

MEDIA

Releasing, www.strandreleasing.com.

2018. DVD UPC 712267372027. \$27.99;

Blu-ray UPC 712267372034. \$32.99. F

Adapted from the 1956 novel by Argentine writer Antonio di Benedetto, this period piece is set in the 18th-century backwaters of the Spanish colony of Paraguay. Don Diego de Zama is a magistrate of the Spanish Empire. He keeps trying to get a revolving set of governors to petition the king to transfer him to the more civilized town where his wife and children live. He keeps getting put off despite his efforts to appease the authorities. The film looks and feels surreal and languorous, with innumerable odd scenes and settings. In many subtle and obvious ways it shows the ignorance and corruption of Spanish colonialism. The native peoples are shown as both noble and oppressed. There are stunning visuals but also something claustrophobic about the close contact of people in small spaces. Diego suffers his indignation with unnerving quietude, which is often uncomfortable to watch.

VERDICT Contains nudity. Both creepy and mesmerizing, this film is very highly recommended for most collections.—

Tom Budlong, Atlanta

ARTS & HUMANITIES

Towards Mathilde. 84 min. In French

w/English subtitles. Claire Denis, dist. by

Grasshopper Film, www.grasshopperfilm.com.

2018. DVD \$99.95; acad. libs. \$375.

Public performance. DANCE

This documentary by Denis (*Beau Travail*; *Let the Sunshine In*) focuses on French-born Mathilde Monnier (b. 1959), head of the Montpellier National Centre for Choreography as she prepares a group of dancers to perform a variety of pieces. Most of the footage was originally recorded on 8mm and 16mm film, which gives the production a grainy look. The attempt is to show the process and struggle of creating the dances, but by the end viewers are no closer to knowing or understanding them. The dialog and narration are overly cerebral and add little to the audience's comprehension. The snippets of actual dance don't provide a very strong picture of the whole work. Just when something might begin to look interesting, it's cut off; this reviewer failed to understand Monnier's nitpicking with the slightest movement change. A bonus extra with a full performance would have been immensely helpful. **VERDICT** Not recommended except for the most inclusive dance video collections.—**Tom Budlong, Atlanta**

24 x 36: A Movie About Movie Posters.

82+ min. Kevin Burke, dist. by FilmRise c/o MVDvisual, www.mvdb2b.com.

2018. DVD UPC 760137113294. \$19.95.

Closed-captioned. FILM/ART

Traditionally, movie posters give fans their first look at a new film and, as director Joe Dante (*Gremlins*) says, a glimpse of how film addicts will be spending the next few months. This documentary offers a brief look into the early days of movie posters, often more creative than the films themselves. Posters were folded and placed inside film canisters, then shipped to theaters. A few were designed by notable artists such as Norman Rockwell, but most artists' identities were concealed by the studios. This presentation focuses on the "golden age" of the 1970s and 1980s, when sf, action, and fantasy films like *The Goonies*, *Star Wars*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* encouraged imaginative, visually compelling poster designs. Eventually, studios opted for "floating heads," featuring the film's stars, which spurred rebellious artists to design nonsanctioned "alternatives." Though mostly unofficial, some studios are exploring ways that these alternative works could reach audiences and promote new products. **VERDICT** This film suffers from the usual fanboy excess and could use more coverage of early classic posters. Still, general audiences will enjoy this look at an unusual art market.—**Stephen Rees, formerly with Levittown Lib., PA**

Here To Be Heard: The Story of the Slits.

color & b/w. 84+ min. William E. Badgley,

dist. by Cadiz Music c/o MVDvisual,

www.mvdb2b.com. 2018. DVD UPC

844493061663. \$21.95. MUSIC

The story of seminal all-female punk pioneers the Slits is finally told on film, 40 years after their emergence from the mid-1970s London punk scene and nearly a decade after the death of singer Ari Up halted a brief reunion. Director Badgley creates a nostalgic tone by centering the documentary on bassist Tessa Pollitt as she rummages through scrapbooks filled with articles, photographs, and other mementos from her years with the group. She reminisces about her band's 1976 founding and 1982 split; friendships and conflicts among the members; their evolution from a primitive punk sound to more sophisticated reggae; and Up's worsening personal and medical struggles. This well-crafted production also features new interviews with band members and other musicians, archival photos, behind-the-scenes footage from music video shoots and home movies, and plenty of raucous live snippets. However, the film, which stresses intimacy and visual appeal over historical context, only hints at the Slits' importance and unique place in music history as well as their influence on future female rockers. Bonus features include additional

live footage. **VERDICT** While not as in-depth or insightful as this film might have been, the abundance of audio and video footage featuring one of punk's truly great bands makes it worthwhile viewing for all fans of the genre.—**Douglas King, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia**

★**Song of Granite. b/w. 104 min. In Gaelic & English w/English subtitles. Pat Collins, dist.**

by Oscilloscope Labs, oscilloscope.net. 2018.

DVD UPC 857490005578. \$27.99. MUSIC

This is a stunning biography of the cantankerous Irish folksinger Joe Heaney (Seosamh Ó hÉanaí; 1919–84), a legendary figure in the world of Irish traditional music (sean nos). Visually dramatic and in stunning black and white, Collins's film lets the landscape and action tell the story, in much the same way that Heaney lived in service to the rigorous adherence to the music. Occasional voice-overs from Heaney provide just enough biographical detail to move the story forward, and the performances by actors Michael O'Chonfhlaola as Joe in his 60s, Macdara O Fatharta as Joe in his 40s, and Colm Seoighe as child Joe are unforgettable. From Connemara on the Irish coast to his death in Seattle in 1984, Heaney lived sharing the music he learned "drinking from the bottle when I was in the cradle." Heaney's exacting standards and wealth of knowledge made him known far and wide and merit this gorgeous and spare treatment.

VERDICT Moody as an Irish mist, the singing is excellent, the biography subtle, and the film leaves viewers as if in that moment just after the last notes of a song. Highly recommended.—**Bill Baars, Lake Oswego P.L., OR**

Supergirl. 80 min. Jessie Auritt, dist. by

FilmRise c/o MVDvisual, www.mvdb2b.com.

2018. DVD UPC 760137113195. \$19.95.

SPORTS

What starts as father-daughter bonding time ends up morphing Naomi Kutin into a preteen power-lifting phenom. Being an Orthodox Jewish girl not yet out of elementary school, Naomi does not fit the typical power-lifting persona, which makes it all the more amazing when the New Jersey girl breaks a world record at age ten. The film focuses on an important time for Naomi in her religious life, her education, and her sport. It is the year of her bat mitzvah, the year she will transition from elementary school to high school, and a growth spurt will move her into a higher weight class and tougher competition. The story is told almost exclusively through the voices of Naomi and her family, and the filmmakers effectively combine these with footage from her meets, her school and home life, her bat mitzvah, and her graduation. **VERDICT**