

(the development of modernist style in general was strongly influenced by the Bauhaus movement). The filmmakers point out that many artists, architects, and social planners have been inspired by Bauhaus, including planners of contemporary school campuses and designers of affordable housing initiatives around the globe. Although the directors' enthusiasm sometimes threatens to overwhelm the structure, this will likely appeal to those already acquainted with (and appreciative of) the Bauhaus spirit. A generally worthy centennial celebration of the widespread impact that Bauhaus has had on art, culture, and society, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

Coriolanus ★★

(2017) 164 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99. Opus Arte (dist. by Naxos of America).

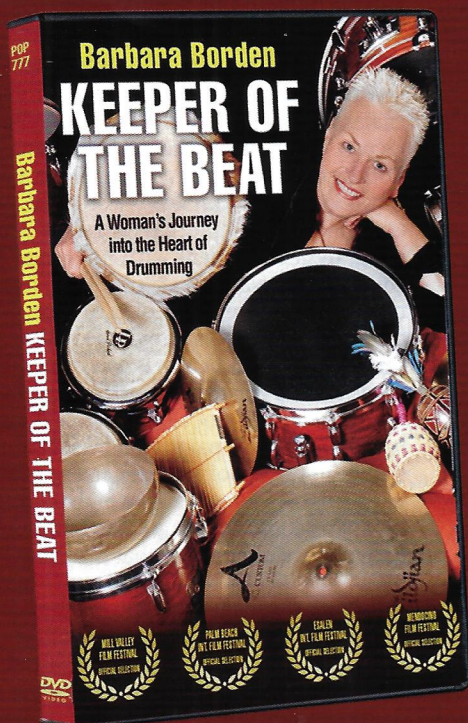
Shakespeare's last Roman tragedy (written around 1605) receives uneven but compelling treatment in Angus Jackson's 2017 production for the Royal Shakespeare Company. The protagonist is Caius Marcius (Sope Dirisu), a patrician general who wins acclaim—and the titular nickname—both for his victory over the Volscian city of Corioli and his prowess in individual combat with enemy leader Tullus Aufidius (James Corrigan). But Marcius's contempt toward

the plebeians leads to his banishment, and in his anger he offers his services to Aufidius, taking command of the Volscian forces for an assault on Rome. Only the intervention of his mother Volumnia (Haydn Gwynne) and wife Virgilia (Hannah Morrish) persuades him to break off the attack, although he is killed for his treachery when he returns to the Volscians. Like Ralph Fiennes's film of the play (VL-5/12), Jackson's production is in modern dress, and while it cannot replicate the contemporary weaponry and bloody battles that Fiennes favored, it compensates with extraordinarily bruising (and homoerotic) hand-to-hand combat between Marcius and Aufidius. The outstanding performances here are by Gwynne, who brings passion to her pleas, and Paul Jesson as Menenius, the senator who counsels Marcius to be more moderate. In the title role, Dirisu casts an imposing figure, but lacks the full measure of patrician arrogance, while Corrigan takes Aufidius's lust for Marcius so far that it becomes almost humorous. With spare sets and an unobtrusive music score, this *Coriolanus* may not be the final word on the play, but it offers a good—albeit flawed—take. Extras include an audio commentary by Jackson, cast interviews, and a cast gallery. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (F. Swietek)

Life After Flash ★★★

(2018) 94 min. DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$24.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Actor Sam Jones produced this affectionate look at the 1980 film *Flash Gordon* (in which he starred in the title role), which was not the megahit that mogul Dino De Laurentiis desired but won cult status for its Fellini-esque designs, color, sublimely non-ironic camp attitude, and Queen's music. Unsurprisingly, the framing device is Jones's bio recast as the devoutly Christian's path of redemption. Jones succumbed to Hollywood excess, after which his fame dissipated, and he re-invented himself (drawing on Marine Corps training) as a bodyguard/security specialist, committing anew to faith and family after reading Rick Warren's 2002 religious bestseller *The Purpose Driven Life*. The good news for fans (besides the Good News) is that director Lisa Downs nicely interweaves conversations and on-set tales with a stellar *Flash* reunion of talent and admirers, including costars Melody Anderson, Brian Blessed, and Topol, filmmaker/fan Robert Rodriguez, Martha De Laurentiis (Dino's widow), and Queen's Brian May—a virtual Comic-Con panel, right down to comics artist Alex Ross and *Film Threat* editor/author Chris Gore. Jones's positivity in hitting the nostalgia-expo trail is contagious



