

of a fruitless rivalry between two suitors (Ronald Pickup, Frank Wylie). As the story progresses, hearts are broken, duels are fought, and imperfect circumstances find gradual acceptance. Filmed on decorative yet simple sets in long, static shots, the near-three-hour *Three Sisters* will surely test the patience of some, but those who appreciate the gently masterful portrayals by the sterling cast—including Olivier himself as the irascible old army surgeon—will find real treasures here. Extras include archival interviews with Bates and Edie Landau (widow of producer Ely Landau, who was responsible for the American Film Theatre project). Recommended. (J. Cruz)

### Vision Quest ★★

Warner, 107 min., R, Blu-ray: \$21.99

Screenwriter Darryl Ponicsan (*The Last Detail*) and director Harold Becker (*The Onion Field*) set aside their usual gritty view of the world to make this formulaic 1985 film about an underdog male athlete and the woman whose hard-won affection represents his rite of passage into manhood. Matthew Modine stars as Loudon, an 18-year-old high school wrestler determined to slim down to a certain weight class while juggling studies, a job at a hotel, aspirations to be a doctor, and his search for spiritual enlightenment. His rigorous life is thrown off course by the arrival of Carla (Linda Fiorentino), a 21-year-old Jersey girl who gets stuck in Loudon's town and takes up temporary residence at the house he shares with his father (Ronny Cox). A tough, skeptical woman who seems older than her years, Carla naturally captivates Loudon. The story moves inexorably toward triumphs and reality checks, but this is a cookie-cutter movie, with no room for a spontaneous idea or cinematic freedom. Fiorentino is more grim than complex—a truly one-dimensional figurehead character. Modine is much more convincing in his intensely physical performance. And a young Madonna appears in a club setting singing "Crazy for You." Optional. (T. Keogh)



### When Knighthood Was in Flower ★★1/2

Undercrank, 115 min., not rated, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$19.95

Barely seen since its 1922 theatrical release, this silent epic is a major surprise: a charming, entertaining adventure that contradicts long-held prejudices by film scholars against the costume dramas starring much-maligned Marion Davies that were produced by her lover, publishing mogul

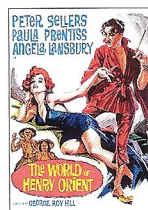


William Randolph Hearst. Davies plays Mary Tudor, the free-spirited sister of Henry VIII, who plans to offer her to rival King Louis XII of France as part of a political alliance. But Mary prefers the handsome young knight Charles Brandon over the elderly French king. Of course, Henry is not one to have his command disobeyed, but Mary and Charles go through extraordinary lengths to maintain their love. Restored from a rare nitrate print from the film's original 12-reel road show presentation and featuring a new organ score by Ben Model, filmmaker Robert G. Vignola's *When Knighthood Was in Flower* is an opulent production with rich costuming and elaborate sets. But its real power comes in the energetic performance by Davies, whose gift for light comedy is evident throughout, but she is also highly credible as both a romantic lead and as an action heroine fending for her life. If this work is any indication, Davies' reputation requires new consideration. Highly recommended. [Note: two other Davies films from 1922 are also newly available on DVD at the same price: *Beauty's Worth* and *The Bride's Play*.] (P. Hall)

### The World of Henry Orient ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 106 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99

Peter Sellers has top billing as eccentric concert pianist and frustrated lothario Henry Orient in this 1964 comedy, but it is not really about his world. Instead, the narrative focuses on two outcast schoolgirls—Gil (Merrie Spaeth) and Val (Tippy Walker)—with overactive imaginations, who become fast friends, bonding over their love of fantasy and play-acting. Orient's story, as he sneaks around with a married woman (Paula Prentiss), provides much of the comic relief and Sellers offers a more subtle form of physical comedy than in his *Pink Panther* roles, as his attempts at secret rendezvous are constantly interrupted by the two girls. More bitter-sweet are the girls—the lonely Gil, raised by a single mother who is overjoyed that she has finally found a dear friend, and the neglected Val, raised by servants and relatives while her parents travel on business. Val pushes her fantasy life to destructive extremes at times (she has been kicked out of numerous exclusive schools), and she runs away when her parents (Angela Lansbury and Tom Bosley) return and Val becomes disgusted with her mother's hypocrisy and neglect. Director George Roy Hill bounces between the two stories, letting Sellers carry the comedy in extended sequences, but his compassion is clearly with the two girls and the loving affection of Gil's mother, which Val so desperately desires. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



### Zaza ★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 84 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95

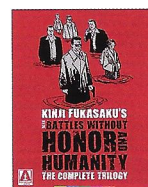
Gloria Swanson is the titular music hall star in this spirited silent film adaptation of the 19th-century play by Pierre Berton and Charles Simon. *Zaza*, the temperamental main attraction of a 20th-century music hall in a provincial French town, dreams of performing in Paris and she competes with a rival actress for the attentions of the aristocratic Bernard Dufresne (H.B. Warner). But when *Zaza* discovers that Dufresne is already married (to a social climber who has no affection for him) and has a daughter, she turns her back on him. A lively but thinly-plotted film, *Zaza* starts as a high-spirited, lavishly produced comedy before veering into romantic melodrama, but what keeps the film buoyant is the charm and spirit of Swanson and the lively direction by Allan Dwan, who moves the story along at a terrific pace, fills it with glamour and spectacle, and brings out the best in his lead actress, who dominates every scene with her sheer star power. *Zaza* is a trifle but an enjoyable one that illustrates why Swanson was such a huge silent movie star. The piano score is adapted from the original cue sheets of the film's 1923 theatrical presentation and performed by Jeff Rapsis. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Frederic Lombardi, and a booklet. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



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