



MY GOLDEN DAYS

by other actors, he's seen at 11, 16 and in his late teens and twenties. Young Paul has a melodramatic scene with his mother, shortly before her suicide, that plays like something out of *Bates Motel*. Teen Paul has an adventure in Russia, repercussions from which don't reach him until the present, despite all the traveling he's done as an anthropologist in the meantime. Finally comes the main event, the tale of Esther (Lou Roy-Lecollinet), the great love of Paul's life. Desplechin has obviously studied the films of Francois Truffaut and tries to recapture their magic, substituting sex for subtlety. Quentin Dolmaire, who plays teen Paul, is no match for Jean-Pierre Leaud as Antoine Doinel; and Roy-Lecollinet unwisely tries at times to duplicate the mystery of Jeanne Moreau in *Jules and Jim*. God knows there's room for more than one coming-of-age film, but this sincere flattery is almost as bad an idea as Gus Van Sant remaking *Psycho*. If you've never seen the originals you should find it reasonably entertaining, but you'd be wiser to discover or rediscover Truffaut.

—Steve Warren

**RIO, I LOVE YOU (NR)**

★★<sup>1/2</sup>

What might have been a decent collection of short stories set in Rio de Janeiro is crazily edited into a patternless mosaic that will have viewers trying to figure it out instead of enjoying it. The cast, writers and directors are drawn from all over the world. Most have done a fine job and there's enough beautiful photography for a travelogue. Some tales, notably those about a one-armed boxer and a homeless old lady, deserve to be spun into features. At least one, with John Turturro (who wrote and directed it) and Vanessa Paradis as a bickering couple, should have been left out. While those stories are told in their entirety at one go, others are broken in pieces scattered throughout. Some people are introduced in establishing shots and never seen again, while others appear in different stories, so you have to try to remember who they are while being introduced to a new set of characters around them. It feels like a cocktail party where you don't know anyone at first but bounce around, getting vaguely acquainted with several guests but being unable to spend as much time as you'd like with the most interesting ones.

—Steve Warren

**SWEET BEAN (NR)**

★★★

I wonder how showing "foodie" movies affects concession sales. Can people watching the preparation and consumption of exotic dishes be satisfied with ordinary popcorn? Does the sight make them

hungry enough to eat anything? The bar doesn't appear to be set too high in *Sweet Bean*. Dorayaki is a Japanese snack food, a sandwich made with pancakes spread with an, a sweet paste made from beans. Sentaro (Masatoshi Nagase) is so glum he could be running a WWII POW camp instead of a neighborhood dorayaki shop. He doesn't even eat his own product, made with an he buys in bulk, until he hires 76-year-old Tokue (Kirin Kiki), who has her own delicious recipe for bean paste. She transforms his business and his life overnight, but a movie needs conflict and the woman who owns the shop provides it. The movie asks the question, Just because someone has had leprosy, does that mean they should be treated like a leper? Unfortunately it doesn't provide enough medical details for the vast majority of us to give an informed answer. Could rubber gloves have solved the problem? Be warned that after a slow first half, *Sweet Bean* gets even slower; but besides the food – where can I get some dorayaki around here? – and characters to care about, there's uplifting philosophy about listening to nature and not spreading gossip. Without a single mention of religion, this could be the year's most spiritual film.

—Steve Warren

**TAKE ME TO THE RIVER (NR)**

★★<sup>1/2</sup>

Though effectively unnerving, Matt Sobel's family drama leaves you with more questions than answers. Ryder (Logan Miller) rides with his mother (Robin Weigert) and father (Richard Schiff) to mom's family reunion on a Nebraska farm. Having spent his 17 years in California, the gay teen can't understand why he shouldn't come out to the whole family. His parents veto the idea but rebellious Ryder compensates by dressing provocatively. On the farm he's idolized by his four young female cousins, especially precocious Molly (Ursula Parker), who's nine. She goes with Ryder to the barn and runs out screaming with blood on her dress. Her father, Ryder's uncle Keith (Josh Hamilton), imagines the worst and becomes oddly passive-aggressive for the next 24 hours (about one hour of screen time). Why, for instance, does he give Ryder a lesson in handling a gun, except to heighten tension by introducing the weapon? Because the barn scene is foreshortened, we lack Ryder's full perspective. Without knowing what happened we're unsure how sympathetic to be toward him. The moral of the story, if you can do the required mental arithmetic, is that the definition of "normal" isn't the same in Nebraska as it is in California.

—Steve Warren

HOME THEATER

NEW RELEASES

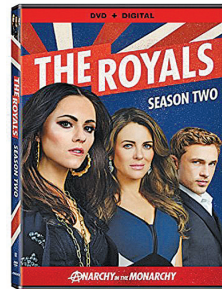
THE LATEST DVD, BLU RAY & VOD RELEASES

By John Moore

THE ROYALS - SEASON TWO

(Lionsgate)

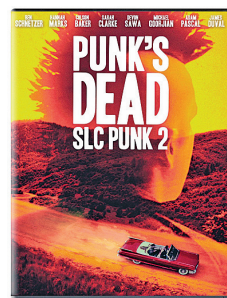
For some unfathomable reason, the U.S. has a stalker-like obsession with British royalty. And while watching the coming and goings of the current English monarchy is about as much fun as watching paint dry, the Elizabeth Hurley-fronted series *The Royals* is pure guilty pleasure. Loosely based on the book *Falling for Hamlet*, Hurley is Queen Helena who heads a twisted family that includes her twin son and daughter – both deliciously flawed in their own ways. Season two finds the family scheming for control much like the clans in *Game of Thrones*, with murder, sex and betrayal just as essential to the plot of both shows. It isn't pretty, but this salacious soap is hard to look away from.



PUNK'S DEAD: SLC PUNK 2 (Cinedigm)

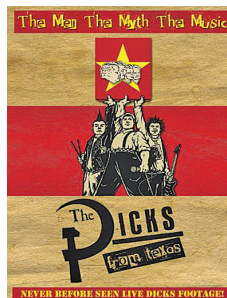
When the indie movie *SLC Punk* came out it slowly became a cult hit thanks to every loner Doc Marten-clad teen in the late '90s. Since then, punk rock has become about as dangerous and threatening as a boy band. So the sequel, *Punk's Dead*, seemed a little unnecessary. By the same writer/director as the original, James Merendino, the sequel pick up with

the teenage Goth/steampunk hybrid son of the Heroin Bob (dead, so speaking from the afterlife in this one) going nuts from a break-up, getting drunk for the first time and heading to a punk show. While obvious there was an audience for this one – the film was partially crowd funded – the result now seems pretty tepid and meandering. Some things are best left in the past, but a pretty fitting movie title.



THE DICKS FROM TEXAS (MVD Visual)

There have been countless articles and rock bios written about all of the British bands that were formed after witnessing the Sex Pistols live. Add Texas punk hardcore band *The Dicks* to the list. Garry Floyd saw the band at the San Francisco show, eventually migrated to Austin and told anyone who would listen that he was in a band called *The Dicks*. Years later, he actually put that band together and they became one of the most notorious hardcore/punk bands to come out of the Lone Star State. Through interviews with vets like Henry Rollins, Ian MacKaye, Mike Watt and David Yow, among others, filmmaker Cindy Marabito rolls out the story of one of punk's most underrated bands.



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