

DVDs THIS WEEK

By Michael Giltz



"CATCH ME IF YOU CAN"

In this witty film about con man Frank Abagnale Jr. (\$29.99, DreamWorks), **Leonardo DiCaprio** delivers the polished, seemingly effortless performance of a movie star that is key to the success of countless Hollywood projects but rarely recognized by critics or the Oscars. Thoroughly professional (in the best sense of the word) with a buoyant score by John Williams, a clever title sequence that immediately sets the right tone and fine supporting work by **Tom Hanks** and **Christopher Walken**. Sadly, director **Steven Spielberg** continues to avoid doing an audio commentary track.

THE JACK RYAN COLLECTION

Four movies featuring **Tom Clancy's** durable hero at a solid price (\$69.99, Paramount). Solid, that is, until you actually watch "Patriot Games" (1992), "Clear and Present Danger" (1994) and "The Sum of All Fears" (2002) again and remember that the only Jack Ryan movie worth watching at all was the enjoyable submarine flick "The Hunt for Red October" (1990), with **Alec Baldwin** and **Sean Connery**. Happily, it's available separately at \$19.99.

"THE EMPEROR'S CLUB"

"THE WAY HOME"

Here's a little secret: Critics hate sentimentality unless it comes with subtitles. "The Emperor's Club" (\$26.98, Universal) is **Kevin Kline's** rather bitter-sweet spin on "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," with the twist that the teacher doesn't always succeed in shaping the lives of his students for the better and they may not even care that he tried. Thoroughly conventional in its approach, the movie was seen as sentimental and generally dismissed. But "The Way Home" (\$29.99, Paramount) is a far more shamelessly heart-tugging movie about a little boy from the city who learns to love his deaf-mute (!) grandmother. If this were in English instead of Korean, it would have been pilloried.

JIMMY STEWART WESTERNS

A roundup of seven Jimmy Stewart westerns at bargain prices (\$14.95 each, Universal). Generally, you can't go wrong with Stewart in an oater. But the best of the bunch include 1939's "Destry Rides Again," which paired him oddly but successfully with **Marlene Dietrich** (you'll enjoy "Blazing Saddles" more if you watch this one first) and three collaborations between Stewart and director **Anthony Mann**, including "Bend of the River" (1952), "The Far Country" (1954) and my favorite, 1950's "Winchester '73." Their five films have deservedly grown in stature over the years and "Winchester" (with **Shelley Winters** and **Dan Duryea**) will show you why.

"ZATOICHI" Nos. 6, 7 & 8

If **Clint Eastwood** had decided those spaghetti westerns starring the Man With No Name were all he ever wanted to do, the result might have been a dozen or so movies akin to Zatoichi, the fun, long-running Japanese film series about a blind samurai (\$19.95 each, HVE). The latest releases — "Zatoichi and the Chest of Gold," "Zatoichi's Flashing Sword" and "Fight, Zatoichi, Fight," are all from 1964, all in color and all dependable. Check out the Independent Film Channel every Saturday morning at 8 and at 2 p.m. if you want to sample Zatoichi before buying.

ALSO OUT:

Sissy Spacek's Oscar-winning performance as country singer **Loretta Lynn** in "Coal Miner's Daughter" (\$14.98, Universal); "Babylon 5": The Complete Second Season (\$99.98, Warner Bros.), with **Bruce Boxleitner** joining as the commander and the series kicking into high gear; and a handful of minor **Bing Crosby** double features (\$14.98, Universal) with the best pairing **Billy Wilder's** "The Emperor Waltz," from 1948, with "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," from 1949.

OUT NEXT TUESDAY

The seventh-season boxed-set of "The X-Files," **Jerry Seinfeld's** documentary "Comedian," **David Attenborough's** fascinating wildlife series "The Life of Mammals," and two very different movies starring **Robert De Niro** — "Analyze That" and a deluxe edition of "The Mission."