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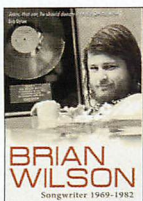
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DVDs



**Brian Wilson –
Songwriter:
1969 - 1982 DVD**
(MVD)
★★★★★★★★★ 7/10

The most troubled period for The Beach Boys' resident genius is the focus of this documentary. With input from musicians, friends, and writers, along with period photos and footage, the film glances briefly back to the band's start before taking a close look at the pressures that led to Brian Wilson's withdrawal during the creation of the doomed *SMiLE* album.

While tracking The Beach Boys' progress through these years, *Songwriter* also follows Wilson's projects such as recordings with poet Stephen Kalinich and Spring, his first wife Marilyn Wilson's band. With the controversial therapist Eugene Landy eventually stepping in, we see Wilson begin to truly reemerge—though, ultimately, at what cost? (www.mvdb2b.com)

By Hays Davis



The Cabin in the Woods
Blu-ray/DVD
(LIONSGATE)
★★★★★★★★★ 8.5/10

Co-written by longtime friends Joss Whedon (*The Avengers*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) and Drew Goddard

(*Cloverfield*), *The Cabin in the Woods* is a charming horror film that knows its voyeuristic audience. It plays up the upstart cast's snarky banter and the gruesome jump scares. Subverting the horror genre has been done before, but Whedon and Goddard's flighty enthusiasm is entirely toothsome. The main through-line will be familiar to slasher film aficionados, but what goes on beyond the scenes will thrill the brain beyond the reptilian hypothalamus. The gripping and blood-filled final act ends with a nihilistic thump when the puppeteers running this meta-freak show pull back and reveal *The Cabin in the Woods'* true intentions. Lionsgate's Blu-ray bonus features (commentaries, documentaries, and featurettes) are ordinary but can divert your attention in fits and starts. The true highlight is this pleasurable genre experiment transferred to the small screen.

(www.discoverthecabininthewoods.com)

By Kyle Lemmon



Children of Paradise
Blu-ray/DVD
★★★★★★★★★ 10/10

Les Visiteurs du Soir
Blu-ray/DVD
★★★★★★★★★ 5/10
(CRITERION)

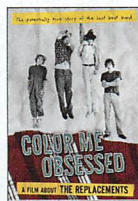
The legends behind Marcel Carné's *Children of Paradise* are as fascinating as the film itself.

Filmed in France during German occupation with a cast of 1,800 extras that included both Resistance members and Nazi sympathizers, and released to massive success after the Liberation, it's rumored to be playing somewhere in a French theater every day of the year. While its frequently attributed status as the greatest French film of all time might be debated, it no doubt belongs in the upper ranks; *Children of Paradise* is a magnificent joy. Set mostly in and around a Parisian theater circa the 1830s, four characters—a mime, a crook, an actor, and an aristocrat—become romantically entangled with the same woman. Every setpiece is either majestic in scale or bustling with life; not a single performance is unmemorable. At 190 minutes—like other compulsively watchable classics, such as *The Godfather* or *Gone With The Wind*—it's the perfect film to lose afternoon after afternoon in. Criterion's presentation is superb, boasting a restored transfer and new

extras that make even their standard-setting 2002 release of the film look shabby in comparison.

Les Visiteurs du Soir—English title: *The Devil's Envoys*—is Carné's earlier occupation-era film. A medieval fantasy about two imps—disguised as wandering minstrels—who are sent to a castle to muck up a royal wedding. Much love has gone into this release, but the film suffers from tedious pacing and dull characters. Compared to *Children of Paradise*, it's not even in the same league. (www.criterion.com)

By Austin Trunick



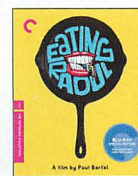
**Color Me Obsessed:
A Film About The
Replacements**
DVD
(MVD)
★★★★★★★★★ 7/10

Color Me Obsessed is a talking history of The

Replacements that, thanks to its endlessly colorful subject and a wide range of knowledgeable firsthand commentators, manages to effectively cover the entire lifetime of a band without including any of their music, photos, or footage.

Incorporating details from journalists, label employees, and musicians such as Hüsker Du's Grant Hart and Greg Norton, the film incrementally dwells on each album and on various career milestones (their 1984 *Village Voice* cover), fractures (on-stage fights), and their joy in playing a mad range of covers. Here's your source for the number of aborted attempts at playing an entire first gig without being asked to leave. (www.mvdb2b.com)

By Hays Davis



Eating Raoul
Blu-ray/DVD
(CRITERION)
★★★★★★★★★ 7.5/10

Eating Raoul is as black as comedies come.