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Keeper of the Beat is a documentary on the life and music of Barbara Borden, acclaimed drummer, composer, teacher and peacemaker. The film tells the story, in eloquent words and toe-tapping music, of a woman whose love of drumming has given her courage and inspiration. We watch the unfolding of Borden's identity as she grows from a little girl in love with drumming to a pioneering woman drummer to a world-class percussionist practicing "drumbeat diplomacy." Filmed on four continents.

"A wonderful film, the inspiring story of one talented woman's crusade to spread the joy and transformative power of drumming." — Bonnie Raitt

"This uplifting and entertaining movie does a wonderful job of capturing Barbara's warmth, talent and contagious spirit."

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"Good documentaries often introduce audiences to someone they'd love to meet for a nice long conversation in the three-dimensional world. Filmmaker David L. Brown's *Keeper of the Beat* is all about one such subject: Barbara Borden, a terrific musician and a joyful, indomitable individual. RECOMMENDED." — Video Librarian

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as he begins to enjoy a career revival. Extras include a generous swag-bag-full of extended and deleted scenes. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

The Longings of Maya Gordon ★★★

(2019) 54 min. DVD: \$99; public libraries; \$249 w/PPR: colleges & universities. Seventh Art Releasing.

Amsterdam artist Maya Gordon makes art that reminds her of home ("that longing for something you don't even know what it is"). One piece, a giant cupboard, represents something that loomed over her as a 6-year-old living in Poland (she and her family emigrated to Israel in 1957). Her work can reflect the food that she ate under Communist rule, her process for preparing herring, her changing face (particularly after a thyroid condition altered her eyes), and her propensity for picking up men. Spending time in Israel, Poland, and Holland, co-directors Yair Lev and Ety Wieseltier follow Gordon around as she prepares for exhibits, socializes with friends, and chats with people she meets along the way, such as a philosophical fishmonger who notes that "just as there are no fish without bones, there are no people without troubles." Gordon is a curious, open-hearted person who says exactly what's on her mind. To Nahum, a former soldier she meets in her old neighborhood, she describes herself as "Victoria Maya," explaining that, "my mother felt the need to produce Jews" after the May victory

over Hitler. She also recalls her relationship with Hezy Leskly, an Israeli artist and poet who led her to Holland. Leskly later returned to Israel, where he died, but left Gordon everything, securing her financial future. In many ways, this observational documentary prioritizes Gordon's life over her art, and it's stronger for it, offering a vivid portrait of a single 72-year-old woman living her life to the fullest. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennesy)

Master of Dark Shadows ★★★

(2019) 87 min. DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99. MPI Media Group (avail. from most distributors). SDH captioned.

Offering a surprisingly fun look back at *Dark Shadows*, the groundbreaking soap opera that caught fire with teens as well as bored housewives between 1966-71, filmmaker David Gregory's documentary is graced by the presence of many of the show's principal creators. Chief among these is Dan Curtis, a forceful, iron-willed producer who oversaw the show's transition from lurid drama about a wealthy Maine family to a supernatural tale about a reluctant vampire. Curtis discusses the huge ratings jump once the bloodsucking character of Barnabas Collins (Jonathan Frid) was introduced into the weekday afternoon serial, with much of that audience increase coming from school kids who rushed home to catch the 4 p.m. broadcast. Surviving cast and crew members recall a tight daily pro-

