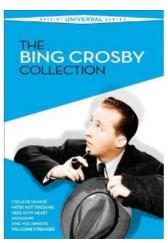
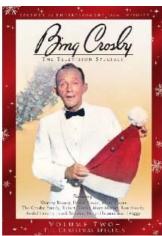


The World is a fresh and funny, weird little film. Cera is Pilgrim, a guy who feels guilty about dating this girl he doesn't really like but darn she's cute and so young and then suddenly he meets the alterna-chick of his dreams and dumps the high school girl and then the alterna-chick turns out to have a batch of previous boyfriends who are, like, super-villains and Pilgrim has to defeat them one by one via video game-inspired smackdowns. It's crazy, visually fun and I'm sure I missed have of the Easter eggs (the jokes only the video savvy would catch, though even I took pleasure in the witty, game soundtrack quoting score). If that description sounds off-putting, by all means stay away. But you'll miss Cera's best role in ages (kicking ass suits him) and Kieran Culkin is awesomely funny as his gay roommate. Shaun of the Dead, Hot Fuzz and now this? Director Edgar Wright is three for three in cult comedies.



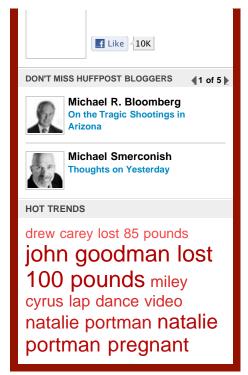


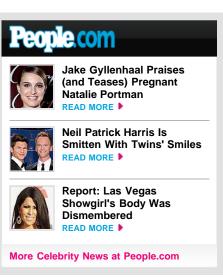
The Bing Crosby Collection (\$49.98; Universal)

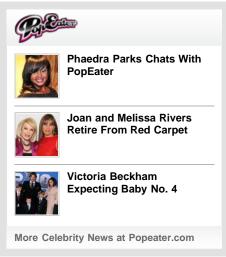
Bing Crosby: The TV Specials Volume 2 -- The Christmas Specials (\$29.98; Infinity/Bing Crosby Enterprises)

Bing Crosby: The Christmas (\$13.98 CD; Collector's Choice)

Bing Crosby: Bing Sings The Great American Songbook (\$13.98 CD; Collector's Choice) -- No star has ever dominated the entertainment landscape like Bing Crosby. In terms of ticket sales, he remains one of the biggest movie stars of all time. Literally no one has recorded as much music as Crosby. And he revolutionized singing, one of a handful of vocalists stretching from Louis Armstrong through Billie Holiday to Elvis Presley and Bob Dylan. He was the king of movies, the king of radio (the TV equivalent of its day), a huge star on TV specials and of course he dominated the pop charts, including the title of best-selling single of all time, "White Christmas" (100 million copies and counting). These DVDs and CDs give you a hint at why. The Bing Crosby Collection is a gathering of decent vehicles, most of them from the 1930s. None is truly great but they're all pretty solid and look decent, with Mississippi fun for the presence of W.C. Fields and "We're Not Dressing" sparked by Burns & Allen. Crosby is a pro throughout with an easy, unassuming charm, the very opposite of the Brando method school of acting that would hold sway in years to come. The TV Specials show Bing so relaxed you feel completely at ease. You get five specials (counting one bachelor pad oddity with him and Frank Sinatra) that range from 1961 to the final TV special he recorded just weeks before collapsing on a golf course in 1977. The yuletide quotient gets stronger with each special, a good thing when one of the earlier shows tries to hip him up and has the unflappable fellow offering up a dreadful dance craze called "Doin' The Bing" that is painful and funny. Mostly, you get Crosby knocking out one gem after another surrounded by his family and guests





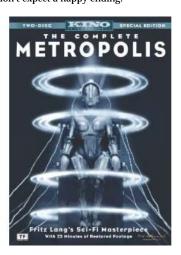




ranging from Mary Martin to David Bowie. Extras include an ode to England for a tourism spot that's almost half an hour long. Finally, two CDs mine the rich motherlode of radio show material that Crosby recorded to offer up two very good sounding CDs, one devoted to holiday songs and the other mostly to intimate jazzy recordings with the Buddy Cole Trio. Both are must-haves for collectors but not the first CDs of choice for anyone knew to Bing.



