

Starmaking turn

Oscar-winning 'Juno' makes Page a household name

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

"Juno"

Teen pregnancy becomes less of a burden when the mother involved is the coolest, sharpest-tongued kid in school and sets out to find the perfect adoptive parents for the baby she's hatching. Ellen Page earned a best-actress Academy Award nomination as the title character, an almost impossibly glib teenager whose support crew includes a best-friend beau (Michael Cera), a sympathetic dad (J.K. Simmons), bold stepmom (Allison Janney) and a seemingly ideal couple (Jennifer Garner and Jason Bateman) looking to adopt. The movie comes in single-DVD, two-disc DVD and Blu-ray high-definition releases that include 11 deleted scenes, plus commentary with director Jason Reitman and writer Diablo Cody, who won the Oscar for original screenplay. The two-disc set and Blu-ray disc also have digital copies of the film for portable media players and a handful of featurettes, among them segments on Reitman and Cody. Single DVD, \$29.98; two-disc DVD set, \$34.98; Blu-ray, \$39.98. (20th Century Fox)

"Aliens Vs. Predator: Requiem"

The clash of the space beasts resumes in this second movie in a series that revived two long-dead sci-fi franchises by making the creatures fight each other. This one sets the relentless aliens loose in Colorado after a space ship crashes there, with an alien-predator hybrid joining the hunt. Available as a single DVD, a two-disc DVD set or a Blu-ray release, the home-video version is an unrated edition that adds 10 minutes of extra gore to the R-rated theatrical movie, accompanied by two commentary tracks with the filmmakers. The two-disc set and Blu-ray release come with digital copies for portable media players and a batch of behind-the-scenes segments. The Blu-ray disc has both the theatrical and unrated versions of the movie. Single DVD, \$29.98; two-disc DVD set, \$34.98; Blu-ray, \$39.98. (20th Century Fox)

TV on DVD

"Melrose Place: The Fourth Season"

The scheming and romancing continues among a group of young Los Angeles hipsters that include Heather Locklear, Marcia Cross, Daphne Zuniga and Andrew Shue. The nine-disc set has all 32 episodes from year four of the prime-time soap opera. DVD Set, \$61.99. (Paramount)

"American Dad: Volume 3"

This animated series from the creator of "Family Guy" features an all-American hero fighting for the ultraconservative way of life while stumbling on the domestic front as he deals with



Ellen Page, second from left, earned an Oscar nomination for best actress for her portrayal of the titular "Juno" in one of the year's sleeper hits.

family and friends. The latest three-disc set has 18 episodes, along with commentary and deleted scenes. DVD set, \$39.98. (20th Century Fox)

"Clive Cussler's The Sea Hunters: Set 2"

Action novelist Cussler and marine archaeologist James Delgado lead expeditions in search of great shipwrecks, including the fishing boat at the center of "The Perfect Storm," a Civil War Confederate vessel and the passenger liner Carpathia, which rescued Titanic survivors and was sunk by a German U-boat six years later. The two-disc set has six episodes. DVD set, \$39.99. (Acorn)

"I Remember Nelson"

A two-disc set packs the four-part miniseries from 1982, featuring Kenneth Colley, Geraldine James and Tim Pigott-Smith in a historical drama about Lord Nelson, the legendary British naval leader. DVD set, \$39.99. (Acorn)

Other new releases

"Before the Devil Knows You're Dead"

Philip Seymour Hoffman and Ethan Hawke star as brothers

whose scheme to make easy money by robbing their own parents' jewelry store goes awry. The film is accompanied by cast and crew interviews and commentary with Hoffman, Hawke and director Sidney Lumet. DVD, \$27.98; Blu-ray, \$35.98. (Image)

"I Want Someone to Eat Cheese With"

Jeff Garlin of "Curb Your Enthusiasm" wrote, directed and starred in this quirky tale of a tubby actor living with his mother whose struggle to lose weight is complicated by a chance at romance with a woman (Sarah Silverman) he meets at an ice cream shop. Garlin offers commentary, and the DVD includes a deleted scene. DVD, \$19.95. (Genius)

"A Passage to India"

The final film from director David Lean ("Lawrence of Arabia") returns in a new two-disc DVD edition and debuts on Blu-ray, each packed with seven background featurettes and including commentary with producer Richard Goodwin. The 1984 epic stars Peggy Ashcroft, Judy Davis, Alec Guinness and Victor Banerjee in an adaptation of E.M. Forster's saga about a British woman whose misfortune on a cave-exploration trip in India leads to false accusations against an Indian man. DVD set, \$24.96; Blu-ray, 28.95. (Sony)

'Under Review' documentary series sets its sights on Van Morrison



"VAN MORRISON: UNDER REVIEW 1964-1974" (MVD Visual/Sexy Intellectual) ★★☆☆☆ out of five — There have been very few misfires in the outstanding "Under Review" series, and this fascinating exploration of Van Morrison ranks among the best in a thoroughly enjoyable assortment of

music documentaries.

