, obviously Jack Irish is seeing his life go in the wrong direction. Guy Pearce embodied the character created by Peter Temple with unshaven, unhappy poise. Burdened by the unsolved murder of his wife, Irish is a mess, living in Melbourne and getting by with jaunts to the race track, the pub and a woodworking shop (shades of Det. Freamon on *The Wire*). In three movies and now one season of six episodes, Irish invariably takes on a seemingly minor case that snowballs into something more serious. But Pearce makes the formula work and it's certainly one of the best crime shows out of Australia.



PIONEERS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CINEMA (\$99.95 BluRay; Kino Lorber)

THE DAUGHTER OF DAWN (\$34.95 BluRay; Milestone Films)

I'm worried about making these two releases sound important and educational. Both preserve nearly lost glimpses of cinematic history featuring oft-ignored or belittled minorities. *The Daughter Of Dawn* is a

surprisingly solid silent film shot in Oklahoma and featuring an all Kiowa and Comanche cast of actors. The print is solid given its 1920 origins, the 80 minute story fine and the glimpse into a vanished way of life is palpable. The copious extras give context and pleasure to everything you see, including interviews with descendants of people who appeared in the film and see it for the first time. Even more impressive is the sprawling five disc boxed set *Pioneers Of African American Cinema*. No wonder Martin Scorsese is proudly touting this set with a quote on the front of it: this is an historic release. Yes, it's important and scholarly and worthy of praise. But with a dozen feature length films and more than 20 shorts and fragments, just a small sampling makes clear that it's damn entertaining. Paul Robeson is just one of the many notable names appearing in or contributing to the wide range of movies, including melodramas, westerns, comedies, musicals and more. Unlike some B movie offerings with all black casts made purely for profit by disinterested studios (the awful *Harlem Rides The Range* springs to mind), these are passionate artistic efforts made by artists who sacrificed a great deal to tell these stories, often zeroing in on race issues naturally ignored by Hollywood. It'll take weeks to really get a handle on everything here, but for all its landmark status it's a pleasure to report that your first real response will simply be pleasure.

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