



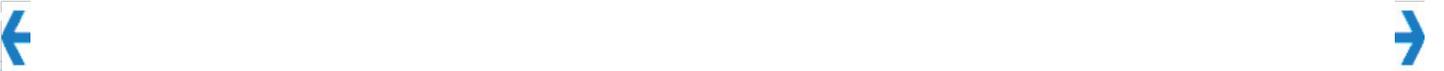
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Michael Giltz

Freelance writer and raconteur
Posted: November 10, 2010 07:58 PM

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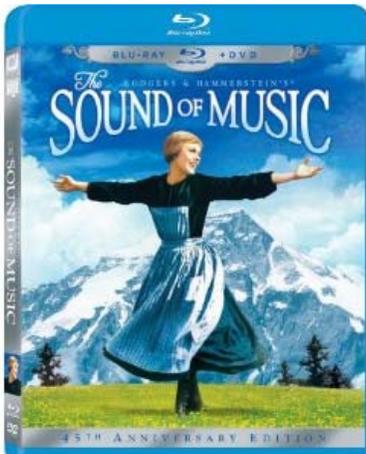
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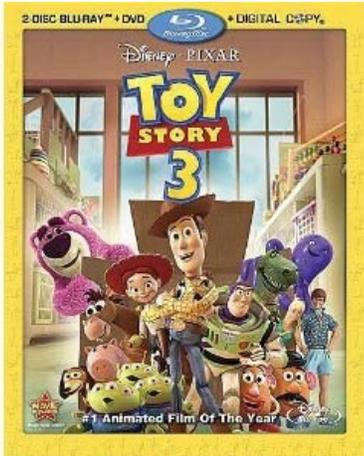


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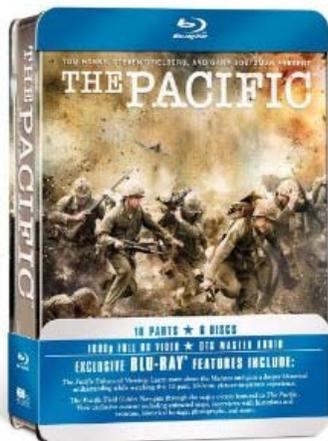
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THE SOUND OF MUSIC 45TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION BLURAY (\$34.99; FOX) -- I've seen *The Sound Of Music* quite a few times. It's the first film I remember seeing in a movie theater and then of course I've seen it on TV and DVD. Still, my jaw DROPPED when I saw how stunning this new transfer is on BluRay. Really, I don't get all hung up on technical specifications and 7.1 remixed sound and the like. I just watch the movies and TV shows and tell you which ones I liked. But this one is a stunner. Argue all you want about it being too sentimental or sweet. But when every single song in a musical is memorable, I can't imagine what your complaint would be. Loads of extras including some previewed on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. By the way, I love that Oprah brought together the entire cast of the family (as well as the next generation of Von Trapp family singers) but where the heck was Rolfe (actor Daniel Truhitte)? Well worth upgrading to BluRay.



TOY STORY 3 (\$45.99; Disney) -- Pixar's amazing hitting streak continues with one of the best films of the year and certainly one of the most satisfying trilogies of all time. *TS3* starts a little slow and I feared it was repeating itself. But the set pieces were great, Buzz speaking Spanish was inspired and then it really kicked in. The scene of the toys facing death together hand in hand was unexpectedly moving and the finale was heart-tugging even if it was drawn-out just a tad. Adults were amusingly competitive about this movie. If they'd seen it, I would ask, "Did you cry?" And they leaped at me. Of course they cried! Aren't they human beings? Don't they have feelings? A rock would have cried! They cried earlier than I did! (My friend Sam wins that contest for tearing up during a "home movie" that showed Andy measuring the height of Buzz Lightyear against a wall and making a mark, just like his own son did years ago when the first movie came out. Heck, I teared up just hearing him tell me about that.) For the love of God, please don't make a *TS4*. The story is finished and beautifully so. On sale, you can get the regular DVD for \$15. Or you can get this BluRay edition for \$25 which has loads of extras, the BluRay and the regular DVD version and a digital copy.



