

DRAMA



The Ultimate Gift

P4.0/S3.0

CRITICS' COMPOSITE 2.0

Trust-fund baby Jason Stevens (Fuller) is about to receive his inheritance from his wealthy grandfather (Garner), but it is not what he expected. The inheritance is a series of tasks that are intended to help Jason find true happiness by imparting to him **The Ultimate Gift**. Based upon the novel

The Ultimate Gift by Jim Stovall. Special features include the featurettes *Behind The Scenes Of The Ultimate Gift* (12 minutes), and *Leave A Legacy* (three minutes), *Live The Ultimate Gift* (three Minutes); the music videos "Something Changed" and "Legacy"; the original theatrical trailer; and a preview for *The Redemption Of Sarah Cain*.^{SP}

The anamorphically enhanced 1.85:1 DVD shows impressive detail with little in the way of annoying compression artifacts. There are occasions when the images look somewhat soft, especially outdoors. Colors look naturally saturated, but fleshtones can occasionally be too pink. While contrast is well bal-

anced, shadow delineation is lacking, leaving dark scenes looking flat and undefined. Source element artifacts and edge enhancement are not overly bothering.^{DR}

The Dolby® Digital 5.1-channel soundtrack has troubles with dialogue, oftentimes sounding thin and bright or edgy and harsh. Spatial integration can also be off at times, sounding too forward and detached from the rest of the soundtrack. Effects are delivered through each of the full-range channels, and phantom imaging is used on occasion, with varying effectiveness. Pans are mixed well, helping liven up the soundtrack.^{DR} **WSR**

20th Century Fox Home Entertainment • Catalog Number 2244486 • PG/2006/117 Minutes • Michael G. Sajbel (Director) • Stars Drew Fuller, Bill Cobbs, Abigail Breslin & James Garner

ACTION COMEDY



Dirty Sanchez: The Movie

P2.5/S2.0

WSR SCORE 2.0

If you left the theatre after watching *Jackass The Movie* unfulfilled, needing the gross-out humor to go one step further then I suggest

you watch **Dirty Sanchez**. This crew of self-abusive northern-English lads will certainly repulse and sicken you for the entire 90-minutes of the video as they rage through seven deadly sins in six different countries. Special features are limited to up-front previews, an option to view film with commentary by Matthew Pritchard and Lee Dainton, and 13 deleted scenes.^{SP}

The anamorphically enhanced 2.30:1 DVD can be noisy and poorly defined, while at other times, it can show good resolution and a clean, smooth look.

Black levels, as well, aren't consistently deep, but shadow delineation is consistently not good. Pixel breakup and compression artifacts are noticeable. The disc is not consistent, but it can look decent at times.^{DR}

The Dolby® Digital 5.1-channel soundtrack has a decent mix for music, which also shows good fidelity, but voices are not recorded very well, sounding harsh, sibilant, and poorly defined. The corner full-range channels are generally not used, and the LFE channel is rarely used.^{DR} **WSR**

Genius Products • Catalog Number 80323 • Unrated/2006/96 Minutes • Jim Hickey (Director) • Stars Dainton, Joyce, Pancho & Pritchard

DRAMA



Gracie

P3.0/S3.5

CRITICS' COMPOSITE 3.5

Gracie Bowen (Schroeder) is a typical 15-year-old girl with one exception: she would like to play soccer on the boy's team. Her school forbids her to play on the team and her parents begin to doubt her ability. That is when this "typical" teen shows all who doubt how far true determi-

nation can take you and surprises them all. Special features include an optional commentary track with Davis Guggenheim, an alternate commentary track with Elisabeth Shue and Andrew Shue, the featurette *Bringing Gracie To Film* (27 minutes), the original theatrical trailer, and previews.^{SP}

The anamorphically enhanced 2.38:1 DVD shows overblown contrast and a washed-out color balance during the daytime scenes. The DVD generally shows good resolution, with fine details, like faint mist in the air and individual blades of grass delivered well. Night shots can show spurious noise. Color banding can be noticed at times, and compression artifacts

can make a mess of some shots. Edge enhancement is relatively minor, and generally only noticeable over high-contrast transitions.^{DR}

