

Reviews

Damned to Heaven

Thomas Elliott and Pawel Gula
Street: 2007

This film started making the festival circuit last year and will soon be released on DVD. It follows the story of several former FLDS members and the hunt for their fugitive leader **Warren Jeffs**. Interviews with members and audio clips from sermons given by Jeffs paint an eerie picture of the goings-on of this apostate group of fundamentalist Mormons. Much of the story revolves around the high rate of sexual predation among FLDS families—proof that when men are encouraged to take multiple brides, and when women are compelled to believe that this is what God wants for them, it becomes very difficult for healthy sexual relationships to develop. Stories of statutory rape, molestation and community silence show exactly how far gone this community really is. The saddest part, though, is how many of the exiled members cited here still feel like polygamy is how God wants them to live—it is their own weaknesses that keep it from working properly. And while this outlook shows just how deeply engrained the polygamist lifestyle is in their communities, it also shows how manipulative and genuinely evil Jeffs and his colleagues really are. Hopefully his recent conviction on accomplice to rape charges will keep him locked up for a very long time. —James Bennett

Fred Armisen presents: Complicated Drumming

Technique: Jens Hannemann
Drag City

Street: 10.23

This instructional DVD showcases the drumming prowess of Jens Hannemann, a Fred Armisen parody of a euro-trash **Neil Peart**-wannabe (complete with **Eddie Vedder** hair, a sleeveless sci-fi t-shirt and a soul patch.) Live clips of Hannemann's mock jazz band are interspersed with song breakdowns and drumming tips. At one point Armisen demonstrates how to count off a 61/4 time signature, and another clip ends in a fantastic tirade of cursing after a drum tech almost loses his hand trying to change a snare. What makes the faux-technical DVD work is how it remains ridiculous, but somehow still true to the genre of instructional video. It can be a little painful to watch in parts, and a bit too long in others, but Armisen's talent as a drummer holds it together in spots where a simple parody would fall flat. In all, this Drag City release is a great joke and the perfect DVD for a drummer with a sense of humor. —James Bennett

Haunted Histories Collection

History Channel

Street: 09.25

This five-disc collection features the History Channel-produced programs "Hauntings," "Vampire Secrets," "Salem Witch Trials," "The Haunted History of Halloween" and the A&E-produced "Poltergeist." The programs on the

Salem Witch Trials and the history of Halloween are the most straightforward, presenting a fair amount of historical information regarding the events of the Salem Trials and the different origins of the Halloween tradition. "Hauntings" and "Poltergeist" are both presented in a fair, balanced approach with experts who both attempt to prove or disprove the various ghost stories and allow the viewer to make whatever conclusions that they will. The most exploitative program also proves to be the longest: "Vampire Secrets." Playing up the sexual, horrific elements and augmented by many experts, modern day vampires and unintentionally camp reenactments it is also the most entertaining. This in a sense is rather horrifying, particularly in the retelling of contemporary examples considering the amount of violence, perversion and loss of life that actually took place. In their defense the vampire myth itself tends in this direction, as does society's interest in the myth: a combination of fascination and fear. All in all, it's a nice collection of tales with plenty of substance to go along with the more sensational elements worthy of the History Channel branding, even if it isn't quite on par with their better-known war documentaries. —ryan michael painter

Last of the Breed: Live in Concert with Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard, Ray Price

A&E Video

Street: 09.25

Last of the Breed was filmed at a sold-out show in March of this year at the *Rosemont Theatre* in Chicago. Interesting in its scope and breadth of performance, this DVD showcases how intrepid these three legendary performers are. Like a 50-year-old cougar who still has it in the sack, Willie, Merle and Ray still put on a stunning live show. Being the first time all three have shared a stage, they invariably play off each other well, not upstaging or outdoing the other. The camera angles are conservative and point back to 1950s variety TV show techniques as the camera oscillates between wide shots and full body shots—occasionally using close-ups for guitar solos and panning around the other musicians for good measure. Diverse and entertaining, this DVD intertwines a valuable moment in country music history. —Erik Lopez