THE PACIFIC (\$99.98 BluRay or \$79.98 regular DVD; HBO) -- For some reason, I was resistant at first to this new miniseries overseen by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, who had done such a good job on *Band Of Brothers*. I'd seen it all before, hadn't I? The first few episodes went by and then quietly, forcefully I was hooked. Hooked by three terrific actors who anchor the film: Jon Seda as a Medal of Honor winner who is drawn inexorably back into battle even after falling in love, James Badge Dale as an aspiring writer who has a mental breakdown, and especially Joseph Mazello as an almost innocent who is brutalized by battle to the point where we fear for his soul, fear like his father does that this young man

PHOTOS: Guess Whose Sister
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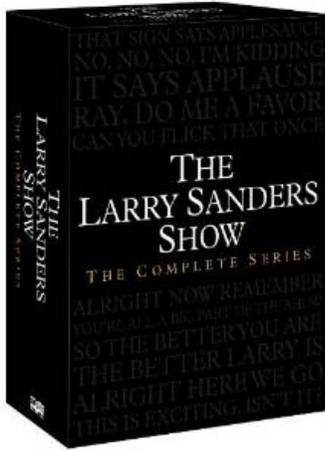
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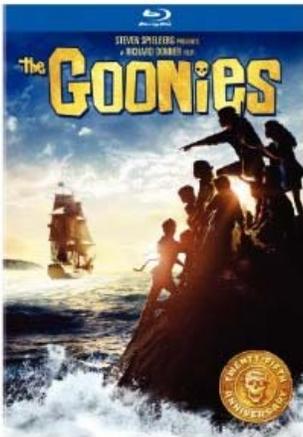
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Queen's Royal Wedding
Rift

will come home with eyes deadened to the world. We see soldiers on leave in Australia, hospitals with crude mental wards, and war bond rallies on the home front. But above all we experience the endless, trudging, horribly violent battles. By the end, I was thoroughly engrossed and wondered how the damn thing would turn out. A lovely tin case sets just the right tone for a set filled with informative extras and real-life heroes that give you hours of detail to explore. Two complaints: the menu for accessing episodes is poorly done and the steps you have to jump through to turn subtitles on and off is absurd. Sometimes you just want to confirm a bit of dialogue that's obscured and it shouldn't be such a bother to do so.



THE LARRY SANDERS SHOW: THE COMPLETE SERIES (\$149.99; Shout) -- Very few actors appear in one great comedy, much less two. But now we can appreciate Garry Shandling's remarkable achievements even better thanks to Shout's two boxed sets. One of course is his witty deconstruction of the sitcom called *It's Garry Shandling's Show* (\$159.99; Shout). The other is his corrosive deconstruction of the talk show. Shandling had a shot at his own talk show, but perversely chose to deliver what was in essence a talk show AND a behind the scenes work place comedy sending up the egos and frustrations of the format. The entire cast is brilliant and the use of actors mercilessly spoofing or tearing down their public image is tremendously fun. But at the heart there's Shandling, Jeffrey Tambor as his insecure sidekick and Rip Torn as the no B.S. producer. The credits are filled with talented actors, writers and directors who went on to substantial careers (like Judd Apatow, Todd Holland and Mary Lynn Rajs kub, to name a few). You get all six seasons and solid extras in a 17 disc set that's neatly packaged. The image quality won't blow you away but the comedy quality will.



