

many larger than life figures, it is able to muster surprisingly little excitement. A better choice here would be *Mafia: The History of the Mob in America* (VL-9/94). Not a necessary purchase. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)

Sosúa: Make a Better World ★★1/2

(2013) 56 min. DVD: \$24.95 (\$195 w/PPR). Willow Pond Films (tel: 212-665-7970, web: www.willowpondfilms.com).



Prior to the outbreak of World War II, the Dominican Republic offered refuge to 800 German Jews trying to flee from the Nazi regime. This seemingly humanist gesture, extended by Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo, was not entirely altruistic—the racist Trujillo was in the midst of persecuting the nation's blacks, and he used the arrival of Europeans as a means to expand his white population. Peter Miller and Renée Silverman's *Sosúa* revisits this bizarre chapter in Caribbean history through an unusual vehicle: documenting the creation of a musical play about the incident. The stage production, which is put together by Broadway veteran Liz Swados, features a cast of Dominican and Jewish teenagers from the Washington Heights section of New York. Needless to say, history takes a backseat to profiles of the plucky kids who study and rehearse with aggressive passion. Miller and Silverman's film is well made, and the young performers deserve kudos for their talent and sincerity, but the musical itself is unremarkable (the score is weak and the story reduces the historical complexities). Still, this well-intended PBS-aired documentary should be considered a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

We Women Warriors ★★★

(2012) 82 min. In Spanish w/English subtitles. DVD: \$300, Blu-ray: \$330. Todos Los Pueblos Productions (tel: 213-342-8397, web: www.wewomenwarriors.com). PPR.

We Women Warriors focuses on the violence threatening indigenous peoples of Colombia, centering on three women—Doris, Flor, and Ludis—who organize in their small villages and campaign together for peace. Caught in the fighting between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and rebel guerrillas, native villagers have been accused of crimes against the government and imprisoned or executed, or driven from their communities, with the end result that some groups are now facing possible extinction. Tribal leader Doris has worked to protect refugees fleeing the conflict, speaking before local gatherings and appearing nationally to call attention to their plight. She also meets with coca growers—dependent on the drug trade for their livelihood—who argue that if the government provided the infrastructure they would produce and sell other crops. Flor, also a tribal leader, explains how the present conflict is financed by drugs. Ludis worked as a cook for the local police, and then was accused of conspiring in the deaths of 15 policemen and spent a year in prison. For the most part, filmmaker Nicole Karsin lets the trio tell their stories in their own words, occasionally supplementing their personal accounts with official news reports and archival footage. A powerful, well-made overview of a tragic situation, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

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Halloween Home Haunts ★★★★★

(2013) 86 min. DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$24.95. *Apprehensive Films* (avail. from most distributors).



This unique documentary showcases a staple of neighborhoods across America every October—houses that go all out for Halloween with elaborate displays, strobe lights, loud sounds, and live actors to create a genuinely spine-chilling experience. Scouring yard sales, secondhand stores, and hardware shops—as well as “traditional” providers of masks and other supplies—the enthusiasts featured here rival Hollywood set designers, displaying impressive expertise in layout, construction, animation techniques, and other skills. One man whose specialty is an

projection techniques, and other skills. One man, whose specialty is an obstacle-course approach through his yard, employs a fog machine with an elaborate PVC pipe system to distribute the smoke, and also has a number of coffins and other automated and human-powered units that allow beasties to pop out and elicit the desired shrieks. The goal for visitors is to make it to the door, where the candy awaits as a reward. Advice from the pros here? Pick a theme (such as a zombie wedding or vampires) and then start building your interpretation. The people and walkthroughs featured will likely inspire anyone interested in giving this seasonal hobby a try, while those who've already succumbed to the temptation will undoubtedly pick up a few solid tips and tricks. A warm and engaging look at an offbeat topic, this is highly recommended. **Editor's Choice**. Aud: P. (C. Block)

In the Spirit of the Game: Sports Conduct and Fair Play ★★★

(2012) 21 min. DVD: \$129.95. VEA (dist. by Films Media Group, tel: 800-322-8755, web: www.films.com). PPR. Closed captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62290-040-4.

This Australian production takes a brief look at the importance of exhibiting good behavior in competitive sports. A narrator covers topics including the definition of proper sportsmanship (offering bad examples to contrast with good etiquette like shaking hands), codes of conduct (controlling one's temper, and the importance of rules for players, coaches, officials, and spectators), being a team player and modest winner (and graciously accepting defeat), and guidelines for successful conflict resolution (such as staying calm during heated situations). Featuring various scenarios, tips, and commentary from rugby referees Nigel Owens and Natalie Amor, Aussie pro basketball player Daniel Dillon, and Melbourne Heart football player Mate Dugandžić, this is recommended. Aud: I, J, P. (J. Williams-Wood)

Revelations ★★1/2

(2013) 120 min. DVD: \$28. Westar Institute (tel: 503-375-5323, web: www.westarinstitute.org). PPR.



The byways of early Christian thought—namely through texts considered peripheral or ultimately excluded from what evolved into the Scriptural canon—has long been the scholarly focus of Elaine Pagels, Professor of Religion at Princeton University, and the author of numerous bestselling books. *Revelations* captures her plenary address at the 2013 spring meeting of the Westar Institute, a talk largely tied to Pagels' most recent titular tome, subtitled *Visions, Prophecy, and Politics in the Book of Revelation*. Pagels primarily deals with the context in which the last book of the New Testament was written, but her treatment is delivered in a conversational and often digressive style that is accompanied by some illustrative slides. Unfortunately, while her comments touch upon the myriad other apocalyptic works composed at roughly the same time as the Book of Revelation, her assessment is obviously not as complete as what is found in her book. On the other hand, Pagels' remarks about her own religious experiences and how they led her to make the scholarly choices that have guided her academic career make for interesting asides. Also including a somewhat lengthy introduction of Pagels by L. Michael White of the University of Texas, as well as a Q&A that followed her talk, this low-budget production serves as a useful adjunct to Pagels' 2012 book, but is by no means a replacement. A strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (F. Swetek)

Wagner: A Genius in Exile ★★★

(2013) 54 min. DVD: \$24.99. Naxos of America (available from most