

# OUT ON FILM

## Getting Away from Politics

BY STEVE WARREN

CONSIDERING THAT OUT ON FILM began, in 1987, for reasons at least partly political, it's ironic that a selling point of this year's festival of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) films is that it lets you escape from presidential politics for eight days.

If you embrace Atlanta's marvelous diversity (as opposed to following West Side Story's advice: "Stick to your own kind!") you may want to check out some of these films, even if they're not about people who look, think and act like you.

"This is an exceptional year for LGBT cinema," says Out On Film festival director Jim Farmer. "This is our biggest festival to date in terms of the number of films we are showing, as well as the most diverse slate we've ever presented." There are films in this year's festival, which unfolds September 29-October 6 at the Landmark Midtown Art Cinemas, that should be as palatable for general audiences as TV series like *Modern Family* and *The Real O'Neals*. But when I'm tempted to brand the likes of *Taekwondo* and *Paris 05:59: Theo & Hugo* as too intensely gay, I'm reminded that *Queer as Folk*, which would have fallen into the same category, had huge ratings among straight women. And that was over a decade ago.

Here are some of my favorites of the features: Ever have to choose between staying on the farm with your family or having a chance at true love in the city? That plot comes up in *Fair Haven* (Sept. 30, 9:20 p.m.), where the city is Boston; *Summertime* (Sept. 30, 7:25 p.m.), where the city is Paris; and *AWOL* (Oct. 1, 11:40 a.m.), where the city is – well, Army duty in Afghanistan; but the true love is back home. All but the first involve women.

Another recurring plot is having to choose between a partner of the same or opposite sex. That's the case for the other woman in *AWOL*, and also the Chinese movie star in *Front Cover* (Oct. 2, 2:50 p.m.), high schoolers in *Slash* (Oct. 5, 6:15 p.m.) and *First Girl I Loved* (Oct. 3, 8:15 p.m.); and it was the case for a man who's now at the end of life in *Jonathan* (Oct. 2, 11:10 a.m.; Oct. 6, 3:30 p.m.).

Besides many of the characters in the films above, there are more denying, questioning or struggling with their sexuality in *Where Are You Going, Habibi?* (Oct. 1, 11 a.m.), *Closet Monster* (Oct. 4, 9:15 p.m.), *Being 17* (Oct. 4, 7:05 p.m.) and *Spa Night* (Oct. 5, 9:20 p.m.).

The Internet can be helpful for people wondering about their own gender or sexuality,

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as it was for the subject of *Real Boy* (Oct. 5, 8:20 p.m.), who found information and support there for his transition from girl to man.

About the only good films I saw in which the main characters are comfortable with their sexuality are *Retake* (Oct. 2, 7:05 p.m.) and *Lazy Eye* (Oct. 3, 7:15 p.m.). I guess that's harder to write about because it's also true in my least

favorite of the festival films I saw, *Do You Take This Man* (Oct. 1, 7:40 p.m.) and *Suicide Kale* (Oct. 1, 5:40 p.m.).

Documentaries, more than narrative films, are dependent on your interest in their subject. If you care about the topic you can overlook some technicalities. Of several docs

previewed *The Slippers* (Oct. 4, 3:30 p.m.), about Judy Garland's ruby reds jumpstarting the Hollywood memorabilia industry; and *Southwest of Salem: The Story of the San Antonio Four* (Oct. 6, 6:40 p.m.), about four lesbians wrongfully imprisoned, will be enjoyed by those interested in the topics.

Better made, though not necessarily of greater interest, are the aforementioned *Real Boy*; opening night feature *Strike a Pose* (Sept. 29, 7 p.m.), about the backup dancers from Madonna's 1990 tour; *The Queen of Ireland* (Oct. 2, 11:05 a.m.), about a drag queen/activist who helped his country legalize same-sex marriage by popular vote; *Letter to Anita* (Oct. 3, 4 p.m.), about how Anita Bryant's campaign against homosexuality broke up one woman's family but galvanized the LGBT movement; *An Act of Love* (Oct. 6, 6:45 p.m.), about the United Methodist Church defrocking ministers for performing same-sex weddings, one of them involving the man's own son; and especially *Political Animals* (Oct. 2, 12:45 p.m.), about the first four out politicians – all women – elected to the California legislature.

All that plus the shorts and a dozen or so features and an encore of the beloved *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Oct. 1, 11 p.m.).

**OUT ON FILM**  
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## HOME THEATER

### NEW RELEASES

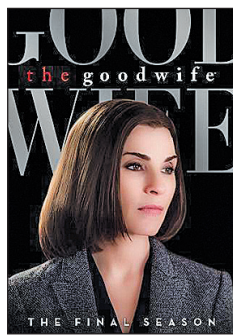
THE LATEST DVD, BLU RAY & VOD RELEASES

By John Moore

#### THE GOOD WIFE – THE FINAL SEASON

(Paramount)

With refreshingly creative characters and impressive writing, it's pretty easy to see why *The Good Wife* continued to be a favorite show for many up until the end. Part legal drama and part political series, the show over its run mirrored current and past political scandals. The last bow finds Alicia Florrick (Julianna Margulies), mother, former political wife and attorney, adjusting to life as a partner at her firm while supporting her husband's new White House bid. Eli Gold, the political strategist and crisis manager, played brilliantly by Alan Cumming, returns as well to usher out the show. After a seven-year run, *The Good Wife* had one strong season after the next and though it will be missed, ended up on top before the writing became stale.

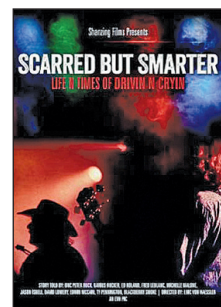


#### SCARRED BUT SMARTER: LIFE N TIMES OF DRIVIN N CRYIN

(MVD Visual)

It seems like every decent-sized city has that one great band that is massively popular in town, but cannot seem to catch a break beyond city borders. For Atlanta, *Drivin N Cryin* just happens to be their band. The group finally snagged national airplay in 1991 with their fourth album, *Fly Me*

*Courageous*, a record that sounded little like the folk/country/punk band that first came together on the mid-'80s. But despite a brief moment of national notoriety, the band quickly faded from the mainstream. *Scarred But Smarter* was a passion project of ATL DJ Eric Von Haessler, who wanted to find out why the band never really enjoyed much national success. At the risk of giving too much away, he never really answers the question, but in the process gives a thoughtful, warts and all look at this tragically overlooked band through interviews with members past and present, ex's, roadies and fellow musicians, like Peter Buck, Darius Rucker and Ed Roland.



#### ALL THINGS MUST PASS (MVD)

Over the course of nearly five decades, Tower Records grew from a small CA-based indie record store run out of a drug store to a corporation with stores in every major city across the globe and sales totaling \$1 billion dollars. By 2006, the empire imploded, the company filed for bankruptcy and shut down all of its retail stores. Along the way, the indie-turned-behemoth won over a slew of music fans and musicians alike, including Dave Grohl and Elton John, both of whom are interviewed throughout *All Things Must Pass*, a 90-minute documentary on Tower Records. Directed by Colin Hanks, the doc succeeds in telling a pretty compelling story of music lovers who set out to open a record store and ended up becoming a fixture of pop culture in the process.



AWOL