

DVD Select: '10 MPH' in the fast lane

by Robert_J_Hawkins

You've always wanted to be a Hollywood player. Admit it.

Here's your big chance to help finance an upcoming documentary. (And like all slick Hollywood players, the money won't even be coming out of your pocket!)

All you have to do is download the documentary "10 MPH." For free. And when you do, each time that you do, the folks behind the Web site www.ourstage.com/go/10mph will hand over a crisp \$1 to filmmakers Josh Caldwell and Hunter Weeks who are currently making their follow-up documentary, "10 Yards."

'THE GAME PLAN' - Dwayne Johnson plays an NFL quarterback living the bachelor life who discovers that he has a 8-year-old daughter from a previous relationship in the comedy 'The Game Plan.' CNS Photo courtesy of Ron Phillips. DVD RATINGS

4 stars: Don't miss: rent it/buy it

3 stars: Worth the risk: rent it

2 stars: On the tipping point: if nothing else is available

1 star: Don't bother: wait until it's in the \$1 bin Granted, there is a bit of whimsy in all this.

Unless 150,000 people are interested in downloading into their iTunes folder a 98-minute film about two guys who quit their corporate day jobs and travel from Seattle to Boston on a Segway scooter.

Download for free. Did I mention that?

If that happens, this whole thing moves from the realm of whimsy to revolutionary.

What does all this have to do with DVDs? Well, if you wanted to, you could order the documentary on DVD through your Netflix or Blockbuster Total Access account. You could buy the DVD from Amazon.com for just under \$18.

Or, if you have no philanthropic impulses whatsoever, you can watch it for free, for a limited time, on YouTube. (Just Google "10 MPH" and all these options will line up in front of you.)

"It's exciting to be making it so easy for people to watch '10 MPH.' And I'm thrilled to be helping to shape the new digital landscape for distributing films," says producer Hunter Weeks.

NEW FORMATS

Meanwhile, the major movie studios are slugging it out over two new formats, Blu-ray and HD DVD, which neither you nor I asked for. The studios need a new format because they have exhausted the possibilities of

DVD to the point where they are repackaging some films into low-priced box sets.

The music industry is also in self-destructive chaos. Its industry gestapos are hunting down and trying to crush every person who downloaded an unauthorized version of a song - in other words, their entire consumer base.

Two truths of the new millennium: The CD is no longer the preferred format for music distribution and the digital disc will no longer be the preferred format for distribution of movies.

Fox Home Entertainment sort of recognizes this. Last week, the studio announced a plan to include on its DVD movies a digital copy downloadable to iTunes. First up is the animated TV sitcom "Family Guy" parody of "Star Wars," titled "Blue Harvest."

The digital copy can be viewed on your PC, Mac, iPod, iPhone or AppleTV. You can download only one copy.

That refreshingly consumer-friendly home entertainment company Netflix plans to offer downloadable movies for viewing on your TV through a box built by LG Electronics. The service will be rolled into the \$5 and upward monthly fee that you already pay. (But yes, the box will cost something.)

With options like this, who needs discs?

Well, we do for now. But I love the fact that the "10 MPH" filmmakers are in the fast lane outside the traditional distribution networks. I love the idea that downloading their film enables a third party to help finance their next movie.

By the way, OurStage is all about working outside the old walls, too. Artists upload their films and music to the site and viewers cast votes in an American Idol-like elimination contest. Winners are chosen monthly and receive \$5,000 and a chance to participate in film and music festivals, among other opportunities.

Check it out. And download "10 MPH" while you're at it. Their next film, "10 Yards," is a documentary on fantasy football and you know that's going to be interesting - if they get the dough to finish the film.

ALSO THIS WEEK

"The Game Plan" (Disney, 2 stars) Dwayne Johnson (aka "The Rock") is a high-flying bachelor pro football quarterback for the Boston Rebels who is suddenly encumbered with a precocious 7-year-old (Madison Pettis) who shows up at his door as his daughter from a brief, long-ago marriage. Suddenly the championship-bound jock is thrown into the big leagues of parenting and he's got no game. The cast also includes Kyra Sedgwick, Roselyn Sanchez and Morris Chestnut. A terrific family comedy with across-the-board appeal.

