

This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ

**The Manchurian Candidate** ★★★★★

MGM, \$14.95

Director Jonathan Demme's ill-advised remake comes out July 30. He better hope few people watch director John Frankenheimer's crackerjack 1962 original, in which Laurence Harvey is a Korean vet brainwashed into assassinating a presidential candidate. It's a career peak for everyone, including Frank Sinatra (above) and Angela Lansbury. So-so extras include an audio commentary.

The Barbarian Invasions★★★★½
Miramax, \$29.99

"The Barbarian Invasions" is a sequel that surpasses the original. "Barbarian" is the Oscar-winning follow-up to writer-director Denys Arcand's 1986 drama "The Decline of the American Empire," in which liberal Canadians gleefully mock the U.S. Now older and wiser, the friends come together when one of them is dying to share a final goodbye.

The Dreamers★
Fox, \$29.98

Director Bernardo Bertolucci's inept look at three young people frolicking during the 1968 Paris riots is simply not explicit enough. There's lots of nudity, but Bertolucci is too skittish to show gay sex or the threesome the entire film is heading toward. And Michael Pitt, who plays the innocent American, is too debauched an actor for us to believe he could ever be "corrupted" by anyone.

On Valentine's Day / 1918★★★ each
Image, \$19.99 each

Here are two small, intimate films by playwright and Oscar-

winner Horton Foote ("Tender Mercies") about life in a small Texas town. Foote's daughter Hallie is marvelous as a young woman based on his mother. She defies her wealthy parents to marry her true love in "On Valentine's Day" (1986) and deals with the horror of an influenza outbreak in "1918" (1985). Matthew Broderick co-stars, but Foote's quiet authority is front and center throughout.

Batman: The Animated Series Volume One★★★½
Warner Bros., \$49.98

Batman — the superhero without super powers — has been poorly served in movies and on TV. You've got the campy

"Batman" series from the '60s, those bland "Super Friends" cartoon shows from the '70s and Tim Burton's visually striking but creatively bankrupt movies in the '80s and '90s. Here's the exception: This 1992 animated series has a sensational art-deco look, terrific voices (including Mark Hamill as the Joker), great music and the willingness to treat the Dark Knight seriously. Top-notch.