Eyes Wide Open (\$27.95; First Run Features) -- This Israeli film is about an Orthodox Jew living in Jerusalem, a butcher who has just reopened the meat store after his father's death. He's got a dutiful wife, a couple of kids and the deep respect of his community. Until, that is, he takes in a young Orthodox Jew who seems lost and adrift. The younger man quickly proves useful in the store but word filters back from other communities that he is bad news, a sinner. And what is his sin? One man intriguingly describes the man as having performed too many mitzvahs (good deeds). The simple truth is that the man is gay and was in love with another man who has rejected him and yearns to follow a respectable path. You can see where this is headed, I assume. It's delivered with restraint and respect and perhaps a little fear for the tightly knit, stifling world of the Orthodox Jews. There is safety in such uniformity, such closeness but you pay a very heavy price. Their burgeoning love is contrasted with the scandalous neighbor who continues to court a young woman who loves him even though she's been promised by her father to another. The community is relentless, even violent in destroying this love. And we realize by implication how utterly beyond the pale the love of these two men would be if it were known. A solid, well-told tale. Just don't expect a happy ending.



The Complete Metropolis (\$29.95; Kino) -- It's a revelation; simple as that. I've always enjoyed the spectacle of Fritz Lang's Metropolis, but it always seemed a bit cold and didactic. I've always preferred -- and still do -- his brilliant M. But now Metropolis can give M a run for its money, thanks to this newly restored version which includes 25 minutes of long-lost footage that actually make the plot coherent for the first time. Despite an excellent restoration, you can clearly spot the newly inserted footage, which was in terrible shape. But this doesn't detract from enjoyment of the film. The Alloy Orchestra score is not included, for some reason, but you do get a new performance of the original score and solid extras, though not all the extras from the previous restoration. This film has come closer than ever to its true greatness and has to be seen by serious buffs. Maybe now we can all blot the Giorgio Moroder version completely from our minds.

Kourtney K.'s Stunning
Bikini Bod

Jane Krakowski Reveals
Baby Bump

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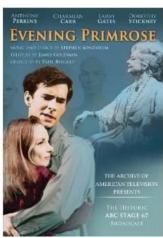
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The Kids Are All Right (\$39.98 BluRay and \$29.98 regular; Universal) -- It's a very positive sign of the times, I think, that this movie seems so conventional. Two lesbian moms are discomfited when their teenage daughter gets in touch with her sperm donor biological dad, even more so when he turns out not to be the genius-level model citizen they imagined but a footloose and fancy-free guy who shakes up their lives. It's a fine cast all around, with Annette Bening and Julianne Moore as the moms, Mark Ruffalo as the ne'er do well dad and Mia Wasikowska and Josh Hutcherson as their kids. Co-written and directed by Lisa Cholodenko, it was a genuine word of mouth art house hit. Harmless, it tells a story that might once have been considered shocking and controversial. Now it just comes across as the pilot for a sitcom.

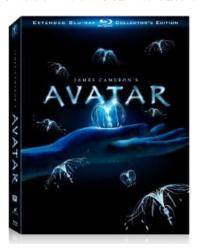




Sondheim! The Birthday Concert (\$29.98 BluRay and \$24.98 regular; Image)

Evening Primrose (\$29.98; E One) -- It's been a great few weeks for Stephen Sondheim fans. First came the long-awaited release of the TV special Evening Primrose, a modest gem about two people spending the night locked up in a department store that starred Anthony Perkins and Charmain Carr. Perkins always deserved a much broader career than he got, thanks to the indelible stamp of Psycho.) And this charmer contains some gems like "Take Me To The World" and "I Remember." Why it's been locked away so long can be discovered on the 80 minutes of extras, which run longer than the 52 minute film. Now there's a fine release of a tribute concert stuffed with great talent. Bernadette Peters and Mandy Patinkin

