

DVDs this week

By Michael Giltz

Monster's Ball (\$24.99; Lions Gate)/ Everything Put Together (\$24.98)

Anyone who saw HBO's "Introducing Dorothy Dandridge" already knew Halle Berry was a great actress, so her Oscar-winning performance in *Monster's Ball* was no surprise. Anyone smart enough to catch director Marc Foster's previous film, *Everything Put Together* — a Sundance drama about a couple facing the unexpected death of their baby — knew he was a talent, too. So the real surprise for me in what was clearly one of the best films of last year was an excellent Heath Ledger in a supporting turn as Billy Bob Thornton's son. For the first time, Ledger delivered on his hype and made me believe he's an actor of substance. I even believed (for a moment) that he was scruffy and plain looking. Now that's acting.



BERRY

Frank Herbert's Dune (\$26.98; Artisan)

David Lynch's feature film version of *Dune* was a hallucinogenic mess that even fans of the book had trouble following. This far more staid but effective TV version gets the details of the book right — even if it doesn't have the visionary oomph you'd hope for. Starring William Hurt and a decent Alec Newman as Paul Atreides, the miniseries was a huge hit for the SCI FI Channel, which is naturally making a sequel. The only problem? Author Frank Herbert's follow-ups quickly became pretentious, eco-philosophical tracts with nary a hint of the original's cogent power.

Black Hawk Down (\$27.96; Columbia TriStar)



'BLACKHAWK' SCENE

The best accomplishment of this stolid war film is that director Ridley Scott and his editors keep us brutally aware of exactly what's going on at all times. The soldiers themselves in that '93 mission to capture a Somali warlord must have been terribly confused, but Scott juggles dozens of participants — who we barely know anything about — and their respective positions relatively clear throughout. Unfortunately, that's all he does, since the men involved mostly remain ciphers. Starring Josh Hartnett and Ewan McGregor among others, not that you'd notice.

The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes Boxed Set (\$59.98; MPI)

Errol Flynn will always be Robin Hood. Christopher Reeve will always be Superman. Johnny Weissmuller will always be Tarzan. Right? Don't count on it. You may think an actor owns a role forever, but if Jeremy Brett can supplant Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes, then anything is possible. This boxed set gathers the first 13 episodes of Brett's triumph, which also feature David Burke as the ideal Watson. The picture image isn't ideal here, but everything else is and Baker Street Irregulars should pounce.

The Judy Garland Show: Legends/The Harvey Girls (\$19.98; Warner Bros.)/Ray Charles Live at Montreaux (\$29.98; Pioneer/\$24.98; Pioneer)

Buying the massive boxed set of "The Judy Garland Show" is a daunting task for most. But this one-disc set is a terrific compilation. It gathers solo turns from some of her biggest guests — Bobby Darin, Tony Bennett, Peggy Lee and so on — along with all of Garland's most memorable duets, including that stunner with Barbra Streisand. Those looking for a younger but no less potent Garland can pick up *The Harvey Girls*, a rather pokey musical with a few gems, including the rousing Oscar winning song "On the Atchison, Topeka & the Santa Fe." (God bless DVDs; you can jump right to it.) Another legend, Ray Charles, serves up a fine recent concert at the Montreaux Jazz Festival along with the real treat of hearing the *Genius* discs.



CHARLES