

DVD EXCLUSIVE™



Indies say screeners are essential for survival

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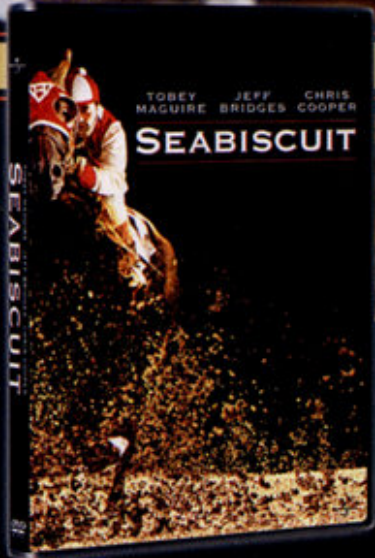
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- SEABISCUIT: RACING THROUGH HISTORY

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SPECIAL FEATURES

Babylon 5 scores new tune on DVD

Composer comes back seven years later to score again

BY SAMANTHA CLARK

Composer Christopher Franke has returned to the *Babylon 5* TV series to record new music for the DVD version of the cancelled series.

Although creating new music exclusively for a DVD release is not new—Howard Shore did it for each Extended Edition of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and various musicians have composed new notes for menus or other extras—Franke is possibly the first to compose new music seven years after his work on the production was seemingly completed.

For the *Babylon 5: The Complete Fourth Season* DVD, being released by Warner on Jan. 6, Franke, who composed all the music for the series, created the “No Surrender, No Retreat Suite,” named for the theme of the fourth season’s shows.

“In many ways, it was almost like seeing an old friend or returning to a familiar place after a long



■ Franke

absence,” said Franke. “Musically, my approach was similar to before but with a whole new palette of colors, something familiar but fresh and new at the same time.”



“First, I spent quite a bit of time revisiting the entire fourth season,” said Franke, who also composed music for CBS’ *The Elizabeth Smart Story* and is now working on a TV movie about Britney Spears. “I collected the best musical ideas and motifs from the season and combined them into what became a six-minute suite.”

The six-disc set also will contain the 10-minute featurette *Celestial Sounds*, about the making of

the series’ music and with interviews with Franke. “We thought it was a great idea and something that hasn’t been done to my knowledge and added value to the set,” said Rosemary Markson, Warner’s executive director of TV marketing. “We had a continuing relationship with Christopher Franke, and he was very excited to work with us on this.”

The DVD work is a first for Franke, who said, “It is an honor and a pleasure to be involved with the creation of this DVD.” ■

LIVE ACTION

First Look gives big push for *Leo*

BY DANIEL FRANKEL

Hoping to meet or exceed the DVD premiere success of last year’s *Gentleman’s Game*—which won best live action movie, best cinematography and best actor for Gary Sinise at the 2002 DVD Exclusive Awards—First Look Home

ANIMATION

Animator, short in spirit of woods

Goal of *Ghost Warrior* DVD premiere is a series of films

BY DANIEL FRANKEL

It’s about as far from Burbank, Calif., as a former Disney computer animator can get.

Just north of Fairbanks, Alaska, in a remote cabin smaller than his old Disney cubicle, Timothy Albee is having his Walden’s Pond moment—some of the inspiration of which is going into his DVD premiere anime project, *Ghost Warrior*.

Produced by Albee entirely on his 2GB PC, the 22-minute *Ghost Warrior* is meant to be an introduction to an entire series of CGI films called *Kaze*, “which is kind of like *Kung Fu*, stretched out into infinity,” as Albee describes it.

The short will be released exclusively to DVD in April by book publisher Wordware Publishing, along with a documentary about the project produced by a local Alaskan public broadcasting station.

Albee hopes the project, which has a production budget of \$5,000, leads to the \$8 million or so in financing he needs to start producing the *Kaze*

series.

More than anything, though, he wants to convince his fellow animators, many of whom have been laid off recently or soon will be, that there’s work to be done outside the major studios.

“You don’t have to play by the Hollywood rules and tone down your stories in order to get distribution,” Albee said.

Having battled for more than 2½ years in Alaska subzero temperatures that drop as low as minus-34 degrees, Albee seems to have found the creative satisfaction he was searching for.

“When I was at Disney, I took a look at myself and where my life was heading,” Albee said. “By any measure, I was a decent person; I had a nice job, a nice car and a nice house. I had reached the pinnacle of everything I wanted to do, but I still was unhappy. This was something I always wanted to try: living on my own in a small cabin with no running water.” ■



■ *Ghost Warrior* was made for \$5,000 on a 2GB home computer.



■ The DVD premiere movie *Leo* will be marketed to consumers.

Entertainment officials are developing what they call an ambitious promotional plan for their May release of the Southern-set drama *Leo*.

Starring Joseph Fiennes, Elisabeth Shue, Sam Shepard, Dennis Hopper and Mary Stuart Masterson and budgeted at around \$7 million, *Leo* has a cast and production profile similar to that of *Gentleman’s Game*.

“It will be difficult to recoup all the money on [*Leo*], so we feel we’ll be best served by taking it out direct to [DVD] and using the money we would have spent on a theatrical run to create an event for the [DVD] release,” said Bill Bromiley, senior VP of sales and distribution.

Bromiley wouldn’t disclose the planned promotional budget for *Leo* but said First Look would spend a “significant chunk” of it on consumer advertising—a move the company rarely makes for its live action features (although it did for *Gentleman’s Game*).

First Look also plans to contribute generously to individual retailer promotions for the title. ■