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May '10 Docs on DVD

Written by Kevin Filipski

Covering a topic that went underreported at the time, Mine (Film Movement) sympathetically follows several New Orleans residents trying to be reunited with their pets, which were left behind during the chaotic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Although other families from across the country, with all the good intentions in the world, happily adopted animals that were thought abandoned, the frustrated local pet lovers are shown going through many legal and emotional difficulties trying to have their pets returned to them. Director Geralyn Pezanoski shows several people looking for their missing dogs (cats are also seen in the opening montage of "lost" animals); although the brief 80-minute running time precludes a comprehensive study, Mine is an engrossing look at another example of the devastation wrought by America's worst natural disaster. Extras include an update on one of the reunions, and a short film, The Life of a Dog, by director John Harden.



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Ancients Behaving Badly (History/New Video), despite its annoying use of re-enactments that are becoming the norm for these types of programs, provides insight into the barbarity of historical figures from Alexander the Great and Caligula to Cleopatra; Francois Romand's Call Me Madame (Alibi/Microcinema) presents the eye-opening story of a middle-aged Communist with a wife and teenaged son who becomes a transsexual (best extra: 22 Years Later featurette); Collapse (Film Buff) introduces us to Michael Ruppert, a muckraking journalist whose predictions about our current economic collapse are less chicken-little than prescient, and if he's only partly right about what's still to come in our future, God help us all (best extra: update with Ruppert); Yoav Shamir's provocative Defamation (First Run) is a clear-headed study (with a welcome sense of humor) about the very serious-and, unfortunately, ongoing-problem of worldwide anti-semitism; shot in Africa and Latin America, The End of Poverty (Cinema Libre)-narrated by Martin Sheen-gives us all food for thought about the dysfunction of the world's current economic policies, which favor the rich over the poor (best extra: extended interviews); the exhilarating Icons Among Us: Jazz in the Present Tense documents the present and future of jazz with interviews of and performances by greats Terence Blanchard, Jason Moran, Ravi Coltrane, along with Herbie Hancock and Wynton Marsalis (IndiePix); Inheriting the Future of Music: Pierre Boulez (Euroarts), a refreshingly casual musical portrait of the legendary French conductor-composer, shows him at work with young musicians and discussing his work and that of his predecessors (best extra: performance of Boulez and Debussy works); many hours of interviews and press conferences have been distilled to manageable length in John Lennon: Rare and Unseen (Wienerworld/MVD Visual), which presents a warts-and-all portrait of the slain Beatle; Pierre Boulez: Live from the Louvre (Ideale Audience) is a live performance as remarkable for its location-underneath the pyramid entrance of the Louvre-as for its sensational music-making by Boulez and an orchestra, performing Stravinsky's ballet score The Firebird (lone extra: Boulez interview about Stravinsky); one of the seminal performance artists is profiled in Meredith Monk: Inner Voice (First Run), an intimate glimpse at an artist at work by her good friend, director Babeth M. Van Loo (lone extra: performance of Monk's "Dolmen Music"); New York Jets: Best Games of 2009 (Warners) chronicles the team's surprising run last season that fell one victory short of the Super Bowl, with three complete games that were their most impressive wins; Road to Super Bowl XLIV: New Orleans Saints (Warner Blu-ray) follows the Saints as they made their way along the road to becoming last season's Super Bowl champions by defeating the Indianapolis Colts, thanks to an MVP performance by QB Drew Brees; Waiting for Armageddon (First Run) is an even-handed study by directors Kate Davis, David Heilbroner and Franco Sacchi of what millions of fundamentalist Christians believe: that the end of the world is near (best extra: roundtable discussion with filmmakers and experts); Words of Advice-William S. Burroughs on the Road

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