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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Best Movies Of 2005 -- The Extended Version

The ringer? *March of the Penguins*, which is on my Worst of 2005 list. It's NOT a documentary. It's a poorly made fictional film using animals to tell a fake story. (At least in the rest of the world. For the US, they slapped on some embarrassing, unscientific gobbledygook about penguins that often ignores what's happening right in front of our eyes.) For other duds, scroll down to the bottom.

THE BEST MOVIES OF 2005

The Best of Youth – a six hour Italian miniseries that spans decades to cover politics and business and terrorism and love. And life. Which only sounds dorky before you've become caught up in the lives of a group of characters you get to know almost as well as your best friends. Shot for TV, so its visual flair is limited. But pure entertainment.

Brokeback Mountain – yes, it is a gay cowboy movie. A very good one. Ang Lee has only really stumbled once (with “The Hulk”) and been less than great only one other time (the fine “Ride With The Devil”). Other than that, since his breakthrough with the commercial hit “The Wedding Banquet,” it's been one marvelous film after another: “Eat Drink Man Woman,” “Sense and Sensibility,” “The Ice Storm,” “Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon” (one of the great entertainments of all time) and now this thrillingly good drama. Heath Ledger and Michelle Williams are terrific, but Jake Gyllenhaal is the center of the tale, doing his best work since “Donnie Darko.” A great, tragic love story – no wonder teenage girls are going again and again.

Mysterious Skin – a strange, odd and compelling movie, easily the best from director Gregg Araki (who always had great style, but not always great storytelling skills). Adapting the novel by Scott Heim pushed Araki to be very disciplined when telling the story of two kids

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