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USA TODAY

This week, film fans can celebrate the career of one of Hollywood's greatest leading men with *The Cary Grant Box Set*. The set includes four re-releases and the DVD premiere of 1938's *Holiday*, in which Grant, Katharine Hepburn and director George Cukor tackled a Philip Barry play about class distinctions, a la *The Philadelphia Story*, which came out two years later.

BACK STORY: You can't go wrong. Even the least of these (*The Talk of the Town*, 1942) is still polished, and, with co-star Ronald Colman playing a pending Supreme Court nominee, topical. The others are even better: 1937's *The Awful Truth* (Oscar to director Leo McCarey); 1939's pilot melodrama *Only Angels Have Wings*; Howard Hawks' 1940 newspaper classic *His Girl Friday* (blessedly restored); and *Holiday*.

EXTRAS, EXTRAS: Promotional photos, miniature posters; featurettes on the films and a splendid *Friday* commentary by *Variety* critic/definitive Hawks biographer Todd McCarthy.

★★★★



The Best of Youth

One of the few movies, if not the only one, of which it can be said: The first three hours compel, but the story

really kicks in during the second three.

BACK STORY: Florence's Arno River flood (1966), Red Brigade terrorism, the Mafia and even the

Oh, Mr. Grant!

You can't go wrong with Cary box set

World Cup are factors in director Marco Tullio Giordana's remarkably fluid 366-minute Italian TV production about two brothers with contrasting personalities. The lives of psychiatrist Nicola (Luigi Lo Cascio) and emotionally turbulent cop Matteo (Alessio Boni) intersect with major sociopolitical events. And in keeping with a family epic, there's a moving romance as well. Miramax press-screened this in 2004 for a summer opening, then pulled it back until early 2005 when some engagements played it in two parts.

★★★1/2



Blood and Wine

Despite Jack Nicholson, Michael Caine and Judy Davis matched by Jennifer Lopez and Stephen

Dorff, you probably haven't seen this undervalued drama of Miami diamond thievery that could be overshadowed by the news value of its DVD extras.

BACK STORY: The sixth teaming of Nicholson and director Bob Rafelson was sold as the third in a dysfunctional family trilogy, along with *Five Easy Pieces* and *The King of Marvin Gardens*. Nicholson and stepson Dorff clash over treatment of Dorff's mom (Davis), the atten-

tions of nanny Lopez and the necklace heisted from J. Lo's rich employer, customers of Nicholson's failing wine business.

EXTRAS, EXTRAS: Nicholson doesn't do talk shows or ruminate much on acting craft, so it's a treat hearing him expound on prep work and scene-to-scene pragmatism amid a series of featurette interviews in which Dorff and Caine also shine.

★★★



Julia

Playwright Lillian Hellman (Jane Fonda) struggles to bloom as Dashiell Hammett (Jason Robards) mentors her in their beach house.

Ironically, this half of the story betters its more trumpeted centerpiece: Hellman's friendship with Julia (Vanessa Redgrave), who is imperiled fighting Nazis. Redgrave and Robards got debatable supporting Oscars for tiny roles in director Fred Zinnemann's penultimate film. Half of the adaptation from part of Hellman's *Pentimento* connects, and the other half sputters. Its soft-focus photography translates badly to DVD, though the acting is hallmark (including a dark-haired Meryl Streep's brief screen debut).

★★1/2



Ryan's Daughter

It is famous lore (noted by Richard Schickel on this DVD) that director David Lean and his ill-

received Irish epic got so lambasted by critics that he didn't make another film for 14 years. A small story in thunderous packaging, the film deals with a widowed schoolteacher (Robert Mitchum) cuckolded by his frisky young wife (Sarah Miles) against a backdrop of the First World War and IRA "troubles." John Mills got an Oscar, but Trevor Howard steals the film as the local priest. Poor Miles has to play off Mitchum, whose personality is submerged, and stilted Christopher Jones, as her British lover.

★★



Wallace & Gromit in The Curse of the Were-Rabbit

Employed by a dowager with (to me) a Jayne

Meadows manner, the famed man-dog team protects elaborate veggie plots with their pest-control busi-

ness. I gave this current Oscar nominee a second look because I wanted to love it, but too many dead spots did me in again.

★★1/2

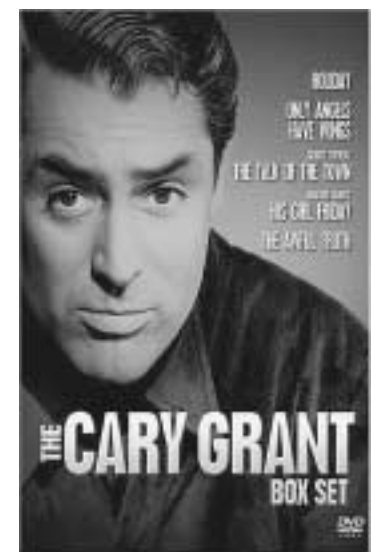


Just Like Heaven

Reese Witherspoon walks the line between life and death after an auto mishap turns

her comatose to all but co-star Mark Ruffalo. She's buttercup cute, but Ruffalo — who alone can chat up her ghostly form — looks mortified to be caught here.

★★1/2



MUSIC DVDS



New York Dolls

All Dolled Up MVD

Nowadays, The New York Dolls are rightly considered one of the most original, important and influential bands in the history rock. But back in their mid-'70s heyday, almost nobody outside of a few American cities heard or saw them. Thankfully, one of the few who did was photographer Bob Gruen. And he had the foresight to have a camera rolling. Armed with one of the first portable B&W videotape recorders in the U.S., Gruen and his wife followed the Dolls from gig to gig and city to city, taping dozens of hours of the seminal Big Apple glam band. The magnificent *All Dolled Up* is the whittled-down version of

Gruen's vast archive. The main event has 96 minutes of performances, interviews, photo shoots, shopping trips and backstage debauchery. Highlights: Footage of Johnny Thunders before drugs totally scrambled his brains; singer David Johansen claiming he "can't wait to get home and get out of this ridiculous costume" during a photo shoot; the boys filming an impromptu backstage message to their record company; and a freewheeling interview on a grassy knoll outside NBC in Hollywood while waiting to tape the *Midnight Special*. There's plenty more where that came from. *All Dolled Up* is all filled up with extras, including: A dozen uncut performances from five gigs in three cities; commentary tracks by Johansen and guitarist Sylvain Sylvain; a 25-minute interview with Gruen conducted by Handsome Dick Manitoba; and a remarkable hour-long photo gallery narrated by Gruen. All in all, it's about four hours of vintage Dolls — which is about four hours more than most folks have seen of them.

★★★★

> DARRYL STERDAN