



FASTSCANS Top Foreign & Indie Picks

By Jeff T. Dick, Davenport, IA

The Bridge. b/w. 103+ min. In German w/English subtitles. Criterion Collection. 1959. DVD ISBN 9781681430126. \$29.95; Blu-ray ISBN 9781681430118. \$39.95.

In the waning days of World War II, a German bridge of no strategic significance is provided protection by seven barely trained teen soldiers. Orders given from a sympathetic local commandant are intended to keep the naïve recruits from being sent to the front lines, but the gung-ho troopers take their mission way too seriously, defending their village bridge to the death in the face of advancing Allied tanks. Surprising for its era, Bernhard Wicki's powerful antiwar film, based on an actual incident, dramatizes the horrible folly of blind patriotism. [Trailers, *LJ* 5/1/15.]

Limelight. 2 discs. b/w. 137+ min. Criterion Collection. 1952. DVD ISBN 9781604659948. \$29.95; 1-disc Blu-ray ISBN 9781604659931. \$39.95.

Billed as the "Tramp Comedian," aged Calvero (Charlie Chaplin) is past his prime as a vaudeville performer, drowning his sorrows (and getting through his act) with booze. Then he gets a new lease on life after rescuing a young ballerina

(Claire Bloom) from suicide and helping her land a plum role. She falls for him—or convinces herself she has—despite their two-generation age gap. Beautifully restored, Chaplin's late-career film flirts with mawkishness yet ultimately proves very moving in dealing with the implacability of time.

Magician: The Astonishing Life and Work of Orson Welles. color & b/w. 94+ min. Cohen Media Group. 2014. DVD UPC 741952791997. \$24.98; Blu-ray UPC 741952792093. \$34.98. Rated: PG-13.

Dubbed the Boy Wonder, Welles (1915–85) left an indelible mark on radio, theater, and film. From his school years performing on stage to his unseemly gig pitching Paul Masson wine to finance his projects, the director of *Citizen Kane* and broadcaster of "The War of the Worlds" gets a pithy profile from documentarian Chuck Workman (*What Is Cinema?*). Movie clips, archival footage of the filmmaker, and interviews with artists he influenced (Martin Scorsese, Peter Bogdanovich, et al.) make for an insightful, if too brief, primer.

Roman de Gare. color. 105 min. In French w/English subtitles. First Run Features. 2007. DVD UPC 720229916578. \$24.99. Rated: R.

A best-selling author (Fanny Ardant) whose disposable novels have been

ghostwritten by her male assistant (Dominique Pinon) finds her secret is threatened with exposure when his chance encounter with an abandoned fiancée (Audrey Dana) provides the inspiration for her—i.e., his—latest book. In this tantalizing thriller, Claude Lelouch (*A Man and a Woman*) excels as a master of implication, creating suspense without resorting to clichéd genre tropes while plumbing the arcane process of fictionalizing.



The Wrecking Crew. color. 101+ min. Magnolia Home Entertainment. 2008. DVD UPC 876964008549. \$26.98; Blu-ray UPC 876964008556. \$29.98. Rated: PG.

Filmmaker Denny Tedesco pays well-deserved tribute to his dad, Tommy, and other studio musicians whose recording session work provided the hit-making instrumentals for the Beach Boys, Nancy Sinatra, Herb Alpert, and many other pop artists in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Priceless file footage and revealing interviews with surviving members of the talented group harmonize with Brian Wilson, Cher, and others who sing the praises of these unheralded artisans. A terrific complement to the Oscar-winning *20 Feet from Stardom*.

expansion owing to weather conditions, etc.). This documentary shows how Vilaréal and a small group of determined visionaries accomplished this feat, which was dramatically unveiled on March 5, 2013. (Note: According to the Bay Lights website [www.thebaylights.org], a proposal with the State of California will bring the installation back in 2016 permanently.) **VERDICT** A fascinating look at the relationship between community support and art as well as a demonstration of how a seemingly impossible project came to be. For all audiences.—Phillip Oliver, Univ. of North Alabama Lib., Florence

Style Wars. color. 69+ min. Tony Silver, Public Arts Films, dist. by MVDvisual, 800-888-0486; www.mvdb2b.com. 2014. DVD UPC 022891139591. \$19.95. ART-GENERAL/HIP-HOP

First broadcast on PBS in 1983, *Style Wars* has been called "the Holy Grail of hip-hop movies," and this chronicle of late 1970s graffiti culture has retained its legendary status. Directed by the late Silver (1935–2008), *Style Wars* captures the look and feel of an ebullient moment in the de-

velopment of a genre of music, dance, and art that has a direct line to the present day. Silver interviewed key artists of the time, following them into the depths of the subway network and capturing their exuberance at the sight of their work as it traveled the line. The film is a balance between movement—cars, artists, the necessity of quick work—and thoughtful interviews with both those doing the painting and those tasked with keeping the subways clean and untagged, up to and including New York's feisty mayor Ed Koch. Bonus features include *Style Wars: Revisited*, a 34-minute collection of outtakes, new interviews, and "Where are they now" footage. **VERDICT** An excellent document of the early, premainstream days of hip-hop culture and the social and political context of graffiti art.—Bill Baars, Lake Oswego P.L., OR

Tap or Die. color & b/w. 62 min. Jackie Pare, dist. by Alexander Street, Filmmakers Library, www.academicvideostore.com/filmmakers. 2014. DVD \$295. Public performance. DANCE Pare's documentary uses the construct of au-

ditions for a proposed Broadway show, called *Imagine Tap!*, organized by master tap dancer Derick Grant to reflect on the history, rituals, styles, and issues of the tap world. The viewer is introduced to legendary faces of tap as well as a variety of contemporary performers and styles. An overriding theme is the rise and fall of the art form over time. Tap dance incorporates many elements from African American, English, Irish, and even clogging traditions. One of the most significant discussions concerns the musicality of tap both as a form of percussive music and as dance, with the sound being of utmost importance. The film does not shy away from race issues that have become part of the tap dance backdrop. Interviewees include Jacob's Pillow executive and artistic director Ella Baff and *New York Times* dance critic Brian Seibert, among many others. **VERDICT** This multi-film festival nominee is a solid contribution to a dance genre that is not well covered elsewhere. Recommended for almost any dance collection, though the high price will probably limit purchase by libraries with narrow budgets.—Tom Budlong, Atlanta