

Mission turned out fine as Cruise control failure put star into skid

DVD RELEASES

Ranked out of five stars

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Mission: Impossible III ★★★1/2

Yes, it was the best of the *Mission: Impossible* movies to date, but it still cost Tom Cruise his production deal with Paramount.

The problem wasn't the movie — a combustible blend of high-octane action and thrilling friction between Cruise and villain, Philip Seymour Hoffman. The problem was Cruise, who was at the nadir of his popularity as he courted Katie Holmes in a style borrowed from *The Bachelor*.

A few months after the ugly memories of couch jumping and other unpleasantness, *M:I:III* looks even better than it did on opening day. Cruise finds great chemistry with his male leads, and even manages to cook up some spark with love interest Michelle Monaghan as his character is forced to suffer through the abduction of his young wife. Great stunts, a good story and wonderful performances from the ensemble make Cruise more palatable — but he's still the film's biggest liability.

DVD features include a revealing making-of featurette that unveils the intricate details behind the stunts, as well as some good chit-chat with director J.J. Abrams. Other special features include audio commentary, deleted scenes, tribute montage, Inside the IMF, Scoring the Mission, a look at makeup effects and more.

LoudQUIETloud: A Film About The Pixies ★★★★

Watching a band break up can be as good, if not better, than a round of ultimate fighting. But watching a band get back together after a few years of estrangement is really the stuff documentary filmmakers dream about in the hours before Christmas morning.

If you're not a Pixies fan, chances are you won't get the same thrill as a Doolittle-lover, but you'll still be drawn into the drama of Steven Cantor and Matthew Culkin's documentary that follows the cult band as it picks up the pieces and heads back on tour after more than a decade of hostility. Featuring incredible access to the band that inspired Kurt Cobain to write *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, LoudQUIETloud investigates what pulled the band apart, and revises the myth of hipster cool as everyone emerges as a slight headache suffering from huge bouts of low self-esteem. If you thought being



Tom Cruise in *Mission: Impossible III*.
Paramount Pictures

a Pixie looked like fun, think again. These are some of the unhappiest and most insecure people you'll ever see.

DVD features include bonus scenes such as scoring the film with Daniel Lanois, Steve Albini and Girls with Insurance, Midterm Break, Sigur Ros, A Music Shop with Kim and Listening to WJUL Radio Session.

It's A Wonderful Life — 60th Anniversary Edition ★★★★★

It's a signature piece of warm and fuzzy movie magic from director Frank Capra, but *It's a Wonderful Life* would have gone nowhere if it hadn't begun with the possibility of death. George Bailey, Jimmy Stewart's depressive would-be Christmas suicide victim, embodies so many of our everyday fears and worries, there's something cathartic in just watching him find the courage to contemplate his troubles. By the time he overcomes those troubles, we're already in a different universe, delighting in the idea that fate can give us all a second chance.

In this 60th anniversary edition, we get the same magic that made this film a classic, as well as *The Making of It's a Wonderful Life* and *Remembrance, A Tribute to Frank Capra*.

Andy Goldsworthy — Rivers and Tides (Special Two-Disc Collector's Edition) ★★★★★

When the movie opens, it's hard not to look at Andy Goldsworthy as a man just bordering on sanity. By the time it's over, it's clear he's fine. We're the ones who've lost our connection to reality.

Without any formal introductions, the

movie places us squarely in Goldsworthy's universe as he roams around a rugged landscape, breaking up icicles and slowly sticking them back together. When the camera does pull back, the genius of Goldsworthy is revealed in all its glory. He's turning the landscape into artwork — quite literally.

Goldsworthy's work is not only inspiring, it provokes a pure emotional response — which makes this a standout film that's as meditative as it is transformative.

DVD features include Dolby 2.0, seven never-before seen shorts, photo gallery and a biography.

Keeping Up with the Steins ★★1/2

Keeping Up With the Steins is a comedy about Bar Mitzvahs, but it's actually about a lot more than birthday party parades and the desire to keep up with one's excessively wealthy neighbours.

For poor Benjamin Fiedler, a nice kid who's about to turn 13, plans for his big party are beginning to wear him down. It's just one crazy family scenario after another, and even though we've seen a lot of this high-energy ethnicity-driven comedy before, director Scott Marshall finds a handful of redeeming and original moments in the clutter of cliché.

DVD features include digital transfer and Dolby.

Tales of the Rat Fink ★★★

Toronto director Ron Mann (*Comic Book Confidential*, *Grass, Go Further*) tackles another subcultural landmark in his documentary look at the seminal force in chop-shop car design, Ed Roth — aka Big Daddy, creator of the Rat Fink.

An outsider without many prospects, Roth was part of the first wave of car customizers that pulled rusty old clunkers from the junk yard, and rebuilt the cars for curb value. Mostly a post-war obsession for former GIs, the car movement found a natural home in southern California as part of a nascent surf culture, and suddenly, the dune buggy was born.

Roth's cars truly are works of art, and in Mann's documentary, the most interesting moments come through the archival footage and the exploration of the cultural impact of Roth's work.

John Goodman appropriates the voice of Roth for the audio track, but his presence adds little. If anything, it borders on oversimplistic and just a little patronizing. It's the cars and the art that make this movie, and fortunately, Mann doesn't skimp on either.

DVD features include interviews with (Big Daddy) Roth, Rat Fink Reunion, Big Daddy's Garage, interview with Mann, trailer, The Sadies music video.