THE GOONIES 25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION (\$49.99 BluRay and \$39.99 regular DVD; Warner Bros.) -- This kiddie flick about a group of friends who discover a treasure map and hope to find gold so they can keep their families from being evicted was a decent hit in 1985, grossing \$61 million. Then it came out on VHS and turned into a phenomenon. Kids just love this movie and watch it over and over again, even though the story is paper-thin, the scares mild (including a lovable ogre) and every set looks very much like a movie set or an amusement park ride, not an actual place where the gang is in danger. Think Scooby-Doo without the deep plotting. It helps that the roles were very well cast; future stars appearing here include Josh Brolin, Corey Feldman, Martha Plimpton and Sean Astin. This new edition includes a reprint of a UK article charting Where Are They Now, a very nice booklet and even a Goonies board game (which I didn't play). Oh and the movie looks very good on BluRay, which is nice since

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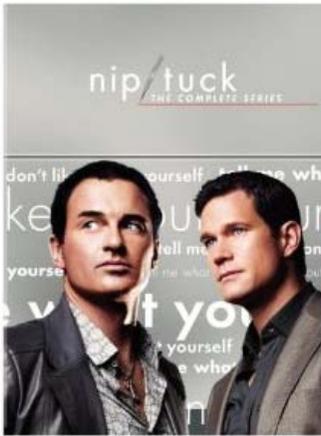
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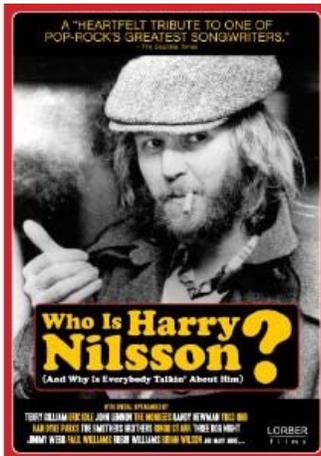
apparently your kids are going to be playing it over and over and over again.



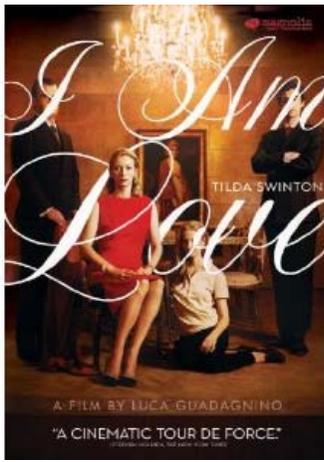
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NIP/TUCK THE COMPLETE SERIES (\$199.98; Warner Bros.) -- Creator Ryan Murphy went on to deliver *Glee*, but he first sprang to prominence with this outrageous, button-pushing prime time soap. If *nip/tuck* has a failing, it's that the show became over the top just for the sake of over the top. The first few years -- even with a serial killer dominating season three -- had some basis in reality. Then it spun off into space. But the show was always fun throughout its six seasons and the cavalcade of guest stars looking to get work done is impressive and keeps your interest, even when the reboot of the series took it to LA and made a declining show lose all impact. Dylan Walsh and Julian McMahon dug into their roles with relish all the way through. This boxed set just offers the previous boxed sets of all the seasons in one silvery box. No new extras or packaging, just the sets they've already put out in a new cardboard case. On sale, it's a decent discount compared to buying them individually. Anyone who bought the sets one season at a time won't need to buy it again. And anyone who wants to dive in can start here.



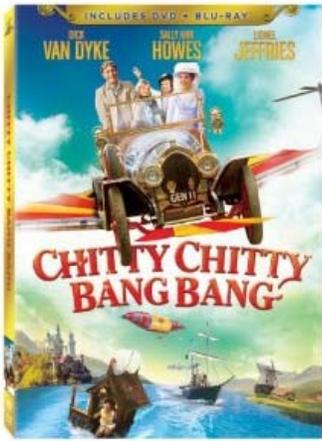
WHO IS HARRY NILSSON (AND WHY IS EVERYBODY TALKING ABOUT HIM?) (\$29.95; Lorber) -- A solid documentary loaded with extras about the artist the Beatles always singled out in their heyday as a musical favorite. Indeed, Nilsson would be Ringo's best man, record with John and otherwise come as close as Billy Preston and Yoko Ono and George Martin to the coveted title of honorary Beatle. He was also a self-destructive man who willfully left behind people who had supported him when they didn't serve his purpose anymore, fairly ignored a first wife and son (who are quite open-hearted towards him) and was bollocks at career management. But God could he sing! And what a talented songwriter as well. Five or six albums of his are classics, or damn near. (I'd recommend *A Little Touch Of Schmilsson In The Night* if you love standards, *Nilsson Sings Newman* if you're a Randy Newman fan, *Nilsson Schmilsson* for his pop high point or *Aerial Pandemonium Ballet* and *Harry* for his own excellent tunes.) If you're already a fan, the film illuminates why he never achieved the huge fame and burned out. If you're not a fan, the film will unquestionably get you to check out his music. Because you shouldn't be talking about him -- you should be listening to him.



