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Beatles, 'Brave One' top DVD releases

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

"Across the Universe"

Songs by the Beatles and wild visuals crafted by director Julie Taymor take center stage in this musical romance set against the social upheaval of the 1960s and the Vietnam War. Evan Rachel Wood stars as a sheltered American teen whose eyes are gradually opened to the era's injustices and idealism, while Jim Sturgess plays a working-class Brit who comes to America searching for his father and falls for Wood. The largely unknown cast is augmented by musical performances from Joe Cocker, Eddie Izzard and Bono, along with a cameo by Salma Hayek, who starred in Taymor's "Frida." The two-disc DVD set and Blu-ray high-definition disc have eight extended musical numbers and a deleted one — the tune "And I Love Her" featuring co-stars Dana Fuchs and Martin Luther McCoy. Taymor and composer Elliot Goldenthal also provide commentary. DVD set, \$28.96; Blu-ray, \$38.96. (Sony)

"The Brave One"

Jodie Foster gets mad and gets even in a female variation of "Taxi Driver," the 1970s film that brought the actress her first Academy Award nomination. Foster stars as a New York radio host who turns into a vengeful vigilante prowling the streets with a gun after she's seriously injured and her fiancé is killed by thugs. Terrence Howard co-stars as a cop who befriends her, unaware she's the perpetrator making headlines as judge, jury and executioner of wrongdoers. The DVD has deleted footage and a featurette. DVD, \$28.98; Blu-ray and HD DVD, \$35.99 each. (Warner Bros.)

"Elizabeth: The Golden Age"

Cate Blanchett returns to the role that made her movie career, again earning a best-actress Oscar nomination as the British monarch of centuries past. The follow-up to 1998's "Elizabeth" reunites Blanchett, co-star Geoffrey Rush and director Shekhar Kapur as the Protestant spinster queen faces a holy war with Roman Catholic Spain while engaging in a dalliance with the dashing explorer Walter Raleigh (Clive Owen). Among the extras are deleted scenes, featurettes on locations, battle scenes and production design, and commentary from Kapur. DVD, \$29.98; HD DVD, \$39.98. (Universal)

"The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford"

The movie whose title is its own plot spoiler stars Brad Pitt as legendary 19th century outlaw James, an 1880s media star coming undone amid his own self-created myths, while Casey Affleck plays the spurned admirer who decides to take out his idol. The role earned Affleck an Oscar nomination as supporting actor, while cinematographer Roger Deakins also was nominated for the dreamlike imagery captured in director Andrew Dominik's portrait of James. High-definition HD DVD and Blu-ray releases of the film follow on Feb. 26. The HD DVD



Jim Sturgess admires his strawberry collection in "Across the Universe."



When her bosses at the radio station told Jodie Foster's character her talk show would benefit from a rapid-fire delivery, they didn't know she would take them literally.

release includes a behind-the-scenes documentary segment. DVD, \$27.95; Blu-ray and HD DVD, \$35.99. (Warner Bros.)

"The Aristocats"

A feline variation of "Lady and the Tramp," Disney's 1970 animated feature returns to DVD. The musical cartoon features Eva Gabor providing the voice of a pampered society cat

dumped in the French countryside by a butler scheming to deprive her and her kittens of an inheritance left by their rich owner.

Phil Harris provides the voice of a pragmatic alley cat who helps escort the kitties back home.

The new DVD version includes a deleted song and a 1946 Disney short cartoon. DVD, \$29.99. (Disney)

TV on DVD

"Third Watch: The Complete First Season"

Police, firefighters and paramedics work side by side to protect and serve New Yorkers in this action series. The first 22 episodes come in a six-disc set, accompanied by deleted scenes and a featurette. DVD set, \$59.98. (Warner Bros.)

"Perfect Strangers: Complete First and Second Seasons"

The sitcom that debuted in 1986 stars Mark Linn-Baker and Bronson Pinchot in the story of an American bunking with his immigrant cousin. The four-disc set has the first 28 episodes. DVD set, \$29.98. (Warner Bros.)

