

3/16/04

# DVDs THIS WEEK

By Michael Giltz



Benicio Del Toro was nominated for an Oscar for his performance as a born-again ex-con in "21 Grams."

## "21 GRAMS"

Like director **Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's** previous work, "Amores Perros," "21 Grams" (\$26.98, Universal) is a puzzle. Figure out how all the separate story lines of an ex-con, a professor and a young mother are connected and you're done. It's clever, well-acted (thanks to **Sean Penn, Naomi Watts** and **Benicio Del Toro**) and punishingly serious, but once you've solved the puzzle the film loses interest.

## "THE CAT IN THE HAT"

Watch this movie (\$26.98, Universal) and watch your kids' brains turn to mush while destroying the memory of a beloved story at the same time. Extras include 16 deleted scenes — but there's hardly a scene in the film that didn't deserve to be deleted in the first place. Read the book!

## "THE FLINTSTONES": COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

## "SCOOBY-DOO": COMPLETE FIRST AND SECOND SEASONS

Until "The Simpsons" came along, Fred and Wilma Flintstone were the head of TV's most successful animated family. Essentially, "The Flintstones" is a stone-age retread of "The Honeymooners." "Scooby-Doo" is even more enduring (kids love Scooby), but the series (\$64.92 each, Warner Bros.) is a lot tougher for adults to endure. Those meddling kids!

## "KUNG FU": COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

Just as **Keith Carradine** triumphs in the new HBO western "Deadwood," here comes David Carradine's best-known work, "Kung Fu" (\$39.98, Warner Bros.). This odd series about Caine, a traveling Buddhist monk who could kick ass, was a hit in 1972. Its creators went out of their way to create "art," using odd camera angles, cutting to scenes of nature (close-ups of leaves are a big motif) and interrupting action scenes with flashbacks to the poetic ramblings of Caine's mentor. Compellingly strange, it would never get on the air today.

### Also out:

"**Scenes From a Marriage**" (\$49.95, Criterion) which presents both the theatrical version and the original Swedish miniseries cut of **Ingmar Bergman's** classic because Criterion always does exactly what film buffs would hope for; "**Dave Gahan: Live Monsters**" (\$19.99, Mute), directed by Anton Corbijn, is a solo concert in Paris by the driving force of Depeche Mode; "**The Commitments Collectors Edition**" (\$26.98, Fox) is bursting with extras about this 1991 fan favorite; Cate Blanchett is so good she can get people to take even a Joel Schumacher film seriously, in this case "**Veronica Guerin**" (\$29.99, Touchstone); "**Winnie the Pooh: Springtime With Roo**" (\$29.99, Disney) has an Easter theme, though adults will still miss the voice of Sebastian Cabot; "**AbFab Series 5**" (\$34.98, BBC America) is a definite step up from the sad Series 4, though still not quite up to the standards of the scandalous first episodes; "**Prime Suspect 2 and 3**" (\$29.98 each, HBO) are out to remind us of how sensational Helen Mirren and this classic show were.

### Coming out next Tuesday:

Robert Downey Jr.'s overlooked work in "**The Singing Detective**," TV's scandalous, short-lived "**Richard Pryor Show**," and "**Splash**."