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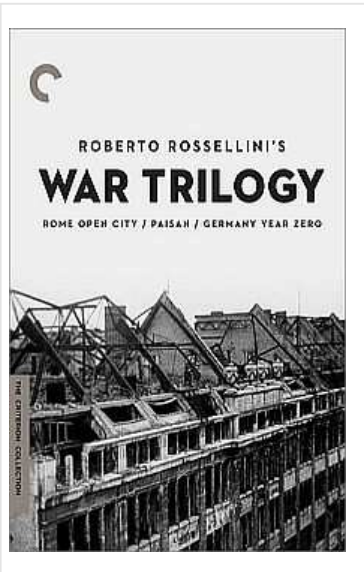
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FILM

January '10 Classics on DVD

Written by Kevin Filipski

Roberto Rossellini—War Trilogy (Criterion) comprises the three films that put the Italian director on the neo-realist map immediately after World War II: *Rome Open City*, *Paisan* and *Germany Year Zero*. With dramatic immediacy and (at the time) a unique quasi-documentary style, Rossellini's classic trio takes the pulse of his ravaged homeland at the end of the war and during the initial rebuilding years; even through their obvious deficiencies (wooden acting and stilted dialogue), they remain unforgettable portraits of the triumph of humanity even in the worst of times. Even by Criterion's high standards, this boxed set is indispensable: the films have never looked better—warts and all—and the extras place them in the context of both Rossellini's career and film history. Included are Rossellini's own introductions to all three films; an audio commentary by Peter Bondanella on *Rome Open City*; two excellent documentaries on the director, both of which feature interviews with colleagues (Scorsese, Truffaut, Taviani brothers) and family (daughter Isabella Rossellini); and visual essays and additional featurettes.



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ALSO AVAILABLE...

Dallas—the Complete Twelfth Season (CBS) finds JR (the always tongue-in-cheek Larry Hagman) thrown in prison, from which he breaks out to continue on his merrily mercenary ways, at the expense of his family and enemies—he has no friends, of course; **Drop Dead Rock** (MVD) isn't the most original music-biz farce ever made, but this 1995 scattershot comic caper is the only place to see Adam Ant and Deborah Harry act up a (semi) storm to a satisfyingly bizarre soundtrack (lone extra: two music videos); **ER—the Complete Twelfth Season** (Warners), comprising 22 episodes from 2005-6, is notable mainly for the last appearance of one of the original cast members, Sherry Stringfield, in the very first episode (lone extra: deleted scenes); not really my idea of a movie that needs a DVD release, **House on Sorority Row** (Liberation Entertainment) is a silly collegiate shocker that does little with its unoriginal (but still promising) premise; **JFK—Three Shots That Changed America** (History Channel) comprises original footage from the JFK assassination era, going far beyond the Zapruder film to create an compellingly thorough compendium of the events from November 22, 1963 through modern-day conspiracy theories to show how that killing changed America; **King Lear** (E1), another important release from the *Omnibus* DVD series, is a record of a true television event: on October 11, 1953, Orson Welles brilliantly played the tragic king in an 80-minute distillation of Shakespeare's towering classic that was directed by a young Peter Brook (best extra: host Alistair Cooke visits Brook, actors and composer Virgil Thompson in rehearsal); the 1977 cult thriller **Kingdom of the Spiders** (Shout! Factory) is as risible as they come, but where else will you get to see Captain Kirk himself get bitten by renegade tarantulas? (best extra: new William Shatner interview); **Mister Ed—The Complete Second Season** (Shout! Factory) presents the further adventures of television's favorite talking horse, 26 episodes' worth of hayseed hilarity from the 1961-2 season (best extra: audio interview with stars Alan Young and Connie Hines); **The Sherlock Holmes Collection** (A&E) brings together the only five surviving episodes from the entertaining 1960s series starring Peter Cushing as the great detective and Nigel Stock as his faithful sidekick Dr. Watson (lone extra: *Sherlock Holmes: The Great Detective* documentary).

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