"Beauty and the Beast: The Final Season"

The third and final year of the fantasy romance comes to DVD in a three-disc set with 12 episodes. Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman star in the love story about a prosecutor and her subterranean beau. DVD set, \$49.99. (Paramount)

"Slings and Arrows: The Complete Collection"

All three seasons of the acclaimed Canadian series are packed in a seven-disc set with 18 episodes. Starring Paul Gross, Don McKellar, Martha Burns and Mark McKinney and featuring such guest stars as Sarah Polley and Rachel McAdams, the show follows the ups and downs of an eccentric theater troupe. DVD set, \$59.99. (Acorn)

"McLeod's Daughters: The Complete Fifth Season"

Women continue to rule the ranch in this Australian series about half-sisters who inherit a cattle farm and staff it with a group of all-female cow hands. DVD set, \$76.98. (Koch Vision)

Other new releases

"The Jane Austen Book Club"

An ensemble including Maria Bello, Kathy Baker, Jimmy Smits, Emily Blunt and Amy Brenneman plays out modern variations of Austen's romantic entanglements as a book club meets once a month to discuss the author's works. Extras include deleted scenes and commentary. DVD, \$26.96; Blu-ray \$38.96. (Sony)

"Feast of Love"

Another ensemble led by Morgan Freeman, Greg Kinnear, Radha Mitchell and Selma Blair is featured in director Robert Benton's tale of love and heartache set at an Oregon coffee shop. Benton provides commentary, and the DVD has a couple of featurettes. DVD, \$29.99. (MGM)

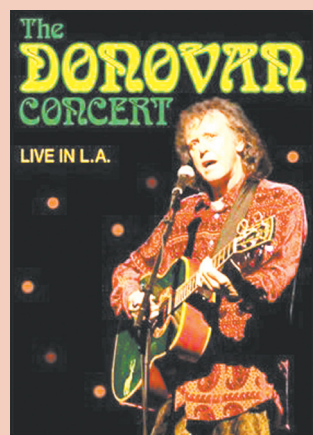
Donovan DVD a mellow meditation on the 1960s

DONOVAN, "The Donovan Concert Live in L.A." (Raven Productions) ☆☆☆ — Donovan Leitch, or simply Donovan to a generation of Boomers whose life's soundtrack was the top-40 radio playlist of the mid-1960s, was the quintessential poster boy for the cultural revolution when he burst onto the American music scene in 1966.

From his bell-bottom jeans and Nehru shirts, to his quirky yet very British singing style, his "psychedelic folk" arrangements and eclectic lyrics, his very public arrest for marijuana consumption and his very vocal opposition to the Vietnam War, Donovan personified the hippie image. It's hardly a surprise that when punk and metal became rock's dominant forms in the 1970s, Donovan all but disappeared from the radio and the public consciousness.

But he didn't disappear from the scene, apparently. Although the last Donovan single to gain any significant altitude on the charts was "Goo Goo Barabajagal," which reached No. 36 in the U.S. in 1968, he has continued to make music off and on for the last 40 years.

If you haven't heard it, well, you're not alone. It seems that even Donovan eschews his later catalog in favor of his early radio hits when he takes to the concert stage, as he did on Jan. 24, 2007, at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood,



in a benefit for the David Lynch Foundation for Consciousness-Based Education and World Peace.

It seems Dave and Don want to bring back the Transcendental Meditation movement, and if that by itself doesn't scream "1960s," neither Donovan nor the filmmakers are shy about pointing it out at every opportunity during the 78-minute video that documents the performance.

A photo montage of a younger, groovier Donovan in all his flower-power glory while "Sunshine Superman" plays in the background sets the mood, which is enhanced by Lynch's introduction touting him as a visionary whose words and music take the listener "to a magic place."

Donovan takes it from there, sitting cross-legged on the floor with his acoustic guitar while he chants lead-ins to his songs and name-drops Beatles, Beach Boys

and Rolling Stones. Sense a common thread here?

But what prevents him from being merely a nostalgia act — or worse, a complete anachronism — is the fact that the old songs have aged rather well, especially when stripped of their hippie trappings.

There are no harpsichords or whirling organs or brass here. Just Donovan's guitar, augmented tastefully by Tom Mansi's concert bass and Stewart Lawrence's congas. Pared to their folk essence, it's easy to see why "Jennifer Juniper," "Season of the Witch," "Hurdy Gurdy Man," "Mellow Yellow," the aforementioned "Sunshine Superman" and a handful of others were such big hits.

Donovan debuts a verse he says George Harrison wrote for "Hurdy Gurdy Man" during their days of palling around with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and debuts a new song — "Illusions" — as part of the four-song bonus-extras package. In this case, though, "bonus" translates to extra baggage.

