

force emerged on the national scene when Texas State Treasurer Ann Richards gave a brashly amusing keynote speech during the Democratic National Convention. Richards, who had served as state treasurer since 1983, reeled off caustic putdowns of Republican nominee Vice-President George Bush, creating a happy shockwave throughout the convention and stamping her as a larger-than-life personality ready to shake up the political scene. Richards was elected governor of Texas in 1990, but despite an achievement-rich term she was soundly defeated during her 1994 re-election bid by George W. Bush. Filmmaker Keith Patterson's documentary traces the unlikely rise of Richards from a poverty-stricken childhood to the dizzying heights of the rough-and-tumble world of Texas politics, where she brought diversity and technology to the Lone Star State's long-stagnant government. Many admirers here speak warmly of Richards's wit and skills, including former President Bill Clinton, TV anchors Tom Brokaw and Dan Rather, and Michael Dukakis, the presidential nominee at the convention where Richards stole the show with her speech (notably absent here are Bush senior and junior). Richards's political star may not have burned for long (she died in 2006 from esophageal cancer), but her impact was considerable. A fine biographical portrait, this is recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Bing Crosby Rediscovered ★★★1/2

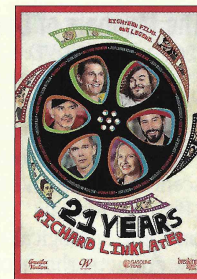
(2014) 90 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-160-8.

This PBS-aired *American Masters* documentary from filmmaker Robert Trachtenberg looks at the life of one of the most successful and oft-recorded vocalists in history, Bing Crosby (1903-1977). Viewers who thought they knew Crosby from his holiday chestnut *White Christmas* and his paternal laid-back demeanor may be surprised to learn that the entertainer was considered a ladies' man and carouser in his early Hollywood days, chronically late to engagements and even denounced from the pulpit since his romantic singing was blamed for a number of divorces (Crosby's lead role as a Catholic priest in the hit *Going My Way* was actually a career risk). Crosby had the distinction of being able to hold his liquor; the same was not true of his first wife, and some of his notoriously troubled children may have been the victims of fetal alcohol syndrome. The posthumous image of Crosby as a cold, abusive father, according to family members interviewed here (actress-daughter Mary, widow Kathryn), was largely due to late son Gary Crosby being convinced to spice up his tell-all memoir for hype purposes. Crosby's famous *Road* comedies with Bob Hope were the most successful film franchise prior to James Bond, but while the duo seemed inseparable to the public, Bing and Bob actually saw little of each other when not performing (a good way to

21 Years: Richard Linklater ★★★1/2

(2014) 79 min. DVD: \$19.99. Breaking Glass Pictures (avail. from most distributors).

This wonderfully entertaining and thoughtful overview of the career of Richard Linklater—a leading light in America's independent film movement—is a must-see for fans of the Austin-based director's many movies, which include *Slacker*, *Bernie*, *Before Sunrise*, *School of Rock*, *Dazed and Confused*, and the multi-Oscar-nominated *Boyhood*. Michael Dunaway and Tara Wood's documentary does not feature Linklater in current or archival interviews (Linklater appears in a few still photographs and in his character role in *Slacker*). Instead, all of the commentary in *21 Years* comes from past collaborators, well-known actors who have much experience with Linklater's often-oblique sensibilities and Buddhist-like aphorisms. Jack Black talks about the director's enormous confidence and trust in his actors; Ethan Hawke (perhaps Linklater's most frequent star) speaks extensively about the courage it took to make "the least-profitable trilogy in movie history" (*Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset*, *Before Midnight*), a very honest portrait of a relationship and marriage. Billy Bob Thornton (who starred in the hilarious remake of *Bad News Bears*) touches on how Linklater doesn't show his complete hand to a cast while filming, and Matthew McConaughey proves both hilarious and brilliant going down long, long roads to make a series of points about Linklater as an inspirational artist. A fun portrait of an influential filmmaker currently at the top of his game, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)



stay friends in showbiz, evidently). The artist whom Crosby did idolize, in fact, was Louis Armstrong. Although it has a smattering of harsh language (rather peculiar in the genteel Crosby atmosphere), *Bing Crosby Rediscovered* is a fine biographical portrait, featuring interviewees including Crosby biographer Gary Giddins and crooners Tony Bennett and Michael Feinstein. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (C. Cassidy)

Cristiano Ronaldo: The World at His Feet ★★★

(2014) 60 min. DVD: \$19.95. Vision Films (avail. from most distributors).

Oscar nominee Benedict Cumberbatch narrates this brisk and exciting documentary profile of the soccer player regarded by many as the best in the world, Cristiano Ronaldo of the Spanish club Real Madrid, who is also captain of the Portugal national team. Director Tara Pirnia traces Ronaldo's humble beginnings as a child in a slum in Madeira, Portugal, sleeping on a dirt floor and eating little. A loner, Ronaldo found a companion of sorts in an old soccer ball and eventually began playing for a youth league. At 12, he was noticed by professional scouts and his training for the big leagues began. Signed to United Manchester in England while still very young, Ronaldo became a superstar, which meant a hero to some and an arrogant villain to others. Combining extensive interview clips, archival and recent footage, and some dramatic re-enactments, *The World at His Feet* details Ronaldo's ups and downs, numerous awards and accomplishments, and gradual maturity from self-centered playboy to major philanthropist and role model. Still active with Real Madrid, Ronaldo's story is far from finished. Recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

The Decent One ★★★1/2

(2014) 96 min. In German w/English subtitles, DVD: \$29.95 (avail. from most distributors, Mar. 31), \$349 w/PPR (avail. from www.kinolorbereud.com). DRA. Kino Lorber.

Vanessa Lapa's fascinating biographical documentary, which looks at the private life of Heinrich Himmler, chief of Hitler's black-uniformed SS elite corps and a major architect of the Final Solution in which Jews were exterminated in concentration camps, draws on journals and correspondence recovered after the war. Actors read sometimes-astounding passages against a backdrop of vintage/archival footage (Leni Riefenstahl's being the most recognizable). The young Himmler, who harbored a loathing of Jews, Slavs, and homosexuals, aspired to fight for the Fatherland in the Great War but was disappointed. He would trade treacle-laced love letters with his bride (which did not stop him from taking a mistress during WWII), exhort German scientists to perfect a method of easy mass-sterilization for Jewish women, and commend himself and the SS for remaining fundamentally "decent" throughout the arduous and psychologically draining work of operating death factories and overseeing executions. Aside from a few title cards, all statements here come from Himmler, a despicable villain who is blitzkrieged through his own words. Highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (C. Cassidy)

Dorothea Lange: Grab a Hunk of Lightning ★★★1/2

(2014) 108 min. DVD: \$24.99 (\$54.99 w/PPR). PBS Video. SDH captioned. ISBN: 978-1-62789-078-6.

Aired on PBS's *American Masters* series, this biographical portrait of 20th-century