I AM LOVE (\$26.98; Magnolia) -- *I Am Love* is a lush, Visconti-like Italian drama starring Tilda Swinton as the wife of a powerful businessman who takes over the family empire from the aging patriarch but must share duties with his less cynical, noblesse oblige of a son. Director Luca Guadagnino has made a string of films but I think this is the first one of his I've seen. On a technical level, it is masterful. Beautifully shot images, a cast that glides through their world like royalty, with sound and image and production design and editing all working in concert to tell the story. Edoardo (a handsome Flavio Parenti) is the son with no interest for business. But when he's dragooned into the role, he becomes increasingly concerned with his father's desire to merge and grow and place economics ahead of the workers, fearing it is not what his grandfather would want and that the family is losing their soul. His mother (Swinton) meanwhile, begins a passionate affair with the chef Edoardo has befriended and plans to open an airy, mountain-top restaurant with as soon as the permits clear. It's another example of art (the chef has high standards and doesn't want to soil his cooking with crowds of people) trumping commerce. There's also a sister who falls in love with a woman but keeps it secret from the father because he wouldn't understand. It all builds to a gripping, operatic finale that is both silly (as finales in operas often are, with eight things happening at once) and quite moving. I was never bored, but the film is so arid and intellectual and removed, I felt I didn't really know the people I was watching. Certainly scene after scene is wonderful, the way the director uses every technique at his command to tell the story. I simply won't know where I stand until another viewing. And that itself is a compliment, since most movies aren't worth watching once.



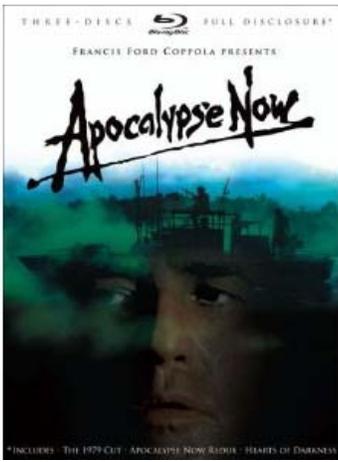
WOLVERINE AND THE X-MEN: THE COMPLETE SERIES (\$44.98 BluRay or \$29.98 regular DVD; Lionsgate) -- Very well received by fans, this iteration of the X-Men franchise has solid animation and very good voice actors with decent plots that hold true to the X-Men mythology. The 26 episodes come with 29 audio commentary tracks and two brief making-of pieces. On BluRay, they look pretty darn good.



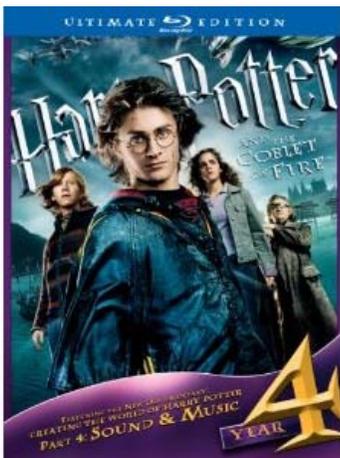
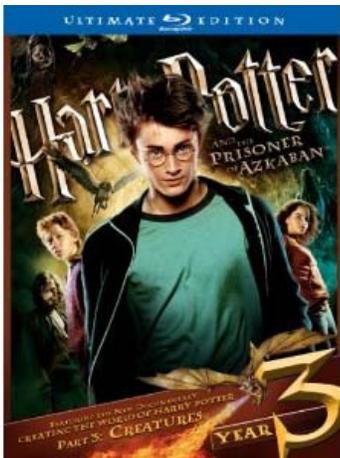
CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG (\$34.99 BluRay; MGM) -- I could just refer to this as the beloved childhood classic, but the truth is that *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* is really quite awful. Unless your kids are ten or younger, they're likely to be bored by this tepid adventure that crossed the gadgets of James Bond with the songs of Disney's the Sherman Brothers (not their best work) and came up with...nothing. Bland as can be, with only the title song memorable and even that's just a ditty. Yes, I enjoyed it when I was very young -- which makes it all the sadder to realize how bad it really is now. Decent extras include demos of the songs by the sibling Shermans, star Dick Van Dyke looking back and promo pieces from the period.