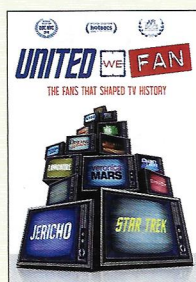
duction schedule, beginning with a morning table read, followed by a couple hours of preparation, then a rehearsal before filming. The speed sometimes resulted in missed cues, garbled dialogue, and other mistakes, which are highlighted here in good humor. Curtis never worried about bloopers (one of the best found Frid, in costume and make-up as Barnabas, walking into the camera's gaze while carrying his own street shoes), maintaining that episodes were only going to be seen once, so why care about glaring errors (little did he know about the many lives on home video to come for this cult hit). Other tidbits include Frid's daily habit of downing several vodkas after every taping, and discussion about Curtis's decision in 1971 to pull the plug on the show. Other talking heads in this enjoyable survey of all things *Dark Shadows* include superfan Whoopi Goldberg, who talks about how sexy a vampire's bite can be. The bountiful extras include footage of a 1969 Halloween party appearance by "Barnabas" at the Nixon White House, a 1968 audio interview with Frid on *The Dick Cavett Show*, the 1954 episode "The House" (which would become the inspiration for *Dark Shadows*) from the CBS anthology series *The Web*, a tour of the studio where the series was shot, and more. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

World's Tiniest Masterpieces: The Wonderful World of Willard Wigan

★★★1/2

(2019) 60 min. DVD: \$225. DRA. Film Ideas. PPR.

Aired on Channel 4 in the U.K., filmmaker Kenny Scott's delightful documentary focuses on the astounding achievements of British painter-sculptor Willard Wigan. Born to working-class Jamaican-descended parents in Wolverhampton, Wigan was a struggling, dyslexic student with no formal education but was also a veritable prodigy at carving miniatures using only rudimentary tools (he started by making little houses for the backyard ants). Wigan is now recognized as the world's great "micro-artist" (a category in which he is not alone), painstakingly hand-making tiny paintings and sculptures that fit in the eye of a needle. In the course of this documentary, Wigan embarks on a highly personal project, a carved, infinitesimal piece of carpet fiber that is a tribute to his late mother, who supported and inspired his efforts. If completed, it will break records as the smallest human carving ever—actually at the cellular level—and the blend of art and science (as well as undertones of multiculturalism and tolerance) is sublime. High-tech digital cinematography enlivens the already transfixing presentation, using special f/x to render the charismatic Wigan as either a giant or an incredible shrinking man. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)



United We Fan ★★★

(2018) 97 min. DVD: \$29.99 (\$250 w/PPR from edu.passionriver.com). Passion River (avail. from most distributors).

Some people mourn when their favorite shows are canceled, but then move on to other series. Others leap into action to convince networks to reverse their decisions. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Filmmaker Michael Sparaga's entertaining documentary concentrates on the success stories. Bjo and Jon Trimble pioneered this form of direct action through their letter-writing campaign on behalf of *Star Trek*. Nichelle Nichols, who played Lt. Uhura, and creator Gene Roddenberry's son,

Rod, credit the couple for their efforts. Dorothy Swanson also went to her typewriter when it looked like CBS was going to cancel *Cagney & Lacey*, writing over 500 letters to the editor and suggesting that friends do the same. She admits now that it was "over the top," but it worked. CBS repeated a season over the summer, ratings spiked, and production resumed. Swanson would go on to co-found the organization Viewers for Quality Television (VQT). The difference between the old campaigns and the new ones is, of course, the Internet, as campaigners use e-mail, message boards, and social media. TV critics and show creators, like Jason Katims (*Roswell*) and Rob Thomas (*Veronica Mars*), cite Twitter as a way to see how fans are reacting to a show in real time. Sadly, the rise of the web also contributed to the death of VQT, although producer Barney Rosenzweig (*The Trials of Rosie O'Neill*) accuses them of disloyalty, since they didn't back his every show. Other speakers include Scott Bakula (*Quantum Leap*), Zachary Levi (*Chuck*), and Skeet Ulrich (*Jericho*). In more recent years, campaigns have brought renewed interest to *Person of Interest*, *Longmire*, and *The 4400*. Fan campaigns might not always work, but it's hard to imagine they'll ever disappear. Extras include extended and deleted scenes, and a segment on a new fan campaign for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* spin-off *Angel*. An interesting cultural documentary, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (K. Fennesy)