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AVDVDs

Shark Tale DVD is just small fry

When the *Shark Tale* bites, it gets an Oscar nomination. Don't really know why, especially with something as interesting as *The Polar Express* being denied in the best animated-feature category. But there it is: The swim-with-the-fishes mob satire is an Academy Award nominee!

The slick all-star flick is out on DVD now in separate wide and fullscreen editions that are fully loaded with bonus materials that should please the movie's fans and show off voice talent Will Smith, Angelina Jolie, Renee Zellweger, Jack Black, Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese at work in the studio.

Like the movie itself, though, *Shark Tale* falls short of the standards the DreamWorks animation department defined for themselves with the *Shrek* series on DVD. There is some goofy stuff, such as the animators' mistake reel, the kids games, the tongue-in-



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cheek audition by Vincent Pastore as Gigi the Whale and the fin-tastic dance lessons at Club Oscar.

And you get a lesson in how the creative process works in the era of computer technology. Another extra highlights the musical numbers, allowing viewers to jump directly to those scenes. A separate Car Wash music video shows Christina Aguilera and Missy Elliott performing their new version of the disco-era favourite.



ILLICIT LOVE

On the DVD box for the off-off-Hollywood movie *P.S.*, Richard Corliss of *Time* magazine proclaims: "We cry Oscar!" Unfortunately for filmmaker Dylan Kidd, his star, the elegant, dynamic Laura Linney, was nominated for an Academy Award — as best supporting actress for *Kinsey*. *P.S.* was shut out. Too bad. If she had made it in both categories, as Jamie Foxx did on the male side, it would have been a fascinating twist on an already interesting set of acting nominations. Her performance in writer-director Kidd's strange little romance is excellent: Multilayered, sophisticated, full of pathos as Linney creates a portrait of a woman looking for love in odd places. In this case, she is a university admissions officer who falls for an art student (Topher Grace in yet another role that indicates he is the real deal among young actors). The DVD is out in a widescreen-only edition, with a commentary and deleted scenes.

stereotyping, overt racism, family and workplace pressures and other complex, serious topics worth exploring. That they come up in an *Animal House*-style flick just makes them more interesting and accessible. The DVD is out in a so-called *Extreme* edition with a widescreen-only, unrated version of the film. The disc offers extras such as group commentary and a featurette called *The Art of the Fart*, which must be both seen and heard to be believed.



DUST IN THE WIND

Some movies seem to disappear totally, as if they never existed. Witness the Reese Witherspoon vehicle, *Vanity Fair*, directed by Mira Nair and based on the Thackeray novel. Most critics dismissed it as an exercise in futility, and now the Oscar voters have stamped it irrelevant. *Vanity Fair* generated no awards buzz at all. The DVD is out now, waiting to be discovered in separate wide and fullscreen editions.

BARGAIN BASEMENT

Fox Home Entertainment is digging out titles for a low-price DVD line of discs stripped of extras. Out last week, the latest releases included: *Star Chamber*, *Laughing Policeman*, *Class Action*, *Bad Girls* (the extended cut) and *Secrets & Lies* starring Brenda Blethyn. The latter movie is a superb character-driven drama from Mike Leigh, who's a best-director nominee in the Oscar race for *Vera Drake*. The bargain *Secrets & Lies* DVD has no extras, but the 1996 film really does speak for itself. Leigh forces us to confront the dark truths in family in a vivid and ultimately uplifting film.

RUDE, CRUDE & FUNNY



Every generation needs its own *Animal House*. Right now, it is Danny Leiner's wacko comedy *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle*. The flick is larded with crass talk, gonzo bad behaviour, topless babes, juvenile but horny guys chasing those babes, marijuana and even the grossest fart joke sequence ever. It's a savage satire on racial

MUSIC DVDS

Al DiMeola One of These Nights In-Akustik / MVD


Acoustic jazz-guitar virtuoso Al DiMeola showcases his firepowered fretwork in a two-hour concert taped last year in Germany. But it isn't all about Al. As a nimble drummer and a percussionist supply the spicy world-beat grooves DiMeola has favoured as of late, a pianist and string quartet colour elegantly between the lines of his turbocharged arpeggios and flamenco-flavoured melodies. Granted, its genteel coffeehouse ambience and seated performances may make it a bit too sedate for the average viewer. But the jazz buffs and guitarists in the crowd will dig it.

★★★

— Darryl Sterdan



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