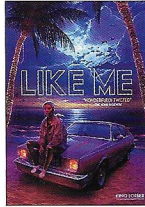


were married in 1964, and they had a son, nicknamed "Grub," who accompanied them everywhere, even when van Lawick was transferred to Africa's Serengeti. But Jane's heart remained with her work in Gombe and the couple eventually separated in 1974. Now 84, Goodall still travels around the world, advocating for conservancy. An excellent profile, this is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Granger)

Like Me ★★1/2

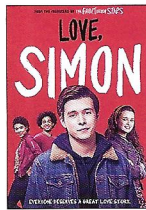
Kino Lorber, 83 min., not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$34.99



The destructive ways in which lonely, desperate people use the Internet to attract online "friends" are explored in flamboyant style here by first-time writer-director Robert Mockler. Gloomy Kiya (Addison Timlin) is determined to escape her dismal, drug-fueled existence by shooting videos designed to appeal to YouTube junkies, beginning with a convenience store robbery in which she forces the initially nonchalant clerk to beg for his life. That piece receives enthusiastic response from most viewers—who seem as troubled as Kiya—but there is one exception: Burt (Ian Nelson), who pedantically blasts its creator as an attention-seeking hack and points to her supporters as proof of cultural calamity. Kiya goes on to seduce a sleazy motel manager (Larry Fessenden) into letting her tie him up for sex and then films his humiliation, but afterward takes him with her as a hostage. As they travel, the pair develop an odd bond, suggesting that Kiya may be developing an ability to interact with real people. Still, she insists on tracking down and confronting Burt. Mockler indulges in all sorts of cinematic tricks—brightly-colored montages of random images, hyperkinetic editing, blaring music—that are more exhausting than exhilarating. But while often overwrought and confusing, *Like Me* marks Mockler as an inventive filmmaker with promise. A strong optional purchase. (F. Swietek)

Love, Simon ★★★

Fox, 110 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$34.99

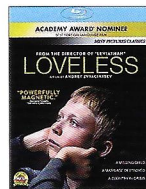


This sensitive, sweetly sincere, upbeat romantic comedy is a coming-of-age story that also marks the first major studio PG-13 wide-release film to revolve around an openly homosexual adolescent. Based on Becky Albertalli's 2015 YA novel, *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, the central character is popular 17-year-old high school senior Simon Spier (Nick Robinson), who ruefully notes that he's never "the leading guy." Instead, he's relegated to being "the best friend." So Simon decides: "I'm done living in a world where I don't get to be

who I am. I deserve a great love story." Affable Simon lives in an idyllic Atlanta suburb with empathetic parents (Jennifer Garner, Josh Duhamel) and a younger sister (Talitha Bateman), and he has a trio of supportive pals (Katherine Langford, Alexandra Shipp, Jorge Lendeborg Jr.). But Simon hasn't come out yet, and this reluctance leaves him open to blackmail by a drama club classmate (Logan Miller) when Simon's mysterious virtual love interest is revealed: Simon, utilizing the pseudonym "Jacques," has been corresponding on the school's chat board with another anonymous student, dubbed "Blue," who is also gay. As suspense builds, Blue's identity is kept secret until the sealed-with-a-kiss climax. Smartly directed by Greg Berlanti, this is recommended. (S. Granger)

Loveless ★★★★★

Sony, 127 min., in Russian w/ English subtitles, R, Blu-ray: \$30.99



The spiritual and moral rot permeating modern Russian society lies at the heart of director Andrey Zvyagintsev's somber Oscar-nominated film. On the surface, *Loveless* is a procedural mystery about the disappearance of a child, but on a deeper level it reflects the narcissistic emptiness at the center of so many lives, including those of the missing boy's parents, Boris (Alexey Rozin) and Zhenya (Maryana Spivak). A middle-class Moscow couple, they are working out the details of their divorce in a far from amicable process: the pair no longer talk to one another so much as string together insults, and both have already found new lovers. Their discord devastates 12-year-old son Alyosha (Matvey Novikov), whom neither parent wants custody of. But when the boy disappears and the police shrug it off, the couple contact a volunteer agency for assistance. The remainder of *Loveless* follows the search through forests and abandoned buildings, as well as the distant, isolated home of Zhenya's widowed mother (Natalya Potapova), who proves to be venomously unconcerned about what might have happened to her grandson. A lacerating portrait of a country in decline, made with an uncompromising vision, this is a brilliant piece of filmmaking. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (F. Swietek)

Manifesto ★★★

FilmRise, 95 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$24.95



Cate Blanchett plays 13 characters in German artist Julian Rosefeldt's feature-length film based on his earlier multi-screen gallery installation exhibited in Berlin and New York. In a series of scenes (sometimes intercut with one another), the actress portrays people declaiming a medley of

revolutionary manifestos, beginning with Karl Marx and followed by would-be artistic rebels, from Futurists, minimalists, and figures in the Fluxus movement, to surrealists, expressionists, and exponents of the Dogme 95 filmmaking school. At different times Blanchett adopts the guises of a homeless man, a news anchor, a wealthy capitalist, a puppeteer, a factory worker, and a scientist. Among the more amusing segments are ones in which she plays a Gloria Swanson-like choreographer rehearsing a bevy of dancers, a prim mother saying a prolonged grace at a meal as her husband and children fidget and giggle, a eulogist delivering a Dadaist diatribe at a funeral, and a teacher instructing her astonished young charges about filmmaking in the words of people like Stan Brakhage and Lars von Trier. *Manifesto* is an extended piece of recorded performance art, very well done from a technical perspective, with Blanchett clearly relishing the opportunity to take on so many rambunctious characters. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

Maya the Bee 2: The Honey Games ★★

Shout! Factory, 85 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$22.99



This so-so follow-up to 2014's computer-animated *Maya the Bee* seems more like a platform for encouraging kids to buy video games than a story with whole-cloth integrity. Once again, eternally positive and hopeful bee girl Maya (voiced by Coco Jack Gillies) shakes up the insect world when she implores a bee empress (Marney McQueen)—the hardhearted sister of the queen (Justine Clarke) of Maya's hive—not to demand half of the winter food that is stored for the colony. The best the empress will do is pronounce the arrival of competitive games between insect colonies; if Maya's team wins, they can keep all their honey. Much of the film becomes a sequence of games, from dodgeball to a team climbing exercise. Maya's friend Willi (Benson Jack Anthony) offers comic relief as a swooning doofus infatuated with the mean-girl bee who is trying to sabotage Maya's plans. The animation here is quite pleasing—with colorful bugs and blooming spring flowers—but without a substantive story, this sequel is a disappointment. Optional. (T. Keogh)

A Midsummer Night's Dream ★★1/2

Passion River, 104 min., not rated, DVD: \$69.99



Shakespeare's play receives highly imaginative but overly busy treatment from filmmaker Casey Wilder Mott, who transfers the action to pres-