Director/co-writer/star

Paul Bartel plays Paul Bland, a nebbishy wine collector; Mary Woronov is his good-looking wife. The couple hold firm to values ripped from a 1950s sitcom, sleeping in separate beds, frowning on sex, and bemoaning the swinger-types who have moved into their building. They dream of opening up their own country kitchen, but lack the seed money. When Paul accidentally kills two lascivious intruders and finds more than \$1,000 in their wallets, the couple decides to make a business out of luring in the "perverts" and murdering them with frying pans. As the dollars—and cadavers—are starting to really add up, enter a charismatic grafter named Raoul. You can draw your own conclusions about where this is going just from the film's title.

Eating Raoul is disturbingly funny, provided your sense of humor is dark. Paul and Mary have an absurdly dry attitude toward serial murder; the deliberately campy script is full of over-the-top characters. Criterion's treatment of the film is superb, with a clean transfer—the best it's looked since its 1982 release—and a healthy number of extra features, including two of the late Bartel's early short films. (www.criterion.com)

By Austin Trunick



The Game
Blu-ray/DVD
(CRITERION)
★★★★★★★★★ 7.5/10

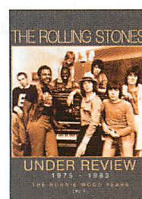
Between the hit *Seven* and cult classic *Fight Club*, David Fincher

directed this mind-warping thriller that plays out like a feature-length *Twilight Zone* episode.

Michael Douglas stars as filthy rich, super-mean investment banker Nicholas Van Orton, a through-and-through asshole who receives a mysterious gift card from his younger brother (Sean Penn) on his 48th birthday. This card enrolls him in "The Game," run by the mysterious Consumer Recreation Services, and promises to be a life-changing experience. What is the game? When does it start? Who's playing it, and who isn't? These are the questions both Van Orton and the audience must ask themselves throughout the film. As a series of increasingly catastrophic events throw the banker's comfortable life into chaos, it becomes less and less clear where real life ends and the roleplaying begins.

If there's a nagging complaint, it's in how the movie wraps up a little too neatly in a succession of cluttered twists; however, as unsatisfying as the closing scenes can feel, you'll find yourself hard-pressed to come up with a better one. As you might gather from the equally underwhelming alternate ending on Criterion's extra-packed release, Fincher probably struggled with it, too. (www.criterion.com)

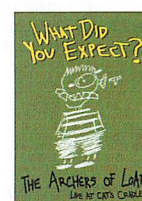
By Austin Trunick



**The Rolling
Stones – Under
Review 1975–1983:
The Ronnie
Wood Years
(Pt. 1) DVD**
(MVD)
★★★★★★★★★ 6/10

The years 1975 to 1983 did not represent the best period for The Rolling Stones. Guitarist Mick Taylor left the band in 1974, after some spectacular work on albums like *Sticky Fingers* and *Exile on Main St.*, and was replaced by Faces guitarist Ronnie Wood, who would see the band through to the present. *Under Review 1975–1983* examines this period in the Stones' history, with contributions from journalists Robert Christgau, Anthony DeCurtis, and Barney Hoskyns, among others. Interviews present a chronological examination of the Stones' work during that time, with interspersed video clips that provide visual reference points. Importantly, this is no fluff piece: the DVD presents an honest critical account of the period that spawned both *Some Girls* and *Undercover*. By the end the Stones are left, as they might say, in tatters, but with regained status on the horizon. (www.mvdb2b.com)

By Frank Valish



**What Did You
Expect? The
Archers of Loaf
Live at Cat's
Cradle**
DVD
(MVD)
★★★★★★★★★ 7/10

This live DVD was filmed on the band's North Carolina home turf during their 2011 reunion, and in it Archers of Loaf tear through a long set that reaches deep into their catalogue. Playing before a packed, ecstatic crowd that probably often sings along without realizing it, the band has possibly never sounded better, crashing through such favorites as "Audiowhore" and "Harnessed in Slums" like they'd wrapped recording on 1995's *Vee Vee* album only that afternoon.

Fans will also enjoy the road tales and bits of insight from the band interviews interspersed throughout. How many reunited groups have to abandon playing certain songs because the original tuning is now completely beyond them? (www.archersofloaf.net)

By Hays Davis