

while a park ranger offers explanatory comments. In nearby Canyonlands, the wear and tear wrought by two rivers over millennia has left a magnificent canyon and a visual feast of varied shapes. Here, trails lead intrepid visitors deep into the back country, while the raging Colorado River offers a perfect (if also dangerous) venue for whitewater rafting. The filmmakers also stop at the Natural Bridges National Monument (established by Theodore Roosevelt and boasting fantastic stone formations), as well as ancestral Pueblo sites. Footage of recreational drivers steering souped-up jeeps through chasms and up and down rock walls might sound environmentally perilous, but it sure looks like fun. Highly recommended. Aud: P. (T. Keogh)

BIOGRAPHY

Bob and the Monster ★★★

(2012) 85 min. DVD: \$16.95, Blu-ray: \$19.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

Many documentaries revolve around musicians who have battled substance abuse, but director Keirda Baruth profiles an indie rocker who became a drug and alcohol counselor. Bob Forrest admits that he wanted to try heroin ever since he discovered Lenny Bruce. In the 1980s, Forrest moved from Palm Springs to Hollywood, where he hobnobbed with bands like Fishbone and Jane's Addiction. His interest in poetry and literature led him to front Thelonious Monster, whose ascent coincided with his own descent into coke, crystal meth, and heroin use (Baruth uses claymation sequences to depict Forrest's chemically-enhanced experiences). Just as

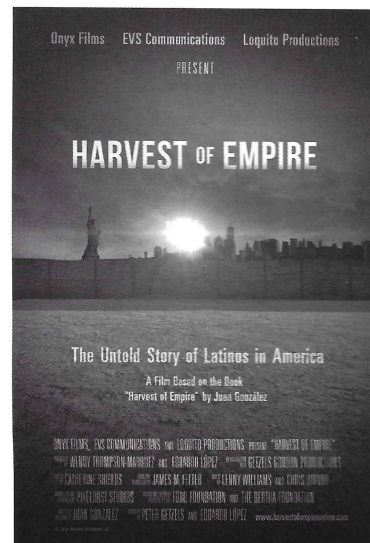
the band was rising, Forrest took a considerable advance from RCA to leave and made an ill-fated solo album. As Monster's drummer Pete Weiss puts it, "He was one of the largest assholes ever to walk the planet." The band would eventually reunite, but Forrest's drug problems only worsened. Forrest believes that his downward spiral began when he learned the truth about his origins (which involved adoption) at the age of 13. After hitting bottom, he started to get his life back together following a series of rehab stints. From there, he went on to help fellow addicts, including Courtney Love and Red Hot Chili Peppers guitarist John Frusciante, in conjunction with the Musicians Assistance Program. Through celeb rehab expert Dr. Drew Pinsky, he studied the science of addiction and became a proponent of abstinence-based treatment (although Baruth is a little vague about Forrest's falling out with the Las Encinitas program, which utilizes prescription drugs). Forrest ultimately formed his own recovery centers, where he promotes the same non-religious, prescription-free techniques that were effective for him. Offering an interesting portrait of one man's triumph over addiction and subsequent good work, this is recommended. [Note: this is also available on DVD for \$99.95 w/PPR for public libraries, and \$350 w/PPR for colleges and universities from The Cinema Guild at www.cinemaguild.com.] Aud: C, P. (K. Fennessy)

In Search of Blind Joe Death: The Saga of John Fahey ★★★1/2

(2012) 57 min. DVD: \$24.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

John Fahey (1939-2001) was "a provocateur in the Romantic mode" says a friend of

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Far Out Isn't Far Enough: The Tomi Ungerer Story

★★★1/2

(2012) 98 min. DVD: \$27.95. First Run Features (avail. from most distributors). Closed captioned.

Children's book author-illustrator Tomi Ungerer shunned the limelight for years before recently reappearing. Brad Bernstein's fascinating, beautifully-made documentary is essentially an autobiographical piece, featuring extended excerpts from interviews with Ungerer, who discusses his childhood in Nazi-occupied Alsace before proceeding to his move to the United States in 1956, where he found work as a magazine cartoonist. Ungerer also wrote popular (albeit idiosyncratic) children's books, and produced a series of devastating anti-war posters during the Vietnam protest era. But his career was derailed when it was revealed that he was also creating works of erotica, and he left New York, first for Nova Scotia, and then Europe, and is only now reemerging to widespread but belated acclaim. Ungerer's recounting of his life is both deeply moving and filled with wry observations, which Bernstein accompanies with plentiful examples of his illustrations—some transformed into animation—as well as stills, other archival material, and comments from relatives and friends such as Jules Feiffer and the late Maurice Sendak. DVD extras include audio commentary by Bernstein, deleted scenes, a conversation between Ungerer and Feiffer, and a tour with Ungerer of his home in Ireland. A powerful portrait of uncommon depth and perception, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

