



Blade Runner: Five-Disc Ultimate Collector's Edition DVD (Warner Bros.)

It's finally here! The film geek's holy grail of DVD releases has arrived at last, and it should keep most fans contented with the inclusion of hours of special features as well as *Blade Runner: The Final Cut*, which director Ridley Scott assures us will be the last version of the film ever. *The Final Cut* is actually the fifth *Blade Runner* cut that is featured in this luxurious briefcase set, and while it is amazing, it might not compare to DVD producer Charles de Lauzirika's jaw-dropping 3-hour *Dangerous Days* documentary on the complete history of the 25-year-old film. The doc features new interviews with almost every living person involved with the making of the film (including the notoriously reluctant Harrison Ford).

In addition to the documentary, the set's other four discs are filled with deleted and alternate scenes (45 minutes worth), featurettes on the poster art, special effects and cinematography, various commentaries, and a frank discussion on whether lead character Deckard is a replicant or not. That features such noteworthy talking heads as directors Guillermo del Toro and Mark Romanek, many of the film's stars, and perhaps best of all, Ridley Scott and Harrison Ford. Whether Deckard is or isn't a replicant doesn't matter—the film endures as a masterpiece. If five discs aren't enough for you, Vangelis is releasing a 3-disc set of his *Blade Runner* music to coincide with this release. Eight discs of *Blade Runner* will do for now. Is it too early to plan for the 50-year anniversary? (www.bladerunnerthemovie.warnerbros.com)

***** 10/10 By Nick Hyman



Dan Deacon and Jimmy Joe Roche: Ultimate Reality DVD (Carpark) Jingle All the Way: Family Fun Edition DVD (Fox)

If you're like me, you may have an unhealthy obsession with cultural icon Arnold Schwarzenegger. If you need a fix, the bodybuilder-turned-actor-turned-California governor is featured on two very different recent DVD releases. Wacky musician Dan Deacon made a bit of a splash last year with his full-length *Spiderman of the Rings*. Now he's teamed with avant-garde visual mastermind Jimmy Joe Roche for an all-out A/V Arnold nerdfest. Yes, it's true; *Ultimate Reality* consists of kaleidoscopic images from classic films such as *Conan the Barbarian*, *Junior*, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, *Total Recall*, and *Kindergarten Cop* set to some very abrasive musical ramblings. It's like two dudes got wasted while watching *Twins* and thought it would be fun to fuck with images of Arnold over throwaway tracks.

I'll admit it's kinda fun, but so is the holiday comedy *Jingle All the Way: Family Fun Edition* if you're messed up and want to see hijinks ensue when an overworked family man tries to buy his kid a popular toy. *Jingle All the Way*, though commercially successful, marked the end times for Arnold in films. I saw the movie in theaters, but couldn't recognize what was new in the extended director's cut. I really don't know who was asking for a longer version of this film, but here it is for your viewing enjoyment. Perhaps Deacon and Joe Roche can feature *Jingle* co-star Sinbad in their next

performance art piece. You never know. (www.carparkrecords.com, www.foxhome.com)

Ultimate Reality: *** 6/10**

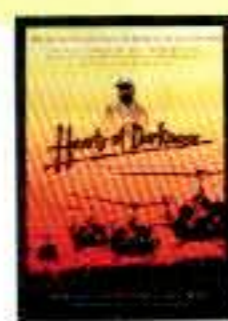
Jingle All the Way: Family Fun Edition: *** 4/10 By Nick Hyman**



The Donovan Concert: Live in L.A. DVD (MVD)

Donovan and director David Lynch have been practicing transcendental meditation (TM) for most of their creative lives. This DVD documents a live show benefiting the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace, a group whose goal is to introduce TM into schools to reduce stress in students and ultimately prevent violence. The concert, which took place at the packed Kodak Theater, home of the Academy Awards, is a personable and warm journey through Donovan's songwriting past. "Season of the Witch" and "Hurdy Gurdy Man" are among the songs performed, and appearances from Lynch and Mike Love of The Beach Boys make the night one to remember. (www.davidlynchfoundation.org)

***** 7/10 By Nick Hyman



Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse DVD (Paramount)

