

DVDs this week

By Michael Giltz

Planet of the Apes (\$29.98; Fox) and Planet of the Apes - The Complete TV Series (\$49.98; Fox)

Tim Burton's remake starring Mark Wahlberg and Helena Bonham Carter is thoroughly disappointing. Where's the kinkiness? The dark, disturbing vision? Where's the loincloth, for gosh sakes? I was told this DVD would set new standards. But given the mondo-deluxe DVDs we've seen lately for *Shrek*, *Snow White* et al, the only way *Planet of the Apes* could set new standards of interactivity would be if they sent actual apes to crash into your home and hunt you down. Sadly, that doesn't happen. This two-disc set is crammed full of terrific extras, nonetheless. The best part of the movie? Releasing it prompted Fox to put out the entire 14 episode TV series on DVD. As every true fan knows, the TV show is the missing link between the original five movies. You must see these episodes to make sense of how all the other films tie together. Now where's the animated series?



BONHAM CARTER

Apocalypse Now Redux (\$29.99; Paramount)

Critics were too kind to Coppola's expanded version of his classic Vietnam War movie. At best, the added 49 minutes of scenes are a wash. This sort of tinkering with a classic is fun to look at and argue over, but it is obscene of Coppola to suggest that it be the only version available. It's like rewriting history, the cinematic equivalent of those Soviet photos of leaders where they would airbrush out anyone who had fallen from favor. Second guessing like this should only be available as an adjunct to the original.

Best of Friends - Volumes 3 and 4 (\$34.98; Warner Bros.)



SCHWIMMER

Each volume contains six episodes, including a two-parter, so you do get a good amount of "Friends" for the money.

But however enjoyable individual episodes like "The One With Chandler in a Box" or "The One With All the Resolutions" may be, this mishmash of shows from different seasons is exactly how not to repackage a TV sitcom. You can turn on the TV any day and watch a random episode of "Friends." If you love the show enough to collect it, what you really want is each complete season in a boxed set so you can enjoy the series from beginning

to end, watching the characters (including star David Schwimmer as Ross) change and grow over time. Besides, what odd choices - three different Thanksgiving-themed shows in this set alone?

Notorious (\$39.95; Criterion)

My choice for the greatest movie by director Alfred Hitchcock changes from week to week. Often, it's *Rear Window* or *The Lady Vanishes* (but never *Vertigo*). Today I'll choose this tense, romantic thriller about spies with a dapper Cary Grant and the ravishing Ingrid Bergman. *Rear Window* has the best kiss, but this movie has the best sex scene.



BERGMAN

Thunderbirds - Sets 3 & 4 (\$39.95 each; A&E)

The coolest puppet show ever, bar none. "Thunderbirds" is a very fun, very exciting, very silly action series featuring the International Rescue team, who rush around the world at a moment's notice to foil evil criminals or rescue people in perilous situations. It's actually fairly tense, at times, and for brief moments surprisingly adult.

Calle 54 (\$32.99; Miramax)

Timing is a mysterious thing. There's no particular reason why this terrific documentary/concert film about Latin jazz didn't catch on as thoroughly as *Buena Vista Social Club*. Anyone who bothers to check it out will find the same pleasures: master musicians who are in the twilight of their careers, great music, and compelling stories. The late Tito Puente, Chano Domniguez and Eliane Elias are highlights. But be warned: if you buy this DVD, you'll need enough money to head right back to the store and buy a pile of new CDs.