

New to DVD Reviews

By Bryan Capistrano

The Matador

3 out of 5

Release Date: July 4, 2006

This is the return of the buddy comedy. Pierce Brosnan (After the Sunset) and Greg Kinnear (Godsend) are hilarious in this odd couple story about a hitman and a businessman who meet in Mexico and become the strangest of friends.

Danny Wright (Kinnear) is a businessman who, down on his luck, travels to Mexico for a job interview. Fresh off a deadly job, Julian Noble (Brosnan) is also on his way to Mexico to complete an assignment. A little drunk off of margaritas, the two meet in a bar and so begins their unusual journey as friends.

For those who would think it a weird thought for Brosnan to take on a comedic role, think again. Though it is a comedy, *The Matador* features one of Brosnan's best performances. The chemistry between Brosnan, Kinnear and Hope Davis (Proof) is exceptional and creates believability in such an unusual plot.

I mention Brosnan quite a bit more than the others because of his usual Bond persona. And seeing as the role of 007 has been re-cast, *The Matador* is a great way for him to shed that persona.



Tsotsi

4 out of 5

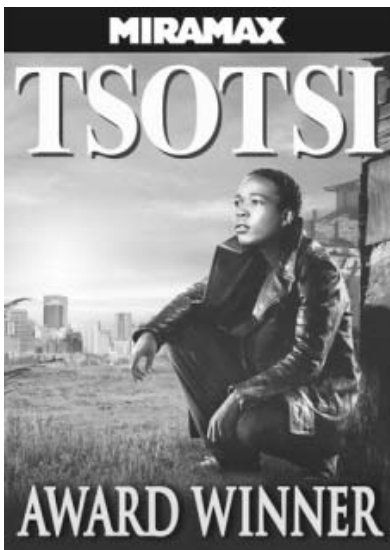
Release Date: July 18, 2006

After a deserving win for best foreign film at this year's Academy Awards, it took a while for *Tsotsi* to make it to theatres around Victoria and now you can watch it from the comfort of your living room (where no one will see you covering your eyes at uneasy moments). Directed by Gavin Hood (*W pustyni i w puszczy* aka *In Desert and Wilderness*), *Tsotsi* is a riveting look at a young relentless thug's sudden encounter with responsibility after inadvertently kidnapping a baby.

First time actor Presley Chweneyagae plays the adolescent hooligan that goes by the name of *Tsotsi* (which means "criminal"). He's stolen from people and murdered without guilt all within the first 15 minutes of the film. This makes his character extremely unpredictable and the story that much more effective. This is especially the case whenever *Tsotsi* has encounters with vulnerable characters such as the baby and the young woman he forces to tend to it.

There's a scene in the middle of the movie where *Tsotsi* stalks a homeless man in a wheel chair after a brief confrontation at a nearby subway station. The scene's intensity comes from the development of *Tsotsi*'s character as unpredictable and dangerous.

By playing on certain characters' vulnerabilities with *Tsotsi*'s unpredictability, Hood sets an effective tone for the film that grips audiences in every scene.



Classic Rock DVD Round-Up

by Lucas Aykroyd

QUEEN

Under Review 1973-1980

Chrome Dreams

The DVD narration starts off by describing Queen as "perhaps the most unique band in the history of rock music." Now, most critics would argue the classic pomp quartet trails the Beatles (creativity), the Stones (longevity), and Pink Floyd (stage presentation). Still, this 103-minute package is a smart, in-depth analysis of Queen's best years, which spawned eight studio albums.

The British-made documentary focuses on the music, avoiding VH-1-style comments like "singer Freddie Mercury's cocaine abuse cast a long shadow." Instead, you learn details of how Queen built its flamboyant image and its majestic sound. Veteran rock journo Malcolm Dome identifies the influences of vaudeville, Hollywood musical and Noel Coward on the breakthrough 1974 single, "Killer Queen," and then reveals how the group broke the BBC's rules for its lip-synched Top of the Pops performance by not re-recording the backing tracks. Simon Bradley of *Guitarist* magazine dissects the "Keep Yourself Alive" riff and explains how Brian May achieved his famous fat tone, in part, by using an old English sixpence for a pick.

Compleatists will love the live clips, such as a 1975 version of "Stone Cold Crazy," or "Bicycle Race" at the Tokyo Hippodrome in 1979, plus 11 other tracks. Bonus features are scanty, but check out "The Hardest Queen Quiz Ever" (and sing "We Are the Champions" if your score exceeds 9/25).

You're simply left regretting that the supremely talented Freddie Mercury couldn't curb his excesses and grace us with his four-octave range a little longer. In November, it'll be 15 years since he died.

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