Cinephiles will remember 2007 as a great year for movies on the big screen (*No Country for Old Men*, *Into the Wild*, *Michael Clayton*) and as a watershed year for long-overdue releases to finally come out on DVD. The latter list includes *Twin Peaks*, a special edition of *Blade Runner*, Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*, Gus Van Sant's *Mala Noche*, and last but not least, the incredible *Apocalypse Now* documentary *Hearts of Darkness*. After languishing forever on dusty laserdiscs, the film is now available on DVD and features only a few extras: You now have the option of watching the film while listening to comments from *Apocalypse Now* director Francis Ford Coppola (who's quite embarrassed about how he comes off) and his wife Eleanor Coppola, who shot most of the footage that appears in the movie. It's not quite as good as it sounds, but it's better than nothing. The other extra is called *Coda: Thirty Years Later*, and it has nothing to do with *Apocalypse Now* but is rather a new documentary about Coppola's return to cinema, making his latest film *Youth Without Youth*. These aren't bad, but where's the footage of *Apocalypse*'s original lead, Harvey Keitel? That would have been the bee's knees. Maybe next time. (www.paramount.com)

***** 8/10 By Nick Hyman



Hot Fuzz: 3-Disc Collector's Edition DVD (Universal)

One of 2007's best has to be *Shaun of the Dead* director Edgar Wright's second full-length feature, the tongue-in-cheek British action buddy cop flick *Hot Fuzz*. Universal already dropped a single disc version of *Hot Fuzz* and have now double-dipped with this supremely awesome 3-disc edition. The extras are amazing: four commentaries from cast and crew, the teenage Wright's self-made *Hot Fuzz* predecessor *Dead Right*, and perhaps best of all, *The Extended Fuzzball Rally*, a hilarious doc that shows Wright and stars Simon Pegg and Nick Frost touring the U.S. while doing press for the film's domestic release. Most of these extras are almost as funny as the movie. If you haven't already seen *Hot Fuzz*, watch *Point Break* and *Bad Boys II* beforehand to ensure supreme enjoyment. (www.hotfuzz.com)

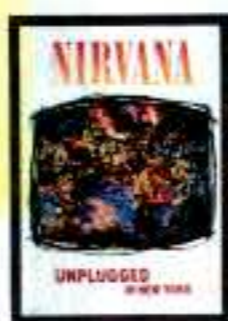
***** 9/10 By Nick Hyman



The Namesake DVD (Fox)

Mira Nair turned down directing the fifth *Harry Potter* film for the chance to direct this lush version of Jhumpa Lahiri's acclaimed novel *The Namesake* for the big screen. Kal Penn (Kumar from *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*) rises to the acting occasion as second generation Indian-American Gogol Ganguli, who struggles to integrate his American and Bengali cultures into his identity. Through finding out about his father's past, he eventually comes to appreciate his heritage. The beautiful film occasionally falls prey to the novel's soapy elements but is still a rich entertaining drama unlike any seen in 2007. The DVD is loaded with extras, including a commentary from Nair and deleted scenes, and best of all is footage from a Columbia University talk showing Nair and cinematographer Frederick Elmes (*Blue Velvet*) discussing the creative choices they made during filming. (www.foxhome.com)

***** 8/10 By Nick Hyman



Nirvana: Unplugged in New York DVD (Geffen/Universal) Kurt Cobain: About a Son DVD (Shout! Factory)

Nirvana hasn't been around since 1994, but they've never really gone away. Evidence of this fact is exemplified by these two outstanding DVDs. Nirvana's appearance on MTV's *Unplugged* was the high point for the series at the time. The band was at a creative and popular peak, and the last place anybody thought to see Nirvana was on an acoustic rock show. The performance has since become legendary, and this DVD has wisely included the original show and even better, a complete version without the *Unplugged* titles and with additional songs that were never aired. A new 5.1 mix of the show practically puts you in the audience, and some candid behind-the-scenes soundcheck footage shows a prima donna-like Cobain bossing the crew around.