The Dolby® Digital 5.1-channel soundtrack is a lively mix, with each of the channels used frequently to deliver music and effects. There is rarely a time when all of the channels are not used to deliver a fairly natural soundstage. Still, dialogue can sound bright, but generally it has good articulation. Deep bass is not incorporated often but when present bass is delivered through each of the channels. Fidelity is not as pristine as in the best releases, but it is a good mix.^{DR} **WSR**

New Line • Catalog Number N10991 • PG-13/2006/97 Minutes • Davis Guggenheim (Director) • Stars Dermot Mulroney, Cary Schroeder, Elisabeth Shue, John Doman & Andrew Shue

STAGE PERFORMANCE



Tangerine Dream: Live At The Shepherds Bush Empire June 11th 2005

P2.0/S2.0

CRITICS' COMPOSITE 3.0

Tangerine Dream performed **Live At The Shepherds Bush Empire** on **June 11th 2005**. Their 35th anniversary concert was a celebration of the recording of their

Phaedra album and was performed before a sell-out crowd, not in "Warsaw In The Sun," but rather London, most likely in the rain. While "Talking To Maddox" (whoever he is) in some sort of "Oriental Haze" or maybe even "Purple Haze," the band was most definitely a "Force Majeure." There are no special features.^{TS}

The anamorphically enhanced 1.78:1 DVD features poor black levels and shadow delineation, creating a very flat-looking image. This is especially disappointing considering how dark most of the presentation is. Details oftentimes look soft, as if they were

out of focus. Edge enhancement is not overly noticeable, but color smearing, moiré patterns, and stair-stepping are noticeable at times.^{DR}

The Dolby® Digital 5.1-channel soundtrack sounds much older than it is, with a dated fidelity that removes from the naturalness of the sound. All of the audio sounds harsh and distorted, and a tinny character further limits its effectiveness. The front stage can be amply wide, but there is little in the way of true surround integration. Often the audio can sound phasy, which can really become distracting.^{DR}

MVD Entertainment Group • Catalog Number VPDVD29 • Not Rated/167 Minutes • Andy Gamble (Director) • Stars Edgar Froese, Jerome Froese, Thorsten Quaeschning, Linda Spa, Iris Camaa & Zlatko Perica

FOREIGN DRAMA



Offside

P3.0/S3.0

CRITICS' COMPOSITE 4.0

A handful of girls rebel against the Iranian government's edict that only men should be allowed to go to soccer matches—no girls allowed. They dress up as boys to attend Tehran versus Baharain in a World Cup decision match, but not all fool the soldiers guarding the entry to the stadium.

Many are rounded up into a holding pen, and then are tortured by being able to hear the match but not see it. Will humanity and the love of the game be enough to soften the guards to allow the girls a glimpse of the game? Special features are limited to an interview with Director Jafar Panahi (36 minutes) and previews.^{SP}

The anamorphically enhanced 1.84:1 DVD shows nice black levels and shadow delineation, which help create a fairly dimensional-looking picture, but fine details are not resolved as well as on the best releases. The color palette is generally limited to hues of brown and red, with most of the other colors looking

desaturated and pasty. Compression artifacts are not overly noticeable, but subtle edge enhancement and source element artifacts can be noticed from time to time.^{DR}

The Iranian-language Dolby® Digital 5.1-channel soundtrack features a pristinely low noise floor and a suitably quiescent mix to deliver a realistic soundscape. Surround envelopment is acceptable for most of the presentation. Fidelity is not as pristine as on most new releases, with a muffled and muted character for most of the originally recorded material like dialogue. The canned effects sound more natural, and pans of these effects are delivered nicely.^{DR} **WSR**

Sony Pictures Home Entertainment • Catalog Number 17097 • Not Rated/2006/92 Minutes • Jafar Panahi (Director) • Stars Sima Mobarak Shahi, Safar Samandar & Shayesteh Irani