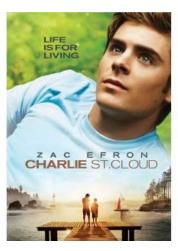
doing "Move On" from *Sunday In The Park With George*, Elaine Stritch doing "I'm Still Here?" Audra McDonald with "The Glamorous Life?" Just a few of many delights.



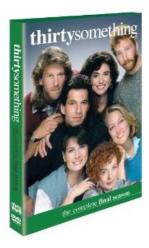
Avatar Extended Collector's Edition (\$54.99 BluRay; 20th Century Fox) -- James Cameron may be 3-D's worst enemy. First he calls out any studios that do a junky, rush job on 3-D enhancements, like Clash Of The Titans, for giving the format a bad name. Then he puts out a 2-D special edition of the top-grossing movie of all time and in every way possible it looks more stunning, more visually exciting and is just plain more fun to watch at home on a plasma tv than it ever was in the movie theaters with those clunky glasses. I'm still not won over to the film dramatically, but boy does it look a stunner! Combine this with the jaw-dropping work on The Sound Of Music and you've got a really good idea of how great movies can look at home. This Avatar has the original theatrical cut (always a necessity in any boxed set; don't make fans choose), the extended theatrical edition (with 8 more minutes) and now a third edition that includes 16 extra minutes. Plus even more deleted scenes and enough background on the making of the film to keep you busy til the sequel comes out in 2012.



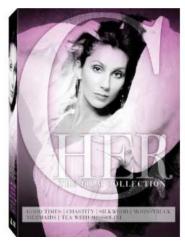
The Golden Girls 25th Anniversary Complete Collection (\$149.99; Buena Vista) -- A very solid sitcom that has endured and even flourished -- I swear kids under 30 know this show better thanks to reruns than the people (like me) who watched it when it first aired. Peerless actresses so it's no wonder they all snagged Emmys. This set is basically a fancy package that contains all the 7 previous season boxed sets. The only new extra is an amusing set of playing cards with the gals photos and the silly set that contains them all shaped to look like Sophia's purse. It's wildly impractical and kind of flimsy. But the sets themselves can be removed and put on the shelf and it's cheaper than buying them all individually. If you want the entire show, this is the way to go from now on. God knows it's endlessly playable and if you have a grandmother or a grandkid, this will be something you can both share happily.



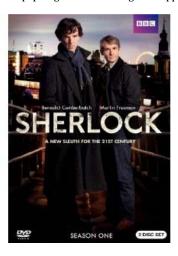
Charlie St. Cloud (\$29.98; Universal) -- I'm still not quite sure why the talented Zac Efron backed out of the Footloose remake? Was he worried about being typecast as only a guy who made musicals? Making it wouldn't have stopped him from appearing in a smart indie film like Me and Orson Welles. And why reject Footloose (a likely box office winner with him in it) for something disposable like this weepie about a young man who feels guilty over the death of his little brother and needs to let go so he can rescue the girl of his dreams during a terrible storm and get on with his life. Maybe Efron feels guilty about ducking out of that film. i doubt it. But the ghost of that project haunts me every time I see him in something like Charlie St. Cloud and think, "Why this and not that?" I'll get over it.



