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# AVDVDs

## Bride & Prejudice misses Firth factor

**E**ast meets West with lots of zest in the sly romantic comedy *Bride & Prejudice*.

This multi-cultural masala is, of course, based on a classic piece of English literature, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This time, the novel has gone both Bollywood and Hollywood under the guidance of Indian-British filmmaker Gurinder Chadha, of *Bend it Like Beckham* fame.

Cast Bollywood star and international beauty Aishwarya Rai in the Lizzie role, shoot on location in India, England and the United States, and you have a spectacle to behold.

Too bad the exquisite Rai was teamed with Martin Henderson as an Americanized Mr. Darcy. He looks handsome but lacks the moody depth and skill set that made Colin Firth brilliant in the traditional British mini-series. Replace Henderson with an actor with more sex appeal and emotional complexity and this film would have soared.

So *Bride & Prejudice* is good, not great, though it is a fully loaded, handsome, widescreen version.

The strong extras include a commentary by Chadha and her collaborator, Paul Mayeda Berges. In addition, there are separate visits with Rai and Henderson, a making-of doc, deleted scenes and extended musical numbers, although the rousing first Bollywood piece is

missing (maybe everything they shot is already on screen). The whole package is excellent.



### DARK VISIONS

Film noir is not just a crime-fueled movie genre, it is an attitude in American cinema.

With the spectre of danger and even death casting its long shadow, people and the events they make happen are infused with angst, anger and bittersweet longing.

One of the intriguing aspects is that women are as empowered and lethal as unsavoury males.

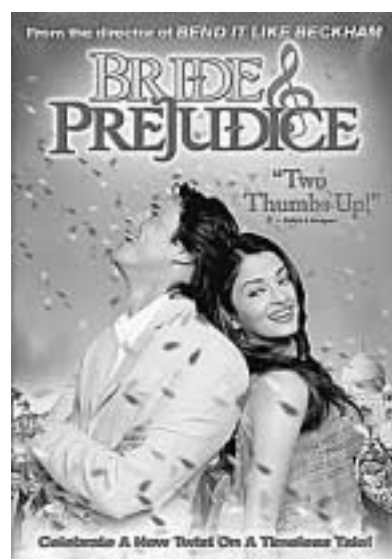
Noir is one of my favourite genres. So it is a cause for celebration that *Volume 2 of the Warner Bros. Film Noir Classic Collection* is out now. This time it is a five-disc, five-title collection that runs from 1945 through 1952.



**BRUCE KIRKLAND**

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The titles are: *Dillinger*, starring Lawrence Tierney as 1930s gangster John Dillinger, who is sold with a tag line that blares: "His story is written in bullets, blood and blondes!"; *Born to Kill*, starring Tierney, Claire Trevor and Walter Slezak in a high-sleaze romance; *Crossfire*, a murder mystery starring the three Roberts, Young, Mitchum and Ryan; *The Narrow Margin*, with Charles McGraw, Marie Windsor and Jacqueline White; and *Clash by Night*, Fritz Lang's all-star drama with Barbara Stanwyck, Paul



Douglas, Robert Ryan and a eerily young Marilyn Monroe.

Jumping out of the all-B&W lineup is Edward Dmytryk's provocative *Crossfire* because it uses the noir visual vocabulary — including shadows, tough dames, cynical cops and hardened criminals — in the service of a powerful social statement. The murder here is a hate crime, a senseless death of an American Jew who dies simply for his religion.

This is the first Hollywood film after the horrors of the Holocaust to deal with the contentious issue of anti-Semitism. It pre-dates even *Gentleman's Agreement*, the tamer if more complex mainstream drama with Gregory Peck as a journalist exploring American prejudices.

One of the fascinating aspects of *Crossfire* is that Dmytryk, as he reveals in a vintage interview included as an extra, employed film noir lighting techniques because they were cheaper and his budget was restricted because of the risk of the issue involved. Necessity mothered invention and a hit.

Each of the films in this excellent collection has a commentary, including the innovative approach on *Clash by Night* in which filmmaker-critic Peter Bogdanovich is intercut with a vintage recorded interview with Fritz Lang.

## MUSIC DVDS

### The MC5 Kick Out the Jams Creem | MVD

The makers of this short film starring the Detroit soul-rawk legends describe it as a "swirling psychedelic art piece" and "an exploding kaleidoscopic mind-trip." Which is a fancy way of saying it's basically half an hour of odds 'n' ends of old footage cobbled together and set to a soundtrack of MC5 classics like *Ramblin' Rose* and *Motor City is Burning*. Art it may be — but as documentary it's kind of disappointing. Still, an MC5 fanatic will get a big kick out of these jams.

★★

### Johnny Cash Ridin' the Rails: The Great American Train Story Rhino | Warner

It's an age-old problem: Where to find a DVD that appeals equally to Johnny Cash fans and train enthusiasts? Well, here's the answer. It's *Ridin' the Rails*, a 1974 TV special on train travel, hosted by The Man in Black. See Johnny wander the tracks and lurk in train stations. Watch Johnny narrate re-enactments of key moments in U.S. rail history. Hear Johnny sing train songs like *John Henry*, *Casey Jones* and the *City of New Orleans*. And, above all, marvel that this weirdly entertaining nugget made it to DVD.

★★★

> Darryl Sterdan

### GOD & SCIENCE

The TV mini-series *Revelations* may wear its desperate emotions and religious faith on its sleeve, but David Seltzer's six-hour epic is so wondrously wrought and so brilliantly written, directed, performed and edited that it emerges as a major work of art.

"The story is about science and theology," says producer-writer-creator Seltzer.

"It is about good and evil."

The two-disc DVD set is out now in a beautiful widescreen transfer. Its only flaw is that the extras are severely limited to a making-of doc a mere three minutes long.

The scope of the mini-series deserves, even demands more extensive off-screen exploration than that. We need a lot more from the dour Seltzer as well as from his well-cast stars, Bill Pullman as the scientist mourning the death of his daughter, Michael Massee as the Satanist-murderer and Natascha McElhone as the nun searching for the new Christ.