The New Technology of War

Popular Mechanics

Street: 09.11

Produced by the folks at *Popular Mechanics* magazine, *The New Technology of War* is a terrifyingly interesting look into the future of warfare on planet Earth. The documentary focuses explicitly on recent advancements in science and technology and the ways in which they are altering military combat. Split up into five segments ("Ground Forces," "Air Power," "Sea Power," "Counter Terrorism" and "The Future of War"), this

series is filled with computer animation and live-action demonstrations of how the U.S. is contributing to the ongoing arms race. Shit like robotic ground troops and unmanned aerial vehicles are very literally turning the battlefield into a video game. Military experts throughout the documentary stress the importance of mobility. In comes the EFV (Expeditionary Fight Vehicle), which is an amphibious assault tank that can maneuver both water and land, all while transporting about 10 Navy Seals. These bitches can get up to about 45 mph on land and about 40kn on water. Apparently, we are only a few short years away from total **MEGAZORD** warfare. —Michael DeJohn

The Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett Story

John Edginton

MVD Visual

Street: 09.18

This documentary takes a look into the life and short-lived fame of **Pink Floyd**'s front-man Syd Barrett before he slipped into a drug-induced dementia. I found it to be very interesting and full of things I had no idea about, like how Pink Floyd came into being and the stories behind certain songs. With lots of interviews from members of the band and other people who knew Syd, it paints an image of what he was like before and after his fall into drug use. Although it may have been a tragedy for Pink Floyd to lose him, it seems like this was the way it had to be for young Barrett. His drug use may have ended up driving him crazy, but without it he may not have made some of his epic songs. I definitely learned a lot from this short, informative documentary. I would highly recommend picking this video up, whether you're a Pink Floyd fan or not, just for the mere fact of hearing all that was accomplished from the bright young mind of Syd Barrett. —Adam Dorobiala

SACRIFICE SKATEBOARDS POR VIDA DVD

Street: 2007

Sacrifice Skateboards is down for the cause. I don't know what cause that is, but I'm sure it has something to do with skating a pool or a park while drinking booze. That is, unless you're **Casey MacCaugh**, **B.J. Morrill** or **Dave Nelson**, each of who has solid street-type parts. The rest of the DVD is a bunch of older dudes getting shit done and eating some serious shit. The slam sections in this DVD are hilarious. These guys supported **Neil Heddings** while he was incarcerated so there is some classic Super-8 footage of him. Other reasons to peep this DVD are as listed:

-Dude in opening credits eating shit in full pipe from about 10:45.

-Dude throwing that full glass of alcohol onto a scalding hot pan of grease while skating a mini-ramp inside of a house.

-Dudes filming themselves with camera in hand and eating shit.

-Dude, I think **Animal Chin** is in this shit. —PETERPANHANDLER

VOX SHOES PRESENTS Black and Blue Vol. 2 DVD

Street: 2007

If you liked the *Vol. 1* DVD then you'll probably like this one as well. There does seem to be a lack of street footage in this edition, but the street skating that's in there is quality. I'm not talking about the most stairs or freshest bangers, I'm talking style, speed, power and more style. Style is exactly what you get from *East Coast* man-am **Henry Ponza**, so be on the lookout for this relatively unknown skater. Vertical vampire **Darren Navarrette** throws down a 50/50 on a real railing. How many of you street lurkers can even drop in on vert? There is a ton of skate-park footage from Australia, most of which you can fast-forward through because how many pivot to fakies can you watch **Dan Dreho** do? That was a trick question. The only thing lacking in this DVD is the street skating of **David Gravette**, **Slash** and **Justin Strubing**. Find a copy of this DVD at any decent shop around town that carries *VOX*. Remember this shit is free and not much in life is free anymore. —PETERPANHANDLER

Wild Women of Wongo

The Film Stars

Shout! Factory

Street: 09.11



Mike Nelson, **Bill Corbett**, **Kevin Murphy**. Names sound familiar? That's because they are the stars in front of the big screen in *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. Now, they've returned as **The Film Crew**, hilariously criticizing some of the worst films to grace the silver screen. Beyond that, there's really nothing new here. The humor's essentially the same, as are the voices and jokes. If you like a group of wise-cracking old guys making fun of really, really bad movies, then go buy this. If you liked *MST3K*, then go buy this. —Ross Solomon