Cobain's unguarded side is also featured throughout the remarkable *Kurt Cobain: About a Son*. AJ Schnack's documentary takes journalist Michael Azerrad's audio interviews with Cobain and transposes them against moving images from three Washington cities that were very important in his life: Aberdeen, Olympia, and Seattle. The film has a waking dream quality and is ultimately devastating when you consider that this complicated father, husband, and musician who had so much to give took himself away from everyone. (www.hereisnirvana.com, www.shoutfactory.com)

Both: ***** 8/10 By Nick Hyman



Once DVD (Fox)

Fox Searchlight's 2007 indie film darling would have to be *Once*. The small film follows the story of two Dublin-based lost souls who find each other on the street, a guitar-playing singer guy (Glen Hansard, The Frames' vocalists and one of *The Commitments*) and a flower-selling gal with a lovely voice and a talent for piano (musician Markéta Irglová). Much of this film's hype has been about it reinventing the musical, which is totally bogus. Sure, the film has the characters playing music and singing together, but it isn't really doing something that hasn't been done before. That being said, it does have some remarkable moments of musical bliss during a few of the songs that are performed. The DVD release has some behind-the-scenes footage of the small production as well as separate film and music commentary. If you keep your expectations realistic, you might be charmed by this little film that could. (www.foxhome.com)

***** 7/10 By Nick Hyman



Sigur Rós: Heima: A Film by Sigur Rós DVD (XL)

After finishing a worldwide tour in 2006, Sigur Rós decided to stage a series of unannounced free concerts in their native Iceland. *Heima* (Icelandic for home) is a charming and beautiful film showing some of the breathtaking sights Iceland provides as well as the typically sublime music from the band itself. Oddly enough, the film was directed by *Lilo & Stitch* director Dean DeBlois using an all-Icelandic crew, and as with all of the band's visual output, *Heima* is stylish and warm. (www.sigur-ros.co.uk)

***** 8/10 By Nick Hyman



Sunshine DVD (Fox)

Danny Boyle's *Sunshine*, a sci-fi tale about a diverse group of scientists on a trip to save our dying sun, was one of the most anticipated flicks for cinephiles in 2007. *Sunshine* delivers for about two-thirds of its running time, but unfortunately, as is the case with many of Boyle's movies, the ending is hampered by a shift in narrative (a Freddy Krueger-like device) that does a complete disservice to every poignant event that comes before. Many of the crewmembers of the *Icarus II* are cool to look at but are largely undeveloped as characters; much of the film's feel appears to have been taken from Ridley Scott's *Alien* wholesale. Visually, however, the film is absolutely spectacular, and the soundtrack by *Underworld* and John Murphy (still not released on CD) is the perfect aural accompaniment to the futuristic setting. The DVD has a couple of commentaries and deleted scenes, but sadly doesn't include a new third act that would have made this cool movie into a great one. (www.fox.com)

***** 6/10 By Nick Hyman



Superbad: 2-Disc Unrated Extended Edition DVD (Sony)

Thankfully, this isn't called *The McLovin Edition*. The 2-disc version of *Superbad* follows in the same footsteps as the other 2007 Judd Apatow-associated DVD *Knocked Up* by featuring deleted scenes, behind-the-scenes footage, and much, much more. Disc one includes a funny commentary with many of the films' principal players, but the best stuff is on the second disc. *Snakes on a Plane* features a post-tonsillectomy Jonah Hill contending with animal wranglers putting frogs, scorpions, and pythons on him while he is unable to even scream. *Everyone Hates Michael Cera* is another highlight, showing the film's supposedly insufferable other co-star glomming on to everybody on the set and getting dissed at every turn. On most "special editions," the extras are largely filler, but if you liked the comedy of *Superbad*, then consider this new set worth your time. (www.sonypictures.com)

***** 9/10 By Nick Hyman



Waitress DVD (Fox)

It's hard to watch *Waitress* without constantly thinking of the tragic loss of the movie's writer, director, and co-star, Adrienne Shelly. A mainstay in many Hal Hartley movies and cult films such as *Hedwig*, Shelly was a shining light of the early '90s indie film movement and became a filmmaker in her own right. *Waitress* stars Keri Russell as Jenna, an unhappily married waitress and pie-maker who is pregnant by her abusive husband (Jeremy Sisto). Though others are excited about her pregnancy, Jenna is not. While trying to figure out how to change her life, she falls in love with her new, married ob-gyn (Nathan Fillion), all the while making delicious-looking pies with fantastic names (Pregnant Self-Pitying Loser Pie, anyone?). The small-town fable has great supporting work from Cheryl Hines and—believe it or not—Andy Griffith. The film is accompanied by a commentary and several featurettes, including a lovely memorial for Shelly. A foundation has been set up in Shelly's name to support other young women filmmakers. (www.foxsearchlight.com/waitress, www.adrienneshellyfoundation.org)

***** 7/10 By Nick Hyman