

# DVDs this week

By Michael Giltz

## **Beauty & The Beast Special Edition (\$29.99; Disney)**

A peak for movie musicals and animated films. Why? It's the songs, stupid. This edition contains "Human Again," a number cut from the film but used in the Broadway production. It's fun to have, but slows the movie down. Watch it once, then stick with the original version (also wisely included). Along with tons of extras, they also present the "Work-in-progress" version shown at the 1991 New York Film Festival. It was a clever ploy that flattered critics, emphasized the human artistry behind animation and set the stage for its nomination as Best Picture.

## **I Love Lucy Volumes Three and Four (\$14.99 each; Paramount)/ The Carol Burnett Show: Showstoppers and I Love Lucy 50th Anniversary Special (\$19.99 each; Paramount)**

More great "I Love Lucy" shows with smart extras (like her earlier radio series), all foolishly packaged in overpriced DVDs that only the most fanatic of fans would purchase. *Carol Burnett's Showstoppers* rocked the world of TV, where it scored massive ratings and sent executives scurrying to revive other old shows with hasty clip jobs. *I Love Lucy's 50th Anniversary Special* gets the job done.



LUCY!

## **Flashdance/Footloose (\$24.99 each; Paramount)**

Two smash hits from the early '80s. *Flashdance* was always silly (Her loft! That water-drenched "dance" piece!) but now it seems almost surreally unbelievable. It's hard to imagine we watched it without giggling. *Footloose* has its dated moments (like that game of chicken played with tractors). But now we appreciate the solid little drama at its core. And talk about synergy: Kevin Bacon's appearance last week on "Will & Grace" where he cut loose with Will was the canniest marketing ploy of the year.

## **The Son's Room (\$29.99; Miramax)**

This terrific drama came and went without much notice earlier this year. The story of a family cleaved in two by a terrible tragedy, it is funny, touching and ultimately very moving. I'm not usually a fan of star/director Nanni Moretti (often called the Italian Woody Allen), but this humane, rich drama is a singular work. Pair it with *In The Bedroom* and see which one sticks with you longer.

## **Grave of the Fireflies (\$29.99; Central Park Media)/Neon Genesis Evangelion: Death & Rebirth and The End of Evangelion (\$29.95 each; Manga/"X (One)" TV Series (\$29.98; Pioneer)**

Critic Roger Ebert is always a welcome presence on DVD and he'll convince you the sober World War II anime drama *Grave of the Fireflies* belongs on a short list of classic war films. The style of anime you expect — over-the-top visuals, apocalyptic settings and a huge dose of mysticism — can be found on the *Neon Genesis* flicks, sequels to the classic anime series. If you can puzzle it out, call me. But the anime series *X* (with four episodes) is the beginning of a keeper, featuring the usual reluctant but beautiful young hero who must save the world.

## **The Pride of the Yankees (\$14.95; MGM)/Major League (\$24.99; Paramount)/Slammin' Sammy: The Sammy Sosa Story (\$19.95; Lil Vision)**

Every possible attitude towards baseball is covered in these releases. The reverent attitude in *The Pride of the Yankees* is embodied by the ever-decent Gary Cooper as Lou Gehrig. As good as it is, they were wise not to include that newsreel clip of Gehrig saying goodbye at Yankee Stadium. No film can match its emotional wallop. *Major League* is the scandalous, scatological take on baseball, though deep down it loves the game as well. And *Slammin' Sammy* is for the kids, an admirably wholesome but not sugarcoated look at the slugger that even chides Sosa just a little for showboating. Sosa learns his lesson, of course, and so will the tykes.