WINNEBAGO MAN (\$29.95; Kino) -- A viral video on YouTube was dubbed "The Angriest Man Alive" and showed Jack Rebney melting down and ripping into his crew while filming a local commercial for motor homes. Filmmaker Ben Steinbauer wondered if Rebney really was that angry or had just had a bad day. And did the guy know he was famous in a weird sort of way? Rebney decided to track him down. This documentary about what happened (which takes the usual, *Catfish*-like twists) has the makings of a very good short. Unfortunately, it's stretched out to feature film length and ultimately outstays its presence. Extras include, naturally, the Winnebago sales videos along with 25 minutes of footage that didn't make it online.

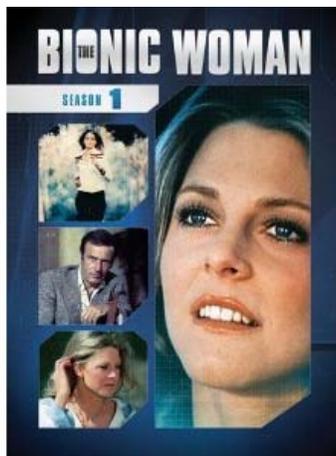


APOCALYPSE NOW FULL DISCLOSURE (\$59.99 BluRay; Paramount) -- Sometimes filmmakers are their own worst enemies. At one point, director Francis Ford Coppola was so enamored with his new cut of *Apocalypse Now* that he wanted the extended edition to become the de facto version of the film, with the original cut not even available. Now it wouldn't matter if his new version were the greatest movie in the history of the world, for posterity's sake the original cut of important films like this should always be available. Luckily, saner minds prevailed and now we've got this smashing BluRay edition which includes the landmark original film, Coppola's new cut and loads of bonus material including -- by the way -- *Hearts Of Darkness*, the brilliant documentary film about the making of the movie that is a gem in its own right. Needless to say, the film looks sensational. My neighbors are getting tired of the helicopter scene, but I'm not.

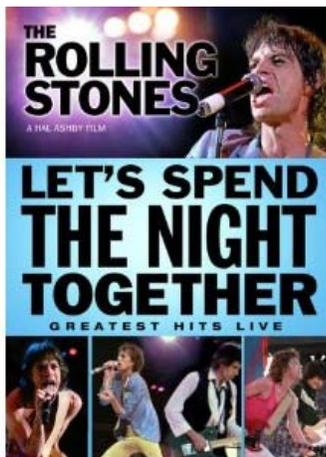


HARRY POTTER 3 AND 4 ULTIMATE BLURAY EDITIONS (\$49.99 BluRay and \$39.99 regular DVD; Warner Bros.) -- Like an adult downing one too many butterbeers, these Ultimate Editions are absolutely brimming with extras. Unlike the Ultimate versions of part one and two, you get the theatrical versions of the movie, not the versions shown on cable and TV with extra scenes. (Those scenes can be found among the extras but there should be an option to show either version for the completists.) You get a nice hardcover photo album, character cards, numerous making of features highlighted by Part 4's

focus in one major documentary on creating the sound and score for the film, which is fascinating enough to send some kids on an unexpected career path. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* is still my favorite of the films. And they both look excellent, assuming you can find them among all the extras.