"Van Morrison" focuses on arguably the most fertile portion of the Irish native's career. It begins with his early days as part of Them before moving on to a solo career that produced countless hit singles and some of the most original albums of the era.

Born in Belfast in 1945, Morrison grew up in a musically eclectic household. His influences ranged from gospel to traditional folk to rock and the blues, and he incorporated every element into his distinct style.

His time with Them was brief — the band broke up after just two albums — but produced such memorable hits as "Gloria," "I Put a Spell on You" and the rousing "Here Come the Night."

Most of the two-hour independent critical analysis by the collection of knowledgeable panelists centers on Morrison's solo albums of the period, starting with 1967's "Blowin' Your Mind" and continuing through 1974's "Veedon Fleece."

That solo debut is considered one of his weaker efforts despite the presence of "Brown Eyed Girl" and one of my favorite Morrison songs, the sprawling "T.B. Sheets."

That set the stage for "Astral Weeks," a record that struggled to find an audience upon its release in 1968, but has since ascended (rightly so) to masterpiece status. Though it didn't spawn any hit singles, Morrison has written few songs better than "Cyprus Avenue," "Madame George" and the title track.

Next up was the record that made Van the Man a household name. Looking to make an album that could be played on the radio, Morrison struck gold with 1970's "Moondance." In addition to the title track, songs such as "And It Stoned Me," "Caravan," "Crazy Love" and "Into the Mystic" became classics.

Critics (and audiences) were divided on the remaining six albums of the era covered by the film. There were stellar efforts "Tupelo Honey," "Saint Dominic's Preview," the live "It's Too Late to Stop Now" and "Veedon Fleece," and a couple missteps in the good-but-not-great "His Band and the Street Choir" and the middling "Hard Nose the Highway."

Yet all of those releases seemed to spawn a hit, adding such radio-ready tunes as "Domino," "Wild Night" and "Jackie Wilson Said (I'm in Heaven When You Smile)," along with epic tunes like "Almost Independence Day," "Tupelo Honey," "Listen to the Lion" and "You Don't Pull No Punches, But You Don't Push the River."

Despite a paltry collection of extras that includes an interactive quiz and panelist biographies, "Under Review 1964-74" is a must for Van Morrison fans. (Jeffrey Sisk)



uh, girlfriend.

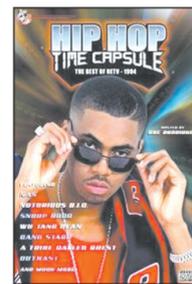
In lesser hands, "Lars and the Real Girl" would be an impossible sell — and even with Gosling and the talented supporting cast the film is an acquired taste — but it's a surprisingly sweet romantic comedy. There are no cheap laughs (Lars never has relations with "Bianca," nor is such behavior alluded to in any way) and the obvious fondness his fellow townsfolk have for the painfully shy Lars is touching.

Their willingness to go along with the Bianca ruse, in an attempt to help Lars learn how to relate to real people, is sweet without being cloying. Kudos to co-stars Emily Mortimer, Paul Schneider and the always reliable Patricia Clarkson for their believable portrayals.

There aren't many extras on "Lars and the Real Girl," merely a deleted scene and a couple of ho-hum behind-the-scenes featurettes. (JS)

"HIP HOP TIME CAPSULE: THE BEST OF RETV 1994" (MVD Visual) ★★☆☆ — Focusing on a year when the East Coast-West Coast rap feud was heating up, "Hip Hop

"LARS AND THE REAL GIRL" (MGM Home Entertainment) ★★☆☆ — Any doubt as to the acting ability of Ryan Gosling — for my money he's the best under-30 actor working today — should be put to rest after watching this bizarre, oddly endearing tale of a social misfit who orders an anatomically correct doll that becomes his,



Time Capsule 1994" is painfully one-sided. Not in terms of the political ramifications of the war of words that soon became deadly, but in the focus on the year's best/most influential artists.

All we get in this collection of videos, assorted interviews and snippets of live performances is the New York/New Jersey rap scene. There's nary a mention of West Coast stars like Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg, yet we get extended footage on East Coast also-rans O.C. and Black Moon? It doesn't add up.

I could understand the East Coast bias — host Koe Rodriguez is a proud New Jersey native — if "Time Capsule" focused on the region's heavyweights. But other than one video by Biggie Smalls ("Juicy"), a cursory look at Nas' game-changing "Illmatic" debut album (no music, though) and a brief mention of the Wu-Tang Clan, the emphasis is on B-listers.

The one redeeming feature on "Time Capsule 1994" is a mini-documentary by LaMarr Stephens entitled "The More Things Change." It examines rap culture and its effect on the African-American community — especially the children — and includes interviews with Princeton University political scientist Melissa Harris Lacey and female rap pioneer Roxanne Shanté. I could have done with fewer forgettable videos and a lot more of this well-made documentary. (JS)