



STOP!
UPDATE AD

Flying Daggers a cut above competition

If House of Flying Daggers were an episode of *Dragnet*, we'd hear Jack Webb intone: "859 A.D. Tang Dynasty shaking. The chief wants my partner and me to bring down the underground, anti-government Daggers sect. It's agreed that I will befriend a beautiful blind courtesan said to have dealings with this clan, and ..."

BACK STORY: One of Zhang Yimou's best movies (and his best in almost a decade) serves up a few surprises and so much lushly pigmented decor that cinematographer Xiaoding Zhao surprised nobody by getting an Oscar nomination after earning some critical awards. (Tingxiao Huo's production design did, too.) One of those special movies that's as scintillating indoors as out, *Daggers* benefits from a full course of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*'s Zhang Ziyi (now billed as Ziyi Zhang). Coming in December: Her lead in the movie of *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

IN LIKE FLYNN

Errol Flynn's acting instincts: a light comedian's. Physicality: made for derring-do. And you won't see it any better than in the boxed *Errol Flynn Signature Collection*.

BACK STORY: An overnight star in his first Hollywood lead (1935's *Captain Blood*), Flynn died in 1959 after 50 years of high living. *Blood*'s Olivia de Havilland is extremely touching here reminiscing about her seven-time co-star, and you get to see Flynn heckled by Steve Allen's TV regulars in 1957. The documentary *The Adventures of Errol Flynn* isn't available separately, but the box set's films are (listed at \$20): the Technicolor *Dodge City* and colour *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (both 1939); the prime swashbuckler *The Sea Hawk* (1940); and the George Custer whitewash *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941).

LONG WAY HOME

Her character scarfs down culinary monstrosities with M&M and peanut butter bases, but the camera still loves Scarlett Johansson in *A Love Song for Bobby Long*. Poor and anything but book-read, her character Popsy inherits a house with two literary squatters who were friends of her late mom. John Travolta is a boozy ex-college professor with a rebuilt face, blood in his urine and a love for the written word. Less *Saturday Night Fever* than *Sunday Morning Cottonmouth*, it's a brave but iffy acting stretch that pulls a few muscles.

DIG IT!

Vociferous rock rivals — the Brian Jonestown Massacre and the Dandy Warhols — dig at each other for years in *Dig*; stalwart filmmaker Ondi Timoner could almost be Spinal-Tapping a parody. But one onstage scuffle is as good as the saloon brawl production number in Errol Flynn's *Dodge City*.
> Mike Clark



MUSIC DVDS

Elvis Costello & the Imposters *Club Date: Live in Memphis Eagle Rock*



What could be better than seeing Elvis Costello live? How about seeing him live in a tiny bar? That's the

premise behind the *Club Date* series — take a great band, put them in a venue way too small for them, turn on the cameras and let them cut loose. And cut loose Costellos and his Imposters do here, cranking out a fiery 20-song set of new material and oldies like *Pump it Up*, *Radio Radio* and *Mystery Dance*. Just to make it even more special, Emmylou Harris drops by to sing a few tracks.

★★★★



Iggy Pop *Live San Fran 1981*

Target / MVD

It's Iggy Pop. Wearing — believe it or not — stockings, garters and a mini-skirt. Singing *Some Weird Sin*, *TV Eye*, *1969*, *Lust for Life* and a bunch of other classics. In a small, sweaty venue in San Francisco in 1981. With future Bowie sideman Carlos Alomar on guitar and Blondie's Clem Burke on drums. And let us repeat: WEARING STOCKINGS, GARTERS AND A MINI-SKIRT. Honestly, if you want more than that, you're probably asking too much.

★★★1/2

> Darryl Sterdan