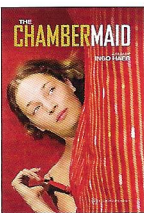


act out her peculiar form of self-therapy: namely, hiding under strangers' beds. A diligent worker with a nearmania for cleaning—and recent history as a mental patient—Lynn sometimes also puts on the clothes of hotel guests. But she is largely interested in observing activity in a room from an underneath-the-mattress perspective, which leads to her meeting and forming a relationship with a high-priced prostitute. Writer-director Ingo Haeb patiently strings out the various mysteries going on here about Lynn's sanity, while clearly also establishing Lynn as a sympathetic—albeit quirky—girl-woman. Along the way, there are moments of genuine tension revolving around what strange, dark acts Lynn is actually capable of doing. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



Chasing the Muse ★★

Artsploitation, 101 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$18.99

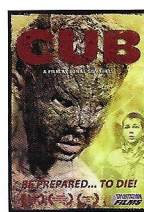
French filmmaker Jean-Francois Davy's essay/exegesis/skinflick documentary *Chasing the Muse* serves up plenty of explicit female nudity and sex as it follows the bearish Davy—a Fred Flintstone lookalike and longtime purveyor of steamy stuff—who quotes Godard and Lelouch while ruminating on women, repression, and how he makes no distinction between raunchy porn and allegedly higher-class eroticism. Supposedly auditioning actresses, Davy and a cameraman tour Eastern Europe, interviewing beautiful girls and paying them for orgasmic sessions and sex, finally settling on one blonde. Some will certainly find this distasteful, and may be disappointed that Liam Neeson never crashes through a door and sprays the set with gunfire while rescuing a daughter. Slightly more interesting is an included second feature, Davy's 1975 film *Exhibition*, in which the filmmaker talks with French prostitute-turned-XXX-star Claudine Beccarie (who condemns *Deep Throat* as “sick...deformed sex” and regrets that she can no longer take Holy Communion because she's divorced) in between a number of hardcore sex scenes. Not a necessary purchase. (C. Cassidy)



Cub ★1/2

Artsploitation, 85 min., in Flemish & French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$18.99, Blu-ray: \$22.99

Belgium filmmaker Jonas Govaerts' grisly Flemish-language horror film (originally called *Welp*) starts with a wonky sense of humor before settling down for the basically grim business of sadistic bloodletting and mass homicide. A bunch of boy Pathfinder



scouts set off for a camping expedition under the supervision of young counselors, who have already prepared a campfire mythology about “Kai”—a juvenile werewolf terrorizing the forest by night. It turns out there really is a menace: a brutal survivalist of unknown origin who is booby-trapping the woods with all sorts of devices, accompanied by his ward/apprentice/something—a feral boy in a mask. Sam (Maurice Luijten), the most bullied of the young scouts, mistakes the wild child for lycanthrope Kai, and a twisted relationship develops between the lads. Sensitive viewers (who would be watching this...why, exactly?) should beware of a scene of extreme animal cruelty involving a bull terrier. Add to that a bunch of forgettable characters and a disappointing payoff and this is one to skip. Not recommended. (C. Cassidy)

Dark Star: H.R. Giger's World ★★★

Icarus, 80 min., in English & German w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99

During the final months of his life, H.R. Giger (1940-2014)—a Swiss artist known for his bizarre paintings as well as his creature designs for Ridley Scott's *Alien*—gave filmmaker Belinda Sallin access to his cluttered Zurich estate for this documentary, which mimics the dreamy, surrealist tone of the artist's work rather than being a conventional biographical profile. Much of *Dark Star* follows Giger as he putters about the house, where every nook and cranny is stuffed with his creations, or visits the surrounding garden, which is filled with grotesque statuary that is circuited by a miniature train. Giger says little, although when he does become introspective—such as when he recalls his first wife's suicide—the tone of regret is palpable. More in-depth commentary is offered by Giger's second wife and a number of friends and collaborators, who not only offer admiring assessments of Giger's art but also provide insight into his family background and suggest psychological interpretations regarding the origins of his unusual “biomechanical” constructs. In addition to archival footage of a younger Giger, the film accompanies him on a contemporary trip to a museum that houses his work, where he seems shyly ill at ease with enthusiastic fans at a book signing. Serving up an interesting portrait of a popular artist in his twilight days, this is recommended. (F. Switek)



Descendants ★★1/2

Walt Disney, 112 min., not rated, DVD: \$26.99

High School Musical meets the next generation of Disney fairy-tale characters in this original musical fantasy that aired on the Disney Channel. The offspring of four Disney villains—Mal (daughter of Maleficent), Carlos (son of Cruella de Vil), Jay (son of

Jafar), and Evie (daughter of Evil Queen)—are released from a magical island prison (which looks alarmingly like a slum) and welcomed into the magical kingdom to attend boarding school with the children of fairy-tale heroes and heroines. Maleficent (played by Broadway superstar Kristin Chenoweth) sees this as her big chance to escape; she orders Mal to steal the Fairy Godmother's wand. But the only chance for that is during the coronation of the new king (son of Belle and the Beast)—the same teen monarch who freed them from their miserable captivity. Directed by veteran Kenny Ortega (*Newsies*, *High School Musical*), *Descendants* is very much a juvenile musical, with goofy comedy and high school dramas involving teen crushes, prejudices, cliques, cool kids, and outcasts, all set in a world of fairy-tale royalty and magic. Along the way, the kids discover teamwork, friendship, loyalty, and romance, while also learning that appearances and expectations can be misleading. Featuring energetic song and dance numbers, scenes of sports action (a version of lacrosse with added complications), and magical battles (albeit on a cable TV budget), this is a so-so Disney original that is likely to be popular. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)



Dog Years ★★★

Green Apple, 88 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95

Co-writers and co-directors Warren Sroka and Brent Willis also star in *Dog Years*, playing estranged stepbrothers who meet up in Tokyo, where they attempt some sort of uneasy reconciliation. Elliot (Willis) is a morally and physically exhausted businessman who abandons a failed relationship back in the U.S. and loses himself in Tokyo's busy, overcrowded urban center. Plagued by sleeplessness and depression, Elliot struggles through the days and does not relish reconnecting with his puppyish brother Ben (Sroka), who teaches English at a local school. The two are able to hurdle old obstacles (Elliot essentially hates Ben, who moved with his mother into their father's house too soon after the death of Ben's mom) long enough to travel a bit in the country and meet up over drinks and dinner. But beneath the show of fraternal ties lies a powerful undercurrent of hostility that ultimately surfaces. Combining a solid narrative with an interesting visual portrait of modern Japan, this is recommended. (T. Keogh)



The Duke of Burgundy ★★★

Shout! Factory, 104 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$26.99

Shooting with exquisite, painterly beauty subject matter that others might deem sor-