Thirtysomething: The Fourth Season -- (\$59.97; Shout) -- A marvelous cast heads out the door with their heads held high on the fourth and final season of thirtysomething. A show that initially seemed painfully, tragically self-absorbed had a great deal of fun putting its angsty characters through the ringer and watching their ideals crumble in the real world and when faced with fascinatingly manipulative people like businessman Miles Dentrell. Always a modest hit that survived thanks to a very smart, very wealthy core group of viewers that made the show appealing to advertisers, thirtysomething would have become a parody of itself if it had continued for another few years, turning the drama into soap. So thank goodness it ended when it did. This final season is available for the moment at Amazon and continues virtually no extras, in stark contrast to earlier season sets. Me, I don't really care. It's the show that counts. But if you feel cheated, you are now forewarned. I wouldn't hold my breath for some elaborate boxed set with more extras. This is probably the best you'll get for a very long time.



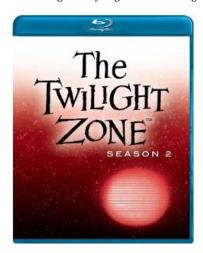
Cher: The Film Collection (\$49.98; MGM) -- That's Oscar winner Cher to you, baby. Just in time for her new movie Burlesque, here's a boxed set of Cher films from throughout her career. You get two early awful films from her Sonny Bono period (Good Times and Chastity). Then you'll find four good to great films: the so-so Tea With Mussolini (almost rescued by a great cast), the sweet trifle Mermaids, the solid drama Silkwood (albeit a bit self-important now) and the romantic classic Moonstruck (still as goofy and charming as ever). All that's missing from her best work is Mask and the Robert Altman film Come Back To The Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean, which still hasn't come out on DVD. But pretty darn good for a pop singer who had to fight for opportunity every step of the way.



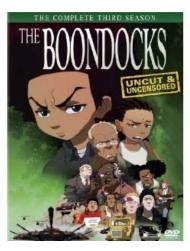
SHERLOCK SEASON ONE (\$39.98 BluRay and \$34.98 regular; BBC) -- Well, I'm a Sherlock Holmes fanatic but quite picky. So while I was definitely going to watch this modern spin on the great detective, I was by no means an easy sell. Despite some heavy editing and flashy camerawork that seems to infect every British drama these days, I must admit I was won over. It's not definitive but it is fun and seeing the modern settings for these tales does give them a certain freshness. The marvelously named Benedict Cumberbatch is a gangly, quirky Holmes. The ruder he is, the more I like him. And Martin Freeman is an excellent Dr. Watson. Neither a dim bulb nor a reimagined but unlikely spin on the old fellow -- just a decent, intelligent guy who is awed by Holmes' intelligence but willing to call his friend to the carpet when necessary as well. They're fun together in these three stories, each roughly 90 minutes long. Solid hits in the UK, the BBC must be kicking itself for only ordering three episodes. With Freeman off to New Zealand for a solid year to film *The Hobbit*, it's going to be quite a while before they return with season two.



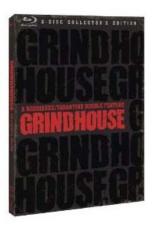
VENGEANCE (\$24.98; IFC) -- I'm not a big Johnnie To fan, so when I say this is the most enjoyable movie of his I've seen yet, you can take that with a grain of salt. This movie wants to be cool like John Woo's Hard Boiled but it plays more like a spoof. The cast is fun, led by French rock star Johnny Hallyday. But this To film has the usual awful score that sounds like it was composed in one day on a Casio keyboard, silly action sequences that look sort of fun if you completely turn off your mind and a plot that hinges on memory loss and -- I kid you not -- fine tailoring. One ludicrous action sequence sticks in my mind. Our heroes are in a garbage dump of sorts and are surrounded by bad guys who are closing in. How do the bad guys close in? Each gangster is rolling a giant bale compacted of trash end over end, hiding behind them for protection and firing over the top or from the side. The good guys grab their own bales and form a circle. You literally see giant bales careening towards each other across a field, like some clunky, slow-moving video game. The kicker is when the bad guys seem to be mostly destroyed when we see yet ANOTHER ring of bales closing in: the bad guys are actually just getting going. It's certainly supposed to be funny. But surely it's also supposed to be kind of cool and different, rather than just ridiculous. The idiocies pile up the closer to the finale we get, but it's good-natured silliness right down to the goofy last shot of people laughing for no particular reason. Director To certainly has talent and surely it's only a matter of time before Hollywood gives him a big budget to play with. I won't be the least bit surprised if he out Woos Woo in Hollywood. He's actually made for the place whereas Woo's genuinely original talent belongs back in Hong Kong.