"The Hunting Party" (Genius, 2 1/2 stars) Richard Gere is a washed-up TV journalist in the Balkans who forms a hunting party to "bag" Bosnia's No. 1 war criminal Radoslav Bogdanovic (aka the Fox) who is still on the loose after five years. (Hiding out with Osama Bin Laden, no doubt.) He recruits a thrill-junkie cameraman (Terrence Howard) and a rookie journalist (Jesse Eisenberg). The hunters soon become the hunted as the Fox mistakes them for a CIA hit team. It's a thriller with clever humor from director Richard Shepard ("The Matador") and one that raises some questions about big game hunting for war criminals: As in, why can't we find them? Based on a true story - but stick around for the filmmaker's explanation of what is real and what isn't.

"Moliere" (Sony, 2 1/2 stars) As far as we know, Shakespeare never had romantic adventures like these. Even if he did write better plays. In director Laurent Tirard's romantic-comic drawing-room thriller, the French playwright Moliere (Romain Duris) is struggling over a project for the royal family. The year is 1644. His memory drifts back 13 years to his stint in prison over some debts. When he is released, he simply

disappears for several months. Historians have been unable to fill in the blank. Tirard's film fancifully imagines, with the help of Moliere's own plays, what happened during this period. Let us just say it involves subterfuge, high society, seduction and the lovely Ludivine Sagnier and Laura Morante. Subtitled.

And the rest: Lars Von Trier's second look at a haunted Denmark medical institution "The Kingdom: Series 2"; martial arts newcomer Jacky Wu stars in "Fatal Contact"; one more in the horror-dismemberment franchise "Saw IV"; Amanda Bynes plies her charm in the comic "Sydney White"; Jessica Simpson and Luke Wilson bimbo-dork their way to the top in "Blonde Ambition"; and Dolph Lundgren still metes out the pain in "Missionary Man."

IT CAME FROM TV

Want to feel good about your country again? Check out "America: The Complete Series" (Genius). This four-disc set is filled with 13 hours worth of heartwarming, positive, inspiring stories of ordinary Americans living better-than-ordinary lives.

They came, they saw, they changed the channel: Season two of the popular 1970s cop sitcom "Barney Miller"; a 12-disc mega-set for the 40th anniversary of the stop-action cult-classic "Thunderbirds"; season three of contemporary illusionist "Criss Angel: Mindfreak"; season eight of hospital drama "ER"; season three of bimbo bunnies in "The Girls Next Door"; fresh from their 30-second stays in prison Paris and Nicole return for "The Simple Life Goes to Camp"; season one of Animal Planet's "The Jeff Corwin Experience"; season three of "Hawaii Five-0"; season three of "The Odd Couple"; the four-DVD box set of the TV series "Swamp Thing"; the seven-disc first season of BBC's Dr. Who-spinoff "Torchwood."

FROM THE VAULTS

Fox and MGM have been around long enough to attach more than a few Oscars to their movies. And this week, movie fans can reap the harvest of Academy Award-winning pictures. The studios are offering three new box sets, each containing five Oscar-winning movies. The sets are titled "The Best Picture Collection"

("Gentleman's Agreement," "French Connection," "All About Eve," "Sound of Music" and "How Green Was My Valley"); "The Best Actor Collection" ("Wall Street," "Patton," "Harry & Tonto," "The King and I" and "In Old Arizona"); "The Best Actress Collection" ("Anastasia," "Three Faces of Eve," "Boys Don't Cry," "Norma Rae" and "Walk the Line"). Each box is priced under \$40.

Another esteemed director gets his well-deserved box set: "The John Frankenheimer Collection" from United Artists, includes "Young Savages" (1961, starring Burt Lancaster); the Robert De Niro spy-thriller "Ronin"; the World War II drama "The Train" and, of course, "The Manchurian Candidate," which starred Frank Sinatra as a brainwashed Korean War vet. The set is priced under \$40.

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