Guests Astrella Celeste (Donovan's daughter, a singer in her own right) and Beach Boy Mike Love (who mostly just stands around holding a microphone during "Mellow Yellow") contribute little to the show. But with Donovan and his two sidemen bringing their A-game to the stage, the pinch-hitters aren't necessary. (Dave Fennessy)

'Hannah Montana' rules box office

LOS ANGELES (AP) — First, she sells out a nationwide concert tour. Now Miley Cyrus and pop-star alter-ego Hannah Montana are selling out movie theaters in such record-breaking style that the film's run has been extended.

"Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," the 3-D film chronicling her recent tour, was the biggest debut ever over Super Bowl weekend, pulling in \$29 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Distributor Disney planned to have the movie out for only a week but now has decided to keep it in theaters until it runs its course.

The concert film — featuring 15-year-old Cyrus both as herself backstage and as her Disney Channel character, pop sensation Hannah — filled the void for fans unable to catch one of the live shows on the Hannah Montana 54-date tour.

The digital 3-D technology also gave fans the illusion of practically being at a live show, said Mark Zoradi, president of Disney's motion-picture group, who visited several packed theaters where the movie played over the weekend.

"The screaming level was unbelievable. It almost plays like a concert. At the end of a song, you have audiences clapping like you do at a concert," Zoradi said. "Parents who weren't able to get concert tickets, now they were able to take their kids and satisfy that demand, and kids were in a way able to be up close and personal, with the best seats in the house."

The film surpassed the previous Super Bowl record of

\$21.6 million set by "When a Stranger Calls," which opened over the same weekend two years ago.

Lionsgate's "The Eye," a remake of the Japanese horror hit, opened at No. 2 with \$13 million. "The Eye" stars Jessica Alba as a blind concert violinist whose vision is restored by a corneal transplant that also results in terrifying visions.

"Desperate Housewives" co-star Eva Longoria Parker delivered a dud with her first top-billed movie, "Over Her Dead Body," which opened with a weak \$4.6 million to finish at No. 11. Distributed by New Line, the movie stars Longoria Parker as a dead woman whose ghost tries to break up a romance between her fiancé (Paul Rudd) and his new girlfriend.

Playing in just 683 theaters, "Hannah Montana" broke another record: never before has a movie in so few cinemas premiered at the top of the box office chart.

The movie averaged a whopping \$42,460 a theater, compared to an average of \$5,337 in each of 2,436 cinemas for "The Eye" and about \$2,327 in each of 1,977 theaters for "Over Her Dead Body."

The grosses for "Hannah Montana" were boosted by higher admission prices many theaters charged because of the 3-D format. Tickets for "Hannah Montana" ran as high as \$15, roughly 50 percent more than the top price for other movies.

The success of "Hannah Montana" showcased the commercial prospects for an upcoming wave of 3-D releases, both new movies such as this summer's adaptations of Jules Verne's "Journey to the

Center of the Earth" and releases such as the first two "Toy Story" films in 3-D versions.

Digital projection allows sharper and more realistic images than old-fashioned film 3-D, a 1950s fad revived only occasionally over the decades. Now, many big studio films come out in 3-D versions.

Those releases typically do three times more business than 2-D versions, said Michael Lewis, chairman and co-founder of Real D, whose digital-projection 3-D technology was used in most theaters showing "Hannah Montana" and will be used in an upcoming wide release of another concert film, "U2 3D," now playing in limited release.

The 3-D technology eventually could expand turn theaters into venues showing live concerts and sporting events, Lewis said.

"There are a lot of places, a lot of small towns where we have Real D in place where U2's not going to go, Hannah Montana's not going to play there," Lewis said. "They'll be able to see it in theaters, and in my view maybe with a better seat and better experience than if they were actually there live."

The top 10

1. "Hannah Montana & Miley Cyrus: Best of Both Worlds Concert," \$29 million.
2. "The Eye," \$13 million.
3. "27 Dresses," \$8.4 million.
4. "Juno," \$7.5 million.
5. "Meet the Spartans," \$7.1 million.
6. "Rambo," \$7 million.
7. "The Bucket List," \$6.9 million.
8. "Untraceable," \$5.4 million.
9. "Cloverfield," \$4.9 million.
10. "There Will Be Blood," \$4.8 million.