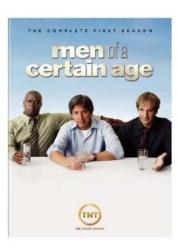
THE TWILIGHT ZONE SEASON 2 (\$99.98 BluRay; Image) -- This is a TV boxed set handled with the utmost care, lavished with attention, filled with extras and all in the service of a landmark series that deserves it completely. The Twilight Zone episodes were beautifully shot at the time but I doubt anyone could even begin to appreciate the craftsmanship that went into them on those tiny little blurry screens. You've literally never seen the show like this until you've seen it in hi-def. You get 29 episodes, which of course range in quality, but this is the heyday for the series before they went to one hour and spoiled everything in the fourth season. Here you'll find all the extras from previous editions plus 25 new commentary tracks, interviews, an episode of Suspense that creator Rod Serling wrote, 15 radio dramas and more. And it all comes in a wonderfully compact set that's barely any thicker than a standard movie DVD box. Thank God they didn't stuff the DVDs into some bulky set shaped like a UFO or something crazy like that. This is ideal stuff. Yeah, it's a little pricey but it's worth it.



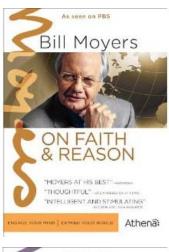
BOONDOCKS SEASON THREE (\$49.95; Sony) -- This animated series seems to have stepped into a Twilight Zone of its own. It debuted as a terrific comic strip, utterly original and fresh, especially in the world of the daily newspaper. Then creator segued with ease into TV with Boondocks. Season One was brilliant. But for whatever reasons, season two was delayed and the spark of public attention was lost. Season three was delayed even longer but finally came out, only to be declared its last, which hardly was encouraging for anyone wondering if they should check it out. Frankly, the show disappeared so entirely from view I wasn't even aware when season three aired -- and heck, I write about TV! I'm looking forward to catching up with the terrific voice cast -- including Regina King and Cedric Yarbrough -- and the socially conscious adventures of Huey, Riley and Granddad. Whatever McGruder does next, it's sure to be fascinating. But I suppose a *Boondocks* movie is out of the question?

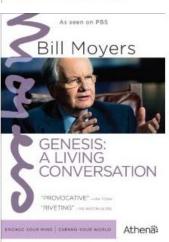


GRINDHOUSE COLLECTOR'S EDITION (\$39.95; Dimension) -- This B movie celebration featuring two complete films -- Planet Terror by Robert Rodriguez and Death Proof by Quentin Tarantino -- along with fake trailers for other films came out in 2007. And for the life of me I'll never understand why it's taken more than THREE YEARS for the original theatrical versions, complete with trailers, to come out on DVD. This is the way the movies were initially shown. This is the way they were meant to be seen. Yes, many critics actually seem to have preferred the longer versions that came out on DVD, especially the Tarantino film which made some year end lists. But surely any fans of those films and those guys would like at least the chance to watch them the way they were originally seen in the theaters. Now, finally, they can, along with new extras. Man that took longer than I ever imagined. To me, these shorter versions are great. Heck, I'd prefer even another cut of the films that ran only, say, 65 minutes. I think that would make them even better. Yet I'm very pleased we can finally check out the original theatrical experience again.



