

Foster introduces each segment, and from there we learn about the female leaders and barrier breakers, the creative minds and the clever supporters, the savvy businesswomen, and those who sparkled, then fizzled. Interview gems with pioneering artists are woven together with film clips from all over the world, telling the “reel herstory” in a fascinating and informative narrative. Interview subjects include Samira Makhmalbaf (Iran), Pirjo Honkasalo (Finland), Naomi Kawase (Japan), Haifa Al Mansour (Saudi Arabia), Fina Torres (Venezuela), and our own Nora Ephron, among many others. **VERDICT** Filmmaker Acker brings us a two-and-a-half-hour presentation that is really three films strung together, back to back, and it suffers from repetition when viewed in one sitting. Luckily, it's available in separate editions—*The Silent Era*, *The Talkies*, and *Contemporary Reel Women*—so purchase and circulate that way if you've got an audience of film students or cinema lovers.—**Ellen Druda, Half Hollow Hills Community Lib., Dix Hills, NY**

Ornette: Made in America. color & b/w. 78 min. Shirley Clarke, Milestone Film & Video, www.milestonefilms.com. 2015. \$249. Public performance; home version DVD ISBN 9781933920658. \$29.95; Blu-ray ISBN 9781933920665. \$39.95. MUSIC

It's a bit disconcerting to see Ornette Coleman (b. 1930) and his band Prime Time collaborating with a symphony orchestra early in this 1984 film, as Coleman is best known for the spontaneous improvisation of free jazz. We also see him performing on Italian TV, on the streets of New York City, in Nigeria, and with the Master Musicians of Joujouka. Coleman's music was so revolutionary that an audience once destroyed his saxophone, and musicians were known to leave the bandstand when he showed up. Director Clarke (1919–97; *Portrait of Jason*) employs a vast palate of techniques—from quick cuts to stylized biographical vignettes, interviews, and downright hallucinatory animation—that wonderfully echo the disorienting near chaos of free jazz. Extras include an interview with Coleman's son, drummer Denardo Coleman, who performed with his father from a young age. **VERDICT** Though it only covers roughly the first half of Coleman's ongoing career, this restored film serves as an easy intro to free jazz and its first master and also succeeds as a work of art in its own right. [Trailers, *LJ* 10/1/14.]—**John Hiatt, formerly with Iowa City P.L.**

Rock 'N Roll: Vocal Wonders. 3 discs. color. 201 min. Kultur, www.kultur.com. 2014. DVD ISBN 9780769749716. \$29.99. MUSIC

For those who miss those fabulous voices of the Fifties and Sixties, these are the discs for

you. Disc one contains a 1992 performance from Franki Valli and the Four Seasons in Atlantic City during a national tour. The large backing band is well polished, and the show is very professionally done. The original Jersey Boy is in fine voice. Disc two is a performance by the Brooklyn Bridge, best known for their Jimmy Webb–penned 1968 hit “The Worst That Could Happen.” Fronted by Johnny Maestro, the band members perform a variety of doo wop and pop tunes, each interspersed with a short interview, in a show from 2004. Finally, Righteous Brothers Bill Medley and Bobby Hatfield sing at a 1983 concert at the Roxy Theater in Los Angeles. Although the production values aren't up to the level of the other two shows, this is an enthusiastic performance and Medley and Hatfield seem to be enjoying themselves. Medley had one of the greatest voices in pop, and when blended with Hatfield they were a powerful combination. Despite a bit too much synthesizer (true of all of these DVDs), this is a decent portrait of blue-eyed soul. **VERDICT** If you're a fan of any of these groups, settle back and enjoy a trip down memory lane. And have no fear of those pesky pledge breaks.—**Bill Baars, Lake Oswego P.L., OR**

Rye Coalition: The Story of the Hard Luck 5. color. 77 min. Jenni Matz, Matzorific Prods., dist. by MVDvisual, 800-888-0486; www.mvdb2b.com. 2015. DVD UPC 760137663294. \$16.95. MUSIC

Rookie documentarian Matz traces here the rise and fall of New Jersey punk band Rye Coalition, chronicling their journey from the 1990s postgrunge rock scene to an ill-fated attempt at major label stardom. The film boasts an impressive array of amusing home movie snippets, raucous and well-shot live clips, and other archival footage from throughout Rye Coalition's career. There are also new interviews with band members and supportive colleagues such as indie music producer Steve Albini and the ubiquitous but always entertaining Dave Grohl. Matz tries hard to win the viewer's sympathy by painting the musicians as earnest, hard-working, and talented young innocents who were cruelly victimized by a soulless music industry and frequently reminding viewers of just how unfortunate yet determined the band was. It is a familiar and not particularly well-told or compelling story. Extras include a long list of deleted scenes. **VERDICT** This unabashedly fawning portrait misses its mark as a band retrospective, but there's enough interesting archival footage to appeal to Rye Coalition's biggest fans and viewers familiar with the music scene from which the group emerged.—**Douglas King, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia**

SOCIAL SCIENCE

Whitey: United States of America v. James J. Bulger. color. 107 min. Joe Berlinger, Global News Network, dist. by Magnolia Home Entertainment, www.magpictures.com/whitey. 2014. DVD UPC 876964007207. \$26.98; Blu-ray UPC 876964007214. \$29.98. Rated: R. CRIME

With his usual attention to detail and interviews of those close to the story, Berlinger (*Paradise Lost; Brother's Keeper*) examines the exploits of Boston organized crime chief James “Whitey” Bulger (b. 1929) and the apparent complicity of law enforcement that allowed Bulger and his cohorts in the Winter Hill Gang to engage in murder, extortion, and drug dealing in Boston for decades. With no cameras allowed in the courtroom, the filmmaker blends interviews, news footage, and scrolling court transcripts to recount Bulger's brutal reign and the 2013 trial drama. Whitey's unbridled criminal activity is reviewed by attorneys, local reporters, an array of law enforcement personnel, and a voluble former partner in crime. Comments from victims' families are especially penetrating as Berlinger captures their pain and their credible suspicions about corruption in the FBI and Department of Justice that appears to have shielded Bulger from apprehension for years. Plenty of screen time explores whether Bulger bought such protection with information. Production quality is high; bonus features include deleted scenes. **VERDICT** Despite Bulger's conviction on many counts, the story is unsettling. The film raises key questions about Whitey's status as an informant and law enforcement corruption but can't definitively answer them. Still, true crime buffs and those who have followed Bulger's story will appreciate the work.—**Joan Pedzich, formerly with Harris Beach PLLC, Rochester, NY**

Ivory Tower. color. 90+ min. Andrew Rossi, CNN Films Prod., dist. by Paramount Home Entertainment, www.paramount.com. 2014. DVD UPC 032429201553. \$21.99; Blu-ray UPC 032429201959. \$26.99. SDH subtitles. Rated: PG-13. ED

Filmmaker Rossi (*Page One: Inside the New York Times*) examines the current crisis in higher education in this thought-provoking documentary. Among the numerous problems chronicled are tuition rates that continue to rise and student debt that has surpassed an alarming \$1 trillion. High tuition is fueled by competition that drives colleges to outbuild one another by providing amenities such as pools, luxury condos, and rock-climbing walls in order to attract wealthy out-of-state students primarily searching for a “party college.” The documentary jumps through a number of seg-