

This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ

Brokeback Mountain

★★★★

Universal, \$29.99



BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN: Gyllenhaal and Ledger.

A GENUINE classic, this is a subtle, moving drama about true love frustrated by time, circumstance and self-denial — "Brief Encounter" on horseback. The fine extras include the ironic "On Being a Cowboy," in which the screenwriters insist everyone got it wrong. Jack and Ennis were just sheep-herders.

The Mel Brooks Collection

★★★

Fox, \$99.98

NO "The Producers" and no "Spaceballs." But you do get eight movies, including 1974's "Blazing Saddles," 1981's "History of the World Part I" (where the funniest moment is still the previews for the never-made sequel) and his masterpiece, 1974's "Young Frankenstein." Most have little or no extras, but you'll be laughing too much to care.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Special Edition

★★½

Disney, \$34.99



JUST good enough to make you wish it was better. The quiet early stages capture the modest charm of C.S. Lewis' best, especially the interplay between Lucy and Mr. Tumnus the faun. But the battle scenes are way overblown. Extras include 10 hours of features on how they did it.

9 to 5

★★★

Fox, \$19.98

KIND of cheap-looking and a plot that seems more like a series of skits than a story line, but it's all so darn good-natured you can't help loving it. Dabney Coleman is a great sexist pig of a boss, but the three gals (who all appear on the commentary track) are so good as a team it's hard to believe that Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin and Dolly Parton haven't worked together again.

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The Greatest Game Ever Played

★★★

Disney, \$29.99

A winning film directed by actor Bill Paxton. Shia LaBeouf stars in this true story about a poor lad who defies classism to compete in the U.S. Open against Harry Vardon, the British champion who had similar struggles. Intelligent and mostly free of sentimentality, the DVD has audio commentary by Paxton and Mark Frost, who wrote the original book.



"The Greatest Game Ever Played" is clearly above par.

The Merv Griffin Show: 40 of the Most Interesting People of Our Time

★★½

Alpha Home Ent., \$29.98

LONG before James Lipton learned to gush, Merv Griffin offered a show where stars were always his close friends and never heard a question they weren't expecting. Griffin includes about nine hours of footage, with voiceovers introducing clips from appearances by the likes of Orson Welles (who died hours after the taping), a young Tom Cruise, Richard Pryor, and more.

Pooh's Grand Adventure

★★★

Disney, \$29.99

HERE'S a DVD where the extras outshine the main feature. "Pooh's Grand Adventure" is the OK film about the day Christopher Robin goes to school. But the gem is the 25-minute short included as a bonus, the Oscar-winning "Pooh and the Blustery Day" with narration by Sebastian Cabot. Delightful.



Pooh's cool!

The Long Good Friday Special Edition

★★★½

Anchor Bay, \$19.98

BOB Hoskins became a star as a violent British gangster who finds betrayal everywhere in this 1979 classic. Helen Mirren and Pierce Brosnan co-star, but it's Hoskins' film all the way. Extras include director commentary, making-of film and a Cockney slang index.

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Moonstruck: Deluxe Edition

★★★½

MGM, \$19.94

FINALLY, a full "Moon!" An early DVD release, this delightful 1987 romantic comedy was put out in a cropped version that mutilated director Norman Jewison's expansive valentine to New York City and the dopey love between a widow (Oscar winner Cher) and the loony fella (Nicolas Cage) who wins her heart. It's now restored to widescreen with new extras that include commentary with Jewison and screenwriter John Patrick Shanley, as well as a food guide to Little Italy.

The Complete Mr. Arkadin

★★★½

Criterion, \$49.95

PERHAPS no Orson Welles film was butchered as lavishly as this pulpy tale of international intrigue. Criterion includes not one, not two but three very different versions of this 1955 movie, once considered Welles' best. The many extras include scholarly commentary, an interview with actor-biographer Simon Callow, three episodes of Orson Welles from the radio as Arkadin. play that inspired it and the complete novelization that Welles may or may not have written.



Orson Welles as Arkadin.

Mrs. Henderson Presents

★★

Weinstein Co., \$28.95

NEVER underestimate the Weinstens. If they can score Judi Dench an Oscar nomination for this trifle, they can do darn near anything. Dench and Bob Hoskins partner during WWII on a West End spectacle featuring girls in nude tableaux. To get around the censors, the ladies can't move — but they still give the lads a quick thrill. They'd certainly enjoy it more than this pallid tale, which wouldn't even shock a grandmother.

Also out: Cillian Murphy, delectable as a cross-dresser in "Breakfast on Pluto" (Sony, \$24.95); the Democratic Party's tear-jerker docu "One Bright Shining Moment: The Forgotten Summer of George McGovern" (First Run Features, \$29.95); a look at the jazz legend in "Herbie Hancock: Possibilities" (Magnolia, \$26.98).

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