MEN OF A CERTAIN AGE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON (\$39.98; Warner Bros./TNT) -- I know, we all get busy. Like me, you probably heard about the new drama from Ray Romano that also starred Scott Bakula and Andre Braugher. It's about three friends (one a failed golf pro, one a struggling actor who at least manages to date younger women and one a car salesman with loads of stress). It got good reviews and the consummate Braugher was even nominated for an Emmy. You didn't watch it. I'm not complaining. To be honest, I didn't watch it either. But season two begins December 6 and let's face it, the fall batch of dramas was pretty lame. except for The Walking Dead, there's nothing I'm hooked on. So this is the perfect time to catch up with the first season and get ready for the second. Are you with me?

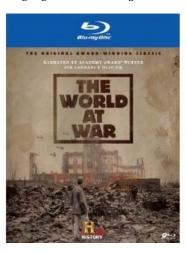




BILL MOYERS ON FAITH & REASON (\$59.99; Athena)

BILL MOYERS: GENESIS -- A LIVING CONVERSATION (\$79.99; Athena) -- Has Bill Moyers really retired? I refuse to accept it. I mean, he retired once and came back. I know he's in his 70s and done the work of ten for many years, but can't he come back again. Who but Moyers who dvote such time and energy to thoughtful discussions of faith with people like Salman Rushdie and Margaret Atwood? Who would examine Genesis with care and appreciation for how it's seen by Christians and Jews and Muslims? They're a little pricey, but I understand how hard it is to break even when dealing with such specialized fare. But fans will certainly want to rent or own these. It's essential viewing by someone who

we're not going to see the like of again.



THE WORLD AT WAR (\$149.95 BluRay; A&E/History) -- This is a landmark TV documentary series that captures World War II with impressive scope and sober judgment. Laurence Olivier narrates it, so that should tell you right away they're not messing around. It's essential viewing for TV and war buffs. Unfortunately, this smashing BluRay edition includes archival footage that's been cropped so it can be shown in widescreen. Got this? For decades, movies were butchered on VHS and shown on TV in horribly altered versions (dubbed pan and scan) because networks worried that people would freak out if a movie was letterboxed so it could be seen in its original format. Now that people are accustomed to even TV shows like Lost being shot in widescreen and of course so many people own widescreen TVs, knuckleheads are going back and screwing around with classic shows like this (shot in the "boxy" 4:3ratio) so that they can "fill up" a widescreen TV. This is MADNESS. Mind you, the people behind the series were involved every step of the way and attempted to do it with care and thoughtfulness. They argue that since war footage wasn't "framed" or shot with care the way a movie was that it's no big deal to cut out portions of the image that aren't "important." But the distortion of the historical record, both from the footage originally and this series as it was originally seen, make that claim ludicrous. Imagine screening the Zapruder film but cropping out 25% of the image so you wouldn't have to leave any portion of a widescreen TV blank. This is really an insane decision, especially when it comes on such a landmark work. Hopefully the outcry will convince them they made a terrible mistake. At the very least, it should give anyone else pause before taking the same moronic step in a short-sighted attempt to make a DVD release more "commercial." As a final note, the BluRay is 50% more expensive than the regular DVD, which is also too much. On sale, the BluRay costs twice as much, which is far too high a premium. What a shame such a great series has been meticulously restored and I can't recommend it.

Thanks for reading. Michael Giltz is the cohost of Showbiz Sandbox, a weekly pop culture podcast that reveals the industry take on entertainment news of the day and features top journalists and opinion makers as guests. It's available free on iTunes. Visit Michael Giltz at his website and his daily blog. Download his podcast of celebrity interviews and his radio show, also called Popsurfing and also available for free on iTunes. Link to him on Netflix and gain access to thousands of ratings and reviews

NOTE: Michael Giltz is provided with free copies of DVDs to consider for review. He typically does not guarantee coverage and invariably receives far more screeners and DVDs than he can cover each week. Also, Michael Giltz freelances as a writer of DVD copy (the text that appears on the back of DVDs) for some titles released by IFC and other subsidiaries of MPI. It helps pay the rent, but does not obligate him in any way to speak positively or negatively of their titles.

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