

the judiciary and the police department) are involved in all of these crimes but in unexpected ways. King struggles with the conflicts of balancing her personal life, her demanding and sometimes dangerous job, and the usual provoking office politics. **VERDICT** An Australian *Law and Order* but with considerably more development of characters' private lives and a lot more profanity. Recommended where crime drama is popular.—**Joan Greenberg, Warminster, PA**

★ **Murdoch Mysteries: A Merry Murdoch Christmas.** 88 min. Michael McGowan, dist. by Acorn Media, [www.acornonline.com](http://www.acornonline.com). 2016. DVD UPC 054961252091. \$24.99; Blu-ray UPC 054961252596. \$24.99. F/TV

In this double-length broadcast, the long-running Canadian mystery series (2008-) offers up a taste of Christmastime mayhem in turn-of-the-20th-century Toronto. The episode opens at a charity event with the discovery of a wealthy industrialist wearing a Santa Claus suit dead of a broken neck. One suspect is an elderly man calling himself Kris Kringle (TV veteran Ed Asner). Another is a creature that some believe is the mythological Krampus, a half-goat, half-demon bent on the destruction of all things Christmas. Det. William Murdoch (Yannick Bisson) is a decidedly rational man who trusts in science. Throughout the investigation, he remains skeptical that there are supernatural forces at work as he and the rest of the Toronto constabulary try to solve the crimes. **VERDICT** Fans of mysteries who want a little holiday magic as well will find this both a terrific whodunit and a reminder of what makes Christmas special.—**Lawrence Maxted, Gannon Univ. Lib., Erie, PA**

★ **A Place in Heaven.** 113+ min. In Hebrew w/English subtitles. Yossi Madmony, dist. by SISU Home Entertainment, [www.sisuent.com](http://www.sisuent.com). 2016. DVD ISBN 9781560867678. \$24.95. F Taking its inspiration from an ancient Jewish ruling that one person can buy another person's spot in heaven, this moving, well-produced, and beautifully photographed film tells the story of a nonobservant Israeli army captain, an admirable man with a number of flaws, especially with regard to his treatment of religion and his religious promises, who sells his place in heaven to a very devout Jewish cook under his command in exchange for a good breakfast. This nod to the Jacob and Esau story features wonderful actors and leads to a parable about modern Israel. The captain's son is born again and seeks to retrieve his father's place in the afterlife. The story itself, of an army officer who is at one time glorified and later vilified for actions during the war and of the tense familial relationships, is itself

engaging; when the reflection on modern Jewish history is added, the story becomes epic. **VERDICT** This tale of modern Israel will appeal to lovers of films that explore serious issues.—**Augustine J. Curley, Newark Abbey, NJ**

**Southlander: Diary of a Desperate Musician.** 80+ min. Steven Hanft, dist. by MVDvisual, [www.mvdb2b.com](http://www.mvdb2b.com). 2016. DVD UPC 760137835899. \$16.95. MUSIC

In this 2001 low-budget indie from writer/director Hanft, a struggling Los Angeles musician named Chance (Rory Cochrane) embarks on a comical quest to retrieve his stolen beloved vintage synthesizer. In one rambling, loosely structured scene after another, Chance encounters an eccentric cast of characters in the L.A. music scene who in some oftentimes-absurd ways help or hinder his mission. Light on plot and heavy on musician cameos (Elliott Smith, Beth Orton, Hank Williams III, and others, but most notably Beck in a lengthy key scene), the film features an understated and convincing performance from Cochrane that keeps viewers rooting for him. The disc boasts a large amount of mostly worthwhile bonus content, including extended and deleted scenes, on-set footage, and an insightful director's commentary. **VERDICT** While too weird, amateurish, and arty for mainstream audiences, this is easily recommended as light entertainment for indie and experimental film aficionados with an interest in music.—**Douglas King, Univ. of South Carolina Lib., Columbia**

**Sunset Song.** 136+ min. Terence Davies, dist. by Magnolia Home Entertainment, [www.magnoliahome.com](http://www.magnoliahome.com). 2016. DVD UPC 876964009669. \$26.98. Rated: R. F

This production, based on the 1932 novel by Lewis Grassic Gibbon, tells the story of Scottish lass Chris Guthrie (Agness Deyn), a bright girl preparing to be a teacher. Her future changes radically when her mother commits suicide and her brother leaves home to escape their brutish father, leaving young Chris obliged to stay to help him. When her father dies, Chris inherits the farm and soon after marries Ewan Tavendale (Kevin Guthrie), a handsome local farmer. This is a time of genuine happiness for Chris, but with the start of the Great War (shortly after the birth of their son), local "patriots" make life difficult for Ewan, who hasn't enlisted, and he reluctantly succumbs to the pressure. He returns home for a brief visit greatly changed, now coarse and disconsolate. **VERDICT** What saves this film from being totally depressing is Chris, a survivor who in spite of misfortune continues to see beauty in her world. Features sexuality, nudity, some violence. Recommended for public libraries.—**Joan Greenberg, Warminster, PA**

## TRAILERS

### What's coming on DVD/Blu-ray

**Black Girl.** b/w. 59+ min. In French & Wolof w/English subtitles. Ousmane Sembène, dist. by Criterion Collection. Jan. 2017. DVD ISBN 9781681432489. \$29.95; Blu-ray ISBN 9781681432472. \$39.95. DRAMA  
A 1966 groundbreaker.

**Closet Monster.** 90+ min. Stephen Dunn, dist. by Strand Releasing. Jan. 2017. DVD UPC 712267360932. \$32.99. DRAMA  
Uniquely coming of age.

**Fox and His Friends.** 124+ min. In German w/English subtitles. Rainer Werner Fassbinder, dist. by Criterion Collection. Jan. 2017. DVD ISBN 9781681432465. \$29.95; Blu-ray ISBN 9781681432458. \$39.95. DRAMA  
West German 1970s gay community.



**His Girl Friday.** 2 discs. b/w. 193+ min. Howard Hawks, dist. by Criterion Collection. Jan. 2017. DVD ISBN 9781681432335. \$39.95; Blu-ray ISBN

9781681432328. \$49.95. COMEDY  
Journalistic jabs and jokes.

**The Light Between Oceans.** 133+ min. Derek Cianfrance, dist. by Disney. Jan. 2017. DVD UPC 786936851540. \$29.99; Blu-ray UPC 786936851526. \$39.99. Rated: PG-13. DRAMA  
Love in the wake of World War I.

**Masterpiece: Victoria.** 480+ min. dist. by PBS. Feb. 2017. DVD UPC 841887030922. \$49.99; Blu-ray UPC 841887030939. \$59.99. DRAMA/TV  
The epic life of an epic queen.

**Something Wild.** 2 discs. b/w. 113+ min. Jack Garfein, dist. by Criterion Collection. Jan. 2017. DVD ISBN 9781681432441. \$29.95; 1-disc Blu-ray ISBN 9781681432434. \$39.95. DRAMA  
Carroll Baker, bent on suicide.

**The Whole Truth.** 93+ min. Courtney Hunt, dist. by Lionsgate Media. Jan. 2017. DVD UPC 031398257844. \$19.98; Blu-ray UPC 031398257875. \$24.99. Rated: R. DRAMA/SUSPENSE  
Keanu Reeves as a determined lawyer.—**Bette-Lee Fox**