

images that presented him as a powerful artistic figure) seemed to overfeed his ego, and his strident perfectionism resulted in fractured relationships with filmmakers, most notably French auteur Henri-Georges Clouzot. If the conductor did not score points for congeniality with his cinematic collaborators, at least he managed to create a series of handsome productions that captured his energy and artistry. Karajan wisely predicted this footage would preserve his legacy—even noting that his perceived artistic foes would only be remembered by reputation because there was no filmed record of their live performances. Wübbolt's film, which combines archival material, conversations with Karajan, and interviews with collaborators and production partners, offers fascinating insights into the creative process, with an unapologetic view of a brilliant but arrogant maestro who reached for greatness while stepping on toes. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (P. Hall)

Michael Jackson: The Life and Times of the King of Pop 1958-2009 ★1/2

(2009) 79 min. DVD: \$14.95. Music Video Distributors (avail. from most distributors).

It's hardly surprising that various entrepreneurs have tried to capitalize on Michael

Jackson's death in June 2009, or that their products were of dubious quality and questionable merit. That description certainly applies to this inoffensive but slapdash offering from filmmaker Wilson Ebiye, which adds precisely nothing to the King of Pop's legacy. Title notwithstanding, Jackson's "life and times" are almost incidental; instead, we're treated to the 911 call for help and scenes of the ambulance arriving at Jackson's Holmby Hills, CA, mansion on the day he died, followed by excerpts from the memorial service held at the Staples Center a few days later, where Berry Gordy, Smokey Robinson, Brooke Shields, Magic Johnson, Stevie Wonder, Al Sharpton, Usher, and various Jackson family members sing, cry, and pay tribute (some nice moments, all previously aired). Afterward, a "reporter" talks to some fans in attendance, whose penetrating insights include "it was amazing," "he's an icon," and "awesome." Also included is some footage of Jackson at his Neverland Ranch, along with brief clips from such events as the accident during the making of a Pepsi commercial when his hair caught on fire, his participation in the "We Are the World" music video and performance at the 1993 Super Bowl concert, and his child-molestation trial. Not a necessary purchase. Aud: P. (S. Graham)

Notes on Marie Menken ★★★

(2006) 97 min. DVD: \$29.98. Icarus Films Home Video (avail. from most distributors).

Experimental filmmaker Marie Menken (1909-1970) is recalled in this remarkably detailed documentary from Martina Kudláček, who has assembled archival footage, film excerpts, and interviews with contemporaries (including Kenneth Anger, Gerard Malanga, Alfred Leslie, and Billy Name) to provide social and historical context, as well as stories about Menken herself. In addition to covering Menken's work in cinema, Kudláček describes the process she employed in her early career as a collage artist, her emotionally volatile marriage to filmmaker and poet Willard Maas (the inspiration for Edward Albee's play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*), and the specifics of the Bolex film camera she used. Menken was also involved with Andy Warhol's Factory and occasionally appeared in his movies (*Chelsea Girls* is excerpted here). On camera, one-time Warhol collaborator Malanga watches newly rediscovered (and deteriorating) footage of the two filming each other outdoors in "Duel of the Bolexes." DVD extras include three Menken productions in their entirety: *Visual Variations on Noguchi*, *Glimpse of the Garden*, and *Arabesque for Kenneth Anger*. While this may not have widespread appeal for general audiences, it is an important documentary for

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