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The Flip Side

Reviews and More

TUESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2010

August Docs on Disc



Venice Revealed (Athena), a four-part documentary by British historian Peter Ackroyd, explores one of Italy's most mysterious and beautiful cities through painters, architects, musicians and theater artists. Instead of didactically showing us Venice's glories in a pedantically academic manner, Ackroyd leads us through its rich artistic history by concentrating on 19th century critic John Ruskin in *The City as Architecture*; great 17th century painter Tintoretto in *The*

City as Art; composer Antonio Vivaldi in *The City as Music*; and street performers in *The City as Theatre*. This three-hour series is much more than a companion to Ackroyd's book about Venice: it's also a visually splendid recording of one of the world's greatest—and grandest—repositories of various kinds of art.

ALSO AVAILABLE...

In David Rothmiller's strongly-argued ***For My Wife (Cinema Libre)***, Charlotte Strong tells how she became a marriage equality activist after her partner Kate died and both the hospital and funeral home treated Charlotte with discrimination (best extra: "Meet the Filmmakers" featurette); ***Four Seasons Lodge (First Run)***, the name of a Catskills resort, is also an evocative title for Michael Jacob's elegiac documentary of a group of Holocaust survivors that meets yearly to celebrate their second chance at life and remember family members who did not make it to America (best extra: deleted scenes); ***I Need That Record! (MVD)*** succinctly shows decades of history of the independent record store and how illegal file-sharing and the internet hastened its demise; ***The Jeff Koons Show***

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(Microcinema) says all we need to know about this trickster posing as an artist: he's entertaining but emphatically not a revelatory and revolutionary artist like Picasso, to whom he compares himself (lone extra: Koons discusses curating an exhibit); **Monarchy—Complete Collection (Acorn)** presents the entirety of David Starkey's engrossing 16-part series, on five discs, probing the men and women who have led the British for nearly 1500 years, from early Anglo-Saxon king Offa to Queen Victoria—some episodes were not seen when the series was on PBS; the story of a black teenage girl with white lesbian parents, **Off and Running (First Run)** incisively documents an unconventional but emphatically normal family (best extra: additional scenes); another transparent attempt to make a buck off the Beatles, **Paul McCartney Really Is Dead (MVD)** ineptly tries reviving the "Paul is dead" rumor, with a bad George Harrison sound-alike giving shocking "revelations" about Paul's supposed imposter (best extra: vintage footage, *Bob Dylan Meets the Beatles*); **Prodigy—Tiger Woods (Infinity)** gives a superficial overview of Woods' life before and after he became the world's most famous—then infamous—golfer (best extra: *Golf Back in the Olympics* featurette); Stephanie Soechtig's **Tapped (Disinformation)** soberly lays out how the bottled water business destroys everything: namely, our fresh water supply and our health: it's advocacy journalism in the very best sense (best extra: additional scenes); **World War I in Color (Athena)**, narrated by Kenneth Branagh, unveils hours of fascinating vintage footage from the Great War (in six 50-minute episodes) that has been recently colorized—rather than the black and white images we are used to, a nearly century-old war is brought to immediate life thanks to the vividness of color film (best extra: *Tactics & Strategy*, a superb 50-minute program detailing how warfare became modern in the 20th century).

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About Me

Kevin Filipksi....

began writing reviews in 19 his college newspaper, The Buffalo State Record. Since he's written about movies, theater, books and videos/I for The New York Times, The Buffalo News, Buffalo Night Magazine, Metro Weekend, Dog Press, Queens Resident York Resident, Stagebill, Play Time Out New York, Brooklyn Bridge magazine, Musicworld magazine, The Brooklyn Paper, The West Side Spirit/Our Town staticmultimedia.com, amazon.com, film-forward.filmfestivaltraveler.com and timessquare.com. He's also written the program notes for Brooklyn Philharmonic concert since the 2007 season and written the liner notes for the 2004 Special Edition CD of "The Electric Chill" soundtrack.

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