THE BIONIC WOMAN SEASON 1 (\$39.98; Universal) -- Fans who can't wait for the boxed set of *The Six Million Dollar Man* coming out at the end of the month from Time-Life can occupy themselves with this season of the spin-off series. To be honest, I always preferred the bionic woman. I never worried about Steve Austin but believed Jaime Sommers could actually get hurt or die. Sexism? No, I think it was Wagner's performance, which actually garnered an Emmy -- an almost unheard of event for a comic book series of this sort. (Bill Bixby, for example, was never even nominated for his widely praised work on *The Incredible Hulk*.) The set includes five cross-over episodes (but not the later TV movie reunions), so you get the whole saga from the start.

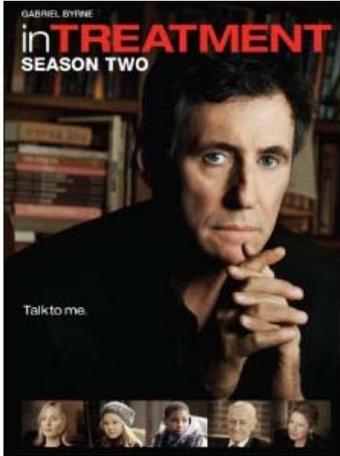


LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER (\$14.98; Lionsgate) -- The title card might surprise some Stones fans: the name of director Hal Ashby is just about as big as the Rolling Stones. But as Peter Biskind convincingly made the case in his book *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, Ashby was the greatest, most consistent director of the Seventies with one unique gem after another. So it's no surprise that with Ashby directing and the great Caleb Deschanel (along with Gerald Feil) as the DP, you won't be surprised that the movie looks great and unlike so many concert films actually finds a good angle during a song (like focusing on Keith Richards) and sticks with it rather than the usual cut-cut-cutting that goes on to engender "excitement." Still, this is a stadium show with all the bombast that entails, Ashby often wanders offstage to see what's going on behind the scenes (nothing very interesting) and the Stones are in cruise control rather than truly inspired. Serious fans only.



HIGHLANDER/HIGHLANDER 2 (\$19.99 each BluRay; Lionsgate) -- I was really really jazzed by the

original *Highlander* film though not in my wildest imagination did I think this nifty B movie would spin off multiple sequels, not one but two TV series plus an animated series, novels, comic books and on and on. This edition is Russell Mulcahy's director cut (about five minutes longer than the original). As always I much prefer the original theatrical version be included as well; that is, after all, what launched all this craziness. Christopher Lambert (who was a good Tarzan in *Greystoke*) has the role of his life as Connor MacLeod, one of the Immortals. That sounds great until you find out you're not literally immortal and -- more to the point - "there can be only one" so other hard-to-kill Immortals are gunning for you. Good pulpy fun. The sequel is out too but I could never be bothered with all the other spin-offs so why start now? The image quality is nothing special and the extras are mild. If you don't own it, this is ok. If you do, no need to upgrade.



IN TREATMENT SEASON TWO (\$59.98; HBO) -- It must suck being a psychotherapist. You don't get to always choose your patients (you need the work, after all) and surely sometimes you get stuck with boring people whose problems just don't interest you. That's how it feels during season two when Gabriel Byrne is saddled with people needing the talking cure that you just wish would shut up. Season Three airing now happily looks more promising with at least two good storylines.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of [Showbiz Sandbox](#), a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's [available free on iTunes](#). Visit [Michael Giltz at his website](#) and his [daily blog](#). Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called [Popsurfing](#) and also [available for free on iTunes](#). Link to him on [Netflix](#) and gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews.

NOTE: Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs to consider for review. He typically does not guarantee coverage and invariably receives far more screeners and DVDs than he can cover each week. Also, Michael Giltz freelances as a writer of DVD copy (the text that appears on the back of DVDs) for some titles released by IFC and other subsidiaries of MPI. It helps pay the rent, but does not obligate him in any way to speak positively or negatively of their titles.

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